



The DISPATCHER

Published by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Vol. 62, No. 1



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.
www.ilwu.org

January 2004

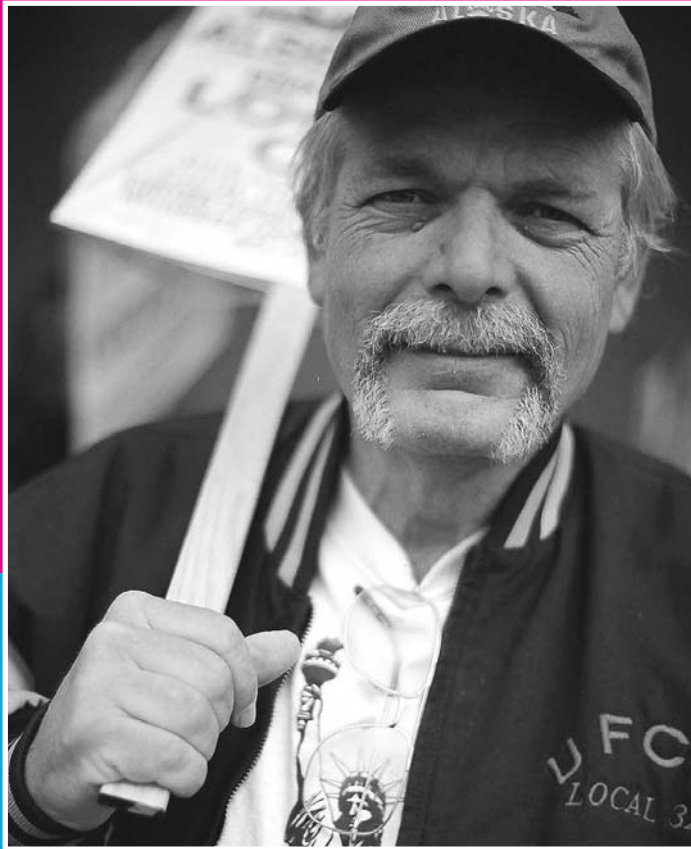
ILWU shows solidarity with grocery workers on the picket line

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Inside Line

Who shall pay?

If there was ever any question that the Bush administration's economic, social and military policy was anything but a plan to transfer wealth from the poor to the rich, if there was ever any question that globalization's promise of prosperity for the people of the world was anything but a lie and a scam, the last three years have finished off such doubts.

Under the policies of George W. Bush, the U.S. government has gone from its largest surplus in history to its largest deficit in history in three short years. The ever-increasing tax cuts for the rich leave that debt—and its mounting interest payments—on the backs of working taxpayers. As we pay for the war in Iraq in money and lives, as we pay for the cost of rebuilding what American bombs destroyed, and as we see how Bush's pals at Halliburton, Bechtel and SSA get millions to do that rebuilding, we are told there's no money left for healthcare, schools and infrastructure in the U.S. Who is paying for this?

The Bush administration and the Republican Congress just eliminated mandatory time-and-a-half pay for overtime for millions of American workers, a legal right they have held since 1938. Republican-appointed judges are allowing companies declaring bankruptcy to ditch their union contract obligations to pay pensions and healthcare to millions of retirees who worked their whole lives counting on those agreements. High unemployment rates only go down as good-paying manufacturing jobs exported to Chinese factories are replaced with low-wage service and retail jobs without benefits. Profits soar, but who pays?

We need look no further than the grocery workers' strike and lockout in Southern California for the latest answer. Even though the three grocery store employers are hugely profitable, they are determined to end the United Food and Commercial Workers union's health care program. They have said they are willing to take hundreds of millions of dollars in immediate losses from the strike and lockouts because they will save more in the long run not paying for benefits. When millions of people lose their health care coverage, who pays—with their money and lives?

But as *Dispatcher* Assistant Editor Tom Price reports (see page 3) the ILWU and the AFL-CIO are doing all they can to spoil the employers' plans.

Sometimes elections can make a difference in who pays. California's March 2 primary has several initiatives that do just that. As Marcy Rein reports (see page 5), California's new governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, is slashing education and social programs to balance the budget deficit without seeming to create the new taxes he campaigned against. Instead, he is pushing Proposition 57, a bond measure that will dump the debt—increased by interest charges—into the future. So far the polls show most people understand his solution to a deficit is a larger deficit. And people are understanding who pays. If we can turn that majority of debtors into a majority of voters, we can stop paying for some of it.

—Steve Stallone
Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Beat Bush in November

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

In less than 10 months—D-day, Nov. 2, 2004—the future of our country and that of the whole world will be decided. If George W. Bush gets another four years in the White House, if both houses of Congress remain controlled by the Republicans, the labor movement will be facing its biggest crisis since the McCarthy witch hunts of the 1950s.

The fate of all American working people—union and non-union—of working people around the world, of human and civil rights and of the global environment hang in the balance. Fathoming the depths of damage Bush has done in the three years since he lost the election—while knowing he faced another race—it's hard to imagine what he'll dare to do if he wins this time and doesn't ever have to face voters again.

Between war, globalization, unemployment and privatization, working people haven't faced so grim a reality since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Back then a desperate working class movement, inspired in large part by the West Coast Maritime Strike of 1934 and its victory that established the ILWU, stemmed the tide of the corporate greed of the 1920s. It brought unions, decent wages and conditions and basic human dignity to workers. It paved the way for employer-paid vacations, health care and pensions—all now under attack by the employers and the Bush administration.

Once again the ILWU is challenged to become a force in turning the labor movement into the leaders of a social movement. Even if the deck seems stacked against us, we are not without hope. This union has faced odds this tough before.

The ILWU's International Convention last spring decided almost unanimously that beating Bush in November 2004 is the number one goal of the union. We don't stand much of a chance of moving forward on our other programs until Bush is out of the way. We are already moving on the Convention's mandate and are continuing to develop our strategies to stop Bush's war on workers.

First, all members must donate as much as they can to our Political Action Fund. It is an unfortunate truth of politics and power that money opens doors when our rank-and-file legislative activists go to the halls of Congress to lobby for our issues, be they port security to protect our longshore members, or cabotage laws to protect our IBU members, or support for the domestic sugar industry to protect our sugar workers in Hawaii and California or occupational health and safety, Social Security or trade agreements that affect all of us, including all American working people.

One thing we learned during the 2002 longshore contract struggle, when Congressional Republicans were threatening to



pass laws taking away our rights to strike and bargain collectively, is that we need friends in high places. And if we are to withstand the employers' continuing onslaught of slanders against us, we need to make sure that those who stood up for us then remain in a position to help us later. With your contribution, the job you save may be your own. (See page 4 for details on how to donate to the ILWU Political Action Fund.)

But money alone is not enough. We need every ILWU member to become a political activist. First you must be registered to vote so your voice can be added to the chorus calling for change.

But the ILWU, although strong and vocal, is a small union. So we need each member's voice to be amplified. That means you need to make sure everyone in your family eligible to vote is registered, and that all your friends and their families, friends and co-workers are registered and understand what is at stake for working people in November.

From there we need to fan out to our communities. The ILWU needs to be visible in our communities, leading and inspiring by example. You can join these coordinated efforts by volunteering at your local. Your local officers will help you plug in with the work of the ILWU District Councils—the political organizations of the union in each region—and the area's Central Labor Councils—the political coalition of all AFL-CIO unions locally.

On Jan. 20 the ILWU International Officers and Coast Committeemen convened a meeting of the officers of our District Councils, our Coast Legislative Action Committee and other political activists in the union to map out and coordinate our fundraising, campaigning and lobbying efforts. Your union has a plan and we are moving forward with it.

But the ILWU will not be acting alone. We are already working with the national AFL-CIO to multiply our efforts. While we will focus most of our attention on the states where we live—California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii—we plan on taking our influence nation-wide.

In the November 2002 Congressional elections we pioneered a new program with the AFL-CIO, sending more than 30 members to campaign in battleground states, those swing states where the vote was close and we could help make the difference between victory and defeat. Our ILWU political road warriors were an inspiration to union members wherever they went, galvanizing the campaign and getting out the vote. In 2004 we are planning to send at least 100 ILWU activists out on the campaign trail.

We do not know yet who the Democratic candidate for president will be, but any one of the contenders is far better than Bush. And if we apply ourselves to the task ahead, we can send him back to Texas in November.

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Published monthly except for a combined July/August issue, for \$5.00, \$10 non-members, a year by the ILWU, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6898. The Dispatcher welcomes letters, photos and other submissions to the above address. © ILWU, 2004.



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ILWU rallies to support grocery workers

by Tom Price

Grocery workers in Southern California are feeling the pain as their strike/lockout enters its fourth month. While the companies are losing millions of dollars, workers are losing their homes. Without help, they might not be able to hold out much longer.

But they are not alone. Unions around the country are rallying to their cause. The AFL-CIO is throwing its full weight behind this contract fight, as it did with the ILWU longshore contract in 2002 and the Charleston Five struggle the year before. And the ILWU, led by its Southern California locals, has donated and pledged more than \$1 million to keep the workers' families fed and to cover their health insurance. The ILWU's International Executive Board has declared this struggle a top priority and donated \$5,000 to the cause at its Dec. 11-12 meeting.

This fight is all about health care and whether workers, even union workers, will have coverage. The grocery companies are proposing a plan that within a few years would slash coverage to almost nothing. The employers have said publicly they are willing to take the losses of a prolonged strike to reap the savings of not paying for health care. About 71,000 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union at 859 stores are affected. If the Southern California workers go down, the companies intend to take their attack nation wide as grocery store contracts come up for renewal this year—this summer in the Puget Sound area and this fall in Northern California.

All Southern California ILWU locals are involved in the support effort. Longshore Local 13 and marine clerks' Local 63 covered the grocery workers' backs with contributions that will total over \$1 million at their Jan. 12 membership meetings. Foremen's Local 94 voted for a voluntary \$100 per month per member contribution that could total \$37,400 per month. Their contributions will extend beyond the dispute's end to help workers recover. Local 13 will contribute \$25 per member per month for up to six months and Local 63 will give \$25 per member per month for the next three months, both pending a mail-in vote of the membership. The Southern Calif. Pensioners' Assn. voted at its Jan. 7 membership meeting to adopt ten families. Bay Area locals opened their wallets at their Jan. 15 membership meetings. Longshore Local 10 chipped in \$25,000, clerks' Local 34 gave \$5,000 and foremen's Local 91 gave \$1,000.

The ILWU Coast Committee—International President Jim Spinosa, International Vice President Bob McEllrath and Coast Committeemen Ray Ortiz, Jr. and Joe Wenzl—donated the services of the ILWU's law firm of Leonard, Carder to UFCW locals.

Donato hopes the ILWU will set the standard for other unions.

"Local 13 has always been a leader in the labor movement, and we lead by example," Donato said. "That's what we need to show the rest of the unions across the country. We're going to start the ball rolling, reaching out to these UFCW workers. We hope other unions will do the same."

"We don't see this as just a fight for the UFCW, but as a fight for all workers in America," marine clerks' Local 63 President Joe Gasperov said. "It's bigger than just this battle. People are getting more aware of this through the work of the Harry Bridges Institute (HBI) and its Adopt-a-Family program."

Within three days of the begin-



Striking and locked out grocery workers and their supporters picket at the Garden Grove Vons store Jan. 17.

ning of the strike-lockout the Friends of Labor Project and the HBI mobilized picket line support, bringing water, fruit and supporters to the line. The HBI also coordinated the "adoption" of distressed UFCW members, matching them with ILWU members to help them get by while they are out of work.

"I heard about a woman who had breast cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and who was about to be evicted," Local 63 member Julie Brown said. "She wasn't able to walk the picket line because of her health. I committed to donate a paycheck. It just happened that her rent was exactly that, \$1,265. Now we're fighting together for our futures and our families' future."

"I don't think this is in any way charity, because these people are holding the line for all of us," Brown added. "It could have been us when we were locked out in October 2002. They are fighting for medical benefits for all of us."

The UFCW found big trouble when the employers came to the bargaining table early last year demanding brutal concessions. These included a pay freeze, two-tier wages and a gutting of the healthcare plan.

About 20,000 workers at Safeway-owned Vons struck Oct. 11. Then Albertsons and Kroger-owned Ralphs, the other two companies in the employers' bargaining group, locked out 50,000 of their workers and set up a profit-sharing scheme with Safeway to share the costs of the labor dispute that California Attorney General Bill Lockyer is investigating as a possible violation of anti-trust laws. Ralphs, Albertsons and Safeway respectively are the third, fourth and seventh largest private employers in the five-county Los Angeles area.

The companies released misinformation that they only asked workers to pay \$5 to \$15 a week for health insurance, a claim the union refutes. The actual proposal cuts benefits by 50 percent and places caps on prescriptions and surgeries. Workers would have to pick up 50 percent of all emergency and major medical expenses. In all, management's demands would shift \$1 billion in costs to workers. New hires, under the two-tier wage system, would effectively have no insurance at all. Many workers make less than \$10 an hour now and three-quarters of the workforce are part timers, averaging

only \$312 per week. By the end of the three-year deal, the workers would pay an average of \$95 per week for family healthcare, according to the union. The health insurance that traditionally came with the job made the difference in workers being able to support their families.

These prosperous companies—over the last five years Safeway's operating profits were up 47 percent, Albertsons' was up 101 percent and Ralphs' was up 143 percent—claim competition from Wal-Mart makes the concessions necessary. That retail giant, already the eleventh largest private employer in the L.A. area, plans more stores with low wages and benefits similar to what the grocery stores want to impose. But even once Wal-Mart opens the 40 "super center" stores it now plans, it would only capture about one percent of the area's grocery business, compared to the 60 percent controlled by these big three supermarket companies.

Both pro- and anti-union people acknowledge the battle these grocery workers are fighting has enormous implications for workers everywhere.

"It is obvious they [the employers] are going for the gold here," Jack Kyser, Senior Vice President and chief economist for the pro-business Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, told the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*. "It appears they are not just looking to win the strike, but to break the union as well."

ILWU retiree Al Perisho, Recording Secretary of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Assn. has, with his wife, adopted a UFCW family, a single mother and her two kids, to help them through the strike. He sees the same decisive battle here, but from a worker's perspective.

"They're fighting a battle that other unions will face down the road," Perisho said. "The ILWU longshore division fought successfully for maintenance of benefits in 2002, but that's an exception, not the rule. The employers picked the next fight with the grocery workers to destroy their benefits. There are other UFCW contracts coming up, plus auto and Teamsters. It's a real tough struggle, and labor has to get on the bandwagon and help these people."

UFCW member and picket captain Christine Callahan put in 30 years at the San Pedro Vons.

"My boss walked out of the store

and came to the picket line," she said. "He gave me a box of my things from my office. He told me, speaking for the corporation, my position no longer exists."

"While I'm watching the devastation going on around me, what a great uplifting feeling to go to those meetings at Locals 63 and 13 to see that they are backing us up," Callahan said. "I volunteer at HBI, and it's great to see somebody happy because they have a place to live for another month."

Callahan got to see a lot of action during her work at HBI. A Local 63 member put 40 people to work Jan. 8 through his convention services business. They made about \$3,500 at the Anaheim Convention Center hanging pipe and drape. The ILWU Credit Union gave \$3,000 and adopted a family. Jan. 8 saw \$10,000 in donations.

More contributions poured in.

Two Local 13 members put in \$3,000 each. Two members of Local 63 paid \$1,400 on the rent of a single mother.

Labor is ramping up support for a really big fight. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney addressed a huge UFCW support rally in Beverley Hills Dec. 16 and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka is on the scene. CalPERS, the massive public employees' pension fund, wrote letters Dec. 17 to the employers saying their \$180 million investment in the companies was not well served by union busting. Hollywood actors, musicians, the Major League Baseball Players Assn. and other unionists have pledged support.

Other rallies in Northern and Southern California drew hundreds of supporters. About 500 UFCW supporters picketed one of the busiest Safeways in San Francisco Jan. 24 for four hours, reducing business there dramatically. Members of more than a dozen unions joined the picket, including members from ILWU warehouse Local 6, longshore Local 10, marine clerks Local 34 and the Inlandboatmen's Union.

"I'm overwhelmed by what I've seen, the ILWU and supporters are saving us," Callahan said. "People are tired, broke, needing medicine and groceries, they need a place to live, and all of a sudden—they have it. They felt there was nothing else they could do, but the hope is new again, the very first day the program started."

Slobodan Dimitrov

WASHINGTON REPORT

Bush moons nation's transportation needs

By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

President Bush could create hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs by funding the nation's transportation needs while at the same time dramatically improving the safety of the American people, but Bush is on the moon.

The Bush administration unveiled its transportation funding plans for the next six years May 14, 2003, a plan inadequate to meet the nation's transportation needs. The proposal would authorize \$247 billion over the next six years, in spite of the fact that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) says that the U.S. would have to spend at least \$375 billion to begin to meet the need. The Bush administration has given Congress the pathetic excuse that we have no money to meet the transportation infrastructure that would benefit the country now and in the future. But, we apparently have enough money to go back to the moon.

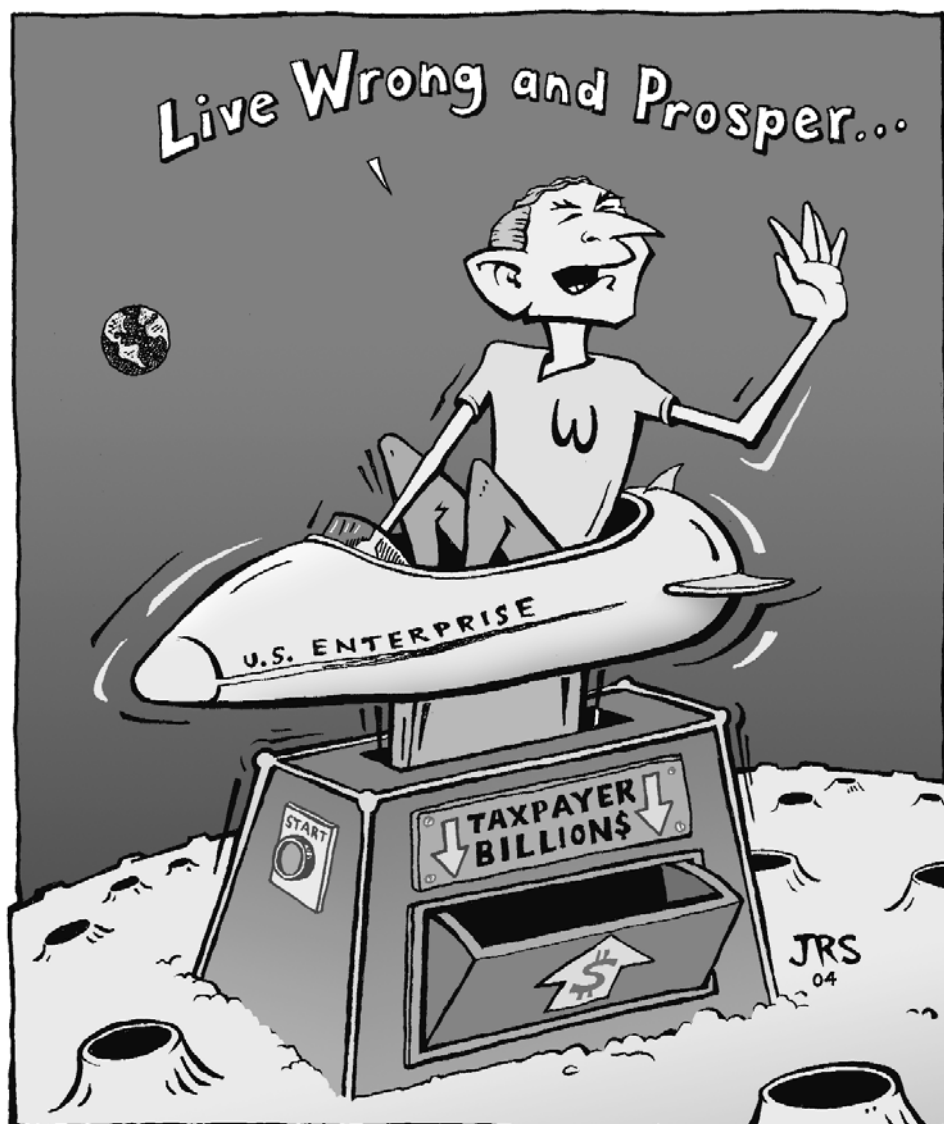
Bush has spent all the nation's reserves on massive tax cuts for the wealthy and the occupation of Iraq. Those are his priorities—not jobs, not safety and not the welfare of the American people.

Why should America address the highway and transportation needs of the country? First and foremost, funding will enhance public safety. Each year 42,000 motorists are killed in the U.S. Nearly a third of all fatal crashes each year are caused by sub-standard road conditions and roadside hazards. Highway fatalities remain the leading cause of death for young people. On top of the personal tragedies of deaths and injuries, the economic cost of these accidents is more than \$230 billion per year.

Secondly, highway and transit funding creates thousands of good-paying jobs. For every \$1 billion invested in federal highway and transit spending, 47,500 jobs are created or sustained, according to the Bush administration's own figures. Highway and transit investments stimulate economic activity for the nation. They increase productivity by decreasing time spent on the road, and encourage new job-creating development to occur. More than 64 percent of the nation's freight moves on highways, an annual value to the economy of more than \$5 billion.

Finally, considering the congestion and highway safety impacts of insufficient investments in transportation alone, our economy is losing \$300 billion per year because we are not investing the necessary resources to maintain and improve our nation's transportation systems. We cannot afford to continue to shortchange these systems. To effectively reduce congestion, to increase mobility, to truly improve highway safety and to achieve continuing long-term increases in productivity and economic growth, we must invest in our nation's transportation future. But we may miss the boat on this initiative, because Bush is going to the moon.

A bi-partisan solution to this problem is being proposed. Rep. Don Young (R-AK) and Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) have introduced H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. This bill would spend \$298 billion on highway projects for the next six years and increase public transit funding \$69 billion over the next six years. The proponents claim the legislation will create 1.7 million new jobs by 2009.



Recently, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure asked for transportation unions' thoughts about the bill, including our overall view of it and ways to improve it. We made several suggestions that would greatly advance the interests of ILWU members.

First, the ILWU supports the bill's commitment for ferry transportation. The Transportation Equity Act allocates up to \$125 million for the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities. This increased funding has already been allocated among three states: Alaska, New Jersey, and Washington. Yet the San Francisco Bay Area ferry system currently has the third largest passenger ridership, and has launched an initiative to more than double that. This critical transportation project will greatly help to alleviate bridge traffic in the Bay Area. The ILWU and other transportation unions have asked Young and Oberstar to include a set-aside for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Secondly, the ILWU asked the sponsors of the legislation to ensure that chassis maintained at the docks are safe to be taken over the road. Chassis, special trailers fitted with wheels used to transport shipping containers, are vital to intermodal transport in the U.S. Global shipping companies transport goods to the U.S. in large containers, thousands of which are mounted on chassis and hauled by trucks to their final destination. Yet these chassis are not sufficiently inspected for structural or mechanical defects, nor are they maintained to federal standards, placing motorists on America's highways at risk.

Current law allows chassis owners—usually steamship lines and global shipping companies—to evade responsibility for the safety of their equipment and does not penalize owners for safety problems with their equipment or for safety violations. Instead, motor carriers and their

drivers are held accountable when an unsafe chassis is discovered by law enforcement officers on the road, despite the fact that they do not control the equipment. Motor carriers and their employees do not have the expertise to inspect chassis for defects, and more importantly, they are not authorized to perform any necessary repairs. This places drivers in the untenable position of being financially responsible for unsafe equipment that they ultimately can do nothing about.

So the ILWU requested legislative language in the bill to require equipment providers to inspect and maintain all intermodal equipment under their control, and be held responsible if a chassis fails to meet federal motor carrier safety regulations. In addition, this language should require the DOT to establish a process to remove violations for to unsafe chassis from the records of drivers and motor carriers.

Lastly, the ILWU testified before a Congressional panel concerning the congestion crisis around our nation's ports. We specifically emphasized the crisis in Southern California concerning the I-710 freeway and the bottle-

neck of trucks in and out of the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach. As a consequence of our voices and others, the bill includes a section on freight intermodal connectors which would make freight related highway projects designed to relieve congestion eligible to receive federal funds.

Additionally, the bill includes a section regarding projects of national and regional significance. Under current law, surface transportation programs rely primarily on formula capital apportionments to states. Current levels of investment are insufficient to fund high-cost transportation infrastructure facilities that address critical national economic and transportation needs. The Alameda Corridor and highways connecting the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach certainly have huge national significance given the amount of goods transported to the interior of the country from that region.

At this point we simply do not know if Congress will pass a comprehensive six-year transportation bill that meets the needs of the nation. Much will depend on how far Republicans are willing to go to fight a Republican administration and its budget priorities. Bush is proposing at least \$2 trillion in new future spending on things like Mars and moon explorations, new tax cuts, missile defense and marriage promotion. At the same time, his priority is to cut biomedical research, health care, job training, veterans funding and transportation and infrastructure projects.

But we can make a difference in turning things around. Contact the Chairman and the lead Democrat member on the House Transportation Committee and let them know we support funding for federal infrastructure projects. We insist that the bill include a provision to ensure the safety of chassis that are hauled over the road. Tell your Congressional representative that the ILWU supports funding for ferry transportation, particularly for the San Francisco Bay Area ferries. That will create hundreds of jobs for ILWU/IBU members.

Letters can be sent or faxed to the following offices:

The Honorable Don Young
Chairman,
House Transportation Committee
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-0425

The Honorable James Oberstar
Ranking Member,
House Transportation Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-0699

The ILWU Political Action Fund

The ILWU Political Action Fund has a goal of raising more than \$500,000 for the union's work on the November 2004 elections and for contributions to pro-worker candidates' campaigns. The International officers and the Coast Committee are asking all members to donate \$50 each to the fund. All contributions are voluntary, are not part of your union dues or a condition of union membership. You can give more or less than the officers suggest—all contributions are valued—and there are no reprisals for giving less or not participating in the union's political activities. Contributions to the ILWU Political Action Fund are not tax deductible.

Donations may be sent to:
ILWU-PAF

1188 Franklin St., 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94109

Checks should be payable to: ILWU-PAF.

CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS

Up against the Wal-Mart

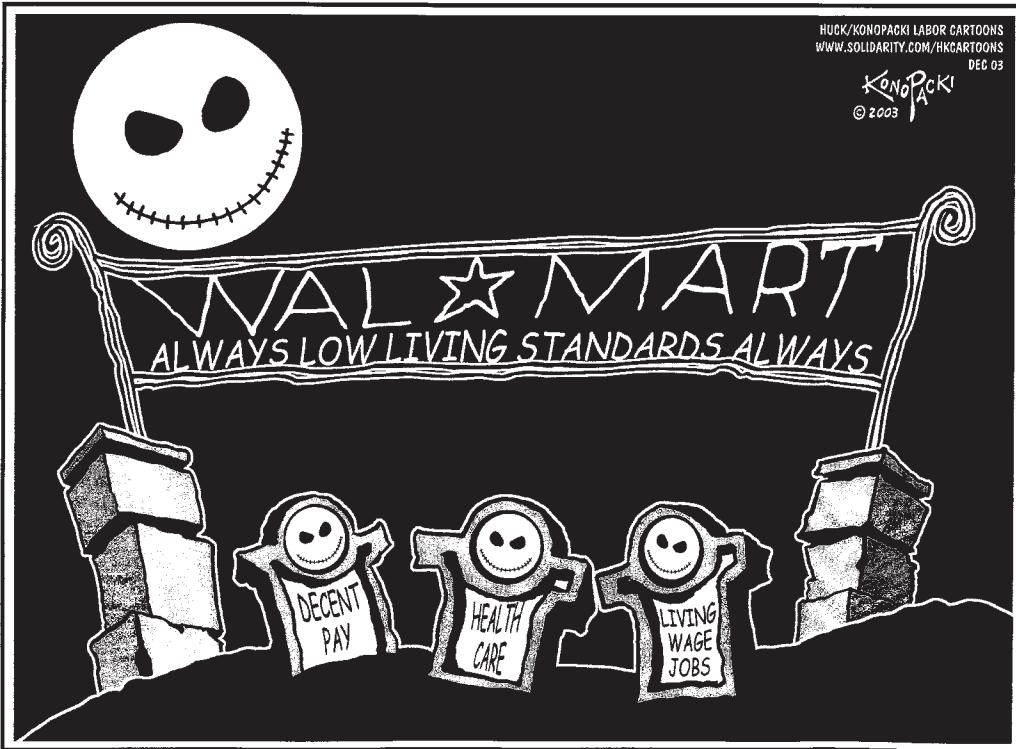
The world's largest corporation wants to make Contra Costa County play its way. Wal-Mart put an initiative on the March 2 ballot challenging a county land use ordinance that could cramp its expansion plans. Labor and community activists in this suburban San Francisco Bay Area county plan to fight to the last vote.

"This goes beyond Contra Costa," County Supervisor John Gioia said. "It's really about our democratic system, about our being able to control our own land-use destiny."

Last spring, Gioia and other supervisors got wind of Wal-Mart's plans to site 40 "super-centers" in California. (A super-center sells groceries alongside other goods and sprawls over much a greater area than the usual "big-box" store.) They passed an ordinance June 3, 2003 that excludes super-centers from unincorporated areas of the county, by prohibiting stores larger than 90,000 square feet from devoting more than five percent of their floor space to non-taxable goods.

Dry enough, but Wal-Mart immediately poured more than \$100,000 into paying signature-gatherers to put the Supervisors' decision before the voters. To uphold the ordinance, now known as Measure L, Contra Costa will have to vote "Yes on L."

The referendum has made Contra



Costa "the most hotly contested battleground" among the fights against Wal-Mart raging around the country, according to *Business Week*. (Oct. 6, 2003) About 100 communities a year are taking on the giant retailer.

Wal-Mart has been painting itself as the victim of "discrimination" and "union pressure" in direct-mail pieces sent to county residents under the name of "Contra Costa Consumers for Choice." When its supporters tried to

put similar arguments into the ballot pamphlet, three supervisors took them to court. Superior Court Judge Steven Austin backed the supervisors, ordering one disputed statement stricken and seven others changed in his Dec. 19, 2003 ruling.

Some 35 dedicated souls turned out Jan. 17 for a precinct walk organized by the Contra Costa County Central Labor Council. Most belonged to unions or to ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), though the growing coalition backing L also includes local chapters of the Democratic Party, the ACLU, Planned Parenthood and the League of Women Voters.

The Southern California grocery lockout/strike seemed to be on everyone's mind when they talked about their support for Measure L.

"It's so important to continue to have strong jobs in our community," said UFCW Local 1179 member Kimberly Ellis. "We don't need to have a huge corporation like Wal-Mart keeping us from lifting ourselves up."

Unionized grocery workers earn about one-third more and are about twice as likely to have health insurance as non-union workers, according to a 2002 study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Wal-Mart makes no secret of its anti-union bent,

and played an active role in the West Coast Water-front Coalition, the employers' front group during the 2002 ILWU Longshore Division contract negotiations.

Measure L supporters also voiced worries about the increased traffic hassles and damage to local businesses that super-centers could bring. The unincorporated areas of Contra Costa now are open space. Truckers and shoppers heading to the super-center would crowd local roads coming off the highways, said ACORN's James Musumici.

Town after town has watched local independent businesses wither and die when super-centers open nearby. "We would see the small stores, the *mercados*, all dry up," said Victor Ornelas of Laborers Local 3. Wal-Mart and other "big box" retailers claim they bring sales tax revenue. But often communities lose money on this type of development, Gioia said.

"Studies have shown that most of the sales tax they generate is transfer from the other businesses that go under," Gioia said. And because grocery sales are not taxed, super-centers often don't pay enough in sales tax to offset their impact on streets, traffic, air quality. Wal-Mart, which makes workers subsidize its low prices and high profits, drains local resources in other ways as well.

Taxpayers subsidized \$20.5 million in health care costs for Wal-Mart employees in California in 2002, according to research in progress at U.C. Berkeley's Institute for Labor and Employment. PBS' "NOW with Bill Moyers" reported the ILE's findings (Dec. 19, 2003) and talked to former Wal-Mart managers who said they were expected to tell employees about public agencies and charities that could help with health care, food, clothing and other needs.

"I like Wal-Mart's roll-back prices," said Moe Lockhart of ATU Local 192. "But I don't like paying for someone's health care because he works at Wal-Mart—and that will take the library, the schoolyard, the after-school activities away from my child," she said, as the other precinct walkers laughed and clapped.

—Marcy Rein

Prop 56: Busting budget gridlock

Republicans played on California voters' frustration with delayed state budgets to oust Gov. Gray Davis last fall. But with Gov. Schwarzenegger prepared to terminate social services and fund the state by floating bonds, the likelihood of budget gridlock remains as high as ever. The Budget Accountability Act, Prop. 56 on the March 2 ballot, addresses the real reason state budgets have backed up in 23 out of the last 27 years.

Key provisions of Prop. 56 would:

- allow the legislature to pass the budget with a 55 percent vote, instead of the two-thirds now required;
- dock legislators' pay for every day the budget is late. The State Constitution requires that a budget be passed by June 15;
- require the state to set up a "rainy day fund" and put in five percent of the budget in years when revenues exceed expenses.

Only three states—California, Arkansas and Rhode Island—need voters of two-thirds or more to pass their budgets. The two-thirds requirement holds the state hostage to the whims of right-wing Republicans.

"Without this we're subject to the tyranny of the minority," said Jean Ross, executive director of the California Budget Project, a Sacramento policy group. "The majority isn't able to govern."

The minority imposes their priorities and their hostility to any new taxes.

"In the last couple of years, in order for the Republicans to agree to the budget they have demanded and received tax breaks for growers and manufacturers that make no economic sense except they help their contributors," said Ken Burt, political director for the California Federation of Teachers.

Education, like other social programs, is faring badly under Schwarzenegger, despite his campaign promises to leave it alone. His budget proposal includes \$2 billion in education cuts and fee increases of up to 40 percent

for students at community colleges, the California State Universities and the University of California campuses.

"The radical Republican minority refuses to raise revenue," said Allen Davenport, SEIU's Director of Government Relations in California. "Because we can't find new broad-based taxes, this ends up being a fee-for-service government with the fees paid by those who can least afford them."

SEIU, with 95 percent of its members depending in some way on the state, is playing a key role in the labor-community coalition behind Prop. 56. But public response was so positive that the coalition was able to gather a million signatures in just 60 days to put it on the ballot, according to Yes on 56 spokeswoman Robin Swanson. Backers of the measure include several cities, counties and community college districts along with the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, the State Building and Construction Trades Council and numerous civil rights, seniors' and environmental groups.

The oil, insurance, tobacco and alcohol industries are bankrolling the opposition. The Distilled Spirits Council, State Farm, ChevronTexaco, Anheuser-Busch and Southern California Edison had each given more than \$200,000 to the opposition by mid-January, according to state campaign finance reports.

Voters will also face two other budget-related propositions in March, both backed by Schwarzenegger. Prop. 57 would let the state float an "Economic Recovery Bond" worth up to \$15 billion to cover the remaining 2003-2004 budget deficit. If it passes, taxpayers will be paying it off, with interest, for up to 14 years.

Prop. 58 requires the state to balance the budget and establish a reserve fund of \$8 billion. It has to pass for Prop. 57 to take effect. At press time the California Labor Federation had taken no position on Props. 57 and 58.

—Marcy Rein

RM-2: Boosting transit

Hard work by a new coalition of transit unions put a measure on the March ballot to boost bus, ferry, and rail service in seven San Francisco Bay Area counties. The Inlandboatmen's Union, many of whose members work on ferries, passed a resolution at its October 2003 convention urging passage of RM-2. The California Labor Federation and the labor councils in all seven counties have endorsed it.

RM-2 would raise the toll on five bridges in the area by \$1. Residents in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Solano counties will vote on it March 2. Users of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge as well as the Richmond-San Rafael, Benicia-Martinez, Zampa (Carquinez) and San Mateo-Hayward spans would pay the freight.

Last year the Transit Works coalition successfully lobbied for SB-916, sponsored by State Sen. Don Perata (D-Oakland), which cleared the way for the toll hike to go to the voters. Members of the IBU, ILWU longshore Local 10 and marine clerks Local 34 traveled to Sacramento on the AFL-CIO's 2003 "lobby day" and urged legislators to back the bill. They pooled efforts with brothers and sisters from

the other unions in Transit Works—the Teamsters, SEIU, ATU, TWU and MEBA.

"This is a new and important labor coalition, because transit workers are partnering for the first time to further their common interests," said Marina Secchitano, San Francisco Bay Regional Director for the IBU and a member of the Water Transit Authority (WTA), the state body responsible for ferry planning.

Present plans call for 21 percent of the revenue raised by RM-2 to go to ferry service—an estimated \$84 million. Vallejo-San Francisco service will benefit, as will new services in the WTA 10-year plan passed by the legislature last term. The bulk of the remaining RM-2 funds will be split between buses and BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit).

Besides supporting stable, long-term jobs for transit workers, RM-2 should ease traffic congestion and smoothe commutes around the Bay Area.

"Ferry workers will be in a world of hurt without this, but it's critical to the entire region," Secchitano said.

For more information, see www.measure2.org

—Marcy Rein

AROUND THE UNION

SOLIDARITY BEATS THE ODDS FOR LOCAL 17

Finally the former Fleming workers in ILWU warehouse Local 17 could exhale. They ratified a contract with their new employer, C&S Wholesale Grocers, by an overwhelming margin Jan. 17—ending two jittery years on an upswing, thanks to strong solidarity with the Teamsters.

Around 170 Local 17 members worked at the Sacramento distribution center for Fleming, the top U.S. grocery distributor. They covered all the routine warehouse jobs except for the hostler, loader, palletizer and front-office clerical positions filled by Teamsters Local 150 and the inventory clerk jobs, which are non-union.

Fleming started sliding in early 2002, after its main customer, K-Mart, went bankrupt. Local 17's jitters mounted later that year when Fleming began shedding its retail stores and the SEC started looking into its accounting practices.

Local 17's contract with Fleming was set to expire May 31, 2003. Negotiations began in March. Fleming declared bankruptcy April 1. At the table, management demanded more than \$1 million in concessions from the union.

"Holiday take-backs, two-tier wages—they wanted everything," said night shop steward and Local 17 Vice President Jeff Carter.

Facing these unreasonable demands and Fleming's unstable situation, the union took a very deliberate approach to negotiations. Business dropped further and people lost work. By the fall, only 57 of those on the seniority list were being scheduled for 40 hours a week. The rest got anywhere from 32 hours a week to none.

C&S filed paperwork to buy Fleming's wholesale business in June. Once they had managers in place, they offered to extend Local 17's contract to February 2004. But when they came to the table in December, they brought a Scrooge of an offer. They wanted a \$1.71 per hour wage cut, then a wage freeze for the life of an eight-year contract.

Seven sessions did little to close the gap. The union walked away from bargaining.

Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt, Sr. and Dispatcher/Business Agent Everett Burdan called on ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. He in turn called John Williams, head of the Teamsters' warehouse division. Ultimately ILWU Local 17 and Teamsters 150 agreed they would monitor each other's negotiations, with their international officers sitting in.

C&S called the parties back to the table. They were working against the bankruptcy court's Feb. 23, 2004 deadline to close the Fleming deal or walk away, and they wanted to close.

"They really want to be in California," said Local 17 President Evan Jenkins. "C&S has grown incredibly rapidly, and this was important for their positioning."

When the C&S negotiators showed up for bargaining with the Teamsters Jan. 9, they saw officials from the ILWU and IBT Internationals and ILWU Local 17 sitting in.

"When they saw John Williams and me at the table, they knew we meant business and we had a united front," Willie Adams said. "We told them you get a contract with both unions or you have no contract."

By the end of that weekend, both unions had tentative agreements.

Local 17 kept fully paid retiree health care and pensions. Members will see a raise of 75 cents per hour in



An ILWU Local 17 member working in the frozen meat section of the former Fleming warehouse in Sacramento.

June 2004, but will take 75 cents per hour out of their checks for health care. The higher rate will still give them higher overtime and will raise the floor for the next contract. They will also get 50 cents per hour in each of the next two years. They gave up six of 12 sick days per year and will lose two days of vacation next year—but they get to keep all their holidays and the vacation accrued under Fleming.

The new management agreed to honor Local 17 members' seniority and past practices at the shop, and to keep the contract language allowing them to respect picket lines. The agreement will expire May 31, 2007, giving them a common expiration date with Local 150 for the first time.

"For a new company coming in that has a third of the business the old one did, this is a good contract," Jenkins said. "I don't know if we would've done better with a solvent Fleming."

Burdan gave lots of credit to his fellow negotiating team members—Wyatt, Jenkins, Carter, Brian Gerring, Ernest Vasquez and Chief Steward Dale Farrow.

"This is one of the best teams I've seen," he said. "A few months before, these guys didn't know if they'd have jobs. The company thought they could use the fear factor, but the whole bargaining unit upheld the ILWU traditions and principles of fighting back. We pulled together and got this done."

—Marcy Rein

FERRY WORKERS FIGHT FOR THEIR JOBS

Thanks to union solidarity, political pressure and strategic organizing, some 130 food service workers aboard the Washington State Ferries may yet get their jobs back.

Washington State Ferries management announced Dec. 30, 2003 it could not reach an agreement with Sodexho, the food service vendor aboard the ferries, to extend its contract and keep the galleys onboard open. Shocked workers, represented by the ILWU's marine division, the Inlandboatmen's Union, continued to serve the public and load trucks with provisions and equipment owned by Sodexho on New Year's Eve. By New Year's Day all galleys aboard WSF

vessels were closed and the IBU members were unemployed.

This shutdown occurred despite repeated concessions by the workers to cut hours and some benefits in an effort to reach an agreement. On Dec. 19 IBU officials and Rick Bender, head of the Washington State Labor Council, met with WSF top management officials Mike Thorne and Gary Balwin. The managers suggested the IBU meet with Sodexho and try to come up with some concessions that might enable the galleys to stay open through August 2004.

The IBU did just that and Sodexho went back to WSF with its offer. WSF would not accept the Sodexho terms and offered a two-week extension to try to work out a longer deal. Sodexho found this unacceptable and decided to shut down its operations as of midnight, Dec. 31. Informational pickets started going up at terminals the next day.

The financial trouble in the WSF system is directly linked to Initiative 695, passed in November 1999, and subsequent legislation eliminating the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (2.2 percent of the value of all motor vehicles) in the state of Washington. Loss of the car tax revenue sucked 20 percent of the operating funding and 75 percent of the capital funding from the public ferry system. WSF management is now looking to make up some of that lost revenue by taking money from union workers.

Earlier last year Sodexho informed WSF that it did not want to continue its contract with WSF under the current terms, claiming they were losing too much money. WSF then started the process for Requests for Proposals (RFP) for new food service vendors that did not include long-established worker protection language to give preferential hiring to the existing galley workers and to honor the terms and conditions of their current contract. The IBU filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge against WSF because of the omission and on Dec. 8, 2003 the union won a huge victory when the Marine Employee's Commission, the state agency that governs labor relations in the WSF, ruled that WSF had violated labor law and ordered it to rescind the RFP's that did not contain worker protection language.

"The state and the IBU have a relationship concerning labor protections in the RFP process," IBU President David Freiboth commented. "If WSF wishes to modify those protections they are obligated to bargain with the IBU."

WSF is currently engaged in an effort, through court action, to get the MEC ruling overturned.

The first RFP round produced no bidders for the contract and WSF put out new requests with letters of intent due Jan. 9. As of Jan. 13, 21 companies submitted letters of intent for on-shore food and beverage service and 11 for on-board food and beverage service. Final proposals are due Feb. 10.

WSF has asked potential bidders to contact the IBU about their proposals. According to Dennis Conklin, IBU Patrolman, any new vendors must now honor the current terms and conditions of the contract and rehire laid off Sodexho workers. As of press time only one potential bidder has contacted the union. While this is good news for IBU workers, the earliest that a full-scale galley operation could be up and running wouldn't be until late March or April.

The IBU is continuing to run informational pickets and inform the public that they need to contact their legislators, the state Transportation Commissioners, as well as the governor to put pressure on WSF to come to an agreement and reopen the galleys. WSF CEO Thorne's vision of a new way to do business aboard the ferries has resulted in the loss of jobs, inconvenience for thousands of ferry riders every day, and the loss of any revenue the state could have continued to make from the concessions for a period of three to four months.

—Jay Ubelhart and Peter Hart

ELECTIONS BRING BIG CHANGES IN LOCAL 142 LEADERSHIP

HONOLULU—As the result of local-wide elections held last November, close to half, or 13 of the 27 elected full-time offices of Hawaii's Local 142, will be filled by new people.

The biggest change occurred in the top offices of the local, where five of the seven executive positions will be filled by new people. Of the three highest officers—president, vice-pres-

AROUND THE UNION

ident, and secretary-treasurer—two are newly elected. Former Hawaii Division director Fred Galdones will take the lead as president and Maui member Donna Domingo will serve as vice-president. Guy Fujimura is the only incumbent, having served as the local's secretary-treasurer since 1985.

The next highest positions are the four division directors—Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, and Oahu—who administer the work of the union in their division. Three of the division directors will be new to the job, however, all three have many years of experience as business agents.

After serving 20 years as a business agent, Willy Kennison will take on a new position as head of Maui division. Former business agent Richard Baker will take over as Hawaii division director. Baker served 15 years as a business agent. Dave Mori will take office as the new Oahu division director. Mori has 11 years experience as a business agent. Kauai's director, Clayton Dela Cruz, is the only incumbent, with 20 years of experience as a full-time officer.

The three titled officers and four division directors also serve as the local's executive committee and meet monthly to coordinate the work of the union, particularly in the areas of contract negotiations and grievance handling.

Of the 20 elected business agents (BA), who carry out the day-to-day work of the local, more than half or 11 will be fairly new to the job. Six were newly elected and another five business agents were mid-term appointments and served less than two years in office.

—Mel Chang
Editor, Voice of the ILWU

COLOMBIAN UNIONISTS CONTINUE COKE BOYCOTT

Juan Carlos Galvis met with International Vice President Bob McEllrath, International Executive Board Member John Rapp and the officers of longshore Local 8 Oct. 17 to continue the exposure of Coca-Cola's involvement in the killing of union officials and union busting at Coca Cola bottling plants in Columbia.

Galvis is a worker and Vice President of the Sinaltrainal Union at the Coke plants in Barrancabermeja, Colombia. He was in the Northwest as part of a larger campaign to educate unions about the involvement of paramilitary troops in Coca-Cola bottling plants and the 1996 murder of former Sinaltrainal President Isidro Segundo Gil. Galvis himself recently survived an assassination attempt Aug. 22, 2003 when armed gunmen on motorcycles fired bullets at his vehicle being driven by his bodyguards.

Galvis was also a plaintiff in a lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court in Florida brought under the Alien Tort Claims Act for human rights violations—specifically the murder of Isidro Segundo Gil—committed by paramilitaries in Colombia on behalf of two Colombian Coca-Cola bottling companies. Galvis explained that even though the court dismissed Coca-Cola Company as defendant in the case, they are allowed to proceed against two Colombian Coca-Cola bottling companies: Panamco and Bebidas y Ailmento.

The plaintiffs are represented by Dan Kovalik, Assistant General Counsel for the United Steelworkers of America. They plan to appeal the portion of the ruling against Coca-Cola and to continue pressing the campaign until Coke stops the

GRINCH OF THE YEAR AWARD



Jobs With Justice (JWJ) has announced that David Flentge, CEO of Community Health Care (CHC), has been awarded the Pierce County Grinch of the year award. Grinch Flentge has achieved this undesirable benchmark for his part in what has become one of the biggest debacles in recent local history.

CSC is a nonprofit health care provider that in the past has been showing a profit of 17 percent and providing much needed health care to the less fortunate in the City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington. Just one year ago CSC had \$3.5 million in its coffers. Then in an effort to be one of the "big guys," Grinch Flentge and his henchmen and women (management staff) began squandering millions of dollars on fancy buildings, architects and even a management-led union decertification drive. The decertification drive was defeated by SEIU 1199 by a margin of 89 to 13. Now Flentge is asking the workers to forgo a modest 2.5 percent raise. Once again we see corporate greed grow at the expense of workers.

JWJ activists, including ILWU local 23 members Vance Lelli and Roger Boespflug, met at the CSC downtown office to present Grinch Flentge his award. When the Grinch appeared in the parking lot the delegation sprang into action. Grinch Flentge was surrounded while Boespflug was given the honor of reading the plague and presenting the award, then the affected union members of SEIU 1199 recited a poem written especially for him. The Grinch quickly turned on his heels and ran for his car.

The delegation had done their job, but then they saw a company truck parked in the lot that had the phrase "Where care is the final word" on it. The Sisters of SEIU 1199 said it seemed that corporate greed is actually the final word. Jake Carton, an organizer for JWJ, suggested they fix the slogan for them. Carton went into his trunk and out came a "Stop corporate greed" sign. The delegation modified the sign and then modified the truck. The advertisement on the truck now reads "Where corporate greed is the final word."

JWJ presents these awards in the hopes that, just like in the fabled fairy tale, the Grinch's heart will begin to melt and then grow three times its normal size. This Grinch's heart does not seem to melting, but with pressure from community organizations like JWJ and a healthy labor movement we may yet melt the block of ice in the chest of all the CEOs.

human rights violations at its Colombian facilities. The most recent State Departments Human Rights Report for Colombia released March 31, noted, "Paramilitaries continued to commit numerous unlawful and political killings, particularly of labor leaders, often kidnapping and torturing suspected sympathizers prior to executing them."

The country's judicial system, which itself has been frequently attacked, has seldom interfered. Among the 1,875 murders of union leaders that have occurred since 1991, only five convictions have been obtained.

International Vice President McEllrath presented Galvis a letter of support from the ILWU for the continued boycott against Coke, and ILWU Local 8 member Jack Lee presented him with his anti-Coke artwork creatively painted onto a 1997 *Dispatcher* article exposing the com-

panies involvement in union-busting paramilitary activity.

Sadly, on Dec. 4, 2003 Jose Rojas Castaneda, a member of the teachers' union and the brother-in-law of Juan Carlos Galvis, was murdered when two men came to his home and killed him in front of his wife, who is eight-months pregnant with their first child.

Some of the union activists have limited protection, such as bodyguards, provided by the government, but their families do not have the same degree of protection.

The President of the Sinaltrainal union in Barrancabermeja, William Mendoza, and Galvis ask that we all support the boycott actions against Coca-Cola and contact the U.S. Embassy officials and the President of Colombia to express our concerns.

They can be contacted at:
Ambassador William B. Wood
Embassy fax: (571) 315-2197.

President of the Republic of Colombia
Dr. Alvaro Uribe Velez
Palacio de Narino Carrera 8 No. 7-26
Santafe de Bogota, Colombia
auribe@presidencia.gov.co/rdh@presidencia.gov.co

—Jack Mulcahy

STEWARDS' TRAINING EMPOWERS RANK AND FILE

Stewards at mine, mineral processing Local 30 took a day off Nov. 21 to attend an intensive training workshop sponsored by the ILWU International. Except for two stewards away on union business, all stewards and local officers attended the session in Boron, Calif. Guests included allied division workers from longshore Local 13 and chemical processing/packaging workers from Local 20.

"Some of our stewards are pretty well seasoned, but we figured we could all learn something," Local 30 President Ray Panter said. "So Trini [Vice President Trinidad Esquivel III] got in touch with the International and we set it up."

The training program was initially developed under the direction of former International Secretary-Treasurer Joe Ibarra. Willie Adams stepped in after he was elected to that position and he and Ibarra led the training.

"We promised our people we would get more involved in the International, and this is one way to do it," said Esquivel, who also serves on the International Executive Board. "Stewards' training—along with leadership conferences and secretary-treasurers' training—will help us get more new people involved in our union."

The course began with the rights and responsibilities of stewards as defined by law and by their own contract. It uses a combination of formal presentations, instructional videos and role-playing to increase stewards' understanding of their tasks on the job. These tasks include contract administration, grievance handling, negotiations and member mobilization.

Stewards are on the union's front line of defense representing workers on the job. But they are also on the front line in representing the union to the workers. One of the goals of the training is to educate them on the history of the union and its place in the world.

International staffers Russ Bargmann, Research Director, and Gene Vrana, Director of Educational Services and Librarian, spent many hours developing materials for the training. Because of the widely diverse groups represented by the union, the materials have to be flexible and adaptable to different workplaces. Local 30 workers mine borax in a huge open pit. They are geographically isolated from each other and from the rest of the union. They also face an unusually hostile employer, the huge multi-national Rio Tinto Ltd.

"The training satisfied their thirst for knowledge, and that knowledge gives them the strength to stand up more confidently in representing the workers to management," Vrana said. "It was really important for them to develop the skills in evaluating grievances to know which were ones could be the basis for a campaign on the job."

"We have a lot of new members in the local who had no previous union experience, and we need show them how the union works," Panter said. "I think both the new and the more seasoned people really got a lot out of it."

—Tom Price

What were these guys thinking?

TWO-HEADED SPACE ALIEN SHRINKS LABOR MOVEMENT

by Gary Huck and Mike Konopacki
Capitalism Sucks Press
112 pages, \$14.95

A BOOK REVIEW OF SORTS

by Kathy Wilkes

Readers of *The Dispatcher* are no strangers to labor cartoonists Gary Huck and Mike Konopacki. Their art has appeared in the paper for well over a decade, giving punch and focus to issues important to ILWU members, retirees and their families.

Case in point: Last year, at the height of the dispute between the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association, Mike's "Homeland Security" cartoon of President Bush holding a gun to the head of a long-shoreman was duplicated, adapted and distributed up and down the coast, much to the delight of union members and the consternation of PMA executives (especially Joe Miniace whose name was substituted for Bush's after a particularly nasty bargaining session).

And that's just one example of why, for many of us in the labor movement, Gary and Mike are like old friends: always there when you need them. Their cartoons are a boon to busy labor editors, the bane of bad employers and a boost to beleaguered working stiffs everywhere.

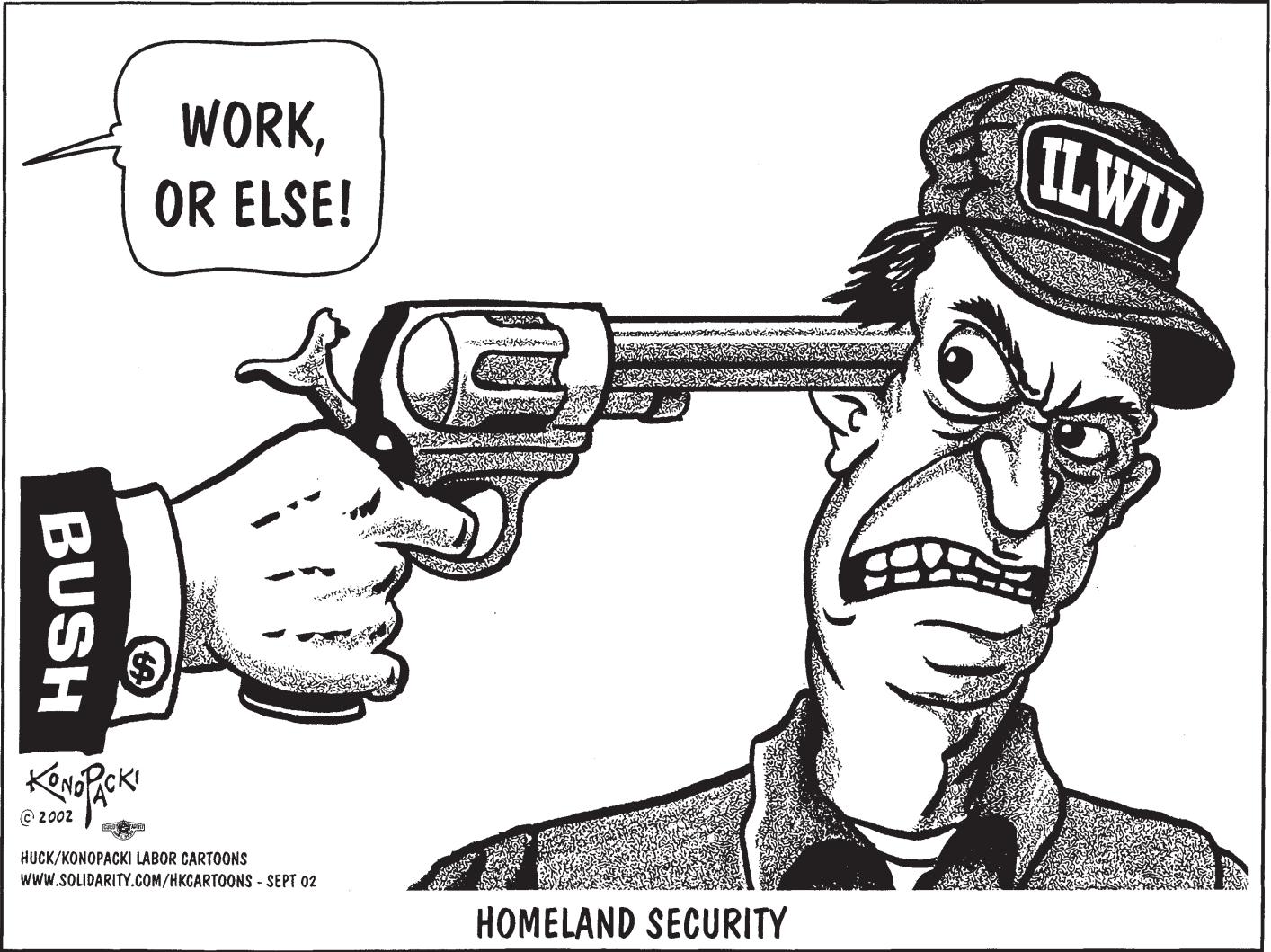
Spoofing supermarket tabloids, their fifth and newest book, "Two-Headed Space Alien Shrinks Labor Movement," gets its name from the fact that people often confuse these self-labeled "hirsute, four-eyed cheese heads" from Wisconsin who, since forming Huck/Konopacki Labor Cartoons in 1983, have documented with their art the shock and awe of a labor movement under siege.

In typical tabloid-ese, the book charges H/K with using extraterrestrial powers to single-handedly shrink union membership in the U.S. by more than seven percent. While vehemently denying any affiliation with the "AFL-UFO," they admit they had havoc in mind when they put their heads together 20 years ago and started syndicating their monthly package of labor cartoons.

"We wanted to serve labor, not shrink it," they protest. "We thought we could use humor and acerbic workingclass wit to subvert the capitalist conspiracy against worker solidarity and creativity."

Apparently they never heard of Murphy's Law.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Pete Mueller, whose own cartoons have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Progressive* and other national publications, begins his foreword to "Two-Headed Space Alien" with the question: "What were these guys thinking?"



The answer is in their art. If a picture is worth a thousand words, H/K cartoons speak volumes about the stuff that really matters to working people, the stuff the mainstream media usually ignores. Stuff like decent wages and working conditions; safety in the workplace and healthcare for our families; the right and the inevitable fight to support a union; a future for our kids through a good education; a future for ourselves through retirement with dignity; employment, unemployment and underemployment; free trade vs. fair trade; America's eroding manufacturing base; the "invisible hand of the marketplace" that pumps up corporate piggery and slashes our social safety net.

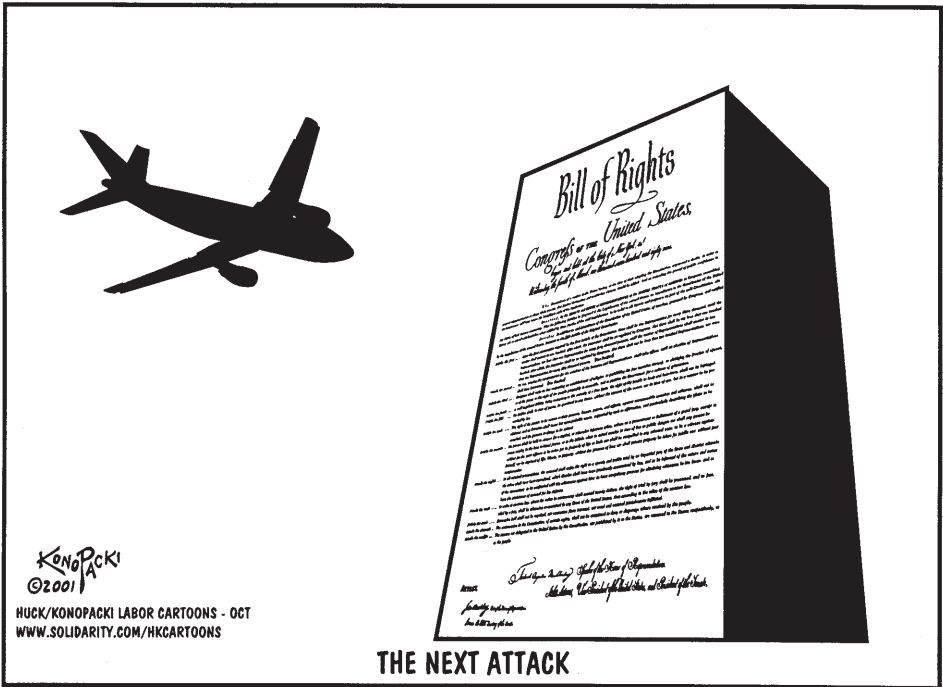
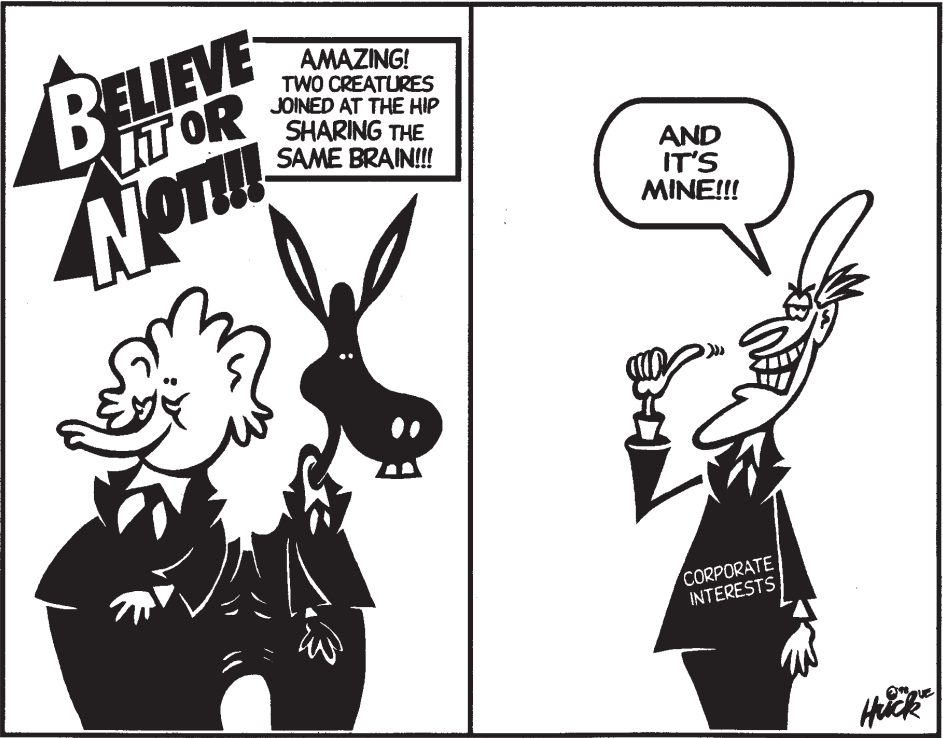
Despite labor's decline there's still plenty of move in the movement, and it's those movers and shakers who are H/K's most avid fans. Whatever the issue, nothing revs up the ranks like a swift kick in the seat of power, and nothing accomplishes that better than labor cartoons plastered on picket signs, lockers, bulletin boards and all over the union newspaper. Bosses really hate that.

And then there's politics. The 2000 Florida election coup; 9/11, war and peace, blood and oil; the Bill of Rights and the USA PATRIOT Act; the twisted brain of our "Pretzel Prez"; our two-faced, one-party system; those ever-present, well-heeled, high-rolling, back-stabbing, hood-winking, double-dealing, union-busting, money-grubbing, democracy-destroying corporate criminals—and the politicians they own.

Thank your lucky stars, H/K's got it covered. Otherwise, pass the Prozac, please.

H/K Labor Cartoons aren't just about sorely needed comic relief, though. They make us think, and that's the last thing the powers-that-be want us to do. Masters at emasculating the high and mighty, H/K's enterprise boldly goes where no one has gone before, which is precisely why the "kept press" won't touch them with a two-foot light saber. Maybe that space alien thing isn't so far off the mark after all.

Celebrating Huck/Konopacki's 20-year collaboration, "Two-Headed Space Alien" also features other



works by the artists, including Gary's hilarious gag cartoons, "Oddservations," and moving tributes to John Lennon, Malcolm X and Lenny Bruce, along with Mike's occasional zine, *Wage Slave World News*, and thought-provoking political comics for Amnesty International and others.

At \$14.95, the book is a bargain and can be purchased online at:

<http://solidarity.com/hkcartoons/>. Even if you don't buy the book, check out the website for cartoons, animations, political comics, web links and more. It's fun, it's funny, it's...out of this world.

Kathy Wilkes is past editor of *The Dispatcher* and has done freelance work for several other labor publications, all on this planet.

One day at a time: George Cobbs retires

By Maria Brooks

The mayor of San Francisco declared Jan. 6, “George Cobbs Day.” A member of ILWU Local 10 for 38 years, Cobbs is hanging the hook. To celebrate his extraordinary career, the Local put on the glitz with a candle lit retirement dinner. The event turned into a loving tribute to a man who has offered many a second chance at life.

George Cobbs is Coast Director of the ILWU-PMA Alcoholism/Drug Recovery Program and a certified substance abuse counselor. Under his stewardship the program has grown into a nationally recognized model, one that has been copied around the country.

Colleagues flew in to celebrate his retirement. Many were members of the national organization of Employee Assistance Professionals. With its membership in the thousands, EAPA counselors work in recovery programs from Seattle to Maine. Cobbs has been international president of the organization. He’s traveled world wide and met with the powerful. He’s even spent an evening at the White House.

Although he can schmooze with bureaucrats and charm elected brass, he appears most comfortable with people most of us shun—the down and out, the drunks and drug addicts.

“His heart is open to any suffering alcoholic who wants to change,” said Honey Powell of Local 10 who went through the PMA-ILWU Recovery Program.

At his retirement dinner Cobbs sat surrounded by six pretty women, all of them his daughters. Nearby were grandchildren and next to them sat his 83-year old mother. The family listened to a parade of well wishers. A PMA officer commended Cobbs for leadership. James Spinosa, ILWU International President, praised him as “an icon of the union.” Many others trailed up to a microphone to offer gratitude for the program and love for the man who steered it for 23 years.

“When you’ve been a drunk,” Cobbs once said, “no matter how much success you might achieve, you always have a feeling inside that says, ‘I ain’t worth shit.’”

Sitting with his family, listening to laudatory praises from friends and union buddies, Cobbs may have reflected on how starkly different it had been the night before.

On this rainy evening in Oakland, Cobbs drove to a not-too-safe part of town. He left his van at the end of a parking lot and entered a small building.

Underneath his black beret, his eyes glanced around the room. At 67, George Cobbs is a big man. His face is marked by crescent shaped scar. Years ago when he was drunk, Cobbs shoved a stranger on the street. In an instant, a razor slashed across his face. The cut went deep.

“Hello, my name is George. I’m an alcoholic,” he said entering the room.

Three men sat at a long table under a ceiling light bulb. Each was bundled in rain gear. They looked haggard and edgy. But they were sober.

“No one graduates,” Cobbs said when it was time for him to speak. “It’s one day at a time.”

He talked in a whispery voice, without pretension. He was relaxed and unguarded, although he had never met these men before. In meetings like this one, Cobbs took control of his life. He has attended AA meetings for more than 40 years.

As he often does, on this night Cobbs talked about his only son and about loss. Sobriety, he said, offers no

promises of happiness. Pain finds you, whether you’re drunk or sober.

Cobbs’ son was shot to death in a contract killing on the streets not far from this meeting.

“They blew him away,” he said. He doesn’t know what activities his son was involved in—and he doesn’t want to know. “He wasn’t dealing, I believe that,” he said in a voice trailing off.

Born in Arkansas, George Cobbs grew up in Oakland. His family was part of the Black migration to the East Bay during World War II.

He wasn’t a good student, but he was an exceptional football player. In high school and later at San Jose State, Cobbs played running back. He was a star, at least, he felt like one.

“I had no goals for myself,” he remembered. Girls liked him, he had enough money, life was easy—until his knees gave out.

“By that time,” Cobb said, “I liked wine better than football.”

With his football career over, he married an Oakland woman. Soon he was a father, with babies arriving every year.

“I started drinking white port and lemon juice,” he said. “It made me crazy, crazy as a loon.”

He worked at odd jobs and lost them. He didn’t bother to show up for work, or when he did, he was drunk. He hung out on the streets, bumming for liquor.

“Friends I grew up with worked at Continental Cans, it was organized by ILWU Local 6,” he said. “These guys had nice cars, good clothes. I knew I wasn’t good enough to keep a job like that. I was a drunk—I was different from those guys.”

Years went by with failed attempts at sobriety.

“Inside I knew I was a loser. I was afraid I’d die drunk, that I’d leave that kind of legacy to my kids,” he said.

Cobbs took his last drink in 1963. Once sober he was eager to find work, but no one would hire him. When a janitorial position came up at local department store, Cobbs begged.

“Lady, I need a job. I got babies. I need a job,” Cobbs remembered pleading in the personnel office.

An operations manager overheard him. He came out of his office and stared at Cobbs, and on an impulse, hired him. “Pushing a broom” was for Cobbs a second chance at life.

“I’ll never forget that man,” Cobbs said. “He had a heart. He gave me an opportunity when I really needed it.”

Within a couple of years Cobbs had become a maintenance supervisor. During this time, by chance, he submitted an application to the ILWU. His timing was perfect. In 1965 Local 10 offered him a job. With two years of sobriety behind him, he was ready to start a new life.

“There are people that honestly don’t believe that you can get sober and stay that way,” Honey Powell said. “People have been telling me that for almost 11 years. I’ve been clean since ’93.”

In 1980 Cobbs trained to be a counselor for a special health care approach to drug and alcohol addiction. The program grew into the ILWU-PMA Welfare Plan Alcohol/Drug Recovery Program.

The program works. According to Rich Marino, employee rep for PMA, of 50 individuals who went through the Recovery Program, only two failed to maintain sobriety. Everyone’s confidentially is protected.

A few days ago Cobbs performed one of his last functions as area director of the PMA-ILWU Recovery Program. He represented a union



George Cobbs

member at a special LRC meeting. The woman was applying for reinstatement. The year before she failed a random drug test.

The meeting was held in PMA’s conference room in downtown Oakland. At the end of a long table the woman sat fingering her brown hair. Across from her was Henry Graham, president of ILWU Local 10. Cobb took a seat near Graham.

For one year the woman had followed an arduous list of PMA-ILWU Alcohol and Recovery Program’s requirements for reinstatement. She brought letters of support attesting to her sobriety. Cobbs confirmed her successful participation.

PMA’s rep, Rich Marino, entered the room carrying a folder stuffed with papers.

Sitting down at the table, he rummaged through the pile. The woman watched him carefully.

Suddenly, he looked over at her and in a loud voice asked, “Do you want to be a longshoreman?” For a second, the words hung in the air.

“Oh, lord, yes,” she shot back, her voice cracking.

Minutes later the meeting was over. The woman had been reinstated. Graham pressed her hand, “You’ve been blessed. Make good this time,” he said softly.

Cobbs calls these reinstatement hearings “a second chance.” Not all of us get second chances. Cobbs got one. So did Henry Graham.

“This program saved my life,” Graham said. “Without it, I’d be dead today.” For 14 years, he’s been clean and sober.

Leaving the building, Cobbs reflected on his years counseling addicted workers.

“I’m grateful for my life,” he said. “People’s lives don’t have to be perfect. Most do the best they can—from where they are. They may not have big houses—they may not have shit. But you know what they got that can’t be taken away?”

He doesn’t wait for an answer. “They got sobriety,” he smiled. “One day at a time.”

International Longshore and Warehouse Union
International Executive Board
San Francisco, California
December 11-12, 2003

STATEMENT OF POLICY IN HONOR OF BROTHER GEORGE COBBS UPON HIS HANGING UP THE HOOK

Brother George Cobbs is a member of Local 10 from the class ‘65, Book #6851.

Brother Cobbs is a pioneer in alcohol and drug counseling. Brother Cobbs is the first and only Director of the ILWU-PMA Drug & Alcohol Program coastwise and for Northern California. He has served in this capacity since 1980. His leadership has promoted the development of drug and alcohol recovery programs through the ILWU and beyond.

Brother Cobbs’ work has helped create a community for brothers and sisters. This community has sustained the ILWU-PMA Drug & Alcohol Program with a track record second to none. The program has helped countless members maintain sobriety. The program he developed included weekly meeting at Local 10, an annual picnic, dances, annual fundraisers for independent social service programs, and an annual week long rank & file DARE Coordinator training.

Brother Cobbs assisted other organizations in starting programs, and he is a leader in the national movement to provide treatment and support for alcoholics and drug addicts through Employee Assistance Programs.

We thank and commend Brother George Cobbs for the years of service to the membership of the ILWU and his fellow human beings from other walks of life.

Brother Cobbs is an important leader of the ILWU. The ILWU International Executive Board wishes Brother Cobbs a lengthy retirement filled with joy, fellowship and good health.

LETTERS

ASHAMED OF THE DISPATCHER

I'm an affiliate of the ILWU in Local 20 in Wilmington, Ca., and I am totally ashamed of your political stance on world politics and your horrible attitude toward the Iraq war. There probably are more conservative viewpoints AMONG OUR WORKERS than the faggot liberal left. I hope the fact that the International is in San Francisco with the liberal 9th Circuit Court is not the reason you're liberal, too much so, that even though I'm a strong labor advocate, I'd vote conservative just to keep a liberal from getting voted in. I'm also a Viet Nam Vet and cannot stomach your liberalism. What happened to compromise or middle of the road or is it called moderate?

With your continual views and me as a veteran, I am embarrassed to be affiliated with your group, as many of my friends are as well.

To say we, the U.S., is occupying Iraq sounds like you got some Arab writing the front page, or even a terrorist, you liberal bastards.

Seymour Weinberg
ILWU Local 20

UNFAIR TO CONSERVATIVES

I am absolutely sickened by your newspaper, *The Dispatcher*.

It is extremely one sided. It is also extremely liberal. Does no one there realize that not all union workers feel the way *The Dispatcher* does?

It is highly unfair to the conservatives that belong to the union. I try to read *The Dispatcher* and I get sick to my stomach because of the one-sided, liberal spouting of... use your imagination.

There are two sides, liberal and conservative. Funny *The Dispatcher* doesn't see it that way.

Keep your paper and send it to someone who will read it. It does not get read here at my home, it only gets tossed in the trash, where it belongs.

Scott Morse
Port Townsend WA

THANK YOU, ILWU

Gaston (Babe) Brochier and myself wish to thank all the ILWU workers who worked so hard for the

increase of the additional wages and for all the other problems you had to go through. We who are retired appreciate the pension increase. It was a godsend, well needed.

Gaston is very ill at this point in life. When receiving the ILWU newspaper, I make a point to read every page to him. His eyes light up as he enjoys to hear the news.

God bless all of you and congratulations to all those who were voted into office. Happy New Year and may God keep you safe and in good health in 2004 and beyond. Thank you sooo much!

Gaston (Babe) and Alvera Brochier
Local 34 retired

LELLI ORAL HISTORY APPRECIATED

Thanks to Harvey Schwartz for his wonderful oral history with Tacoma's Phil Lelli in the November *Dispatcher*. Phil is a unique friend to everyone in the labor community in the Pacific Northwest, and helps guide me and others in doing labor history. He and other ILWU members and pensioners in Local 23 and Local 19, Local 52 and other locals in the Puget Sound pioneered in establishing the Harry Bridges endowed chair in labor studies at the University of Washington. There are only six endowed chairs at the UW, and this is the most unique one. It is the only endowed chair named after a labor leader (and what a leader!) that I am aware of in the U.S., and perhaps the only endowed chair funded by hundreds of small donations from workers.

I am especially proud to be the first faculty member from Tacoma to hold this chair. I would like to thank all ILWU pensioners, current ILWU members, and ILWU supporters such as attorney Bob Duggan for their hard work and compassion. They show us day to day what solidarity really means.

Mike Honey,
Harry Bridges Chair of Labor Studies,
University of Washington, and
Professor of Ethnic and Labor Studies and
American History, University of Washington,
Tacoma

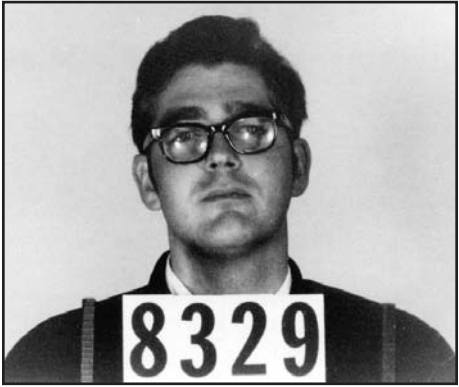
Ralph Rooker retires

After working on the San Francisco Bay waterfront for 35 years, Local 10's Ralph Rooker has retired.

Rooker became a member of Local 10 after serving two tours in Vietnam as a Sea-Bee. When he started working as a longshoreman in 1969, the work in San Francisco was almost non-existent for Calls B members. Rooker kept notes and documented how members would make themselves available for dispatch daily, even when there was no chance to pick up a job. It wasn't until 1976 that he became a Class A member.

All of his documentation for work availability from 1969-1973 would be critical later, when in the 2002 contract negotiations he was a member of the "Back-Years" Committee. Under his leadership, they were able to bargain special provisions allowing members to get pension qualifying years if they worked 50 percent of the B members' average hours for the 1969-1973 period. This provision applied to members in San Francisco, Stockton, Port Hueneme and Seattle, and was the culmination of 17 years of persistent negotiating.

During his tenure at Local 10, Rooker served as dispatcher many times, finally making Chief in 1981. He had a reputation for being hard-nosed, speaking his mind and not being afraid to tell the PMA representatives when they were screwing things up, whether



Ralph Rooker gets his book number in 1969.

it was the allocation of work or simply on the job site. Rooker also served as Caucus and Convention delegate many times for the local between 1983 and 2003. He attended Conventions in Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, Hawaii and San Francisco.

Rooker's retirement will be a loss for the local, but we know that he will be an active pensioner, someone who will be happy to lend his wisdom to our membership. His undying loyalty to the ILWU, its hiring hall and membership has been unmatched over the years. It will be the responsibility of the next generation of longshore workers to follow his example of hard work, honesty and leadership. Thank you, Ralph, for all your work and dedication over the years. You will be missed.

—John Castanho
Secretary-Treasurer Local 10

NOTICE TO ALL ILWU-REPRESENTED EMPLOYEES, ILWU MEMBERS,
FINANCIAL CORE NON-MEMBERS AND NEW HIRES

January 2004

This notice applies to all ILWU-represented employees, ILWU members, nonmembers and new hires working in an ILWU bargaining unit, including members and individuals who happen at any time to become financial core members by any means, including by choice, suspension or expulsion from union membership in any local or division affiliated with the ILWU, for the one year period following the date of this notice or until such time covered by a later notice of similar kind.

The information contained herein applies to ILWU International per capita and, for those working in the Longshore Division, the ILWU Coast Pro Rata fees or payments of any kind under a union security clause. This notice also applies to local dues and fees paid to any affiliated ILWU locals or divisions, except those affiliates who have chosen not to be covered by this notice and have issued their own separate notice under their own separate policies and procedures. (Accordingly, this notice shall be superseded by any other notice issued by any affiliated ILWU local or division with respect to its dues and fees.)

Please be advised that individuals working under a union security clause contained in a collective bargaining agreement, notwithstanding the specific provisions of such clause, are only required as a condition of employment under such clause to pay uniform dues and any required initiation fees and may, by writing to the ILWU Secretary-Treasurer, or to their local ILWU secretary-treasurer, resign or decline union membership and choose to become a "financial core member" at any time. Such "financial core members" are deemed to be in compliance with any union security clause, regardless of any specific wording to the contrary, so long as they timely pay all regular and periodic financial core dues or fees properly charged by their bargaining representative as explained herein.

Please be advised, however, that financial core members deprive themselves of the valuable rights of union membership in the ILWU and their ILWU local or division. A financial core member does not have the right to vote, nominate for office, hold office, or be a candidate for office in the ILWU; nor may he/she participate in or even attend ILWU meetings or any functions of the union that are limited to union members. In addition, a financial core member has no right to vote on dues increases or on contracts submitted to the membership for ratification. These rights and privileges of union membership are accorded only to union members in good standing.

Nevertheless, financial core members are still legally required under a valid union security clause to pay to their union for the costs related to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievance adjustment, and union organizing of establishments within competitive markets of ILWU-unionized employers, and other activities reasonably related to the effectuation of the union's representational duties (hereinafter called "chargeable activities"). However, union expenditures for non-representational activities such as political activities, lobbying (hereinafter called "nonchargeable activities") - activities which most workers know help build a better climate for us all in bargaining with employers and in securing fundamental worker rights - may not be charged to financial core members who file timely objections.

For calendar year 2002 (which is the most recent audited year), the financial review has confirmed that no more than 10% of all ILWU International's expenditures were for nonchargeable activities. While each ILWU local and division may have different percentages of nonchargeable expenditures, financial reviews and practical experience confirm that the nonchargeable percentage for ILWU locals is significantly lower than that for the ILWU International. Nevertheless, those ILWU locals and divisions covered by this notice will not collect or seek to collect financial core fees greater than that based on the nonchargeable percentage of 10% stated above for the ILWU International for the applicable collection period herein or until such time as such local issues a separate notice.

For those individuals employed in the ILWU Longshore Division and work for a PMA-member company under the Pacific Coast Longshore and Clerks Agreement, please also note that with respect to Coast Pro Rata Fees, for calendar year 2002 (which is the most recent audited year), the financial review has confirmed that no more than 10% of all ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee's expenditures were for nonchargeable activities.

The ILWU International Executive Board and the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee have adopted Procedures on Financial Core Members Objecting to Nonchargeable Expenditures (hereinafter called the "Procedures"). Said procedures can be obtained from the ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer at 1188 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Under the Procedures, a financial core member of any affiliated ILWU local and division has the right within an applicable 30 day period of time to object to expenditure for nonchargeable activities of his or her local dues paid to the ILWU local and the per capita paid to the ILWU International, as well as any Coast Pro Rata fees paid to the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee. In the event a financial core member perfects such objection, he or she shall receive either the appropriate monthly reduction or an advance rebate of a portion of local dues and per capita reflecting the ILWU International's nonchargeable percentage of 10% stated above and, additionally for those working in the ILWU Longshore Division, an appropriate monthly reduction or an advance rebate of a portion of the coast pro rata fees reflecting the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee's nonchargeable percentage of 10% stated above.

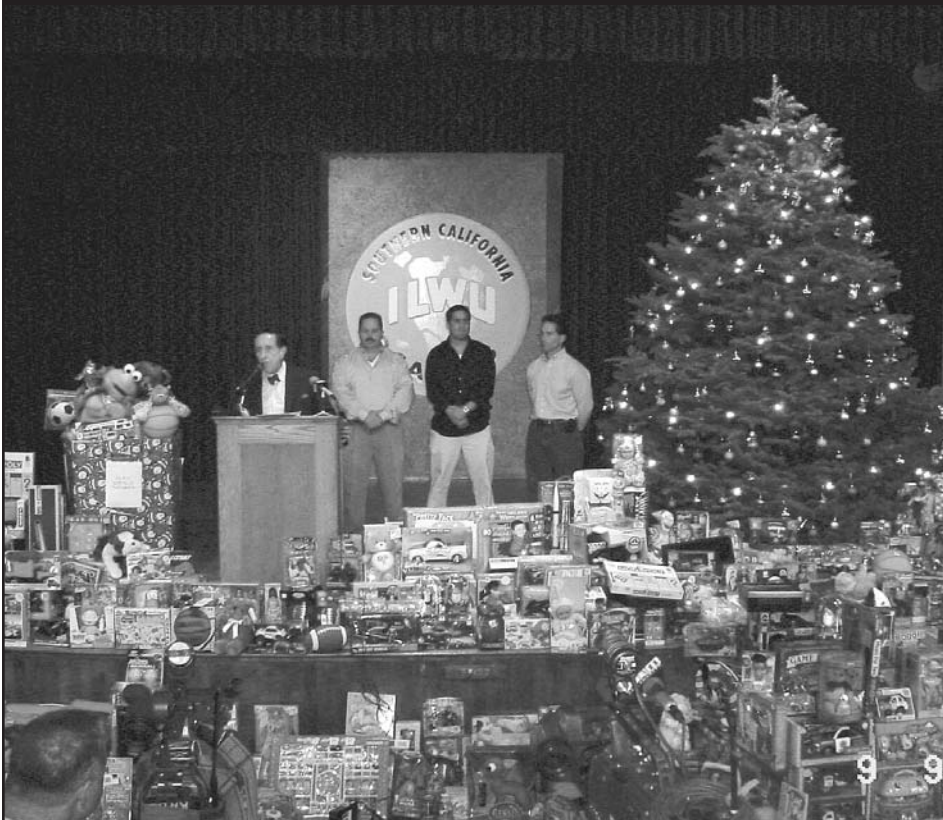
Under the Procedures, an objection by a financial core member must be made in writing and post-marked within 30 days from the date of this notice or the date of becoming a new hire or a financial core member under an ILWU union security clause and receipt of this notice, whichever is later, and addressed to the ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer, 1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109. To be valid, the written objection must specify the objector's name, address, social security number, current wage rate, the name of his or her employer and the name of the local union or division which represents the objector. A written objection must be timely in order to be valid. Without waiving the 30-day filing period with respect to other notices of this type, please be advised that under this notice only, objections filed by current financial core members will be deemed timely if postmarked on or before March 15, 2004. Individuals who after the date of this notice become new hires or financial core members may file an objection within 30 days of the date they become a new hire or financial core member or receive this notice, whichever is later.

Unless changed by a later notice, those financial core members and new hires who file timely objections will not be charged from the date they file a timely objection through December 2004 for expenditures related to nonchargeable activities based on the applicable percentages noted above and also will be provided detailed, independently audited financial information concerning the breakdown between chargeable and nonchargeable expenditures of the ILWU International, the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee (if the objector works in the Longshore Division) and of their ILWU local (if covered by this notice as explained herein). Objectors will also be given an opportunity to file, within 30 days of receipt of such financial information, a challenge to the amount and calculation of any such nonchargeable expenditures and percentages, as well as an opportunity to have such a challenge resolved, if not voluntarily settled, through expeditious arbitration before a neutral arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association (AAA) in proceedings conducted under AAA Rules applicable to objections to agency fees. Please also note that the amount or portion of financial core fees pending the period for filing any objection and challenge as well as the amount reasonably in dispute pursuant to any challenges will be kept in an interest bearing escrow account pending resolution of such challenges. Objectors who file challenges will receive any amount that may be determined to be owed them, plus accrued interest, pursuant to these Procedures.

It is important to know that the vast majority of ILWU represented workers believe that the little extra in dues for maintaining union membership and enjoying all the valuable benefits of full participation in the governing of the ILWU, and the negotiation of working conditions is quite a bargain. For a few cents more each week, union members enjoy all the benefits of membership in the ILWU. We sincerely believe that after careful consideration, new hires and financial core members too will agree that becoming and remaining a union member makes the most sense. If you are not a union member already, please contact the Secretary-Treasurer of the ILWU International or your ILWU local to join the ILWU.

This notice may be superseded or amended by later notices as issued by the ILWU, the Coast Pro Rata Committee or affiliated locals and divisions of the ILWU.
(rev. Jan 2004)

Santa visits Local 13



For more than five hours children of locked-out and striking grocery workers partied Dec. 19 at the longshore Local 13 hall, selecting toys, feasting and meeting Santa. This year's festivities also had a serious side, as Southern California ILWU locals banded together with pensioners and the Federated Auxiliary to provide for the children's families.

A six-foot tall stuffed Grinch standing on a pile of coal greeted the children as they arrived. The Dr. Seuss character, who stole Christmas in the famous story, wore a sign reading "Corporate Scrooge Steven Burd." Burd is President and CEO of Safeway. ILWU members wore elf hats and helped the kids choose presents.

Santa asked William Chavez Feipel to stand in while he finished negotiations with the elves' and reindeer's union, who got everything they asked for. Feipel works as an ID mechanic in his regular job

"With the ILWU discharging containers loaded with toys from the ships, we have always been Santa Claus on the West Coast," said Shannon Donato, Director of the Harry Bridges Institute (HBI) and one of the organizers of the Adopt a Family program that helps UFCW families. "The union took it upon itself through Local 13 and its 'Yes We Can' community involvement program to organize the giant toy drive."

The word went out through the HBI and various locals, pensioners and auxiliaries to bring unwrapped toys to the hall.

"At the Dec. 8 membership meeting every one of them walked in with a toy or an armload of toys and placed them at the base of the tree," Donato said.

With 71,000 grocery workers off the job, the need for solidarity has rarely been greater. Warehouse Local 26, marine clerks Local 63, port pilots Local 68, walking bosses Local 94 and Federated Auxiliary 8 joined Local 13 in making it all happen. Office clerical Local 63 had a party the same day and donated extra toys to United Food and Commercial Workers locals.

UFCW workers have been out since Oct. 11, when workers struck Safeway-Vons. Ralphs-Kroger and Albertsons, the other companies in the employers' bargaining group, locked out their employees in retaliation.

—Tom Price

Christmas comes to the Local 19 hall



With Seattle's economy in a slump, longshore Local 19's annual holiday drive faced a special urgency this season. The members and their families were determined to respond, and 20 volunteers from ILWU families raised nearly \$15,000 to buy presents and food for distressed families.

Local 19 set up the ILWU Christmas for Kids Program as a special, tax-exempt foundation to sponsor the annual drives some 20 years ago. Members sign up to donate throughout the year.

This year the union had an opportunity to share union solidarity as well as holiday cheer with locked-out Teamsters. Local 19 supported the Darigold creamery workers when the company locked them out last August. Since then the company outsourced 60 driver jobs and eliminated 14 warehouse jobs. In all some 300 Teamsters are out of work and Darigold products are now on the AFL-CIO boycott list. Local 19's Curt Cunningham and his partner Leona contacted Teamsters Local 66 President Mark Jones and asked what their families were doing for Christmas.

"Mark Jones told us some of the Darigold families were going to have a pretty bleak Christmas," Curt Cunningham said. "So we offered to adopt 15 families for a Christmas party."

Local 19 turned their hall into a party room Dec. 19 for 11 of the 15 Teamster families. The longshore workers spent about \$60 on gifts per family and provided gift certificates from local grocery stores for their holiday meal. The four families that couldn't make it got their presents from their union staffers who made sure the gifts were hand-delivered.

The regular work of the ILWU Christmas for Kids Program went on as well. Volunteers first consult ministries or social workers who locate truly needy families and then deliver the presents.

"One of the homes we went to had no presents under the tree and eight kids," Cunningham said. "They looked at us and must have thought 'who are these people with longshore jackets and big red bags?' Their faces lit up when we pulled out the presents and called out each child's name. They took the presents and put them under the tree."

Local 19 members also get the union's name out and show community involvement.

"Leona and I always wear our longshore colors when we go shopping for the gifts," Cunningham said. Leona is a past president of ILWU Federated Auxiliary 3. "She got in a conversation with an elderly couple and told them we were shopping for needy kids. They said 'I didn't know longshoremen did that.' Well, there's another convert."

Leona Cunningham reported on another Christmas phenomena, the benefits those who give receive from their actions. Some local kids had a little trouble with the authorities the previous year and were sentenced to do community service. They carried out their stretch with the Christmas program.

"They were completely transformed," she said. "They were so moved by giving to those who had nothing they went and donated their own presents. They came back this year to volunteer again."

—Tom Price

Local 23 members mobilize for holiday giving



The day after Thanksgiving is the biggest shopping day of the year. But many people in the Tacoma area could not take part, as the unemployment rate rose to 7.2 percent in November.

With local charities feeling the strain, Local 23's Charity Committee met Nov. 28 to figure out what to do about the bleak Christmas faced by needy people. Longshore workers are well known in the area for yearlong giving, but this year they decided to do a special holiday toy drive.

"Within a week we had toys coming in," Charity Committee Chair Dragan Butorac said. "The ID casuals really went above and beyond. They put the push on, they and the travelers brought their toys early and inspired everyone else."

The traveling longshore workers, who came to Tacoma from other ports to work, were happy to donate to a community that was not, technically, their own. Butorac and the committee went to local charities, county welfare agencies and other groups known to the local through previous drives. The YWCA and St. Leo's hospitality kitchen provided names and addresses of needy people, and the American Legion hooked up the longshore workers with military families distressed by a parent's deployment in Iraq.

Because so many needy people get evicted, the volunteers had to track some of them down to get them their presents.

"The toys kept coming in right up to Christmas Eve," Butorac said. "We sent \$200 gift cards from Fred Myers stores for families. That store is a grocery and variety store. We also distributed \$50 food cards for 80 families."

Member participation was tremendous, Butorac said. Workers had friendly competitions to see who could raise the most money or provide the most bicycles. Some of the money came in \$500 and \$1,000 chunks from an individual or a small group.

With the hall stuffed to the rafters, volunteers worked long and hard sorting presents, loading pickups and driving to the homes of the needy. Local 23 families also found time to take toys to Everett in support of locked-out Teamsters at the Darigold creamery.

"In all we had 96 bicycles, about \$35,000 in toys and \$20,300 in gift cards," Butorac said. "The toy drive was the new part and a great success. The members, casuals and travelers really came out for this and they deserve all the credit."

—Tom Price

ILWU Book & Video Sale

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

BOOKS:

- 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. **\$7.00**
- The Big Strike** By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. **\$6.50**
- 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. **\$13.00**
- The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront** By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. **\$15.00** (paper-back)
- A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco** By David Selvin: the newest and best single narrative history 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**

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. **\$5.00**
- Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges** A 17-minute VHS 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. **\$28.00**

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