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No more innuendos. No more backdoor assaults. No more collat- eral casualties. This is all out class war and all out class struggle.

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has made his position clear—the enemies of the state are its workers, particularly those organized in unions. All the ballot initiatives he is backing in the Nov. 8 special election show that he is sticking to that agenda and is willing to fight not only the unions but any non-Republicans who have opposed Schwarzenegger’s corporate agenda.

Posing as a moderate Republican, Schwarzenegger is pushing an extreme Bush-style program to endlessly attacking workers and unions, while raking in millions and millions from his corporate sponsors.

The nurses and teachers have been relentless, slamming Schwarzenegger at every one of his mil- lion-dollar fundraisers, even and especially when he was seeking his behalf. When he lost his bid to move out of California of his own and continuously staged media events to highlight the financial sta- tus of those backs his “reform” agenda and contrast them with the working class who is being bled.

Schwarzenegger’s poll numbers are way down. So now the media, ever the sheep, are emboldened to finally do their job and point out how he is using dummy front orga- nizations to hide and launder cam- paign contributions from his corpo- rate pats. What we now have is not just influence peddling, but also blatant lying about it. As Watergate and Iran-Contra showed, it’s not so much the crime but the cover-up that’ll get ya.

And so the other offi- cers of the ILWU have worked out a plan for longshore work- ers to raise and donate money to the ongoing relief effort for the next six months.

We have decid- ed to work with and through our friends and allies in the AFL-CIO. The labor union federation that stood by us during the 2002 long- shore contract fight is now leading a comprehensive program to help working people in the Gulf area get back on their feet.

The AFL-CIO has set up worker centers in seven cities where evacuees are stay- ing—Baton Rouge, Houston, Atlanta, Mobile, Dallas, San Antonio and New Orleans. These centers are providing job referrals, counseling and information services to displaced workers and their families. They are also guiding families as they apply for government assistance and helping them access services and resources when possible. The centers will also fulfill some immediate needs of vic- tims by distributing supplies, clothing, etc.

Under our new program, interested ILWU longshore work- ers can, with ease and convenience, make voluntary, charitable contributions for hurricane relief efforts directly through individual payroll withholding. In addition, our longshore employer PMA will match dollar-for-dollar on the first $250.00 of contributions by longshore workers through this program. This program is com- pletely voluntary.

To participate, all you need to do is sign and return to PMA a consent form, “ILWU-PMA Voluntary Payroll Authorization,” speci- fying the amount you choose to have withheld from each paycheck via our new program to other charitable organizations pro- viding hurricane relief. So all ILWU monies will be devoted to hurricane relief efforts. The Union Community Fund is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charity. Donations to UCF are, therefore, tax-deductible to the extent provided by law for charitable contributions. PMA’s matching contributions will go to a hurricane relief public charity yet to be deter- mined (one in need of funds on the ground).

Those affected most by the hurricanes are the workers and the community in this case, most people of color who have been the brunt of so much suffering and horror. But it was political decisions that turned disaster into catastrophe. New Orleans flood- ing because of a political decision by the Bush administration to move FEMA away from being a natural disaster emergency relief agency and to put someone with absolutely no experience in the field in charge of it. And it’s a political decision by the Bush administration to use this devastating disaster to further attack workers and make them victims again.

In the Katrina situation, Bush has invoked emergency powers and the contracts being given to Halliburton and his other corpo- rate cronies. And so much we rely on each other to overcome the inevitable adversities.

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ILWU mobilizes relief for Katrina victims

By John Showalter

The city where as many as 14,000 hurricane relief donations and their handlers were temporarily relocated its office and hiring hall to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The local’s president, James Campbell, told Riley that longshore workers are only working in partial capacity at the Port of New Orleans. Most members—having lost their homes—are living in military ships docked at the port. Campbell also said that his local members, like many stranded in New Orleans after the hurricane and subsequent flood, didn’t know where their neighbors, family and union brothers and sisters were in the days after the disaster.

The New Orleans local is having problems getting checks to its pensioners and accurately recording members’ times worked. Only 60 percent of Local 3000 pensioners have direct deposit. Local President Benzy Holland, Jr. reported that Local 3000 is credit-crediting New Orleans’ longshore workers whose work was disrupted with the minimum work hours to qualify for welfare and benefits.

ILA presidents and secretaries meeting in Houston made it an immediate goal to get weekly checks for $500 into the hands of every, identified, affected local member for the next three weeks. Many other ILA locals—like ILWU locals—are coordinating their relief donations with local Black churches or giving between $10,000-$25,000 to the ILA’s Katrina Fund. For instance, in Charleston, ILA Local 1422 gave $1,000 worth of bottled water to a local congregation’s relief drive, and Savannah ILA Local 1414 gave $25,000 towards the fund. Other nearby ports have absorbed some longshore workers from the New Orleans. The ports of Galveston, Houston, Baton Rouge, Pascagoula and Gulfport—all targets for goods delivery in New Orleans’ absence—hired approximately 100 Local 3000 members.

Katrina hits port workers lives, jobs

By John Showalter

Some 1,500 longshore workers in the Gulf Coast region, members of the International Longshoremen’s Association, have been adversely affected by Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans Local 3000 is bearing the heaviest burden, along with locals in Mobile, Alabama, and Pascagoula and Gulfport, Mississippi also affected.

At a Sept. 14 emergency gathering of ILA locals in Atlantic, South Atlantic and Gulf District ILA locals in Houston, the ILA International decided to reallocate $1 million in general funds for relief of longshore workers and their families affected by the hurricane. The funds were reallocated to ILA locals to give at least $1,000 out-of-pocket to the relief effort. The ILA North Atlantic has given $200,000 towards immediate relief.

Local 10 members load a container with Katrina relief supplies outside their dispatch hall.

ILWA mobilizes relief for Katrina victims

By John Showalter

September 2005

The ILWU's Marine Division, has set up an "IBU Hurricane Relief Fund" with the Waterfront Credit Union in Seattle. Members are donating to that fund designed to help the dozen ILWU members in the Gulf who have been affected by Katrina.
The disaster after the disaster

By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

Hurricane Katrina ripped through the Gulf coast, last month killing hundreds of people. Citizens of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama lost their homes, their jobs and their businesses. The levees around New Orleans broke and flooded 80 percent of the city.

We have since found out that the government diverted needed money to shore up levees to the war in Iraq and anti-terrorism initiatives. Americans cried out for help from the Superdome, the New Orleans convention center and from atop their flooded homes while Bush and his cronies at the Department of Homeland Securityiddled and dawdled.

Federal Emergency Management Agency head Michael Brown was complimented by Bush for doing “a heck of a job” before the American people demanded he be sacked in favor of someone who knew something about emergency response.

The world watched in horror as the all-powerful U.S. government left American citizens, New Orleans’ poorest and most vulnerable residents, to fend for themselves. The Bush administration’s inattention and callous disregard for human suffering is in itself a disaster of immense proportions.

The day after Bush signed the Jones Act waiver, he signed the Patriot Act. The Patriot Act included provisions that would deny worker rights for the people of the Gulf region who have worked through the Gulf coast last month, through the Gulf of Mexico.

Katrina.

Four days after the hurricane hit, Bush waived the Jones Act—which mandates that cargo transportation of goods between U.S. ports must be done by U.S.-flagged, U.S.-built, U.S.-crewed and U.S.-owned vessels—to benefit the petroleum and gas industry, even though the U.S. maritime industry clearly has enough vessels to handle the situation. This waiver expired Sept. 19, but it gave the anti-Jones Act coalition a victory and other industries have followed suit and are asking for waivers.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has asked for a waiver of the Jones Act for agricultural products through the end of 2005.

Bush also suspended Davis-Bacon Act protections for construction workers in the rebuilding efforts of New Orleans and the Gulf. Davis-Bacon, enacted in 1931, requires contractors on federally funded construction projects to pay workers at least the prevailing wages in the area where the work is conducted.

“Suspending Davis-Bacon protections for financially distressed workers in the Gulf states amounts to legalized looting of these workers who will be cleaning up toxic sites and struggling to rebuild their communities while favored contractors rake in huge profits from FEMA reconstruction contracts,” commented Ed Sullivan, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department.

In the rush to cut worker wages in the Gulf, Bush’s Davis-Bacon suspension may have been illegal, according to a Congressional Research Service report on Sept. 15, 2005. The law requires the president to issue a national emergency, according to the CRS.

“The Bush administration first made mistakes when it was too slow to respond to rising floodwaters,” said Rep. George Miller (D-CA), a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee. “Then it made mistakes when it was too quick to slash workers’ wages.”

H.R. 3763, introduced by Miller (D-CA), would rescind Bush’s proclamation to slash wages for workers in the region. It already has 170 cosponsors. This common sense legislation is needed to get money in the hands of the people who really need it—the workers in the Gulf region who have been devastated by the hurricane.

The day after Bush signed the executive order allowing contractors awarded federal money to help rebuild the Hurricane Katrina devastated Coast to pay substandard wages to construction workers, the U.S. Department of Labor waived most federal affirmative action laws for contractors. The affirmative action waiver applies to companies that do not have existing government contracts and are awarded federal relief work contracts. This waiver is for three months, but could be extended.

The bankruptcy bill the Republicans passed earlier this year could effectively ruin the futures of the working poor in New Orleans whose lives have already been demolished by keeping them responsible for debts they cannot possibly pay with all their assets washed away.

“In today’s economy, far too many hardworking Americans are living paycheck to paycheck, just barely getting by,” said Congressman John Conyers (D-MI). “In that tenuous financial condition, many families are only one tragedy away from being devastated by debt. Many of the families who have now lost their homes, livelihoods, and personal possessions will soon be contacted by credit collection agencies demanding the next installment payment on a credit card. Unfortunately, the bankruptcy bill recently passed by Congress makes matters far worse for these families.”

The hypocritical Republican Congress is moving to exempt Katrina victims from the bankruptcy bill. But earlier this year, Democratic amendments to it designed to exempt disaster victims from the effects of the bill were voted down. Clearly there will be more disasters and more working people financially wiped out and deserving of a fresh start. But Congressional Republicans feel no pressure to provide for them and won’t. Congress needs to repeal the bankruptcy bill that is simply a boon to multi-billion dollar credit card companies at the expense of working people.

To add insult to misery, the Bush administration is looking at closing 18 no-bid contracts to its most cherished corporate supporters. A major donor to the Republican Party, the Fluor Corporation and the Shaw Group, a client of George W. Bush’s former campaign manager, was awarded a $100 billion contract. Meanwhile, Halliburton Company subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root (which still funnels money to Vice-President Dick Cheney) was awarded a $30 million cleanup contract.

You can ask your member of Congress to take several sound public policy steps that would help those people who have suffered so much in the Gulf.

Your member of Congress can be reached at:

The Honorable U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Tell your member of Congress and Senators to:

1. Restore Davis-Bacon wage protections for construction workers who will rebuild the Gulf Coast.

2. Protect the Jones Act so mariners in the Gulf region will have gainful employment.

3. Identify and protect recovery workers from new and terrible biological and chemical hazards in the region.

4. Improve the benefits of the Disaster Unemployment Assistance program.

5. Provide health insurance coverage to all survivors through Medicaid, and reverse the budget cuts that limit Medicaid’s ability to meet ongoing needs as well as those created by Katrina.

6. Provide comprehensive re- employment services to displaced workers.

7. Restore affirmative action requirements for contractors in an area where those who suffered most were disproportionately poor and people of color.

8. Repeal the bankruptcy bill so that Americans hit by disasters can start anew.

ILWU election endorsements

California State ballot initiatives

Prop 74 NO: No new delays on teachers’ worker rights.
Prop 75 NO: No budget power grab to allow the governor to cut school spending.
Prop 76 NO: No unfair and unneeded retesting.
Prop 78 NO: No phony reform designed for pharmaceutical companies’ profit.
Prop 79 YES: prescription drug discounts for uninsured low and middle-income Californians.
Prop 80: YES: secure energy supplies and no more energy rates.

Washington State ballot initiatives and port commissions (By the Puget Sound District Council)

Initiative 900 NO
Initiative 901 YES
Initiative 912 NO

Port Commissions

EVERETT
District 2: Connie Hira

GRAYS HARBOR
District 2: Jack Thompson

OLYMPIA
District 1: Steve Puttle

PORT ANGELES
District 2: George Schoenfeldt

SEATTLE
District 1: Lawrence Malloy
District 2: Richard Barkowitz
District 3: Pat Davis

TACOMA
District 1: Connie Bacon
District 2: Dick Marzano
District 4: Ted Buttinger

VANCOUVER, WASH.
District 1: Brian Wolfe

September 2005

“The Dispatcher” September 2005

ILWU Local 28

Local 28

Local 28
Hotel workers demand contract

On Labor Day, John Wilhelm, president of the hospitality division of UNITE HERE, the union for hotel, restaurant, garment and laundry workers, joined leaders and members of San Francisco Local 2, in getting arrested for blocking the entrance to the Grand Hyatt Hotel just off Union Square. The union targeted the Grand Hyatt for this act of civil disobedience because it is one of the hotels in the MEG/MEG Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks lawsuit. The MEG Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks lawsuit was brought against the employer, the Grand Hyatt, for back pay and pension contributions.

The key issues Local 2 is fighting for include: 1) an end to the city's tourist industry rather than reach a new agreement. The key issues Local 2 is fighting for include: 1) an end to the city's tourist industry rather than reach a new agreement.

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A bout 1906 my father, Hyman Kagel, came to San Francisco to avoid the Czar’s Army and to get his butt out of rural Russia where the Jews were being slaughtered. He knew my moth- er, Zeda, who was from a Russian village some miles from his. When she first got to this country my mother worked in the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York. That was where the huge fire in 1911 that killed so many women who had been locked inside by the factory owners. Fortunately, my mother left for San Francisco a few years before that happened.

My father’s first job in America was on a hog farm in Colusa, California. He went there from San Francisco, but soon returned to the bay city where he married my mother I was born in San Francisco in 1909. When I was about five we moved to the East Bay and settled in Oakland, where my parents bought into a small grocery store at the corner of 4th and Harrison. This was part of a poor working-class neighborhood then. When I was in the sixth grade at the Harrison Street School I used to collect stale bread and trash from the neighborhood. Eventually I got to Frank Norris, Emile Zola, Anatole France and Upton Sinclair. These guys were basically sociologists who turned to writing. I knew about them from my parents. Once the 1934 strike began we had a little shed where my father piled newspapers - I remember it in the back of our old army uniform maker’s place. We could feed the kindergarten kids.

At our house we had a little shed where my father piled newspapers - I remember it in the back of our old army uniform maker’s place. We could feed the kindergarten kids.

As a kid I worked loading watermelons into horse-drawn wagons for the local fruit sellers. My father drove one of those wagons. We had a fruit stand in the produce market. When the watermelons came into Oakland on trains I would drive a few for the Wobblies who rode the rails. The Wobblies, as they were known, were members of the radical Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW.

The Wobblies would talk with me generally in their economic terms, although we never had any great or long conversations. I knew about them thorough. Six blocks from our house there was an IWW reading room. About 1925 I saw a bunch of guys dressed in army uniforms trash the place. They threw the Wobblies’ typewriters, furniture and books out into the street. This was part of the post-World War I “Red Scare” of the early 1920s. I also remember a couple of guys coming to our house around the same time. They wanted my mother to turn the members of the Wobblies’ Circle over to them. She was the secretary of that group, which was an organization of Jewish people whose primary interest was sup- porting strikers. My mother wouldn’t give these guys the names of the members as she was not an American citizen at the time. I thought that was very clever.

In the mid-1920s I went to the University of California, Berkeley. I paid my way working in the pro- duce markets and passing out towels in the Harmon Gym. My senior year I was hired to read examination papers in economics. I grad- uated in 1929 and became an economics graduate student and a teaching fellow. Then I met Paul S. Taylor, the prominent labor economist, who was from Cal. He got me two jobs. One was a short-term appointment with the California Department of Industrial Relations. The second was with the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau.

I took the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau job on a temporary basis in 1932 and stayed for ten years. The Labor Bureau was part of a New York outfit. Our Pacific Coast office was set up in San Francisco by Henry Melnikow, who had been representing the typographical union in negotiations and arbi- trations for a year or two when he hired me as his assistant. Melnikow was a brilliant statistician and economist. He really knew how to present wit- nesses and how to cross examine, too.

I couldn’t have gotten a better teacher than Melnikow. When he had an arbitration case I would do the research and help put together the exhibits. Remember, this was the Great Depression that started in 1929 and the employers were cutting wages. Usually the case was how small the cut was going to be. In increases you were talking about two or three cents an hour. When we got that, we’d go out and get drunk.

Of course, nobody knew what was going to happen during the following nine or ten years. Between 32 and 41 or 42 we had what I would consider 50 years of labor experiences all smashed into this short period. What a lucky guy I was, because I was right in the middle of it all.

When the unions began to stir in the 1930s, the Labor Bureau was the only place they could come to. Lawyers were not in the collective bargaining field yet. We only used law- yers when we got arrest- ed. Generally the lawyers didn’t get into collective bargaining until the U.S. got into World War II (1941-45). When the War Labor Board was set up with millions of regula- tions, then the unions “got the shit in their neck,” as
Our Labor Bureau office developed a union petition and gave copies to the active longshoremen, who went up and down the waterfront signing everybody into the Pacific Coast District of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA). The union didn’t become the ILWU until 1937.

In 1934 the longshoremen demanded a coastwise agreement, a union hiring hall that would get rid of the flank halls at the other ports and the morning “shape-up” for jobs in San Francisco, a six-hour day to spread employment around and some increase in wages. Once the ‘34 strike began and other maritime unions went out too, the longshoremen expanded their original demands to include the requirement of a settlement for everyone.

I discussed all these things continually with Harry. These demands were solely what the longshoremen up and down the coast said they wanted. They were all pure “pork chop” issues. They were not designed politically by Communists, Republicans, Democrats or anybody else, despite the employer charges at the time that the ‘34 strike was a Communist uprising.

Five weeks into the strike Harry became Chairman of the Joint Marine Strike Committee (JMSC) set up then by all the maritime unions. For all intents and purposes he was the Committee. There were other outstanding guys on the JMSC, like Randolph Merriweather, who headed the MEBA, but Harry did whatever Harry wanted to do and whatever I advised.

I actually became a member of the JMSC because of Merriweather’s insistence that he work with me on it. We became close friends. When they said to pick guys to represent the MEBA on the JMSC, Harry would say he picked me as one, even though I wasn’t a member of his union per se. But I was made an honorary member in June 1934.

It was all very exciting. Here I was, for God’s sake, a young guy in the midst of an event I knew was major. But I knew because I already had this background in labor economics and history. I was full of piss and vinegar too. Hours and days meant nothing to me. I was going to work and I worked on and on. Sometimes, when I got very late, I just slept on my desk at the Labor Bureau. But I never felt put upon. This was part of the job. I was representing unions and at the same time, I was a member of the JMSC. I wasn’t there for the fun of it.

Then came the battle on Bloody Thursday, July 5, when the employers tried to force open the port. I saw a lot, although, thank God, I didn’t see the police shooting. I was working for the Labor Bureau. But I never felt put upon. This was part of the job. I was representing unions and at the same time, I was a member of the JMSC. I wasn’t there for the fun of it.

Despite the violence, federal mediation hearings were ongoing during the strike. It was a vote and decided to seriously observe the Sloss strike arbitration award. One thing the award did not cover was conditions like slang load limits.

In those pre-container days the hand-worked cargo was moved to and from ships in slings. Before 1934 the loads were too heavy and were dangerous. So once the longshoremen were back to work they undertook “job action,” or quickie strike, to cut down on the size of the loads. The employers screamed bloody murder about these work stoppages.

There was an arbitration system set up after the ‘34 strike under which the Secretary of Labor selected arbitrators for the longshore industry. The first arbitrator, Judge Max C. Sloss, who had been on the California Supreme Court, decided some early cases against the union, including these work stoppages. He concluded that the situation was on the waterfront, what the longshoremen wanted and why they wanted it. He never got excited by the situation, contrary to the JMSC or the federal mediators or when he appeared as a witness in the arbitration proceedings. Harry just knew where he wanted to go and how he was going to get there, and it was no big excitement.

Harry’s testimony to the National Longshoremen’s Board was outstanding and the union got its basic demands satisfied in the ‘34 strike arbitration award. One thing the award did not cover was conditions like slang load limits. Still, under Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) came into force in 1933 things changed fast. Section 7A said workers could join real unions, although there wasn’t statutory enforcement until the Wagner Act passed two years later. Still, under Section 7A Matson Navigation had to put back longshoremen they had fired for union activity. That was a big deal. As Harry said, that was the end of the Blue Book.

Once Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) came into force in 1933 things changed fast. Section 7A allowed workers to join real unions, although there wasn’t statutory enforcement until the Wagner Act passed two years later. Still, under Section 7A Matson Navigation had to put back longshoremen they had fired for union activity. That was a big deal. As Harry said, that was the end of the Blue Book.

© Courtesy San Kagel

I lived in Berkeley, but could get to San Francisco easily because the ferryboats were not on strike. Sometimes, when it got late, I would stay overnight in this wonderful old hotel near the waterfront. It was right across from the Southern Pacific Building. I think it was called the Terminal Hotel. They charged a dollar a night. Sometimes, when I got very late, I just slept on my desk at the Labor Bureau. But I never felt put upon.

The Labor Bureau office had glass windows facing the Bay. I saw the Office had glass windows facing the Bay. I saw the Bay Bridge being built from the first hole to the last cables. I was a member of the JMSC. I wasn’t there for the fun of it.

The waterfront was the center of work and home for many of the working people there. It was a place where people could earn a living by using their hands. The work was hard, but it was satisfying. People were doing something for a living. It was a union hall, a place where people could come together to discuss their concerns and work towards a better future.

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ILWU Pensioners pledge continued struggle at 38th Convention

by Tom Price

T he Pacific Coast Pensioners Association, the organization of ILWU lifetime retirees, gathered for their 38th Convention in San Francisco Sept. 12-14. Their goal: to support the union, to confront the threat of cuts in their health care and the interests of all active and retired ILWU members and families.

In all, 132 delegates and 20 guests, representing pensioners from the U.S. West Coast and Canada, rekindled the camaraderie they shared for so many years on the job and in the hall. But it was not about nostalgia. The retirees focused on problems that will confront the youngest worker, the worker’s children, and eventually the old timers everyone hopes to be one day.

Longshore Local 10 President Trent Willis welcomed the pensioners to the area. “But it’s really the other way around,” he said, referring to the relationship between younger members of the union and their veterans.

The union’s top officers dropped by the meeting to greet the old timers.

International President Jim Spinosa’s opening remarks reassured the members that their pension and benefits were safe and that the union was watching carefully moves by Congressional Representatives who might harm pension plans in the future.

“We’re going to make every effort not to fall for the [calendar] plan but to make it better for workers throughout the world,” Spinosa said.

Coast Committeeman Bob McEllrath assured the pensioners that the Welfare and Pensions Committee of the Longshore Caucus was meeting often in preparation for the 2008 negotiations.

“The committee is in training just like a pro fighter,” McEllrath said. “The committee we have is just like a champion, we can go in and do 15 rounds.”

International Secretary/Treasurer Willie Adams said a few words about organizing.

“It’s important that we do another March Inland,” Adams said. “Longshore will grow, by the nature of the work, but we need to also fight for the people who can’t fight for themselves.”

Committeeman Joe Wenzl laid down a friendly challenge to sign up more pensioners for the union’s continuing battles.

“Only 2,500 pensioners signed up, yet there’s 8,700 retirees,” Wenzl said. “The fight for pensioners’ benefits is the same battle we have to get down to the hall and mingle with the new members. We need to make the connection and show that we are all in this together.”

Committeeman Ray Ortiz Jr. stressed the need to re-unify labor.

“The movement of the global economy has labor eating at each other, while the big boys, the Wal-Marts and Wall Street, are sitting back laughing,” he said. “Some other countries have even gone after their pensioners, because with the high health care costs a guy working for his pensioners, because with the other unions have even gone after their pensioners, because with the big boys, the Wal-Marts and Wall Street, are sitting back laughing.”

Ortiz added that if the delegates passed reflected present and future needs. The Convention voted to increase dues slightly to $5 annually and resolved to protect health care, prepare for the 2008 longshore negotiations and to “Richard,” he said.

“I’ll hang tough and I’ll support the next PCPA Convention.”

The PCPA needed to raise dues because the pensioners are sending representatives to the Third International Pacific Rim Mining and Maritime meeting in South Africa in 2007. They had also agreed with the Maritime Union of Australia Veterans to work more closely in international retiree organizations and build international worker unity.

The delegates voted to contribute $1,000 to Hurricane Katrina relief and hold a “tarpsaline must” to raise more funds. Canadian pensioner Frank Kennedy announced ILWU Canada’s Longshore Pensioners’ club would match the U.S. contribution.

Southern California pensioners donated $5,000 and Longview donated another $1,000.

The ILWU has negotiated some of the best health care plans in the U.S. But the pensioners see that corporate America’s drive to pass rising health care onto workers is epidemic, and that workers have to fight this trend if health care is to be at all affordable.

“Instead of cutting care or costs, the corporations want to wash their hands of responsibility to workers’ health care,” Spinosa said.

The delegates passed a resolution noting that a single-payer system could eliminate 25 percent of current health care costs and committing themselves to join picket lines whenever medical coverage issues provoke a strike.

ILWU pensioners have long memories of contract battles past. The 2002 negotiations showed the PMA, the employers group, is, as another resolution states, “in cahoots with the Bush administration, and (it) clearly desires to completely destroy the ILWU.” And that could end health care and other benefits for retirees and survivors. Looking forward to the next longshore negotiations in 2008, the resolution calls for the nine ILWU credit unions to take “the necessary steps to put the significant financial power of their joint members in readiness for the upcoming negotiations.”

“Credit unions represent almost a quarter billion dollars of our money,” said Lewis Wright, an ILWU pensioner and chair of the board of directors of the ILWU credit union in Wilmington. “Let’s put our money where it can do the best for our future.”

Rich Austin spoke in favor. “I’ll ask my local to ask the credit union to suspend loan payments in the event of some nasty employer chicanery.”

The convention voted for its officers for the upcoming year. They will be:

President—Arne Auvinen
Vice President—Joe Lucas
Recording Secretary—Bill Duncan
Treasurer—Barbara Lewis

EXECUTIVE BOARD:
Seattle—Paul McCabe, alternate Bill Roberts
Columbia River—George Gornick, alternate Verna Porter
Coos Bay—Jim Davidson
Columbia River small ports (Longview and Astoria)—Kenny Swicker, alternate Ester Auvinen
Southern California—Lou Loveridge
Northern California— Cleophas Williams, alternate Ralph Rooker

The next PCPA convention will be in Tacoma Sept. 18-20, 2006.

PCPA President Arne Auvinen summed up one of the most important goals ahead for workers in the U.S.

“This country of ours is just like that flag in ‘The Star Spangled Banner,’” he said. “The Constitution is tattered and torn and we have to get organized so we can make changes in this country. We’ve gotta get those jackals out of the White House and Congress and get things going our way.”

September 2005

ILWU International President Jim Spinosa (at microphone) addresses the Pensioners’ Convention. Looking on, left to right, PCPA President Arne Auvinen, (standing) Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr. and (seated) PCPA Vice President Joe Lucas.

PCPA President Arne Auvinen, standing, and Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr. welcome pensioners and family members to the Convention.
Strike situation worsens at Northwest Airlines

by Tom Price

When Northwest Airlines unilaterally slashed mechanics' jobs and wages Aug. 20, the work stoppage that has lasted since then except for granting support from other union workers, things have gotten worse. The Aircraft Mechanics International Assn., the union representing 4,427 mechanics, cleaners and custodians, returned to the bargaining table Sept. 8 to accept much of the company’s demand for $176 million in concessions and another 1,000 job cuts. AMFA broke off talks Sept. 11.

NWA’s previous last offer Aug. 20 called for a workforce reduction of 53 percent, a 20 percent pay cut, 20 percent medical co-pays and a freeze in retirement contributions. NWA also hired 1,300 contract-to-pay AMFA workers. If the company gets its way, the new job cuts will mean AMFA will have lost more than 48 percent of its jobs over the last four years.

“Grim reaper is still very strong,” said AMFA Aztl National Director Steve MacFarlane. “This isn’t about increases in pay and benefits. This is truly about our very survival and our jobs in the airline industry.”

Workers around the country are outraged over the treatment of its employees. In Toledo, Ohio AMFA threw up picket lines Sept. 5 and 8. But the protests were headed to NWA in Detroit. Members of the United Transportation Union and the Teamsters union jumped off the line until federal Judge Ann Aldridge ordered them to cross on Sept. 7. UPS pilots had pledged Aug. 16 not to handle diverted NWA cargo. Auto workers approved $800,000 in contributions to the strikers Sept. 13.

“Japanese and European aircraft mechanics have supported us and made contributions,” MacFarlane said. “Minneapolis municipal workers kicked in another $5,000.”

The ILWU turned out strong at a Labor Day rally at San Francisco Airport’s old international terminal. ILWU President Jimmy McRae and President Trent Willis addressed the crowd.

“We see that job cuts, outsourcing, attacks on pensions and security do not equal prosperity and happiness,” Willis said. “They equal poverty and death. The ILWU will not stand for it!”

Longshore Local 23 members, about a dozen at a time, continued to demonstrate with strikers at SeaTac and bring coffee, sandwiches and their band along with them. Local 1916 workers frequented the picket line.

NWA declared bankruptcy Sept. 14 and claimed the striking workers had been permanently replaced.

NWA lost no time in attacking its other workers. The day after its bankruptcy the company eliminated 400 pilot jobs. Pilots had given up a quarter billion in wages and benefits last year. NWA won another 22 percent pay cut. Pilots can expect a double hit as their pensions, as part of the bankruptcy proceedings, are taken over by the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp., a federal agency that makes partial payments to those who lose their pensions. PBGC rules state that both unions retiree classes 65 suffers a penalty. Federal rules require pilots to retire at 60.

NWA wants more than its $3.3 billion pension obligation for the years 2006 through 2008. Its three weapons for doing that: bankruptcy, where the judge relieves them of the obligation, legislation, where the Republican Congress re-writes the laws in their favor, and union busting, where NWA forces massive concessions out of workers. The company has chosen all three. It spent $107 million preparing scabs and nearly another million in pension reform lobbying during the first half of 2006.

NWA announced Sept. 21 that it would eliminate 1,400 flight attendant jobs and contract out many others. Those remaining will face at least a 20 percent pay cut. The airline is expected to demand more wage and benefit cuts from all workers, and federal bankruptcy judges can order re-writing of union contracts. The company has also announced it will outsource flight attendant, aircraft cleaning and maintenance jobs to other countries like China and Singapore, where there is no FAA. California. If that happens, AMFA will lose as many as 300 inspectors this year, and has only 97 replacements, working on the 23 longshore locals.

“Looking in people’s shoes, looking at grandmothers who wouldn’t hurt a fly, and we’re spending unbelievable resources on looking at the least likely people to harm six and the most likely are completely ignored,” MacFarlane said.

American Airlines is one of the few that actually decided to bring the worker’s strike home. AMFA Aztl Rome said. “Minneapolis municipal workers, both unions represent home-based workers, both unions represent home-based employees, who work for carry-on, work for carry-on, work for carry-on, work for carry-on, who are members of AMFA’s United Domestic Workers will work in partnership while maintaining their autonomy.”

Airline contracts. The company has

similarly, AFSCME and SEIU exchanged unkind words in Chicago. SEIU filed for representation of an AFSCME home care local in Southern California the day it dissaffiliated and AFSCME accused SEIU on the floor of the convention of raiding its locals. But in a Sept. 19 press release the locals presented a different note, pledging not to raid each others’ locals and to work jointly to make gains. For example, they pledged not to organize child care workers not already organized.

“When we strengthen our coop- eration and help workers in the same industry unite, everybody wins,” said SEIU President Andy Stern. “We look forward to working together with AFSCME to create better jobs and provide quality services.”

“This agreement is a victo ry for the millions of workers who want a union but don’t have one,” said AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee. "I look forward to working with SEIU to help unorganized work ers get good jobs, health care and a voice at work.”

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

The information contained herein applies to ILWU International per capita and, for those working in the Longshore Division, the ILWU Coast Pro Rata fees or payments of any kind under a union security clause. This notice also applies to local dues and fees paid to any affiliated locals or divisions of the ILWU, for the one year period following the date of this notice or until such time covered by a later notice of similar kind.

This notice must be superseded by any other notice issued by any affiliated ILWU local or division with respect to its dues and fees.

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

Please note that, financial core members deprive themselves of the valuable rights of union membership in the ILWU and their ILWU local or division. A financial core member does not have the right to vote, nominate for office, hold office, or be a candidate for office in the ILWU nor may he/she participate in or be involved in any ILWU meetings or activities.

For calendar year 2004 (which is the most recent audited year), the financial review has confirmed that no more than 13% of all ILWU International’s expenditures were for nonchargeable activities. While each ILWU local and division may have different percentages of nonchargeable expenditures, financial reviews and practical experience confirm that the nonchargeable percentage for ILWU locals is significantly lower than that for the ILWU International. Nevertheless, those ILWU locals and divisions covered by this notice may not colle or collect to seek financial core fees greater than that based on the nonchargeable percentage of 13% stated above for the ILWU International for the applicable collection period herein or until such time as such local issues a separate notice.

For those individuals employed in the ILWU Longshore Division and work for a PMA-member company under the Pacific Coast Longshore and Clerks Agreement, please note that with respect to Coast Pro Rata Fees, for calendar year 2004 (which is the most recent audited year), the financial review has confirmed that no more than 13% of all ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee’s expenditures were for nonchargeable activities.

The ILWU International Executive Board and the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee have procedures on Financial Core Members Objecting to Nonchargeable Expenditures (hereinafter called the “Procedures”). Said procedures can be obtained from the ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer at 1188 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94108. Under the Procedures a financial core member of any affiliated ILWU local and division has the right within an applicable 30 day period of time to object to financial core activities of his or her local dues paid to the ILWU local and the per capita paid to the ILWU International, as well as any Coast Pro Rata fees paid to the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee. In the event a financial core memberperfects such objection, he or she shall receive either the appropriate monthly rebate or an advance rebate of a portion of local dues and per capita reflecting the ILWU International’s nonchargeable percentage of 13% stated above and, additionally for those working in the ILWU Longshore Division, an appropriate monthly rebate or an advance rebate of a portion of the coast pro rata fees reflecting the ILWU Coast Pro Rata Committee’s nonchargeable percentage of 13% stated above.

Under the Procedures, an objection by a financial core member must be made in writ- ing and post-marked within 30 days from the date of this notice or the date of becoming a new hire or a financial core member under an ILWU union security clause and receipt of this notice. Nevertheless, this notice is later, and addressed to the ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer, 1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94108. To be valid, the written objection must specify the objector’s name, address, social security number, current wage rate, the name of his or her employer and the name of the local union or division which represents the objec- tor. A written objection must be timely in order to be valid. Without waiving the 30-day filing period with respect to other notices of this type, please be advised that under this notice only, objections filed by current financial core members will be deemed timely if postmarked on or before November 15, 2005. Individuals who alter the date of this notice become new hires or financial core members may file an objection within 30 days of the date they become a new hire or financial core member or receive this notice, whichever is later. Unless changed by a later notice, those financial core members and new hires who file timely objections will not be charged the applicable amount of fees, but those who do not will be charged the applicable amount of fees on or before November 15, 2005.

The Harry Bridges Project
P.O. Box 66218
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Add $7.50 per item.
ILWU member sworn in as L.A. Harbor Commissioner

With city council members singing their praise and a hundred longshore workers looking on, Joe Radisich became the second ILWU longshore worker to win confirmation as a member of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners on Sept. 6.

Council members acted quickly to approve Radisich’s nomination, brushing aside concerns aired last month by opponents over where Radisich calls home.

“Of course that Joe Radisich will be the local boy, the community boy on this commission,” said Harbor Commissioner Janice Hahn.

Commissioner Tony Cardenas, who met with Radisich for committee constituent hearings, told the council members that the issue had been tackled head on.

“It is on the record,” said Cardenas, “and it’s in accordance with city rules governing appointment, Cardenas told the council.

With Radisich replacing another longshoreman—clerks Local 63 member Thomas W ekon—who answered—on the commission, council members went out of their way to say that it’s a good thing for the commission to have a dockworker on board.

Councillmembers Wendy Gruel and Tom LaBonge praised the selection of a worker for the board.

“It’s great that we have a longshoreman on the commission,” said Gruel.

“I think the mayor has chosen wisely,” said Hahn, who urged the nominee to lay out why it is a good thing for a longshore worker to be on the commission.

“I think it is very important because we know what’s going on in the port,” said Hahn. “We know what’s happening with port security. We’re on the front lines in terms of exposure to emissions. We’re stuck in the traffic every day that this influx of international trade has brought.”

Radisich spoke of his desire to bring about infrastructure improvements that can handle the tripling of cargo expected to flow across the docks in the next 20 years.

“The infrastructure problems in the port, we’ve done a lot of good work on that said Radisich. “We can improve the roads, the highways, the rails.”

After a 13-to-0 vote confirming his appointment, Radisich and scores of longshore brothers and sisters marched to the brightly-lit office of the City Clerk where he took the oath of office in front of his parents, family and friends.

Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

RECENT RETIREES:

DECEASED:
Local 4—Richard Proli; Local 7—Walther Rohde (Pauline); Local 8—Luke Baccelleri (Barbara), Robert Huntley (Myrtle), Lea Owayne (Mary), Chas Noonan Jr. (Patricia), Lynn Barrett (Tanya), Grady Phillips (Nena), Eldon Fricke (Evelyn), Don Taylor, Luke Baccelleri, Henning Hellervik, Robert Huntley, James Foster Jr., Local 10—Charlie Sawyer (Lillian), Ray Godwin (Rohob), Luke Delmar, Carl Stitt, Wilbert Watkins; Local 12—Edward Najper (Dawn); Local 13—Gilbert Martinez (Mary), Delbert Chapman (Norma), Nick Avila (Marie), Victor Valverde (Juluane), James Barber (Claudette), Tony Martinez (Adam), George Ireland (Shirley), Ralph Bise (Harrietie), Troy Cooper (Snellie), Paul Van Dolender (Marjorie), Felipe Dominguez, Norman Torstensen, Dan Stewart, James Barber, Ernest G. Ramirez, Velton Sample Jr.; Local 19—Arthur Speaks (James), Leo Hunius (Mary Ann), Arthur Harding (Mable), Cleo Laverty, Vernon Strand; Local 21—Daniel Abel; Local 23—Rene Aguierre (Travis), Manuel Eli (Elia), Robert Setz (Diane), Ronald Allen (Cheryl); Local 24—Ivan Laxey (Ann) Local 26—William Good, Mathew Cusaveila (Josephine), Billy Huxford; Local 34—George Engfeld (Phyllis), Ben Mallia (Dorothy), Harvey Keller (Anita), Frank Seelel (Elizabeth), George Walsh, Charles LaVuit; Local 40—Francis Boone (June), Charles Barnes; Local 46—Pedro Perez; Local 47—David Benis (Nemis); Local 52—John Snyder (Rhonda); Local 54—Leslie Frey (Ruth), Richard Powell (Betty); Local 55—Lawrence Hennon (Paddy), James A. Jackson (Margaret); last Local 60—Evelyn Booth, Local 63—Lester, Robert Weeks; Local 92—Carl Koppen (Berglot), Leilani Roundtree; Local 94—Herbert Moen (Yakie), William Barritt (Dixie), Laurence Degelman. (Survivors in parenthesis.)

DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 4—Ruth Laine; Local 7—Marilu Wallace; Local 8—Ida Hamilton, Velma Ahlberg, Sophie Edie Liso Hoinass; Local 10—Sarah Bulleri, Rosie Lee Barry, Willie Gama, Mabel Robak, Freddie Redmond, A. M. Bonner, Marietta Newby, Amelia Venegas, Maria Costa, Annie Tatum, Virginia Burke; Local 12—Hazel Hansh, Gertrude Curtis, Bessie Renick, Mildred Moore, Local 13—Margaret Galeazii, Icara Jones, Rebecca Person, Selveta Taylor, Theola McCoy, Tula Palica, Jean Boyen; Local 14—Elaine Tett; Local 18—Viola Wileh; Local 21—Evelyn Scott, Althena Barnham; Local 23—Antoinette Ragudale; Local 27—George Bond, Local 28—Gloria Ruiz; Local 29—Margorie Duarte, Barbara Corenello, Esther Roush, Local 41—Adelia Beejar; Local 50—Alaida Bejar; Local 67—Lorraine Bates; Local 91—Lauraine Machado; Local 94—Minnie Ora Gura, Nora Haslam, Irene F. Jones; Local 98—Alice Sjtt, Jiy Jutte.

Coast Benefit Workshops coming your way

Do you know that medical studies show that:

Each of us and our families have only about a 50 percent chance of receiving the recommended treatment when we are in need of care.

At least 44,000 people, and perhaps as many as 90,000 people, die in hospitals each year as a result of medical errors that could have been prevented. That’s about as many deaths as are caused by such feared threats as motor vehicle wrecks, breast cancer and AIDS put together.

For every preventable hospital death caused by medical error many more people are permanently or temporarily disabled.

The National Quality Forum has endorsed a set of 30 safe hospital practices.

“Outcomes,” how much your condition improves due to treatment, can be measured and reported for both hospitals and physicians.

The United States spends far more on health care per person than any other country, yet we have 45 million American workers out of coverage and another 36 million who are without coverage for part of the year. Most of the uninsured are from working families with at least one person working full time. The inability to pay medical bills is a leading cause of personal bankruptcies.

For the the plan year July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 the ILWU longshore medical plan cost $325,700,808.

Watch for notification of the Workshop location in each area.

Workshop schedule
Southern California—Oct. 27 Puget Sound and Washington area—Nov. 1 Columbia River and Oregon area—Nov. 3

Corrections

In the obituary for Margaret Howell in our July-August issue, we mistakenly included two different dates for her death. The correct date is July 29. The Dispatch regrets the error.
ILWU-PMA HURRICANE Relief
Voluntary Payroll Withholding Authorization

Pursuant to a voluntary, charitable contribution by the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to withhold from your paycheck the dollar amount specified by you below for the sole purpose of making a voluntary, charitable contribution to the special Hurricane Relief Fund of the AFL-CIO’s Union Community Fund (UCF), labor’s charity for working families and communities in distress. The dollar amount specified by you below will be withheld from each paycheck issued to me during the limited period of November 1, 2005 through April 30, 2006, or, if I so designate below, as a one-time lump sum deduction. I understand that my charitable withholding contribution will be confirmed on each of my paycheck stubs during this six month period and that this withholding contribution will automatically end on April 30, 2006. I understand that PMA will match all charitable contributions to the Union Community Fund, to a total amount of $250,000, by making a contribution to a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity to be designated by PMA which provides hurricane relief assistance to workers and their families in the Gulf region. I also understand that I have the right to cancel or revoke this authorization at any time by sending to PMA written notice of cancellation.

Voluntary Payroll Withholding Authorization Form

To participate, all you need to do is sign and return to PMA the attached consent form, “ILWU-PMA Hurricane Relief Campaign”. We encourage you to choose to have withheld from your paycheck in each weekly payroll period between the time period of November 1, 2005 through April 30, 2006, or in one lump sum contribution. As stated clearly in the accompanying authorization form, all voluntary weekly withholdings will automatically terminate after April 30, 2006. You may also choose to cancel your donations at any time before April 30, 2006, by sending a written notice of cancellation to PMA.

Minimum Amount of Donation

If you choose to participate in this voluntary program, the minimum weekly amount that PMA can withhold from each paycheck is five dollars due to administrative reasons. In deciding what amount, if any, you wish to have withheld from your paycheck on a weekly basis, it is important to note that the withholding program will cover approximately 26 payroll periods during the six-month period of November 1, 2005 through April 30, 2006. So, for example, a minimum contribution of five dollars per paycheck during 26 weekly payroll periods would amount to approximately $130 by the end of the six-month period. Alternatively, you may elect to make a one-time, lump sum contribution.

Where Will the Money Go?

The funds raised through this payroll withholding program from longshore workers will go entirely to the special Hurricane Relief Fund of the AFL-CIO’s Union Community Fund (UCF), labor’s charity for working families and communities in distress. The longshore payroll contributions will all go 100% to UCF worker centers that are assisting working families in the Gulf region devastated by the hurricanes. None of the monies donated will go towards overhead costs or other purposes.

Your Donations Are Tax Deductible

The Union Community Fund is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) public charity. Donations to UCF are, therefore, tax-deductible to the extent provided by law for charitable contributions. If you donate more than $250 to UCF in any calendar year, then UCF will issue you a receipt for tax deduction purposes. Contributions for less than a total of $250 do not need a formal receipt but are still deductible. Your pay stubs will also serve as a receipt because it will itemize the charitable contribution deduction per pay period or the lump sum amount. Remember that no contribution is too small.

PMA to Match Contributions

To encourage voluntary employee participation in this relief program, the Pacific Maritime Association will match dollar-for-dollar the charitable contributions of longshore workers made under this program, to a total amount of $250,000, by making a contribution to a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity to be designated by PMA which provides hurricane relief assistance to workers and their families in the Gulf region. This means that by donating through this program, you will be giving working families in need double the monies you agree to have withheld in each paycheck. Please make a difference and help our working brothers and sisters get back on their feet.