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On May Day, ports up and down the Pacific Coast were quiet. Nearly 10,000 longshore division workers voluntarily gave up a day’s pay to participate in one of the largest and most effective “no work” actions in recent history.

The May Day action had one important goal: to protest the war in Iraq. But it also produced some unexpected benefits, including a powerful display of membership solidarity, extraordinary public support, and extensive positive media coverage.

While Local 13 and other Southern California locals didn’t hold rallies or marches like their counterparts up north, they made their own dramatic statements with overwhelming membership participation that sent a clear message to the politicians in Washington who continue to fund the war in Iraq.

“We stood up for America, the troops, and against the war.”

Paul Krehbiel, 60, of Pasadena (center) brought apple pies to L.A. longshore workers who gave up a day’s pay to send a message about supporting the troops by ending the war in Iraq. Krehbiel says he heard about the ILWU job action on the radio, then drove an hour from his home with five apple pies to thank ILWU members for their courage and patriotism. A former truck driver and construction worker, he said, “All of you are true patriots for what you did.”
Dear Editor,

Thanks for covering the “Hollywood to the Docks” event in last month’s Dispatcher. I’d like to provide special recognition for the Local 13 members who marched 28 miles over three days (April 15-17). As mentioned in your report, the ILWU had the largest group in the march, and these folks from Local 13 deserve the credit: Chris Aguierre, David Arian, Steven Calhoun, Mike Dimon, Mario Erosa, Richard Flores, Amanda Flores, Richard Flores II, Mike Freese, Michael Hernandez, Tom Hibbison, Louis Hill, Linda Kennedy, Ryan LaPinta, Orland Lopez, Andrea Miller, Ramon Montoya, Maureen Montoya, Jeff Osborne, Tim Patrick, Paul Sanchez, Eric Sanchez, and Gregory Weir. I also want to thank Kevin Schroeder, Mike Piazza, and others who helped coordinate this important event.

Joe “Jo Jo” Cortez
President, Local 13

Dear Editor,

I recently had the opportunity to attend an annual awards celebration at the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle on April 11, 2008. It was very nice to receive a booklet there called: “Men Along the Shore and the Legacy of 1934.” What an interesting booklet. Thank you for sharing this struggle and heart-filling information.

Karla Anderson
Seattle, WA

Media coverage was heavy – and positive – when longshore workers gave up a day’s pay on May Day to support the troops and end the war in Iraq. National and local newspapers, TV, radio, and web-bloggers all carried the ILWU’s message from International President Bob McElrath. “We’re standing-down to support the troops, we’re standing-up for America, and we’re sending a message to politicians in Washington that it’s time to end the war in Iraq.”
Thank you for standing up for America!!!
Dan Hyde
Charleston, SC

My husband is currently serving his second 15 month tour in Iraq. I want to thank you for your brave, and in my view, highly effective protest of the Iraq war. My husband and I are very pro-union for a lot of reasons, and you’ve just given us another great reason to proudly say Union YES!!!
M.J.

Hurray for the ILWU! By stopping work to protest the war in Iraq and expressing support for our troops in the only way that is meaningful, bringing them home, you have shown that the true spirit of unionism is still alive in the U.S.
Arne Vokk, M.D.
Williamsport, PA

It’s great to see the last of the really strong unions standing up for Americans by walking out in protest of the war. Thank you!
Lee Webster
King Salmon, AK

My husband is serving his second tour in Iraq. He has only been in three years, but he misses home and family. It’s great to see the ILWU standing up for the war in Iraq.
Marilyn Puskas
Baltimore, MD

I want to thank the men and women of the ILWU for taking a stand against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. I took part in the first Gulf War, so I will always have strong feelings about whatever goes on in that theatre of operation when our countrymen and women are over there. It’s nice to know there are people like you and your organization willing to forgo your pay for a noble cause. As a fellow American and prior soldier, I thank you.
-Tony

The way you go folks at the ILWU. Reminds me of the Boston Tea Party – and look what that set off. You are brave souls and have my full and deepest appreciation and support. GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!
Becky McCarley

Thank you for your May 1st stand against the war. Today is my birthday and I couldn’t have gotten a better present!!!
Sincerely,
Marilyn Fishas
Baltimore, MD

Thank you for your May 1st stand against the war. Today is my birthday and I couldn’t have gotten a better present!!!
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Marilyn Fishas
Baltimore, MD

Way to go you folks at the ILWU. Reminds me of the Boston Tea Party – and look what that set off. You are brave souls and have my full and deepest appreciation and support. GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!
Becky McCarley

Three times down ball and patriotic action. At the signing event, now is the time for all good men (people) to come to the aid of their country. You at the ILWU have a proud history of action and are rising up to that standard once again. Thank you so much for your dedication to peace and restoring our democracy. May our country be inspired to follow suit and our politicians be ashamed and act out of office.
BRAVO for your action on May 1st – a first step in reclaiming our democracy.
Peter May
“Our message about ending the war was received loud and clear in Washington, D.C., and the response there was overwhelmingly positive,” said Local 63 Secretary Peter Peyton who was in the Capitol on May Day to help spread the word with a team that included International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, Local 40 Vice President Dawn DesBrisay, plus Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin and Legislative Assistant Kyle Weimann.

Local 29 members in San Diego protested the war in Iraq on May Day, and President William Silva was interviewed on local TV news stations. “All of us agree that it’s time to get out of Iraq now,” Silva told the local CBS and FOX outlets. “We care too much about America to stand by while our country, our troops and our economy are destroyed by the Iraq war. Soldiers from working families are fighting and dying for a stupid war.” Local 29 member Ray Leyba was also interviewed by TV reporters. “We stand together not with signs but with human beings, with bodies and families who are united against the war,” he told CBS, adding: “This doesn’t have anything to do with our contract or negotiations.”

Public support for the action by ILWU members was overwhelming, with over a thousand unsolicited “thank-you” messages that poured into ILWU locals and International headquarters. A relative handful of complaints were received – and most of them came from anti-union employers.

President Joe Cortez of Local 13 said their office received many offers to help from concerned citizens in their community. The same was true at other ILWU locals in the Southland, according to Local 29 President William Silva in San Diego and Local 46 President Dan Hultgen in Port Hueneme.

Local 46 workers in Port Hueneme took the day off to reflect on the war. One member, Victor Gallardo, was protesting 35 years ago against the Vietnam War. Today his two daughters are serving in the military, one of them on her second tour in Iraq. “Our union has always been anti-war,” he told the Ventura County Star. “We don’t have any kind of picket line today,” Local 46 President Dan Hultgen told the Star. “We’re just letting the country know that we’re supporting our troops and asking for an end to the war.”

In addition to sending messages and phone calls, some community members brought boxes of donuts and other goodies to ILWU members as a way to show support. Paul Krehbiel
May Day with the ton to Seattle.

was one private citizen who drove an hour from his home in Pasadena after hearing about the ILWU action on the radio. He arrived at San Pedro with five fresh apple pies; each was decorated with an American flag and a "thank you" message. The former truck driver and construction worker said, “All of you are true patriots for what you did today, your courage is inspiring to everyone who wants the war to end.”

At Local 19 in Seattle, the docks were quiet and cranes were “boomed-up” – a sign that usually signals a serious tragedy such as a death on the job, but not on May Day.

“Normally, when I see all the cranes boomed up, it makes me sad,” ILWU Local 19 President Herald Ugles told a crowd of nearly 2,000 marchers at a waterfront rally in Seattle. “But today it’s a great sight to see all those cranes boomed up – not just here, but all up and down the whole West Coast!”

With that comment, the crowd erupted in cheers, whistles and sign-waving. A diverse group of ILWU workers, community groups, and fellow union members were on-hand to celebrate the coastwise solidarity action against the war in Iraq.

Ugles noted the toll that the war has been taking on the troops – and

continued on page 6
Making history
on May Day

continued from page 5

on America’s economy. He attacked the “decline of our country’s infra-
structure, including roads, rails, and bridges that have been neglected with
dire results, such as the tragic deaths of innocent people who perished in
Minnesota when an aging bridge col-
lapsed.” Ugel then pointed to the
nearby Aftonbladet Way Viaduct, an ele-
vated, double-decker highway along
Seattle’s waterfront that USA Today
has called “a catastrophe waiting to
happen.” Interviewed by KOIN News
4, Ugles summed-up the views of
many by saying, “We need to stop this
war, bring our troops home, and let’s
rebuild America – not just Iraq.”

The spirited rally in Seattle capped
a 2-mile waterfront march that began
near the Local 19 union hall. The march
was led by Local 19 members, and
included representatives from most
other Washington ILWU locals.

In Portland, several dozen members
of Columbia River ILWU locals gathered
with peace activists on a floating walk-
way in Portland to place flowers in
the Willamette River that represented
more than 4,000 American soldiers
killed in Iraq.

The event was heavily covered
by local media. Local 8 Secretary-
Treasurer Bruce Holte told the Portland
Business Journal that all 1,300 work-
ers from Locals 8, 40, and 92 in Port-
land, Local 4 in Vancouver, Local 50 in
Astoria and Local 21 in Longview,
were joining the members in 25 other
ports “to take a stand for the majority
of Americans who oppose the war in
Iraq.” Members from Local 5 in Port-
land were also on hand to lend their
support.

Holte told Oregon Public Broadcas-
ting (OPB), “We’re very proud union
members, and we feel strongly against
the war. Believe me, they know back
in Washington, D.C. that we’re not
working today – and why we’re not.”

When asked if he was afraid of get-
ting hit for skipping work to protest
the war, Local 8 member Jerry Law-
rence told OPB News, “If that’s what
they wish to do, then they gotta fire all
of us, ‘cause we stand in solidarity.”

Local 8 President Jeff Smith pub-
lished an opinion piece on Oregon’s
most influential blog on May 3rd,
thanking the community for their
generous expressions of support. He
wrote, “We’ve run out of patience
with the endless excuses for why this
war goes on and on with ‘goals’ that
seem to change all the time. It’s time
to thank our troops for their service by
bringing them home so they can raise
their kids.” Smith’s opinion piece drew effec-
tive positive comments from readers
statewide who thanked locals and the
International Union for taking a stand
against the war.

In Tacoma, Local 23 workers also
protested on May Day, and got good
media coverage for their strong show
of solidarity.

“We have a long history of taking-up
social causes even if they aren’t popu-
lar,” explained Local 23’s Scott Mason
to the Tacoma News Tribune. “Our job
is to get ships in and out, but today we
need to get those troops home.”

Local 23 members showed some sol-
arity on the home-front by attending
an afternoon rally to support security
guards at their port who want to join
the ILWU, but are getting the run-
around from management.

Local 54 members in Stockton
took the day off to protest the war. At a local
May Day rally, teachers, Teamsters,
nurses, and Stockton City Council-
woman Susan Eggerman joined two vet-
erans who spoke against the war.

“It’s a small group, but we have a
statement to make,” Secretary-Treas-
urer Gene Davenport said. “It’s time to
end the war – now.”

One of the ILWU’s largest May Day
events happened in the San Francisco
Bay Area where union members and
community supporters gathered at the
Local 10 hall until Local 10’s Drill Team
members led-off a waterfront march at
a smart clip. Longshore workers, fol-
lowed behind with family and friends,
passing old piers where longshoremen
once loaded ships by hand and fought
to establish the ILWU. They passed
the Ferry Building and Harry Bridges Plaza
near the spot where longshoremen
were gunned-down in 1934.

Joining longshore workers were a col-
orful mix of supporters that included
teachers, nurses, activists from the
“Raging Grannies,” and uninhibited exotic
dancers from the Lusty Lady Theater.
Together they lifted the plaza with more than a thou-
sand and 36 people who gathered for a noon rally where
Local 34 President Richard Cavalli was
one of the first speakers.

“This war, like all wars, is killing
the sons and daughters of workers. George
Bush’s daughters are getting married in
the White House while our daughters are
getting buried in Iraq. The politi-
cians in office have failed to end this
war—and it’s not going to end until we
get people into the streets.”

ILWU International Executive Board
Member Lawrence Thibeaux read a state-
memment from ILWU International
President Bob McElrath.

“The corporations that control global
shipping today aren’t loyal or account-
table to any country. To them, it’s all about
making money. But longshore workers are
different. We’re loyal to America, and we won’t stand by while our coun-
try, our troops, and our economy are
destroyed by a war that’s bankrupting
us to the tune of $3 trillion dollars.”

Actor Danny Glover was on hand to
lend his support and thank longshore
workers for taking a stand. Local 10
members Jack Heyman and Clarence
Thomas also spoke, joining a host of
community activists.

After the San Francisco rally, some
members from Local 10 and 34
attended the Immigrants’ Rights Rally
at Dolores Park, then marched to San
Francisco’s Civic Center. ILWU mem-
bers in the East Bay also attended an
immigrant’s rally in Oakland at the
Fruitvale BART station, then marched
to Oakland City Hall.

Local 34 capped-off the day of action
by hosting a Community May Day
Festival Celebration with Local 10
at their union hall on the waterfront.
Special guests performed at the event,
including singer Renée Glaubion,
singer/producer Raymond Nar-Burner from the
group Upstairs, singer Elisa Welch from
the activist group Code Pink, and
entertainers Ringpin Row & Lady Yen
who performed songs and poetry as
the Elite Team.

Local 34 members Jacqueline Hart,
Guillermo Morales, Messina Bishop,
Karl Bishop, Sean Farley, Juan del
Pozo, Tony Boyadzis – plus Christo-
pher Cadelago of Local 10 – all worked
hard to make their celebration a suc-
cessful conclusion to a historic day for
all ILWU members.

– contributors to this report included
Craig motorcycles, Russ Miyashiro,
Tom Price, and Jennifer Sargent

The ILWU’s fan club includes these supporters in Rome, Italy.

Trent Willis, Business Agent at Local 10 and Northern California Regional
Representative for the 2008 Longshore Safety Negotiating Committee, joined
other union leaders and Congressmember George Miller to highlight the dan-
gers of longshore work at a press conference for Workers’ Memorial Day on
April 26, 2008. Willis remembered the 13 longshore workers who have been
killed on the job since 2002, including Reggie Ross of Local 10 who died at the
Port of Oakland on Sept. 24, 2007. In 2006, more than 1.2 million workers
were injured and 5,703 workers killed as a result of workplace injuries in
the U.S. and another 50,000 workers died from workplace disease and
exposures, according to the non-profit group WORKSAFE that sponsored
the event.

6 DISPATCHER • June 2008
Solidarity in the high desert: In their two-year fight to join the ILWU, workers at the Rite Aid distribution center in Lancaster, CA learned what a lift solidarity can give. So when 300 emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with American Medical Response struck in disgust over the company's contract offer, members of the Rite Aid organizing committee walked the picket line with them.

“I just feel that the only way we’re going to change the way employers treat employees in the Antelope Valley is by standing together in solidarity,” said committee member Angel Warner.

The EMTs went back to work April 29 after three days on the line, having reached agreement with AMR on their wage and benefit issues.

Solidarity with Guards: Security guards at the Port of Longview told Commissioners on May 13 that the Port would be better off hiring them directly rather than contracting out the Port's security. Eleven of the 14 guards have signed cards asking to be represented by ILWU, but their contracted employer has refused to recognize their union directly rather than contracting out the Port's security. Eleven of the 14 guards have signed cards asking to be represented by ILWU.

DISPATCHER • June 2008 7
Anew edition of “A Spark Is Struck: Jack Hall and the ILWU in Hawaii” has just been issued by the ILWU’s Education Publishing, at the urging of ILWU Local 142. Long out of print, this epic account of the birth and growth of the ILWU in Hawaii is filled with anecdotes and details about Hall and his union. Written by journalist Sanford Zalburg, with unofficial input from several ILWU leaders, the new edition adds size and better reproduction of photographs to the original—which greatly enhances the quality and readability of the thick volume.

University of Hawaii Press published the book in 1979 in paperback and sold it at $5.95 per copy, and it was quickly adopted by Local 142’s educational program. When the book went out of print, Local 142 purchased the remaining copies and made the book available to members at a discount to members. By the year 2000, the book had become a collector’s item and the idea of having it re-issued was often discussed at the Local. In mid-2006, though a chance conversation, Local 142 Secretary-Treasurer Gay Fujimura was put in touch with Sanford Zalburg and the serious pursuit of the book’s reprinting began.

In late November 2006, George Engebretson of Watermark Publishing expressed interest in reprinting the book with the Locals’ cooperation in production and distribution. The Local provided photographs from its archives and technical assistance to the Watermark staff.

The decision was made to scan and reprint the book without modifications to the text, with a new cover design and page layout, and with a new foreword to be written by Ah Quon McElrath, the longtime Local 142 social worker, social justice activist, and University of Hawaii regent. Sanford Zalburg was able to hold the second printing of the book in his hands in November 2007. The entire process from contacting the publisher to the finished book had taken about a year. Sanford Zalburg died on February 16, 2008 at the age of 90 in Pahalu, and was buried at the Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe.

“...why it is important for new members to read ‘A Spark Is Struck today,’ said Ah Quon McElrath in a recent interview, “to get clarity with regard to the nature of people who led the growth of the ILWU during a very fascinating period in the development of Hawaii as well as the United States. Even though the book may lack a sense of the broad history of Hawaii it nevertheless conveys the feeling that the multi-ethnic groups of Hawaii could indeed take hold of their destiny and determine what it should be for them as well as their families. That is the primary lesson of the book—industrial organization, political action, and democracy in action.”

The value of the book for all ILWU members lies also in learning about the struggles and decisions of Hall himself, and the price he paid for his left-wing politics. As A.Q. McElrath writes in her forward to the new edition, Hall’s legacy includes the right of workers to belong to unions, to engage in political action, and to control and shape the conditions under which they work. Reading “A Spark Is Struck,” she concludes, “can provide some of the answers as to where the labor movement will go in the future and how union ideology, policies and structure can direct labor in a changing worldwide economy. This book is a powerful reminder that the legacy of Jack Hall continues to today’s labor movement.”

By special arrangement with Local 142 and Watermark Publishing “A Spark Is Struck” is now available through the ILWU book sale at the discounted price of $13.50, including shipping and handling.

Rae Shirah, Local 142 Library Services Coordinator & Gene Vrana, ILWU Director of Educational Services

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**BOOK REVIEW**


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**ILWU BOOKS & VIDEOS**

Books and videos about the ILWU are available from the union’s library at discounted prices!

**BOOKS**

- **A Spark Is Struck:** Jack Hall & the ILWU in Hawaii. By Sanford Zalburg: A high quality re-issue of the book with the Local’s cooperation in production and distribution. The Local provided photographs from its archives and technical assistance to the Watermark staff.
- **Along the Shore/Porto La Costa—ILWU Coloring Book:** A bilingual English/Spanish coloring book about waterfront workers and their union. Originally developed by the California Federation of Teachers’ Labor in the Schools Committee in consultation with member Patricia Aguirre and the ILWU Local 13 Education Committee. Meets K-3 classroom standards for History and Social Studies. Two (2) for $5.00
- **Legacy of 1934:** An historical exhibit by the ILWU. Produced as a catalogue to accompany the travelling exhibition about the events of 1934. Includes archival photographs and oral histories from both the ILWU and non-union waterfront workers.
- **The Big Strike:** A 58-minute DVD feature presentation of the strike, this brief but vivid publication stands on its own as a pictorial history of the coastwise longshore strike, this brief but vivid publication stands on its own as a pictorial history of the coastwise longshore strike. The strike, this brief but vivid publication stands on its own as a pictorial history of the coastwise longshore strike. Two (2) for $5.00
- **The Spark Is Struck:** Jack Hall & the ILWU in Hawaii. By Sanford Zalburg: A high quality re-issue of the book from 1979. A Spark Is Struck! continues to today’s labor movement.
- **We Are the ILWU:** A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about the union’s organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. $5.00

**VIDEOS**

- **Eye of the Storm:** Our Fight for Justice and a Better Contract.” A 58-minute DVD feature documentary film produced and directed by Amie Williams, Eye of the Storm tells the story of the 2002 longshore lockout on the West Coast. DVD Version $5.00
- **We Are the ILWU:** A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about the union’s organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. $5.00

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