The Power and Pain of Solidarity

The word “solidarity” is often heard in the labor movement. But putting solidarity into practice is so much harder than giving a speech or singing a song. Just ask the 311 members of ILWU Local 6 who work at Waste Management in Alameda County. A majority of the workers are women, and many are single moms who earn $11 an hour. Beginning in early July, they endured over three weeks on the picket line and mounted an impressive solidarity action to support 500 of their co-workers from the Teamsters Union who were locked out on July 2.

“It’s been really tough,” says Lola Hall. “We didn’t choose this fight but it’s a fight that we have to win.” Paul has been with the union effort at Waste Management from the beginning. She believes that all three unions representing workers at the Alameda county waste hauler share a common fate when it comes to dealing with their powerful employer. Teamster members drive the trucks carrying garbage, yard-waste and recycling. ILWU members operate the recycling program, sanitary landfill, and provide customer service, billing and other clerical duties. A group of 95 mechanics who maintain the equipment are represented by the Machinists union. Together, they make up a workforce of nearly 900. Their employer is Waste Management, a powerful global company that earned more than a billion dollars in profit last year; profits are up 19% this quarter.

Waste Management has a reputation for playing hardball with unions and environmentalists—and they have a long record of criminal, civil and administrative fines, penalties, and convictions to prove it. Just two days after the Teamster contract expired on June 30th, Waste Management officials stunned workers by locking out 500 Teamster drivers. The lockout posed some serious challenges for the ILWU workers. They had no warning, no time to prepare, no chance to save a little money or look around for other work. For the union, it meant there was no time to develop a strategy and battle plan. But going without a paycheck was the biggest fear for most workers.

"Some of us make a little more money, continued on page 3
Rite Aid deal fuels drive

By Marcy Rein

LANCASTER, Calif.—Nacho Meza walked in to his job at the Rite Aid distribution center in Lancaster June 23 to cheers and hugs from his co-workers. It was the first day he had been back to work since Rite Aid fired him Jan. 30 for helping organize his co-workers to join ILWU Warehouse Local 26. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ordered the company to re-hire him and悸Une as union supporter, Debbie Fontaine.

The Board had been ready to take Rite Aid to trial on 49 labor law violations. The company chose to settle rather than face an NLRB judge. It re-hired Meza and Fontaine as part of the settlement—and their return gave the organizing a new surge of energy.

On his first day off after being real-wired, Meza flew to Washington, D.C. with ILWU Organizer Carlos Cordon to speak at a June 19 rally for the Employee Free Choice Act. Their presence broadcast Rite Aid’s lawbreaking far and wide.

“This is the company’s attempted to present itself as nothing more than the employer, and they had no protective gear.” Unit 223 Business Agent Randall Baker said. “The employers would refuse to deal with us, saying that Unit 223 didn’t represent them.”

The employers’ refusal to voluntarily recognize Unit 223 put the women in a tough spot because the NLRB will not allow an election for a unit of “security guards” who want to join a union that includes other kinds of workers at the same workplace.

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A visit with Chinese union leaders
By Ray Familathe, International Affairs Director

M any recent nine-day trip to China, over the July 4th holiday, where I represented the ILWU was an experience that I will not soon forget. Visiting China is an incredible experience that will test your knowledge of history and open your eyes to a population of 1.3 billion people which fuels this 21st century global economy and makes China such a global economic force.

I joined a thirteen-member delegation organized by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, led by Maria Elena Durazo, head of the L.A. Fed. We visited China to establish formal relations with the Shanghai Municipal Federation of Trade Unions (SMFTU), the Shanghai Municipal Management Board and the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions. Many of us were locked out…we had to stand together.”

The delegation in China. Ray Familathe center. Dave Arian center right.

John 3rd our delegation visit-

A visit with Chinese union leaders

Leaders and Stewards were key

Local 6 Stewards and workplace leaders held many meetings and took responsibility for explaining what was at stake and why it was so important to stick together and show unity to management. Many meetings and took responsibility for explaining what was at stake and why it was so important to stick together and show unity to management. Their hard work and long hours delivered a reality for all of us.”

Lessons Learned

While ILWU workers had no idea that management was planning to lockout the Teamsters, the company was following a carefully developed anti-union plan.

WASHINGTON, July 3, 2007 (AP) — Waste Management has built a nationwide network of strikebreakers they call their “Green Team.” They recruit and develop this team of strikebreakers from their operations around the country. Scabs are issued bright green t-shirts, and the company uses anti-union law firms to quickly file claims that unions are using “violence, threats, and intimidation” against employees.

Tentative deal in Local 63 OCU contract

Local 63 Office Clericals announced a tentative accord July 26 with Waste Management companies for a three-year contract covering the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. “This agreement means the good jobs our community needs will stay here,” Local 63 OCU President John Fagaus said. “As we go to vote on this contract, workers are very excited.”

“This contract guarantees good jobs and the respect that all clericals deserve,” Local 63 OCU Secretary-Treasurer Debbie Karmelich said. “Talks began back in July and in August were held by several long days of talks. The new contract establishes a multi-employer pension trust that provides secure retirement and health benefits.

Solidarity Dollars

Financial support from the ILWU and other unions helped ease the burden on workers. The ILWU contributed $10,000, Longshore Division contributed another $20,000 from the Longshore Division. Local 64 members contributed $10,000. Local 10 sent $5,000. Other locals also stepped forward to cross the second week but over 90% were still honoring the picket line after 3 weeks without a paycheck.

“Fear really good that we are standing up and being strong for so long,” says Jo Martinez, Chief Steward at the landfill.

“Don’t go to walkout or picket line. And the lowest- wage workers from the recycling department mounted one the strongest showings of solidarity despite the severe economic hardship their families.

“It was really hard because we had to pay our bills, and many of us make so little money,” said Juan Carlos Cruz who does recycling work and brought his six-year-old daughter Viana to the union hall. Despite the severe hardship, Juan and his co-workers held the line and stood strong.

Addressing the need for a viable union in a global economy, the ALA Labor Council called banks and utilities, telling creditors to give workers some slack during the job action. Bags of groceries were distributed at the Local 6 union hall, and a hardship fund was organized to provide emergency cash to families in crisis.

Waste Management took advantage of Wal-Mart’s size and power to impose its anti-union agenda. Wal-Mart was extremely anti-union in its Beijing office. The ILWU delegation organized by the Los Angeles Federation of Labor met with the Beiren Machine Factory, a local machine manufacturing company, and the Fuji Corporation from Japan which manufactures high quality printing presses. We had a brief tour of the factory but were unable to speak directly to the workers, and we were surprised when the manager lectured us at length while the union official sat silently.

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The Green Team allows management to staff a lock-out quickly during a dispute. The company expects a flood of customer complaints for the first few weeks, but the Green Team allows them to staff up relatively quickly and function better each day.

Waste Management uses anti-union law firms to file lawsuits against strikers and lockouts. They immediately file claims that unions are using “violence, threats, and intimidation” against employees, and then they promote these claims with the news media to shift public opinion in their favor.

Waste Management has massive financial resources and is willing to endure losses in order to achieve their anti-union objectives. With over a billion in annual profit, the company can afford to make considerable financial losses at the local operation where they have a union problem.

Responding to these initiatives is just part of the broader challenge facing the ILWU and the broader labor movement, according to ILWU International President Bob McElrath. “We have to develop a progressive anti-union strategy, respond to their anti-union campaign, and continue to build political power at the local and national level,” he said. “That’s a lot, but it’s what we have to do to make solidarity work in the ILWU, and it’s the task of our courageous sisters and brother at Local 6—more of a reality for all of us.”
SAN FRANCISCO
The Big Strike of 1934 was nearly two months old when cops gunned down two strikers on the streets of San Francisco on July 5th. On that day, forever known as “Bloody Thursday,” 800 cops backed by the National Guard tried to open the port. The battle raged on for most of the morning. Workers gathered quietly in front of the union hall on Steuart Street for lunch. Then cops pulled up and fired into the crowd. Longshoreman Howard Sperry was hit in the back. Nick Bordoiie, a union cook, went down; both men died. At least 32 people were wounded by gunfire that day—none of them were cops. Police seriously injured 75 others in beatings.

Maritime workers had struck the ports up and down the West Coast on May 9, demanding a union-run hiring hall, a Coastwise contract, a local union and the maritime industry, “You said what had to be said. And some times you sang the songs people didn’t want to be sung. Have courage, brothers and sisters, if you want to keep this union going.”

Local 10 President Tommy Clark said, “Things didn’t come just because you were good look ing people. It came because people had the guts to do what had to be done. You said what had to be said. And some times you sang the songs people didn’t want to be sung. Have courage, brothers and sisters, if you want to keep this union going.”

Local 10’s John Castanho said.

Retiree Clephas Williams, the first African-American president of Local 10, spoke on the difficulties of control that they fired on Senator Wagner’s (D-NY) car, the same senator who would push the National Labor Relations Act through Congress a year later. President Roosevelt signed that “Bill of Rights for Labor” on the first anniversary of Bloody on Thursday, July 5, 1935.

Over 1,400 people turned out to remember their fallen brothers and sisters at Local 19’s Bloody Thursday commemoration in Vasa Park at Lake Sammanish in Seattle.

At the ceremony, Bloody Thursday was celebrated.

Johnson: “Somebody had to pay. You don’t get the conditions we have today, but it was a blessing and memorial prayer for the six longshoremen who are honored on Bloody Thursday, and for those who have passed since July 5, 2006. Teresa Bowman, the wife of Butch Bowman who died in a tragic motorcycle accident recently, was among the relatives of the deceased who attended. As several bands played, members and their families lined up to play baseball and douse Local 19 President Herald Ugles who took his soaking in a “dunk tank.”

In 1934, Seattle maritime workers fought with scabs almost daily for more than a month. Late in the night of June 30, strike delegate Shelby Daffron was gunned down. Nineteen days later, striking sailor Olaf Helland was hit in the head and killed by a gas grenade.

Dutch Harbor, Alaska
Alaska Longshore Division Unit 223 in Dutch Harbor held their first Bloody Thursday event this year. The unit invited all waterfront workers to a barbeque at Keilty Field to commemorate the history of the ILWU and welcome their newly-organized members: APL and Horizon security guards and Delta Western fuelers.

About 150 people attended, including IUB members from the Harbormaster’s Office. In addition to the food, there were special events for the many kids including bingo riding, sack races, and a piñata.

International Executive Board member Pete Hendrickson described the history of Bloody Thursday and the ILWU, and called for an annual Bloody Thursday event.

—Jan Gilbrecht, International Organizer

SAN PEDRO
ILWU families gathered at San Pedro’s Peck Park for a picnic that included speeches by ILWU leaders and local politicians, music, entertainment and food provided by Locals 13, 63 and 94. ILWU officers and retirees spoke to television, radio and print journalists, including Fox News, ABC-7, KFWB Newsradio, KPFK and the Torrance Daily Breeze.

PORTLAND
Members and families of Clerks’ Local 40 and Longshore Local 8 attended a memorial and picnic on July 5th in Oaks Park. A group of Local 8 longshoremen led by Marvin Ricks, placed a large floral wreath in the Willamette River. Ricks is a retired Local 8 member who is the last surviving longshoreman in Portland from the Great Strike of 1934. As the wreath was laid to rest in the water, the grandson of Joe O’Neill, a retired Local 8 member, played taps.

Back in 1934, the workers in San Francisco, 40,000 workers joined the murdered men’s funeral procession as it marched silently down Market Street. The whole city closed down in a general strike and the port remained closed until the workers won their demands.

—Tom Price

Mike Toporoff, a retired Local 8 member who is the last surviving longshoreman in Portland attended a memorial and picnic on July 5.

Local 10 President Tommy Clark also said, “Things didn’t come just because you were good looking people. It came because people had the guts to do what had to be done. You said what had to be said. And some times you sang the songs people didn’t want to be sung. Have courage, brothers and sisters, if you want to keep this union going.”
China delegation cont'd from p. 3
Dispatcher, and explained that he is a regular reader of the union's paper and other news from the U.S.

On July 4th we traveled to Shanghaï, which was one of the most incredible modern cities that I have seen anywhere in the world. We were met there by Huang Guo Peng of the International Department of the Shanghai Municipal Trade Union Council. Their Council represents 6 million workers in Shanghaï, a city of over 20 million.

We had a very positive meeting with the Council. Maria Elena Durazo and Chen Hao, President of the Shanghai Municipal Trade Union Council, agreed to establish sister-city relations between the two labor councils and exchange delegations each year between LA and Shanghaï during spring of 2008. This represents the first such relationship between Chicago and Shanghai.

Finally on July 6th we visited the Yangshang Deep Water Port of Shanghaï, which is located 18 miles offshore, connected to the mainland by an immense superhighway over shallow waters that took us 2 hours to reach by bus from downtown Shanghaï. David Ariam and I thought the Shanghai Shenglong International Terminal (SSIT) was like Disneyland on the docks. This single terminal had 34 hammerhead cranes, 120 transstaits, 16 top-scapers, 5 reach stackers and 220 UTIs. Using twin spreaders on the hammerhead cranes, our host Captain Wang informed us that they just set a new record of moving 96 forty-foot containers in a single hour, requiring 48 moves for the cranes. The SSIT terminal was completed in 2005 and is now in phase 2 of operation. The raise will apply to Shovies workers across the province.

RWDSU members have brothers and sisters who work in hotels, pineapple and sugar in Hawaii, and in warehouse and longshore, Adams said. “They have brothers and sisters anywhere. We’ve had tugboats and in bookstores. We may all look a little different, act a little different, but we represent the work- ing class, we’re a bottom-up union, a democratic union, we are the vision of the people who control us.”

The 130 delegates and guests also included ILWU Canada’s President Tom Dufresne, President of ILWU Canada, Federation of Labor President Larry Hubich, Grain Services Union, ILWU Canada and Canadian Federation of Labor President Larry Hubich, President of ILWU Canada First Vice President Bob Ashton. Provincial Premier Lorne Calvert, a member of the ILWU and the Shanghai dockers and exchange delegations each with the Council. Maria Elena Durazo and Chen Hao, President of the Shanghai Municipal Trade Union Council. Their Council represents 6 million workers in Shanghaï, a city of over 20 million.

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Tom Price

Morris; John Castanho, Local 10; Jeanne Kagel. to R): Joe Mosley, President, Bay Area Pensioners Club; "Indian Joe"

Local 10 honored Jeanne Kagel at its Bloody Thursday celebration. (L to R): Joe Mosley, President, Bay Area Pensioners Club; "Indian Joe" Morris; John Castanho, Local 10; Jeanne Kagel.

Oakland, California waterfront.

As a young produce employee he slipped watermelons to itinerant Wobblies, as the rebels of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) were known, and read deeply in the writings of London, Frank Norris, Emile Zola, Anatole France and Upton Sinclair. "Those guys were basically sociologists who turned out to be great writers," he said in his oral history recorded in 1999.

In the mid-1920s, Kagel attended the University of California, Berkeley. He worked his way through school handing out towels in the campus gymnasium and laboring in the produce industry until he was invited to read examination papers in economics during his senior year.

Kagel graduated from Cal in 1920 and then went on to a college preparatory a student and a teaching fellow. When the eminent labor economist Paul S. Taylor got him a temporary job advocating for unions with the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau (PCLB), a private consulting firm, the direction of Kagel's life was set for what would become an extraordinarily long and brilliant career.

The San Francisco office of the PCLB had been recently established under the direction of Henry Melnikow when Kagel went to work there in 1932. The bureau represented unions in negotiation, mediation and arbitration proceedings. Melnikow needed a great man named "Indian Joe" to Kagel, who stayed with the PCLB for ten years. He arrived, it turned out, just in time to participate in the labor upheaval of the mid-1930s, which started regionally with the West Coast maritime and San Francisco general strikes of 1934.

Kagel got acquainted with Bridges during 1932-1933. He helped with the organizing campaign on the San Francisco waterfront in 1933 that replaced the existing company-dominated "Blue Book" union with the worker-controlled, autonomous Pacific Coast District of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA).

The employers had used the Blue Book in the 1920s to control longshore laborers and deny them true union benefits. In other ports there were employer-controlled hiring halls, called "fink halls" by the workers, that served the same purpose. This was why the longshore unions demanded a worker-controlled hiring hall in 1934.

Once the 1934 strike began, Kagel met with Bridges on a daily basis as his close advisor. He remembered strategizing for hours on end with the longshore leader in the small PCLB office on the mezzanine in the Ferry Building on the San Francisco waterfront.

There were times during the May through July strike when Kagel would find himself at Bridges' desk, ready to fly and forgoing home because the hours were so long and the demands on him so unremitting. "But I never felt put upon," he said. "This was part of the job. I was representing unions. I wasn't there for the fun of it."

As the PCLB's waterfront advisor, Kagel also worked closely with Randolph Meriwether of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), which was on strike with all of the other maritime unions. Appointed an honorary MEBA member in June 1934, the 25 year old Kagel represented that organization on the important Joint Maritime Strike Committee (JMSC), which Bridges chaired. Kagel remained justifiably proud of that service for the rest of his life. Before he passed away he was the last living JMSC member.

Kagel witnessed the violence of Bloody Thursday, July 5, 1934, when San Francisco police killed two workers and wounded scores of others. "I didn't see the guys getting shot in the back," he said. But he did see "guys getting clubbed." He walked in the great peasant funeral parade up Market Street four days later. "Nobody said anything while we were marching," he remembered. "Except for the low music and the shuffling of shoes there wasn't a single sound."

A week later Kagel saw the famous San Francisco general strike of July 16-19, when all of the region's union members stopped work in a show of sympathy and solidarity, "I looked up Market Street and there was nothing moving," he recalled of that historic event. "It was like in the movies where something happens and all of a sudden the film slows blank.

When the San Francisco general and the coastwise maritime strikes ended, Kagel counseled Bridges while the latter prepared to testify before the National Longshoremen's Board, which arbitrated the dispute and handed down a landmark decision in favor of the workers. Bridges was articu- late and was "the name" in the strike, Kagel explained. Besides, he said, Bridges "had worked all types of cargo. So what better witness do you want to describe the conditions on the waterfront? Harry was made to order."

Kagel picked a great witness. Henry Schmidt and others also testified that summer, but Bridges proved spectacular in describing the degrading longshore employment conditions that brought on the strike, including extortion and favoritism in hiring, brutally long work shifts, and unsafe "speed ups" on the job.

In the aftermath of the what has been known ever since as the Big Strike, Kagel became widely known in Northern California as a representa- tive of a broad variety of unions. Most notably, from 1934 through 1947, he helped plan organizing drives and negotiate contracts for the ILA during its dramatic "march inland" into the San Francisco Bay Area warehouse, distribution, and production industries.

Working with Eugene Paton and other organ- izers, the initially small waterfront warehouse bastion emerged as one of Northern California's most important unions. In 1937 it became Local 6, ILWU, when the Pacific Coast District ILA turned itself into the ILWU.

San Francisco's employers locked out all of their newly-unionized warehouse workers the fol- lowing year. As usual, Kagel played a central role. Throughout that summer-long crisis he consulted daily with Paton, who was by then Local 6's presi- dent. Ultimately the lockout was settled on terms satisfactory to both sides. One result was the creation of the Local 6 master contract system that is still in place today.

Paton died young a few years after World War II. But Kagel never forgot his good friend. In later years, he always credited Paton, along with some other ILWU pioneer organizers like Oakland's Paul Heide, with the success of the march inland in Northern California.

After the United States entered World War II in December 1941, Kagel joined the federal gov- ernment's War Manpower Commission (WMC). He decided this made more sense than staying with the PCLB at a time when most unions, including the ILWU, were committing to a "no strike pledge" for the duration of the conflict.

Sam Kagel passes— one of the last links to the 1934 strike

By Harvey Schwartz

Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

The ILWU lost one of its most esteemed friends when former coast arbitrator for the long- shore industry Sam Kagel died on May 21. He was 98. As coast arbitrator, Kagel was a major figure on the waterfront for 54 years between his appointment in 1948 and his retirement in 2002. As a person who served as a union advocate in the 1930s, he was also one of the last living links to the 1934 strike and to the founding of the ILWU.

Among the many remarkable things about Kagel was that he was completely trusted by both the ILWU and the employer bargaining group, the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA). Everyone knew he was close to Harry Bridges from 1934 on and that his background included union advocacy. But everyone in the ILWU and the PMA also knew that he was thoroughly honest and scrupulously fair in everything he did.

Those qualities held Kagel in good stead as he presided over hearings, interpreted the longshore contract as well as agreements in the warehouse industry, and handed down arbitration decisions over so many decades. That he was also direct and down-to-earth, humane and progressive in his per- sonal values, and in possession of a great sense of humor seemed only to increase his attractiveness.

Kagel emerged from humble beginnings in an immigrant family to become one of America's lead- ing figures in the field of labor mediation and arbi- tration. Born in 1909 to Jewish parents who fled persecution in the Russian Empire for asylum and work in the United States, Kagel grew up in Jack London's old working-class neighborhood near the

Coast Arbitrator Sam Kagel

Kagel, flanked by ILWU President Harry Bridges and the PMA's Paul Heide, was one of the last links to the 1934 strike of July 16-19, when all of the region's union members stopped work in a show of sympathy and solidarity, "I looked up Market Street and there was nothing moving," he recalled of that historic event. "It was like in the movies where something happens and all of a sudden the film slows blank.

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San Francisco's employers locked out all of their newly-unionized warehouse workers the fol- lowing year. As usual, Kagel played a central role. Throughout that summer-long crisis he consulted daily with Paton, who was by then Local 6's presi- dent. Ultimately the lockout was settled on terms satisfactory to both sides. One result was the creation of the Local 6 master contract system that is still in place today.

Paton died young a few years after World War II. But Kagel never forgot his good friend. In later years, he always credited Paton, along with some other ILWU pioneer organizers like Oakland's Paul Heide, with the success of the march inland in Northern California.

After the United States entered World War II in December 1941, Kagel joined the federal gov- ernment's War Manpower Commission (WMC). He decided this made more sense than staying with the PCLB at a time when most unions, including the ILWU, were committing to a "no strike pledge" for the duration of the conflict.
Coast arbitrator Sam Kagel 1909 – 2007

Kagel, flanked by ILWU President Harry Bridges and the PMA's Ed Flynn, announces the end of the 1971-72 strike. Pictured of the Pacific Coast.

rest of his long career. He was already well-known provided Kagel with an outstanding home base for the table. I was sitting over here by myself.”

ners. For the first time in their history Harry and his employers tried to get rid of it in ’48. It took a dispute made by four major port area arbitrators.

dispute, “The longshoremen had gotten the union-coastwise longshore strike. Kagel said of that was taking arbitration cases on a regular basis.

school at the University of California’s Boalt Hall, he was another pivotal development in his life. He was

tral arbitrator.

the name adopted for the apparel industry’s new

rubber workers employed directly by stevedore companies. These issues were eventually settled on a port by port basis. Pacific Longshore Local 13 needed an experienced hand to present its steady worker cases in post-strike arbitration proceedings before Kagel. Rudy Rubio, who had served as the local’s secretary-treasurer until his two year term limit expired during the strike, was the logical choice. He said recently on the Local 13 representative, he found watching Kagel in action to be an education. “What especially impressed me,” Rubio noted, “was that Kagel instilled a real code of ethics into the arbitration system.”

In 1977 Rubio became International Vice-President. During the five decades after his appointment to the Longshore Longshore Local 10 made him an honorary member at its yearly July 6 memorial in San Francisco in remembrance of the settlement of a major strike. I seemed a fitting tribute to a man who had spent 54 years on the job and seven decades in all working for justice in the turbulent world of labor relations.

Sam Kagel is survived by his second wife, Sophia, who he sepa-

rated from in 1971, preceded him in death. He is also survived by his and Sophia’s children, John Kagel, who is now the arbitrator for the Pacific Coast longshore industry, Peter Kagel, of San Francisco, Katharine Kagel, of Sante Fe, New Mexico, three step children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Donations in Kagel’s memory can be sent to the Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University, 480 Winston Drive, San Francisco, CA 94132; the Sam Kagel documentary program, care of the Harry Bridges Project, P. O. Box 962018, Los Angeles, CA 90066; or Kids’ Turn, 1242 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Kagel, who is now the arbitrator for the Pacific Coast longshore industry, Peter Kagel, of San Francisco, while mediating the 1971-72 strike.
Air pollution from expanding ports in the Pacific Northwest is a growing concern among state and federal regulatory authorities, port officials, industry executives and longshore workers. At a series of recent gatherings of these groups in Washington State, members of the ILWU and ILWU Canada spoke out about their personal experiences with air pollution at the ports and the unions’ ongoing efforts to encourage owner-operating companies to clean up their emissions.

At the Freight Freight Cleaner Air Puget Sound Conference, May 16, in Seattle, Michael Jagielski of Tacoma Longshore Local 10 and Albert LeMonnier, 2nd Vice President of ILWU Canada, told attendees how longshore workers are increasingly exposed every day to potentially carcinogenic chemicals found in the soot emitted by ships, trucks and yard equipment operating at Pacific Northwest ports.

In two panels at the conference, each longshoreman offered his advice to regulators and industry representatives about how ports and their tenants can make progress on cleaning up this pollution with emerging technologies, many of which were on display in the conference exhibitors’ room.

“While we must continue a growing econom- ies to potentially carcinogenic chemicals...” said Washington State Department of Ecology Executive Director and conference keynote speaker Jay Manning. “We’re the canaries in the coalmine.”

Jack Heyman, the translator, Manawell Abdul-Ali, Willie Adams and Tim Paulson.

COLORADO LABOR LEADER VISITS LABOR COUNCIL

The San Francisco Labor Council invited Manawell Abdul-Ali of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions to address unionists in San Francisco. The invitation was extended by Tim Paulson, Executive Director of the Labor Council.

“I was in Israel and Palestine as head of the Labor Council and met both Israeli and Palestinian leaders.” The San Francisco Bay Area labor leader said.

Several ILWU members attended the meeting, including Jack Heyman from Local 10. “It’s important for us to have contact with labor leaders around the world, especially at a time that has witnessed the rise of Islamic fundamentalism,” explained Heyman.

Mr. Abdul-Ali emphasized that his Federation is struggling to build labor solidarity despite the hardships of occupation and civil strife.

ILWU International Treasurer-Treasurer Willie Adams and Vice President Joe Raddisch presented Abdul-Ali with ILWU pins when he visited the ILWU Headquarters.

P A L E S T I N I A N L A B O R L E A D E R V I S I T S L A B O R C O U N C I L

By John Snowatter

A

Continued on page 9 PACIFIC NORTHWEST, CANADIAN LOCALS JOIN DISCUSSION ON PORT AIR POLLUTION

In the early stages of a 2 year re-construction project.

My problem is getting APL manage- ment and they are difficult to use as I can do about this situation.

Reality Check: Health and Safety

(Note: the following letter was submit- ted to The Dispatcher in Cal/Osha... We encourage you to share similar letters in stories or with other labor leaders)

Mr. Ken Gleiter, Area Manager CAL/OSHA

April 24 2007

I’ll try and make this as brief as I can. My name is Bill De La Mater. I am a stevedore in Port of Oakland. I work for American President Lines. I have been with APL for 19 years. I have been on the job night and day for over a year at their Middle Harbor facility in the Port of Oakland. I have never been late for work. I have no stories or problems with APL. If I had to take time off from work (that is until recently) I’m 64 and plan to continue working for APL until I’m 67. God willing.

American President Lines Middle Harbor facility is in the early stages of a 2 year re-construction project.

My problem is getting APL manage- ment to instruct their construction contractor O.C. Jones to use the water truck at night to control the dust. I have made several complaints to my direct supervisor Mr. Ron Defanti, but without acknowledgement from APL management or any results. During the day the water truck is used (for all to see) but at night the truck sits at the construction continues on a 24 hr basis. The dust from this landfill dirt has a peculiar feature. It is the portion of the container yard that is currently under construc- tion is located near an old SHEREX plant site that was torn- down years ago due to non-compliance with hazmat regulations. I fear that the dust is from contaminated soil. I have developed a chronic cough when I breathe this dust that’s stirred-up with the construction equipment.

This dust causes me to cough, so much so, that I have had to take a day off or two after being exposed (without pay as we do not have sick leave) due to the lack of sleep and chronic coughing. I have been exam- ined by my doctor and he tells me that this dust is an irritant, and I should wear a dust mask as long as I’m exposed to it. Dust masks are ineffective and give little protec- tion and they are very uncomfortable. I must talk on the terminals radio and telephone to Longshoremen, Pilots, Visitors, Mechanics, Police and other Emergency Personnel. One night when the problem was so bad that I couldn’t breathe, I was approached to an O.C. Jones employee and asked him if something could be done about the dust. He replied that the requested response was swift and to the point.

The following day APL printed and distributed to all US and CANADA O.C. Jones construction employees stat- ing that they were not to have any contact with any APL employees who are members of a union. That night the APL carpenter Mr. Dennis Lenart, who has been assigned to see the construction, made my asss for talking to the O.C. Jones employee and told me I was to have no further dialogue with any of the construc- tion workers. He continued to tell me, and I quote: “This is as good as it’s going to get Bill. If you can’t handle the dust, I suggest you quit and seek employment down the road.” The following day I emailed my boss Mr. Christian Jones, who is the Manager of Security and Environment and I asked him if this was APL’s solution to the dust prob- lem. He replied that he considered it an alternative solution if I was not satisfied with APL’s management of the matter. Mr. Gleiter, this has been APL’s only response to the problem. If I go away, the problem goes away. I have acquired some retirement benefits that I hope to enjoy with my family some day. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I would appreciate hearing that you can do about this situation.

—Bill De La Mater, Local 75

Clime Action Task Force was mod- ulated on a similar task force set up by the ILWU and Maersk voluntarily shifting to lower-sulfur fuels and experiment- ing with alternative marine power (AKA “cold-ironing”) for docked ships at California and Pacific Northwest ports, the collective efforts of the ILWU, the ports and industry appear to be paying off, albeit gradually, in terms of cleaning up port air.

“The slow persistence of our campaig- n’s effect on shipping industry practices makes me feel like we are doing something,” said Jagielski “like water dripping in a caving.”

Climate Change Task Force was mod- euled on a similar task force set up by the ILWU and Maersk voluntarily shifting to lower-sulfur fuels and experiment- ing with alternative marine power (AKA “cold-ironing”) for docked ships at California and Pacific Northwest ports, the collective efforts of the ILWU, the ports and industry appear to be paying off, albeit gradually, in terms of cleaning up port air.

“The slow persistence of our campaign’s effect on shipping industry practices makes me feel like we are doing something,” said Jagielski “like water dripping in a caving.”

Climate Change Task Force was mod-
Flat rack accidents highlight safety concerns

By John Showalter

Two separate incidents involving flat racks at the Port of Los Angeles-Long Beach in June serve as a reminder of just how dangerous the docks can be. The incidents occurred on Tuesday, June 5 and Friday, June 8. In the June 5 incident, a loaded High Cube flat rack corner casting which was being hoisted to the truck chassis, was returned to the dock with chains attached from the bottom corners. Twelve flat racks—series number MATU370063-6 through MATU370066-2, which were manufactured in China—have been taken out of service and required to be recertified before they can be put back into use. This precaution has been the stated position of the Coast Safety Committee representative, Joint Port Safety Committee, two years to the day of the second incident. In the second flat rack failure, on June 8th, flat racks were being discharged from below deck and failed when they separated from their locked castings while being lowered to the dock. The flat racks crashed onto the truck chassis, requiring the UTR driver to seek medical attention, but fortunately not causing a fatality. Hoisting stacked, flat racks from below deck is not advised because there is no way for a visual inspection to be made to insure that they are properly connected. The position of the ILWU Coast Safety Committee is that stacked flat racks are to be brought up from below deck onto the ship’s hatch cover, individually lifted, or secured from their bottom corners and hoisted.

According to the position of the ILWU’s Longshore Division, the Coast Safety Committee (CSC) has been advocating the CSC’s view, that stacked flat racks cannot be re-hoisted unless they are secured from the bottom corners. This stance has been maintained since the CSC first raised the issue in 2004.

Contract education for casuals and ‘B’-Registrants

By John Showalter

The 2008 contract negotiations—one month away, the ILWU’s local education committees coastwise and others are working to bolster everyone’s understanding of what may be included in the ILWU family learn about the negotiating process and the union’s plan for winning a better contract. A series of classes are being conducted for newcasuals, ‘B’-registrants and registered longshore workers at several locals. The classes cover local longshore history, recent political activity and past contract negotiations with the employer, and how to advocate for job safety.

A series of classes are being conducted for the Longshore Division of ILWU, its history and its culture. The classes are an essential part of training for new hires and ‘B’-registrants’ orientation coverage.

“it’s important that workers have a place to go and get answers,” Aguirse said. “When new workers ask questions at these classes, it dispels rumors and misunderstandings about the union that might circulate on the job. We also want members to feel empowered and in tune with the issues we’ll face at contract time next year. Longshore work is very dangerous, and the good jobs we’ve won are important in our communities where we live. These classes will make it easier for workers to communicate that message to the public.”

“Many instances of flat rack accidents go unreported,” said ILWU Safety Committee member and Local 94 President Danny Miranda, “Especially incidents where individuals get injured by multi-lift flat racks. Damaged flat racks, rigging using wire or chain-leg spreaders attached to each corner of a bottom unit for hoisting them in a stack, and ground personnel should stand clear at least one hatch away from the lifting, approximately 40 feet.”


Juneteenth honors African American history

This year’s Juneteenth celebration in San Francisco honored the role of African American maritime workers by placing the ILWU Drill Team at the front of the parade. Longshore Local 10 retiree Josh Williams, in his fortieth year with the team, was parade Grand Marshall and his team took first prize as “Best Drill Team.”

San Francisco’s 57th annual Juneteenth celebration, held June 16-17 in the Fillmore district, brought thousands of people to the street fairs and the music festivals. The first true observance of Juneteenth was in Galveston, Texas. It stated that all slaves are free and that nearly three years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, federal troops read a proclamation in Galveston, Texas. It stated that all slaves are free and that this is an absolute right of persons of all colors, races, and rights of property, between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them, become that between employer and hired labor.

Attendants of Union members and the Western Regional Universities Consortium designed the course. Steve Hecker, Senior Lecturer at the Univ. of Washington also participated.

“we did an internal audit in Local 10 and we found about two-and-a-half times as many workers live in Alameda Co.,” Castano said. “We live where we work, we work where we live.”
Over the years, several books have been written about the ILWU. The following list details the author, title, publisher, price, main subject or theme, and availability of these books. These and other publications about the ILWU can also be read at the ILWU Library.


Smith, Scott B. Industrial Relations In The Pacific Coast Longshore Industry. Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley, 1956. A traditional study of labor relations in the longshore industry, focusing on the ILWU's organizing campaign in warehouse and distribution.


Ston a 10-foot tall statue of Harry Bridges will stand watch over the San Francisco waterfront. The project has gotten as far as raising money, getting preliminary support from the Port and building a three-foot tall model of the statue in clay. Local 10’s Richard Mead said, “Now we’re consolidating our forces politically to get the model approved for the Harry Bridges Plaza.”

“Mead said. “We put authorization for the statue into the Port Commission’s resolution naming the plaza after Harry. We’re going to the Board of Supervisors and Port to get this design approved.”

The Committee for the Harry Bridges Plaza began its work with the Port and the City a decade ago to name a special spot for Bridges in honor of the contributions of maritime workers to the City. The spot chosen is by the Ferry Bldg., within sight of where “the shape-up ball” used to be. Before the ILWU and the union hiring hall, longshoremen used to beg for jobs.

The Committee has raised $100,000, including $10,000 from the Port’s Ted “Whitey” Kelm, who is also an actor known for portraying the plant manager in the film “Norma Rae.”

Griff Fariello chairs the committee, Richard Mead is secretary and David Selvin is treasurer. The Committee’s project will need as much as $500,000 to cast the statue in bronze, insure it, and provide perpetual maintenance.

—Iron Pesce

Bridges statue growing taller

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

The curriculum will focus on “What It Will Take in 2008,” from the nuts and bolts of Robert’s Rules of Order and running a union meeting to how to use communication skills, manage conflict, and work effectively in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, international setting. The urgency of meeting the twin challenges posed by national elections and industry negotiations in the coming year will underlie all discussions. The curriculum will be drawn from the ranks of active and retired members as well as from the staff of the International, the AFL-CIO, university labor centers, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

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

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

Please return completed forms to me by fax or mail no later than July 27, 2007. ILWU LEAD V Applications, c/o Int. Secretary-Treasurer William Mead, ILWU, Bldg. 1, 1160 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94109 (Fax: 415-775-1302). Questions may be addressed to or from Gene Vrana, Director of Educational Services, at the same address.
The Red Eye Express—Local 63 OCU’s Bargaining Team worked long days and longer nights to win a good contract. They were joined here by International President Bob McElrath, Vice President Joe Radisch and Coast Committeeeman Ray Ortiz Jr.

Pensioners never retire from the Union

Pacific Coast Pensioners Asn. members were out in force June 14, doing what they’ve always done—helping the ILWU and supporting workers at Rite Aid.

In Eureka Club President Mike Mullen and others did a bang-up job, as did pensioners from the Oregon Coast, Columbia River, Washington Coast and Puget Sound. Rite Aid workers want to join ILWU Local 26, but Rite Aid has committed numerous labor law violations to beat back the union. They will not succeed. We’ll be back until Rite Aid in Lancaster is ILWU! We want our fellow workers to know they have the backing of all active and retired ILWU members. We practice what we preach: An injury to one is an injury to all.” —Rich Austin, President, Pacific Coast Pensioners Asn.