



THE DISPATCHER

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION

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Local 10 celebrates Juneteenth [page 2](#)



One hundred and fifty workers at the Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (WWL) Tacoma Vehicle Processing Center in Tacoma won union recognition and a first contract after more than a year of determined organizing and bargaining. Workers won significant pay increases, safety protections, increased PTO, and other protections.

"Heat & Hammer" Wins Historic first contract at Wallenius in Tacoma

Local 23 welcomes 150 new workers; here's how we won

After ten months of bargaining and holding strong against an aggressive union-busting campaign, 150 workers at the Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (WWL) Tacoma Vehicle Processing Center won a first contract with ILWU Local 23.

Part of the ILWU's Supply Chain, Logistics, and Transport (SCLT) organizing program, Local 23's victory over WWL is a powerful step down the supply chain and toward greater union power for the entire ILWU.

Here's how we did it:

Building the Union at WWL

In 2019, Wallenius opened a new "vehicle processing center" (VPC) across the street from a major ro-ro/break bulk terminal in the Port of Tacoma. Workers at the VPC

prepare vehicles before they go to the dealership, including post-factory accessory installs, parts-handling in the warehouse, moving cars to and from satellite yards, quality control, a body shop, and rail team that loads vehicles onto autorack train cars.

Wallenius is the largest ro-ro carrier in the world and also a PMA member company. As a signatory to the PCL&CA, they're familiar with good union standards and wages — and can easily afford them. In 2024, Wallenius brought in \$5.3 billion in revenue and more than \$1 billion in profits alone. But wages for WWL distro drivers were less than 40% of what ILWU longshore workers earn performing the same work for the same company. Other problems, such as abusive management, dangerous speed-ups, deliberately high turnover, and other sweatshop conditions, were even worse.

Despite having unionized facilities around the world, WWL intended to keep their Tacoma VPC non-union — and above all, the company directive was to keep the ILWU out. These low wages and poor conditions posed an existential threat to ILWU standards and jurisdiction. Local 23 knew organizing the VPC would strengthen our position, and VPC workers knew with longshore power at their backs, they could disrupt the flow of cargo and force Wallenius to the table.

VPC workers launched the union fight with a mass strike that coincidentally coincided with a vessel offload on February 7, 2024, walking off the job after managers reacted to their demands for respecting health and safety by illegally threatening to fire workers in retaliation, landing several "unfair labor practice" (ULP)

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Local 10 celebrates Juneteenth with all-day event

Local 10 marked Juneteenth with a celebration at their hall in San Francisco featuring speakers, a DJ, games, a bouncy house for kids, a barbeque lunch, and an educational film. The African-American Longshore Coalition organized the event.

Speakers included Local 10 President Demetrius Williams, Local 10 member and AALC co-chair Trent Willis, and Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee. In attendance but not speaking were International President Bobby Olvera, Jr., International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris, Coast Committeeman Cam Williams, BALMA President John Castanho, Local 10 Vice President Aaron Wright, and Will Tracy from the Maritime Union of Australia.

The holiday marks June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers arrived at Galveston, Texas, to inform enslaved African Americans of their freedom and the end of the Civil War. The soldiers came to Galveston two-and-a-half years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery throughout the Confederacy – and two months after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, Virginia. Slavery was officially abolished in the United States on December 6, 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified.

Juneteenth, also known as “Freedom Day” and “Emancipation Day,” has long been celebrated by African Americans but did not become a federal holiday until 2021. On June 19th, 2020,

ILWU dockworkers stopped work for eight hours in observance of Juneteenth and in solidarity with the movements for racial and social justice that erupted following the murder of George Floyd.

Trent Willis welcomed everyone to the event and reflected on the meaning of Juneteenth in the context of the challenges confronting workers today.

“We are happy to have you here today to help us celebrate this day of freedom. And I hope that that can be the theme of the day, because we are under a lot of challenges in this country,” Willis said. “If you watch the news, there's a lot of chaos going on, and the only way to challenge that chaos is to organize and for the free people of America to exercise our rights and stop a lot of this nonsense that's going on right now.

“Juneteenth is not just about Black people, but it is about Black people. We need to learn from the lessons of the past and to realize what we have to do to obtain freedom for everyone, and that takes unity. I'm very proud to be here today. I'm very proud to be a member of a union that is this diverse. I'm very proud of this local and its members, because the fight to have Juneteenth as a holiday as a part of our contract came from this local, and now it has come true for us.”

Willis went on to explain about the work of the AALC and its role in strengthening the ILWU and the labor movement. “We're trying to do the work that it takes to bring people together, and that's what the African American Longshore Coalition is about. It's about not only bringing



The Local 10 Drill Team performed to the delight of the crowd.

African Americans together,” Willis explained. “We're bringing working people together so that we are strong enough to fight an effective fight, the fight for freedom and the fight to be treated with dignity and respect as workers.”

fought for, and demanded by the brave, the bold, the unheard, and the determined. And so it is fitting that I stand before you, members of ILWU, whose own history echoes the same life fight.”

“On June 19, 1865 word finally reached the enslaved people of Galveston, Texas, that they were free—over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Freedom came late but it came, brothers and sisters.”

– Local 10 President Demetrius William

Local 10 President Demetrius Williams discussed the history of the 1934 strike, Juneteenth, and the connections between the struggle for racial justice and worker power.

“Today, we commemorate not only a date in history, but an unyielding spirit for liberation. On June 19, 1865, word finally reached the enslaved people of Galveston, Texas, that they were free—over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Freedom came late, but it came, brothers and sisters,” Williams said. “At that delay of two years, we find the deep, painful truth of American injustice, but we also find strength, the courage, and the resolve of those who never stop believing that justice would prevail. Juneteenth reminds us that freedom in this country has never been a gift. It has been a struggle. Freedom had to be seized,

Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee, who helped to make Juneteenth a national holiday when she was in Congress, opened by recounting how the first time she was arrested was at a demonstration in support of Local 10's refusal to unload cargo from South Africa.

“I want to just thank ILWU for keeping the spirit alive of Juneteenth and for making sure that working men and women have the opportunities that they solely deserve,” Mayor Lee said.

She explained that her grandfather was born in Galveston, TX, in 1867, just two years after enslaved people heard they were free, and that her grandfather's mother was born into slavery in Galveston. “I share this because to illustrate that this was not far past,

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Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee (left) and Local 10 President Demetrius Williams. Mayor Lee recalled the first time she was arrested.

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SEIU CA President David Huerta arrested protesting ICE raids

Unions rally behind labor leader, condemn attacks on immigrant workers

Labor unions across the United States rallied in support of SEIU California President David Huerta on June 9 after he was detained while documenting and protesting a workplace raid by ICE.

Huerta is a well-known and respected figure in the California labor movement. He began his career organizing immigrant janitors in Los Angeles to demand better working conditions as part of the Justice for Janitors campaign in the 1990s.

Huerta was detained by federal agents on June 6. Video footage of his arrest shows the 58-year-old labor leader being violently knocked to the ground. He was later taken to the hospital and then held in detention for three nights. He was charged with conspiracy to impede an officer and released on a \$50,000 bond. He faces up to six years in prison.

In a statement from his hospital bed, Huerta said: “What happened to me is not about me. This is about something much bigger. “This is about how we as a community stand together and resist the injustice that’s happening. Hard-working people, and members of our family and our community, are being treated like criminals. We all collectively have to object to this madness because this is not justice.”

ILWU responds

Following the arrest of Huerta, the ILWU released a statement condemning the arrest and the heavy-handed ICE raids targeting immigrant workers:

“The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), representing 44,000 workers on the West Coast, Hawaii, Alaska, and Canada, condemns the detention of David Huerta, President of SEIU California, and the violent raids conducted today by masked ICE agents across Los Angeles.

“These raids were not about the fair enforcement of immigration policy or protecting the public; they served no purpose except to create fear in immigrant communities. These cruel and unjust actions by ICE and the detention of Brother Huerta are an attack on all workers. The ILWU joins our siblings in the labor movement calling for the immediate release of Brother Huerta and an end to the destructive ICE raids targeting hard-working members of our community.”

On June 9, the ILWU released an additional statement condemning the deployment of National Guard troops to Los Angeles:

“The deployment of the National Guard in the streets of Los Angeles by the Trump Administration is a dangerous provocation by the federal government that escalates the conflict



From left to right: Local 20 President Mike Gonzalo, Local 56 President Albert Ramirez, Local 13 member Teresa Trujillo, SCDC President Mickey Chavez, IBU Southern California Regional Director Cris Sogliuzzo, SCDC Vice President Lulu Bocox were among the ILWU members who attended the rally for David Huerta in Downtown Los Angeles.

and endangers lives. The ILWU stands in opposition to this abuse of power. The use of tear gas and flashbang grenades against protesters is an unnecessary and disproportionate use of violence against thousands of Angelenos who are standing up to protect their friends, neighbors, family members, and fellow workers from the unjust raids by ICE. The escalation of violence by the federal government is not to enforce ‘law and order’; it is an attempt to silence dissent. The ILWU stands in solidarity with Angelenos and millions of workers across the country in defense of our civil liberties

and in opposition to this authoritarian overreach.”

After Huerta was released, SEIU President April Verrett released a statement thanking those who stood in solidarity with Huerta. “We are relieved that David is free and reunited with his family, and we are deeply grateful to the hundreds of elected officials, civil rights leaders, labor partners, and allies from across the nation who stood in solidarity and demanded David’s release,” Verret said.

Moving Forward in Solidarity

Federated Auxiliaries commit to unity and amplifying mission at 42nd Biennial Convention



The Federated Auxiliaries gathered in Longview, WA, for their 42nd Biennial Convention, graciously hosted by Auxiliary 14 at the ILWU Local 21 Hall on May 16-18. In addition to the 21 officers and delegates sent from Auxiliaries 1 (North Bend), 2 (Hoquiam), 5 (Portland), 8 (Southern California), 14 (Longview), and 35 (Tacoma), 7 auxiliary members attended as guests.

This year’s theme, “Moving Forward in Solidarity, with Policy Over Politics,” set a powerful tone for the weekend. Among the key issues discussed were generating membership growth through increased awareness, shared recruitment strategies, and expansion to new territories; efforts to support at-risk auxiliaries; embracing changes to outdated processes and literature; and preparations for 2026.

President Pro-Tem Denise Miken reported on her activities since assuming the President role, including traveling

to Alaska with LaDonna Chamberlain (WA Area VP) for a presentation on forming an auxiliary. Each officer, area VP, committee, and auxiliary then reported on their respective areas of responsibility, highlighting successes and challenges.

Trina Contreras, Auxiliary 8 President, shared about the meaningful programs, dedicated advocacy, and strong partnerships that have enabled Auxiliary 8 to expand its reach and deepen its impact among SoCal ILWU Locals. “It’s such a blessing to be part of an organization that thrives on giving back and making hearts happy,” said Contreras. Auxiliary 35 Co-Secretary, Renée C. Denney, was delighted to report on the numerous activities and events they engaged in thanks to steady support from Local #23. Most notably, their Wine and Roses Sale was incredibly well-received, with 80 floral arrangements sold, along with wine and cookies. It’s the profits from this and other dedicated fundraising efforts throughout the year that allow the Federated Auxiliaries to continue supporting their union members and local communities.

During business sessions, the following elected Federated Auxiliary

officers were sworn in: President, Denise Miken; Vice President, LaDonna Chamberlain; Secretary-Treasurer, Laurie Higgins; Oregon Area VP, Donna Wilson; Washington Area VP, Deanna Heller; California Area VP, Tina Carranza. In addition to auxiliary business, attendees enjoyed a craft project, a raffle, a live auction, and a community service project. Together, they assembled 100 “Personal Item Bags” for local teens in need.

Overall, the convention was a great success, grounded in a renewed commitment to advancing the cause of the Federated Auxiliaries. A heartfelt thank you to ILWU Local 21 for their generous hospitality and for providing the hall for the gathering.

The Auxiliaries predate the formation ILWU and were formed in 1933 by wives of longshore workers who wanted to support the union on the picket line, in the soup kitchens, legal defense committees, and mobilizing community support. They’ve since expanded to include any ILWU family member as well as “honorary members”. Please email ilwufedaux@gmail.com if you have any ILWU family members interested in joining.

“Heat & Hammer” Wins Historic first contract at Wallenius in Tacoma



Local 23 President Jared Faker swears in the new members from WWL.

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charges against WWL. Longshore workers discharging autos refused to cross the picket line. Operations at the facility ground to a halt, and no new cars made their way in.

But successful mass strikes don't happen spontaneously. They take careful preparation. VPC workers spent months building an organizing committee, one conversation at a time. These discreet “one-on-one's,” conducted away from management's watchful eyes, are the essential building block for organizing a union. With support from ILWU Local 23 President Jared Faker and ILWU Assistant Organizing Director Jon Brier, the committee met on a monthly and then weekly basis to share updates about their ongoing efforts.

The day after the strike, workers announced they were joining ILWU Local 23 and demanded voluntary recognition. WWL declined and filed for an NLRB vote instead, hoping to defeat the union in a certification vote. The company flew in their union-busting team from at least four states and Canada, texting anti-ILWU propaganda to employees and holding anti-union meetings on a near-daily basis. Despite WWL's efforts, workers prevailed by a vote of 2-1 on March 21.

After the vote, we invited everyone from the bargaining unit to propose contract demands and then elected a 20-person bargaining committee, including Local 23 President Jared Faker as chair, At-Large Labor Representative Zack Pattin as vice chair, and Jon Brier, who directs the ILWU SCLT program. This large, broadly-representative committee was a constant thorn in the side of WWL. The company's chief negotiator (a longtime union buster picked up from Amazon) complained for months about the size of the committee and their “decorum.”

This big committee ensured that members' needs across every department were met, but there was another reason for it too: the union's members are the union's greatest strength. Packing the room means rank-and-file workers themselves control and shape negotiations and also get to see firsthand just how little the

company thinks of them. When you see firsthand who's fighting for you and who's against you, it's easy to pick your side and stick with them.

Battle for a first contract

On June 4, we sat down with WWL and hit them with a full proposal covering every issue that goes into a contract, including complete job descriptions, jurisdiction, terms of the agreement, a working grievance machinery, year-by-year wage scale — even a cover page and signature lines. That move caught them off guard and left WWL's negotiators speechless. The next two days, they returned with copy-paste responses, mostly from their company handbook.

This zero-effort approach was the norm for the first several months. WWL made clear they would obstruct, stall, delay, and drag out negotiations as long as they could. Engaging in petty debate, showing up late, cancelling bargaining dates, refusing to schedule more than just two half-days a month at times, even making an issue about the temperature of water provided — WWL wanted to waste our time. Many of their responses were incoherent and contradictory. Several passes were blatantly illegal, violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Washington state L&I.

The worst of WWL's behavior wasn't at the table, however, but back at the facility. Before or after almost every single session, a committee member or supporter would be forced into unsafe or irregular assignments, written up for fabricated infractions, even illegally fired for union activity. In one case, a manager hurled racist slurs at a bargaining committee member and threatened to fight him in the parking lot.

During negotiations, the union filed fifteen ULPs. Marches on the boss, sometimes 50 people at a time, were a regular occurrence. Workers struck two more times, both in response to illegal discipline and firings: On August 2, a one-day ULP strike over the firing of Dakota Booth and forcing others to walk through high-traffic areas; in December, a four-day ULP strike in response to WWL's firing of bargaining committee member Milton Turner. Again, longshore workers, and

additionally truck drivers and railroad workers, honored picket lines, and the facility was shut down.

Our committee was trained and prepared for these attacks (what organizers call “inoculation”) before negotiations even started. We made regular reminders of what ILWU Organizer Jon Brier told everyone before we started: That the bargaining table is only where we measure our strength. The job itself — where workers are able to take collective action to disrupt production — is where we have our power.

Another powerful tool was our regular member bulletins. Summarizing discussions and providing updates on tentative agreements (TAs), these bulletins were an antidote to WWL's attempts to control the narrative, helping dispel rumors and other misinformation. Though written for members, our bulletins caught the attention of management too, including executives as far away as Norway.

“Longshore workers need to follow our work down the supply chain and build union power along the way. If we don't, and the employers' control goes unchecked for too long, we could lose what we've fought so hard to keep.”

Bad publicity and the threat of further disruption forced WWL to change gears. Corporate leadership reached out to the Port of Tacoma and scheduled a meeting with commissioners and Local 23 President Jared Faker, hoping to ease tensions and worker militancy. President Faker made clear the ILWU's commitment to moving cargo, but that the union would never back down in the fight for good conditions. WWL added a new negotiator to their committee: a retired general manager from Vancouver, BC.

In part, this change was just about getting a more reliable set of eyes and ears on the situation. WWL's new direction at times undermined their in-house union buster's own agenda: an obsessive hostility towards workers'

rights, regardless of what's best for the company. We began making progress on core issues for the first time, including defeating WWL's demands for 12-hour days and mandatory extra shifts.

In January, though, we took a hit when General Motors imports returned to Baltimore. WWL imposed layoffs and manipulated the situation, claiming it was because of the union's “unreasonable” demands. But GMs were only temporarily here (something WWL told workers from the start), a short-term fix for pandemic-related supply chain issues. Undeterred, our committee refused to cave. WWL's entire team was visibly taken aback when the committee kept pressing ahead with full confidence.

Still convinced they had the upper hand, WWL tried to slow the pace of negotiations again. We needed to escalate in a new way to keep the pressure on. That's where the ILWU's international allies came in.

Letters of support from dockworker and maritime unions around the world flooded in: East Coast longshore with the ILA, Australia, Belgium, Benin, Bermuda, Japan, New Zealand, Ukraine, Uruguay, and international federations like the IDC and ITF. Dockers with the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) in Port Kembla and All Japan Dockworkers Union (Zenkowan) in Yokohama picketed on the docks and even took actions aboard Wallenius vessels, including hand-delivering letters demanding WWL bargain in good faith.

The next time we met, we secured nine TAs in two days, our single most productive session. And on April 2, 2025, after ten months at the table, we

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Workers elected a 20-person strike committee. The large, broadly-representative committee was a constant thorn in the side of the employer.



Members of the Maritime Union of Australia took action in Port Kembla in solidarity with WWL workers in Tacoma. International solidarity efforts from maritime unions around the world was an important to our victory.

locked in wages and healthcare, and had a near complete TA — except for one outstanding issue: wiping out past discipline.

Despite assurances from WWL’s negotiators that both parties would benefit from a clean slate, the company’s union buster had other plans. The bulk of this discipline was purely retaliatory. After a few tense days, WWL folded and reset discipline records back to zero in the majority of cases. A few special circumstances moved to lower steps in the discipline process, while others continued before the NLRB. Just this month, the Board announced it will prosecute WWL for firing Violet Moman. She was on the organizing committee and fired the day after the certification vote.

Three other illegal firings were resolved through the MOU, including bargaining committee members Dakota Booth and Vance Flippin, as well as Isiah Soto, who was fired for taking a phone call from his niece’s school. He was late to get her because of mandatory overtime — a practice now banned by the contract: If you’re assigned overtime, but have to pick up your kids from school, you’re exempt from all required overtime assignments for childcare purposes and emergencies.

Ratification, retaliation, & fighting back

With a complete tentative agreement in hand, we scheduled read-throughs for members to attend and went over every word of the contract, taking questions along the way. When members voted on May 1 (International Workers’ Day, as it were) the contract passed by 97%. Here’s what we won:

- Average of 50-60% raises
- 95% employer-match healthcare
- The right to standby over safety
- Joint Labor Relations Committee
- 40-hour (full-time) guarantee
- Fair scheduling
- 100% voluntary extra shifts
- 3 weeks vacation after 3 years, 4 weeks after 7 years, 5 weeks after 12 years
- Additional leave even after exhausting sick time
- 14 holidays, including MLK Day and Bloody Thursday

Among the contracts we reviewed from other WWL VPCs and their competition, like Auto Warehousing Company (AWC), the standards we won in Tacoma are far and away the

best, helping set the bar and raise expectations for Wallenius employees across the country. But now comes the next fight: enforce the contract and protect what we won.

Barely allowing the dust to settle, WWL’s union buster resumed operations soon after ratification. The company announced a punitive round of layoffs less than a week into the new contract, followed by a slew of flagrant violations: deliberately misclassifying employees into lower-paid categories, denying protected forms of medical leave, management doing bargaining unit work (in the midst of layoffs, no less), understaffing rail in violation of safety requirements, and more.

On June 24, WWL announced fourteen additional layoffs, targeting four more members of the bargaining committee: Richard Booth, Jose Camacho, Ladda Hilyard, and Jessica Roberson (who became a fourth-generation ILWU Local 23 member when she swore in at the June meeting). Everyone laid off took part in strikes, signed petitions, or marched on the boss, and the majority have spoken with NLRB agents about WWL’s illegal activities.

On the same day, WWL fired Garret Wagner, another bargaining committee member, whose past discipline had also been cleared by the MOU. Garret and his girlfriend, Violet Moman, have both been long targeted by the company. He was fired two weeks after the NLRB announced it would prosecute WWL for Violet’s illegal firing last year.

But we’re not taking these lying down. Members now have the ability to fight back using their contract. We’ve filed grievances on behalf of all the workers laid off or fired on June 24, not to mention the two dozen other grievances already in the system. Four have been adjusted in members’ favor so far. The rest we’ll fight to resolve through the JLRC and take to arbitration if we have to. With support from longshore workers across the street and around the globe, we’ve beaten this company on every front so far, and we’re ready to win again.

A new march inland

Securing a first contract and expanding ILWU jurisdiction to WWL’s Tacoma VPC is the biggest win to date in a string of local victories in recent years. Following previous drives at P&B Intermodal, organizing eight

mechanics in Tacoma in 2021 and ten more in Seattle in 2022, thirteen bunker fuelers at NAES in Tacoma in 2023, successfully organizing a new unit at WWL perfectly illustrates the union’s “heat & hammer” model: worker heat to fight back meets union hammer to disrupt cargo.

All three of these companies share several features and pose an existential threat to the ILWU. Each of those employers ran a non-union, sweatshop operation immediately adjacent to longshore work, potentially allowing for the transfer of good, union work to non-union sites close to the docks or further inland. Case in point: nearly every warehouse handling marine cargo along the Kent Valley in Washington State or the Inland Empire stretching across Southern California.

“The bargaining table is only where we measure our strength. The job itself — where workers are able to take collective action to disrupt production — is where we have our power.”

Prior to containerization, the individual pieces of cargo that now move through these warehouses were hand-stowed by an ILWU member inside the hold of a ship. Now, palletized and stuffed into 40-foot steel boxes, the contents of that container are handled just once on the vessel by a single crane pick. What used to be a 16-person gang hired for a week or more at a time is now a fraction of that and only good for maybe 2-3 shifts.

Though the ILWU Coast Longshore Division’s numbers have grown in the past two decades with the rise of China and the East Asian economy, our numbers have not kept up with the exponential increase of non-union warehouse jobs throughout the country. The process of containerization and the transfer of union work away from the docks and into non-union sweatshops over the last half century has systematically dismantled our work and undermines our power at the bargaining table.

We have to recapture this off-dock work and bring it under ILWU jurisdiction the old-fashioned way: building majority support through one-on-one conversations and forcing employers to sign a contract under the threat of disrupting the flow of cargo.

If you’re a longshore worker or a warehouse worker, you can help. Start thinking about where the goods you handle go to and from. If you know somebody who works at one of these warehouses, fulfillment centers, or cross docks, start talking to them about how they can improve their pay and conditions. The ILWU has an entire Organizing Department staffed with dedicated full-time organizers who can help.

If employers in our industry are allowed to maintain these sweatshop conditions, that threatens everything we’ve built over generations of struggle. Our founders understood this: it’s both our 7th Guiding Principle and why we have the ‘W’ in our name. The logic behind organizing sugar and pineapple in Hawaii stems from that same astute understanding of capital and the flow of cargo as well: longshore workers need to follow our work down the supply chain and build union power along the way. If we don’t, and the employers’ control goes unchecked for too long, we could lose what we’ve fought so hard to keep.

What we’re doing at WWL is a major step toward protecting the future of the ILWU and building our power as a union — and we’re not stopping there. Let’s organize the unorganized.

— Zack Pattin, ILWU Local 23



Wallenius workers went on several Unfair Labor Practices strike over the course of the campaign.

Local 23 volunteers raise \$16k at annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk



April 12, 2025, was a beautiful day at Chambers Bay Golf course in University Place, Washington for the ILWU Local 23 team to participate in the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk. There was a great turnout with longshore, family, and friends all proudly wearing union-printed ILWU team shirts walking for the cause.

Co-captains Holly Hulscher and Lisa Reed noted the longshore team came in 3rd place by raising \$16,057 this year through two fundraisers. Over the last 22 years of participating, they have raised a total of \$208,714 to help fight MS.

The longshore team has a strong group of walkers, many of whom have been part of the walk from the start of the Local 23 team. “It’s such a great event to be a part of,” said longtime walker Paul Steelquist. “Contributing to the advances in research that helped so many and reaching for a cure in the future has a profound effect on our community.”

There are many families who participate in the walk together. “The MS Walk was an incredible celebration of hope. It was truly inspiring to connect with everyone who came out to support the cause, raise awareness, and make a lasting impact,” said walker Katie Crotty Green. “The highlight of my day was having my kids, Teigan and Liam, by my side as we walked together in support of such an important cause.”

– Holly Hulscher

Local 19 celebrates Juneteenth

At this year’s Juneteenth celebration in Seattle, more than 200 attendees gathered at the southwest corner outside of the Local 19 hall to hear from a great lineup of speakers, share food, and celebrate Emancipation Day.

“This union is intentionally set up to be a family. We may not always agree, but the man next to you is the man who's going to save your life.”

The crowd included members of Local 19 A, B, casuals, and pensioners, as well as members of Local 4, the Washington Young Emerging Labor Leaders, the Freedom Socialist Party, Radical Women, and other unions and community groups. Food was served on the south side of the hall. Local 19 members and families manned the grill and serving station. This is the first year Local 19 has held its Juneteenth rally at the hall. In previous years, a march was held to Terminal 46, where a rally was held. Lively music was played before and after the event. Multiple booths were set up, including those for the Local 19 Auxiliary, Organized Workers for Labor Solidarity, and the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

The United Farm Workers sent representative, Lorena Avalos, to speak. She said through translation, “We would have liked to have come today with more of our members, but it's hard for our people to come out in public right now.”

Neyko Wright, Local 19 Class B member, spoke about the importance of the family structure within the union. “This union is intentionally set up to be a family. We may not always agree, but the man next to you is the man who's going to save your life.”

American Postal Workers Union member David Yao spoke about the largest wildcat strike in the history of our country. Two hundred thousand postal workers went on strike in 1970, led by Black workers and young people.

Shaunie Wheeler, Teamster member and MLK Labor Council Deputy Executive Secretary-Treasurer, spoke about her great-grandfather, who came to Seattle, WA from Texas in the Jim Crow South. He sought a better life but found that many of the conditions he had just left persisted in this new place, but he stayed. Today, thanks to calloused hands like those of her great-grandfathers, for the first time, a labor federation in the AFL-CIO is being led by two Black women: Cherika Carter and April Sims.

Cherika Carter, Washington State Labor Council Secretary Treasurer, member of UFCW, and President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, said, “Joy is our birthright and rest is our resistance.” She spoke about how the ancestors dreamt of their descendants' joy. The radical practice of rest is a tribute to those who were forced to never stop working.



Local 19 volunteers worked the grill to feed the attendees at the Juneteenth celebration.

Multiple unions shared their struggle. UFCW 3000 grocery store workers recently voted overwhelmingly to strike. As this article is being written, they have ratified a contract that includes synchronized expiration dates across the state. The APWU spoke about the looming threat of privatizing the post office. UFW shared their ongoing struggle for union recognition from Windmill Mushroom Farms.

The Local 19 Juneteenth Committee looks forward to planning our 2026 event and invites all A, B, and casuals to participate in the planning. One of the strategies of having a rally at the hall was to attract more Local 19 longshoremen. Juneteenth is a contractually negotiated holiday for us and should be celebrated like the Fourth of July or Labor Day with pride in our union's history of standing up for workers across borders and color lines.

Each local can plan their own Juneteenth event. We encourage you to get together and plan a Juneteenth celebration at your local for 2026. We’re happy to share our experience and strategies message us at juneteenthseattle@gmail.com or on Instagram @stoppoliceterrorseattle.

– Alia Lighter, Local 19

Scan the QR Code to view a video of the speakers is on Youtube:



Lawrence Thibeaux, Bay Area Pensioners president and past president of Local 10 passes



Lawrence Thibeaux, President of the Bay Area Pensioners, Vice President of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association, and past president of Local 10, passed away unexpectedly on June 3.

Lawrence was a devoted ILWU activist throughout his career and retirement. He was elected to multiple offices over the years and actively fought racial, gender, and age discrimination in the longshore industry along the West Coast and in the Bay Area. He was appointed to serve on several international delegations, including to Kenya, Rotterdam, and Singapore.

Lawrence Thibeaux was born in 1942 in New Iberia, Louisiana. He grew up in the Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco. When Lawrence was three years old, his family relocated to the Bay Area, where his father built Victory ships for the World War II effort.

His first union job was with Cement Masons Local 580 in San Francisco, where he worked alongside his father for five years. He eventually left the cement masons due to his frustrations with favoritism and discriminatory hiring practices he witnessed in the local.

He secured a few jobs on the waterfront through the unemployment office, working on banana boats. He enjoyed the work, and in 1967, he submitted his application to become a B person.

In his oral history with ILWU historian Harvey Schwartz, Lawrence described his interview process for joining the union and his early days on the docks. "They asked me about unions. I said, 'My father's in a union. I'm a union man. I believe in unions.' They asked me about leaving the cement masons and I told them corruption and that I didn't want to have nothing to do with it," he explained.

"I got a letter in the mail saying I had been selected to B. Then, they allowed the B people to join gangs. This was during a time when they had steam winches and everything was hard work, where

you had to spend all day uncovering the hatches. The next day, we started putting cargo in, and that usually took three or four days to finish the ship.

"The cargo we worked was coffee and hides. We worked in Benicia on pineapples and at the Alameda reefer dock with military stuff that we put on the Victory ships. That was the bulk of our work – coffee, hides, incidental, and the Alameda reefer dock."

Lawrence said he worked nights and became a steward in the gang. He eventually became a secretary of the steward's council.

He was encouraged to run for office by members after speaking up at a union meeting about the lack of access to water in the hold. He eventually was elected to the position of weekend business agent after obtaining his A book, but quickly realized he didn't have the necessary knowledge to do the job. So, he began taking labor classes at City College of San Francisco and the Labor Studies program at UC Berkeley.

"I did a lot of work during the day, went to school at night. I learned about labor law and the history of labor, and became more confident in what I was doing. I felt comfortable representing the members and not being the people I complained about," he said.

While at UC Berkeley, the union assigned Lawrence to a project aimed at combating discrimination against Black workers seeking to become foremen.

"The local had a problem with discrimination by the employers against African Americans trying to go into the walking boss's union," Lawrence explained in an interview with the *Dispatcher* in 2020. "I had just finished a class on discrimination in employment. We discovered that the employers were hiring younger white workers and older Black workers. You had to be over 55 years of age if you were a Black worker to even be considered to be a walking boss, but if you were white, you could become a walking boss at 35. We took that information to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and they had a 10-year restraining order against the employers on age discrimination."

As business agent, Lawrence cut his teeth on Local 10's actions supporting community pickets protesting apartheid in South Africa. He became one of the locals' leading experts on the longshore contract and safety code.

Lawrence was also elected to serve on the Local 10 Executive Board, Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer, and the International Executive Board. He also served on the Northern California District Council and served three terms as President of Local 10.

As Local 10 President, Lawrence said that he forced PMA to make its lashing test more equitable for women by removing the timed element.

He explained, "I shut the lashing program down. PMA called me up and I said: 'I want to get rid of the stopwatch. All I care about is that they're able to do it. They may not be able to do it as fast as a guy, but all they have to do is do it. Can you show me anywhere on the dock where we work by a stopwatch?'"

In the early 1990s, Lawrence, along with Leo Robinson, David Stewart, and others, formed the African American Longshore Coalition (AALC) to help the entire union recognize and address racism and all other forms of discrimination internally.

one of two Local 10 officers who went out to South Carolina within weeks of the indictments of the Charleston Five.

Local 10 invited ILA Local 1422 President Ken Riley to address the Coast Longshore Division Caucus, where the Division adopted the cause as its own, which was followed by an endorsement of the Charleston 5 defense efforts at the ILWU Convention.

In June 2001, the ILWU sent a 60-person delegation, including the Local 10 Drill Team, to a massive labor rally in Charleston. The support of the Charleston 5 by Local 10 and the rest of the ILWU was followed by support from the California Federation of Labor and the AFL-CIO. After its historic labor victory, Local 1422 presented Local 10 with a placard stating that they were the first to respond to the struggle of the Charleston 5.

Lawrence retired in 2009 and became active in the Bay Area Pensioners, eventually was elected its President. He also served as Vice President for the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association. Lawrence was instrumental in the organizing efforts to defeat the Oakland A's attempt to build a baseball stadium and condos at Howard Terminal in the Port of Oakland.

"What's clear is that we have one big group of shippers who control everything around the world, and that we all have the same problem with the same employers, even though they change their names. A ship is a ship is a ship, and they're always trying to undermine labor and get the government to do it for them."

– Lawrence Thibeaux

In 2000, Lawrence was a key leader in solidarity efforts to support the Charleston 5—members of ILA Local 1422 in South Carolina who faced felony rioting charges and five years in prison after 600 riot-equipped police attacked the ILA's lawful picket line protesting the use of scab labor unloading a Danish freighter at their port on Jan. 20, 2000.

Because of Lawrence's leadership, Local 10 was the first to respond to the plight of the Charleston longshore workers. Local 10 sent money to their legal defense fund, and Lawrence was

Reflecting on his long career in the union, Lawrence said, "I'm kind of surprised that I got so involved just by speaking that one time at the union meeting. I was pushed to say more and more, and as I said more, I got more involved. It's been a wonderful time. I never would have had an opportunity to go to the different places around the world and participate in the future of the ILWU and the dockworkers around the world. What's clear is that we have one big group of shippers who control everything around the world, and that we

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Lawrence Thibeaux was one of the first on the ground in Charleston, South Carolina to support the Charleston 5.

Photo by Jack Heyman

Local 10 celebrates Juneteenth with all-day event

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and what we are dealing with today here in our country, are the issues of repairing the damage of those more than 250 years of slavery. We have to address the issues of the wealth gap, the employment gap, health disparity, and housing discrimination. This is a day to remember those who helped get us this far, and also take up that baton and keep fighting. Because we have not completed the work of the Emancipation Proclamation. We have not completed the work of justice and freedom, and we have not completed the work of peace.”

Local 34 President Dave Gonzales spoke about the connection between Mexico and enslaved people who escaped there to secure their freedom. “Slaves were running to Mexico for protection, and Mexico would not return them to the United States to be re-enslaved,” he said. He also noted the inspiration and influences the Black freedom movement had on the Chicano movement and the United Farm Workers.

“One example was the march from Selma to Montgomery, a year later, the

farm workers right here in California marched from Delano to the state capitol, inspired by the Black movement, and we thank you for that,” he said.

He ended by criticizing the Trump Administration’s ICE raids. “He’s rounding up people whose bloodlines are indigenous and calling them illegal. He’s separating husbands and wives. He is separating parents and children. He’s taking kids from hospitals—kids with stage four cancer, and deporting them without their parents. He has numerous bankruptcies and felonies, yet he wants to call indigenous people criminals,” Gonzales said.

Other speakers included Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Ed Henderson, Local 10 Business Agent John Hughes, Local 34 member Derrick Muhammad, and historian John William Templeton.

Following the speakers, attendees enjoyed a barbeque lunch and watched the documentary, “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America,” which follows civil rights attorney Jeffery Robinson as he confronts the enduring legacy of anti-Black racism in the United States.

Lawrence Thibeaux, Bay Area Pensioners president and past president of Local 10 passes

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all have the same problem with the same employers, even though they change their names. A ship is a ship is a ship, and they're always trying to undermine

labor and get the government to do it for them. I think sometimes we need to do like they did in Iceland, where they put all the bankers in jail for ruining their country.”

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 8: David A. Angelo; Jon A. Julian;
Local 10: Frank M. Bio; Andre B. Burnley; Eric L. Davis; Jaime E. Henriquez; John A. McDaniel; **Local 13:** Martin D. Brotherton; Lee F. Frazier; Lori J. Guzman; Paul M. Ibusuki; Fred J. Martinez; Hugo A. Martinez; John M. Miller; Gene A. Milligan; Brian J. Misuraca; Frank H. Platzer; Richard T. Ponce; Thomas V. Salcido; Craig M. Scott; **Local 18:** William J. Linker, Jr.; **Local 19:** Mitchell D. Blondin; Dan J. Elverston; **Local 21:** Thomas E. Kilkelly; **Local 23:** Michael L. Brummett; **Local 26:** Bill Kernodle; **Local 34:** Kevin L. Wilson; **Local 46:** Eric W Nunez; **Local 63:** Lena E. Berg; Josue O. Garcia; Robert J. Garcia, Jr.; David A. Head; **Local 91:** Stanley Hlynsky; **Local 94:** Nicholas D. Garcia;

DECEASED ACTIVE MEMBERS:

Local 10: Nigel R. Ragland;
Local 13: Edward K. Stagner;
Local 34: Charles A. Fisher;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Charles R. Perry;
Local 10: Benjamin Bracamontes; Rudy R. Escobar, Jr.; Garth E. Spatz; Irvin Williams; **Local 13:** Ralph De Martino; Mary Eileen McAtee; **Local 19:** Roosevelt Lathan, Jr.; Douglas D. Smith; **Local 23:** Carlos A. Sambrano; **Local 26:** Howard Bourda; **Local 29:** Cloyes Johnson; **Local 34:** Nick J. Gentile; **Local 47:** Thomas D. Haag; **Local 50:** Robert A. Gauthier; **Local 63:** David H. Olsen;

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 10: Maria Carlos; Maria J. De Araujo; Lee Ella Wheatley; **Local 13:** Julie R. Estrada; Kathleen Ortega; Helen S. Timmer; **Local 32:** Lynda L. Larsen; **Local 34:** Linda E. Facey; **Local 52:** Wilma M. Lambert; **Local 91:** Daisy N. Littleton; **Local 98:** Sandra A. Allyn; Mary Ann Majar;

Can \$146,812 and a Bicycle Ride Save a Child’s Life?

ILWU Walk the Coast sends a **BIG THANK YOU** to our donors!

We are proud to announce that our 2024 annual fundraiser set a one-year donation record, \$146,812. For 13 years, ILWU locals, pension groups, auxiliaries, industry companies and friends from Alaska to Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii and Canada have united to raise \$1.3 million to help fund Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation’s childhood cancer research and family assistance programs.

On June 5, International Longshore and Warehouse members from Canada and the U.S. will gather at Peace Park on the Canadian border for the powwow and photo shoot that will kickstart the union ride of a lifetime. ILWU member Paul Zuanich volunteered bring awareness to ALSF by spinning his electric bicycle 1,750 miles from Canada to Southern California. Paul’s 30-day challenge will send him riding through every ILWU port from Bellingham, Anacortes, Everett, Port Angeles, Port Gamble, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Aberdeen, Astoria, Longview, Vancouver, Portland, Newport, North Bend, Eureka, Sacramento, Stockton, San Francisco, Port Hueneme and finally to the July 5th Bloody Thursday Memorial Picnic in San Pedro, California. Can \$146,812 and a bicycle ride save a child’s life? No disease has ever had an instant cure. By working together, we are closer to our goal, find cures.

To donate and have your name in next year’s ad, please visit www.ilwuwalkthecoast.org

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