

# PIPELINE

THE VANE BROTHERS COMPANY

SUMMER/FALL 2024



## Advocating For The U.S. Tug And Barge Industry

Page 1



**also inside: Calendar Contest Winners ■ 'Safety at Sea' Honoree**





OS Deckhand Christopher Hazard earned a spot in the 2025 Vane Brothers calendar with a photo of the tug Cape Fear bringing in a barge at the Port Newark Container Terminal.

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Summer/Fall 2024  
Vol. 23, No. 2

The Pipeline is published twice annually by:  
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Production and Design: PCA of Timonium  
An RR Donnelley Company



## Winning Photos Picked For 2025 Calendar

Congratulations to all of the Vane Brothers employees whose images have been selected from more than 500 entries submitted for the company’s annual “Moments From Our Voyages” calendar contest. The winners receive a cash prize and will have their photos featured in the 2025 calendar being circulated later this year.

Receiving the grand prize are: Captain **Tony August**, AB Tankerman **Chasen Davis**, Port Captain **Patrick Dougan**, Captain **Ralph Gundersen**, Captain **Erik Hansen**, Captain **Rusty Harris**, AB Deckhand **Austin Hartl**, OS Deckhand **Christopher Hazard**, OS Deckhand **Matthew Horn**, Barge Captain **Drew Langley**, Captain **Cory Lawrenson**, and Mate **Birk Thomas**.

Honorable Mentions go to Barge Captain **Jester Castro**, Barge Captain **George Foreman**, Engineer **Peter Munro**, and Mate **Derek Waldman**.

### TAKE PICS FOR 2026!

Vane employees should start submitting photos for the 2026 calendar contest. Images must be high resolution, landscape-oriented, and feature Vane vessels and/or mariners. Send your entries (as many as you like!) to Communications Manager Blaise Willig by email ([bwillig@vanebrothers.com](mailto:bwillig@vanebrothers.com)) or text (443-253-5899). The deadline is July 11, 2025.

*Please note: All photos submitted for the contest become the property of Vane Brothers and may be used for promotional purposes.*

**ON THE COVER:** *This photo of the tug Elizabeth Anne showing plenty of patriotism while working in the Pacific Northwest won AB Tankerman Chasen Davis a grand prize in the annual Vane Brothers calendar contest.*

# AWO ACHIEVEMENTS

## Captain Luliucci Proud to ‘Honor Mariners’ During Chairmanship

Though Captain Rick Luliucci has completed his one-year term as Chairman of the Board for the American Waterways Operators (AWO), his active participation with the national advocacy organization for the tugboat, towboat and barge industry is far from over.

As Immediate Past Chair, he provides “continuity” for the organization while supporting the new Chair, Kelly Teichman of T&T Marine Salvage. (Teichman was formally installed during the AWO’s Washington, D.C.-based Spring Convention in May.)

Luliucci, who joined Vane Brothers in 2007 and is currently Vice President, Operations, continues to represent the AWO in meetings with the U.S. Coast Guard and federal and state legislators. He also remains a member of the AWO Leadership Council. “I’m still very active in the governance of the organization,” he says.

AWO President and CEO Jennifer Carpenter praised Luliucci for his “quiet confidence” and “unflappable steadiness,” whether discussing ways to recruit new mariners into the industry or speaking to legislators in defense of the Jones Act, the federal law requiring that goods shipped between U.S. ports be transported on vessels that are American-built, American-owned, and American-operated.

Looking back on his Chairmanship, Luliucci appreciated the opportunity to utilize a national platform to “honor mariners and remind everyone about the hard work, service, and



▲ Vane Brothers Vice President, Operations, Captain Rick Luliucci, left, has a “Sustainability Conversation” with Julie Ferland, Shell’s General Manager, Maritime Operations Americas, during the AWO’s Washington, D.C.-based Spring Convention in May. Ferland stressed the importance of forging partnerships to move the industry forward.



▲ Vane Brothers Vice President, Operations and AWO Immediate Past Chairman, Captain Rick Luliucci, shown far right, joins, from left, Vice Chair Patrick Sutton (American Commercial Barge Line) and AWO Chair Kelly Teichman (T&T Marine Salvage) to discuss industry issues with U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington during the AWO Spring Convention in May.

sacrifice they provide to our nation.” He felt “especially privileged” to be on hand for the presentation of AWO HERO Awards recognizing “Honor and Excellence in Rescue Operations.” [You can read more about the HERO Award on page 2.]

Prior to his election as AWO Chairman, Luliucci spent one year as Vice Chair. During that time, he took charge of a Sustainability Task Force that promoted the industry as a “sustainability leader” and helped AWO member companies “make meaningful progress on their individual sustainability journeys.” The AWO is now seen as “a recognized leader in global maritime sustainability,” Luliucci says.

Luliucci took special pleasure in being able to meet and hear stories from Merchant Mariners who served during World War II and had come to Washington, D.C., to receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

Luliucci has encouraged other Vane Brothers employees to be involved with the AWO. They have responded by representing the company at Coast Guard roundtable meetings and at industry-focused hearings and forums throughout the country.

“It is important to make sure Vane has a say in critical issues affecting our industry and our business,” Luliucci says. “AWO is recognized as the advocate, resource, and unified voice of the tug, towboat and barge industry, and Vane needs to be at the forefront of the organization.” [📄](#)



# VANE PORT ENGINEER REGISTERS SUPPORT FOR CARB AMENDMENTS

Port Engineer Max Rosenberg represented Vane Brothers at a recent California Senate hearing regarding a bill impacting commercial harbor craft activities in the state. Assembly Bill 1122 codifies certain language addressing safety and scheduling concerns surrounding recent California Air Resources Board (CARB) amendments.

Representatives from several American Waterways Operators (AWO) member companies have lobbied Senators and Assembly members regarding the bill. At a Senate Transportation Committee hearing on June 11, the bill received a 14-0 vote in favor.

“The core objectives of AB1122 are to promote mariner safety and protect mariner income,” says Rosenberg, who adds that the bill accomplishes both goals by:

- requiring that Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF's) be approved by the U.S. Coast Guard and meet standards for safe design before being installed on a vessel,
- requiring that aftermarket DPF's be installed with an override system to ensure a safe level of propulsion can be maintained in the event of an emergency situation,
- NOT requiring a vessel to install a new engine or retrofit an existing engine until its next Subchapter M drydock inspection.

Rosenberg provided comment on the topic at several CARB meetings and a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hearing. He also registered his support of AB1122 during the June 11 hearing.

Dr. Jasmeet Bains, an Assemblymember and author of AB1122, has stated regarding the purpose of the bill: “I share CARB's goal to reduce air pollution from California's ports. But as a doctor, I also took the Hippocratic Oath to do no harm. Sometimes, we have to have enough common sense to realize when the medicine is worse than the illness. Endangering the lives of mariners, increasing the chance of oil spills off our coasts, and hiking the price of food and basic necessities by disrupting trade in our ports is not the right medicine.”

The bill next goes to the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. [↕](#)

## ABBA Chimes In On SIRE

A working group known by the acronym ABBA (short for AWO BIQ and BPQ Advisory) has held multiple meetings this year to discuss refinements to the Safety Inspection Report (SIRE) program. The group specifically seeks improvements to the Barge Inspection Questionnaire (BIQ) and Barge Particulars Questionnaire (BPQ).



▲ Prior to a June 11 Senate Transportation Committee hearing addressing CARB amendments, Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Bains, third from the left, meets in her office with a group assembled by the AWO, including Vane Brothers Port Engineer Max Rosenberg, far right.

Jim Peschel, Vane Brothers' West Coast Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Manager, is part of the group, which brings together representatives from the American Waterways Operators (AWO), Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMP), and the oil majors that commission safety inspections.

“Both the towing industry and the oil majors share the goal of reducing personal injuries, improving reliability, and eliminating spills to the environment,” says Peschel, who adds that ABBA is a collaborative effort focused on “revising the vetting checklist so it will be more applicable to the tug and barge industry instead of geared towards larger oil tank ships.”

ABBA has been able to provide points of clarification while also eliminating redundancies in the BIQ and BPQ. This, Peschel says, “will make it easier for the inspector to complete the checklist, it will reduce the number of formal findings that are not really applicable to our class of vessels, and it will streamline the vetting process done by the oil majors to focus on the topics that are truly important to them.”

The OCIMF, which is dedicated to “the safe and environmentally responsible transportation of petroleum products,” is expected to present the changes to its entire membership by the end of the year. A vote will then be taken regarding adoption of the revised question bank. [↕](#)

## HERO Recognition

The American Waterways Operators (AWO) has released a new video showcasing the national advocacy


organization's "Honor and Excellence in Rescue Operations" (HERO) awards program.

The two-minute video draws attention to the role played by the tugboat, towboat and barge industry's mariners in keeping people safe on the waterways. The AWO HERO Award, established on March 1, 2023, "recognizes rescues undertaken by AWO member company employees that demonstrate selflessness, skill and bravery."

The crew of the Vane Brothers tug *Red Hook* received a HERO Award in February after coming to the aid of a refrigerated cargo ship that lost power and was adrift on the Delaware River. Vane's tug *Pocomoke* crew was likewise recognized last year following the rescue of passengers on a disabled

powerboat near Puerto Rico. Members of both Vane crews are seen in the video.

According to AWO President & CEO Jennifer Carpenter, "We are so proud to share these stories, which exemplify the industry's commitment to safety, and to shine a richly deserved light on the people who make the waterways safer for all."

The video, titled "The American Waterways HERO Award: Honoring Industry's Heroic Mariners," debuted in May at the Inland Marine Expo (IMX 2024) in Nashville. The video can be viewed on AWO social media pages and at <https://vimeo.com/948321790/527694438a?share=copy>. 

## HUDSON 'ANCHORING BAN' A SAFETY CONCERN

What has been described by the American Waterways Operators (AWO) as "an incredibly important safety practice" is being threatened by a proposed Hudson River "anchoring ban." In May, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill that would prevent barge anchorages in the greater Hudson Valley area. The bill is now being considered by the U.S. Senate.

Tugboat, towboat and barge industry leaders, rallied by the AWO, have submitted a letter to members of the Senate Commerce Committee emphasizing the importance of access to anchorages "when conditions on the Hudson River are not optimal for safe navigation." The letter also states that "barging is the safest, most energy-efficient, and environmentally friendly form of commercial transportation available, both in New York and the nation."


Captain Rick Iulucci, Vane Brothers' Vice President, Operations, pointed out in a July 26 *Marine Log* article that the Hudson Valley experiences dense fog and other adverse weather conditions that can impair navigation. He says an anchoring ban would seriously limit the safety options for Officers of the Watch and could result in "supply chain issues, added congestion, and inefficient fuel consumption caused by extended reduced speed, idling, and excessive maneuvering."

Brian Vahey, AWO Vice President-Atlantic Region, has expressed concern that a Hudson River anchoring ban would set a dangerous precedent: "Anchoring is an incredibly important safety practice. ... Congressional lawmakers should not rob operators of their ability to anchor, be it on the Hudson River or any other commercial waterway."



▲ Access to anchorages on the Hudson River is beneficial when weather conditions are not optimal for safe navigation. This photo of Vane Brothers vessels appeared in an AWO social media post expressing opposition to the proposed "anchoring ban."

In a 2023 report to Congress, the U.S. Coast Guard affirmed the importance of Hudson River anchorages "for crew rest, to await better weather conditions, to avoid traffic congestion, and to correct mechanical issues." The report adds that Hudson River navigation practices result in "improved environmental sustainability of the surface transportation system," among other benefits.

According to Iulucci, who is the AWO's Immediate Past Chairman, designated Hudson River anchorage areas help to ensure "a safe, reliable mode of transport" for the delivery of "most of the home heating and refined gasoline and distillate products to not only the Hudson Valley, but also western portions of New England." 





# SEVERN EARNS AMVER AWARD

The Vane Brothers tug *Severn* received recognition during a recent “Safety at Sea” seminar organized by the North American Marine Environment Protection Association (NAMEPA).

The *Severn* and its crews were acknowledged for their ongoing participation in the Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue (AMVER) system. This is a U.S. Coast Guard-sponsored, voluntary ship-reporting system used worldwide by search-and-rescue authorities to arrange for aid to persons in distress at sea. Vessels participating in the AMVER system send a sail plan to the AMVER computer center and report their locations every 48 hours until arriving at their port of call.



▲ The *Severn*, a 4,200-horsepower Vane Brothers tug shown towing the barge *Double Skin 311* in the Pacific Northwest, received an AMVER award during a recent “Safety at Sea” seminar. [Photo by Captain Cory Lawrenson]



AMVER awards were presented May 22 in Washington, D.C. Accepting the award on behalf of Vane Brothers was John Shkor, Vane’s Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Manager.

NAMEPA is an assemblage of environmental stewards striving to preserve the marine environment through educational programs and by promoting sustainable marine industry best practices. The non-profit group’s Board of Directors includes executives from such companies and organizations as the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), Blank Rome LLP, and the Port of Los Angeles. [↕](#)

◀ Representing Vane Brothers at the “Safety at Sea” seminar in Washington, D.C., HSE Manager John Shkor, center, accepts the AMVER award from NAMEPA Executive Director and co-founder Carleen Lyden Walker, left, and Admiral Linda Fagan, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant. The award was presented in May to recognize participation by the tug *Severn* and its crews.

## Oysters Contribute To Creek Cleanup

A creek once considered among the most polluted in the Elizabeth River watershed continues to sprout new life due in large part to a Virginia-based environmental organization and the annual support it receives from partners such as Vane Brothers.

As part of an oyster restoration program spearheaded by the nonprofit Elizabeth River Project, mature oysters were harvested in July from six cages alongside Vane’s pier in Paradise Creek, Virginia. The oysters were then planted on a sanctuary reef nearby.


Oysters are natural filter feeders. They trap suspended sediments and chemical contaminants in their gills as they consume food particles. With the ability to filter as much as 50 gallons of water per day, they are considered a low-cost, low-maintenance solution for making waterways healthier.

“It is incredible how clean the local rivers and tributaries are now,” says Captain Mason Keeter, Vane’s General Manager, Port of Hampton Roads, “It’s all due to a very aggressive effort to improve our environment and waterways with organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and, here locally, the Elizabeth River Project.”

► Captain Mason Keeter, Vane Brothers General Manager, Port of Hampton Roads, observes from above as volunteers replace the oysters grown in Vane's cages.

Keeter, whose involvement with the project began even before he joined Vane in 2007, is encouraged to see that oysters harvested from Vane's cages are producing "spat" (juvenile oysters) and are also larger than they once were. In addition, the cages have contained some mussels, which are considered even more effective at filtering water than oysters.

New batches of spat now reside in Vane's cages, with the expectation that full-grown oysters can be harvested next year.

-Article contributed by Vane Brothers intern Macey Blackburn 



## Vessels Do the Right Thing In Whale Territory


Four Vane Brothers tugboat crews operating within the boundaries of a National Marine Sanctuary have received an A+ grade for their commitment to speed restrictions that help protect endangered North Atlantic right whales.

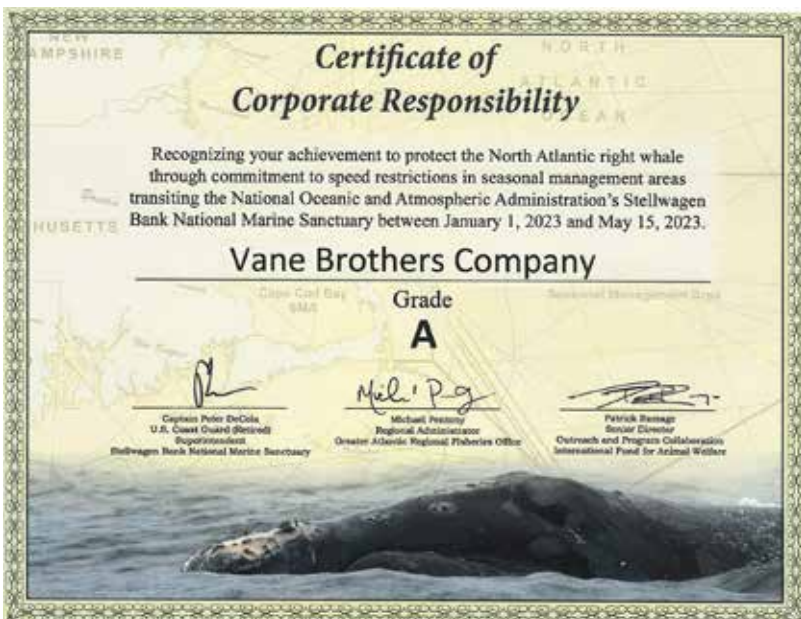
The tugs *Magothy*, *Philadelphia*, *Pocomoke*, and *Wye River* each achieved 100 percent overall compliance while their speeds were monitored in an environmentally sensitive area off the northeast coast of the United States. The monitoring period lasted from January 1 to May 15, 2023. Certificates of Corporate Responsibility were just received this past May.

The *Pocomoke* completed 11 transits that covered 266.25 nautical miles (NM) within the observation zone. The *Wye River* completed five transits covering 121.9 NM. The *Magothy's* three transits covered 54.6 NM, and the *Philadelphia* was observed twice in the zone for a total of 47.7 NM. The only other Vane vessels monitored were the *Patuxent* and *Potomac*. They both barely missed a perfect score, coming in at 96.2 percent and 98.6 percent, respectively, while traveling nearly 75 combined NM through the observation zone.

In all, 323 vessels representing 121 companies were monitored: Vane Brothers received an overall grade of A, while 16 percent of other companies scored below the A level.

Vessels are monitored as part of an ongoing Right Whale Corporate Responsibility Program, which was initiated in 2016 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary working together with the International Fund for Animal Welfare. The program uses report-card data to rate a vessel's "safe and responsible operation" while transiting the Off Race Point and Cape Cod Bay right whale seasonal management areas (SMA's). Mandatory speed restrictions of 10 knots or less are required in the SMA's.

Scientists estimate perhaps fewer than 350 North Atlantic right whales remain, making them one of the rarest marine mammals in the world. 







► For the Orange Coast College (Newport Beach, California) Career Fair in May, Vane Brothers Fleet Recruiting and Development Manager Palmer Dickson, left, was joined by Captain Igor Loch Jr., Vane’s Director, West Coast Marine Operations and Labor Relations.

## MAKING THE CASE FOR A MARITIME CAREER

Vane Brothers’ Fleet Recruiting team had its usual busy career fair season leading up to this past summer, and then launched into a series of Vane-exclusive Mariner Hiring Events in July.

Throughout the spring, Vane Brothers was represented at maritime academy fairs everywhere from Maine to California, as well as during a Baltimore Port Alliance-sponsored job expo and programs based at colleges and high schools. In many cases, Vane’s Fleet Recruiting staffers were joined at the company booth by members of the Human Resources and Operations departments.



▲ During a break at the July 10 Vane Brothers Hiring Event in Brooklyn, a tour of the tug Charles Hughes was provided by Captain Sean Crowley, second from right, for Vane Human Resources Generalist Cassandra Sullivan, left, Fleet Recruiting and Development Manager Palmer Dickson, second from left, and Recruiting consultant Tom Lamm, a former Vane employee.



▲ Vane Brothers Recruiting Coordinator Alicia Wink, left, and Recruiting consultant Tom Lamm, second from left, gathered with a group of Mariner Hiring Event attendees on July 31 outside Vane’s Norfolk office.

Four Vane-exclusive Mariner Hiring Events held in July took place at company facilities in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Norfolk. As a result, several potential Vane mariners began making their way through the hiring process.

During the company’s Hiring Events, Fleet Recruiting and HR personnel also took advantage of the opportunity to visit with Vane vessel crews and shore-side staff at the various offices.

More Mariner Hiring Events are in the planning stages. [➡](#)



# WELL-SUITED FOR SUPPORTING BOATER SAFETY

Several Vane Brothers employees in Baltimore got suited up for “Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day,” which is observed each year on the third Friday in May. The goal of this fun activity is to bring global awareness to a very serious issue: boater safety.

According to U.S. Coast Guard statistics from 2023, drowning was the reported cause of death in 75 percent of all boating fatalities. And among those victims, 87 percent were reported as not wearing their life jackets.

A photo taken in the Vane Brothers Marine Safety and Services (VBMSS) raft room received thousands of views on the company’s social media. Mike Ahern,, VBMSS General Manager, Operations, really got into the spirit, donning an immersion suit rather than just a life jacket!

“Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day” leads into National Safe Boating Week, a product of the National Safe Boating Council. [📌](#)



**WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET  
AT WORK  
TO PROMOTE BOATER SAFETY**

► *Participating in the “Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day” photo posted on social media in May were, front row from left, Bob Pierce and Lorena Ahern, together with, back row from left, Mike Ahern, Tony Morton, Colby Chaney, Kathy Rider, and Larry Dela Cruz. All are VBMSS employees except Bob, who is Vane Brothers’ Purchasing Manager, and Tony, Vane’s Baltimore Warehouse Manager.*



## MARITIME DAY MEETING

Stationed in front of the World War II Liberty Ship John W. Brown, Vane Brothers Communications Manager Blaise Willig, back left, meets up with Vane Captain Mauricio Penaherreta, who brought a group of young people to Baltimore’s National Maritime Day observance held May 19 at the Canton Marine Terminal.

Vane Brothers set up a booth at the free event to provide attendees, including several Boy Scouts of America Sea Scouts, with information about the advantages of a tugboat and barge career.

Spearheaded by the Baltimore Port Alliance, National Maritime Day activities were highlighted by an observance ceremony on board the N/S Savannah, docked across from the John W. Brown. Tours of both historic vessels were also available.

# PORT RESILIENCE

## Baltimore Maritime Industry Bouncing Back Following Key Bridge Collapse

After Maryland's iconic Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed and blocked the federal navigation channel that provides access to the Port of Baltimore, Vane Brothers continued to be active in the region while offering support and assistance to government and industry partners handling salvage and removal operations.

In a statement released on the afternoon of the March 26 incident, Vane Brothers President C. Duff Hughes said, "For 126 years, Vane Brothers has called Baltimore home, and our commitment to this city and its people remains unwavering. We also recognize the resilience of our beloved State of Maryland, the City of Baltimore, and the Port of Baltimore. In times of adversity, our community has consistently shown strength and unity, and we are confident that together, we will overcome this tragedy."

The collapse occurred when the Singapore-flagged M/V *Dali* container ship apparently lost power and allided with one of the bridge's support columns. Six members of a road crew working atop the bridge lost their lives in the Patapsco River.

A final report regarding the incident is not expected from the National Transportation Safety Board until 2025 at the earliest.

Stranded at the accident site for two months until it could be safely refloated, the *Dali* was briefly shifted to Seagirt Marine Terminal, just across the river from Vane Brothers' headquarters, before sailing to Virginia for repairs and container removal.



Meanwhile, the federal navigation channel leading to the Port of Baltimore was fully reopened less than three months after the bridge's collapse. During the first week the channel was able to allow safe ship passage, the Port reportedly welcomed nearly 40 cargo vessels compared to nearly 50 the same week in 2023.

### VANE'S OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

Prior to the *Dali's* removal from the main navigation channel, Vane Brothers vessels were among the first "commercially essential" tugs and barges given clearance by the Captain of the Port to travel through temporary, shallow-draft channels on both sides of the blocked primary passageway. Those vessels were involved in operations that included government contract work.

Vane Brothers also allowed the company's Baltimore pier to be used by maritime groups involved in salvage efforts. In addition, the *Willkate*, a Vane Launch freight boat that regularly delivers critical supplies to vessels at anchorage in the region, completed multiple trips to the accident site. Operating on behalf of the vessel's agent, the *Willkate* mainly transported surveyors, insurance representatives,



◀ The Vane Brothers tug *Wicomico* and barge *Double Skin 502* move through a temporary, shallow-draft channel alongside what remains of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in late April. [Photo by Captain Richard Harman]





▲ As seen from Vane Brothers' Baltimore headquarters on March 26, Vane Launch's Willkate freight boat arrives on the starboard side of the M/V Dali after transporting support personnel to the stranded ship.

and personnel assisting the *Dali* crew. to and from the container ship.

After one early excursion to the site of the collapsed bridge, Bob Roosevelt, Vane Launch's General Manager and primary *Willkate* Captain, commented, "To see the level of sheer destruction of the concrete foundations and steel structures is unlike anything I have experienced in my career."

He added, "It's also difficult to think of the thousands of workers at the Port of Baltimore directly impacted by such an event as this." With the aim of "offering resources and aid for affected Port workers," the Baltimore Port Alliance (BPA) hosted a Hiring and Career Expo in early May at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) Dundalk campus. Vane Brothers was among the exhibitors.

In late May, Baltimore's Cruise Maryland terminal welcomed the return of the first two cruise ships. Both vessels received their bunkering fuel from Vane Brothers barges. 📍

## In-House Training Provides Ongoing Benefits For Barge Crews

Tankerman Trainees continue to be introduced to the basics of barge operations through a multi-day training program conducted at Vane Brothers' Baltimore headquarters and the nearby Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS).

Launched in September 2022, the program officially received U.S. Coast Guard approval this past December. To earn the approval, Vane's Marine Superintendent, Rich Butrim, and Vice President, Operations, Captain Rick Iulucci, fine-tuned course procedures while working with MITAGS.

Butrim has trained more than 40 Vane mariners, many of whom have earned their PIC U.S. Coast Guard endorsement and are now working on board Vane barges.

As part of the program, trainees have been able to complete several Coast Guard-approved transfers on the training barge, Double Skin 19. And according to Butrim, "A new development in the structured length of the class will provide the trainees with the remainder of the U.S. Coast Guard-required transfers, prior to departing the end of the class. This will be accomplished with Vane Brothers equipment in the Baltimore area."

Training classes have been scheduled one per month from September through November of this year. 📍



▲ As part of Tankerman Training in June at Vane Brothers' Baltimore headquarters, Vane Marine Superintendent Rich Butrim works with OS Deckhand Nathaniel Tyler, who joined the company in August 2023, on the proper removal of a cargo hose blank prior to connecting to the dock header.

# 25-Year Milestone Achieved By Six Vane Employees

Sometimes you just know when the time is right to make a move. For Jerry Cowell, that time came in September 1999.

“I needed a change of careers,” says Jerry, who hadn’t found satisfaction with either farming or opening his own plumbing business. Convinced to give tugboating a try by a cousin working in the industry, he joined Vane Brothers and set himself on a maritime path.

Now, the Chief Engineer is among six Vane employees that, as of the second half of 2024, have achieved a quarter-century of continuous service with the company. The others are Accounts Payable Manager Nadine Czech, Barge Captain George Foreman, Captain Richard Harman, Chief Engineer Jack Hollowell Jr., and Barge Captain Bryan Kosegi.

## JERRY COWELL

When Jerry came to Vane, he showed himself to be an eager student, wanting to learn everything he could about the inner workings of a tugboat. Back on the family farm in North Carolina, he had always been around machinery, so it made



▲ Chief Engineer Jerry Cowell

sense that, even as a Deckhand, he gravitated toward the engine room. Before long, he became an Unlicensed Engineer. Then he was “pushed hard” by tug *Doris Hamlin* Captain Ron Roman to get his license.

Ron and Jerry sailed together for a good nine years, but as the company prepared to sell the 1,800-horsepower *Doris Hamlin*, Jerry asked to be assigned to the 4,200-horsepower *Wye River*, which was being built in Louisiana in 2008. Jerry went to down to the shipyard and was part of the crew that brought the new tug into service for Vane Brothers. He has remained on the *Wye River* ever since, working primarily with Captain John Cater.

“When I make my nest, I stay there,” says Jerry. “I’ve been on a lot of other boats, but they’re not my home like the *Wye River*.”

Jerry resides in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, within two miles of where he was born. “I’m rooted very deep,” he says.

Jerry’s son, Jerry Cowell Jr., has worked at Vane Brothers since 2017 and just received his Engineer’s license this past summer. Jerry and wife Terrah also have a daughter who is an educator.

## NADINE CZECH

Nadine’s path to Vane Brothers began in a roundabout way with a salon appointment! One of Nadine’s daughters provided manicures for former Vane Controller Donna Kuemmer, who let it be known on one occasion that Vane was looking for an Accounts Payable person. According to Nadine, “I went for an interview and was hooked!”

Nadine had studied Accounting while putting herself through college. At the same time, she worked at a law firm as an Administrative Assistant, and later took over for a bookkeeper who retired. Next came a part-time job in a company’s Accounts Receivable department, but only after she put her career on hold for several years to raise her two daughters and two sons.

Then came the opportunity to join Vane Brothers. Nadine says she fondly remembers her time working at the company’s former headquarters in Baltimore’s Canton neighborhood, followed by the move 20 years ago to the current campus in Fairfield. Along the way, she has found her involvement with Vane and her interactions with numerous co-workers to be “very rewarding.”

“Vane is a well-respected company in our industry that stays ahead of all the changes that need to be made,” she says. “I am proud to be a part of these ever-changing requirements.”



Along with serving as Vane's Accounts Payable Manager, the Baltimore resident has operated an embroidery business for 35 years. She is known for providing beautifully embroidered apparel to Vane employees, including winners of the company's annual calendar contest.

For many years, Nadine made great memories riding her Harley-Davidson trike through many parts of the United States. She now has three grandsons that keep her active. For relaxation, she has crocheted numerous sweaters and scarfs.

## GEORGE FOREMAN

Already with commercial fishing experience under his belt, George followed a path to Vane Brothers that had been blazed by his father, former Vane mariner Jimmy Foreman. "Dad got me on as a Deckhand on the *Captain Russi* in Baltimore," says George. "From there I got my Tankerman's credential in 2001."



▲ Barge Captain George Foreman up close and on the barge!

Many years were then spent on the barge VB33 out of Paradise Creek, Virginia. During that period, Barge Captain Carl Wilkins, whose own career with Vane spanned more than two decades, never failed to provide George with guidance. "He taught me how to Tank," says George, who also appreciated the support of Virginia-based General Manager Mason Keeter.



When the VB-33 went out of service in 2011, the Vanceboro, North Carolina resident spent a short time working on different barges in the Philadelphia area. He then found a home in 2012 on board Vane's Double Skin 304 with Barge Captain Tony Leach. George himself was promoted to Barge Captain soon after, remaining on the DS-304 to this day.

George and wife Christy have been married for 20 years. They have two daughters and enjoy traveling together. Disney World is among their favorite destinations. "I enjoy simply spending time with my family," George says.

## RICHARD HARMAN

As a young man working on a docking pilot's tugboat crew, Richard decided he wanted to get a deeper education in the maritime industry. "I chose to join the Army and take advantage of the great training they provided," says the long-time tugboat Captain.

He completed six years of active duty, which included performing operations in California onboard his own patrol boat, Q-628. This was followed by six years with the U.S. Army Reserve in Curtis Bay, Maryland. He then sailed with Salisbury Towing and Maritrans before joining Vane Brothers in 1999. The North East, Maryland resident feels proud to have spent 25 years "working for my hometown company and supporting the hometown team!"

While crediting former Vane Captain Norman Dove for turning him from "a military-minded mariner to a confident and relaxed boat operator," Richard says many Vane mariners and shore-side staffers have made an impact. "It has been a great honor to be able to do what I have done and interact with the great people I have encountered along the way," he says.

Richard always wanted a family of his own, but, "due to life circumstances, it took until my 50's to begin the process!" He

► *Captain Richard Harman in the wheelhouse and performing as Elvis during a Vane Brothers function in 2010, much to the delight of Vice President, Communications Elizabeth Hughes!*

and Dawn Strohmaier are now the proud parents of two young daughters and a son.

Music is a constant source of pleasure in Richard's life. Using the stage moniker Richard Blane, he has made quite a name for himself performing tributes to Elvis Presley and other artists all over the country (including occasionally at Vane Brothers functions). He was inducted into Maryland's Entertainment Hall of Fame in 2015.



▼ *Chief Engineer Jack Hollowell Jr.*



## JACK HOLLOWELL JR.

Jack's story is a familiar one in that he grew up around the water and knew people who were making a good living in the maritime industry. This led him to investigate tugboat and barge work.

He accumulated a decade of experience even before joining Vane Brothers, but acknowledges, "There is always something to be learned and that can come from anyone. An all-around group effort is needed to safely and efficiently accomplish our objectives."

The Chief Engineer goes on to say that the industry is forever being altered by "political, regulatory, economic, and

international fronts all casting change and affect. The industry, along with the people that make it work, have definitely felt this and inevitably changed as a whole."

A resident of Arapahoe, North Carolina, Jack and his life partner, Kimberly, have raised three children and now have three granddaughters. He enjoys family time, getting outdoors, recreational farming, riding his motorcycle, and "embracing each day I am given."

## BRYAN KOSEGI

After serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, Bryan went to work in 1987 with Fort Lauderdale-based Port Everglades Towing. "I enjoyed the equal time-on/time-off schedule right away," he says. "I ended up on a barge that Vane purchased. I decided to stay with the barge and work for Vane. It was a good decision."

The Barge Captain has witnessed a number of big changes in the industry over the years, including the introduction of double-

hulled barges, vapor recovery systems, and greatly enhanced computer technology on vessels. One constant has been the high regard he feels for many of his fellow mariners. "Since working for Vane, I've had a lot of good people working on the barges with me," he says. "We've had good teamwork."

Bryan and wife Tara have been married for 27 years. "She's the glue while I'm out there working the barges," says the Rustburg, Virginia resident, adding that he likes to spend his time off with family.

He also enjoys playing golf, bass fishing, and attending sporting events. 📍



▲ *Barge Captain Bryan Kosegi*



# A Warm Welcome for Recent Additions

Please say hello to five of the newest members of Vane Brothers' shore-side team.

## KASSANDRA SULLIVAN

*Human Resources Generalist*



Human Resources Generalist Cassandra Sullivan

After graduating from high school on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Cassandra Sullivan was working three jobs and wondering what to do with the rest of her life. She had plenty of energy, but lacked direction.

At the restaurant where Cassandra waitressed, a recently married co-worker would read letters out loud from her husband, who had just joined the Marine Corps. "It sounded so crazy with everything he was doing at bootcamp," Cassandra says, "but it got me to thinking. I do very well with routine, and I knew it would be good to have someone holding me accountable." So she signed up.

The next four years proved to be "life changing" for Cassandra, "all in a good way." Frequently pushed to her physical and emotional limit, she discovered strength she didn't know she had. "I was already a determined and stubborn person," she admits. "I found a way to channel that, and it helped to form my leadership abilities."

Stationed for two years in Okinawa, Japan, Cassandra drove trucks in support of combat and garrison operations. She was the only female in her 40-person unit. "All I kept hearing was, 'We're not going to go easy on you just because you're a girl,'" she says. "It made me so much more tough and physically fit."

At one point, she was assigned the task of climbing Mount Suribachi in full gear while on the nearby island of Iwo Jima. Though many Marines dropped out during the 554-foot climb, she reached the summit!

Kassandra next spent two years at Camp Pendleton in California before leaving the military. "I was loving the stability, but I wanted to change jobs," she says. "I wanted to work in an office, maybe be a Career Planner."

Discharged as a Corporal, Cassandra moved back to Maryland to be with family and go to college. She graduated with honors from Salisbury University and eventually earned a

Master's degree in Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration from the University of Arizona Global Campus.

While completing her studies, Cassandra worked as an Employee Relations Representative and Recruiter at Perdue Farms in Salisbury, Maryland. Earlier this year, she moved up to the Baltimore area to be with her boyfriend, Michael Hagerman, a steamfitter.

She joined Vane Brothers in June, and then one month later was able to travel with other Baltimore-based staff members to the company's facilities in New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk. "People at each stop seemed delighted to see us and proud to show off the work they do," she says. "It left me feeling very positive!"

In her spare time, Cassandra likes to go to the gym, practice yoga, and shop.



▲ After completing her climb, Cassandra Sullivan stands next to a monument atop Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi, marking the spot where U.S. Marines raised a flag during World War II.

## JACOB ANDERSON

*Financial Analyst*

Baltimore Ravens Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis once said, "Success is one thing, impact is another." These words ring true for Vane Brothers Financial Analyst Jacob Anderson, who defines personal success by how much of an impact he can make, whether at the office, on a sports field, or volunteering for worthy causes.

Jake joined Vane in January after five years spent as an Accountant in the areas of construction and real estate development. His other experience following graduation from the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business in 2017 included stints as an Accounts Payable Analyst and a Private Banking Operations Consultant.

Entering college, Jake initially considered pursuing a field similar to his father, Dan, a retired civil engineer. Jake loved working with numbers and thought maybe biomedical



Financial Analyst Jacob Anderson

engineering would be right for him. He ultimately decided on something a little less math intensive. “Finance was a happy medium,” says Jake, whose budding interest in Corporate Finance led him to Vane Brothers. “This position came up at the perfect point in my career.”

Having grown up just outside Annapolis, Maryland, Jake would often go boating in his youth. But he rarely paid attention to ships calling on the nearby Port of Baltimore. Now that he’s working at Vane’s headquarters, he feels proud to be part of a company that fills an essential function in the movement of America’s cargo. “The maritime industry as a whole is a vital cog,” he says. “I enjoy learning all about it.”

Learning is in Jake’s blood. His mother, Karen, is a retired teacher, and his older brother, Alex, is a General Manager with the Mathnasium tutoring program.

Jake is passionate about sports. He played lacrosse in high school and then joined a very competitive college Club team. (He also served as the team’s Treasurer.) Now he stays active by participating in Baltimore-based “social leagues” organized by Volo Sports. From season to season, he chooses from activities such as beach volleyball, kickball, and basketball.

As a fan, Jake rarely misses a Baltimore Ravens game. “Nothing emphasizes teamwork and striving for a common goal like football,” he says, while listing Ed Reed and Ray Lewis among his favorite players. He is also an avid supporter of Baltimore Orioles baseball and Arsenal FC Premier League soccer.

Jake’s sports fanaticism has, on occasion, overlapped with his passion for volunteerism. At one point he participated in a program that had him teaming up with special-needs students as they competed in activities such as bowling, tennis, and bocce.

## CHRISTOPHER CUNNINGHAM

Dispatcher

A tattoo on Christopher Cunningham’s right forearm consists of seven words: “The world does not meet you halfway.”

Chris calls it “a family code” – a saying that his grandfather and father were fond of using, and that his 10-year-old daughter, Addison Anne, will no doubt come to appreciate as she gets older. “To me, it simply means I approach everything

with the mindset that nothing is given, only earned,” Chris says. “Even if the outcome isn’t what I anticipated or hoped for, I carry on knowing I gave my all.”

That code allowed Chris to “maintain focus and stay strong” during a particularly trying time in his life. Early last year, at the age of 37, Chris required a heart transplant as the result of hereditary heart disease. The same ailment tragically claimed the life of his father, Allen, at the age of 34.

“I take no one and nothing for granted,” Chris says. “I know how fragile life is.”

In March, almost exactly one year after his transplant, Chris joined Vane Brothers as a Dispatcher in the Chartering and Scheduling Bunker Group. He recently had one of those “it’s a small world” moments upon learning that a fellow Dispatcher, John Stachowiak, played on the same youth football teams as Chris’s father!

This is the second Vane Brothers stint for Chris, who spent 10 years with the company as a mariner. He started in 2006 as a Deckhand on the Baltimore-based tug *Alexander Duff* and worked his way up to becoming a Barge Captain. He progressed through the company’s 30-class and 50-class units before assisting with the outfitting and delivery of Vane’s brand-new barge Double Skin 601 from a Louisiana shipyard in 2016. Unfortunately, his diagnosis came that same year, which prevented him from being able to renew his mariner credentials.

Working for Cunningham Collision, a family-run auto-body repair business in West Virginia, offered Chris a solid career opportunity, but he longed to return to the maritime industry.

Chris covets the experiences he had sailing with Vane crews and learning valuable lessons from a long line of top-notch tug and barge Captains. “There is a camaraderie when you are on the water,” he says. “It’s a brotherhood, and you can make a good living doing it.”

Chris has two cousins currently attending the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Both of them have that same “The world does not meet you halfway” tattoo.

Away from work, Chris says, “Being here for my family is the most important thing.” He enjoys spending time with wife Brandi and daughter Addison on their 16-foot fishing boat or camping at Monongahela National Forest near the Cunninghams’ Elkins, West Virginia home. “The beauty of the outdoors always catches my eye,” he says.



Dispatcher Christopher Cunningham



## JIMMY SANCHEZ

*Mechanic, New York*



New York-based Mechanic Jimmy Sanchez

Jimmy Sanchez called it “a game-changer.” Being able to attend the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School, a public high school primarily focused on marine science and technology, opened his eyes to tangible career opportunities.

“For a kid growing up in Brooklyn, I felt fortunate to have something different like Harbor School to put me on a path for my future,” he says.

Jimmy chose to concentrate on Engineering while at the school. In his early teen years, he had learned a lot from an uncle who was a diesel mechanic in Florida. A little later, Jimmy took on many of his own projects. For instance, when his 1992 Honda Civic wasn’t providing the get-up-and-go he wanted, he and some friends simply gave it a major upgrade. They dropped in a larger engine with dual overhead cams and converted the Civic from an automatic transmission to a stick shift.

Jimmy has since moved on to bigger and more powerful engines, such as those you would find on a ferry or tugboat. He spent seven years with NYC Ferry, most recently as a Chief Engineer responsible for the maintenance and repair of the ferry’s propulsion and auxiliary systems. Then in February, he joined Vane Brothers as a Mechanic working out of New York.

The Perth Amboy, New Jersey resident learned about the Vane position from a friend, New York-based Port Engineer Dan Latchman. And he has since become better acquainted with another Harbor School graduate working at Vane, Tug Engineer Mario Alvarez.

Jimmy appreciates what he calls the “maritime brotherhood.” He explains, “The people in this industry, we kind of click. Everybody has a different story to tell that I find interesting.”

When the workday ends, Jimmy doesn’t put away his tools. He enjoys working on cars and motorcycles. “I have a lot of toys in my garage,” he says.

Jimmy will occasionally strap on a pair of skates and play ice hockey, a sport he picked up while attending Harbor School. He was also a member of the school’s successful rowing team.

When not playing sports, he likes to root for his favorite professional teams, especially football’s Giants, baseball’s Yankees, and hockey’s Rangers

## ROLAND CUNANAN

*Life Raft Technician/Driver*

There are many sides to Roland Cunanan. Along with being a Life Raft Technician and Driver for Vane Brothers Marine Safety and Services (VBMSS), he is an athlete, singer, and new husband.

In recent years, he has also been an armed insurgent and a member of Russian Special Forces.

Okay, those last two roles aren’t actually real. Roland and his parents have played various parts while serving as civilian contractors assisting with U.S. military “Infantry Immersion Training.”

“We are given scenarios and act them out,” says Roland, who has participated in several “missions” at the Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base in North Carolina. “We help to train the military in real-life situations.”

As for Roland’s real-life endeavors:

- Roland-the-athlete plays in the Filipino Basketball League of Virginia and even serves on the league Committee. In fact, it was on a basketball court in Virginia Beach that Roland became friends with VBMSS Production Manager Edward Bueno and was “recruited” to join the Marine Safety team.
- Roland-the-singer, having grown up in the Philippines, enjoys performing covers of Filipino songs and streaming them on apps such as Kumu and Poppo. “It’s a good feeling when I know people are listening and they send nice comments or drop me virtual gifts,” he says.
- Roland-the-new-husband proposed to his girlfriend, Kathreene, at the airport when she returned from a recent trip to the Philippines. They picked up their marriage certificate in August and are looking forward to having a formal wedding ceremony sometime in the future.
- Roland-the-Life-Raft-Tech has been with VBMSS in Norfolk, Virginia since January. He likes that it’s a unique job. “When people ask me what I do and I tell them I’m a Life Raft Technician, they don’t know what that is,” he says. “I try to explain to them that we work on things that are like floats in a pool, but these can hold six people or more, and we make sure they have food, water and survival equipment if they have an emergency out at sea. It can be hard to explain sometimes, but it’s cool!” 📌



Life Raft Technician/Driver Roland Cunanan in Norfolk

***This section of Pipeline magazine sheds light on industry friends at the Port of Baltimore, home of Vane Brothers' headquarters.***

► *Creating interest in the Baltimore maritime industry is one goal for Kipp Snow, left, of the Community College of Baltimore County and Mike Singer, Community Manager for the Baltimore & Chesapeake Bay Shipwatchers.*



# CHANNELING A PORT CHAMPION

*Singer and Snow Follow a Path Blazed by Helen Delich Bentley*

There will never be another Helen Delich Bentley. For seven decades until her death in 2016, the noted newspaper reporter, television host, and Congressional representative advocated tirelessly for the Port of Baltimore.

Now, Mike Singer and Kipp Snow are channeling Bentley's spirit to spotlight Port activities. Instead of newspapers, TV, and a political stage, they are utilizing social media, podcasts, and a college classroom.

"I think there has been a void at the Port of Baltimore since Helen Bentley passed away," says Kipp, who works for the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) as Director of its Transportation, Distribution and Maritime Logistics Institute. "There are a lot of important and successful leaders at the Port, but I don't know that we quite have that one voice we can all get behind."

Mike, who heads a group of ship enthusiasts called the Baltimore & Chesapeake Bay Shipwatchers, quickly chimes in, "We're certainly not coming anywhere close to suggesting that we are the ones providing that voice." To which Kipp adds, "But maybe we're at least allowing the larger community to learn and understand what's going on here, kind of mirroring what Bentley was doing. We just want to help move the Port forward and for it to be successful."

## GETTING PEOPLE TO TAKE NOTICE

Kipp's extended family has had professional ties to shipping, air transportation, and rail for generations. Though Kipp ultimately chose a teaching path, he maintains those same interests.

Through the CCBC Institute Kipp directs, students can earn a degree or credit certificate that helps with employment and

advancement in the Transportation, Distribution, and Maritime Logistics field.

Kipp, who lives in Gambrills, Maryland with his wife, Christine, and four children, especially wants to make sure the general population is aware of the hidden gem that is the Port. "If you're not in the industry, maybe you know about shippers and longshoremen, but what about all the other terminal-related functions: safety, quality assurance, document processing, dispatch, billing. ... All of these job opportunities exist, they just go mostly unnoticed."

Mike is quick to pick up on that thought: "The Port certainly isn't a cottage industry, but from an information standpoint among the general public, it might as well be. We need to help teach folks about it."

A self-described nature lover, Mike grew up fishing and crabbing with his father in the shadow of Fort McHenry. He later developed a great interest in railroading, but more recently became obsessed with shipping after he and wife Wendy moved to a waterfront location in Pasadena, Maryland. "We happen to have a view four to five miles straight out into the shipping channel," he says. "I see these ships coming and going, and I wonder, 'What does that one do? Why is that one here? What are they bringing and taking out?' The logistics just fascinate me."

Mike's "day job" is as a Senior Designer for the aerospace manufacturer Blue Origin. The Shipwatchers group, which he launched in August 2017 (coincidentally the same month and year Kipp joined the CCBC staff), is simply Mike's hobby, but one that he takes very seriously.



## ALL EYES ON BALTIMORE

Mike has organized several Shipwatchers tours of Vane Brothers' headquarters and other Port-related companies. Meanwhile, the group's website features links to Port resources, a list of prime shipwatching locations, and even merchandise for sale.

Among social media outlets, the group is most active on Facebook, where approximately 16,000 members check in regularly. Many members have maritime ties, according to Mike – “crane operators, tugboat crews, Port workers, Presidents of private terminals, ...” and, of course, Kipp!

Shipwatchers also enjoy scenes of Port traffic via livestreaming cameras situated on the western shore of the Patapsco River below the Francis Scott Key Bridge site. In fact, it was one of Mike's cameras that captured the container ship *M/V Dali* striking the bridge and causing its collapse in March. That footage was circulated around the world and even brought a news crew from England to interview Mike.


Having met at various Port-related functions over the years, Mike and Kipp had long discussed starting a podcast. Videographer Mike Wicklein, a mutual friend whose Port experiences extend back to working with Helen Bentley, suggested that, with “all eyes on Baltimore” following the *Dali's* accident, the time was right for the launch of a new informational outlet. And so the Baltimore & Chesapeake Bay Shipwatchers podcast was born.

► *Kipp Snow and Mike Singer kindly promoted the recent series of Vane Brothers' Mariner Hiring Events on an episode of the Baltimore & Chesapeake Bay Shipwatchers podcast, as seen on YouTube. Additional hiring events are yet to be scheduled.*

For their first episode, which appeared on YouTube in May, Mike and Kipp were sure to credit Helen Bentley as their inspiration.

The podcast receives hundreds of views each week while delivering ship-tracking updates and Port news, promoting activities such as Vane Brothers' recent series of Mariner Hiring Events, and interviewing guests like the Rev. Josh Messick of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center.

In the spirit of Helen Bentley, the podcasters have one primary rule: “It's important for us to be credible,” Kipp says. “We hold ourselves to a high level of integrity.”

Visit the Baltimore & Chesapeake Bay Shipwatchers website at [www.baltimoreshipwatchers.com](http://www.baltimoreshipwatchers.com). Learn more about Community College of Baltimore County Transportation, Distribution, and Maritime Logistics programs by visiting [www.ccbcmd.edu](http://www.ccbcmd.edu). 



## COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT

While spending part of her summer as an intern in Vane Brothers' Communications Department, Baltimore resident Macey Blackburn, right, took a moment to share a photo with her father, Nick Blackburn, who is Lead Scheduler for Vane's Bunkering Group. Macey expects to graduate this coming May from Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina, with a degree in Communications and Media (minoring in Marketing). While at Vane, Macey assisted with projects such as Pipeline magazine, the annual calendar contest, and promoting Vane's Mariner Hiring Events on social media.

# SCHOOL CHESS TEAM CHECKS IN AT VANE HQ

For an hour or two one June afternoon, a few Vane Brothers employees put aside thoughts of tug and barge moves to concentrate on chess moves.

Vane's Baltimore headquarters became the site of a mini tournament featuring four intrepid Vane players competing against young members of the nearby Hampstead Hill Academy (HHA) Chess Club. Vane has provided sponsorship support to help the club participate in competitions such as the Super Nationals VIII Chess Championship scheduled for May 2025.

HHA is a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade Baltimore City public charter school. Among the Chess Club's more than 40 members are Captain Mauricio Penaherreta's sons, Spencer and Cameron. Mauricio's wife, Anya Cappolla, volunteers as a club coordinator and organized the trip to Vane. According to Anya, the HHA club is "the most decorated team in the Baltimore area as well as the State of Maryland."



▲ Representing Vane Brothers in a friendly chess tournament with Hampstead Hill Academy students were, at right from front to back, Mauricio Penaherreta, Brian Onyango, John Bennett, and Palmer Dickson.

The Chess Club chose four champions to compete in the mini tournament against Vane's contingent. Vane Brothers' four players were Mauricio, Scheduler John Bennett, Fleet Recruiting and Development Manager Palmer Dickson, and Information Technology Developer/Programmer Analyst Brian Onyango.

After the matches, which were played in a five-minute "blitz" format, Brian commented, "It was awesome being challenged by the young chess talents that they are."

Since this was just a fun competition, there's no need to mention which team came out victorious. But the Vane facility still seems to reverberate with the sound of young voices saying "checkmate"!



▲ Vane Brothers President C. Duff Hughes poses with members of the Hampstead Hill Academy Chess Club at Vane's Baltimore headquarters.

## TUG CAPTAIN TALKS ABOUT HIS CAREER

Vane Brothers Captain Tony August talked about life as a tugboater during Career Day at Knollwood Meadows Elementary School in April. Tony's grandson, Luis Chavious, was a third grader at the school, which is located in Newport News, Virginia.







▲ Dylan Green, Vane Brothers Warehouse/Inventory Coordinator I, helps a Siberian Husky from the Schuylkill River in June.

## CANINE RECOVERY BY WAREHOUSE TEAM

Members of Vane Brothers' Philadelphia-based Warehouse crew participated in an early June river rescue, pulling a dog from the water and carrying him to safety.

Senior Fleet Coordinator Paula Herzer saw the dog wandering along the bank of the Schuylkill River and notified Warehouse personnel. It was then that Warehouse Manager Steve Knowles and his co-workers, Mike Maher and Dylan Green, leapt into action.

"Dylan went into the water to try and calm the dog and keep him from going in further," says Steve, who cut a length of rope to use as a leash. Instead, Dylan carried the dog over his shoulder and up the embankment. "It became clear the dog was too weak to make a steep climb."

After Mike walked the dog out of the woods, the Warehouse team cleaned him up and gave him water while Mechanic Pat Dwyer provided a sandwich.

The dog, identified as a full-bred Siberian Husky and estimated to be just over one year old, had no collar, tag or chip to find the previous owner. "We think it got dumped on our backroads since this has happened before," Steve says.

Mike has stepped in to take the dog, which has been given the name "Ollie."

"We're happy with the outcome," says Steve. "The dog went to a good home." [📍](#)

## Peretz Participates in Colossal Cardboard Construction

Using only cardboard boxes, tape, and plenty of people-power, Vane Brothers Port Captain Deb Peretz and other volunteers completed a "City Hall" building project for the four-day Mondegreen Festival held in August in Dover, Delaware. Standing more than 70 feet tall, "City Hall" became the centerpiece of the festival as performers such as the rock band Phish, the event's founders, entertained some 45,000 attendees. At the festival's conclusion, all hands participated in flattening the cardboard for recycling.

Over the last seven years, Deb has traveled to events across the globe to participate in "Monumental Construction Projects" inspired by French artist Olivier Grossetête. Along the way, she always makes new friends and enjoys a sense of artistic accomplishment. Deb says working on the project in Delaware was "a great time ... but exhausting!" [📍](#)



▲ Port Captain Deb Peretz, inset at left, joins other volunteers to tape cardboard and create "City Hall" for Dover, Delaware's four-day Mondegreen Festival held in August.



## Our Growing Family



### MILES AIDEN PIERCE

Eric Pierce Sr., Team Leader for Vane Brothers' Chartering and Scheduling Clean Petroleum Product (CPP) Group, and wife Jenessa are now "Pops" and "Lolli" to a second grandchild. Born May 13 at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, Miles weighed 7 lbs., 4 oz. and measured 20 inches. Miles' parents are U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Eric Pierce Jr. (an Aircraft Hydraulic Systems Specialist stationed at Ramstein Air Base) and wife Courtney. His older brother, Grant, is 3. Miles' great grandfather is Vane's Purchasing Manager, Robert Pierce.



### THEODORE STEPHEN SCHMITT

Max Schmitt, Team Leader for Vane Brothers' Chartering and Scheduling Bunker Group, and wife Rachel welcomed their first child on March 8. The Bushkill, Pennsylvania residents' son weighed 6 lbs., 11 oz., at birth and measured 19 inches. Grandparents are Vane Scheduler Stephen Schmitt and wife Francine. Uncle Harry Schmitt is Manager of Vane's Chartering and Scheduling Clean Petroleum Product (CPP) Group.



### MEREDITH GRACE PARKS

Licensed Engineer Hunter Parks and girlfriend Ashley Truitt welcomed a daughter on June 25. Meredith weighed 6 lbs., 4 oz., and measured more than 19 inches. She was delivered at TidalHealth Peninsula Regional Hospital in Salisbury, Maryland. Hunter notes that several relatives work on board Vane Brothers vessels – "the whole Tangier Island crowd!"



### BIRTHDAY WISHES

*Elizabeth Hughes, Vane Brothers Vice President, Communications, was joined by her son, Vane President C. Duff Hughes, as she celebrated her 94th birthday in April. A quiet meal was enjoyed at the Oregon Grille in Hunt Valley, Maryland.*

## CONGRATS, GRAD!

### JOHNATHAN BRYAN JOYNER

Alton Joyner, Licensed Engineer on the Vane Brothers tug Wicomico, and wife Ann proudly announce the graduation of their son, Johnathan Bryan Joyner, from Western Carolina University. Johnathan earned a Doctorate of Physical Therapy and received his diploma in a ceremony on May 10. The Joyners reside in Atlantic, North Carolina.





# BELLS AND WHISTLES

Congratulations to these valued employees who have reached service milestones or are marking special anniversaries from July to December 2024. [*\*Re-hired individuals have, in many cases, been assigned an adjusted Seniority Date that is issued to determine service anniversaries.*]

## 30 YEARS

Michael J. Ahern  
Reade H. Belote Jr.  
Donald T. Price Jr.  
Judith P. Robbins  
Nenad Uljarevic

## 25 YEARS

Jerry L. Cowell  
Nadine M. Czech  
George A. Foreman  
Richard B. Harman  
Jackie U. Hollowell Jr.  
Bryan P. Kosegi

## 20 YEARS

Marvin L. Fulford\*  
Robert R. Roosevelt  
Timothy J. Sell\*

## 15 YEARS

Curtis J. Armstrong  
James H. Berman  
Anthony Ceraso  
Jeffery L. Crockett\*  
Joseph E. Harrison  
Colin R. Rooney\*

## 10 YEARS

Jerod S. Adams  
Robert F. Cowart Jr.  
Paul M. Garrett  
Glen E. Giasson  
Frank J. Groh IV  
Woodrow Hall  
Charles L. Hill Jr.  
Michael C. Mills  
James A. Moore  
Joseph C. Owens Jr.\*  
Jeffrey P. Revers\*  
Donald S. Schaffer  
Ryan E. Tinkler  
Timothy G. Williams II

## 5 YEARS

Nicholas A. Bahl  
Jason M. Berger  
Jonathan P. Blake\*  
Cory E. Buckhalter  
Jester A. Castro\*  
Monte E. Cross IV  
Chasen D. Davis  
Aaron H. Donehue  
Quinn A. Freeman  
Kimberly K. Golden  
Isaiah J. Heffernan  
Jonhard F. Joensen

Darteis R. Jones-Cooper  
Joseph J. Korenek  
Eshwar Latchman  
Cory L. Lawrenson  
Alexander J. Martz  
Peter S. Munro  
Wyatt L.F. Price  
Justin S. Roberts  
Richard L. Simpson III  
Stephen L. Strickland  
Scott A. Tolliver  
Andrew J. Yberg\*  
Steven A. Zeravica

## 1 YEAR

Adam J. Beeman  
Asa D. Blackwell  
Theresa E. Booth  
Ricky L. Childs  
Austin M. Coleman  
Timothy L. Cool  
Benjamin Cruz  
Christopher M. Dalton  
Corey M. Davis  
Otesh M. Davis  
Palmer K. Dickson  
Jeffrey T. Dolan  
Derek J. Drury

Cory L. Duncan  
Matthew W. Feeley  
Gerald R. Foster  
Dylan R. Green  
Jarret B. Gremli  
Trayvis J. Harrison  
Naomi M. Himley  
Matthew D. Horn  
Akari R. Johnson  
Tanner A. Le  
Benhamin J. Levine  
Ethan E. Majus  
Tori McCray  
Brian D. Morse  
Michael R. Ohrt  
Rodney S. Ortiz  
Luis E. Partida  
Neal T. Riley  
David A. Rogers  
Joshua A. Schaffner  
Corey M. Shaffer  
Devin R. Sheipe  
Kyle A. Talarico  
Mark J. Thiboldeaux  
Nathaniel R. Tyler  
Clarence J. Washington



## BRIGHT NIGHT IN BALTIMORE

*Fourth of July fireworks light up the sky over the tug Kings Point in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The tug, captained by Phillip Ashberry, held the Vane Brothers water barge, RA-59, in place as the fireworks were launched from the barge.*



## MEMORIAL TO A FRIEND

*Christy Foreman gave her husband, Barge Captain George Foreman, something special to remember his good friend and Vane Brothers co-worker Carl Wilkins, who passed away suddenly earlier this year. The window of George's truck is now adorned with a fitting memorial for Carl. Both men were hired by Vane in late 1999, and they spent many years working together on Vane barges.*

## 'Welcome Aboard' To These New Employees!

Ibraheem Abd El Aal  
Jeffrey C. Allen  
Joshua J. Anderson  
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