

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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ILWU, PMA HAVE TENTATIVE WATERFRONT CONTRACT

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association announced they have a tentative agreement on a new six-year contract covering workers at all 29 West Coast ports. The parties released a joint statement and noted that the agreement was aided in part with assistance from Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su.

"We are pleased to have reached an agreement that recognizes the heroic efforts and personal sacrifices of the ILWU workforce in keeping our ports operating," said PMA President James McKenna and ILWU President Willie Adams in the joint statement. "We are also pleased to turn our full attention back to the operation of the West Coast Ports."

ILWU represents 22,000 dockworkers serving at 29 West Coast ports. The PMA represents shipping lines and terminal operators at those 29 ports. The previous agreement expired at 5 pm on July 1, 2022. Talks had been ongoing since May 10 of last year.

Recently, the Maritime Labor Alliance stressed that a completed contract should reflect longshore workers' contributions during the pandemic that translated into huge profits for the employers. MLA is a cooperation between the ARA, IBU, ILWU, M.E.B.A. and the MM&P that fights to protect MLA member jurisdictions, working conditions and labor rights.

The MLA statement urged that employers fairly reward longshore workers for their "sacrifices and for the critical work that they perform."

The statement notes, "After two years of a global pandemic and unprecedented profits for container terminal operators on the West Coast, longshore workers from California to British Columbia have earned the right to fair and equitable collective bargaining agreements. On the U.S. West Coast alone, over 40 active longshore workers lost their lives to COVID-19. During this time, Pacific Maritime Association terminal operators and ocean carriers amassed over \$510 billion in profits handling U.S. cargo."

The ILWU and PMA jointly noted that they would not be releasing the details of the tentative agreement yet. The agreement is subject to ratification by both parties.

OSG CREWS CONDUCT TWO AT-SEA RESCUES HOURS APART

Late last month, crews aboard two Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG) tankers, the OVERSEAS SANTORINI and the OVERSEAS NIKISKI, performed at-sea rescues in two separate incidents within 18 hours of each other that led to saving the lives of six individuals.

As daylight faded on May 30, 2023, the crew of the OVERSEAS SANTORINI, along with two other vessels, received a distress call relayed by U.S. Coast Guard Norfolk of a sailboat crew in distress in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. 800 miles away from land (the Azores), the sailboat had encountered harsh weather, which breached its hull and caused water to flood in. The individuals on board were fatigued and potentially injured. 30 nautical miles away from the unfolding tragedy, the crew of the OVERSEAS SANTORINI changed course and headed towards the distressed vessel. With their ship sailing at maximum speed, they successfully carried out the rescue operation and saved a family of four comprised of two adults and two children. Captain Peter Behling of the OVERSEAS SANTORINI stated, “We train and drill for these scenarios all the time, hoping the call never comes, but that collectively we can come together to allow for a successful outcome when it does.”

The following morning, the OVERSEAS NIKISKI responded to a distress signal issued by the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Clearwater, alerting them to two stranded individuals aboard a sailboat adrift in the Gulf of Mexico. Due to a loss of both propulsion and steering, and facing a developing tropical depression, the sailing vessel was in dire need of assistance. Without hesitation, the OVERSEAS NIKISKI altered course quickly reaching the distressed sailboat, and successfully rescued both individuals in a deft display of seamanship. All persons rescued in each case were taken onboard the responding vessels and were disembarked at each of the vessels’ next port of call. M.E.B.A. represents the engineering officers on both vessels. The ships Deck officers are as yet unrepresented. SIU represents the unlicensed.

Sam Norton, OSG’s President and Chief Executive Officer said the two rescues, “are a reminder of the enormity of the ocean and its ability to make a single human life seem infinitely small. The collective and inspired choice of each crew to act with honest concern and empathy for those in distress and to engage without hesitation in providing the relief required affirms in the most visible way possible the standards of ethics and transparency that I believe lie at the core of OSG’s culture.”

OSG’s Chief Operations Officer, Patrick O’Halloran, commended those involved stating, “OSG is immensely proud of its seafarers for their selflessness, their dedication to the preservation of life, and for the professionalism displayed in these challenging and stressful situations. These rescue efforts exemplify OSG’s commitment to the highest standards of maritime safety and the paramount concern for human life.”

MLL HAILS CONTINUED FLEET SAFETY

Maersk Line, Limited (MLL) has now gone more than 12 months in a row across its fleet without incurring a Lost Time Incident (LTI). The company said more than 450 seafarers perform difficult, demanding, and dangerous work safely every day aboard the MLL-managed vessels. They noted that being able to do so without injury for such a long period in a workplace where even a momentary lapse of attention can result in a “bad day” is impressive. “This achievement did not happen by chance,” the company stated. “Nor was it the result of any single safety initiative. Instead, our injury-

free year was largely due to our seafarers' commitment to creating an environment where everyone feels empowered to address safety concerns.”

MLL pointed out that it values the input of their mariners who are encouraged to prioritize safety as they keep the fleet running smoothly. “We have seen several instances where seafarers used their “stop-work” authority, immediately fixed unsafe situations on their own, and reported near misses because there was no fear of retaliation,” says Brian Province, Safety Manager. “We want to encourage more of that.”

“There is nothing more important than the health and safety of our seafarers,” said Ed Hanley, MLL Vice President of Labor and Marine Safety and Standards. “Creating a culture that values safety feedback irrespective of rank and experience improves the lives of all seafarers and is the right thing to do.”

NLRB RULING REMOVES HURDLE FOR ORGANIZING GIG WORKERS

On Tuesday, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a new ruling that could facilitate organizing and unionization of workers in various sectors, including Uber and Lyft drivers, construction workers, home health aides, and strippers. Previously, labor law only extended the right to unionize workers classified as employees, excluding independent contractors. However, the recent board ruling expands the criteria used in the government’s assessment of a worker’s status, whether they are an independent contractor or an employee. NLRB Chair Lauren McFerran stated that this clear standard would prevent workers seeking to organize or exercise their rights under the National Labor Relations Act from being unjustly excluded from its protections.

This reversal of a 2019 decision regarding independent contractors could have far-reaching implications for millions of low-wage workers across the United States. According to a 2021 Pew research study, approximately 16 percent of Americans earn income through the gig economy. In its decision, the Board ruled that the hairstylists, makeup and wig artists who are seeking union representation at the Atlanta Opera are not independent contractors and are instead employees entitled to union rights under the NLRA, marking a departure from the 2019 standard.

The Board will now revert to a 2014 framework for determining worker classification, rejecting the Trump-era test that emphasized a worker's “entrepreneurial opportunity” as the primary factor in determining employment status. The new framework considers various factors, such as employer control over working conditions and the presence of supervision.

AFL-CIO SEES GAINS FOR LABOR IN FIRST YEAR OF NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

The AFL-CIO celebrated the completion of the first year of its new leadership team and noted that President Liz Shuler and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond are encouraged that the labor movement has been reinvigorated, enjoyed expanded union membership and won key legislative and political victories since a year ago. The duo were elected by Delegates at the 29th AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in June 2022.

At that Convention, the M.E.B.A. was elected to the AFL-CIO Executive Council, a first in the Union’s history. M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha serves as one of the 55 Vice Presidents, along with Shuler and Redmond, on the Council that sets Federation policies and goals.

Among other things over the past year, the AFL-CIO has expanded by adding new affiliated unions, rolled out a historic initiative focused on making sure the emerging clean energy sectors create good union jobs, launched the Southern Workers Opportunity Fund to support workers' rights campaigns in the South, advanced new bargaining and policy strategies around automation and artificial intelligence through the AFL-CIO Technology Institute and created the AFL-CIO Sports Council to support organizing and bargaining for professional athletes, like the 5,000 minor league baseball players and who organized.

Regarding the Shuler/Redmond one-year anniversary, President Shuler noted, "A year ago today, I committed to amplify the voices of working people, invest in the tools we need to organize and innovate, and stand with workers to strengthen and reshape the labor movement—and I am so proud of the progress we've made. This has been a year of growth, expansion, investment and victories—and I am very excited to build on this work in the years ahead."

SEN. CANTWELL HONORED WITH SALUTE TO CONGRESS AWARD

The International Propeller Club of the United States honored Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) on Tuesday night at their annual Salute to Congress event. The award is presented to Members of Congress who demonstrate a keen awareness of the importance of all segments of the maritime industry to the economic, homeland and U.S. national security. Senator Cantwell is the Chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and has been a strong supporter of our industry and issues throughout her career. M.E.B.A. Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini and Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan along with Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan attended for the Union and congratulated the Senator on the well-deserved honor.

MONDAY WAS 248th ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE

The U.S. Merchant Marine is 248 years old following the marking of its anniversary on Monday. The birth of the Fourth Arm of Defense is said to have been on June 12, 1775. It harkens back to the struggle of the 13 colonies for independence from Great Britain. Without a strong Navy, the colonies relied on privately-owned commercial ships and their crews to serve as privateers in the tenuous months after our country declared its independence from Mother England. The "American Merchant Marine at War" website (www.usmm.org) describes the beginnings of the U.S. Merchant Marine when privateers engaged the British schooner MARGARETTA:

"Forty men, armed with guns, swords, axes, and pitchforks, headed by Jeremiah O'Brien, on the sloop UNITY and twenty men under the command of Benjamin Foster on a small schooner pursued the MARGARETTA. During the chase they put up planks and other objects to defend themselves against the MARGARETTA's cannon.

On June 12, 1775, near Round Island on Machias Bay the patriots crashed into the MARGARETTA and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The British crew was disheartened when their captain was mortally wounded and lost the one-hour long battle. Twenty-five of the combatants were killed or wounded. The victors claimed "four double fortified three pounders and fourteen swivels" and some smaller guns. This was considered the first sea engagement of the Revolution and the start of the merchant marine's war role."

HALLS CLOSED MONDAY FOR JUNETEENTH

The M.E.B.A. halls and offices are closed on Monday, June 19 to observe Juneteenth/Emancipation Day. Juneteenth, which symbolically commemorates the end of slavery in the United States, has been celebrated in Texas for years. It was made a national holiday two years ago. The observance harkens back to 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas bringing very late word about the Emancipation Proclamation, which took place 2 ½ years earlier. Granger announced that “all persons held as slaves” in the rebellious States were “thenceforward, and forever free.” Though it was cause for immediate celebration, the wheels turned slowly and many of the 250,000 slaves in the Lone Star State wouldn’t enjoy their freedom until many months later.

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

Monday, July 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, July 4 – ***Independence Day* – All Halls Closed**

Wednesday, July 5 – ***“Bloody Thursday”* - CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, July 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Oakland@1230; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, July 7 – **Honolulu@1100.**

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***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; mebahq@mebaunion.org. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.