

THE FEDERAL MARINER

MSC * NOAA * ARMY COE * MARAD

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION'S GOVERNMENT SERVICES DIVISION

MSC Commander, NOAA Admiral Salute Federal Mariners



The commander of the U.S. Military Sealift Command (MSC) and the director of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine and Aviation Operations Centers recently praised the work of U.S. Federal Mariners and their respective unions at the Maritime Trades Department (MTD), AFL-CIO meeting on March 8 near Orlando, Fla. MSC Commander Rear Adm. Mark Buzby (center in photo at above-left, with SIU VP Government Services Kermet Mangram, right, and Asst. VP Chet Wheeler) said America's "national security and national defense" rely on civilian mariners and the unions that represent them. Rear Adm. Michael Devany (left in other photo, with Seafarers International Union President Michael Sacco) said of mariners' work, "There's a vital national security role as well as a commerce role." The MTD consists of 23 unions representing 5 million workers; SIU President Sacco also serves as president of the MTD. For more information about the meeting and the department, visit www.seafarers.org and www.maritimetrades.org.

Union Basics: What the SIU Does For Federal Mariners

The Seafarers International Union represents thousands of American workers aboard U.S.-flagged vessels in both the private and public sectors. One of its most important membership groups consists of mariners who are employed by the federal government aboard MSC, NOAA, and other government service ships.

During the past year or so, there has been a lot of media coverage surrounding unfair attacks on unions and their members, especially at the federal and state level. Ironically, some of the people who led and supported those attacks unintentionally helped reveal important, positive facts about unions, including how representation benefits employees and how workers and their unions flat-out were not to blame for fiscal woes in states including Wisconsin, Florida and others. Many in the general public who previously had been unfamiliar with the labor movement learned that federal workers – and their unions – are part of the backbone of the nation, and that they help provide important services to fellow citizens.

The labor movement has contributed to some major benefits for working people in this country and it's hard to imagine what life would be like today without some of the benefits that unions have secured. Things like time off for the weekend, workplace safety rules, worker's compensation, and other rights we have today have become almost an afterthought for many. But a look back at history, especially for merchant mariners, paints a very different picture – one that has changed significantly since the founding of the SIU.

"You can put me in jail, but you cannot give me narrower quarters than as a seaman I have always had. You cannot give me coarser food that I have always eaten. You cannot make me lonelier than I have always been."

That quote is from Andrew Furuseth, who is considered the father of the maritime labor movement. He was speaking before a 1915 Congressional committee and painted a picture of life at sea that seems unimaginable to most seamen today. Due to the suc-

cessful struggles of early maritime workers and their unions, things have definitely changed.

Today's federal mariner is part of a much broader family of seafarers and part of a rich maritime labor history. In the early part of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for seafarers to be kidnapped and pressed into service against their will. During voyages lasting for many months, mariners were overworked and fed rotten food. Quarters were in abysmal shape. Captains were permitted to beat or whip their crew. Seafarers had no voice in their work environment. The ability to organize a union for geographically dispersed seafarers was most difficult.

In their infancy, unions representing seafarers advocated for basic protections related to fair working conditions and pay issues. But today, the SIU does much more for its members, including federal mariners. The SIU plays a critical role in protecting federal mariners by advocating for issues such as fair compensation and working conditions, safety and health protections, vaca-

tion entitlement, health care coverage and many other issues and concerns.

On a daily basis, SIU Government Services Division representatives advocate for CIVMARS in discipline cases, loss of security clearances, workman's compensation issues, fitness for duty issues, retirement questions and other issues that have a real, tangible effect on the day-to-day lives of federal mariners.

In the past year alone, union representatives from the SIU Government Services Division have gained numerous advances for bargaining unit members in the federal maritime sector. The following is just an example of what the SIU representatives have accomplished:

NOAA: Negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement;

ACOE: Ships coverage for all the various vessels in the unit. Holding regular meetings with management on

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Welcome to the First Edition of The Federal Mariner

Welcome to the first edition of *The Federal Mariner*, a newspaper for federal service merchant mariners. *The Federal Mariner* is the official publication of the Seafarers International Union's Government Services Division and aims to become the source for news for federal workers aboard government vessels.

The mission of this paper is to help ensure that SIU members and other government services mariners are kept up to date on news that affects their livelihoods. This includes not only updates on the industry and government happenings, but also information about

the union, its functions, and what it does for its dues-paying members and other represented workers aboard MSC, NOAA, Army COE, and MARAD vessels. With the amount of misinformation about unions being spread by anti-worker entities, it's important for federal service mariners to know the truth.

The Federal Mariner welcomes pictures and story ideas from its readers. Contact editor Paddy Lehane at plehane@seafarers.org or call 301-899-0675 ext. 4328. Story material also may be submitted to your union representatives.

President's Column

Welcome Aboard!



Michael Sacco

On behalf of all your SIU Government Services Division officials, I welcome our brothers and sisters from the public-sector units to the first edition of *The Federal Mariner*. For now, our new publication is modestly sized, but I think you'll find a lot of useful and interesting content within these pages.

We believe this is the right time to start a newsletter specifically aimed at meeting your needs. The Government Services units are vitally important to the SIU and the government agencies you work for. Your work is critical for our country. At the same time, I encourage you to also continue reading the union's flagship publication, the *Seafarers LOG*, which features not only Government Services Division news but other stories about SIU members and our roles in the labor movement. Visit our website, too – there's a lot happening at www.seafarers.org, including a members-only section, links to our social media pages, a section specifically devoted to federal mariner news, and more.

Over the years, I've often said that I view our organization as a family, and that's a very sincere sentiment. As with any family, we may not always agree on every subject, but we know when and how to pull together. And let me be crystal clear on this point: Our federal-sector members are a valued part of the SIU. That has always been the case in my administration and that'll never change. We advocate as hard for the federal-sector mariners as we do for our private-sector Seafarers.

We have a lot of quick reads in this kickoff edition and I encourage you to check out all of them. But please pay particular notice to the brief about how the SIU enjoys strength beyond our numbers. That's a big part of who we are and how we're able to make gains on your behalf.

To those of you thinking about joining the union, I urge you to sign up today. The SIU is your champion – we are here to promote your work, protect your job and look out for your interests at all times. We aren't perfect – what organization is? – but I've spent my whole life in this union and I can tell you that our officials and staff members are dedicated, effective, hard-working people who do things the right way. In that regard, they're just like the vast majority of our members.

Finally, a word about the jobs crisis in America. I know that for many of our CIVMARS and other federal-sector mariners, there may not seem to be a direct link between the jobs our country has been exporting and the work you currently perform aboard ship. But part of that "strength in numbers" concept means we're all in it together with our brothers and sisters from other trades. Our fights are their fights; their fights are ours, too.

We can't win if only those of us directly affected by different issues face them one-on-one. Acting in isolation usually doesn't work. Instead, just like your crew aboard ship, we need all of us working together. As some of you may know, that's what happened last year in Wisconsin and Ohio, where public and private sector workers stuck together, engaged the entire community and scored some important political victories that ultimately affect all of America's working families.

By standing together with people and organizations that share our values, the numbers are on our side. That's something to remember not only with Election Day looming, but also in the years that follow.

Meet the SIU Government Services Representatives



Kermet Mangram
Vice President

Kermet Mangram is the Vice President of the Seafarers International Union's Government Services Division. Mangram is a graduate of the entry training program for merchant mariners at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Md. His first vessel was the *Sea-Land Seattle* where he sailed as a steward assistant in 1978. He came ashore in 1980 and became an instructor at the school. In 1981, Mangram was named patrolman of the New York port and became port agent there in 1987. The SIU executive board named Mangram assistant vice president for contracts and contract enforcement in 1992 and he was ultimately elected to serve as Government Services Division vice president in 1999, succeeding longtime SIU official Roy "Buck" Mercer. He was reelected to that position in 2000. Mangram is based out of the port of Norfolk, Va.



Chet Wheeler
Assistant VP

Chet Wheeler is the Assistant Vice President of the SIU's Government Services Division. Wheeler began his deep sea sailing career in 1966 working for the Military Sealift Transport Service, which was the predecessor to the Military Sealift Command of today. Wheeler sailed in the deck department in every position and received training in all deck department shipboard work. In 1996, Wheeler came ashore and devoted his time and efforts to representing MSC CIVMARS. In his role as the Assistant Vice President, Wheeler handles negotiations with MSC about policy, safety issues, and various other matters. In addition to his expertise with MSC matters, Wheeler is also responsible for helping oversee the other federal units represented by the SIU. In 2007, Wheeler was appointed to a three-year term on the Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health. The council, which is part of the Department of Labor, works on issues related to the safety and health of federal workers throughout the government.



Kate Hunt
Representative

Kate Hunt serves the SIU membership as a Government Services Representative. Hunt hails from a long line of merchant mariners and union members. She first entered the maritime industry as an AB for the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket Steamship Authority in 1976. She continued working there until 1980, serving as a union delegate for most of that time. Then, Hunt went shoreside for the National Maritime Union in the Port of Boston (the NMU merged with the SIU in 2001). Hunt served in a variety of positions within the NMU, including as Secretary-Treasurer, from 1980 through the merger in 2001. Following the merger, Hunt continued serving the membership as the Government Fleet Representative for MSC East Coast mariners, NOAA crews, and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) where she continues to work today.



Maurice Cokes
Representative

Maurice Cokes is another of the SIU's Government Services representatives who works primarily out of the Norfolk, Va. union hall. Cokes joined the United States Navy in 1969. He served as a Hull Maintenance Technician from 1969 to 1976. He then continued his maritime career by joining the SIU and going to work for the Military Sealift Command in 1976 as a DMAC. His first ship was the *USNS Aeolis*. After more than three decades of service, Cokes sailed on his final MSC ship, the *USNS Diehl*, and retired. Cokes transitioned to the shore as a joint SIU/MSC representative and joined the SIU Government Services Division as a representative in 2008. Cokes remains in that position to this day.

Affiliations Give SIU Strength Beyond Numbers

One of the basic tenets of trade unionism is that there's strength in numbers.

That's definitely the case for the SIU through its affiliations with other labor groups, most prominently with the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). The SIU is one of 57 autonomous affiliates of the AFL-CIO. Collectively, those unions represent more than 12 million workers. Also, SIU President Michael Sacco has served on the federation's executive council for many years.

For the SIU, the affiliation carries many benefits. But the biggest one arguably is this: When we have a major issue, we can count on the federation to help deliver our message in Washington, D.C., and wherever else we want it to be heard. When representatives from any organization representing millions of people knock on a door, that door tends to open.

Similarly, our union's president also is the head of the Maritime Trades Department (MTD), a constitutionally mandated department of the AFL-CIO. The MTD has 23 affiliates representing a combined five million members. And here again, when the SIU needs to advance a particular issue, the MTD helps us speak with the voices of millions.

These same concepts apply to another key SIU affiliation: our membership in the Federal Workers Alliance (FWA). The FWA is a

coalition of 22 unions representing a combined 300,000-plus federal employees (including mariners) and millions more in other sectors.

Those are just the basics. There also are state labor federations and area labor federations/central labor councils across the country, and we participate in many of them, too.

Finally, the SIU Government Services Division is part of another affiliation of autonomous unions known as the Seafarers International Union of North America (SIUNA). The SIUNA structure is

a lot like that of the AFL-CIO: It has a dozen affiliates collectively representing tens of thousands of members, but each affiliate elects its own officers, maintains its own constitution, etc. Within the SIUNA – and this is where the Government Services Division resides – is the separate but similarly named Seafarers International Union, Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters District/NMU. Those last three letters stand for National Maritime Union, which merged into the SIU in 2001.

How to Become an SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy. The union's web site – www.seafarers.org – includes printable PDF versions of forms that mariners may use to request and authorize payroll deductions for labor organization dues. The forms are posted at:

<http://www.seafarers.org/memberbenefits/civmar.asp>

Need help or additional information? Contact any of the following SIU Government Services Division officials or email siufedmariner@seafarers.org: Chet Wheeler, (510) 444-2360, extension 17; Kate Hunt, (718) 499-6600, extension 223; Maurice Cokes, (757) 622-1892.



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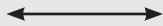
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2012: Golden Anniversary of Historic Order

President Kennedy's Breakthrough Assured Bargaining Rights for Federal Workers

The year 2012 marks an historic milestone for workers' rights in the United States. Fifty years ago, President John F. Kennedy signed landmark legislation that gave federal employees the right to collectively bargain on the job for the first time in American history.

Executive Order 10988, as it is officially known, gave workers employed by the federal government the right to join and form labor organizations that would represent their interests. These organizations would then be able to deal directly with the government, allowing for federal workers in a variety of sectors to be able to voice their opinions on a grander scale.

During his presidency, Kennedy was a supporter of organized labor and noted many of the benefits gained by workers joining together.

"Labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups," said Kennedy. "They have raised wages, shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor."

President Kennedy's executive order paved the way for a wide array of other executive and congressional decrees that dealt with workers' rights and labor relations with government management. The Nixon Administration ordered a

review of the legislation seven years after it passed. The Review Committee's findings included that "the 1962 order produced some excellent results, beneficial to both agencies and employees," and, "the new policies have contributed to more democratic management of the workforce and marked improvement in communications between agencies and their employees and through labor-management consultation and negotiations, improved personnel policies and working conditions have been achieved in a number of areas."

That report led to President Nixon's own executive order that expanded upon the 1962 order. Executive Order 11491 created the Federal Labor Relations Council and the Federal Services Impasse Council, a body charged with mediating labor disputes.

The subsequent administration, that of Gerald Ford, amended some of Nixon's provisions but continued to support the right for federal employees to organize, collectively bargain, and have an opportunity to fight for their rights.

Collective bargaining rights for federal workers changed the face of the federal workforce and, many argue, provide an excellent model for union/management relations in both the public and private sector.

In a press conference commemorating the signing of Kennedy's Executive Order, Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis took note of the importance of collective bargaining to the advancement of effective government.

"Whether we're talking about the shop floor or a government building, bargaining helps us deliver better services and better products because all Americans are shareholders in the business of government," Solis said.

And in the face of attacks on public sector union members in places like Wisconsin and Ohio, Solis is quick to point out that respecting the hard work done by federal employees is paramount to American values. For that, Solis says, Executive Order 10988 should be celebrated.

"We believe that no budget shortfall, no fiscal woes and no political election can be a legitimate excuse to betray our values," said Solis. "And in America, perhaps our most basic value is a belief that hard work should be respected. I'm so proud [of the] thousands of dedicated federal employees who serve their country with excellence and distinction.... Happy 50th birthday, Executive Order 10988. You've served this nation well for half a century and today, we commit ourselves to 50 more."

SIU, MSC Continue CMPI 610 Negotiations

Editor's note: This article is part of a series to advise MSC CIVMARS in the SIU Government Services Division about the ongoing efforts to complete Civilian Marine Personnel Instruction 610 (CMPI 610) negotiations. CMPI 610 covers Hours of Work and Premium Pay for all CIVMARS employed aboard MSC vessels.

The Seafarers International Union (SIU) and the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command (MSC) continued their ongoing CMPI 610 negotiations followed by a break in the negotiations during fall 2011. The last negotiation session took place at the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service between Jan. 30 and Feb. 3, 2012. The parties have now completed nearly all of the new language for the Instruction, with a few outstanding items remaining to be negotiated.

The parties have turned much of their attention to the financial modeling stage of the negotiations. Over the last several months, the parties have been engaged in an extensive financial modeling process to ensure that whatever changes are made have a minimal effect on the overall economic impact for CIVMARS as well as for MSC. This process involves analyses of ships' logs, payroll records and other data that documents the various work evolutions which may result in overtime and premium pay. Much of the recent financial modeling was done at MSC Norfolk (MSFSC) during January 2012.

In addition to the financial modeling, the parties are continuing to refine, clarify and organize the language of the revised CMPI 610 to ensure that the finished product is written as clearly as possible. Much of the criticism of the current Instruction has to do with its confusing and repetitive provisions.

Negotiators made every effort to address these well-founded concerns. At each bargaining session, the negotiators worked carefully to eliminate the

confusion, misapplication and inconsistent language currently found in the Instruction. The new document is being thoroughly examined to make certain that the language that was reached through these negotiations accurately reflects the intent of the parties in the final product.

As the parties complete the negotiations, work begins on the process of preparing to "roll out" the revised CMPI

610 in order to get the many users of this Instruction familiar with the changes and train all licensed and unlicensed CIVMARS about the new provisions to ensure the consistent application of the work rules.

The SIU will continue to update MSC CIVMARS about this important initiative in future issues of *The Federal Mariner* and *The Seafarers LOG*.



SIU Government Services Division members aboard ships including the *USNS Charles Drew* (left, pictured in the Arabian Gulf in early February delivering supplies to the guided-missile cruiser *USS Cape St. George*) are impacted by the Civilian Marine Personnel Instruction 610. More news on the negotiations will be featured in upcoming issues of *The Federal Mariner* (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Christopher S. Johnson).

Benefits of SIU Membership for Federal Mariners

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safety and scheduling issues. Contract renegotiations will happen later this year.

MARAD: Representatives negotiated the new performance management system, plus review of health and safety issues.

MSC: Representatives are negotiating provisions of CMPI 610: Hours of Work and Premium Pay; and CMPI 330: Employment; negotiated MSC's request to change how CIVMARS will be treated if they are injured OCONUS. MSC advised the SIU that it is no longer able to cover medical costs abroad

if a CIVMAR is injured and workman's compensation coverage is not accepted in an emergency. The union pressed for greater CIVMAR protections in this situation and is working on developing coverage options with MSC should a CIVMAR be injured abroad. These negotiations are ongoing for all three issues.

The SIU knows that one of the most important issues facing mariners is living and safety conditions aboard vessels. With the support of many unlicensed CIVMARS, the SIU litigated several shore side and afloat habitability cases since 2005. Winning each

case, awards included many hundreds of thousands of dollars in habitability pay for unlicensed CIVMARS and spurred MSC to make changes in shipboard habitability conditions. The union consistently addresses inadequate habitability issues for ashore lodging and vessels and is dedicated to making sure that safety rules are enforced. The SIU also carefully monitors health issues, including recent roach eradication efforts and other safety and health issues on MSC's newest vessel, the *USS Ponce*. On behalf of MSC federal mariners the SIU handles clean water issues and lead abatement concerns

on MSC's older vessels. The SIU also followed all the safety and health concerns and worked with MSC to ensure the health and safety of CIVMARS when the *USNS Bridge* passed through radiation areas as it went to assist Japan after last year's tsunami.

The times and conditions certainly have changed since Furuseth's famous quote before that Congressional committee. But it is clear that federal mariners still need someone watching their back. The SIU and its leadership will continue to go to bat for its members as long as the U.S.-flag maritime industry still sails.

Understanding Your Benefits And How to Secure Them

This column is envisioned as a regular feature aimed at delivering information that's useful to all federal employees about health plan, pension and other insurance issues.

Among other topics, this column will cover open season dates and ways to evaluate the types of health insurance options for you and your family.

Ever wonder when is the best date to retire? You will find guidelines and suggestions in this column along with many other tips to help you understand the pension benefits available to federal mariners and how to find resources to work your way through the complex federal government pension system.

Currently, to process pensions for all federal employees there is a significant backlog. Planning to retire within the next year? It is taking the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) five to eight months on average to process pensions for federal employees.

Here are some tips on processing your pension application. This is a summary only. Keep in mind that the Federal pension application process is timely and complex. If you have questions, be sure to ask your agency benefit representatives or call OPM so you do not make a mistake which may cost you time or money.

1. Complete your "Agency checklist of Immediate Retirement Procedures." You can get this from your agency or from the OPM website.

2. Make sure you complete and sign the Certified Summary of Federal Service - Form 2801-1 (CSRS) or 3701-1 (FERS).

3. Make sure all your service is fully documented in your Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

You can get copies of any missing documentation by contacting the appropriate federal record centers. If OPM has to verify information once it receives your pension application, its verification process will delay your application process.

4. Call your agency and make sure you know how to transfer your health insurance coverage from active status to retired.

5. Prepare your SF 50 Form - Notification of Personnel Action.

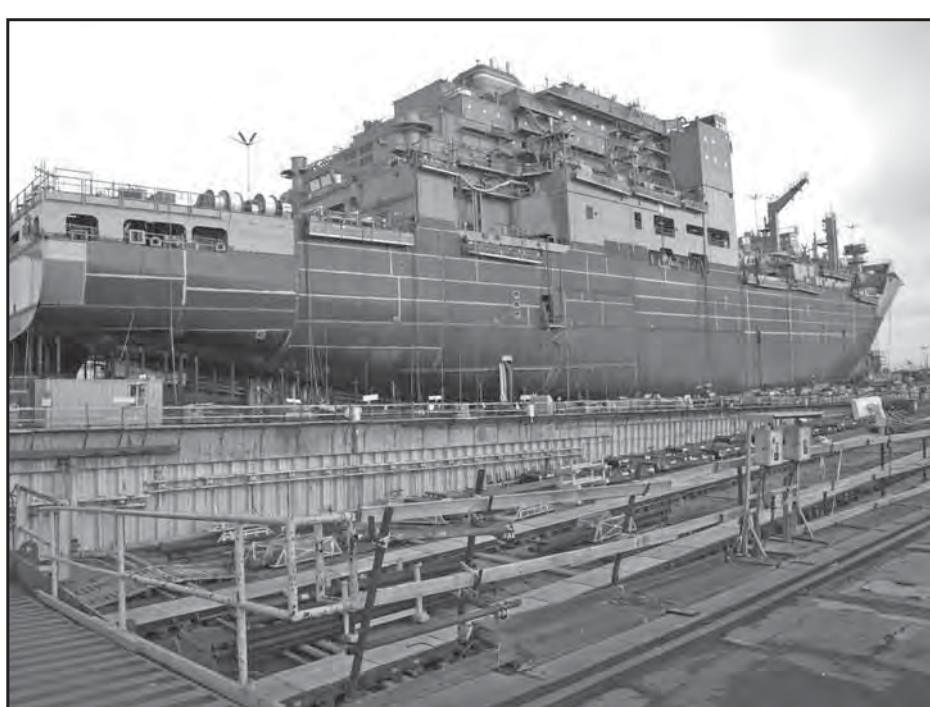
6. Make sure that you call your agency to request pension application pre-filing assistance to make sure that your retirement paperwork package is complete. Request information as to the correct address to send your paperwork.

7. Keep copies of everything you send to your agency or OPM.

There are government websites and private groups which publish information about the federal retirement process. The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is a private group that provides information.

USA.gov is a website that has lots of information for employees to learn about the retirement process. Log on to USA.gov and enter the search term retirement. The OPM website also has detailed information about what documents you will need to collect and submit.

Remember, your federal government pension is one of your most important assets in your retirement. You deserve a secure retirement! Take time to make sure your benefit is processed carefully and you get all the money and health benefit coverage you worked so hard to earn.



Final T-AKE Set for Christening

The *USNS Cesar Chavez* (shown in late December) is scheduled to be christened and launched into San Diego Bay during an evening ceremony May 5 at the NASSCO shipyard. The 689-foot vessel, named in memory of labor leader Cesar Chavez, is the fourteenth and final vessel in the U.S. Navy's T-AKE class. Members of the SIU's Government Services Division sail in the unlicensed slots aboard those vessels, which deliver food, ammunition, fuel and other provisions to American combat ships at sea.

Union Privilege, Union Plus Offer Discounts, Benefits for Members

One of the benefits of being an SIU member is that it opens doors to other opportunities and offers from fellow union-contracted companies. A great resource for any union member is Union Privilege and its collection of discount programs known as Union Plus. Union Plus is an assortment of discount programs, special offers, and other benefits that are available exclusively to union members and their families, including Seafarers.

Union Privilege was created by the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in 1986 to provide union members with consumer benefits. By using the purchasing power of millions of union members, Union Plus offers a variety of benefits to union members, dependents and retirees.

The benefits available through Union Plus run the gamut from discounts for gym memberships and rental cars to savings on AT&T wireless monthly phone bills. In addition, union members who utilize Union Plus benefits have access to a prescription discount card, a credit card, and even a discount for a Hawaiian cruise aboard the *NCL Pride of America* - a vessel that is crewed by SIU members. Union Plus also provides assistance for major purchases, such as mortgages and other loans.

Taking advantage of the various offers presented by Union Plus not only helps save money, but it also helps support businesses that hire union workers. That's an important consideration in any era, but especially during the current economic climate.

Union Privilege gives back to the union community in ways other than offering discount programs. Since 1992, Union Privilege has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarship money to union members and dependents seeking to get an education. Union Privilege has also established a Mortgage Assistance Fund which has helped more than 600 out-of-work union members who mortgaged their homes through the Union Plus Mortgage program. Union Plus has a disaster relief fund for members affected by natural disasters; following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Union Plus donated \$400,000 to union members who were in desperate need of assistance.

All members in good standing of the SIU are entitled to apply for Union Privilege and Union Plus benefits. For more information about the programs, SIU members are encouraged to contact their union representatives or visit the Union Plus website: www.unionplus.org.

Federal Mariners: Update Your E-Address Book!

SIU Government Services Division members should note that there's a new email address for contacting your union. The new address is siufedmariner@seafarers.org, and it replaces the old civmarsupport@seafarers.org.

