



DISPATCHER

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photo-Bill Orton

Workers win tough fight at Rite Aid warehouse

After a tough two-year battle, the workers at Rite Aid's distribution center in Lancaster, CA, won their fight to join ILWU warehouse Local 26. They prevailed despite Rite Aid's all-out effort to squash their organizing drive. They overcame the flaws in U.S. labor law that make it almost impossible for workers to form unions. And they gave the ILWU its largest mainland organizing victory that anyone can remember, sending a hopeful signal to other workers on the inland end of the maritime logistics chain.

"I am so happy right now," organizing committee member Ignacio "Nacho" Meza said just after the March 14 vote count. "We had to make sacrifices, but we showed that if we stand together, if we speak up, we can make changes for ourselves, our families and the people who come after us." Rite Aid fired Meza in January 2007 for his support of the union, but had to rehire him six months later as part of a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

The million-square-foot warehouse where Meza works serves more than 500 Rite Aid retail outlets in the Pacific Southwest. Most of its inbound freight and inventory is shipped from the Pearl River Delta in China through the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, then trucked 80 miles up to the desert in Antelope Valley.

"... we showed that if we stand together... we can make changes for ourselves, our families and the people who come after us."

— Ignacio "Nacho" Meza

As logistics work has moved inland to places like Lancaster, employment has gone up—but working standards have gone down. Most of the new jobs are lower-paid and non-union. In fact, many companies hire through temp agencies, leaving workers with even fewer rights, little or no benefits, and less protection than other non-union workers.

Workers at Rite Aid's Lancaster

facility began organizing in March 2006. They wanted an end to mandatory overtime piled on top of ten-hour shifts, and to address punishing production quotas. They'd had enough of sweating through desert summers with no air conditioning in their work areas, and being employed "at will" with no job security. More than anything else, they wanted to be treated decently.

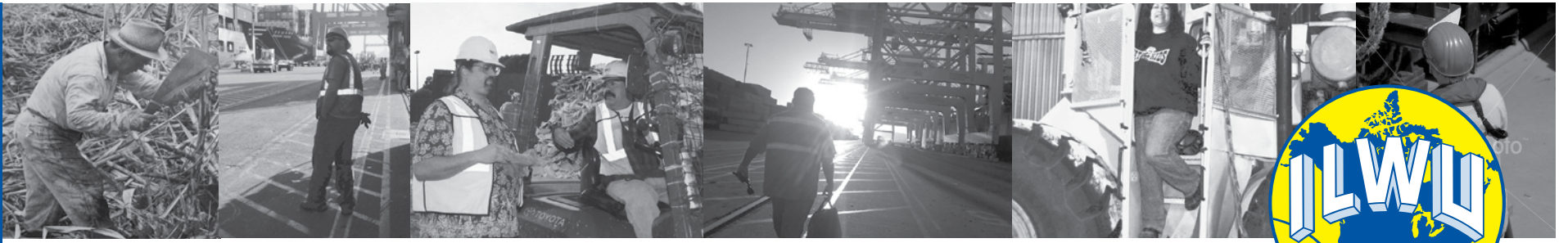
"Finally we can have some respect and dignity," committee member Debbie Kaliff said. "This is huge. It levels the playing field for us."

Rite Aid responded to the workers' concerns with an all-out anti-union campaign that landed it on the wrong side of the law. A months-long investigation by the National Labor Relations Board found enough evidence to try Rite Aid on 49 labor law violations. These included disciplining, demoting, suspending and firing union supporters; threatening that people would lose their raises if they voted for the union; interrogating people about their union activities and sympathies, and publicly disparaging union supporters.

The company settled in May 2007 rather than face an NLRB judge, but

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Postmaster: Send address changes to The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800.



LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

Dear Editor,

I'm glad to see the ILWU is taking a strong stand against symbols of racial hatred, including nooses. I saw racial hatred up close when I travelled around the country in 1971 after serving in the army. I travelled on freight trains and hitchhiked to Mississippi where I saw firsthand how racism and segregation were still being practiced.

I became registered at Local 13 in 1995, and worked at different ports on the west coast since 1974.

I still remember what we were taught in the Methodist Church when I was growing up: "red, yellow, black and white, we are all precious in God's sight." It's important for our union to speak out whenever we see symbols of hatred and racism.

– Neal Schreiner
North Edwards, CA

Dear Editor,

My dad, Joseph Stevenson, was a member of Local 10 when he was a young man. He marched down Market Street with Harry Bridges in July of 1934 after Bloody Thursday. He then became a member of the Warehouse Union, Local 6.

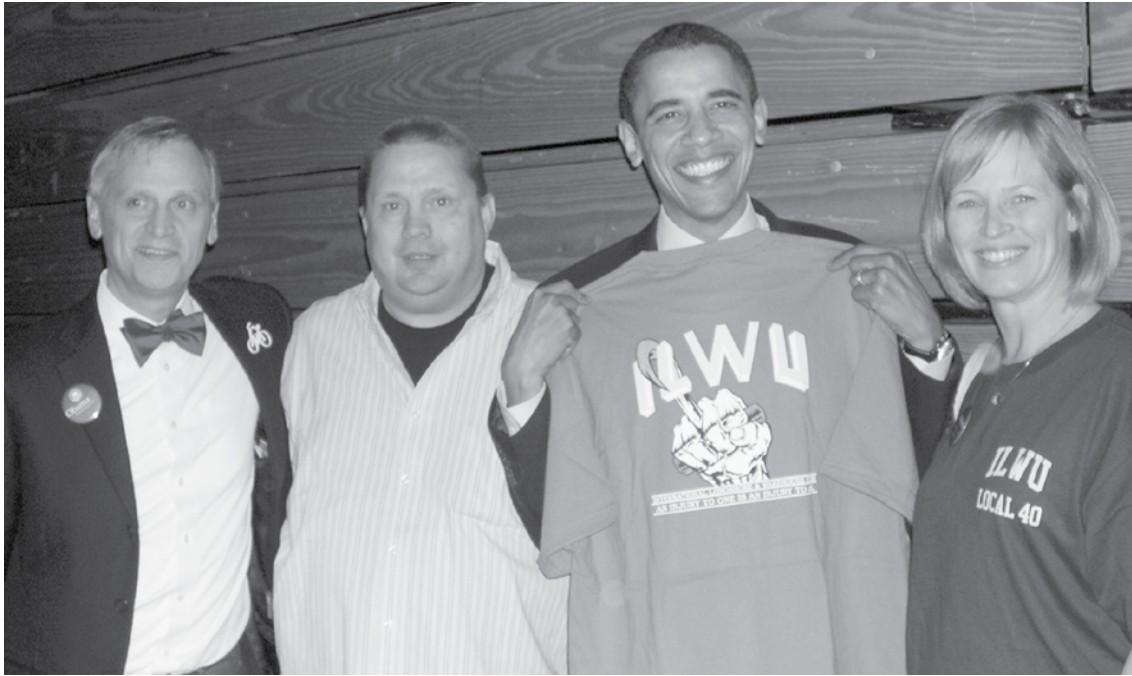
Dad always said that the ILWU will always stand up for the "little guy." Today, I'm deeply concerned about a proposition on the California Ballot this June 3rd that would outlaw rent control anywhere in the State. There are 17 cities that now protect tenants with rent control laws, including San Francisco. All this would end if big landlords get their way. I hope the union will stand with tenants in this fight and honor the ILWU's creed: "An injury to one is an injury to all."

– Candice Stevenson
San Francisco

Send your letters to the editor.

The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800
or email to editor@ilwu.org

A note on the new design... This issue of the *Dispatcher* has a new, updated look that we're hoping will be easier to read – while retaining the substance and feel of this classic ILWU publication. Please let us know what you think.



Senator Barack Obama came to Portland, Oregon on Friday, March 21 for a community rally that filled the Memorial Coliseum with nearly 10,000 supporters. He met there with Local 40 Vice President Dawn DesBrisay, Local 8 President Jeff Smith, along with Congressman Earl Blumenauer of Oregon's 3rd District. "Obama talked about being an advocate for working families, and that made me hopeful," said DesBrisay. "I told him that the ILWU would help him if he continued to stand up for unions and working families, and he promised to keep fighting for us." Thirty ILWU members from locals 4,5,8,28,40 and 92, were invited to sit in the VIP section at the rally where New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson endorsed Obama, citing many qualities for his decision – including an exceptional ability to address racial issues in an honest and constructive way.

Stop work meetings on May 1 will focus on Iraq War

Nearly one hundred Longshore Caucus delegates voted on February 8 to support a resolution calling for an eight-hour "stop-work" meeting during the day shift on Thursday, May 1 to protest the war by calling for the immediate, safe return of U.S. troops from Iraq.

"The Caucus has spoken on this important issue and I've notified the employers about our plans for 'stop work' meetings on May 1," said ILWU International President Bob McEllrath.

Members should check with their local unions for more information about plans in their area.

Caucus delegates, including several military veterans, spoke passionately about the importance of supporting the troops by bringing them home safely and ending the war in Iraq. Concerns were also raised about the growing cost of the war that has threatened funding for domestic needs, including education and healthcare. Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard economist Linda J. Bilmes recently estimated that the true cost of the war in Iraq to American taxpayers

will exceed 3 trillion dollars – a figure they describe as "conservative."

The union's International Executive Board recently endorsed Barack Obama, citing his opposition to the Iraq war as one of the key factors in their decision-making process.

Caucus delegates are democratically elected representatives from every longshore local who set policy for the Longshore Division.

McEllrath has written letters to President John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO and President Andy Stern of the Change-to-Win Coalition, and to the presidents of the International

Transport Workers' Federation and the International Dockworkers Council to inform them of the ILWU's decision - and invite others to speak out against the war on May 1.



DISPATCHER

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Workers win tough fight at Rite Aid warehouse



Rite Aid workers and community supporters joined members and staff from the ILWU and other unions to visit employees at their homes.

workers—who travelled to Lancaster on weekends to visit workers in their homes and explain how important it is to have a union,” explained ILWU International Vice President Joe Radisich, who spent a weekend visiting workers in Lancaster.

ILWU members also hit the streets of San Pedro for a lively rally in front of a Rite Aid store last spring, and caravanned to Lancaster for another rally in December. Pensioners pitched in, leafleting at Rite Aid stores up and down the Coast. The Antelope Valley Community Labor Coalition and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, offered tremendous support, mobilizing members for actions and putting the Rite Aid worker’s struggle on the map. A dozen Teamster organizers supported the effort last year during a weekend of worker outreach with ILWU and other union members.

“Now the Rite Aid workers will need to negotiate their first contract, and we’ll continue to help them through that process as well,” said International President Bob McEllrath. “The future of our union will depend on helping workers at the new ‘inland ports’ and warehouses of the future. The Rite Aid victory is an important step in that direction.” — Marcy Rein

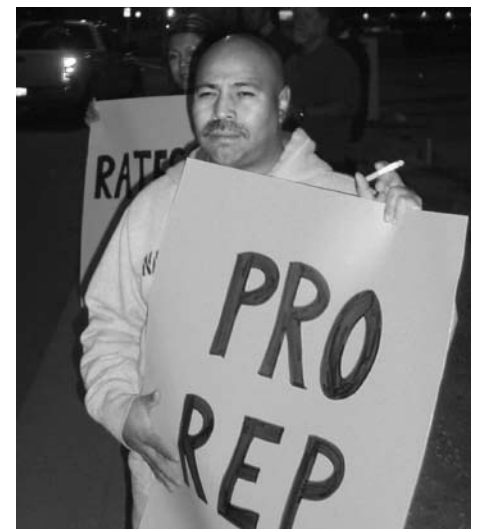
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paid only a small price. The settlement required Rite Aid to re-hire Meza and another worker who had been fired for openly supporting the ILWU, and pay them back wages plus interest. The company also had to post a notice in the warehouse informing employees of their rights and promising to respect them. The notice said, in effect, “We didn’t do anything wrong but we’ll never do it again.”

And while labor law does little to penalize violators, it does even less to even out the balance of power between management and workers. At Rite Aid, as in any workplace, the company had unlimited access to the workers. Union supporters could only talk organizing with their co-workers when they were all “off the clock.” The union didn’t even get a list of voters until three weeks before the election, and the list did not have to be complete.

But when the votes were in, 283 workers in the warehouse voted “union yes,” 261 voted “no.” Rite Aid decided not to challenge the election, and the NLRB made the results official March 21.

“The keys to success here were a grassroots campaign led by the workers themselves, terrific support from the ILWU organizing team, and volunteers from locals in Southern California—including many longshore



Rite Aid worker Ignacio “Nacho” Meza.



Photo by Marcy Rein

Students support Blue Diamond workers

SACRAMENTO, CA—Some 500 members of M.E.Ch.A. (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) rallied in front of the Blue Diamond Growers plant here March 21 during the group’s national conference. They also took up chalk and paint to cover the pavement with drawings and messages of support for the Blue Diamond workers’ long fight to join ILWU warehouse Local 17. The two blocks leading to the plant’s main gate bloomed with solidarity greetings from as far away as Pennsylvania, Colorado and Arizona.



“M.E.Ch.A.’s motto is ‘La union hace la fuerza,’ in unity there is strength,” said Steven Payan, a member of M.E.Ch. A. at Woodland Community College and an organizer of the support action. “These workers are part of us. They’re people of color, people in the struggle. We know some of them are scared and we want to increase their hope and faith by letting them know we’re behind them.”

M.E.Ch.A., the nation’s largest Chicano student organization, also committed to spread word of the Blue Diamond workers’ union fight through its chapters around the country. If Blue Diamond has not agreed to ground rules for a free and fair vote by the group’s next national conference, it will consider a boycott.

Blue Diamond did its best to keep the workers from seeing this colorful and energetic show of support. Management closed the plant on Good Friday for the first time in at least 20 years – and washed away the messages of solidarity in the street before workers returned the next day. — Marcy Rein

Contract Negotiations Begin



ILWU's Longshore Negotiating Committee arrived in force on opening day, led by International President Bob McEllrath (front, center)

Negotiations for the new longshore contract kicked off Monday morning, March 17th in San Francisco. The ILWU negotiating team arrived in force at the headquarters of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), taking their seats at a large conference table across from dozens of employer representatives.

ILWU International President Robert McEllrath told employers that the ILWU was looking forward to negotiating a new contract that was fair for workers.

PMA President Jim McKenna said in an earlier press statement that employers would be seeking to "increase efficiency, implement technology and other workplace innovations."

After preliminary remarks that included agreement on some basic ground rules, McEllrath passed the ILWU's demands across the table to management. Both sides agreed to meet again the following afternoon, when McKenna presented management's proposals to the ILWU negotiating team.

Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr.

said, "We're off to a good start with a team that's united and working together to win a good contract."

Both sides agreed to meet as often as their schedules will allow.

ILWU's 8-member Safety Committee also came to the opening Negotiating session where they made arrangements to begin meeting with PMA officials immediately. The ILWU Safety Committee has developed a set of demands to improve the Safety Code and reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries.

"We're making proposals that will save lives and protect families from losing their loved-ones," said Safety Chair Tim Podue from Local 13.

Safety Committee members met several times with management during the first week of negotiations.



PMA President Jim McKenna reaches for ILWU contract demands.

**Need longshore negotiating news?
Check ILWU's website & contract2008.org**

Tacoma guards and community unite to fight for better jobs

Twice in the past four months Maersk Line, the largest shipping company in the world, had its Tacoma operations shut down by community activists who say the company is violating the rights of its security guards who overwhelmingly chose to join the ILWU last summer at the sub-contractor Securitas.

Security guards have faced a management-run union-busting campaign



Tacoma guard George Twiggs was fired for union activity.

complete with unlawful threats of mass firings. The guards are organizing with the ILWU to raise their poverty wages, secure affordable family healthcare, and win more respect and a voice on the job.

One guard, George Twiggs, was fired on February 13 for union activity – a practice that is becoming more common nationwide as employers try to intimidate workers from exercising their right to join a union.

When Twiggs – who is also a pastor and disabled military veteran – showed up to work on the terminal for his early morning shift, a manager tried to force him to sign an agreement that would stop him from talking to co-workers about "issues" or gathering with them in non-work areas, among other topics. When Twiggs refused the manager's demand to give up his rights, the manager said Twiggs would be fired by the end of his shift.

That afternoon, managers called him into the office and suspended him for an entirely different reason – for distributing union information to co-workers. The next day a manager

fired Twiggs over the telephone, reading a statement allegedly from Maersk Terminals Security Manager Marvin Ferreira that said, "No matter how many yellow pieces of paper guards or longshore post, the guards will never belong to ILWU."

"The public should know when big foreign-owned companies try to take advantage of local employees," Twiggs told the *Dispatcher*. "Instead of sitting down with us to solve problems, improve working conditions and services, Securitas continues to break the law by abusing employees."

The community activists who shut down the Port on both occasions were organized by Jobs with Justice (JwJ). In February of 2008, JwJ staged a loud and lively picket line at the port during the evening shift. Concerned that crossing the picket line might be unsafe until it ended, port workers called for a neutral arbitrator to evaluate the situation.

In November of 2007, an arbitrator decided that a similar JwJ picket line was unsafe to cross, and ruled that management must pay longshore

workers while they waited for the picket to end.

Many security guards at the Maersk terminal earned about \$10 per hour when the organizing drive started. For years, Maersk has undercut security guards' rights by using a system of sub-contracting and "company unions." This form of union-busting has spread like a virus throughout the Port of Tacoma.

Craig Dameron, statewide co-chair of Jobs with Justice, explained that the group was sending a message to Maersk and other operators that the community will not tolerate companies "that continually disrespect the rights of workers at Port of Tacoma terminals."

Hundreds of low-wage guards at Tacoma and other ports are watching this precedent-setting organizing drive waged by the Maersk terminal guards to see if jobs with justice can be won.

Maersk is the largest Danish corporation and the largest container shipping company in the world, with 110,000 employees worldwide and

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California ports back plans to “grow greener” and help truckers

In separate decisions, commissioners at the Ports of Oakland and Los Angeles recently voted to reduce pollution from trucks and ships – while strengthening the rights of truckers who work at the ports.

“These decisions mean port workers can look forward to cleaner air on the docks, and it allows the industry to move forward by dealing with pollution that’s been an obstacle to growth,” said Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr.

The Los Angeles Harbor Commission unanimously approved a Clean Trucks program on March 20 that will upgrade the 17,000 drayage trucks that have the most outdated, dirty engines and cause much of the pollution that affects residents in San Pedro, Wilmington, and other towns around the port.

The Clean Trucks plan was supported by labor, environmental, and community groups – and strongly opposed by anti-union forces. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union supported the effort.

“We want to help workers who are trying to organize,” said Ortiz “and the port’s Clean Trucks program was the best plan out there. It creates trucking companies with a stable workforce and the resources to maintain fleets with cleaner vehicles.”

The Port of Long Beach remains opposed to implementing the plan to help truckers become direct employees – instead of independent operators – and improve working conditions. Los Angeles and Long Beach are also implementing a plan on July 1 that will reduce emissions from over 5,000 ships calling at the ports. Companies will help pay for the Clean Trucks program.

Up north in the Bay Area, port truckers who are part of the local Clean and Safe Ports Coalition, held a march and rally in West Oakland on March 18 to protest their unsafe working conditions and appeal to the Port of Oakland to pass a measure similar to the one adopted in Los Angeles. ILWU Local 10 President Melvin Mackay was on hand to support the event, along



ILWU members marched in Oakland for cleaner air and justice for port truckers on March 18.

with Business Agents Frank Gaskin and Trent Willis, Executive Board member Jack Heyman, and the union’s regional “Saving Lives” representative, Clarence Thomas.

That evening, the port’s Board of Commissioners passed a container plan similar to the one in Los Angeles, but they didn’t decide how to pay for the plan. More importantly, the commissioners sidestepped the issues of fair labor rights for poorly paid port truckers, deciding to revisit that part of the plan at a later date.

The same week as the Oakland Port Commissioners’ vote, the California Air Resources Board, and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District released a study of the port’s emissions impact on residents living in the Bay Area. The study showed that residents—especially those living in the portside community of West Oakland—face a much higher risk of cancer from exposure to diesel particulates from trucks, trains and ships at the port. ILWU Local 10 responded to the study’s findings with alarm in a press statement, since many of its members not only spend their days at the port but also live around it.

“We work and live in this community,” said ILWU Local 10 President Melvin Mackay. “We breathe the same dirty air on the docks that West Oakland residents do on their streets. We’re very concerned about the cancer and asthma risks that this study found. The shipping industry needs to take more steps to reduce its pollution.”
— John Showalter

SPFPA, the California Security Officers’ Union (CSOU), United Federation of Special Police and Security Officers, Inc. (UFSPSO) and the United Government Security Officers of America (UGSOA), to prevent guards from joining stronger unions like the ILWU.

Last month, the National Labor Relations Board issued a complaint charging that Securitas managers had violated federal labor laws by repeatedly threatening employees who wanted to join the ILWU.

Adam Hoyt, Co-Chair of the JwJ Pierce County Organizing Committee vowed to “work with other Jobs with Justice local coalitions and their allies nationwide to confront Maersk for violating worker rights. If management thought tonight was a headache, they don’t know the migraine that’s coming.”
— Jennifer Sargent

Tacoma guards

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\$44 billion in revenues in 2006. Both Maersk and Securitas (based in Sweden) have generally good labor relations with unions in their home countries. But when operating abroad, Maersk and other global shipping corporations hire security contractors like Securitas to insulate themselves from the responsibility of providing union living wage jobs espoused in their own corporate policies.

Until recently, Securitas workers were technically under the International Union of the Security, Police & Fire Professionals of America (SPFPA). When Congress weakened federal labor laws decades ago, they compromised the rights of security guards to join strong unions, organize and honor picket lines, and to strike over basic worker issues. Companies then helped unions like

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

What will it take to win a good longshore contract in 2008?



“We need to stand together with all our brothers and sisters. We need to stay strong together among ourselves, and build international solidarity, because what we obtain here affects trade unions everywhere.”

— Cameron Williams
Local 19

“A good contract can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people, so it’s important that we present a united front, like we do at caucuses.

Our organization is bottom-up. While our bargaining team works at the bargaining table to protect our jurisdiction and make sure that any new technology leads to good jobs, we need to keep doing our jobs well on the docks.

We have a great way of life, and it’s worth protecting these good jobs for our communities and our kids.”

— Dave Porter, Local 8 Vice President



“We have to let everyone know what the contract negotiations are all about. We also have to do a good job out there on the docks and always be professionals. Some people seem to take everything we have in the ILWU for granted. I don’t, because I’ve worked other places where there’s no union, and I know how different it can be.”

— Wil Vasquez, Local 13

“To get a good contract we need to follow the time honored theme of solidarity. It’s something we gather our strength from, how the ILWU family sticks together when it counts, and it’s the way we become a formidable opponent across that negotiating table.

As a Local 34 member, I know that we have to be vigilant with new systems and technology to make sure the companies don’t try to outsource jobs away from the waterfront.”

—Gail Yui, Local 34



“We need to keep doing the good work we do, being productive and doing it safely. We also need to keep working with the community, so they know we’re not just all about us. We need to support our local food drives and Christmas giving programs, so people know that union members are there when the chips are down, we’ll help people get back on their feet—because we support our country and our community.”

— Dave Reda, Local 23

So Cal Scholarships

In Southern California, applications are being taken for Local 13's High School Scholarship Fund that provides support for students from the Local's families who need help with college. "We rarely turn anyone away, and this year we expect to provide a total of \$15,000 to help students from Local 13 families," says Scholarship Committee co-chair Greg Mitre, who co-chairs the Scholarship Committee with David Serrato, along with Ruth Brown and Joe Marino who also serve on the Committee.

Winners receive money to help pay for books and college tuition. Student applicants are required to write an essay about ILWU President Harry Bridges.

"The kids tell us what they admire about Harry," said David Serrato. "In the past, students said they could relate to Harry fighting against racism and deportation and never giving up."

A larger community high school scholarship program was started by Local 13, aimed at helping students in the community who don't come from an ILWU family. Locals 63 and 94 are

now participating in this community scholarship program that's expected to have more than \$30,000 in funds available for the community in 2008.

"We're going big this year," said Mitre. "Funding has doubled from the 2007 level, and the number of participating schools where students must be enrolled to be eligible has increased from five to 14, including: San Pedro High School, Banning High School, Carson High School, Mary Star High School, Poly High School, Narbonne High School, Palos Verdes



Local 13 Scholarship Committee co-chairs David Serrato (L) and Greg Mitre stand with winner Eric Pardo, now a student at Boston University.

High School, Torrance High School, Mayfair High School, Cabrillo High School, Jordan High School, Peninsula High School, Bishop Montgomery, and the Port of Los Angeles High School.

"Our committee members get real satisfaction from helping these

kids attend a school they might not otherwise be able to afford," said Mitre. Each school will be awarded three scholarships of \$1,000.00, \$800.00 and \$600.00 each. School officials will decide which students receive the scholarships.

Special scholarship for Local 10 members

Trustees of the Smolin-Melin Scholarship Fund are prepared to accept applications for scholarships for the academic year 2008-2009. The application deadline is June 2, 2008.

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 has awarded scholarships in a range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for full-time students at four-year colleges or universities, and from \$750 to \$1,750 for full-time students at two-year colleges.

Trustees are Beth Ross, 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.

To request an application, simply call Beth Ross' office (415-771-6400) and ask for Mathilda Mendonca. She will then send you the application form with all the necessary information

AFL-CIO Scholarship Programs

The AFL-CIO offers several scholarship programs for union members and their families. One program, aimed at encouraging women and racial/ethnic minorities to take leadership roles in unions, is called the "Union Leaders of the Future Scholarship." This program provides annual awards up to \$3,000. All applications must be postmarked by May 30, 2008. More information about all the AFL-CIO scholarships, including the one described above, is available at: www.unionplus.org/benefits/education/scholarships

NEWS & NOTES

Local 13 President Mike Mitre spoke at the Annual Peak Season Conference in Long Beach March 19 about port pollution and possible job losses.

"We live in the local communities," Mitre said, according to the *American Shipper*. "We don't want our kids getting asthma ... but we also don't want to get into a situation where we chase work away."

"But when you start talking about these environmental groups that have had such a large say—some of these groups are about a dozen people. We're talking about 100,000 affected ILWU family members. Those 12, 15, or 17 people, somehow, do not outweigh the local workforce that supports these local towns."

The employers expressed their concerns about increasing fuel costs and declining shipping volumes. China will shut down factories in Shanghai for a month to clear the air for the Olympics and this could also reduce shipping volumes.

Local 19 reports a jump in cruise ship calls for 2008, Vice President Dave Vigil said. According to the Port of Seattle, 211 ship calls are expected this season, which began April 3. If they all come in, that means 21 more calls than in 2007. The port estimates the cruise industry brings in \$268 million to the local economy and provides 2,087 jobs. Local 19 members have some of those jobs; they tie up the ship, lower the ramps, load ship's stores and passenger baggage, and assist passengers boarding the vessels. The port expects 800,000 passengers this year.

Local 8 will show the historic display "The Legacy of 1934" in the hall between April 14 and 18. The exhibit will snake through most of the hall with its seven-foot tall panels showing the history of the union up to the near present... The Port of Portland reported its fourth post-Panamax crane is on its way. The ship Zhenhua 17 left Shanghai March 8 and should arrive in early April. The crane is being built with a folding pylon structure in order to pass under power lines and bridges.

ILWU Canada is putting the finishing touches on their newly-signed longshore contract. The



ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne

members ratified the agreement last month by a 59 percent margin. The pay increases, going back to April 2007, will average about 3.78 percent in each of the three years. The Straight Time Base Rate will be \$34.51 per hour (about \$34.37 U.S.) by the end of the contract in 2009. The Saturday base will be \$44.17, Sunday \$55.22, and recognized holidays \$69.02.

While Canada has a national health care plan, unions still negotiate supplements. The union won more funding for extended health care, life insurance, disability payments and dental coverage.

"We got a health and benefit package for the lower board casuals, which we never had before, and we've extended the coverage for B-board casuals," ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne said. "The employers came in with all kinds of nasty stuff, but we were successful in having it removed from the table."

ILWU Canada faces right-wing governments on both the provincial and federal level. The federal Labour Minister, Jean-Pierre Blackburn, claimed that a study showed Canada had the highest number of days lost to strikes in the G-7 industrialized nations. But the study compared Canada with countries with low union density, like the U.S., and countries with more cooperative labor relations, like the E.U.

"The government has appointed a special labor relations expert to review 'work stoppages,' which we see as part of a strategy to attack unionized workers like longshore," Dufresne said. "We've been preparing and have protection through the longshore contract and the Canada Labour Code."

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TRANSITIONS

RECENT RETIREES

Local 4: Larry Warner; Local 8: Harold Odden, Eddie Lincoln (Victor Sanders); Local 13: Donald Steinback, Tony B. Urrea, Gary Carr; Local 26: Robert Winter; Local 34: Dan Kinghorn; Local 50: Dick Gustafson; Local 63: Marianne Kellstrom; Local 94: Darrell Page.

DECEASED

Local 8: Cleyan Payne (Vivian), Eddie Lincoln (Victor Sanders); Local 10: Cesario Realin (Maria), Joseph Cooper (Florence), Charles Dacus Sr. (Ollie), Ronald Finley (Mary), Richard J. Smith; Local 12: Herbert Hansen (Mary); Local 13: Thomas Castorena (Angie), Cesario Cuevas (Christine), Edward Carins, Eugene Ware, Marjorie Coulter; Local 14: Robert Lovejoy (Helen); Local 19: Richard Boruch (Linda),

David Vinson (Maureen), Adrian Gallardo (Margaret), Michael Mills (Martha); Local 21: Arvie Johnstun (Bobbye), Andrew Farland; Local 23: Raymond Deffenbaugh (Jacklyn), David Bouchard (Mary), Douglas Linquist; Local 26: R.C. Myers (Wilhelmina); Local 27: Paul Conner (Thelma); Local 40: John Wisser; Local 52: John Herrin; Local 54: Lester Lane; Local 63: Robert Pacheco (Elizabeth); Local 91: Richard McKown (Peggy), Albert Arieta; Local 92: Keith Coon (Jean); Local 94: Hubert Rabjohn (Maisie), Vinko Stame (Mira), Joe Herrin (Kathryn), Harold Thayer. (Survivors in parenthesis.)

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 4: Rosemary McEllrath; Local 8: Maria Kalivas, Delores Sukurski, Ann C. Anderson, Irmogene Mehner; Local

10: Mollie Rohatch, Yuriko Courtney, Klavdia Shevkuta, Jean P. Alvarez, Vinnie Hanspard, Mildred Manning, Odeal Stevens, Angelita Bueno; Local 13: Edna Roberts, Ella Mabel Dunn, Terri Gray, Rose Ramos, Ruth Dozal, Esther Fitzgerald, Rita Abbott, Mattie Dowling; Local 19: Nellie Weidman, Caroline Lindsey, Helen Goulet, Minerva Henderson, Mary Brees, Aune Hepokoski, Naomi Perry, Agnes Scott, Ruby McAndrew; Local 21: Dorothy Mawae; Local 23: Lucy Mack, Frances Carino; Local 24: Jozefa Gacek; Local 34: Dorothy Davis; Local 50: Ellen Niemi, Cora Riggs; Local 54: Donna Small, Katherine Beck; Local 63: Irene Maxon, Iris Taylor; Local 75: Agnes McHugh; Local 92: Ruby Carney

Building Political Power in the Delta



Members from Locals 6 and 54 interviewed candidates last month.

On Wednesday, March 12 and Thursday, March 13, two dozen ILWU members from Longshore Local 54 and Warehouse Local 6 came together at the local 54 hall in Stockton Calif. to interview candidates running for local office. Members wanted to know which candidates would stand with the ILWU on critical issues facing the union in the heart of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Issues of concern included creating more family wage jobs, protecting and

expanding longshore jurisdiction, and supporting our organizing agenda to help Delta workers.

More than a dozen candidates for local office came to the hall seeking ILWU support. At the end of two long nights of interviews, longshore and warehouse workers united around a slate of local candidates for Mayor of Stockton, Stockton City Council, and the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors.

"This is just the beginning," said Local 54 Secretary-Treasurer Gene Davenport. "Now that we have our candidates we're gearing up to hit the streets and do the hard work it will take to get our candidates elected," Davenport explained.

Both locals see this effort as the start of a program to build power for working people across the Delta, and one that participants are committed to continue over the next several election cycles.

Big march, film fest and history exhibit all coming to San Pedro in April

Film, history and labor activism will come together in San Pedro during the month of April, beginning with a big labor march that will climax with a massive rally on the docks of San Pedro. A local film festival is scheduled to begin a few days later where the ILWU will present the new photo exhibit about the 1934 longshore strike – and will screen the ILWU documentary film about the 2002 employer lockout called, "Eye of the Storm."

Marching from Hollywood to the docks

About 20,000 longshore workers in Southern California are covered by a contract that expires on July 1, part of 350,000 union workers in Southern California who also have contracts expiring in 2008. Hollywood to the Docks is the name given to the three-day march organized by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor that will involve dozens of unions – including the ILWU – with the goal of generating unity and positive media attention.

"Hollywood to the Docks is going to be big," said ILWU International Vice President Joe Radisich, who is scheduled to speak at the wrap-up rally on April 17th that will be held at Berth 87 at 6pm in San Pedro. "We're expecting thousands of union members and supporters to be at the rally for good jobs."

The march will begin on the morning of April 15th with a rally outside the offices of the Screen Actors Guild in Hollywood. Workers from dozens of unions will then begin their 28-mile march, arriving two days later at the Harbor on the 17th.

"We're reaching out to the community in this event," says Local 63 Secretary/BA Peter Peyton. "There's a lot at stake in 2008; not just for ILWU members but for the whole community."

In addition to Local 63, all ILWU locals in Southern California are being invited and encouraged to attend. The Southern California District Council is helping to spread the word.

Docks on the big screen

After "Hollywood to the Docks" wraps-up in San Pedro, the ILWU will join forces with

local community leaders to co-sponsor the 5th annual "Los Angeles Harbor International Film Festival" (LAHIFF), which runs from Thursday, April 24th through Sunday, April 27th.

LAHIFF organizer Stephanie Mardesich – a third-generation San Pedran whose family worked in the canneries – announced the union's sponsorship at the festival's media kick-off and got a nice round of applause.

"The ILWU's support is a huge boost to our festival," said Mardesich. "Your organization has a high profile at the port, and your commitment to building strong community, culture and education is gaining more recognition and support each year," she said.

The ILWU's documentary, "Eye of the Storm," produced by independent filmmaker Amie Williams in 2007, will be shown at the Warner Grand Theater on Sunday, April 27th at noon, part of "Documentary Sunday" program on the festival's final day.

Legacy of 1934 Exhibit premiere

The film festival's closing reception will feature the ILWU's historical exhibit entitled, "The Men Along the Shore and the Legacy of 1934." The event will be held Sunday afternoon, with a public showing of the exhibition that same evening. Both events will be held at the Grand Vision Foundation Events Center at 434 W. 6th Street, just a few doors down from the Warner Grand Theater in San Pedro.

For more information

Learn more about "Hollywood to the Docks" by contacting your local union, and visiting www.hollywoodtothedocks.com or calling the L.A. County Fed at (213) 381-5611.

For more about the film festival, go to www.laharborfilmfest.com. All screenings will be at San Pedro's historic Warner Grand Theater, located at 638 W. 6th Street. Video of Stephanie Mardesich thanking the ILWU can be viewed at www.youtube.com/4theilwu.

For more about "The Men Along the Shore and the Legacy of 1934," see www.ilwu.org where you can also read an article about the exhibit in last month's issue of *the Dispatcher*.



Bush to push Colombia Free Trade Agreement despite labor murders

The Bush administration and big business are pushing another free trade agreement like NAFTA. The latest deal involves Colombia – the country where more union activists have been murdered than anywhere in the world: 2,515 since 1986, with 98% of the killers unpunished. The ILWU and other unions are trying to stop the trade deal and push Congress to get serious about addressing human rights and dealing with corruption and collusion between the military, government officials, right-wing-death squads, and corporations. There have been 12 trade unionists murdered in Colombia in 2008, as of late March.

Temporary port workers in Chile win agreement

Temporary port workers in Chile are now covered by an agreement, thanks to negotiations by Chilean dockers' representatives. The agreement, which was signed on 19 February, was negotiated by the Sindicato de Estibadores Marítimos del Puerto de Chañaral, the Coodinadora de Trabajadores Marítimos Portuarios de Chile and stevedoring companies.

Union activist jailed in Iran for organizing May Day protest

Amnesty International, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) are calling on Iranian authorities to release Mahmoud Salehi, the former leader of the Saqez Bakers' Union, who was arrested and later imprisoned after he led a peaceful May Day demonstration in 2004. He was supposed to be released in late March after serving a year in jail, but Iranian officials are now charging him with a new crime: sending "messages of solidarity" to the outside world.

Latest U.S. Export: Union busters

U.S. corporations have added a new export to the Blue Diamond Almonds, scrap metal, waste paper, and consumer goods that lead our shipments abroad. Now companies are exporting union-busting consultants to countries such as the United Kingdom, which still enjoy a high rate of union membership. In America, union-busters have built worker-destruction into a \$4 billion dollar business. One of America's worst union-busting firms, the Burke Group, recently opened offices in Britain and across Europe. The British firm Kettle Chips employs many immigrant workers from Eastern Europe, Africa and Portugal, but those workers voted last year against joining the union after the Burke Group was hired to run a typical U.S. anti-union campaign where supervisors met individually with workers to warn them about the plague of strikes that would follow if anyone voted for the union. U.S. unions are now sharing information with European unions about how to beat the busters.

French port workers strike over "reforms"

The word "reform" is not always what it seems. French corporations, like their U.S. counterparts, think "reform" means having your friends in government get rid of unions, sell-off public resources for pennies on the dollar, cut taxes for the richest 1%, and let the free market work its special magic on worker wages and benefits. France's leading port workers union is seeing things differently, and has been preparing to strike over "reforms" that would transfer public ports into private hands, leaving port workers and their union in the cold. The port and dockers section of the Confederation Generale du Travail says the government is refusing to negotiate over what happens to workers when the ports are privatized, hence the preparations for a strike.

New port in Baja?

Rumors of a new port being built on Mexico's Baja peninsula are old news, but things may be getting more serious with another scheme taking shape at Punta Colonet, a large, shallow-water bay that's 150 miles south of Tijuana. Right now it's used by ranchers, fishermen, and surfers, but developers imagine a \$4 billion-dollar port with new rail links, a large breakwater, and deepwater docks. Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helu is part of the latest development group that includes Marine Terminals Corporation (MTC), and other terminal operators said to be interested include Hutchison and SSA. The recent decline in container shipments from Asia may cool the project's prospects for now, but rumors persist of big things coming to Baja.

NEWS & NOTES

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Local 6 held their 61st Annual Convention March 1 at the union's hall in Oakland. Members, retirees, guests and family gathered to renew friendships and uphold the traditions of the local. The officers reported on organizing drives in the Stockton area and on the 14 contracts that were ratified in the last year. Eleven contracts are currently in negotiation and three have been extended. Local 6's officers lobbied for health-care reform in Sacramento and the Convention resolved to support State Senator Shelia Kuehl's single-payer health care bill SB 840. The resolution also supported Congressman John Conyer's HR 676, a single-payer health care bill in the U.S. Congress. Members passed resolutions supporting immigrant rights and opposing the continued U.S. occupation of Iraq. The anti Iraq war resolution also supported union rights in Iraq and opposed efforts to privatize Iraq's oil.

"The biggest struggle our Local faced in many years was when Waste Management locked-out the Teamsters Local 70 for four weeks in the East Bay," said Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker in his officer's report. Local 70 has a tentative settlement with the employer. "Local 6 members at Waste Management walked the walk when it came to true solidarity. The overwhelming majority of ILWU members did an incredible job honoring Local 70's picket lines for a full month."

Pecker said that Waste Management has refused to drop a lawsuit against Local 6 for showing solidarity and honoring the Teamster picket lines...

Local 6 has joined with Locals 5, 17, 20 and 26 to form a Warehouse Caucus within the ILWU. The caucus will enable locals to share information on negotiations, contract language, organizing and member education. Pecker told the convention delegates that he hopes the Warehouse Division will "have a united voice in advocating for the problems that ILWU warehouse locals face."

Local 17 clerical workers at Sacramento Logistics ratified a four-year contract on March 12 that will provide raises of nearly \$7 an hour in wages and benefits. The 35 workers, who provide clerical labor at distribution warehouses, will also gain six new holidays and

maintain their health and retirement benefits.

The bargaining took nearly a year, said President Jeff Carter, and was finally wrapped up over the phone.

The employer will continue paying into the 401(k) until 2010 when the workers enter the warehouse pension plan. Bargaining team members Michael Duncan and Jimmy Robinson joined Carter and Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt Sr. to help secure the victory... Local 17 began negotiations on March 4 with Smurfit-Stone, a paper-recycling company with about 15 ILWU employees... Local 17 met with International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams and the Pacific Grocery Strategy Team on March 14, a meeting that brought together the Teamsters, Food Workers, and all other unions that have contracts with grocery employers. The goal is for unions to prepare and coordinate for the next round of contract negotiations.

Local 28 security officer Daniel "DJ" Mekelburg took a bullet on the job at the Port of Portland March 11, but was able to bounce back and has returned to work, according to the local. The incident occurred around 1:30 in the morning while Mekelburg was investigating a suspicious sound at Terminal 4. An unknown assailant shot him in the leg, but it caused only a minor injury.

The shooting raises the issue of safety that security officers have been bargaining over for the last 11 months—along with concerns about pay equity and better equipment. Since 9-11, security officers have had increased duties to enforce homeland security regulations. The union is seeking more staff and radios that work.

Local 28 Secretary-Treasurer Dan Hardisty says they've compared their pay with officers at Tacoma, Oakland and Long Beach, and found that Portland officers are paid less. Their goal is to make progress on closing the gap.

Negotiations resumed after a 30-day cooling off period, meaning the workers could legally strike as early as April 7.

Local 21 is supporting security workers at the Port of Longview who want to organize and become members of the ILWU, just like guards at LA/Long Beach, and other ports. A majority of the 15 guards employed by Reliant Security have signed ILWU union representation cards.

"We've met with the workers and helped facilitate their direction," Local 21 President John

Philbrook said. "They're being paid substantially less than organized guards on this coast.

Our goal is to help them get a good contract."

Local 10 member Harold "Coach" Brinkley joined Oakland City and Port officials on a tour of the old Oakland Army Base on March 8 TO explain why the vacant space needs to be converted to maritime use. The U.S. Army turned the base over to the city in August 2006. Since then, various proposals for development have been suggested, including a condominium development. The city wants to dedicate part of the property into an "auto mall," with car dealerships that might generate large tax revenues. Now it appears the city will divide the land in half, with the city getting the northern half and the port getting the southern half. The city hasn't chosen a master developer yet. Coach from Local 10 says: "We'd like it to be put to maritime use." There had been talk of using the property for an intermodal terminal that Coach believes could mean less pollution, because containers would be loaded directly onto rail cars without using trucks on local roads to move containers.

Intermodal use is still a possibility because the terminals are equipped to bring rail cars right to the dock, Coach said. Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums proposed to the City Council Feb. 19 that the land be preserved for industrial use, because the city has so little left...

Meanwhile, on the Oakland docks, Local 10's new Secretary-Treasurer Adam Mendez reports that management has hired more superintendents who are monitoring activity and encouraging speed-up. Mendez is concerned because injuries are up, and he worries that some equipment being used on the docks might not be as safe as it should be.

Local 400 (ILWU CANADA'S MARINE SECTION): George Bartlett, who served as Secretary Treasurer of the local for nearly 12 years, retired from his office at the end of January. "George Bartlett worked tirelessly for the interests of our membership throughout his time in office and the new Secretary Treasurer will have very large boots to fill," President Terry Engler said. "George has earned the support of the members, executive and bargaining table officers by his hard work and compassion. George's support for working with First Nations (native people) has resulted in Local 400 embarking on a program to promote First Nations involvement in the towboat industry and we

intend to build on that program in the future."

Working with members who have addiction problems has always been close to George's heart and he helped many members maintain their employment during their darkest moments, Engler said. He has also pushed Local 400 into joining "Courage to Care," a program initiated by the Washington Marine Group. This program works to keep people employed while helping them deal with the disease of addiction, instead of dumping people onto the streets. George will continue to sit on the steering committee for "Courage to Care" for some time into his retirement and is training other members to take over the important job of union counseling for Local 400.

"George has told us that he won't be far away and we know he will continue to be involved in our community and our movement but we will miss him dearly and we also wish him a wonderful retirement because he deserves it," Engler said.

Local 34 reports that the Matson-SSA negotiations with the local's Office Clerical Unit will start soon. The unit began meetings to formulate its demand package. This OCU unit is the local's oldest OCU unit. It was first organized in 1977, and the first contract was negotiated in the summer of 1978.

Local 34's has completed its most recent longshore-to-clerk transfer process. When the PMA denied transfer of two Local 10 members to Local 34, the local went to arbitration and got the members admitted.

The Local 34 Executive Board will meet next month to discuss the creation of a strike committee and picket duty rosters.

Lastly, the Labor Archives and Research Center at San Francisco State University held their 22nd anniversary evening program at the Local 34 Hall & James R. Herman Memorial Building on February 29, 2008. The event featured guest speaker Dawn Mabalon who presented a program called: "We Must Eat Dust - Filipino Migratory Labor and Labor Organizing on the West Coast and Alaska, 1920s-1970s," Local 34 honored past office staff members Muriel Eldridge, Barbara Lauritsen, and Frances Lona by adding them to the Labor Archives' "Labor's Book of Remembrance."

Paul Robeson honored:

The ILWU made a donation last month to support The Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee that will present an exhibit during April on the life and legacy of Paul Robeson in the Oakland City Hall Rotunda. More details at: www.bayarearobeson.org - Tom Price

ILWU BOOK & VIDEO

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

BOOKS

Along the Shore/Por la Costa—ILWU Coloring Book. A bi-lingual English/Spanish coloring book about waterfront workers and their union. Originally developed by the California Federation of Teachers' Labor in the Schools Committee in consultation with member Patricia Aguirre and the ILWU Local 13 Education Committee. Meets K-3 classroom standards for History and Social Studies. **Two (2) for \$5.00**

The Legacy of 1934: An historical exhibit by the ILWU. Produced as a catalogue to accompany the new traveling historical art exhibit about the origins of the ILWU in the 1934 maritime strike, this brief but vivid publication stands on its own as a pictorial history of the coastwise strike and an account of the extraordinary sacrifices and democratic principles of the founding members of the union. **Two (2) for \$5.00**

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. This book 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. A new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union's organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. **\$9.00**

VIDEOS

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 Kimeldorf: A provocative comparative analysis of the politics and ideology of the ILWU and the International Longshoremen's Association.

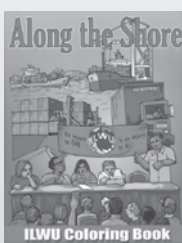
VIDEOS:

"Eye of the Storm: Our Fight for Justice and a Better Contract." A 58-minute DVD feature documentary film produced and directed by Amie Williams. Eye of the Storm tells the story of the 2002 longshore lockout on the West Coast. DVD Version \$5.00

"We Are the ILWU." A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about 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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