



THE DISPATCHER

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More than 400 dockworkers from around the world convened in New Orleans for the International Dockers Council's 9th General Assembly.

Global dockers, ILWU strengthen bonds of solidarity at IDC 9th General Assembly

A diverse delegation of ILWU longshore workers joined more than 400 other delegates at the International Dockers Council's (IDC) 9th General Assembly in New Orleans, LA from May 25-26. It was the largest ILWU delegation ever sent to an IDC Assembly.

The ILWU delegation included representatives from the Coast Longshore Division, the Hawaii Longshore Division, and the Alaska Longshore Division, along with ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton. ILWU International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr, the

IDC's West Coast Zone Coordinator, ILWU International Vice President (Hawaii) Sam Kreutz, and ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris were all a part of the delegation.

General Coordinators report

IDC General Coordinator Dennis Daggett from the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) delivered a report that touched on many of the themes that surfaced throughout the two-day Assembly: strengthening international solidarity, defending dockworkers under attack by employers and governments, fighting automation and privatization, fighting against discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation and

improving the IDC organizational structure.

"With the struggles and strikes that we've experienced in Portugal, Australia, South America, and other parts of the world, I hope by now we all understand the importance of international solidarity and unity," Daggett said. "Governments, employers, and the ocean carriers do not want to see a unified global docker movement. They don't even want to see it in the United States. ILWU International President Willie Adams at our last ILA convention delivered one of the most powerful speeches I have ever experienced. He bridged the gap between the two coasts in the United States, and the ILA's bond with the ILWU is stronger than ever."

Daggett urged the delegates to adopt a unified position opposing automation of the ports, saying it destroyed jobs and was less efficient than dockworkers in loading and unloading cargo. "Automation eliminates jobs, period," he said. "There's no other way around it. You can sugarcoat it all you want. Automation eliminates our jobs. Nobody on the other side has proven to me that automation is more productive than an actual butt in the seat."

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Triple threat: (Left to right) Local 54 Vice President Stef Flores, Alaska Longshore Division Unit 60 Secretary-Treasurer Sonya Hibbets, and Local 19 Alternate Dispatcher Sarah Esch were among the diverse group of ILWU delegates at the IDC Assembly.

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ILWU Statement on the U.S. Supreme Court Overturning Roe v. Wade

June 24, 2022

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) strongly condemns the U.S. Supreme Court's decision overturning the longstanding precedent, *Roe v. Wade*, that protected reproductive health care rights for Americans for half a century. Since the late 1930s, the Supreme Court has expanded rights; this decision to take rights away represents a dangerous shift for all Americans and the rights we take for granted.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* is a direct attack on people's fundamental right to reproductive health care and bodily autonomy. The impact of the criminalization of reproductive health care that some states will enact in the wake of this decision will be borne disproportionately by working-class people and people who do not have the means to travel to states with more rights.

It is clear from Justice Clarence Thomas' concurring opinion that the Supreme Court is not going to stop here and the extremists on the Court intend to take more rights away from Americans. Justice Thomas explicitly calls on the Court to reconsider precedents that protect the rights to contraception, same-sex relationships, and same-sex marriage.

The vast majority of Americans overwhelmingly support reproductive rights. Five of the nine sitting Justices were appointed by presidents who did not win the popular vote. The anti-majoritarian features of our Constitution are being wielded by the extreme right-wing to block policies supported by the majority.

The ILWU stands firmly in solidarity with all of those impacted by this decision and the right of all people to have access to reproductive health care and bodily autonomy. We urge Congress to pass legislation that codifies *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land.

An Injury to One is an Injury to All.

RSF/CWA-39521



Statement of Willie Adams, ILWU International President, on Oakland Juneteenth Article

June 17, 2022

On June 10, a CNBC story titled "Union announces daytime work stoppage at congested Port of Oakland" stated that "a port official said the change was made so Black longshoremen could celebrate the Juneteenth holiday." The article goes on to suggest a link between the observance of Juneteenth and the expiration of our ILWU-PMA contract on July 1, and states, "the Port of Oakland is among the worst performing ports for the movement of import containers," without giving the supply chain context that has nothing to do with ILWU workers.

As International President of the ILWU and a proud Black man, I take issue with this article and need to set the record straight.

First, the article is deeply racially insensitive. Juneteenth is a federal holiday that recognizes the deep harm that slavery inflicted on generations of Black individuals, families and communities for hundreds of years, and whose impacts are still insidiously felt today. Juneteenth is no less important a federal holiday than Independence Day, Presidents' Day, or any other holiday, yet the media do not complain about those holidays or their impacts on the American workplace.

Second, the comment is attributed to an unnamed "port official." Port of Oakland Danny Wan denies the port had anything to do with this comment. Someone is not being honest.

Third, ILWU dockworkers of ALL races are commemorating Juneteenth together, in solidarity, in our multiracial, multicultural union where we know we are stronger together. In fact, the first ILWU local to propose using its contractually allowed, monthly stop-work meeting to commemorate the federal Juneteenth holiday on June 20 was ILWU Local 23 in Tacoma – a progressive local in Pacific Northwest. Other ports that are observing Juneteenth on June 20 include Los Angeles and Long Beach, along with Tacoma, Seattle, and other Puget Sound locals.

Fourth, the observance of this federal holiday – which has been observed by African Americans since 1866 and has just now been federally recognized as a holiday as of 2021 – has nothing to do with negotiations. To say we observe justice for Black people for political gain is just offensive.

Finally, the Port of Oakland is home to more than a thousand hardworking ILWU men and women who excel at moving cargo. The numbers of containers dropped due to the decisions of our employers, the carriers that chose to discharge containers at Southern California ports and skip calling on Oakland, in order to more quickly return ships to Asia for more imports. The carriers' profit-driven decision to skip Oakland harmed ILWU dockworkers in Northern California and the agricultural exporters whose products perished due to the carriers refusing to pick up their containers in Oakland. It is wildly inaccurate to blame workers for the carriers' decision to put their own profits above agricultural exports and workers' livelihoods.

I am proud and moved that my fellow dockworkers of all races are standing together to commemorate Juneteenth. The ILWU's multiracial, multicultural support for Juneteenth, an important holiday marking the end of slavery in the United States, shows that we live up to our motto: An Injury to One is an Injury to All.



Solidarity with Local 20:

More than 200 ILWU and community members came out to a rally on June 6 supporting Local 20 members in Wilmington, CA who are fighting for a fair contract at Rio Tinto. ILWU Locals 13, 13A, 26, 30, 56, 63, 63-OCU, 94, the IBU, and ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris all came out in solidarity.

President Biden visits the Port of Los Angeles



Photo by Port of Los Angeles



Photo by Port of Los Angeles

On June 10th President Joe Biden visited the Port of Los Angeles, delivering a speech aboard the Battleship USS Iowa. Pres. Biden was introduced by Local 13 member Sal DiCostanzo (Top photo at the podium). "The ILWU is made up of men and women from every race, religion, culture and background, the very fabric of America itself. Our members are extraordinary citizens who do extraordinary work, morning after morning, and night after night. In the past two years, ILWU members helped these world class ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach repeatedly shatter cargo volume records. In 2021, despite unprecedented obstacles, over 20 million TEUs crossed these docks." Pres. Biden noted the progress on the nation's supply chain challenges and thanked the ILWU workforce for their efforts in processing record amounts of cargo amid the pandemic. He also called attention to the record setting profits made by ocean carriers. In the second photo, Pres. Biden walks with Local 13 members David Ross, Jr. (left) and Jaime Hipsher (right) who stood behind the President during his speech.



Freedom Day in Seattle: ILWU members in Seattle celebrated Juneteenth with a waterfront march and rally. The event was covered by the local CBS affiliate KIRO 7. "Today is a great day for us because we are seeing that the country and people are moving forward for change, for better. And that's what Juneteenth is all about," said Local 52 Vice President Gabriel Prawl who was interviewed for the news segment.

ITF Inspector Position in Southern California

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is hiring for the ITF Inspector Position in Southern California due to the upcoming retirement of Stefan Mueller.

The position will be a full-time role, the duties of which are detailed in the ITF Inspector Role Description document. A copy of the job description and ITF Inspector Application form have been sent to your local or can be obtained by contacting Jeff Engels at the email below.

The position is based in Southern California, but will cover other U.S. ports as required.

The position-holder will remain a member of their affiliated union during their employment as an ITF Inspector, however the chosen Inspector will not be able to work concurrently on the waterfront and should not hold any union office while employed in the position.

Applicants should send a resume and cover letter along with the completed ITF Inspector Application form to Steve Trowsdale (trowsdale_steve@itf.org.uk) with a copy to ITF U.S. West Coast Coordinator Jeff Engels (engels_jeff@itf.org.uk), to be received no later than Friday, July 29 2022.

DISPATCHER

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Communications Director

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Diversity is strength: ILWU's first Annual Women, Trans, and Non-binary Workers' Conference



Left to right: Local 500 member Joulene Parent, Local 94 member Fran Grove, and Local 500 member Angela Talic were among the panelist at the Annual Women, Trans, and Non-binary Workers' Conference.

The ILWU held the First Annual Women, Trans, and Non-binary Workers' Conference on April 26 and 30. The event was held online over Zoom. The conference was the result of the tenacity and the hard work of several members who wanted to see a conference for ILWU women.

Event organizers drafted a resolution to host a women's conference and submitted it to the ILWU International Convention, the union's highest governing body, in June 2021. The resolution was amended at the Convention to include trans and non-binary workers, and passed with overwhelming support. A planning committee was convened to help organize the event. Members of the committee included women and non-binary workers from across all ILWU divisions who provided input into the event themes, sessions, outreach, and the selection of panelists.

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris welcomed everyone to the conference. "We're building worker power. We're promoting inclusion. That's what we're all about. Just look at the ILWU's Guiding Principle number three: workers are indivisible. I want to thank and acknowledge all the hard work that has been put into this program and looking forward to learning a lot tonight," Ferris said.

Gender in the workplace

The first panel, "Gender in the Workplace," focused on the ways ILWU leaders have encouraged participation from women, trans, and non-binary workers. The panel was facilitated by Adrienne Smith, a labor and social justice attorney from Vancouver, British Columbia. Their work includes conducting workplace trainings on labor law, and racial and gender inclusivity. The panelists for the session were Local 5 Union Representative Myka Dubay, Local 94 member Fran Grove and Local 19 Alternate Dispatcher Sarah Esch.

"Union is a verb"

"I think we really get into trouble when we stop thinking about union as a verb and we start thinking about it as a noun," Smith said. "Union is a thing that we do. And it's a way that we hold ourselves together." Smith said that in preparing for the event, they were struck by how radical the ILWU's 10 Guiding Principles are.

"What you say in your Guiding Principles is that there is this basic democracy and the union is the people. You also say workers are not divisible and the fact that employers try to keep us apart is answered with organizing," they

said. "That boils down to a solidarity that is tangible and we celebrate it; it's also a call to arms. Part of what we're doing here today is making sure that the solidarity that some of us have enjoyed will be extended into the world."

Years in the making

Local 94 member Fran Grove was one of the driving forces for the conference. Grove said that prior to coming to the ILWU, she was with the building trades, which already had a conference for tradeswomen. When she started on the waterfront, she was surprised that a union as progressive as the ILWU did not have something similar.

"It took probably about 10 to 15 years before we got to this point," said Grove. "But we finally had a group that was able to push it forward. We've gotten to the place now that we're having our first conference. It's a fantastic thing."

Local 5 union representative Myka Dubay talked about how union contracts can be used to fight for all workers.

"We have the power with a contract to build stuff that protects more marginalized workers," Dubay said. "You can do more. You can fight for a trans-inclusive healthcare, you can fight to get like spouse/domestic partner language into health care access. We try and support our members, by fighting for these smaller things that maybe only impact a couple of our members, but it shows them that this contract is for them."

ILWU Canada's anti-bullying campaign

The second panel focused on the ILWU Canada anti-bullying and harassment prevention program called *Be More Than a Bystander*. The panel featured Tracy Porteus, Local 500 members, and *Be More Than a Bystander* program coordinators Jessica Isbister and Angela Talic, and ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton.

Porteus is a leader in the Canadian anti-violence sector who has worked for the past 40 years addressing gender-based violence in communities, workplaces, and families. She kicked off the panel by giving an overview of the *Be More than a bystander* program.

"We are working to make violence and disrespect socially unacceptable," Porteus said. She compared the program to the decades-long effort that changed cultural attitudes around smoking and normalized wearing seatbelts. The change didn't happen overnight but was the result of consistent messaging over time.

"The vast majority of men don't commit violence," Porteus said. "But many men are bystanders. They have seen and heard negative and disrespectful attitudes towards women

and girls. They see firsthand down putting jokes and are privy to abuse and violence going on around them."

Porteus said the harassment prevention program was about teaching people in the workplace the skills to know how to intervene safely and effectively when they see harassment or bullying in the workplace. "We're not born with skills and confidence and knowing what to say or what to do."

ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton took the course and said that he learned important skills and also learned a lot about himself. "This program is going to give people the courage to help stand up and make our culture better, and to make our union better. That's what this is about."

"Cultural change takes time. But this is a positive step towards a better waterfront," concluded Isbister.

The second day of the conference focused on women in leadership, and how to grow the ILWU through internal and external organizing programs.

Diversity is strength

Before the panel discussions began, the conference heard from guest speaker April Sims, Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council. Simms is the first woman of color and the first Black person elected as a Washington State Labor Council executive officer. She spoke about the importance of diversity and how hearing other people's viewpoints can expand your vision of the possible and lead to stronger, more effective organizations.

"We need the diversity of opinions, ideas, perspectives, and experiences of all workers if we really want to build power for the working class," Sims said. "We know that our solidarity makes us stronger. And anything that divides us makes us weak. When we come together across ideology, or political affiliation, regardless of background or race, no matter our gender, identity or ability, when we build together, nothing can tear us down. We know that organizations that are the most effective, the most competitive, and the most efficient are also the most diverse."

Organizing the Untraditional

The first panel discussion of the day was "Organizing the Untraditional," a conversation with ILWU activists who have been involved in organizing across genders in the ILWU.

The panel was facilitated by ILWU Canada Organizer Genevieve Lorenzo. In her introduction, Lorenzo spoke about the importance of the ILWU's Third Guiding Principle, which states: "Workers are indivisible. There can be no discrimination because of race, color, creed, national origin, religious or political belief, sex, gender preference,

or sexual orientation. Any division among the workers can help no one but the employers. Discrimination of worker against worker is suicide. Discrimination is a weapon of the boss. Its entire history is proof that it has served no other purpose than to pit worker against worker to their own destruction."

Lorenzo noted, "It's in the very foundation of our union to actively seek out and value workers as they are and as they exist. Diversity is not division. It is a unifier. Without change, growth, and evolution, we stagnate. A diversity of experiences makes us stronger and more resilient in the face of challenges. And we can accomplish that through organizing. Not only by bringing in new workers through organizing externally but also internally."

The panelists for this topic were Local 5 organizer Kate Stubblefield, Local 500 member Joulene Parent, and IBU member Krissel Calibo.

Stubblefield spoke about the efforts in the Portland area to organize early childhood education workers, the fight for better pay and working conditions in that industry, and the gendered nature of the work. "It's work usually performed by marginalized people," she said. "Because we live in a racist, patriarchal, capitalist society, those workers are treated worse and paid less. It's a liberatory action to organize in places where the most marginalized people are working."

Parent talked about the importance of community alliances, solidarity, and supporting struggles outside of your union.

"It's very important to go out there and support other people who are dealing with struggles," Parent said. "Answer the call to that invite, and bring somebody. I cannot highlight enough, the importance of just inviting somebody along."

Krissel Calibo from Inland-boatmen's Union (IBU), the ILWU's Marine Division, spoke about the internal organizing effort by the IBU on the Washington State Ferry system in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus v. AFSCME* decision.

Find your voice in leadership

The final panel of the day focused on women in leadership, which featured Local 54 Vice President Stef Flores as moderator, Local 142 Vice President Corinna Nguyen, Alaska Longshore Division Unit 60 Secretary-Treasurer Sonya Hibbets, Local 10 Recording Clerk Vanetta Hamlin, and Local 519 Young Workers leader Viri Gomez. The panelists discussed their own unique stories about finding their way into leadership positions in their unions.

"I just encourage everyone to take that first step," Hamlin said. "Get involved, regardless of the discouragement, because it's always going to be there. And just keep learning. I'm still learning right now, today. Every day is a learning day for me."

Planning for the next Women, Trans and Non-binary workers' conference is already underway. A date has not yet been set, but once it has, it will be announced in the *Dispatcher*.

We are the ILWU



Local 14 Eureka, CA

Local 14 in Eureka, CA, was chartered in 1937 with approximately 55 members. The members in Eureka have historically handled cargo related to the timber industry, and the fortunes of the local have been closely tied to the region's logging industry. Membership in the local steadily grew from 1937, reaching a peak membership of approximately 175 in 1967.

In the 1970s, membership in the local began to fall with the decline of the forest product industry, losing about 25-50 members per decade until the 1990s, when membership continued to decline but at a slower rate. Today the local has 13 members who still primarily handle wood products. A proposed offshore wind farm project could be a boost to the local. Local 14 officers, with the help of the ILWU International, are already meeting with elected officials to protect ILWU jurisdiction for the proposed project.

Rick Sousa Local 14 President

I was registered in 2006. I started down here as a casual in the early 1980s. I worked in the timber industry and worked in the mills, and I would come in and casual whenever I could. I finally got my book in 2006 and that was a great day, getting registered into this union. I put in my two weeks' notice at my former job. Even my bosses knew that the job I was getting was worth leaving there, because they had heard that longshore jobs are good jobs. My dad was a longshoreman. My grandfather was a longshoreman. My uncles on both sides are longshoremen. It runs deep in my family.

We used to get a couple of pulp ships a month. That was good work. Pulp is no longer here in Humboldt Bay. Most of what we handle are wood products like chips and logs. We have had lumber ships and the occasional pipe ship. We are seeing what's going to happen with the offshore wind energy farm. We've been getting involved in that by getting our name back out there.



This used to be a 170-member port. Now we are down to 13 members. What we're trying to do right now, with the help of the International, is to get out there and meet with our local politicians, and let them know who we are and that we're a work-ready workforce. We handle anything from bow to stern and lines.

We respect other unions' jurisdiction, and we expect them to respect ours when it comes to the loading and offloading of any of the windmill cargo. We've been involved in unloading and loading windmill pieces in Sacramento and Stockton. We've done it for years, we know what we are doing.

We've let representatives know that people getting these jobs are mostly from the local community. These are good-paying jobs where people in the community are putting money back into the community.

As a kid, I remember the days when my dad would get called for a line job and the whole family would go to dinner. Then we'd go over to the ship and we would play on the docks while they were tying the ship. That was a part of how we grew up. I remember my mom would drive the car right out on the dock and bring my dad lunch.

I remember the strike in 1971. I was in the seventh grade. I knew what they were going through. I knew because my dad had to pick up jobs at food stands in between picket duty to make ends meet. I kind of had a concept at an early age of what the union was for.



Steve Kioukis Local 14 member

I came into the local originally in June of 1968 and then left the area. I eventually moved back and got registered again. My father was a longshoreman, and I came in when I was 18. I was the baby of the group at the time.

As a young man, you don't understand what the adult world is all about, and you don't understand the benefits of longshoring. I had real respect for my father. He said, "You need to get into this union, and you need to stick around. This is good for you." That was the catalyst for me coming down here and trying to stick it out.

I didn't want to leave, but back in that era, we had what I called conventional ships coming in. Those ships took a lot of manning. We were doing 15-man gangs. You'd have three gangs in the daytime and two at night. At that time, there were 170 of us registered in the local. There were 42 or 43 B men, and the rest were all A men. In a five-year period of time, it went from the conventional ships to the more open hatches with the swinging booms and the manning was cut way down.

I was a B man, and there wasn't enough work for the A men. It got to the point where you had to go out and get another job. I ended up getting deregistered in 1973. I moved from here to Sacramento and spent 15 years in Sacramento. From Sacramento, I ended up moving to Boise and spent 17 years there. When Boise started to get too big, it was time to move again. Eureka is home. I talked to the wife, and we decided to move back here. I decided to poke my nose into the hall. There were still guys here that I knew and that I'd worked with years ago—this was in 2003. They told me to sign up as an off-the-street casual. I thought, "Oh, sure, that'd be fun."

I started right at the bottom as an off-the-street casual and then worked my way into being an ID casual. I got the hours and was taken in as a B man. I knew how the game was played because I'd worked here before. I knew that I had to get as many hours as I could. It was worth a gamble because I knew what ILWU was, and I knew the opportunity here.

My dad was a logger. He didn't come to longshore until he was 60 years old. He was born in 1896. He came over here from Greece when he was 15. He came through Ellis Island, went to Chicago, and then ended up in Washington State, and that's where he logged. He was logging there for 45 years. In the 1920s and 1930s, my dad was involved with organizing logging unions. I grew up with him telling me about the struggles that they had. They used to send gangsters from Chicago to break strikes and that type of thing. It was pretty violent in those days. My father told me that his best friend was shot and killed next to him in a union struggle.

It's important to understand what unions had to put up with to get what we have today and what people that went before us fought for.

Shannon Lewis
Local 14
Vice President

Before I was a longshore worker, I was a sixth-generation logger. The first Lewises came here in the 1880s. My great grandfather's grandfather came here from Missouri as a cook with the Transcontinental Railroad. He settled in San Francisco and later came up here to cook in the logging camps. That's where our family got started in this area.

In 1999, I got word that they needed a guy down here that could run front-end loaders. So, I started working as a walk-on casual in 1999. That was my first introduction to this industry. At the time, they were unloading barges of hog fuel—woodchips. Maybe a year or so later, I got on the ID list. It wasn't until 2008 that I got my B book. It took me roughly 10 years to get 1000 hours. There wasn't a lot of work. We all worked other jobs.

My family owned a logging company, so organized labor wasn't always a positive thing whenever the subject came up. We didn't grow up around this, so we didn't know about it. I didn't understand it. I think the people that aren't involved with unions don't have an appreciation for what it is. Before being in the union, I was paycheck to paycheck. We would pay for our health insurance. We sacrificed. We drove junk cars to afford health care. We sacrificed to do what we needed to make sure our kids had what they needed.

There is security in a union. It's unreal, having the opportunity to focus on other things in your life, knowing that this little part of your life is in good shape, knowing that your health care is taken care of, knowing that you have opportunity. When other things arise in life, you have time to deal with it and have a productive job, instead of it being all or nothing.

Growing up, all I ever wanted was to be a logger. I had never thought of doing anything else. I'm fortunate that I found this family. We are a small little local without much work opportunity. It was really like winning the lottery, getting this job. I was the 12th one to get a B book since 1968.



have any contact with the local. I didn't have any contact with PMA. Eventually, I was deregistered, because I was on the run for five years in the drug bowels of Eureka. I didn't even know I was deregistered. I hadn't contacted anybody. When I finally had enough of living on the streets and I finally reached out for help, I called my brother, and he came and got me.

I got into a suboxone program, which was a way to help heroin addicts get off of opiates. My brother said he had contact with the union and that it was possible I might be able to get my job back. He told me to check with Hunny Powell, the ADRP Rep in San Francisco. I called Hunny and sure enough, I qualified for the last chance program. I had to pay for my rehab and had a year's worth of observation to see if I was going to stay straight. There were a lot of hoops and drug testing, and I jumped through all of them. It's an awesome program.

I got my book back. I even got my same number back. There's just really no way for me to say how grateful I am for this program and this local. They had to vote whether to allow me back. And with how I went out, they didn't need to do that. But they did. I'm just so grateful for the people that believed in me. It's unbelievable, to go from being a homeless, drug addict—the only thing I had in my name when I when I finally decided to get my act together was a bag of clothes and most of that I stole—to go from that to where I'm at today. I mean, that's about as quick of a recovery as you can have. To have a job like this to come back to was a big motivator.

Cary Tegarden
Relief Dispatcher

I started down in 2002 around Thanksgiving. They had an extra job. My first day was right around Thanksgiving. I heard they needed truck drivers. They went to a new system of how they hauled the pulp out to the dock, which was on trucks. It was mostly just for extra money. I was working my full-time job. I worked 16 years driving a truck for Pepsi Cola. I went to Redmond and back every night. And then that job ended, so I worked a little bit more and started from there.



I came down here the first day. I had no idea what was going on. You sit in the other room and wait for them to call you. You might get called up, you might not. They needed truck drivers. Because I have a Class A driver's license, 30 years of experience driving trucks, and was licensed through the State of California, they figured I knew enough to make it to the dock and back.

I was never in a union before I got here. I spent seven years working for my father-in-law; we hauled lumber and feed. It kept me away from home most of the time on the road. It was overnight stuff. Then I got kind of a local job with Pepsi. It was a 300-mile trip to Redding and back, but you were home every night. Not until two or three in the morning, but you were still home, which made it nice. When that job ended, I ended up running crane—the mobile cranes you see run up and down the highway, you know, the big 50 ton, 100 ton—that's what I was doing up to the point of getting in and getting to my B book in 2008.

When I first got in it was it was kind of, well, I got another job. I made it to where I'm not waiting to get picked. I've gotten a job. But it didn't take long to realize that this was a good thing. Your benefits start happening. Locally, our work fell off two months after I got to B book, and it was hit-the-road time. I spent more time in Sacramento, Stockton and the city during the first couple of years than I was at home. Pay-wise it was fantastic, but being gone all the time wasn't all that good. My family was used to me being gone at night or on the road. I got to know a lot of good people.

I enjoy being Relief Dispatcher. It's all good. I've always been happy, no matter what job I've had. You stay in contact with everybody. It keeps me busy, and it keeps me off the road instead of traveling all the time.

I'm just really thankful for this job. And not just the job, but the people in it. I've met a lot of good people and had a lot of good times on the road.



Lee Branstetter
Local 14 member
ADRP Representative

I had heard about the waterfront through a friend of the family at Westfall Stevedore Company. He was in kind of a bind because a lot of casuals didn't have any equipment experience. I was at a barbecue, and I'd heard about longshoremen from different people and how it was such a good job.

I was a logger at the time. In those days, you could just walk in off the street and get a job. I would work logging during the day and would come here at night and get a night job. And that's how I started.

At the time, I didn't even know what a union was. I just heard people talk in the community about how good a job it was. The security is unmatched; the pay is unmatched; the benefits are unmatched. It's 100 times more of a job than I thought that was.

I'm the ADRP (Alcoholism and Drug Recovery Program) Representative. I fell into that position when someone retired. I was probably the most qualified to become the ADRP Rep, and I took the opportunity to help other people.

When I came into the union as an A man, I was 15 years clean and sober. I relapsed on pain pills.

That was the start of me going downhill. I wouldn't show up for crane jobs. I should have been there. Nobody could work because I wasn't there. PMA started noticing, and they would have meetings with me. They put me on probation. I couldn't drive crane anymore.

This whole time my disease was progressing. Anybody who's ever been addicted to opiates knows it's not an easy quit. My disease progressed to the point where I just quit coming to work and didn't

Global dockers, ILWU strengthen bonds of solidarity at IDC 9th General Assembly

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Honoring the Liverpool dockers' struggle

The Assembly also paid tribute to the Liverpool dockers' strike that lasted 28 months between 1995 and 1998. That struggle ended in defeat for the Liverpool dockers and was the precursor to the eventual formation of IDC in 2000. A video was shown that honored Liverpool dockworker leaders Jimmy Nolan (who passed away earlier this year), along with Tony Nelson and Terry Teague. Each was awarded a medal of distinction in recognition of their enormous contributions to the global dockworker movement.

The IDC's slogan, "We will never walk alone again," was inspired by the recognition of the international dockworker movement's failures to adequately come to the defense of the Liverpool dockers.

Daggett and IDC International Labor Coordinator Jordi Aragunde both tattooed the slogan on their forearms. "Their vision was to have a rank-and-file run, democratic organization with no bureaucratic nonsense," Daggett said. "Hence, the IDC was created on the principles of direct participation, assembly, and solidarity. And that's why we're in this room today."

Zone Coordinator reports

Delegates heard reports from the Zone Coordinators, getting updates on struggles in Latin America and the

Caribbean, Africa, Asia and Oceania, Europe, and the East and West Coasts of the United States.

In Latin America and Caribbean Zone report, the General Assembly heard details of dockers under attack in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Ecuador where port privatization efforts are underway. Delegates also heard about the violent persecution and repression of dockworker leaders in Colombia and El Salvador that have included death threats and assassinations.

The Africa Zone report highlighted progress in Côte d'Ivoire, including the legal recognition of dockworkers. However, dock work in much of the continent remains precarious with poor wages and conditions for many dockers throughout the region. The need for modernization of maritime laws, implementation of training and safety standards, the need to combat the widespread use of casual and informal labor in the ports, and the need to hold multi-national corporations accountable were emphasized.

The European Zone report included a report on the struggle by Portuguese dockworkers in the Port of Lisbon. The Stevedoring and Logistics Activity Union (SEAL) has been on strike since February of 2020. Delegates also heard a report from the BTB Belgium young dockers movement.



Standing from left to right: ILWU Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr., ILWU Vice President (Hawaii) Sam Kreutz, ILWU Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris and (seated) ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton.

West Coast Zone Coordinator report

ILWU International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr. gave the West Coast Zone Coordinator report. He spoke about the importance of educating new generations. He used the analogy of the importance of learning your grandmother's recipes so that her knowledge and legacy don't pass with her.

"The recipes I have learned are a reflection of the 28 individual members of my family, on both my mother and father's side, that have loaded and unloaded ships along the West Coast since 1901," Olvera said, noting that his grandfather and great uncle were both members of the ILA in the Port of Los Angeles pre 1934 and charter members of ILWU Local 13.

"This has come full circle for me. We are a family. Dockers—it matters not whether you are SEAL, ILA, ILWU, or MUA, we are all one. We walk the same gangways. We unload the same ships, we move the same cargo. I hope we take back a sense of education and solidarity to those that come behind us," said Olvera.

"We have an obligation to those that come behind us to teach them the victories, the struggles, and yes, even the losses, so they understand the culture and the recipe of what

your unionism is about," continued Olvera. "It's not about always taking and having and owning. It's about giving. It's about serving. It's about working tirelessly until you cross that finish line. And that's what we will do together."

ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton also addressed the Assembly during the West Coast report. Ashton brought words of solidarity and unity. He said that ILWU Canada would be there for any docker around the world even though ILWU Canada is not an IDC affiliate.

"Our longshore contract is up next year on March 31. We could be in for a big struggle just like every other union in this room," Ashton said. "I know that one day, I will probably need somebody's help that is sitting here today. I know that same person or another person will need the help of ILWU Canada. Just because we don't sit in the IDC does not mean we won't be there. Because the slogan that you all use, 'We shall never walk alone, again,' rings true no matter who you are, where you are, or what corners of the earth you're from."

Hawaii Longshore Division Director Dustin Dawson also addressed Assembly, pledging support and solidarity to dockers who need assistance.

Resolutions and elections

The assembly adopted more than a dozen resolutions addressing a range of issues to strengthen collective bargaining rights, equality at work, health and safety, building international support and solidarity for dockers around the world as well as making several organizational changes.

- Delegates unanimously adopted a resolution on diversity and inclusion, declaring itself an anti-fascist, anti-homophobic, anti-racist and anti-bullying organization. "Non-discrimination on the basis of birth, ethnicity, sex, class, age, ability, or any other personal

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Hawaii Longshore Division Director Dustin Dawson addresses the Assembly and pledges support for dockworkers who need assistance while IDC General Coordinator Dennis Daggett looks on.



ILWU delegation: The ILWU brought its largest-ever delegation to an IDC assembly with dockworkers from the West Coast, Alaska, Hawaii and Canada.

Jim Norton: “Union Man”

On January 18, the ILWU lost a brilliant, dedicated, and humble mentor, Jim Norton. Brought up in a decidedly working-class community, Jim was a lifelong union man and one of the best leaders ever produced by ILWU Local 23. He was a longtime Business Agent, served several terms on the local Labor Relations Committee (LRC), and as a Caucus & Convention delegate.

Even years after retirement, Jim stayed active in the union through the Tacoma Pensioners Club, as regional grain arbitrator, and helping negotiate contracts for the local’s allied division at the South Intermodal Yard and with ILWU Local 22 at the Port of Tacoma.

Jim was a mentor to multiple generations of longshore workers in Tacoma and a fierce advocate for the ILWU No. 23 Young Workers Committee, embodying the pensioners’ motto of “retired from the job, not from the struggle” better than just about anyone.

James P. Norton (#60505) was born February 16, 1939 in Ruston, WA, a small town adjacent to Tacoma’s Old Town neighborhood. His father worked at the old Asarco smelter and was a member of the Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers Local 25, an old left-wing union with close ties to the ILWU.

All four of his uncles were members of the Boom Men and Rafter’s Union, rafting logs to the several mills along the old Tacoma waterfront. They snuck him into the union at age 17 (despite needing to be 18 to join). He later worked as a tugboat deckhand with the Inlandboatmen’s Union (IBU) and at Concrete Tech as a member of the Hod Carriers’ Union (now Laborers Local 252).

In 1963, Jim started as a casual longshore worker at the Port of Tacoma and made the B bench on March 20, 1967. He fondly recalled the era of the 10-2 gang structure, referring to the gang as “a family” and the “backbone of the union.” He often drove winch and stayed in the same gang for eight years.

Like many of his generation, Jim was a champion of the “Tacoma Advantage”, defined by the local’s driving work ethic and entrepreneurial approach toward working with the Port, especially port manager Roy Perry. He joined several delegations traveling to other ports on behalf of the local, learning to handle rubber in New Orleans or documenting discrepancies between working conditions on the West Coast and elsewhere.

Jim first ran for office after an unsatisfactory ruling on the job from Business Agent George Ginnis. He raised a safety issue about stowing sacks in the wings of the hold, but was ordered back to work by the BA. Jim held a grudge over it but Ginnis later encouraged him to run for LRC. They quickly became good friends and Jim quickly emerged as an expert on arbitrations in the local. After Ginnis

retired, Jim ran for BA and held the position for many years.

Early on, Jim struggled on the LRC. After he got beat in five arbitrations in a row, Jim committed to never letting that happen again. Jim rigorously studied the contract and past rulings. He made a point to remind others that he wasn’t above asking for help either, frequently turning to then ILWU Vice President Rudy Rubio and Coast Committeeman Bobby Olvera Sr. for advice.

Most importantly, it was Jim’s wife, Joan Norton, who was the secret to his success in arbitrations. In an interview last year, Jim recalled how there was no one at the hall who could type or edit well enough to do the job to his standards. So Joan helped at home on her typewriter, transcribing Jim’s notes and making corrections to the final documents.

“I never had one arbitration typed in this local. My wife did ‘em all,” he said. “I didn’t lose many of them. I’m proud of that. And my wife, god bless her, she really helped me a lot — she’s smarter than I am!”

Jim was a living legend in Tacoma, particularly for his work as an arbi- trator, but with characteristic style always deflected the praise he received. “Maybe I got too much credit,” he said. “You always have mentors or someone to help. All the negotiations I’ve done, I didn’t do ‘em alone. It was guys that helped me and I always appreciated that.”

That kind of support went two ways. For many in Tacoma, Jim was the one helping out when they needed it most. As ILWU Local 23 Vice President Dean McGrath put it, “It really helps to know that someone you’re leaning on has been through rough times too.” Always appealing to unity, Jim’s advice to Dean was always “based around one simple thing: What’s best for the union?”

When Victoria Sowers was working to rebuild ILWU Auxiliary No. 35, Jim was a frequent supporter, always encouraging Victoria and others to keep at it until it stuck. “Jim took me aside to tell me how important the Auxiliary could be to the Local,” she said.

ILWU International President Willie Adams said that Jim Norton was a mentor to him when he first started on the docks of Tacoma in 1978 and continued to provide support and advice throughout his career.

“We lost a Local 23 icon with the passing of Brother Jim Norton,” Adams said. “Jim represented the best of who we are. On the first day of bargaining with the PMA I dedicated these negotiations to Jim Norton and all those that set the table for us.” After Willie was sworn in as ILWU International President by outgoing President Robert McEllrath, he came back home to Local 23 where he was sworn in a second time by none other than Jim Norton.

According to his longtime friend and President of the Tacoma Pensioners Mike Jagielski, Jim was



especially proud of his time with the Young Workers Committee (YWC). Mike described their work there as “the best thing we have done on the waterfront.” When YWC started in late 2015, the project didn’t initially stick. It took a few months to gain traction. The committee’s first real success came in securing support from the local Pension Club — specifically from Jim, Mike, Donnie Arneburg and honorary member Dr. Ron Magden.

“We were a group of casuals and B men having meetings about how to get involved in the union, which raised some eyebrows,” said Brian Skiffington, one of YWC’s co-founders in Local 23. “When our old timers got involved, it took all the pressure off. Jim’s support sent signals to people who would have been skeptical that what we were doing was serious. It wouldn’t go off the rails and he’d keep us on track.”

Jim and the other pensioners met with YWC on a weekly basis for three and a half years, with only small breaks for summer and the holidays, until the pandemic disrupted in-person meetings. Some of those were planning meetings for the committee’s Passing the Torch education series or coordinating picket support for other unions. Other times we just met up and talked. Those were the moments where Jim really opened up and was at his best.

He taught us in those meetings was that it’s ok to be vulnerable and to love your union. Like all the longshoremen of his generation, Jim was one of the toughest guys you could ever meet. He was also one of the few you’d see choke up talking about Bloody Thursday and the men who gave their lives to build the union.

It wasn’t lost to us just how lucky we were to work with him. Jim and the other pensioners were our old timers. And when Jim was a young worker, it was the ‘34 Men who were his old timers and mentors. Learning about the union from someone like him meant we were only one step removed from the people who struck for 82 days, won the hiring hall, and built the ILWU from the ground-up.

Jim was quite funny and the stories he’d tell about the old waterfront always had the group laughing. A particular favorite was his story about the time he and another Tacoma delegate skipped out on caucus proceedings to grab a drink and were joined by none other than Harry Bridges himself. Bridges was apparently equally disinterested in the debate at that moment and so the

three of them just drank in the hotel bar instead.

What Jim appreciated most about the exchange with Harry was that even though Bridges was nearly 40 years their senior and despite the historic tensions between Bridges and an older generation in Tacoma, he effortlessly put that aside and treated these two younger delegates as equals. They talked union and swapped stories. They were just longshoremen together at the bar.

Jim was both grounding and practical when we needed it while simultaneously never limiting or discouraging. He never tried to pull rank or clip anyone’s wings and listened more than he ever spoke. For all of us who came up through the YWC, Jim wasn’t just a mentor and a role model but our friend and equal.

Jessica Fote, a Tacoma B woman and one of YWC’s first organizers put it best: “I’ve wondered many times how someone like Jim who has done so many great things can make anyone feel as an equal, especially a young, inexperienced worker on the waterfront. But it’s because of his long battle and advocacy for the common good, to ensure that every worker gets treated equally. To him we are all equals, no differences between you and I. Jim exemplified ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’”

There’s a lot going on with the union right now and more than enough struggles ahead of us. Rather than suggest what Jim Norton might have wanted or said in this moment, I’ll leave you with what he did say:

“There’s so many jobs today where people are in need or for want — not us. I never have worried about having three meals a day or having medical coverage, and that means a lot to me and my family. But everything we got, we deserve ‘cause we fought for it.”

If you’re a young worker reading this right now, go find each other and get active in the union. But just as importantly, find your pensioners. Get yourself the mentors you need to organize for the long haul. And if you’re a pensioner, go find your young workers. Invest in them and teach them what you learned the hard way to make sure we keep our union strong.

As Jim so often reminded us: “You don’t do these things alone. You do ‘em together.”

— Zack Pattin, ILWU Local 23

Global dockers, ILWU strengthen bonds of solidarity at IDC 9th General Assembly

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or social circumstance involving discrimination of any kind is a non-negotiable principle,” the resolution stated.

- The Assembly voted to change the terms of office from two to four years, with a biannual conference in between Assemblies.
- The delegates unanimously passed a resolution that IDC-affiliated unions who refuse to adhere to the IDC Constitution – such as refusing to pay membership dues – will be expelled by the governing body of IDC delegates. Delegates also affirmed their commitment to standing behind all dockworkers under attack, regardless of their affiliation status with the IDC.

Dennis Daggett was re-elected as IDC’s General Coordinator through 2026.

Daggett said the IDC emerged from the Assembly stronger and more united. “No employer, no shipping company, no terminal operator, or any government will out-muscle or out-maneuver the IDC in our objective to provide power and representation to our membership around the world,” he said.

In the West Coast Zone, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris was elected Coordinator to replace Bobby Olvera, Jr. who stepped aside because of other obligations. Paul Keating, Oceania and Asian Zone Coordinator; Andy Green, European Zone Coordinator; César Luna,

Latin American and Caribbean Zone Coordinator; Ken Riley, East Coast Zone Coordinator; and Guigrehi Aklégbou Pierre, African Zone Coordinator; were all elected to return to their posts.

Stronger together

The ILWU delegates were energized by their experience at the IDC and the chance to meet, connect and learn from dockworkers all over the world.

“The IDC Assembly was a revitalizing experience,” said Local 13 member Marty Cerda, “It was filled with passionate speakers from around the world, pledging renewed dockworker solidarity. The event embodied everything global working-class solidarity should look like. We shared challenges, perspectives, and potential solutions. Above all, we promised to be there for each other when called on, because we’re stronger together.”

Eddie Hayashi, Vice Director of the Hawaii Longshore Division, said that the Assembly exceeded his expectations and that hearing from the experience of dockworkers around the world was a learning opportunity. “It was very different from what I experienced in Hawaii. To have the opportunity to have this international exposure, to experience the camaraderie, and to see how different ports are throughout the world, was very educational for us.”

The Federated Auxiliaries hold 35th Biennial Conference



The Federated Auxiliaries held their 35th Biennial Conference on May 13-15 in Portland, OR. It has been three years since the Auxiliaries have been able to gather in person and we had an amazingly productive weekend.

We had five of our Auxiliaries attending the conference Auxiliaries 1 & 5 from Oregon, Auxiliary 8 from California, and Auxiliaries 14 & 35 from Washington. Other Auxiliaries sent reports sharing what their members have done since our Convention in May of 2021. We have some very active Auxiliaries in both the community and in support of the locals they serve.

One of the highlights of our conference was our guest speakers. Local 23 Young Workers’ Committee members Brian Skiffington and Zack Pattin from Tacoma spoke about what organizing really means. They suggested ideas on attracting and retaining new Auxiliary members. Both Brian and Zack did their research into the Federated Auxiliaries and reminded us of our commitment to promote union ideals and the history our militant sisters of the 1940’s and 1950’s. It was a needed reminder of our purpose and place in the ILWU and our role in union activism.

Area Vice President Carrie Perrin

attended the ILWU Women, Trans and Non-Binary Workers’ Conference and reported to the membership. One of our agenda items is the updating of our Federated Auxiliary Constitution. We have found that the language is outdated and vague. We have put together an amazing group of committee members to address the changes needed. Another agenda item was the promotion of our Auxiliaries within the ILWU and our communities.

Your Federated Auxiliaries are committed to our purpose: FORTIFY - STRENGTHEN – SUPPORT

- We FORTIFY the ILWU in times of need.
- We STRENGTHEN the ties of the ILWU and communities.
- We SUPPORT the ILWU, communities, and ourselves with time and resources.

Thank you to the locals that support our Auxiliaries. If you are not in contact with your local Auxiliary, reach out! The Auxiliaries are here to support you, the ILWU membership.

We are actively recruiting new members and look forward to answering any questions you may have. Feel free to contact us at ILWU_fedaux@gmail.com or Auxiliary President Victoria Sowers at 253-223-5714.

– ILWU Federated Auxiliaries

BPO Corner:

Introducing the ILWU-PMA Benefits Plan Office column

Greetings from your Benefit Plans Office! This is a new column, and we want to begin by saying thank you to *The Dispatcher* for devoting some space so we can share benefits information with the members of the ILWU, their families, and their survivors. In the coming year, look out for articles about applying for retirement, submitting power of attorney documentation, notifying the Benefit Plans Office of family changes and address changes, as well as primers for annual events like open enrollment, the other insurance coverage audit, and the Medicare reimbursement reset.

In addition to announcing the column, we want to use this article to share some information about our office and how to interact with us. We are the Benefit Plans Office (aka the BPO) and we are located in San Francisco at the Harry R. Bridges Memorial Building. Here at our office, we process healthcare eligibility under the ILWU-PMA Welfare Plan and issue retirement payments under the ILWU-PMA Pension Plan and ILWU-PMA Watchmen Pension Plan. We also process benefits relating to the Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Program (ADRP), and some other claims like hearing aids and dental implants. In addition to our main office in San Francisco, there are four satellite offices dedicated to assisting with Welfare Plan benefits and another four satellite offices dedicated to assisting with ADRP benefits. There is one of each in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Long Beach.

We are not the only organization that helps to administer your benefits. There is also the Coastwise Claims Office, located across town in San Francisco, where medical claims under the Coastwise Indemnity Plan are reviewed and paid. The Coastwise Claims Office can be reached by phone at (800) 955-7376.

From Monday-Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM, you can reach us by phone at (415) 673-8500. If you call that line outside of normal work hours, you can leave a message. Our website is available 24/7 and can be found at www.benefitplans.org. The website has contact information, special announcements, forms, benefit descriptions and rules, an archive of Memos to Ports, links to help you locate an in-network provider, and other features.

That’s all for now but keep an eye on this space as we continue to publish columns to help you get the most out of your benefits.

– The Benefits Plan Office

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Thomas Langman;
Local 10: Julio Argueta;
Harold Green; George W. Lybrand;
Local 12: Russell Leibelt;
Local 13: Kenneth Anderson;
Gerard E. Beaudoin; Frank C. Delgado; John Habura Jr.; Thomas C. Hoysgaard; Cindy L. Norman; James E. Prijatel; Dennis M. Swearingen; Jeffrey L. Thayer; Alice M. Trujillo;
Local 19: Donnell Jackson; Abdur R. Lane-Abdallah; Charles T. Morton;
Local 23: Scott R. Latterell; Tommy S. Tomal; **Local 63:** JoAnn Bosowski; Tina Flanigan; Sabrina Jimenez; Craig M. Kazmark; Mary Kazmark; Rene X. Perez; Shellee A. Reeves; Tena P. Sandoval; **Local 92:** Gary L. Carson;
Local 94: John L. Braly; Patrick F. Gabel;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Emiliano F Rodriguez;
Local 10: Jose M Carrancho; Raymond Potter; Noel R. Roach; Robert Woodruff; **Local 12:** Dennis L. Gerber;

Local 13: Joseph Camello; Erick Koski; Edward Loy; Richard H Masterson; Barbara N. Williams;
Local 19: Daniel Martinez; Fred Redman; **Local 21:** Steven L. Grizzle;
Local 34: Robert Lucas;
Local 46: Daniel Tinoco;
Local 63: Laraine Arian; Charles Coleman; Mary L. Lawrence;
Local 92: Terry L. Walker;

DECEASED ACTIVE MEMBERS:

Local 8: Mark A. Sr Thorsfeldt;
Local 13: Gary S. Hirschberg;
Ron L. Langham; **Local 34:** Steven R. Anderson;

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 4: Lorene K. Kemp;
Local 8: Virginia M. Anderson; Eleanor Oathes; **Local 10:** Celestine Phillips; **Local 13:** Slavia Herrera; Betty Main; **Local 19:** Renate Brace;
Local 50: Sadie R Gipson;
Local 51: Mildred Kyle;
Local 63: Pauline J. Cox; Betty J. Mc Graw;