

URGENT! PENSIONERS' CONVENTION
ANNOUNCEMENT ON PAGE 6



The DISPATCHER

Published by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Vol. 65, No. 6



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. CANADA POST: Send address changes to ILWU Canada, 111 Victoria Dr. Ste. 180, Vancouver, BC V5L 4C4

June 2007

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Courtesy Sam Kagel

Sam Kagel, with Harry Bridges looking over his shoulder

Sam Kagel passes—last member of the 1934 Joint Maritime Strike Committee

by Tom Price

Sam Kagel was a friend of the ILWU even before the union was organized. In his 70 years on the waterfront, Kagel was present at the birth of the union out of the fire of the 1934 strike, and he would later become the Coast Arbitrator, interpreting the contract he helped found for both labor and management.

He was born in San Francisco in 1909 to parents who escaped from Czarist Russia and its anti-Jewish pogroms. He grew up in Oakland, near the docks, and social ferment was in the air. He lived a few blocks from the Industrial Workers of the World reading room, which the police raided. At about the same time his mother Zelda refused to give the cops the minutes of the meetings of the Workingman's Circle. She was secretary of that strike-support group. His father Hyman ran a store while Sam worked delivering produce, occasionally slipping purloined watermelons to IWW vagabonds when he was a kid.

While still a graduate student at UC Berkeley, Kagel got a job in 1932 at the Pacific Coast Labor

Bureau, an outfit that provided legal and organizational help to workers.

Through his work at the Bureau Kagel soon met Harry Bridges. Bridges and Kagel together would soon learn the value of organization and teamwork as Bridges' brilliant strategic skills joined up with Kagel's tactical expertise.

Kagel's office passed out a union recognition petition and longshoremen up and down the Coast signed up to join the International Longshoremen's Assn. The union's demands were simple: end the "fink halls," the phony company-unions; end the morning "shape up," where workers had to fight and bribe their way into jobs; establish a six-hour day with a pay raise; and establish a Coastwide agreement. The maritime employer's resistance to these demands led to the Big Strike of 1934.

Soon after the strike began Bridges was chair of the Joint Maritime Strike Comm., and Kagel—25-years young—was a member, representing the Marine Engineers Beneficial Assn. The cops and scabs killed six men up

and down the Coast, but the union held firm. In San Francisco a general strike ensued after two men were killed.

"I can still see the general strike of July 16-19 held to protest the killings," Kagel once said. "I can still see it and feel it."

Roosevelt appointed the National Longshoremen's Board to arbitrate the longshore strike. Kagel helped prepare the testimony for the workers' star witness—Harry Bridges. They sat for hours over a bottle of Old Quaker whiskey, going over every detail. The Board ruled for the union's basic demands. The West Coast ILA became the ILWU in 1937.

One of the Board's actions was to set up arbitration for local disputes, and later, in 1948, Kagel would assume the newly created post of Coast Arbitrator. He kept that job until 2002. During those years he established labor arbitration as an art and science, handing down thousands of rulings in the longshore industry and rulings groups as diverse as the National Football League and the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. Former Coast

continued on page 7

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Countdown to longshore bargaining

By Robert McEllrath
ILWU International President

The Longshore Division Caucus was held April 30-May 4 at the Holiday Inn on Van Ness Ave. in San Francisco. Several topics were discussed and I will address in this article two subjects: 1) Early longshore negotiations and, 2) The National Labor Relations Board case concerning the changes in the amount of longshore pro rata and per capita payments by non-member Class 'B' longshore workers to the Union.

First of all, a brief history of the timeline for previous Pacific Coast Longshore Contract Document (PCLCD) bargaining. Normally, the Longshore Division has a two-week caucus to prepare for bargaining, where we put together a package of resolutions brought from the Locals up and down the coast. Each one is introduced and discussed on the floor, with a final vote to either accept or reject the resolution. All resolutions that are accepted are then given to the Officers, Coast Committee, and the Negotiating Committee (selected from the Caucus) to prepare and present to the employers. This usually occurs in the first part of May, giving the parties about two months—May and June—to negotiate an agreement before the Contract expires on July 1.

Research shows there has been only one official set of "early" negotiations, in October 1970. The Caucus authorized early negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Assn. (PMA) for the 1971 expiration of the 1966 "Second Mechanization and Modernization (M&M) Agreement." Early negotiations were broken off in January, 1971 and resumed a few months later.

For the current contract, the employers first expressed a desire to finish bargaining by December 2007, and then changed their request, asking for negotiations to begin in early 2008. After agreeing with early bargaining, the Longshore Division will hold its negotiating Caucus, known as the "Contract Caucus," in January or early February, and

begin bargaining in March. This schedule gives the Negotiating Committee about four months to obtain an agreement. It will clearly demonstrate that the ILWU is taking the concerns of everyone involved very seriously. It will also demonstrate that the Union is doing its part to minimize the chance of an interruption of commerce by either side.

As we all remember, the 2002 lock-out by the employers was the first time in American labor history the government

take all steps necessary to implement the reduction by the June 1 deadline.

With respect to the refund, each individual who is or was a nonmember class 'B' worker during the settlement period has the right to accept or reject the refund on a totally confidential basis. The Union will have no idea who rejects and who accepts the partial refund; only the Labor Board will know this and they will keep it confidential. The Union must assure everyone that the choice to accept or reject the partial refund is entirely up to the individual, free from any threats, coercion or intimidation.

However, the Union needs to equally stress to all individuals eligible for the refund the importance of choosing to reject their share of the refund so that the money may be returned to the Coast Pro Rata Committee for ongoing programs vital to the welfare of the Longshore Division, including especially upcoming 2008 contract negotiations.

Having myself been a B-man for five years, I was not allowed to vote or run for office. But we

paid our dues, we listened, and we learned how the Union is run and held together. All the assessments and dues back then got us to where we are today. The dues and fees paid today will get us improved Contracts and conditions for tomorrow.

It is also important to note that only a small group of the 'B' registrants wanted this Pro Rata changed. There are excellent trade unionists among our 'B'-ranks who are the ILWU's future officers. To all of you I say thanks, and for the very few among us who want to tear it apart..., I won't say I'm sorry for you, but I am sorry for the ILWU. This institution is your house, our house. However, I for one am proud to have given, and will continue to give whatever is asked in order to build the strength and unity of the ILWU. And I know the great majority of Casuals and Class 'Bs,' and all Class 'As,' are with the Union 100 percent.

An Injury to One is an Injury to All.



Having myself been a B-man for five years, I was not allowed to vote or run for office. But we paid our dues, we listened, and we learned how the Union is run and held together.

invoked the Taft Hartley Act against a union when the employers were the ones to bring about disruption of commerce. The employers said we were slowing down the flow of goods, but as hard as they tried, it was never proven in court. Everyone should be aware that 2002 negotiations cost the Coast about \$3.4 million.

This brings me to my second topic: the NLRB lawsuit on non-member Class 'B' payments for Pro Rata (Longshore Division) and Per Capita (International Union.) As mandated by the Caucus, the ILWU Coast Committee has assumed responsibility for paying the Labor Board from existing Coast funds. The settlement covers the refunds to be paid to all individuals who are or were nonmember class 'Bs' during the settlement period. As also directed by the Caucus, each Local is responsible for implementing by June 1, 2007 the collection of reduced nonmember class 'B' fees. The Locals will

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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, 2007



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Interim Editor

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Remembering the fallen in San Pedro

By John Showalter

The Southern California Pensioners Group (SCGP) hosted its annual memorial to the many longshore workers who have died on the job over the years at the Ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Port Hueneme on May 15, 2007 in John Gibson Memorial Park in San Pedro, California. The date marked the 73rd anniversary of the murders of Dickie Parker and John Knudsen, the first two West Coast longshore workers killed by police and scabs during the Waterfront Strike of 1934 in San Pedro.

ILWU Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr. shared the stage with ILWU Vice President Joseph Radisich; Southern California Pensioners Group President Al Perisho; Local 13 President Mike Mitre; Local 63 President Joe Gasperov; and Local 94 President Danny Miranda, and others. Pensioners Lou Loveridge and Art Almeida served as the program's Chairman and Master of Ceremony, respectively. Los Angeles Councilwoman Janice Hahn (D-15th Dist.) sent a representative.

"We can't forget who we are," Ortiz reminded audience members which included pensioners from Locals 13, 63 and 94. "We are labor and we move cargo. The day we forget that is the day we start having problems in our struggles in California and nationwide." Ortiz dedicated his remarks to his father, Ray Ortiz, and to Pete Velasquez, a deceased longshoreman who was de-registered under the Modernization and Mechanization Agreement of 1960.

John Joseph Royal, former Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, Local 33, ILWU, described the violence he saw as a young boy on the waterfront in 1934, when police patrolling the docks would routinely beat up longshoremen with their Billy clubs.

Days after the murders of Parker and Knudsen, labor historian Harry Fisher wrote: "There are times when circumstances so control the destinies of men that death lifts from obscurity sterling characteristics of golden promise in the unfolding process of development. A vivid confirmation of this truism was exemplified at the funeral of Richard Parker. Just one week ago this boy of twenty was buoyant spirit approaching the threshold of a brilliant career, where success was wholly dependent on his own endeavor....It was the irony of fate that Dick Parker, who had just joined the union, should be the one to die, by being shot through the heart."

A monument and two benches (dedicated last year) in Gibson Park commemorate those who lost their lives working—and fighting for the right to work—on the docks in Southern California. Several years ago, Hugh Hunter, an active member of the SCGP Executive Board, pushed the City of Los Angeles for a panel on the monument honoring three longshore workers killed on the job. The plaque currently lists the names of 59 brothers who have died on the waterfront since 1934.

"This event is not just to honor the fallen," said SCGP President Perisho, "but to honor each other."



Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz Jr. at the memorial.

John Regas

Canadian longshore negotiations continue

ILWU Canada and its employers were still far apart when the contract expired March 31. The employers, the British Columbia Maritime Employers' Assn. (BCMEA), had made 110 proposals, and many of them would change basic labor relations in Canada's West Coast ports. Bargaining continues as we go to press.

The employers came to the table with what they called five targeted demands.

"One of the big ones is a change in the dispatch in Local 500," ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne said. "This is the Port of Vancouver, and

that is where they want to [dispatch] over the internet or to a telephone system with voice recognition software."

The union is trying to work with the employer to come up with a workable system that preserves the dispatch hall, Dufresne said. But other employer demands go to the heart of the union.

"There are demands the union can't accede to because they would never get ratified by the members," he said. "But other demands are just so unpalatable that we can't even deal with them."

—Tom Price



ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne at the Longshore Caucus

Local 17 bargains to organize

By Marcy Rein

Warehouse Local 17 came out of its recent contract talks with C&S Wholesale Grocers a double winner. It reached a good deal for its largest house, and scored its first organizing victory in years.

Joint bargaining with the Teamsters guaranteed the local's success. It also made organizing a key bargaining goal. The agreement ratified April 28 covers 285 members at C&S's Sacramento Logistics facility, and brings 30 C&S clerks into the local.

"At the ratification meeting I told people, 'the best thing about the contract is right here: the clerks are in,'" Local 17 President Jeff Carter said.

Local 17 nearly lost the house altogether in 2003 when the former owner declared bankruptcy. Only 110 seniority members were working, and many of them part time. The 2003 contract talks had already started when C&S, the country's second-largest wholesale grocer, bought the business.

"C&S wanted gigantic takeaways," said Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt Sr. "We called [International Secretary-Treasurer] Willie Adams, and he called John Williams, head of the Teamsters' Warehouse Division." The Teamsters represented

the loaders and the office clericals at the facility.

With the two unions sitting in on each other's talks and the Internationals actively involved, Local 17 beat back the takeaways and got a four-year deal they could live with. They immediately began planning for this year's talks, meeting with the Pacific Grocers Strategy Team, which included Adams, Williams, and the leaders and shop stewards from the ILWU and IBT locals.

"We met every four months for the last three years to talk about strategy," Adams said. "This year we had the first joint negotiations for a master grocery warehouse contract with the ILWU and the Teamsters in central California."

This year's agreement covers C&S workers in Fresno, Tracy, Stockton and Sacramento. They belong to Local 17 and three Teamster locals. Local 17 members will get an extra \$1.45 per hour in the first year of the five-year contract. Part will go to wages and part to benefits, such as health care. They will get \$1.20 per hour the second year and \$1.25 in each of the following years.

"Most of the of the clerks I talked to wanted job stability, so the managers couldn't just look at you and say, 'We don't like how you're dressing today, you're out of here,'" said OMS clerk Audrey Corral. "They also felt they could do better on the wage increases."

The two unions decided even before talks started that they'd ask C&S to recognize the clerks if a majority signed union cards.

ILWU International Organizer Agustin Ramirez helped Local 17 organize a card-signing blitz. Assistant chief steward Robert Strom, and stewards Baqi Uddin, Tony Ybarra, and longtime member Willie Willis anchored the effort. In one day, they got signed cards from a majority of the clerks and asked for recognition.

"Williams and I talked to the lead negotiator at C&S and said, 'This is what it will take to get a deal,'" Adams said. The company agreed and the clerks were in under the existing contract. The local will negotiate wages and classifications for them separately.

"This really energized us," Jeff Carter said. "We're on the move and looking to organize some more."

The whole ILWU/Teamsters warehouse group has organizing on its mind.

"We will extend our work and focus on developing some plan to deal with health care costs and on joint organizing," Adams said. He pointed out that the two unions have a long history and are working on building relationships and trust.

"We have a unity agreement with the IBT that dates from our last longshore contract talks in '02," he said. "They will be there for us and we for them."

top four photos by Frank Wiber



Delegates Martha Hendricks, Local 40 and Mary Dutra, Local 29.



Bill Ward, Local 34, retired.



Delegates getting coffee.

Longshore Caucus prepares for negotiations

by Tom Price

The Longshore, Clerk and Walking Boss Caucus met April 30 through May 4 in San Francisco to set the course of the Longshore Division through 2008. The Caucus is comprised of 85 delegates and presided over by International President Bob McEllrath, Mainland Vice President Joe Radisich, and Coast Committeemen Ray Ortiz Jr. and Leal Sundet.

The delegates, elected from up and down the coast, debate policy and provide direction for the Coast Committee and the Longshore Division of the ILWU. International Vice President, Hawaii Wesley Furtado and Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, who is a delegate from longshore Local 23, also attended.

President McEllrath called the Caucus to order Monday morning. He began by saying the Longshore Division was growing by “leaps and bounds” with longshore Local 13 reaching 8,000 registrants in the near future and the Division reaching 14,000 coastwise.

“The membership needs to be educated on our medical benefits, pensions, and on being good trade unionists,” McEllrath said. “Concerning the upcoming contract negotiations, our main issues will be maintenance of benefits and the hiring hall.”

By the end of the week, the delegates had a plan to prepare the union for up coming negotiations with the employers, the Pacific Maritime Assn. (PMA). In preparation, the delegates addressed major topics such as member education, legislative action, safety, publicity and international solidarity. Another caucus will meet before actual negotiations begin.

The Caucus voted to authorize the International President and the Coast Committee to establish a timetable for negotiations with the PMA. Bargaining issues like maintenance

of benefits and the hiring hall were also on deck.

The Caucus took action sustaining the education and political actions programs—building international docker relations with Mexico, and supporting longshore workers in Canada. The Caucus answered president McEllrath’s call to fund a positive publicity campaign with a million dollars. The Caucus also discussed the Transport Worker Identification Card (TWIC).

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chair Dennis Brueckner, now with walking bosses’ Local 91, read the Education Committee’s report. The Longshore Education Class project is gathering educational materials from the locals and the Coast Committee will decide on funding and distribution, the report said.

Last April the committee proposed holding “Contract Grievance and Arbitration Procedures Workshops.” This year’s report recommended holding these at times coinciding with local elections. These workshops will train new local officers and members in handling arbitrations and grievances and provide them with tools for effective leadership.

The report recommended “Contract Preparation Workshops” be held up and down the coast after the Contract Caucus and before 2008 contract bargaining. A new proposal for a ‘B’ registrant educational program, to be held monthly, was approved.

The Caucus moved to commend Brueckner for his many years of work for the Division as a member, and later chair, of the Education Comm. It passed unanimously.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne informed the Caucus of Canada’s longshore bargaining difficulties and read into the record the International Executive Board’s

Statement of Policy in support of Canadian negotiations [see story p. 3]. The Caucus moved to support Canada in its negotiations.

“This is a good motion,” McEllrath said. “The International Executive Board will be in Canada [for its next meeting] to support you.”

McEllrath discussed meetings between the ILWU and Mexican dockers’ unions. The employers want the cheapest labor, McEllrath said. “The ILWU wants to bring those workers up.”

The ILWU will host the International Dockworkers Council’s General Assembly this August.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The PR committee is moving from the “inside game” to the “outside game” as the year progresses, the report said. That means a movement towards media production, such as video and ads for radio and TV. These ads will stress the members many contributions to their society. Training for media spokespersons will continue and the committee will develop talking points on port security, saving lives, goods movement, safety, industry productivity and profitability, and health care.

Local 142 Secretary-Treasurer Guy Fujimura showed TV ads the local put up on Hawaiian TV. The ads received sustained applause and positive comments. International Vice President Joe Radisich screened 30 and 60-second PR videos produced for the union, and longshore Local 10’s Felipe Riley played ILWU radio spots and remarked that enhancing the Local’s public image was a priority. Committee chair Dave Arian, longshore Local 13, reported the video “Eye of the Storm” would be shown up and down the Coast. It will be distributed to members with an envelope for Political Action Fund (PAF) contributions.

The committee reported the ILWU Local 10 Drill Team had participated in three events, and recommended it do more. It also reported the Saving Lives Campaign has given the committee insight into how to build a Coastwise PR effort. The Trade Show Booth was shown at the AFL-CIO Convention and at the Los Angeles Labor Day parade. The video “Eye of the Storm” was ready to go and there will be a “Black History and Labor” celebration for 2008. The ILWU web site received 445,000 hits, averaging 37,000 per month, the report said.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Marine clerks Local 52’s Max Vekich Jr. showed a five-minute video and gave the Legislative Comm. report. Money is critical in order for members to take the ILWU message to battle ground states, he said, “the march inland will be political.”

“The ILWU Longshore Division is a step closer to a new Coastwise contract following the election of Democratic majorities to both chambers of Congress,” the report read. “Organized labor, specifically the ILWU and the AFL-CIO, played a significant, if not instrumental, role in electing the new majority.”

Contributions by rank-and-filers to the PAF and to candidates directly supported these victories, the report said. As a result, many of labor’s foes were defeated and many friends were elected. According to the report, when legislative committee members visited Congress members’ offices, they were frequently asked, “what can our office do for the ILWU?” The members responded with a call for affordable, universal health care. The committee also worked for the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, which would aid organizing by allowing workers to get card-check recognition.

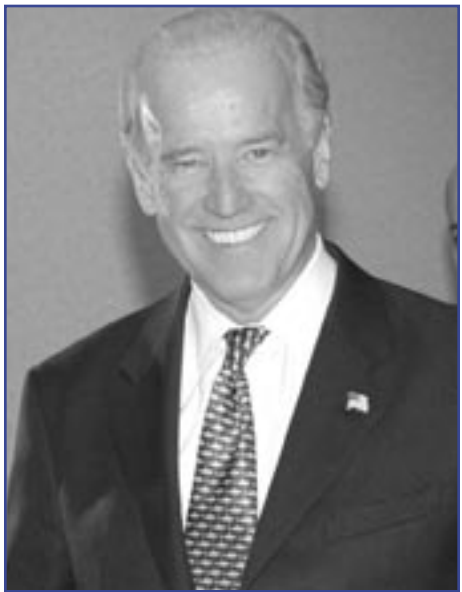
Political Director Peter Peyton, marine clerks’ Local 63, reported on the Political Action Fund. Pensioner Lou Loveridge and longshore Local 23’s Mike Jagielski urged everyone to make PAF contributions. “A contribution to the PAF is job insurance,” the report read.

The Caucus took up a collection on the spot, raising \$3,500.

COAST SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Safety Committee continues its mission of promoting safety for all longshore workers, clerks, and walking bosses/foremen through the applications of the Pacific Coast Marine Safety Code, OSHA regulations, and internal documents outlining safe work practices not addressed by either of these publications, the report read. The goal remains—the elimination of all workplace fatalities as well as the reduction of injuries and sickness.

Safety Comm. Chair John Castanho, Local 10, presented its report, and he reminded the Caucus that safety is a prime issue. The regulations are “writ-



Senator Joe Biden, candidate for the Democratic Party nomination, addressed the Caucus: “I became a Senator because I couldn’t get a [union] card down at the Port of Wilmington [Delaware].”



International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams with candidate Barack Obama at the San Francisco Labor Council.

John Snowwater



down to business.

ten in blood,” he said.

The committee reported on Vertical Tandem Lifts, the practice of lifting two containers at a time. The union remains opposed to that practice because it is inherently unsafe to use semi-automatic twistlocks as hoisting gear instead of certified lifting mechanisms on the crane’s spreader bar. OSHA is expected to issue regulations soon on this practice, the report said.

The committee reported that particulate matter tests have been completed and the results have been linked from the ILWU web site under the Coast Safety Comm. link. The committee will push for “green” ports through negotiations and political lobbying, the report said.

PENSION AND WELFARE BENEFITS COMMITTEE

The committee reported on a proposal from last year’s Caucus to review a proposal for an ILWU Life Insurance Program. Based on meetings with legal counsel, the Coast Benefits Specialist, the union actuary, the officers, and a company that designs life insurance programs, the committee unanimously recommended going ahead with the program. The Caucus approved, with the proviso that it should include pensioners.

“Throughout its discussions, your committee was guided by, and reconfirmed, the Division’s absolute commitment to Maintenance of Benefits (MOB), our Defined Benefit Pension Plan...,” the report said.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Before getting down to work Monday morning the Caucus observed long-standing tradition by taking a moment of silence for fallen brothers and sisters. Longshore Local 19’s Joe Aliseo, longshore Local 23’s Ken Eddo and the 56 members listed on the plaque of the Southern Calif. Longshore Memorial were honored. The Caucus also remembered Arbitrator David Selvin. Local 13 brothers Chuck Brady and Kevin Schroeder, who were ill, were also



President Rich Austin, Pacific Coast Pensioners Assn.

honored, as were the people recently murdered at Virginia Tech Univ.

The Caucus voted to attend the May Day rally for immigrant rights and to set aside time to view a model of the statue of Harry Bridges.

Coast Benefits Specialist George Romero spoke on the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Programs and their value to members in need. He introduced ADRP Coast Director Jackie Cummings. She introduced Directors Norman McLeod, Donnie Schwendeman and Jim Copp. Cummings spoke on the success of their work in recovery issues and she commended Jim Copp, who will retire this year after 27 years in the program and 41 years overall. Romero introduced the workers at the ILWU-PMA Benefits Plan Office, who received a standing ovation for their years of service. He also discussed the situation of benefits generally.

“Our Welfare Plan expenses have risen dramatically as stated in the Coast Committee Report, and are projected to increase further in the face of rising costs and the lack of a positive national health care policy,” Romero said.

Tuesday morning’s session began with a moment of silence in honor of Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald’s passing.

“She has helped Local 13 throughout the years and is one of the few people who are honorary members of ILWU Local 13,” Local 13 President Mike Mitre said.

President McEllrath began the Tuesday afternoon session with solidarity greetings from Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia. The Caucus also received greetings from the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

The Tuesday afternoon session began with President McEllrath introducing Senator Joe Biden Jr. (D-Del), a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination.

“At age 29, against almost impossible odds, he became one of the youngest people ever elected to the U.S. Senate, beating an incumbent Republican,” McEllrath said. “He never forgot where he came



International President Bob McEllrath, left, and Local 10’s Clarence Thomas take time out for the Immigrant Rights demo. Si Se Puede!

from. While most Senators live in Washington, he commutes home every night using public transportation to be with his wife of 30 years, Jill.”

“I became a Senator because I couldn’t get a [union] card down at the Port of Wilmington [Delaware],” Biden said, to laughter and applause. “You all think I’m kidding, don’t you?”

“Look, all kidding aside, I am a U.S. Senator for one reason, because of organized labor. That is no malarkey. That’s not being solicitous with you.”

He also said the Bush administration was doing everything in its power to weaken organized labor.

“You are the only thing to keep the barbarians outside the gates,” Biden said. “There is nothing, nothing that stands before big business owning the whole deal. You are the people who built the middle class. Labor is the middle class.”

Biden discussed his opposition to the Iraq war and told the Caucus his plan would be to work with Islamic states to separate the major Iraq factions under a federated government and withdraw American troops.

The Caucus reconvened after the applause for Biden subsided. George Romero announced his retirement, to take place after the 2008 negotiations. The Caucus approved the appointment of Local 10’s John Castanho to fill the position.

Local 13’s Greg Mitre read the Cruise Ship Comm. report. The ILWU

protected dockside work in Alaska by getting cruise ship jobs under union jurisdiction. Local 10’s Mike Villegiante emphasized that cruise ship work puts the ILWU directly in contact with the public, and “we need to present a positive view of longshoremen,” he said.

Project Organizer Jan Gilbrecht presented a slide show on Alaska organizing. The Caucus moved to continue supporting Alaska organizing.

Mike Mitre, Local 13, read the Port Security Comm. report. He recommended continuing to establish relationships with the Coast Guard and maritime entities. President McEllrath said the TWIC program will be implemented and the union is working to get one consistent TWIC program for all ports.

Friday’s session began with Romero introducing the last group of BPO workers to the Caucus. The Caucus approved the Budget Comm. report and moved on to resolutions.

Honored guests included International President Emeritus Jim Spinoso, ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne, Local 142 President Fred Galdones, Oahu Longshore Unit Chair Nate Lum, longshore Local 500 president Glen Bolkowy, and Pacific Coast Pensioners’ Assn. President Rich Austin. And as always, the pensioners, with their centuries of collective wisdom, who spoke from the floor of the Caucus.



Dawn Des Brisay, ILWU 40, reads a letter to John Edwards from the ILWU Titled Officers and Coast Committee.

“We are pleased that you earned the AFL-CIO’s 2006 Paul Wellstone Award for your strong support of the Employee Free Choice Act.

“We are also impressed by your initiating the Health Care debate and forcing all of the candidates to speak on the issue. Health care reform to the ILWU means access is universal and costs are affordable and fair.”



Local 10 members: BA Melvin Mackay, Secretary-Treasurer Farless Dailey, BALMA Treasurer Mike Villegiante.



Taking the Oath, L to R: Members Colleen (Red) French and Mary Solis, and Local 63 OCU President John Fageaux.

ILWU Credit Union Staff joins Local 63A

By Vivian J. Malauulu, Local 13

The Local 63 Office Clerical Unit swore in 15 workers May 8 from the ILWU Credit Union, the union’s only Southern California credit union. The union and the employer had reached agreement on their first contract April 24 and workers unanimously ratified it the same day. They had been working without union representation for more than 50 years.

OCU President John Fageaux, Jr. swore in the new members during the membership meeting at the Cabrillo Marina Room in San Pedro.

“I am pleased with the results of the contract as it provides substantial increases in benefits and wages for all new members,” Fageaux said. “Both the credit union and the OCU worked very hard in an effort to reach resolution. I’m looking forward to a healthy working relationship with the ILWU Credit Union.”

All workers will get at least 25 percent wage increases. There will be no co-pays on medicals and each worker will get \$250/year for incidental medical costs.

A few months ago, Fageaux was approached by a credit union employee who was interested in organizing with the 900-member OCU. Workers then held meetings to discuss an organizing campaign. At that point, the OCU Executive Board decided to conduct a card check election, which began the unionization process.

John Coleman, Chief Executive Officer of the Credit Union, agreed to the card check election, which the union won by an overwhelming majority on October 6, 2006. Contract bargaining began.

“Our membership expressed [the opinion] that they wanted a union staff in their credit union,” Coleman stated. “Our staff deserved the benefits and protection derived from belonging to a union. We are extremely pleased to be members of the ILWU family.”

Coleman went on to describe the credit union’s long-term objective to become a valuable resource for the ILWU in the upcoming contract negotiations. He expects that unionization will facilitate a relationship between the locals and the credit union that will greatly benefit their common membership base—ILWU members.

The credit union has been modeled after the Pacific Maritime Credit Union in Australia, their international counterpart. PMCU has achieved the global financial dynamic aspired to in Southern California.

The unionization of the staff is the first of several major strategic milestones planned by the credit union’s executive board, whose objective is to enhance the ILWU with a strong financial component.

The staff is happy to be the first ILWU members to benefit from this alliance. Mary Solis, Consumer Loans Officer and union organizer, comes from a long line of union members. Her father, retired Locals 13 and 94 member Mike Ahumada, taught her all about unions and the strength behind them. When she entered the work force as a member of the banking industry—where no unions are welcome—she often wondered why banks did not affiliate with unions. Solis speculated that many financial institutions have failed because they did not have the strength of a union to support them.

“I hope that this will be a stepping stone to encourage others in the financial industry to unionize,” Solis added. She plans to become active in Local 63 OCU.

“It has been a struggle,” she said, “but it is all so that our families can have a good life, a bright future, and a stronger working environment.”

“As I stood there holding my right hand up and making my pledge to the union,” Solis reflected with tears in her eyes, “I thought ‘what better organization than Local 63 OCU to be a part of?’ The ILWU will stand by you and fight for a better work place. They will fight for us to succeed in this world. Seeing my new union brothers and sisters gave me a good feeling. I am very proud to be a part of ILWU Local 63 OCU.”

Interested in becoming a credit union member? The ILWU Credit Union will soon be a \$100 million financial institution. Address: 1134 N. Avalon Blvd., Wilmington, CA 90744. (310) 834-6411, www.ilwucu.org.

LETTER FROM A PENSIONER

RETIRED, BUT NOT DEAD

Longshore retirees mobilized April 6 to aid the Blue Diamond Almond organizing drive at Los Altos Center in Long Beach California, handing out flyers and talking to Sees Candies customers.

“I’m not working any more but I haven’t given up the fight. There plenty of that left in me,” said Sixto Rodriguez, a retired member of walking bosses’ Local 94 and, like the author, a member of the Southern California Pensioners Group.

I brought my wife Maria and two daughters Adihel and Angeles, who passed out flyers and took photos.

The action went well with no negative incidents. The managers at Sees were grandmotherly types. They wanted to give us samples. Sixto refused but my kids said yes, if there are no almonds in them.

The customers were great, taking the flyers and reading them. Some customers wanted to help. “What do you want me to say in there? I’m union all the way,” said Clara Beam of Cypress, California.

It was a very busy day, all the flyers were passed out, everyone who



Local 23’s Erick Knutson (above) got that warm, fuzzy feeling when he leafleted the See’s Candies in Kent, Wash. for the Blue Diamond workers. Other ILWU participating: Locals 4, 19, 23 and 52 in Washington; Locals 4, 8, 40 and the Inland Boatmen’s Union in Portland; the IBU in California and Puget Sound; Locals 6, 10, 13A, 17, 26, 54, 63 and 94 in California, and Hawaii Local 142.

participated went away smiling, and feeling satisfied that they had helped their fellow workers. “It’s in the spirit of this holy week that we help these workers.” Maria Wright said. “And they will be in my prayers at Good Friday Mass.”

—Lewis Wright, Local 63 retired

Teachers, activists shut port

Dozens of anti-war activists picketed the SSA Terminal in Oakland May 19, blocking the entrance and causing longshore workers to stand down.

The demonstrators, who appeared at the morning and evening shift, included many Oakland teachers whose schools are suffering with budget cutbacks as war funding nears the trillion-dollar mark. The demonstrators also demanded that the Port of Oakland should share with the schools a portion of the billions in dollars in revenue that flow through the port.

With the entrance to the terminal blocked, the longshore workers waited for the arbitrator, who would rule if the picket line was permitted by contract, which meant the workers could choose not to cross. If there was any danger involved in crossing the line, the arbitrator could also rule the workers were not required to cross.

“We had an arbitration, [in the morning] and the arbitrator ruled it was a health and safety issue, and they paid the men time worked and that was the end of that one,” longshore Local 10 President Tommy Clark said. “In the second shift the arbitrator ruled against the union because he felt it wasn’t a bona fide picket line.”

Workers cited the behavior of

Oakland Police during the April 7, 2003 demo as a reason for not crossing the picket line, according to news reports. That day, police fired wooden dowels and rubber bullets at a peaceful crowd, injuring nine longshore workers—who were well away from the line—and dozens of protestors.

“There wasn’t any hostility from the police towards the demonstrators this year, it was quite different from April 2003,” Clark said.

The police didn’t fire on anybody, but they did keep news crews away from the scene for “safety reasons.” Some demonstrators speculated that the cops might be planning another police riot and didn’t want cameras around. Some also speculated that this had something to do with the fact that Ron Dellums is now the Oakland mayor. He sent a message of support to the protestors.

The ILWU International Convention, the highest constitutional body in the union, has condemned the Iraq war and called for the withdrawal of occupation forces.

“The ILWU speaks for itself on that issue, we’re against the war,” Clark said. “But we support our troops and we want to return them safely home.”

—Tom Price

ILWU LEADERSHIP EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (LEAD V)

The next ILWU Leadership Education and Development Institute (LEAD V) will be held in San Francisco, California, September 24-28, 2007. Application forms are available on the ILWU web site: www.ilwu.org/training.

The curriculum will focus on “What It Will Take in 2008,” from the nuts and bolts of Robert’s Rules of Order and running a union meeting to how to build strength and unity through member participation, political action, and international solidarity. The urgency of meeting the twin challenges posed by national elections and industry negotiations in the coming year will underlie all the sessions. Instructors will be drawn from the ranks of active and retired members as well as staff from the International, the AFL-CIO, university labor centers, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

The local union or affiliate should nominate participants, who are each required to fill out the LEAD V application. Priority consideration will be given to new officers and rank and file activists who have not participated in any previous LEAD program. For reasons of space and diversity, we anticipate having to limit each affiliate to two participants, but we will create a waiting list in case of cancellations or non-participation by any locals.

The LEAD V budget will cover participants’ housing, breakfast and lunch, training materials, facilities, and instructors. Participants will be housed together in double rooms, but may upgrade to a single room at their own expense. Any reimbursement for expenses such as lost wages or travel will have to be covered by the participant, his or her local or IBU region, or by area fund raising activities. Financial hardship applications will be considered. In cases where financial hardship is an obstacle to participation, a request for assistance should be submitted along with a written statement about the circumstances involved and the amount of assistance requested.

Please return completed forms to me by fax or mail no later than July 27, 2007: ILWU LEAD V Applications, c/o Intl. Secretary-Treasurer William Adams, 1188 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 (Fax: 415-775-1302). Questions may be addressed to Adams or to Gene Vrana, Director of Educational Services, at the same address.

PACIFIC COAST PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION 40TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Executive Board September 16, Convention September 17 – 19.
Hosted by the Southern California pensioners at the:

Double Tree Hotel, 2800 Via Cabrillo Marina, San Pedro, CA 90731

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Deadline for discounted hotel reservations August 15

Convention registration fee \$45, can be paid at the door.

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2682 Bostonian Dr., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • (562) 431-0825

Longshore Caucus visits an art exhibition— 'The Legacy of 1934'

By Maria Brooks, photos by Frank Wilder

A highlight of last month's Longshore Caucus was the unveiling of a remarkable photo exhibition, the "Legacy of 1934." The exhibit in San Francisco recounts the fierce struggle of West Coast longshoremen for democratic unionism and their triumph in 1937 with the emergence of the ILWU.

The delegates were the first to view the exhibit on and to inspect the seven-foot tall panels April 30. They were invited to analyze the presentation before the images are permanently laminated.

Tinted in sepia tones, the assembled photographs build, one upon another, into a dramatic story. Images of hooks, work tokens and union cards, newspapers, photos and drawings document the events that affected a generation of longshore workers. Brief descriptions guide the viewer through the twists and turns of history.

"Legacy of 1934" was designed as a traveling exhibition. Eventually four sets of the entire exhibit will be available to union locals so the display can run concurrently in different locations.

When the Caucus adjourned for the evening, groups of delegates drifted into the banquet room of the Holiday Inn. The panels supporting the digitalized photographs run fifty feet in length and reach nearly wall to wall. The normally talkative delegates grew silent as they looked at the images for the first time.

They saw pictures of hungry men and frightful times on the docks. It was the era of the shape up, the blacklist, and the fink book.

The pictures show police aiming their guns at workers. Crowds flee from the bullets and men die in the streets. It is Seattle and San Pedro and San Francisco.

A few of the delegates begin to share memories, recalling old timers they had worked with. The younger delegates say little, looking astounded by the powerful images.

"This is an excellent exhibition," said ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, staring at the panels. "It'll teach our young people what we're all about. We have to understand our history to know where we're going."

"Legacy of 1934" was inspired by Dan Imbagliazzo of longshore Local 13. A forty-one year member of the union, Imbagliazzo wanted to do something that would educate new members. And he wanted to share his deep emotions for the union.

"I got a life of decency and respect," he said. "I used to work next to old guys who faced loaded machine guns in '34. They were the Salt of the Earth."

He remembered his boyhood pleasure in looking at *Life Magazine* with its black and white pictures. He believes photographs can teach. He contacted ILWU Director of Educational Services and Librarian Gene Vrana. Imbagliazzo knew the library held a treasure trove of art

and photographs and letters.

With the help of the union's Education and Research Department, Imbagliazzo proposed a photo exhibit to the Caucus in 2006. If ILWU members were too busy to visit the library, then the library's treasures would come to them. The project would be under the supervision of the Longshore Division's Coast Committee.

Richard Bermack and Robin Walker were recruited to create the exhibit. Bermack, a long time labor writer and photographer, came on board as the project's producer and designer. Walker, with a degree in history and experience working in museums, became the curatorial consultant. Harvey Schwartz, the ILWU oral historian, shared his scholarship with the production team.

After plumbing the resources of ILWU library, Bermack traveled the West Coast, visiting union halls from San Pedro to Seattle looking for materials. He interviewed old timers, talked to rank and filers, and conferred with historians. For eight months he collected, he photocopied, he procured objects that had not been seen in years.

"The ILWU attracted artists in past generations," said Bermack. "These people were first rate, like [photographer] Otto Hagel who worked for *Life Magazine* and other major periodicals."

Former International President Dave Arian, from longshore Local 13, walked around the panels several times. "Just beautiful!" he exclaimed pointing at a three dimensional drawing. Arian has devoted years to the development of educational materials for new members. "Probably 50 percent of our membership has less than five years in the union," he said. "This is two, three generations removed from the origins of the union."

Many new members in longshore have no union backgrounds. Some come from non-union families. "Young people coming in today have never faced the struggles that are projected on these panels," said International President Emeritus Jim Spinosa, from clerks' Local 63. "They need to know the sacrifices that got us here."

International Organizer Carey Dall from warehouse Local 6 is age 30 and one of the younger members in the room. He came into the union as a bike messenger. "Young people have got to recognize this is our story," said Dall, "This is not about George Washington or some president sucking up to the railroad interests. This story is us."

Bermack darted behind the crowd, casting a critical eye on his work. For the past few weeks, he has lived with these pictures. He set up the entire display in his living room. There he adjusted and edited the images. He knows each picture intimately.

"If someone doesn't know the history of his union, he or she is missing out on the whole experience," Bermack said. "It's like going on an expensive vacation and never leaving



Viewing the exhibit: Mike Jagielski, Local 23; Ray Familathe, Director of International Affairs; Glen Bolkow, President Local 500; Peter Olney, Director of Organizing.

your hotel room."

"Look at that first panel" shouted clerks' Local 34 President Richard Cavalli. He points to a photograph from 1922 showing longshoremen crawling up a wooden ladder propped over the water from the pier to a ship. The ladder is rigged like a teeter-totter, with men clutching the rungs with no safety net.

"People who aren't involved in this industry wouldn't understand how unsafe that is," Cavalli said, "If one of those rungs break, down you go."

"There are pictures here that show the Ku Klux Klan on the West Coast," added Cavalli. "Most people don't know there was a Ku Klux Klan here on the West Coast. It shows what we were up against in terms of the society we lived in."

The younger delegates peer at the panels showing strikers huddled together with their hands in their pockets. Pushing up their baseball caps, the young members move close to the photographs and squint at union brothers who lived 70 years ago. In the black and white images from the 1920's, some workers look as if they had come from distant places.

"Immigrants were not considered

Americans back then," said Bermack. "They were foreigners. And the Irish, Italians and Jews were not considered white", he added. A large percentage of America's population was immigrant in the early years of the 20th Century. On the docks nationalities mingled.

"Harry Bridges had an internationalist experience," said Dall. "Dock workers came from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds and were informed by very internationalist perspectives which came out of being seamen, of being itinerant workers."

The images in the "Legacy of 1934" tell a collective story of longshore workers who, with courage and sacrifice, gained control of their union after monumental struggle.

The ILWU triumphed. Its achievement cast a bright light in the dark days of the Great Depression. By 1937, unions were on the march. The ILWU, with Harry Bridges at the helm, was leading the fight on the West Coast. And the whole country watched.

"We must understand the importance what happened 80, 90, or even a 100 years ago," reflected Dall. "We know what we have today—and how we got it. Now we must defend it."



The exhibition production team: Harvey Schwartz, Richard Bermack, Robin Walker and Gene Vrana.

SAM KAGEL PASSES *continued from page 1*

Committeeman Bill Ward remembers Kagel as a great friend.

"The first thing he did when I got onto the Coast Committee was to invite me to lunch," Ward said. "He filled me in on who he was, what he did. He gave me a basic lesson on what to present to arbitration. 'Don't

waste time bringing things that aren't backed up by the printed word of the agreement'.

"He was fair to the industry and to the union," Ward continued. "He was a great supporter of ours, at the same time he as fair in representing the industry, both parties. He told me

right off the bat. 'I like this union, I helped build it, Harry and I have been friends for 40 years, and we learned a lot from each other.'"

Sam Kagel died May 21 of heart failure at the age of 98.

"Between '32 and '41 or '42 we had what I call 50 years of labor

experience all smashed into this short period," Kagel said. "What a lucky guy I was, because I was right in the middle of it."

A full appreciation of the life of Sam Kagel will appear in the July-August *Dispatcher*.

ILWU Book & Video Sale

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

BOOKS:

Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the United States By Charles Larrowe: A limited number of copies of this out-of-print and useful biography are now available through the book sale by special arrangement with Bolerium Books in San Francisco, which specializes in rare publications and documents about radical and labor history. **\$10.00**

The ILWU Story: unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and dozens of rare photos of the union in action. **\$5.00**

The Big Strike By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. **\$6.50**

The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. **\$20.00 (paperback)**

A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco By David Selvin: perhaps the most comprehensive single narrative about the San Francisco events of 1934. **\$16.50**

The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938 By Harvey Schwartz: new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union’s organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. **\$9.00**

NOTE: TWO IMPORTANT BOOKS ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO THE ILWU LIBRARY AT A SIGNIFICANT DISCOUNT, BUT MAY BE PURCHASED FROM BOOKSTORES, INCLUDING THE ILWU LOCAL 5 WEBSITE (powellsunion.com)

Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s By Bruce Nelson: the most complete history of the origins, meaning, and impact of the 1934 strike.

Reds and Rackets: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront By Howard Kimledorf: A provocative comparative analysis of the politics and ideology of the ILWU and the International Longshoremen’s Association.

VIDEOS:

We Are the ILWU A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about what the union meant in their lives and what it needs to survive and thrive, along with film clips, historical photos and an original musical score. DVD or VHS version **\$5.00**

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NOTE: “A Life on the Beam” is now available in DVD format through the book sale at this greatly reduced price by special arrangement with the Working Group, and includes a bonus feature on the building of the Golden Gate Bridge.

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