



NMA REPORT #R-242

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Asserting our right "...to petition the Government for redress of grievances."

Amendment I, U.S. Constitution, Dec. 15, 1791

GCMA's First Years Accomplishments

April 24, 2000

Dear Mariner:

It's hard to believe that our Association started just one year ago. As members of the newly elected GCMA Board of Directors, we feel honored to be able to work with you to build a strong Association.

We would like to review some of GCMA's most important accomplishments over the past year:

- We've formed the largest and most influential organization of working Gulf mariners ever. More than 1,000 mariners and their families – captains, engineers, deckhands, in fact mariners with all license sizes and ratings, inland and offshore -have joined the Gulf Coast Mariners Association, and we're growing every day.
- We've stood up to boat companies who want to deny workers the right to join an organization that provides them with a voice. We rallied at Port Fourchon and in front of Edison Chouest Offshore and demanded that all mariners have the right to freely join the GCMA.
- Many of our members mobilized with our community allies to re-elect Louisiana Senator Mike Robichaux -- a true friend of working mariners.
- Watching the return of drilling activity in the Gulf, we've started our "Give It Back!" initiative demanding that the companies give back the jobs, the wages and the benefits they took away when times were tough.
- Gulf mariners are now represented at all U.S. Coast Guard public meetings. No longer does the U.S. Coast Guard get feedback just from company or industry representatives. Now they hear from real mariners about working conditions in the Gulf and on the rivers, about STCW, safety and license issues.
- We've brought the concerns of working Gulf mariners to the U.S. Congress – both the House and Senate – and to other key government agencies that make decisions that impact the lives of mariners.
- We started a Mutual Aid and Protection Committee to help mariners with problems they have with the U.S. Coast Guard, license or on the job issues.
- We negotiated a series of benefits that mariners and their families can take advantage of – dental services, legal aid, a prescription card and lots more. Now we're working with local merchants to provide even more benefits by pooling our purchasing power.

But as successful and eventful as our first year has been, we're just getting started! In 2000, the GCMA will fight for:

- **A Voice for Gulf Mariners.** Working mariners in the Gulf need a voice on the issues important to our families. We will actively participate in all public meetings hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard and other government agencies considering matters important to mariners. We will institutionalize our communications with the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure that we have regular input into decisions. We will be watchdogs in our industry and work to strengthen procedures for reporting companies who break the law.
- **Safe Jobs.** We will publicize the grim fact that jobs on offshore and inland vessels are among the most dangerous in America. We'll fight for stronger regulations aimed at reducing deaths and injuries on the job. We'll call attention to a major

problem in our industry -- the lack of enforcement of the 12 hour rule, the scandal of undermanned vessels and the bone-tiring fatigue suffered by Gulf mariners. We'll agitate around an agenda for reform and press the industry and the U.S. Coast Guard for major changes.

- **Corporate Accountability.** We will continue to work with allies in the LaFourche-Terrebonne Community Roundtable and join with other like-minded organizations throughout the Gulf region fighting for the rights of all working people. We will launch an Offshore Accountability Project and demand that the companies we work for respect the rights of workers and the communities where they are located.
- **Effective and Affordable Training.** We will continue our work to ensure that training requirements provide maximum opportunity for advancement in the industry yet minimize the financial burden on individual mariners. We will continue our fight against restrictive licenses for offshore and inland mariners.
- **A U.S.-Flag Fleet.** By joining with others in maritime labor and the marine industry, we'll work to preserve the Jones Act that guarantees jobs for American mariners.

To achieve these goals, we need your continued participation. As your annual membership expires, we urge you to renew and to sign up a friend.

If our first year has taught us anything, it is that there is truly strength in numbers and that people working together can make a difference.

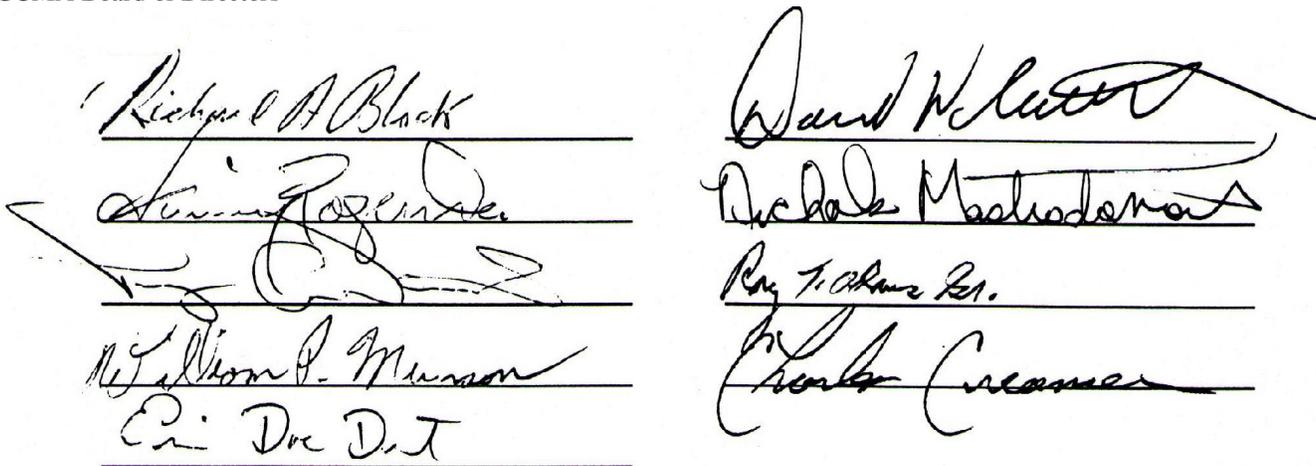
Finally, as many of you know, mariners we have met and spoken with have expressed an interest in forming a union. They understand that matters such as pay rates; health insurance, grievance procedures, manning or pensions can only be addressed through union representation and collective bargaining. In other parts of the U.S. and the world, organized mariners have gained the kind of wages, benefits and working conditions that those of us who work in the Gulf of Mexico can only dream about. Gulf Coast mariners are asking, "Why can't we have those things here?"

In response to requests from many offshore workers, the five maritime unions that have helped get the GCMA started have begun supporting offshore mariners in gaining union representation. The Gulf Coast Mariners Association applauds this development and wishes every success to this effort. While the Gulf Coast Mariners Association is not and will never be a union, we do encourage those who want to improve their pay, benefits and working conditions to think about helping organize a union where they work.

We also realize that just as the boat companies have tried to intimidate mariners from joining the GCMA and have misrepresented what the GCMA is doing, these companies will also try to keep the mariners working for them from organizing with these unions. Just as we have pushed for mariners' interest with the U.S. Coast Guard and the industry, we will also support the efforts of these five unions to help the offshore mariners who want to organize a union.

Sincerely,

GCMA Board of Directors



The image shows two columns of handwritten signatures, each with a horizontal line underneath. The left column contains four signatures: Richard A. Block, Kevin Fogel, [unclear], William J. Munson, and Eric Doe D.T. The right column contains four signatures: David W. [unclear], Nicholas Mastodora, Ray T. Adams Sr., and Charles Creamer.

P.S.: GCMA HAS MOVED! Our new office is at 7 Professional Drive in Houma. Our membership meeting - the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. - will be held at our spacious new office starting on May 15. Our phone and fax numbers and email address have not changed.