Local 20 accepts contract with health care cuts

Interview with IDC leader Julian Garcia

Bloody Thursday along the Coast

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Hiring Hall Shares the Work

Excellent article, and to the point, was President Spinoza’s report in the April–May 2006 Dispatcher. I well remember when I started as a longshoreman back in 1940. There was little if any work for permit men and while waiting for a job to come up, I went to a little nearby beanery to have a bowl of soup. I sat down next to a long-time longshoreman who was eating a much better lunch than I was. He asked me if I had a job, and when I said no, and that I didn’t think I could get enough work to hang on, he said, “Hang on, and you will stay until you become a regular and you will always have a job.”

When I questioned why he would reply, “Because the guy that got the first job would not get his second job until you got your first.”

He was right and we all got work, sometimes frugal and sometimes good, but we all worked and that of course was the principle of the hiring hall.

But now I wonder, the discrepancy of pay, the forming of the elite’s feeling of superiority when their very existence was made possible by the discriminations of pay—how the worker is divided into division of our troops with our 2008 face-off with the employers, which could dwarf all that same before. Yes, I do wonder.

Walter V. Robinson
Local 13, retired

A Salute to the ILWU

To the members of the ILWU, elected officials and especially the rank and file.

My father, Arthur Pepper, was associated with the longshoreman’s labor movement in the 1930s before, during and after Bloody Thursday. He was referred to then as a soap box orator. He and hundreds of others fought and persevered for the rights of the working man. As a very young child, I marched along side of my father in the parades held in San Pedro, Calif.

You could find out of both the San Francisco and Los Angeles harbors. All my growing up years I would listen at the kitchen table of all the stories, the truths of the struggle, the goods, the times and the bad times of the union. During the fighting for the benefits enjoyed for all of us who followed.

As a daughter, sister and wife of longshoremen I have benefited greatly due to the hard working men and women of the ILWU. Now once again I am being cared for as a widowed. I can live in dignity in my senior years thanks to you and I do thank you—A Salute to you all.

Mrs. R. G. Scatt
Survivor

Send Them Back

I am upset about the articles that you are writing in The Dispatcher concerning illegal immigrants. The articles that you write in The Dispatcher reflect the official position of the ILWU at all times. The union’s official policy on immigration and on immigrant workers’ rights can be found in International President James Spinoza’s letter to the U.S. Senate (http://www.ilwu.org/about/conven
tional/Immigration%20Letter.pdf) and two resolutions (R-35 and R-52) passed by the ILWU 33rd International Convention (visit: http://www.ilwu.org/about/conventionpdf/index.htm).

Food for Retirement Thought

My name is Ron Schmidt—they used to call me “Dirt Box Baby”—starting at 19 years old. I’ve been in the ILWU over 50 years and met a lot of good clerks’ Local 40 for 40 years.

Brothers and sisters, we are approximately two years away from our next contract. It’s now time to really start thinking of all the issues and what it is we want and need to keep us a strong and viable union.

I’ve never regretted doing this great work we call “meeting the hook”—it has provided my family a great livable wage and the security that most people don’t have. Of the 50 members I was registered “B” with, there are three left in my local. They are retired or deceased.

The PMA has provided a “window” where a member who is 59 may retire early. We would like to see the ILWU and PMA address the members like myself who are there or very close but have served more than 35 years. PMA pays for 35 years of retirement, but if you work longer, they continue to take money from your wage. Those extra years are lost—this is blatant age discrimination. While more and more members are brought into this great union, they are usually older when they start. The 35 years is going to be very difficult to attain. Many will not live long enough to get these years. I would like to suggest some ways for consideration:

1) Pay members every year that they earn up to 45 years, maximum age 65.
2) If we can’t get compensated then I would like to be able to throw these extra years that I’ve earned and then demand an agreed-upon pay and put them into a pool of “earned years.” This pool then could be used to help other members who would like to retire but don’t have the available years.

I think about it, “Not about me, it’s about us.”

Ron Schmidt
Local 40

Dig Deep

My wife and I along with several other retired ILWU members and spouses, attended two great events here in Southern California this past week. The first was the July 5 Bloody Thursday picnic at Point Fermin Park in San Pedro. It was well attended by ILWU families from Locals 13, 63 and 94. It was really family oriented and everyone enjoyed the day. Local 13 Security Volunteer staff did a bang-up job. They even set aside a great shady area with picnic tables for our pension club and Women’s Auxiliary flies. We heard great speakers commemorating the Bloody Thursday struggle, plus great food and music.

The second event, also hosted by Local 13, was the kick-off political action rally on July 10 in the Long Beach Sports Arena with upwards of 5,000 ILWU members, active and retired, attending. The ILWU officer candidates spoke, along with the Coast Committee candidates. The newly-elected Mayor of Long Beach thanked the ILWU local for its support. California Democratic candidate for Governor Phil Angelides also pledged to support the union’s political agenda, and we have endorsed him in his bid against Schwarzenegger. The political action rally was three outstanding keynote speakers—ILWU Local 142’s own Ah Quon McElrath, Hawaii Congressmen Neil Abercrombie and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. All three committed the members to join in the fight to advance our political action funding program for the November election.

Great tributes by the speakers were given to International President James Spinoza and their support are deserved. Each member must realize what is at stake. We must contribute even more to the union’s political action program. We must make the ILWU Political Action Fund successful! We must get rid of the anti-social, anti-union Bush politicians in November and in 2008.

This is our challenge, ILWU members, are we up to it? We must take back our Congress and our country. Dig deep, brothers and sisters!!!

Al Perito, President Southern California Pensioners Local 13

ILWU Editor’s note: Voluntary Political Action contributions can be sent to:
2008 Political Action Fund
1188 Franklin Street 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94109
Make checks payable to ILWU Political Action Fund.
TWIC card is more onerous than any previous screening process. "Background checks run on dock workers during the Korean War included an appeals system with a local board, people familiar with the industry, the operations in the area, including labor representatives," Local 13’s Richard "Ole" Olson pointed out to the USCSC and TSA officials. "What on earth has changed to make you offer us something far worse than we got out of Joe McCarthy?"

Some questioned whether the timeline for the roll-out of a TWIC card can be believed, considering the track record of federal implementation of earlier rules to secure ports. "How realistic is the schedule of a year-and-a-half projected for the TWIC to impact our work force?" asked ILWU Local 13’s secretary-treasurer Frank Fonce de Leon, who cited rules from 2002 that still have yet to be implemented. "If it is not TSA and the Coast Guard, then who is going to be looking at employers who don’t implement rules that have been passed down years ago?"

Requiring a new identification procedure for 350 to 450 workers, office staff and an eight-digit PIN before work starts, "Cards are going to be lost," said ILWU Local 8’s Leal Sundet. "They are going to be destroyed. Machines aren’t going to work. You know what the contingency plans are going to be when things don’t work? Open the gate and let them in. That’s reality. That’s what is going to happen."

In addition to potential delays in delivery schedules, industry leaders pleaded with federal regulators to drop the dollop of testing a system that most argue is not ready. "We can’t even lock the door at night because of the public use for the rest rooms," he said. "We can’t lock the door at night."

"We have had customers choose other ports," said SSA’s Director of Security, "We don’t want to have to choose their wedding or their mitzvah on a vessel where there are something above board," said cruise operator Elizabeth Gedney. "Complete testing of a prototype system should be a quick phase of the implementation. Otherwise, millions of dollars may be wasted by port authorities and facility owner/operators as they rush to install card and biometric readers."

Local 13’s Ole Olson questioned the fairness of the TWIC background checks. "No one wants to secure our ports more than the ILWU!" said Longshore Local 13 member and Director of Port Security Mike Mitre said. "While regulators offered opinion, ILWU members are the ones who collect the data from each worker who enrolled for a card.

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"We have wronged workers worldwide with arrest or fails, impacts the entire supply chain," Mitre and others argued that the security of personal data given by port workers in America carry a sophisticated identity card that few TWIC card holders will be kicked off the waterfront for an old mistake or denied a TWIC card due to inaccurate record. "Disqualifiers in the proposed rule are too broad," Mitre said. "TWIC cannot be allowed to unjustly punish employees for bad decisions made years ago.

"Because the Coast Guard definition of conviction is much broader than the criminal courts, many people are on arrest still on their record for which they were never convicted," said Sailors Union of the Pacific spokesmen David Connolly. "Only those crimes that might threaten the United States of America is being bungled and the need to incorporate procedures and limits set forth in the original Maritime Transportation Security Act. "For the rights for information collected and generated by the TWIC process is critical," said ILWU Local 10’s President Science Director Lawrence Thibaux, who posed a series of questions to regulators. "Are we going to allow this information to go through a criminal background check? What happen to it then? What if the penalties for misuse of our data? Is data stored with the contractor or the government?

While regulators offered opinions, little is written into the codes to answer these concerns. Moreover, either, does Maritime Transportation Security Act say that costs should be borne by port authorities or the individual who will collectively shell out more than $100 million in fees—at $139 per card by the end of 2007.

Others objected that the proposed appeal system for those denied a TWIC card was more onerous than any previous screening process. "Background checks run on dock workers during the Korean War included an appeals system with a local board, people familiar with the industry, the operations in the area, including labor representatives," Local 13’s Richard "Ole" Olson pointed out to the USCSC and TSA officials. "What on earth has changed to make you offer us something far worse than we got out of Joe McCarthy?"

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July-August 2006

Richard M. Daley, 82, has decided to retire after 30 years as mayor of Chicago, a move that could set the stage for an early election and for the mayor to continue as a power broker in the city’s Democratic Party.

The decision is the latest in a string of political retirements that have reshaped the political landscape of the city and the state. The city’s pension system has been battered by years of budget shortfalls, and the state’s financial troubles have highlighted the challenges facing Illinois’s political leaders.

MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Supreme Court on Monday overturned the results of the state’s most recent election, a decision that could have far-reaching implications for the state’s political landscape.

The court ruled that the election results were invalid because of irregularities in the tabulation process. The court also ordered a new election on the issue.

The decision was announced by Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson, who said the court had found “evidence of fraud and other irregularities” in the election process.

The court’s decision came in response to a petition filed by the Wisconsin Democratic Party, which had challenged the election results.

The court’s ruling could have significant implications for the state’s political landscape, as it could reset the political balance and potentially change the outcome of future elections.

The court’s decision was seen as a major setback for the Republican Party, which had won control of the state legislature in the previous election.

The court ordered a new election on the issue, which would take place later this year.

The decision was met with mixed reactions, with some lawmakers expressing support for the court’s move, while others criticized the decision as an attempt to undermine the democratic process.

The court’s decision is likely to set the stage for a new round of political maneuvering in the state, as the parties jockey for position in the lead-up to the upcoming election.

The court’s ruling could also have implications for the state’s political landscape beyond the immediate election, as it could potentially alter the political balance in the legislature and affect the outcome of future elections.

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The TWIC card will contain bio-
metric data, such as fingerprints, and
cost each worker about $139. The
government projects that eventually
as many as 850,000 transportation
workers will come under the rule.
Under TWIC, workers will be able to
appeal denial of a security clearance
to an administrative law judge (see
storage 4).

Interim screening will exempt port
truckers and those working less
than 90 days at the port, McLaughlin
said. Many experts consider that exemp-
tion a serious flaw. Regular port workers
whose families and careers are at or near
the port have the most to lose from
terrorism, and the temporary work-
ers are often here today and gone
tomorrow.

Warehouse Local 26 represents
wage earner workers whose jobs
include bunkering ships and pro-
cessing scrap metal and other cargo prior
to it being loaded. The local also repre-
sents about 420 guards at the ports
of Los Angeles and Long Beach. They
are already required to clear a background
check by the State of California.

“When it comes to real port security,
that has to be something that the collec-
tiveness of the people who work there,”
said Luisa Gratzi, president of Local 26.
Citing the technology by which
humans must operate that technol-
ogy. They recognize data as flawed, or
maybe incomplete or suspicious. ILWU
members know the dock like the back of
their hands. And humans should
always be able to challenge the
‘policiticians’ who ask our members about port security,
not some think tank.”

members of the Inlandboatmen’s
Union, the Marine Division of the ILWU,
are usually required to have Merchant
Marine Documents (MMDs), accord-
ing to IBU Puget Sound BA Stuart
Dovern. They will probably need a
TWIC card in the future.

“We started living the post-9-11
regulations before 9-11,” Dovern
said. “When you apply for a MMD
you have to give your Social Security
number and answer all the questions
about any criminal activities. They run a full FBI background check.”

Workers on the water side of the
docks have experienced the down-
side of the document process, according to
IBU President Alan Cote’.

“We have already lived the life
of being vetted, probed and tested,”
Cote’ said. “Unlike 30 years ago, a
sailor today would lose his document
if he got a second DUI and not be able to
work.”

Union companies are speak-
ing up loudly against this system,
Cote’ said. “They rely more on un-
documented, casual labor, not gener-
ally under paid, who work long hours and
and don’t have the advantage of a union
contract,” Cote’ said. “They have a
lot of turnover. They don’t know how
they’re going to staff certain non-
secure ferries.”

Gary Harvey, president of chemi-
 cal processing packaging Local 20,
works on the docks in Wilmington,
right next to aviation fuel tanker
loading facilities. His members sub-
mitted their names to DHS.

“As long as they’re using it for
what they’re using it for, I don’t real-
ly see it affecting anyone down here.”

Harvey said. Harley and others have
complained to the Coast Guard and
the port about the lax security on the
fuel-loading docks. So far nothing has
been done.

Security officers’ Local 28, whose
members cover security at the Ports
of Long Beach and Long Beach, has not
yet been informed of the screening
by DHS, according to Secretary-
Treasurer Dan Hardisty.

“We have already gone through
background checks by the state gov-
ernment. It’s just another one for
the members,” he said. “But we
probably will have to go through the
TWIC process.”

Many warehouse Local 6 workers
are employed in waterfront facilities
at the various ports around the San
Francisco Bay and may be affected by
the screening, according to its
Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker.
But the Coast Guard has yet to say which
ones.

“Do we really know how it’s
going to affect our members, but
some of our members could lose their
jobs because of immigration status or
prior activities that they’re already
paid their debts to society for,” Pecker
said. “I think they’re scapegoating the
workforce. In particular, they’re
scaretheong the highly organized
sector of the workforce.”

Local 6 members who may be
affected work a liquid bulk termi-
nal and a general warehouse in San
Francisco, a cotton warehouse in
Oakland, a Con-Agra flour factory on
the Cerritos Creek in Cerritos.

In Richmond they handle bulk cement,
cement, and handle entire tritium
system wallboard. In Stockton they
stock scrap metal, ammunition and liquid
radioactive. All of the members have
the warehouse and perform maintenance
work on the port.

Screened workers with IDs
will have an advantage in getting jobs on the
docks, Sacramento warehouse Local 17
director/BA Everett Burdan said.

“In a way, it’s an opportunity for
some of our members because [long-
shore] Local 18 has a lottery system
where people can come in off the street,”
Burdan said. “As long as they have
a driver’s license and a Social Security
card, they can work for the day.”

But non-union workers who
would not be able to work unless they
had been screened. That gives union
workers an advantage.

“If I have a readily available list,
then a lot of members who aren’t
working on the warehouse side might be
able to go back to that,” Burdan said.

But while there are advantages
to having ID cards, the down side
is that they are time consuming,
and a presumption of guilt if a
person is denied a card.

Plant workers in the port secu-
 rity, in the way they’re implementing it,
is such a façade,” Gratzi said. “It
has nothing to do with port security,
it has to do with tracking longshore
workers. Port security should include
the majority of the workers, not
just property.”

Long before the government came
up with the idea of screening workers,
Local 26 came up with the idea of
training workers to deal with known
terrorists.

“We have specialized training in
crowd control, terrorist awareness,
CPR first aid, how to put fires out,
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The ILWU belongs to two international dockworker union federations—the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), a more than 100-year-old group that includes other transportation workers like sailors, truckers and rail and airline workers, and the International Dockworkers Council (IDC), which is just dockworkers.

In 2002 IDC backed the ILWU during its 2002 contract fight and was instrumental in stopping the European Union’s attempt to privatize and casualize European ports. It has been growing and gaining strength over the last few years. Garcia came to the Longshore Caucus to sit down with him and ask him a few questions.

Q: It’s been four years since the founding First Assembly of the International Dockworkers Council in Charleston. What changes have happened in the organization since then?

A: There have been positive changes and new additions. Some of them are important, especially from strategic sites in the world. We’ve also noticed during this period that unions don’t need large structures to be effective, that’s what’s been possible, as we have said, that large structures slow the organization down too much. We need, admittedly, a qualitative lead. We’re building a new membership of 50,000 dockworkers, starting from an initial membership of 12,000, but we need to have contingents in 20 different countries, 17 European ones I think.

The fact that there have been affiliations is important, but more so is the important work that’s been done in small groups, especially from strategic sites in the world. We’ve had a very interesting meeting with our fellow dockworkers in Uruguay, from Montevideo, who have made a comeback from a brutal dictatorship, especially where trade unions are concerned, I think we will soon have members in Montevideo. We are also very close in Malta. Malta is an important place for the Mediterranean, it has a huge container terminal, and in a way we would almost close the Mediterranean circle. We have been meeting in the Maghreb and in Egypt.

We are also meeting with the ex-Soviet republics because they have over 15,000 dockworkers in the Black Sea and northern Europe. And a very important event was a meeting held three weeks ago in Brazil, attended by more than 230 delegates from all over the country. We’ve been notified that seven or eight unions will be affiliating with IDC because we understand they need to open an international office in Brazil, given that country’s enormous size; more than a country, it’s a continent in itself. This means our growth is significant, but more importantly, I think we can see that IDC has solidified as an organization.

Q: One of the most important things that’s happened in recent years is the European ports package, the two attempts by the European Union to pass and the two attempts by the UN to pass and the ports there. Obviously people felt like everything was on the line there. How big a victory was that for European dockworkers as a whole, but also, how important was the organizing and the victory to the IDC getting stronger?

A: Well, I think it’s been decisive. The dockworkers have realized again that we can do it, that we may currently be one of the few collective organizations in the world that can stand up to governments and powerful captains of industry if we really get organized. To one day we mobilized 45,000 dockworkers and over 10,000 demonstrated on one day’s notice.

The result was convincing. We came from almost 20 different countries, 17 European ones I think and with help from Australia, the United States, from Poland. And of course the IDC is recognized all over the world as an organization that can hold its own at the table, knows how to take action and is therefore a well-established organization.

Q: Let’s talk about the Mexico situation. What is happening now is that a lot of the shipping companies are building capacity there to try to bypass the ILWU, a big concern for us. Having the Mexican dock workers reorganize is very important. How do you see that happening? Where is it going? Do you see a role for the ILWU in there?

A: I don’t think it’s a matter of what role the ILWU can play, but rather the role it should play. The verb tense is very important. The ILWU should play a fundamental role in the reorganization in Mexico.

Mexico is the premier laboratory where large corporations are trying out what they want to accomplish elsewhere in the world. There are company unions, where employees work long hours, for poor wages and no social security after their workday is over, if it’s ever over. It’s a situation that’s being exploited by the companies. It’s gone from a situation in which the unions were exploiting the workers to one in which there is a shameful exploitation by the companies. I think we have to invest a lot of money and effort into revitalizing that whole situation. There is no doubt they are going to work very hard to take a lot of traffic away from the U.S. West Coast.

I was in Manzanillo in January, in Tampico and Vera Cruz. I didn’t get to Lázaro Cárdenas. I think I saw enough. I was there long enough to take the pulse of the situation and see the reality and the IDC’s importance. There is no doubt they are going to try hard to win over the whole situation.

Q: What do you see that the ILWU could do to help them?

A: It’s not how the ILWU can help them, but rather how it can help itself. That’s very important, because if you have that mentality I’m talking about, you’ll make different decisions. It’s not the same to save someone as it is to save yourself.

Q: And I think people realize that, understand and look at it that way. But still there’s the issue of practicality. What are the steps? I’ve heard different people talk about using ILWU organizers down who speak Spanish, or does it make more sense to find Mexican organizers who already know how to do it. What other ways might we actually make it happen? I think people understand it has to be done to save ourselves.

A: I think the first thing to find out is whether or not people in Mexico want a change. Then, if there are people who can make the change happen. And if there are people who want to face that situation, then we’ll be a movement.

On that basis, I think the most valuable instrument that I can see, more so than the ILWU, is the IDC, which can play an essential role, if the ILWU really wants to be in the middle of the Mexican movement, they’ll be able to do it. What other ways might we actually make it happen? I think people understand it has to be done to save ourselves.

Julian Garcia addresses the Longshore Caucus.

Q: Let’s talk about the second IDC Assembly in Barcelona in May 2005. What was accomplished there?

A: A substantial part of the objectives are being accomplished: as far as growth, as far the work around safety. The next conference is still over a year away. I’m confident that the IDC is big and strong and has responsibilities within the dockworkers’ movement.

Q: Do you think you’ll be stepping down as IDC General Coordinator?

A: Yes. I think there’s enough work for everyone in the IDC. I don’t need to be the general coordinator to keep on working. My objective is not to be general but rather how it can help itself. That’s very important. That’s what we have to do in Mexico.

Q: If you don’t continue as general coordinator, where do you see yourself going from there?

A: If there is no change, I’ll keep working. But if a change takes place, I’ll keep working, if they’ll let me. I’ve retired, but I’ll never stop being a dockworker. That’s my condition. I believe that the IDC is big and strong and has responsibilities within the dockworkers’ movement.

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**Local 20 bows to health care cuts**

By Bill Orton and Steve Stallone

Health care cuts and creeping co-pays hit an ILWU contract in the L.A. Harbor last month as the Borax processing plant there were accepted concessions in their coverage to retain their jobs. The contract covers 83 workers who toil at the Borax plant in Wilmington, turning raw borates into usable products. Littler Mendelson, the firm Littler Mendelson, and the bar

The new contract recognizes union bargaining rights for the longshore contract. That contract, like earlier pacts with Borax, included a provision for cost-of-living adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index for wages. Borax management wanted to strip that provision, and ILWU members accepted health care co-pays.

Local 20 resides 20 percent contention level in the fifth year of its contract. Miners in the desert hit the level in the third year of their five-year contract. They also conceded changes in long-term disability and sick leave.

Each worker in Wilmington will see a wage hike of between 54-to-62 cents each year, after costing out health care cuts and creeping co-pays. That left Borax workers paying more for health care and benefiting less from their raises. Borax workers are among the toughest cookies, they know their operations on every continent and their job security and seniority. Bargaining team members accept health care co-pays.

“People change, they may have done something at one time, but later on they get something else,” the outgoing president said. “The seniority rules also needed a little fine tuning,” Levinson said. “The old contract allowed a temporary employee who had qualifications we didn’t have to stay and we could go.

The new contract recognized union security and seniority. Bargaining continued into 2005 with give and take on wages and benefits. Borax was rewarded for its effort. Borax said it had put up their hat off to the committee,” Alarcon said. “They were some tough cookies, they know their operations well, and they had 70 years of seniority, so the company couldn’t lie to us.”

**Waste Management clericals sign third contract**

by Tom Price

A fter more than a year of hard bargaining, warehouse Local 6 at the San Dimas Paper Mill in Ontario has a new two-year contract that raises wages and maintains benefits with Waste Management Inc.

The contract secured five percent of 100 percent employer-paid healthcare, maintained a company-paid, union-sponsored pension, and brought $3.20 per hour more to the pockets of the 88 clerical and warehouse Local 6, clerks’ Local 63, foremen’s Local 94, port pilots Local 68 and warehouse Local 26. But just before the contract expired the company placed a last, best and final offer on the table. The negotiating committee recommended against it and on June 17 the rank and file rejected it by a 58 percent vote.

The local president annual review power over the company’s health care premiums too. “The rank-and-file have never seen a picture of the two deals shows that Rio Tonto succeeded by setting an aggressive tone out of the gate, never wavering in its demand that ILWU members accept health care co-pays.

“Waste Management clericals sign third contract”

By Tom Price

The new contract is ground zero in bargaining. “It’s the rank-and-file I worry about,” the outgoing president said. “They complained that union transfer applicants with any experience could be considered for a long-term position.

So bargaining team members Levinston, ast, steward Amy Gallow and Vicki Crenshaw hunkered down for a long fight. They worked late into the night, researching their company and others. They took apart the contract and re-wrote parts of it to make it less one-sided and pro-management. This drew praise from their local President, Ethan Spinosa, International Vice President and Vicki Crenshaw hunkered down for a long fight. They worked late into the night, researching their company and others. They took apart the contract and re-wrote parts of it to make it less one-sided and pro-management. This drew praise from their local President, Ethan Spinosa, International Vice President and International Secretary Treasurer Fred Pecker joined the team early on and provided guidance. The team used their research and went into negotiations with the company to help workers if health care cost savings come about, as the company argued, if members reduce their benefit usage due to co-pays.

“Stayed in there and got the best wage offer we could,” Harvey said. “Every member stays in the black through the life of the agreement. We had the authority to go out, but it would have been hard to suggest a strike in light of the wages.”

Dollars may have smoothed over the bottom line, but side-by-side comparisons of the two deals shows that Borax got a lopsided victory. “The workers are ready to strike over the health care demand if this new money had not materialized.”

Through three months of talks, the company stuck to its demand that workers pay 20 percent of health care costs. Although the deal will be phased in over the life of the contract. Now members who had never paid premiums or co-pays before will pay each time they visit a doctor or buy medicines, and a new deduction will appear on their pay stub.

“Health care is on the front burner in all collective bargaining and these contracts just turned up the heat.”

As he prepared to leave office later this year, Spinosa said the new crop of leaders understand that health care is ground zero in bargaining.

“ILWU Southern California members rallied outside the Borax plant in support of Local 20.

The real injury is year six until retirement well and they have many years of experience. They know their operations on every continent and their job security and seniority. Bargaining team members accept health care co-pays.

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Longshore and other maritime workers struck along the West Coast May 9, 1934. The longshore workers main goals were the recognition of the union, a coastwise contract and a union-run hiring hall to replace the hated “shape-up” system, a hiring process in which the boss would pick men from a crowd, often shaking them down for a bribe for a day’s work.

In San Pedro workers marched May 14 on a scab encampment and were fired upon. Dickie Parker died in the arms of workers who said Knudsen died later from his wounds. In Seattle workers fought with scabs almost daily for more than a month. Late in the night of June 30 strike delegate Shirley Daffron was gunned down, and 18 days later striking sailor Olaf Helland was hit in the head by a gas grenade and killed.

The police fired into the picket lines, but workers stood firm. The cops were so out of control they fired on Senator Wagner’s (D-NY) car, the same senator who would push the Wagner Act (National Labor Relations Act) through Congress a year later. President Roosevelt signed the bill July 5, 1935. That “Bill of Rights for labor” set up a federal board to hear labor law issues, and it recognized workers’ rights to organize and strike.

In San Francisco some 800 cops, with National Guard backup, attacked 2,000 strikers Thursday, July 4, as they tried to reach the port. The battle raged on for most of the morning, though nearly everyone stopped by police fire. Police later cleaned quietly in front of the union hall on Steuart Street. Then cops pulled up and started firing into the crowd. Longshoreman Howard Sperry was hit in the back. Nick Bordoise from the Army-MarineViolence and it fought its way to the docks. But the ports stayed closed.

Workers paid their last respects to the fallen men, Speery and Bordoise, in front of the stage and stood at attention and played “Taps.” We all know, if we might still be stuck in the shape-up, we need to educate our young people on what the old timers went through, Gonzalez said. “Jerry McNerney shares our dreams, our aspirations and the values of the ILWU. He believes in healthcare, he believes that people should have pensions and benefits. He’s very, very strong, very determined. He wants to go to Washington and make some changes in the Mariana Islands.”

“McNerney came to support the ILWU and the community,” Adams said. “Jerry McNerney shares our dreams, our aspirations and the values of the ILWU. He believes in healthcare, he believes that people should have pensions and benefits. He’s very, very strong, very determined. He wants to go to Washington and make some changes in the Mariana Islands.”

Pensioner Cleophas Williams spoke of the need to educate the younger members and the children in the ways of the union. “It’s a joy to see all of you here this morning. It’s especially a joy to see the children, because before you know it they’ll be just as bold as I am, and regrettably, just as crippled,” Williams said. “We haven’t taught our children enough about the union. In many cases they know nothing. We bring the check home and they get on the computer and play games. What do they know about us?”

Local 10 President David Gonzales cited themes of learning and remembering. “It’s time to remember the ultimate sacrifices made by six men up and down the Coast,” Gonzalez said. “Without them and the thousands of workers who had not de voted wages, conditions and benefits, we might still be stuck in the shape-up, not the hiring hall. We all know, if we forget the past, we are condemned to repeat it.”

The ILWU 10 Drill Team presents the colors in front of the flower-strewn outlines of the two San Francisco Bloody Thursday.

San Francisco—The fog had lifted onto a sunny day July 5 as Indian Joe Morris blew “Taps” and segued into “Amazing Grace” to begin Coastwise remembrance of Bloody Thursday.

The Ports played the Modesto Nuts while the ILWU family and friends held a barbecue. The occasion was both solemn and joyous as the gathering remembered the past and prepared for the future.

“The Public address announcer reads from our history between innings, how the ILWU was founded and how we came together,” Local 54 Secretary-Treasurer Gene Davenport said.

McNerney carries labor’s hopes in unseating right-wing Republican Richard Pombo in the 11th Congressional District that includes Stockton. Pombo has advocated privatization of public lands and taken money from convicted sleaze peddlers like Jack Abramoff. In fact, Pombo received the most money in California from Abramoff. Pombo also used his influence to block labor reforms in the U.S. colony of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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ILWU-endorsed Congressional candidate Jerry McNerney throws out the ceremonial first pitch at the baseball game where Stockton Local 52 com memorated Bloody Thursday.

The band Retrofit played for a couple hours while children played games, swam and rode the merry-go-rounds or maneuvered through a blow-up obstacle course.

“He’s an amazing guy to talk to,” said Tom Price, President of Federated Auxiliary 3 out of Seattle, auctioned off a quilt she had handmade and donated the proceeds to children’s charities.

Even though it was mainly social event, education was the goal from the minds of ILWU veterans.

“We need to educate the younger generation to say, ‘We have an influx of people who have no ties to the industry and need to be educated to our culture.’”

Southern California: ILWU families in the Los Angeles Harbor Area enjoyed an ocean breeze, food and fun at San Pedro’s Point Fermin Park, as workers celebrated the 72nd anniversary of Bloody Thursday on July 5. Point Fermin is the western tip of the Palos Verdes Peninsula and home to one of the oldest lighthouses—built in 1874—on the West Coast. As younger workers and the influx of casuals change the face of the waterfront, Bloody Thursday becomes even more critical to connect dockworkers to the struggle of forming the union.

“July 5 was a time to remember our fallen workers and we shall never forget them,” former’s Local 94 President Danny Miranda said. Locals 15, 63 and 94 provided burgers, hot dogs, chips and sodas and bounce houses and a play area for kids while politicians filed up to the stage to swear solidarity to the union in between sets from three local bands.

The ILWU 10 Drill Team presents the colors in front of the flower-strewn outlines of the two San Francisco Bloody Thursday
Container work returns to Portland

by Tom Price

The ZIM USA, a 3,900 TEU containership, tied up at Portland’s Terminal 6 May 14 and marked the successful end of a two-month sitdown to get a new container line and third container crane at the port.

The port invested $7.5 million in a new, 16-story tall super crane, the third such crane to grace the port’s container line. Longshoremen installed it May 3, with Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski in attendance. The port has four such cranes.

“We worked with the port and lobby very heavily to get this crane,” said Local 8 Secretary-Treasurer Bruce Holte. “The port went out on a limb. They ordered this thing even knowing we had a lot of our work in the hope we would attract more container work.

Since May Ming Line opened its service to Terminal 6 with the arrival of the containership Yang Ming on May 12, the Port of Portland has discharged footwear and garment merchandise and carried away paper, refrigerated food and wood products.

Yang Ming is expected to move 23,000 containers a year through Portland. The shipport includes the Columbia River District Council and the union’s Washington, D.C., office, had already worked with Port of Portland, other port authorities along the river and more than 200 union, city, port and business groups to lobby for the port channel dredging nearly a decade ago. Shipping companies “K Line” and “Z Line” had already pulled out of Portland in 2004, leaving the port with only Hanjin container ships calling.

After many stops and starts, the Army Corps of Engineers will complete the dredging this year. And thanks to the three feet of increased draft, to 43 feet, grain ships in ILWU jurisdictions along the Columbia River can now load thousands of tons more cargo. Dredging will also allow larger container ships to navigate 10 feet up the Columbia River to Portland.

“The port continued to invest in critical improvements, crane and rail expansions, in anticipation that, as they delve more into the import market, they will see the benefits of the congestion in other ports,” Local 8 President Leal Sundet said. “All sides worked together to maintain Portland as an integral container port. Other locals and the International were supportive of that.

The port had positioned itself as an export port, and wasn’t ready for the demand in the ports.

“We lost business because of the sudden imbalance that took place in the industry,” Local 13 President Robert “Bob” McEllrath said. “We worked hard to reposition ourselves into the import market, into a position so stable that we can move the port as a transshipment destination. We are seeing success in that strategy.”

Container work returns to Portland as crane shipper needed container service to get imports into and exports out of the port.

“After many stops and starts, the port channel channel dredging that was completed in August 2004, the port got the advantage of importing and exporting containers a year through Portland.

The region’s highly developed rail service can efficiently move much of the port’s annual billion dollar worth on and off the docks, and with far less pollution than diesel trucks. The port is also eager to expand break bulk services.

“The port has one of the best break bulk docks on the West Coast, Terminal 2,” Local 8 LBC Chair Karl Sundet said. “At this point we are underutilized. The port has actively shopped that property and Local 8 has always been willing to see to it that when the companies show up, the guys are there, ready to go to work.”

In all, nearly 40,000 jobs depend on the Columbia River commerce, according to the Columbia River Channel Coalition, which supported the dredging.

This means more work for Local 8 members everywhere, said Holte. “We just brought in 15 B-men and about 60 new casuals. We’re hoping to get another 50 B-men.”

‘Politics matter,’ ILWU members told at Long Beach Rally

by Bill Orton

The ILWU’s international office disarmed its heavyweights from politics and labor—told nearly 6,000 rank-and-file gatherers July 20 at the Long Beach Arena that the union’s influence in election campaigns.

“Our voice has been loud, but not loud enough,” said Local 13 President Robert ”Bob” McEllrath, who was joined by fellow president Joe Gazparro, of clerks’ Local 63, and Danny Miranda, of Teamsters Local 584.

“We need to get out, we need to raise money, and we’re going to write those checks,” International Vice President Bob McEllrath said. “But our candidates are going to stand and say they’re going to you right now,” Abercrombie told the audience. “And I said, ‘Give me a chance.’ And I won that election despite what anyone thought. And that’s what I’m asking. Give the people who are for a chance for you to be for you. They can’t be for you if they’re not for you.”

Giving money is important, Abercrombie said, but voting is just as critical.

“Don’t let anybody tell you their vote doesn’t count,” he said. “After the way the presidential election was stolen the last two elections, how can anyone say that your vote doesn’t count, in a living, breathing proof that every vote counts.”

The joint stop-work meeting also featured a year-long protest and letter-writing campaign for outgoing International President James Spinosa, who is finishing his second term as head of the union.

California nurses put public campaign financing on ballot

I n a move that could shake up U.S. politics, the California Nurses Association (CNA) single-handedly gathered enough signatures to put an initiative on California’s November ballot to establish public financing for elections.

In an interview at the Take Back America conference in D.C., CNA activist Tom Price explained that the independent union’s leaders decided to fight for the idea after California’s physicians, AFSCME, teachers, fire fighters and others—fought off Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s anti-work- er initiatives last year.

One of the referendum ideas, which Schwarzenegger later dropped, would have rolled back mandatory nurse-patient ratios in the state’s hospitals enacted under his predecessor, Democratic Gov. Gray Davis. Schwarzenegger has tried to delay the mandates by executive order, too, but the court has blocked that. In the meantime, CNA gathered 100,000 signatures from CNA demonstrations all over the state dogging him at fund raisers and news conferences, with protest and letter-writing campaign.

Another initiative on the 2005 special election ballot would have cut the cost of prescription drugs for California’s seniors.

“The pharmaceutical industry spent $835 million to stop that,” Preston said. “As long as that kind of money comes flooding into the political sys- tem, nurses and patients will suffer.”

Schwarzenegger’s moves against teacher tenure, worker pensions and for paycheck protection and the flow of big business campaign cash behind him were all defeated after the labor movement poured its resources and energies into the campaign. This led CNA to conclude that its cause and labor’s credibility were advanced with out campaign finance reform first, Preston added.

The move is particularly important because California is the largest state in the U.S. and easily the most expensive to campaign in. Recent statewide election campaigns there cost $30 million or more per candid ate. Two smaller states, Arizona and Maine, have public financing of elections.

And the money that businesses spent—and Schwarzenegger raised everywhere from San Francisco to Boston—for his ballot schemes also ran into millions of dollars. That fundraising left unions and their allies always outspent.

CNA was successful because its volunteers were accompanied by uni formed nurses as they took the petitions around, and the nurses had credibility with the voters.

“They (the nurses) are very much into this because they’re committed to health care reform because of the depressing and awful system right now,” Preston said. “The nurses...
ILWU makes splash at AFL-CIO Trade Show

The ILWU contingent presented the winning prize—air fare and three nights at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Waikiki, next to the Kalakaua Avenues shopping complex. The winning design was created by the Union Label and Storefront Development (ULSTD). The contest received 443 entries, and the winners were as follows:

- 1st place: Charles King (Local 94)
- 2nd place: Lisa Tuman (Local 13)
- 3rd place: David J. King (Local 13)
- 4th place: Karen Brandow (Local 94)
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- 8th place: Al Perisho (Southern California Pensioners)
Dorothy “Baba” Vekich

Dorothy Vekich passed over Dec. 30, 2005 at Mother Joseph’s Care Center in Olympia, Wash. Dorothy was wife of Max Vekich Sr., long-time dispatcher at longshore Local 24, Aberdeen, Wash. He preceded her in death in 1984. Dorothy was past president and a founding member of the ILWU Ladies Auxiliary of Local 24, Washington, D.C., and served as Treasurer/Assistant President of the ILWU Ladies Auxiliary. Dorothy once was 1st Vice President of the ILWU Ladies Auxiliary 52, Seattle, Wash. and was a founding member of the ILWU Ladies Auxiliary 92, Tacoma, Wash. Dorothy worked for the Washington State Office of the Governor and was a member of the Governor’s-State Teachers Association. Dorothy was a Labor organizer, a labor leader, a labor activist, labor supporter and labor advocate. Dorothy made a difference by working together.

Today, the ILWU Ladies Auxiliary is known as the ILWU Federated Auxiliaries. The ILWU Ladies Auxiliary continues to be part of the ILWU, and it continues to be a united force and a labor leader for working environments.

The northwestern United States of America, in the territory of Washington State, includes the city of Seattle, a major port city and the largest city in the state. It is also the site of the University of Washington. The Pacific Northwest is a region of the western United States and British Columbia, located between the Cascade Range and the Pacific Ocean.

Arlene Irish; Winona Joseph Myler Jr. (Dian), Mabel
Brothers Will and Adams reminded a difference by working together. They informed us Solidarity .”

The Federated Auxiliaries Executive Board meeting will be held in October 2006 in North Bend, Ore.

Dorothy Vekich (left) and Frances Schoening protesting the Iraq war.

28th Biennial NW Federated Auxiliaries Conference

The Northwest Auxiliaries of the ILWU Federated Auxiliaries were hosted by Auxiliary 38 of Olympia, Washington. Dorothy Vekich, President of Auxiliary 38 welcomed the attendees. She informed us of the Conference was “Sisters of the North West Conference. State Vice President of the ILWU Ladies Auxiliary 92—Robert Fairchild, Richard Denny, Colette Brown, Christine McGough, James Fremont, and Local 24—Karen Money; Local 63—Phil Vules, William Kalapaca, Fred Albert; Local 98—Carl T. Navarro, Stephen Segurson, Charles Shipman (Pamela), Richard Costigan Jr.; Local 92—Norman Haugen, Henry Breaker; Local 94—John Negrete, Billy Witty, Elfrida, Voden II, Emma Nae, Joseph Falzon, and Global Ponce; Local 98—Larry Hartman.

DECEASED:

Local 4—Roger Fugman (Kathleen); Local 7—Loren Owens (Virginia); Local 16—Linda Finn (Alice); Local 18—James Niehuser, Herbert Vaughn; Local 20—Joseph Myler Jr. (Dian), Charles Shipman (Pamela), James Fremont, and Global Ponce; Local 24—Alvarez, Caliph Brown Jr.; Local 26—Carl T. Navarro, Stephen Segurson, Charles Shipman (Pamela), Richard Costigan Jr.; Local 29—Local 34—Karl Geier (Patricia); Local 50—Carl Geier (Patricia); Local 52—Fred Edwards, Charles Shipman (Pamela), Richard Costigan Jr.; Local 54—James Fleming (Leso), Reino Erkkila, James Fleming; Local 63—Mary Wallin, Mary Ayers.

RECENT RETIREES:

Local 8—Kenneth R. Smith; Local 10—Adene Iris; Local 12—Roger L. Montoya; Local 13—William D. Clark, Garland Hedman 253-564-6472.

Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

For reservations call the hotel at 253-572-3000 or reservations at 800-325-3535. When making your reservations, be sure to let the hotel know you will be attending the ILWU Pacific Coast Pensioners Assn. Convention. The registration fee is $45.00 registration fee for all members attending the Convention. The registration fee will cover all events planned by the Paget Sound Pensioners Convention Committee. To obtain registration forms, contact your local ILWU Pension Club or contact Bill Roberts at 360-879-5730 or Darryl Hedman 253-564-6472.

PCPA 39th Convention Plans

Move Ahead

The ILWU Pacific Coast Pensioners will hold their 39th Annual Convention in Tacoma, Wash., Sept. 18, 19 and 20, 2006. The PCPA Executive Board will be in session Sept. 17, 2006. The Convention will meet at the Sheraton Hotel, 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, Wash. 98402. Accommodations at the hotel are $124.00 for a single or double, $10.00 for each additional person. A deluxe king is available for $144.00 for a single or double plus $10.00 for each additional person; suites are also available for $234.00.

Dorothy Vekich (right) and Frances Schoening protesting the Iraq war.

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 4—Adene Iris; Local 8—Eva Bunch; Local 10—Ida Brooks, Rosina Brooks, Agnes Randon, Rosa Drew, Jayne Brown, Minnie Atkins, Jeanette Smith; Local 12—Winona Scott, Priscilla Jacobson, Myrtle Shaw, Local 13—Mary Medison, Juanita Martinez, Bonnie R. Trujillo, Phyllis Katsich; Local 21—Mabel White; Local 34—Bessie Miller; Local 47—Gloria Swanson; Local 52—Karen Money; Local 54—Wilma Lawrence, Cleo Wennhold, Blanche Reule; Local 63—Olive Harrigan; Local 94—Mary Wallin, Mary Ayers.
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