



# THE DISPATCHER

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Teaser photo Local 502 raises money for Children's Hospital [page 2](#)



**Sticking together for victory:** After a long and hard fought campaign that included strong support from the ILWU family, community supporters, environmental groups and elected officials, Waste Management workers won a fair contract with yearly raises that will reach \$20.94 an hour by 2019 for recycling sorters.

## Recyclers score two victories with support from ILWU & community

**D**uring the final days of October, two groups of Northern California recycling workers decided that they would no longer tolerate indignities and discrimination from their employers. One group voted overwhelmingly to join the ILWU. Another group – already members of ILWU Local 6 – walked off their jobs for a week-long strike.

### Striking for respect

“They think we’re insignificant people,” declared striker Dinora Jordan on the picket line. “They don’t think we count and don’t value our work. But we’re the ones who find dead animals on the conveyor belts. All the time we have to watch for hypodermic needles. If they don’t learn to respect us now, they never will.”

### Big profits at WM

Jordan’s employer is Waste Management of Alameda County whose parent, Waste Management, Inc. (WM), is a giant corporation that handles garbage and recycling throughout North America. In just the second quarter of 2014, WM generated \$3.56 billion in revenue and \$210 million in profit, “an improvement in both our net cash provided by operations and our free cash flow,” according to CEO David P. Steiner.

### Millions for the CEO

Shareholders received a 35 cent per share quarterly dividend, and the company used \$600 million of its cash in a massive share buyback program. Two years ago, Steiner was given 135,509 shares (worth \$6.5 million) for a performance bonus.

### Years with no contract

But at WM’s facility in San Leandro, California, the company was unwilling to reach a fair contract with Local 6 for three years.

On October 23, members of the union Negotiating Committee returned to the facility after another fruitless session. They called workers, including Jordan, together to offer a report on the progress in bargaining, a standard practice for the recyclers at Local 6.

### Sparking the strike

One supervisor agreed to the shop floor meeting, but another would not. The workers met anyway. Then the second supervisor told the vast majority of workers that they were being disciplined and to clock-out, go home, and lose pay for the rest of the day. The same supervisor

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# LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

Dear Editor,

My father, Alfred Victor Jr., a Local 18 longshoreman from West Sacramento entered into rest on October 1. He was 91 years old and passed away peacefully at home where he wanted to be. My father was a great man. He became a longshoreman after serving in World War II. For his service, he received the WWII Victory Medal, WWII Victory Medal-TWX-WD45, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, and the American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal. He was buried with full military honors.



He became a longshoreman in 1948 and married my mother that same year. He was one of 13 Class A longshoremen who were asked to come to West Sacramento to start a new port.

He lived a long and great life of surviving for five generations. He loved his family and his union and he was to be an ILWU member and one of the founding members of Local 18.

Sharon K Victor  
Sacramento, CA

Dear Editor,

I am writing to note the passing of my wife of 19 years, Anne Andrews at the age of 69. She was a devoted wife and proud supporter of labor, Local 26 and the ILWU. She will be greatly missed.

Arnold Andrews, Local 26 (Ret)  
North Platte, NE

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)



**Senator Sanders visits ILWU:** Only a few U.S. Senators have consistently stood with the ILWU and working families against powerful corporate interests, and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is one of the best. Never afraid to criticize Wall Street or advocate for unions, Sanders is an "independent" who calls-out the sell-outs in Washington. In mid-October he came to Richmond, CA to rally citizens against the Chevron Corporation's attempt to buy City Council votes with \$3 million in campaign cash – and replace the progressive, pro-union City Council members with a company-backed slate. The next day he visited with union leaders, including ILWU International President Bob McEllrath and Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, before making a speech to hundreds at a nearby church. Some are urging Sanders to run in the Presidential primary against Hillary Clinton who is backed by Wall Street, supports free trade agreements, and other corporate priorities.

## Local 502 four-year donation total to Vancouver Children's Hospital tops \$126,000

For the fourth straight year, Local 502 members have raised funds for the British Columbia Children's Hospital. Every year the fundraising effort has beaten previous records. This year the record was beaten by \$9,000; Local 502 members raised \$41,502 which brings the four-year total to \$126,008.

"This is a collective effort in which everyone digs deep to help. From the newest casual recruit to the most senior member, everyone really puts their heart and soul into this fundraising drive," said Bal Singh Sanghera. "Our executive and officers worked hard to make it a success. The fundraising team is humbled by the support and commitment we received."

A team of volunteers along with BA Rocky Thompson made an appearance on live TV to present the donation. The Telethon is broadcast throughout British Columbia and viewed by millions.

The generosity of ILWU members is greatly appreciated by the



hospital. The annual Telethon helps to fund and provide medical aid that is not subsidized by the government. Lauren Wagner from the Children's Hospital stated, "The donations have helped in pediatric cancer research including the discovery of a new drug with no side effects that has

improved the three-year survival rate from 20% to 75%, and enabled us to upgrade and purchase over 55 pieces of equipment including the EEG/ICU inpatient monitoring system in the Pediatric ICU. The time, energy and dedication that you put into organizing your team's

fundraising activities are not only inspiring but greatly appreciated. It's my honor to recognize and thank you for your achievement and for making a difference."

The TV presentation can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uayAseE8OrU>

## DISPATCHER

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**Truck driving class in Dutch Harbor:** ILWU members completed a two-week truck driving class taught in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, Alaska taught by instructors and fellow union members Joey Echavarria and Jeff Hancock, using the equipment of APL and Horizon Lines. From left to right: Jorge Alveal, Echavarria, Jim Paulin, Patrick Santiago, Rudolfo Yap, and Hancock.



**Delta Western workers strike in Dutch Harbor:** Fuel terminal workers walked off their jobs on October 16 at the Delta Western fuel dock in Dutch Harbor, Alaska after a manager unfairly fired their co-worker, Manolito "Mo" Reyes. Delta Western workers formed their new union last April with help from the Inlandboatmen's Union, the ILWU's Marine Division. Contract talks to establish fair workplace rules and conditions have been ongoing, but the company refused to negotiate over the termination of Reyes, who was unfairly accused of a safety violation. "We are outraged that Delta Western retaliated against Mo because he was a union supporter," said co-worker Leo Dacio who faced retaliation himself after management demoted him and cut his hours for supporting the union – while two workers not actively supporting the union received promotions. The Filipino crew at Delta Western says the company is discriminating against them by providing special favors and advantages to a group of white employees flown-in from Anchorage who receive better pay and benefits. "Playing favorites and punishing us instead of talking things over and working together is disrespectful," said co-worker Erwin Rioldil. "Delta Western needs to work with us to create fair and transparent rules."

## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 10:** Oscar R. Vilanova; **Local 13:** Louis S. Lorenzana; Joe B. Di Massa; Michael J. Morton; Marijo Zuvich; Merwyn G. Jones; Wade C. Strickland; Katherine M. Avila; Earl S. Sears; Alton E. Davis; Gerald E. Millican; Fred S. Schiazzano; **Local 19:** Lanny R. Mcgrew; Glen E. Miller; **Local 21:** Michael K. Muller; **Local 23:** Leslie L. Richardson; **Local 29:** Patricia M. Russo; **Local 34:** Ralph G. Bucher; **Local 40:** Gary B. Angus; **Local 63:** Teddy J. Dowe; John A. Eckenrod; Alan R. Cotter; Elaine M. Powell; Joseph A. Wilvers; **Local 94:** John Falangetti; Warren D. Brown;

### DECEASED PENSIONERS:

**Local 10:** Lester Jones; Victor Pereira; **Local 13:** Thomas P. Stanich; George S. Mirko; William R. Espinoza; **Local 14:** Richard E. Streiff; Harvey Watkins;

**Local 21:** Arnold V. Johnson; Rockne Foshaug; Gary C. Firth; **Local 23:** John W. Borland; Robert J. Hunt; **Local 24:** John A. Flink; **Local 25:** John A. Haley; **Local 27:** Wayne L. Danielson; Len A. Gallauher; **Local 40:** John Clemson Jr.; **Local 46:** Alfred T. Zavala; **Local 54:** James A. Piazza; Melvin Nunez; **Local 63:** Willis E. Aiken; Boris Antolos (Cathryn); **Local 91:** Willard D. Whitaker

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 8:** Lethabelle Tovey; Naomi A. Phillips; Janet K. Cox; **Local 10:** Dorothy C. York; Frances Coleman; **Local 13:** Toni Soto; Ethelinda P. Dacanay; **Local 19:** Anna P. Furlong; **Local 21:** Florence A. Dixon; **Local 34:** Maria E. Carballar; **Local 54:** Garnet P. Brodehl; **Local 63:** Margie Blake;



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gives the employer the upper hand.

**PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR JOB.  
DISCUSS UNION BUSINESS AT THE HALL ... NOT ONLINE!**

Remember: The employer, the government and the media will use your words against individual members and your Union. Let's protect ourselves and each other by discussing Union business at the Dispatch Hall and at meetings... and keep job-related photos, videos and posts offline!

**An Injury to One is an Injury to All.**

## IN MEMORIUM

# Oscar Loya: Distinguished by his service

Local 46 mourns the passing of our brother and our friend, Oscar Loya. After a three-year battle with cancer, Oscar passed away on August 6th with his beloved family by his side. He was 54.

Port Hueneme workers held Oscar in the highest regard for his exceptional job skills, incomparable work ethic and his dedicated leadership. As a second-generation longshoreman with 36 years in the trade, Oscar mastered every type of equipment used on the waterfront, from winches to top-handlers, Hysters and whirly cranes. In the early years, he travelled south to work with Hueneme co-workers to the ports of Long Beach and San Diego where he learned a great deal about stevedoring and made many friends. Later, in Port Hueneme, he became a supplemental foreman and then a registered clerk

Oscar was committed to the well-being of his local and the ILWU. He held various positions over the years, includ-

ing trustee, sergeant at arms, executive board member, balloting committee member, Vice President and Secretary Dispatcher. In each role, he worked diligently and conscientiously to improve and manage the affairs of Local 46.

Oscar held a keen respect for others and was renowned for his generous spirit: he always gave more than he took. When considering local union issues, his approach was earnest and evenhanded. Fellow workers and friends were drawn towards him because he was helpful, unassuming, and trustworthy.

"When people talked to Oscar, whether in casual conversation or in expressing a serious concern, he always took the time to listen," said Local 46 member William Ruelas. "He was interested in what others thought and had to say. He engaged others by asking questions. He had a real knack for drawing people out! Without fail, others walked away feeling appreciated. Oscar warmly welcomed visitors from other ports and made them feel at home."



His wife, Rosie Loya, said: "Oscar really enjoyed his work. He often expressed gratitude for having such a good job. He felt very fortunate to be a member of Local 46 and the ILWU."

"One of the nicest, hardest working and helpful longshoreman on the waterfront. I will miss him. So will many other longshoremen who were lucky enough to meet him and get to know him," said Andy Trucanich of Local 94.

"The ILWU has lost an extraordinary union brother. Oscar was a leader who led by example. I will greatly miss my friend," said Local 46 Secretary/Dispatcher, Mag Flores.

Oscar was loved and respected by all, not just in Local 46, but by many workers from Local 13 and Local 29. His brothers and sisters in Port Hueneme will always remember his contributions and how much he enriched our lives.

– Submitted by Local 46

# Port of Anacortes contract fight expands

Hundreds of visitors attending the Port of Anacortes “Bier on the Pier” festival and “Floating Boat Show” in early October encountered a giant banner with a hard-hitting message: “Port of Anacortes: blowing your tax dollars, unfair to maintenance workers, accountability now!”

The banner and public outreach materials were distributed by a dozen Port workers, local community members, supporters from ILWU Local 25, the Inlandboatmen’s Union (IBU), Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 191, Carpenters Local 756, plus staff and volunteers from “We Do the Work” radio.

Visitors attending the events showed concern about problems being raised by Port workers. Hundreds accepted leaflets explaining how maintenance workers at the Port are trying to keep things running safely and smoothly – while Port bureaucrats are breaking labor laws and wasting public funds.

Last November, the Port’s maintenance workers voted to join ILWU Local 25. They made their decision after facing years of mismanagement and abusive treatment from Port supervisors.

Instead of honoring the workers’ decision and cooperating with employees, managers ordered workers to attend mandatory meetings with Port executives who threatened union supporters for wearing ILWU buttons. The Port workers held their ground.

“We refused to be intimidated, stood up together for respect, and voted to form our union after the managers illegally threatened us,” said Mike Wray, a Port maintenance employee.

The Washington State Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) ruled in September that Port management acted improperly and outside the law. “The State validated what workers and community members have been saying publicly for months now,” said Dave Bost, one of

several maintenance workers who was threatened by Port managers.

After winning their union election, maintenance workers began to seek a fair contract – while management continued violating the law.

Port managers illegally changed the employees’ health plan; eliminated parking options for maintenance workers and obstructed union testimony before state investigators – by allowing a management witnesses to stay on the clock while Local 25 members were forced to use vacation, unpaid or comp time to testify in a PERC hearing over illegal management activity.

Port administrators recently admitted to a local newspaper that they’ve spent over \$50,000 in public funds so far on private lawyers to negotiate a simple contract with employees. As of November, community members estimate that the Port’s legal fees are approaching \$100,000.

During the summer and fall months, union and community members packed six separate Port Commission meetings to offer public support and solidarity for the Local 25 maintenance workers. Supporters criticized the anti-union tactics used by managers and demanded more accountability from the Commission. Speakers included members of the IBU, Pacific Coast Pensioners Association, Skagit Valley Labor Democrats, Carpenters Locals 70 and 756, Fire Fighters Local 1537, WA State Council of Fire Fighters, IBEW Local 191, Laborers Local 292, and SEIU Local 925. Letters of support for the maintenance workers were sent to the Commission by officials from ILWU Canada, Steel Workers 12-591 and WA State Representative Kristine Lytton.

Despite hearing strong support from the public, the Commissioners decided to played defense and do some damage control by inviting the Port’s Executive Director and lawyer to testify at length in late September. The duo downplayed management’s violations and offered misinformation about working conditions and the contract talks.



Community members put up a picket line which shut down loading operations.

Union members and supporters decided it was time to take the fight outside the hearing room, launching public leaflet actions and banner displays at major Port events during the first week of October.

“Someone has to hold management accountable,” said Tyler Ashbach, a Business Agent for ILWU Local 25. “If the elected Port Commissioners won’t do it, then it’s up to Port workers and our Anacortes community.”

Community members set up a picket line on October 2nd at the Port’s main industrial loading operation. ILWU Local 25 Longshore members honored it, delaying the transfer of industrial coke onto a barge at the pier. This was the second time that Longshore members recognized a picket line, following a similar incident in July.

At the October 2 Port Commission meeting, Commissioner Keith Rubin stated, “I believe we have a problem here at the Port of Anacortes.” He noted that “workers who feel like they’re getting a fair deal don’t organize a new Port bargaining unit.”

Similar concerns were echoed by lifelong Anacortes resident Tom Montgomery, a retired 35-year Shell Oil refinery worker. “I’ve always been proud of the Port and always supported your mission of producing and supporting new and long-time family wage-jobs—that is, until now,” he

told Commissioners. “I’m appalled at the actions of the Port Director and his assistant during the last several months, specifically where it concerns their handling of the so-called ‘ongoing negotiations.’”

Local 19 member Rich Austin, Jr. also testified at the hearing, noting his experience as a volunteer who is helping the Port workers with their contract negotiations. “There’s been avoidance to bargain by the Port, based on the schedule of their attorney,” he said, explaining how workers have made many lengthy trips to accommodate the schedule of the Port’s expensive private attorney. “We’re serious about getting a contract and are willing to drive there,” adding that the Commission should get more involved to help reach a resolution.

Commissioner Rubin directed his final comments on the Port management. “We have a culture where we treat our local ILWU folks like a necessary evil rather than a partner, and I think that needs to change... I think that needs to change at the top,” he said.

Port worker Tyler Ashbach said he was pleased to hear productive comments coming from the Commissioners, and believes it indicates “we are on the right track” thanks to solidarity and community support.



**Fundraising for the Jimmy Herman memorial:** A fundraising breakfast to raise money to complete the James R Herman Memorial Sculpture at Pier 27 was held October 9th at the Delancey Street Foundation, a drug and alcohol recovery program which was supported by Herman. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi was the guest of honor at the event which also featured former San Francisco mayors Art Agnos and Willie Brown. ILWU International Secretary Treasurer and San Francisco Port Commissioner Willie Adams and Local 34 President Sean Farley also spoke at the event. In the photo on the left from left to right are ILWU International Vice President (Hawaii) Wesley Furtado, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and International President Robert McEllrath. In the photo on the right, ILWU International Secretary Treasurer Willie Adams speaking at the event about the life and legacy of former ILWU President Jimmy Herman.

To contribute, call Local 34 President Sean Farley at 415-362-8852.



**Infrastructure investment at Port of Seattle:** Local 52 member Max Vekich, speaking at the Port of Seattle at ceremony announcing \$20 million in federal grant money dedicated to infrastructure improvements at Terminal 46. (Left to right): Port of Seattle Commissioner John Creighton, (Behind Max Vekich) Port of Seattle CEO Ted Fick, Congressman Jim McDermott, Dept. of Transportation Secretary Fox, Senator Patty Murray, and Washington Council on International Trade President Eric Schinfield.

# Trabajadores del reciclaje se apuntan dos victorias con apoyo del ILWU y la comunidad

**S**AN LEANDRO, CA—En los últimos días de octubre, dos grupos de trabajadores del reciclaje del norte de California decidieron que ya no iban a tolerar las humillaciones y discriminación por parte de sus empleadores. Un grupo votó casi unánimemente por afiliarse a ILWU. Otro grupo – los que ya eran miembros del Local 6 de ILWU – hicieron un paro laboral que duró una semana.

## Huelga por el respeto

“Nos consideran personas insignificantes,” dijo la huelguista Dinora Jordan. “Piensan que no contamos y no valoran nuestro trabajo. Pero nosotros somos los que nos encontramos con animales muertos en las bandas transportadoras. Siempre tenemos que cuidarnos de las agujas hipodérmicas. Si no nos respetan ahora, nunca lo harán.”

## Grandes ganancias de WM

El empleador de la Sra. Jordan es Waste Management, Inc. (WM), una gran corporación que se encarga de recoger y reciclar basura en todo Norte América. Sólo en el segundo trimestre de 2014, WM generó entradas de \$3.56 billones y \$210 millones en ganancias, “un aumento tanto de entradas netas por nuestras operaciones como en el flujo de dinero en efectivo libre,” según el Director General, David P. Steiner.

## Millones para el Director General

Los accionistas recibieron un dividendo trimestral de 35 centavos por acción, y la empresa usó \$600 millones de su dinero en efectivo para la compra masiva de acciones. Hace dos años, a Steiner se le dio 135,509 acciones (con valor de \$6.5 millones) como bonificación por su buen desempeño, para sumar al gran tajo de acciones que ya posee.

## Años sin tener un contrato laboral

Sin embargo, en las instalaciones de WM en San Leandro, California la empresa se negó por 3 años a dar al Local 6 un contrato digno.

El 23 de octubre, miembros del Comité de Negociaciones del Sindicato volvieron a la planta después de otra sesión improductiva. Reunieron a sus compañeros de trabajo, Jordan entre ellos, para informarles de los avances de las negociaciones, algo que acostumbraban los trabajadores del reciclaje del Local 6.

## La chispa que provocó la huelga

Un supervisor estuvo de acuerdo en que se realizara la junta en la planta, mientras que el otro no. Los trabajadores se reunieron de todas maneras. Luego el segundo supervisor avisó a la mayoría de los trabajadores que quedaban sujetos a medidas disciplinarias, que marcaran la hora de salida, se fueran a sus casas y se les descontaría el pago por el resto de la jornada. El mismo supervisor permitió que sólo algunos trabajadores selectos siguieran trabajando para poder operar la instalación.



Trabajadores de ACI, incluyendo al reciclador Jose Gomez han estado compartiendo sus historias con reporteros, políticos y líderes comunitarios.

“Eso fue cuando finalmente dijimos –¡Ya basta!” explica Jordan. “Como Sindicato, nos apoyamos mutuamente. Si algunos no podemos trabajar, entonces los demás también dejamos de trabajar.”

Los trabajadores decidieron abandonar el trabajo al mismo tiempo, e inmediatamente se reunieron en el salón del Sindicato, donde el 98% de ellos votaron a favor de la huelga en VM, la cual fue muy animosa y duró una semana.

## Otra votación cerca de allí

En otra instalación en la misma ciudad, los trabajadores de Alameda County Industries (ACI) estaban también bastante enojados. En el recuento de votos que duró hasta bien entrada la noche en un gran galpón rodeados por pacas de papel y plástico reciclado, los agentes de la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales desdoblaron las boletas echadas por los trabajadores en una elección de representantes sindicales.

## Los trabajadores querían ser representados por ILWU

Cuando se anunció que 83 por ciento de ellos habían echado sus votos por el Local 6, los trabajadores empezaron a gritar “¡Viva la Unión!” y se pusieron a bailar por un pasillo lleno de casilleros.

## Sucio y peligroso

El separar basura es trabajo sucio y peligroso. En 2012, dos trabajadores del East Bay perdieron la vida en instalaciones de reciclaje. Salvo excepciones notables, el meter las manos en los cartones y botes de lata que van pasando rápidamente en una banda transportadora no es trabajo bien pagado. Es más, se paga mucho menos que, por ejemplo, lo que se les paga a los choferes que recogen los contenedores de basura a la orilla de la acera. En la zona de la Bahía, la mayoría de los que separan la basura son mujeres inmigrantes de México y Centro América y trabajadores afroamericanos.

## Levantamiento de trabajadores

En la primavera de este año, los trabajadores del reciclaje de Alameda County Industries empezaron a rechazar su condición de trabajadores de segunda clase, las malas condiciones

de trabajo y su categoría de trabajadores “temporales permanentes”. No sólo se convirtieron en activistas en un movimiento que cobró fuerza en todo el East Bay, sino que sus protestas motivaron la intervención del público para que se detuviera el despido de trabajadores indocumentados.

## Contratistas particulares

Los camiones de recolecta de basura manejados por afiliados del Sindicato de Choferes (Teamsters) llegan uno por minuto en el plantel de ACI a vertir sus cargas malolientes recogidas en Livermore, Alameda, Dublin y San Leandro. Dichas ciudades contratan a esta empresa particular para que rescate los materiales reciclables. En la zona de la Bahía, sólo la ciudad de Berkeley tiene su propio servicio de recolecta. Todas las demás contratan a compañías particulares; incluso Berkeley subcontrata el trabajo de reciclaje con una empresa independiente que separa la basura.

## Temporales permanentes

Pero ACI además contrató una agencia de empleados temporales, Select Staffing, para hacer el trabajo de reciclaje en sus instalaciones. Debido a esta subcontratación, los trabajadores quedaron privados de derechos laborales que hubieron tenido de otra manera; no tenían derecho a seguro médico, beneficios de jubilación, vacaciones o días festivos pagados. Los salarios también eran muy bajos. Después de recibir un aumento hace dos años, los clasificadores de basura recibían sólo \$9.00 por hora en el turno del día y \$9.20 por trabajar en el turno de la noche, sin beneficios salvo unos cuantos días libres por año.

## Salarios ilegales

El año pasado, los trabajadores descubrieron que sus salarios eran demasiado bajos porque se estaba violando la ley. La ciudad de San Leandro aprobó en 2007 una Ley Municipal de Salarios Dignos, que requería que en 2013 se pagara \$14.17 por hora o \$12.67 si recibían beneficios de salud. En el 2014, la tarifa es de \$14.57 y \$13.07. El otoño pasado, algunos de los trabajadores en las bandas transportadoras recibieron volantes anun-

continued on page 7



Lluvia durante el segundo día de la Huelga no detubo a recicladores de Waste Management (I-D) María Nambo, Rosa Nares, María Elena Vivas.

# Recyclers score two victories with support from ILWU & community

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allowed a few hand-picked workers to remain on the job in order to run the facility.

“That’s when we finally said ‘Enough!’” Jordan explains. “As a union, we support each other. If some of us can’t work, then none of us will.”

Workers decided to walk out together, and immediately met at the union hall where 98% voted to strike WM in a spirited action that continued for a week.

## Another vote nearby

At another facility in the same city, workers at Alameda County Industries (ACI) were equally angry. At the end of a late night vote count in a cavernous sorting bay, surrounded by bales of recycled paper and plastic, agents of the National Labor Relations Board unfolded the ballots in a union representation election.

## Workers want ILWU

When they announced that 83 percent had been cast for Local 6, workers began shouting “¡Viva La Union!” and dancing down along a row of lockers.

## Dirty & dangerous

Sorting trash is dangerous and dirty work. In 2012, two East Bay workers were killed in recycling facilities. With some notable exceptions, putting your hands into fast moving conveyor belts filled with cardboard and cans does not pay well – much less, for instance, than the jobs of the drivers who pick up the containers at the curb. And in the Bay Area, sorting recyclables is done largely by workers of color – many of whom are women – mostly immigrants from Mexico and Central America and African Americans.

## Workers rise-up

This spring, recycling workers at Alameda County Industries began challenging their second-class status, poor working conditions and “perma-temp” status. Not only did they become activists in a growing movement throughout the East Bay, but their protests galvanized public action to stop the firings of undocumented workers.

## Private contractors

Garbage trucks driven by Teamsters carrying recycled trash arrive every minute at the ACI facility, dumping their fragrant loads gathered on routes in Livermore, Alameda, Dublin and San Leandro. These cities contract with the private firm to process their recyclables. In the Bay Area, only one city, Berkeley, picks up its own garbage. All the rest hold contracts with private companies; even Berkeley contracts recycling to an independent sorter.

## Perma-temps

But ACI went even further by using a temp agency, Select Staffing, to employ workers for their recycling operation. The outsourcing scheme left workers with fewer rights on the job,

no health insurance, retirement, vacations or holidays. Wages are also very low. Even after a raise two years ago, sorters are paid only \$9.00 per hour with no benefits except for a few days off each year.

## Illegal wages

Last year, workers discovered that their wages were illegally low. San Leandro passed a Living Wage Ordinance in 2007, mandating pay (in 2014) of \$14.57 per hour or \$13.07 with health benefits. Last fall, some of the workers on the lines received leaflets advertising a health and safety training for recycling workers put on by Local 6. They decided to attend in order to protect themselves from hazards at work.

The union’s organizing director Agustin Ramirez says, “When they told me what they were paid, I knew something was very wrong.”

Ramirez put them in touch with a lawyer, who sent ACI and Select a letter stating workers’ intention to file suit for back wages. In early February, 18 workers, including every person but one who’d signed, were told that Select had been audited by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) a year before. ICE, the company said, was questioning their immigration status.

## Fighting back

Instead of quietly disappearing, though, about half the sorters walked off the lines on February 27, protesting the impending firings. They were joined by faith leaders, members of Alameda County United for Immigrant Rights, and workers from other recycling facilities, including WM. The next week, however, all eighteen accused of being undocumented were fired.

“Some of us have been there 14 years, so why now?” wondered sorter Ignacia Garcia.

Despite fear ignited by the firings and the so-called “silent” immigration raid, workers began to join the union. Within months, workers were wearing buttons and stickers up and down the sorting lines. At the same time, sorters went met with city council members, denouncing the raid and illegal wages, asking councilmembers to put pressure on the company processing their recyclables.

## Organizing brings change

By the time Local 6 asked for the election, ACI had stopped campaigning against the union, likely out of a fear of alienating its city clients, and had ended its relationship with the temp agency. The class-action lawsuit filed by workers was also settled for \$1.2 million.

When the Labor Board counted ballots from ACI workers on October 21, only one voted for no union while 49 cast ballots for the ILWU. A campaign by the Teamsters, who had secured a spot on the ballot, fell short with only 9 votes; probably because Teamsters Local 70 has represented ACI drivers for decades, but was unable or unwill-



ACI workers celebrate winning vote to join ILWU.

ing to help recycling workers during that time.

## Seeking help at city hall

Because cities award contracts for recycling services, they indirectly control how much money is available for workers’ wages. That’s taken the fight for more money and better conditions into city halls throughout the East Bay. Waste Management has the Oakland city garbage contract, and garbage truck drivers have been Teamster members for decades. When WM took over Oakland’s recycling contract in 1991, however, it signed an agreement with ILWU Local 6. Workers had voted for Local 6 on the recycling lines, at the big garbage dump in the Altamont Pass and even among the clerical workers in the company office.

## Retaliation

At WM, workers also faced immigration raids. In 1998, sorters at its San Leandro facility staged a wild-cat work stoppage over safety issues, occupying the company’s lunchroom. Three weeks later, immigration agents showed up, audited company records and eventually deported eight of them. And last year, three more workers were fired at WM, accused of not having legal immigration status.

## ILWU solidarity

When Teamster drivers were locked out of WM in 2007 for more than a month over company demands for concessions, Local 6 members respected their lines and didn’t work. That was not reciprocated, however, when recyclers staged their walkouts over firings last year.

Last week the Teamsters told drivers to cross Local 6 lines again. One unidentified Teamster officer told journalist Darwin Bond-Graham that Local 6 had not asked for strike sanction.

“Our members can’t just stop working,” he said.

In fact, Local 6 officers immediately sought sanction from the Teamster Joint Council but the request was ignored during the week-long strike. And instead of solidarity, Teamster officials directed members to drive through the recyclers’ picket lines. Despite the hostility and indifference from Teamster officials, most drivers

expressed support for the recyclers – along with regrets that their union officials had failed to respond with solidarity. A number of drivers said they were planning to call-in sick instead of breaking the strike, and another larger group of drivers took up a collection that bought lunch for all the strikers. An impressive gesture of solidarity also came from officials at SEIU Local 1021, who arrived at the picket line, rallied with strikers, provided lunch for everyone and pledged to provide additional resources.

Under the contract that expired three years ago, WM sorters got \$12.50—more than ACI, but a long way from San Francisco and San Jose, where Teamster recyclers get \$21 an hour. To get wages up, recycling workers in the East Bay organized a coalition to establish a new standard; the Campaign for Sustainable Recycling.

## Community support

Two dozen organizations have joined the campaign in addition to the ILWU, including the Sierra Club, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Movement Generation, the Justice and Ecology Project, the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy and the Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (FAME).

FAME leaders visited picket lines and held prayer sessions with workers during the strike.

San Francisco, where recyclers earn \$21 per hour, is charging customers \$34 per month for garbage and recycling service. East Bay companies are paying recyclers half that wage - while East Bay ratepayers still pay almost as much each month for their services.

## A new pattern & standard

Fremont became the first test for the campaign’s strategy of encouraging cities to mandate wage increases for recyclers. Last December, the Fremont City Council passed a rate increase of one penny per day per household – with the condition that its recycler, BLT, agree to raises for workers. The union contract with BLT now mandates a wage of \$14.59 per hour, rising to \$20.94 in 2019 – plus affordable family health benefits.

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# Trabajadores del reciclaje se apuntan dos victorias con apoyo del ILWU y la comunidad

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ciendo una capacitación dada por el Local 6 para trabajadores del reciclaje sobre la protección de su salud y seguridad en el trabajo, a la cual decidieron asistir.

El director de organización del Sindicato, Agustín Ramírez dijo, "Cuando me informaron lo que se les estaba pagando, yo sabía que algo andaba muy mal."

Ramírez los puso en contacto con un abogado, quien envió una carta a ACI y a Select informándoles que los trabajadores pensaban presentar una demanda para recuperar los salarios atrasados. A principio de febrero, a 18 trabajadores, incluyendo a todos los que habían firmado salvo uno, se les informó que el Servicio de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE) había investigado a Select el año anterior. Según la compañía, ICE estaba investigando el estado migratorio de los empleados.

## Opusieron resistencia

Sin embargo, en lugar de esconderse o desaparecerse, la mitad de los clasificadores de basura abandonaron las bandas transportadoras el 27 de febrero para protestar los despidos que se avecinaban. A ellos se unieron líderes religiosos, los miembros de Alameda County United for Immigrant Rights y trabajadores de otras plantas de reciclaje, incluso de WM. Sin embargo, a la siguiente semana, los diez y ocho supuestos indocumentados fueron despedidos.

"Algunos hemos estado aquí por 14 años, entonces ¿por qué se esperaron hasta ahora?" preguntó una de las clasificadoras, Ignacia García.

A pesar del miedo provocado por los despidos y la llamada redada de inmigración "silenciosa", los trabajadores empezaron a unirse al Sindicato. Dentro de unos meses, los trabajadores llevaban puesto los botones y etiquetas a lo largo de toda la banda transportadora. Al mismo tiempo, los clasificadores de basura empezaron a reunirse con

los miembros del consejo municipal para denunciar la redada y los salarios ilegales, y pedir a los consejales que presionaron a la compañía que estaba procesando los reciclables de su ciudad.

## Se logran cambios con la organización

Para cuando el Local 6 solicitó la elección, ACI ya había dejado de hacer campaña contra el Sindicato, probablemente porque temía disgustar a los funcionarios de la ciudad, y había dado por terminada su relación con la agencia de empleados temporales. La compañía también estuvo de acuerdo en pagar \$1.2 millones para resolver la demanda colectiva presentada por los trabajadores.

Cuando la Junta Laboral contó las boletas de los trabajadores de ACI el 21 de octubre, sólo hubo un voto en contra mientras que 49 votaron a favor del ILWU. A pesar de que los Teamsters lograron un lugar en la boleta, su campaña quedó corta, pues sólo recibieron 9 votos. Es probable que esto se deba al hecho de que el Local 70 de los Teamsters ha representado a los choferes de ACI por décadas, pero no pudo o no quiso ayudar a los trabajadores del reciclaje durante ese tiempo.

## Buscando ayuda en la alcaldía

Debido a que los municipios conceden contratos a las empresas para los servicios de reciclaje, estos indirectamente controlan cuánto dinero está disponible para los salarios de los trabajadores. Es por eso que la lucha por más dinero y mejores condiciones ha llegado hasta las alcaldías en todo el East Bay.

Waste Management, Inc., ha sido contratado por la ciudad de Oakland para recolectar la basura, y los choferes de los camiones de esa compañía han sido miembros del sindicato Teamsters por décadas. Sin embargo, cuando WM se convirtió en el concesionario de reciclaje de Oakland en 1991 firmó un contrato de trabajo con el Local 6 de ILWU. Los trabajadores de las bandas trans-

portadores, el basurero de Altamont Pass e incluso los oficinistas de la compañía habían elegido al Local 6.

## Represalias

En WM, los trabajadores también afrontaron las redadas de inmigración. En 1998, los clasificadores de basura en la planta de San Leandro hicieron un paro salvaje debido a problemas de seguridad, ocupando el comedor de la compañía. Tres semanas después, se presentaron los agentes de inmigración, investigaron los registros de la compañía y finalmente deportaron a ocho empleados. Además, tres trabajadores más fueron despedidos el año pasado por WM, supuestamente porque su estado migratorio no estaba en regla.

## Solidaridad de ILWU

Cuando WM hizo un cierre patronal contra los choferes afiliados a los Teamsters in 2007 por más de un mes con tal de arrancarles concesiones, los afiliados del Local 6 respetaron su huelga y no entraron a trabajar. Sin embargo, el sindicato de choferes no se solidarizó cuando los trabajadores del reciclaje protestaron los despidos con un paro laboral el año pasado.

La semana pasada el sindicato Teamsters de nuevo les dijo a los choferes que no respetaran la huelga del Local 6. Un dirigente no identificado de los Teamsters le dijo al periodista Darwin Bond-Graham que el Local 6 no había solicitado su apoyo para la huelga.

"Nuestros miembros no pueden parar de trabajar así no más," dijo él.

De hecho, los dirigentes del Local 6 desde un principio solicitaron el apoyo para su huelga ante el Consejo Conjunto de los Teamsters pero este ignoró la petición durante la semana que duró la huelga. Y en lugar de la solidaridad, los dirigentes de los Teamsters dieron instrucciones a los choferes a que se cruzaran la línea de piqueteo de los trabajadores del reciclaje. A pesar de la hostilidad e indiferencia de los dirigentes del sindicato Teamsters, la mayoría de los choferes expresaron apoyo por los trabajadores del reciclaje – además de lamentar de que los dirigentes de su sindicato decidieron negarles la solidaridad. Varios choferes dijeron que pensaban reportarse enfermos en lugar de romper la huelga, y otro grupo numeroso de choferes hicieron una colecta para comprarles el almuerzo a todos

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La unidad ayudó a recicladores de Waste Management a ganar su lucha por un contrato con dramáticos aumentos y beneficios de salud accesibles (I - D) Josefina Villalba, Guadalupe García, Alicia "Licha" Macías, Francisca Peña y María Aguayo.

# Recyclers score two victories with support from ILWU & community

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Oakland then followed suit, requiring wage increases for sorters as part of its new residential recycling and garbage franchise agreements. Those 10-20 year agreements were both originally going entirely to California Waste Solutions, but after WM threatened a suit and a ballot initiative, it recovered the garbage contract, which also includes some commercial recycling services.

The new Local 6 contract for WM recyclers, which ended the strike yesterday, follows the same pattern and was approved last summer by the Oakland City Council which required the recycling wage and benefit standard to be included in the City's 2015 franchise agreement. The new ILWU/WM contract will provide workers with

a signing bonus of \$500 to \$1,500, depending on seniority, to provide some retroactive compensation for working three years under an old contract with no raises. All workers will get an immediate raise of \$1.48 per hour, and another 50 cents on New Year's. Starting next July, wages will rise \$1.39 per year until 2019, when the minimum wage for sorters will be \$20.94. The strikers at WM ratified their new agreement by a 95% margin.

But the strike was about much more than money and benefits. It was initiated and led by recycling workers determined to push back against what they felt was second-class treatment by an arrogant company that used to take them for granted. They gained new confidence, developed new leadership and made important solidarity connections

during their week. Despite the hardships and challenges that began each morning at 3:30 a.m., workers from -Alameda County Industries would come by to join the picket lines after their shift ended, offering help and support for the Waste Management strikers.

ILWU International President Bob McEllrath praised the recycling workers for their leadership and determination.

"By standing together on the picket line, these courageous workers showed all of us how to win with solidarity— even when some officials from other unions seemed more comfortable standing with management. The kind of unity and determination shown by recyclers is exactly what it takes to win against powerful employers in Alameda County – and all along the West Coast."

## Next up: ACI workers

Now that three Alameda County companies have agreed to provide the better wages and affordable health benefits defined by the Alameda County Recycling Worker Standard, the torch is being passed to workers at ACI so they can enjoy the same improvements. After WM workers voted by 95% to end their strike on the evening of October 30, and before adjourning to celebrate, they pledged to support the upcoming struggle by ACI workers for a similar contract that will include the Alameda County Recycling Worker Standard.

"We won our fight for fair raises and benefits, and now it's our turn to help the workers at ACI win their fight" said recycler Maria Sanchez.

# Trabajadores del reciclaje se apuntan dos victorias con apoyo del ILWU y la comunidad

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los huelguistas. Además, los dirigentes del Local 1021 de SEIU impresionaron con su solidaridad, presentándose en la línea de piqueteo, participando en la manifestación de los huelguistas, brindando el almuerzo para todos y prometiendo recursos adicionales.

De conformidad con el contrato de trabajo que se venció hace tres años, los clasificadores de WM recibían \$12.50 – más que ACI pero mucho menos que lo que se paga en San Francisco y San Jose, donde los trabajadores del reciclaje afiliados a los Teamsters reciben \$21 por hora. Para aumentar los salarios, los trabajadores del reciclaje del East Bay organizaron una coalición, la Campaña de Reciclaje Sostenible, con tal de establecer una nueva norma.

## Apoyo de la comunidad

Dos docenas de organizaciones se han unido a la campaña además de ILWU, incluso el Sierra Club, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Movement Generation, Justice and Ecology Project, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy y Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (FAME).

Los líderes de FAME visitaron las líneas de piqueteo e hicieron sesiones de oración con los trabajadores durante la huelga.

San Francisco, ciudad en que los trabajadores del reciclaje ganan \$21 por hora, está cobrando a los usuarios \$34 por mes por el servicio de recolección de basura y reciclaje. Las compañías del East Bay están pagando a los trabajadores la mitad de ese salario – a pesar de que los usuarios

están pagando casi la misma tarifa cada mes por los servicios.

## Una nueva norma y forma de proceder

En Fremont se probó por primera vez la estrategia de pedir a los municipios que requieran los aumentos salariales para los trabajadores del reciclaje. En diciembre del año pasado, el Consejo Municipal de Fremont aprobó un aumento en la tarifa de un centavo por día por hogar – a condición de que BLT, la empresa encargada del reciclaje, concediera aumentos a sus empleados. El contrato colectivo de trabajo con BLT ahora establece una tarifa salarial de \$14.59 por hora, con aumentos anuales hasta ganar \$20.94 en 2019, además de beneficios de asistencia médica para la familia a precios asequibles.

Oakland después siguió con esta pauta, requiriendo aumentos salariales para los que separan la basura como parte de los nuevos contratos de franquicia de los servicios de reciclaje y recolección de la basura residencial. Aquellos contratos con duración de 10 a 20 años inicialmente se concedían siempre a California Waste Solutions, pero después de que WM amenazó con presentar una demanda judicial y una iniciativa electoral ante los votantes, recuperó la concesión de la recolección de basura, la cual también incluye una parte de la recolección de la basura comercial.

El nuevo contrato laboral del Local 6 para los trabajadores del reciclaje de WM que motivó el levantamiento de la huelga ayer sigue la misma pauta y fue aprobado el verano pasado por el Consejo Municipal de Oakland, el cual requiere que los aumentos salariales

y beneficios para los trabajadores del reciclaje sean incluidos en el contrato concedido por el municipio para 2015. El nuevo contrato entre ILWU y WM establecerá una bonificación de \$500 a \$1,500 para los trabajadores del reciclaje si aprueban el contrato, dependiendo de su antigüedad, para que estos reciban retroactivamente una remuneración parcial por haber trabajado por tres años con el antiguo contrato de trabajo sin recibir ningún aumento. Todos los trabajadores recibirán un aumento inmediato de \$1.48 por hora, y otros 50 centavos en el Día de Año Nuevo. Empezando en julio del próximo año, las tarifas salariales aumentarán en \$1.39 por año hasta 2019, para que los clasificadores de basura lleguen a recibir un salario mínimo de \$20.94. Los huelguistas de WM votaron en un 95% a favor del nuevo contrato.

Sin embargo, la huelga se trató de mucho más que el dinero y los beneficios. Fue iniciada y dirigida por los trabajadores del reciclaje que estaban decididos a oponerse a lo que sentían que era el trato despectivo por una compañía prepotente que antes los subestimaba. Lograron una mayor confianza en si mismos, se formaron nuevos líderes y establecieron relaciones solidarias importantes durante su semana. A pesar de las dificultades y retos que los esperaban todos los días empezando a las 3:30 a.m., los trabajadores de Alameda County Industries pasaban a unirse a las líneas de piqueteo después de su jornada para ofrecer ayuda y apoyo a los huelguistas de Waste Management.

El Presidente Internacional de ILWU, Bob McEllrath, halagó a los tra-

bajadores del reciclaje por su liderazgo y valor.

“Al mantenerse unidos en la línea de piqueteo, estos trabajadores valientes nos mostraron a todos cómo se gana con la solidaridad – incluso cuando dirigentes de otros sindicatos les dieron la espalda para quedar bien con el empleador. Esa unidad y determinación mostrados por los trabajadores del reciclaje es exactamente lo que se requiere para enfrentarse a los empleadores poderosos del condado de Alameda – y a todo lo largo de la costa occidental.”

## Ahora les toca a los trabajadores de ACI

Ahora que tres compañías del condado de Alameda han accedido a proporcionar los salarios dignos y beneficios de asistencia médica a precios económicos, de acuerdo a la norma establecida por los trabajadores del reciclaje de ese condado, la antorcha se ha pasado a los trabajadores de ACI para que ellos también puedan gozar de las mismas mejoras. Después de que 95% los trabajadores de WM aprobaron la terminación de su huelga la noche del 30 de octubre, y antes de ponerse a celebrar, prometieron apoyar la próxima lucha de los trabajadores de ACI para que consigan un contrato similar que se apegue a las normas salariales y de beneficios para trabajadores del reciclaje del condado de Alameda.

“Ganamos nuestra lucha por aumentos y beneficios dignos, y ahora nos toca a nosotros ayudar a los trabajadores de ACI para que ganen su lucha,” dijo María Sánchez, una trabajadora del reciclaje.

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