



# THE DISPATCHER

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Photo by Robin Dymo

**Golden Anniversary:** The Pacific Coast Pensioners Association celebrated their 50th anniversary on September 18-20. Over 250 people attended the event which was held in Long Beach.

## Pacific Coast Pensioners Celebrate 50th Anniversary

The 50th Annual Convention of the ILWU's Pacific Coast Pensioners Association (PCPA) was held September 18-20 in Long Beach, California where delegates marked their important organizational milestone. The convention was hosted by the Southern California Pensioners.

### Golden Anniversary

"This year's event is extra-special because it marks our 'Golden Anniversary' in honor of the 1967 founding of our group with help from ILWU President Harry Bridges, who encouraged us to come together, grow and become a vital part of the ILWU, which we continue to do," said PCPA President Greg Mitre.

### Record Attendance

The Southern California Pensioners Group rolled out the red carpet for all the delegates, officials and special guests who attended the event. Record-breaking attendance of over 250 people were packed into 4 days of events that began with a spirited PCPA Executive Board meeting on Sunday where issues were discussed and debated in front of a large group of observers.

### Bags full of history

Sunday was also check-in day when delegates and guests first met the large team of volunteers composed of Convention Committee members who helped everyone register and receive their official 50th Anniversary Convention bag filled full of goodies. Included were boxes of See's candy (union-made), a book of remarkable poems written by Jerry Brady, the Poet Laureate of the ILWU Pensioners. Also included was a beautiful hardcover book: "The Port of Los Angeles, An Illustrated History from 1850 to 1945," which was provided courtesy of the Port of Los Angeles.

### Delegates and members meet

A reception was sponsored by Local 13 members on Sunday evening to welcome delegates, allow them to mingle with old friends and meet with active members and officers, including Local President Mark Mendoza and Vice President Gary Herrera. The event was held on the beautiful grounds of the Maya Hotel in Long Beach, which served as convention headquarters for the next four days. Drinks were served along with countless appetizers and a popular taco bar. Members of the

ILWU Auxiliary hosted a Hospitality Room that became "the place to be and be seen" during the welcome reception and it remained open during the following four days, providing delegates and guests with complimentary beverages, fresh fruit, snacks and a place to meet, relax, and catch-up with old friends.

### Opening with three anthems

Monday marked the official opening of the Convention, beginning with the National Anthems of the U.S., Canada and Panama. Words for each anthem were displayed on large screens which encouraged everyone to join in and sing words that were previously unknown to many in the audience.

### Honoring the departed

A somber moment of silence followed the anthems, in honor of Pensioners who had passed-on since the last convention. Included was a special tribute to George Cobbs Jr., well-known and much-loved pensioner from the S.F. Bay area who helped countless ILWU members win the struggles against drug and alcohol addiction during his lifetime. A complete list of the dozens more pensioners who were honored by *continued on page 4*



## ILWU Local 13 members among injured in Las Vegas

**A**s the *Dispatcher* was going to press, we received word that three ILWU Local 13 members, Mike Ljubica, Doug Cotter and Ambrose Russo were among those shot at the Route 91 Harvest Festival Concert in Las Vegas on October 2.

Ljubic was shot in the back while protecting his wife. He has undergone multiple surgeries and is currently in a medically-induced coma but expected to survive.

Cotter was struck in the arm by a bullet that also travelled to his abdomen. He underwent surgery and is

still hospitalized. Russo was shot in the leg and is still recovering. They were among a group of longshore workers who travelled to Las Vegas to attend the concert.

"Our thoughts and best wishes go out to our injured brothers and to all of the victims of this senseless

act of violence," said ILWU International President Robert McEllrath.

"Mike's selfless act to protect his wife showed the heart of a true hero. We will continue to keep all of those effected by this tragedy in our thoughts and pray for their quick recovery," said Coast Committeeman Frank Ponce De Leon.

## Sisters in harmony & solidarity

**E**mpowerment, organization and representation were all present at the 38th Biennial ILWU Federated Auxiliary Convention that was hosted by Auxiliary 1 in North Bend Oregon on May 19-21.

Eight of our twelve active Auxiliaries were able to send officers, delegates and guests who all joined together in a spirit of solidarity to address issues and make agreements to help us succeed. An Executive

Board meeting was held in addition to three days that were packed full of meetings, goal setting, history lessons, nominations, elections and more.

We broke into committees in order to better tackle our work and share an abundance of important information. Motions were made to pass seven new constitutional resolutions; six of which passed and will be added to our new Constitution when the new version is printed.

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**Meeting and making plans:** Among those attending the Auxiliary Convention were (L-R): Kandis McEllrath, Jorja Campbell, Kristen Stockwell, Denise Miken, Peggy Burkes, Evelyn Alford, Nancy Coleman, Roxanne McCready, Danielle Sandoval, Margo Erickson, Victoria Sowers, Ida Taylor, Kim Grendahl, Pat Richardson, Marilyn Richardson, Desiree Fierro, Janis Paetz, Marie Cortez, Tina Carranza, Kathy Clark. The newly elected officers are President Ida Taylor, Vice President Victoria Sowers, Secretary Marie Cortez and Treasurer Danielle Sandoval – plus Area Vice Presidents Tina Carranza (California), Denise Miken (Oregon) and Nancy Coleman (Washington).

## Commonwealth Club building preserves ILWU history



**Honoring longshore history:** Bay Area Pensioner President Lawrence Thibeaux (left) and ILWU International Secretary Treasurer Willie Adams in front of the plaque commemorating the 1934 Waterfront Strike outside of the Commonwealth Club's new headquarters.

**W**ith new buildings now rising everywhere in San Francisco, one recent ribbon-cutting stood out because it included surprising details about the ILWU's early history and turbulent origins.

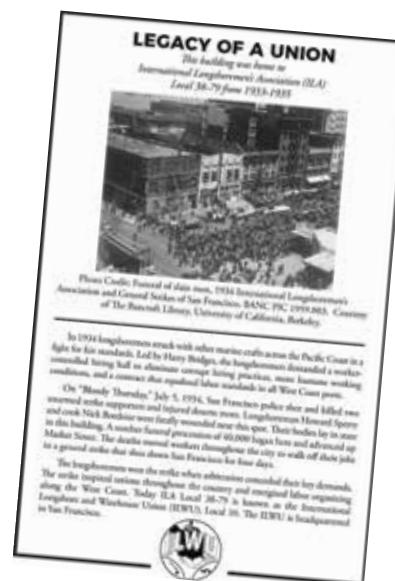
### 1934 longshore strike headquarters

The story begins almost ten years ago when the Commonwealth Club – America's oldest public-affairs forum – began searching for a site to build their new headquarters in San Francisco. They discovered

a long-abandoned property with an old collapsed office building facing the Embarcadero waterfront in front and Steuart Street in back. They soon realized this run-down property served as the office for longshore workers in Local 38-79 of the International Longshoremen's Association between 1933-1935 when they struggled to build a union that eventually became today's ILWU.

### Preserving worker history

"Other developers might have just demolished the old building and ignored the history, but the Commonwealth Club took it seriously and worked with us," said



ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. He explained that ILWU officers were contacted early by the Commonwealth Club and were invited to help preserve the building's unique history. The International officers assembled a committee to assist with historical documentation for the site, consisting of ILWU staffer Robin Walker, who serves as the ILWU's Librarian, Archivist and Education Director; ILWU historian Harvey Schwartz; and Bay Area pensioner John Fisher. The effort resulted in a productive collaboration that lasted years as the project unfolded..

### Hosting public forums

The cooperation yielded results beginning in 2014 when the Commonwealth Club hosted a public forum for ILWU leaders and allies to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the 1934 Maritime Strike. Local 10 President Melvin Mackay served as Program Chair and fellow Local 10 member/Coast Benefits Specialist John Castanho offered remarks, along with comments from historians Robert Cherny and Harvey Schwartz, Labor Council Director Tim Paulson and SF Chronicle reporter Carl Nolte. A recording of the sold-out event remains accessible on the Club's website.

### Building's exterior preserved

Another significant gesture made by the Club to honor the building's history came when a decision was reached – at some expense – for architect Marsha Maytum to preserve and restore the building's original crumbling exterior façade on Steuart Street.

### Plaque to tell the story

In addition, the Commonwealth Club worked with the ILWU to design a plaque installed on the building's Steuart Street entrance to honor the events in 1934 including the Waterfront Strike and San Francisco General Strike that gave rise to today's ILWU.

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## DISPATCHER

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# IBU breaks ground on new apprenticeship training center in San Pedro

The Inlandboatmen's Union, the marine division of the ILWU, held a groundbreaking ceremony for the training hall of their newly established apprenticeship program. The IBU apprenticeship is a two-year program that will provide mariners with the skills and knowledge to safely enter into a career in the marine industry. The training center will also provide classes for experienced mariners to renew their credentials in San Pedro. This will save them the added expense of having to travel to San Diego or to the Pacific Northwest. The program will consist of 3,000 hours of on-the-job training and 420 hours of supplemental instruction and training.

## It started on a napkin

"It started on a paper napkin at a lunch meeting," said IBU Southern California Regional Director John Skow. Kenyata Whitworth, who will serve as the programs first Apprenticeship Director first suggested the idea of an apprenticeship program. "At first I was hesitant because I thought apprenticeship programs were something for the Building Trades, but I eventually came around to the idea."

Whitworth said he was inspired to start a local maritime apprenticeship program after talking with a friend who had recently joined the industry. "It's very difficult to gain experience in the industry," Whitworth said. "Employers are hesitant to hire people without sea time and sending people into the industry without training is not always the best thing for them." Whitworth said his friend, who had three small children at the time, enrolled in the Tongue Point Seamanship Academy in Oregon in order to get the training and experience he needed. The Tongue Point Academy is a Job Corp program and requires that students be at the Acad-



**Important partnership:** Representatives from LAUSD and the IBU at the groundbreaking of the new apprenticeship hall in San Pedro. From right to left: Gilidga Pollard WIOA Navigator/Advisor, Paul Pidoux Apprenticeship Advisor/LAUSD, Kenyata Whitworth IBU Apprenticeship Director, Marcella Baker LAUSD, Terri Mast IBU National Secretary, Eric Bland IBU Apprenticeship Instructor, John Skow IBU Southern California Regional Director.

emy for 20 months. "He had to sacrifice time away from his family to get the training he needed. I don't want others to be forced to make that same choice."

"This program will be great for the IBU," said IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast. "There's a great need because this is an industry that is growing." Mast said that the Southern California program can serve as a model. "Once this program gets going, we can take it to other regions and hopefully more employers will see the value in supporting this type of training program."

## Important partnerships

A key partner for the IBU in the process was the Division of Adult and Career Education (DACE) at the Los Angeles Unified School District. Skow said their assistance was instrumental. DACE helped the IBU apply for a grant from the State of California that provided the start-up funds for the program and DACE also helped to secure classroom space at Harbor Occupational Center and to develop the program's curriculum.

Pacific Tugboat Services (PTS), an IBU signatory, has also been at crucial partner in setting up the program. Steve Frailey from PTS spoke at the ceremony. He said he was grateful to be a part of establishing the apprenticeship program, which he said would help bring qualified mariners into the industry.

## Honoring Victor Kaplan

The training hall was named in honor of Victor Kaplan, a labor attorney and long-time friend of the IBU. Kaplan, who recently turned 103, is the oldest practicing member of the California State Bar. He began his law career in 1935. At one point, he even tried, unsuccessfully, to get a job with the ILWU. Kaplan said that he was inspired by the New Deal to "take up the cause of the working man." His commitment to helping workers was solidified by his experience working on the frontlines of the Potash strikes



Southern California IBU Regional Director John Skow

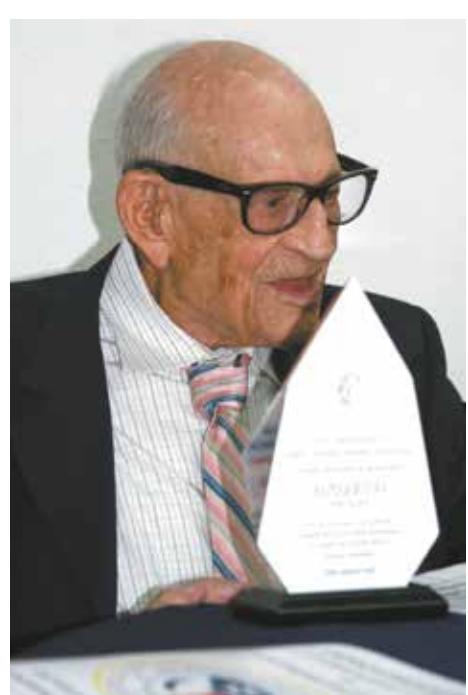
in Trona, CA in 1941 where he provided free legal-aid for union members while also picketing in solidarity with the workers.

Throughout his eight-decade career, Kaplan has fought for agricultural workers, miners, atomic and chemical workers and the IBU. He can often still be found at the IBU hall in San Pedro on Fridays offering legal assistance.

"Victor has been coming here every Friday for the past 9 years or so, offering his knowledge without a price tag," Skow said. "This is why we wanted to dedicate the training hall to him, because we want to take that same model and apply that here. We want to share our knowledge with our apprentices."

## Finishing touches

The program will train 50 new apprentices for the industry over two years once the program is up and running. The buildout on the Victor Kaplan training hall is underway. The facility will include Desktop Ship Simulators, computer-based simulations to train students in marine radar. A date has not been set for the official start of classes but Skow said he is hopeful that instruction can begin by the end of the year.



Labor attorney Victor Kaplan



Apprenticeship Director Kenyata Whitworth

# Pacific Coast Pensioners Celebrate 50th Anniversary



**Volunteer Committee:** The Convention Planning Committee has been hard at work since last year's PCPA Convention. Auxiliary 8 members were an important part of the Committee and the success of this year's convention.

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delegates after passing during the previous year are contained in the Convention's official minutes and record.

## Officials in attendance

An introduction of ILWU officials and special guests who attended the convention was the next order of business. ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, Vice President Ray Familathe were all introduced, along with Coast Committeemen Cam Williams and Frank Ponce De Leon. Also attending were a dozen local union presidents from up and down the coast, each of whom was introduced, welcomed and invited to deliver brief remarks during the proceedings.

## Overview of the Port

The Convention was held along the waterfront of America's largest Port complex that encompasses both the Port of Los Angeles and Port of Long Beach, which are administered under separate political jurisdictions. Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Gene Seroka delivered the convention's first major address with opening remarks and a power point presentation that emphasized growing consolidation

within the global shipping industry that now has fewer but more powerful multinational players.

## Time to learn and enjoy

Monday afternoon was dedicated to some fun and an educational tour. A fleet of modern buses took delegates on an informative Labor History tour with guides on each bus who noted points of interest, emphasizing dates of important longshore and other labor struggles. The final stop included a tour of Local 13's new dispatch hall that is expected to open soon.

## Catalina King tour

The highlight on Monday was a memorable cruise, dinner, and dance aboard the historic Catalina King vessel that accommodated 300 guests who were wined and dined while enjoying a fascinating narrated tour of both the ports of Los Angeles & Long Beach. Providing facts and details about the Port of Long Beach was PCPA's own President, Greg Mitre, who at one time used to work as a Captain of the Catalina King. Details about the Port of Los Angeles were provided by Port Director Gene Seroka, who was onboard to give an impressive account of the Port's operations. Dinner served onboard during the tour featured a fabulous BBQ selection of ribs, chicken and brisket, provided by retired ILWU crane operator Marvin Hardley & his amazing family. Live music and dancing moved many onto the floor thanks to the popular local band, "Time Machine," that performed hits until the Catalina King returned to her berth in Long Beach.

## International guests

Tuesday provided delegates a chance to hear from distinguished guests who travelled thousands of miles to attend, beginning with Londor Rankin, President of the Panama Canal Pilots Union. Rankin was responsible for initiating contact many years ago with Vice President Familathe that eventually led to the formation of the ILWU's Panama Canal Division. Captain Rankin, gave a detailed report regarding the newly-expanded canal that recently opened – along with some

important labor and safety struggles between workers and their employers in the Panama Canal Authority (ACP). Rankin delivered good news about growth in the Panama Canal Division, thanks to a new group of stevedores who are ready to affiliate. Another very interesting report was presented by Raul Feuillet, who is also a Panama Canal pilot and President of the Panama Canal Pilots Credit Union. He explained how important the credit union has become to provide retirement savings to retirees there who would otherwise receive only modest Social Security payments. Following the Panama reports, brothers and sisters from Canada and Alaska were welcomed and presented reports. Canadian pensioners continue to have a strong program and good participation. The Alaska report was focused on the dramatic growth and organizing that has taken place during the past year, making them now the fastest-growing region of ILWU pensioners.

## Overview from "down under"

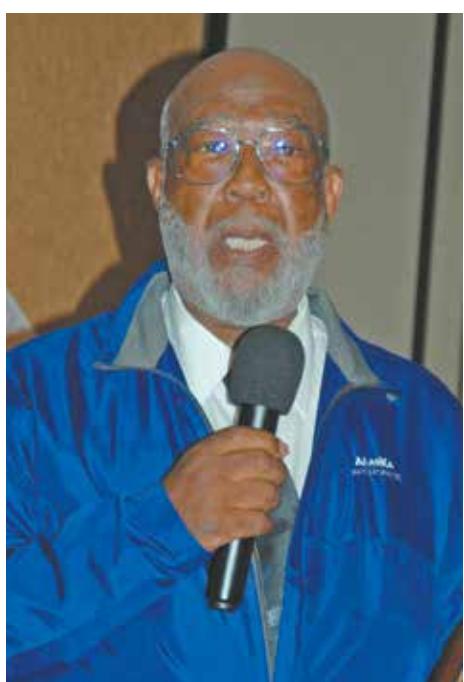
Following lunch, President Barney Sanders of the Australian pensioners delivered a rousing speech that had many listening closely to better appreciate his sharp wit, charming accent and unusual Aussie expressions. As President of the Maritime Union of Australia Veterans (the Australian term for "Pensioners"), Sanders also travelled thousands of miles from his home in Brisbane to deliver a blistering account of labor struggles in Australian ports involving automation, mass lay-offs and firings, along with employer demands to "casualize" the maritime workforce. He noted that workers down under are facing the same ordeals as workers elsewhere, because the same global employers are increasingly controlling operations in ports around the world. He pointed to the current effort by big employers in Australia to eliminate local workers from staffing coastal vessels, similar to efforts underway in the U.S. to eliminate the Jones Act, which requires U.S. vessels serving domestic ports to hire U.S. crews.

## Awards

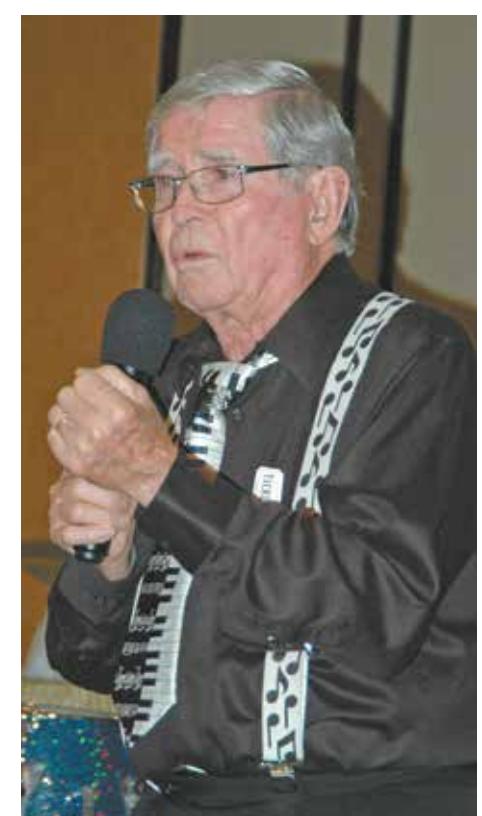
Tuesday night featured a big awards banquet. After a delicious dinner, several awards were presented, beginning with Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, who received the "friendly politician" award. Hahn has been a great friend of the ILWU for many decades, beginning with her service as a Los Angeles City Council member, then U.S. Congresswoman, and now County Supervisor. George Cobbs Jr., was honored posthumously with a special award for his many decades of service to the ILWU, particularly his leadership in the Drug & Alcohol Recovery Program. Next up was the Jesse and Lois Stranahan Award, which is given to an individual who represents the values of the ILWU and goes beyond the call of duty. Southern California Pensioner Herman Moreno received this year's award from PCPA President Greg Mitre who fought back tears as he explained how Herman has been a lifelong mentor to him and many others.

## Special honors

The last award of the evening was presented to International President Bob McEllrath, who was honored for his years of dedication and service to the ILWU. McEllrath was first presented with an epic poem composed by the ILWU Pensioner Poet Laureate, Jerry Brady, then thanked repeatedly for serving in so many different capacities over the years, including Coast Committeeman, International Vice President, and his current post as International President. At the previous ILWU Convention, McEllrath announced he would not seek another term and that he was looking forward to becoming a pensioner soon – reminding the Award Banquet audience that he will soon be joining their ranks. After receiving more thanks and praise from the pensioners for his lifetimes of service and support, McEllrath was presented with a special gift that he is expected to utilize during his upcoming retirement.



**Honoring George Cobbs:** Bay Area Pensioner Norm McLeod helped to honor the legacy of George Cobbs who passed away in July.



**Stranahan Award:** Southern California Pensioner Herman Moreno was the recipient of this year's Jesse and Lois Stranahan Award, which is given to an individual who represents the values of the ILWU and goes beyond the call of duty.

During his earlier speech, McEllrath said: "This is the last time I'll be speaking to you as your International President – and the next time I'm here, it will be as Big Bob the pensioner." McEllrath said the Pensioners remain a critical part of the union, and noted, "We're all still in the struggle and when a union brother needs help, we'll be there."

#### Conclusion, resolutions & Portland

Wednesday marked the culmination of the Convention, including the election of PCPA officers. Elected to serve without objection by acclamation were President Greg Mitre, Vice President Lawrence Thibeaux, Recording Secretary Kenzie Mullen and Treasurer Christine Gordon.

Several resolutions were considered with all passing unanimously on Tuesday:

- Support for new "Medicare for All" legislation introduced by U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, California Senator Kamala Harris, and others;
- Support for Alaska Pensioners including a visit by Vice President Lawrence Thibeaux to attend their upcoming convention on October 4;
- A letter urging the Coast Committee to continue doing everything possible to implement improvements for pension benefits to surviving spouses;
- Support for a documentary film effort to interview 50 waterfront families living and working in LA and Long Beach;
- Opposition to President Trump's racist remarks and hate groups he has encouraged;
- Directing the PCPA to implement a 2009 resolution to create an Education Committee.



**Honoring the President:** ILWU International President Robert McEllrath (right) was given a special award from the convention by PCPA President Greg Mitre (center). The award recognized McEllrath for his dedication and service to the ILWU. Southern California Pensioner and PCPA Poet Laureate, Jerry Brady, (left) composed an epic poem for McEllrath

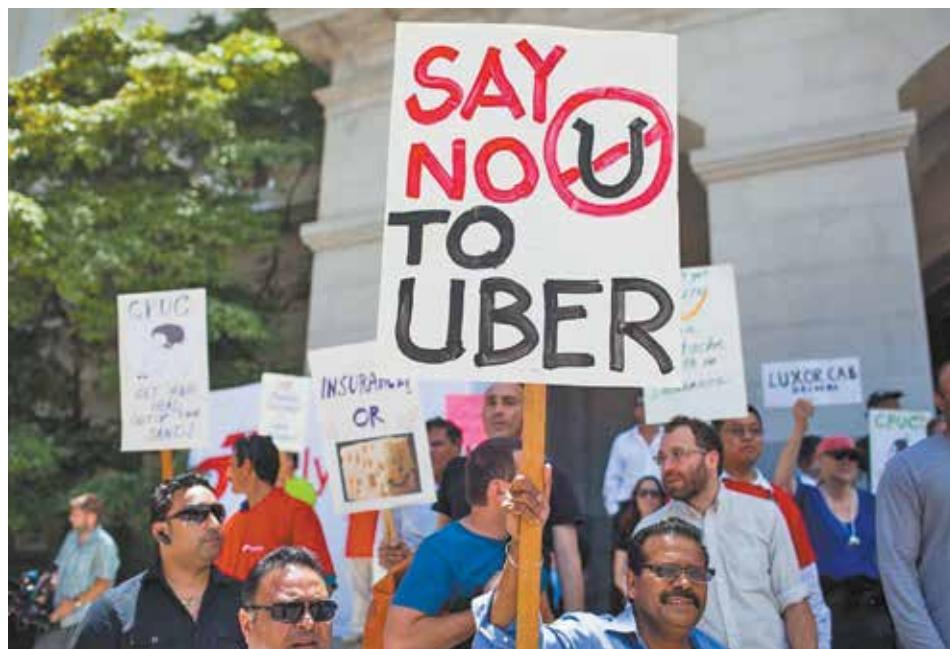
Prints of a group photo were distributed on Wednesday morning to each delegate, thanks to efforts on the previous day by Local 13 member Robin Doyno.

President Mitre thanked all who attended the event and brought the entire committee of volunteers up on stage, and they received a rousing round of applause. After announcing the next ILWU-PCPA Convention will be held in Portland, Oregon in September of 2018, delegates adjourned and headed home.



**Panama Solidarity:** Panama Canal Pilots President Londor Rankin gave a detailed update on the ILWU's Panama Canal Division

## Unions cheer as Uber is kicked-out of London



Uber – the anti-union, "disruptive" high-tech darling of venture capitalists – got a bloody nose in London late September from public regulators who refused to issue the company a license and declared them "not fit and proper."

This wasn't the first time Uber has clashed with governments in cities including Austin, Texas, Paris and Rio de Janeiro where there have been bitter conflicts. But London is Western

Europe's largest city, the region's tech-hub and the biggest body so far to "dis" the "disruptive" technology giant.

#### Unions speak out

London's rejection followed militant protests by taxi drivers in Paris, Berlin and Madrid. The decision was celebrated by local and international labor unions because Uber has compiled such a long record of worker and public criticism in such a short period of time, including allegations that workers were cheated, passengers deceived and labor standards lowered for taxi drivers.

#### Plenty of problems

Uber has been accused and sued for lying and concealing details about accident insurance and driver background checks. Drivers say the company cheated them out of fair pay, tips, benefits and employee status. Pedestrians and bicycle riders have complained that city streets are much more dangerous. San Francisco now has 45,000 new "ride-sharing" drivers on city streets, and they account for a majority of some traffic violations, according to SF police testimony in late September. "Walking on workers for profit"

Paddy Crumlin, head of the Maritime Union of Australia's (MUA) and President of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), a global body that includes the ILWU, praised London's decision for getting tougher with Uber.

"This is another nail in the coffin for a business model that walks all over the rights of workers and the safety of passengers in the name of profits. We are not opposed to new technology in transport, but we are opposed to a return to Victorian working conditions. Workers today need good jobs and strong regulation to keep corporate greed in check," said Crumlin.

#### Business model based on subsidy

Crumlin's critical stance is shared by business analysts who have questioned Uber's behavior in the pages of Fortune, Forbes, the Washington Post and other outlets. They wonder about the company's dependence on massive venture capital funding – \$15 billion since 2010 – that sustains Uber's massive losses in order to achieve their goal of dominating the marketplace for ride-sharing today, and self-driving cars in the future. Critics say Uber has operated at a loss for eight years since it started, and may continue losing money for years to come. The company reported a loss of \$708 million in the first quarter of 2016 and lost \$991 the quarter before. But the losses are all part of a business model that subsidizes driver pay, lures riders with unsustainably low rates, and manipulates laws here and abroad to avoid regulations and taxes. Uber has ignored local ordinances in Virginia, Texas and other states where local governments tried to regulate Uber and other ride-sharing companies.

#### Taxpayers foot the bill

Uber's funding doesn't just come from private venture capital. Taxpayers in San Francisco and other locations are providing Uber and other hi-tech giants

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# Union strength on display at LA Harbor Coalition Annual Labor Day march and celebration



**Volunteers made it happen:** The volunteer from Auxiliary 8 staffed the annual burrito breakfast held at the Longshoremen's Memorial Hall before the parade got underway. Photo by Michelle Meese.

**T**housands of union members, families, and community supporters lined the streets of Wilmington for the Los Angeles Harbor Coalition's 38th annual Labor Day Parade. The march and picnic remains one of the largest Labor Day celebrations in the country organized by and for workers and it is the largest Labor Day celebration on the West Coast.

## Breakfast burritos

The day started with breakfast burritos sponsored by the Southern California Pensioners group and Auxiliary 8. Over 1,500 burritos, along with juice, coffee, cupcakes and cookies were distributed to hungry marchers at the Longshoreman's Memorial Hall. While marchers fueled up for their day, Pacific Coast Pensioner President Greg Mitre introduced several area-elected officials that are friends of the ILWU and the Southern California Labor Movement.



**Speaking out:** ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe spoke at the Labor Day picnic on behalf of the ILWU. He said it was important for workers to stand up against those that would try and divide the working class.

## Parade

The parade started a few blocks from the Local 13 Dispatch Hall and ended at Banning Park for an all-day picnic and barbecue. The ILWU pensioners float, following just behind the Color Guard, led the march down Avalon Boulevard. They tossed candy to the children and families that lined the parade route. The march was filled with workers proudly walking behind their union banners, while high school marching bands and flag corps, classic cars and union motorcycle clubs filled the parade route along through downtown Wilmington.



Children gathered along Avalon Blvd with their families to cheer the Labor Day parade in Wilmington.

## Spirited picnic

The picnic and barbecue featured free hot dogs, chips, sodas and sno-cones sponsored by area unions. Several officials from Los Angeles County unions spoke at the picnic. They addressed the many threats that the Trump administration posed to unions and workers including attacks on rights of immigrants and the DACA program. ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe spoke on behalf of the ILWU and said labor's fight was about more than just wages, hours and working conditions. "Our International Executive Board took a position that we had to resist and to stand up against fascism, racism, sexism and all the phobias that divide the working class," Familathe said.



**Marching together:** ILWU members marched with family members of all ages in the annual Labor Day parade. Photo by Michelle Meese.

# Unions cheer as Uber is kicked-out of London

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with big tax breaks. Two years ago in 2015, the city Controller estimated that Uber and other hi-tech companies had received \$34 million in tax breaks that year, and the amount is probably higher today. Those tax breaks are going to companies that claim to be worth billions; Uber's valuation alone is estimated at \$68 billion, and some believe it will soon be \$100 billion. Others say Uber is worth far less, but as a private company without public shares and public documents, an accurate valuation is hard to determine.

## Tax avoidance

To qualify for special tax breaks, Uber established their headquarters building on San Francisco's Market Street, a few blocks from the ILWU International offices. Now the com-

pany has added a new headquarters building in the Netherlands, believed to be part of a massive tax-avoidance scheme, similar to ones used by Apple, General Electric and other corporations to avoid paying billions in U.S. taxes. Ironically, the Netherland is now in the process of banning Uber from operating their car-sharing platform there, one of a half-dozen nations that are taking similar action.

## Prices too good to be true

A recent ten-mile trip in the Bay Area may illustrate why the economics of ride-sharing may be "too-good-to-be-true." The rider paid Uber \$12.00 for a trek from Marin County across the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco. The company took 20% of the total, leaving the driver with about \$9.60. But that was before the driver

had to pay a \$6.00 bridge toll, leaving just \$3.60 to cover his wage plus the cost of gas, oil, maintenance and depreciation on an expensive automobile. Other drivers in different circumstances may do better, but this example illustrates why the system's "success" deserves closer scrutiny. In 2015, one transportation analyst used Uber's own financial documents to conclude that the company was charging only 41% of what their ride service actually costs to operate.

## Rates will eventually rise

Analysts and Uber officials admit the company will eventually be raising rates, but probably not until they eliminate the competition and achieve their goal of market domination. One estimate last year put Uber's market share at 78%, which seems impressive, but

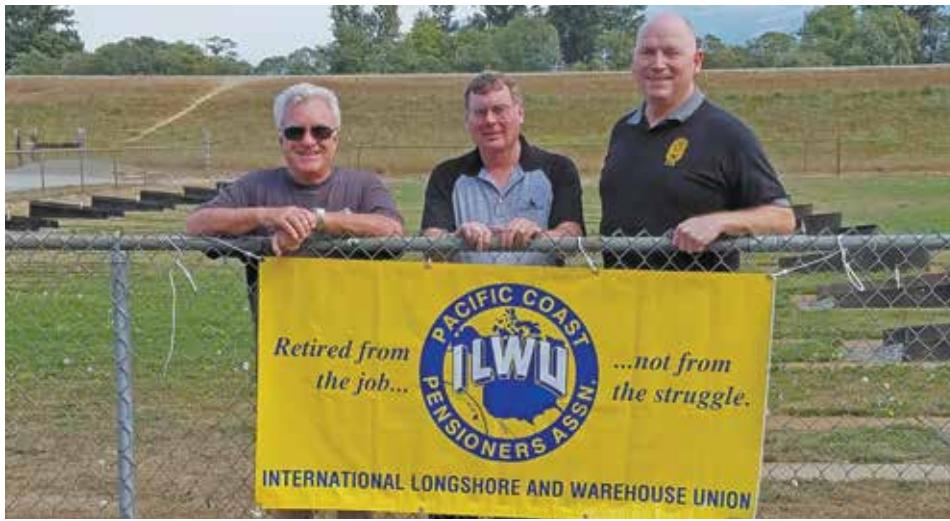
the company appears determined to capture an even larger share by quashing Lyft and other competitors.

## Predatory behavior?

Similar business practices were once considered vile, predatory and sometimes illegal. During the turn of the 19th Century, workers and farmers organized against monopolies or "trusts" formed by oil, steel, railroad and grain companies that killed competitors and fixed prices. The result was social unrest, formation of worker political parties and anti-trust legislation. Anger against big banks and Wall Street rose again during the Great Depression in the 1930's, sparking a new round of political action, mass organizing of workers by the ILWU and other unions, and more laws to control corporations

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# Washington State labor celebrates Labor Day



**Union candidate:** ILWU pensioner Rich Austin, Sr. (L) stands beside Northwest Washington Central Labor Council Mark Lowry (center). Both are backing City Council candidate Karl de Jung (R) who's running for Ward 6 in Sedro-Wooley, WA. Mr. de Jung is a rank-and-file member of The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. Labor Council President Lowrey is a rank-and-file member of the Amalgamated Transportation Workers Union (ATU) Local 843.

Union members, their families, and community allies gathered on September 4 for the annual Labor Day picnic hosted by the Northwest Washington Central Labor Council. Fajita tacos were served with meat barbecued by members of the Amalgamated Transportation Workers Union, with plenty of trimmings and side dishes to assure that no one left hungry.

"Up here in northwest Washington, we're encouraging union members to run for office," said Karl de Jung, who belongs to the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employee (IATSE). Mr. de Jung recently decided to run for a seat on the City Council of Sedro-Wooley, WA. "It's important that Union members are contributing funds each year to support union-friendly politicians, but having our own rank-and-file members in these positions is even better," he said.

ILWU pensioner activist Rich Austin Sr., said: "Karl is a longtime social justice supporter who makes

no bones about being a union member and strong labor advocate." Austin has known de Jung for decades and is supporting the campaign.

"In a few weeks I'll be facilitating a discussion among labor activists in our area about how we can encourage more union members to serve on boards and commissions at the city, county and state," said Austin. "These bodies have the potential to influence contract negotiations, community planning, public services, recreational opportunities, and responsible job growth – so it's important for us to be involved."

Austin is encouraging local union members to learn more about Boards and Commissions in their area by contacting city and county clerks to ask about vacancies, then lining up broad support to get appointed, including support from our ILWU locals.

"These bodies make important decisions, provide us with important local contacts and connections, and serve as a great training ground for union activists that could hold a higher elected office," said Austin.

## Sisters in harmony & solidarity

*continued from page 2*

It was decided that our main goal over the next two years will be to increase auxiliary membership. Each auxiliary has come up with creative ideas to accomplish this goal by using advertising, social media, and appearing at local events – all aimed at generating more interest and involvement in the Auxiliaries.

We were reminded about the importance of knowing our history during a private tour of the new Coos Bay History Museum that was generously arranged by our hosts. All of us were proud and excited to learn more about the role that the ILWU has played in strengthening the communities of North Bend and Coos Bay.

The Convention concluded with us nominating and electing our new officers. Each auxiliary cast their allotted number of votes after allowing time

for members to caucus. We are proud to announce that our Auxiliary officers elected in 2017: President Ida Taylor (Auxiliary 8), Vice President Victoria Sowers (Auxiliary 35), Secretary Marie Cortez (Auxiliary 8) and Treasurer Danielle Sandoval (Auxiliary 8). Our Area Vice Presidents are Tina Carranza of Auxiliary 8 for California; Denise Miken of Auxiliary 5 for Oregon and Nancy Coleman of Auxiliary 35 for Washington.

Our 38th Biennial convention was a major success and we were able to accomplish all of our business matters in a spirit of solidarity. The Federated Auxiliaries look forward to working together to help the ILWU succeed in serving the working men and women of our communities on the west coast.

Kandis McEllrath,  
Secretary Local 4,  
Auxiliary 11, Vancouver, WA



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# Commonwealth Club building preserves ILWU history

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## Educational video inside

Inside the buildings entrance and reception area, the Club is developing an educational video that will further showcase the building's history involving worker struggles.

## ILWU in opening ceremony

And finally, on September 12, 2017, the grand opening ceremony for the Club's new headquarters included remarks by ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer and Port Commission President Willie Adams – along with acknowledgement of the ILWU's historic role made by Commonwealth CEO Gloria Duffy, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee and Supervisor Jane Kim. Also recognized and participating was ILWU Bay Area Pensioner President Lawrence Thibeaux.

Adams and Thibeaux unveiled the newly installed plaque to more than 100 guests and reporters who attended the event.

"This building is where Harry Bridges and other leaders planned the 1934 waterfront strike that changed history in San Francisco and other west coast ports – and sent out shock waves that inspired workers around the world," said Adams. He also noted that the restored building is just a few doors down from the corner of Steuart and

Mission where two strikers - Howard Sperry and Nick Bordoise – were killed by police on July 5, marking a date that became known as Bloody Thursday. Bodies of the slain martyrs were taken inside the old longshore offices where they laid in repose for several days, allowing thousands of mourners to visit and honor their sacrifice.

## Lectures about ILWU & 1934

After guests passed by the newly-installed plaque to enter the light-filled, energy-efficient building, they were treated to food, drink and brief lectures scheduled throughout the afternoon from local historian Rick Evans, Architect Marsha Maytum and Club CEO Gloria Duffy – all of whom acknowledged the ILWU's role in the new headquarters building.

## A growing institution

The Commonwealth Club was founded more than a century ago and now has 20,000 members who attend hundreds of speeches and debates each year. Public radio broadcasts of keynote speakers reach an even larger mass audience.

"Everyone who visits the Club's new headquarters will also learn something about the ILWU's past and our work that continues to this day," said ILWU International President Robert McEllrath.

## Unions cheer as Uber is kicked-out of London

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and investors. Enforcement of these laws weakened after the crisis passed and corporate power grew in Washington. In recent decades, politicians have grown increasingly fond of Wall Street investors and high-tech companies in Silicon Valley. Trump's new push to lower taxes for these and other corporations, along with super-rich individuals, is a new indicator of how far America has gone down that road.

## Amazon's similar strategy

Uber isn't the only start-up that's using massive funding from venture capitalists to incur losses while stomping out the competition. Amazon seeks to dominate retail and delivery markets. But unlike Uber, Amazon directly employs about 180,000 workers in the U.S. with many of them receiving benefits. Another 100,000 will be hired during the coming year, but even when that total hits 280,000 it will still be a small fraction of Walmart's 1.5 million employees. Like Uber, Amazon also uses vast numbers of "independent contractors" to deliver products. In this way, both Uber and Amazon are cheating workers out of Social Security, disability, benefits or other payroll taxes for their allegedly "independent" workers. Both companies also share an appetite for soliciting hefty taxpayer subsidies as incentives to locate new

facilities. Amazon is now soliciting bids to locate a new headquarters building somewhere in the U.S. that will employ thousands of workers; the highest bidder is expected to pay billions in public subsidies to win the contest.

## Traditional organizing is tougher

Uber's "independent contractor" model means organizing traditional unions is much more challenging. Ironically, taxi-drivers who face the same legal obstacles as independent contractors, were among the first to win improvements through organizing a "union" like New York City's Taxi Workers Alliance. Uber workers have used a similar approach to successfully organize legal and political actions that have yielded some concessions and financial settlements. With anti-union courts now weakening labor laws covering traditional, organizing these "advocacy and action" groups may become more common and necessary. Unions that support and show solidarity to these non-traditional efforts may find themselves in good company with new friends, allies and some public support.

## Privatization wedge

Another reason for all workers – not just taxi drivers – to be concerned about Uber, Lyft and similar examples of non-union "disruptive" hi-tech companies, is that they are now

## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 8:** Gerry F. Thornton; **Local 10:** John F. McClean; Ron P. Letcher; Charles F. Grimsley; **Local 13:** Sandi S. Coleman; George W. Ulrich; Thomas H. Gorny; Linda M. Cibel; Rosemary S. Crespin; Anthony S. Palma; Ronald A. Zavala; Clarence L. Davis, Jr.; Neal S. O'campo; Albert F. Zepeda; Jose A. Garcia; James H. Golden; **Local 19:** Rudolph E. Finne; Robert C. Kitzinger; Thomas A. Sonnenberg; Seymour Quimby; **Local 23:** William J. Douglas; **Local 24:** Ronald A. Foulds Jr.; **Local 26:** Larry D. Davis; **Local 34:** Deborah L. Shaw; **Local 50:** Thomas W. Reneque; David W. Brewer; **Local 54:** Juan S. Barrera; **Local 63:** Michael A. Kusik; Patricia A. Hunt-Landeros; Michael J. Sparacino; Joan Villarico; Willie M. Johnson; **Local 94:** Michael S. Einstoss; **Local 98:** Rosalie A. McCallister;

### DECEASED PENSIONERS:

**Local 4:** Ralph Veitenheimer (Florence); **Local 7:** Barry L. Frost; **Local 8:** Clarence Klein; **Local 10:** Joe R. Smith; Henry Brown Jr.; **Local 13:** Theodore A. Thomas; Felipe

Hernandez; David Monje; Donald P. Sanders; Robert Mc Kenna; **Local 19:** Calvin Winstead; **Local 23:** Everett L. Hobbs (Janice); **Local 40:** Jerry Fredrick Hanes; Wilbur L. Adams (Kathleen); **Local 46:** Jesus C. Hernandez (Soledad); **Local 50:** Raymond Tolson; **Local 63:** Frederick F. Langer Jr (Charlene); **Local 94:** George Valbuena Jr.; William E. Houck (Norma); Albert Smith; Gordon R. Reynolds

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 4:** Lawayne Alcock; **Local 8:** Rae C. Yochim; Lois L. Trachsel; **Local 10:** Florida W. Grant; Hazel J. Johnson; Stella Gonzales; Mercy P. Yong; **Local 12:** Anna Emily Bailey; **Local 13:** Gloria Turrigiano; Helen L. Hughes; Dorothy S. Hogan; Amelia M. Soto; **Local 19:** Mary Ann Hayes; Martha S. Mills; Judy Holmes; **Local 23:** Geraldine McCarthy; Joy A. Ellsworth; **Local 34:** Virginia McRae; Shirley Andre; Donna Cashero; **Local 40:** Patricia A. Harader; Mary A. Hughes; **Local 94:** Joan Gimenez;

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actively soliciting business from public transit systems, many operated by union members. The city of Altamonte Springs, Florida near Orlando recently decided to subsidize the cost of Uber rides for residents instead of offering public transit. Lyft says they're already negotiating similar deals with unnamed "large city transit systems." A city official at Altamonte Springs says his city allocated \$500,000 in Uber ride subsidies for the coming year, that was motivated in part from the failure by local governments to provide decent public transit options for residents in the region. Before settling on Uber, the city considered operating a public van or small bus to shuttle residents, but

the estimate of \$1.5 million for that service made the \$500,000 subsidy to Uber seem like a bargain.

## Gouged by the gig economy

"All union members, whether they're in the public or private sector, need to be aware of these non-union 'gig-economy' companies who make claims that are 'too-good-to-be-true,'" said the ILWU's Vice President (Mainland) Ray Familathe. "At the same time, we have to help the workers at these new companies learn about their rights and support their efforts to organize for improvements. Our problem isn't with the drivers; it's with the owners and investors who are trying to profit on the backs of others."