



The DISPATCHER

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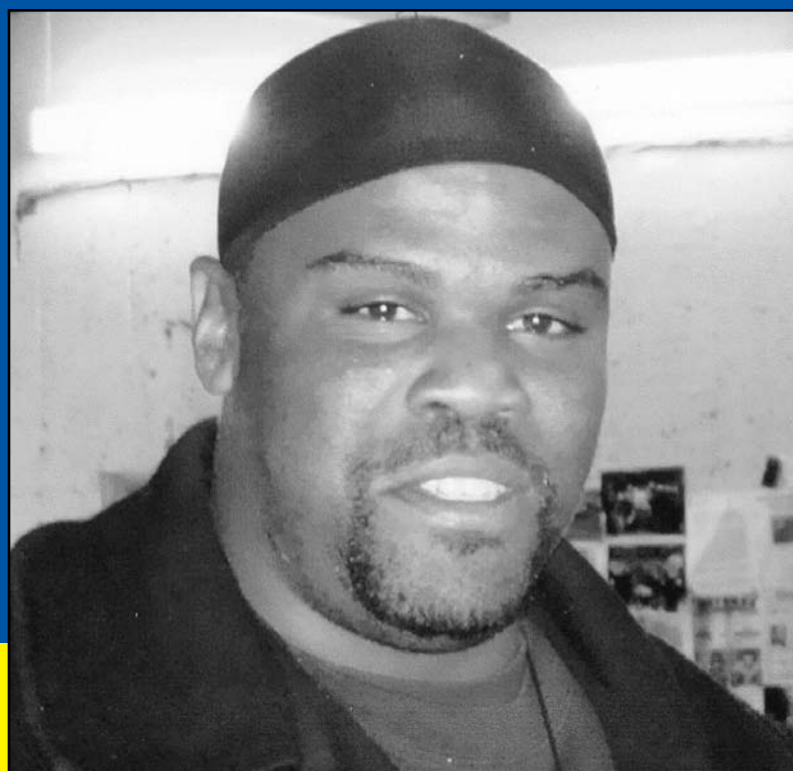
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Shown L to R: Pat Maguire; Lynn Robinson; Everett Burdan, BA; Lance Schueler; Jeff Carter, President; and Dan Moody, Dispatcher and Chief Steward.

Rice co-op workers make gains in contract

By John Showalter

The 165 members of ILWU Local 17 working at Farmers’ Rice Cooperative gained a major victory on September 7 after four months of contract negotiations with their employer, a cooperative owned by more than 800 rice growers in California’s Central Valley. Among the gains Local 17 achieved in the new three-year contract were pay raises of 40 cents an hour for the first year, 35 cents for the second year and 30 cents for the third year, for raises totaling \$1.05 over three years. Local 17 negotiators Lance Schueler, Lynn Robinson, Celia Cisneros and Pat Maguire also preserved the local’s 30-minute paid lunch break and managed to avoid having members pay 29 cents an hour for health care benefits. According to Dan Moody, Local 17 Chief Steward at Farmers’ Rice, the paid lunch break has long been a contentious issue since local members went on strike over it for six weeks in 1976.

“The [Local 17] pensioners let us know during negotiations that they didn’t want us to give in on the lunch break this time around either,” Moody said.

Moody said that members were very united during the four months of sometimes tough negotiations. They

voted twice in near unanimity to strike in June and July, but each time the employer came back to the table. After Farmers’ Rice implemented a substandard contract in July, the local waited until the harvest to apply optimum pressure to get what it needed. Local 17 also filed unfair labor practices in late July at the Co-op on regressive bargaining and intimidation charges when the Co-op threatened to bring in 200 scabs to do the work.

The rice-growing industry—based primarily in California, Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana—is almost entirely non-unionized, and this made negotiations especially difficult. However, Local 17’s record as one of the top-performing rice processing plants in the country worked to its advantage. Unity of the entire Co-op workforce—members and casuals—was key to the victory.

“The employer usually targets the casuals first, since they have the fewest rights and defenses, but Local 17 made clear to Farmers’ Rice that it wasn’t going to let them take away anything from them,” negotiating committee member Lynn Robinson said. “We were really able to stick together. When you stick together you win.”

Letters to *The Dispatcher*

Dear Editor,

Last month, brother Seymour Weinberg of Local 20 wrote a letter expressing his opinions on several issues, including his feeling that the ILWU shouldn’t be involved in politics. First, let me make it clear that I respect brother Weinberg for expressing his views, which is our right and obligation in a democratic union—but I disagree with his point about politics.

We’ve got to fight politicians who oppose minimum wages, want to destroy Social Security, or oppose better health care. We have to challenge the ones who vote to make it practically impossible for workers to join a union, or those who vote for NAFTA and other free trade deals that send good jobs to places where workers have no rights and earn pennies a day. Our wages, benefits, and contracts are under attack right now from big corporations and the politicians who serve them. If we aren’t involved in the political process, these folks will gain the upper hand, leaving ILWU members and working families in deeper trouble.

I am liberal on some issues and conservative on others, and none of us will always agree on everything.

But when it comes to protecting our contracts and defending working families, we have no choice but to be involved in the political process.

—Joe Radisich
International Vice President

Dear Brothers and Sisters at the ILWU,
We want to thank everyone who supported us throughout our recent labor dispute at Columbia Ford. Many unions and individuals helped us during this difficult time by giving generously of their time and resources. We are especially grateful to ILWU Locals 21, 4, and 8, along with the ILWU Pensioners.
In solidarity,

—Brian King
Teamsters Local 58, Vancouver, WA

Executive Board meets in Vancouver

The ILWU International Executive Board held their last meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, on September 13 and 14.

Attending the meeting were: Richard Cavalli, Alan Coté, Michael Davenport, Tom Dufresne, Luisa Gratz, Pete Hendrickson, Ken Ige, Nate Lum, Avelino Martin, Mike Mitre, George O’Neil, Fred Pecker, Conrad Spell, Joey Silva, Lawrence Thibeaux, Max Vekich, Jr., Jerry Ylonen, and Robert Zahl. ILWU International officers attending the meeting included President Bob McEllrath, Vice President Wesley Furtado, Vice President Joe Radisich, Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams. Also attending were Guy Fujimura, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 142, and Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet.

International Union Trustees Alan Coté, Nate Lum, and George O’Neil met the day before, on September 12, with International Officers to review the union’s finances. Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams reported that the union currently has

a small surplus but needs to remain vigilant about managing the budget and expenditures.

An update on the union’s organizing campaigns was presented by Vice President Joe Radisich who covered new developments in the Rite Aid and Blue Diamond Almond projects. Both campaigns continue to enlist new allies and make steady progress, but Radisich cautioned the Board about the tremendous challenges facing workers who want to join the union.

Board members reported on the activities and new development in their respective areas. The Executive Board also discussed whether to make an endorsement in U.S. Presidential election and discussed various candidates, but decided to continue the discussion to the next Executive Board meeting on December 6 and 7 at the ILWU headquarters in San Francisco. Union Trustees will meet on December 5th at the same location. The Board also approved a change in the date of the 2009 Convention to June 8-12.



ILWU OFFICERS MEET NEW COAST GUARD ADMIRAL FOR WEST COAST

Rear Admiral Craig E. Bone, the new commander of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, met with ILWU officials Aug. 29 at International Headquarters in San Francisco and discussed topics such as port security, Transport Worker Identification Cards and appeals processes for anyone denied a TWIC card. Admiral Bone’s district covers the entire West Coast. The union also discussed its ability to help get the ports up and running in the event of any disaster.

“We have had a good relationship with the Admiral in previous positions he has held,” Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet said. “We look forward to working with him in his new position.” We also want to make sure any TWIC appeals will be fair and open.”

Pictured above: International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, Adm. Bone, International President Bob McEllrath, Sundet, Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz Jr., and International Vice President-Hawaii Wesley Furtado.

News and Notes

Alaska longshore experienced a good summer, International Executive Board (IEB) member Pete Hendrickson told the IEB. “Cruise ships keep coming, we are experiencing the second largest salmon runs ever statewide, and container work remains strong.” The Arctic ice pack is melting rapidly, he said, and the union is keeping an eye on the *Northern Sea Route*. This would mean ships could sail a polar route to Europe and the Atlantic Coast, cutting the mileage from Tokyo to London by 5,000 miles compared to the Panama Canal route... The union is protecting jurisdiction in remote ports, including salmon loading. The union also won an arbitration against APL over non-ILWU people handling cargo in ILWU ports. Hendrickson reported the union held a meeting with the arbitrator and APL and the employer agreed to pay past time and all future time until the dispute is settled. The union also won a dispute over for-

eign crews doing union work on the docks. Federal officials ruled only those who can work legally in the U.S. can do dock work...Hendrickson also reported that Alaska Longshore had elected Cliff Davidson President of the Alaska Longshore Division. He’s a longshoreman with 34 years experience and is a former State Legislator.

ILWU Canada has appealed their government’s draconian docker security screening plan to Canada’s federal Office of Privacy, a commission that investigates government violations of privacy rights. The screening plan would look into a worker’s ethnic background and could deny employment based on racial profiling, long-past criminal convictions, hearsay, and suspicions the government will keep secret from the worker. The complaint, filed Aug. 28, seeks to have investigators only ask questions that directly relate to security and do not invade privacy. The ILWU has advo-

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Craig Merrilees
Editor and Communications Director
Tom Price
Assistant Editor

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Secretary-Treasurer

What happened to warehousing?

By Craig Merrilees

When the *Dispatcher* reported last month that a settlement had been reached for the Northern California Warehouse Master Agreement, there was news about raises for workers—along with some painful health benefit reductions for spouses and retirees. But behind that report lies a deeper story about the future of the ILWU and the warehouse industry.

It's no secret that the ILWU's role in the Bay Area warehouse industry has been declining for several decades, as revealed through falling membership numbers, fewer union shops, and lower union density within the industry—factors that make it difficult for the ILWU and other unions to maintain good contracts for Bay Area warehouse workers—despite the hard work and dedication of ILWU members and officials.

LOCAL 6 HAS BEEN HIT HARD

The numbers at Local 6 illustrate a local that has been reeling from plant closures and run-away shops for decades. Membership peaked just after WWII when nearly 17,000 workers were employed in hundreds of union shops and dominated much of the regional coffee, beverage, paper, and food service industries. Most of these shops were covered by standard agreements or the Northern California Master. When Fred Pecker joined Local 6 in the mid-1980's, there were less than 10,000 members, and today there around 3,000. The Master now covers approximately 600 ILWU workers in a handful of shops, plus some Teamster members who are covered by the jointly-negotiated agreement. While contracts in some shops are still patterned and influenced by the Master, many are the only remaining union shops within their region or industry—making for hard bargaining because the competition is predominantly non-union and operating with lower costs.

INDUSTRY THRIVES WHILE UNIONS DECLINE

Ironically, the warehouse industry is thriving—but most of the growth is outside the Bay Area and non-union. Several factors explain why the warehouse industry has changed, leaving the ILWU and other unions with declining membership, low density, and eroding contracts. Some of the forces that devastated the ILWU's presence in warehousing are the same ones that ravaged industrial unions across America and the industrialized world. The most important factors in the decline of union warehousing include:

- ✓ Skyrocketing land costs that have made it too expensive for most warehouses to continue operating near the docks and in cities with ILWU locals. Warehouse managers who owned their buildings and land were tempted to sell their property, pocket huge gains, and relocate

ies. In San Francisco, Oakland, and Emeryville, many old warehouses where ILWU members once worked have been closed, sold, and dismantled or transformed into luxury condos, retail, or commercial office space.

- ✓ City congestion, growth in the suburbs, and new freeway systems made it more efficient for warehouses to relocate outside cities along fast-moving interstate routes. The exodus of warehousing from the cities paralleled the post-World War II move toward suburbs, sparked by decades of post-war prosperity (shared by most union members), massive public spending on the interstate highway system (initially conceived as a cold war military asset), and the creation of FHA and Fannie-Mae loan programs that aided single-home ownership and the real-estate industry.

- ✓ The growth of the trucking industry allowed warehouses to operate further from the docks. Trucking grew quickly in the 30's—along with creative organizing tactics developed by radical union leaders in Minneapolis who won another famous strike in 1934 that laid the foundation for a Teamsters' National Master Freight Agreement in 1964. At the same time, containerization transformed the waterfront, increasing efficiency, reducing the workforce, and creating greater dependence on trucking. Deregulation of the trucking industry in 1981 slashed transportation costs further and devastated the Teamsters Union when 183 unionized carriers were driven out of business within one year and 30 percent of freight handling Teamsters were left unemployed. The remaining union carriers leveraged concessions in wages, pensions, health benefits, speed-ups, and “flexible workweeks” that included weekends. Deregulation—supported by Republicans, Democrats, and President Carter—quickly transformed one of the most powerful unions and high-union-density economic sectors into the predominantly low-wage, low-cost, non-union industry it remains today.

- ✓ Avoiding unions and searching for lower labor costs has long been a powerful motivator for warehouses to flee the coast and seek refuge in California's central valley or move farther into “right-to-work” states, including Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho. Passage of the Taft-Hartley law in 1947 weakened unions in many ways, including establishing the “right-to-work” scheme that allowed states to prohibit “union shops” and replace “card-check recognition” in every state with Labor Board elections that gave management the right to campaign and coerce workers to vote against the union.

- ✓ Concentration and consolidation in the retail and warehouse industry, combined with de-industrialization, off-shoring and outsourcing have resulted in more warehouses that are larger in size, and more likely



Craig Merrilees

Donations from longshore workers helped nearly 300 Local 6 members who honored the Teamster lock-out in July 2007.

to be linked with a major corporation. Outsourcing production within the U.S. has meant relocating warehouses to the south or other non-union regions. As offshoring shifted more industrial production to Asia, the containers unloaded on the west coast now move quickly inland, past old ILWU warehouses to modern facilities in the central valley, high desert, or nearby states. Leveraged buy-outs in the 80's, and private equity hedge funds today put more pressure on firms to cut costs, raise returns for investors, and squeeze workers.

- ✓ The use of new technology (computers, scanners, gps, automated pick and sorting devices) combined with just-in-time production and distribution methods, have transformed the nature of work in many warehouses and increased productivity. But most modern warehouses are now non-union, so workers have not shared in those productivity gains, while older warehouses (more likely to be union shops) often lack this new technology and are left at a competitive disadvantage.

The result is a modern warehouse and distribution industry that is:

- ✓ more concentrated and integrated with shipping companies and retailers.
- ✓ more vulnerable to disruption at any point along a global supply chain
- ✓ more dependent on higher technology, yet still labor intensive.
- ✓ largely non-union.

The challenges can seem overwhelming. Individually, any of these factors would be difficult to overcome, but combined they can feel overwhelming to leaders at Local 6 in the Bay Area, Local 17 in Sacramento, Local 9 in Seattle, and Local 26 in Los Angeles that once represented workers in hundreds of warehouses.

“For every job we gain through organizing, we seem to lose another,” says Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker. “We’ve lost so many shops and members that it feels like a war zone around here. We were fighting this war against closures and concessions before I started here twenty-two years ago,” he adds, “and it hasn’t stopped.”

“For decades, our focus has been on negotiations and contract enforcement,” Pecker explained. “The pressure to deal with current conditions, and our struggle with limited resources meant that it didn’t seem like we could afford to put the same effort into organizing. The loss of our membership has put us in a downward spiral where it becomes harder and harder to maintain our existing contracts,” says Pecker.

Pecker's observations are similar to problems that many other unions have been facing since membership peaked in the late 60's or early 70's. Figuring out a strategy for growth—

and marshalling the organizational commitment and resources—has been a challenge throughout the labor movement.

HISTORY HOLDS CLUES

The history of the ILWU offers some interesting examples of how the union has addressed this problem in the past, that included organizing campaigns during both good and bad times. History also shows that the fate of both longshore and warehouse workers has been closely linked.

The union's famous “march inland,” occurred after the first waterfront contracts were won in 1934 when there were only about 500 warehouse workers in the union. But within two years, nearly 4,000 warehouse workers had joined the union; providing some much-needed bargaining power that was tested in 1936 when a 3-month strike shut the ports as longshore and warehouse workers joined forces to win better contracts together. Employers were refusing to pay union members over .60 cents an hour while there were so many men willing to work for .40 cents. Longshore picketers left their comfort zone at the docks and went to organize workers in nearby warehouses and shops. The strike was won when warehouse workers reached a settlement first, then contributed desperately needed funds to help their longshore brothers survive longer on the picket lines and eventually win their contract.

By 1938 there were 8500 ILWU members working in San Francisco warehouses—just in time for a city-wide lockout that was settled when the union and employers established the first Master Warehouse Agreement. Ten years later, longshore workers were on strike in 1948 and warehouse workers provided funding and support to help their brothers again. Warehouse workers had big strikes in 1967 and 1976, when longshore members offered support.

Today, it's the Longshore Division locals that have the strong financial resources and a booming membership—but the spirit of solidarity still lives. Consider what happened when 300 low-wage workers from Local 6 honored the Teamster lock-out at Waste Management for 30 days this past July. Longshore locals contributed over \$50,000 to help workers who were mostly women, many of whom were recent immigrants.

“The support we got from all over the union, especially longshore, was sobering,” said Pecker. “Workers who are making good money and benefits can have a hard time understanding what low-wage workers face, but the support we felt during the lock-out made us all proud to be part of a union where there are brothers and sisters who still understand the power and urgency of solidarity.”

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Local 6 members collect for the longshore strikers in 1946.



Chris Heller

Jackie Cummings talks with incoming PCPA Vice President Lou Loveridge.

Pensioners emphasize solidarity, political action at 40th Convention

by Bill Orton

Sunshine and sea air took a back seat to solidarity and political action for delegates at the 40th annual convention of the ILWU’s Pacific Coast Pensioners Association (PCPA), held Sept. 16th-19th at San Pedro’s Double Tree Hotel.

“It really meant something to have the Australian, Canadian and Mexican delegations with us,” said PCPA President Rich Austin, who returns for a second term heading the union’s retir-

ees. “They’re facing the same union busting and politicians who don’t stand up for labor that we face here.”

PCPA delegates heard the message of solidarity in many forms including on the big screen, with the showing of “Eye of the Storm,” the ILWU documentary about the 2002 lockout. It seemed to some that Harry Bridges was attending the conference, as he was vividly portrayed by actor Ian Ruskin, who presented a short film clip from his new documentary

about the life of the late longshore arbitrator Sam Kagel that will also help keep Harry’s vision alive.

Between a BBQ and banquet, retirees were hard at work planning future battles, including next year’s political campaigns and the upcoming longshore contract fight.

“We raised thousands of dollars for the ILWU’s political action fund and this is just a beginning,” said newly-elected PCPA Vice President Lou Loveridge on behalf of pensioners who contributed \$5000 to the union’s Political Action Fund.

The political donations followed greetings from the International officers, who thanked retirees for their past donations and for pledging support for the 2008 contract fight.

“The political action money we raise is one way we make our voices heard,” said International President Bob McEllrath.

International Secretary-Treasurer William E. Adams and Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr., joined McEllrath and Vice President Joe Radisich in laying out the stakes of a year where both the longshore contract and the Presidency of the United States are up.

Politicians who do stand with the ILWU and took time to join the pensioners included Los Angeles Councilwoman Janice Hahn, State Senator Alan Lowenthal, and Assemblywoman Betty Karnette.

The annual “Lois and Jess Stranahan Award” went to Jackie Cummings for 20 years spent helping ILWU members recover from drug and alcohol addiction.

“This is such a big honor because

you pensioners put together what we have and fought hard for it,” said Cummings. “I get paid to do what’s in my heart.”

Cummings, herself a recovering addict with 31 years of sobriety, was hired in 1987 to run the joint PMA/ILWU alcohol and drug recovery program in southern California. She recently took up duties as the coast-wise program administrator after the retirement of George Cobbs, who spoke warmly of Cummings as one of his favorite people.

“The ADRP is about helping people, helping people’s families,” Cobbs told convention participants. “When you describe the program and talk about helping people, that’s the same way you’d describe Jackie.”

Delegates bestowed outgoing PCPA Vice President Joe Lucas, who had earlier headed the group, with the honorary title of “President Emeritus.”

Austin, who first became a longshoreman in Local 10 (SF) in 1967 and retired from Local 32 (Everett) in 2003, enters his second term as President. Austin also served the union as Coast Committeeman—Northwest (1988-1993) and International Vice President—Mainland (1994-1997).

Joining Austin and Loveridge as officers will be Arne Auvinen as Recording Secretary and Barbara Lewis as Treasurer.

“Al Perisho and the Southern California Pensioners Group did a magnificent job on hosting this convention,” said Austin.

The 41st annual PCPA convention will take place in Portland, Oregon.

More photos online at www.ilwu.org.

Prince Rupert enters super containership age

by Tom Price

The arrival of three giant cranes at the Port of Prince Rupert, British Columbia on Aug. 20 signaled more work for ILWU Canada’s Local 505. The Fairview Container Terminal opened Sept. 12, and it will immediately add 500,000 TEU (twenty-foot container equivalents) in new capacity to the port, with much more to come.

“With the increase in work, Local 505 has recently registered more than 150 new employees and re-activated another 50 former registrations,” Local 505 Secretary-Treasurer Tom MacDonald said. “When combined with the current employees our workforce, union and casuals, is now more than 300.”

Chinese officials from the Port of Ningbo attended the ceremony. The two ports have entered a “friendship agreement” to promote container traffic. COSCO, the Chinese government-owned line, will make its first call Oct. 31, according to The Journal

of Commerce.

Located in the northwest corner of British Columbia, 436 miles closer by sea to Shanghai than Vancouver, the port is located on a great circle route that makes it a couple days closer to Asia than U.S. ports. Served by a world-class railway, the Canadian National (CN), Prince Rupert is also several days closer to the central and eastern U.S. markets. The Port plans to increase capacity to 4 million TEUs in the few years, and has room for more. CN will contribute to a \$161 million intermodal facility for the port and dedicate 65 new locomotives to move the cans.

CN has direct railway lines to Memphis, Tenn., the third largest rail hub in the U.S. The Memphis rail hub takes about 60 percent of its containers from ILWU ports in Southern California, according to an article by Don Whiteley in BC Business Magazine. CN’s land speed advantage complements Prince Rupert’s ocean-going efficiencies to avoid congestion and move more West Coast freight.



New cranes arrive at Prince Rupert.

Prince Rupert can also provide fast export of fresh meat from the Province of Manitoba, Whitely reported.

Local 523, which handles coal loading at Prince Rupert, will not directly benefit from the increased container work, President Ron Coolin said. “Glen Edwards [Local 505 pres-

ident] did a lot of work for this and showed really good leadership,” Coolin said. He credited Edwards and ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne for making sure members got proper training and for keeping the port union.

News and Notes *cont’d from p. 2*

cated greater port security based on actual inspections of empty containers and cargoes, especially hazardous materials, and better identification of port visitors.

Local 400, ILWU Canada’s Marine Division out of Vancouver, B.C., is fighting for workers’ compensation for injured deckhand Mike Fuller. “He had been bumped off a barge and ended up between the barge and a ship,” Secretary-Treasurer George Bartlett said. “He was crushed pretty bad and was lucky to be alive.” The captain was able to pull away and avoid killing Fuller. But he wasn’t so lucky with the newly “liberalized” provincial workers comp process. He will receive only \$21 a week under British Columbia’s new, much stricter qualifications for long-term wage compensation. The comp board refused to pay him adequately because he had only been re-employed for a few days after a leave of absence.

B.C. premier Gordon Campbell’s right-wing government has made the workers’ comp law more corporate friendly at the expense of workers, Bartlett said. Local 400 is appealing...The local has nearly wrapped up separate negotiations with its numerous employers in towing, tug, launch services and oil bunkering. They previously negotiated a master contract, which was a lot easier, Bartlett said. “But the contract with Seaspan International served as something of template,” he said. “We had no concessions, a better deal for retirees, and wage increases of three percent in each of the four years.”

Canadian Employers continue to feel the fallout from a recent **Supreme Court of Canada** decision overturning laws banning collective bargaining for workers. Provincial law in Alberta still forbids farm workers the right to form unions. But just before Labour Day, the Alberta

Federation of Labour sent the provincial government notice it would sue if the laws were not overturned. “There is another option,” federation president Gil McGowan wrote to the labor minister. “We can work together to repair the damaged parts of the [law] and save Albertans time and hassle of a lengthy court processes.”

WASHINGTON STATE

Local 4 celebrated the repair of the Columbia River jetty Sept. 14 with Senator Patty Murray, (D-WA). “The senator lobbied hard to get funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to finish work on the jetty,” local president Cager Clabaugh said. The jetty keeps the shipping lane at the mouth of the Columbia free of debris by directing water currents away from the shipping lane.

Local 7 in Bellingham, Wash. will not directly lose work when the port loses a tissue paper mill in

December, but more than 200 non-ILWU jobs will disappear, according a Georgia-Pacific press release. Two years ago, Georgia-Pacific agreed to return to the Port 137 acres of waterfront property, including the tissue mill site. “If they replace the tissue plant with condominiums, then that might make problems for the shipping facility. New condo owners might not want to live next to a real port,” Local 7 Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Foster said.

Local 23 workers will have more work when port improvements are finished. The Port of Tacoma announced Aug. 30 that contractors will drive the first of about 820 concrete pilings for new wharf construction on the Blair Waterway. The new wharf will occupy the 96 acres formerly used by Kaiser Aluminum and have a 1,200-foot wharf.

Local 32 in Everett celebrated

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Organizing the slow and only way

SACRAMENTO, CA—The city basked in Sunday quiet, summer’s fierce heat had mellowed to a soft 85°, and both the Raiders and the ‘Niners had fans biting their nails. But for the team gathered at the ILWU warehouse Local 17 office Sept. 16, organizing was the name of the game. Local 17 members joined worker-organizers from Blue Diamond Growers and ILWU staff organizers to fan out around the Sacramento area and visit Blue Diamond workers at home.

Most successful organizing drives rely on house calls. Management can and does talk to workers on the job, filling them up with anti-union propaganda. Workers have the right to talk union on breaks, at lunch, before and after work—but often feel shy about exercising this right under the prying eyes of bosses and spies. To really “talk union,” organizers and committee members have to seek people out at home.

“We all need to do our part,” Local 17 President Jeff Carter said. “When we’re out there as union members, we can explain how we deal with issues people come across on the job, like safety and training and getting pulled out of one department and put in another. We can explain how we have a hand in setting up the procedures, so they don’t just get shoved down our throats.”

After a quick orientation among the still-unpacked boxes in Local 17’s new hall, volunteers paired up and hit the road.

Blue Diamond Organizing Committee member Cesario Aguirre got the route in Galt and Elk Grove, about 20 miles south of Sacramento.

“All this used to be farmland when I was in high school,” he said as he drove. “I used to work out here, and Cesar Chavez came through a couple times with the UFW people.”

After a bit of unscheduled exploration, Aguirre reached the first house, but the person he was looking for was out. Richard Thompson, next on the list, said he’d left Blue Diamond in January.

“I walked away after 28 years,” Thompson said. “I drove a forklift when they needed me to, then they’d bump me back to general laborer and treat me like a nobody.”

“Weren’t you a battery attendant too?” Aguirre asked.

“For 10, 12 years. You take care of those forklift batteries and you can get seven or eight years out of them,” Thompson said. “But when [General Manager] Kim Kennedy came in, he didn’t want to pay someone to do that. He’d rather let one run down and get a new one. Just like he has all those temps in there.”

Another person on the route

explained how they lost their job after getting injured at work. Another, who still works at Blue Diamond, just wanted to know, “When are we going to vote?”

“When we can have a fair process,” Aguirre said. “Now Blue Diamond has all the leverage. They can fire people. They can talk to us all the time and the union can’t get in there. They even have the election at the plant instead of in a public place.”

The worker nodded thoughtfully, then said to Aguirre, “They tried to shit-can your job too, didn’t they?”

Aguirre, a mechanic, had been off the job for 16 months after an 800-pound box dumper fell on him. The accident nearly cost him an eye. He came back to work in 2004 and did everything asked of him. Two years later, Blue Diamond suddenly decided he was too disabled to perform his duties safely, and tried to fire him.

“They tried to get rid of me but they didn’t succeed,” Aguirre said. The union started a petition for him, and asked one of its lawyers to go with him when he met with management to be sure Blue Diamond understood the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The next couple people on the list were out, but Jagit Singh invited Aguirre in and proved very supportive.



Marcy Rein

Blue Diamond Organizing Committee member Cesario Aguirre (left) chatting with Blue Diamond truck driver Jagit Singh.

“In my town in India, I was the mayor, from the Congress Party, and all the workers were for me because I was for the unions,” Singh said.

By 7 p.m. the teams headed back to the Mexican seafood restaurant half-owned by a retired member of longshore Local 18. They swapped war stories and lessons over guacamole, chips and dinner.

“One guy in a trailer park in North Highlands had a sign up by his driveway, ‘Redneck Parking Only,’” Local 17 Dispatcher/Business Agent Everett Burdan said, his blue eyes glinting. He’d been teamed up with Willie Willis, a Local 17 member from C&S/ Sacramento Logistics.

“I just went back to the truck,” said Willis, who’s African American. “I wasn’t going to try to represent the union there, knowing how he felt.” But in Del Paso Heights, where Willis grew up, it was a different story.

“This one lady didn’t want to talk and I said, ‘hey, I went to school with your kids, and you know Ms. Willis, she works there at Blue Diamond too, she’s my mom,’” he said. “That made her more comfortable and we talked for about a half-hour about the problems she has with the benefits, with her husband being disabled and all.”

ILWU Organizing Director Peter Olney and C&S clerk Audrey Corral

drove 60 miles around Rio Linda and the area bordering Citrus Heights. Two of the houses on their route had signs out front, “for sale by bank.” The residents, both long-term temps at Blue Diamond, lost their homes to foreclosure.

“I wouldn’t be able to live on what they make at Blue Diamond, much less raise a family on it,” Corral said. “It’s like being on welfare.”

Earlier this summer, Corral and the other clerks successfully organized to join Local 17. When one of the Blue Diamond workers talked about their fears of getting involved in organizing, Corral could relate.

“I told them the ILWU will back you up and protect you to its utmost ability,” Corral said. “My having had the experience made it more real to them.”

The rest of C & S was unionized, and the clerks still had to fight, Burdan pointed out. “At Blue Diamond, we’re building from the ground up, and it’s going to take a while. We’re going to have to keep doing this.”

—Marcy Rein

If you would like to help out with house calls, please phone ILWU Organizer Agustin Ramirez at (916) 606-4681.

Retired Americans learn new skills & raise a little hell in Washington

By Verna Porter

I was married to a Longshoreman for 33 years and have stayed active in the political process because I know how much politics can help or hurt working families. That’s why I attended the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association conference last month in San Pedro, and it’s why I led a delegation of Oregon senior activists who attended the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) over the Labor Day week in Washington, D.C.

The ARA brings together retirees from a wide-variety of groups including many retired union members. Joining us at the ARA event were more than 600 folks from practically every state, including my friends in Washington State who came with state chapter President Art Bolton. Our goal was to prepare for the 2008 election year, hear from lawmakers and Presidential candidates, and let them know our views during a “lobby day” on Capitol Hill.

Alliance President George Kourpias welcomed us to the Capitol with a call to action behind the theme “Building for America’s Future.” He urged us to work for changes that will help our generation and those who will follow us.

We heard from several political strategists who displayed a map showing many of the key races next year, including some in the Northwest. The effort to unseat Oregon incumbent Senator Gordon Smith (who scores below 20 on most union scorecards) is getting a great deal of attention, because his poll numbers keep going down as he flip-flops on important issues like the war in Iraq. Fortunately, two committed friends of working families have mounted challenges: Jeff Merkley, Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives who in 2007 ran the best pro-union legislative session in decades, and Steve Novick, a political strategist who comes from a family of union activists.

AFL-CIO President Sweeney, Executive Vice-President Chavez-Thompson, and Secretary-Treasurer Trumka all took the time to speak with us, emphasizing the importance of the senior vote. Senator Hillary Clinton expressed her support for Social Security and health care reform. Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and Elizabeth Edwards (appearing on behalf of former Senator John Edwards) detailed their progressive health care plans and called for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act.

Workshops helped us learn more about the health care debate, suggested ways to build coalitions back home, and provided tips for getting our message out to the media. This training means that hundreds of ARA activists are now ready and able to help with grassroots political work across the nation.

The day we spent talking with members of Congress on Capitol Hill was very productive. Each of us had “talking points” on key issues including Social Security and Medicare that made it easier to nail-down our elected representatives and their staff. Congress was just back in session

and very busy following the August recess, but we were still able to meet with Senator Wyden as well as Representatives McDermott, Dicks, and Wu.

The work we do as seniors and union members—at home and on Capitol Hill—is an important part of keeping politicians accountable to working people and the issues we care about. Early next year we’ll come together again in regional meetings to prepare for the most important election of our lifetimes, as we move to take back America for working families and retirees, and end the nightmare of Bush II.

Local 5 scores tentative contract at Powell’s Books

Local 5 in Portland, Oregon has reached a tentative agreement with their main employer, Powell’s Books, according to Union Representative Ryan Takas.

If approved by the members, the four-year contract will mean a wage increase of 18.8 percent for a worker at average pay, and 38 percent for the lowest paid workers.

Members also got an employer contribution to the 401(k) plan and an increase in the “wellness benefit” to \$750 a year, which pays for preventive care. The new transportation benefit will include bicycles as well as buses.

“Local 5 worked hard and came away with a good settlement,” International President Bob McEllrath said. “They have our admiration and respect for a job well-done.”

Mexican miners strike to survive

By David Bacon

CANANEA, SONORA, MEXICO (9/20/07)—Even though the Cananea mine has been on strike for fifty days, rock dust in parts of this huge complex is so deep that it rises up over the boot tops of the miners. Mine dust is more than just uncomfortable—it’s deadly. Miners who breathe it year after year suffer a variety of lung diseases, but the most dangerous is silicosis. That dust is the most serious reason why the miners are out on strike – to force the mine’s owner, the giant Grupo Mexico corporation, to abide by the union contract that mandates protection.

But it is also a strike for the union itself. Across Mexico, miners are locked in conflict with Grupo Mexico, which seeks to replace the 70-year-old miners’ union with another union that would let it run the mines as it likes. If the union loses, and the strikers lose their jobs, they will have to leave Cananea, since there is no other work in this small community that can sustain a family.

In Cananea, the healthcare system doesn’t help workers assess their physical condition. Letters signed by the director of the Hospital Ronquillo, where the company pays for miners’ medical care, repeat a few stock phrases. Miners with 15 or 20 years on the job are told they’ve either had a “normal medical examination,” or are given diagnoses of problems unrelated to work.

The Hospital Ronquillo’s inadequacy led miners half a century ago to build a clinic of their own, with a beautifully equipped operating theater, a children’s wing, wards with one bed and bathroom per room, and specialized prenatal care, obstetrics, and other services. The union contract required the company to pay its costs, and the workers ran it. “I was born here,” says Jose Luis Zamora, who was elected administrator by his fellow miners. “So were most of us.”

In 1999, however, Grupo Mexico refused to continue paying the clinic

costs, although the union contract required it. After the clinic closed, Zamora, its last director, was kept from returning to his job in the mine for three years. “They were punishing me,” he says, “for fighting to keep it open.” Reopening the clinic in accord with the contract is another strike demand.

Grupo Mexico also owns most of the large mines in Mexico, as well as its privatized railroad system. In the last decade the company also bought two even larger mines in Peru, and ASARCO (American Smelting and Refining Co.), The Cananea Mine with two mines and a smelter in Arizona.

After years of job cuts, today 1350 working miners belong to the union in Cananea, and have permanent employment in the mine. But another 450 people work alongside them for contracting services that sell their labor to Grupo Mexico, and pay none of the benefits union members receive. That, too, has become an issue in the current strike.

Napoleon Gomez Urrutia became the general secretary of the Mexican Union of Mine, Metal and Allied Workers in 2001, and immediately began to push hard against declining conditions. Taking advantage of world record copper prices, he won 6-8% wage increases, twice those dictated by government austerity policies. When former Mexican President Vicente Fox pushed to reform the country’s labor laws at the behest of the World Bank, Gomez Urrutia brought even conservative unions into a coalition that finally spiked the proposals.

But after a huge explosion in the Pasta de Conchos coal mine killed 65 miners on February 19, 2006, Gomez Urrutia accused the Secretary of Labor and Grupo Mexico of “industrial homicide.” The Mexican government then tried to appoint an expelled union leader, Elias Morales, to replace him, and Gomez Urrutia



David Bacon

The Cananea Mine

had to flee to Canada.

In November, 2006, however a new organization received a “registro,” or legal status as a union, from Mexican labor authorities, the National Union of Workers in the Exploration, Exploitation and Benefit of Mines (SUTEEBM). The Mexican labor board then set up elections to allow it to take over representation rights in eight mines. The Center for Labor Action and Reflection (CEREAL), a human rights organization, charges the election process was manipulated to get rid of the miner’s union.

Before the vote fifteen workers were fired at a San Luis Potosi mine. In Nueva Rosita, Coahuila, miners were locked inside the coalmine for a day before balloting began. At Nacozari, over 900 workers were

denied voting rights, while the mine’s workers were told they would be fired, evicted from company housing and sent back to southern Mexico if the company union didn’t win.

Miners at Cananea are on strike to save their union, since no election can be held there while the strike is on.

Manny Armenta, a representative of the United Steel Workers of America, believes that miners on both sides of the US/Mexico border have a common interest, especially since so many of them work for Grupo Mexico. “If we don’t help them,” he explains. “eventually we’ll face the same problems. They want the right to elect their own leaders, and to belong to a union controlled by miners, not by the company. We can all identify with that.”

Ferry and Towboat Union Reps Hold First West Coast Caucus

An Ounce of Prevention equals a Pound of Cure

by Peter Hart

On Tuesday, September 11 a unique labor gathering was held in Vancouver, British Columbia when a group of union leaders representing the ferry and towboat industry on the West Coast of Canada and the U.S. met to get acquainted and explore how they could help each other in their respective fights.

Attending this first caucus were Jackie Miller, President of the BC Ferrys and Marine Workers’ Union (BCFMWU); Ed Koloszek, President of Local 11 BCFMWU; Michael Jordon, ILWU Local 400; Terry Engler President ILWU Local 400 (host); Greg Landvik-ILWU Local 400; Kevin Hall, Business Agent BCFMWU; Richard Goodo, 1st Vice President BCFMWU; David Badior, Ships Officer Component BCFMWU; Darryl Tseu, IBU Alaska Regional Director; Dennis Conklin, IBU Puget Sound Regional Director; and Alan Coté, IBU National President.

During a free and open discussion, they discovered that they are facing many common problems in the maritime industry. Several issues were addressed including federal and corporate attacks on the Jones Act and its counterpart in Canada known as the Cabotage Laws. Other topics included the shortages of qualified labor, subcontracting of jobs, stricter drug and alcohol testing policies, increased security, and the ever present threat of privatization and its many manifestations in the public sector. This newly formed coalition brainstormed a priority list and began the conversation of how to support each other in the months ahead.

Organized by Alan Coté, President of the Inlandboatmen’s Union (IBU), this initial meeting brought together an impressive group of representatives from the ferry and towboat industries to discuss a multitude of concerns.

Whatever the nature of the issue, whether it be local or national politics, local or national economics, or a cultural or regional disagreement, the hope is that this coalition of labor from Alaska to eventually Hawaii, will strive to prevent problems from occurring and work together on those that can’t be foreseen. This caucus will become a regular event, meeting once or twice a year or more if necessary, and alternate between the U.S. and Canada.

With a new and improved dialog, the participants hope to become more aware of the threats to the membership. They hope to become better prepared to respond to these threats and prevent the seeds of anti-unionism from spreading. As difficult as it is to maintain and improve upon union contracts, it’s far easier in a region that understands the value of organized labor. The climb for union protections and benefits is far steeper when a federal or regional government is openly hostile to the idea of union labor. Becoming aware of what problems the different ferry and towboat labor groups have in common should make it easier to unite in this shared struggle.

With a more unified front, the coalition hopes to amplify its power, to improve labor conditions throughout the maritime industry. When an issue arises on the west coast this new coalition can respond internationally by using all the assets in its collective power to obtain results. Getting out in front of an issue before it becomes an expensive problem will save member resources. Whether it’s through their relationships with the ITF or their collective political influence in Juneau, Victoria, Olympia, Ottawa, or Washington, D.C., the coalition will share their political tools along with their improved knowledge of each others needs to better labor’s cause.

WASHINGTON REPORT

ILWU Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin reported to the International Executive Board Sept. 13 on the union’s activity in the federal and state governments. As usual, the ILWU was very active in Washington.

- President Bush signed a bill codifying a list of crimes that could prevent a docker from getting a Transport Worker Identification Card (TWIC). The union lobbied in the Senate and House to protect worker interests, with some success.

- The House and Senate passed a \$900,000 allotment for dredging the Sacramento River. The bill also authorizes continuing the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel.

- The union asked the Alaskan house and senate delegation to write a letter to the Dept. of Labor saying the shippers were abusing the “Alaska Exception,” which allows employers in Alaska to use ships’ crew to do longshore work if no longshore workers are available. Senators Stevens, Murkowski, and Congressman Don Young wrote to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, “We strongly urge you to take all necessary measures to curb these practices and to remedy all violations of the Alaska exception”.

- The Farm Bill passed the House. It includes a provision that would mandate the Dept. of Agriculture to buy sugar for ethanol production. This will help ILWU sugar workers if it also passes the Senate and the

president signs it. The ILWU didn’t forget Blue Diamond workers during the farm bill debate. The union lobbied for minimum labor standards for any enterprise receiving federal agricultural dollars. This could deny funding to companies like Blue Diamond, which was found by the NLRB to have 20 labor law violations in March 2006.

- While the union was not successful in getting a statute passed, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Rep. Phil Hare (D-IL) committed on the House floor to continue working on this issue of fairness and justice for the Blue Diamond workers. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee is writing a letter to the USDA to urge them to adopt minimum labor standards for companies that receive Market Access Program funds.

- The National Parks subcommittee of the House held a hearing on the problems associated with the National Park Service contract with Hornblower, including their unwillingness to bargain in good faith and retain the skilled workers who are members of the Inlandboatmen’s Union and the Masters Mates and Pilots.

- The union lobbied against changes in NLRB regulations that would de-unionize workers with minimal supervisory duties. The union also met with Senator Kerry’s aides for discussions on catastrophic illness insurance. The union continues to back the single-payer health care bill HR 676.

Local 10 casual fatally injured in container accident

By John Showalter

Reginald Ross was just 39 years old when his life was tragically cut short while working on the deck of a container ship at the Port of Oakland. Ross had been working on the docks for about 3 years and was just a few months away from becoming a registered “B” man when he was fatally injured on the afternoon of Monday, September 24.

Though there were no eyewitnesses, according to Business Agent Frank Gaskin—who was on duty at the time of the accident—Ross was lashing containers on the deck of a Hapag-Lloyd vessel, the *Stuttgard Express*, at Berth 57 when he was fatally injured as a container was lowered into place. Emergency personnel carefully transported him from the deck of the ship to a waiting ambulance, but he died several hours later of internal injuries at a nearby hospital.

In reaction to Ross’ tragic death, Local 10 longshore workers at the Port of Oakland stood down for 24 hours to mourn their fallen brother and make sure conditions were safe enough to return to work. An investigation of the accident is being conducted by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard. The agencies held an initial conference that started the investigation on

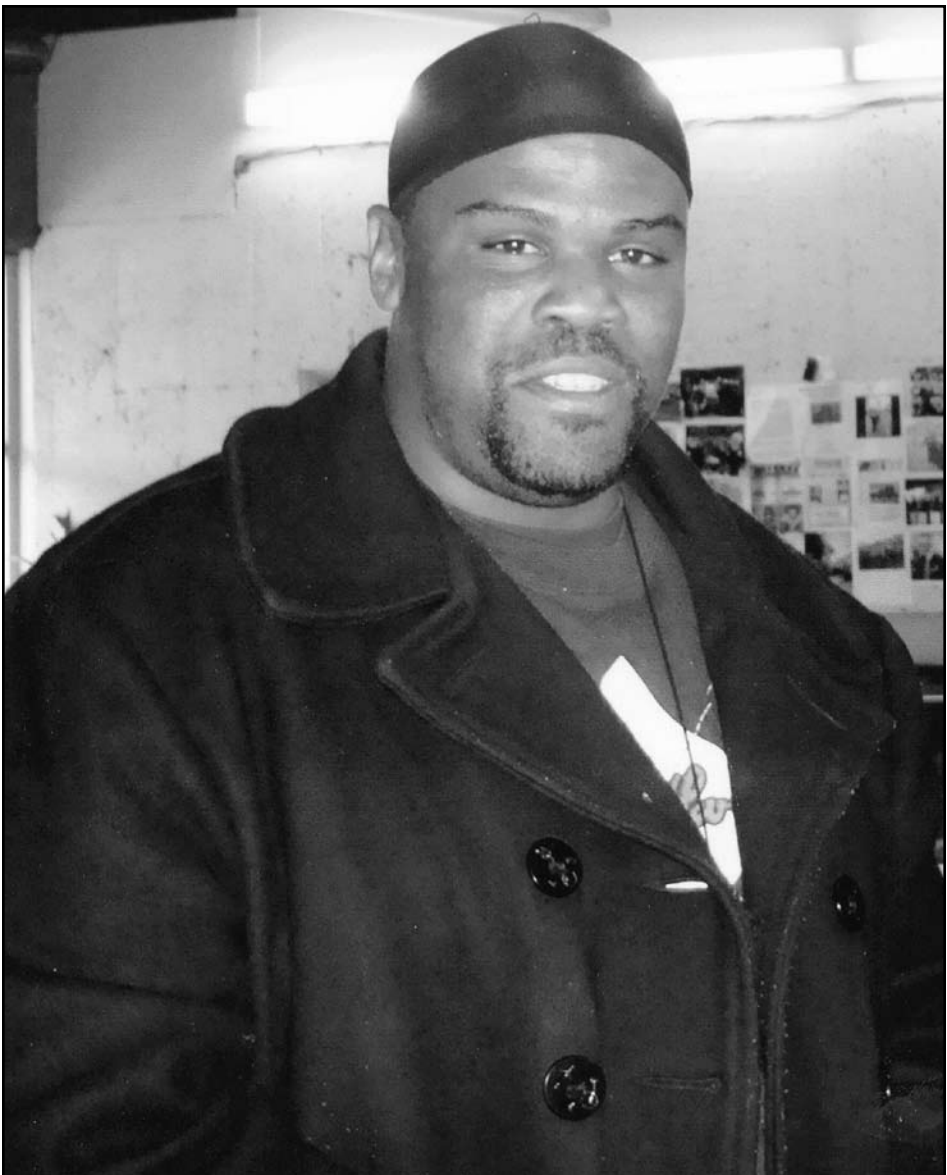
September 25. John Castanho, who chairs the Coast Safety Committee, attended the OSHA conference to represent the union and is conducting an independent inquiry into the accident.

“Reggie loved his job and had deep family roots in the union,” Glenda Ross, his sister, said. “He was really looking forward to getting his ‘B’-book.”

Ross came from a proud family of San Francisco longshoremen going back to his grandfather, Luther Ross, who worked the docks in the 1950s. His uncle, Luther, Jr. was also a longshoreman. His father Richard is still an active longshoreman out of Local 10.

Ross, a San Francisco resident, was well-liked by all those who knew him, according to his sister. He enjoyed fishing, playing chess and cooking, especially his much-loved pies and cakes. In addition to his sister and father, Ross is survived by his brother Leonard and four daughters who live in San Francisco: Gloria, 16, RayAnn, 17, Sazion, 8, and Simone who was born last year.

The Ross Family is appealing for funds to help pay the costs of his funeral. Please send your donations in the form of a check to: **Reginald Ross Memorial Fund, c/o Secretary-Treasurer Farless Dailey**, ILWU Local 10 400 North Point St San Francisco, CA



Reginald Ross

Local 47’s Del Edgbert passes

Del Edgbert helped steer Local 47 through some tough times. He served as president during a period of low work and his fellow workers credit him as playing a major role in keeping the local together. He passed away peacefully August 18 at home with family and friends from ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease), on the night of his high school reunion.

Del was born on March 3, 1939 and lived most of his life in Olympia, Wash. He graduated from Olympia High School in 1957 and attended

the Northwest Nazarene University in Idaho and graduated in 1962. Del began his working life as a seaman, joining the Coast Guard and serving aboard the cutter *Yacona*. He turned to longshoring and got his ‘A’ registration in July 1968. He retired Oct. 1, 2002.

Del’s friends remember him as a man of many abilities.

“He was a unique guy, he was multi-talented,” Local 47 Secretary-Treasurer Robert Rose said. “In the last ten years it’s been hotrods. He’s probably one of the most artistic guys you’ll ever see, he could take a piece of junk and make it into something.”

Although much of his life was devoted to longshoring and the ILWU, Del was also a high school English teacher and an instructor of English as a second language. He taught in the U.S. Navy’s Programs Afloat for College Education aboard ships and in foreign countries. He served on the Puget Sound District Council, was a Caucus and Convention delegate, and helped negotiate several contracts as a representative of the small port locals. Del served his local as president from 1980 until 1990, years when low work opportunity threatened the existence of the ILWU in the small ports.

“He was probably responsible for keeping our local afloat during those ten years,” Rose said. “He led this local through some pretty tough times.”

Del’s quest for adventure led him to become a boat inspector in Taiwan. He also assisted his wife in her Olympia-based business, Thompson Framing.

Creativity defined Del’s life, his life-long friend Lee Parks said. His avocations were as diverse as his professional interests. He restored the historic sailboat *Martha*, a 50-ton, 84-foot two-masted staysail schooner built in 1907. In typical fashion, Del credited his wife, his union brothers and his kids for their work on the boat.

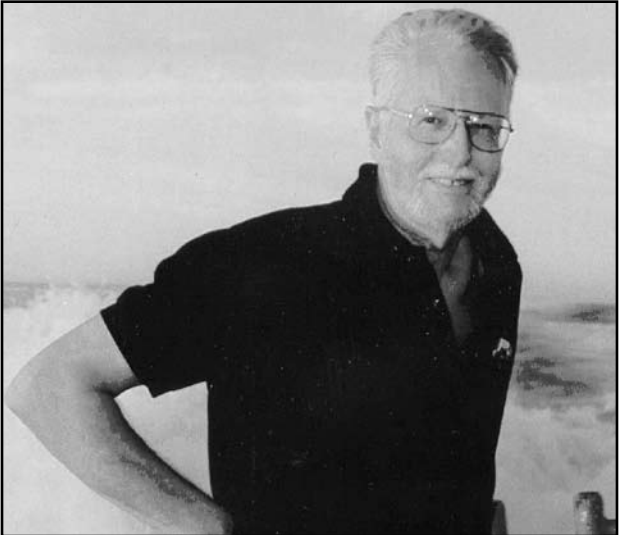
“[It’s] just one more example of the brotherhood of this great union,” Del told *The Dispatcher* in June 1985. “*Martha* has proudly carried the ILWU flag to ports from San Francisco to Alaska.”

As president of Local 47, he helped organize workers to volunteer to load wheat for the starving people of Ethiopia in 1984.

Del and Paulette traveled to 40 countries, their favorites being those in the Third World, Lee Parks said. He was concerned with abused workers. He was humbled by those who had so little, but were so eager to share. His major regret was that his time to give back was shortened. In Del’s words, “I’m happy I have taken the road less traveled.” Regarding his street rod creations, he said, “Once again it’s a journey from junk to cool, that motivates me.”

He leaves behind Paulette, his wife of 30 years, his children, Gay Lynn Heinrich and her husband Jeff, Jay Edgbert and his wife Jessica, and Quinn Thompson. He had four grandchildren. Del loved his family and eagerly helped them with home remodeling, advice and support. Two brothers, Bill and Bruce, and one sister, Wilma Muir, all living in Washington, also survive him.

—Tom Price, with help from Lee Parks



Del Edgbert

Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

RECENT RETIREES:
Local 10—Joe Lara Jr.; **Local 13**—Jesus Talamantes, Jerry Serros, John Cameron, Emilio Acosta, James Moses, Mario Fizulich, Marion Rafkin, Richard C. Powell Jr.; **Local 23**—Donald Gill, William Brinkman, Charles Duback; **Local 34**—Gerald Cook; **Local 63**—Charles Espinosa, James Harryman, John Phillips; **Local 94**—Rosario Giacalone, Clarence Armstrong Jr.

DECEASED:
Local 4—John Zumwalt (Arlene); **Local 8**—Ernest Post (Iola); **Local 10**—Howard Grant (Florida), Tony Torres (Madeline), Gene Coleman (Frances), Garfield Jackson (Josephine); **Local 12**—Harry Wilson (Margaret); **Local 13**—Frank Gutierrez Jr. (Jeanette), Gordon Gaskins, Michael D. Henderson, Benni Robello; **Local 19**—Angel Domingcil; **Local 23**—Vinko Buric (Teresa),

Roscoe Cox Jr. (Hannelore), Michael Bartholomew (Destiny); **Local 40**—Erwin V. Johnson (Marlene); **Local 50**—Erwin Bergholm (Coreen); **Local 63**—John Griffin Jr. (Charlotte), Benjamin Baca; **Local 92**—Jean Stennick; **Local 94**—Harry Heath (Jessie), George Kuvakas (Alice), Joseph Balboa. (Survivors in parenthesis.)

DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 8—Donna Gonnuscio; **Local 10**—Irene Giomi, Inez Sanchez, Betty Mignacco, Gloria D. Jackson; **Local 12**—Helen Hardcastle; **Local 13**—June Muehler; **Local 19**—Lillian Warren, Carolyn Gacek, Narvlee Fitch; **Local 40**—Helen Gustafson; **Local 50**—Patricia Geier; **Local 54**—Mildred Miskulin, Ruby Spurgin; **Local 92**—Barbara Hendrickson; **Local 94**—Nellie Hernandez, Ruth Todd; **Local 98**—Kirk Madlyn.

Trina Victoria Lewis-Moore, Local 6 activist

Local 6 lost a rising star when Trina Victoria Lewis-Moore passed away August 24. She was born Dec. 3, 1964 and graduated from Oakland’s McClymonds High School and attended Hayward State Univ. She received a certificate in labor research and education from the C.L. Dellums African American Leadership Institute at U.C. Berkeley earlier this year.

Management and the union both recognized Trina’s talents, and she held numerous managerial jobs at Jack N’ the Box and I. Magnin before working at Bayer Pharmaceuticals in Berkeley, beginning in 1997. Trina’s co-workers elected her Co-Chief Shop Steward for Local 6 at Bayer in 2005, after she helped negotiate the contract that year.

“She was a force of nature, very outgoing, she included everyone in the room in her conversation,” Local 6 BA Donal Mahon said. “She was well liked by the members and respected by management. She was sharp as a nail in grievances, people from all over the site came to her.”

In addition to representing her 530 co-workers at Bayer, she was a dedicated wife, mother and friend to her family. She is survived by husband Danny, daughter Kishawnta Johnson, son Michael, adopted sons James Harris and Aquarius Gibson, her father Lorenzia Lewis Sr., brothers Carlton, Michael, Lorenzia Jr., Everett and James. She also leaves sisters Lydia and Maggie, and stepsisters Sharon and Virginia, and nieces and nephews.

—Tom Price

ILWU Book & Video Sale

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

BOOKS:

Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the United States By Charles Larrowe: A limited number of copies of this out-of-print and useful biography are now available through the book sale by special arrangement with Bolerium Books in San Francisco, which specializes in rare publications and documents about radical and labor history. **\$10.00**

The ILWU Story: unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and dozens of rare photos of the union in action. **\$5.00**

The Big Strike By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. **\$6.50**

The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. **\$20.00 (paperback)**

A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco By David Selvin: perhaps the most comprehensive single narrative about the San Francisco events of 1934. **\$16.50**

The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938 By Harvey Schwartz: 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 (powellunion.com)

Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s By Bruce Nelson: the most complete history of the origins, meaning, and impact of the 1934 strike.

Reds and Rackets: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront By Howard Kimledorf: A provocative comparative analysis of the politics and ideology of the ILWU and the International Longshoremen’s Association.

VIDEOS:

We Are the ILWU A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about what the union meant in their lives and what it needs to survive and thrive, along with film clips, historical photos and an original musical score. DVD or VHS version **\$5.00**

Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges A 17-minute DVD of the original video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorializes Harry Bridges through still photographs, recorded interviews, and reminiscences. Originally produced for the 1990 memorial service in San Francisco. DVD **\$5.00**

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

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Warehousing? *cont’d from p. 3*

ORGANIZING IS THE OBVIOUS ANSWER, BUT...

“The problems that warehouse locals face today can only be solved like they were in 1936—by organizing more workers in the industry,” says ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, who has been convening meetings of the Warehouse Caucus.

“Organizing workers today is so much harder than it was in the 30’s,” says Adams. He says some of the challenges are the same; opposition from employers and anti-union politicians, for example, and notes that the union’s Political Action Fund is crucial for addressing that problem.

But Adams also believes there are new challenges that require more discussion about what is needed from members and leaders if the union is serious about organizing new workers. He says the ILWU’s organizing effort in the warehouse industry is raising many difficult issues, including:

- ✓ Many new warehouses are located a hundred miles or more away from the largest ILWU warehouse locals.
- ✓ The workforce in many warehouses includes workers who speak Spanish and other languages that many leaders don’t understand.
- ✓ Most ILWU members haven’t participated yet in an organizing campaign, although Adams believes many would find it rewarding and he feels their role is “absolutely critical.”
- ✓ The financial resources needed to tackle today’s warehouse industry—and take on the mega-employers involved—are enormous.

Adams says none of these obstacles are overwhelming, and he believes the ILWU is making progress in several areas. For example:

- ✓ The ILWU is now allocating a third of the International Union income to organizing—something that few other unions have matched.
- ✓ Some ILWU workers and officers from the Longshore Division are volunteering to help Rite Aid employees who live in the desert, almost 100 miles away from the docks and union halls of San Pedro.
- ✓ Many of the ILWU organizing staff speak Spanish, as do some of the volunteers who are meeting with warehouse workers that want to join the ILWU.

The ILWU’s Organizing Director, Peter Olney, believes one of the biggest challenges—and opportunities—for ILWU organizing is to harness the union’s existing strength on the docks, and use that power to follow the containers wherever they lead, including warehouse work.

“We have to build our organizing strategies around the opportunities that are present in the new systems and traditional links on the docks,” he says. “One goal is to harness our power on the docks through thousands of longshore workers who understand that their future prosperity depends on helping other workers beyond the docks to escape poverty. That’s not going to happen overnight, but we have to get moving because there are other forces at work that leave all of us vulnerable, including longshore workers.”

Olney’s reference to “other forces” may sound sinister, but he says it’s just a question of perspective. Today’s longshore workers, he says, are a critical link in the global supply chain, “but we’re surrounded in all directions by a workforce that’s predominantly non-union and low-wage.

Willie Adams says the existing links between longshore and warehouse are critical, and notes that the Longshore Division has provided valuable financial support for organizing and other important projects.

“Change on the docks and in warehousing is constant,” he says, “and I’ve seen plenty of changes during my time in the industry.” Adams notes that longshore is thriving now, but cautions that the future may be more difficult. “Organizing new workers down the supply chain is critical because we’re at a crossroads now with warehousing, and all of us have a stake in the outcome,” he says.

Adams points to the historic role played by ILWU Secretary-Treasurer Lou Goldblatt, who encouraged warehouse organizing more than half a century ago. “Lou wanted warehouse and longshore folks to work together, because workers could benefit from the experience and power of both industries; that was the strategy then, and it’s our best chance for a larger and stronger union today.”

News and Notes *cont’d from p. 4*

the first ship to call at its new Lehigh Cement terminal in late August. The new terminal will generate more work for the union, and the Port of Everett signed a 20-year lease with Lehigh. Local 32 will also handle more cargo from Boeing, as that company imports more parts for its 787 “Dreamliner” aircraft.

OREGON

Local 8 has taken on Ash Grove Cement with picket lines protesting the company’s failure to pay “area standard” wages and its use of ships’ crew to discharge cement. U.S. law forbids seafarers doing longshore work when the ship is tied up and the union has sent photos to federal agencies documenting these violations. The company denies it. “We’ve been picketing since April 3. We’ve gone to the facility and attempted to talk to management and have been forcibly removed by the police,” Secretary-Treasurer Karl Lunde said. Local 8 has vowed to keep up the pressure.

CALIFORNIA

The **Northern and Southern California District Councils** teamed up to help pass an indoor heat safety standard that will require CalOSHA to protect workers from extreme heat at the workplace. The bill is on the Governor’s desk. But key worker protections were stripped from the bill.

The **Southern Calif. Pensioners Assn.** hosted a Labor Day pre-parade breakfast at the Local 13 dispatch hall and fed 500 marchers. The pensioners donated \$4,000 for the food and Local 13 member Mike Miller led the kitchen staff.

Local 6 members who refused to cross the picket lines of locked-out Teamsters were honored at the Alameda County Labor Council Labor Day Picnic. More than 300 Local 6 people gave up their paychecks for a month’s solidarity. For its part, the local has been sued by Waste Management and had an unfair labor practices charge filed against them by the company.

Local 13. The Port of Long Beach—using real-time monitoring—has completed a study of air quality at the port. Based on recommendations by Local 13 members, air monitors were set up at four locations around

the port, with an additional monitor set up near the Local 13 Memorial Hall in Wilmington, according to Local 13 Health Benefits Administrator David Beeman.

Local 18 welcomed Steve Kioukis back to the hall after a bit of an absence—35 years, to be exact. “I left because of lack of work,” Kioukis said. “I enjoyed working on the ships back then, but I’d gotten into the habit of eating at an early age! When I started in 1968 everything was hand stowed, and in the five years I was in it went to mostly mechanized.”

Local 26 ratified a contract for 130 members with American Extrusion Products. Workers will get a wage increase of 3 percent annually, President Luisa Gratz said...The Area Arbitrator ruled in favor of 18 Local 26 workers Sept. 21 in a dispute for time, and they will be paid in lieu time. The arbitrator reaffirmed the ruling Sept. 24.

Local 29 in National City says the Port of San Diego is bringing in new work fast. So fast, in fact, that more workers may be needed to handle the additional work. The port has become a niche market for the delivery of windmill parts, and receives break bulk cargoes like cement, fertilizer, fruit, lumber and steel.

San Diego’s Port Commissioners will be meeting with ILWU Local 29 and PMA officials in San Francisco on Oct 30 to discuss how to handle growth in cargo volumes at the port. Their agenda will also include talks about safety and staffing. According to the Port of San Diego, break bulk imports increased by 60 percent in fiscal year 2007, while vehicle imports increased nearly 20 percent. Overall revenues over the past year also increased by \$4 million, to \$39.4 million. In addition to growing cargo volumes, San Diego is expecting more cruise ships to call at the port this year than ever before during peak season, from October until May...There was also a change in leadership at Local 29 this summer **Abram Rodriguez** was elected President and **Anthony Soniga** was elected Secretary-Treasurer/Dispatcher.

Local 30 in Boron announced the retirement of long-time officer **Ray Panter**, who served six terms as president. Other retirees include: Paterno Basilio, Stuart Sims, Andrea Placker, Frances Ellwood and David Ku.