

Labor kicks off battle for  
Employee Free Choice Act  
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# The DISPATCHER

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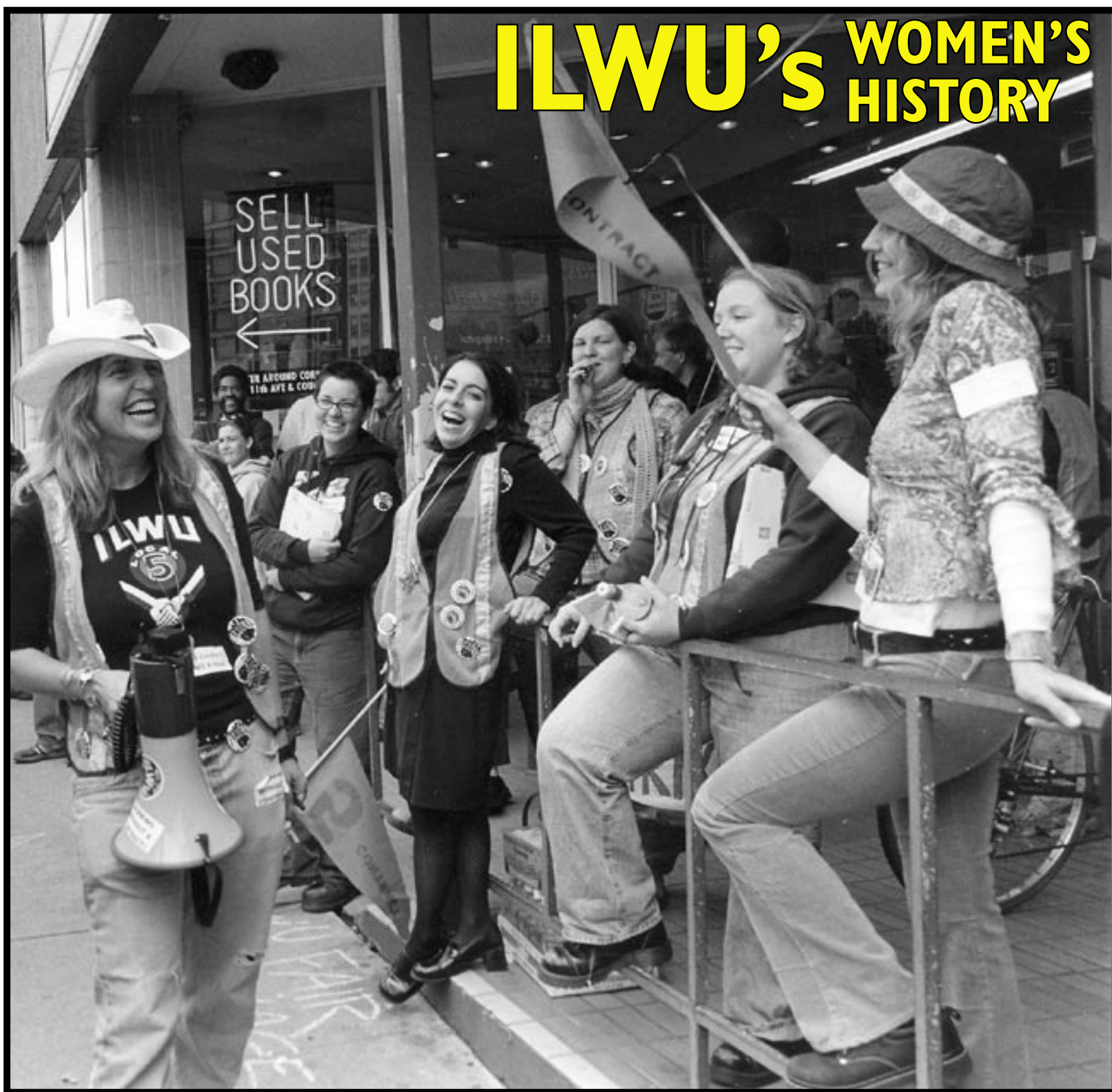
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Bette Lee

Women on the line—the Powell's Books Story

## In celebration of Women's History Month

Women's History Month has deep roots in the labor movement, and this should not be a surprise to working families. Since the first woman went into labor in the birth of the first man, women have worked. And since humans first learned to gather plants, fish hunt and make clothes, women have worked.

In the labor movement women were often the first out the door when strike time came. They formed cooperatives and unions, and before they had the right to vote, they formed political parties. But they were often the last to be recognized.

Women also faced discrimination, harassment and assault on the job and in their unions. Their efforts have often been marginalized, even in the labor

movement, which they co-founded. Labor must remember that women fought against slavery when they were little more than chattel in their own homes.

Labor must remember women like Frances Perkins, President Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor and the first woman cabinet member. She had witnessed the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire in 1911, where a quarter of the 600 women garment workers had died, and she made a life-long commitment to labor rights. Women's History Month was founded in part to remember that tragedy. As Secretary Perkins would administer the National Labor Relations Act, a New Deal bill that legalized workers' rights to form unions and, if necessary, to strike. Under her leadership,

the National Longshore Arbitration Board ruled the ILWU had a right to coastwise bargaining with maritime employers. That was because the employers acted as a group and it was only fair the workers should have the same rights. The coastwise longshore contract is that legacy.

She crossed paths with the ILWU again in 1939 when she refused to deport Harry Bridges. The Labor Dept. ran the immigration service then, and right wing Congressmen threatened Perkins with impeachment for her refusal. She stuck to her guns and Bridges won. While the New Deal reforms might have blunted the militancy of workers, it also provided many gains. Every time a worker cashes a Social Security check she can

thank Perkins, who helped write the Social Security legislation.

This month *The Dispatcher* remembers the founding of warehouse, retail and allied Local 5 through the words of its former president, Mary Winzig. While this is only one example of women in the ILWU, it shows women will carry the union's banner into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives, honored the Harry Bridges building with her presence in San Francisco in support of the Employee Free Choice Act. She warmly greeted Local 6 retiree Leroy King, co-chair of her first congressional campaign. See Marcy Rein's story on page 3.

—Tom Price



**Ken Bauder, Secretary-Treasurer ILWU Canada:** “This gives Canadians a way to see how it’s done in the US, where the reporting rules are generally more punitive. It was very useful to get instructions on what documents to save and archive, and which documents you shouldn’t. I’m taking that back and will implement it in my office.”

“The ILWU traditionally has had a good turnover of officers, and often the staff has to train the new officers in how these things work to protect our history and be stewards of the union. I see many staff members here and we are able to collaborate with each other in training.”



**Kristi Lovato, President Local 5:** “In our local we have a high turnover rate and not a lot of institutional memory, so it’s helpful to have these trainings as new officers come in we can gain the expertise of more experienced officers. I appreciate the examples, the question and answers in each packet that we can take back to our hall.”

We saw a big change in the last Congressional election, and I hope that with a new presidential administration there will be less of a focus on penalizing unions and looking for ways to make our jobs more difficult.”



**Martha Hendricks, Secretary-Treasurer/ BA Local 40:** “There are pros and cons of rank and file people running our offices, and one of the cons is that at times there’s a lack of continuity in education and knowledge. The conference was such an education, with amazing speakers, and the actual tangible info we can take back to our locals to pass on. These conferences are wonderful to help us follow the laws and do it well.”

# ILWU Secretary-Treasurers’ Conference, 2007

By Gene Vrana, Director of Educational Services and Librarian  
Photos by Frank Wilder

The largest and most diverse group of ILWU officers ever to attend the union’s Secretary Treasurers Conference assembled in San Francisco to update their understanding of local union administration. The Jan. 29-Feb. 2 program was designed to help ensure ILWU compliance with federal regulations and internal union procedures. Participating were 31 local secretary-treasurers, 21 who hold other office (e.g. president, business agent, patrolman), nine trustees, and 11 clerical employees, such as book keepers and office managers.

ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, Mainland Vice President Joe Radisich, and VP Hawaii Wesley Furtado welcomed the participants.

“You are the core of the union,” said International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams in his opening remarks. “You keep us going and serve the members needs and keep us in compliance with federal regulations and union procedures. The members need you to know how to protect the union so they can be without worry to focus on doing their jobs and taking care of their families.”

Instructors for the conference, which has been held about every two years since 1998, included ILWU attorneys Chris Hwang, Philip Monrad, Beth Ross, Rob Remar and Peter Salzman; ILWU auditor and CPA Jong Lee; ILWU staff members Russ Bargmann and Gene Vrana; and ILWU Secretary Treasurers Jack Wyatt, Sr. (Local 17), Guy Fujimura (Local 142), IBU National Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast, and Willie Adams.

The rigorous schedule included presentations on reporting requirements under the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act



Participants spent an entire day learning how to conduct and monitor a local union financial audit. Above, Local 13 Secretary-Treasurer Frank Ponce de Leon works out an audit problem.

(LMRDA), fiduciary responsibilities of the local union and its officers, Beck procedures regarding financial core members, prohibited union expenditures and payments or gifts from employers, the role of trustees, local union election procedures and regulations, record keeping and records management, understanding and conducting an audit, and fiscal guidelines for political action funds and committees.

On the right, Local 142 bookkeeper Linda Suzuki and Local 142 Office Manager Desmond Koch review a workshop exercise. The participants also had a wealth of written information to take back to their locals for future officers and staff.



Conference participants worked together throughout the week to digest information about administrative regulations and procedures. Shown here, from left to right: Dan Hardisty Local 28, A.J. Wright Local 26, Edward Calloros Local 26, and Tove Holmberg Local 28.

## The DISPATCHER

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Tom Price  
Interim Editor

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# Labor launches battle for the right to organize

by Marcy Rein

The U.S. House of Representatives stands poised to pass the biggest labor law reform in almost 60 years. House approval of the Employee Free Choice Act (H. R. 800) will set off a fierce fight that could color the next few political seasons as the Democrats seek to flex their majority.

“In November the American people asked for a new direction,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) told a hometown press conference in support of the Act on Feb. 21. “This is the beginning of that.”

Since the AFL-CIO launched an all-out push for the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) Dec. 8, the ILWU has helped fuel the effort. Larry Newsome from the Blue Diamond workers’ organizing committee appeared at the December kick-off rally. His colleague Ivo Camilo was one of two workers to testify at the first hearing on EFCA in the 110th Congress.

Camilo addressed the House Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Feb. 8. He told the panel how Blue Diamond found a flimsy excuse to fire him in 2005 because he supported his co-workers’ effort to join ILWU warehouse Local 17.

“I worked at Blue Diamond Growers for 35 years,” Camilo said. “On April 20, two supervisors—one in front and one in back—escorted me out of the building like a criminal. The next day I was terminated.”

The National Labor Relations Board found Blue Diamond guilty of more than 20 labor law violations, including the firings of Camilo and another union supporter, Mike Flores. The two walked back into the almond plant almost exactly a year after Camilo got sacked.

Keith Ludlum, who worked at

the Smithfield hog plant in South Carolina, was not so lucky. He lost his job in 1994, shortly after the Smithfield workers started organizing. The NLRB ordered Smithfield to re-hire him. The company appealed, and lost. Ludlum got back to work 13 years after he got fired.

Smithfield broke the law so badly during the workers’ first union election in 1994 that the NLRB ordered a re-run in 1997. Workers going in to vote that time had to run a gauntlet of armed police.

“County sheriffs in full battle gear with shotguns lined the long driveway into the plant, all the way up to the election booth areas,” Ludlum told the House panel. “Managers stood next to them in the voting room, showing their authority.”

Backers of the Employee Free Choice Act want to make sure other workers don’t have to go through such trials to exercise their legal right to join a union. The Act would:

- Require fines for employers who break the law during organizing drives;
- Require the NLRB to immediately seek court orders telling employers to re-hire workers who get fired for supporting the union;
- Make majority sign-up (“card-check”) rather than election the standard way for workers to decide on union representation; and
- Require mediation and binding arbitration to ensure that workers get a first contract quickly. Either the employer or the union could request mediation if they haven’t reached agreement within 90 days. If the mediation doesn’t work in 30 days, they would have to go to binding arbitration.

Much of the debate over the Act has swirled around the majority sign-up clause, but the first-contract section also addresses a huge flaw in the



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi introduces former Blue Diamond worker Ivo Camilo at the San Francisco Labor Council.

current law.

“The mediation and arbitration provisions included in the Free Choice Act are important because there are so many cases in which you get recognition but no contract,” said William Carder, recently retired after 36 years as a lawyer representing workers and unions, including the ILWU. (Some 45 percent of newly organized workers do not get first contracts, according to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service’s 2004 annual report.)

The original National Labor Relations Act included few restrictions on unions when it passed in 1935, Carder said. Those came in with the infamous Taft-Hartley Act in 1948 and continued with the Landrum-Griffin Act in 1959.

“The Employee Free Choice Act is the most significant change in labor law since Taft-Hartley, and the most in the spirit of the original Act,” Carder said.

The Act had the backing of a bi-partisan group of 233 co-sponsors when Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez) introduced it Feb. 5. It passed out of committee Feb. 14 and is due to hit the House floor when Congress comes back after its Presidents’ Day recess. With more than half the 435 House members behind it, it should pass, said ILWU Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin.

“This will be a heavy lift in the Senate,” McLaughlin said. “It won’t work unless there is a mass movement behind it.”

EFCA’s opponents, led by the National Chamber of Commerce, can be expected to unleash a multi-million dollar campaign, said Kimberly Freeman of the pro-worker advocacy group American Rights at Work.

“The Chamber spent \$24.5 million on lobbying the federal government in 2004, the most recent year for which

*continued on page 6*

# Labor delegation visits China ports

*Editor’s note: Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa invited the ILWU to participate in the City’s Asia Trade mission and the Titled Officers designated Organizing Director Peter Olney to be part of the delegation. The ILWU participated in the first leg of the mission to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) from October 8-15.*

By Peter Olney  
Director of Organizing

The Mayor’s delegation made four principal stops in China, beginning with three days in

Beijing. We also made daylong visits to the port cities of Shanghai, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Because of the huge, 16 percent increase in traffic from China, the ILWU’s relationship with Chinese dockers and its understanding of the operations of Chinese ports are crucial to the union’s future well-being, and to its success in 2008 longshore bargaining. This trade also accounts for much of the growth in longshore registration in Los Angeles, Long Beach and throughout the union.

The trip gave the union the opportunity to:

- Take an up close look at three important Chinese sea-ports—Shanghai, Hong Kong and Guangzhou;
- Make contacts with leadership of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and important municipal and provincial trade unions;
- Continue to do important work on the Blue Diamond Growers campaign in Hong Kong;
- Deepen the union’s ties with Mayor Villaraigosa, his staff, and Harbor Commissioner Freeman and his staff;

- Meet players in international commerce particularly LA-based toy and apparel importers.

About fifty-five people participated in the China leg of the mission. The majority of the delegation was businesspeople, equally divided between importers, real estate and investment people. Only three representatives were from labor: Maria Elena Durazo, Executive Secretary Treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Kent Wong Director UCLA’s Labor Center and myself from the ILWU. It was very important for the ILWU to spend time with Ms Durazo who leads the second largest labor council in the United States and who will play an important role in supporting ILWU contract and organizing efforts.

## MEETINGS WITH CHINESE TRADE UNIONISTS

**Beijing**—Kent Wong from UCLA facilitated a meeting for the ILWU and Maria Elena Durazo with leaders of the ACFTU. The ACFTU has 130 million members in 10 affiliated industrial unions and provincial and municipal councils. We met with the following persons:

- Wang Ying—Division Chief for Grass Root Organization and Capacity Building Department. She has been primarily involved in the recent organization by the ACFTU of 62 Wal-Mart retail outlets.
- Zhang Guoxian—Deputy Chief of the International Liaison Department.
- Tan Tao—Interpreter and Member of the International Liaison Department.

The discussion focused mainly on  
*continued on page 6*

# Local 5 gathers support for Del Monte boycott

by Tom Price

Kitchen workers at Evergreen State College were proud to serve Del Monte products with the 60,000 meals they served each month—and why not? Their ILWU Local 142 brothers and sisters in Hawaii planted, picked and processed the pineapple. Union sailors and ILWU dockers shipped the fruit to the college in Olympia, Wash., and Local 5 members served it.

But in Feb. 2006 Fresh Del Monte Produce decided it would close Hawaii operations in 2008. Then last November the company decided to shut down a year early, throwing 550 Local 142 members off the farm with little or no time to prepare. The operation closed in Jan. 2007.

When Del Monte refused to bargain a proper severance package, Local 142 filed and won an unfair labor practice charge and asked the ILWU International Executive Board for a boycott of Del Monte, which was approved at the Dec. 2006 Executive

Board meeting.

Local 5 members have had a contract with Aramark food services, the Evergreen State College contractor, for three years. The union has a good relationship with Aramark, according to Local 5 Vice President Paul Malleck.

“We have monthly shop steward meetings with Craig Ward, the food service director,” Malleck said. “Last week we sat with him to discuss some work issues and we brought up the boycott against Del Monte and asked if they would join us in fighting for workers and hold wrongful companies responsible. I explained the situation in Hawaii and let him peruse the recent *Dispatcher* article.”

The next day Aramark sent back all Del Monte produce it had previously ordered and made a commitment to the boycott.

Back in Hawaii, the company has laid off everyone except a dozen maintenance people who will clean up the camp and do administrative work. The Hawaii State Dept. of Labor

scheduled sessions to get the workers signed up for unemployment. Workers will be eligible for job training, relocation assistance and wage subsidies for those under 50 years old. The union worked with the state to provide “rapid response sessions” to inform workers of services and scheduled a job fair to help them find new jobs. The union bargained enhanced severance payments for seasonal workers, who otherwise would have had none.

Fred Galdones, President of Local 142, expressed gratitude to Local 5 for putting the Del Monte boycott into action.

“Fresh Del Monte Produce is a foreign-owned company with no ties to Hawaii,” Galdones said. “Their decision to shut down immediately showed they had no aloha for the workers who helped them build their wealth. Del Monte fought us all the way and gave the workers nothing more than they were forced to give. We urge others to join in the boycott of Fresh Del Monte Produce.”



Mary Winzig, June 2001

Harvey Schwartz

Introduction by Harvey Schwartz

To honor women’s history month, we are featuring Mary Winzig, who recently became the ILWU Columbia River organizer. Winzig was the founding president of warehouse, retail and allied workers Local 5, which represents employees at the nation’s largest independent book company, Powell’s Books of Portland, Oregon.

Mary Winzig was a shop steward, a member of the Organizing Committee, and a key figure in the 1998-2000 unionization drive that brought more than 400 Powell’s workers into the ILWU under a new charter. I interviewed her in June 2001, ten months after Local 5 secured its first contract with Powell’s. Our discussion focused on the Powell’s organizing drive, which attracted much community support and media attention.

MARY WINZIG

Edited by Harvey Schwartz,  
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

I was born in Houston, Texas, in 1964. My parents were Republicans, but odd Republicans. They told me never to cross a picket line. When President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers in 1981 for going on strike, my parents said, “That’s not a good thing.” So I learned something about labor from an early age.

I got interested in politics as a student at the University of Texas. There was an anti-apartheid drive because UT had money invested in South Africa. There was a free speech movement because they were arresting people for speaking on campus during non-designated hours. I met folks from Central America and I joined the UT Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador.

In 1987 I went to Washington, D.C., for a big protest march against Reagan. Going to school during the 1980s, when Reagan was president, opened your eyes if you were not blinded by business school. After college I worked for Pueblo to People,



Harvey Schwartz

Powell’s women, left to right: Margret Howell, Lori Domaghy, Maryjoe Schimelpfenig and Leigh Mauer.

# Mary Winzig and the Powell’s organizing drive, 1998-2000

a Houston group that helped cooperatives in Central and South America sell their goods for a living wage.

When I was 28 I came to the Northwest, partly for the cool climate. I hate hot weather. If you want to know about global warming, go to Houston. Besides, I was really tired of Texas. The state was getting so conservative! I got a job in Portland at 23rd Avenue Books and stayed for two years. But the store was small and I wanted more responsibility. So in 1995 I got a job at the Burnside Street store of Powell’s Books.

During orientation at Powell’s, the human resources guy, who was the owner’s cousin, said, “I just want you to know that there was a union drive a couple of years ago, but we don’t need a union here.” Immediately I thought, “Oh, if you’re willing to say this right off the bat, you must really need a union.”

What I heard about that union drive was that they tried to organize just the big Burnside store, which is just one of several Powell’s shops. They realized too late that they needed to organize the rest of the company. They never did get enough pledge cards signed to get a union certification vote with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

What happened to us was that we felt desperate. Management pulled so many things all at once that we had the momentum and the anger to sustain us.

I started working at Powell’s right after they computerized. Powell’s went from a fairly small family business to a multi-million dollar corporation. There began to be a split between management and the workers. Management began thinking more about the bottom line, more about themselves than about what the workers needed. When I started at Powell’s upper management would say hello, talk to me and even help me shelve. But as time went on, management pulled away.

By the time we unionized, management didn’t have personal relationships with us anymore. I think this worked to our advantage, because they were so out of touch. It also helped that we liked each other. We got stronger as we went along. We became family. I don’t think management had that.

Michael Powell, who owns the company, is a liberal. To his credit, he opposes discrimination and censorship. But people need a living wage. After I’d been working at Powell’s for five years, despite stunning performance reviews, I was making eight-something an hour. People who had been there longer were making only 50 cents, 75 cents more.

It’s great to be against censorship, but when people are having a hard time making rent, an employer has to come to grips and do right by his workers. If you are going to be the planet’s bookstore, get online and be a multi-millionaire, you need to give people their fair worth. Michael Powell wasn’t doing that.

We felt degraded, too, when the company restructured our jobs. Before we were working in areas we understood and enjoyed. But suddenly I would be shelving in railroads or automotive that I didn’t know jack about. I couldn’t help customers anymore. This sort of thing happened across several departments at the Burnside store, which had the most Powell’s employees. Many of us saw what we’d liked about working at Powell’s disappearing.

What affected every employee, though, is that they eliminated the compensation group made up of workers and managers that had set up a plan to get people equal compensation. They decided instead to give us small raises based on merit, which in many cases meant raises based on favoritism.

Friends of mine and I talked about how we needed a union. Little did I know, but other people in the Burnside store were having similar conversations. Many of us felt we had nothing to lose. We were making crap wages, and even if we got fired, we felt we could always make crap wages somewhere else.

When they eliminated the compensation group, Marty Kruse said, “Let’s meet at Ringler’s Annex, the bar down the street, and discuss what we’re going to do.” I wasn’t at that initial meeting, but some of the people I had talked to were. Those who

attended decided, “Let’s start a union.”

I was at the next meeting, which was in September 1998. We invited the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, the Wobblies) and the Teamsters to meet with us at the same time. This was a little naive. It put the union people on the spot. We met at a private house late at night after Powell’s closed. Weirdly, the cops showed up. I thought, “We’re getting watched already!”

There were 30 of us at the meeting. These people ultimately became the Organizing Committee, but at this point we didn’t know what we were doing. People were all talking at once. Finally one guy took charge and had us introduce ourselves. The UFCW and the Wobbly organizers answered some questions, but things didn’t seem quite right yet.

Then Jobs with Justice suggested we try the ILWU, which was democratic and represented a bookstore in San Francisco. In October we met with Michael Cannarella, the ILWU Columbia River organizer, at the longshore Local 8 hall. Some of our group had looked into the history of the ILWU and learned about its militancy and support for different causes. When we met at Local 8, Michael gave a good spiel, and those of us who were there decided to sign cards that night.

Once the main organizing drive started, the company held a series of meetings with the workers. These were commonly at the Powell’s corporate office. Michael Powell would sit there with his top managers and ask how come we didn’t take our concerns to him, his door was always open. But he’d been a very private person until the union drive began. Then he was like, “Hi, how are you?” We thought, “Where are you coming from? Where were you?”

Peter Olney, the ILWU organizing director, Cannarella, and Paul Bigman, the Puget Sound organizer, predicted that the managers would have these meetings. They said management would tell us they were sorry and if we just didn’t unionize things would get better. We told the workers who were skeptical of us that this would happen. When it did, those workers felt, “Wow, they know what’s going on.” It made us look smart. That helped us in many ways.

One way it helped was in overcoming this class thing that existed. Many people working at Powell’s had college backgrounds. Some said, “Longshore? I’ve been to college. Why do I need a dock worker to represent me?” This was even though some longshore workers made five or six times as much money as Powell’s employees. It also helped that Bigman had gone to Reed College, because a lot of people from Powell’s had gone to Reed.

It was hard talking to some people, especially in other stores away from Burnside, where we had no contact at first. Some folks at the technical books store complained, “Here’s this union being thrust upon us.” Finally at one of the management meetings I stood up and said to those people, “You’re mad, but don’t blame the union, blame me. I was one of the first to bring in the union.” That felt kind of like outing yourself. I thought, “Can’t go back now!”



Mary Winzig speaks at rally, March 2001

ILWU ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
Volume X  
  
Mary Winzig  
Powell’s Books  
organizing drive, 1998-2000



# Powell's Books 1998-2000



May 2000

Harvey Schwartz

names and locations and we would pick workers to talk to. I had a group of 10 or 12. When we were making decisions or having a meeting, we would contact those people to let them know what was going on.

We got help from the outside from progressive community groups like Jobs with Justice and Art and Revolution. ILWU longshore Local 8 and marine clerks Local 40 from Portland and longshore Local 4 from nearby Vancouver, Washington, were always at our picket lines and rallies. Some of us wore punk clothes, and we looked different from waterfront workers, but they would be there with their banners. Their nickname for us—which they didn't tell me about until a year ago—was "the Bisexual Vegan Union." This was all in fun. They were really supportive.

In December 1998 we started wearing union buttons. I gave one to Billy Bragg, the singer, when he came into the Burnside store. He said, "Mary, you're doing Woody Guthrie's work." That was inspiring. At a concert that night he dedicated his song, "There's Power in a Union," to the Powell's workers. This led to our first mention in *The Oregonian*, the Portland paper, which is usually no friend of unions. That felt like, "OK, you've gone another step. You just got to keep going."

In early 1999, when the NLRB election for union certification got closer, the company sent out more letters. They said how costly dues would be, so we kept announcing that the workers voted on the dues. We had to do a lot of education to counter their misinformation. In April we won the election, 161 to 155. I think it was so close because people are afraid of the unknown, even though there might a better future with a union.

But as soon as we won and reality set in, people came forth to help us. Some who had voted "no" and had refused to wear a button or a sticker were willing to serve on our bargaining committee. It came down to, "Who do you trust more, management or us?" People could see that we had their best interest at heart. It helped, too, that when we put together a bargaining team, we made sure there was equal representation throughout all the stores and locations. We elected one person each from Beaverton, Hawthorne, tech, travel, and Hoyt the warehouse, and I think two from Burnside. We didn't want it to be Burnside-centric.

The company

Michael Powell shook his head and looked over at me like he was thinking, "Oh, no, a voice of reason." I was taking responsibility. It was not what he wanted to hear. Others of us went to management meetings held at various stores. They said, "If Michael Powell's going to give his spiel, well, here's our spiel." This was quite brave and wonderful.

The company also sent letters to our homes. We never got letters before, but now managers sent letters signed with their first names. One letter identified us as the wrong union. Our members said, "You're telling us the union is bad, and you can't even do the right research?"

When we were organizing we had people we called communication stewards. We had stickers I labeled "Peter Olney papers," because Peter loves those stickies. There were charts with people's

employed Larry Amburgey, a union-busting lawyer, to bargain with us. He sat across the table and insulted our team. Amburgey was there to take the heat off Michael Powell and to stall the process. One of the best things we did is have open negotiations where any Powell's employee could watch. I think that idea, which was brilliant, came from Peter Olney. People could see how their co-workers were being treated. It also put pressure on management because they could see 30 or 40 workers trooping in.

We asked for better wages, reinstatement of the compensation group, the same healthcare, the union shop and a successor clause. Michael Powell fought long and hard to try to have an open shop. We tried to tell him he was putting himself in the same company as George W. Bush, who supposedly he didn't like. Ultimately we were able to come to a compromise, so a limited number of people who didn't want to join the union could stay out. Fewer than 20 signed up for that, and later some of those joined the union anyway.

We had to have a series of demonstrations and short strikes before we finally got a contract. Once Art and Revolution, which does visual street theater, made these huge puppets for us. We staged the marriage of the puppet Larry Longshore to the puppet Michael Powell. Larry Longshore was holding a union contract. At the same time, there was a carpenters' union conference in town and 300 of their people joined our rally.

The Teamsters helped us, too, by sending their truck around the block at the Burnside store blaring really bad '80s music. Some of the more friendly middle managers, who actually did the work on the floor, said, "If that truck goes by one more time, you'll get that contract!" We also used a lot of written material that Marcy Rein, *The Dispatcher* reporter, prepared for us.

In April 2000 management was still stalling. The ILWU International Convention was coming to Portland during May 1-5, and somebody on the union side said to Larry Amburgey, "You should sign an agreement before May. You don't want the convention protesting you." Larry said, "Take it to the streets." So we did.

Management underestimated us again. A lot of amazing things happened convention week that turned the campaign around. On May Day there was a parade headed for the Burnside store. The cops yanked the permit and started beating people and trying to run them down with their horses, motorcycles and four-wheelers. All the Powell's stores were on strike over an unfair labor practice issue and a lot of us were there. The Burnside store was still open though.

Later that day, at 4 o'clock, all the ILWU convention people marched from their Hilton Hotel headquarters toward Powell's. I went with them. Powell's was surrounded by cops in riot gear. I could see my co-workers being pushed up against the wall by cops with bully clubs and shields. Helicopters were overhead. It was horrible and scary. It looked like a war zone.

As we marched up, Brian McWilliams, the president of the ILWU, approached the head of the police. The cop said, "There's just a bunch of anarchists across the street." Brian looked at him and said, "Those are our people. We're going across." We started to march. Some cops took a few swings, but there were more than 400 ILWU people with us, so the cops moved away. When we joined our people across the street, everybody was clapping and cheering like liberation was at hand. Powell's shut down early. That made people believe what a union can do.



Harvey Schwartz

"There was a parade headed for the Burnside store. The cops yanked the permit and started beating people and trying to run them down with their horses, motorcycles and four-wheelers."

The opening ceremonies of the convention were the next morning. About 50 of us from Powell's walked in and everybody was chanting, "ILWU." I'll remember that for the rest of my life. I gave a speech about the people I was working with and the union we were joining. The convention passed around ILWU tote bags and the delegates filled them with money for strike relief. On May 4 the convention marched to the Burnside store again and we held a hands-around-Powell's rally with the ILWU delegates. We shut the store down once more, too.

We went on strike again on Memorial Day and people who had never worn a button or even signed a petition were walking the picket line. I knew then we were going to win. We went into federal mediation and now negotiations were totally different. The workers couldn't watch this time and the mediator negotiated between the two bargaining teams that were in different rooms.

The contract proposal agreed upon called for an 18 percent raise over three years. We retained our health care. Now there was a grievance procedure, so we couldn't be fired at will. The compensation group was put back in place. We didn't get the successor clause we wanted, but I don't think Powell's is going anywhere. We got a profit-sharing program, so if a customer goes through our website we get a percentage of the sale price. The vote in favor of the contract that August was 293 to 37.

After we won our contract we were on the cover of *The Oregonian*. Of course, that contract symbolizes much more than its various clauses. We have a sense of community at Powell's now that we never had before.

When I visited the International library in San Francisco, there was this glass table with all these medallions that looked like they came from when Harry Bridges was around. Beside them was a Local 5 button. I thought this represented such a blending of past and future, longshore workers and booksellers. Today unions have to expand their jurisdiction to survive. It clicked for me then that what we had done together was pretty cool.

[Editor's note: Powell's and Local 5 still have the internet-based profit-sharing program established in that first contract. If you go to [www.powellsunion.com](http://www.powellsunion.com) to order books, 10 percent goes to the workers at no extra cost.]



Bette Lee

Kristi Lovato, left, and Mira Brockan, right celebrates Local 5's victory.

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U.S. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-Cerritos) addresses the Employee Free Choice Act rally in Glendale, CA Feb. 22. Behind her stand Rite Aid distribution center workers (left to right) Bryon Bullock, Ignacio Meza (fired for supporting the union) and Tim Patrick.

RIGHT TO ORGANIZE continued from page 3

we have figures,” Freeman said. Now the Chamber belongs to the “Coalition for A Democratic Workplace,” a classic “Astroturf” (fake grass-roots) group. The Coalition claims to include rank-and-file workers as well as leaders of national associations and its Web page mimics a workers’ rights site. But you don’t have to go farther than the “A’s” on its list of backers to see its real sponsors, the likes of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, the American Hospital Association and Associated Builders and Contractors.

If the Free Choice Act passes the Senate, President Bush will surely veto it, Vice President Dick Cheney told the National Assn. of Manufacturers. (Reuters News Service, Feb. 15.)

“We are looking at a multi-year project to get this passed,” McLaughlin said. “If we have a good election in 2008, we can do it. It is critical that working people understand this is part of the political landscape for the next few years.”

The AFL-CIO declared Feb. 19-25 a “Week of Action” to thank Congress members for supporting EFCA and bolster them against the opposition

attacks to come. The Federation coordinated events in 93 communities involving 130 members of Congress. ILWU members, staff, and workers active in organizing drives participated in these events in Honolulu, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Olympia, WA.

Flanked by several co-workers, Tim Patrick told the Los Angeles press conference what the workers at Rite Aid’s Lancaster distribution center have gone through since they began organizing last April to join ILWU warehouse Local 26. Rite Aid has fired five union supporters, suspended and disciplined many more and routinely dissed them as “union pushers.”

Blue Diamond workers took part in the Sacramento and San Francisco events. ILWU warehouse Local 6 passed a resolution supporting EFCA at its annual convention Feb. 24 in Oakland. IBU member Charlie Finger from McCall Oil and Chemical spoke at the Portland roundtable.

About 20 ILWU and IBU members met with Rep. Jay Inslee at the Washington State Labor Council Legislative Conference in Olympia,

he is involved in an effort to organize the work force of 20,000. He says that he has 800 port workers who the HKCTU is working with. The HKCTU has a very strong relationship with the Solidarity Center of the AFL-CIO. Mr. Lee has been helpful to us in building solidarity for Blue Diamond workers.

The ILWU visited the Modern Terminals facility in Hong Kong. These three terminals have five cranes. (This is one terminal operation in a huge port). There is no on-dock rail, all traffic on land is by truck. A massive ten-story warehouse rises up next to the terminal. The warehouse is so large that tractors towing containers can drive up inside the warehouse on circular ramps to pick up and drop off cans. Several of these warehouses exist in the Port of Hong Kong. There is insufficient real estate or terrain to build out so everything builds up.

**Guangzhou**—Guangzhou is the capital city of the province of Guangdong. Kent Wong arranged a meeting with leaders of the Guangdong Provincial Trade Union Council. The principal leader of the GPTUC present at the meeting was Peng Fang, Director of the Council’s International Department. Mr. Peng assembled a large group of leaders, including some members of the Chinese Seamen’s Union to meet with the ILWU. The ranking member of the Guangdong Provincial Trade Union Council was Mr. Xiao Jian Kun, the chairman of



Left to right: International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, International President Bob McEllrath and former Blue Diamond worker Ivo Camilo.

NANCY PELOSI’S STATEMENT AT THE FEB. 21, 2007 SAN FRANCISCO LABOR COUNCIL PRESS CONFERENCE:

“It is very special to me, any occasion that I can come to the ILWU hall and acknowledge the leadership of this great union—Bob McEllrath, Joe Radisich and Willie Adams, and see my dear friend who was with my campaign 20 years ago, Leroy King. Your former International President, Jimmy Herman, who was a personal friend, used to tell my children stories about how when he was 12 years old he settled his first union strike and got a one cent an hour raise.

“In November the American people asked for a new direction. We leveraged a change from a situation where we had the Republicans in power and their focus was to concentrate the wealth and power of America into the fewest number of people—the wealthiest people. That has changed, that leverage has come to the middle class, to working families. We said we would work to make the economy fair. In the first 100 hours we passed legislation to raise the minimum wage. The next step is to pass the card check recognition legislation, the Employee Free Choice Act.

“The right to organize is essential to the path to prosperity for all Americans. Indeed, fairness in the workplace is a fundamental right that increases productivity and ensures competitiveness in our country. Unions strengthen America’s middle class by providing workers the opportunity to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions. Many of the benefits workers enjoy today are owed to the struggles of organized labor, because their victories didn’t just benefit union members, it benefited everyone in America. 57 million Americans said they would belong to a union if they could. We want to give them that opportunity.”

just after he testified before a committee of the state legislature.

“He said it’s going to happen,” said ILWU Legislative Committee Chair Max Vekich Jr. of Marine Clerks’ Local 52. “The Legislative Committee will meet in March and decide on actions to recommend to the Longshore Caucus, the officers and the International Executive Board.

“This legislation is about collective bargaining rights in the workplace. You can’t get more basic than that,” Vekich said. “It’s a key to the survival of organized labor in this country.”

To find out how you can help pass the Employee Free Choice Act, e-mail [washdc@ilwu.org](mailto:washdc@ilwu.org) or visit [www.employeefreechoice.org](http://www.employeefreechoice.org).

CHINESE PORT VISIT continued from page 3

Wal-Mart organization and potential liaison activities. Delegates pointed out to the ILWU that it would be fruitful to seek a meeting with Wu Ziheng, Chair of the China Seamen and Construction Workers’ Union (CSCWU). This is one of 10 industrial committees of the ACFTU representing transport workers on the water and roads, including dockers, and construction and building materials workers. Mr. Wu Ziheng is an ex COSCO Captain!

**Shanghai**—Kent Wong arranged a meeting with leaders of the Shanghai Municipal Trade Union Council (SMTUC). There were three representatives present from the SMTUC:

- Wu Shen Yao—Vice Chairman SMTUC;
- Shen Xiongde—Director International Liaison Department SMTUC;
- Zhang Guo Feng—Deputy Director—International Liaison Department SMTUC;

In this meeting there was a wide-ranging discussion of organizing and social policy. Vice Chairman Wu explained that there are 20,000 dockworkers in Shanghai represented by the CSCWU. He said that CSCWU leaders in Shanghai would welcome a future delegation from the ILWU.

**Hong Kong**—The ILWU met with Mr. Lee Cheuk Yan, General Secretary, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU). This is an umbrella organization for Hong Kong unions. There is no unionization in the port, however Mr. Lee said

the Auditing Committee (Financial Secretary-Treasurer).

They also drove the ILWU 70 kilometers down the Pearl River Delta to see the Nansha Terminals of the Port of Guangzhou, and arranged a meeting with Mr. Deng, the terminal manager, who also serves as the vice chair of the Nansha Port Trade Union. He was aware of the lockout in 2002 and expressed an interest in knowing what would happen in 2008. CSCL ships call regularly in Oakland and Los Angeles from Nansha Terminals. These trade union leaders are very anxious to meet with a future delegation of ILWU leaders.

Nansha Terminals was built in the last two years and is already handling over 1.3 million TEUs per year. There is ample land for expansion, and construction of a completely new

terminal was underway during the ILWU visit. There will be 10 berths available by the end of 2007. The brand new terminal headquarters building is immense and rivals the size of the Long Beach Port Building. Nansha Terminal is one of four terminals that are part of the Guangzhou Port Group.

For a whirlwind trip this was extremely productive for the ILWU. We made contacts with important labor leaders and maritime management officials that will be crucial to the long-term future of the union. It is still unclear of the exact relationship between labor and management in the People’s Republic, but only further contact will reveal an understanding of how best to manage the ILWU relationship with the ACFTU and Chinese management.

<b>Chinese Ports</b> —In TEUs for 2005, eight of the top 50 container ports are Chinese:	
• Hong Kong #2	22.60 million TEUs
• Shanghai #3	18.08 million TEUs
• Shenzhen #4	16.20 million TEUs
• Qingdao #13	6.31 million TEUs
• Ningbo-Zhoushan #15	5.21 million TEUs
• Tianjin #16	4.80 million TEUs
• Guangzhou #18	4.68 million TEUs
• Xiamen #23	3.34 million TEUs
It is also important to note that of the top 20 container carriers ranked by operating capacity as of July 2006, two are from the PRC:	
• COSCO Container Lines —Ranked # 6 in the world—Headquartered in Beijing and a Pacific Maritime Association member company;	
• China Shipping Container Lines—Ranked # 7 in the world.	
In Hong Kong and Guangzhou that much of the port traffic is transloading of containers from barges to ships or from ships to barges. Accurate measures of these phenomena are needed because it weighs heavily on productivity measures.	

# Kate Thornton retires from the Benefits Plan Office

by Tom Price

Kate Thornton began working for the ILWU-PMA Benefits Plan in the summer of 1965, on a temporary basis, while she was still a student. In 1967 she signed on full time, back when the office was in the basement of 150 Golden Gate in San Francisco and Harry Bridges was president.

Now its forty years later Kate is retiring. In a very personal sense, she has always worked for the ILWU family.

“My father Frederick ‘Blackie’ Myers and my husband Lonnie Thornton worked out of Local 34,” she said. “My son Matt Thornton is a Local 34 member, my daughter-in-law Eileen also worked out of Local 34 and her father, Tom Wallace, was a Local 34 member. And my Daughter Liz was in Local 34 for a while.”

Before working out of Local 34, Blackie Myers was a veteran activist among seafarers who were persecuted during the anti-Communist witch-hunts of the McCarthy era, and he was a leader of the National Maritime Union and the Maritime Workers Industrial Union.

Kate spent most of her time administering the welfare benefits, making sure people got things like

hearing aids, dental care and supplemental disability—making real the benefits the longshore contract provides ILWU families. Member service has always been the goal.

“We have had several systems over the years, from a hand operation to a modern, sophisticated system,” she said. “I’ve worked under all of them and they have changed a lot, but the thing that hasn’t changed is attention to the members. We get back to them, when they call they get a person, that has always been something we have maintained.

“The best thing about the job is the people I work with, and the members I talk to,” she said. “The members are appreciative of the good benefits they have, and it’s good to know it means something to them. There’s something satisfying about working with these people, I work hard and I like it.”

Kate worked with many special women who contributed to the union. She mentioned quite a few for Women’s History Month, including Carol (Schwartz) Cuenod, who became ILWU Librarian, Elaine Black Yoneda, who organized legal defense for longshore workers during the Big Strike in 1934, and Linda Kuhn, who is now office manager for the International Union.

With 40 years of service behind her, Kate is ready to move on.

“What I’m going to do now is go to Boston in April and run the Boston Marathon,” she said. “I’ve been a runner for years and this is the pinnacle of my running. I’m about two-thirds done with the training.”

Kate also has a granddaughter and she hopes to spend a lot of time with her.

“This has been a very good job for me, I’ve been here a long time and it has been a very good place for me to work. I like it that I am retiring after 40 years, I like doing it when I’m feeling good, I’m happy and healthy and I have energy for other things to come,” she said. “Forty years represents completion, it’s a good time to say goodbye.”



Tom Price

Kate Thornton on the patio of the Harry Bridges Building.



Tom Price

Women in Power: Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi greets Local 6 retiree Leroy King, right, co-chair of her first Congressional campaign as Tim Paulson, Executive Director of the San Francisco Labor Council, looks on.

To the editor:

I wish to express my thanks for the opportunity to attend the Secretary-Treasurers Conference in February. Your instructors went into great detail and were wonderful in answering any and all questions we had. I found it to be very informative as to our responsibilities in working in fiduciary positions.

Also, it was a very open and comfortable atmosphere. Your staff was wonderful from greeting us, to providing needed breaks, wonderful lunches and answering any questions we might have. A special thanks to Linda Kuhn, whom I had not seen in 10 years, yet who recognized me by name. She is a great asset to the ILWU.

Sue Bukoskey,  
Bookkeeper, Local 200

## ILWU Canada’s Van McLean passes

Van McLean was born on the tenth day of the tenth month of 1920. He passed away Jan. 26, but his spirit, his drive for getting a task completed and his ability to disregard obstacles that hindered progress will be remembered by the many people who came in contact with Van during his 86 years of life.

These years include his five years in the Canadian army during the Second World War and his 35 years as an active longshoreman. After he retired on May 1, 1986 he spent 20 more years as an active supporter of his union by participating in the ILWU Pensioners Club.

He served six years as the club’s president, covering two Pacific Coast Pensioners Conventions held in Canada, 1999 and 2004, where Van and his wife Margaret (Betty) proved their ability to get things organized to help make the conventions a success.

Prior to his retirement Van was active in the affairs of the union, attending many conventions and caucuses dealing with policy of the union,

and he held executive positions in Local 500 and, prior to the amalgamation of the Vancouver locals, his home Local 501. He served as BA in Local 500 from Nov. 1969 to Nov. 1970.

The ILWU Pensioners Organization expresses our condolences to Van’s family.



Van McLean



## Longshore Retired, Deceased and Survivors

### RECENT RETIREES:

**Local 7**—Willis Roughton III; **Local 8**—Gerald Cressa, Don D. Anderson, George Rimer, James Kame; **Local 12**—Wallace Robbins; **Local 13**—Richard Mondor, Richard Rodriguez, Louis Madrid, James M. Perez, Christopher Ponce, Raymond O. Smith; **Local 19**—Dale Harkinson, Stephen Perkins, Gary Boden, John K. Munson; **Local 23**—Gerald Pratt, Brian Brenno, Lannie Enger, Albert Udovich; **Local 34**—Gloria Carrasco, William Aviles, Darryl Allen, Howard Jarvis, John Fisher Jr; **Local 40**—

Richard Alderson; **Local 50**—William Hunsinger; **Local 52**—Wayne Day, Gary Epperson; **Local 63**—Luis Flores, George Matsumoto, Dewey Troup; **Local 98**—John Ross.

### DECEASED:

**Local 8**—Fred Burns (Dorothy), Joe F. Smith, Gerald Mussman; **Local 10**—John Flemister (Gloria), Dale Kelly (Dale), Raymond Castro, Frank Ouano; **Local 12**—Millard Miller; **Local 13**—Douglas La Franco (Irene), William Kimble (Nellie), Fernando Toscano (Lucy), Roberto Masing (Freida), Joya Dickerson, Jessie Brionez, Rudolph

Frka, Mladenko Bozajic, Carol Reed; **Local 18**—William Redenour (Gloria); **Local 19**—Joseph Cardinale (Marie), Melvin Highland; **Local 23**—Leroy Crow (Vivian), Herman Jones (Nancy); **Local 50**—Henry Boyd (Trudy); **Local 52**—Sigurd Sigurdson (Louise), Henry Isaksen Jr.; **Local 63**—Alphons Martorella (Nina); **Local 92**—Howard Sullivan (Elaine), Thomas H. Thompson Jr. (Linda).

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 4**—Ella Malloy; **Local 8**—Vivian Loveng, Betty King, Mary Evans, Dorothy Price; **Local 10**—

Eugena Broussard, Mayetta Miranda, Emma Alexander; **Local 13**—Julia Cervantes, Mercedes Highfill, Mary Jane Suarez; **Local 21**—Bernice Miller, Ella Hardy; **Local 23**—Hellen Cook, Mavis Swanson, Peggy Edmunds, Dixie Nelson; **Local 24**—Mary Rye; **Local 25**—Elma Kager; **Local 26**—Talma Justensen; **Local 34**—Hazel Swierstra, Rachel Schuder, Mary Cirincione, Alice Lynch, Maxine Lewis; **Local 40**—Beverly Flego; **Local 52**—Frances Covert, Madeline Morrison; **Local 63**—Henrietta Harold, Julia Crockett



# ILWU Book & Video Sale

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

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**The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938** By Harvey Schwartz: new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union’s organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. **\$9.00**

**NOTE:** TWO IMPORTANT BOOKS ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO THE ILWU LIBRARY AT A SIGNIFICANT DISCOUNT, BUT MAY BE PURCHASED FROM BOOKSTORES, INCLUDING THE ILWU LOCAL 5 WEBSITE (powellsunion.com)

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**NOTE:** “A Life on the Beam” is now available in DVD format through the book sale at this greatly reduced price by special arrangement with the Working Group, and includes a bonus feature on the building of the Golden Gate Bridge.

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