Sisters Visit Sees Candies

Education for a New Generation

Pensioners Provide Leadership at California Congress of Seniors

INSIDE

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In the end, it was the rank and file leaders who did the heavy lifting and gave the members enough hope to believe in themselves and the power of solidarity.

We encourage letters from our readers. Please try to keep them short; we reserve the right to edit for clarity and space. E-mail to Craig Merrilees, Editor, ILWU, 1188 Franklin St., 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS AND IMMIGRATION

Dear Editor:

You folks in the hierarchy of the International Union assume that all of us are left liberals and that is simply not true. I am not a liberal, but I am a realist when it comes to labor. You guys assume that all of labor and the ILWU are Democrats and that is not true. There are plenty of chances for divisions to break out between the workers. It could have been between the lower-paid and higher-paid workers or between the members of ILWU and Machinists. But in the end, everyone realized that sticking together was the only way to make progress.

From the beginning, there were workers who were afraid, and they had a right to be. They wondered how the Teamster drivers would ever walk out if they had to lock out the Teamster drivers and that is not true. You can be sure there were folks who were hesitant to support the drivers; maybe because the drivers were better paid or spoke a different language or belonged to a different union. They probably wondered if the Teamster drivers would ever walk out to support the recyclers or clericals if the shoes weren’t under the rent, buy groceries, or make car payments.

That’s the real world. And in the real world those fears and concerns have to be addressed head-on. And the only ones who can really do it are the rank and file leaders. Union officials can help, and they did a great job at Local 6. Throughout the union, ILWU locals sent checks—some of them very large checks—to help the Local 6 workers win their fight. Some individuals came forward with their own personal checks, and dozens of community members did the same. But even the $100,000 that was eventually donated to Local 6 didn’t go that far when it was divided between 300 workers and spread out over four weeks of hardship.

The slogan, “an injury to one is an injury to all,” is something like the gospel in our union.

But as important as slogans and principles are, we have to be honest with ourselves: it’s one thing to talk about solidarity when we’re relatively comfortable and well-off, but it’s different when there isn’t enough food on the table, the kids are hungry, there’s nothing left in the checking account, and the car is about to be repo’d. That’s when our resolve is tested and the word “solidarity” takes on a whole new meaning.

Most of us who work in Longshore haven’t had to worry about putting food on the table for a very long time. We drive nice cars and most of us own our own homes. We have to look back almost an entire generation to remember any truly “hard times” when we had to worry about the basics. We know that our lives are better today because of the sacrifice of those who came before us, but we haven’t been challenged in the same way as that generation.

But all of us will be tested in the months and years ahead. Longshore workers have a contract fight coming next summer, and we hope it goes smoothly—but we have to be prepared for a fight if it doesn’t. And that fight could involve sacrifices.

Outside of Longshore, it’s a whole different world where union membership is dropping, wages are falling, benefits are being cut, and working families are generally taking it on the chin.

The challenge for the ILWU is to build on our success where we have power, then use that strength to help other ILWU workers win better contracts, and help workers without a union to win their fight to have one. All this will take a lot of resources and hard work, but in the end, I think it comes down to two things: whether we learn the lessons that Local 6 members just taught us about solidarity and sacrifice, and whether we can develop the next generation of rank and file leaders who can help us win the battles ahead for the ILWU and for working families in a whole new world.

An injury to one is an injury to all.
Doworkers around the world meet in Long Beach

T he third meeting of the International Dockworkers
Council (IDC) was held in Long Beach, California on
September 12-14. The event was hosted by the
ILWU and brought together unions representing
workers in 36 countries in South America, Central
America, North America, Europe, and North Africa.

HISTORY OF ACTION AND SOLIDARITY

The IDC was formed to coordinate solidarity efforts that support work-
ners, their unions, and confront abuses by the}
global shipping and stevedoring
industries. The group coalesced
in the mid 1980’s when many unions,
including the ILWU, supported dock-
workers in Liverpool, England who
were fighting a privatization scheme at
their port without the full backing of
their parent union – making it dif-
ficult for the International Transport
Federation (ITF) to lend support.

The IDC first met in 2000, when
dockworkers in 18 countries (including
Carolina, known as the “Charleston Five”) were fighting trumped-up
conspiracy charges brought against five
ILA union activists who challenged a
union-busting effort at their port. Those
charges were later dismissed after the
ILWU and other unions protested and
provided legal defense support.

RECENT VICTORIES

In January of this year, the IDC
helped lead protests against indus-
try and government efforts to weak-
en dockworker unions within the
European Community. The effort
was successful, following protests
involving 10,000 workers in 150 ports
around the world that included 46-
hour strikes in Portugal, France, Greek,
Cypres, and Sweden. Dockers in Bel-
gium, Holland, and Finland also
struck for two hours to show their
support for the global campaign.

CALLS FOR UNITY

International President Bob
McEllrath opened the event in Long
Beach with an address that praised
the victories and accomplishments of
the IDC, but also challenged delegates
to consider working more closely with
the ITF.

“The ILWU is committed to help-
ing dockworkers around the world
whenever they need help, whether
they’re affiliated with the IDC, the
ITF, or any other group,” he said.

The most important thing is for
dockers to work together,” he said.

Paddy Crumlin, National Secre-
tary of the Maritime Union of Australia
that is affiliated with the ITF, appeared
briefly as a special guest speaker but
made a dramatic appeal for unity.

“I know there have been disappointments and
mistakes in the past, but the ITF has
been changing and improving,” he
asserted. Crumlin said the two dockers
groups should consider joining forces to
build a united dockworker movement
on a global level.

The financial realities of main-
taining the International Dockworker
Council raised another set of chal-
enges for the meeting in Long Beach.
Local news cont’d from p. 3

continue to endanger other workers...

The local is moving forward with the hiring process for a new group of foremen who are undergoing a series of evaluations, written tests, and interviews.

Local 26 was awarded an arbitration

award the Alcatraz Island contract

about the Park Service decision to

in August to explain ILWU concerns

Director Marina Secchitiano, rank-

ial with family members. “Terence

that was beating a pregnant woman.

Mayor Ron Dellums, reminding him

of church and community leaders

outreach work to build stronger rela

Longshoreman (and Reverend) Ted

cling center in Fontana…

Local 10

Longshoreman (and Reverend) Ted

Frazier is coordinating some public

outreach work to build stronger rela

tions and win more community allies

in the 2008 Longshore contract fight.

Ted recently convened a gathering of

church and community leaders and

has plans for more meetings in the

future….The Local is also trying to

improve relations with Oakland

Mayor Ron Dellums, reminding him

that Oakland is one of the few major

cities without a Longshore member

on their Port Commission. 

Local 10 member Terence Martin left his ILWU brothers and sisters on August 23, 2007, as a Good Samaritan who

was killed after stopping a young man

that was beating a pregnant woman.

Terence was shot in the back as he

walked away saving the woman.

Each year, co-workers hold a memo-

ral for family members. “Terence

was a union brother who died a hero

and deserves to be remembered for

his strength and generous spirit,” says

co-worker Ed Henderson. “Each year

we say a prayer, light a candle, and

release a bunch of white balloons,”

added Chauncie Gipson who helped

organized this year’s event with Ed.

For the past six years, Local 54 President Richard Cavalli says their local has welcomed a developmentally

President Richard Cavalli says their

organized this year’s event with Ed…

Local 28 has a little over 100 members who work as secu-

rity officers at the ports of Tacoma and

Portland, and also provide security at

Kaiser Hospitals in the Portland area.

Security officers at the port of Tacoma

are currently bargaining and hope to

catch-up with better wages earned by

their counterparts up and down the

cost….Local 50 in Astoria is a smaller

local but they put together a huge Labor Day picnic. This is their 49th

annual event – it usually lasts 5

hours and attracts over 500 but somewhere tops 1,000. They welcome

the entire community – even a few

friendly politicians – but the speeches

are short and the beer is free, along

with 400 pounds of beef and plenty of

fresh Oregon salmon….Local 12

has been trying for six years to get

cargo into Coos Bay. They had to deal

with port commissioners who were too
too negative and tried to trade away

prime waterfront land. The commis-

sion even issued a study claiming that

the Coos Bay port wasn’t viable. After

many meetings and several years of

getting nowhere with the old commis-

sion, the local petitioned the Governor

and politicians to make some changes.

The Governor appointed a new port

commission and asked the ILWU to

join a search committee that found a

new Director from the Port of Tacoma.

Now things are looking more positive

for containers coming into Coos Bay,

and even better since the Governor

signed a $60 million bill for dredg-

ing and environmental work that has

signed a $60 million bill for dredg-

ing and environmental work that has

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ing and environmental work that has

signed a $60 million bill for dredg-

ing and environmental work that has
Workshop held in San Francisco

September 2007

The sign translates approximately to: “United dockers say no to malicious intentions in the construction of the container terminal. The people united will never be defeated.”

ILWU joins delegation to probe murder in Guatemala

When Pedro Zamora, a leader of Guatemala’s dockworkers’ union was murdered on January 15, 2007, ILWU and GAP (General American Postal) unions joined other labor leaders to demand justice for this cold-blooded killing that occurred during a struggle against privatization at the Pacific Port of Quetzal.

On July 22-26, Vice President Joe Radisch, Local 23 President Conrad Spell, and Northern California Area Director Joe Cabrales joined a group of labor officials who traveled to Guatemala on a fact-finding and solidarity mission. The group met with Guatemala’s Attorney General, the Human Rights Commission, Port Authority, and the U.S. Ambassador. “We made it clear that Pedro’s murder appeared to be more like a political assassination than the random act of violence that some officials had suggested,” said Radisch. “We told them Zamora’s murder is being discussed at City Councils and in Congress, and that it could impact foreign aid funding for Guatemala.”

To back up those claims, Radisch brought resolutions and letters of support from the ILWU locals in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Carson, plus the Los Angeles Port Commission. The resolutions and letters condemned the killing and called for Zamora’s assassins to be brought to justice. The documents were formally presented to Zamora’s son during a visit to the nearby police station. Guatemalan dockworkers earn about $150 per week compared to the country’s average of less than $2 a day.

The bullet-ridden car where Zamora died is still sitting in front of the nearby police station. Guatemalan officials have promised an aggressive and thorough investigation, but have produced no suspects and little information. The obvious connection to his role in fighting privatization at the Port of Quetzal has not been explored.

The union’s trustees have worked on a number of issues, including the benefit plan. Everyone in Canada has healthcare, but pensions, drugs, and other health services are open for bargaining. The union wants a new benefit plan for casuals, but the BCMEA is reluctant to agree. ILWU Canada’s longshore caucus is determined that anyone working in the industry for any length of time deserves to be covered by a health and benefit plan, Dufresne said.

“The employer wants a greater benefit without going into concilliation,” he said. “We’re concerned with just how far they want to go. Local 500 has agreed to explore different options to facilitate dispatch, but are not willing to change the whole system.”

The union is interested in protecting the industry against corporate raiders, Dufresne said. Recently, companies with no real connection to the maritime industry have bought out many of the BCMEA employers. Some of those firms are known to slash costs and “flip” the company by selling it for a short-term profit. That might be one thing for real estate, but it could be a disaster for the ports in the long-term.

“We’re getting less and less optimism that we’ll achieve an agreement without going into concilliation,” Dufresne said. “The BCMEA has a new president who will take over as of Oct. 1, and he has a checkered history in labor relations on the provincial level. We’re very cautious about him and the problems he’s caused in other industries.”

Bargaining resumes for ILWU Canada longshore

ILWU Canada’s negotiating team began an eight-day round of contract talks Aug. 22 with the British Columbia Maritime Employers’ Assn. According to the union, the BCMEA hasn’t moved much. But the ILWU is holding out hopes for a new contract replacing the one that expired March 15. When GAP locals in June the employers still had many proposals on deck that the union had rejected. Foremen’s Local 514, ILWU Canada, will also return to negotiations with their employers.

“The worst employer demands include changes to the dispatch system,” ILWU Canada President Tom Price said. “They’ve come back with just how far they want to go. Local 500 has agreed to explore different options to facilitate dispatch, but are not willing to change the whole system.”

The BCMEA wants to use a larger portion of steady employees. That means fewer jobs dispatched out of the hiring hall, bringing up issues of fair access to jobs. “The employer wants a greater say on who will be in the workforce,” Dufresne said. “And they want to cut the union out of that part of the decision making process. We’ve had this in place for 30 years and it works very well. While there can be improvements, we’re not going to cede control of the dispatch of a regular workforce. All members are equal, we’re not prepared to create a special elite force within the union chosen by the employer.”
This notice applies to all ILWU-represented employees, ILWU 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, suspension or expulsion, as well as those affiliated with the local union or division with respect to the period following the date of this notice or until such time covered by a later similar notice.

The information contained herein applies to ILWU International per capita and, for those working in the West Coast Longshore and clerks Agreement, to the ILWU coast Pro rate committee. This notice also applies to local dues and fees paid to any affiliated ILWU locals or divisions, except those affiliates who have chosen not to be covered by this notice and have issued their own separate notice under their own separate policies and procedures. (Any such notice subsequently shall be superseded by any other notice issued by any affiliated ILWU local or division with respect to their 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 union dues and any required initiation fees, as well as any periodic special assessments required by such clause. This notice also applies to ILWU locals or divisions, except those affiliates who have chosen not to be covered by this notice and have issued their own separate notice under their own separate policies and procedures. (Any such notice subsequently shall be superseded by any other notice issued by any affiliated ILWU local or division with respect to their dues and fees.)

This notice may be superseded or amended by later notices as issued by the ILWU, the Coast Pro Rata Committee or affiliated locals and divisions of the ILWU.

To: ALL MEMBERS
FROM: George Kuvakas

MEMBERS, FINANCIAL CORE NON-MEMBERS AND NEW HIRES

This notice applies to all ILWU-represented employees, ILWU 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, suspension or expulsion, as well as those affiliated with the local union or division with respect to the period following the date of this notice or until such time covered by a later similar notice.

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**ILWU TELLS AG DEPT. TO QUIT FUNDING LAWBREAKERS**

Blue Diamond Growers, along with the California Almond Board, has gotten more than $86.75 million in marketing subsidies from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) in the last four years. This funding could increase should parts of a proposed farm bill become law. In ILWU v. USDA in federal court, the Almond Board and the USDA will be required to show that Blue Diamond is a fair user of the funds. The ILWU wants the Almond Board to stop providing money to Blue Diamond until the court determines the fairness of the program.

**LOCAL 6 MEMBERS RATIFY MASTER CONTRACT**

After three months of bargaining, warehouse Local 6 workers finally got a contract. The three-year agreement increases: 70 cents the first year, 60 cents the second, and 70 cents the third. The agreement covers ten Bay Area ILWU houses and 650 members. Workers ratified it on December 21 and got retroactive pay increases back to May 1.

The ILWU and Teamsters bargain the master agreement jointly with the Industrial Employers and Distributors Association. Local 6 said, "The negotiations have been wrapped up by the time the contract expires at the end of May." Local 6 President Efren Alarcon said, "The sticking point this time was medical benefits. The employers were willing to pay a certain amount, and insisted that members pay anything beyond that." Workers were able to maintain their level of medical benefits, with what will be at $56 per month. Bargaining teams negotiated a pension increase of five dollars a month per year of service. When they retire, members will receive $55 per month for each year they worked starting at age 55.

The union was able to maintain a medical trust fund that will cover retiree for several more years, but the employers refused to provide a long-term medical coverage for retirees, effectively ending retirees health care when the fund runs out.

—Ram Price

**Kuvakas passes cont’d p.6**

financial reasons and because their government had objected.

The conference praised the ILWU’s right for dockers “to point the face of mechanization and modernization. The conference also advocated formal registration lists for dockers, as supported by the International Labor Organization’s conventions. The conference also stressed the importance of a law that could clearly describe himself and his generation.

They built up the organization through the rank and file, fought the war and two after it, said, “If it hadn’t been for those old timers fighting for better conditions our younger generation would not have jobs — it could have been lost.” He is survived by Alice, wife of 20 years, his two sons George and Robert, two daughters, Kenya and Ginny, and 12 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

**“LABOR and POLITICAL ACTION”**

*A class offered by L.A. Trade Tech College Labor Center with the ILWU.

*Politics is more than elections! Learn strategies and campaign techniques and develop your union’s political program by organizing members around issues that matter to them. Learn first-hand about the ILWU’s Rural Action campaign and gain valuable experience on how IUW members can take on large employers such as Local 6 at a赅."
continued support. He noted that she serves on the Transportation Committee and it’s important to have her there for her state’s benefit. The project should be completed by 2010 and could double the number of berths from seven to 14. Work on this 19th pier will be ahead along with the new cruise ship-terminal operation, while work is underway to open a new cruise facility at pier 91. With it arriving “on budget” for the construction work, pier 30 should be handling containers in the 2nd quarter of 2007 and along with the new cruise ship-terminal. President Harold Buley expects a “3rd call” on Fridays in the 2008 cruise season that begins late April and goes to October...Safety concern has increased since the state agency, OSHA, conducted their audits and issued fines against TTI for failing to prepare for the use of safety belts in straddle carriers and semi’s. The enforcement action may be related to a death earlier this year in another port where seat belts may have been a factor...At their latest “stop work” meeting in August, Local 19 members awarded $575 scholarships to Meghan Karach, Niklas Enquist, Jennifer Ventura, Jessica Ventura, and Chantel Stenberg. The Stenberg Scholarship was awarded to Kawiya Emalski-Pai...Local 23 members are watching plans by the Port of Tacoma to purchase additional water-front land that will expand the port’s capacity to handle Alaskan-MAX’s...safety over the next 15 years...The Tacoma longshore local also endorsed strong contracts for the 2009 bargaining...In August 2007, Local 36, the primary election for Port Commissioner.

ILWU warns Ag Dept. cont’d from p. 7

“Would the gentleman [DeLauro] agree with me that the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to deny serious labor lawbreakers taxpayer funding which are distributed under the Market Access Program?” asked Hare, a former president of UNITE-HERE Local 617.

“I too am concerned about the treatment of workers at Blue Diamond Growers,” DeLauro responded, “this issue is not just about Blue Diamond Growers...the company and cruise ship operators to support their candidacy...There’s been a factor...At their latest ‘stop work’ meeting in August, Local 19 members awarded $575 scholarships to Meghan Karach, Niklas Enquist, Jennifer Ventura, Jessica Ventura, and Chantel Stenberg. The Stenberg Scholarship was awarded to Kawiya Emalski-Pai...Local 23 members are watching plans by the Port of Tacoma to purchase additional water-front land that will expand the port’s capacity to handle Alaskan-MAX’s...safety over the next 15 years...The Tacoma longshore local also endorsed strong contracts for the 2009 bargaining...In August 2007, Local 36, the primary election for Port Commissioner.

ILAW 775-0533, ext 113, or Craig@iwlw.org

Worksafe! to hold safety policy conferences

The non-profit safety advocacy group Worksafe! collaborated closely with the ILWU to promote indoor heat regulations through CAL/OSHA, California’s workplace safety agency. The plight of Rite Aid workers in the sweltering heat in Desert, California, spurred these efforts. Worksafe! will hold a two-day occupational health and safety (OHS) conference entitled “Learning from the Past, Building for the Future: Worker Health and Safety Policy, Research, Advocacy and Organizing.” The Worksafe! OSH Policy Conference will be held Sunday, December 2, 12:30 pm - 9 pm and Monday December 3, 2007, 9:00 am–6 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1800 Powell Street, Emeryville, CA 94608.

Worker safety advocates are invited to contact (510) 302-1071 or e-mail fsc@worksafe.org if they want to attend. The web site is www.worksafe.org.

Conference organizers say the statewide gathering will identify priorities for future legislation, promote new OSHA regulations, and take other actions. The group will release a major policy paper on occupational safety and health problems and solutions, and will bring together worker safety advocates from all over the country. Representatives from unions, labor councils and worker centers will gather to discuss workplace safety and health.

Worksafe!’s goal is to build a network of concerned groups and individuals to promote and monitor California’s occupational health and safety. It promotes education on the need for worker protection, the control of workplace hazards, and the protection of community health and the environment. It also advocates for effective worker injury and illness prevention programs and also promotes the development of comprehensive programs. It helps protect all workers.

With no paid staff, Worksafe! volunteers provide technical assistance to unions and other worker organizations, to communities groups, responsible employers, and government.

A Helping Hand... ...when you need it most. That’s what we’re all about. We are the representatives of the ILWU-sponsored recovery programs.

We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcoholism, drug abuse and other problems—and we’re just a phone call away.

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