



# *The* DISPATCHER

Published by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Vol. 62, No. 11



95

*The Dispatcher* (ISSN 0012-3765) is published monthly except for a combined July/August issue, for \$5.00 a year and \$10.00 a year for non-members by the ILWU, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109. Periodical postage paid at San Francisco, CA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Dispatcher*, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109.

December 2004

[www.ilwu.org](http://www.ilwu.org)





# Getting smarter, moving together— ILWU charts new course

Story by Marcy Rein  
Photos by Tom Price

Back in the day, locally owned coffee companies lined the streets facing San Francisco's waterfront. Longshore Local 10 members literally rolled sacks of beans across the street for roasting and shipping by warehouse Local 6 members.

Now just one of those local coffee companies remains, and it has moved to Oakland. Light manufacturing has gone the way of coffee and the Warehouse Division has hemorrhaged members up and down the Coast. Longshore work has changed as well, though membership has held steady.

"Containers are stuffed and unstuffed overseas or off-dock and all the handling work we did is gone," ILWU International Vice President Bob McEllrath said. "All we do is move boxes from ship to dock to rail."

For the last 10 years the ILWU has been engaged with organizing, trying to balance the loss of work and members. The union took another step in deepening that commitment Dec. 8, when the first meeting of the Elected Leaders Organizing Task Force brought most of the mainland IEB members together with officers from warehouse locals and ILWU organizing staff. Top organizers from the national AFL-CIO flew in to huddle with the Task Force and plan for these times that make organizing more urgent and more challenging than ever.

"We were pleased to have the AFL-CIO's national Organizing Dept. come in and help set a course and pinpoint strategies that will strengthen the ILWU in our key industries," McEllrath said.

This followed a workshop done by the AFL-CIO for Local 142 in June, International Vice President Wesley Furtado said. "We had 50 rank and filers there along with 25 officers and the International organizers," Furtado said. "We have already seen that training bear fruit."

The ILWU's International Convention in 1994 committed the union to an organizing policy, but did not budget for it. Later that year, the Titled Officers proposed that each mainland member put in \$2 per month for two years to fund the new direction. The "2-4-24" assessment, as it was called, passed in a mail-ballot referendum. The 1997 Convention upped the ante, earmarking 30 percent of the International's budget for organizing. The organizing program tried out different structures and took on a wide range of targets. Drawing on past experience, participants in the Dec. 8 meeting took a hard look at the present and future.

"We have three points to consider as we think about organizing today," ILWU International Organizing Director Peter Olney said. "We have to do it now, we have to do it smart and we have to do it together. We have to do it now because the labor movement and the ILWU are watching their density decline. We have to do it smart, using leverage and selecting targets that fit with our strategic vision. We have to do it together, as we need the participation of elected leadership and membership."

## DO IT NOW

"We are in very real danger," AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff told the Task Force. "Unless we get very drastic, very quickly, we could be the first generation to leave our children a lower standard of living and less justice."

"When did you go into bargaining



ILWU International Vice Presidents Wesley Furtado and Bob McEllrath with AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stuart Acuff.

thinking, 'We're going to make major gains?' It's very rare, because only 12.8 percent of all workers in this country belong to unions, 8.2 percent of workers in the private sector," Acuff said. Union density, the percent of workers in an industry or an area who belong to unions, has everything to do with quality of life for workers, in or out of unions. Organizing to increase density benefits current members when they enter bargaining as much as it benefits new members getting their first contract. It creates what Acuff called a "virtuous circle."

Before SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign took off, most janitors worked part-time for low or minimum wages and no benefits, according to Robert Masciola of the AFL-CIO's Center for Strategic Research, who also attended the Dec. 8 meeting. Over 10 to 12 years, JforJ organized up to 90

percent of the cleaning companies in some cities. It pushed wages up to around \$10 per hour, won benefits and spread from cities to surrounding suburbs.

"In 2003, where we had the most strength we were able to get family health care for our members," Masciola said.

Truckers saw the opposite happen. In 1979, with union density at 50 percent, unionized truckers enjoyed average wages of \$19.56 per hour. Density dropped by half over the next 27 years, and average union wages fell by almost \$6 per hour, by AFL-CIO figures.

Warehouse workers still under contract need to watch out, warehouse Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker said "We're making close to \$18 an hour under our master contract," said Pecker. "Non-union warehouse workers make \$8 to \$15 an

hour and their benefits aren't near ours. But this is a big drag on us in negotiations and everywhere else. Our members need to see their families aren't secure as long as these gaps exist. A rising tide lifts all boats, but a falling tide pulls everyone towards the drain."

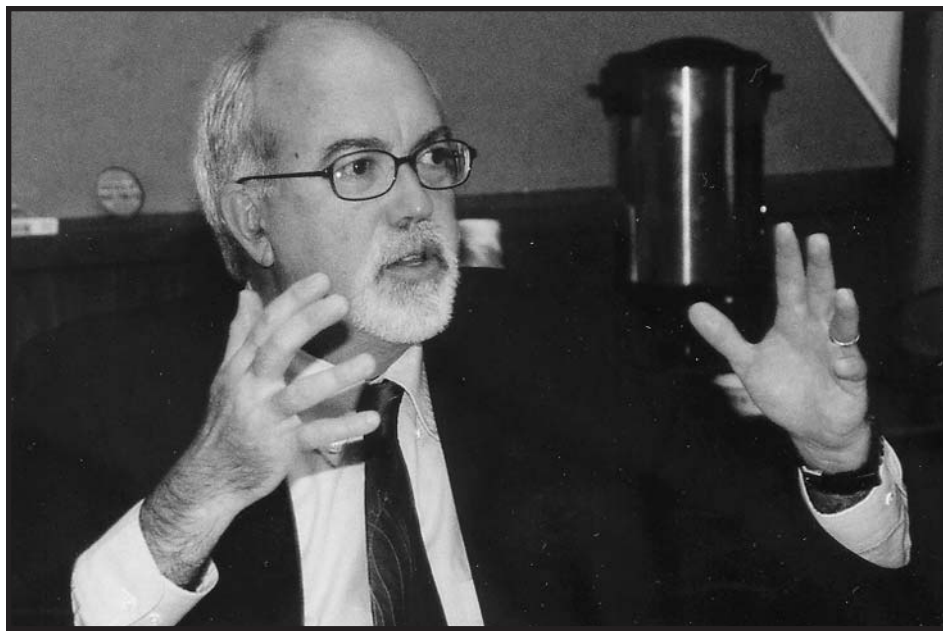
Many members in the ILWU's Warehouse Division—like those from Max Factor and Rite-Aid, Folger's and Colgate—know up close the story the statistics tell. Union density in West Coast warehousing plunged from 31 percent in 1983 to 14 percent in 2003. But the Longshore Division's share of the work is slipping too, according to research done for the ILWU by the Institute for Labor and Employment at the University of California.

The number of registered longshore workers has held steady over the last 20 years, while overall employment in the cargo-handling industry has exploded. Highly unionized parts of the industry, like railroad and water transport, have been shrinking. Less-unionized sectors like warehouse have been growing rapidly.

## DO IT SMART

Organizing can build density, but only if unions get smart about how and where they do it. Relying on elections supervised by the National Labor Relations Board saddles them with skewed rules enforced by a Board stacked with Bush appointees.

"The U.S. ranks among the top four violators of workers' right to organize, right up there with Colombia and China," Acuff said. Almost all workers face anti-union campaigns when they try to organize and some 20,000 get fired each year for their efforts. The firings are illegal, though the campaigns are not, and the law provides neither deadlines to encour-



AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stuart Acuff explains the how union density, having more workers organized in an industry, helps all workers.

## The DISPATCHER

Published monthly except for a combined July/August issue, for \$5.00, \$10 non-members, a year by the ILWU, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6898. *The Dispatcher* welcomes letters, photos and other submissions to the above address. © ILWU, 2004.



www.ilwu.org

Steve Stallone  
Editor

Tom Price  
Assistant Editor



## ILWU Titled Officers

JAMES SPINOSA  
President

ROBERT McELLRATH  
Vice President

WESLEY FURTADO  
Vice President

WILLIAM E. ADAMS  
Secretary-Treasurer



# for organizing

age timely justice nor strong penalties to discourage violations. One-third of all workplaces that win NLRB elections never get a first contract.

“Unions simply have to refuse to play by rules designed to make them lose,” said Ken Zinn, director of the AFL-CIO’s Center for Strategic Research. They can’t just file for elections with random groups of workers who come to them. Instead, they need to carefully choose targets that build power in their industries and offer opportunities to leverage recognition.

Leverage comes through understanding and exploiting the employer’s web of relationships with suppliers, customers, competitors, politicians, government regulators, financial institutions, the general public and its own workers. Often the union can exert its greatest leverage on an employer through existing contracts.

“It’s got to be a priority of the union to put organizing front and center in collective bargaining, and make tracking work a priority,” Zinn said. CWA, for example, began “bargaining to organize” as its employers expanded into the wireless business. Only a third of the workers at Verizon Communications belonged to CWA four years ago. A 17-day strike by 37,000 Verizon workers secured the employer’s agreement to be neutral during future CWA organizing efforts.

Through the ILE research, the ILWU has begun to see where its work

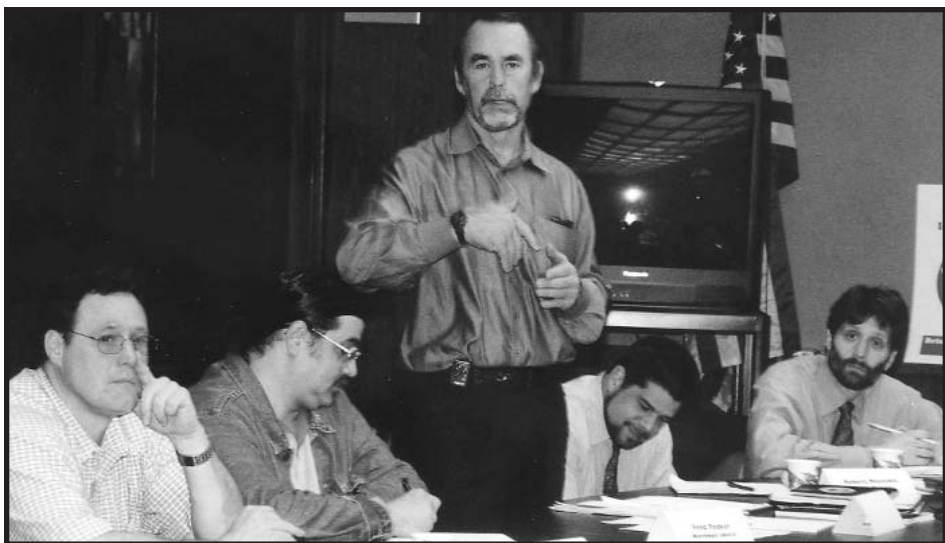
is going. Peter Olney gave the Task Force a snapshot of the Institute’s work, which shows the cargo-handling industry in rapid transition. Most of the companies in the Pacific Maritime Assn. used to stick to one function. (The PMA is the employer group of steam ship operators and stevedoring companies that negotiate with the Longshore Division.) Shippers carried goods across the ocean and dumped them on the dock. De-regulation and technological change have forced these companies to diversify if they want to remain competitive. Most now have spin-offs that operate distribution centers, handle paperwork and planning, and even run trucking lines and air-freight services.

“I knew our employers have become diversified,” said John Tousseau of marine clerks’ Local 63. “But when you get into more depth about the sub-companies of the sub-companies, it’s really eye-opening,” he said.

The union not only needs to follow where cargo goes, but where it comes from, said IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast. “We need to look at all the companies, all the players and understand how cargo is shifting away from the ILWU,” Mast said. “We need a deeper analysis of where the whole maritime industry is heading.”

## DO IT TOGETHER

“Plans are nothing, planning is everything,” Zinn said, quoting



ILWU Organizing Director Peter Olney (standing) presents the union’s strategic organizing perspective. Looking on (from left to right) clerks’ Local 34 Vice President Frank Reilly, warehouse Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker, and Robert MMasciola and Ken Zinn of the AFL-CIO’s Center for Strategic Research.

General Eisenhower.

“The best plan Peter [Olney] can come up with will not be as good as what you can do as a group. Strategic organizing has to make use of the union’s biggest resource—its members,” he said.

Task Force participants quickly rattled off some of the contributions members make to organizing. They furnish the power for actions, energy to add to limited staff, experience in the industry, connections in the community and the most credible voice possible to speak for the union.

The ups and downs of the last several years have shown that day-to-day, effective collaboration will depend on the locals and the Organizing Dept. setting clear goals and commitments and keeping communication open.

Making strategic organizing work will require a vision of the union’s future shared across all divisions.

“We’ve talked about organizing and earmarked money for it, but lots of people in the Longshore Division weren’t seeing what it has to do with them,” Tousseau said. “But we have to protect our flanks, and these other divisions are all part of the ILWU.”

Much of the information shared during the Task Force meeting appears in a PowerPoint presentation, which local leaders and the organizing staff will bring to members as campaigns develop in their areas.

“This was the best meeting I’ve been to for 20 years,” warehouse Local 26 President Luisa Gratz said as the Task Force wound down. “Local 26 lost a fifth of its membership when the company I came out of moved to South Carolina in 1982. I wrote resolutions on organizing for every convention after that. Now, for the first time in a long time, I feel we have a future.”

# IEB reviews political action, prepares for more

The ILWU International Executive Board held its regularly scheduled meeting Dec. 9-10 at the San Francisco International office to review the union’s finances and its political action program.

The board’s trustees reported that four locals were behind in their per capita payments to the International, but that in all cases plans had been worked out with their officers for repayment in due time. The trustees reviewed the budget and actual expenses for the first three quarters of 2004 and revised the 2005 budget, adjusting it for inflation.

The board also received a report on the union’s political action program over the last year with an emphasis on the upcoming year’s work. ILWU Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin focused on the work of his Washington, D.C. lobbying office. He noted that with the Republicans firmly in control of both houses of Congress, his will be an uphill battle.

The Republican agenda will be devastating to working people, McLaughlin said, and they are already moving fast to privatize Social Security, the bottom line retirement security workers have been counting on for some 70 years. Stopping this will be the labor movement’s top priority this year and that will take countering the myth that the system is going broke when it actually has enough reserves to continue making payments at its current rate until 2042.

Another Republican agenda item, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), would pretty much end sugar production in Hawaii. Like other free trade agreements, CAFTA has no enforceable global stan-

dards—in fact it only requires each nation to enforce its own labor laws, no matter how inadequate they may be. McLaughlin said opponents have the votes in Congress to stop it right now, but he expressed concern that might change once Bush starts campaigning for it.

McLaughlin also reported that although Bush has successfully pushed through legislation eliminating overtime, the union movement is trying to salvage it state-by-state with new protective laws.

On port security, McLaughlin reported that the Coast Guard has not yet included the TWIC card (Transportation Workers Identity Card) in its regulations, although it continues to plan for all port workers to carry one. The prototype is in its third phase, but it is still not clear yet what information will be included in a final version or who would have access to that information. Hazmat truckers are currently being subjected to criminal background checks, but that has not been instituted for longshore workers yet.

Peter Peyton, Local 63 Secretary and Coast Legislative Action Committee member who, along with ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams coordinated the union’s national political action campaign, reported on their work in the 2004 election. Although the failure to throw Bush out of power was very disappointing, Peyton cited the successes of the program: the union exceeded its fund-raising goals; more than 300 member activists mobilized to get out the vote and some 70 members traveled to battleground states; and a foundation was built for further political organizing.

Peyton said now the union needs to move on to a second phase of the program and figure out how to bring in more money for political action; how to look at what needs to be done for the mid-term elections in 2006; and how to get more members mobilized, going from the current 300 experienced activists to 1,000.

“We need to develop our own message and our own approach to the next legislative session,” Peyton said. “Ad we have to continue our political education of our membership through our District Councils.”

Secretary-Treasurer Adams pointed out that with the Republican majority in both houses of Congress, the ILWU legislative team will have to talk with Republicans and find some the union can work with.

“We’ll need more out of the box thinking,” Adams said.

Writer/actor Ian Ruskin, whose play about Harry Bridges and the ILWU “From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks” has been performed up and down the Coast, addressed the board. He has filmed the play, but is short about \$50,000 to complete it and make it available to the public. The board agreed to ask ILWU members to contribute to the project so this compelling story of Bridges and the union can get out (see box for contribution details).

Northern California IEB representative and clerks’ Local 34 President Richard Cavelli introduced a Statement of Policy thanking Kaiser Permanente and other health care providers for their offer to continue coverage for San Francisco hotel workers locked out of their jobs (see below). The board passed it unanimously.

## STATEMENT OF POLICY IN APPRECIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL WORKERS’ HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

On behalf of the entire membership of the ILWU, this International Executive Board wishes to express its appreciation and admiration to the health care providers who have extended health care benefits for the San Francisco hotel workers who were locked out of their jobs for over two months. Led by the Kaiser Permanente Foundation, a health maintenance organization with which the ILWU has had a cooperative and constructive relationship for over 50 years, Chinese Hospital and PacificCare followed suit by continuing health care insurance for these workers who are engaged in a bitter fight with a hotel industry that has grown into a global conglomerate that is attempting to break the back of HERE Local 2.

The ILWU has always held that health care is a basic right to which all persons are entitled. The humanitarian act of these three health care organizations will allow the labor dispute to move toward resolution without placing a cruel and unfair burden on the health and welfare of these workers and their families.

Contributions to  
“From Wharf Rats to  
Lords of the Docks”  
should be made out to:  
**The Harry Bridges Project**  
**P.O. Box 662018**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90066**



# Season's Greetings

## FROM THE INTERNATIONAL

**Titled Officers**

Jim Spinosa  
Bob McEllrath  
Wesley Furtado  
William E. Adams

President  
Vice President, Mainland  
Vice President, Hawaii  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Administration**

Linda Kuhn  
Karen Coffey  
Valerie Smith  
Jorge Freiberg  
Nancy Legardy  
Frank Wilder

Office Manager/ Executive Secretary  
Manager/ Accounting Department  
Administrative Secretary  
Bookkeeper  
Receptionist  
Clerical Assistant

**Research and Education**

Russ Bargmann  
Eugene Dennis Vrana

Director  
Director of Educational Services and Librarian

**Communications**

Steve Stallone  
Tom Price

Communications Director and Editor of *The Dispatcher*  
Assistant Editor

**Washington, D.C. Office**

Lindsay McLaughlin  
Brian Davidson

Legislative Director  
Legislative Assistant

**Coast Committee**

Joseph Wenzl  
Ray Ortiz, Jr.  
George Romero  
Robert Maynez  
Haydee Lind  
Diana Contreras  
Janice Smith-Yamagata  
Eddie Ko  
Christina Courter  
John Showalter

Committeeman, Northwest  
Committeeman, California  
Benefits Specialist  
Administrative Director  
Accounting and Finance Manager  
Administrative Secretary  
Coast Imaging Project Secretary  
Coast Bookkeeper  
Administrative Secretary  
Coast Public Relations Specialist

**International Department**

Ray Familathe

Director of International Affairs

**International Representatives**

Tracy Takano

Hawaii

**Organizing**

Peter Olney  
Jon Brier  
Agustin Ramirez  
Rodolfo Gutierrez  
Carlos Cordon  
Mary Winzig  
Marcy Rein  
Sandy Babich  
Chuck Wendt  
Carey Dall  
Amy Willis

Director of Organizing  
Puget Sound Organizer  
Northern California Organizer  
Southern California Organizer  
Southern California Organizer  
Columbia River Organizer  
Communications Specialist  
Secretary, Southern California  
Alaska Organizer  
Project Organizer  
International Organizer/ Researcher

**International Transport Workers' Federation**

Jeff Engels  
Peter Lahay  
Lila Smith  
Don Liddle  
Stefan Mueller-Dombois  
Carolyn Jones

ITF West Coast Coordinator  
ITF Canadian Coordinator, Vancouver, B.C.  
Inspector, Puget Sound  
Inspector, Columbia River  
Inspector, Southern California  
Bookkeeper

**Harry Bridges Building**

Victor Duran  
Claude Caputi

Building Engineer  
Maintenance

Have a Happy and Safe New Year!