



THE DISPATCHER

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION

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New fleet of electric forklifts celebrated at POLA event [page 6](#)



Members of the Local 10 Drill Team assembled for the wreath laying ceremony outside the hall while Local 10 member Scott Barton played taps on the trumpet.

ILWU marks 91st anniversary of "Bloody Thursday"

The 91st Anniversary of Bloody Thursday was celebrated on July 5 along the West Coast with memorials, picnics, and gatherings at union halls. ILWU members, pensioners, auxiliaries, families, and community members came together to remember the sacrifices of all those killed during the 1934 West Coast waterfront strike that laid the foundations for the ILWU.

The Big Strike

The strike began on May 9th, as longshoremen in every West Coast port walked out; they were joined by sailors several days later. Over the course of the strike, violent confrontations between union dockers and police and private security forces took place in ports up and down the West Coast.

A fight for dignity

The longshore workers' demands included a coastwide contract and increased wages. They wanted union representation. But above all, they demanded the abolition of the hated shape-up and its replacement with a union hiring hall.

In recorded interviews conducted by historian Harvey Schwartz, union co-founder Harry Bridges described the bribery, favoritism, and abuses of the corrupt "shape-up" in pre-1934 hiring. Each morning, men, desperate for work, gathered in front of San Francisco's Ferry Building to beg for jobs or were forced to pay bribes, called "kickbacks," just to get a day's work.

Dangerous conditions

The employers created divisions among longshore workers to keep workers disorganized and squeeze more profit from their labor. They pitted work gangs of different nationalities or races against one

another to compete at a reckless pace. The accident rate on San Francisco's waterfront was notorious, with three to six serious injuries for every eight-hour shift of 2,000 workers. If workers got hurt on the job, they often didn't apply for workmen's compensation for fear of being "blacklisted," or denied future employment, because compensation claims could increase an employer's insurance rates.

Employer tactics

In an effort to break the strike, the employers used scabs; They accused strike leaders of being communists, and they worked with police and hired goons along the coast to suppress the strike. In San Francisco, the National Guard was mobilized. They set up machine gun nests and deployed tanks.

Bridges described the situation in San Francisco: "We'd get out there with our flag, our union banner, and I think we had a couple of drums

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A message from the Titled Officers Lessons of the Big Strike

Sisters, Brothers, and Union Siblings,

Ninety-one years ago, the foundations of our union were laid down when longshore workers and allies from Everett WA to San Diego, CA, stood together during the 83-day West Coast Waterfront Strike in their fight for a union-controlled hiring hall that would end discrimination and favoritism in hiring and equalize work opportunities; a coastwise contract, with all workers on the Pacific Coast receiving the same basic wages and working under the same protected hours and conditions; and a six-hour work day with a fair hourly wage.

“The history of the Big Strike is a testament to the importance of solidarity and what workers can accomplish when organization and purpose focus our power into collective action.”

For the Coast Longshore Division, July 5 is a day off. But it is not an excuse for a picnic or a day to spend with our families. We commemorate Bloody Thursday every July 5 to remember the deaths of Nick Bordoise and Howard Sperry, who were shot by police on July 5, 1934, in San Francisco, and all of those killed during the ‘34 strike: Dickie Parker and John Knudsen in San Pedro, Shelvy Daffron in Seattle, and James Connor in Portland.

Bloody Thursday is also a time to recognize the debt we owe to past generations and reflect on what we will pay forward to those who come after. The benefits we enjoy today came from the sacrifices and struggles made by generations of ILWU members who fought contract after contract to improve wages and working conditions and built a strong union that we continue to benefit from. What does it mean for us to be stewards of this union, and

what legacy will we leave behind for future generations?

The strike began on May 9, 1934, when West Coast longshore workers struck, shutting down docks along 2,000 miles of coastline, including the major ports of Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, San Francisco, San Pedro, and San Diego. The press labeled the strike an insurrection, and the longshoremen were vilified as rioters and communists.

The governor of California mobilized 1,700 National Guard troops to the streets of San Francisco—not to quell disorder, but to crush the strike and force the longshoremen back to work. They deployed tanks and set up machine-gun nests along the Embarcadero. The escalation of violence by the government ultimately led to the murders of Bordoise and Sperry.

The employers and the government joined forces to break the strike, so cargo could continue to move. But workers came together, too. The history of the Big Strike is a testament to the importance of solidarity and what workers can accomplish when organization and purpose focus our power into collective action.

The 1934 strike was won through the efforts of more than 12,000 longshore workers along the West Coast, allied with other maritime workers—an estimated 35,000 in total participated in the strike, including sailors, engineers, firemen, oilers, wipers, cooks, stewards, masters, mates, and pilots. They were joined and supported by other working-class allies, including Nick Bordoise, a Greek immigrant and a member of the cook’s union who was volunteering in the union kitchen, helping to prepare meals for striking longshoremen, when he was murdered.



On July 9, a massive funeral procession for Bordoise and Sperry marched up Market Street in San Francisco. The police killings united workers in the city behind the strikers and ignited a general strike.

On July 9, a massive funeral procession for Bordoise and Sperry brought together people from San Francisco, with 50,000 people turning out to witness the solemn event, according to strike leader Henry Schmidt. Their deaths sparked a general strike in San Francisco, uniting more than 130,000 workers across the Bay Area in support of longshore and other maritime workers. This act of mass solidarity marked a turning point in the conflict, leading to a coastwise victory and ultimately led to the formation of our union.

The strike united workers not just across craft lines but also across racial lines. This did not happen organically but was the result of organization and determination. Strike leaders recognized that the discrimination against Black workers on the waterfront by white longshoremen was a source of strength for employers. The exclusion of Black workers became a tool of the boss, creating a pool of potential strikebreakers that ultimately weakened worker power as the failed 1916 waterfront strike demonstrated.

By organizing within the Black community and promising to integrate the union, strike leaders effectively undermined the employers’ ability to divide workers against each other. Overcoming this legacy of racism was a conscious act of solidarity by white workers and Black workers.

There are many lessons to learn from the 1934 strike and the history of Bloody Thursday. Given the deep divisions among workers today we ask, where would we be now if those efforts to overcome divisions had failed and the strike had been defeated?

The strike was won due to the solidarity of workers coming together, regardless of craft, race, or ethnicity, whether they were native-born or immigrant, organized or unorganized. Solidarity builds bonds across differences. It spans generations. It is a recognition of the interconnectedness of workers and that we need not be exactly alike to come together, take collective action to build a strong union and a better future.

DISPATCHER

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Un mensaje de los Oficiales Titulados

Lecciones de una Gran Huelga

Hermanas, Hermanos y Compañeros Sindicales,

Hace noventa y un años se sentaron las bases de nuestro sindicato cuando los trabajadores portuarios y sus aliados, desde Everett, Washington hasta San Diego, California, se unieron durante la huelga de 83 días en los muelles de la Costa Oeste, en su lucha por: un sistema de contratación controlado por el sindicato que pusiera fin a la discriminación y al favoritismo en la contratación y que igualara las oportunidades de trabajo; un contrato a nivel costero, con todos los trabajadores de la Costa del Pacífico recibiendo los mismos salarios básicos y trabajando bajo las mismas horas y condiciones protegidas; y una jornada laboral de seis horas con un salario justo por hora.

Para la División de Estibadores de la Costa, el 5 de julio es un día libre. Pero no es una excusa para un picnic o para pasar el día con nuestras familias. Conmemoramos el Jueves Sangriento cada 5 de julio para recordar las muertes de Nick Bordoise y Howard Sperry, quienes fueron asesinados a tiros por la policía el 5 de julio de 1934 en San Francisco, así como todas las demás personas asesinadas durante la huelga del 34: Dickie Parker y John Knudsen en San Pedro, Shelly Daffron en Seattle y James Connor en Portland.

El Jueves Sangriento es también un momento para reconocer la deuda que tenemos con las generaciones pasadas y reflexionar sobre lo que dejaremos a quienes vendrán después. Los beneficios que disfrutamos hoy provienen de los sacrificios y las luchas de generaciones de miembros del ILWU, que lucharon contrato tras contrato para mejorar los salarios y las condiciones laborales, y construyeron un sindicato fuerte del cual seguimos beneficiándonos. ¿Qué significa para nosotros ser guardianes de este sindicato y qué legado dejaremos para las generaciones futuras?

La huelga comenzó el 9 de mayo de 1934, cuando los estibadores de la Costa Oeste se declararon en huelga, paralizando los muelles a lo largo de 3.200 kilómetros de costa, incluyendo los principales puertos de Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, San Francisco, San Pedro y San Diego. La prensa la calificó de insurrección, y los estibadores fueron vilipendiados como alborotadores y comunistas. El gobernador de California movilizó a 1.700 soldados

de la Guardia Nacional en las calles de San Francisco, no para sofocar disturbios, sino para aplastar la huelga y obligar a los estibadores a volver al trabajo. Desplegaron tanques e instalaron nidos de ametralladoras a lo largo del Embarcadero. La escalada de violencia por parte del gobierno terminó provocando los asesinatos de Bordoise y Sperry.

Los empleadores y el gobierno unieron fuerzas para romper la huelga y mantener el movimiento de carga. Pero los trabajadores también se unieron. La historia de la Gran Huelga es un testimonio de la importancia de la solidaridad y de lo que los trabajadores pueden lograr cuando la organización y el propósito concentran nuestro poder en la acción colectiva.

La huelga de 1934 se ganó gracias al esfuerzo de más de 12.000 estibadores de la Costa Oeste, aliados con otros trabajadores marítimos: se estima que participaron en total 35.000 personas, incluyendo marineros, ingenieros, fogoneros, engrasadores, limpiadores, cocineros, camareros, capitanes, contra maestres y pilotos. Se unieron y recibieron apoyo de otros aliados de la clase trabajadora, entre ellos Nick Bordoise, inmigrante griego y miembro del sindicato de cocineros, quien estaba ofreciendo su tiempo en la cocina sindical ayudando a preparar comidas para los estibadores en huelga cuando fue asesinado.

El 9 de julio, una gran procesión fúnebre para Bordoise y Sperry reunió a la población de San Francisco: unas 50.000 personas asistieron al solemne evento, según el líder de la huelga Henry Schmidt. Sus muertes desencadenaron una huelga general en San Francisco, que unió a más de 130.000 trabajadores de toda el área de la bahía en apoyo a los estibadores y otros trabajadores marítimos. Este acto de solidaridad masiva marcó un punto de inflexión en el conflicto, llevando a una victoria a nivel costero y, en última instancia, a la formación de nuestro sindicato.

La huelga unió a los trabajadores no solo a través de los oficios, sino también a través de las fronteras raciales. Esto no ocurrió de manera espontánea, sino como resultado de la organización y la determinación. Los líderes de la huelga reconocieron que la discriminación contra los trabajadores negros en los muelles por parte de estibadores blancos era una fuente de fortaleza para los empleadores. La exclusión de los trabajadores negros se convirtió en una herramienta de los jefes, creando un grupo de posibles rompedores que finalmente debilitaría el poder obrero, como lo demostró el fracaso de la huelga de 1916 en los muelles.



El 9 de julio, una multitudinaria procesión fúnebre por Bordoise y Sperry marchó por Market Street en San Francisco. Los asesinatos policiales unieron a los trabajadores de la ciudad en apoyo de los huelguistas y desencadenaron una huelga general.

Crédito de la foto: "Funeral de los caídos" de la Colección: Asociación Internacional de Estibadores y Huelga General de 1934, UC Berkeley, Biblioteca Bancroft

Al organizarse dentro de la comunidad negra y prometer integrar el sindicato, los líderes de la huelga socavaron de manera efectiva la capacidad de los empleadores para dividir a los trabajadores entre sí. Haber superado este legado de racismo fue un acto consciente de solidaridad entre trabajadores blancos y trabajadores negros.

Hay muchas lecciones que aprender de la huelga de 1934 y de la historia del Jueves Sangriento. Dadas las profundas divisiones entre los trabajadores hoy en día, nos preguntamos: ¿dónde estaríamos ahora si esos esfuerzos por superar las divisiones hubieran

fracasado y la huelga hubiera sido derrotada?

La huelga se ganó gracias a la solidaridad de los trabajadores que se unieron sin importar su oficio, raza o etnia, fueran nacidos en el país o inmigrantes, organizados o no organizados. La solidaridad construye lazos a través de las diferencias. Trasciende generaciones. Es un reconocimiento de la interconexión de los trabajadores y de que no necesitamos ser exactamente iguales para unirnos, tomar acción colectiva, construir un sindicato fuerte y un futuro mejor.

“La historia de la Gran Huelga es un testimonio de la importancia de la solidaridad y de lo que los trabajadores pueden lograr cuando la organización y el propósito concentran nuestro poder en la acción colectiva.”

ILWU marks 91st anniversary of “Bloody Thursday”



Kathy Chester (center), daughter of past ILWU Vice President and Local 10 icon, Bill Chester, with Local 10's Gabrielle Gambrell (left) and Gina Villeggiante. Chester attended the Bay Area Bloody Thursday event after seeing a flyer.

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to march along. Then the cops would move in and beat the shit out of us.”

Bloody Thursday

On July 5, 1934, Bloody Thursday, the employers tried to force open the Port of San Francisco by running scab trucks with police escorts through the longshoremen’s picket line at Pier 38, sparking a pitched battle. The police used tear gas, clubs, and guns on the unarmed strikers. At least 100 strikers and supporters were injured.

Three workers were shot by plainclothes police outside the union’s headquarters at Mission and Steuart Streets. One worker, Charles Olsen, survived. Two others, Howard Sperry, a longshoreman and a World War I veteran, and Nick Bordoise, a Greek immigrant, union cook, and strike supporter, were shot in the back and killed.

The police violence against the strikers provoked outrage. On July 9, a massive funeral parade for Sperry and Bordoise, more than a mile in length, marched up Market Street in San Francisco. Despite being relentlessly attacked in the press, public opinion turned in favor of the strikers following the murder of Bordoise and Sperry.

From Waterfront Strike to General Strike

Between July 16 and 19, more than 40,000 Bay Area workers participated in the historic 1934 San Francisco General Strike to protest the killings. The general strike marked a major turning point in the struggle and may have played a role in why the board arbi-

trating the longshore strike eventually conceded to the union’s key demands.

Stronger together

Strike organizers successfully won the support of San Francisco’s African American community. In return for honoring the longshore strike, Bridges promised Black workers that the union would adopt a policy of “no discrimination” in hiring if it won the strike. Employers were unable to recruit African American community members to cross the union’s picket lines, and Bridges kept his promise when the strike ended.

The “Big Strike” lasted for 82 days. The union won the all-important coast-wide contract. The strike arbitration board awarded longshore workers a ten-cent increase in wages to ninety-five cents an hour—equivalent to \$22.50 an hour in 2025. But wages were a secondary consideration compared to the issues of dignity on the job and union control in hiring. The union achieved its demand for a hiring hall through a decision by the strike’s federal arbitration board that each hiring hall dispatcher must be a union member.

The strike was a victory for worker power and democracy on the waterfront that fundamentally altered the relationship between longshoremen and the employers—breaking the employers’ unilateral authority to control the pace of work, distribution of jobs, and working conditions.

Bay Area

The Bay Area marked Bloody Thursday with a day-long event attended by hundreds of members and supporters at the Local 10 hall. The

event featured a lineup of speakers, a lunch consisting of tacos, pizza, and barbeque, music, and entertainment for kids. Bay Area Pensioners President Norm McLeod served as the Master of Ceremonies.

International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris was one of the speakers, and he reflected on the sacrifices made by the ’34 strikers, the union’s legacy, and issued a call to action for the membership.

“We should never forget what happened just down the street. Those men got shot in the back trying to get \$1 an hour, trying to get a union hiring hall, trying to end the shape up,” Ferris said. “As bleak as things look right now in our world, with the rise of authoritarianism, the amount of war and genocide in the world, with ICE raids, attacks on due process—it’s easy to get depressed. But all we need to do is look back to where we’ve come from. I get my motivation from knowing what working-class people are capable of if we only have the will and solidarity. We need to step up. We need to remember who we are, that we are not helpless, that we’ve always been a voice for the voiceless, and in the end, that’s what we’re going to be remembered for.”

Several speakers, including pensioners Norm McLeod, Clarence Thomas, and Jack Heyman, remembered Lawrence Thibeaux, past Local 10 president who passed away on June 3. A moment of silence was held in his honor.

Other speakers included Local 10 President Demetrius Williams, Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Ed Henderson, BALMA President John Castanho, Local 34 President Dave Gonzales, Local 91 President Adrian Lowrey, and others.

Oakland Youth Poet Laureate

Nairobi Williese Barnes, the 2023 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate and daughter of Local 34 member Eugena Ferdinand Barnes, composed and performed an original poem, “Bloody Thursday.” Her moving performance brought the morning speeches to a poignant and emotional close before the afternoon’s lunch, music, and other activities.

Surprise guest

Kathy Chester, daughter of Local 10 leader and former ILWU International Vice President Bill Chester, attended the event. Kathy Chester is a patrolman for the Seafarers International Union. She said she saw a flyer for the event.

“It’s been so long since I have been around anything ILWU, and with the hall being named after my father, I felt like I wanted to come and pay my respects. It was really uplifting to be here. I was inspired by the speeches that I heard about the importance of looking forward and challenging what is going on today.”

Southern California

Southern California’s Bloody Thursday began with a morning assembly of hundreds of ILWU members and family at Gardena’s Roosevelt Memorial Park, where ILWU members gathered to honor the first two martyrs killed in the 1934 struggles.

The ‘First Blood’ of 1934

Dickie Parker and John Knudsen are both buried at Roosevelt Park. They were shot, along with five other union members, by company-employed goons shortly after midnight on May 15, 1934, at Berth 145 in Wilmington. Dickie Parker died on the way to the hospital, while John Knudsen died of his wounds weeks later. The public response to the killing of both men was impressive, with an estimated 8,000 people lining the streets from San Pedro to Gardena to witness the funeral procession of cars that stretched six miles. Law enforcement warned of a riot following the funeral, but because both events were peaceful, public support increased for the union cause.

Local 13 President Gary Herrera, SoCal Pensioners President Greg Mitre, and Los Angeles City Councilmember Tim McOsker all spoke at the gravesite. There was a procession of motorcycles and classic cars that drove from the cemetery to the “First Blood” memorial in Wilmington’s Waterfront Park, close to where Knudsen and Parker were shot and killed.

The memorial event was followed by a gathering at the Longshoremen’s Memorial Hall in Wilmington, where people celebrated ILWU pensioner, Paul Zuanich’s, 30-day, 1,750-mile bike ride to raise awareness about the ILWU’s support for the fight to end childhood cancer.

Over the past 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 child-

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The Southern California Bloody Thursday bowling tournament held on June 29 was a huge success that filled all of the lanes at the Bowlero Center in Torrance.



Southern California ILWU members marked Bloody Thursday by celebrating the end of pensioner Paul Zuanich’s, 30-day, 1,750-mile bike ride to raise awareness about the ILWU’s support for the fight to end childhood cancer. The event was held at the Longshoremen’s Memorial Hall following a morning graveside memorial for the “First Blood” martyrs.

Photo by Dan McKisson



The Seattle Pensioners organized a graveside memorial for Shelly Daffron who was shot in the back on June 3, 1934 while checking on a rumor that non-union crews were about to sail two oil tankers in Point Wells.

hood cancer research and family assistance programs through the ILWU's Walk the Coast program.

ILWU Canada President Rob Ashton and other union members kick-started Zuanich as he began pedaling from Peace Arch Park at the U.S.-Canadian border. He then made his way through Bellingham, Anacortes, Everett, Port Angeles, Port Gamble, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Aberdeen, Astoria, Longview, Vancouver, Portland, Newport, North Bend, Eureka, Sacramento, Stockton, San Francisco, and Port Hueneme. Paul ended his journey in Wilmington with a ride down the middle aisle of the Memorial Hall. Members cheered as they waved American and Canadian flags. Due to time and travel constraints, the only ILWU port Paul did not visit was San Diego. To include Local 29, Paul is planning a ride to San Diego in the second week of August. To see photos and videos of Zuanich's ride, visit the ILWU Walk the Coast's Facebook page.

So Cal bowling tournament

As part of the Bloody Thursday events, Locals 13, 63, and 94 also held a Bloody Thursday bowling tournament on June 29 that filled all of the lanes at the Bowlero Center in Torrance, CA.

"We would like to extend our deepest thanks to all the bowlers who came out to the 2025 Bloody Thursday Tournament. Your presence turned the day into more than just a competition—it was a celebration of solidarity, strength, and the enduring spirit of unity that defines our labor movement," said Local 13's Mondo Porras. "Whether you bowled strikes or cheered from the sidelines, you helped make this event memorable. It's gatherings like this that remind us how far we've come and how powerful we are when we stand together—not only on the job but also on the lanes."

Photo by Brian Skiffington



Local 23 Trustee Pat Erb, casuals Timm Trust & William Evans serving hot links and dogs at the Tacoma picnic.

Seattle picnic

ILWU members began the day in Seattle with a 7 a.m. wreath-laying ceremony at the cruise terminal to memorialize the workers whose lives were lost during the 1934 strike. Following the wreath-laying service, members and pensioners gathered at the graveside of Shelly Daffron to pay their respects and honor his sacrifice that helped build the ILWU. Shelly was shot in the back on June 30 while checking on a rumor that non-union crews were about to sail two oil tankers in Point Wells just north of Seattle. The Seattle pensioners organized the graveside event.

This year's picnic was held at Lincoln Park in West Seattle. An estimated 800 union members and their families participated in the July 5 event that remembered the union's past, while providing entertainment and relaxation for families. Attendees enjoyed brisket and ribs, a softball game, and a photo booth.

Tacoma picnic at the lake

Local 23 members in Tacoma honored Bloody Thursday with their traditional picnic held at Spanaway Lake Park. An estimated 650 people attended this year's event, which included barbecue, a cribbage tournament, a corn-hole tournament, a bingo fundraiser for Auxiliary 35, and games for kids. The picnic was made possible thanks to the hard work of all of the volunteers.

Local 4 picnic

Local 4's picnic was held at Lewisville Park in Battleground, Washington where it has been held for generations. Local 4's Cahri Citron was the lead organizer and helped to make it a great family experience.

Bloody Thursday

Brothers and Sisters,
Do you hear the horns in the harbor?
Do you feel the rumble in the rails, the cry in the crane?
There was a time when they told us to carry the weight—
But not the power.
To bleed for the profit—
But never touch the throne.
Brothers and Sisters,
The docks remember.
The waters recall the names.
Bloody Thursday, 1934—
When the hands that built this nation
Stood still in defiance.
Not in weakness—no,
But in will.
Brothers and Sisters,
Let me tell you about July 5th,
When bullets rang out like betrayal in the wind.
Let me tell you about fallen Brothers,
Struck down not for violence—
But for daring to dream of something just.
Their blood stained the streets I
So we could walk free with dignity.
Brothers and Sisters!
This wasn't a riot—
This was a rising.
This was Labor shouting back:
We are not your machines.
We are men. We are women.
We are more.
Brothers and Sisters,
Can I get a witness?
A witness to pain, yes—
But also to power.
To the hands that fed ships and stitched sails,
That dug in, locked arms, and said:
We will not move until you see us.
We remember Bloody Thursday
Not for defeat—
But for the victory that came after.
For the general strike that shut down a city
With nothing but solidarity
And the sound of boots refusing to march alone.
Brothers and Sisters,
This is sacred history.
And the pulpit isn't just in the church—
It's in the union hall,
The breakroom,
The picket line.
It's in the mother feeding three kids on one paycheck.
It's in the old man whose back gave out to finish the job.
Brothers and Sisters,
We are not just workers.
We are the ones who make the world move—
And we can make it stop if we stand still!
Can I preach a little longer, Brothers and Sisters?
They'll try to divide us:
Black against white, young against old,
Dockworker against teacher,
Nurse against patient—
But solidarity doesn't speak the language of division.
Solidarity doesn't care what the color of your collar is
When your hands are calloused just the same.
Solidarity is gospel, Brothers and Sisters!
And the gospel says:
An injury to one is an injury to all.
The gospel says: You touch one, you fight us all.
From every port, every factory, every school, every field—
We rise together or not at all.
I ask you, Brothers and Sisters—
Are you ready to lock arms again?
To shoot down injustice,
To know when to walk off to a better world?
This isn't nostalgia—this is a torch.
Carried from 1934 to today,
Pass the torch in remembrance, Brothers and Sisters,
In memory, and In might!
For every soul who dared say, no!
So we could one day say yes to fair wages,
Say yes to dignity!
Say yes, to the unbreakable union of
the working class!
Say yes, to the ILWU!

– Nairobi Williese Barnes



Scan the QR code to watch Nairobi Williese Barnes' reading of "Bloody Thursday"

Dockers gather to celebrate the 25th anniversaries of the IDC & the Charleston 5 struggle

More than 300 dockers gathered in Charleston, SC, from June 23 to 27 to mark the twin anniversaries of the founding of the International Dockworkers Council (IDC) and the historic struggle of the Charleston 5. Dock workers gathered from ports all around the globe to share experiences, strengthen bonds of solidarity, and promote the collective defense of dockworkers' rights.

The ILWU delegation included the ILWU's International Titled Officers: President Bobby Olvera, Jr., Vice President Ryan Whitman, Vice President Brandon Wolff, and Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris.

"The ILWU was the first union to take up the cause of the Charleston 5, led by Local 10 President Lawrence Thibaux."

The week began with a tribute to the Charleston Five—five dockworkers from ILA Local 1422 who, in 2000, were arrested and prosecuted for defending their jurisdiction in the Port of Charleston. The five dockworkers faced felony rioting charges and five years in prison after 600 riot-equipped police attacked Local 1422's lawful picket line protesting the use of scab labor unloading a Danish freighter at their port on Jan. 20, 2000.

Their case became an international cause that highlighted the criminalization of union activism and the extraordinary power of solidarity to achieve justice. What began as a local conflict became a global rallying cry for the defense of workers' rights.

The ILWU was the first union to take up the cause of the Charleston 5, led by Local 10 President Lawrence Thibaux. He, along with Local 10 Business Agent Jack Heyman, flew to Charleston within weeks of the indictments to show Local 10's support.

Thibaux 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. The rest of the labor movement followed suit.

Because of international solidarity, ILA Local 1422 eventually won its strike, and South Carolina dismissed the charges in November 2001. The Charleston Five avoided prison, but endured house arrest for nearly two years.

Ken Riley recognized the important role played by the ILWU in the struggle, for donating to the campaign and raising awareness, even before ILA officials lent their support to the struggle.

"There are moments in history that define who we are—not just as workers, but as a movement, as a family, as a force that refuses to be broken," said Riley, who still serves as President of ILA Local 1422 and is the East Coast Coordinator for the IDC. "In the end, we prevailed. And today we remember that victory with pride and renewed strength."

"The story of the Charleston Five is a story of solidarity, resistance, and what workers can achieve when we stand together," President Olvera said. "The ILWU was proud to stand with the Charleston Five in 2000, and we

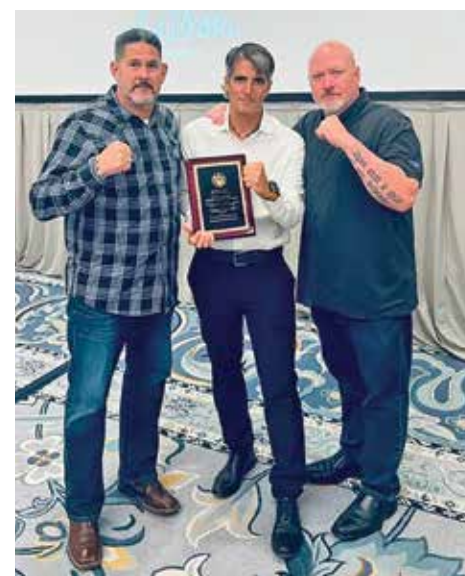
are proud to stand here today, 25 years later, to honor that history, legacy, and the global solidarity that led to their exoneration."

On June 25, delegates visited the International African American Museum, where they attended a ceremony that underscored Charleston's deep connections to struggles for human rights and equality. The IAAM is located at the site of Gadsden's Wharf, the first destination for an estimated 100,000 enslaved Africans during the peak of the international slave trade. It was a powerful reminder that the fight for workers' rights is inseparable from broader movements for social justice, dignity, and freedom.

On June 26, delegates celebrated the 25th anniversary of the IDC, which has championed the rights of port workers worldwide since its founding in 2000. The IDC remains a powerful voice opposing port automation, advocating for fair wages and working conditions, and promoting cooperation, solidarity, and internationalism among dockworkers across continents. Speakers included IDC General Coordinator Dennis A. Daggett; International Labor Coordinator Jordi Aragunde; European Coordinators Andy Green and Marc Storms; Latin America and Caribbean Coordinator César Luna; Asia-Oceania Coordinator Paul Keating; West Coast U.S. Coordinator Ed Ferris; and East Coast Coordinator Kenneth Riley.

Pope Leo XIV sent greetings and a message of support for the IDC's commitment to opposing automation: "I am pleased to know that, as unions, you have taken on the challenge of working together to prevent job losses caused by automation, while at the same time ensuring equal and fair conditions, as well as job security for all workers, without discrimination."

The double 25th anniversary was not only a time to honor the past but also a call to action to safeguard the



Left to right: ILWU International President Bobby Olvera, Jr., International Labor Coordinator Jordi Aragunde, and IDC General Coordinator Dennis A. Daggett.

dignity, rights, and livelihoods of dockworkers everywhere. The spirit of Charleston will continue to inspire generations of dockworkers and trade unionists worldwide.

Delegates paid tribute to the late Swedish dockworker and IDC founder Björn Borg, Argentine trade unionist Mauricio Zarzuelo, and the veterans of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), who played vital roles in shaping the IDC's history. Throughout the week, meetings advanced plans for expanded union training programs, new partnerships—including a forthcoming delegation to Shandong, China—and strategies to combat the growing threat of automation to decent jobs in ports. The IDC also spotlighted initiatives on youth involvement, gender equality, and the promotion of sports as tools for building community and solidarity.

Delegates left Charleston with a determination to strengthen the IDC, a commitment to international solidarity, and a resolve to stand united against the challenges facing port workers worldwide.

New fleet of electric forklifts celebrated at POLA event

On May 5th, 2025, SSA Marine held an event at the Port of Los Angeles Outer Harbor Berth 55 to commemorate the completion of the first fruit season to use human-operated zero-emission cargo handling equipment. SSA Marine's Berth 55 operation handles palletized fruit from South America and New Zealand on refrigerated ships.

SSA recently replaced its entire fleet of 44 propane-powered forklifts with battery electric-powered forklifts, making them the first terminal in the harbor to have a zero-emission operation. The battery electric Hyster forklifts are estimated to reduce propane fuel consumption by 44,000 gallons

each year at the fruit dock while reducing CO2 emissions by approximately 264 metric tons annually. The original target date for the conversions was in the year 2030, completing their goal 5 years ahead of schedule.

"We all have a responsibility to the communities that we serve. This is important, paving the way for other terminals and companies to follow suit. Proving that economic growth and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand," said Local 13 Vice President Brandi Good.

"This project is what we would call the gold standard of cargo handling operations. It is not only zero emissions, but it is also human-operated and is capable of doing the job," added Local 13 Port Liaison Sal DiCostanzo.

Local 13 handles palletized fruit at the San Pedro terminal seasonally every year, starting in January. From January through April, grapes, cherries, and stone fruit from Chile make their way to the Port of Los Angeles. After the grape season ends in April, they have been getting ships from New Zealand carrying kiwis.

"I appreciate that SSA is making this kind of investment; that we have a cleaner and quieter work environment, and they are keeping local jobs. Generations of my family have been working here, and now, with this kind of investment, we'll have more generations working here in the future," said Local 13 member Peter Dever.

— Peter Dever, Local 13



From left to right: Local 13 Port Liaison Sal DiCostanzo, Local 13 Vice President Brandi Good, Local 13 member Peter Dever at the Port of Los Angeles event marking SSA's new fleet of electric forklifts and commemorate the completion of the first fruit season to use human-operated zero-emission cargo handling equipment.

Millions projected to lose health insurance, food assistance after passage of “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”

Budgets are moral documents,” Martin Luther King, Jr. is purported to have stated. Budgets lay bare a government's values and priorities, stripped of politics, misleading rhetoric, faux populism, and politicians’ talking points. The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (OBBBA) is a large reconciliation bill that was signed into law by President Trump on July 4.

“Reconciliation” is a special legislative process that allows Congress to pass bills by a simple majority that are related to mandatory spending programs (such as Medicaid, Medicare, and SNAP) and taxes.

The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” is first and foremost a tax-cut bill that will primarily benefit the wealthiest Americans. In order to pay for these tax cuts, millions of struggling working-class families will lose healthcare and food assistance. Because the OBBBA’s benefits are skewed to benefit the rich, the bill will increase economic inequality, which is already higher in the United States than in almost any other industrial country and has been on the rise for much of the past 60 years.

Overview

The OBBBA will:

- Reduce federal tax revenues by an estimated \$4.5 trillion, mostly due to the extension of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provisions, which primarily benefits the rich, as well as implement new tax cuts, including making private jets fully tax-deductible in their year of purchase.
- Create a temporary tax deductions on qualified tips (capped at \$25,000) and qualified overtime compensation (capped at \$12,500 for individuals filing singly and \$25,000 for married couples filing jointly and phased out for individuals with modified adjusted gross income over \$150,000 and \$300,000 for joint filers) for some workers until 2028.
- Reduce federal spending by an estimated \$1.4 trillion, primarily due to

changes to Medicaid, SNAP, and federal student loans.

- Increase federal spending in some areas by \$325 billion, primarily on the military and immigration enforcement and detention, including nearly tripling the budget of ICE.

The legislation will expand the budget deficit and add \$3.4 trillion to the national debt over the next decade, according to an analysis by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The CBO also estimated that 10 million people will lose access to health insurance by 2034 because of more than \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and ACA (Obamacare) insurance subsidies. Medicaid is a public health insurance program for low-income and disabled Americans and also provides financial assistance to family caregivers. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) estimates 71 million Americans are enrolled in Medicaid.

According to the CBO, as a result of the OBBBA, the poorest ten percent of households will see an average income reduction of 7 percent (\$2,700), while those in the top ten percent will see an income increase of about 1.5 percent (\$8,000).

Delayed impact

The federal Medicaid cuts will be phased in over time through 2034, and it will take years to feel the full impact. There will be an estimated \$17 billion in cuts starting in 2026, with increased cuts occurring each year after. The lion's share of the cuts—76 percent — will be implemented between 2030 and 2034, with \$165 billion in cuts projected for 2034.

The impacts of the OBBBA’s failure to extend the ACA marketplace subsidy will be felt in 2026, which could make the cost of having health insurance unaffordable for millions of Americans. Younger and healthier individuals may opt to drop coverage due to increased costs, thereby increasing the percentage of insured individuals with chronic illnesses or other health issues, which could add to inflationary pressures on health insurance costs.

Because the OBBBA will increase the deficit, it will trigger about \$500 billion in mandatory reductions in Medicare spending between 2026 and 2034, including a 4% reduction in payments to hospitals, unless Congress takes action to prevent it.

AI provision defeated

During the reconciliation process, workers achieved an important victory by forcing the removal of a dangerous provision that would have barred states from enforcing or enacting laws regulating artificial intelligence (AI) and automation for 10 years, potentially invalidating existing legislation in California and other states. An action alert was distributed by the International, District Councils, and Locals asking members to call Senators demanding the removal of this provision from the final version of the OBBBA. Thanks to the efforts of ILWU members and pensioners, this dangerous provision that would have prevented states from putting up guardrails to protect workers and consumers from the effects of AI was removed.

Negative ripple effects

The cuts to healthcare and SNAP will extend beyond the millions of people who will lose health insurance and food support. The effects will ripple through hospital systems and grocery supply chains, particularly in rural and low-income areas where hospitals and independent grocers rely on federal revenue streams.

The OBBBA healthcare cuts will reduce hospital revenues and increase the number of uninsured people seeking care in emergency rooms. This will put financial pressure on hospitals to cut services, reduce staff, or close altogether, especially in rural areas where many hospitals are dependent on revenue from Medicaid patients. A recent analysis by the Sheps Center found that 338 rural hospitals could be at risk of closure as a result of the OBBBA. There are nearly 1,800 rural hospitals nationwide. This increased financial pressure on hospitals will negatively impact everyone who accesses healthcare, not just Medicaid recipients.

Cuts to SNAP benefits will also have a broader impact on communities. The Department of Agriculture estimated that every \$5 in new SNAP benefits generates as much as \$9 of local economic activity that benefits farmers, truck drivers, and grocers.

The OBBBA will cut an estimated \$186 billion from SNAP, the largest anti-hunger program in America. SNAP provides basic food assistance to more than 40 million people, including children, seniors, and nonelderly adults with disabilities. Approximately 22.3 million people would lose some or all of the food assistance they need to afford groceries because of the OBBBA cuts, according to the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Approximately 27,000 independent grocery retailers could face significant hardships from the loss of revenue from SNAP, according to The Center for American Progress. While large grocery chains may be able to absorb the loss, small independent grocers in rural and low-income areas with a large percentage of customers on SNAP would face significant hardship, forcing them to reduce staff, raise prices, or close.

Job losses expected

The Trump Administration argues that the negative fiscal impact of the OBBBA tax cuts is that the tax benefits to the rich will trickle down to the working class — an often-repeated claim that never materialized in previous tax cut bills for the wealthy under Reagan, Bush, or Trump. But the more than \$1 trillion in spending cuts to healthcare and SNAP will lead to significant job losses and lost state and local tax revenue, according to a report by the Commonwealth Fund and the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. According to their analysis, the combined cuts could lead to 1 million jobs lost, including 477,000 health care jobs impacting hospitals, nursing homes, and doctors’ offices and 78,000 jobs in food-related sectors such as grocery stores, agriculture, and food production, and a \$113 billion decline in states’ gross domestic products across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



BALMA scholarship ceremony

On July 9, the Bay Area Longshoremen’s Memorial Association (BALMA) hosted its annual scholarship awards ceremony in the Henry Schmidt Room at Local 10. The event was co-sponsored by ILWU Local 91, the ILWU Credit Union, and the Women of the Waterfront. A total of 46 scholarships totaling \$29,500 were awarded to the sons and daughters of active ILWU members. Dinner, desserts, and refreshments were provided to all.

BALMA President John Castanho presided over the awards ceremony and was joined by Vice President Trevyn McCoy, Secretary Vanetta Hamlin, and Treasurer David Newton. Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Ed Henderson and Dina Earl (Business Development Manager of the ILWU Credit Union) were also in attendance.

BALMA would like to thank all who made this year’s scholarship ceremony such a huge success, including our volunteers from the Local 10 Young Worker’s Committee (Gina Villeggiante, Dillon Mendoza, Bo Langi, Noelle DeMartini, Charlie Pahulu, and Lakisha Hill), member Tomika Tullis (she provided the delicious deserts), and BALMA Operations Specialist Angelique Meyer, who planned and coordinated the entire event. We look forward to continuing our long tradition of providing scholarships to the children of ILWU members for many years to come.



Take your kids to work day: On April 24th Local 4's Young Workers Committee in tandem with the newly reinstated Auxiliary 11 organized a "Take Your Kid to Work Day" event in Vancouver, WA. The turnout was fantastic with 105 participants including parents and children. A&B members as well as casuals were all in attendance. The kids had a great time gaining a glimpse of what their parents do.

New IBU region

The Inlandboatmen's Union, the Marine Division of the ILWU, has added a new region, splitting the Puget Sound Region into two separate Regions, the Passenger Region and the Freight, Towing, Environmental & Research Region. The Executive Council of the IBU appointed Robert (Robbie) Robison as the Regional Director of the Freight, Towing, Environmental & Research Region.

Robbie can be reached at robbie@ibu.org

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:
Local 4: Michael W. Scott;
Local 8: Meriu P. Kioshi;
Local 10: Donald C. Govan; Charles D. Harlan; Jose D. Martinez; Francisco Ruiz; **Local 12:** Sandy L. Meyers; Arthur K. Sutton; **Local 13:** Eliana Bassil; Carlos R. Carmona; Raul Cervantes; Gabriel A. Contreras; Steve E. Espino; Stanley M. Fontes; John J. Grossheim, Jr.; Erlinda R. Jimenez; Titae S. Kalasa; Manuia T. Logoai; Maria E. Magallanez; Jose F. Montoya; Michael J. Olson; Julie M. Palumbo; John J. Prohoroff; Johonn J. Raquel; Steven J. Serafin; Marshall D. Trujillo, Sr.; Vailili M. Tufele; Gary T. Valdez; Anthony M. Urrea;
Local 21: Louis A. McGill, Jr.;
Local 23: Michael A. Cook; William T. Hartvig; Daniel Lay; Steven W. Peterson; Timothy M. Shulich;
Local 24: Clayton D. Underwood;
Local 29: Kenneth D. Miramontes;
Local 34: Kevin L. Wilson;
Local 40: Joseph C. Bennett; William S. Bown; **Local 52:** James C. Sanders;
Local 63: Mona L. Aguirre-Briseno; Dino E. Andrie; Nick Boskovich; Forest D. Hill; **Local 63 OCU:** Yolanda Bravo; Joel Bautista; Larry Yan Cao; Renee Carmona; Rosie Carrillo; David Deatrick; Gina Degaetano; Shari Delprino; Sharon Dinkelbach; John Dinkelbach; Angie Escarciga; Michael Finn; Sandra Garcia; Lisa Hillman; Cathe Howard; Delitta Jones; Teresa Kuhia; Moonika

Lago; Hope Martinez; Lisa Navarro; Tanya Petrie; Annie Ramirez; Felix Rodriguez; Adriana Romero-Izzo; Noel Serrano; Jackie Tannen; Josefine Pimentel; Michael Whitlock;
Local 98: John L. Black;
DECEASED ACTIVE MEMBERS:
Local 13: Robert J. Bowers; Cory Guzman; Fikret Malkoc;
Local 23: Eric J. Hunt;
DECEASED PENSIONERS:
Local 8: Cecilia A. Pinkal; Carl E. Setera; **Local 10:** Edward L. Clay, Jr.; Ocie Hamilton; James Hill; Rudolph Mestrovich; Lawrence J. Thibeaux ;
Local 12: Richard A. Fertig;
Local 13: Johnnie Crutchfield; Lester Estrada; Carl J. Miskey; Kenneth S. Orr; Lee J. Pomeroy; John B. Quick; Carl R. Reid; **Local 23:** Ricky N. Beck; Heinz Lemke; Albert M. Udovich;
Local 54: Matthew M. Butterworth;
Local 63: Frederick J. Williamson;
DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 8: Priscilla A. Jauron;
Local 13: Joan M. Livingston; Lagolemu P. Lutali; Elodia R. Ortiz; Betty J. Peterson; Elaine K. Stish;
Local 21: Joan C. Kalisch;
Local 40: Hild A. Altree; Betty J. Youngblood; **Local 54:** Mary J. Marchettoni; **Local 63:** Delores Burdette; **Local 94:** Vivian Bertschinger; Katherine A. Saggiani;

A Helping Hand...

...when you need it most. That's what we're all about. We are the representatives of the ILWU-sponsored recovery programs. We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcoholism, drug abuse and other problems—and we're just a phone call away.

ILWU LONGSHORE DIVISION

ADRP—Southern California Tamiko Love 29000 South Western Ave., Ste 205 Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275 (310) 547-9966	ADRP—Oregon Brian Harvey 5201 SW Westgate Dr. #207 Portland, OR 97221 (503) 231-4882
ADRP—Northern California Hunny Powell HPowell@benefitplans.org 400 North Point San Francisco, CA 94133 (415) 776-8363	ADRP—Washington Donnie Schwendeman 3600 Port of Tacoma Rd. #503 Tacoma, WA 98424 (253) 922-8913

ILWU WAREHOUSE DIVISION

DARE—Northern California Teamsters Assistance Program 300 Pendleton Way Oakland, CA 94621 (510) 562-3600	ILWU CANADA EAP—British Columbia John Felicella 3665 Kingsway, Ste 300 Vancouver, BC V5R 5WR (604) 254-7911
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Local 53 members work first vessel in Newport in 25 years

It is my great honor to finally write in to The Dispatcher and report that ILWU Newport Local 53 worked its first vessel at the port in nearly 25 years. Through the efforts of our local President Tracy Burchett and Labor Relations Committee Brian Corder and Mike Fogarty, we were able to secure this precious work in our small port. Pasha Stevedoring stepped up to the plate and secured the equipment needed to unload this specialty cargo.

Local Port Commissioner and ILWU local 53 pensioner Pat Ruddiman worked tirelessly to see this project come to fruition.

The ship Atlantis tied up in port July 28, 2025, and quickly went to work loading and unloading research cargo. Including the famous submersible vessel "Alvin" which was the first vessel of its kind to take humans to the Titanic wreck. The Atlantis will be working off the coast of Newport for the next few months making several port calls to the Newport International Terminal.

The men and women of local 53 are proud to be working at their home port. We hope that this work will help the local community see that Newport isn't just a port famous for fishing, but for moving cargo as well. And to let the shipping industry know that Newport is open for business and a viable option to ship cargo.

— Ben Forsman
Secretary/Treasurer Local 53 Newport



Local 53 members worked the ship Atlantis in Newport, the first vessel at the port in nearly 25 years.