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While the ILWU has been keeping an almost laser-like focus on the November election and the defeat of Bush, the other work of the union continues. It keeps on organizing, negotiating contracts, building solidarity and advocating for its members. In this issue we report on some of this work.

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Workers at a landfill in the East Bay city of Livermore, California, tired of making lower wages than union workers doing the same job at nearby dumps, decided they wanted to join those warehouse Local 6 members (see page 9). Even though 15 of the 16 workers in the unit signed cards saying they wanted ILWU representation, the employer, Republic Services, ignored their demand. Frustrated, the workers took direct action. They downed their tools and picked up picket signs. With some truckers respecting the line and the operation slowed down, the company relented within a few hours and consented to talk to the union. Within three weeks, they agreed to recognize and bargain with Local 6.

In Hawaii, where nearly everything but the tourists comes in by ship, members of the Inlandboatmen’s Union, the ILWU’s Marine Division, are essential to the day-to-day economic life of the state. They operate the tugboats that guide the cargo ships to berth at the Port of Honolulu and the barges that then shuttle goods around the islands. Still, while their contract expired eight months ago, Hawaiian Tug & Barge/Young Brothers, came to the table seeking to cut crew size and refusing to grant more time off (see page 6). Both moves spelled “safety hazard” to the IBU members who ply treacherous currents for days on end. So they docked their boats and manned the picket lines. In four days they had a deal which preserved manning and gave them more time off.

The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) draws 600 unions under its umbrella, including the ILWU. Several ILWU International officers and the International Affairs Director went to the ITF’s 27th Congress in Singapore to build strategy and solidarity for confronting threats to seafarers, dock workers and their unions worldwide (see page 7).

Unions always deal with bread-and-butter issues that keep families alive—pay, health care, pensions. But nothing hits closer to home than your home. On Hawaii’s main island of Oahu some 300 people, mostly ILWU pineapples workers and their families, live in Poamoho Camp, old plantation housing run by their employer Dole (see page 6). Dole Monte was about to give up its long-term lease on the land and the camp’s residents faced eviction. But the tight-knit community organized with the help of ILWU Loc. 142, its local union, and went door to door to build support for saving the camp and social connections. They found a local developer to buy the land and are working out how they can buy their homes and keep their community together.

“...the American labor movement will not likely survive another four years of these policies. And the ILWU, with the longshore contract expiring in the summer of 2008, will be in the crosshairs of a Bush lame duck presidency.

“We’re fighting to save our unions and any hope of a decent future for the working families of this country.”

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

More than a year ago the democratically elected delegates to the ILWU International Convention voted resoundingly to make the defeat of George W. Bush in this November’s election our number one priority. Since then, even while doing the day-to-day work of the union, negotiating and administering contracts, organizing new workers and defending our jurisdiction, we have kept our focus on that goal. We have been planning and building toward it, coordinating our collective imagination and energies. Now we are in the final stretch of the race, time to pull out all the stops.

This program is not driven by ideology, by some partisan taste for a Republican presidency. It comes out of our own experience.

We must never forget how Bush abused the office of the president during our 2002 longshore contract negotiations. He intervened on the side of the employers with the intent of destroying the ILWU. He directly threatened to send the military to seize the docks and take our jobs. He threatened to pass legislation eliminating our collective bargaining rights and to invoke the dreaded Taft-Hartley injunction should we exercise those rights and strike. And in an unprecedented move he did impose Taft-Hartley on the workers and their union when the employers closed all West Coast ports with their lockout.

His blatant bias and callous disregard for the lives and well-being of working people weren’t demonstrated just in the ILWU’s situation. Every policy he has initiated in the last four years has had that intent and effect. His tax cuts for the rich and subsequent cuts in programs aiding working and poor people; his proposals to privatize Social Security and individualize pensions for the rich; his failure to regulate Wall Street bankers and investors at the expense of the working people’s retirement; his war in Iraq that has cost the lives of a thousand sons and daughters of American workers, created a budget deficit of unprecedented size and made the world safer only for oil profits—the list could go on and on. What they all have in common is that the rich get richer and the workers get screwed.

The American labor movement will not likely survive another four years of these policies. And the ILWU, with the longshore contract expiring in the summer of 2008, will be in the crosshairs of a Bush lame duck presidency.

We cannot let this happen and we won’t. As part of our strategic plan the ILWU is working with the AFL-CIO on its nationally coordinated effort to beat Bush. As part of that, just about every other union in the AFL-CIO, the ILWU will be sending rank-and-file activists to key battleground states to get out the vote, to make sure every anti-Bush, pro-John Kerry ballot is cast. We of course will be focusing much of our efforts in our home states of Washington, Oregon and Hawaii, but since it is clear California and its 55 electoral votes will go to Kerry, we will be sending activists from there to the nearby swing states of Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. Working together with other unions doing the same thing we will dramatically increase our chance of ousting Bush. As we fight side by side with members of other unions, we will strengthen the lies that bend the labor movement as well. We will put ourselves in a better position to advocate for our issues in a Democratic administration and remind Kerry who helped win him.

This will take a tremendous grassroots effort. We need every rank-and-file member to find time to volunteer in your own areas to register voters and make sure they get to the polls. (Contacts in your area are listed on page 5.) It is your responsibility not just to vote for Kerry, but to make sure all your friends, family members and neighbors do too.

It is an unfortunate but well-known fact that campaigns of this magnitude require money. For the last few months the ILWU has been raising money for our Political Action Fund and many of our members have already contributed generously. Others have not yet and they need to step up because time is growing short. Instructions on how to make your contribution are on page 10 of this issue of The Dispatcher. You will also be receiving a mailing at home soliciting a political action donation.

We will be using these funds to power our get-out-the-vote effort and to contribute to key Senate and Congressional races around the country, targeting pro-worker candidates so that when Kerry wins the presidency, he’ll have a Congress that will pass his programs.

Do not be discouraged by polls that imply Bush is leading this race. These polls have many statistical irregularities. Mostly they only measure “likely” voters, defined as those who voted in the last election. We have been recruiting many new voters, people who felt disillusioned or powerless in the past, but now, motivated by Bush’s disastrous policies, see the need to get involved. The polls can’t measure the passion of the opposition and the united activism Bush has invited. Remember, the only poll that matters is the one taken on Nov 2.

Do not let others define the terms of the debate. We’re up against a corporate media machine that sows confusion and blows smoke to cover up the real issues. Some of our members have deeply felt concerns on social issues that may push them towards Bush. It’s up to us to keep the focus on the real issues in this election. We are fighting to save our unions and any hope of a decent future for the working families of this country.

We will win this election because we must win and because the working people of this country are the majority. And when we unite, organize and mobilize the American labor movement cannot be beaten.

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President
Workers to converge on DC for social justice

Actor and activist Danny Glover joined ILWU longshore Local 10 at its hall for the Million Worker March kick-off rally May 22. The local has put out a call for rank-and-file workers to converge on Washington, D.C., Oct. 17 to demand that politicians listen to those who pay their salaries and that they seriously need the needs of working families.

The Million Worker March will rally workers, their families and supporters the Lincoln Memorial to demand power be taken from the corporate oligarchy and restored to the people.

Local 10 president Henry Graham, Chris Silvera, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 808 in New York and Chair of the Teamsters National Black Caucus Brenda Stokely, President of AFSCME District Council 1707 in New York and journalist Alexander Cockburn and Brenda Stokely, President of AFSCME District Council 1707 in New York and journalist Alexander Cockburn and "These four ticket sellers don't normally work the same day and shift and one was kept overtime," Mast said. "And the only African American supervisor who normally works that day was re-directed for Friday and sent to a different dock."

The whole arrest procedure violated the workers' rights and the WSF’s own Code of Conduct, IBU Puget Sound Regional Director Dennis Conklin charged. The WSF can confront employees with allegations, instruct them to cooperate with an investigation and place them on administrative leave, but there is supposed to be a fact-finding investigation and a hearing in which the employee gets to rebut the charges before any arrests are made, he said.

"There's nothing on the tapes, the allegations are just a theory," said Conklin, who has seen the video.

The union mobilized to protect its members. Conklin filed ULP charges against management for breaking the contract's rules on discipline and for changing the conditions of work by putting the surveillance cameras in the booths without consulting the union. He and Mast organized a delegation, including representatives from the Washington State Labor Council, the King County Central Labor Council, the NAACP, the A. Philip Randolph Institute and ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, to make a call on the head of the WSF Mike Thorne.

At the meeting the union delegation asked Thorne why he had arrested the workers rather than using the proper process. Thorne said he knew nothing of the situation. But the judges said the process preceding the arrest was updated on the process preceding the arrest.

The union had U.S. Senate Patty Murray (D-WA), Congressional representatives Jay Inslee (D-WA), call Thorne to inquire about the situation. Thorne has since "resigned" his position.

WSF fired Eaton, Gregory and Clark. Jackson remains on adminis- terial leave. No charges have been filed, although the state has up to two years after the arrests to do so. Conklin plans to take the termina- tion to arbitration and feels confi- dent of victory.

"I believe we’re going to win their jobs back," he said.

### Black ferry workers targeted, arrested

By Steve Stallone

Washington State Ferry ticket seller Jesse Eaton sensed something wrong as soon as he arrived at Colman Dock June 6. As he took the elevator to the mezzanine to start his 3:15 p.m. shift that Sunday, he noticed a large crowd of African Americans working personnel crowding the lobby and a state trooper he didn’t recognize lurked by the lobby door.

"It felt like turning around and going home," Eaton said. "I felt like turning around and going home."

Rushed into the lobby, three plain clothes detectives swarmed him and asked if he was Jesse Eaton. They told him he was under arrest. They handcuffed and searched him and then escorted him across the lobby to a vacant room.

The detectives read Eaton his Miranda rights. At first Eaton started answering their questions. They told him there were four arrests that day. Eaton asked if they were all African Americans, but they declined to answer. Instead they asked him if he'd heard rumors about surveillance cam- eras or tapes of him and his co-workers. They had videotapes of him reselling tickets. Eaton asked for an attorney.

During the interrogation, Steve Rodgers, a Washington State Ferry manager, handed Eaton a suspension letter. The WSF "obtained information" that he had committed theft and violations of the contract’s rules on discipline and for going home. Eaton said. "I felt like turning around and going home.”

"I wanted to stick up for them, maybe if they would let me," Eaton said.

"There's nothing on the tapes, the allegations are just a theory," said Conklin, who has seen the video.

The union mobilized to protect its members. Conklin filed ULP charges against management for breaking the contract's rules on discipline and for changing the conditions of work by putting the surveillance cameras in the booths without consulting the union. He and Mast organized a delegation, including representatives from the Washington State Labor Council, the King County Central Labor Council, the NAACP, the A. Philip Randolph Institute and ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, to make a call on the head of the WSF Mike Thorne. At the meeting the union delegation asked Thorne why he had arrested the workers rather than using the proper process. Thorne said he knew nothing of the situation. But the judges said the process preceding the arrest was updated on the process preceding the arrest.

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One way or another, everyone knew by the end of the day that there were four to arrive at Colman Dock June 6. As he took the elevator to the mezzanine to start his 3:15 p.m. shift that Sunday, he noticed a large crowd of African Americans working personnel crowding the lobby and a state trooper he didn’t recognize lurked by the lobby door.

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Rushed into the lobby, three plain clothes detectives swarmed him and asked if he was Jesse Eaton. They told him he was under arrest. They handcuffed and searched him and then escorted him across the lobby to a vacant room.

"It was really embarrassing,” Mast said. "And the only African American supervisor who normally works that day was re-directed for Friday and sent to a different dock."

The whole arrest procedure violated the workers' rights and the WSF’s own Code of Conduct, IBU Puget Sound Regional Director Dennis Conklin charged. The WSF can confront employees with allegations, instruct them to cooperate with an investigation and place them on administrative leave, but there is supposed to be a fact-finding investigation and a hearing in which the employee gets to rebut the charges before any arrests are made, he said.

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John Kerry, ILWU’s choice for president

By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

T he ILWU Executive Board endorsed Senator John Kerry (D-MA) for President of the United States at its April 15 meeting and unanimously affirmed this decision with a Statement of Policy at its Aug. 26-27 meeting (see page 10). This endorsement was no close call. Throughout Kerry’s 18-year Senate career, he has voted for labor’s position 90 percent of the time.

Kerry supports workers’ right to organize and has card-check recognition in organizing drives. He opposes Bush’s plan to eliminate overtime pay, supports ergonomic safeguards on the job, has co-sponsored legislation to outlaw striker replacement and wants to index the minimum wage to inflation and extend and improve unemployment benefits.

But Kerry’s record is not perfect. In the past he has supported the free trade policies of both the Clinton and Bush administrations that have been so devastating to the nation’s manufacturers, based as they are on good blue-collar jobs. However, Kerry’s position has evolved. He is committed to voting against the Central America Free Trade Agreement and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas unless the agreements contain meaningful labor, environmental and human rights provisions.

Kerry has stated publicly that he agrees with the ILWU that a national and international network of poll watchers to catch ballot tampering procedures and setting up a network of poll watchers to catch ballot fraud and abuse. “Calculated and determined efforts at intimidation and suppression” of voters of color started in the post-Civil War Reconstruction period and continue today according to the AFL-CIO’s report, “The Long Shadow of Jim Crow,” a report issued by the NAACP and People for the American Way. The report details more than two dozen incidents taking place over the last 25 years. Earlier this year, for example, armed plainclothes officers visited elderly Black voters at home in Orlando, Florida.

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The ILWU’s choice for president.

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In an unprecedented move, the administration invoked the Taft-Hartley Act against the ILWU in an employer locking. ILWU members did not bend under the lockout and Taft-Hartley injunction. The solidarity among members proved to be the deciding factor in the ILWU’s ability to obtain a favorable collective bargaining agreement with the Pacific Maritime Association. This contract expires in 2008. If Bush gets re-elected, he most likely will attack ILWU collective bargaining rights again.

Kerry understands that employers are pushed through changes in regulations to eliminate overtime pay for as many as six million American workers. He is opposed to a strong opposition vote from a majority of Congress members. With these rules changes, Bush then determines the 4-hour week American workers died to win. Kerry knows that most union members have collective bargaining agreements protecting their right to overtime, the rules changes will hit them as well. Most union contracts specify that overtime hours must be compensated at time and a half. But when these contracts expire, all bets are off. At that point the employers can insist on converting overtime to straight time. For the first time, many workers who had a federal right to overtime will have nothing. Kerry wants to protect their current protection, union workers might have to give up other benefits.

Congress can repeal these egregious regulations, and certainly Kerry will work hard to ensure passage.

Recognizing that working families will suffer tremendously if Bush wins, the AFL-CIO International Convention made the defeat of Bush its top priority. Accordingly, ILWU members are stepping up to the plate to elect Kerry president. Washington and Oregon are key states that could go either way. Fifteen longshore workers were trained by the AFL-CIO’s Get Out the Vote program to become “poll captains.” They bring a new perspective to the polls in November. The Get Out the Vote campaign is in part on our exercise of their right.

Patriot Act through Congress. The Patriot Act allows the FBI to investigate American citizens and residents based on their exercise of their First Amendment rights. The FBI can spy on people because it doesn’t like the books they read or the web sites they visit. It can spy on people who write letters to the editor criticizing U.S. government policy or on sites they visit. It can spy on people because it doesn’t want to see what websites they visit. It can spy on people because it doesn’t want to see what websites they visit.

As ILWU President Jim Spinosa said in a recent letter to ILWU members, “It is vital that you register and get out there to vote this year. More importantly, don’t vote for your family members and their friends out to the polls in November as well. The future existence of the ILWU is at stake.”

The AFL-CIO is producing a “Voters Bill of Rights” tailored to each battleground state and advises union members and activists to take some of the tools and share their votes:

Call the local election office to be sure you are registered and know where to vote.

Be especially sure to check your registration if you have moved or changed your name or have not voted recently.

Check for any new voting procedures in your area.

Know that you have the right to vote a provisional ballot if your name doesn’t appear on the list at your polling place.

For more information, go to www.myvotemyright.com, e-mail vot

rights@ afl-cio.org or call the AFL-CIO’s Civil, Human & Women’s Rights Dept. at 202-637-5270. For a copy of “The Long Shadow of Jim Crow,” go to www.pliw.org.
House by house, union members fight the power

Still hanging back, thinking about doing some election work? Then Philbush of longshore Local 21 has a few words for you. We spoke with the Kenyon Edwards president, and a lot about what’s going on and I leave them with more information. I’ve registered people to vote, and that feels good thing.”

Forget the state fright, Philbush said. “Always the same old song, but just I tell people we’re union volunteers talking to other union members...”

Philbush is one of a half-dozen ILWU members who are helping the AFL-CIO to coordinate their work in the battleground states of Washington and Oregon. Dozens of other members,...

The ILWU plans to send around 50 members in all swing states for the final weeks of the election. Most will come from California, where Democrats have a strong edge. Members from Oregon and Washington have their work cut out for them closer to home. The AFL-CIO has also asked the ILWU for immediate help in Arizona and Nevada. Tim Scott (Local 65) and Patricia Rank (Local 60) are leading the efforts there...

The Columbia River District Council hosted its special Labor 2004 in-person GOTV July 27 for Labor 2004 in Portland. Some 75 union members, 30 from ILWU Locals 5, 8 and 40, downed burgers and hot dogs courtesy of CRDC before fanning out to talk to Portland union members. The next week ILWU efforts helped bring a highly visible union presence to the 60,000-strong rally that marked the end of the Kerry tour. “I’ve seen people come together for a common cause,” Wenzl said. “I’m keeping labor issues out front, debate over ‘personal character’ and social wedge issues will take over,” she said. And intensive worker-to-worker campaigns will play a crucial part in highlighting those issues and moving voters...

“Any campaign, the most valid endorser is a fellow worker,” Granville said. “People want sincerity, not mind-numbing legislation details.”

At the end of August, organizers in the Puget Sound area and Southwest Washington have been doing similar work with the Labor/Neighbor programs there. They have hosted GOTV barbecues, helped mobilize for the Aug. 28 Kerry rally in Tacoma and registered new voters...

John Shwalter contributed this story.

Clement Mejia from waste management in the area’s District Council.

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VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES
What’s your deadline to register Bush out?
Depends on where you live...

Washington St. Oct. 2
Oregon Oct. 12
California Oct. 18
Hawaii Oct. 4
Alaska Oct. 3*

* Regional elections offices will be open from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 3.

SIGN UP, ALREADY!
To find out how to get involved, talk to your local’s political action coordinator or the president of your area’s District Council.

Puget Sound District Council: Henry Graham, (415) 776-8100 (cell)
Columbia River District Council: Jeff Smith, (503) 709-8805 (cell)
Hawaii District Council: Henry Graham, (415) 776-8100 (Local 10)
S. California District Council: Joe Radisch, (310) 521-8796 (SCDC office)

Local Longshore 8 members Gordon Wescott (at left) and Brian Harvey (at right) canvassing July 27 in Portland. Some 75 union members, 30 of them from Local 5, 8 and 40, walked the neighborhoods that right after a barbecue hosted by the Columbia River District Council.

Clemency reviewed the East coast longshore Local 18’s John Philbush...
The 300-plus residents of the tight-knit Poamoho Camp community are looking forward to keeping their homes instead of losing them, thanks to their own determination and strategic help from ILWU Local 142.

Poamoho is an old pineapple plantation camp run by Del Monte for its employees. Most of the residents are Local 142 pineapple members, their families and retirees. The camp sits on 30 acres out of 2,200 leased by Del Monte from the Galbraith estate near Wahiawa on the island of Oahu.

Del Monte told Poamoho residents in February 2004 that they would have to move by the end of June. The company planned to let the lease expire, demolish their homes and return the land to the estate. The notice surprised and dismayed the residents.

“Many of the people living at Poamoho grew up here, just like me,” said Boyd Isnec, chair of the ILWU Local 142 pineapple members, their families and retirees. Isnec has a unique spirit, said Haunani Tyrell, who was also raised there.

“Poamoho was a great place to grow up,” Tyrell said. “We kids could go into anyone’s yard, help ourselves to a fruit, play with the animals, talk to strangers. Everyone treated us kids like our own family even though we were of many different cultures. There’s no place like Poamoho. I can’t imagine it gone. It holds so many fond memories for me. My roots are there.”

The union helped the Poamoho residents organize and mobilize political and community support. Allies in the state legislature introduced two resolutions that called on Del Monte to extend the lease until at least December 2005 or provide financial aid so residents could remain in Poamoho. The resolutions also asked the Galbraith Estate to consider leasing the land to either the Poamoho Camp Community Association or another group of the residents’ choosing. Poamoho residents rallied at the state capitol and testified at a hearing on the resolutions April 2.

A week and a day later, the residents voted to approve an offer by local housing developer Peter Savio to take over the lease, buy the land, and then sell the homes to them. Details took some time to work out, but by June 12, the residents were ready to celebrate their successful fight against their eviction.

At a press conference held before the party that day, Community Assn. President Vaeleti Tyrell thanked the state legislators who introduced the resolutions on their behalf—State Senate President Robert Bunda, State Reps. Marilyn Lee, Michael Magaoay and Marcus Galicic—as well as City Council Chair Donovan Dela Cruz and Council member Ann Kobayashi. (The City and County of Honolulu covers the whole island of Oahu.)

“I am proud of the Poamoho residents,” said Local 142 President Dave Arian. “But it’s still not over yet.”

Poamoho was one of many plantation camps that carry a long history of the ILWU, Local 142’s Pineapple members. They are looking forward to buying their homes.

Residents have a lot of work ahead of us before we are 100 percent secure in our homes, but we will continue to work with all parties to save the camp,” Tyrell said.

The residents are studying ways to form a cooperative, because they want a structure that will let them keep their community and lifestyle, said ILWU International Rep. Tracy Takano.

“The community supported them preserving their lifestyle and housing, and they feel they shouldn’t let the place become something for profit,” Takano said.

Though the ILWU has experience converting plantation camps into affordable housing, the Poamoho project will be challenging, he said. The union is helping the residents find financing and find their way through the maze of permits and paperwork needed to upgrade the 1950s-era homes.

Voice of the ILWU and Dispatch staff reports

Puget Sound Arbitrator Randy Vekich waded into the 20-foot-long bin of settlements that carry a long history of the ILWU, Local 142’s Pineapple members. They are looking forward to buying their homes.

Poamoho resident Randy Sanborn at the rally and press conference the community held at the Hawaii State Capitol April 2, 2004.

HAWAII IBU STRIKES TO WIN

Hawaiian Tug & Barge/Young Brothers played hardball with the Ianbordonians’ union when contract talks began in early May. They kept it up until the old contract expired June 30 and the 60 IBU members who run the islands’ lifeline walked out on strike. Four days of pickets changed the game. The company agreed to a new deal that gave members the extra time off they needed for safety, kept the crew size at a safe level and preserved medical care.

“We have a fair agreement now,” negotiating team chair Kenny Ho said. “We’re just looking forward to working hard and making this profitable for us and for the company.”

The IBU members at HTB/BB crew the tugs that assist ships in the Port of Honolulu and tow the barges that carry goods to and among Hawaii’s outer islands. Everything from rice to cars to toilet paper comes to Honolulu on ships and then gets transferred to barges for transport to Maui, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai and the Big Island.

Tug crews work hard in harsh conditions for days at a stretch.

“Our members routinely deal with huge, heavy cargoes and some of the largest ships in the world,” said Jonathan Loke Kane, the IBU’s Hawaii Regional Director. “Our channels are well-known for their dangerous currents and strong winds and Hawaii is under small-craft warnings 300 days of the year.”

Working tugboats is not a nine-to-five job, Kane added. Once on a boat, crew members can be at sea for two or three days, then go back to port, turn around and go out again. Sometimes they go as much as two months without real time off. This creates safety hazards, Ho said.

“We are dealing with Mother Nature and heavy equipment, sometimes working around the clock for days on end. People get injured,” he said.

In those conditions, members’ safety and well-being depend on adequate rest time. For every day at sea, they accumulate time off, and increasing the accumulation rate became the union’s top negotiating goal.

Time off for HTB/BB’s last, best and final offer fell far short of the union’s demands. The company also proposed cutting crews who maintain vessels that carry goods to and among Hawaii’s outer islands. This would create another threat to safety, and making several unacceptable changes in work rules. Not one IBU member voted for the offer.

During their four days on strike, the HTB/BB workers enjoyed “unreal” support, Ho said.

“All different unions were dropping off food and water and walking the lines with us. The ILWU longshore brothers showed solidarity. We also had the ILWU International, AFL-CIO affiliate unions and building trades members with us,” he said.

The four-year deal worked out during the strike provides six hours of accumulated time off for each eight hours worked, an increase of two hours over the old rate. It maintains the six-person crew and the employer-paid health benefits, though a co-pay will kick in if costs rise more than 32 percent. It includes a small pension increase after the first year, and cleans up some troublesome work rules.

Union members voted 42-1 to accept the deal early on the morning of July 4, and returned to work immediately.

—Marcy Rein

LONGSHORE LOTTERY

Despite industry projections of 10 to 20 percent growth each year at the twin port complex, and despite Local 13’s constant requests for an expanded port, the HTB/BB’s ratified a four-year deal that protected jobs.

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Puget Sound Arbitrator Randy Vekich waded into the 20-foot-long bin of settlements that carry a long history of the ILWU, Local 142’s Pineapple members. They are looking forward to buying their homes.

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ITF Dockers’ Section MEETS IN SINGAPORE

Dockworkers from around the world spent two days at the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) Dockers’ Section conference in Singapore July 13 and 14 making plans to defend against privatization, to protect seafarers’ shore leave and ensure the new international security system would not de-unionize seaports.

To attending 5 million transport workers from 600 unions in 139 countries, including the ILWU in the U.S. and Canada, it has struggled for more than a century for worker rights. ILWU International officers attended the conference, including President Peter Benett and Vice President Bob McElrath and Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. Committeeman Ray Ortiz Jr. and Ray Familathe, ILWU Director of International Affairs, also represented the union.

“There’s nothing better than looking the brother you just worked with in the eye,” Familathe said of the conference. “Not only do they have to work with you, but because the effects of globalization throughout the world are horrendous, and it’s good to be able to feel their pain as a human being, to feel their frustration first hand.”

At the dockers’ conference the ITF resolved to fight for “frank port security,” that is, employer attempts to de-unionize longshore work, and new international security rules that restrict sailors’ shore leave, making them virtual prisoners aboard their vessels.

The UN’s International Maritime Organization recently passed the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code, a measure that tightens port security and imposes strict security standards aboard vessels.

The IMO wrote the code in response to the 9-11 attacks and it came into force July 1, 2003. Under the ISPS Code, a vessel is considered high-risk if it’s traveled a “red zone” that is, if it’s sailed from a territory it’s considered high-risk. Under the ISPS Code, security compromise reports are required to be filed with the coast guard.

“The whole world is looking for ways to maintain trade, but it can’t be maintained at any price,” Familathe said of the conference. “We have to speak out.”

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For many sailors, the ancient craft of seafaring was reduced to a temp job aboard a floating sweatshop. For many sailors now have ITF-approved labor agreements. Many FOc seafarers organized themselves to bargain collectively. Grupo M got a $23 million loan from the World Bank to build its factory in Haiti. The terms of the loan require the company to live up to a similar code. In addition to union rights, protesters demanded rehiring of laid-off workers, the return of machinery moved out of the plant and an end to company violence. The workers’ union has made similar demands.

Dolan held up a puppet of Grupo M’s manager, Fernando Capellan, and asked Levi Strauss to send out someone to tell Fernando to live up to the code. Then Michael Kobori, Director of Levi’s Global Code of Conduct Dept., came out side to speak to the demonstrators. Kobori said Levi Strauss told the owners of Grupo M to follow the code, and it was only a matter of time before they expected their subcontractors to comply.

“The Labor Council calls on Levi Strauss to adhere to its code and fix the problem—reinstate the fired workers and bargain in good faith with the union,” San Francisco Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Walter Johnson said to Kobori and the crowd.

“On June 4 soldiers of the Dominican Republic army crossed the nearby border and entered the Grupo M compound in Haiti,” said U.C. Berkeley student Kirstin Jackson of United Students Against Sweatshops. “The 15 soldiers entered with the knowledge of the company security force and pointed their guns at workers. Workers were ordered to leave the plant. Soldiers entered the plant in the head with a rifle butt and a pregnant woman was thrown to the ground.

“Not only do the workers there have to struggle with this threat of violence daily, workers live under threat from non-union conditions. They work 55+ hours and we have no paid sick days. That’s two dollars a day.”

—Tom Price

DEMONSTRATORS DENOUNCE SWEATSHOP SUPPLIERS TO LEVI STRAUSS, WAL-MART

Workers who make Levi’s jeans for Wal-Mart in Haiti want to join a union. A score of anti-sweatshop activists marched to the Levi Strauss world headquarters in San Francisco Aug. 5 to ask the company why they shouldn’t be allowed that right.

“Grupo M is making Levi’s jeans in sweatshops for Wal-Mart. What’s the lowest common denominator with these companies? Sweatshops and busting unions to keep labor costs down,” Mike Dolan of the California Coalition for Fair Trade & Human Rights told the crowd.

Levi Strauss has a code of conduct that includes suppliers, nearly all of which operate overseas. The code requires the contractors to respect freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. Grupo M got a $23 million loan from the World Bank to build its factory in Haiti. The terms of the loan require the company to live up to a similar code. In addition to union rights, protesters demanded rehiring of laid-off workers, the return of machinery moved out of the plant and an end to company violence. The workers’ union has made similar demands.

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By Jack Rasmus

Pension plans in the corporate crosshairs

R

ecently, United Airlines declare that it will abandon the pension plans for its 120,000 employees and retirees, provoking an announcement from the U.S. Airline Association of plans to withhold pension payments, threats by ATA Airlines and Delta AirLines to follow suit, and sharply increasing the likelihood of a chain reaction of pension plan failures in the airline industry. United Airlines' action directly followed a decision by Congress earlier this week to not provide a government loan to the company at the taxpayers' expense. And it dramatically raises the possibilities of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), a federal corporation that insures pensions, will itself be forced into bankruptcy should it have to assume the nearly $8.3 billion liability of United’s unfunded pension obligations (plus additional $10-$20 billion of other airlines' liabilities).

The PBGC was created by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), the main federal legislation regulating pensions. It currently pays retirement benefits for members of around 3,300 pension plans that have ended. Though the Secretaries of Labor, Commerce and Treasury comprise its Board of Directors, it is not funded by federal government. Instead, it gets funds from insurance premiums paid by around 37,000 American corporations. It then, plans and investments from and the term terminations.

As a consequence of the Bush administration’s decision this year to allow companies with unfunded pension plans to forgo $80 billion in payments currently due and required by law to bring their plans into balance, the PBGC is facing pension liabilities of more than $278 billion. Should the PBGC itself fail under the weight of a large-scale abandonment of group pension plans by United and other corporations, it will certainly create tremendous political pressure on Congress to bail it out. This would mean yet another huge windfall for the hands of the American worker and taxpayer.

Less certain, but no less ominous, will be the impact of the current crisis and string of failures on the already faltering U.S. economic recovery. Between 1975 and 1985, pensions represented 78 percent of Social Security benefits and by 2003 only 53 percent. The PBGC has thus been a large-scale sunsetting of Social Security. In 1983, 21 million were in a typical 401(k) plan. Enron management pulled its own money out of the company’s 401(k) and plans when they want, pressure featherbeds, corporate off-shore, and workers wait longer to retire and workers. For example, the typical fee to run a 401(k) averages two to four percent of the worker’s contribution. If a worker had $100,000 in a 401(k), earning 8 percent over 30 years, every one percent reduction in the two to four percent fee charged would mean an extra $2,150,000 in the worker’s account upon retirement.

Employees at Enron Corporation, who lost more than $2 billion when that company went bankrupt in 2002, were in a typical 401(k) plan. Enron management pulled its own money out of the company when it knew the company was going under, while they “froze” the accounts for their employees. They were allowed $3 percent retirement reduction, which was less than the plan was essentially bankrupt.

But Enron’s not just Enron workers who have been victims of 401(k) plans. Between 2000 and 2002 workers who had their money in 401(k) plans saw their retirement savings shrink on average by 20-40 percent in one year. Individual retirement plans based on 401(k)s and similar programs are largely the product of the last 20 years. A series of laws was passed under Reagan in 1982 and 1987 that gave a huge boost to 401(k)s. At the same time under Reagan, a corporate offensive against the PBGC was launched to break up and dismantle defined-benefit pension plans.

The result has been a major shift from union and group pension plans to individual retirement accounts. Very few households had 401(k) retirement plans in 1983. By 1995 this had risen to 23 percent. Today more than 62 percent have such plans despite the various risks associated with them. In contrast, the 2001-2003 period of American workers were covered under some kind of pension or retirement account, the number is less than 20 percent.

GROUP PENSION PLANS IN THE CROSS-HAIRS

George Bush, U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan and other con-

servatives recently declared that pri-

vatizing and breaking up Social Security will be high on the Bush agenda in a second term. Social Security alone will generate $1.1 trillion in surplus in between now and 2018. Wall Street, the banks and corporations want this huge sum transferred into 401(k) plans so it will be available to make offshores investments, to stim-

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vati...
Several trucks turned around on twisting, treacherous Vasco Road rather than cross the line of landfill workers on strike to get ILWU Local 6 recognized.

PARTNERSHIP OPENS DOOR FOR KAISER SECURITY

“We have a voice now,” said veteran security officer and Kaiser steward Tommy Rudd. “Before the union, we didn’t.”

Rudd and other members of the security staff at Portland-area Kaiser medical facilities ratified a first contract with ILWU security officers Local 26 July 15, not quite two months after they voted to join the union.

Before their vote, the officers stood out as the last non-union group at Kaiser in Portland. Their co-workers, from RNs to housekeepers, all take part in bargaining that participated in the health-care giant’s “Labor Management Partnership.”

With the partnership in place, the officers’ drive unraveled without the union-bashing, lying and stalling by management that usually scar elections and negotiations.

Kaiser forged the partnership with five international unions and 26 locals in 1997, after a series of bitter work stoppages. To get the partnership up and running, the company respect their decision.

The cities of Berkeley, Livermore and Pleasanton all reported back to work, only to be told an hour they pulled the picket. They couldn’t do suicide clean-up for the landfill and we certainly hope to help verify signatures in a card-check porting the workers and offering to the Vasco Road site. Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates wrote to the company supporting the workers and offering to help verify signatures in a card-check recognition process.

The Vasco Road crews.

“We need a union because we need better wages and medical care to support our families,” said Alba Flores, a heavy equipment operator. Local 6 members at Alum Rock, just an hour more in medical and pension benefits. “We drive the City of Berkeley trucks. After a few months of quiet base-building, they got 50 of their 57 co-workers signed on to a recognition petition and authorization cards in just two-and-a-half days. As they prepared a delegation to management, the other unions in the partnership—SEIU, the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals and the Oregon Nurses Association—contacted hospital higher-ups on their behalf.

Management wouldn’t go with card-check recognition, but agreed to stay neutral and have the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service run an election. On May 17, the officers voted 46 to 5 to join Local 26, with three noes at the watchtowers at the Port of Portland.

Negotiations began less than a week later, using an interest-based “bargaining” process. In this type of negotiations, the two sides start with an agreement to agree and then table, then move to the harder items.

“Everybody treated everybody else in a very professional manner,” Rudd said.

They emerged with a deal that gave them 13 percent wage increases over three years and 20 percent hikes in pension. Kaiser agreed to bring subcontracted work back into the unit and to bring uniform-cleaning in-house, which will save about $100 per month for full-time officers.

The security officers voted to join the partnership coalition, so they now enjoy the strong job security protections in the national partnership agreement. They also sit on committees to hire new people for their department, make the schedules and plan for a new clinic.

“We will be able to raise security issues ahead of time, have some say on safety and let other employees know more of what we do,” Barbour said. “We’re very excited about that.”

—Marcy Rein

CONTRACTING SCAMS TAKE HITS

Two recent decisions by state and federal agencies slapped contractor companies that “converted” their employees to independent contractors. Since the ILWU began organizing with hike
N ot since the days of Senator Joe McCarthy have U.S. workers faced a foe so intent on destroying and dismantling the American labor movement, (and society in general) as President George W. Bush. Every event, no matter how tragic or perverse, from the attacks of September 11, is used as an excuse to harass and intimidate working people not only in this country, but around the world.

From his tax cuts for the rich, free trade policies, and international excursions alienating many former friends, Bush has destroyed in a few years what took decades to build. His wars harming innocent civilians overseas, his Social Security—legislation that will allow the Bush administration to recommend privatizing Medicare and push seniors into HMOs, as well as his support to expand prescription drug benefits without reducing their costs for those who have it in their union contracts is one of the most significant.

John Kerry supports expanded funding for public education, including higher pay for teachers. He opposes the concept of vouchers that are nothing more than a band-aid adding on to the system. While Kerry supports free trade agreements, he at least says he will require them to meet environmental standards in all future negotiations.

The labor movement has incorporated a tendency to quickly and easily trade off demands for money and volunteers without getting sufficient guarantees for its positions in return. If Kerry can ensure that the ILWU commits to holding him accountable for all promises to labor and the public, it is likely to be a deciding factor in issues surrounding health care, outsourcing, port security and free trade (as it was in the upcoming CAPTA agreement).

The ILWU International Executive Board, meeting in San Francisco on July 22, revised the union’s budget to reflect additional administrative costs that were not known at the time the International Convention adopted the 2004 budget. The increases will most likely be covered by the per capita of an expanding membership, especially the registration of new longshore workers. The board backed up its action of the previous November elections. Olney outlined his department’s new strategic approach to organizing.

The board will probably do and amplify the power in the ILWU’s current cur-
exists where the union has leverage and where it will build further leverage. The ILWU dedicated a small portion of the meeting to organizing. The board reviewed the union’s political efforts in the November elections and for contributions to pro-worker candidates.

The board backed up its action of last April endorsing Sen. John Kerry for President by unanimously passing a Statement of Policy explaining the union’s support for Kerry (see statement below). Local 63 Secretary Peter Peyton laid out the union’s plans for the November election. The ILWU, in coordination with the AFL-CIO, will be sending about 50 members to swing states to help Kerry’s campaigns there, as well as concentrating member activity in Oregon and Washington (see story page 5).

Longshore Local 10 and Northwest Maritime Union member Lawrence Thibeaux presented a resolution asking the board to endorse the Million Worker March, a non-partisan demonstration with pro-worker demands scheduled for Oct. 1 in Washington, D.C., and the action of the action’s initiators, Local 10 Executive Board member Clarence Thomas, who has subsequently asked for the union’s support. The march would support neither Kerry or Bush, the resolution states, since the union’s demands of universal health care, workers’ rights and ending the Iraq war would still be needed no matter which one won the election.

Various board members opposed the march, arguing that while they supported the positions of the march, organizing for an October event would detract from the November elections. It was apparent that the International Convention decided was the union’s number one priority—defeating Bush. The board then decided to turn down the proposal, and a companion one to donate $150,000 to organizing the march, on a voice vote.

The ILWU Political Action Fund has a goal of raising more than $500,000 for the union’s work on the November 2004 elections and for contributions to pro-worker candidates. The ILWU’s 32nd International Convention committed support for a national single-payer health care program, and mandated the union to back other measures necessary to defeat Bush. The ILWU’s support for Kerry (see statement below). The board decisively supported the positions of the march, organizing for an October event would detract from the November elections. It was apparent that the International Convention decided was the union’s number one priority—defeating Bush. The board then decided to turn down the proposal, and a companion one to donate $150,000 to organizing the march, on a voice vote.

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The board backed up its action of last April endorsing Sen. John Kerry for President by unanimously passing a Statement of Policy explaining the union’s support for Kerry (see statement below).

Local 63 Secretary Peter Peyton laid out the union’s plans for the November election. The ILWU, in coordination with the AFL-CIO, will be sending about 50 members to swing states to help Kerry’s campaigns there, as well as concentrating member activity in Oregon and Washington (see story page 5).

Longshore Local 10 and Northwest Maritime Union member Lawrence Thibeaux presented a resolution asking the board to endorse the Million Worker March, a non-partisan demonstration with pro-worker demands scheduled for Oct. 1 in Washington, D.C., and the action of the action’s initiators, Local 10 Executive Board member Clarence Thomas, who has subsequently asked for the union’s support. The march would support neither Kerry or Bush, the resolution states, since the union’s demands of universal health care, workers’ rights and ending the Iraq war would still be needed no matter which one won the election.

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SAN FRANCISCO—Nearly 200 people gathered at longshore Local 10’s hall to honor Bloody Thursday, today, exactly 70 years before on July 5, 1934. This year the membership also honored two ILWU pioneer leaders, Bill Chestor and former Coaster Arbitrator Sam Kagel.

At the ILWU Drill Team stand at crisp attention, Local 10 past President Joe Mosley read the proclama- tion making Kagel an honorary member of the Local 10 Council.

Benjamin Johnson, son of Local 10 stalwart Joe Johnson and a Local 10 Blue streamer carrier, read the proclamation making Kagel an honorary member of the Local 10 Council.

Sullivan; Frank Estes, Frank J. Franko, J. D. Wade, Michael Downs, Claude Harrison, Frank King; recently retired:

SAN PEDRO—Peck Park in San Pedro July-August 2004

Daniel Potts, William Strube, Antonio Duback, Russell Fowler;


Local 13—Edward Kohal (Carmen), Paul Aranda;

Local 21—Edward Kohal; Local 63—Edward Kohal (Mattie), Willie Cross (Dorothy), Kenneth (Elaine), Palmris Scardacci, Albert Fuller (Mollart (Canzada), John Howard (John)

Local 22—Lester Dorris (Gloria), Steven Popovitch, (Judith);

Local 12—Barry A. Kefalas (Frances), Henry Lawrence (Lawrence), John Wirick (Marguerite), Albert Foundation (Martina), Clair Newell (Anna), Loren Cooke (Joann), Albert Duro Betty (Alina), John Candioto (Julia), Frank Pryor (Elsie Trump, Mildred Lusk, Ellen Scott, James Neal, Lawrence Primo, James P.

Local 54—Tom Price

Local 8—Edward Tillman, John M. Caso, Joseph P.

Local 10—Joseph Sorentino (Marti), Andy Avaloz (Cook (Myrtle), Joe Falcon (Albina),

Local 11—Ray A. Bates; Local 12—Richard Alvino (Rina), Saunoa Toavalu (Marijan Pesic (Rina), Peter Tolich (Ruth), Harry Collins

Local 8—James Neal, Lawrence Primo, James P.

Local 10—Lawrence McAdoo, Julie Kelso, Daniel Potts, Stacey Williams, Aubrey Fields, William R.J. Ward, Vincent Ferraro, Michael Downs, Claude Harrison, Frank King;

Local 11—Ray A. Bates; Local 12—Richard Alvino (Rina), Saunoa Toavalu (Marijan Pesic (Rina), Peter Tolich (Ruth), Harry Collins

Local 10—Robert King;

Local 52—Edward Kohal (Carmen), Paul Aranda;
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