SIU, NOAA Complete Contract Negotiations

SIU Vice President Government Services Division Kermett Mangram, 64, has called an end to his career with the union. He retired effective Aug. 31 following 40 years of dedicated service.

Mangram is only the second person to hold the Vice President Government Services Division post, which was created in 1985 shortly after the old Military Sea Transport Union merged into the SIU. Mangram successively served as an advocate for the group’s membership and as the group’s primary representative in matters related to the employment conditions and the welfare and training of the union’s rank-and-file members.

SIU representatives will soon visit NOAA ships throughout the fleet to explain the contract to the crew and seek ratification. Additionally, there are other steps NOAA agency representatives will take to seek agency-head approval for the agreement. Employees will be updated on the process in future issues of the Federal Mariner and via other notices.

SIU Vice President Government Services Division Kermett Mangram Retires At 40-Year Mark

Briefly pausing for a photo are members of both negotiating teams. SIU personnel (from left) included Valerie McCaskill, Sam Spain, Mark O’Connor, Johnny Brewer and Phil White. NOAA personnel (right to left, starting at far right) included Hilary Fort, Michael Hopkins, Laura Young, Glenda Spears, David Zezula and Tina Eames.

SIU representatives will soon visit NOAA ships throughout the fleet to explain the contract to the crews and seek ratification. Additionally, there are other steps NOAA agency representatives will take to seek agency-head approval for the agreement. Employees will be updated on the process in future issues of the Federal Mariner and via other notices.

SIU Assistant Vice President Archie Ware described Mangram as a trusted friend and outstanding union official who would at nothing to help rank-and-file members. He was a one of a kind union official,” Ware said. “I met Kermett in Piney Point shortly after he came ashore to become a union official. I was there...
**President's Column**

**Labor Rises to the Occasion**

As we approach the end of another successful year for our union, I extend my sincere thanks to all of our federal mariners, our shipboard delegates, vice presidents, representatives, and staff for their collective roles in helping keep the SIU moving in the right direction.

Despite an array of challenges that were thrown our way during the past 12 months—the three executive orders impacting federal employees, the litigation that followed and the landmark case of Janus vs. AFSCME being among them—the SIU and the labor movement as a whole have continued to advance. In the face of adversity, we have not floundered. Instead, we have gotten stronger and more popular.

According to a report issued earlier this year by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, union membership last year grew by 262,000 to 14.8 million. Further, the report showed that 11.4 percent of working men and 10 percent of working women in the private sector belonged to a union. Public sector numbers were higher, where 34.4 percent of government employees are protected by a union. Many people learn what unions are all about, too — and they support us. A Gallup Poll released Aug. 31 said 61 percent of adults in America approved of labor unions, the highest percentage since the 65 percent approval record set in 2005. The same poll said the current labor union approval rate is up five percentage points from last year and is 13 points above the all-time low found in 2009.

All in all, these statistics show that there is good reason for optimism about the future of organized labor. At the same time, however, it would be foolish not to admit that there are some undeniable challenges ahead. This is true not only for the labor movement, but for all workers across the country as well.

What it means is that we must all step up to the plate and do what’s necessary to fully revitalize our movement. In my view, a good starting point would be to call on our elected officials— federal, state and local — to join us in the trenches and support our cause. We must demand that they do everything in their power to protect, strengthen and expand the freedom of American workers by making it easier for them to join together in unions.

That task now should be a bit easier to accomplish considering the results of the recent midterm elections. The labor movement helped elect a wave of union members and other pro-worker allies across the country in contest after contest. We proved that if you support working people, you’ll have our back. And we sent a resounding message to every candidate and elected official that if you seek to divide and destroy us, we’ll fight back with everything we have.

This was an historic election for working people. Union members in every community, city and state were a driving force in this election. We fought for our issues, for union candidates and for proven allies, and we filled the halls of power with our own.

Seven-hundred and forty-three union members were elected to office from the U.S. Senate to state capitals, including U.S. Sen.-elect Jacky Rosen (UNITE HERE) of Nevada; Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer; Minnesota Gov.-elect Tim Walz (Education Minnesota); and U.S. Reps.-elect Jahana Hayes (UNITE HERE) of Nevada; Michigan Governor-elect Gretchen Whitmer (AFT); Minnesota Gov.-elect Tim Walz (Education Minnesota); and U.S. Reps.-elect Jahana Hayes (CSEA; AFSA); and Connecticut and Ihlam Omar (AFSCME) of Minnesota.

Union members knocked on more than 2.3 million doors this election cycle. These results are meaningful but there is more to do. How can you make a difference? Step up in your work environment and support your union. Keeping in contact and letting us know what challenges you are facing is vitally important to protecting your interests on the job. Paying union dues helps guarantee that the SIU remains strong and continues to protect all mariners as they perform the essential work of supporting the missions at ACOE, NOAA, MSC and the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet.

Happy Holidays

The winter holidays once again are upon us. As indicated earlier, I am grateful to everyone for their hard work and continuing support.

On behalf of all SIU officials, I extend warmest wishes to all federal mariners, retirees and their families for a safe, healthy and happy holiday and a highly productive and prosperous New Year.

Additionally, I offer heartfelt greetings and prayers for all men and women of our armed forces — stateside as well as overseas — who are protecting our freedom. May all of your missions be successful and may you return home to your families safe and sound.

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**Did you miss a back issue of The Federal Mariner?**

**PDF copies of every edition are available at www.seafarers.org**

**Look under the News menu, then click “CIVMAR News”**

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**Introducing Jesse Ruth, West Coast Government Services Representative**

The SIU is pleased to introduce our new West Coast Government Services Division representative, Jesse Ruth. Many CIVMARs may know Jesse Ruth from his work with the Military Sealift Command at the Customer Services Unit (CSU) West.

SIU Assistant Vice President Government Services Division Chef Wheeler said, “Our Government Services team is very excited to have Jesse on board. I’ve worked collaboratively with Jesse during his decades-long career as the coordinator of the MSC CSU West. I’m looking forward to working closely with Jesse as he enters his new career representing federal mariners at the four agencies where we have bargaining units — MSC, NOAA, ACOE and the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet.”

Working at the CSU West, Ruth assisted many CIVMARs in their day-to-day administrative needs. Prior to starting his SIU position on the West Coast, Ruth attended a month-long intensive training program for union representatives at the Seafarers-affiliated Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland. Jesse met many of the SIU staff members and union officials and learned all aspects of the union’s history and operations.

While at the Paul Hall Center, Ruth also met with Sam Spain, the East Coast Government Services representative, to share information and discuss future projects that Vice President Government Services Division Kate Hunt, Wheeler and the entire SIU Government Services team will be addressing on behalf of federal mariners.

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**Know Your Workplace Rights: Taking Action Against Exposure to Unsafe Living or Working Conditions**

For decades, the SIU has protected and advocated for federal mariners at ACOE, NOAA, MSC and the SUISUN Bay Reserve Fleet who have been exposed to unsafe working and living conditions.

The SIU has most recently been advocating for CIVMAR working aboard the USNS Siouxs who may have been exposed to hexavalent chromium — an element which can cause harm to the respiratory system, liver, kidneys, eyes and skin. The exposure occurred while the vessel was undergoing a maintenance period.

Asbestos, lead, poor air quality, noise, unpleasant water, and other types of dangerous exposures require SIU representatives and federal mariners to work together to ensure shipboard protections are implemented, the problem is corrected, and the exposure is recorded in the federal mariners’ work and medical record. These are crucial steps once the danger is discovered.

Often, agencies will notify the union long after an exposure takes place. This is why the greatest protection starts with the crew — we need to know about the unsafe conditions and exposures as soon as possible. Mariners are most likely the first to know of these problems.

The sooner SIU officials are notified by the mariners, the better the union can take action to protect the mariners. To best address the issue, the SIU will investigate and gather information, and work with agency representatives or through the Safety Committee or Habitability Committee structures to correct the problem.

If solutions are not reached and more advocacy is needed, the SIU will file grievances, OSHA complaints or unfair labor practice charges to rectify the situation. To best protect yourselves and your shipmates, let us know of any problems. You can do this by writing to your representative or to siu@seafarers.org. If no email is available, call your SIU Government Services Division representative (contact information is listed on page 3).

Editor’s note: The Joint SIU–MSC Safety Committee will be meeting in early 2019. Have a suggestion? Contact SIU through the siu@seafarers.org e-mail.

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**SIU Directory**

Michael Sacco, President
Augustin Tellez, Executive Vice President
David Heindel, Secretary-Treasurer
George Tricker, Business Vice- President Contracts
Kate Hunt, Vice President Government Services
Chester Wheeler, Asst. Vice President Government Services

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For more information, contact the SIU at (202) 452-0100 or visit www.seafarers.org.
Deborah Kleinberg, SIU Counsel, will be leaving the SIU after 35 years of dedicated service. During her time with the legal department, Kleinberg worked on a wide variety of issues including on behalf of the Seafarers Plans, the SIU’s private sector vested units and the SIU’s Government Services Fleet unit representing federal mariners at four government agencies.

“The majority of Deborah’s time was spent working with our federal mariners and the union officials who represent them to ensure they were receiving the wages and benefits to which they were entitled and that they experienced the best possible days on the job,” stated SIU General Counsel Leslie Tarantola. “She has been extremely dedicated to this cause over the years and has done a very good job, which included winning major arbitrations on behalf of the union and the federal mariners the union represents.”

SIU Assistant Vice President Government Services Fleet Chet Wheeler described Kleinberg as “a consummate unionist and a joy to work with. She and her team are the best.”

Kleinberg had that vision and it always made a difference. She gave me absolute support.”

“Debbie is a credit to the SIU and the SIU’s collective bargaining committees,” said Matt Judge, SIU Communications Director. “She was also the driving force behind the launch of the Federal Mariner newsletter which provides a credit to the SIU and to the entire labor movement, and most definitely will be missed.”

Kleinberg’s work on behalf of the Seafarers Plans included establishing the Seafarers Aids Forum for Education (SAFE) with Dr. Elizabeth Reissman. This was the first joint labor-management work group convened to address the needs of mariners and shipping companies who were in need of information and education to assist seafarers with HIV/AIDS working on vessels. She was invited to share the results of that work at the World Health Organization Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Kleinberg also participated in setting up one of the original PPO hospital and occupational health networks for the care of Seafarers and their families.

In addition to advocating for SIU members, Kleinberg was appointed to the Department of Labor’s Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health (FACOSH), a group which works on health and safety-related issues across the government.

She has also worked closely with two federal labor groups: the Federal Workers Alliance, and the United Defense Workers Coalition. These organizations are composed of federal employees representing civil service employees nationwide. They have protected workers’ interests through advocacy and litigation, including the most recent lawsuit challenging three executive orders issued by President Trump’s administration in an effort to diminish workplace rights.

Kleinberg has worked directly with mariners to assist them with complex disciplinary actions and injuries, and has advocated for mariners who were in unhealthy and unsafe working conditions. She also handled grievances to ensure collective bargaining agreements were enforced.

Over the course of her career, Kleinberg has participated in scores of negotiations. She was the union’s lead negotiator during the CIVMARs negotiations. She participated in the retroactive “Comp Time for Travel” negotiations, which took several years to complete and resulted in CIVMARS receiving a significant time-off award.

Kleinberg lobbied a series of shipboard and shore-side habitability arbitrations, all of which had positive outcomes. The first shore-side habitability case resulted in a $350,000 buck award for the impacted CIVMARS and approximately $61,000 in attorney’s fees. These attorney’s fees were used to finance other habitability arbitrations. At the end of this multiyear litigation period, MSC and SIU representatives agreed to enter negotiations for a permanent payment for unlicensed MSC CIVMARS berthed in quarters lodging more than two individuals, the implementation of certain habitability standards, and the establishment of a joint habitability committee which requires that the SIU and MSC convene on a regular basis to negotiate about habitability modifications to all MSC vessels.

Reflecting on her time working for the SIU, Kleinberg said that it has “been a great honor to work with and to support Mike Sacco, and all of the SIU’s executive officers. I also have been incredibly fortunate to work for SIU’s General Counsel Leslie Tarantola, and with each of my great colleagues in the union’s legal department. Leslie Tarantola gave me the opportunity to work for an exceptional organization and supported me in developing a very fulfilling and challenging career.”

We also noted, “Working with all of the SIU’s Government Services unit officials and representatives has been a delight of my career, seeing how hard they strive each day to protect all federal mariners working in government. We are especially grateful to Chet Wheeler, assistant vice president of the Government Services Unit who continued in a multi-year sailing with MSC, we began working together in 1997 when he came aboard. We began doing work together with respect to the SIU’s Government Services Division. I knew very little about this sector of the union when I first started. Working together in these capacities, I am gaining a better understanding of the unique working environment of federal mariners and what it takes to represent them.”

In retirement, Deborah will continue her volunteer efforts for Montgomery Hospice and organizations doing voter protection and voter education work. She also plans to travel and spend more time in her garden, participating in citizen scientist projects including raising and releasing monarch butterflies as part of a yearly “Raise the Migration” effort.

MSC to Implement Crew Manning Pilot Program for Medgar Evers, Pecos

The U.S. Military Sealift Command (MSC) will implement a crew Manning pilot program covering the USNS Medgar Evers and the USNS Pecos beginning in January 2019.

How to Become an SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy and an important step in protecting your workplace rights. The union’s website – 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: www.seafarers.org/memberbenefits/civmar.asp

Contact Information

President: Pete Doherty
Ph. (205) 392-2070
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VP Mangram Retires After Decades of Service

Continued from page 1

Maryland. His first assignment was aboard the Sea-Land Se-attle as a steward assistant. “I received the same basic training as most Seafarers still receive today,” recalled Mangram. “That included the usual indoctrinations, first aid, CPR, industrial relations and social responsibilities aboard ships. I went to the training facility on a day or two, and then I worked very hard to prepare for the recently completed NOAA negotiations. He worked to recruit and establish the bargaining committee and organize and develop the proposals to be nego- tiated during the bargaining sessions. Mangram was one of the few SIO officials who had experience in both private and government services sectors. He used his knowledge from both operations to ensure that the federal mariners received the greatest possible protection. He then went on to work on the ship’s crew and aboard the ship when he was on station. He came home with a check for about $700 to his pocket. He had left behind a wealth of knowledge from his experience, and he knew how to conduct himself in a professional manner.

“Another part of going to college was that I was able to learn how to be a better man,” he continued. “I learned to be more patient, more understanding, and more empathetic to others. I also learned how to develop strong relationships with my co-workers and how to work effectively in a team environment.”

Mangram’s proudest moment as a union official was when he was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Maritime Union, which represented the interests of the rank-and-file members, and he worked hard to support them. He said, “I value my membership in the union because it provides me with a voice in the decision-making process.”

“Over the years, I have seen the union grow and become more effective in protecting the rights of its members,” Mangram added. “I was proud to serve as a union official and to be a part of the movement that has brought about so many positive changes for our members.”

“I am grateful to the union for the opportunities it has given me to contribute to the well-being of the maritime community,” he concluded. “I look forward to continuing my involvement in the union’s efforts to improve the lives of our members.”

Know Your Benefits and How to Secure Them

Completing, Filling Accurate Retirement Application Package is Vital

In 2018, there was a significant jump in retirement ap- plications for civil service employees. You may be thinking about joining the federal government or returning to retirement. It’s important to think through all the steps in this process carefully and prepare for the application. You can do this by understanding how your Social Security number, birthdate and marital status affect the information on this document (your retirement benefits). You must make sure all the information is correct and up to date. The information in the article will help you get a good start. You should always ask questions if you are not sure about any aspect of the retirement application process. The following tips can help you:

1. Check your retirement history. This is one of the most important things you can do to prepare for your retirement. Make sure to review your personnel file (OPF). This file will contain information about your employment and service with the federal government, including your pay history and retirement contributions. You may also be able to access your retirement benefits online through OPF Plus.

2. Understand your retirement benefits. You need to know how your retirement contributions will affect your benefits. There are two types of retirement benefits available to federal employees: Civilian Retirement System (CRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The CRS is a defined benefit plan that pays you a retirement benefit based on your average earnings and years of service. The FERS is a defined contribution plan that requires you to contribute a portion of your earnings to a retirement account. The FERS includes a defined benefit component (the Social Security Equivalent Benefit) and a defined contribution component (the Thrift Savings Plan).

3. Understand how your benefits are calculated. The government calculates your retirement benefits based on a formula that takes into account your earnings and years of service. The formula may differ depending on your retirement plan. The formula for the CRS is:

   P = 1.0% x [A x Y x M x D]

   where:

   P = your retirement benefit

   A = your average earnings

   Y = years of service

   M = months of service

   D = days of service

   The formula for the FERS is:

   P = 1.0% x [A x Y x M x D] + 1% x [T x E]

   where:

   P = your retirement benefit

   A = your average earnings

   Y = years of service

   M = months of service

   D = days of service

   T = your federal service credit

   E = your employer's contribution

4. Understand your retirement options. There are many different ways to receive your retirement benefits. You can choose to receive a lump sum payment, a series of payments, or a monthly annuity. You can also choose to receive your benefits before you reach age 60 or after you reach age 62. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best option for you.

5. Understand your retirement contributions. You need to understand how your contributions to your retirement account will affect your benefits. You should also understand your right to make additional contributions to your retirement account. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

6. Understand your retirement service. You need to understand how your service will affect your retirement benefits. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

7. Understand your retirement eligibility. You need to understand how your current employment will affect your retirement benefits. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

8. Understand your retirement travel and tuition benefits. You need to understand how your retirement benefits will affect your travel and tuition benefits. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

9. Understand your retirement life insurance. You need to understand how your retirement benefits will affect your life insurance. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

10. Understand your retirement health insurance. You need to understand how your retirement benefits will affect your health insurance. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

11. Understand your retirement annuity. You need to understand how your retirement benefits will affect your annuity. You should consult with a retirement planning professional to determine the best options for you.

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