



# THE DISPATCHER

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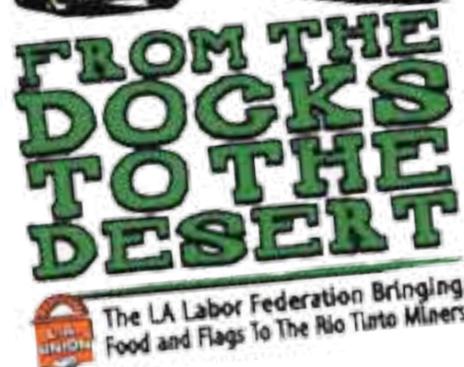
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## Caravan brings hope and help to Boron families



**P**arking lot 13 at Dodger Stadium filled up early in the morning on Feb. 24th, but fans weren't cheering for the boys in blue. Instead, the gathering attracted hundreds of working men and women on their way to bring food, flags and solidarity cheer from Los Angeles to the locked-out workers and their families in Boron. International mining goliath Rio Tinto imposed the lockout Jan. 31 after the workers refused to cave in to contract demands that would have made them sign away good jobs and basic rights.

About 250 people from more than 40 unions started gathering before dawn, along with television reporters from most Los Angeles stations. Members of ILWU Locals 13, 20, 26, 63, 63 OCU and 94 showed up, along with members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), SEIU and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. There were nurses, home care workers, and Latino car wash workers who've just begun to orga-

nize in order to improve their sub-minimum-wage jobs.

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO had started organizing the "Docks to the Desert" caravan just three weeks before.

"We knew we were going to have to do something when we saw the workers locked out," said Glenn Arnodo, the Federation's staff director. "Their situation shows in the most dramatic way what working people are going through everywhere, with a multinational company trying to roll over them," he said. "And it inspires all of us to see the courage of the families in Boron who are willing to make a stand in the midst of a recession."

The Federation's Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Maria Elena Durazo, called on UFCW Local 1428 to help get food for the locked out families.

"When Southern California grocery workers got locked out in 2003-2004, the ILWU was instrumental in helping us," said UFCW1428 President Connie Leyva. "We couldn't think of a better way to pay them back." Local 1428 runs a food bank out of its office. Food bank coordinators Zazette Scott and Mary Ann Radigan got busy planning the order,

calculating the number of cases of staples needed to feed the Boron families—including 1,000 cans of tuna, 996 jars of peanut butter and 1,200 pounds of rice and beans.

Stater Brothers Markets supplied \$32,000 worth of food at a discount because the UFCW represents the workers at 168 Stater's stores around Southern California. Teamsters Local 630 and the Food and Drug Council sent four gleaming 18-wheelers to transport the food. The ILWU belongs to the Food and Drug Council, which brings together several local and international unions for mutual support, including help for the workers at the Rite Aid distribution center in Lancaster, about 30 miles from Boron.

"It's not about the identity of one union or the other," said Council President Paul Kenney. "We're all together fighting for the same thing."

The big rigs, splashed with union logos, led the caravan of nearly 160 cars on the two-hour drive from Dodger Stadium to Boron. The LAPD escorted the caravan out of Dodger Stadium, and the California Highway Patrol took over on the freeway.

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# LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

**Dear Editor,**

The February issue of *The Dispatcher* included a report about our jurisdictional fight for good jobs in Eureka. We have good news to share. Two more generators are scheduled to arrive by barge in June and several ILWU members will be hired for these jobs—at the same dock where we were previously denied work. This shows that these battles are worth fighting and can be won.

I would like to thank all those who helped us with picketing in February. Many of our pensioners showed up and encouraged us to carry on the tradition of standing up for our rights. Local 92 members walked the line with us, as did our brothers from Local 54 in Stockton who came up two weeks in a row to help. One member from Local 10 came up to help. We also received support from IBU deckhands on the barge who refused to touch the cargo and kept me informed of developments.

IBU President Alan Coté and the regional directors in San Francisco and Portland did all they could. The International officers got involved by making phone calls to other unions and providing us with valuable advice. Coast Field Coordinator Will Ward was especially helpful and spent about six days in Eureka, and Coast Communications Director Jennifer Sargent gave us some good tips on how to keep the story in the public eye. Local 10 members went to PG&E headquarters in San Francisco and handed out leaflets explaining our fight for good jobs. Finally, we want to thank the members of ILWU Local 14-A (local marina workers) who honored our picket lines.

Being a small local, it was great to get all this support, as we had to maintain pickets on three gates at two different sites on land and out on the water when the barge was moving. The extra support really helped out. It showed me that “An Injury to One Is an Injury to All” is not just a motto, but something that can be put into action. Thank you all.

**Damien Mooney, President Local 14  
Eureka, CA**

**Dear Editor,**

It's apparent that our great labor unions are under attack by companies and corporations that are trying to bust our movement!

Case in point: While traveling back home to Michigan, after visiting relatives in Santa Maria, CA, I made a pit stop in Boron, on I-58. I struck up a conversation with a local citizen, and during our brief encounter he explained

that he as well as many other townspeople had recently been locked out of their jobs at U.S. Borax Corp. I was made aware that this corporation is foreign-owned.

This corporation has taken out full-page ads in newspapers against its own workers and has hired an “axe man” (union buster) while bringing in outsiders in buses with blacked out windows to perform the jobs of the locked-out workers. I guess there's nothing like foreign-owned American business to really show us where we're headed. I thought greed was only prevalent in large American companies and corporations.

I'm sure that big business is sharing information about our labor organizations. Perhaps we need to share more information about them. My question to you as an American is, “How can a foreign company own and mine our natural resources on our soil?”

If you would like to show these workers support, please by all means do!

**Jim the Electrician, Proud U.A.W. retiree  
Grand Blanc, Michigan**

**Dear Editor,**

I greatly enjoyed the article in the February 2010 *Dispatcher* announcing Gene Vrana's retirement as director of educational services, librarian and archivist at the International library. I would like to acknowledge here how much Gene has aided my historical work on the ILWU over the years. From the 50 oral history profiles that began running in *The Dispatcher* in 1994, to the reissue of “The March Inland,” my book on the origins of the warehouse division released in 2000, to the publication of “Solidarity Stories: An Oral History of the ILWU” in 2009, Gene was always there to help me with my research, answer my endless questions, and act as an insightful and supportive critic. In the end, I think that to whatever extent “Solidarity Stories” holds value for the ILWU's membership and depicts the union's great heritage for the world at large, this is in many ways a tribute to Gene.

**Thank you,  
In solidarity,  
Harvey Schwartz  
Honorary ILWU member**

Send your letters to the editor to: *The Dispatcher*, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800 or email to [editor@ilwu.org](mailto:editor@ilwu.org)

**Every March**, the *Dispatcher* takes special note of the contributions and accomplishments of the sisters in the ILWU. We do this to mark International Women's Day (IWD), March 8, and National Women's History Month. Women around the world celebrated the first IWD in 1911. They honored the immigrant women workers who organized against the sweatshops of New York's Lower East Side. Some 20,000 New York garment workers struck in 1909, standing up to police and prison. The next year 60,000 walked off the job and won the contract that established the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Below we profile just two of the women who broke ground in the ILWU last year, Vanetta Hamlin and Holly Hulscher.

## Local 23 VP Holly Hulscher

*“Understand how hard people fought to get what we have today”*

After she got her “B” book and started going to Local 23 meetings, Holly Hulscher became a hard-core, committed volunteer. “I'm passionate about helping the community through our local,” Hulscher said. Her election as local vice-president last fall seemed to flow naturally out of her other efforts. “I guess people see how much I care,” she said.

Hulscher, her sister and her brother all started working on the waterfront around 1997. Her father retired from the docks just a couple of years ago. At first she thought she'd just work part-time and make some money for school, but she found she liked longshoring too much to leave.

“I've always tried to work really hard, but I also feel pressure to do my best,” Hulscher said. “For women in the industry, it's important to have a good work ethic—but really, it's key for anyone,” she said.

Hulscher got her “B” book in 2003 and her “A” in April 2007. With her sister, Mandy Peterson, she has anchored a Local 23 team in the MS Walk for the last six years. About 100 members and friends came out for the walk last year, and raised



about \$7,500. Hulscher also volunteers on the local's annual Christmas toy drive, and serves on the local's education committee.

“People come in to the union from all walks of life, and it's really important that they understand where we came from and see how hard people had to fight to get our wages and benefits, our safety rules and everything else in our collective bargaining agreement. People fought and died for these things,” she said.

Hulscher said she takes her responsibilities very seriously, and looks to other women in leadership positions, like Dawn DesBrisay and Martha Hendricks in Marine Clerks Local 40, Andrea Struller from Marine Clerks Local 52, Longshore Education Committee Chair Patricia Aguirre from Marine Clerks Local 63 and national IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast. “They're an inspiration to me,” she said. “To me, they're pioneers.”

## Local 10 Chief Dispatcher Vanetta Hamlin

*“Stay focused and give your 150%”*

Being a good dispatcher takes will, determination and lots of energy, according to Vanetta Hamlin, longshore Local 10's new chief dispatcher and the first woman to hold that position.

A native San Franciscan, Hamlin (plug #9663) came to the waterfront as a casual in 2000. Her father, Carl Zenn, had worked on the docks for 40 years, first as a member of Local 10 and then in marine clerks' Local 34. Hamlin served as an alternate business agent before deciding to run for dispatcher in 2007.

Dispatchers take in all the work orders from the longshore employers, write the jobs up, and then send members out to fill them. To ensure fairness, the hiring hall uses the “rotary dispatch” system. Jobs get assigned using the members' plug numbers. When their numbers come up, they get the chance to do the next job available. If they choose not to do it, the person with the next number gets the option, and so on through the numbers until they've all been called and the rotation starts again.

“You can make it look easy, but there's a lot to learn,” Hamlin said. “It's on the job



training. I learned a lot from the old-timers like Frank Cresci, who trained me.” Dispatchers have to be good with details and able to multi-task. “You have to be people-friendly—and for the females, it's a big step, because men aren't used to seeing a woman in a position of authority,” she said.

When she started on the docks, Hamlin had some doubts, but the pay and benefits made it the best option for her as a single parent.

“You have to love your job,” she said, “and to the ladies out there, I say, ‘You've got to stand your ground. Only you know what you can do, and you can't let other people discourage you or intimidate you. If there's something you want, stay focused and give it your 150 percent.’”

## DISPATCHER

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# Longshore Division stands with Costa Rican dockers

For more than 20 years now, dockworkers around the world have been fighting efforts to privatize ports, bust unions and turn good jobs into day labor. From Liverpool to Sydney they have battled governments and corporations working hand-in-glove. Now the unionized longshoremen in the Ports of Limón and Moín on Costa Rica's Atlantic Coast have taken a stand—and the ILWU Coast Longshore Division is standing with them.

The Costa Rican government began its privatization campaign around 10 years ago. Despite massive protests and strikes by students and workers, the country's telecommunications and electric companies privatized. In 2006, the port of Caldera was privatized. The union was destroyed, and working conditions took a nose dive. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) reports that 33 former Caldera workers committed suicide.

The dockers in Limón and Moín are the country's last holdouts against privatization. But two years ago, the Costa Rican government took out a \$72.5 million loan from the World Bank to "modernize" these ports. The dockworkers' union, SINTRAJAP, wouldn't get with the program. Two union activists were arrested and detained on Feb. 24, according to the ITF. The next day, about 140 people blocked police from getting into the port and taking over the union office. Finally, the Costa Rican government removed the union's democratically elected leadership, installed new officers and froze the union's bank accounts.

The ITF, the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, the International Labor Organization, UNI Global Union and the Central American Confederation of Workers (the coordinating body for unions in the region) have all protested the government's action, as did the ILWU Coast Longshore Division.

The Division purchased a two-page ad in Costa Rica's leading daily newspaper, *La Nación*, to publish a letter of support for SINJATRAP.



The Coast Longshore Division published this letter as a two-page ad in the national daily newspaper of Costa Rica. The headline reads, "Letter of Support from the Dockworkers on the West Coast of the United States to SINJATRAP." SINJATRAP is the union that represents the longshore workers in the Atlantic Coast Ports of Limón and Moín.

The letter calls on the Costa Rican government to restore the union's rightful leaders and to negotiate in good faith over modernization of the port. It also demands that the U.S. government "recognize and cease its corruptive role in promoting the powerful economic sectors that want to put an end to Costa Rican trade union-

ism in the name of profits and plunder." It ends with a strong statement of solidarity:

"Dockworkers worldwide are of a strong and unique fraternity that transcends nationalism. Cargo vessels and their owners are not dependent on any one country. Neither are dockworkers. An injury to one is an injury to all."

## "United we stand, divided we fall"

Longshore Local 14 Secretary-Treasurer Perry Bressman went the extra mile to get the ILWU's views out to the community. He sent this op-ed to the *Eureka, CA Times-Standard*, which ran it on Feb. 25, 2010. The *Dispatcher* edited the piece slightly for space. You can read the whole op-ed on line at [http://www.times-standard.com/ci\\_14468285?IADID=](http://www.times-standard.com/ci_14468285?IADID=).

When it comes to workers' rights and fair labor practices, the ILWU has been recognized as one of the strongest labor unions in the world.

On Feb. 1, a handful of longshoremen set up (informational only) pickets to protest PG&E's boast that it was helping our local economy. The truth of the matter is they brought in outside help, who most likely took their income with them. If PG&E seeks future endeavors in our community, we

deserve a straightforward, transparent approach with no surprise endings.

The ILWU desires a working relationship with all locals and businesses in general. The longshoremen unloaded PG&E's engines and generators quicker than they had expected. PG&E then hired Bragg Crane to bring in their own equipment from out of the area and bypass longshoremen. We discovered this company has had problems with unions up and down the coast and is used to skirting around longshoremen.

The ILWU was led to believe Bragg Crane would consider us, until we noticed them moving cargo to be unloaded at property owned by the Harbor Commission earlier than what we were told. It appears they were attempting to bypass paying longshore wages....

By Tuesday, a busload of longshoremen from Stockton and San Francisco traveled to Eureka to signify solidarity with us. The president of the

coastwide ILWU scheduled meetings and contacted the Inlandboatmen's Union. A member from their union hollered from the barge that they would stand aside when the barge docked and honor our pickets.

Yes, we had pickets on the bay, circling the tug and barge. We had people from just about every large port on the coast calling Eureka to ask what was going on up there. San Francisco longshoremen distributed fliers outside PG&E headquarters. Representatives from other local unions brought Eureka's longshoremen doughnuts and coffee, and the local support from all of the passersby honking their horns in support was greatly appreciated. Some even stopped to help carry signs, and a church brought all the men a bagged lunch.

By the second week, the Harbor Commission agreed to an emergency meeting with our union, as well as other unions, to have dialog as to where

we are headed with future work in our bay....

We spent two weeks protesting during the coldest, wettest weather of the year, because we don't intend to forget what longshoremen have fought for over the years, and we will not be ignored. If this was a sanctioned strike, no port on this coast would recognize any cargo from any tug, barge or ship that moved dirty cargo and crossed our picket line.

Smaller, private docks are popping up and moving into the handling of cargo, with the intentions of eliminating longshoremen. If they ever got big, the larger ports would be out of the question.

The bottom line is, the longshoremen in Eureka are here to stay, and we will make do no matter what happens. What we are saying for the rest of the county who desire to keep jobs local is that we need to stick together. United we stand, divided we fall.

— by Perry Bressman

## ILWU Canada elects new VP

ILWU Canada concluded its 31st Convention (21st Biennial) on March 26, as the *Dispatcher* was going to press. On the last day of the Convention, delegates elected Local 517 member Mandy Webster to the position of Vice President-at-Large. This is the first time a member of Local 517 has reached national office within the ILWU Canada. The local represents office, trades, maintenance and marine staff of Fraser Surrey Docks Container Terminal, the Nanaimo Port Authority, Port Metro Vancouver, Squamish Break-Bulk Terminal, and Westshore Coal Terminal.

ILWU Local 500 voted a \$10 per member per month assessment to support the families locked out by Rio Tinto in Boron. Other Canadian

longshore locals are also considering monthly assessments, and the Convention collected another \$540 to help them by doing a 50/50 draw at its dance March 25. A fuller report on the Convention is planned for next month's *Dispatcher*.



## Rio Tinto execs have their millions. The locked-out families in Boron have us.

Our contributions will help them keep up their fight. Please be generous.

Write checks to "Labor Community Services" with "Boron Lockout" in the memo portion. Mail to: Labor Community Services, 2130 W. James M. Wood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Your contribution is tax deductible. Or you can make a contribution using your credit card by going to <http://www.launionaflcio.org/donation-boron/>.

Some ILWU credit unions have set up a way for members to make regular weekly contributions. Go to <http://www.ilwu.org/mobilize/Local30/index.cfm> to see how to help through your credit union.

**Thank you for supporting the locked-out families who are standing up for all of us.**

# School Employees march with families in Boron



Riot-clad Sheriff's deputies greeted the "Good Jobs & Good Schools" march when it reached the Rio Tinto gates. The members of the California School Employees Association—who came out to support the locked-out Rio Tinto workers—were surprised to see so many police at such a family event.

**R**io Tinto's lockout against 600 families was just a few hours old when members of the California School Employees Association sent word that they wanted to help. With more than 230,000 members in California, the CSEA is a powerhouse that includes custodians, clericals, aides, and most other school workers who aren't teachers. The union has a strong democratic tradition that emphasizes member involvement, like the ILWU.

A few days after the lockout, the first donation that arrived to help families was a check that CSEA members hand-delivered to the union hall in Boron. The check came with a promise that CSEA members would return a few weeks later with hundreds of their co-workers.

On Saturday, March 6, hundreds of school employees and locked-out families gathered at the union hall in Boron.

The weather looked menacing, but rain clouds blew past without soaking the crowd that gathered on Borax Road to march a mile down to the "line" and Rio Tinto's locked gates.

Children led the way, along with a color guard provided by veterans from VFW post 6313. A banner carried the message of the march: "High Desert Families United for Good Schools & Good Jobs."

School workers talked with locked out family members along the route, offering comfort and support. Parents pushed strollers with babies and small children while other kids were pulled behind in wagons. Many kids carried small American flags. Some CSEA members asked why the locked-out families weren't chanting slogans and making more noise, but family members replied that they didn't mind walking quietly through the desert down to the line and appreciated the quiet time together.

When the group reached the line that marks the end of the public road

and beginning of Rio Tinto's property, they faced several dozen Sheriff's deputies, who had been ordered by supervisors to wear riot gear. School employees were shocked to see so many riot-clad police facing the families with so many women and children. Most families were not as concerned. They'd already seen it many times before. Some even knew the names of individual deputies, and exchanged "hellos," and got waves back from the officers, who have been working for months without a contract themselves.

Finally a chant emerged from the crowd, one unlike any that the school employees had heard before. The chant simply repeated the words, "We want to work" a dozen times. Then, an ordained minister and locked-out worker, Randy Granath, stepped up to the microphone and asked everyone to link arms.

"We've just finished our walk through the desert, and we're reminded of the children of Israel who were fleeing the slavery in Egypt," Granath said.

"Like us, they had to face their oppressor, and like us they had to walk in the desert. They faced difficult times, had many doubts, and sometimes lost hope. But their faith kept them strong and allowed them to keep walking and keep believing. And eventually they reached their promised land, and so will we."

After he finished, there was a muffled chorus of "Amen's." The group chanted "We'll be back," then headed to the union hall for lunch and a rally. Volunteers had prepared barbecue, and local grocer Kim Chong Su of Crain's Market had contributed enough cake mixes to produce six large sheet cakes for dessert.

At the end of the afternoon, Local 30 Vice President Jack Liebengood hung the "Good Jobs & Good Schools" banner in the union hall.

"The kind of support we got this afternoon was really important," Liebengood said. "It could be a long fight, but we'll be OK with more friends like these."

## Media Matters: Locked-out workers get their stories out



Local and national media outlets have picked up the story of the locked-out Boron families' gutsy stand against Rio Tinto. *The Nation*, a national progressive weekly, ran an in-depth cover story that showed how Boron fits into Rio Tinto's global game plan (<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20100329/davis/>). *Labor Notes* ran a feature and highlighted Rio Tinto's attacks on workers around the world (<http://www.labornotes.org/2010/03/truckloads-solidarity-borax-miners>). The local *Antelope Valley Press* and *High Desert News* keep a close eye on the fight. Locked-out workers spoke on the national radio programs "Marketplace" (<http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/03/02/pm-borax-town/>) and "Democracy Now" ([http://www.democracynow.org/2010/3/26/labor\\_struggle\\_in\\_boron\\_union\\_workers](http://www.democracynow.org/2010/3/26/labor_struggle_in_boron_union_workers)), and KCET-TV ran an excellent story as part of its "Dream Interrupted" series ([http://kcet.org/socal/dream\\_interrupted/2010/03/borax-mining-lockout-rocks-the-town-of-boron.html](http://kcet.org/socal/dream_interrupted/2010/03/borax-mining-lockout-rocks-the-town-of-boron.html)).



# Locked-out families and students fight school bias



Jessica Irish (left) and Chelsea Lasley have been spending many evenings on the line. During the day, they find themselves having to speak out against anti-worker bias at their high school.

Jessica Irish and Chelsea Lasley are best friends who attend Boron High School. Since the lockout, both high-performing students have been spending almost every evening out at “the line” with their parents and other families who go there to express their support for good jobs and opposition to Rio Tinto’s corporate greed.

During school hours, their commitment is just as strong. Both have been challenged to defend their views from anti-union students and teachers.

“One of my teachers was married to a guy in management,” said Jessica. “One day after class, she told some of us that the union Negotiating Committee wasn’t doing a good job and should be replaced so they would go along with the company. I told her that my dad happened to be elected to the union Negotiating Committee, and that she was totally wrong. She quickly backed off and said she wasn’t talking about my father, but her true feelings came out and couldn’t be covered up.”

Many more students from union families were angered Feb. 24 when high school officials took the unusual step of “locking down” the campus and refusing to let anyone go outside while the mile-long caravan of trucks and cars paraded through town, driven by union volunteers from Los Angeles who came 100 miles to deliver \$32,000 worth of groceries to locked-out families. School officials told students that

the lockdown was “for their own protection,” but Jessica, Chelsea, and other students didn’t buy it.

“It wasn’t fair,” said Jessica, a bright 17-year-old senior with plans to attend college next year. “We had a discussion about it in one of my classes, and I told everyone that the company’s lockout was wrong – and that the school was wrong for locking out students to prevent us from seeing the caravan and showing our support.” There were a few kids in class with parents “on salary,” she added. “We understand that most parents ‘on salary’ don’t have any choice but to hide their true feelings and keep working or get fired,” Chelsea said. The company has repeatedly threatened salaried staff with termination for associating with locked out families.

“We just keep making the point that good jobs shouldn’t be taken away by big companies, and that we’re standing up for everyone in the community,” said Chelsea, a freshman who fires out her lines like a skilled debater.

Parents in Boron’s elementary school have also stood up against bias and insensitivity. In early March, officials invited Rio Tinto officials to promote “career opportunities” at the company, concealing the plan from parents until the last minute. Locked-out parents were furious, lodged complaints with the school principal (who is married to a Rio Tinto official), and with her superiors. The following day, parents made a powerful show of solidarity when nearly 100 students failed to attend class.



**The LA Harbor Area solidarity rally** March 3 in Wilmington attracted members from many ILWU locals, including 13, 26, 63, 63OCU, 94 and others. A contingent of twelve Local 30 members drove down from the High Desert to show their appreciation for the support that’s been coming from the docks since the lockout began Jan. 31.

## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

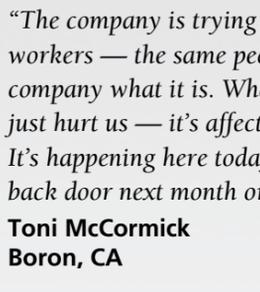
This month’s question was posed to some of the women who are fighting for good jobs in Boron.

### What do you want people to know about your fight for good jobs in Boron?



“Fighting back here in Boron will help other Americans who are facing the same problems. Whether it’s now or in the future, everyone seems to be dealing with the same kind of issues. Good jobs are really important. This is where my family’s been working for generations — going back to my great grandparents.”

**Deonna Robinson**  
Boron, CA



“The company is trying to step on blue collar workers — the same people who made this company what it is. What they’re doing doesn’t just hurt us — it’s affecting all of America. It’s happening here today but could be at your back door next month or next year.”

**Toni McCormick**  
Boron, CA



“Without good jobs, we won’t be able to support our local small businesses and schools. The last fundraiser for our cheer and dance team happened after the lockout. We had a good turnout but a lower collection than we hoped. If the lockout continues, it could destroy Boron and other small towns in the High Desert.”

**Vickie Lewis**  
Boron, CA

“We need to have faith in our union and stand strong until we win. There’s so much help available to help us. Our daughter Savannah has been real sick and we haven’t had health insurance since Rio Tinto locked out my husband Johnny almost two months ago, so the Emergency Committee is helping us get COBRA coverage. All of us need to remember that this is an important fight and we’re going to be OK.”

**Jo Wilson**  
Boron, CA



# Local 6 Convention: members dig deep in hard times

Though Warehouse Union Local 6, ILWU is no stranger to hard times, delegates to the local's 63rd annual convention Feb. 27 had to dig deep as they faced the challenges of today's U.S. —and they did so with impressive generosity and determination to organize. The 150 Local members and guests at the event included a strong turnout from workplaces covered by the Northern California Master Contract.

"This is important, because we will be negotiating the Master this year," Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker said. "Guittard Chocolate, in particular, could've been working, but the members took the time to come here. This sent a clear signal to the employer that they are serious about the contract."

The master contract has shrunk in size over the decades. It now covers seven Local 6 houses, down from a high of around 200, as well as three Teamster workplaces. Though it has fewer direct participants, the master still sets a standard for wages, benefits and pension for many members of Locals 6 and 17.

This year the membership will be fighting to maintain pension funds clobbered by the stock market's troubles, and facing employers in a take-away mood.

"Employers are using the current bad economy to try and beat every-

thing they can out of us, but Local 6's membership is not in the mood to give up any ground. They are saying they are ready," Pecker said.

Local 6's rank-and-file organizing committee continues to work on developing organizing capacity to build the Local.

"We have to organize to build power just so we can keep what we have," said committee chair Pedro de Sa, who works at Gallo Sales. For the last two years, the committee has been surveying the Local 6 area for strategic organizing targets and learning how to evaluate and approach them. Its March 12-13 training drew 20 members of the local.

Local 6 has been partnering with Local 54 in the fast-growing Port of Stockton. Three warehouse Local 17 employers—Weyerhaeuser, Nabisco and Yara—abandoned West Sacramento for Stockton where they operate non-union. Locals 6 and 54 are working a broad program to change this attitude in Stockton through political action, community partnerships, and on the ground organizing.

Delegates and guests at the Local 6 Convention heard from a raft of dignitaries, among them California Assembly member Nancy Skinner; San Leandro Mayor Tony Santos; U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee's district director, Sandra Andrews; California Labor Federation Executive Secretary-Treasurer Art Pulaski; San



When locked-out Boron worker Dave Irish appealed to delegates and guests at the ILWU Local 6 Convention, they dug deep. Pictured here (right to left): Irish, Local 6 Trustee John Cortez, Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker and ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams.

Francisco and San Mateo Labor Council heads Tim Paulson and Shelley Kessler, and several officers from the ILWU International and neighboring locals. ILWU guests included International Secretary-Treasurer William E. Adams, newly elected International Executive Board member Ryan Takas from Warehouse Local 5 in Portland, Inlandboatmen's Union Northern California Regional Director Marina Secchitano, longshore Local 10 President Richard Mead, warehouse Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Carter and Business Agent Everett Burdan.

The convention delegates snapped to attention when locked-out Rio

Tinto worker Dave Irish hit the microphone. Irish explained how he and his nearly 600 co-workers stood up to the ultimatum from their employer that would have shredded their good jobs and basic rights. Convention delegates voted to make a \$500 monthly contribution to the Boron workers' solidarity fund from Local 6. Trustees Heather Chu and John Cortez called for an on-the-spot collection that netted \$957.

"Your contribution is especially generous in light of the challenges facing Local 6, and is a powerful example of the solidarity that's alive and well in the ILWU," Irish said.

# Rite Aid workers pull together for safety

For years, the workers in Rite Aid's Lancaster, CA distribution center had warned managers not to stack cases of heavy products on the highest shelves in the warehouse. After Pedro Morales suffered a serious head injury, the workers moved from words to action.

Rite Aid bragged that the Lancaster facility was "state of the art" when it opened in 1999—even though it lacked air conditioning in many areas, making it a literal sweatshop for the nearly 600 men and women who do the real work there. The unsafe conditions, mandatory overtime and punishing production standards led the workers to vote to join ILWU warehouse Local 26 two years ago. They are still negotiating for a first contract.

The top storage level in the area where Pedro Morales was working on Nov. 24, 2009 is around 30 feet off the ground. Morales' supervisor told him to go help out there because one of his co-workers was having trouble moving a pallet loaded with cases of brandy.

Morales went up in a stock picker, a piece of equipment that raises workers up on a platform. He saw that the pallet seemed to be broken. It wasn't shrink-wrapped all the way, and the bottles at the bottom were leaning slightly. He lowered himself to the bottom level, bent to pick up a piece of paper, and heard something break over his head and shatter. Next thing he knew, he was lying on the floor bleeding from a gash in his head. He'd been hit by a



The Rite Aid warehouse workers have learned what solidarity means. They saw it in their hard-fought organizing drive, they're seeing it their long push for a first contract, and they're showing it for the workers in Boron. During the "Docks to the Desert" caravan Feb. 24, they massed on the Hwy. 14 overpass, flashed signs, and cheered.

bottle falling from 30 feet. He suffered a concussion and took four stitches.

"I told them just because my bones were strong enough to handle this doesn't mean it won't kill the next person," Morales said. He is still having dizzy spells and has not been able to go back to work regularly.

"We've been telling Rite Aid forever that they shouldn't have heavy boxes of liquor in high places," bargaining team member Carlos Rubio said. Cal/OSHA also requires that materials be stacked safely. But Rite Aid just kept

saying that its fire insurance required it to keep flammable materials by the sprinklers, which are near the roof.

Once the workers decided to take action on this safety issue, they pulled together quickly. In just one week, almost 300 people signed a petition calling on management to "remove all liquor from 3rd level picking locations and placed on the 1st levels or on the floor." Even anti-union workers signed on.

Then on Feb. 15, the workers gathered during their morning break

to confront management face-to-face. About 15 people started walking across the warehouse. Co-workers kept joining them until about 40 people surrounded General Manager Renee Johnson, and several other managers who were leaving the morning meeting.

"Renee told us they realize the problem, and are looking into getting sprinklers on the first floor," Rubio said, "They say 'Safety is First,' but we'll have to keep an eye on them to see that they follow up."

# Daily World profiles Local 24 President Jeff Jewell

The Daily World, the newspaper serving Aberdeen, Hoquiam and the Grays Harbor area of Washington, ran a long profile of Local 24 President Jeff Jewell in its Sunday edition on March 21. By the end of the story, the reader has gotten to know Jewell a bit. You've learned about his roots, followed him around the union hall, heard him talk about work, leadership, and that one constant on the waterfront: change. Here is just a little taste of the piece:

"Jewell said his years with the union have exposed him to the incredible changes in the shipping industry. When he started stowing cargo by hand, he never thought he would later electronically check-in cargo loaded by complicated machines.

"But the one thing that never changed was change....

"Jewell said he's pleased to see a chance for growth. The union had about 200 members when he first joined and has dwindled in years since from lack of work....

"He now sees new jobs processing new cargoes. He sees new openings for local workers on the docks. He sees

dozens of young and old union members headed to the Hoquiam waterfront in the low blue glow of the eastern sky. And he plans to keep moving in that direction. "It's mainly just the thankfulness of the job I have being a union member in this union and giving something back," he said. "You want to leave a place better than you walked in."

To see the whole story, go to <http://www.thedailyworld.com/articles/2010/03/21/profile/doc4ba576991b87b767512449.txt>



JACOB JONES | © 2010, Daily World, Aberdeen, WA. Reprinted with permission. ILWU Local 24 President Jeff Jewell at his desk in the union office in Aberdeen. He has worked more than 30 years with the union and was elected president three years ago.

## Local 13 helps Haitians get back on their feet

Local 13 I.D. Charles Barns felt he needed to do something to help the folks in Haiti after the Jan. 12 earthquake.

"My God, look at all that rubble," he said. "These people can use some boots or shoes to walk around in." And so Re:Boot Haiti was born.

After getting the support of the local's officers, Barns hooked up with Judith Kamal and Cha Chi Veyra, the organizers out of Local 13. They collected the donations from ILWU members and the community, with Amber Vera-Mendoza helping on the community collection. There were (3) drop-off locations for the ILWU members: the



Dispatch Hall, the I.D. meeting and the Class-A meeting. The "Community Action Project" in Long Beach, CA also served as a collection site.

"We were receiving 288 shoes a day during the donation period," said Barns, the project coordinator. ILWU and community members contributed 2,309 pairs of shoes and boots. Urban Feet donated more than 100 new pairs of shoes.

"I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone who donated their time and shoes to Re:boot Haiti," Barns said.

— D.C. Chavez, Local 13

## Top brass at Rio Tinto help widen the pay gap

The gap between the rich and the poor in the United States is the widest it has been in 100 years. The top executives at foreign-owned Rio Tinto are doing their part to keep it that way. Just look at what the top four made last year, according to the company's own annual report:

Executive	Total Compensation in 2009
Tom Albanese, CEO	\$ 9.04 million
Dick Evans, former Aluminum Division CEO	\$14.10 million
Guy Elliott, CFO	\$ 6.20 million
Sam Walsh, Executive Director and Chief Executive, Iron Ore and Australia	\$ 6.30 million

Altogether, the 14 executives listed in the annual report took home \$69.8 million in compensation, and another \$15.69 million in bonuses. Meanwhile, they went on a worldwide cost-cutting spree that cost 14,000 people their jobs.

How does this stack up to the income the Boron workers got before the lockout? The total wage for 601 employees working full-time for a year is \$32,473,334.40. The top 14 execs made a little more than twice what the 601 workers did. The executives' bonuses alone would cover more than half the annual payroll.

A rising income gap brings other social problems with it, the AFL-CIO reports. Higher rates of physical and mental illness, drug addiction and job insecurity all come with inequality. For more information, go to <http://blog.aflcio.org/2010/03/12/us-income-equality-may-equal-mexicos-by-2043/>.

## Hope and help from the docks to the desert

Continued from page 1

Stadium, and the California Highway Patrol took over on the freeway. The convoy climbed up and over the San Gabriel mountains, the line stretching out for more than a mile under the wide high-desert sky. As it passed Lancaster, workers from the Rite Aid distribution center cheered and waved signs from the overpass. In their organizing, and their fight to get a first contract—two years long and still going—the Rite Aid workers have seen what solidarity means.

When the caravan got to Boron, Rio Tinto workers pulled their vehicles into the parade that filled the mile-long road between the ILWU Local 30 hall and the locked gates of the mine. Driving through downtown Boron, the convoy brought waitresses out of the coffee shops, drying their hands on their aprons to wave at the sight. Veterans came out of the VFW hall to salute and say "thank you."

High school kids wanted to greet the caravan, but were locked inside by school administrators "for their own safety" —a move that was felt as an insult by many students who come from families who are suffering from Rio Tinto's lockout. (See story on page 5)



When the caravan returned to the Local 30 community hall, Boron families joined with caravan volunteers to form a human chain that unloaded the food. After a rally and lunch (barbecue courtesy of the electrical workers union, IBEW Local 47), it was time to drive back from the High Desert to the flatlands.

"Feb. 24 was Day 1," Connie Leyva said. "At UFCW, we know what it's like

to be locked out. We remember how hard it was and how much it meant when people came to our aid and told us, 'We believe in you.' We're prepared to be there for your families until you get your jobs back. We'll be there for you in the same way."

Along with the first caravan in late February, there have been two other major food deliveries to help the locked-out families, thanks to the mil-

Maria Elena Durazo, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, spoke to the locked-out families and their supporters at the end of the "Docks to Desert" solidarity caravan.

lions of union members around the country who are part of the AFL-CIO network. Other unions, including the Service Employees Union that represents 90,000 state workers in California, have also come forward with generous contributions to help the locked-out families.

"The food is important and it reminds us that other folks are out there who care about us," says Terri Judd, a locked out heavy equipment operator, Desert Storm veteran, and single mother. Terri and her mother, Hildegard, volunteer several days a week at the community hall, bagging groceries that locked-out families pick up each day.

Asked how long she and other families can continue their fight for fairness, Judd points to her hard hat that she wore every day before the lockout, with a sticker on front that says: "As long as it takes, as hard as it gets—an injury to one is an injury to all."

Trade trends, port fortunes, dockers' strikes...

## "Shipping News" web site keeps an eye on the industry



The shipping industry is constantly changing, and thanks to a new web site, longshore workers have a glimpse into the factors around the world that affect our jobs on West Coast docks.

The Coast Longshore Division has set up a new web site called [www.LongshoreShippingNews.com](http://www.LongshoreShippingNews.com). At least twice a day, new articles and photos from around the world are posted for public viewing. Since August, nearly 400 articles have been posted on sub-

jects including ports, air quality, shipping lines, and much more.

Articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Coast Committee, but they do reflect the changing times through the eyes of the mainstream media in the U.S., Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Israel, and virtually anywhere that shipping has a major presence.

Readers with a special interest, such as "Port of Oakland," can click on the key word from under an article, and the site will automatically find all articles related to the Port of Oakland.

## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 10:** James C. Robinson; **Local 13:** Gilbert Negrete, Francisco J. Aguilar, Andrea M. Luse, Jorge A. Chavez, John R. Naclerio, Roy D. Mora, Sr., Charles T. Enstedt, Dennis E. Hurlbut, Willie L. Groomes, Louis L. Rodriguez, Edward K. Kapu, Laurie M. Gagnier, Michael J. Cooper, Carlos A. Matamoros, Carlos J. Torres; **Local 19:** James M. Sweeney; **Local 23:** Daniel J. Grassman; **Local 63:** Marlene E. Vaughn, Gary A. Grundtisch, Ronald B. Vander Heide, Pasquale A. Califano, Robert A. Stahl, Dwight C. Woods, Earl L. Short, Andria L. Ruetmann; **Local 94:** George W. Hilbert, Isiah Cummings Jr.; **Local 98:** Rebecca S. Edson

### DECEASED & NEW SURVIVORS:

**Local 4:** Lloyd M. Erickson (Jeanette); **Local 7:** George Lindquist; **Local 8:** Jess R. Fogarty (Armilda), Herbert F.

Lehmann, Andrew H. Wilson Jr. (Jean), Loren Clay Jones, William E. Carroll, Tyler R. Hanson Jr.; **Local 10:** Henry B. Andreotti (Lena), Candido Vargas, Robert Harmon, Phillip Garcia, Gary A. Rueb, Roger Rosenberg (Barbara), Edmond Lowe (Willie Mae), Jimmie L. Ward, Jessie Prince Jr. (Ora), Isaac Hughes, Sr. (Dianna); **Local 12:** Clyde E. Korn (Helen), Tom E. Harper; **Local 13:** Lloyd Haley (Melba), James P. Smith, Willie Seltzer, Charles R. Cline (Juanita), Terry L. Lee (Marie Trani-Lee), Pollard H. Pollard, David Barnum (Mary Ann), Max L. Muir (Bonnie), Robert A. Jones, Anton Vladic, Edward Tucker (Louise), Bruce D. Thayer, Joe I. Campos (Kathaleen Montana-Campos), Daniel G. Gandara; **Local 18:** James Cuff (Sharon); **Local 19:** Mack Williams (Ruby), James Waldean (Valerie); **Local 21:** Oliver W. Staudinger (Joanne),

Samuel K. Haluapo; **Local 23:** Ortan P. Gooden; **Local 27:** Fred O. Amundson; **Local 29:** Leon F. Peer; **Local 34:** Jack L. Purcell Jr., John Reynolds (Marjorie), Raymond J. Cruz, William J. Walsh Jr., Murle E. Mehl (Linda), Edward Holsworth Jr. (Mary), **Local 46:** William Guevara; **Local 52:** Robert R. Dicey, (Irene) Louis Castillo, Louis Evancich; **Local 63:** James R. Perez (Linda Dooley-Perez), Ray J. Hutson (Loydene); **Local 94:** Joseph Sims (Ella), George J. Fullerton, Clarence Armstrong Jr. (Dorothy), Paul Trujillo (Bobbie); **Local 98:** Clarence L. Olson (Georgia)

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 4:** Violet Chandler; **Local 8:** Edith L. Smith, Lorette C. Wagner, Bobbie Wright, Agnes M. Fisch, Florence M. Ingalls; **Local 10:** Mae Belle B. Garrison, Mary M. Zile, Margaret Maldonado,

Dorothy Hurley, Juanita Reyes, Nina Nastovich; **Local 13:** Doris A. Myers, Danica Zuvela, Maria A. Harkness, Dolores J. Maynez, Diana-Lee Brown, Roberta M. Timmons, Leora M. Vaughn; **Local 14:** Helen L. Arthur; **Local 19:** Alice J. Gonsalves, Sylvia Higginbotham, Oline Margrete Waldean, Elsie K. Johnson; **Local 23:** Norma M. Coonan; **Local 34:** Millicent V. Radanovich, Myrtle Clark; **Local 52:** Katherine Ross; **Local 53:** Cleo E. Sjerslee; **Local 94:** Margarite Herrera, Catherine M. Le Claire, Delma Gerhart, Ida M. Buckner, Dixie Bartlett, Betha L. Halladay; **Local 98:** Mildred N. Bjornson, Irene M. Bellmore

## ILWU BOOKS & VIDEOS

Books and videos about the ILWU are available from the union's library at discounted prices!

### BOOKS

**Solidarity Stories: An Oral History of the ILWU.** By Harvey Schwartz. An inspiring collection of first-hand accounts from ILWU union leaders and rank-and-file workers. \$17.00.

**A Spark Is Struck: Jack Hall & the ILWU in Hawaii.** By Sanford Zalburg: A high quality re-issue of the informative epic account of Jack Hall and the birth and growth of the ILWU in Hawaii \$13.50 (paperback).

**Along the Shore/Por la Costa—ILWU Coloring Book.** A bi-lingual English/Spanish coloring book about waterfront workers and their union. Originally developed by the California Federation of Teachers' Labor in the Schools Committee in consultation with member Patricia Aguirre and the ILWU Local 13 Education Committee. Meets K-3 classroom standards for History and Social Studies. Two (2) for \$5.00

**The Legacy of 1934: An historical exhibit by the ILWU.** Produced as a catalogue to accompany the new traveling historical art exhibit about the origins of the ILWU in the 1934 maritime strike, this brief but vivid publication stands on its own as a pictorial history of the coastwise strike and an account of the extraordinary sacrifices and democratic principles of the founding members of the union. Two (2) for \$5.00

**Harry Bridges: The Rise and Fall of Radical Labor in the United States.** By Charles Larrowe. A limited number of copies of this out-of-print and useful biography are now available through the book sale by special arrangement with Bolerium Books in San Francisco, which specializes in rare publications and documents about radical and labor history. \$10.00

**The ILWU Story.** This book unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and dozens of rare photos of the union in action. \$5.00

**The Big Strike.** By Mike Quin. The classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. \$9.00

**The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront.** By David Wellman. The important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. \$20.00 (paperback)

**The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938.** By Harvey Schwartz. A new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union's organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. \$9.00

### VIDEOS

**"Eye of the Storm: Our Fight for Justice and a Better Contract."** A 58-minute DVD feature documentary film produced and directed by Amie Williams. Eye of the Storm tells the story of the 2002 longshore lockout on the West Coast. DVD Version \$5.00

**"We Are the ILWU."** A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about what the union meant in their lives and what it needs to survive and thrive, along with film clips, historical photos and an original musical score. DVD or VHS version \$5.00

**"Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges."** A 17-minute DVD of the original video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorializes Harry Bridges through still photographs, recorded interviews, and reminiscences. Originally produced for the 1990 memorial service in San Francisco. DVD \$5.00

## Scholarship for Local 10 families

Trustees of the Smolin-Melin Scholarship Fund are prepared to accept applications for scholarships for the academic year 2010-2011. **June 1, 2010 is the application deadline.**

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

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

Based always on available assets, the Fund historically has awarded scholarships in a range from \$1000 to \$2500 for full-time students at four-year colleges or universities, and from \$750 to \$1750 for full-time students at two-year colleges.

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

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

To request an application, simply call Mathilda Mendonca 415-771-6400. She will then send you the application form with the necessary information.

## ILWU BOOK & VIDEO ORDER FORM

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\_\_\_ copies of **Along the Shore** @ two for \$5.= \$ \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copies of **The Legacy of 1934** @ two for \$5 = \$ \_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ copies of **ILWU Story** @ \$5 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ copies of **The Union Makes Us Strong** @ \$20 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copies of **The March Inland** @ \$9 ea.= \$ \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copies of **Eye of the Storm** DVD @ \$5 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copies of **We Are the ILWU** DVD @ \$5 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copies of **We Are the ILWU** VHS @ \$5 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ copies of **A Life on the Beam** DVD @ \$5 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_

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