

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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### **KELLOGG'S WORKERS HAVE NEW CONTRACT**

Union members working in four states for cereal giant Kellogg's will return to work on Monday after accepting a new five-year agreement. In early December, about 1,400 workers represented by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) rejected a tentative agreement with the company when that arrangement failed to address some of the workers' most pressing concerns, including the nagging two-tiered wage system.

After the failed vote, Kellogg's had announced that it would be hiring replacement workers on a permanent basis. That announcement was widely condemned by pro-labor forces including President Joe Biden who said, "Permanently replacing striking workers is an existential attack on the union and its members' jobs and livelihoods. I have long opposed permanent striker replacements and I strongly support legislation that would ban that practice."

But the sides continued negotiations, and a more amenable five-year contract was subsequently hammered out leading to this week's successful ratification vote. BCTGM summarized the gains made in the new contract: "No take aways; No concessions; No permanent two-tier system; A clear path to regular full-time employment; Plant closing moratorium: No plant shutdowns through October 2026; A significant increase in the pension multiplier; and Maintenance of cost of living raises.

Workers at the four affected plants (Battle Creek, Mich., Lancaster, PA., Omaha, Neb. and Memphis, Tenn.) produce the company's most popular cereal brands including Frosted Flakes, Froot Loops, Rice Krispies and Raisin Bran. The strike had been going since October 5<sup>th</sup>.

BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton stated, "Our entire Union commends and thanks Kellogg's members. From picket line to picket line, Kellogg's union members stood strong and undeterred in this fight, inspiring generations of workers across the globe, who were energized by their tremendous show of bravery as they stood up to fight and never once backed down...The BCTGM is grateful, as well, for the outpouring of fraternal support we received from across the labor movement for our striking members at Kellogg's. That Solidarity was critical to this great workers' victory."

### **SOLIDARITY FOREVER: ERIE STRAYER IRONWORKERS WIN AGREEMENT**

After nearly three months on strike, more than forty Local 851 Ironworkers at Erie Strayer reached an agreement with Erie Strayer, a company that builds and supplies concrete-batching equipment. Union members walked out in October after the company's contract offer didn't come close to what the workers wanted. Ironworkers had sought a 3 percent raise, a dental plan, and the reform of the company's unforgiving attendance policy.

Initially, the company only agreed to raise wages by a lousy nickel an hour in the second year of their proposed contract (nothing in the first year) and rebuffed workers on their desired dental plan and hated attendance policy. The contract, which workers just ratified, wins a 56-cent raise in its first year, with 40-cent raises each of the next four years. A new dental plan includes individual/family coverage. However, workers did not win the adjustments they wanted to the attendance policy.

"We didn't get everything we wanted, but we kept up the pressure and got a contract," Local 851 V.P. Tracy Cutwright said. But the wins they did get are a testament to the power of worker solidarity. Local 851 leadership said, "in union there is strength, and to all workers still on strike, remember: 'Hold the Line!'"

### **CG MSIB ON REPORTING SA/SH AT SEA**

The Coast Guard has issued a new Marine Safety Information Bulletin (#11-21) encouraging victims and witnesses of sexual assaults onboard U.S. vessels to report such incidents to them. They noted, while the law requires the master or individual in charge of a U.S. documented vessel to make that report, too often sexual assaults go unreported.

Reports can be made via phone to the National Command Center at 202-372-2100, which is available 24/7 to field reports that initiate investigations. To encourage more reporting, the Coast Guard Criminal Investigative Service (CGIS) has also established a website and mobile app that enables anyone to report criminal offenses directly to the Coast Guard. These reports can be made anonymously or with attribution. The Coast Guard will respond to any reports of sexual assault with trained investigators and will hold offenders accountable through criminal prosecution and, or, actions against USCG issued merchant mariner credentials (MMCs).

The master or individual in charge can make an attributed report of a sexual offense through CGIS Tips, including providing detailed contact information for further follow-up. Sexual offenses include sexual abuse and abusive sexual contact. For more information about CGIS, or to submit a tip via the web, visit: <https://www.uscg.mil/Units/Coast-Guard-Investigative-Service/> The MSIB has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website in the "Documents & Member Notices" section.

### **ESSENTIAL WORKERS DISPROPORTIONATELY DIE ON THE JOB**

Data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that workers face preventable hazardous working conditions and disparities continue to grow. In 2020, 4,764 workers died on the job and the job fatality rate was 3.4 fatalities per 100,000 workers, the first decrease in years. That's an average of 13 workers dying each and every day.

The decline in fatalities does not capture the staggering number of workers who so far have lost their lives from COVID-19—tens of thousands and growing—and doesn't capture the nearly 120,000 workers who die each year in the U.S. from preventable occupational illnesses, largely work-related cancers.

Overall, fewer people worked in person in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant fewer people were in direct contact with preventable hazards, production priorities shifted and businesses were forced to do more prevention planning. The labor movement knows that when employers plan with workers, there are fewer job deaths and injuries. Workers deemed essential in 2020 had no choice but to show up in person, risking their lives, and continued to disproportionately bear the brunt of workplace fatalities. They note that the racial disparities are stark: Job fatality rates for Hispanic or Latino workers and Black workers continue to be higher than the overall rate at 4.5 and 3.5 per 100,000 workers, respectively, and Latino workers now account for a larger percentage of all worker fatalities than in 2019.

In 2020, falls, workplace violence and transportation incidents continued to be major causes of job deaths. Women workers died in 16% of workplace homicides even though they represent 8% of all worker fatalities. The number of workplace deaths caused by unintentional drug overdoses continued to surge to 388, up from 313 in 2019 and maintaining its upward trend since 2012. Job deaths in construction (1,008) continued to be one of the highest figures, as it has been since 2007. Older workers experienced a job fatality rate more than 2.5 times the national average.

### **ALLOWANCES MADE FOR TORNADO-DESTROYED CREDENTIALS**

The Coast Guard will issue duplicate Merchant Mariner Credentials for free to mariners who lost their documentation in the recent Midwest tornadoes. Areas of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee were hard hit. Affected mariners should follow certain steps to obtain an expedited replacement credential. Those details are included in a recently issued communication that has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website in the “Documents & Member Notices” section. Those with questions or feedback about the communication can contact the National Maritime Center via the Online Chat or Ticketing System, by e-mailing [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil), or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

### **VACATION BENEFITS – 2021 YEAR-END CLOSING**

Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/16/21 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/3/2022. Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2021 must file before this deadline. Remember, Friday December 24, 2021 and Friday December 31, 2021 are holidays and the Outports and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

### **REMEMBER THE P.A.F.!!**

Supporting labor-friendly lawmakers and those who understand the importance of U.S.-flag shipping to our nation’s security and economy is the focus of M.E.B.A.’s Political Action Fund. Contributions to the P.A.F. are used to educate Members of Congress, regardless of political party, about the importance of our industry. The P.A.F. enables the M.E.B.A. to foster friendships and solidify political relationships in Congress, the White House and in State Capitols.

The Fund helps our Union succeed in Washington and is crucial in helping to uphold labor and maritime policies and programs that are frequently under attack by uneducated lawmakers and interest groups. It helps advance the interests of the U.S. Merchant Marine through the funding of key maritime provisions including the Maritime Security Program, protecting the Jones Act, as well as our health care and pensions. Without it, qualified American mariners could go the way of the dodo, and

the carriage of critical national-interest cargo could be forfeited to foreign mariners and overseas interests.

Members, applicants and retirees are encouraged to contribute to the M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund online by visiting the Union homepage at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) and selecting “Political Action Fund” to support this important cause.

### **LAST WEEK TO VIE FOR THE G&W “SWAG BAG”**

M.E.B.A.’s homegrown fund that helps members in times of need gets an added boost from every donation made this year as the Union is matching contributions made to the Good & Welfare Fund dollar-for-dollar - up to \$10,000. The top G&W contributor through December 31<sup>st</sup> will earn the coveted M.E.B.A. “Swag Bag” – a bag stuffed to the gills with fabulous M.E.B.A. prizes worth an estimated \$200. The Good & Welfare Fund assists active and retired members and their families in times of crisis. It helps remove some of the sting and burden of unexpected tragedy and lends a hand to those within the M.E.B.A. family. This is a wonderful cause, but we must constantly strengthen the fund to allow additional assistance to members and retirees in times of hardship. *All donations are tax deductible as approved by law under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and all contributed funds go directly to supporting M.E.B.A. families in need.* Your contributions to the fund are tax deductible so please give liberally in order to help a Union brother or sister.

You can contribute to the G&W Fund anytime. But right now is the best time now that the Union has pledged to make your generous contribution really pack a punch. You can make a contribution at a Union hall or support the Fund through an electronic payment made using the link on the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)).

### **HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON**

The M.E.B.A. wishes all of our members, applicants, retirees and their families a Merry Christmas, happy holidays and a prosperous new year. M.E.B.A. halls and offices are closed tomorrow (Friday) but will reopen on Monday. The halls will close next week on Friday, December 31<sup>st</sup> in observance of the New Year’s holiday. Please follow up with your local Union hall concerning holiday closings to make sure you can complete your Union business before the end of the year. Business will resume on Monday, January 3, 2022.

### **MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS** *(All times are local)*

**Monday, January 3** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

**Tuesday, January 4** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

**Wednesday, January 5** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register now at [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)

**Thursday, January 6** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, January 7** – Honolulu@1100.

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