



Stern shot of the MV RJ PFEIFFER getting ready to discharge cargo in Hawaii.



M.E.B.A. 2nd A/E John Forbush hangs loose in the engine room aboard the SS MAUI, during a Honolulu port visit.



M.E.B.A. Engineer Luke Kaili gets ready for some engine room repairs during a Hawaii port stop aboard the SS MATSONIA.

M.E.B.A. Re-ups with Matson Navigation

M.E.B.A. negotiators nailed down beneficial new contract language for members sailing with Matson Navigation and, soon after, finalized a new deal covering Port Engineers. The Union negotiations took place shoulder-to-shoulder with the Masters, Mates & Pilots and American Radio Association which also represents members.

As good progress continued to be made during a series of bargaining sessions, negotiators were confident that a fair deal for the membership was within reach. However, exercising the true spirit of union solidarity, negotiators determined not to okay an agreement until each of the parties had reached an acceptable contract. Of particular note, the ARA was being asked by the company to make certain compromises that weren't deemed palatable by the union's membership.

The contracts were set to expire at midnight on June 25, 2009 without new agreements in place and last minute talks had failed to bring relief to ARA's sticking points. The following day, the radio officers put up a picket line in Seattle at the terminal where the Matson ship SS MAUI was moored. ARA is an affiliate of the ILWU and the dockworkers disrupted the loading schedule on the ship preventing the vessel from sailing to Hawaii. M.E.B.A. and MM&P members, of course, honored the picket line. Meanwhile, talks continued throughout the day during the waterfront tumult and negotiators were able to make additional progress. By late evening on Saturday, the persistence of the union negotiators paid off and ARA shook hands on a tentative agreement that better preserved ARA's future aboard the Matson fleet. Back on the docks, the ILWU returned to work and loaded up the SS MAUI which shipped out soon after.

For the M.E.B.A., our negotiators secured a new Matson A3 master contract which covers vessels other than the CV2600 class ships. The new contract was later ratified by members at the July meetings. The four-year, two-month pact provides wage increases, improved medical and pension provisions and increased contributions

to Training, the Joint Employment Committee and American Maritime Congress, among other things.

A deal was also reached with the company in the wage reopener for the CV2600 vessels. A sizeable wage hike as well as benefit improvements and increased contributions are among a host of provisions that further reduces the gap that exists between the A3 and CV2600 fleets. Both contracts include important new job security language.

The M.E.B.A. negotiating team was led by Executive Vice President Mike Nizetich along with L.A. Branch Agent Larry Young, M.E.B.A. Contracts Officer Mark S. Gallagher, Chief Counsel Nils Djusberg and a rank and file team that included Dave Nolan, Cecil Ray, Harry Dodson, Don McNichols, and Rich Doherty.

M.E.B.A. negotiators also closed on a Port Engineers' agreement that was later ratified by members at the August meetings. That pact runs through August 15, 2013 (retroactive to June 16, 2009) and includes 3% wage increases each June 16, commencing this year. Among other things, new language has been added to the contract that will strengthen the controls on compensatory time. The new agreement will also provide more flexibility for Port Engineers to use their earned vacation.

There will be a Port Engineer Money Purchase Benefit increase each June 16 during the contract term, commencing June 16, 2009. Port Engineers will earn two additional holidays under the Agreement and the contribution rates to the M.E.B.A. Training Plan, JEC and AMC will receive significant boosts.

With assistance from M.E.B.A. Contracts Rep. Mark Gallagher and Chief Counsel Nils Djusberg on the Port Engineer talks, Executive V.P. Mike Nizetich's negotiating team included L.A. Branch Agent Larry Young and rank and file members Joe Schmitt, Mike Shea, Todd Simonse and Don McNichols.