



West Coast Sailors

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Friday, January 23, 2009

President Obama picks champion of workers' rights as Labor Secretary

President Barack Obama has selected Congresswoman Hilda Solis from California's 32nd Congressional District (East Los Angeles) as the next Secretary of Labor.

First elected to the California Assembly in 1992 and then the Senate in 1994, Solis focused on labor issues including increasing the state's minimum wage and on protecting easily exploited, low-wage workers through enforcement of the state's labor laws. Former State Senator Ray Haynes, a Republican who tangled with Solis when she headed a budget subcommittee, called her "a committed liberal in the pocket of labor".



Congresswoman Hilda Solis

Elected to Congress in 2000, Solis continued to press her pro-worker, pro-Union agenda by supporting legislation to expand access to health care, promoting fair U.S. Trade and championing the Employee Free Choice Act.

As Obama said repeatedly throughout the campaign, the Bush Administration and outgoing Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, spent eight years attacking workers' rights, strong workplace health and safety rules and Unions while they carried the water for Big Business. Obama summed up the Chao regime this way: "Remember, this is supposed to be the Department of Labor, not the Department of Management."

When her nomination was announced, Solis told reporters: "We can help strengthen one of America's greatest assets, its labor force...I will work to strengthen our Unions and support every American in our nation's diverse workforce. We also must enforce federal labor laws and strengthen regulations to protect our nation's workers, such as wage and hour laws, and rules regarding overtime pay and pay discrimination."

Commenting on the selection of Solis, Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, said: "With the selection of Hilda Solis as our nation's next Labor Secretary, President Obama gets a warrior for working families

who brings a unique blend of experience and passionate advocacy on workers' issues. With Solis at the helm, we're absolutely confident that the Department of Labor will return to its primary mission of looking out for the health and welfare of America's workers."

Solis has strong labor roots. Her father, Raul, was a Teamster's Union shop steward at Quemetco Battery Recycling in San Gabriel Valley and her mother Juana worked for 22 years on the assembly line of Mattel and belonged to the United Rubber Workers.

As the *West Coast Sailors* went to press, the U.S. Senate was preparing to confirm Congresswoman Solis.

Employee Free Choice Act pits labor against capital

The financial markets are in tatters, consumer spending is anemic and the recession continues to deepen, but corporate America is keeping its eyes on the prize: crushing organized labor.

The Chamber of Commerce is capitalizing on the debate over the Big Three bailout to claim that "Unions drove the auto companies off the cliff," while Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and other Republican senators insist on steep wage cuts. A December 10 Republican strategy memo revealed their central obsession: "Republicans should stand firm and take their first shot against organized labor," the memo read. "This is a precursor to card check"—a clear reference to the Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800).

This simple amendment to federal labor law, which would, among other things, allow workers to Unionize when a majority sign cards rather than requiring a bruising election, has galvanized the business community in a way even the \$700 billion bailout couldn't. "I get the sense that this is more important to them than even taxes or regulation," says the AFL-CIO's director of government affairs, Bill Samuels.

"This is about power. And the business community is not going to give up power willingly." Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott said as much to a meeting with analysts in October. "We like driving the car," he told them, "and we're not going to give the steering wheel to anybody but us."

In the lead-up to the election, the co-founder of Home Depot, Bernie Marcus, called Employee Free Choice "the demise of civilization." Wal-Mart summoned store managers into mandatory meetings to warn them against it. Industrial launderer Cintas launched a website to oppose it. The retail industry associations paid blue-chip lobbying firms to block it. The Chamber of Commerce hired Bush Labor Secretary Elaine Chao's chief of staff

to run its opposition campaign, which trashed the bill as anti-democratic because it allows workers to bypass a formal election. Business groups spent tens of millions on ads attacking Democrats in tight Senate races, including \$5 million targeting challenger Jeff Merkley of Oregon, a supporter of the bill who was smeared with a mailer accusing him of doing the bidding of corrupt labor leaders and trailed at every campaign appearance by a grim reaper claiming "Merkley kills democracy." "I've never seen anything like it," says Merkley's campaign manager, John Isaac, "where a group spent so much money to insert their issue into a campaign."

At first glance, Employee Free Choice looks like little more than a technical fix. In addition to allowing Unionizing through majority sign-up, it stiffens penalties for intimidating or firing Union supporters and imposes arbitration when a company refuses to bargain a first contract.

But as the leading corporate lobbies recognize, the bill could have far-reaching effects. By reviving Unions, it could push up wages, realigning the broken economy so that company profits are spread beyond CEOs. It could help rein in corporate power and, perhaps most threatening to a business community that has enjoyed decades of deregulation, sustain a progressive majority in Washington in the years to come.

If progressives aren't doing the math, conservatives are. "Unions don't spend money to elect Republicans," Senator John Ensign (R-Nevada) told a group of executives this past fall. "They spend money to elect Democrats. From our perspective, this would have devastating consequences."

Throughout his run for president, Obama was explicit in his support for Employee Free Choice and his understanding of the forces arrayed against it. "If a majority of workers want a

Union, they should get a Union; it's that simple," he told Union members in Pennsylvania in April. "Let's stand up to the business lobby." Since his election, he's sent other friendly signals: supporting a factory takeover by pink-slipped glass workers in Chicago and tapping Representative Hilda Solis (D-California) as labor secretary. While her predecessor, Elaine Chao, stacked the labor department with experienced Union-busters and gutted regulations and workplace safety inspections, Solis has been a regular on Los Angeles picket lines and pushed a minimum-wage hike into law as a state legislator. Significantly, she made an impassioned plea from the House floor for the Employee Free Choice Act.

But the business lobby Obama once railed against is now giving him a taste of its wares. The Chamber denounced the bill in op-eds as "payback" to "Union bosses" that would signal the end of "workplace democracy" and the advent of "Soviet-style thuggery." All the big industry associations called press conferences to declare war. "This will be Armageddon," one top Chamber official said of the battle ahead. Another pointedly warned Obama against "picking a fight right away on a major, titanic clash." Obama's advisers got the memo. At a November gathering of CEOs, Rahm Emanuel refused to answer a question about the bill, and that same month economic adviser Jennifer Granholm called it "divisive." Obama recently restated his commitment to ending the "barriers and roadblocks" to Unionization but avoided any reference to the bill itself.

For a snapshot of how current labor law works, you could do worse than to travel to McComb, Ohio, a small town a half-hour south of Toledo, where, one Wednesday in early December, Bill Lawhorn showed up for his job as a forklift operator for the first time in six years. He and

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SUP Honor Roll

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Last year's job loss worst since 1945

The worsening U.S. economy hit the nation's work force hard in December, as the unemployment rate climbed to 7.2% and brought the total number of jobs lost last year to just over 2.5 million—the most since 1945.

Of those, 1.9 million vanished in just the final four months of the year.

Job losses spared no region or sector, except for small increases in education and healthcare services and government employment. The United States lost 524,000 jobs in December, the Labor Department said on January 9.

Many Americans have been out of work for months and are resorting to lower-wage or part-time jobs to make ends meet. Long-term unemployment is a worsening problem; the Labor Department reported that the number of workers out of a job for more than 27 weeks doubled last year.

While the official unemployment rate is 7.2%, a different figure that includes discouraged workers who have dropped out of the labor force and those working part-time because they can't find full-time work hit 13.5% in December. That was nearly a full percentage point higher than in the previous month and up from 8.7% at the end of 2007. Meanwhile, the number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits has risen since the employment survey was conducted in the second week of December, hitting a fresh 26-year high in the closing days of 2008.

The U.S. economy appears to have contracted at the sharpest pace in a quarter-century during the October-through-December period, which most economists predict will be the trough of the current recession.

Manufacturing, often a bellwether for the U.S. economy, shed 149,000 jobs in December, the most since 2001. The long-resilient service sector also showed considerable weakness, in retail, hospitality and professional services.

The U.S. hasn't shed so many jobs in a year since the nation was shifting from a wartime to a peacetime economy after World War II. The population then was less than half its current size.

A key gauge of future employment also looked grim in December as the average workweek fell to 33.3 hours, the lowest since the government began tracking the data in 1964.

Matson to cut non-Union jobs

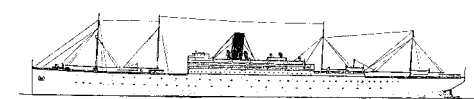
Alexander & Baldwin, the parent company of SUP-contracted Matson Navigation Company, announced on January 21, an expansion of ongoing cost reduction initiatives in response to an expected continued slowdown in economic activity.

"Ongoing initiatives to decrease our costs include workforce reductions, commencing with steps taken today to pare staffing by 10 percent at Matson," said W. Allen Doane, chairman and chief executive officer of A&B. "Other measures to be implemented over the coming months at various A&B business units include: elimination of salary increases; continued reductions in general and administrative expenses; and reductions in incentive award targets, profit sharing targets and workforce levels." Doane continued, "And while fourth quarters and full-year 2008 earnings are expected to be good, these and other proactive measures are necessary in view of the current economic climate."

Matson plans to reduce its non-Union headcount by approximately 60 jobs, augmenting position eliminations that resulted from hiring freezes adopted in 2007 and 2008. "Over the past several years, Matson has been diligently implementing cost reduction measures across the board, without undercutting the reliability of its service," said Matthew Cox,

president of Matson Navigation Company. "We remain fully committed to delivering industry-leading ocean transportation services in all of our trade lanes, and the actions we are taking will be seamless to our customers. Measures involving employees are difficult, however, it is important that Matson realign its cost structure to current demand."

**Attend your
Union meetings!**



West Coast Sailors

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Seattle businesses squawk that *Kauai* blocks views of Elliot Bay & Sound

The Marriott Hotel and Anthony's Restaurant have complained to the Port of Seattle, that Matson's containership *s/s Kauai* is blocking the view of Puget Sound.

The *Kauai* has been in idle-status at Pier 66 since last October. The hotel and restaurant complained that the vessel is an eyesore and is driving business away. The Port is considering other berths.

Final Departures

Norman Kwak, Book No. 3102. Born in Hawai'i in 1926. Joined SUP in 1951. Died in Honolulu, Hawai'i, December 4, 2008. (Pensioner)

Victor Evers, Book No. 1810. Born in Tennessee in 1924. Joined SUP in 1947. Died in Long Beach, California, December 8, 2008.

Oh Young Park, Book No. 3002. Born in Hawai'i in 1916. Joined SUP in 1941. Died in Honolulu, Hawai'i, December 15, 2008. (Pensioner)

Daniel Foster, Book No. 2221. Born in the Philippines in 1947. Joined SUP in 1968. Died in Stockton, California, December 15, 2008.

James Springer, Book No. 7297. Born in Washington in 1928. Joined SUP in 1953. Died in Burien, Washington, December 18, 2008. (Pensioner)

Herman Park, Book No. 3859. Born in Hawai'i in 1932. Joined SUP in 1957. Died in Honolulu, Hawai'i, December 30, 2008. (Pensioner)

SUP Meetings

These are the dates for the regularly scheduled SUP meetings in 2009:

	Hdq.	Branch
February	9	17*
March	9	16
April	13	20
May	11	18
June	8	15
July	13	20
August	10	17
September	14	21
October	13*	19
November	9	16
December	14	21

*Tuesday

Piracy watch update

Escalating piracy in the Gulf of Aden pushed up the number of attacks against merchant ships worldwide more than 11% during 2008, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has reported.

In 293 total attacks, 11 crew members were killed and 21 missing, presumed dead, the bureau reported on January 16. For the east coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden alone, 111 incidents were reported. Pirates were holding 13 vessels for ransom and 242 crew hostage as of the end of December 2008; 42 vessels were hijacked and 815 crew taken hostage.

Elsewhere, however, attacks have declined, with incidents in Indonesia falling to 28, against 121 in 2003. Nigeria accounted for 40 incidents. Just two incidents were reported in the once-dangerous Malacca Strait, from seven in 2007.

The following is an update of pirate activity within the past month.

Karagol: Was freed on January 13, after a ransom was paid. The 6,000 dwt Turkish-flagged vessel was captured on November 13.

African Sanderling: Was released on January 11, after a ransom was paid. The 58,700 dwt bulk carrier was enroute to China from Aqaba, Jordan, when pirates captured her on October 15.

Delight: Was released on January 11, after a ransom was paid. The 43,218 dwt Hong-Kong-flagged but Iranian-owned vessel was enroute from Germany to Bandar Abbas with a cargo of 36,000 tons of wheat when she was seized on November 10.

Sirus Star: Was released on January 9, after a \$3 million ransom was paid. The 319,000 dwt VLCC was captured on November 17. The body of a pirate involved in the hijacking washed ashore in Somalia with a plastic bag containing \$153,000. Five other pirates drowned (along with their cut) after their small boat capsized.

Yasa Neslihan: Was freed on January 6, after a ransom was paid. The 82,849 dwt Turkish-flag bulk carrier was enroute from Canada to China with a load of iron ore when it was captured on October 29, off Somalia.

Kriti Episkopi: The crew of the vessel successfully fought off pirates in the Gulf of Aden on January 2, using water cannons with assistance from aircraft from the European Union naval task force. The Greek-flagged vessel is 145,242 dwt.

On January 2, the Danish navy assisted a Dutch ship after pirates boarded the vessel, rescuing five who had been forced into the water. On the same day, French forces handed over eight suspected pirates to Somali authorities, after responding to distress call from a Panamanian-flagged vessel that was being pursued. On January 4, the French warship *Jean de Vienne* prevented a further two hijack attempts against ships flagged in Panama and Croatia. In the process, it arrested 19 more pirates who are also to be handed over to the authorities in the breakaway Somali region of Puntland.

Container traffic through Los Angeles-Long Beach collapses

Containerized imports through Los Angeles and Long Beach plummeted in the final weeks of 2008 as the economic meltdown accelerated. Full year figures published by the two southern Californian ports show a steep drop in inbound cargo, with the December numbers particularly bad.

Long Beach reported a decline in total container traffic last year of 11%, the biggest single year decline for more than 20 years. The neighboring port of Los Angeles (San Pedro) posted a 6% contraction last year after the December total plummeted by 15%.

Cargo growth across the Pacific was so strong a few years ago that ships sometimes were having to wait days for a berth as both terminal operators and inland haulers struggled to cope with a massive surge in imports from Asia. The turnaround has been sudden, with Long Beach recording its busiest year ever in 2007 as container traffic soared to 7.3 million teu, although imports were already slowing by the middle of the year after the U.S. housing market collapsed. For 2008, the port saw total volumes decline to 6.5 million teu, with exports as well as imports sharply down. As the recession spread to overseas markets, outbound containers from Long Beach declined by 23% in November, and then by a colossal 34% in December.

The pattern was similar in Los Angeles where total container traffic fell to 7.8 million teu last year from 8.4 million in 2007 and 8.5 million in 2006, with loaded export containers sliding almost 26% in December.

The latest evidence of the crisis hitting the global container trades coincided with two new reports on industry prospects that presented a mixed picture.

HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) Global Research is particularly gloomy, forecasting that freight rates will collapse in the coming year because of the massive supply and demand imbalance, with even two of the most highly regarded lines in the world sliding deep into the red.

Both Hong Kong-based Orient Overseas Line and Singapore-based Neptune Orient Lines (the parent company of APL), will be unprofitable in 2009 and 2010, HSBC predicts, with the Hong Kong line expected to lose \$227 million this year followed by a smaller \$98 million next year, and the Singapore line forecast to post net losses of \$487 million and \$377 million respectively.

The firm estimates that container trade demand growth will be zero in 2009, recovering just slightly to 2% in 2010. But with fleet capacity expected to expand 12% in 2009, after allowing for delivery delays and scrapping, and by 13% in 2010, HSBC is anticipating a sharp drop in freight and charter rates over the next couple of years.

In contrast, J.P. Morgan does not think market conditions on the container trades from Asia will get much worse, although no improvement is expected this year. "Currently, we believe, the freight rates in Asia-Europe are below the variable costs and the freight rates in transpacific are only a touch above — both markets are loss-making, factoring in fixed costs," said Hong Kong-based J.P. Morgan analyst Johnson Lueng.

HSBC, on the other hand, expects average freight rates to fall by 35% in 2009 and 7% next year, with charter rates likely contract by as much as 74% in the 2008-2011 period.

Global trade posts sharp decline

Trade among nations is declining sharply around the world, an unusual development even in a recession—and one that makes it more difficult for countries to pull out of their economic dive.

Combined exports and imports by the United States, the world's biggest economy, dropped 18% in the four months from July to November, to \$326 billion from nearly \$398 billion, according to Commerce Department figures released on January 13. Two-thirds of the drop was in imports, which helps explain why so many countries dependent on trade with the United States are suffering: Their exports, a key source of growth, are falling as spending by U.S. consumers and companies continues to sour.

Japan, the No. 2 economy and heavily dependent on exports for growth, posted a 27% decline in November compared with a year earlier, its Ministry of Finance said, the biggest slide it has ever recorded. Its imports also dived by 14%, a contributing to the pain of exporters elsewhere in turn.

China posted its most severe foreign-trade decline in at least a decade, in government figures for December also released on January 13. Germany had its worst export drop this decade in November, down 11.8% from the previous year; the next three biggest European economies had drops nearly as bad, according to a calculation by *The Wall Street Journal*.

The simultaneous trade losses among the world's big economies intensify pressure on their companies to find new customers, but consumers are cutting their spending virtually everywhere. The United States, Japan and Europe's 16-country euro zone are already in recession, and the red-hot growth seen in emerging countries in recent years is cooling rapidly, including in China.

The downturn in trade is hitting big and small companies hard. Maersk Group, the world's biggest container shipping company, said last month it is

laying up eight huge vessels due to a drop in business. Maersk Chief Executive Nils S. Andersen told trade publications that he doesn't expect a quick turnaround.

While the growth of global trade generally slows during recessions, it doesn't usually contract worldwide; the last time it did was 1982. But in December the World Bank projected global trade would decline by 2.1% this year. That would top the 1.9% decline seen in 1975, the biggest since World War II.

The recent trade declines are accentuated by a sharp fall in commodity prices, including a historic slide in the price of oil. Petroleum imports alone drove just over half the total U.S. declines in November from the previous month, falling \$13.6 billion while U.S. imports overall fell by \$25 billion.

The General Federation of Belgian Workers, the Belgian socialist workers union, held an emergency meeting to discuss the decline in export-based production, says spokesman Daniel Richard. "We're all preparing for huge layoffs in the coming months," he says. Belgian law allows companies to temporarily lay off workers and rehire them later without paying a steep penalty.

The woes of the world's biggest economies are especially worrisome to developing nations, whose cheaper labor and raw materials helped those markets become global production centers and rising prosperity, in turn, cultivated their own domestic demand.

Exports from China in December fell 2.8% from a year earlier, extending the 2.2% decline in November, China's customs agency said. China's imports fell even more sharply, dropping 21.3% in December after a 17.9% fall in November.

Exports have contributed around 20% of China's economic growth since 2005, up from a single-digit share in previous years. That boost from overseas demand helped charge China's five-year run of 10%-plus economic growth.

Matson:

Important TWIC information

West Coast ports will begin phase in the mandatory use of the TWIC (Transportation Workers Identification Credential) to gain access to terminals and vessels in the next few weeks. On February 12, Honolulu and the other Hawaiian ports will begin enforcement of the TWIC requirement. Seattle and Oakland follow on February 28. Long Beach and Guam begin enforcement on April 14. Mariners (not including shoregangs and port engineers, who are not technically assigned to a vessel) must have a valid TWIC by April 15.

1. For mariners, between the time a port requires a TWIC and April 15 (when mariners are required to have one), the only valid form of ID that a terminal or gangway watchman will accept will be a Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD or Z-card). Matson company badges, state ID cards or drivers licenses will NOT be considered valid. Only your Z-card, and only if you are assigned to a vessel as a crewmember or standby (including night engineers and PROs). Shoregang personnel and Port Engineers must display a TWIC.

2. Both Matson Terminals and SSAT have been very clear that NO escorts will be provided to persons who work aboard a vessel or at the terminal, but do not have a TWIC. Access will be denied. This includes regular delivery personnel, vendors and repair technicians. Should we encounter a vendor who is not a normal contractor and does not have a TWIC but needs access (as determined by MNC or MTD), arrangements must be made on a one time basis with the Facility Security Officer (FSO) for the terminal, and the Vessel Security Officer (vessel master).

3. Law enforcement personnel, U.S. Coast Guard personnel, US Customs and other state and federal agency people, in the course of their normal duties, will not be required to have a TWIC. Agency credentials shall be sufficient.

In Memoriam

Final Departures of SUP members reported in 2008

Donald Amsden, Book No. 3774. Born in California in 1927. Joined SUP in 1960. Died in California, June 8, 2008. (Pensioner)

Nils Austrheim, Book No. 3748. Born in Norway in 1917. Joined SUP in 1952. Died in Massachusetts, October 8, 2008. (Pensioner)

Daniel Ballstaedt, Book No. 4767. Born in Germany in 1909. Joined SUP in 1944. Died in Heber City, Utah, November 10, 2008. (Pensioner)

Leroy Bateman, Book No. 4734. Born in Utah in 1918. Joined SUP in 1943. Died in Oregon, June 21, 2008. (Pensioner)

Raymond Berntsen, Book No. 5130. Born in North Dakota in 1921. Joined SUP in 1946. Died in Vallejo, California, August 4, 2008. (Pensioner)

James Bonn, Book No. 3917. Born in Ohio in 1908. Joined SUP in 1935. Died in New York, May 14, 2008. (Pensioner)

Norman Bor, Book No. 5079. Born in Canada in 1927. Joined SUP in 1946. Died in Louisiana, November 30, 2008. (Pensioner)

Christopher Bright, Book No. 5735. Born in California in 1954. Died at sea aboard the *President Adams*, October 26, 2008.

William Brindley, Book No. 5644. Born in Nebraska in 1919. Joined SUP in 1953. Died in Los Molinos, California, June 21, 2008. (Pensioner)

Virgil Brunette, Book No. 5428. Born in Minnesota in 1929. Joined SUP in 1948. Died in Portland, Oregon, June 4, 2008. (Pensioner)

Clarence Curl, Book No. 3288. Born in Washington in 1920. Joined SUP in 1941. Died in Davis, California, October 26, 2008. (Pensioner)

John "Johnny" Davis, Book No. 2646. Born in Kansas in 1924. Joined SUP in 1953. Died in Las Cruces, New Mexico, February 3, 2008.

Frank Dufek, Permit No. 18308. Born in Czechoslovakia in 1951. Joined SUP in 1997. Died in Santa Barbara, California, November 21, 2008.

Raymond Erspamer, Book No. 1870. Born in Minnesota in 1925. Joined SUP in 1960. Died in Daly City, California, September 15, 2008. (Pensioner)

Ronald Farrington, Book No. 2143. Born in Washington in 1927. Joined SUP in 1950. Died in Port Angeles, Washington, November 10, 2008. (Pensioner)

Frank Fellows, Book No. 1598. Born in Washington in 1919. Joined SUP in 1936. Died in Green Valley, Arizona, May 7, 2008. (Pensioner)

Robert Ferguson, Book No. 2193. Born in California in 1932. Joined SUP in 1951. Died in San Pablo, California, March 10, 2008. (Pensioner)

George Foster, Book No. 1487. Born in Washington in 1911. Joined SUP in 1934. Died in Lynnwood, Washington, December 26, 2007. (Pensioner)

Stephen Foster, Book No. 2236. Born in England in 1936. Joined SUP in 1967. Died in Seattle, Washington, September 12, 2008. (Pensioner)

Leslie Frater, Book No. 2077. Born in California in 1928. Joined SUP in 1947. Died in Redding, California, October 26, 2008. (Pensioner)

John Geppart, Book No. 2970. Born in England in 1936. Joined SUP in 1967. Died in Seattle, Washington, September 12, 2008. (Pensioner)

David Gillis, Book No. 3012. Born in California in 1932. Joined SUP in 1951. Died in Placerville, California, November 29, 2008. (Pensioner)

Ebbe Hansson, Book No. 5606. Born in Sweden in 1922. Joined SUP in 1948. Died in Portland, Oregon, November 8, 2008. (Pensioner)

Harold Hardesty, Book No. 5778. Born in Oregon in 1918. Joined SUP in 1957. Died in Oregon, June 19, 2008. (Pensioner)

Clarence Hartwig, Book No. 5695. Born in Missouri in 1921. Joined SUP in 1947. Died in Seattle, Washington, February 3, 2008. (Pensioner)

Haakon Haugen, Book No. 5854. Born in Norway in 1928. Joined SUP in 1964. Died in Long Beach, California, July 4, 2008. (Pensioner)

Donald Heath, Book No. 5733. Born in California in 1927. Joined SUP in 1950. Died in Texas, December 23, 2007. (Pensioner)

Harry Hicks, Book No. 5743. Born in Tennessee in 1923. Joined SUP in 1957. Died in Rock Springs, Georgia, May 12, 2008. (Pensioner)

Russell Huffman, Book No. 368. Born in Missouri in 1916. Joined SUP in 1944. Died in Roseburg, Oregon, December 9, 2007. (Pensioner)

Evert Johansson, Book No. 4100. Born in Sweden in 1923. Joined SUP in 1946. Died in California. (Pensioner)

Daniel Kauer, Book No. 3175. Born in Pennsylvania in 1955. Joined SUP in 2001. Died in California, May 9, 2008.

John Kelly, Book No. 3169. Born in Pennsylvania in 1945. Joined SUP in 1989. Died in Hawai'i, November 30, 2008.

Henry Kennedy, Book No. 2584. Born in Washington in 1924. Joined SUP in 1944. Died in Washington, March 8, 2008. (Pensioner)

Robert Kim, Book No. 2714. Born in Hawai'i in 1924. Joined SUP in 1945. Died in Honolulu, Hawai'i, October 17, 2008. (Pensioner)

Walter Klatt, Book No. 2068. Born in Washington in 1918. Joined SUP in 1934. Died in Oregon, April 29, 2008. (Pensioner)

Samuel Kosfeld, Book No. 2909. Born in Missouri in 1928. Joined SUP in 1947. Died in Boonville, Missouri, February 22, 2008. (Pensioner)

Raynold Koskela, Book No. 2881. Born in North Dakota in 1923. Joined SUP in 1943. Died in California, December 28, 2007. (Pensioner)

James Kumis, Book No. 3128. Born in New York in 1923. Joined SUP in 1947. Died in New York, New York, April 9, 2008. (Pensioner)

Chuck Lum, Book No. 3366. Born in Hawai'i in 1920. Joined SUP in 1940. Died in Honolulu, Hawai'i, September 21, 2008. (Pensioner)

George MacGregor, Book No. 5780. Born in England in 1919. Joined SUP in 1946. Died in Fresno, California, August 9, 2008. (Pensioner)

Nis Madsen, Book No. 5139. Born in Denmark in 1922. Joined SUP in 1943. Died in Stoneybrook, New York, September 25, 2008. (Pensioner)

Thomas Mariner, Book No. 6177. Born in New York in 1919. Joined SUP in 1948. Died in Moorehead, North Carolina, February 28, 2008. (Pensioner)

Thomas McLaughlin, Book No. 6182. Born in California in 1926. Joined SUP in 1943. Died in South San Francisco, California, March 2, 2008. (Pensioner)

Vicente Meza, Book No. 6368. Born in Chile in 1917. Joined SUP in 1956. Died in San Francisco, California, May 8, 2008. (Pensioner)

Raymond Morgan, Book No. 6514. Born in California in 1944. Joined SUP in 1992. Died in California, April 7, 2008.

John Nelson, Book No. 2283. Born in Oregon in 1928. Joined SUP in 1945. Died in Astoria, Oregon, February 21, 2008. (Pensioner)

Thomas O'Dell, Book No. 2456. Born in Nebraska in 1939. Joined SUP in 1968. Died in Wahoo, Nebraska, December 11, 2007. (Pensioner)

John Ong, Book No. 2430. Born in California in 1925. Joined SUP in 1951. Died in San Francisco, California, June 30, 2008. (Pensioner)

Laurence Palmeria, Book No. 11219. Born in Hawai'i in 1919. Joined SUP in 1955. Died in San Pedro, California, February 16, 2008. (Pensioner)

Robert Perasso, Book No. 3824. Born in California in 1917. Joined SUP in 1966. Died in Davis, California, April 20, 2008. (Pensioner)

Thomas Riggs, Book No. 2615. Born in Arizona in 1917. Joined SUP in 1944. Died in Victorville, California, February 15, 2008. (Pensioner)

George Roberts, Book No. 3168. Born in Washington in 1942. Joined SUP in 1968. Died in Federal Way, Washington, October 16, 2008. (Pensioner)

John Ropati, Book No. 3149. Born in American Samoa in 1936. Joined SUP in 1958. Died in California, July 3, 2004. (Pensioner)

Gil Roxas, Book No. 3115. Born in the Philippines in 1924. Joined SUP in 1955. Died on March 27, 2008. (Pensioner)

Raymond Saggang, Book No. 7229. Born in Hawai'i in 1926. Joined SUP in 1950. Died in Vacaville, California, March 14, 2008. (Pensioner)

Gino Segreti, Book No. 7494. Born in Michigan in 1953. Joined SUP in 1983. Died in California, August 16, 2008.

Edward Sexton, Book No. 7398. Born in the Philippines in 1925. Joined SUP in 1948. Died in Waupaca, Wisconsin, December 21, 2007. (Pensioner)

Nicholas Solonski, Book No. 7209. Born in North Dakota in 1923. Joined SUP in 1949. Died in Cameron Park, California, September 4, 2008. (Pensioner)

Joseph Staniec, Book No. 6237. Born in California in 1927. Joined SUP in 1950. Died in Australia, January 27, 2008. (Pensioner)

Curtis Stray, Book No. 6947. Born in North Dakota in 1927. Joined SUP in 1945. Died November 20, 2006. (Pensioner)

William Sutherland, Book No. 6801. Born in Oklahoma in 1924. Joined SUP in 1946. Died in Walnut Creek, California, May 15, 2008. (Pensioner)

James Thompson, Book No. 3275. Born in Wisconsin in 1932. Joined SUP in 1967. Died in Fort Bragg, California, February 7, 2008. (Pensioner)

Ivar Thorbjornsen, Book No. 3269. Born in Norway in 1937. Joined SUP in 1965. Died in Mississippi, March 5, 2008. (Pensioner)

George Tiekling, Book No. 2008. Born in Michigan in 1921. Joined SUP in 1944. Died in Raymond, Washington, September 3, 2008. (Pensioner)

William Timmerman, Book No. 3267. Born in India in 1930. Joined SUP in 1961. Died in Bellevue, Washington, January 16, 2008. (Pensioner)

Stephen Troth, Book No. 3018. Born in Australia in 1923. Joined SUP in 1945. Died in Rohnert Park, California, April 22, 2008. (Pensioner)

Fred Warren, Book No. 3547. Born in Massachusetts in 1921. Joined SUP in 1953. Died in Torrance, California, January 27, 2008. (Pensioner)

Robert Welch, Book No. 3631. Born in 1945. Joined SUP in 1976. Died in Belle Chasse, Louisiana, January 22, 2008.

Chester Williams, Book No. 3615. Born in Tennessee in 1931. Joined SUP in 1968. Died in Hawai'i, August 20, 2008. (Pensioner)

Henry Zak, Book No. 241. Born in Illinois in 1924. Joined SUP in 1947. Died in Oregon, July 13, 2008. (Pensioner)

Edward Zoobrick, Book No. 263. Born in Michigan in 1926. Joined SUP in 1945. Died in Mountain View, California, October 18, 2008. (Pensioner)

Employee Free Choice Act pits labor against capital continued from page 1

six other workers were fired in 2002 after leading a campaign to Unionize Consolidated Biscuit, a massive industrial bakery in McComb that produces popular snacks for Nabisco such as Oreos, Nutter Butters and Ritz crackers. The workers started out with “a fire in their belly,” recalls an organizer from the bakery and confectionery workers Union, with more than 650 of 800 signing cards of interest. But after Consolidated Biscuit hired a Unionbusting firm and started threatening workers with firings or deportations or shuttering the plant altogether, the Union lost the election. In 2004 an administrative law judge found the threats and firings to be illegal, but the company appealed to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and then to a circuit court.

According to the research of Cornell University’s Kate Bronfenbrenner, employers fire workers in a quarter of all campaigns, threaten workers with plant closings or outsourcing in half and employ mandatory one-on-one meetings where workers are threatened with job loss in two-thirds. All of these tactics are illegal. Unions, meanwhile, are consigned to getting out their message off the clock and off the premises. “The fact that our labor law has no penalties for employer violations, no punitive damages, no financial penalties, that the worst thing that happens to employers when they commit egregious violations is a slap on the wrist, has emboldened employers to break the law at an extreme that is really astonishing,” says Bronfenbrenner.

The crisis is so deep that in a rising number of campaigns, Unions have abandoned board-certified elections altogether, instead using public pressure to secure Union recognition from employers when a majority of workers sign cards. Over the past decade, the number of election petitions has fallen by 41 percent. Take the Communications Workers of America: within a year and a half of pressuring management at Cingular (now AT&T) to recognize card check, CWA had organized 30,000 new members. But CWA recently lost three elections in a row at Comcast worksites, despite enjoying majority support — the result of antiUnion threats from Comcast. With Employee Free Choice in place, CWA could have used card check even with this sort of intransigent employer.

What would its passage unleash now? Though Union membership has slid to 12 percent in recent decades, the desire to Unionize has grown—from 30 percent of nonUnion workers in the mid-1980s to 53 percent of them now. “Look, the bill will not stop corporate Unionbusting,” says the AFL-CIO’s head of strategic research, Kenneth Zinn, “but it will level the playing field for workers to join a Union.” If the bill passes, says Change to Win campaign director Bob Callahan, his federation’s Unions—including the Service Employees, Teamsters, and Food and Commercial Workers — are poised to organize on a massive scale. He predicts 5 million new members in the first eighteen months after passage—meaning, he says, 5 million workers winning a double-digit raise, nearly a million of them lifted out of poverty. Zinn imagines whole industries, and even the “right to work” South, possibly opening up to Unionization.

With the concentration of wealth approaching 1929 levels, there is a forceful case to be made that Unionization holds the best chance for a reversal. Corporate profits have doubled since 2001, while real wages have flatlined and the number of workers earning poverty wages has risen to nearly a quarter of

the workforce. Unionized workers earn between 15 and 28 percent more than their nonUnion counterparts and receive far better health and retirement benefits, and when Unions reach a high enough density in a particular industry, wages in nonUnion shops tend to rise to meet the new standard.

But Unionization rates have been crashing for decades. “Historically, Unionization basically created the middle class,” says economist James Galbraith. “First, by its direct effect on the wages and benefits of Unionized workers; second, by its indirect effect on the wages of workers who weren’t Unionized; and third, by the impact Unions had on the creation of the social institutions that underpin the middle class, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid—the very structures of the New Deal and the Great Society.” A line tracing the rise of wealth inequality and one tracing the decline in Unionization make a perfect mirror image of each other.

The business community’s massive campaign this past fall to defeat candidates who supported Employee Free Choice focused on the misbegotten claim that the legislation would take away workers’ right to choose a Union by secret ballot election. Actually, labor law allows either a secret ballot or majority sign-up, at the discretion of the employer; the bill would simply put that choice in the hands of the workers. Still, the Chamber, betting on its trumped-up prodemocracy message, dumped millions of dollars on ads with this message in nine battleground states, some using a *Sopranos* actor to play the Union tough who just might kneecap you if you vote no. Interestingly, the gambit failed. Voters in these states told pollsters that secret ballot in Union elections ranked last on their list of concerns; many more said they were troubled by the excessive power of big corporations than said they were troubled by the power of big labor.

If the rhetoric doesn’t work, the business lobby is ready to threaten retaliation. “They’ll promise to dump money to oppose supporters of the bill in the next election,” says Mary Beth Maxwell, director of the pro-Union American Rights at Work. The Chamber of Commerce has been aggressively educating its local chapters so that business leaders can buttonhole senators in their home districts. When Arkansas Senator Blanche Lincoln, a Democrat who counts Wal-Mart among her top donors, met with the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce in late November, she tried to talk about healthcare and the economy, but the businessmen in the room hammered her on Employee Free Choice.

According to the AFL-CIO’s Samuels, “We’re seeing heavy pressure from the retail world, the chain drugstores, Wal-Mart, the retail federation, the nonUnion building contractors and some of the low-wage employers like Tyson’s, the ones who have spent twenty years trying to create a business climate that isn’t friendly toward Unions, and from the several-billion-dollar-industry of antiUnion consultants.” Wal-Mart, he says, is at the top of that list. “They’re flying their forces into DC already.” Wal-Mart sent a shot across the bow in October, when the company shuttered an auto shop in Quebec within days of the workers there voting to organize. “It will be very tight in the Senate,” says one Democratic Congressional aide. “We’re not kidding ourselves.”

One of the many ironies here is that the Employee Free Choice Act already has majority support—the bill just needs

to get a vote on the Senate floor. In 2007 the bill passed overwhelmingly in the House and garnered fifty-one votes in the Senate, but when Democrats failed to achieve a filibuster-proof majority, the business press was quick to assert that this put “a question mark” over labor law reform. Some Union leaders worry privately that the bill can’t be won intact, that the increased penalties for worker intimidation might face better odds on their own. Representative George Miller (D-California), chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, insists that it can. “We had the same opposition last year [2007], and the members understand the issue pretty clearly,” he says. “You’re either going to give the middle class the tools so they can hold on to their economic livelihood or you’re not. It’s a very important priority for me.”

As University of California Santa Barbara labor historian Nelson Lichtenstein points out, the New Deal was not just a series of reforms that stabilized banking or stimulated the economy. “Those reforms,” he says, “were backstopped by the organization of the working class, and those reforms continued for two generations.” Any Obama-era reforms, he adds, “can and will dissipate” unless Unions form an institutional bulwark against retreat.

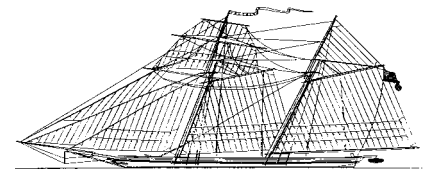
Source: Esther Kaplan, www.alternet.org and The Nation

Biden leads task force to aid working families

President Obama has tapped Vice President Joe Biden to lead the White House Task Force on Working Families, which will seek to make sure the economic stimulus package, which would be the biggest since the Depression, slows the soaring cost of education, expands workforce training and arrests the eight-year slide in middle-class incomes.

Task force members will include the secretaries of labor, health and human services, education, and commerce, as well as the directors of the National Economic Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Domestic Policy Council and the head of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Biden said the task force’s job is to monitor “the one thing we use as a yardstick of economic success of our administration: Is the middle class growing? Is the middle class getting better? Is the middle class no longer being left behind?”



Power of the modern pirate chiefs

The pirate gangs appear to draw recruits from masses of young Somalians in search of a windfall and willing to take the risks. The operations, while sophisticated and well-organized, are guided more by the principles of private enterprise than military strategy and planning.

The report from the United Nations Monitoring Group said financiers and a number of other prominent business and political figures with fisheries assets advanced the seed money for the maritime militias to function. “Typically they provide the boats, fuel, arms and ammunition, communications equipment and the salaries of the pirates, in order that they scout and seize vessels,” the report said.

“Increasingly, these advance teams appear to be benefiting from intelligence provided by contacts who monitor major ports in neighboring countries.”

The report sets out in detail the sequence of events once a vessel is hijacked at sea and brought to one of several pirate havens on the coast of Somalia.

The UN team said financiers are responsible for directing the vessel to a refuge port and organizing provisions and protection pending payment of a ransom. The pirate team can include many people, including translators, local officials, elders and others who provide political cover and the mechanisms to launder cash proceeds.

“The Monitoring Group has independently received credible allegations concerning the involvement of a number of key figures in the Somali Puntland administration, including several ministers, which it is continuing to investigate,” the report said.

One interesting revelation was the average breakdown of ransom payments in a hijacking. The pirates involved in capturing a vessel at sea were said to receive no more than 30% of the ransom payment, with another 20% split evenly between the ground militia and the local community. The “financier” and the “sponsor” received the remaining 50%, illustrating the lucrative returns on offer for those who back these criminal enterprises.

According to the Monitoring Group’s research, many Somalians interviewed attested to the continued remittance of funds through hawalas (brokers) in Dubai and other countries to support the armed struggle against Ethiopian occupation and to advance the causes of various armed opposition groups.

To avoid raising suspicion and possible detection, large sums of money are reportedly broken down into smaller figures for onward transmission. Tracking such transfers and isolating money destined for piracy is difficult, a problem further aggravated by the fact that the Somali economy largely functions on the basis of trust and credit, leaving little or no written paper trail. “Increased international scrutiny of hawala and money transfer companies has obliged armed groups in Somalia to adapt their methods,” the UN report said. “The Monitoring Group has observed a detectable shift in the pattern of financing of arms embargo violations, involving creative methods of transferring value across international borders.”

The use of couriers has become particularly common as a means of ransom payment to armed criminal groups. In piracy cases, for example, it has become the norm for cash ransoms to be delivered by ship or air in exchange for hostages. In addition to the use of couriers to deliver the funds to recipients in Somalia, witnesses described to the Monitoring Group the purchase of various essential commodities, such as rice, sugar and cooking oil from Dubai, which are then shipped to Somalia, where they are reconverted into cash.

Experts say that the greatest difficulty in tracking dirty money is that criminal and terrorist networks are aware of governments’ efforts to stem their activities. In response, they adjust their operations accordingly, and the mechanisms they use to transfer money are constantly mutating.

ESU Office Assignments

For the month of February, John Straley will be in the Seabrook office.

ESU NEWS

JANUARY 2009

Official Publication of the Exxon Seamen's Union

Board Member at Large special election

Ballots for a special election for the office of Board Member at Large were mailed to the membership at the end of December 2008. Under the Constitution and Bylaws (Article V, Section 2, Paragraph B) this ballot allows the membership fleet wide to elect a Union officer to this position.

As everyone should be aware, the two new Board Member at Large positions were created recently through a Constitutional amendment to the By-Laws of the Exxon Seamen's Union that was ratified by the membership on August 18, 2008. One position was filled during the recent 2008 Election of ESU Officers but one position remained open. Therefore a special election is being conducted for the second position. The term for this second position will begin after the voting results are announced and will end on December 31, 2009.

The Union is pleased to see four excellent candidates running for this position. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order as follows: Doug Ensminger (AB), David Franklin (Fleet Chef), Gordon Gibau (Fleet Chef) and John McCarthy (AB). The voting period is currently underway and will conclude on February 27, 2009, when the ballots are due at the American Arbitration Association office in New York. Following notification to the ESU Seabrook office on February 27th, the results will be promptly announced to the membership.

Ballots and voting instructions were addressed individually to each eligible voter and should have been received by the membership by now. Should you require an additional ballot, please see your Ship Representative or contact the ESU Office. Remember, an eligible voter is one whom has been a member in good standing at least 90 days prior to the start of the election.

The ESU thanks all the candidates involved for their support and willingness to serve the membership. All ESU members are encouraged to participate in the elective process and strive for 100% voter participation in this election. At a minimum, their willingness to serve should be recognized by every member casting a ballot during this important election for our Union. PLEASE VOTE!

AMEU Negotiations

Atlantic Maritime Employee Union Chairman John Pitts stopped by the ESU Seabrook office recently with news about their Union activities. Apparently the AMEU is locked into a difficult negotiations with Polar Shipping (ConocoPhillips). Mr. Pitts informs us that the AMEU has put out a Strike Authorization vote to the AMEU membership in case the Union is unable to reach an agreement with Polar. The ESU supports the AMEU in their struggle and offers our support in any way that we can help.

Final Departure Gerald "Gary" Reeves

Retired ESU Member Gerald (Gary) Reeves, 65 passed away on December 9, 2008 in New Orleans. Gary sailed as Able Seamen in the fleet and worked for the Company from 1979-1997. He also was assigned to the *S/R Galveston* on many occasions. He was a sailor of the finest order, teaching new members and reminding all of what it means to be a good seaman. So many of us learned how from people like him to advance our skills and be a good shipmate and sailor. He had a special love for electronics, and was instrumental in keeping things running on the *Galveston*. The crew called him "Grumpy" and they all knew he loved the nickname because he was never happy until things were done right...the first time and every time. A sign of a good sailor for sure. The ESU extends its condolences to Gary's wife Dorothy, family and friends.

2008 ESU election results

On Tuesday, December 23, the ESU Seabrook office received the official tabulation of votes cast in the 2008 election of Board Officers and Ship Representatives from the American Arbitration Association in New York. All terms of office are for three years beginning January 1, 2009.

Executive Board Positions

Board Member at Large

Frank O'Malia (unopposed)

Ship Representative Positions

S/R Wilmington

Jeffrey "Jeff" Harris 43

Aaron Rathbun 27

Blanks/VOIDS 2

S/R Baytown

Joe Bernavich (unopposed)

Sierra

Thor Floreen (unopposed)

Kodiak

Tim Williams (unopposed)

The ESU congratulates Jeff on his election as Ship Representative and we sincerely thank both Jeff, Aaron and the other newly installed Union Representatives for stepping forward to run for these important positions.

Voter participation in this election was around 45% and reflects a lower voter turnout than usual. The ESU mailed a total of 160 ballots to the membership and the American Arbitration Association office counted 70 of the 72 ballots received. Two ballots were not counted because they lacked proper identification on the AAA envelope.

The ESU extends its thanks to those members who demonstrated their support and responsibility by taking the time to vote in this important election.

Three longtime ESU members retire

The Union has been notified that three longtime ESU members have retired recently from SeaRiver.

Fleet Chef Reid Decker received a medical retirement on November 25, 2008 with 25 years of service. Reid, who spent his entire Exxon Shipping Company/SeaRiver Maritime career working in the Steward Department, joined his first vessel, the *Exxon Jamestown* in November of 1983 as a Mess/Utility. Reid worked his way up through the Steward Department and was promoted to Fleet Chef in 2000. Reid was an excellent Chef and went out of his way to order and prepare the best food stores he could get for the ship's crew. Reid was also a strong Union supporter and served one term on the Executive Board as Recording Secretary from 1993 through 1996. Reid and his wife Kathy plan to eventually settle in central Alabama during their retirement years.

Able Seamen Mack Shelby elected to retire on December 23, 2008 with 20 years of combined service. Mack's first vessel assignment in January of 1986 was the *Exxon Galveston*. He later resigned from the Company in 1995 only to return in April of 1997.

Able Seamen Tommy Ball also received a medical retirement on October 1, 2008 after almost 28 years of service. Tommy began his career with Exxon Shipping Company on November 1, 1981 as Ordinary Seaman.

The Exxon Seamen's Union would like to express its most sincere thanks to Reid, Mack and Tommy for their exemplary support that they have provided this Union throughout their careers. All three were excellent shipmates and we wish them all the best in their retirement.

2009 brings change to Exxon Seamen's Union

Seems like change is a word we heard much about lately and the Exxon Seamen's Union is going through a significant change period too due in part to the results of last year's Contract negotiations and the effects of hurricane Ike last September.

The new office is slowly coming together and we expect business will be back to normal soon. Our new location at 913 Hardesty Ave. in Seabrook, Texas, has much more potential than our old location, with lots more room and on slightly higher ground. Although we don't expect to see another hurricane like Ike in the near future, it may help to be a few feet higher above sea level should another storm hit the area.

With the closure of the ESU Benicia office, the Union now has only one full time Union representative ashore. Even though there will only be one officer ashore to serve the membership, we believe it is still possible to provide the same level of representation as the ESU has done in the past.

In order to do so it will be necessary for the Board officer on assignment to be available as much as possible for those occasions when someone needs to talk about an issue, problem or emergency. For the most part this can be achieved by forwarding phone calls to a designated (Union) cell phone when the Board officer is out the office. There still will be a few occasions when the officer on assignment will not be immediately available, so please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Even though we did lose a second Union officer ashore, we did retain some measures that will assist the Union in representing the membership. We now have contractual language that affords the Union the right to travel 10 times per year to the visit ships beyond 500 miles from the ESU office to conduct Union business. Such trips will be planned with the intent of visiting more than one ship but that may not be always possible.

Another newly negotiated contractual provision allows for a second Union Executive Board Officer to overlap with the Officer assigned to office for up to 25-days per year. These overlap days can be used a few days at a time during the year to help when workloads necessitate additional assistance.

An important point to mention and even though we officially have one Union officer on assignment, please understand that important Union issues or policy will not be resolved or made by one person. The officer on assignment will still be frequently communicating with the Union officer on paid leave, Board Members at Large and Trustees when addressing issues on behalf of the membership.

As we progress through the year the Union will continue to evaluate our operation and look for ways to do the Union's business in the most efficient way on behalf of its members.

Reid Decker retires



Reid and Kathy Decker celebrate his retirement at a restaurant near his current home in Novato, CA.

ESU News

Kevin Conroy returns to the fleet

As of December 31, 2008, Kevin Conroy completed a very successful 3-year term at the helm of the ESU as President. This was Kevin's second hitch on the Executive Board. He had previously served with distinction as Secretary Treasurer from 1999 through 2001. Kevin decided well before the end of his term to return to his position in the Fleet as Able Seamen instead of pursuing an additional term on the Executive Board.

The ESU Board, on behalf of the entire membership would like to say thanks for a job well done. Under Kevin's leadership the Union was able to work with management to resolve fleet and shoreside issues that benefited the ESU membership. His work to resolve issues is self evident considering the fact that the ESU did not arbitrate any grievances during his three-year term. At the end of Kevin's term there was only one outstanding grievance that is still being worked by the current ESU Board. Obviously, the ESU and SeaRiver management has come a long way since early 1993 when there were 52 grievances on file, many of which were assigned and waiting for arbitration.

Kevin also proved his ability last year as lead spokesman for the ESU Bargaining committee during contract negotiations. The tone of those negotiations, except for maybe a couple of Union Caucuses, was always civil and respectful. His leadership during negotiations played an instrumental part in the ESU gaining a Contract that was worthy of overwhelming membership approval.

Kevin has built up a lot of vacation time and we know he was looking forward to his time off without the usual interruption that goes with being a part of the ESU Board. Thanks again Kevin for all your hard work.

Ship reports

S/R American Progress

An ESU Board officer visited the vessel on January 18, at the ExxonMobil Refinery in Beaumont, Texas. Michael Harrison was onboard and is filling in as Ship Representative. The *Progress* remains in her Beaumont to Fort Lauderdale run. Vessel has been hampered by fog and some winter sea conditions recently.

S/R Baytown

The *Baytown* in early January loaded her first ANS cargo following an extended assignment on the Gulf/East coast. AB Pete Flaherty did a good job filling in as Temp Rep. for Joe Bernavich who returned from paid leave recently. The unlicensed were without Internet access for a couple of days. Issue was brought to the Captain's attention and eventually resolved. Vessel looks to stay on the Valdez to Puget Sound trade for now. Development of shipyard specs for the vessel will ramp up in the 1st quarter for a mid-year yard period.

Kodiak

The *Kodiak* continues in her Valdez to Puget Sound trade. Regular Ship Rep., Tim Williams is back on board. Vessel along with other ships experienced extreme weather in Valdez re-

cently. The *Kodiak* spent nearly 1 week in Valdez due to high winds and loading delays.

S/R Long Beach

The vessel completed her discharge in Hawaii and returned to Valdez to load for discharge in Benicia, CA. Doug Ensminger is filling in as Ship Rep. and checked in from Hawaii. The vessel's next orders remain uncertain at this time and lay-up plans that were reported in last month's edition of the ESU NEWS have been on hold for now.

Sierra

The *Sierra* completed her trans Pacific voyage from Jurong Shipyard in Singapore when the vessel arrived in Valdez on January 12. The *Sierra* is slated to call on San Francisco for discharge in Richmond. Expect a large crew change and a planned COI inspection while the vessel is in port.

S/R Wilmington

A Board officer visited the *Wilmington* on January 5, at the ExxonMobil Refinery in Baytown, Texas. Newly re-elected Ship Rep. Jeff Harris joined the vessel prior to departure in Houston. Development of shipyard specs for the vessel will ramp up in the 1st quarter for a mid-year yard period.

Singapore Gang



The crew of the *Sierra* at Jurong Shipyard in Singapore. From left: Jim Byrd, Charles Hartman, Don Picou, Billy Kendrick, Rozrick Purvis, Waverly Moore (behind Roz), Larry Harris, Tuan Tran and Rowan Mallet. Kneeling down is Philip Spinaio. Photo taken by ESU Ship Rep. Thor Floreen. The *Sierra* has since returned to Valdez from her successful 30-day shipyard in the Far East and recently completed discharging in San Francisco.

The ESU News is written and edited by the Exxon Seamen's Union.

Panama Canal Transit



The *S/R Baytown* transited the Panama Canal on December 14, 2008, on her way back to the West Coast to reenter Alaska North Slope service. The versatile *Baytown* has traded in clean products on the Gulf/East coast since late July of 2007. Since returning to the West Coast the vessel has loaded twice in Valdez for discharge in Anacortes, WA. It is expected that the *Baytown* will remain in ANS service for the foreseeable future.

Mileage rate reduced

Effective January 1, 2009, the optional standard mileage rate for all miles of vehicle use for business purposes will decrease from 58.5 cents to 55 cents per mile. Reimbursements made using this rate will satisfy IRS accounting requirements and will not be included in the employee's W-2 income or subject to withholding.

Under the current Collective Bargaining Agreement unlicensed employees are permitted to use an automobile for business travel and receive reimbursement from the company. Article IX, Section 6 and paragraph A of the current of the Collective Bargaining Agreement describes the contractual right to receipt of this reimbursement, and states: "When an employee uses an automobile as transportation from his/her home to a vessel, to/from a training program, or to/from a meeting, or for other reasons approved by the COMPANY, the employee shall be paid for the actual miles driven for a reasonably direct route at the mileage rate then current for the COMPANY. Actual miles driven shall include round trip mileage when an employee is driven by another person who returns to the employee's home. The COMPANY will also reimburse any tolls actually paid for the trip. In no case will the total payment be greater than the cost of the prevailing coach class airfare as described herein plus ground transportation allowances provided when traveling by air."

Requests for mileage reimbursements should be submitted to the appropriate Fleet Manning contact.

SeaRiver Engineer dies

Then ESU is deeply saddened to report that 3rd Assistant Engineer, Chris Erickson passed away on January 7, 2009. Preliminary indications are that Mr. Erickson made contact with a live high voltage circuit while performing routine duties on board the *S/R Wilmington*.

The vessel was anchored off Galveston, Texas, at the time of the incident. Extensive efforts to revive Mr. Erickson were made by the crew of the *Wilmington*, the U.S. Coast Medivac team and Memorial Hermann hospital staff in Houston.

Investigations are underway, and SeaRiver is fully cooperating with the Coast Guard and other officials.

Two Memorial Funds have been established in Mr. Erickson's name. Donations can be made to the Christopher Blair Erickson Memorial Fund, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, 101 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532, or to the Wachusett Regional School District, c/o Mike Dubzinski, 1401 Main Street, Holden, MA 01520.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family, friends and the crew of the *S/R Wilmington* in their loss.

EXXON SEAMEN'S UNION

Founded March 28, 1941

Affiliated with the Sailors' Union of the Pacific

913-A Hardesty Avenue

Seabrook, TX 77586

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President/Secretary John Straley

Vice President/Treasurer Leo DeCastro

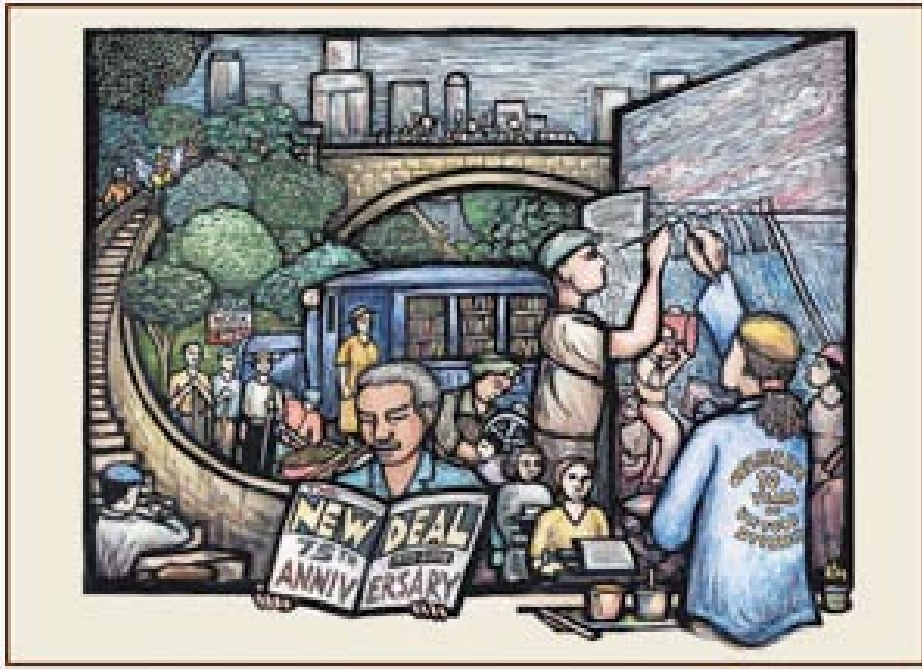
Board Member at Large Frank O'Malia

Deck Trustee Pat Campbell

Engine Trustee William Ackley

Steward Trustee Kurt Kreick

75th Anniversary of FDR's New Deal



Commemorates the 75th anniversary of the New Deal. The poster was sponsored by the Friends of the St. Paul, Minnesota, Public Library for the tenth year of its 'Untold Stories' labor history series. It depicts New Deal library, arts and public works programs.

The "New Deal" was the name that President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave to a sequence of programs he initiated between 1933 and 1936 with the goal of giving work (relief) to the unemployed, reform of business and financial practices, and recovery of the economy during The Great Depression.

The "First New Deal" of 1933 was aimed at short-term recovery programs for all groups. The Roosevelt administration promoted or implemented banking reform laws, emergency relief programs, work relief programs, agricultural programs, and industrial reform (the National Recovery Administration, NRA), and the end of the gold standard and Prohibition.

A "Second New Deal" (1935-36) included labor Union support, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) relief program, the Social Security Act, and programs to aid farmers, including tenant farmers and migrant workers. The Supreme Court ruled several programs unconstitutional; however, most were soon replaced, with the exception of the NRA.

Most of the relief programs were shut down during World War II by the Conservative Coalition (i.e., the opponents of the New Deal in Congress). Many regulations were ended during the wave of deregulation in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Several New Deal programs remain active, with some still operating under the original names, including the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The largest programs still in existence today are the Social Security System, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and Fannie Mae.

Consumer Price Index

U.S. consumer prices rose last year by their slowest pace in over a half century, a government report showed. Much of the reversal was due to a roughly 75% decline in oil prices from their July peak.

For December, the consumer price index dropped 0.7% on a seasonally adjusted basis from the previous month, the Labor Department announced this month. Economists had expected a 0.8% decline. The core CPI, which excludes food and energy, was unchanged. For the full year; consumer prices rose just 0.1%, the lowest increase since 1954 and well below the Federal Reserve Bank's 1.5% to 2% reference over the long run. The core CPI, however, was up 1.8% last year, suggesting the U.S. doesn't yet face economy-wide deflation.

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Welfare Notes

January 2009

To Do List Before Retirement

Check with the Pension Department on your pension status and the Welfare Plan Office on your coverage.

Your active medical and dental coverage will terminate when you retire. As an example, if your shipping time has given you active plan eligibility through November 2009 and you retire effective May 1, 2009, your active eligibility terminates May 1, 2009.

If you are 65 years old or older, you should already be enrolled for Medicare Part A. Medicare Part A covers in-patient hospitalizations after a deductible.

Since active plan coverage will terminate when you retire, you should also visit the Social Security/Medicare office to inquire about Medicare Part B and Medicare Part D coverage. The Plan Office will help you complete forms for your enrollment.

Medicare Part B covers Medicare eligible physician services, outpatient hospital services, certain home health services, and durable medical equipment.

Medicare Part D is the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. Medicare can advise you of the plans available and the cost.

The cost of the Medicare Part B premium (currently \$96.40 per month) is reimbursed to Pensioners on their pension check. The amount of the Medicare Part B premium is then deducted from the Pensioners' Annual Allowance.

The cost of the Medicare Part D premium and cost of co-payments for medical services covered by Medicare Part B and prescription co-payments covered by Medicare Part D can be submitted as claims to the Pensioners Annual Allowance.

If your spouse is not eligible for Medicare or you have other dependents, you will need to inquire about other health care options available for them when your active coverage terminates. It would also be in your best interest to inquire about additional supplemental plans for yourself.

Michelle Chang, Administrator mcsupsiupd@sbcglobal.net

Patty Martin martinpatty59@sbcglobal.net

Virginia Briggs Claims vbriggs80@sbcglobal.net

Michael Jacyna Eligibility mjacyna67@sbcglobal.net

Training Representative Berit Eriksson 415-957-1816

SUP Welfare Plan Phone Numbers: 415-778-5490 or 1-800-796-8003

Fax: 415-778-5495

SIU-PD Pension 415-764-4987

SIU-PD Supplemental Benefits 415-764-4991

Woodside Natural Gas suspends Los Angeles OceanWay Project

Woodside Natural Gas announced on January 15, that it was suspending work on its proposed liquid natural gas (LNG) import project for the Los Angeles region, citing changed energy market conditions.

Woodside Natural Gas President Steve Larson said the current conditions were not right for the proposed development. "We still believe in the long-term value of liquefied natural gas as a new source of clean, reliable and secure energy for Los Angeles," Larson said. "But we must acknowledge the impact of the current market and have notified the regulatory agencies that we are withdrawing our application for the time being.

"We are very grateful for the support we received from many local community members, organized labor and the Los Angeles business community. While the permitting process in California and Los Angeles is challenging, we were confident that - with the overall environmental and safety attributes of our design - our application would ultimately succeed."

The OceanWay project design included an offshore ship and buoy system to deliver natural gas by ship far removed from population centers and shipping lanes.

"As the state's climate change policies continue to evolve, we know they will only strengthen the role for natural gas as part of California's clean air solution," Larson said.

The project was being publicly reviewed in a comprehensive environmental and safety review process that began when Woodside Natural Gas submitted applications in 2006 to the U.S. Coast Guard for a Deepwater Port license and to the City of Los Angeles for a pipeline franchise.

Woodside Natural Gas is a subsidiary of Woodside, a publicly traded Australian company with market capitalization of about \$17 billion, worldwide offices and more than 3000 employees.

The Sailors' Union was very supportive of the OceanWay Project as a key component of the project was that the LNG vessel that would transfer the gas via pipeline to L.A. would be U.S.-flagged and U.S.-crewed. In addition, Woodside committed to 100% Union construction of the shoreside infrastructure.

Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Enrollment Centers as of December 2008

You can pre-enroll online at www.tsa.gov/twic or call 1-866-347-8942. The enrollment process requires applicants to visit an enrollment center to provide biographic information, sign a disclosure form, provide the neces-

sary identity verification documents, provide a complete set of fingerprints, sit for a digital photograph and pay the enrollment fee. For a complete list of disqualifying crimes and offenses, visit www.tsa.gov/twic.

<p>Alabama Tenn. Valley Trng. Ctr. 115 Woodall Rd. Ste. 105</p> <p>Decatur 250 North Water St.</p> <p>Mobile</p> <p>Alaska 619 E Ship Creek Ave.</p> <p>Anchorage Native Village of Eyak 110 Nicholoff Way</p> <p>Cordova 3200 Hospital Dr. #202</p> <p>Juneau 50097 Kenai Spur</p> <p>Nikiski 223 Harbor Way</p> <p>Petersburg 501 E. Bremner St.</p> <p>Valdez</p> <p>American Samoa Clarion Tradewinds Hotel Main Road, Ottoville</p> <p>Pago Pago</p> <p>Arkansas 2005 E 17th St.</p> <p>Little Rock</p> <p>California 2050 Park Road</p> <p>Benicia 301 E. Ocean Blvd. Ste. 500</p> <p>Long Beach 2000 Marina Vista Dr.</p> <p>Martinez 1830 Embarcadero Ave. #104</p> <p>Oakland Oakland Maritime Support Svcs. 11 Burma Rd.</p> <p>Oakland 1251 N. Rice Ave</p> <p>Oxnard 13201 San Pablo Ave. #300</p> <p>Richmond 1025 W. Laurel St. Ste. 103</p> <p>San Diego 1900 Bendixsen St. Bldg 12</p> <p>Samoa 500 Sansome St. Ste. 202</p> <p>San Francisco 1001 New Dock St.</p> <p>San Pedro 17 Fyffe St.</p> <p>Stockton 1401 Halyard Dr.</p> <p>West Sacramento</p> <p>Connecticut 850 Grand Ave.</p> <p>New Haven 75 Crystal Ave.</p> <p>New London 300 Long Beach Blvd #2A</p> <p>Stratford</p> <p>Delaware 102 Quigley Blvd.</p> <p>New Castle 1 Hausel Road</p> <p>Wilmington</p>	<p>Florida Port Everglades Badging Ofc. 1030 Taylor Rd.</p> <p>Dania Beach 955 Tallyrand Ave.</p> <p>Jacksonville Habana Plaza (rear) 3125 Riviera Dr.</p> <p>Key West 975 North America Way</p> <p>Miami Manatee County, Port Auth. 13604 Reeder Rd.</p> <p>Palmetto 707 Mullet Road, Stes. 117/118</p> <p>Port Canaveral 5323 W. Hwy 98 Suites 119,120</p> <p>Panama City 2051 Dr. Martin King, Jr. Blvd. Ste. 303</p> <p>Riviera Beach 2604 E. 7th Ave.</p> <p>Tampa</p> <p>Georgia Georgia Power Plant McManus 1 Crispen Island Dr.</p> <p>Brunswick 5214 Augusta Rd.</p> <p>Garden City</p> <p>Guam Hose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port #201 1026 Tabras Highway</p> <p>Piti</p> <p>Hawai'i Kahului Shopping Center 65 W. Kaahumanu Ave. Unit 14</p> <p>Kahului, Maui 970 Kele St., Ste. 102</p> <p>Lihue, Kauai Hilo Hawaiian Hotel 71 Banyan Dr.</p> <p>Hilo 1347 Kapiolani Blvd. Ste. 204</p> <p>Honolulu</p> <p>Illinois 8741 South Greenwood Dixon Building</p> <p>Chicago 111 W. Washington St. Ste. 346</p> <p>East Peoria 1635 W. First St.</p> <p>Granite City Three Rivers Safety Council 1615 W. Jefferson St. Ste. TWIC</p> <p>Joliet</p> <p>Indiana 4849 University Dr.</p> <p>Evansville 200 Russell St. Ste. 110</p> <p>Hammond 3602 Northgate Ct. Ste. 37C</p> <p>New Albany</p> <p>Kansas Commerce Plaza 1, 7th Flr. 7300 West 110th St.</p> <p>Overland Park</p>	<p>Kentucky 322 Harrison Ave.</p> <p>Paducah</p> <p>Louisiana Safety Council for Louisiana Capital Area, 8180 Siegen Ln.</p> <p>Baton Rouge 1300 N. Bertrand Dr. #306</p> <p>Lafayette 1340 W. Tunnel Blvd. Ste. 550</p> <p>Houma 700 W. McNeese St.</p> <p>Lake Charles LaPlace Shopping Center 1933 West Airline Hwy.</p> <p>LaPlace 512 Roderick St.</p> <p>Morgan City Port Fourchon Harbor Police 108 A.O. Rappelet Road</p> <p>Port Fourchon 170 James Dr. E. Ste. 104</p> <p>St. Rose</p> <p>Maine 163 Hildreth St. North</p> <p>Bangor 236 Oxford St. Ste. 12</p> <p>Portland</p> <p>Maryland 2200 Broening Hwy., Ste. 220</p> <p>Baltimore 213 W. Main St. Ste. 204C</p> <p>Salisbury 3225 Old Washington Rd. Ste. 2106</p> <p>Waldorf</p> <p>Massachusetts 28 Damrell St. Ste. 104</p> <p>Boston 300 Tremont Street, Unit #5</p> <p>Carver</p> <p>Michigan 115 N. First Ave, Ste. 101</p> <p>Alpena 200 W. Erie St., Ste. 1</p> <p>Calcite Delray Mechanical 667 S. Post St.</p> <p>Detroit 906 Ludington St., Ste. 1</p> <p>Escanaba 863 North Pine Rd.</p> <p>Essexville 430 S. Water St.</p> <p>Marine City Old City Hall Bldg. 220 W Washington St. Ste. 120</p> <p>Marquette 800 E. Ellis Rd. Ste. 122</p> <p>Norton Shores Amer. Inn of Silver City 120 Lincoln Ave.</p> <p>Ontonagon 115 N. First Ave.</p> <p>Presque Isle 511 Ashmun St.</p> <p>Sault Ste. Marie 396 N. State St.</p> <p>St. Ignace 1020 Hastings St., Ste. 105</p> <p>Traverse City</p>	<p>Minnesota 1310 Port Terminal Rd.</p> <p>Duluth-Superior Holiday Inn, 1500 Hwy. 71</p> <p>International Falls 34 13th Ave., NE</p> <p>Minneapolis 2161 University Ave.</p> <p>St. Paul</p> <p>Mississippi 800 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.</p> <p>Greenville 1223 30th Ave.</p> <p>Gulfport Ergon Refining 227 Industrial Dr.</p> <p>Vicksburg</p> <p>New Hampshire 30 Mirona Rd.</p> <p>Portsmouth</p> <p>New Jersey 2500 S. Broadway, Ste P-6</p> <p>Camden 33 Wood Ave. S, Ste. 665</p> <p>Iselin Quality Inn Conf. Center 531 Route 38 W</p> <p>Maple Shade 89 Beuning Street, Ste. G</p> <p>South Hackensack 400 Grove Rd.</p> <p>Thorofare</p> <p>New York 102 Smith Boulevard</p> <p>Albany 2680 Grand Island Blvd. Ste. 9</p> <p>Grand Island Sheraton Long Island 110 Motor Parkway</p> <p>Hauppauge 2752 Middle Country Rd.</p> <p>Lake Grove 178 W. Hoffman Ave.</p> <p>Lindenhurst Whitehall Ferry Terminal 4 South St., Room 210</p> <p>New York One East 2nd St.</p> <p>Oswego 800 West Ave., Ste. 323</p> <p>Rochester 700 Hummel Ave.</p> <p>Southold Howland Hook Marine Term. 241 Western Ave.</p> <p>Staten Island</p> <p>North Carolina 311 Atlantic Beach Causeway</p> <p>Atlantic Beach 5704 Oleander Dr. Ste. 107</p> <p>Wilmington</p> <p>Ohio 4830 State Rd.</p> <p>Ashtabula 8044 Montgomery Rd. Stes. 754/755</p> <p>Cincinnati 3100 E 45th St., Ste. 226</p> <p>Cleveland</p>	<p>401 Broadway Ave. #D, Ofc. B</p> <p>Lorain 444 W. Perkins Ave. Ste. 102</p> <p>Sandusky Star Center One Maritime Pl. 720 Water St.</p> <p>Toledo</p> <p>Oklahoma 5350 Cimarron Rd.</p> <p>Catoosa</p> <p>Oregon 400 Virginia Ave. Ste. 112</p> <p>Coos Bay 7025 North Lombard Ste. 100</p> <p>Portland</p> <p>Pennsylvania 50 West Powhattan Ave.</p> <p>Chester 1723 Woodbourne Rd.</p> <p>Levittown 601 Upland Ave. Ste. 120D</p> <p>Marcus Hook Philadelphia Regional Port 3460 N Delaware Ave.</p> <p>Philadelphia 701 North Point Dr. Ste. 104</p> <p>Pittsburgh</p> <p>Puerto Rico Prima Piso, Salon de Conf. Ave., Santiago de los Caballeros final, Edificio Turismo</p> <p>Playa Ponce Navy Frontier Base Ste. 1 408 Ave. Fernandez Juncos</p> <p>San Juan</p> <p>Rhode Island 17 Virginia Ave. Ste. 105</p> <p>Providence</p> <p>Saipan CTSA Plaza Beach Road, Garapan</p> <p>South Carolina 4600 Goer Dr., Ste. 112</p> <p>North Charleston</p> <p>Tennessee 5959 Shallowford Rd. Ste. 427</p> <p>Chattanooga 3865 Viscount Ave. Ste. 2</p> <p>Memphis 3200 West End Ave. Ste. 510</p> <p>Nashville</p> <p>Texas Ford Conv. Ctr Tyler Room 5155 IH-10 So.</p> <p>Beaumont 1000 Foust Rd.</p> <p>Brownsville 7433 Leopard St.</p> <p>Corpus Christi 6000 Broadway Ste. 103</p> <p>Galveston</p>	<p>West Gulf Maritime Assoc. 1717 Turning Basin</p> <p>Houston Gulf Gate, Ste. 314 2900 Woodridge Dr.</p> <p>Houston 621 W. Main St.</p> <p>LaPorte Brazos Mall, Ste. 1039 100 Hwy 322 West</p> <p>Lake Jackson 3800 Highway 365 Ste. 123</p> <p>Port Arthur 411 West Main St.</p> <p>Port LaVaca 301 Highway 146 N.</p> <p>Texas City 1750 FM 1432</p> <p>Victoria</p> <p>Vermont 145 Pine Haven Shores Rd.</p> <p>Shelburne</p> <p>Virginia 814 Greenbrier Cir. Ste. F</p> <p>Chesapeake 11815 Fountain Way Ste. 300 Rm 359</p> <p>Newport News</p> <p>Washington 8327 Summit Park Rd., Ste.D</p> <p>Anacortes Port of Everett Marina Marina Conf. Ctr. 404 14th St.</p> <p>Everett Red Lion Hotel 510 Kelso Dr.</p> <p>Kelso Read Lion Hotel Rm 2110 2515 N. 20th Ave.</p> <p>Pasco Fraternal Order of Eagles AERIE #1 205 Carson Ave. S.</p> <p>Seattle 5009 Pacific Hwy. E Ste. 17 Fife Business Park</p> <p>Tacoma 33rd Place Bldg. Ste. 107 3305 Main St.</p> <p>Vancouver</p> <p>West Virginia Tri-State Fire Academy 4200 Ohio River Rd.</p> <p>Huntington</p> <p>Wisconsin 425 South Military Ave.</p> <p>Green Bay 3073 South Chase Ave. Ste. 620 Bldg. 28 Fl. 1</p> <p>Milwaukee</p> <p>Virgin Islands 8000 Niksy Ctr, #202a</p> <p>Charlotte Amalie Renaissance Park Estate Anguilla</p> <p>KingsHill</p>
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Almost all hands on deck for UN's anti-piracy group

Twenty-four countries and five major international organizations have come together at the United Nations to form the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, charged with coordinating anti-piracy actions in the Gulf of Aden.

The first meeting of the body, which will be known by its acronym CGPCS, took place at the UN's headquarters in New York on January 14, and follows a UN resolution carried last month which authorizes "all necessary measures" to deter the crime.

Perhaps the most significant outcome from the shipping industry's standpoint is the commitment contained in a post-meeting statement to "examine practical options for strengthening the ability of countries willing to detain and prosecute suspected pirates". It has also pledged to consider other means of addressing piracy, including international judicial mechanisms.

Attendees included Australia, China, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, the Netherlands, Oman, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia's transitional gov-

ernment, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the European Union, NATO, the UN secretariat and the International Maritime Organization.

The meeting, chaired by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Mark Kimmitt, also established teams to organize better operational and informational support for counter-piracy operations, as well as stronger powers to arrest, prosecute and detain pirates and to track financial flow related to piracy. There is also to be an industry liaison group, which shipping trade associations hope will provide a mechanism for their input.

A second session has been scheduled for March, in order to review progress and consider the admission of new members. Invitations to sign up have been extended to Belgium, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the Arab League.

The group noted "the primary role of Somalia itself in rooting out piracy and armed robbery at sea and the importance of assisting Somalia in strengthening its own operation capacity to fight piracy".

Suez Canal freezes fees as economic downturn and piracy hits vessel traffic

Egypt's Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has announced an indefinite freeze on transit fees, in a move effectively forced on the nationalized waterway by the global economic downturn and the Somali piracy crisis.

Shipping industry sources in the country are suggesting that considerable discounts are likely to be more readily available by negotiation this year, with ship-owners in a strong position to slice bills by perhaps a quarter or more.

The decision not to increase fees—formally confirmed by SCA chairman Ahmed Ali Fadel at a press conference in Cairo on January 5—comes after an unpopular hike in the order of seven percent last March, ostensibly justified by the need to step up dredging efforts.

Fadel stated that traffic through the canal is likely to fall by around seven percent this year, depending on developments in the world economy. As a result, the authority is officially keeping its pricing options open, and he added that he did not rule out a review later in the year. But, perhaps significantly, he did not give figures for transits or revenues in December, and there are indicators that the decline is already in the order of around 20 percent in terms of vessel numbers.

The Suez Canal Authority bases its charging policy on a complex formula designed to extract the maximum amount of revenue possible, while taking care not to kill the golden goose by making it cheaper to reroute via the Cape of Good Hope. On the basis that there were 21,080 transits last year, according to official statistics, and revenues of \$5.1 billion, the ball park average figure is something like \$242,000 a ship. But this hides wide variations, with many operators enjoying substantial discounts if they can provide volume business. Yet with some owners now rerouting on account of Somali piracy, the equilibrium has been upset and the authority seems obviously eager to hold on to traffic.

Nigerian rebels seize tug crew

Eight seafarers on board a tugboat were reportedly taken prisoner by militants in Nigeria on January 18, during an incident in which one person was killed and one injured on another vessel.

The initial target of the attack is thought to have been 1999-built 311,200 dwt *Front Chief* which came under gunfire while it was loading crude at a platform near Bonny, although none of its crew were harmed. But the assailants were apparently unable to board the very large crude carrier and turned their deadly attentions elsewhere.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, the main armed group in the region, said the attack "was carried out by one of our affiliates" in order "to send a clear message to the oil companies" that the Nigerian military cannot guarantee their security.

The abducted seafarers were eight Nigerian nationals on board the tug *Lamgalco Waxhill*, while the dead and injured personnel were among the crew of a second tug.

The International Maritime Bureau's London office said it had no further details of the latest incident, thought to be the second piracy attack in Nigeria so far in 2009.

Up Interstate 5 to Frisco



A contingent of SUP members from the Wilmington Branch headed north last month to attend the December Headquarters meeting. From left are "Red" Bell, Tom Larkin, former Branch Agent Duane Nash, Grant "Eli" Wegger, Paul Farrillas, Jose Duran and Paul Calais, current Branch Agent.

The smuggling butcher's bill

The United Nations has issued a report estimating the number of people confirmed or assumed dead last year after trying to flee the Horn of Africa region at more than 900 people.

Further, the UN High Commission for Refugees announced this month more than 50,000 people tried to flee the poverty-stricken and war-torn region last year, a 70% increase on the year before. Yet the death toll was much lower than the 2007 figure: 1,400 killed, the UN noted.

Most of the deaths were caused by drowning when smugglers threw their passengers overboard off the coast of Yemen. Traffickers also killed many migrants by beating them to death.

China to send pirate patrol ships

China has deployed three vessels to patrol the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters to ward off pirates. Two destroyers and a supply ship left Sanya in Hainan Province, China on December 26. Their mission is to protect Chinese shipping and vessels carrying humanitarian aid, according to a spokesman for the foreign ministry.

"Chinese naval vessels will strictly follow U.N. Security Council resolutions and international laws. They are willing to work with other countries and to take part in humanitarian relief tasks," the spokesman revealed in a statement.

About 20% of Chinese ships passing by the coast of Somalia between January and November of last year were attacked by pirates, official sources state. Seven ships either owned by China or carrying Chinese cargo and crew were hijacked.

Asia-Europe rates plunge to zero dollars

As the global financial crisis continues, Asia-Europe spot container freight rates have dropped to an unprecedented low of zero dollars, with cargo owners just paying for bunkers.

Industry sources in Singapore said there were a growing number of boxes being shipped from Asia to Europe at a freight rate of zero dollars with lines merely charging bunkers and other surcharges on top. Rates from South China to Europe have been offered at a freight rate of \$0.00 plus bunker adjustment factor for some time now. Spot box rates from North Asia are quoted at \$200 all in, which leaves little, if any, real freight rate beyond fuel cost recovery.

An industry source said that the market was "very bad." On the issue of zero freight rates from Asia-Europe, he said: "I've never heard of freight rates going to zero; this is a whole new ball game," he added.

Even with large cuts in capacity by lines across the board, resulting in reasonable utilization rates of around 80%, rates continued to tumble. Indicating just how badly hit the Asia-Europe trade has been hit by the global financial crisis, container volumes in the port of Singapore plunged 14% December, 2008.

The decline in the trade is expected to continue this year. "The case for trade decline to Europe out of Asia in 2009 is about negative 9%," said Transport Trackers analyst Charles De Trenck in a report, noting that it had heard a range of a 3%-13% contraction in the market.

Castaways found on floating fridge

Queensland, Australia, searchers have rescued two Burmese men who claim to have spent 25 days adrift on an icebox after their wooden fishing boat sank south-east of Indonesia around December 23.

A helicopter plucked the men from the Torres Strait January 17, after the large red box drifted from the site of the sinking, 200 nautical miles off the Australian coast. They reportedly lived off collected rain water and food scraps in the icebox. It is believed 11 other Burmese and nine Thai crewmembers did not survive in the shark-infested waters.

Canberra's Rescue Coordination Center said the two men were first seen by a routine Coastwatch flight 60 nautical miles northwest of Horn Island and are now in the care of "relevant Australian authorities".



SUP President's Report

January 12, 2009

TRANSPORTATION WORKER IDENTIFICATION CREDENTIAL

All hands are reminded that April 15, 2009, is the deadline for U.S. merchant mariners to obtain a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC). Members will not be dispatched on or after April 15, unless they possess this federally-required document.

THE ECONOMY AND SHIPPING

The global economic crisis has hit home. On January 9, the Union was notified by APL Marine Services that the *APL Singapore* will be drydocked a year early and the crew repatriated from Qingdao, China, on February 2, due to lack of cargo. She will resume operating on March 9.

The contraction of the U.S. financial system has forced Americans to drastically cut spending which in turn has affected exports to the United States. The effect on the TransPacific trade has been devastating and is growing worse.

Exports from China, excluding the month of December, plunged approximately 12% in 2008, with 10,000 of the 60,000 factories in China owned by Hong Kong interests closing or in the process of being closed in the coming months. Japan's exports fell by 27% in November, Taiwan's by 23% and Thailand's by 19%. The same thing is occurring in other nations throughout the world.

The economic crisis has also forced APL and its parent company Neptune Orient Line to layup a substantial number of vessels in its foreign-flag fleet.

In another cost-cutting measure, the company announced on January 8, that it was moving its regional headquarters from Oakland to Phoenix, in the second half of this year with 300 white-collar workers affected. APL has been headquartered in Oakland for 30 years after moving from San Francisco. A company spokesman stated the move to the "right-to-work" state of Arizona "will be a cost-effective base of operations." The company indicated that it will continue operating Middle Harbor Terminal in Oakland, although that facility is on shaky financial footing as only one ship per week calls there.

SUP-contracted Matson Navigation Company operates five vessels in the China/Long Beach trade and is not immune to the drop in imports/exports that has affected other carriers such as APL. The company has not indicated that it plans to reduce service on that run, however, economic conditions could force that to occur. In the Hawai'i trade, Matson's container traffic fell by 7% and its auto volume declined by 8% for the first nine months of 2008, ending September 30 — just before the economy really began to tank. The commercial press reports that tourism is down approximately 20% in Hawai'i which has a direct impact on cargo shipped from the mainland.

The long range effect of the economic situation on the membership is unknown as conditions remain in flux. The layup of the *APL Singapore*, for example, will negatively impact the SUP Welfare Plan as approximately 200 mandays (6x35) worth of contributions which provide benefits for members and their families and keep the plan afloat will be lost.

It is hoped that President Obama will propose and the Congress will enact an aggressive economic plan that gets this country out of the morass it's currently in. In the meantime, anticipate that shipping will tighten-up particularly if ships are withdrawn from service.

SIU-PACIFIC DISTRICT PENSION PLAN

In response to several queries by retired and active members on the status of the pension plan given the

collapse of financial markets and institutions, your secretary requested the Plan office to provide data.

On July 1, 2008, the Plan had \$118,432,216 in assets and as of January 7, 2009, \$113,794,009 in assets. The biggest drop were the funds invested in the Dodge & Cox stock portfolio. On July 31, 2008, the market value of Dodge & Cox investments were \$26,567,282. By January 7, 2009, they had dropped approximately 30% to \$18,436,125. However, the remainder of the plan assets invested in bonds with Wright Investors held their own or showed a slight increase. It should also be noted that the Plan pays out \$800,000 a month in benefits. Plan professionals indicate the Plan is still in good shape and it's able to pay current benefits, and projected benefits for future pensioners.

For trust funds that are exclusively SUP, the SUP Welfare Plan remained relatively stable although it has no cash reserves in the Regular Account and, therefore, depends on monthly employer contributions to remain on an even keel. As participants in the SUP Money Purchase Pension Plan and the SUP 401(k) Plan know, both took a hit from July 1, 2008 to January 7, 2009. The Money Purchase Plan declined from \$20,983,651 to \$18,128,688. The 401(k) Plan lost over \$700,000 — starting off with assets of \$3,759,293 and ending with \$3,025,686.

All other Union as well as non-Union plans throughout the nation suffered similar, if not greater, losses. The Trustees of the SUP Plans and SIU-Pacific District Plans continue to monitor all funds to protect the interests of the participants.

CHEVRON SHIPPING COMPANY

In accordance with the 2007-2012 collective bargaining agreement between the Sailors' Union and Chevron Shipping Company covering all unlicensed mariners in the company's U.S.-flag fleet, wages and wage-related items (overtime) shall increase by 3% effective February 1.

PATRIOT CONTRACT SERVICES

In accordance with the 2007-2009 crewing services agreement between the SUP and MFOV and Patriot Contract Services covering the *USAV Worthy*, effective January 1, there was a 3% increase in total labor costs for all ratings serving in the vessel.

For the SUP the new rates are as follows:

	Daily Wage	Daily Vacation	OT Rate	Daily Money Purchase
Bosun	\$95.48	\$38.19	\$20.16	\$10.61
AB	\$86.99	\$35.01	\$18.04	\$10.61

ATLANTIC MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION

On January 8, Vice President Dave Connolly, San Francisco Business Agent Bill Berger and your secretary met with John Pitts, President of the Atlantic Maritime Employees Union (AMEU) and Robert Paulo, that Union's Secretary-Treasurer, to discuss maritime issues.

The AMEU represents all unlicensed mariners in the five vessels operated by Polar Tankers, a division of ConocoPhillips. The AMEU has a similar organizational structure to the Exxon Seamen's Union, an SUP affiliate.

QUARTERLY FINANCE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Article XVII, Section 2 of the SUP Constitution, a Quarterly Finance Committee shall be elected at today's Headquarters meeting to review the finances of the Union for the fourth quarter of 2008, and report back to the membership at the February coastwise meetings. In the event the Committee cannot

be filled today, or is short-handed when it convenes, recommend that necessary committee members be shipped off the hiring hall deck as per past practice.

The Quarterly Finance Committee will meet at Headquarters at 9:00 A.M. on Monday, February 9.

HOLIDAYS

All SUP halls will be closed on Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday; a holiday under all agreements except Chevron Shipping Company and Foss Maritime Company. Branch meetings will be held on Tuesday, January 20.

Next month all SUP halls will be closed on Thursday, February 12 (Lincoln's Birthday), which is a holiday under the collective bargaining agreements with APL (Offshore and Shoreside), Chevron, Matson (Offshore and Shoreside) and the San Francisco Bar Pilots.

On Monday, February 16, all SUP halls will be closed for Washington's Birthday (Presidents' Day) which is a holiday under the collective bargaining agreements with APL (Offshore and Shoreside), Matson (Offshore, Shoreside and Ready Reserve Force vessels), Foss, and Patriot Contract Services. Due to the holidays, the Branch meetings will be on Tuesday, February 17.

Under the agreements with Chevron and the Bar Pilots, Washington's Birthday (February 22) is observed on Monday, February 23.

ACTION TAKEN

Quarterly Finance Committee: Nominated and elected: Arthur Thanash, Kaj Kristensen, William Berry, Romaine Dudley and Paul Fuentes.

M/S to concur with the balance of the President's report. Carried unanimously.

Gunnar Lundeberg

Labor movement to revive?

The New York Times reported on January 7, that the presidents of 12 of the nation's largest Unions met in Washington and called for reuniting the American labor movement, which split apart three-and-a-half years ago when seven Unions disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO and formed a rival federation: Change to Win.

The *Times* article did not name the Unions that participated in the meeting, except for the National Educational Association which is not an affiliate of either federation.

The Unions' presidents issued their joint call after the transition team for then president-elect Obama, led by former Congressman David Bovior, signaled that it would prefer dealing with a united movement, rather than a fractured one that often has two competing voices.

Since the *Times* published the story, there have been no statements on the issue from either the AFL-CIO or Change to Win as the *West Coast Sailors* went to press.

Connaughton departs MarAd

Maritime Administrator Sean Connaughton resigned his post on January 16, as the Bush Administration gave way to the Obama Administration.

"I am really proud of the work we have done here," Connaughton said of the Maritime Administration. He pointed with particular pride to its role as the lead U.S. agency in working with 22 other countries in fighting piracy.

Other MarAd successes he cited included programs to put more U.S. seafarers aboard LNG ships, the proposed Marine Highway scheme to make shortsea shipping viable and the reduction of the Ghost Fleet's size.

Until the Obama administration names a successor, MarAd will be led by James Caponiti, Associate Administrator for Policy and International Affairs.

SUP Branch Reports

Seattle

December 15, 2008

During the period shipped 2 Bosuns, 10 Able-Seaman, 2 Ordinary Seaman and 4 standby jobs. The jobs were filled by 2 A-cards; 9 B-cards; 3 C-cards and 3 D-registrants.

Registered during the period: 6 A cards for a total of 19; 5 B cards for a total of 27; 2 C cards for a total of 8.

Ships Checked

Matson vessels *s/s Maui* and *m/v Manoa* called twice in Seattle with little or no problems. The *President Jackson* and *President Polk* with Seattle gangs called in New York with returning crew members reporting no beefs on the Jackson and some ongoing clarifications for the Polk on gangway duties.

I represented the SUP at the following meetings: the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee; the King County Labor Council meetings; the Port of Seattle Freight Mobility meeting; the Seattle Master Shoreline Advisory Council meeting; the Marine Exchange of Puget Sound meeting.

Along with Berit Eriksson, SUP Training Representative, we met with Washington State Labor Council President Rick Bender to coordinate support for maritime recruitment and training legislation with Washington State's United States Senator Patty Murray. Senator Murray is the "Chair" on the Subcommittee on Transportation within the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations. With President Obama's Economic Stimulus Plan being formed it is fortunate that we have a Senator from a maritime industry dependent state at the top of the food chain in D.C., so to speak.

Along with several "labor leaders" I was invited to a briefing by Governor Gregoire of the impending budget crisis affecting Washington State. As with the rest of the country things look very grim around here. To put this in perspective, Rick Sawyer, Secretary Treasurer of UNITE HERE Local 8 (Hotel Workers) told us that hotel occupancy was down 75 percent in Washington State and he now has thousands of workers laid off and hotel chains selling their buildings.

Vince O'Halloran
Branch Agent

Wilmington

December 15, 2008

Shipping: 2 bosuns, 6 ABs, 3 ABDs, 1 STOS, and 54 standbys for a total of 66.

Registration: 42 A cards, 21 C cards, and 3 C cards.

Ships Checked

Manukai, Manulani, Singapore, Lihue, Pfeiffer, Maunawili, Matsonia, Mahimahi, Philippines, Thailand, and Korea.

Trouble with washdown again. It seems that there are some captains that believe that they can break the agreement at any time, with no penalty to themselves. Brothers, we need to find a path to bring a real penalty to the individual captains who steal from us. For a captain to be told on more than one occasion by his company and our Union how the washdown is to work and still break our agreement time and time again, is harassment and you have the right to work free from harassment. Remember it is the captain that is harassing you, not the company. Note to the captain this is a sanitary washdown not a vanity washdown. It is the front line of disease control for our country. Dead birds and human waste carry many pathogens, so let's have a safe and clean ship.

We had our Christmas party. Many came and as always we ate, drank and told stories and left with a warmed heart and smile. 'Til next year,

Yours in struggle,

Paul Calais, Branch Agent

San Francisco Business Agent

January 12, 2009

Visited and paid off the following ships and did clerk duties at Headquarters:

Mahimahi— Ernesto Lecarnaque, delegate: New bosun Joe McDonald. In the triangle run; no disputes.

Manoa— Pat Tice, delegate: Shipped a relief bosun John Kerlin. No disputes. Made twice. Question on connecting and disconnecting the molasses hose.

Maui— Tom Koppel, delegate: Questions on overtime, otherwise in good shape.

Mokihana— Phil Howell, delegate: Car and van carrier. Running smoothly. Sailed for Long Beach. Question on gangway in Long Beach.

APL Philippines— Hannu Kurppa, delegate; Augusto Silva, bosun: Clean pay off at Oakland. No disputes.

Washington Voyager— Will Williamson, delegate; Paul Seager, bosun: At Richmond Long Wharf. In good shape; no disputes.

Bill Berger

Vice President's Report

January 2009

In addition to the routine duties of the front office, made the following ships...

Ships Checked

President Truman: Greg Schauf turned the delegate's job over to Jesper Pfeil. Bosun Nick Hoogendam. In at Howland Hook with few problems except a clarification on time back. Section 40 of the APL Agreement provides for Time Back compensation only for work after midnight and before six a.m. on days of arrival and departure. The definition of arrival is simply all fast (gangway net secure), or, for departures, after the last line is let go. Arrivals and departures can also be taken in a safe and regular anchorage (partly defined by tradition and the regularity of launch service). Awaiting transit of the Suez Canal, while at anchor, does not qualify for time back under Section 40 because it is not a legitimate arrival.

President Adams: Delegate Steve Thompson got off in New York. Clarification on one-man watchstanding. Between Charleston and Port Kelang, including Jebel Ali, and between Colombo and New York, including Salalah, the ships are all on the one-man watch. Between Port Kelang and Colombo, and between New York and Charleston, until eastbound again, the two man watch is in effect.

APL Korea: William De Benedictis, delegate relieved by Remoni Tufono. Clarification on garbage sorting penalty payable under Section 11 (q).

APL Singapore: Charlie Duke, delegate. No beefs.

USAV Worthy: Robert Bourne, delegate. Shipped two AB's to join in Kwajalein to take the ship to an Australian shipyard. Email from the delegate indicates most things okay. Will layup and call back.

USNS Waters: Harold Uriarte, delegate. Successful mission off San Diego. Headed for the East Coast after high profile demonstration event. Various clarifications on watchstanding, standby work, and relief policy.

Mississippi Voyager: Mark Jones, delegate. Good email update provided the Union with necessary information on members, non-members, and registrants. If you want to do the right thing, if you want to acknowledge the hard work of those that came before you and those that will come after you, if you want some job insurance, then no matter what your present billet, you will make the most of your time at Chevron by joining the Union.

Washington Voyager: Will Williamson, delegate. HVAC problem will now wait for the yard. Bill Berger made the ship at the Richmond Long Wharf. Most things okay.

Cape Jacob: Jim Bailey, delegate. Mike Henderson, bosun. Sailed from South Korea for Sasebo yard. Ammo pay question settled. When moving explosive cargo internally, only ammo handling rate applies. When moving explosives as part of a load or a discharge of cargo, ammo rate and longshore rate applies.

Moku Pahu: Rhonda Benoit, delegate. Clarification on continuous time.

APL Steam Rack: Robert Greene, bosun. Recent injury under investigation. Operations are continuous despite terminal slowdown.

San Francisco Bar Pilots: delegates Louie Urbano and Steve Ross. Discussion on vacation schedules continues. Operators taking responsibility for viability and flexibility of the unit by developing trainees and filling out evaluation forms.

Foss Maritime Company: Sean Gaddis, Tom Tynan, Mel Jackson. Third boat proposal withdrawn by the Company due to economic climate creating poor business conditions.

Dave Connolly

Honolulu

December 15, 2008

During the month of November, dispatched the following: 2 bosuns, 2 AB mains, 4 ABWs, 3 ABDs, 2 ABD reliefs, 1 ABD return. These jobs were filled by 5 A members, and 10 B members. Also shipped 6 standby jobs filled by 4 B members and 2 C members, for a total of 21 jobs shipped.

Registered during the month of November, 7 A members, 3 B members, 1 C member, 2 D registrants. Registered to date are 18 A members, 5 B members, 3 C members, and 2 D registrants for a total of 28.

Ships Checked

Maunalei, Mahimahi, Maui and R.J. Pfeiffer.

On December 1, SUP members Steve Swinton, John Lindsey and I picketed the Pacific Beach hotel to support the ILWU Local 142 "laid off" employees in this planned one year anniversary rally. A Japanese delegation consisting of the All Japan Dockworkers Union (Zenkowan) and ITF Asia Pacific Region personnel were in attendance. There was a large turn out of Hawai'i Unions standing in solidarity with our Japanese Union brothers and sisters. This HTL corporation, under NLRB prosecution, is now being boycotted in Japan where most of their guests come from.

Had to go to the mainland for a family emergency. Wish to thank Bonny Coloma for holding down the hall and Patrick Weisbarth for running the December Union meeting. Pensioner Thomas Vail on the binnacle list.

Mike Duvall
Branch Agent

Support the
SUP
Political Fund

SUP members join pension ranks

The following SUP members joined the ranks of pensioners, bringing the total number of SUP members to 593:

Roy Bradshaw, 70, Book No. 5665, joined SUP in 1959, 48 years seetime.

Steven Cary, 65, Book No. 4801, joined SUP in 1990, 11 years seetime.

Eric Hands, 65, Book No. 18041, joined SUP in 1991, 9 years seetime.

James Meador, 63, Book No. 6507, joined SUP in 1988, 20 years seetime.

Milburn Pond, 57, Book No. 3864, joined SUP in 1991, 14 years seetime.

Dispatcher's Report

Headquarters—Dec. 2008

Deck	
Bosun	7
Carpenter	0
MM	8
AB	11
OS	1
Standby	10
Total Deck Jobs Shipped	37
Total Deck B, C, D Shipped	11
Engine/Steward	
QMED	0
Pumpman	0
Oiler	0
Wiper	0
Steward	0
Cook	0
Messman	0
Total E&S Jobs Shipped	0
Total E&S B, C, D Shipped	0
Total Jobs Shipped - All Depts. ...	37
Total B, C, D Shipped-All Depts. .	11
Total Registered "A"	47
Total Registered "B"	36
Total Registered "C"	5
Total Registered "D"	10