

MAY is MEDICAL/DENTAL  
CHOICE Month  
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# *The* DISPATCHER

Published by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Vol. 65, No. 4



*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.

April 2007

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**Local 6 retiree Evelyn Johnson told the Local's Convention to "fight for what you want and need," page 5**



**Local 5 President Kristi Lovato (center) chairs the Warehouse Caucus. International Vice President Joe Radisich left, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams is on the right, page 2.**



**Local 20 President Gary Harvey at the Warehouse Caucus.**



# Warehouse Caucus meets in San Francisco

Story and photos by Tom Price

Officers, members and retirees from the ILWU's Warehouse Division met March 20 to form a caucus that would discuss issues important to their members.

The Warehouse Division had not met as a group in four years. They discussed organizing goals, the need for common contracts, for research, for cooperation in bargaining, and for mutual support and communication. They also discussed the possibility of merging locals for greater strength, and jurisdictional issues.

"We need some dialogue today, we need to work on solutions and deal with problems," International Vice President Joe Radisich said in his welcoming remarks. "I hope we can deal with solutions and think outside the box."

The meeting was called by the ILWU Titled Officers and warehouse local Presidents Kristi Lovato, Local 5; Efren Alarcon, Local 6; Jeff Carter, Local 17; Gary Harvey, Local 20; and Luisa Gratz, Local 26. The caucus elected Lovato to serve as Chair. The International hosted the meeting, with Radisich and International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams participating. Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet brought greetings from the Longshore Division.

"We have to organize strategically," Adams said. "The Rite Aid and Blue Diamond organizing will be the cornerstone of our new membership—that can bring 1,200 new members into our union. The life blood of our union flows through the ports and warehouse division, it flows through the supply chain."

The caucus devoted time to informal discussions as each local spoke to their experience.

"I hope we can get on-going structures that will help us back each other," Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker said. "We need to look for common contracts to become one voice at the bargaining table and become more cohesive. We need to relate local-to-local, because we all have issues with trust funds and area standards."

"One of our difficulties is



Warehouse (left to right) International Vice President Joe Radisich, Local 6 President Efren Alarcon, Local 5 President Kristi Lovato; Retired Local 17 President Willie Walker; Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt Sr.; Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker; Local 17 Dispatcher / BA Everett Burdan; Retired Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Lupe Martinez; Local 17 President Jeff Carter; Local 17 President Luisa Gratz; Local 26 Secretary-Treasurer Andrew J. Wright; Local 6 retiree Leroy King; Local 26 Vice President Ed Calleros; International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams.

research," Luisa Gratz said. "We don't have the staff time for all the footwork. We also need to do corporate campaigns, where we deal with the company on a scale larger than just across the table. We have some jurisdictional issues with other unions, and we need to enforce area standards against employers who lower the bar for everyone with inferior contracts."

"We have so many of the same issues, but we don't get together to talk to each other," Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt Sr. said.

"I look forward to more political action," Local 17 Dispatcher /BA Everett Burdan said. "We often hear about important legislative bills after the fact. We don't talk to each other politically."

"We need to get our contracts together so we can compare them," Gary Harvey said. "We need to help struggling locals. Organizing oppor-

tunities abound in our area, but we have no full time officers."

"Right now 15 percent of our workforce is temporary workers," Lovato said, noting that Local 5 has serious bargaining coming up, with health care on the table.

"Thanks to all the active members for getting this together," Local 6 retiree Leroy King said. "If we don't improve, we might just fade away. Right now, they come after pensioners' benefits in negotiations. But we have 50 people coming to pensioners' meetings! Sometimes that's more than active members' meetings."

The delegates took on the difficulties of being a rank-and-file, democratic union.

"The Warehouse Division has to decide if it will remain rank-and-file, or hire experts?" Pecker said. "To train from the inside takes longer, but they don't go on to other jobs, they remain rank-and-file."

ILWU Director of Organizing Peter Olney gave a rundown on the union's organizing drives. He also gave an update on the Employee Free Choice Act, (EFCA) a bill passed by the House of Representatives that would allow workers to get union representation when a majority signs authorization cards.

"We can't wait on EFCA to force employers into card check recognition," Olney said. "But the ILWU is at the choke point of the maritime supply chain. Goods to Rite Aid are drayed 80 miles inland. We are also working with the pensioners to adopt a Rite Aid store and explain to customers what the issues are."

The meeting passed motions to: include all ILWU locals with a "community of interests," or overlapping jurisdictions, with warehouse locals. It will meet twice a year—next time on July 18 at the Local 6 hall in Oakland.



The Local 17 team: Everett Burdan, Willie Walker, Lupe Martinez, Jack Wyatt Sr., Jeff Carter.



The Local 26 team: Andrew J. Wright, Luisa Gratz, Ed Calleros.

## *The* DISPATCHER

Published monthly except for a combined July/August issue, for \$5.00, \$10 non-members, a year by the ILWU, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6898. *The Dispatcher* welcomes letters, photos and other submissions to the above address. © ILWU, 2007



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Tom Price  
Interim Editor

### ILWU Titled Officers

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**WILLIAM E. ADAMS**  
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# ILWU raises support funds for family of slain unionist

by Tom Price

The family of Pedro Zamora Alvarez, a Guatemalan unionist gunned down on Jan. 15, will receive \$1,000 from the ILWU as part of a larger donation from ITF-affiliated unions around the world. ILWU International President Bob McEllrath presented the check March 19 while attending the International Transport Workers’ Federation Fair Practices Dockers’ Section meeting in Sorrento, Italy.

Zamora, the General Secretary of the Guatemalan dockers’ union STEPQ, died in a hailstorm of bullets after he helped lead his union through a fierce strike that included a police occupation of the port of Quetzal. The assailants ambushed his pickup and fired at least 100 bullets, 20 of which struck Zamora, including one fired point blank into his face. The murderers also wounded one of his two children who were in the truck. Other STEPQ unionists have received death threats. Zamora’s union, an affiliate of the ITF, has asked for support from all unionists and everyone interested in human rights.

The ILWU, an ITF affiliate, has also responded in a Jan. 31 letter from International President Bob McEllrath to Guatemalan President Oscar Berger Perdomo.

“We believe that Pedro Zamora’s violent assassination was directly linked to this trade union activity and to his role in the recent industrial conflicts in the port of Quetzal,” McEllrath’s letter read. “We hope that you agree with our union that anti-trade union violence is utterly unacceptable and that his murder must not go unpunished.”

STEPQ led a strike last October protesting the privatization of the docks and the failure of the company to negotiate a contract. The government responded by sending 300 armed riot police to occupy the port. The IUF, the food workers’ international union, protested to the banana companies and more international support followed. By January, according to the ITF, the dispute was nearly settled. But armed security guards followed Zamora and other leaders around, and they received death threats.

The ITF joined the International Trade Union Confederation in a fact-finding mission Guatemala Jan. 28 to Feb. 2. The two labor federations submitted a complaint to the UN’s International Labor Organization demanding an international investigation. The ITUC represents 168 million worker affiliates in 153 countries, and the ITF represents 4.5 million transport workers in 148 countries.

“The murder of Zamora shows once again the callous disregard for fundamental rights in Guatemala, and the ease with which powerful interests are able to commit the most heinous crimes and escape unpunished,” ITUC President Guy Ryder said. “Investors who are considering getting involved in the proposed privatization of Quetzal Port should think very hard before taking such a step, unless and until the government of President Berger Perdomo puts an end to the climate of terror against trade unionists.”

The ITF characterized Guatemala as “one of the most dangerous countries in the world for trade unionists, with many murdered each year.” The country has been in and out of civil



ILWU International President Bob McEllrath hands check to Oscar Gonzalez, Board Member of the STEPQ, while Paddy Crumlin, (right), National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia looks on.

war since its democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán was ousted in a coup d’etat organized by the CIA in 1954.

The ITF has asked unionists to send letters to the Guatemalan government and provided an on-line link to make it easy at: <http://www.itfglobal.org/solidarity/pedro-zamora.cfm>.

STEPQ unionist Oscar Gonzalez met in Europe with unionists, human rights activists and members of governments. He also met with members of the European Parliament and on March 15 the EU Parliament passed a resolution denouncing human rights

abuses in Guatemala. The Parliament will send a delegation to Guatemala in April to meet with unionists and the government. The EU provides large amounts of foreign aid to Guatemala and is a major consumer of products from the Port of Quetzal. The ITF campaign will continue.

“Pedro was one of our own, a valued member of the ITF as well as a family man and leader of his trade union,” ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said. “We will grieve for him alongside his family, friends and colleagues, but we will not forget that it does not end here.”

## Walter Reed Hospital—Privatized health care at work

by Tom Price

The scandal over poor health care for wounded veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center has spilled over into a debate on the perils of privatized medicine. At the center of the debate is criticism of the Bush administration’s plans to privatize nearly everything from government services to Social Security, and turn unionized government jobs over to

non-union private companies.

The furor erupted earlier this year when reporters from the *Washington Post* investigated scores of complaints from wounded soldiers. They charged the Washington D.C. facility was infested with rodents, cockroaches and toxic black mold. The troops complained of endless bureaucracy that prevented them from getting care and an unresponsive hospital administra-

tion. Photos and news stories of the facility prompted resignations from top Army brass, including Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey.

The Dept. of Defense under former secretary Donald Rumsfeld had signed a one-bid contract to privatize much of the Walter Reed’s services in Jan. 2006. That \$120 million deal with IAP Worldwide Services, a firm headed by former Halliburton execu-

tive Al Neffgen, gave IAP the right to replace government workers at the hospital with its own employees.

The connection to Halliburton raised eyebrows. Vice President Dick Cheney served as CEO for Halliburton before becoming vice president, while Neffgen had defended Halliburton before Congress in 2004 and again in 2006 against charges of price gouging in war contracts and serving contaminated water to the troops in Iraq. IAP last made news when it failed to deliver ice to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. A hedge fund chaired by former Treasury Secretary John Snow owns IAP.

The House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, under Democratic leadership, called former Walter Reed commander Maj. General George Weightman to testify March 5 on the crisis.

On March 2 the committee sent him a letter asking him to review a memo he received from a subordinate describing “how the Army’s decision to privatize support services at Walter Reed was causing an exodus of ‘highly skilled and experienced personnel.’”

“According to multiple sources, the decision to privatize support services at Walter Reed led to a precipitous drop in support personnel,” the letter continued. “Prior to the award of the contract, there were 300 federal employees at Walter Reed. By Feb. 3, 2007, the day before IAP took over management, the number had dropped to under 60. Yet instead of hiring additional personnel, IAP replaced the remaining 60 federal employees with only 50 IAP personnel.”

The committee’s letter to Weightman explained some of the issues behind the scandal.

“Part of our mission on the Oversight Committee is to investigate what led to the breakdown in services,” the letter continued. “It would be reprehensible if the deplorable condi-

*continued on page 6*

### Important notice from longshore benefits office: MAY IS MEDICAL, DENTAL CHOICE MONTH

Active and retired longshore families in the ports where members have a choice can change medical and/or dental plans during the open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 2007. The change will be effective July 1, 2007. In addition to the May open enrollment period, members may change their health/dental coverage once at any time during the Plan Year (July 1-June 30).

The July 1, 2002 Memorandum of Understanding between the ILWU and PMA provides that new registrants in the ports where members have a choice of medical plans shall be assigned Kaiser HMO Plan or Group Health Cooperative HMO Plan for the first 18 months of registration. After 18 months, those registrants who have qualified for continued eligibility under Mid-Year/Annual Review hours requirement will have a choice of medical plans. New registrants in San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, Los Angeles, Portland/Vancouver and Washington will have a choice of dental plans on the first of the month following registration, and may change dental plans during the Open Enrollment period and one additional time during the Plan Year.

**MEDICAL CHOICE:** The medical plan choice is between Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and the ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan for Southern California Locals 13, 26, 29, 63 and 94; Northern California Locals 10, 18, 34 (San Francisco), 34

(Stockton), 54, 75 and 91; and Oregon-Columbia River Locals 4, 8, 40, and 92. In the Washington State area, the choices for Locals 19, 23, 32, 47, 52 and 98 are Group Health Cooperative and the ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan.

**DENTAL PLANS:** For Los Angeles Locals dental choice is between Delta Dental and the Harbor Dental Associates (formerly Sakai, Simms) group plan. For San Francisco Locals dental choice is between Delta Dental, City Center Dental, Dental Health Services, and Gentle Dental San Francisco group plan. For Sacramento and Stockton Locals dental choice is between Delta Dental and Dental Health Services. For Portland/Vancouver Locals dental choice is between Blue Cross of Oregon Dentacare, Oregon Kaiser Dental Plan and Oregon/Washington Dental Service. For Washington Locals dental choice is between Washington Dental Service and Dental Health Services.

Information on the dental plans, and Coastwise Indemnity Plan, Kaiser and Group Health Cooperative medical plans, and forms to change plans can be obtained at the Locals and the ILWU-PMA Benefit Plans office.

**All enrollment cards must be completed and submitted to the Benefit Plans office by May 31 for the change to be effective July 1.**



# Local 6 holds 60th Annual Convention



(Left to Right) Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker, Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, International President Bob McEllrath, Local 6 retiree Leroy King, Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt Sr., Local 6 President Efren Alarcon.

Story and photos by Tom Price

The Local 6 hall rocked with cheers as an oversized crowd of members, families, guests and retirees celebrated their union at its 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Feb. 24 in Oakland and dedicated themselves to its future. The local will put this enthusiasm to the test this year as it faces heavy bargaining in its major contracts, in a climate of soaring health care costs and rising corporate greed.

“The 800-pound gorilla at the bargaining table remains—it is the upward spiral of health care costs,” warehouse Local 6 President Efren Alarcon said.

The Convention passed resolutions supporting: card check recognition, immigrant rights, a cutoff of Iraq war funding, speedy arbitrations and single payer healthcare. [See sidebar for details.]

Local 6 officers reported to the Convention on the local’s achievements over the year. These included classes introducing new members to the union. More than 30 stewards and members received steward training, and more than 40 members

were trained in bilingual classes to understand and apply family leave laws. Members ratified a dozen contracts over the past year and laid the groundwork for negotiating the big master contract this year. Members turned out in massive support for pro-worker candidates in last year’s elections, and Local 6 members played a big role in their communities. The local’s Activity Committee hosted four Saturday night get-togethers with food, raffles and televised sporting events.

“We need to return to our roots,” Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker said in the Officers’ Report. “We need to get back to a view of a collective outlook—a union outlook. A view of our futures together—not each of us by ourselves. The difference between an individual retirement account like a 401(k) and a defined pension plan is huge. The difference between personal medical savings accounts and comprehensive medical insurance is huge. We are the tide that lifts all boats. Together, we create strong communities, together we build a strong nation.”

A large number of guests attend-

ed, including ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams and Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation. Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet and International Executive Board members Lawrence Thibeaux and Richard Cavalli also attended and spoke to the delegates. Cavalli serves as clerks’ Local 34 President. Jeff Carter, President of warehouse Local 17 also spoke, as did Sandra Andrews, aide to Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

**International President Bob McEllrath** had the crowd on its feet when he thanked Local 6 for its work in last November’s election:

“Last election we donated to 63 candidates, and out of those 56 won office,” he said. “We took over the house, we took over the Senate, and Nancy Pelosi took over as Speaker of the House, the first woman to do that. This is a fantastic change for working men and women.

“Nancy Pelosi is a good friend of [Local 6 retiree] Leroy King. She was called ‘unpatriotic’ by Dick Cheney. Can you imagine the Speaker of the House of the United States of America called ‘unpatriotic’? I look at it from the other side, and it’s some of the best campaign literature the Democrats can use. So let’s all keep looking forward, helping the Political Action Fund, let’s keep banging on the door when the election comes in 2008.”

International Secretary-Treasurer **Willie Adams** paid his respects to Local 6 legacies:

“I’d like to honor the brothers and sisters who have passed on, who set the table for us, and who aren’t here today. I call them ‘the Immortals,’” Adams said. “Lou Goldblatt, Keith Eickman, Curtis McClain, and others. The last Immortal standing is brother Leroy King.

“I have to say to Fred Pecker, Efren Alarcon, the trustees, the BAs of Local 6—I want to thank you for all your hard work. Local 6 has been through some turbulent times, but you have stabilized the local. And to the membership—it hasn’t been easy, it didn’t happen by luck, it happened by skill and determination.”

Local 6 President **Efren Alarcon** asked the members for their involvement:

“We need you to participate and attend your membership meetings and know what’s happening with the local,” he said. “Because of the number of negotiations we have coming up, especially the master contract, which is 20 percent of our local, we need to prepare for a fight. We need to prepare for a strike. It is not our intention to negotiate a strike. It is our intention to negotiate a fair contract. It is a high priority of just about 98 percent of this membership that we keep and maintain the medical benefits that we have now. That’s about \$917 a month. That’s about \$5.29 an hour.

“If we didn’t have all this red tape we have with the HMOs, if we had universal health care, if we had at least half of that money going into our pockets that would be an additional \$2.60. So again we ask you to live conservatively for the next four to five months to prepare your finances, get them in line, no union has a magic wand.”

Coast Committeeman **Leal Sundet** offered support from the Longshore Division:

“I know you are entering your master agreement in April, the number one issue you will be facing will be healthcare costs,” Sundet said. “The same we will be facing in longshore in 2008. As you know the ILWU is for single payer coverage, and we are not there yet. So we will protect our Taft-Hartley plans.

“I want to promise all the resources of the longshore division in whatever help you need in preserving your health care. Because if it happens to you it will be happening to us.”

**Al Perisho**, President of the Southern Calif. Pensioners Group expressed the support of the pensioners:

“I look at the attendance this year and it’s good,” Perisho said. “I know you have a lot on your plates with these negotiations, and pensioners have a lot with our health plan, our pensions, and what people are trying to take away from us in this country. Yesterday on NPR they did a report by several think tanks that said we are paying more in this country than if we had a single-payer plan that covered everybody.

“We’re going to support your negotiations any way we can. You have friends in Southern California



Leroy King, speaking on Policy Resolution 3: “I watched television last night and saw all our young people with their legs cut off, coming back. This resolution on the war is one of the most important things to get involved with and understand: the war has got to end. I want to say to our membership, get involved, write your Congressman, your Senators because this is the most important thing—we have to get that war in Iraq over.”





Newly organized BLT workers get a hand.

in the longshore division.”  
**Richard Cavalli** brought greetings from Local 34:

“We need to take back a message to all the places where we work,” Cavalli said. “The message is that the election victory in Nov. is just the first step. This needs to get back to the rank and file. The bottom line for us is to raise a few bucks, because that gives us access to politicians, whether we like it or not, and I don’t particularly like it, I’m not happy with the politicians we have. So if we can take from this convention that we have this first step done, we’ve got to get the next step, get legislation that allows unions to exist.”

**Lawrence Thibeaux** paid Local 10’s respects and offered an assessment of the health care crisis:

“When I was a little boy we didn’t have for-profit hospitals,” he said. “If you were sick you went to the doctor and it didn’t matter if you had a nickel in your pocket. Now everything is for profit. Can you afford it? We have the president talking about tax deductions for affordable health care. We have Schwarzenegger talking about mandatory health care. One of the things they all have in common is they’re trying to increase the customer base for the insurance carriers.

“We’ll never contain health care costs as long as there’s a profit motive behind healthcare. Because the health care provider’s first obligation is to his shareholders, not to the sick people. As long as we’re going down this trail where we buy into ‘affordable’ health care we’ll never have it.”

**Art Pulaski** brought greetings from organized labor in the state:

“We at the California Federation of Labor have great admiration for Local 6, because we consider this union to be one of the great activist unions in the state,” he said.

“It’s not just a battle at your bargaining table for your members. Your members and your leaders are out there supporting and advocating for every other union. That’s what activism and militancy is about. One of the great values of this is that when your employers see your union activists supporting other unions, sees you active and strong in politics, and in Sacramento, your employer has more respect, and in fact more fear. We like employers that fear our union, right?”

**Jeff Carter**, President of warehouse Local 17, expressed his members’ feelings of solidarity with their sister local and gave a report on his local’s status.

“We believe we have turned the corner in L. 17, the dredging of the deep water channel at the Port of Sacramento brings great potential,” he said. “The Blue Diamond organizing drive in full swing. Our largest house, Sacramento Logistics, added 150 jobs in the last year alone.”

**Carey Dall**, International Organizer, gave an update on organizing drives on Local 6 turf and introduced **Shawn Roy**, a general laborer at Blue Diamond.

“The reason we need to organize is that we have no voice,” Roy said. “We have no respect. We have bad pay and we’re not treated the way people should be treated. Blue Diamond has been cited by the NLRB with more than 20 violations and they have threatened us with moving the plant.

“We need employer neutrality. Neutrality keeps employers from intimidating employees.”

**Sandra Andrews**, aide to Congresswoman Barbara Lee, (D-CA), brought greetings from the Congresswoman:

“Thank you for doing everything you do, and congratulations on your 60th anniversary” Andrews said,



Local 6 President Efen Alarcon

quoting Lee. “I have a certificate to present on your 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, because you are the backbone of what we do in our district. As your Congresswoman says, the way Calif. goes the rest of the nation goes.

“The Congresswoman sent a statement in support. It reads—‘It is my pleasure to give the following statement in support of warehouse union Local 6, ILWU members gathered here today on the occasion of your 60<sup>th</sup> annual convention. I whole-heartedly support the efforts of the ILWU and others who share your vision, and have come together to congratulate your hard work and dedication in improving working conditions for all people. I am confident that as you begin another year of organizing and advocacy, and you are

the greatest advocates we have.”

**Bob McEllrath** finished his speech with words of support for the local:

“We need the support of the rank and file,” he said. “Today I guess you’ll be working on some resolutions and some things to take to the table. Whether you get your point across, win or lose in your debate, once this convention closes up get behind your officers, get behind your bargaining team, show support, don’t let them crack us, don’t let them think the membership isn’t in support of the union. Win lose or draw, when this convention closes we are united and we are going to get a contract. The International officers and the International union are here to support you.”

**THE CONVENTION PASSED A NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS TO SERVE AS GUIDES FOR THE FUTURE:**

**Policy Resolution 1** In Support of the Employee Free Choice Act:  
*Resolved:*

That ILWU Local 6 supports bipartisan legislation introduced in Congress, the Employee Free Choice Act, which would authorize the National Labor Relations Board to certify a union as the bargaining representative when a majority of private sector employees voluntarily sign authorization cards, commonly known as “card check” recognition, provide for first contract mediation and arbitration and establish meaningful penalties when employers violate workers’ rights to join a union; and

*Be it Further Resolved:*

That ILWU Local 6 communicate the need for Employee Free Choice Act to all of the Congressional delegates from the Congressional districts in our jurisdiction.

**Policy Resolution 2** In support of Immigrant Workers:

*Resolved:*

That ILWU Local 6 stands in opposition to the criminalization of any immigrant in the U.S. regardless of documentation;

*And Be it Further Resolved:*

That ILWU Local 6 stands opposed to any kind of guest worker program; and

*Be it Further Resolved:*

That Local 6 stands in solidarity with any worker who organizes on the job anywhere.

**Policy Resolution 3** In Support of Cut Off in Funding for the Iraq War:

*Resolved:*

That ILWU Local 6 communicate its opposition to continued war funding—except to bring our troops home safely, and take care of them when they get here—directly with our Representatives in Congress; and

*Be it Further Resolved:*

That we call upon Bay Area AFL-CIO Labor Councils, the ILWU International and others to join us in this resolve to “Bring Our Troops Home Now—Money for People’s Needs, Not War—Solidarity with Iraqi Workers.”

**Policy Resolution 4** In Support of Speedy Arbitration:

*Be it Resolved:*

That cases approved by the General Executive Board for arbitration will be assigned to an arbitrator within 60 days of the approval by the General Executive Board.

**Policy Resolution 5** In Support of Single Payer Health Care

*Resolved:*

That the ILWU Local 6 endorses single payer health care and SB 840 in particular and encourages our sister locals and the International to do the same.



Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer California Labor Federation.





Dave Freiboth on the International Executive Board, 1994.

## Former IBU officer takes charge of labor council in Seattle

By John Showalter

The ILWU has yet another strong ally in a seat of union power. Since March 2006, Dave Freiboth, former President of the Inlandboatmen’s Union (IBU), has served as the Executive Secretary of the King County Labor Council (KCLC), the AFL-CIO-affiliated central body of labor organizations in and around Seattle.

Prior to becoming executive secretary at the labor council, Freiboth served in various labor leadership positions for 20 years, including 12 years with the IBU, the Marine Division of the ILWU. He decided in fall 2005 not to run for IBU president again, and, at the time, his plan was to “go back to his boats and tools.” However, with a month to go in office, he got word that there was an opening at the KCLC office and was asked by co-workers he had worked in the maritime industry and other industries to step up.

“I had been the maritime trades representative to the Central Labor Council in Seattle for about seven years,” said Freiboth. “So I was involved already, and, in tune with

local politics, ready to represent the Marine Division.”

In the years leading up to his labor council post, Freiboth worked closely with Seattle longshore Local 19 to frame their positions on local plans to build new infrastructure for port freight movement and on the heated debate over gentrification of port land.

In the latter case, Freiboth helped broker a compromise position whose funding is currently under discussion in the state legislature. These and other cases positioned Freiboth well to address longshore issues when he came into office at the labor council and it gives a big boost to longshore workers’ and labor’s positions when they sit down with Port of Seattle to know that Freiboth is representing them at the council.

Freiboth sees the labor council’s mission—to educate those in different sectors of government about labor’s struggles and to provide a central policy entity to project labor’s collective power—as directly benefiting the ILWU. Although, he cautions, labor must be committed and organized in these difficult political times.

## Oregon appoints Local 8 officer to port commission

By John Showalter

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski has appointed former Local 8 President Bruce Holte to a seat on the Port of Portland’s Port Commission. Holte was notified February 9 by the Governor’s office of his appointment, which was approved shortly thereafter by Oregon’s State Senate. He took a formal oath of office on March 1 and started attending to port business immediately.

Holte is the third union representative ever to serve on the Portland Port Commission and the first member of an ILWU to be on the commission since former Local 8 President and Coast Committeeman Dick Wise served in the mid-1990s. Holte sees his priorities as a Port Commissioner to secure more global business for the port, generating more work at the terminal. He would also like to supplement the two hammerhead cranes now in use there with a shoreside crane. The port recently added a shoreside crane at Terminal 6.

According to the Port of Portland, port operations at its four terminals generated 11,724 jobs, nearly \$871 million in personal income and close to \$89 million in state and local taxes in 2006. When combined with activity at the nearby Port of Vancouver,

“Just as solidarity is at the heart of the ILWU’s slogan ‘an injury to one is an injury to all,’ so must there also be a commitment to building broader support in the labor movement,” he said. “At times when workers are threatened in the Marine Division or the ILWU, the labor council plays a key role in galvanizing the resources of the labor movement.”

He adds that union members have a tendency to take unity for granted. Citing the disastrous Professional Air-Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike in 1981, he reminds that President Reagan’s busting of that union occurred because members did not see the warning signs, and did not consider the extent to which big money or a hostile administration could threaten their ability to maintain the balance of power.

“[The ILWU’s slogan] is a wonderful motto, but when folks get into the cut-and-thrust of power plays

the two ports account for more than 22,000 local jobs, \$1.7 billion in personal income and about \$176 million in state and local taxes from the surrounding Portland area.

With his professional background as a longshoreman, Holte anticipates being assigned to the marine division task force on the commission. He has already started addressing the port’s other jurisdiction, Portland’s airport. Bringing more growth to the port is one way, Holte says, that everyone in Portland stands to benefit from a stronger local economy through global trade.

“Keeping growth strong here at the port, including going overseas to develop better relationships with prospective port clients can only benefit the City of Portland,” Holte said. “Our tax base is not as large as California’s, so we need to keep expanding the potential of this port. We have the room for expansion here, too.”

Holte also foresees better labor communications between the local and the commission and improving the workforce at Terminal 6, operated by Marine Terminals Corporation (MTC). As a port commissioner, he hopes to improve relations between the port, labor and the surrounding community in North Portland.

with the bosses, it takes a lot of work to make sure the bosses aren’t working us against each other,” he said. “[The council’s] heavy lifting comes in maintaining that unity and projecting that power. It is a two-pronged attack: it’s the internal work of maintaining that unity through coalition-building and the external work of projecting that power.”

Freiboth says that the council’s efforts to maintain labor unity—despite the national Change-to-Win split of certain unions from the AFL-CIO in 2005—has already provided workers with several opportunities to emphasize their continued unity. When Korean Free Trade Agreement talks were held in Seattle last year, the council mobilized 1500 people from union locals to protest in the streets in solidarity with their Korean brothers and sisters and fight big businesses’ efforts to degrade labor standards globally.

## WALTER REED PRIVATIZED CARE *continued from page 3*

tions were caused or aggravated by an ideological commitment to privatize government services regardless of the costs to taxpayers and the consequences for wounded soldiers.”

Rumsfeld moved to privatize Walter Reed under President Bush’s “competitive sourcing” initiative, launched in 2002.

“According to the Office of Management and Budget, the goal of

President Bush’s ‘competitive sourcing’ initiative was to allow the private sector to compete for nearly half of all federal jobs,” the letter read. The new jobs would be nonunion.

Workers at Walter Reed appealed the privatization decision to the government, but they were found to have “no standing” to appeal under the new privatization rules.

After that, according to the com-

mittee’s letter, employees left the hospital “in droves.”

The democratic leadership of the House Armed Services Committee moved March 20 to include an amendment to the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act that would impose a moratorium on further privatization of military hospitals.

John Gage, the President of the American Federation of Government

Employees, representing the former workers at Walter Reed, praised the committee’s move in a March 21 press release:

“The Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) obsession with privatizing federal employees cannot be allowed to undermine the health of military personnel,” Gage said. “The Walter Reed privatization fiasco could have been prevented.”

## Longshore Retired, Deceased and Survivors

**Local 8**—Wayne Bell; **Local 10**—Noel Roach, Paul Roy, Lowrie Ward, Charles Winston, Louis Edwards; **Local 13**—Carlos Munoz, Robert Mendoza, Melvis Heard, Dragana Anicic, Mario A. Morales, Carl Miskey, Jose C. Huerta; **Local 14**—Raymond Sousa; **Local 19**—Jeffrey Vigna, Gerald Griffin, Eddie Walker; **Local 27**—Wayne Danielson; **Local 29**—William Meza; **Local 46**—Kathy Lewandowski; **Local 50**—Thomas Schoenlein; **Local 54**—Jesse Soria, **Local 63**—James R. Prerez, Frank Bivinetto, Bernard Harvey, Ted Lucich, Kristen Hansen, Albert Rea; **Local 91**—Paul Cagle.

### DECEASED:

**Local 4**—James Adams (Carol); **Local 7**—Buford Green; **Local 8**—

Clinton Pearson Jr. (Marcella), Earl Milsten (Mary Anne), John Pitman (Ruth), Ronald Brown; **Local 10**—Guadalupe Bernal (Elaine), Lincoln Williams (Dorothy), Dan Farr (Rita), John Guillory, Ralph Trufant, Virgual Luckett, Gerald Johnson; **Local 12**—Walter Strassburg; **Local 13**—Milton Olson (Bette), Earnest Campbell (Jean), Silvano Leyva (Maria), Alvin Patow (Linda), Gary Esparza (Monica), Richard Sobkowiak (Steven), Thomas C. Padilla, Edward Lanley, John Medina, Frank Donato ; **Local 19**—Donald Wright (Patricia), Jacob Arnautoff (Lenore), William Harrison (Harrison and Janelee), Creston Lovelace (Jody); **Local 21**—Arthur De Weert (Linda), Richard McQuaid; **Local 23**—Orville McMillin; **Local 24**—Eugene Erickson;

**Local 26**—Frederick Packer; **Local 29**—Ruben Rodriguez (Patricia); **Local 34**—Frank Paton (Stella); **Local 52**—Robert Peters (Nell), William Hulbert (Carole); **Local 63**—Richard Alva (Linda), Richlyn Ho (Cynthia), James Welch (Sharon), Robert Erickson (Margie Anne), David Courtmarche (Angie), Van Barbieri (Eva), John English, Ralph Castaldi; **Local 75**—Yvonne Golden; **Local 94**—Theodore Jackson (Josephine), Rufus Butler (Nancy), Ernst Paulsen. (Survivor in parenthesis.)

### DECEASED SURVIRORS:

**Local 8**—Norma Porras, Mildred Hendricks, Carol Nygren, Katherine Healey; **Local 10**—Carolina Vidal, Minnie Calhoun, Mary Dulaney, Olivia Morrison, Veleator Guiton, Nadine

Mitchell, Christine Spencer, Learly Saunders, Barbara Peterson, Lillie Patrick; **Local 12**—Dorothy Selin; **Local 13**—Eva Lopez, Jacqueline Mattox, Ruby Franklin, Lupe De la Torre, Helen Krebs, Esther Garcia, Betty Yokoyama, Hatsumi Toguchi, Helaria Somera, Jessie Cole; **Local 14**—Emma Sundell; **Local 18**—Isabell Rollins; **Local 19**—Sigrun Murrey, Margaret Scott, Florence Winkler, Bertha Holmes, Mabel Harding; **Local 21**—Dorothy Bergquist, Myrtle Rea; **Local 34**—Donna Rudden; **Local 40**—Carmen Llobregat; **Local 52**—Ray Botchek, Grace Connelly; **Local 54**—Ruth Frey, Jessie Gemigniani; **Local 91**—Clara Cole; **Local 94**—Lucia Vaquera; **Local 98**—Barbara Ziegler, Myrtle Ofsthun.



# Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii’s Interracial Labor Movement

By Moon-Kie Jung  
Columbia University Press, New York, 2006. Hardcover. \$45.00.

Reviewed by Gene Vrana, Director of Educational Services and Librarian

The origins of the ILWU in Hawaii spring from a mix of militant mainland industrial unionism and the rich and often bitter back-ground of the Islands’ agricultural and longshore workers between about 1880 and 1934. It is one thing to trace the development of the ILWU in Hawaii’s labor movement, it is another to understand it in terms of the complex racial and ethnic forces at play during—and after—those early years. The importance—and difficulty—of exploring and evaluating this indispensable part of the heritage of the ILWU is charted with mixed success in Professor Moon-Kie Jung’s *Re-Working Race: The Making of Hawaii’s Interracial Labor Movement*. “Re-Working Race” summarizes both the successes and defeats of the early efforts at unionization in the territorial era (statehood came in 1959), and clearly traces the extraordinary interlocking power among the ruling U.S. and European families (known as *haoles*) that dominated Hawaii’s politics and economy and came to be known through their corporate identities as the Big Five. The Big Five used their control over agriculture, shipping and the governor’s mansion to restrict and repress the growth of workers’ rights and union organizing. Their success

was often guaranteed by their ability to exploit existing prejudices between the Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Portuguese workers who had been imported to work the sugar plantations—and to compete for work with Hawaiians and other Polynesian groups already living in the Islands. The ILWU has often, and accurately, been portrayed as playing a pivotal role in breaking down the feudal rule of the Big Five and bringing interracial democracy to Hawaii. Moon-Kie Jung attempts to understand the impact and meaning of the racial and ethnic factors at play in this history, and to evaluate what kind of racial and cultural unity, known as interracial unionism, it took to build a vibrant ILWU and a successful labor movement. Jung’s major conclusions are simple and well known to most ILWU members: success came only when, in accordance with ILWU principles, the various groups were willing to work together, and continued success required mutual respect of the different experiences and cultures of each group, as opposed to eliminating or ignoring those differences. Success was also built on the accumulated understanding of how the workers had been previously been defeated because they had been divided—and that the newer pineapple industry did not have same feudal control of the workers as did the sugar plantations. Unlike the sugar owners, investors in pineapple plantations chose not to rely on imported and indentured labor, choosing instead to lure away sugar workers with slightly



Sugar strike on the big island, 1946.

better wages and conditions. Another factor in the major organizing drives of 1944-1946, as Jung clearly documents, is that the repressive controls exercised by the U.S. military under martial law during World War II built anger and resentment that helped fuel the commitment to build workers’ organizations after the war. Jung also gives us fresh insight into how the ILWU experience in Hawaii transformed the rest of the union, particularly in the realm of political action and ongoing member mobilization and education from the neighborhood and workplace to the state capitol and beyond—and also redefined the “march inland” of 1935-1939 which organized mainland warehouse and distribution workers, to include agricultural workers—an industrial scope that today includes

miners, radio operators, hospital workers, and others, united in an interracial, democratic organization. Unfortunately, Jung’s sociological analysis of these topics is embedded in a style that will make the meat of the book unappetizing for most readers outside academia. “Re-Working Race” suffers from other characteristics of books written from doctoral dissertations: there are 192 pages of text and 100 pages of footnotes, bibliography and index—much of which is taken up with evidence that Jung has read just about everything other academics have written on the topic. This is not a bad thing in and of itself, it just leaves this reader thinking that the most interested audience will be other residents of academia, and not those engaged in making the history about which he has written.

## A. Q. McElrath offers some thoughts on “Reworking Race”

Some after-thoughts to Brother Vrana’s perceptive review of Moon-Kie Jung’s “Reworking Race—The Making of Hawaii’s Interracial Labor Movement.” Race relations are never easy to predict. Depending on what is happening in a country and its labor needs for economic development, those in power (including lawmakers) determine to a large extent how a community reacts to immigrant workers. And so it happened in Hawaii. As alluded to in the review, but worthy of further emphasis, the success of the ILWU in breaking the so-called feudal rule of the Big Five companies in Hawaii stemmed from a specific set of conditions created by capitalism internationally in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These conditions mixed a dictatorial plantation economy with the need to import thousands of field

hands from around the world to toil in the sugar industry, which itself required a complex mix of free trade and governmental protections to maximize both profits and the repression of the workers. It is interesting to note that the unique quality of Hawaii’s so-called interracial labor organizations came at a specific time and despite a history of anti-racial ideology on the part of the United States. History records the importation of over twenty-five million immigrants necessary for the economy of our new nation. Some times the so-called alien presence in America resulted in anti-immigrant violence, persecution, and prosecution. In more recent times these sentiments are found in the enactment of No Child Left Behind—which obviously work against immigrant children and the poor; and the reauthorization of the

Patriot Act which contains many articles which work against immigrants individually and as members of political and social groups and challenges the nature of our government based on the Bill of Rights. The answer now, it seems, is not so different from what happened some 60 years ago in the middle of the Pacific: one need only look at the few South American countries which have so recently made a move towards ensuring that their people will be able to get a decent kind of life despite NAFTA and CAFTA—a life built upon unity, militancy, and democratic organization. Perhaps in the final analysis it is not so much inter-racialism that matters as it is the ability to understand that what truly matters is to take a stand against discrimination, injustice and impoverishment of humanity. And if we are



A. Q. McElrath testifies before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Medical Care for the Aged, 1961.

to learn from our own experience in the ILWU, perhaps the best chance of making that stand is through a trade union, or a community group or any other organization determined by its members—ordinary working people of any race or culture. —A. Q. McElrath

### ATTENTION : LOCAL 10 MEMBERS

Trustees of the Smolin-Melin Scholarship Fund are prepared to accept applications for scholarships for the academic year 2007-2008. Now is the time to indicate your interest. June 1, 2007 is the application deadline. Victor Smolin and Carlton Melin were long time members of Local 10. They left a sum of money to establish the scholarship fund. They specified that scholarships were to be available to children of Class A Local 10 members to further their “collegiate” education. Trustees of the Fund interpret “members” to mean active members in good standing at the time of disbursement of scholarship funds, deceased members and retired members. The Trustees interpret “collegiate” to apply only to full-time study (at least 12 units per semester or quarter) at either a four-year college or an academic junior college. The Trustees have agreed that (1) no applicant will be awarded more than four scholarships, (2) a fifth scholarship would be considered after careful review of the applicant’s record and if circumstances warrant and (3) in no event would an applicant be considered for a sixth scholarship. Based always on available assets, the Fund historically has awarded scholarships in a range from \$1000 to \$2500 for full-time students at four-year colleges or universities, and from \$750 to \$1750 for full-time students at two-year colleges. Trustees are Richard Zuckerman, counsel for ILWU and for Local 10, David Erkkila, a retired member of Local 10 and a friend of Victor Smolin, and Eugene Vrana, Director of Educational Services and Librarian for ILWU. If you have a son or daughter who is applying to enter college next fall, or is already a college student who is planning to continue, and the above requirements are met, you might want to apply for one of these scholarships. To request an application, simply call Angela Ahn, at (415) 771-6400. She will then send you the application form with the necessary explanatory material.

### LETTERS TO OUR LEGISLATORS

The Southern Calif. District Council sent a letter penned by its secretary-treasurer, Luisa Gratz, to Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) on Social Security privatization. Gratz got a reply from Senator Barbara Boxer thanking her for the letter. The Senator pointed out in her response that President Bush’s plan would cut the average Social Security payment to just \$5,700 a year. Gratz told *The Dispatcher* that more such letters to Senators and Representatives would be helpful. The text of the SCDC letter is reprinted below.

Dear (Senator or Representative): As your constituent, and a supporter of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to urge you to please oppose any legislation, plan, or conference report that will in any way harm the benefits, structure, or traditional role of Social Security or Medicare. This includes efforts to privatize Social Security through private individual accounts, which will undermine the principles that have made this program so successful. As you know, President Roosevelt and

Congress created Social Security in 1935 to protect retired Americans from experiencing a “poverty-ridden old age.” And America’s more than 36 million seniors have invested their hard-earned money in Social Security and Medicare during their working lives. Social Security and Medicare represent a covenant between the government and its citizens. I therefore stand against plans to privatize either of these programs in any way that will harm or diminish these critically important protections against poverty and the devastating cost of medical care. One of my top priorities as a citizen and voter is the protection of Social Security and Medicare for *all* current and future retirees. Among your top priorities as my elected representative should be the defeat of privatization and other proposals that threaten our retirement security. I urge you to work closely with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare to protect the benefits we have worked for, paid for, and earned. Sincerely, (your name)



# 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**

**Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges** A 17-minute DVD of the original video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorializes Harry Bridges through still photographs, recorded interviews, and reminiscences. Originally produced for the 1990 memorial service in San Francisco. DVD **\$5.00**

**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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