A delegation of 20 ILWU members traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, where they spent several days honoring the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who was assassinated 50 years ago during a bitter strike by sanitation workers on April 4, 1968.

The three-day event was co-sponsored by AFSCME, the union that represented sanitation workers then and now in Memphis, and the Church of God in Christ – the largest African-American Pentecostal church in the United States.

Dr. King spoke at the Mason Temple in Memphis on April 3, 1968, where he delivered his famous “Mountain Top” speech on the evening before he was murdered while standing on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel.

The event was named “I AM 2018,” a historical reference to the now-famous slogan used by the Memphis sanitation strikers in 1968, who carried signs declaring “I am a man.”

Mountain Top conference
Hundreds of union members and civil rights activists started gathering in Memphis on April 2nd in order to attend a two-day conference that explored King’s legacy. The event was held at the Mason Temple and included panel discussions with academics, labor and religious leaders, elected officials, Civil Rights movement icons and surviving members of the 1968 sanitation strike. The event also included an activist training where participants met in small groups to develop campaign strategies based on a range of different scenarios presented by trainers.

Speakers at the conference included the Reverends Jesse Jackson and James Lawson, Congresswoman Karen Bass from Los Angeles, AFSCME International President Lee Saunders, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, UNITE-HERE International Vice President and former head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Maria Elena Durazo, Meh-Ling Ho-Shing, a survivor of the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School and CNN host Van Jones.

The conference featured panels on criminal justice reform, poverty, the struggle faced by American workers and the intersection of labor, faith and civil rights organizations.

“I AM 2018 isn’t just a reflection on the past; it’s a call to action for the future,” said AFSCME President Lee Saunders. “Dr. King and the Memphis strikers knew that you can’t achieve economic justice without racial justice. And yet, 50 years after Dr. King’s Mountain Top speech, working people are still fighting those same fights.”

“One of the lessons I took home is that it doesn’t matter what the laws say,” said Local 19’s Ron Thomas. “What’s important is that people come together. It’s through collective action that we have power. That’s how things get changed.”

continued on page 4
May is Dental Choice Month

May is the annual choice period for the Dental Plan. During May eligible active and retired longshoremen may change their dental plan selection for coverage effective July 1, 2018.

The Dental Plan Choice form must be completed by the Member and received by the Benefit Plans Office no later than May 31, 2018 to ensure timely notification to the dental plans.

Choice Forms will be furnished upon request.

DENTAL PLAN CHOICES:
Washington Dental Service or Dental Health Services

More than 110 women trade unionists gathered together on March 8th in San Pedro to celebrate International Women’s Day and at the third annual meeting for the group Union Women in Solidarity. The event was sponsored by ILWU Locals 13, 63 and 94 and was attended by women from more than 10 different unions from up and down the West Coast.

Featured guests included Kathy Bridges, daughter of ILWU co-founder Harry Bridges, Esther Ramirez, an original “Rosie the Riveter,” and Iva Valdase, one of the many pioneering women who worked for NASA during the early days of the space program.

Union Women Solidarity was founded by Local 13 member Valerie Zaks. It started as a group on Facebook to create a place where women who work in primarily male workplaces could come together to talk about common issues. Zaks said she wanted the group to become a launching pad for building community and also as a way to build capacity for collective action.

Zaks said she learned about the importance of worker solidarity when she was a casual. She said she recalls participating in ILWU solidarity actions in 1998 to support of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) during the “Patrick’s dispute.” ILWU members refused to unload Australian ships that had been loaded by non-union workers while MUA members were locked-out.

“What everything that is going on today, it is important that we are active in our unions and in our community,” Zaks said.

International Women’s Day: Union Women in Solidarity (UWIS) held their third annual luncheon in San Pedro on March 8, International Women’s Day. More than 110 women trade unionists from the West Coast attended. In the front (left to right) are: Kathy Bridges, Esther Ramirez and UWIS founder Valerie Zaks; in the back (left to right) are UWIS Board members Sarah Valdez, Carolyn Moen, Miki Kirkland.

Keynote: Iva Valdase (left) with Auxiliary 8 President Ida Taylor. Valdase was the keynote speaker at the event. “She captured every woman in the room,” according to Valerie Zaks. “You could hear a pin drop in between her sentences.”

ILWU Local 22 sponsored two Pierce County high school seniors and hosted two more, for the Lelli Memorial Scholarship Program which is administered by the Tacoma Propeller Club. As part of the day’s activities, Local 22 representatives Lisa Ross and Anthony Judie, and Maintenance personnel, provided a visit to the cranes at Husky Terminal in the Port of Tacoma for the students and their chaperones.
Animal care workers form union and join ILWU

Organizing for positive change: Veterinary workers at VCA-SFVS voted overwhelmingly for the union despite strong employer opposition. ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe coordinated the organizing effort. “These workers built their own union from the bottom-up, which makes for a good partnership with the ILWU,” said Familathe.

A merica’s animal care in-
dustry was once domi-
nated by independent veterinarians and support staff. Now the vet industry is being transformed by powerful cor-
porations and Wall Street inves-
tors – posing new challenges for
both workers and pet owners.

Making history
On April 4th and 5th, a group of
95 workers at VCA-San Francisco Vet-
terinary Specialists (SFVS) made his-
tory by becoming the first large group of
private-sector veterinary workers in
America to form their own union and
affiliate with the ILWU.

Big margin for historic vote
Workers won their National Labor Relations Board election by an over-
whelming margin of nearly 3-1, despite
an aggressive anti-union campaign
featuring expert consultants, manu-
datory “captive audience” meetings, last-
minute personal visits from executives,
staff shakeups and other pressure tac-
tics – all of which failed to flip most of
the 84 workers who originally signed
union cards.

Staying positive, working together
Throughout the weeks leading up
to the vote, workers stayed true to
their original purpose and message.
They emphasized the need to “work
together” and make “positive changes”
to improve working conditions and
raise the quality of care standards for
both animals and pet-owners.

“We decided that the best way to make positive change was by working
together and forming a union,” said Laura Territo, a Registered Veterinary
Technician at the SFVS facility who
was among the large group of vet-
inary workers that led the union effort.

Propaganda and pressure failed
Management tried but failed to
flirt workers by using traditional anti-
union tactics and propaganda mes-
sages designed to foster fear and doubt:
“We’re a family, don’t let the union
get between you and us making things
together. The union just wants your dues money and will say or do anything to get
it. Unions always make promises they
can’t keep or have no intention of keeping.
The union will force you to go on strikes
that will hurt you and your family. Even
if you vote for the union, the company has
no legal obligation to sign a contract.”

While the overwhelming major-
ity of workers supported their union,
hearing these fake and misleading
arguments was unpleasant for every-
one. It’s important to note that these
same tactics are illegal in most demo-
cratic industrialized nations, but are
the norm in America whenever work-
ers try to exercise their right to come
together and form a union.

Consolidation & corporate power
Changes in the animal care indu-
try are following a similar path that
eventually drove most solo-practitioner
physicians into large corporate groups.
Most of those groups then had to affili-
ate with mega-healthcare providers in
order to survive alongside powerful
insurance companies and Wall Street
funded hospital chains.

One company that’s been leading
the consolidation effort in animal care
is Veterinary Centers of America, bet-
ter known by their acronym, “VCA.”
Beginning in 1986 with one animal
hospital, VCA has now acquired 780
facilities that operate in 43 states and 5
Canadian provinces.

VCA’s strategy of acquisitions and
market consolidation has been operat-
ing alongside another recent trend – a
growing number of pet owners with
financial means who are willing to
spend significant sums for food, enter-
tainment and health care services for
their pets.

Impressive revenues & profits
VCA’s focus on acquisition and
consolidation in the pet care industry
has proven profitable. In 2016, the
company generated over $2 billion in
revenue and reported profits exceeding
$500 million.

Mars – an appetite for pet care
Mars isn’t the only big player in
the pet-care industry. Mars, Inc., a
company made famous by their candy
bars – has grown and diversified, in part
by making large investments in the pet
care industry. The company sells pet
food products in Europe and delivers
animal care services in America.
Memphis March: On April 4th the ILWU delegation marched with 10,000 community members and union workers from all over the country to remember Dr. King. The march started at the AFSCME hall and proceeded through Memphis to the Mason Community members and union workers from all over the country to remember Dr. King.

The march started at the AFSCME hall and proceeded through Memphis to the Mason Community members and union workers from all over the country to remember Dr. King.

The speakers at the event included...
Larry Wing: Well-respected Local 10 leader

The ILWU lost a stalwart leader late last year with the passing of longtime Local 10 member Larry Wing who died on December 8, 2017 after a long illness at the age of 81. Larry was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1936 to working class parents who were of Hawaiian and Native American descent. Before becoming a Longshoreman, he served in the United States Army as a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division during the Korean War. After being discharged, he worked as a grave digger at the Park Presidio cemetery in San Francisco. In 1959, he became a registered member of ILWU local 10, where he was elected by the membership to serve multiple terms as the local’s President, Business Agent, and Caucus and Convention delegate during his 49-year career. In 1997, Larry ran for International President against incumbent Brian McWilliam, and lost by a narrow margin. Afterwards, he continued working on the docks and serving his local until retiring in 2008. Larry loved the ILWU and was proud to fight for Local 10’s rank and file. Whether it was representing members at the area’s Labor Relations Committee, or negotiating on behalf of the membership during local or coastwise negotiations, his resolve and determination never wavered in seeking the best conditions for the working men and women of the local. When he was the Business Agent for Local 10, he won several key arbitrations after the implementation of the first Mechanization and Modernization contract. According to a co-worker, Larry was one of the first officers to successfully get a de-registered member re-registered. He was well-liked and respected by many officers and rank and file members up and down the West Coast — and not just within the Longshore Division, but throughout the entire ILWU. His creed was the ILWU motto: An Injury to One is an Injury to All!

As a local officer, Larry was known to be very well-organized and detail-oriented. Former local 10 dues office Secretary Gail Lorentz recalled that Larry maintained a good working relationship with all of the staff members. She remembers him as a man who valued their opinions and treated them all with the utmost respect. Larry was also an accomplished cartoonist who contributed his political satire draw- ings to the local’s weekly bulletins. Larry was a throwback to the old days of the working on the docks in San Francisco, when fisticuffs on and off the job were not uncommon. “Larry’s tough-guy persona, coupled with his experience as an amateur boxer and martial arts fighter, reminded me of Terry Malloy, the fictional character played by actor Marlon Brando in the 1954 movie, On the Waterfront,” said Local 10 member John Castanho.

Larry is survived by his wife Ellen and his four daughters, as well as several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Before passing away, he asked to be cremated and to have his ashes scattered in the waters of Hawaii. He will be missed by his family, his friends, and his union brothers and sisters.
n estimated 60 ILWU members attended the semi-annual Labor Notes “Troublemakers” Conference in Chicago on April 6-8. This was the biggest Labor Notes Conference to date, drawing 3,000 rank-and-file union members, leaders and grassroots activists from across the US and abroad.

Attendees were able to choose from over 100 workshops that covered topics including organizing, media, collective bargaining strategies, leadership development, racial and gender discrimination, and immigrant worker justice. Topics covered a wide-range of issues but the overarching theme was how to revitalize the labor movement by encouraging greater membership involvement, more union democracy and effective organizing campaigns.

**ILWU Members at the Conference**

ILWU attendees at the conference came from locals and Inlandboatmen’s Union regions all along the West Coast. Most of the ILWU participants were younger, energetic and enthusiastic about building leadership skills to help them better participate in the life of their local unions. ILWU members came from as far away as Dutch Harbor, Alaska, and the delegation included workers from both the U.S. and ILWU Canada.

This was the first Labor Notes Conference for IBU member Terence Caddell, who works as a deck hand on the Golden Gate Ferries in San Francisco. “It was eye opening and had a great effect on me. It gave me so many tools and information—I picked up a lot of books to take home.”

Another IBU member, Ryan Brazeau, serves as a business agent on the Washington State Ferries, and noted that the conference offered “a good opportunity to hear what other unions are doing to organize their membership. I sat in on a workshop that featured several small group conversations about unions representing both public and private sector workers. One of the speakers was from the Chicago Teachers Union who discussed organizing teachers and staff at charter schools, and he was spot-on. Another workshop I attended on inequality was very interactive and involved several activities in which groups had to come together to ask questions. It was good to hear why people sometimes come at problems from different angles.”

Myka Dubay of Local 5 took home several resources from the conference. “Meeting people from across the country with common issues was very helpful. My local is organizing around inclusionary language for our LGBTQ members, and it was good to see how other unions are organizing around these issues, and how workers can set up support networks within their unions and workplaces.”

**Organizing in Open Shop America**

The theme of this year’s conference was mobilizing rank-and-file union members to fight anti-union attacks, including the pending Supreme Court decision known as “Janus v. AFSCME,” which has been covered in recent Dispatcher articles. There are now 26 states with “open shop” laws that were once found mostly in southern states. The Janus decision will soon impose these anti-union laws on all public sector union members throughout the country. Anti-union business groups have been financing the Janus case in hopes of weakening or destroying unions. Their goal is to have the courts continue the requirement that unions must represent all workers covered by a contract – while removing the current obligation for all workers to pay either dues or fair share fees that cover the expense of representing members.

**Different approaches**

Many workshops focused on how different unions have been preparing for the Janus decision before it becomes law. Most are creating internal networks of workplace leaders who are talking with co-workers about the need to remain united in a strong union. The short-term goal in these talks is to have everyone “re-sign” a membership card and confirm support for their union in order to win good contracts. Longer-term goals could include a transition away from old “business union” or “service models” based on individual grievance solutions – and moving toward a “collective action” or “organizing” model that seeks to involve members in solving problems together with collective action strategies.

Considerable time was devoted to exploring “how-to” details for conducting effective conversations, mapping workplaces, identifying natural leaders and key groups within each work area. Unions following this route are reporting good results with some creating new networks of engaged members who are trained to use collective action strategies for problem solving. They also report a welcome reduction in the number of lengthy, frustrating and time-consuming grievances because workers discover the benefits of using their power on the shop floor to win more victories than are possible with traditional grievances.

Several workshops also addressed the ongoing problem of public budget cuts that hurt ferry workers, teachers, librarians, bus drivers, public hospital staff and other important jobs that all depend on reasonable levels of public funding. Strategies in these workshops included how to hold elected officials more accountable, how to make big...**continued on page 7**

**Workshops attract ILWU members to Labor Notes Conference in Chicago**

Local 13 Vice President Gary Herrera.

**Outspoken:** Local 54 member Stefanie Flores (left) and Local 19 member AJ Vekich.

Local 29 member Alexander Fernandez.

Big turnout: The ILWU and ILA delegations had an impressive showing of longshore workers at the Labor Notes Convention in Chicago, attended by 3,000.
On Members of the Inlandboatmen’s Union of the Pacific (IBU) – the ILWU’s Marine Division – are taking steps to build unity in order to win good contracts by conducting a systematic, member-to-member outreach campaign. The slogan some members have proposed for their campaign is: “We need IBU – IBU needs you.”

A key goal is to conduct hundreds of “member-to-member conversations” that reach IBU public employees in all locations and all shifts. One topic of those conversations is the imminent Supreme Court “Janus” ruling that’s designed to weaken public employee unions across America. The ruling will directly impact 1500 IBU members who work on public ferries in Washington, Alaska and California. Anti-union forces behind the court ruling hope to prevent financial ruin and internal strife because unions would be compelled to continue representing all workers covered by the contract – while encouraging workers to stop paying their share of representation costs that are now required when workers vote for that “fair share” policy in their contract. The anti-union coalition behind the court-ruling is funded by business interests that have been trying to impose this “double burden” on unions for three-quarters of a century. If the court sides with business over workers in this decision, it would reverse 40 years of settled law and force public employees to lose the right to vote.

Local 13 Vice President Gary Herrera attended the event in Chicago, including the dockworker meeting. “The conference was a powerful dose of inspiration to me,” he said, “I experienced solidarity among the working class that I haven’t felt in a long time. The power of all these union members coming together as one – and ready to fight – was simply amazing.”

Herrera was joined in Chicago by Local 13 Labor Relations Representative Mike Dimon. Before attending, both had been talking about starting an education program and other steps to encourage member participation, build solidarity and promote leadership skills. “The Labor Notes Conference gave us good solutions from an incredible array of workshops that brought together rank-n-file workers, officers, and organizers who want unions to succeed and grow,” said Dimon. “I loved the conference and was surprised by signs of hope for the future – and shocked by the challenges that some members still face in their unions. We intend to share what we learned with others and keep working to involve new members and encourage new leaders.”

Ali Velick, a young worker from Local 19, was also enthusiastic about the meeting. “I loved the energy there. It was great to meet new people from the East Coast and share notes. It was also a good opportunity to debunk some myths about the ILA and figure out ways we can support each other.”

Labor Notes began in 1979 as an independent monthly labor magazine that also publishes a series of books for union members, including the “Troublemakers Handbook” and “Secrets of a Successful Organizer.” In addition to their next semi-annual national Conference in 2020, they produce smaller regional conferences and workshops across the country.
continued from page 3
then encourage a “decertification” vote one year later to remove the union, weaken workers and allow management to regain total control over the workplace.

One sign that VCA/Mars intends to weaken workers and allow management to wait and see what happens. Planning and preparing ahead is always the best way to win a good contract.

The ILWU has teams of experienced organizers and lawyers who care deeply about animals, political allies to support us. Fortunately, San Francisco is a union-friendly town, with many residents who care deeply about animals, worker justice and unions. Including residents, community leaders and political officials – while maintaining unity in the workplace – is how other unions have won their contracts in San Francisco, and VCA-SFPS workers intend to follow that same path to victory.

Animal care workers form union and join ILWU

NEW PENSIONERS:
Local 10: Jose F. Alcaraz; Nhanh H. Le; Local 13: John A. Gatlin Jr.; Jeanne L. Zaki; Paul T. La Riva;
Local 19: Dennis W. Fillbrandt; Local 23: Anthony E. Tomatch; David D. Suchan; Local 63: James A. Jones; James H. Rose; Elisa C. Gyerman; Curt H. Miller; Local 94: Mario N. Benedetti.

DECEASED PENSIONERS:
Local 8: Russell C. Roberts; Local 10: Richard Hicks; Local 12: Doyle R. Williams; Local 13: Jerry R. Duran; Donald A. Ponce Gary G. Osborne (Dynell); Gennaro J. Dileva (Frances); Local 19: David R. Bjornson; Local 21: Kenneth C. Rea (Darlene); Local 23: Bruce W. Jones; Donald E. Clevidence; Local 32: James E. Hauffe; Local 34: David Ballardone; Local 52: Niles G. Wescott; Local 63: Jesse H. Cox; Archie Petrovich; James W. Stamper; Local 94: Hector Durazo (Dianne);

DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 4: Nancy Lynch; Local 8: Helen M. Bracanovich; Local 10: Evelynee M. Allforno; Blanche J. Jones; Mildred Bess; Louise Churchill; Dolores Diaz; Antonette Ferrera; Joan M. Hillenbrand; Lucretia Patricia; Local 12: Betty M. Abell; Local 13: Ann W. Brunac; Amelia Navarro; Maria Triplett; Local 19: Shirley S. Mc Cabe; Carol G. Canaday; Local 50: Mabel K. Herold; Local 52: Kathryn K. Vaux; Local 63: Eloise Huddleston; Local 94: Rosemary Marconi; Christine A. Allen.

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 SEEKING MEMBERS:

Notified.

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