



# THE DISPATCHER

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# Coast Caucus begins two-week meeting to set goals for new Longshore Contract

**W**ith the current Longshore and Clerks' Contract expiring just four months from now on midnight of June 30, 2014, the Coast Longshore Division Caucus began two weeks of meetings on February 24 that will establish member-based priorities for the new contract negotiations.

### A democratic process

A team of 90 elected delegates representing workers from every West Coast port were joined by dozens of pensioners, special dignitaries, fraternal organizations and member-observers who filled the San Francisco meeting hall from morning 'til night.

### President's welcome

Local 13 veteran Joe Cortez was elected Chair of the Caucus by delegates who also tapped Frank Ponce De Leon as Caucus Secretary.

ILWU International President Bob McEllrath delivered brief introductory remarks that provided context and background for the discussions that followed.

"You're here to set the agenda that our Negotiating Committee will follow," he explained. "This is your Caucus - and you'll be calling the shots."

McEllrath then laid out his perspective on issues that will shape the upcoming contract talks. He urged delegates to "hold the line," and encouraged them to propose strategies to address the challenges ahead, including:

- Jurisdiction – efforts by the employers and other unions to poach Longshore jobs.
- Health Care & Pensions – increased employer & government pressure to cut benefits.
- Automation – employer efforts to replace workers with new technology.

### In memory

Delegates responded warmly to a proposal by Southern California Pensioner's Group President Greg Mitre who asked that the Caucus be dedicated to the memory of Victor Manuel Crespo Puerto who was murdered late last month by anti-union death squads in Honduras. Victor Crespo and his wife became assassination targets after his son led efforts to help Port workers secure a union contract at a newly privatized port managed by International Container Terminal Service Incorporated (ICTSI), a story that was detailed in last month's *Dispatcher*. Other dedications were offered on behalf of fallen members Frank Cappiello, Sr., of Local 52; Ernie Di Villarico of Local 34; Reg Theriault, Eric Wright and Joy Daniels of Local 10; Local 10 pensioners Osborn Hill, Al Broussard, John Romo, Manny Simpson; and Ethyl Chester – widow of former Local 10 member and International Vice President, Bill Chester.

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# LETTERS TO THE *DISPATCHER*

*Dear Editor,*

Thank you for your recent coverage of the work of the Local 13 Holiday Committee. Our Feed the Community Day and Kids Christmas Party and Toy Drive was a big success. I would like to acknowledge the work of Katy Witkowski, our co-chair for 2013. This year's events could not have happened without her hard work. I was sidelined with an injury and Katy took on the heavy work load this year. I could not ask for a better team of volunteers who give so much of their time so that we can brighten the holidays of families in need, year after year. Thanks again to generosity of the all of the Southern California ILWU members, pensioners, auxiliary and the ILWU Credit Union.

**Lisa Tonson, Local 13  
Harbor City, CA**

Send your letters to the editor to: *The Dispatcher*, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800 or email to [editor@ilwu.org](mailto:editor@ilwu.org)



**Three decades of support:** ILWU Local 14 President Damien Moody presents a \$500 check to Humboldt Bay Firefighters Christmas Toy Drive. Local 14 members have been supporting this toy drive for the past 30 years.



Photo by Peter Parks

## Protesting the Trans-Pacific Partnership in Portland:

On January 31, ILWU members in Portland participated in a protest against the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) held on the campus of Portland State University. Because of grassroots pressure from community groups and union members, the bill that would grant "Fast Track" authority to the trade agreement appears to be stopped in its track, which would effectively kill the TPP for the time being. Fast track is a procedure that allows the president to submit a trade agreement to Congress for an up or down vote without amendments. It is virtually impossible to pass controversial trade agreements like the TPP without using fast track. House Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi came out against fast tracking the TPP and in January, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, said he would not bring fast track trade authority up for a vote.

In the photo, ILWU members Pat Johnson (left) and Matt Theison at the TPP protest rally in Portland.

## ILWU Credit Unions are here to help when time are tough

The ILWU is working hard to prepare for the new longshore contract negotiations that begin later this year. One only needs to look back at how negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association have unfolded in the last few contracts to know that it is a good idea for members to be financially prepared for any possibilities.

There are nine ILWU Credit Unions up and down the coast and they will be here to help ILWU members weather the storm if there is a dispute with the employers. The ILWU Credit Union was formed by our fathers and grandfathers for just such an emergency. The founders of our credit unions understood that if we were out of work, we would not get any help from the banks. Banks

finance efforts to break unions, not help working people.

If members are faced with a management dispute and not working, the ILWU Credit Union will be there with emergency loans. In the past, this kind of loan has protected many ILWU members and allowed them to continue paying bills and living normally until they are back at work.

Savings plans tied to the length of the union contract are another type of program that help members to be ready for all eventualities. The credit union wants you to be financially strong to weather any possible storm that might be coming.

Loan payments and service charges can be deferred in the event of a lockout or strike, giving the member peace of mind knowing they will not incur increasing penalties or default on their loans. To protect the member from "insufficient funds"



Local 13 member Chris Fuentes at the ILWU Credit Union in Wilmington.

the credit union will pay your bill which will give you time to get that emergency loan to cover your needs. If you are pre-approved for a loan but no longer working, you will still get the loan thereby not disrupting your life. Programs to support the ILWU are different from credit union to credit union but fundamentally all

ILWU credit unions will be there for you. Without the ILWU there can be no credit union, we are one and the same.

Join your credit union and make your union family stronger.

Lewis Wright, Local 63 (Ret.)  
ILWU Credit Union  
Board of Directors

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# Members play a big role in ILWU organizing victories in Hawaii

One-to-one, worker-to-worker – that’s a big part of how we organize in the ILWU.” explained Wesley Furtado, International Vice President (Hawaii). This approach has worked for our Union over the years, including 2013 when over 500 new members were brought into Local 142 between September and November.

On September 1, 2013, the Andaz Maui at Wailea – a Hyatt brand resort – agreed to card check recognition and a first contract that will give Andaz Maui workers a 14.5% increase over 3.5 years. The Andaz is expected to eventually employ some 400 bargaining unit workers.

“The Andaz was the priority for our organizing in Local 142.” Furtado continued. “It was a brand new hotel built on the grounds of the former Renaissance Wailea Resort – an ILWU unit for many years. We wanted to make sure it continued to be an ILWU house so we could protect the standards we have at the two other Hyatt resorts represented by Local 142.”

Organizers and rank and file leaders from many Maui Division units identified Andaz applicants from around the

island and signed these workers on union authorization cards. Thousands of family members, co-workers, and friends were contacted. Social media and many new and creative ideas were used to build on the ILWU approach of one-to-one, worker-to-worker.

In the Hawaii Division, rank and file members were key in convincing a non-union department of the Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa at Keauhou Bay to organize. On September 6, 2013, Guest Service Agents voted 6 – 2 to join the ILWU in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

On September 10, 2013, the NLRB conducted an election on Oahu for 45 drivers and warehouse workers at Anheuser-Busch Sales of Hawaii. The Anheuser-Busch workers took ownership of this organizing drive; leaders talked to co-workers, signed them up on ILWU cards, set up group meetings – and they won! The vote: 27 – 17.

Another NLRB election, this time for workers at Kaanapali Alii, was held November 20, 2013. Kaanapali Alii is a vacation condominium resort located between two longtime ILWU units, the Westin Maui Resort & Spa and the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa.

Organizers built a solid core of support through one-to-one contact with



Kaanapali Alii workers rally in support of the ILWU.

the workers, and this support grew stronger as ILWU members who are family and friends of Kaanapali Alii employees urged them to “go union”. On election day, leaders and members from the Westin and Hyatt turned out to hold signs encouraging a “yes” vote. The 75 Kaanapali Alii workers responded, voting 49 – 22 for the ILWU.

“Westin is a well-established unit in the ILWU and Kaanapali Alii is right next to our hotel. Our members came out when Alii workers voted – we wanted to show them that they weren’t alone. We live in the same communities and shop in the same stores. We

want them to enjoy the benefits of an ILWU contract just like we do,” said Mike Bunyard, unit chair at The Westin Maui Resort & Spa.

In spite of these victories, organizing is tough. Most workers seeking to join a union in this country face an uphill battle made even more difficult by weak labor laws. But one-to-one, worker-to-worker contact – especially by members who can talk firsthand about the ILWU – goes a long way towards countering the fear and intimidation that many workers face when trying to form a union.

# Harbor Dental workers vote to join ILWU family



Local 26 President Luisa Gratz, (left) with the newly organized Harbor Dental workers in Harbor City who joined the ILWU in January.

On January 30, workers at Harbor Dental and Associates in Harbor City, CA voted overwhelmingly to be represented by ILWU Local 26. The new ILWU Local 26 Bargaining Unit consists of dental hygienists, dental assistants and receptionists. They work at the Harbor Dental facility located in a Harbor City.

This facility has been the preferred dental service provider for many Longshore families for decades. They will work with ILWU Local 26 President Luisa Gratz to get a first contract.

# Delta Western workers in Dutch Harbor strike to protest violation of their rights

Employees of fuel distributor, Delta Western, in Unalaska walked off the job on February 16 to protest the company’s violations of workers’ rights and federal law—including discrimination and threats against people who support their union, the Inlandboatmen’s Union of the Pacific.

Workers were joined in the picket line outside the Dutch Harbor facility

by large numbers of longshore workers, the Filipino-American community, and other Dutch Harbor residents.

An Unfair Labor Practices complaint against the company was also filed with the National Labor Relations Board. According the complaint, Delta Western threatened and changed the work assignment of workers because of their support for the union. By the end of the day, employees returned to work while supporters cheered and chanted “we’ll be back!”



ILWU members in Dutch Harbor, Alaska protested on Feb. 16 in support of Delta Western workers.

Photo by Doug Leggett

# Longshore locals criticize Portland Port Commission for approving subsidies concealing ICTSI's mismanagement

Portland Longshore Division Locals 8 and 40 criticized a February 19 vote by Portland's Port Commission that authorized an "incentive plan" that will pay carriers \$20-25 in public funds for each box handled by the controversial terminal operator ICTSI.

Before the vote, the Local Presidents told the Commission that ICTSI was mismanaging Portland's container terminal operation, blaming workers for company mistakes, and trying to blackmail the Port in order to extract public subsidies. As the only subcontractor in the region it was displaying monopolistic characteristics with literally no customer service and no labor relations.

The Locals noted that ICTSI's corporate CEO, Enrique Razon, enjoys a personal wealth of \$4.5 billion.

The Locals also released a letter sent to ICTSI management from officials at Locals 8 and 40 on January 23. The letter noted that freight congestion at North Portland's Terminal 6 was being caused by inoperable vehicles that weren't available to move containers.

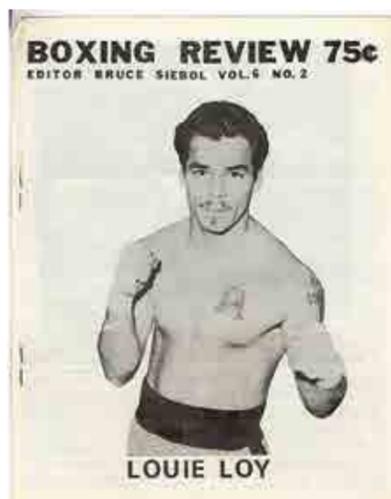
"ICTSI continues to mismanage and make mistakes that are hurting productivity and unfairly squeezing companies like Hanjin," said Local 40 President, David Strader. "Offering public subsidies to mismanaged private companies like ICTSI is unfair to local taxpayers and sends the wrong message to opportunist corporations like ICTSI."

## Local 13 member and pensioner inducted into the California Boxing Hall of Fame

Local 13 member Louie Loy and Local 13 pensioner Ron Sandate were both recently inducted into the California boxing hall of fame. Louie "Champ" Loy began boxing at the age of 10 for the Van Nuys Police Athletic League. As an amateur, Loy was a two-time Open Division Golden Gloves winner in 1978 and 1979.

He turned pro in May of 1979. Loy started his boxing career with 16 consecutive wins, 11 of those by knockout. In 1982 Loy defeated Ronnie Romero by a second round knockout to win the Northwest Super Featherweight title. He retired in 1982 with an impressive record of 17 wins, three losses and 1 draw. 13 of his wins were by knockout.

Ron "Quiet Man" Sandate is a lifelong boxing fan and has served for the past 20 years as the Treasurer for the Golden State Boxers' Association. There



was a time when Sandate thought about becoming a professional fighter, but after several amateur bouts, Sandate took a job on the docks. His longshore career was interrupted by the Korean War when he joined the 955th Field Artillery Battalion. After his service he returned to the docks. He remains active in the Southern California Pensioners, the Korean War Veterans Association, the VFW and still serves as Treasurer for the Golden State Boxers' Association.



**Victory for shipscalers:** Local 56 members picketed Ancon Marine at Berth 187 in Los Angeles. Ancon Marine has an expired contract with Local 56 Shipscalers and when they staffed the job without Local 56 members there was no way to file a grievance. Local 56 members were left with one course of action—they set up a picket. With the help of the solidarity of Teamsters Local 848 who honored the shipscalers picket, Ancon Marine was removed from the job and replaced with Local 56 signatory Engineered Well Services to finish the job.

**Victoria para los "escaleros":** Los afiliados del Local 56 hicieron un piquete contra Ancon Marine en el Muelle 187 en Los Angeles. El contrato colectivo entre Ancon Marine y el Local 56 de Escaleros estaba vencido, así que cuando contrataron empleados que no estaban afiliados al Local 56 no había manera de presentar una queja formal. A los afiliados del Local 56 les quedó sólo un remedio — pusieron una línea de piquete. Con la ayuda y solidaridad del Local 848 de los Teamsters (Choferes) que respetaron el piquete de los escaleros, Ancon Marine fue substituido por Engineered Well Services, empresa que tiene un contrato colectivo con el Local 56, para que esta terminara el trabajo.

## Coast Caucus begins two-week meeting to set goals for new Longshore Contract

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### International support

Delegations of dockworkers from around the world attended the Caucus to convey their solidarity and support. Heading the list of dignitaries was Paddy Crumlin, President of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) which represents over 700 unions in 150 countries with 4.7 million workers. In addition to serving as Chair of the ITF Dockers Section, Crumlin is General Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). He urged ILWU delegates to remember that their upcoming contract struggle would be watched by dockworkers across the globe who draw inspiration from the ILWU's strength and courage. "You can count on your friends at ports around the globe to be there if you need our help," said Crumlin, who noted that powerful carriers and terminal operators are bent on squeezing union members on a global scale. He also cited recent struggles in Australia where dockers have been tangling with powerful employers, "just like the ones you'll be facing in a few

months." He said MUA members are in the process of tackling new technology, "which we don't oppose if employers are willing to negotiate the impacts on workers and ensure that they result in dignity and security instead of fear and insecurity." Crumlin said MUA members at the Port of Brisbane decided to address new technology there by choosing a 32-hour work week with excellent pay that expanded the MUA's membership and strength.

Another important solidarity delegation attending the Caucus was the International Dockers Council (IDC), led by General Coordinator Antolin Goya, representing 90,000 dockers around the globe. Goya also serves as the head of Coordinadora, the union representing 80% of dockworkers in Spain. Goya pledged that the IDC and Spanish dockers would "stand with you in solidarity" because "a victory by the ILWU will help dockworkers everywhere."

### Hawaiian solidarity

Recognizing that Hawaiian Longshore workers have their own contract that is negotiated separately from the

mainland, President McEllrath made a point of acknowledging the delegation of Hawaiian Longshore Division leaders who attended the Caucus, led by Director Nate Lum, along with Wesley Furtado, International Vice President, Hawaii. The Hawaiian members were introduced and thanked for their pledges of solidarity and support.

### Reports for delegates

The Longshore Division's Coast Committee, consisting of International President Bob McEllrath, Vice President Ray Familathe, and Coast Committeemen Ray Ortiz, Jr., and Leal Sundet, reported on the critical issues expected to emerge in negotiations and gave suggestions and recommendations for delegates to consider as they debate goals and priorities during the two-week Caucus.

### Pension & welfare

Additional reports were submitted by the Coast Pension & Welfare Committee that met in late January to prepare materials for Caucus members. Coast Benefits Specialist John Castanho

led a series of presentations that provided delegates with detailed information about the union's health insurance and pension plans. Experts and attorneys were also on hand to provide additional analysis and answer questions.

### Thanking Nick Buckles

As the *Dispatcher* was going to press in Late February, delegates were just beginning to debate the many resolutions that will guide the upcoming contract negotiations. The first resolution to be adopted by delegates was passed unanimously by a standing ovation of delegates who honored Local 32 member Nick Buckles, who started working on the docks in 1961 and served for 18 years as the ILWU's Washington Area Welfare Director. Many heartfelt testimonials, including several filled with tears, accompanied the resolution and honorary plaque that Buckles accepted graciously from the Caucus.

Next month's *Dispatcher* will report on the conclusions reached by the Caucus and the next steps ahead in the 2014 contract negotiations.

# IBU members report back on solidarity delegation to MUA conference in Sydney

The Maritime Union of Australia, Sydney Branch Conference was held December 2-5, 2013. Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) members Samantha Levins, from the San Francisco Region and Jay Ubelhart from Puget Sound Region, attended as guests and filed this report.

The MUA has a strong and long standing connection with the ILWU and the IBU. The Maritime Union of Australia covers waterside workers, seafarers, ferry workers, port workers, professional divers and office workers associated with Australian ports.

The union has roughly 13,000 members throughout Australia. The current union was formed after a 1993 merger of the Seamen's Union of Australia and the Waterside Workers Federation. Harry Bridges, before founding the ILWU, was a member of the Australian Seaman's Union. Additionally, the ILWU and IBU have strong political affinity with the MUA because our unions all have a history of taking positions on social and political issues as well as taking militant stands on labor/workplace disputes.

## Monday, December 2nd

Our first day in Sydney, we rode several of the ferries and met with MUA deck hands. We got a tour of the vessel and wheelhouse. One of the deckhands was going to attend the conference next day as a delegate.

The ferry system in Sydney is extensive and includes eight routes with a fleet of twenty-eight vessels. Until 2012 the ferry system in Sydney was publicly owned and operated. In 2012 the system was privatized and franchised out to Harbour City Ferries, a joint venture between Veolia Transdev and Transfield Services under a seven-year contract. The MUA fought privatization and while the system was eventually privatized, not one union member lost their job.

The name "Veolia" may sound familiar to you; Veolia Transportation was at the center of the recent Bay Area BART strike as well as other labor disputes throughout the country. Veolia is the international private transportation corporation where BART lead negotiator Thomas Hock is the "Vice President of Labor Relations." Most recently Veolia has been involved with a labor dispute in Boston where 700 school bus drivers, employed by Veolia, were locked out of their jobs during negotiations and had five members fired during the dispute.

This really drives home why international solidarity between our unions is important. We may feel like we are isolated in our geographic areas, or that international solidarity is only important when it comes to international shipping and longshore work. But corporations like Veolia are international as well and are engaged in union busting worldwide. With the Golden Gate Ferry contract soon, at the same time as the San Francisco MUNI contract and the ILWU's coastwise longshore contract, building international connections is critical.

## First Day of the Conference

The theme of the conference was "Organised, United, Fighting" and our sisters & brothers in Australia have a big fight on their hands. The conference was opened by an aboriginal group called the Tribal Warrior Association. The MUA throughout Australia has strong

connections with Aboriginal communities and since the founding of the union has supported the rights of Aboriginal people. At the opening of each meeting they acknowledge that they are on the traditional land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and pay their respects to their Elders past and present as well as their traditions and heritage. This is also included in the official mission statement of the Sydney branch.

The opening address was given by Sydney Branch Secretary Paul McAleer. He spoke about the challenges the union is facing in terms of privatization, de-regulation, automation and free trade without concern for worker's rights. Even though Australia has a minimum wage of \$16.91 and a 20% union rate (as opposed to the United States where the minimum wage is \$7.25 and only 11% of people belong to a union) they are facing intense fights from more conservative politicians and a huge privatization push in the country.

Recently, federal and state governments have attacked workers compensation laws, and made it difficult to engage in collective action. Australian labor laws severely penalize workers and unions that take so called "unlawful actions" which include holding union meetings on company time, "unlawful" picketing, and taking industrial action outside of bargaining. Unions in Australia have to ballot members to ask for permission before some job actions or risk being sued. It is illegal for union representatives to access company property without prior permission. Violations could include compulsory interviews of workers by the bosses and high fines for workers.

McAleer said that as workers, if you plan to win you can't rely only on the court or labor law to dictate how you respond to a struggle. He used as an example the privatization of the Sydney Ferries. During that dispute, union delegates were served subpoenas during a union meeting. The response from the membership was to strike, demanding that the subpoenas be dropped. Through collective action the union was able to maintain the jobs of every ferry worker during privatization.

Recently, the oil giant, Chevron, sued the MUA for \$20 million for an

alleged violation of the notice requirements for a job action. There is a conservative-led government under Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott that is attacking unions on all fronts. The right wing there is copying the rulebook written by American anti-union groups like the CATO Institute, ALEC, and the Koch brothers to pass anti-worker laws while they have power.

Following McAleer's speech was MUA National Secretary and President of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), Paddy Crumlin. He spoke at length about the ITF's campaign to support international union organizing campaigns well as the ITF's international "flags of convenience" campaign to support the rights of seafarers globally.

The next panel featured the Firefighters union, teachers and building trades unions. Each spoke about the new conservative government in Australia and strategies for organizing within a hostile political environment. The representative of the Firefighters closed out the panel by saying that they were "Fighting to live in a society, not within an economy."

## Second Day of the Conference

On Wednesday, we spoke on the International Panel along with dockworkers from Hong Kong. The MUA is supporting union organizing efforts in Hong Kong among dockworkers that face conditions such as having to operate cranes and other heavy equipment for up to 12 and 24 hours with no break, even to use the restroom. They must bring their food for the shift with them and use a bucket in the cab for a toilet.

Levens gave an update on the Golden Gate Bridge contract and spoke about the Veolia connection between ferry privatization in Australia and the BART strike. Ubelhart spoke about the ILWU lockout on the Columbia/Snake River in Oregon where IBU tugs and barges refused to move scab grain and helped push the company back to the bargaining table. Ubelhart also discussed fight to raise the minimum wage in SeaTac. That issue generated a lot of discussion.

The delegates found it hard to believe that we would have to fight to get a \$15.00 minimum wage. The minimum wage in Sydney is over \$17.00 per hour and they

have universal health care. Shift differentials are standard practice but the current government is trying to do away with those, saying that they are now a 24-hour economy, and that shift differentials hurt business. The MUA is fighting the same anti-union attacks that we have here, but in a slightly different form.

One evening at the conference there was a presentation on the Dalfram Dispute of 1938, when Port Kembla wharfies refused to load pig iron on ships destined for Japan. The workers knew that the cargo was going to be used in the war effort against China and later, Australia. A preview of an upcoming documentary was shown along with copies of a new book about the struggle. The Dalfram dispute was an early example of wharfies using their power to protest policies and act in solidarity with people being oppressed in foreign countries—a tradition that continues today with dockers around the world.

## Final Day of the Conference

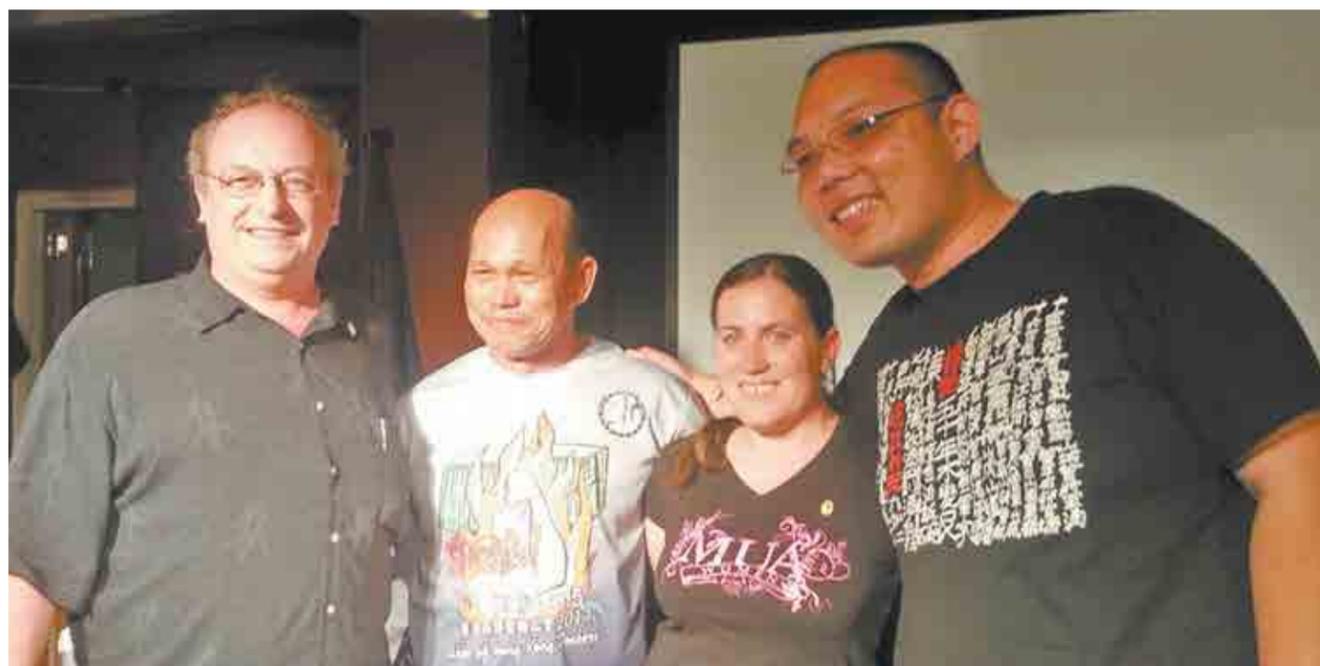
Thursday was the day for resolutions. Earlier in the conference a "branch plan" was presented for the membership to consider. The plan included a revised mission statement, charter of principles as well as a series of Institutional, Industrial, Political and Social goals for the branch. They discussed a new regional maritime federation that will include Australian, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste maritime unions with a goal of improved conditions for maritime workers regionally and globally— particularly seafarers who face some of the worst working conditions internationally.

Resolutions supporting trade unionists being targeted and murdered in Columbia were also voted on, and plans for international campaigns were discussed.

Two other guests were Hong Kong dockers who explained their struggle against the richest man in Hong Kong and the horrible working conditions on the docks. They work 24 hour shifts in the cranes and are fired if they come down.

We would like to offer my heartfelt thanks for the wonderful hospitality and solidarity of the MUA-Sydney Branch while at the conference.

— Samantha Levens and Jay Ubelhart



IBU members Jay Ubelhart (left) and Samantha Levens (second from right) with the members of the Hong Kong dock workers.

# Peter Seeger: Folksinger who fought for workers, unions and the ILWU passes at 94



**P**ete Seeger, a tireless advocate for unions and worker rights who shaped modern American folk music, died on January 27 at the age of 94.

Seeger created many popular songs and co-wrote “If I Had a Hammer.” He followed in the footsteps and performed with Woody Guthrie, combining a passion for social justice, union and environmental struggles, with a love of music and singing. In 1941, Seeger penned a song to help ILWU President Harry Bridges defeat an effort by the government and employers to deport the union leader.

Seeger was modest and soft-spoken but became controversial because of his left-leaning political views. In his younger years, Seeger joined the Communist Party which he left in 1950, but was sentenced to a year in prison for refusing to “name names” when called before the “House Un-American Activities Committee” during the 1950’s Red Scare. Like thousands of others, Seeger was “Blacklisted” for his left-wing political views – barred from making records, appearing on TV or radio, and unable to perform at concert halls for twelve years. The Blacklist ended for Seeger in 1967 when the Smothers Brothers forced CBS to let Seeger perform on their weekly television show. The Smothers Brothers were fired by CBS in 1969 for criticizing the Vietnam War.

In 1963, Seeger performed at San Francisco’s Longshore Memorial Hall. In 2009, he performed at President Obama’s inauguration. He appeared at countless rallies and marches against the Vietnam War during the 1960’s, and continued supporting popular and

unpopular causes, including opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his later years, Seeger continued supporting unions and environmental campaigns, including efforts to protect the Hudson River in New York where he lived.

Seeger celebrated his 90th birthday in 2000 with a concert at Madison Square Garden in New York that drew 15,000 spectators and an impressive list of performers, including Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, Emmylou Harris, Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez and Kris Kristofferson.

Seeger and Woody Guthrie started the *Almanac Singers* in the early 1940s. In 1949, Seeger founded the Weavers, who had #1 hit with their version of Leadbelly’s “Good Night, Irene.” By 1952, the Weavers had sold more than 4 million records, but the Blacklist made it impossible for them to continue and the group broke up. Their music opened the way for Bob Dylan and a new generation of folk music singers and songwriters in the 1960s and ‘70s.

Together with Lee Hays of the *Weavers*, Seeger wrote the inspirational protest song that became an anthem of the 1960’s, “If I Had a Hammer.” They also wrote the hit “So Long, It’s Been Good to Know You.” Seeger’s hit song “Turn! Turn! Turn!” was based on lyrics from the Bible’s Ecclesiastes. With Joe Hickerson, he authored another 60’s anthem, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone”

Like Woody Guthrie, Seeger was generous in sharing credit with others for his inspirations. “Hardly any of my songs have been written entirely by me, I swiped things here and there and wrote new verses to old tunes.”

## Lyrics to “The Ballad of Harry Bridges,” written by Pete Seeger in 1941

Let me tell you of a sailor, Harry Bridges is his name,  
An honest union leader whom the bosses tried to frame,  
He left home in Australia, to sail the seas around,  
He sailed across the ocean to land in Frisco town.

There was only a company union, the bosses had their way.  
A worker had to stand in line for a lousy dollar a day.  
When up spoke Harry Bridges, “Us workers got to get wise.  
Our wives and kids will starve to death if we don’t get organized.”

[Chorus]

Oh, the FBI is worried, the bosses they are scared  
They can’t deport six million men they know.  
And we’re not going to let them send Harry over the seas.  
We’ll fight for Harry Bridges and build the CIO.

They built a big bonfire by the Matson Line that night.  
They threw their fink books in it and they said we’re going to fight.  
You’ve got to pay a living wage or we’re going to take a walk.  
They told it to the bosses but the bosses wouldn’t talk.

They said there’s only one way left to get that contract signed.  
And all around the waterfront they threw their picket line.  
They called it Bloody Thursday, the fifth day of July,  
Four hundred men were wounded and two were left to die.

Now that was seven years ago and in the time since then  
Harry’s organized thousands more and made them union men.  
“We must try to bribe him,” the shipping bosses said,  
“And if he won’t accept the bribe, we’ll say that he’s a red.”

The bosses brought a trial to deport him over the seas,  
But the judge said, “He’s a honest man, I got to set him free,”  
Then they brought another trial to frame him if they can.  
But right by Harry Bridges stands every working man

Seeger was born in Patterson, New York, in 1919. He was the son of two teachers at the Juilliard School of Music. His interest in folk music was sparked by his father, who encouraged family friend Aaron Copland to learn about music played by West Virginia coal miners. That effort inspired Copland’s famous “Appalachian Spring” and “Fanfare for the Common Man.”

In 1938, Seeger dropped out of Harvard University and took his banjo on the road. During his travels he met Woody Guthrie at a benefit concert for California migrant farm workers. Seeger said Guthrie “was the single biggest part of my education.”

Despite his immense impact on American music, Seeger won only one Grammy for his 1997 album called “Pete.” He also received a Lifetime Achievement Grammy in 1993.

Despite being shunned by the establishment and powers-that-be for most of his life, Seeger maintained hope and a positive outlook: “The key to the future of the world,” he said, “is finding the optimistic stories and letting them be known. The world would never amount to a hill of beans if people didn’t use their imaginations to think of the impossible.”



# An oral history with Randy Vekich, ILWU Northwest activist and international officer

By **Harvey Schwartz**  
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

Randy Vekich is an Aberdeen, Washington, native and a former longshore Local 24 President, Coast Committeeman, and International Vice-President. He served on the Coast Negotiating Committee and the International Executive Board and chaired the Longshore Caucus. His ILWU career spanned the period between 1959 and 1995. He retired in 2010 after 15 years as Washington Area Arbitrator for the longshore industry. I interviewed him in 2007 and 2008.

**M**y father, Andy Vekich, started as a longshoreman after the Second World War. There was lots of logging, sawmill, and longshore work then around Aberdeen, where Local 24 was located. This was about fifty years before the local moved to Hoquiam. In 1950, when the country was going after Harry Bridges, Local 24 scheduled a big meeting in town. People from all the Northwest locals were coming to listen to Bridges.

After the meeting, Bridges came by and introduced himself. That's the first time my dad met Harry. A little later though, when I was in junior high school, and there were headlines saying Bridges was a Communist, my father told me, "I don't know about that, but he's one of the most honest men I've ever met. His whole goal in life is to better the working class people."

In 1951, longshoring came to a standstill in Aberdeen and we moved to Everett, Washington. We came back to Aberdeen in 1959 when I was 20. I started to longshore then while I was still in college

When I began, the standard longshore work shift in Aberdeen was nine hours. We hand stowed lumber and pulp. I worked a lot of logs, too. In stowing logs, heavy duty swinging booms weren't developed yet on the ships, which had lighter duty standing gear. They could only pick up three or four tons. Ten years later, they're taking 30 or 35 ton loads. But in those early days, they could only lift one or two logs at once. So the winch drivers would lower one or two logs at a time into ships' holds. Longshoremen in the holds would hook up with chokers like loggers do. Then the logs would go up to the 'tween decks, where they'd be hauled into place using what we called a "stow machine."

I worked for two years, but they froze registration until 1963. In the meantime, I went into the Army, served in Southeast Asia, and took courses while in the service to finish my college degree. I got back to Aberdeen in 1964. By then log exporting was going like you can't believe. There were 20 gangs working log shifts all the time and ships lined up one after the other. It pretty much continued that way until around 1994, when the industry began to decline rapidly. Still, for years Aberdeen was the largest log exporting port in the world.



This photo taken in 1969 shows Local 19 members loading logs at the Port of Seattle's Terminal 105 using heavy lifts equipped with special gear. The technology of log loading changed quickly after 1959. Photo courtesy of ILWU Library and Archives.

I was B registered in 1965. I was A registered in 1967 and elected Local 24 president the next year. In 1968, I also got elected to my first longshore caucus. There some of the old timers introduced me to Harry. That was the first time I personally met him.

By 1969 I had two real strong beliefs. First, I thought we needed a federation of all transportation workers. When I was chair of the longshore caucus in 1986, I made the motion that we should join the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), which we did. Second, I believed we should organize more. In 1969, Jack Hall from Hawaii became an International vice-president. He generated a lot of enthusiasm for organizing. Hall thought we should move on the log marshaling yards, which were developing at all the smaller Northwest ports.

So in 1969 we hosted a workshop at Aberdeen to consider organizing. Following from that workshop, which I chaired, our local ended up with three new subdivisions. These were the log marshaling yard employees, the Boise Cascade sawmill workers at the Port of Gray's Harbor, and the port's maintenance people. Eventually we had to give up the three subdivisions because we couldn't service them right.

For eight months before the 1971-72 coast-wide longshore strike, our local officers thought a confrontation was inevitable. We recommended to our members that they save their income tax refunds and vacation checks and prepare to be off for three months. In 1974, not long after the strike, I became a member of the International Executive Board, where I served for

several terms. Our local had no term limits, and I'd been re-elected Local 24 president every year since I first took office. But because I was devoting most of my time to the International, in early 1975 I decided not to run for Local 24 president anymore.

About that time I also threatened a local strike to stop the Port of Gray's Harbor from using a big grapple the port manager had ordered for loading logs. This was after he lied to us about breaking his promise to discuss the grapple idea before ordering one. That grapple, which was never employed, was dangerous and would have destroyed many jobs.

In 1985, I moved to San Francisco as a coast committeeman. I served in that post until 1988. Jimmy Herman was the International President. He gave Rudy Rubio, who was the International Vice-President, and me a free hand in solidifying things in Alaska. In 1988, I was elected International Vice-President when Rudy decided not to run.

Looking back, I always remember that Harry taught us to keep the organization democratic. That's kept us strong. Another thing is that the main key to fighting the employers for the longshore contract is solidarity from San Diego, California, to Bellingham, Washington. Before 2002 came along, we were drifting in a direction that worried me. Then PMA President Joe Miniache miscalculated. He thought he could destroy us. He locked us out. That solidified us again. We won and it's gonna keep us solidified for a long while.



This photo of Randy Vekich was taken in 1989 when he served as International Vice President.

## Southern California Pensioners elect new officers

The Southern California Pensioners installed their new officers on January 8th, 2014. They are as follows:

President: **Greg Mitre**

1st Vice President: **Jerry Garretson**

2nd Vice President: **Mike Zuliani**

Recording Secretary: **Herman Moreno**

Financial Secretary: **Tina Spittle**

Executive Board: **Dave Arian, Jerry Brady, Ron Costa, Hugh Hunter, Helena Jones,**

**Mike Karmelich, Penne Lavery, Low Loveridge, Gus Muehler, Phil Negrete,**

**Mike Puliselich, Norm Tuck, Marion Rafkin, Paul "Clutch" Urbom and John Vlaic**

Trustees: **Hekena Jones, Malcolm, Phil Negrete, Norm Tuck, Clutch Urbom and John Vlaic.**

– Jerry Garretson

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## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 8:** David W. Degman;  
**Local 10:** William E. Henry;  
**Local 13:** Javier G. Gamboa;  
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John N. Isely; **Local 19:** Christopher  
G. Larson; Peter T. Gardiner;  
**Local 53:** Rodney D. Worman;  
**Local 94:** Darrel Papoff;

### DECEASED PENSIONERS:

**Local 4:** Carl O. Thorson (Lois);  
**Local 8:** Troy E. Potter; Andrew

Ferland; **Local 10:** Robert Russell;  
Melvin L. Jackson; Yusuf A. Al-  
Waajid; **Local 13:** Claud R. Koch  
Jr.; Frank A. Police; **Local 19:**  
Raymond H. Noble, Sr.; Henry C.  
Durkoop; Hans Lerbrek; Ronald R.  
Stickler (Bettee); **Local 21:** John E.  
Parvi (Cathy); **Local 23:** James F.  
Lapenski; **Local 24:** Jennings C.  
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Cappiello; **Local 92:** Joseph D.  
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**Local 8:** Patricia L. Noonan; Betty  
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Esther Mc Cahan; **Local 10:**  
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Susan Martizia; Mercedes Reese;  
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Books and videos about the ILWU are available from the union's library at discounted prices!

### BOOKS

**Solidarity Stories: An Oral History of the ILWU.** By Harvey Schwartz. An inspiring collection of first-hand accounts from ILWU union leaders and rank-and-file workers. \$17.00.

**A Spark Is Struck: Jack Hall & the ILWU in Hawaii.** By Sanford Zalburg: A high quality re-issue of the informative epic account of Jack Hall and the birth and growth of the ILWU in Hawaii \$13.50 (paperback).

**The Legacy of 1934: An historical exhibit by the ILWU.** Produced as a catalogue to accompany the new traveling historical art exhibit about the origins of the ILWU in the 1934 maritime strike, this brief but vivid publication stands on its own as a pictorial history of the coastwise strike and an account of the extraordinary sacrifices and democratic principles of the founding members of the union. **Two (2) for \$5.00**

**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**

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**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)

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

### VIDEOS

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**"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**

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