



# THE DISPATCHER

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## THE INSIDE NEWS

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Union Women in Solidarity    | 2 |
| Local 10's Larry Wing passes | 5 |
| Young workers at Labor Notes | 6 |
| TRANSITIONS                  | 8 |
| BOOKS & VIDEO                | 8 |



Animal care workers win historic union vote [page 3](#)



**Marching forward:** A delegation of 20 ILWU members attended the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Memphis sanitation strike and the assassination of Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

## ILWU members return to the mountaintop in Memphis

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The event was named “I AM 2018,” a historical reference to the now-famous slogan used by the Memphis sanitation strikers in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 Mountaintop 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*

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# Union Women in Solidarity come together for third annual luncheon

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 Val-

erie 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. "With 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, Ester Ramirez and UWIS founder Valerie Zaks; in the back (left to right) are UWIS Board members Sarah Valdez, Carolyn Moen, Micki 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."

## 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**



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 days 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.

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# 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.

America’s animal care industry was once dominated by independent veterinarians and support staff. Now the vet industry is being transformed by powerful corporations and Wall Street investors – 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 Veterinary Specialists (SFVS) made history 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 overwhelming margin of nearly 3-1, despite an aggressive anti-union campaign featuring expert consultants, mandatory “captive audience” meetings, last-minute personal visits from executives, staff shakeups and other pressure tactics – 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 veterinary workers that led the union effort.

### Propaganda and pressure failed

Management tried but failed to flip workers by using traditional anti-union tactics and propaganda messages designed to foster fear and doubt:

*“We’re a family; don’t let the union get between you and us making things better. 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 majority of workers supported their union, hearing these false and misleading arguments was unpleasant for everyone. It’s important to note that these same tactics are illegal in most democratic industrialized nations, but are the norm in America whenever workers try to exercise their right to come together and form a union

### Consolidation & corporate power

Changes in the animal care industry are following a similar path that eventually drove most solo-practitioner physicians into large corporate groups. Most of those groups then had to affiliate with mega-health care providers in order to survive alongside powerful insurance companies and Wall Street financed hospital chains.

One company that’s been leading the consolidation effort in animal care is Veterinary Centers of America, better 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 operating alongside another recent trend – a growing number of pet owners with financial means who are willing to spend significant sums for food, entertainment 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

VCA isn’t the only big player in the pet-care industry. Mars, Incorporated, 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.

In September of 2017, Mars agreed to buy VCA for a staggering \$9.1 billion dollars – with the goal of combining the veterinary operations of both corporate owners into one giant network.

### Monopoly in U.S. animal care?

When federal anti-trust regulators reviewed the proposed sale, they worried that one big company would control animal care services in many U.S. markets. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) concluded that the sale would trigger higher costs for consumers and lower the quality of care. As a result, Mars was ordered by the FTC to sell-off facilities in Seattle, Portland, Chicago, New York, Phoenix, Kansas City, Corpus Christi and San Antonio in order to proceed with the VCA acquisition. While government regulators took action to protect consumers in individual markets, they allowed Mars to control a growing share of the domestic medical market for pet procedures.

### New support

Veterinary employees from many areas recently formed the National Veterinary Professionals Union that is partnering with the ILWU to provide support and resources for workers who want to organize for positive change.

### Veterinarian support

Veterinarians who once ran their own businesses and now find themselves more likely to be employed by companies like Mars/VCA, are also becoming interested in unions. Their loss of freedom and control over working conditions has led a growing number of vets to consider forming unions in order to negotiate from



**Supporter:** Vet Tech Laura Territo believes in positive change through her union.

a position of greater strength and unity when dealing with a powerful corporate employer. Veterinarians seeking help have approached one union, the Union of American Physicians & Dentists, which is affiliated with the large AFSCME labor union.

### Winning a contract

The group of workers in San Francisco who already formed their union and affiliated with the ILWU are now preparing for the next phase – a campaign to secure their first contract. VCA-SFVS employees are also being educated about one tactic commonly used by dishonest employers to try and stop workers from reaching a contract. These employers use “surface bargaining” tactics that involve stalling and delay gimmicks to avoid serious negotiations. Employers who go this route typically hire anti-union law firms that specialize in frustrating workers during 12 months of fruitless negotiations –

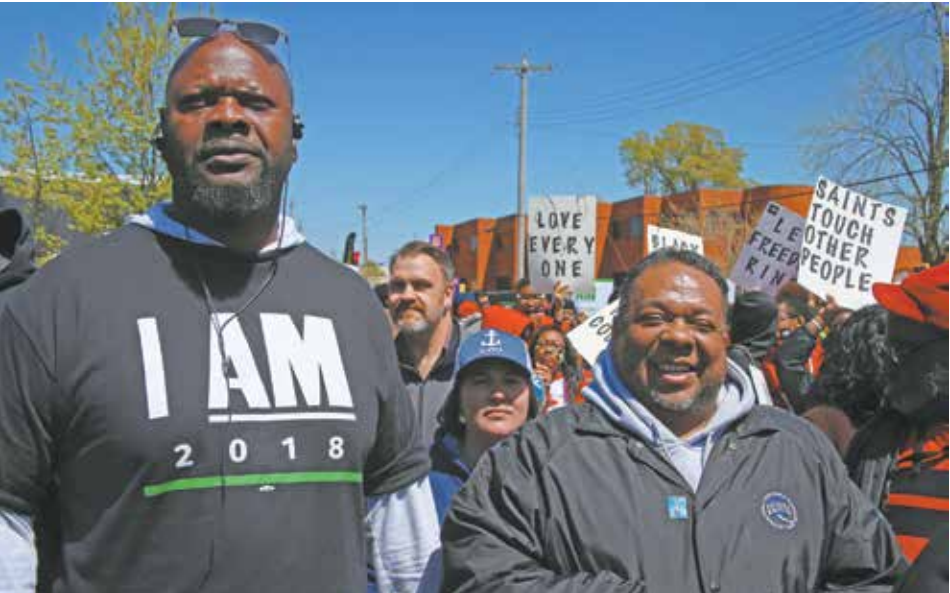
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**Standing strong:** Maria Gomez is among nearly 100 workers at VCA-SFVS who are seeking improvements.



# Return to the mountaintop in Memphis



**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 Temple. Local 19 members Jerome Johnson (left) and Ron Thomas. In the background are Local 502 Casual Stephanie Dobler and Local 23 President Dean McGrath.

continued from page 1

### The three headed monster

A common theme emerging in many of the discussion panels was that a more expansive view of King’s politics is needed today, going beyond activism that challenged segregation and Black disenfranchisement. While the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act are often portrayed as the culmination of King’s work, many conference speakers emphasized that racism was just one part of the “three-headed monster” that King spoke about. The remaining two-heads were poverty and militarism. For King, ending segregation and winning voting rights for Black Americans was only the beginning. He fought hard to raise the minimum wage and decried the injustice suffered by millions of Americans who worked full time but lived in poverty due to meager wages and benefits.

“Our struggle is for genuine equality, which means economic equality,” King said in an address to the Memphis sanitation workers at a rally in March, 1968. “What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn’t have enough money to buy a hamburger?”

King also became increasingly vocal in his opposition to the war in Vietnam. He believed the vast resources devoted to the war had stripped-away funding that should have been used

to eliminate poverty and suffering at home.

### Mountain Top speech anniversary

A special commemoration of Dr. King’s famous “Mountain Top speech” was held on the evening of April 3rd at the Mason Temple. The speech is seen by many as being prophetic because he alluded to his own death and assassination the following day:

“Well, I don’t know what will happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn’t matter with me now, because I’ve been to the mountaintop. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life; longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

The final sentence of King’s speech quotes the Civil War era song, The Battle Hymn of the Republic, which many have interpreted as call to action by King to complete his unfinished work in the struggle for Black freedom.

The speakers at the event included two of King’s children. His daughter, Reverend Bernice King, spoke first and

revealed that her father told her mother on the day of his assassination that the title of his next address was going to be “America May Go to Hell.”

Bernice King explained, “As I look at the landscape of our world today, America may still go to hell. We have not, in 50 years, dealt with, as daddy challenged us to deal with, the last vestiges of racism. We must repent because daddy challenged us to deal with a second evil: poverty, which we have refused to confront in this nation.”

She went on to say that militarism “has robbed us of the necessary resources to address the social injustices and the social ills and the social discrepancies in our nation,” noting that her father said countries who spend more money on military than social advancement are “rapidly approaching a spiritual death.”

She was followed by Dr. King’s eldest son, Martin Luther King III, who praised the efforts of Black Lives Matter, the Me Too Movement and the students at Parkland High School for carrying his father’s work forward. He told the crowd to remain strong. “We’ve come much too far from where we started. You see, nobody ever told us that our roads would be easy, but I know God didn’t bring us this far to leave us.”

They shared the stage with Ambassador Andrew Young, who was standing next to King when he was shot.

“The Africans say you aren’t dead until people stop calling your name,” Young told the audience. “I’ve been to over 120 countries and there has never been a place where I am not asked about Martin Luther King.”

Paul Chavez, the oldest son of Cesar Chavez also spoke at the event, saying that the struggle against injustice must continue and be carried-on by future generations.

Local 10 President Melvin Mackay attended the events and said, “So much of King’s work remains unfinished. I’m sure that King would have loved to see the election of Barack Obama, but he would have also been among the first to speak out against today’s police brutality, or the fact that poverty rates for Black Americans are still as high today as they were 50 years ago. He would be marching to promote unions and fighting to raise the minimum wage so that millions of workers wouldn’t have to live in poverty.”

“The last few days have been enlightening,” said Local 94 member Fran Grove. “There is still so much to be done as union members and as community members. If we come together we can make Martin Luther King’s dream a reality.”

### March and Rally

The events concluded on April 4th, when an estimated 10,000 people participated in a rally and march through downtown Memphis. It began in the morning outside the AFSCME union hall with a diverse crowd composed of participants from across the country and around the world.

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams was among many speakers at the event. He was joined on stage by Senator Bernie Sanders, U.S. Representative Shelia Jackson Lee, Reverend William Barber who has revived King’s Poor People’s Campaign, musical artists Common and Shelia E. and many trade union leaders.

Adams spoke about King’s visit to the Local 10 hall in San Francisco a few months before his assassination. He talked about the struggles facing American workers, including recent attempts to undermine the rights of workers to have unions. “You don’t have to go overseas to fight for people’s rights,” Adams said, echoing one of King’s central themes. “We’ve got workers struggling right here at home. You can stay here and fight for the working class.”

He then challenged those in attendance to recommit themselves to action when they returned home. “What are you going to do when you leave here today to help move Dr. King’s legacy forward?”

Other ILWU members who attended the I AM 2018 event were Local 10 President Melvin Mackay, Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Farless Dailey, Local 10 members Vanetta Hamlin, Vincent Washington, Derrick Muhammad and Trevor McCoy; Local 13 President Mark Mendoza, Local 19 members Jerome Johnson, Julia Bump, Ron Thomas and Tyrone Harvey; Local 23 President Dean McGrath, Local 23 members Phyllis Hamilton, and Matt Chambers; Local 52 Vice President Gabriel Prawl; Local 94 member Fran Grove; ILWU Canada Secretary-Treasurer Bob Dhaliwal, ILWU Local 502 Secretary-Treasurer Cara Kerins, Local 502 Casuals Isacc Baidoo and Stephanie Dobler.



**Combating violence:** Meh-Ling Ho-Shing, a Junior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida talked about the national campaign led by students to address the issue of gun violence. She spoke about the ways media has privileged white and middle class voices in this debate and has neglected to cover the perspective from poor and working class students.



**Mountaintop anniversary:** On the evening of April 3rd, ILWU members joined with nearly 4,000 people at the Mason Temple on the anniversary of Dr. King’s famous Mountaintop speech. In the back row from left to right: Vincent Washington, Local 10 President Melvin Mackay, Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Farless Dailey, Derrick Muhammad, Trevor McCoy; Seated: Vanetta Hamlin (left) and Pamela Grove.



# Larry Wing: Well-respected Local 10 leader

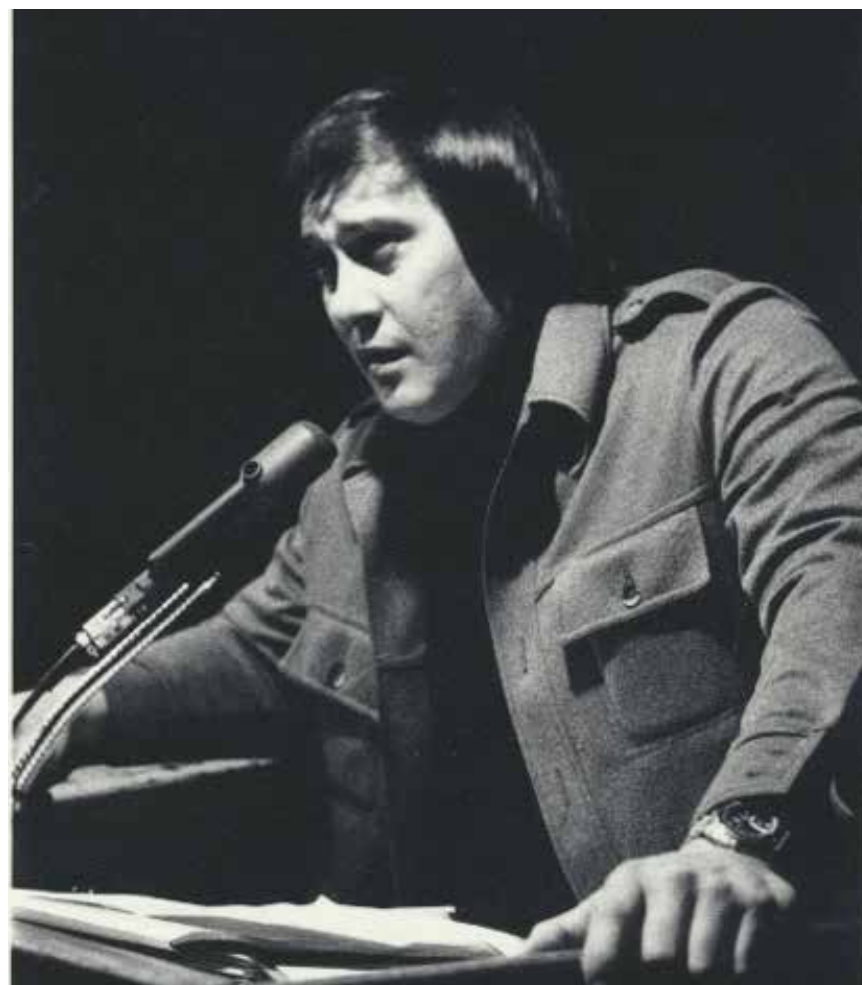
The ILWU lost a stalwart leader late last year with the passing of longtime local 10 member Larry Wing who died on December 8, 2017 after a long illness at the age of 81.

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 McWilliams 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 coastwide 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 upmost respect. Larry was



also an accomplished cartoonist who contributed his political satire drawings 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.



## ATTENTION: LOCAL 10 MEMBERS

Trustees of the Smolin-Melin Scholarship Fund are prepared to accept applications for scholarships for the academic year 2018-2019. Now is the time to indicate your interest. **June 1, 2018 is the application deadline.**

Victor Smolin and Carlton Melin were long time members of Local 10. They left a sum of money to establish the scholarship fund. They specified that scholarships were to be available to children of Class A Local 10 members to further their "collegiate" education. Trustees of the Fund interpret "members" to mean **active members in good standing at the time of disbursement of scholarship funds**, deceased members and retired members. The Trustees interpret "collegiate" to apply only to full-time study (at least 12 units per semester or quarter) at either a four-year college or an academic junior college.

The Trustees have agreed that (1) no applicant will be awarded more than four scholarships, (2) a fifth scholarship would be considered after careful review of the applicant's record and if circumstances warrant and (3) in no event would an applicant be considered for a sixth scholarship.

Based always on available assets, the Fund historically has awarded scholarships in a range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for full-time students at four-year colleges or universities, and from \$750 to \$1,750 for full-time students at two-year colleges.

Trustees are Beth Ross, counsel for ILWU Local 10, David Erkkila, a retired member of Local 10 and a friend of Victor Smolin, and Eugene Vrana, retired Director of Educational Services and Librarian for ILWU.

If you have a son or daughter who is applying to enter college next fall, or is already a college student who is planning to continue, and the above requirements are met, you might want to apply for one of these scholarships.

To request an application, simply call Nicole Bridges at (415) 771-6400 or email her at [nbridges@leonardcarder.com](mailto:nbridges@leonardcarder.com). She will then send you the application form with the necessary explanatory materials.



# Workshops attract ILWU members to Labor Notes Conference in Chicago

An 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.



Local 13 Vice President Gary Herrera.

This was the first Labor Notes Conference for IBU member Terence Candell, 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 court continue the requirement that unions



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

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*



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.



continued from page 6

business and the rich pay their fair share of taxes, and how to win broad public support for important government programs – from Medicare and Social Security down to mosquito abatemen and restaurant health inspections.

Longshore members meet

A highlight for many ILWU attendees was an informal meeting of longshore workers that brought together members from both the ILWU and International Longshoremen’s Union (ILA) who work at ports in the Gulf, South, East Coast and Great Lakes regions. The meeting provided a forum

for dockworkers on both coasts to share experiences and solidarity.

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-filers, 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 Vekich, 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.

# Public employees launch plans to win good contracts with unity & action

**O**n 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 promote 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

all states to adopt policies that developed in Southern States to weaken unions and block racial integration of workplaces.

“We didn’t want to wait for our contracts to expire or for the Supreme Court to announce their ruling before we took action,” said relief able seaman Suzanne Lowe who’s been talking with her co-workers on the Washington State Ferries during the past month. With contract bargaining now underway, nearly 800 Washington State ferry workers understand the importance of building unity that includes training, educating and involving co-workers on every ferry and terminal. During individual conversations with a co-worker, members are asked to show unity by renewing their union membership, reauthorizing dues deductions, enabling phone/text communications and committing to participate in solidarity actions. Besides helping Washington State ferry workers, IBU leaders are planning similar efforts to assist members in Northern California and Alaska. ILWU locals representing public employees are gearing-up to launch their own education and renewal campaigns in the Pacific Northwest, including Local 7 in Bellingham, 9 at SeaTac Airport, 22 in Tacoma, 25 in Anacortes and Local 28 in Portland.

“Unity and solidarity makes a good contract possible, and we’re not going to let the Supreme Court or anyone else divide us,” said Local 9 Business Agent Michael Pavelic in SeaTac.



Alex and Jerry in the dayroom of the Ferry Puyallup say: “We need IBU, the IBU needs you.”



Jake McClintock and Anita Burns on the Bainbridge Island run.



Leaders from Alaska State Ferries displaying their Solidarity.



Seattle Terminal member John Bredin.



TRANSITIONS

**NEW PENSIONERS:**  
**Local 10:** Jose F. Alcaraz; Nhanh H. Le; **Local 13:** John A. Gatlin Jr.; Jeanne L. Zaks; Raul T. La Riva; **Local 19:** Dennis W. Fillbrandt; **Local 23:** Anthony E. Tomatich; 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; Ronald 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. Haufle; **Local 34:** David Balladone;

**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:** Evelynne M. Alforno; Blanche J. Jones; Mildred Bess; Louise Churchill; Dolores Diaz; Antoinette Ferrera; Joan M. Hillenbrand; Lucretia Patrick; **Local 12:** Betty M. Abell; **Local 13:** Ann W. Brunac; Amelia Navarro; Marla 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;

Animal care workers form union and join ILWU

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 follow the “surface bargain and decertify” route may be their decision to retain the notorious anti-union law firm of Littler-Mendelson. But there’s no reason 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 have helped win many victories against law firms like Littler. But the key to

success in every one of those victories has involved the same three elements:

1. Remaining active in the workplace.
2. Promoting unity and encouraging everyone to participate.
3. Enlisting support community and 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. Involving 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-SFVS workers intend to follow that same path to victory.

ILWU BOOKS & VIDEOS

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**  
**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. **\$9.00**  
**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**  
**“Eye of 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 musical 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., 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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ILWU LONGSHORE DIVISION

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