Elections have serious consequences for ILWU members and their families – especially for ILWU longshore workers who recently found themselves being targeted by Republican members in Congress. Here’s how it happened.

In 2014, Republicans took over the United States Senate and increased their majority in the House of Representatives. The Democratic Party played it safe and failed to outline a progressive agenda for working families. In the absence of a Democratic agenda to vote for, voters found something to vote against, registering their anger against growing unfairness in the economy. Attitudes measured by exit polls were negative in the extreme, with 8 in 10 saying they were dissatisfied with the performance of Congress, and 54 percent giving the thumbs down to Obama. A majority of voters were unhappy with the U.S. economic system itself, with nearly two thirds saying it’s unfair and favors the wealthy - and only 32 percent saying it’s fair to most people.

Instead of changing the economy to work for the majority of Americans, the newly elected Republican Congress decided to throw their weight behind the rich and powerful, trampling the working class. One unifying belief held by the Republican leadership is that they do not like strong unions, so they have focused their efforts against a strong union – the ILWU – that fights without apology for good wages, health and pension benefits, and safe workplaces.

In the last month, U.S. Senators, Senator Cory Gardner (Republican from Colorado) and Senator John Thune (Republican from South Dakota) made speeches on the floor of the U.S. Senate, asking other Senators to support their efforts to punish the ILWU for standing up to employers. Senator Gardner proposed legislation to extend powers to Governors to meddle in the collective bargaining process between the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association. Senator Thune introduced legislation (The Port Performance Act) which mandates that the federal government monitor productivity and gather statistics on longshore workers.

Unfortunately, a part of the Port Performance Act (S. 1298) was included in a comprehensive transportation bill that passed the Senate. Senator Mazie Hirono (Democrat-Hawaii) prepared an amendment to the bill that would have struck the port metrics section from the bill, but Senate Republicans refused to allow her to offer the amendment on the floor. The Senate Republican leadership also slipped in a provision that
Dear Editor,

I’m writing to recognize the contributions of ILWU Local 10 pensioner Andrew Dulaney Jr., who struggled to improve equality and opportunity in our union before his passing on July 11, 2015.

Born in 1935 at Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Andrew, Jr. moved with his family to Oakland in 1942. They were part of the “great migration” that saw millions of African Americans leave the South in search of better jobs and opportunities. Andrew’s father and older brother soon joined the ILWU, and Andrew, Jr. followed in 1959. He was elected to serve as Business Agent in 1987, and his work during the years that followed compelled me to write this letter.

In the early 1990’s, a rally was held at the Port of Los Angeles to support hundreds of Local 13 Allied Division rail yard workers in Long Beach. Andrew and I were among many who attended that rally, along with other African American brothers from Locals 8, 19 and 23 in the Pacific Northwest. At the rally, these brothers told us about some disturbing incidents of racism and discrimination in their locals, so the following day we invited them to tell us about the problems in more detail at a small meeting that included Local 10 members Dave Stewart and Leo Robinson. Our group decided to investigate further and some of us flew to Tacoma. There we heard about problems that included Blacks and Latinos being left out of the registration process or limited to only a few slots. We also heard allegations of discriminatory dispatch practices that hurt women, along with reports that entry into the Walking Boss locals was biased against Blacks in Portland and Seattle.

I served on the International Executive Board (IEB) at the time and first raised the issue there. The Board assigned me to serve on a three-man fact-finding committee that included Local 34 member Richard Cavalli and Local 52 member James Dean. Our committee prepared a report that confirmed these problems, and the Board voted to refer the matter to the upcoming Coast Longshore Division Caucus meeting. At the Caucus, we presented a detailed, confidential report describing the problems of racial and gender discrimination in some locals. The Caucus responded with a multi-point plan authorizing International officers to resolve specific complaints; authorizing the Coast Committee to address registration and dispatch complaints, and ensure fairness to all; proposing that the PMA add an affirmative Action program to the registration process; proposing the African American Longshore Coalition (founded at Local 10 and open to all) to make a full report at the next caucus meeting; encouraging more outreach to community groups about the ILWU’s registration opportunities; recommending that the International Convention develop an educational and affirmative action program; and finally they reaffirmed a 1992 resolution that the union and locals would not share the cost of any penalties imposed on another local or individual if discrimination was proven.

At the next Caucus meeting, which followed the 1994 International Convention, Andrew and other African American Longshore Coalition members led a two-day review of issues and solutions. At that meeting, Andrew proposed what has come to be known as the “Dulaney” amendment; reiterating the position that the union and locals are barred from the process; reiterating the position that the union and locals are barred from this policy was in force when one large northwest local was later eliminated.

Andrew proposed what has come to be known as the “Dulaney” amendment and other ideas that made it possible for them too.

The same is true for me and my family today. We need to help the next generation make it possible for them too.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Thibeaux, Local 10 pensioner
Oakland, CA

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Dear Editor,

I am a surviving spouse of ILWU Local 34 member Ivan Johnson who passed away in February of 2006.

I want to thank the union for providing me with a nice pension, but most of all for the wonderful medical coverage that I have. Medical coverage is so important as one ages. Many of my friends wish they had medical coverage like I have. So often we take things for granted and don’t express our appreciation. The last pension increase prompted me to write and say “thank you” for the pension and medical help I receive, which makes my life so much easier and secure.

Dolores Johnson
Santa Rosa, CA

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Dear Editor,

My name is Daniel Conway, and I’m proud to have been the son of John A. Conway, a longtime Local 34 member. Like many who came from the “Greatest Generation,” my father remembered the desperate years during the Great Depression and he serves as a testament to what we learned from those regrettable episodes of discrimination and unfairness, and I wanted the entire burden of a costly settlement among the members who had found guilty of discrimination in a federal court case and had to shoulder the nation. this policy was in force when one large northwest local was later eliminated.

My dad passed away in 1994, after a career as a Ship’s Clerk and Supercargo. He and his union buddies were serious about helping each other on and off the job. I can remember the days when former ILWU International President Brian McWilliams came to help my dad and I re-roof our 3600 square foot home. I also remember the day when dad came home with a 300-pound halibut in his Volkswagen, and asked me to cut it up so he could share it with union members on the waterfront.

I worked for a decade as a union meat cutter, then retired from PG&E after being part of the union there for 23 years. During the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, I quickly checked on my family then spent days helping so many people who needed their power and gas restored.

Today I’m concerned about the situation facing young people with so few union jobs. That’s why I’m ordering two copies of all the books and videos that the ILWU sells in the back of The Dispatcher. I’m planning to read them myself – and share them with my son – so that he’ll understand what my dad always told us about the importance of unions.

Thank you, Dad. Thank you that we had a union, because it was the only thing that saved us and made it possible for dad to provide us with a good life. The union, my father used to say, “is the best of my heart, mind and will. The union is the source of our security and survival for all of my days.”

The same is true for me and my family today. We need to help the next generation make it possible for them too.

Daniel Conway
Fort Mitchell, Kentucky

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Dear Editor,

It was an honor for us, as pensioners and ILWU Canada officers, to be able to join you at St. Peter’s cemetery in Nanoaimo to witness the dedication of a monument to six longshoremen buried there many years ago.

The fact that this was being done some 129 years after the tragic accident which caused their deaths and that the gravesite was unknown for years, is nothing less than remarkable. The dedicated efforts of our Returned Home Club, in addition to the excellent work done by historian Dr. Ron Magen in locating the burial site, all came together on the morning of July 29th.

All members of the ILWU, in attendance or not, stood tall at this ceremony, making us proud of being members of an organization that puts such value on our history and those who came before us.

Barry Campbell, Secretary Treasurer
ILWU Canada Pensioners Organization

Send your letters to the editor to: The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800 or email to editor@ilwu.org
Working with allies to protect the union, community and environment

The ILWU in Southern California is building bridges with pro-labor environmental groups and oil refinery workers to protect good union jobs in the harbor area and safeguard residents living nearby—including many ILWU families.

Pro-union enviros

“We’re working with national environmental groups who are proudly pro-union, said Southern California District Council (SCDC) President Cathy Familathe, pointing to Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and Food and Water Watch (FWW). Along with the Sierra Club, these national groups have pledged to work with unions in order to hold corporations more accountable. “Ideally, this can help workers win safety improvements on the job while the community also benefits from securing good jobs and a cleaner local environment.” In Southern California, the effort seems to be producing results.

Fracking in Carson

On June 27, the SCDC co-sponsored a public workshop about “fracking”—the process of injecting chemicals deep underground to loosen oil and gas deposits. After studying the issue and considering the possibility of permanently contaminated groundwater, the SCDC took a position against fracking in the harbor area.

Supporting a ban

A month later on July 28, the Planning Commission at the City of Carson met to decide whether to ban fracking within the city limits. Several years ago, oil companies announced plans to frack hundreds of nearby wells, but a strong community organizing campaign resulted in a temporary halt. At the July 28th meeting, large numbers of concerned community members and two absent Commissioners resulted in a postponement of the fracking decision until September 8, when another strong turnout is expected.

Refinery workers

The ILWU has also been supporting harbor area refinery workers, who have their own history of working with environmental groups. Most refinery workers in the area belong to United Steelworkers (USW) Local 675 in Carson, a union that shares progressive values with the ILWU and is led by Secretary-Treasurer Dave Campbell. One distinguished refinery union leader was Tony Mazzocchi, who died in 2002 and was a good friend of Dave Campbell. Together they and others believed it was important to build bridges between unions and environmental groups. Steelworker President Leo Gerard called Mazzocchi “one of the most visionary trade unionists in America who wrote the book on building alliances between workers and environmentalists.”

No job give-aways

Pacific Coast Pensioner President Rich Austin, recently circulated a booklet within the ILWU that was inspired by Mazzocchi and published by refinery workers in 1991, called: Understanding the Conflict Between Jobs and the Environment.

“Mazzocchi said it was crazy to ask workers to give up their jobs for environmental reasons if there was no better alternative,” said Austin. “Mazzocchi believed that unions must first protect jobs, incomes and working conditions for members—but he also believed that we need safer jobs and a healthier environment—so he asked how could we accomplish both goals?”

Funding a “Just Transition”

Mazzocchi’s solution, says Austin, was to create a “superfund” for workers with enough money to make a “just transition” from older, dirty and dangerous jobs to newer, cleaner and safer ones. “Of course, America doesn’t have such a fund now, but the idea makes sense now more than ever, and it’s something we should encourage unions and environmental groups to support,” he says, noting that workers in the coal and oil industry are prime candidates.

Like the G.I Bill

Mazzocchi got the superfund/just transition idea after fighting fascism in WWII, and returning home with millions of other soldiers who got free training, education and living expenses under the G.I. Bill. That opportunity improved life for Mazzocchi and millions in his generation, so he wondered why something similar couldn’t be done to help workers doing dangerous and obsolete jobs today.

Obama & Congress

There was a brief time during Obama’s first term when unions and environmental groups were lobbying together for a massive federal jobs program to help America make the necessary transition toward renewable energy. But Obama used his political capital to pass the Affordable Care Act and succumbed to pressure to remove White House advisor Van Jones, who was the administration’s key advocate for the “green” jobs alliance with unions. Only token funding was made available for green jobs before Republican majorities took control of Congress and slashed jobs and alternative energy programs. That left groups to fight issue-by-issue over refineries, drilling projects, pipelines and energy plants.

Local 13 solidarity

After a tentative agreement on the new longshore contract was reached in February of 2015, Local 13 did some solidarity outreach to some of the 30,000 refinery workers across the country who were trying to negotiate contracts with major oil companies. Local 13 members David Serrato and Robert Cobarruvias delivered cases of bottled water to refinery workers on the picket lines in March.

Familiar issues

The issues facing oil workers were familiar: management wanted to replace permanent union workers with contractors who used temporary workers—sometimes non-union—who were lower-paid with less training and less refinery work experience, so they were more likely to cause accidents and get injured or killed. Refiners want “flexibility” like longshore work on the docks, labor costs at refineries are a relatively small portion of the industry’s overall expenses, but that hasn’t stopped oil companies from pushing to cut labor costs and reduce union power on the job by subcontracting.
Continued from page 3

The consequences of oil industry cost cutting have been dramatic for workers and communities. While long, short workers were entering the last days of their contract fight on February 18, refinery workers were also negotiating when an explosion ripped through the Exxon-Mobil refinery in Torrance. The blast rocked neighborhoods with the force of a mild earthquake and injured three workers. Many homes in the harbor area were covered with white ash that irritated residents’ skin. Previous explosions at the same refinery occurred in 1988 and 1994, killing one worker and injuring 37. After the explosion, communities and environmental groups joined forces to call for greater safety measures advocated by the union.

Chevron disaster

In 2012, an explosion and fire at Chevron’s bay area refinery in the city of Richmond also united refinery workers and residents after the disaster killed three workers, endangered emergency responders and sent thousands of residents to hospital emergency rooms with respiratory complaints. Chevron eventually pleaded guilty to pay $540,000 to settle EPA charges that the company bypassed a wastewater treatment system at their Richmond refinery, resulting in toxic releases into the San Pablo Bay over a period of five years. In 2000 the company paid $7 million to settle Clean Air Act violations at an offshore loading terminal near El Segundo. In 2001 Chevron agreed to pay $1 million to settle federal charges that critical safety regulations were violated at an offshore drilling platform near Ventura, California. In 1998 Chevron paid $57 million to settle Clean Air Act violations at an offshore loading terminal near El Segundo. In 2001 Chevron agreed to pay $750,000 settlement involving their oil production facilities in Rancho, California. Also in 2001, a group of companies including Chevron settled a lawsuit for $422 million involving groundwater contamination in 20 states. This history, along with ongoing problems in other countries including Australia, have made Chevron the target of environmental and labor groups around the world, including the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

Common ground

In Richmond, the Steelworkers Union and environmental groups continue to maintain contact and work together when possible. Communities for a Better Environment, Movement Generation and the Sierra Club have supported the union’s call to limit subcontractors and increase safety. When the investigation into the cause of the 2012 explosion and fire showed Chevron had been ignoring safety problems, it confirmed what both the union and environmental groups had been saying. Chevron’s counter-attack

Chevron responded to the emerging alliance between the Steelworkers and environmental groups in several ways. At the worksite, they used “divide and conquer” tactics to promote conflict between the Steelworkers Union and smaller unions affiliated with the building trades who were dependent on contract work. Public relations cover-up

Chevron also mounted a massive public relations campaign that involved buying every billboard inside the City of Richmond, distributing grants to local community groups and launching a company-controlled newspaper and website. But the company’s boldest move was aimed at controlling Richmond’s City Council – and defeating independent-minded Councilmembers who wanted the company to do a better job of protecting residents, safeguarding workers and paying their fair share of local taxes. Chevron spent a whopping $3 million on their political effort last November that backfired when voters rejected the company candidates in favor of more independent councilmembers.

Wilmington refinery safety

Back in Southern California, Cathy Fainblatt was spearheading the work about a July 29 rally sponsored by the Steelworkers Union, environmental groups and the ILWU’s Southern California District Council. The goal was to stop company-proposed refinery operator jobs that threaten safety at the Phillips 66 refinery in Wilmington.

“Wilmington has some of the worst air quality in the U.S., and plenty of ILWU families live here or nearby,” she said. “The industry is pushing for longer shifts with fewer skilled union workers on duty, and that puts our community at risk.”

The long view

Local 13 President Bobby Olvera Jr., agrees. “Most of us want to see America become less dependent on dangerous refineries and chemical plants in the future, and we’ve got more than our share here in the harbor community,” he said. “But until that transition happens, we need to make things as safe as possible for workers and residents who live here.”

Working with allies to protect the union, community and environment

Northwest support: The ILWU’s (L-R) Local 25 President Johnny Decker, Pensioner President Rich Austin and Local 25’s Grant Landers joined with 100 other union and community supporters outside Tesoro’s massive refinery complex in Anacortes on March 20. Members of Local 12-591 went on strike for three weeks at the refinery beginning February 1. A nationwide tentative agreement was ratified by refinery workers on March 23 that addressed some concerns over safety, staffing and subcontracting. Members of ILWU Local 19 in Seattle expressed their solidarity by contributing $7500 to help the strikers and families.

2015 Pacific Coast Pensioners Association Convention

September 5-9, 2015 • San Francisco, California

Holiday Inn Hotel • Golden Gateway • 1500 Van Ness Avenue

Reservations 1.800.315.2621 • Front Desk 1.415.441.4000 • General Fax 1.415.776.7155

This year’s featured speaker and guest is Jhon Jairo Castro Balanta, President of the Buenaventura Port Workers Union in Colombia. “Congress passed the Colombia Free Trade Agreement despite the fact that Colombia is one of the most deadly places to be a labor leader”, said PCPA President Rich Austin. “The Labor Action Plan that President Obama and Colombian President Santos signed in 2011 promised enforcement of labor standards. As with every other phony free trade agreement gimmick, it failed to deliver. Colombia remains a dangerous country for union members. Jhon will fill us in on the current situation there.”

Also speaking at the event at the convention will be Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA 13). The Convention won’t be all business. The Host Committee has range of enjoyable activities planned, including a banquet and dancing. In addition, drummer extraordinaire John Fisher and his group will perform. John is a member of the Bay Area Pensioners.

“Pensioners, plan on attending. You’ll have a great time and you’ll have the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends.”

4 DISPATCHER • July/August 2015
Fighting to save pensions

Local 26 members are putting into practice the "pension protection" resolution that passed unanimously at the ILWU's International Convention in June.

Workers attended a meeting held in August, where they signed a letter to members of Congress who are backing the "Keep Our Pension Promises Act" (Senate Bill 1631 and House Resolution 2644). The proposal would undo part of a law that passed in 2014 making it legal to cut pension benefits of current retirees. Support in Congress for the Pension Promises Act is being led by Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio.

History of pensions

Pensions, like health care benefits, were won by union members who lobbied hard to win their improvements. Unions and radical political movements also pushed hard on President Franklin Roosevelt to establish the Social Security system during the 1930's, but the plan was designed to prevent the elderly, disabled and widows from suffering extreme poverty -- not to provide enough for a secure retirement. That fight for decent pensions was led after WWII by unions including the ILWU, Steelworkers and Autoworkers. Today, almost 40 million retired American workers are covered by pension plans, but the number is quickly decreasing as business interests push to cut all kinds of benefits and plans run into trouble.

Pension problems

Many pension plans remain healthy -- but others are in financial trouble. It's important to understand how pension plans can run into trouble, and what can be done to fix and prevent problems.

Employer greed

Some plans are in trouble because employers refuse to make fair contributions needed to support decent retirement benefits. With corporations and wealthy business owners gaining more power in the workplace and over lawmakers in Washington, DC, companies have increasingly been able to demand cutbacks in pensions, health benefits and hourly pay. One result is that working class Americans have seen their incomes frozen in real dollars for almost 30 years.

Union responsibility

Unions, sometimes also bear responsibility for allowing plans to get into trouble. In some cases, unions fail to help workers maintain power on the job, which allowed employers to easily push through cutbacks with little resistance from workers. In these cases, employers may be doing the dirty work, but they get away with it because unions have failed to help workers organize and hold the line or win improvements.

Failing to organize

A similar problem happens when unions fail to organize, grow and maintain their strength. A declining membership base that can't support a growing number of pensioners is a serious problem facing many pensions. Of course, many employers deliberately avoid unions by moving to non-union areas and using tricks to frustrate workers from forming unions. But employers have always played those games and unions have not been able to overcome those predictable challenges by successfully organizing, are likely to face problems maintaining pensions, health benefits and good pay.

Failing to manage

The best pension plans are managed jointly by union and employee representatives who share equal responsibility. Under the law, both union and employee representatives are obligated to act in the best interest of pension fund beneficiaries -- known as "fiduciary responsibility." Serious problems can result if either or both sides fail to do their jobs, by making poor investment decisions or failing to admit and correct problems when they arise.

Short-run thinking

Managing a union pension plan requires thinking ahead and planning for the future. Unions who are tempted to let employers stop contributing to pension funds when times are good, (known as a 'vacation') such as a rise in the stock market -- may find it harder to recover when there's a market downturn and money isn't available to pay future beneficiaries. This condition, known as "underfunding," has become a serious problem for many pension plans.

Stock market risks

Everything in society -- including pensions -- is now impacted by critical investment decisions made by a relatively few powerful players on Wall Street. The financial collapse and recession in 2008 didn't just cause millions of people to lose their jobs and homes -- it also severely damaged many pension plans that are only now beginning to recover from massive losses. Unions, in order to protect members and pensioners, need to anticipate these risks when managing pension plans -- and also push for more accountability and regulation of Wall Street.

Difficult choices

When pension plans do get into trouble, they usually face difficult, sometimes impossible, choices. One way out is what companies and some unions did in 2014 when they lobbied Congress to pass the "Multiemployer Pension Reform Act" that allowed pension plans to cut benefits in order to "save" plans in financial trouble. This approach stands in contrast to the "Keep Our Pension Promises Act" supported by Senator Bernie Sanders and Congresswoman Kaptur that would bar cuts and provide government funding to help pension plans recover. The problem is that big business -- who now controls politicians in Washington -- are strongly opposed to helping workers with pension problems. While they seem willing to do anything for Wall Street and the richest one-percent, helping the working class and unions is something they strongly oppose.

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In memory of longshore workers killed in 1886 at the port of Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada

In the late 1800s, when a cargo vessel entered the Puget Sound, it would take on longshoremen at its first port of call, then those men would remain on the ship to work the vessel at all ports in the area.

In mid-June of 1886, The Queen of the Pacific put into Seattle where she took on six longshoremen. The longshoremen were charter members of the newly established Seattle Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers Union (SL&RU), predecessor of ILWU Local 19. During June and July, the vessel discharged and loaded cargo at docks in the Puget Sound, working its way up to British Columbia.

On June 9, 1886, the Queen was docked in Nanaimo, British Columbia, where a powerful blast ripped through the hold, killing six longshoremen. The blast was ignited by flammable fumes from the cargo that included 75,000 pounds of charcoal. The explosion killed two sailors as well.

The explosion occurred at 5:30 minutes before noon on July 29, 1886, at the Nanaimo coal dock where Seattle coal passers were unloading coal into the narrow holds of the ship's hold. Suddenly, a ton of coal hit the center of the lower deck; a clap shook the ship from aft to stern and a sheet of flame flashed upward from the hold to the upper deck.

The SL&RU coal gang was engulfed by flames. As they were carried out of the lower hold, eyewitnesses saw that hair had been burned from their heads and faces; flesh hung in shreds and their “cries were most heart-rending.”

The severely burned men also included eight seamen. Horse-drawn wagons carried the injured to the Nanaimo Hospital where three doctors worked around the clock for two weeks to save lives. One by one, all of the longshore workers and two sailors died from seared lungs and skin burns. A court of inquiry later determined that coal dust had ignited from spontaneous combustion. They ruled that the explosion was an accident that could not have been prevented. Ten months later, an explosion killed 155 miners at the same mine that provided coal for the Queen of the Pacific. Another court of inquiry found the second explosion also an “unavoidable accident.”

During the century that followed, coal miners in North America fought to end coal dust and methane explosions that were claimed by employers and their experts to be “unavoidable.” Union members in the United States finally succeeded in passing the Mine Safety and Health Act in 1977 that led to significant safety and health improvements.

Seattle longshore workers installed a plaque at the Nanaimo granite in 1886 to commemorate the deaths of their union brothers and to thank the people of Nanaimo for caring for them. But after 128 years, the plaque had disappeared.

Seattle Pensioners commissioned Local 19 member and artist Ron Gustein to replicate the original plaque. The new monument is a bronze relief measuring to 20 x 28 x 7 pounds. Father Piotr Lapinski, who was in charge of St. Peter’s Cemetery, graciously agreed to the re-installation.

At the 2015 rededication Lapinski’s successor Father Krzysztof (Chris) Pastuszka delivered the benediction for the fallen seamen.

Seattle Pensioner President Carl Woeck read the original SL&RU message that was dedicated in 1886:

“We wish to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation of the services rendered our six comrades by the citizens of Nanaimo and missionary Charles Seghers following the recent accident on the Queen of the Pacific. Our fallen union brothers Hans Hanson, August Johnson, William Kade, William McDonald, Patrick Priestley and William Robe rest in peace in your care. Should the opportunity ever present itself, the people of Nanaimo may rest assured that the longshoremen of Seattle will endeavor to repay the debt that they so justly owe them.”

Steamer Captain Boston Adams reported the terrible tragedy to the American Weekly, which ran the story on its front page the day after the explosion. It was later recognized as the worst waterfront accident in history.

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Steamer Captain Boston Adams reported the terrible tragedy to the American Weekly, which ran the story on its front page the day after the explosion. It was later recognized as the worst waterfront accident in history.
Frank “Goggles” Gomez

Frank Adams passed away peacefully at his home in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, Alaska on Jan. 10, 2015, at the age of 60. He was a caring and devoted father, a loyal son, an adventurous spirit, a mischievous prankster and a terrific friend. He was a longtime member and A card in ILWU Unit 223, serving the Aleutian Islands port.

He was born in Hobbs, New Mexico in 1954, and grew up in Texas, New Mexico, and Japan. He was a world traveler, described “danger junkie.” His travels included places such as Northern Pakistan, Egypt, China, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, and many other exotic locations. He once traveled on the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

In a note to a friend nearly thirty years ago, David wrote, “As you grow older, you’ll find the only things you regret are the things you didn’t do. If you create a purpose in equipping us with a neck, he surely meant us to stick it out.” Although he was taken from us much too soon, David did not get cheated in this regard. He lived his life to its fullest. He was a large man, in all respects. He had a long neck, and he lived to take chances.

David had a brush with death in 2007. He was in a coma for months as family and friends sat by his bedside. He had the misfortune to lose a leg. The courage David displayed in getting through that ordeal be forever remembered by those who witnessed it.

For all of his adventures, David will be best remembered for his loving devotion to his daughters Destini and Anna. He was very proud of them. No one could doubt that he would have traded all of his adventures for his family.

David was survived by his daughters Anna and Destini, his brother Daniel, his sister-in-law Sierra, his nephew Randy, and many other extended family members including his cousin Gordon with whom he was particularly close. David was predeceased by his mother Margaret, who adored him. Among other relatives who predeceased David were his uncle Doyle and aunt Ann.

David left us much too soon. His stories, humor, generosity, and love for family and friends live on.

— Jim Paulin

IN MEMORIAM

ILWU Unit 223 members

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Fighting to save pensions

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Social Security also threatened

America’s Social Security program is an important type of national pension plan that faces trouble in several decades, but not if simple changes are made soon. For example, asking the richest wage earners to simply pay their fair share would fix any financial problems the plan faces now. Contributions are paid jointly by employers and workers, and they fund a non-profit system that follows workers in most jobs. But Social Security benefits are relatively meager and were never designed to provide a full retirement benefit – although millions of older Americans depend exclusively on them – and more will probably do so in the future. A recent poll reported that one-third of workers expect that Social Security will be their primary source of retirement income. Despite the system’s limitations, Social Security remains a critical benefit for the working class that is now under attack from big business. Wall Street and anti-union politicians want benefits cut and the system privatized so that Wall Street could make profits by managing individual Social Security accounts, which would be a disaster.

Step forward

“Pensions are just one part of the bigger challenge that workers and unions face today, but all of us can do something to help,” says Luna Graz. “We’re contacting members of Congress to tell them that we support the ‘Keep our Pension Promises Act,’ which is a small but important step.”

Copies of the letter Local 26 members sent to Congress, urging support for the “Keep Our Pension Promises Act” can be requested at cfj@ilwu26.com. Members of Congress who sit on key committees will soon decide whether to support the “Keep Our Pension Promises Act.” These members and their addresses appear below:

California
Xavier Becerra: 1226 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Susan Davis: 1214 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Mark DeSaulnier: 327 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Linda Sanchez: 2423 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Mike Thompson: 231 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Mark Takano: 1507 Longworth House Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20515

Oregon
Earl Blumenauer: 1111Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Washington
Jim McDermott: 1035 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

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.

ILWU BOOKS & VIDEOS

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

BOOKS


A Spark Is Struck: Jack Hall & the ILWU in Hawaii. By Sanford Zaltzberg. 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, 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 Bolierum Books in San Francisco, which specializes in rare publications and documents about radical and labor history. $10.00.

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

The Big Strike. By Mike Quin. The classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. $5.00.

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

The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938. By Harvey Schwartz. A new edition that contains the only comprehensive account of the union’s organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. $8.00.

VIDEOS

“End the Storm: Our Fight for Justice and a Better Contract.” A 58-minute DVD feature documentary film produced and directed by Amie Williams. Eye of the Storm tells the story of the 2002 longshore lockout on the West Coast. DVD Version $5.00

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

“Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges.” A 17-minute DVD of the original video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorizes 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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