



THE DISPATCHER

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VOL 73, NO 1 • JANUARY 2015

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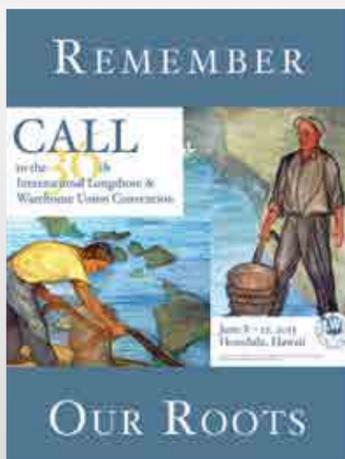
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United team: The ILWU's 16-member Longshore Negotiating Committee and 8-member Safety Sub-Committee reached a tentative contract agreement on February 20 with unanimous support.

Negotiating Committee reaches tentative agreement on new Longshore contract

It wasn't quick or easy, but the ILWU Longshore Negotiating Committee reached a tentative agreement for a new 5-year contract with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) on February 20th.

ILWU International President Bob McEllrath praised the 16-member Negotiating Committee and 8-member Safety Sub-Committee for their months of hard work – and he saluted rank-and-file members and local union officials for maintaining exceptional discipline and unity during the grueling 9-month negotiating process that began on May 12, 2014.

“This was the longest contract negotiation we’ve faced in decades,” said McEllrath, “but the final result is a good agreement that wouldn’t have been possible without the unity and support from members up and down the coast.”

Next steps

The tentative agreement will first be reviewed by 90 delegates of the Coast Longshore Caucus who are scheduled to meet March 30 to April 3. Caucus delegates will decide whether to recommend the proposal to the rank-and-file. If recommended, the complete agreement will be mailed to members, followed by discussions at local union meetings. The process ends with a secret-ballot election that allows members to ratify or reject the proposal. Detailed voting results will be published in a future issue of *The Dispatcher*.

Milestones

The Committee approached their negotiating task with clear directions from the Coast Longshore Caucus that met for two weeks beginning February 24, 2014. The Negotiating Committee opened talks with the PMA on May 12 and continued bargaining past the contract expiration date of July 1, 2014. Important progress was announced in late August when

both sides agreed to maintain health benefits for workers, families and pensioners. The next issue tackled by the Negotiating Committee involved the problems caused by PMA companies that sub-contracted their container chassis pools.

It was also at this point that a pre-existing port congestion problem reached a crisis point. Tensions mounted as PMA companies tried to avoid responsibility for the congestion caused primarily by poor planning and bad business decisions, including:

- Subcontracting chassis units, causing shortages and logistical problems.
- Using massive new containers vessels without proper planning.
- Combining containers from several carriers onto one “alliance” vessel.
- Failing to pay port truckers a living wage, causing driver shortages.

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LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

Dear Editor,

Starting in the 1930's my mother Mildred, my dad Bill Wright and my step dad Joe Kordich were part of a union movement that organized over 10 million workers. Bill held "every nonpaying job" at ILWU Local 26. Joe was "the only white worker" at the Cotton Compress in San Pedro's outer harbor. My mother helped organize the Terminal Island cannery workers and helped tenants return to their homes after organizing a rent strike during which they were evicted.

This was a time of growing equality that was spearheaded by the growth of the labor movement. When workers make union wages, manufacturers hire more workers to satisfy the demand for goods that better union wages can buy. That makes union workers the real "job creators" – not the manufacturers. In 1946 my dad said that he made so much money that he could buy a bicycle to get to work.

From the 1930's until the 1980's our country grew. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which reflects all the services and products we produced in America, grew steadily. That growth was shared with 90% of all workers who got 70% of the increase. Back then, the top 10 percent still got plenty and took 30% of the growth for their share. But this way of dividing the benefits from higher productivity allowed America to build the largest middle class in the world. As the economic pie got bigger, everyone got more. It was a shared economy where the country grew as the people grew. The world of my parents was much more equal than ours is today. That is why my parents believed with good reason that if they worked hard and helped their union grow, things would be better for their kids. A sense of shared sacrifice and greater equality grew even stronger during World War II, when there was the equality of the draft that required almost everyone serve in some way. And in the decade following the war, union membership peaked and the richest citizens paid taxes up to 85 and 90%. History does not support the argument that high corporate taxes will cause a depression but it does demonstrate that workers with good-paying union wages will create jobs.

When I entered the work force in the 1970's, the economy began to change from one of shared growth, expressed through slogans on the docks like: "take us along, we'll go along" to a culture that increasingly emphasized selfishness, greed and individualism.

By the 1980's, wages flattened out while the cost of living rose. Higher costs and lower wages meant that mortgages doubled, health care and education costs soared, and higher taxes all conspired to change the shared economy of the previous 50 years.

From 2009 to 2012, the top 1% of American earners took home 95% of the new income gains for those years. That wealth is largely invested overseas to avoid U.S. taxes instead of being used here to strengthen our economy, improve our infrastructure or educate Americans. Remember Mitt Romney being pressured to admit that he only paid 13% in taxes, if that? The result of this inequity means that my kids may be the first generation to do worse than their dad.

In our society, the tax system is so unequal that small business pay a higher tax rate than giant corporations – who sometimes pay no taxes at all. Even Warren Buffet, the billionaire tycoon is asking why his secretary pays a higher tax rate than he does. The damage is not just an unfair tax system, but a weakening of the social fabric that holds us together as a country. People become cynical and begin to say, "he didn't pay his fair share of taxes, so why should I," or "poor people aren't my problem," or "let someone else fight that war and let the next generation pay for it." When our society breaks down because of unfairness and inequities, the glue that holds us together is weakened, and our country and democracy are threatened.

It's clear that this breakdown is already making life worse for my kids than it was for me, and a college education is a good example. My kids are paying thousands of dollars for their education that I got for free at Harbor College in the 1960's. How is this possible when we are a richer country today? It isn't a lack of wealth, but a question of priorities and fairness that have changed. We're told "there isn't enough money in the budget" but few of us connect those shortfalls to lower taxes for the rich and corporations.

Progressive change is possible when you stand up and demand to be heard. Would you have thought five years ago that 35 states would have ratified equality of marriage rights, or that a \$15 dollar minimum wage would be implemented in a growing number of cities, or that the Keystone Pipeline would have been stopped? These and other changes are won at the local level and Washington is often the last to catch on. We can make changes together if we join together. In the 1930's some longies built our union that allows us to walk tall today. In the 1950's, old-timers built our credit unions that operate as non-profits so we can save money and avoid giving our savings to the bosses' bank. The government didn't do this for us; it's our union and our credit union. The one-percenters are

hoping you'll stay away from union meetings, avoid your credit union, become cynical and give up on democracy. If that happens, we don't stand a chance. That's what the owners and the banks want. They want us to go back to the days when we were called "wharf rats" and paid kick-backs to get a job. This is 2015 and the future is in our hands. We're not going back - Ni un pas atras.

Lewis Wright, Local 63 (ret)
San Pedro, VA

P.S. – Anyone interested in learning more about today's economy might want to read these books that I found useful: "Capital" by Thomas Piketty; "Economics" by the Economist magazine; "The Origins of Political Order" by Francis Fukuyama and "Inequality for All" by Robert Reich

Dear Editor,

I couldn't agree more with the letter written by Local 13 member Robin Doyno who wrote:

"I write to encourage you to donate one day's pay to the ILWU Political Action Fund. This is our pot of money to help elect people who do the right thing and fight for the rights of workers in Washington.

We are in the vanguard of strong unionism. Many folks in and out of the labor movement look to the ILWU to determine the parameters of militancy and rank and file democracy as well as basic safety and working conditions.

My check will not only help the ILWU but the vast swath of middle class Americans who have been left out of the current economic picture."

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Strong presence: Over 20 day-shift recycling workers from Alameda County Industries (ACI) came with family members to the San Leandro City Council Meeting on January 5. Recyclers Delfina Casillas and Damian Sterling addressed the Council on behalf of their co-workers, explaining that they recently voted overwhelmingly to join ILWU Local 6 and will be negotiating with the company on January 7 to secure their first union contract. The organizing effort by recycling workers and community supporters has already resulted in dramatic wage raises and job security improvements after the company agreed to stop paying poverty wages, implement the San Leandro Living Wage Ordinance and end hiring through a temp agency. "We've taken important steps forward, but have much more to do," said Negotiating Committee member Delfina Casillas who pledged to keep the City Council informed about the upcoming contract talks.

Fuerte presencia: Más de 20 trabajadores del reciclaje del turno del día de Alameda County Industries (ACI) se presentaron con sus familiares en la reunión del Consejo Municipal de San Leandro el 5 de enero. Los trabajadores Delfina Casillas y Damian Sterling se dirigieron al Consejo a nombre de sus compañeros de trabajo, explicando que recientemente habían decidido afiliarse con el Local 6 de ILWU por votación abrumadora y que negociarán con la compañía el 7 de enero para conseguir su primer contrato colectivo de trabajo. El trabajo de organización que han hecho los trabajadores del reciclaje y simpatizantes de la comunidad ya han resultado en aumentos salariales espectaculares y empleos más seguros, ya que la empresa acordó aumentarles los salarios de miseria, cumplir con la ley municipal de Salarios Dignos y dar por terminado la contratación por medio de una agencia de colocaciones. "Hemos logrado avances importantes, pero tenemos mucho más trabajo por delante," dijo Delfina Casillas, integrante del Comité de Negociaciones, quien prometió mantener informados al Consejo Municipal sobre las próximas pláticas contractuales.

CORRECTION: We omitted the credit for the photos of Carlos Bulosan that ran in the December 2014 issue of the Dispatcher: "Carlos Bulosan, ca. 1950s." University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, POR0020.

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The *Dispatcher* (ISSN 0012-3765) is published monthly except for a combined September issue, for \$5.00 a year and \$10.00 a year for non-members by the ILWU, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109. Periodical postage paid at San Francisco, CA. The *Dispatcher* welcomes letters, photos and other submissions to the above address © ILWU, 2012. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800.

ILWU solidarity marchers fill San Pedro streets

Over 6,000 ILWU members and their families, along with community supporters and elected officials marched and rallied through the streets of San Pedro on January 22. The dramatic showing of unity and solidarity was organized by LA City Councilman Joe Buscaino to protest the employers' cutting of night-time workers that has compounded severe congestion problems at the ports of LA and Long Beach.

"The PMA's action in further cutting night shifts at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach is another step closer to a lockout," Buscaino said in press release before the rally. "It will only serve to worsen the slowdown and congestion at the ports, disrupt the global supply chain, and result in irreparable damage to the reputation of our ports complex."

Marchers gathered near the Vincent Thomas Bridge on Harbor Boulevard and Beacon. As the sun set, thousands of longshore workers headed

down Harbor Boulevard towards the rally point outside the Maritime Museum. The 30-minute march was led by students from Banning High School's "Mighty Marching Pilots" band. The mood was spirited as parents marched hand-in-hand with their children. Marchers carried glow sticks which gave the event a festive atmosphere. Hundreds of people carried the same support signs that have been posted by local business owners in shop windows throughout the harbor; they read: "We Support the ILWU and the ILWU Supports Us."

ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe, Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr. spoke at the rally along with Southern California representatives from the Negotiating Committee and Safety Sub-Committee who all flew down from the contract negotiations in San Francisco to attend the event.

International Vice President Ray Familathe said the ILWU family would remain strong and united. "The elected Negotiating Committee will continue to battle to get a tentative agreement that we can bring to the rank-and-file for a democratic vote. We need to send a message to the employers that we will last as long as needed to get the fair contract that we deserve."

Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr., said that he has been a part of 12 contract negotiations during his career. "This contract negotiation has been about endurance. The ILWU will not break and we are going to stay strong and get a fair contract and get this cargo moving."



Arm in arm: (From left to right): Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz, Jr, LA City Councilman Joe Buscaino and ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe locked arms in solidarity during the 30-minute march.

ILWU Local 13 President Bobby Olvera, Jr., emphasized the deep roots that ILWU members had in the harbor community, reaching back many decades. "ILWU Locals 13, 63 and 94 have been a bastion of the middle class in San Pedro for over 75 years," Olvera said. "Long before these multinational corporations came to the port, longshoremen were moving cargo and long after they are gone we are still going to be here moving cargo."

In his address at the rally, LA City Councilmember Joe Buscaino had a message for the employers at the Pacific

Maritime Association (PMA): "We say to the PMA, 'Let the ILWU do their jobs. Let the ILWU clear our ports. Do not stand in their way. Our economy's is here in the harbor.'"

Local 13 President Olvera thanked the thousands of families and multitude of supporters, including many elected officials, who came to show their support.

"Your presence here tonight has sent a powerful message that the ILWU and this community are strong, united and willing to fight for what's right – no matter how long it takes."



ILWU pensioner Tony Salcido with his grandnephew, Derek Salcido, a fourth-generation ILWU member.

Hundreds march in Tacoma for a fair contract

Hundreds of longshore workers, families, and community supporters held a nighttime rally and march in downtown Tacoma. The goal was to show unity and solidarity for a fair contract – and set the record straight about the companies' role in causing port congestion and delays.

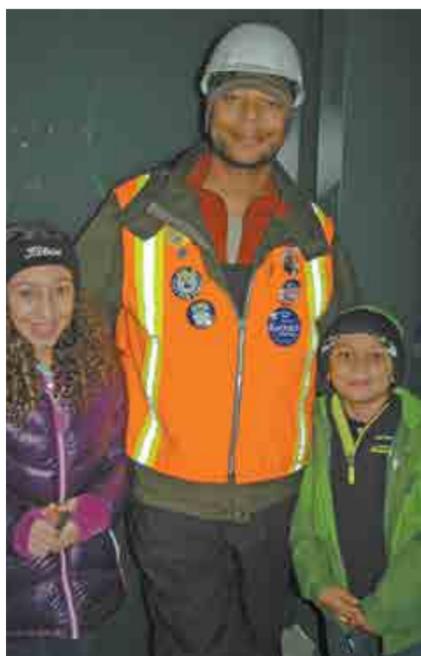
When they arrived at Tollefson Plaza, many marchers wore their safety vests and hard hats on a cold dark night with light rain. Members and



Back row: Local 23 members Liane Uchiyama and Andrew Uchiyama, (front row) Jordyn Beebe and Miya Uchiyama.



Rallying the troops: ILWU Local 13 President Bobby Olvera, Jr. addressed thousands of dock workers and community members gathered near the Vincent Thomas Bridge in San Pedro before marching down Harbor Blvd.



Maizy Apple Green, Local 98 member Zeek Green and Langston Union Green joined hundreds of ILWU members and their families at the Tacoma rally.

supporters came from throughout the Puget Sound region, plus Portland, Longview and Vancouver along the Columbia River and up north to Canada. Long-distance attendees included Alaska Longshore Division President Chuck Wendt and Juneau President Dennis Young.

"Shutting down the ports by cutting shifts and sending workers home is not a solution to the congestion and delays – it's only making things worse," said Local 23 President Dean McGrath who welcomed a short list of speakers who were notable for their strong statements, diversity and young ages.

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Panamanian longshore workers join the ILWU



Building solidarity: ILWU President Bob McEllrath led a solidarity delegation to Panama in September 2011, part of an ongoing effort to support maritime workers there. Dockworkers in this photo have since changed their union's name to SINTRAPORSPA, affiliated with the ILWU Panama Canal Division and won a four-year contract in December that will improve pay and working conditions at Panama Ports – a subsidiary of the powerful Hong Kong-based Hutchinson Port Holdings.

Panama City, Panama – You see a lot of parked taxis in the parking lot at the Panama Ports terminal here. They're not waiting to give rides to longshoremen. Dockworkers themselves are the drivers. Longshore wages in Panama are so low that after a shift driving a crane, a longshoreman has to put in another shift driving a taxi, just to survive.

At Panama Ports, however, this situation has begun to change. In December the union signed an historic new contract with raises totaling more than 27% over the next four years. One factor that made this agreement possible was support from the ILWU International Union. Because of it the Panamanian union SINTRAPORSPA, the Union of Workers at Panama Ports has decided to become the newest member of the ILWU's Panama Canal Division.

"Because we affiliated with the ILWU, things have changed," says Alberto Ochoa, SINTRAPORSPA's Secretary General. "Now our relationship with the company is more equal. We have greater strength at work, and our contract shows it."

The Panama Canal Pilots, ILWU International President Bob McEllrath and Vice-President Ray Familathe began coordinating the latest affiliation agreement with Panama's longshore workers belonging to SINTRAPORSPA. ILWU President Bob McEllrath collaborated closely with Familathe to implement their vision of growing the Panama Division.

McEllrath and Familathe traveled to Panama with fluent Spanish-speaker Greg Mitre, President of the Southern California Pensioners' Group, to build union-to-union relationships. "Our union is committed to defending the rights of all workers, and the Panama Division is the result of that commitment," McEllrath says.

Panama Division growth

When the Panama Division was established in 2012, ILWU President Bob McEllrath explained, "With so many employers now going global, it's critical for workers around the globe to join forces and work together."

The division has now grown much larger, to include 2580 Panama Ports longshore workers. The symbol of the ILWU has also been updated. It used to be a map of North America with a picture of Hawaii, showing the union's strength in U.S. and Canadian ports and in the islands. The symbol now includes a new element – a map of Panama.

According to Capt. Rainiero Salas, the Panama Canal Pilots' Union secretary general, "The Panama Division is growing as workers see what we can gain by working together, and it's not going to stop here."

The new Panama Ports longshore contract didn't come easily. Panama Ports is a subsidiary of the Hong Kong-based corporation Hutchinson Port Holdings Limited (HPH). There was a "yellow" or company union at the terminal there for many years. Ochoa and other independent-minded workers had a long history of trying to change it. Finally they organized SINTRAPORSPA. They collected over 2000 signatures on a petition for recognition, and asked for a government-administered election to certify the union as workers' bargaining representative.

Dockworkers knew how many votes they had lined up, and challenged the transparency of the election. The Ministry of Labor claimed that 1500 workers had cast ballots against SINTRAPORSPA. The President of Panama himself, Juan Carlos Varela, is a partner in the law firm used by Panama Ports, that specializes in helping company management fight unions.

"When we went to the ministry to protest the crooked election, they

did everything they could to stop us," recalls Ramiro Cortez, another SINTRAPORSPA leader. "Nevertheless, it was obvious that we had the support of the great majority of the workers, including those who belonged to the company union."

Ochoa and Cortez made an appeal to the ILWU, and Familathe and Mitre flew to Panama City and met with the Minister of Labor, Luis Ernesto Carles Rudy. They brought with them a letter signed by six U.S. Congress members, asking for a transparent process. The government agreed to rerun the election, and in a fair vote SINTRAPORSPA won overwhelmingly.

"The support from the ILWU was very effective in meeting with the Minister of Labor, and getting the second union election," Cortez says. "The Panamanian authorities were never concerned about how they conducted themselves with us before that. Powerful companies, with the money at their disposal, got whatever that money could buy."

The impact of that support was also felt in the subsequent contract negotiations, which only took a month to reach an agreement. In one meeting the company executive president even told union negotiators that he was "very concerned" at the union's growing relationship with the ILWU. The contract itself is now the first agreement between an ILWU affiliate and Panama Ports a subsidiary of Hutchinson Port Holdings.

Danger & low pay

That agreement will have a big impact on the lives of longshoremen and their families in two areas especially – economics and safety. In Panama they call longshore pay "hunger wages." Workers' families live below the government's own poverty line, and some families literally go hungry.

"That's one reason why the company had to constantly hire new workers," Cortez says. "Most people who got jobs here were just working while they were actually looking for better jobs somewhere else." An agreement that raises wages therefore helps to stabilize the workforce, which can make the terminal more productive. It also impacts safety. "Many accidents in the port could have been avoided if the workers weren't so exhausted," he explains. "They go in at 7AM, and leave at 8PM, and then go and drive or do some other job."

The port does have a high accident rate, and two workers were killed a month apart at the end of last year. But the contract is also changing how safety issues are handled. In one accident, a crane lifting a container hit a six-high stack of boxes that were being stored on the dock, right next to the ship. As they fell, one hit a 22-year-old man who'd been working less than a month.

Cortez was called by the workers, and on arrival met with the crane operator who was in shock and crying, and stopped managers from interrogating him until he got representa-

tion and counseling. Then Cortez and other union leaders met with management and viewed the video of the accident. They told the company that all workers were traumatized by what happened, and should be sent home. If not, the union itself would shut down the terminal, they said. In the end, management sent the shift home with pay for the day.

When Cortez announced the agreement to the workers, they applauded. "I could have been elected president of the republic that day," he says. "It had never happened before." When Familathe and Mitre explained how similar events are handled in Los Angeles, Cortez said he wanted to come and see for himself.

The new union contract establishes five committees, the most important of which is safety. The union then created three new positions, and appointed a high-voltage technician to serve as secretary of the safety committee.

"The challenge is now to implement the contract and ensure that the company abides by it, so that the workers actually benefit from it," President Ochoa emphasizes. "Before the company did what it pleased, and changed the hours, overtime, days off, and wages, whenever it wanted. Now they know we're not on our own, by ourselves. They didn't look on our relationship with the ILWU with friendly eyes, because they knew you would back us up. Companies don't want real unions because we open the eyes of the workers, and we can win respect."

Opportunities to grow

Ochoa has another vision as well – that the Panama Division will expand. "Unions in the ports and the Canal should get together so that we can speak with one voice, and get better benefits and respect for the workers," he says. "I'm very grateful for the opportunity to realize this dream."

It may not be so far off. The same day Familathe and Mitre concluded the affiliation process for SINTRAPORSPA they also drove across the isthmus to meet with the union for dockers in Colon on the Atlantic, the Union of Workers at the Manzanillo International Terminal. The MIT terminal is operated by SSA Marine.

Workers told the ILWU leaders that crane operators work 8-hour days, for six days straight. For that, their pay starts at \$854 a month. Here also the workers rebelled against a former union leadership they viewed as too close to the company, and elected a new slate a few months ago. "They see the improvements SINTRAPORSPA was able to make, and they want the same thing," said Familathe.

Goals for the future

The ILWU in Panama represents the interests of workers by advocating progressive policies on wages, trade and labor rights, while effectively defending workers on the job every day. The Panama Division is supporting pilots in their fight to ensure that the huge ships that pass through the

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Trabajadores portuarios Panameños se unen a ILWU

Panamá City, Panamá – En el estacionamiento de la terminal de Puertos Panameños se ven muchos taxis estacionados, pero no están allí para llevar a los trabajadores portuarios, sino que ellos mismos son los choferes de los taxis. Los salarios de los estibadores en Panamá son tan bajos que después de trabajar su jornada en las grúas, tienen que trabajar otra jornada como taxistas sólo para sobrevivir.

Sin embargo, en Puertos Panameños esta situación ha empezado a cambiar. Hace unas cuantas semanas el sindicato firmó un contrato colectivo histórico que incluye aumentos que ascienden a 27% a lo largo de los próximos cuatro años. Uno de los factores que facilitó este contrato fue el apoyo del Sindicato Internacional ILWU. Como resultado, el sindicato panameño SINTRAPORSPA, el gremio de los que laboran en Puertos Panameños, ha decidido convertirse en el más reciente afiliado de la Sección Panameña de ILWU.

“Debido a que nos afiliamos a ILWU, las cosas han cambiado,” dijo Alberto Ochoa, Secretario General de SINTRAPORSPA. “Ahora nuestra relación con la compañía es más pareja. Tenemos más fuerza en el trabajo y eso se puede ver en nuestro contrato.”

Después de la Convención de ILWU en 2012 en la que fue creada la Sección Panameña con los Pilotos del Canal de Panamá, el Presidente Bob McEllrath y Vice Presidente Ray Familathe del Sindicato Internacional ILWU empezaron a coordinar el acuerdo de afiliación más reciente con los trabajadores portuarios de Panamá de SINTRAPORSPA. El Presidente de ILWU, Bob McEllrath, colaboró estrechamente con Familathe para llevar a la práctica su cometido de ampliar la Sección Panameña.

McEllrath y Familathe viajaron a Panamá con Greg Mitre, Presidente hispanoparlante del Grupo de Jubilados del Sur de California para fortalecer la relación entre los dos sindicatos. “Nuestro sindicato se empeña en defender los derechos de todos los trabajadores, y la Sección Panameña es el resultado de ese compromiso,” dijo McEllrath.

Crecimiento de la Sección Panameña

Cuando se estableció la Sección Panameña en 2012, el Presidente de ILWU Bob McEllrath explicó que “con la globalización de tantos empleadores, es esencial que los trabajadores en todo el mundo unan fuerzas y se pongan de acuerdo.”

La Sección ha crecido y cuenta ahora con 2,580 trabajadores portuarios de Puertos Panameños. El logotipo del ILWU también se ha actualizado. Antes era un mapa de Norte América incluyendo a las islas hawaianas, simbolizando la fuerza del sindicato en E.U., los puertos canadienses y las islas. El logotipo ahora incluye un nuevo elemento: un mapa de Panamá.

Según el capitán Rainiero Salas, el secretario general del Sindicato de Pilotos del Canal de Panamá, “la Sec-

ción de Panamá está creciendo porque los trabajadores pueden ver lo que ganamos al trabajar juntos, y va a seguir creciendo.”

No fue fácil conseguir el nuevo contrato colectivo de los trabajadores portuarios de Puertos Panameños. Dicha empresa es subsidiaria de la corporación Hutchinson Port Holdings Limited (HPH) con sede en Hong Kong. Por muchos años había un sindicato amarillo o patronal en la terminal. Ochoa y otros trabajadores lucharon por bastante tiempo para cambiarlo y hacerlo más independiente. Finalmente organizaron SINTRAPORSPA. Reunieron más de 2,000 firmas en una petición de reconocimiento, y pidieron una votación supervisada por el gobierno para acreditar al sindicato como el representante de los trabajadores en las negociaciones colectivas.

Los trabajadores portuarios sabían con cuántos votos contaban y repudiaron la falta de transparencia en la votación. El Ministerio de Trabajo dijo que 1,500 trabajadores habían votado en contra de SINTRAPORSPA. El mismo Presidente de Panamá, Juan Carlos Varela, es socio del bufete jurídico que representa a Puertos Panameños, bufete que se especializa en ayudar a los empresarios a combatir a los sindicatos.

“Cuando fuimos al Ministerio a protestar por el fraude electoral, hicieron todo lo que pudieron por pararnos,” recordó Ramiro Cortez, otro líder de SINTRAPORSPA. “Sin embargo, no cabía duda de que teníamos el apoyo de la gran mayoría de los trabajadores, incluso los que pertenecían al sindicato de la empresa.”

Ochoa y Cortez pidieron ayuda de ILWU, y Familathe y Mitre viajaron a la Ciudad de Panamá para reunirse con el Ministro del Trabajo, Luis Ernesto Carles Rudy. Le entregaron una carta firmada por seis congresistas de E.U., pidiendo un proceso electoral transparente. El gobierno acordó realizar la votación otra vez, y con la realización de la elección limpia SINTRAPORSPA ganó contundentemente.

“El apoyo que dio ILWU al reunirse con el Ministro del Trabajo y conseguir que se hiciera por segunda vez la votación fue muy eficaz, dijo Cortez. “Las autoridades panameñas no les importaba como se portaban con nosotros antes de eso. Las empresas poderosas con dinero a su disposición conseguían lo que querían.”

El impacto de ese apoyo también se sintió en las negociaciones contractuales posteriores, ya que se terminó de negociar el contrato en solo un mes. En una de las reuniones, el director general de la empresa incluso les dijo a los negociadores del sindicato que le tenía muy preocupado el acercamiento entre el sindicato y el ILWU. El contrato en sí es ahora el primero celebrado entre un organismo afiliado de ILWU y Puertos Panameños, empresa subsidiaria de Hutchinson Port Holdings.

Peligro y bajos salarios

El contrato tendrá un gran efecto en las vidas de los trabajadores portuarios y sus familias especialmente en dos aspectos – el económico y en la seguridad industrial. En Panamá los ingresos de los estibadores son conocidos como



Alberto Ochoa, Secretario General de SINTRAPORSPA se ve con el Vice Presidente del ILWU Ray Familathe Panamá, diciembre de 2014.

“salarios de hambre.” Las familias de los trabajadores viven con ingresos inferiores al límite de pobreza establecida por el mismo gobierno y algunas familias de hecho pasan hambre.

“Por eso es que la compañía tiene que contratar trabajadores constantemente,” dijo Cortez. “La mayoría de la gente que conseguía trabajo aquí lo hacía sólo mientras conseguía un mejor empleo en otro lado.” Un contrato con aumentos salariales ayuda a estabilizar la fuerza laboral, lo cual llevará a que la terminal sea más productiva. También afecta la seguridad. “Se podrían haber evitado muchos accidentes en el puerto si los trabajadores no estuvieran tan agotados,” explicó Cortez. “Empiezan a trabajar a las 7 a.m. y salen a las 8 p.m., y luego se van a manejar o hacer otro trabajo.”

De hecho hay un alto índice de accidentes en el puerto; dos trabajadores murieron en dos meses el año pasado. Pero el contrato también está cambiando la forma en que se maneja la seguridad industrial. En un accidente, una grúa que levantaba un contenedor chocó con una pila de seis cajas que se estaban almacenando en el muelle, justo al lado del barco. Cuando cayeron, una le cayó a un hombre de 22 años de edad que llevaba menos de un mes trabajando allí.

Los trabajadores llamaron a Cortez, esté se reunió inmediatamente con el operador de la grúa que estaba llorando y se encontraba en shock, e impidió que los gerentes lo interrogaran hasta que consiguiera un representante y orientación psicológica. Luego Cortez y los dirigentes del sindicato se reunieron con los gerentes y revisaron el video del accidente. Le dijeron a la compañía que todos los trabajadores habían quedado traumatados por lo sucedido y que se les debería mandar a casa. Si no, dijeron los dirigentes que el sindicato mismo iba a cerrar la terminal. Al final, los gerentes estuvieron de acuerdo en mandar a los trabajadores del turno a casa y se les pagó la jornada.

Cuando Cortez avisó a los trabajadores lo que se había logrado, estos le aplaudieron. “Podría haberme elegido a la presidencia de la república ese día,” dijo él. “Nunca había sucedido antes.” cuando Familathe y Mitre explicaron cómo se resolvían situaciones similares en Los Ángeles, Cortez dijo que quería verlo por su propia cuenta.

El nuevo contrato colectivo establece cinco comités, siendo el más importante el de la seguridad industrial. El sindicato además creó tres

puestos nuevos, y nombró un técnico de alto voltaje para que sirviera como secretario del comité de seguridad.

“El reto ahora es hacer valer el contrato y asegurarnos de que la compañía lo respete para que los trabajadores en realidad se beneficien de él, subrayó el presidente Ochoa. “Antes la compañía hacía lo que le venía en gana; cambiaba las horas de trabajo, las horas extra, los días libres y los salarios cuando quería. Ahora saben que ya no estamos solos. No vieron con buenos ojos nuestra relación con ILWU porque sabían que ustedes nos apoyarían. Las compañías no quieren los sindicatos independientes porque nosotros les abrimos los ojos a los trabajadores y podemos conseguir que se nos respete.”

Oportunidades para crecer

Ochoa tiene otra visión también – que la Sección Panameña se va a expandir. “Los sindicatos en los puertos y el Canal deben unirse para que podamos hablar con una sola voz, y conseguir mejores beneficios y más respeto para los trabajadores,” dijo él. “Estoy muy agradecido por la oportunidad de hacer realidad este sueño.”

Quizás no esté muy lejos de lograrse. El mismo día que Familathe y Mitre concluyeron el proceso de afiliación para SINTRAPORSPA también cruzaron el istmo para reunirse con el Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Terminal Internacional de Manzanillo en Colón en la costa del Atlántico. La terminal MIT es operada por SSA Marine.

Los trabajadores le contaron a los dirigentes de ILWU que operadores de grúa trabajan jornadas de 8 horas, 6 días a la semana. Por ese trabajo se les paga \$854 por mes para empezar. Allí también los trabajadores se rebelaron contra el antiguo liderazgo sindical que estaba muy apegado a la empresa, y eligieron una nueva planilla hace unos cuantos meses. “Ellos ven las mejoras que SINTRAPORSPA logró y quieren lo mismo,” dijo Familathe.

Metas para el futuro

ILWU en Panamá representa los intereses de los trabajadores, promoviendo políticas progresivas con respecto a los salarios, el comercio y derechos laborales, y al mismo tiempo defiende a los trabajadores a diario en el trabajo. La Sección Panameña está apoyando a los pilotos que luchan por asegurar que los enormes barcos que pasan por el canal todos los días sean operados de manera segura. La Autoridad del Canal

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Notice of Nomination and Primary Elections at ILWU Convention and Longshore Division Caucus

The tri-annual Convention will be held at the Sheraton Waikiki 2255 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815 beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 8, 2015, and closing on or about Friday, June 12, 2015. The elected Convention delegates will vote to decide the International budget, proposed increases in per-capita rates, as well as policies and direction of the ILWU for the next three-year period. Pursuant to Article VI, Sections 3 through 7 of the ILWU International Constitution, nominations and primary elections for the offices of the International President, International Vice President (Mainland), International Vice President (Hawaii), International Secretary-Treasurer and for approximately 20 International Executive Board members will be held on the last day of the Convention, which is expected to be on Friday, June 12, 2015.

All Convention delegates have the right to nominate candidates for titled office. Nominations shall be from the floor and shall be conducted separately for each titled officer. No person may be a nominee in Convention for more than one titled office. There shall be no limit for the number of nominees. No one not an accredited delegate from his/her own local to the Convention may be nominated, except that titled officers who by virtue of having held office in the previous term shall be eligible to be nominated for office. For offices where there are more than two candidates, a roll call vote shall be held and the two (2) nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected in the primary election. No person may be nominated for any International office unless such person has been a dues paying member of the ILWU for at least five (5) years, including having worked as a rank-and-file worker under jurisdiction of the ILWU for at least two (2) years, or has been a dues-paying member of the ILWU for a period of at least ten (10) years. The nominees so elected in the primary election shall be placed on a referendum ballot for a vote of the entire International active and eligible membership for final election.

At the Convention, caucuses of the delegates from each geographical area shall be held at the time and place designated by the International President for the purpose of nominations and primary election of Executive Board members. The nominations and primary election of Executive Board members shall be conducted by each caucus in the same manner as such nomination and primary election are conducted for titled officers by the Convention, provided that no more than twice the number of Executive Board members to be elected from the respective area shall be declared nominated at the primary election. Executive Board members shall in no case be a candidate to succeed themselves unless they are accredited Convention delegates from their own local at the time of nomination. A referendum ballot shall be conducted for the election of Executive Board members in the same manner and at the same time as titled officers, provided that only the active members of the local within each area designated by the Convention shall vote for executive board members for their respective area and provided further that exclusive of titled officers there shall not be over one executive board member from any one local. This restriction shall not apply to Local 142 in Hawaii. In Hawaii, there shall not be over one executive board member from any one industrial group in Local 142.

With respect to any primary election held at the Convention, such election shall be conducted by the International President, provided he/she is not a candidate for office. In the event the International President is a candidate for office, he/she shall appoint another International titled officer who is not a candidate for office to conduct the primary election. If all titled officers are candidates for office, the International President shall appoint an incumbent IEB member who is not a candidate for office, and if none is available then a credentialed Convention delegate who is not a candidate to conduct the primary election.

Each Convention delegate may vote for up to two (2) nominees per office in the primary election. A roll call vote shall be taken either by each affiliate or by individual Convention delegate within an affiliate as determined by the procedures of each affiliate.

A local may send as many delegates as it chooses to the International Convention but will be limited to the number of votes allocated in Article XI of the ILWU Constitution. Delegates shall be elected by either secret referendum ballot of the entire membership or by secret ballot at a regular meeting of the local, or where for geographical reasons, meetings of the entire membership are not practicable, by secret ballots of regular meetings of its subdivisions. Nominating procedures for delegates shall be established by the local. Where a local has more than one division or unit, it is up to the local to allocate delegates among the divisions or units. A local's constitution and/or by-laws may provide that one or more officers of the local, elected in a secret ballot election, are Convention and/or Caucus delegates. The credentials of elected delegates shall be signed by the President and Secretary of the local, must bear the seal of the local and certify that the delegate was elected as provided herein.

All credentials must be in the International Office thirty (30) days prior to the Convention.

The International determines the number of votes allocated to each local based on the average per capita payments on union members in the prior calendar year (2014). The number of votes allocated to each local is provided in the Call which is sent to each local. The International will send each of the locals copies of all resolutions, statements of policy, and proposed Constitutional amendments for distribution to their delegates at least two (2) weeks prior to the beginning of the Convention.

All members in good standing of any affiliate of the ILWU shall be eligible to vote in the election in accordance with such affiliate's established rules defining membership in good standing that conforms to the International Constitution.

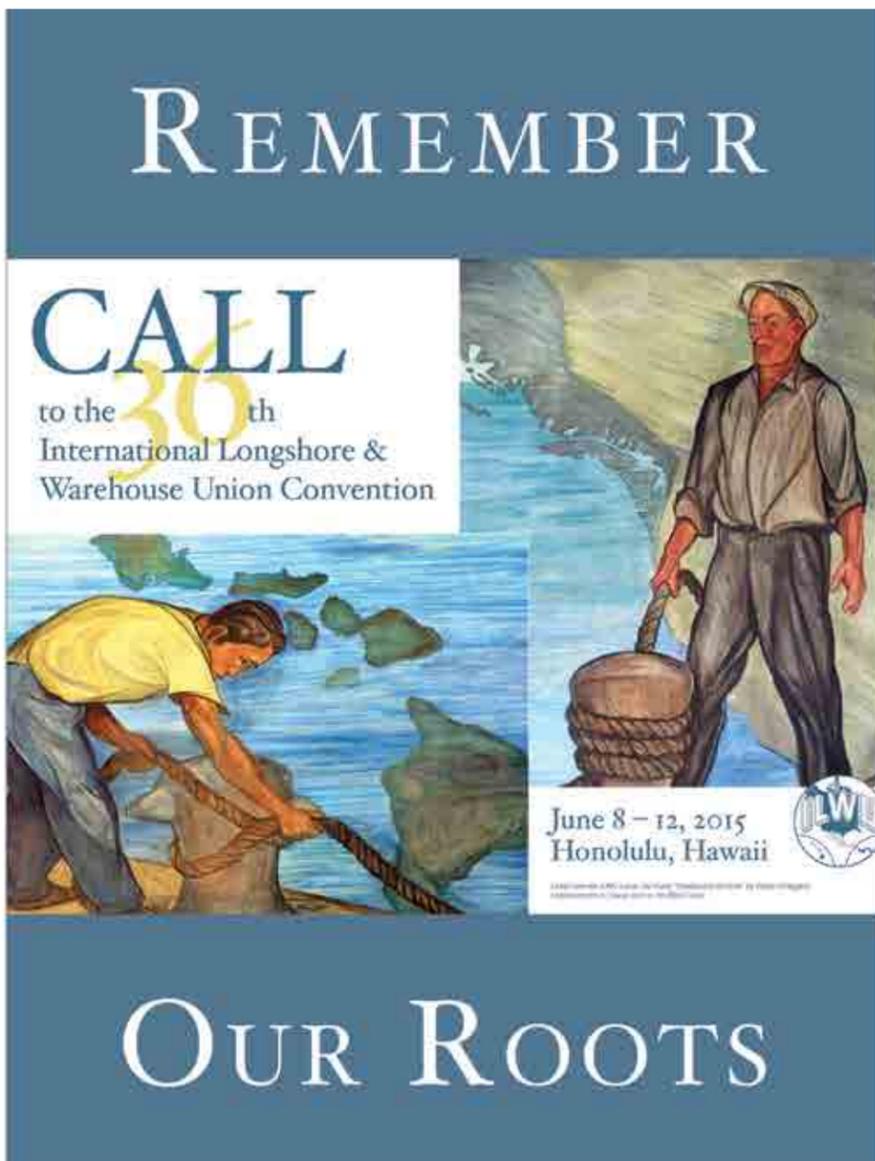
Pursuant to Rule 6.C of the ILWU Election Rules, which are an Appendix to the ILWU Constitution, any accredited delegate to the International Convention who publicly declares an intention to run for International office may request from the International Union a list of accredited delegates to the International Convention at any time within thirty (30) days prior to the Convention. A list of addresses of those delegates will also be available at the International Union for inspection. The International Union will not provide copies of the addresses of delegates or members of the Union.

Any accredited delegate to the International Convention who publicly declares an intention to run for International office may designate an individual to view on his/her behalf, the list of accredited delegates to the Convention with the following provisions: 1) The candidate must specify in writing the name of the individual designated to view the delegate list and the writing must be signed by the delegate; 2) the individual so designated by a candidate must be an ILWU member in good standing; 3) the rules governing the inspection of the delegate list will apply to the designated representative; and 4) if the candidate's designated representative inspects the delegate list, that will constitute the candidate's permitted one inspection of the delegate list.

The custodians of the Convention delegate list are International Research Director Russ Bargmann and Executive Assistant to the President Alexa Jurczak located at the ILWU Headquarters Building at 1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, California. For inspections, please first contact Russ Bargman and only if he is unavailable then ask for Alexa Jurczak. Inspections of the delegate list may only occur during regular business hours between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., and between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, holidays excluded.

Nominations and primary election for the two (2) offices of ILWU Coast Committeeman will take place during the Longshore Division Caucus, which will convene on Monday, June 15, 2015 and close on or about Friday, June 19, 2015. The Longshore Division Caucus will also be held at the Sheraton Waikiki, 2255 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815. The elected delegates of the Longshore Division Caucus may vote to decide such matters as the budget, any proposed increases of the Coast pro-rata and other fees as well as the policies and direction of the ILWU Longshore Division and ILWU Coast Pro-Rata Committee. All Longshore Division Caucus delegates have the right to nominate candidates for the two positions of Coast Committeeman. Nominations shall be from the floor and shall be conducted separately for each position. No person may be a nominee for more than one Coast Committeeman position. There shall be no limit to the number of nominees. No one not an accredited Caucus delegate from his or her own local may be nominated, except that incumbent Coast Committeeman by virtue of having held office in the previous term shall be eligible to be nominated for office. A roll call vote will be held and the two (2) nominees receiving the highest number of votes in each office shall be declared elected in the primary election. The nominees so elected in the primary election shall be placed on a referendum ballot for a vote of the entire, eligible Longshore Division membership for final election.

Publicly declared candidates for the position of Coast Committeeman have the right to inspect the list of accredited delegates to the Longshore Division Caucus at any time within thirty (30) days prior to the Caucus meeting. The procedures for inspection shall be the same as those provided with respect to nominations and primary elections held at the ILWU International Convention.



Trabajadores portuarios Panameños se unen a ILWU

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ha lanzado un proyecto de gran expansión, construyendo nuevas esclusas que podrán dar cabida a los gigantes barcos de contenedores post-Panamax que cargan hasta 13,000 TEU. El sindicato de pilotos ha criticado al gobierno por no tomarlo en cuenta al establecer las reglas y procedimientos de trabajo para el traslado seguro de estos barcos más grandes por las nuevas esclusas. El sindicato está especialmente preocupado por la nueva directiva unilateral del gobierno que por primera vez permite que los barcos transiten en doble sentido en el Corte Culebra, que aunque ha sido ampliado aún es demasiado estrecho. Anteriormente, los barcos que viajaban en sentido contrario se esperaban; solo un barco pasaba por el corte a la vez.

En octubre el capitán Salas dio a conocer públicamente la situación. “Es muy raro que los que tienen la máxima experiencia en el movimiento de barcos por este sistema sumamente importante hayan sido completamente ignorados por la autoridad que lo gobierna,” denunció él. “El mayor cometido de Pilotos del

Canal de Panamá (PCP) es la seguridad de los barcos, sin embargo no se nos ha consultado.”

Los sindicatos panameños de trabajadores portuarios y marítimos también están preocupados por la intención del gobierno de desautorizar el sindicato de capitanes de remolcadores en el Canal. Temen que se puedan usar los tecnicismos legales para socavar también el derecho de representación de otros sindicatos. Eso podría debilitar a los sindicatos de trabajadores portuarios justo en el momento que están mejorando el nivel de vida básico de los trabajadores.

“Nuestro objetivo principal como sindicato es hacer una diferencia en el estado económico de nuestros afiliados, especialmente los estibadores que ganaban menos,” declaró Ochoa. “No digo que lo que hemos podido lograr con este nuevo contrato nos dé un salario que nos permita pagar por todo. Pero es mucho mejor que lo que teníamos antes. Y nuestra responsabilidad como sindicato es seguir luchando por ganar mejores condiciones, especialmente económicos.”

– David Bacon

Negotiating Committee reaches tentative agreement on new Longshore contract

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- Failing to properly plan for record volumes of containers.
- Failing to train enough dockworkers to operate equipment.

As bargaining continued into the fall, the PMA increasingly accused ILWU members of causing congestion at the ports and charged the union members with orchestrating slowdowns in early November – while companies put pressure on workers by cutting shifts and reducing operations, beginning in Pacific Northwest ports, then spreading down the coast. By January 13, the PMA had eliminated night and evening shifts, slashing container and cargo loading and unloading operations by 60%. Soon the docks were empty, but employers were still insisting that no space was available to unload ships. Local 13 member and private airplane pilot Rollo Hartstrom joined with Local 94 member and photographer Bill Kirk to take aerial photos that proved PMA’s misleading claims.

Mobilization

Members in Southern California and the Puget Sound mobilized on January 22 for an impressive show of unity. Local 13 President Bobby Olvera, Jr. and Local 23 President Dean McGrath organized separate but coordinated events that brought together thousands of longshore workers, families, community leaders and elected

officials who showed their support for a fair contract.

Resolution

In late January, union negotiators reached a resolution that maintained ILWU jurisdiction for inspecting chassis units at the ports. With just a few issues remaining, President Obama assigned Labor Secretary Tom Perez to the talks on February 14, joining federal mediator Scot Beckenbaugh who was invited to help by the ILWU and PMA in early January. After the PMA agreed to improve the area arbitration system by making it more fair, a tentative agreement was reached the evening of February 20, supported unanimously by the ILWU Negotiating Committee.

Local agreements

In addition to resolving the “coastwise” contract agreement, separate local agreements were negotiated by union leaders to address issues at local ports. For example, Locals 13, 63 and 94 in Southern California were able to negotiate important terms to improve staffing and transparency. Local 10 was able to negotiate local improvements for manning and equalization.

“The efforts of local leaders, rank-and-file members, and our Negotiating Committee were all pulling in the same direction for the same goal,” said President McEllrath. “That kind of unity is the only way for workers to win.”

Hundreds march in Tacoma for a fair contract



Telling the truth in Tacoma: ILWU Local 23 President Dean McGrath spoke at the Tacoma rally on January 22 and invited younger members to also share the podium.

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Local 98 member Zeek Green brought his family to the podium as he shared a clever and hard-hitting “rap” about the lengthy longshore contract struggle.

Washington State Labor Council President Jeff Johnson noted that former ILWU President and co-founder Harry Bridges, said that workers must always struggle against corporate greed.

And local 25 year-old member Meghan Mason led the crowd in a chant; “Union town, through and through, you for me, and me for you!” before delivering a strong speech.

When the rally ended, the march took shape with a new twist: a set of battery-powered electrified letters, each carried by a marcher, spelled out an important message when carried in formation: END PORT LAYOFFS. This “light brigade” led marchers on a

short walk to the Glass Bridge, a pedestrian overpass spanning Interstate 705, where the lighted message and throngs of marchers were visible to thousands of cars passing below.

The well-organized and tightly-timed event lasted just 90 minutes, but many reported that it boosted spirits – and scored positive media coverage in local TV, radio and newspaper outlets.

Local 19 worker Leith Kahl came down for the rally from Seattle carrying his banjo that he used with his powerful voice to serenade supporters at the end of the march with union solidarity songs, including one that he’d written about the cancelled shifts and employer firings that became routine in the Northwest beginning last fall. “It’s all part of making history, and always better when our voices are heard in the process.”

LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

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He is right. We need to keep our Political Action Fund viable. If each of would live up to the goal of "\$10 per member per month" discussed at the Longshore Caucus, it would help our union fight the battles that we must. However, there is that 3 percent who don't believe it is important to pay attention to politics, the 25-45 percent who mean to donate but forget, the 20 percent who are determined to give more and those that sign up for the \$3.00 per week payroll deduction that equals \$150 a year or \$10 per week which equals \$500 a year. But I like Robin's idea of one day's pay. Enclosed you will find my check for one day's wage as a casual walking boss for the ILWU Political Action Fund.

Thomas Reneqe
Astoria, OR

Dear Editor,

I want to thank the many friends who visited my father, Richard "Red" Ross, while he was at the University Mound home in San Francisco after suffering a stroke. That facility recently closed, so dad is now at the Amore Residential Home at 130 Vale Street in Daly City, CA 94014 (650) 755-0412. I want to say "THANK YOU" with all my heart to those who have visited him because it makes such a difference and brightens his day. He continues to welcome all visitors and enjoys reminiscing with his comrades from the waterfront. Thanks again to everyone for taking the time to visit my dad and others living in similar situations.

Glenda Ross
San Francisco, CA



Honoring Dr. King's legacy: Bay Area ILWU members were up early on Monday morning, January 14, to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Day. Together with unions from the San Francisco Labor Council, the ILWU joined community and church groups plus political leaders at a program emphasizing youth leadership that featured the Latin Jazz Youth Ensemble. Pictured (L-R) are: Local 10's Victor Brooks and President Melvin Mackay; Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker; Local 10 members Renee Oliva, Norman Franklin, and Derrick Mohammad; Local 34 pensioner John Fisher, Local 6 Pensioner Leroy King, former State Assembly Speaker and San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown; Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Farless Dailey, Frank Gaskin, and Bruno Reepen.

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Edward E. Middagh; Timothy W. Mortimer; William L. Powell; Duane R. Schuetze;
Local 10: Edwin S. Cotton;
Local 13: James E. Whitt; Lawrence E. Henry; Vinko Kolich; John M. Janisse; Alfred M. Plumridge; Richard J. Rivera; Raymond S. Garcia; Dale B. Greene; Whitside G. Miller; Joseph G. Camello; Tony Ivcevic; **Local 19:** James J. Cadigan; Alexander M. Earle; Bobby J. Wood; **Local 21:**

Ray M. Marks; **Local 23:** Michael J. Mostrom; Jeff R. Mc Carthy; **Local 24:** Daryl D. Graham; **Local 29:** Jose R. Sandoval; **Local 32:** Lars G. Folkesson; **Local 34:** Roberta Bowman; **Local 40:** Denise L. Schafte; **Local 63:** Donald A. Crew; Gloria J. Swanigan; Virginia Umana; Marjorie M. Mcintosh-Morton; Paul L. Torres; Glyness R. Ellis; Robert H. Dickerson;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 4: Gene A. Westling; Robert E. Cloud; **Local 8:** Earl L. Johnson; Arvid J. Marquardt; **Local 10:** Carl Dixon; William J. Rayo; **Local 13:** George S. Medina Sr.; Carl A. Grosso; Herbert Thomas; Ronald A. Linares; **Local 19:** Arni G. Scheving; **Local 21:** Kenneth A. Swicker; **Local 26:** William M. Gwin; **Local 34:** Kenneth Park (Violet); **Local 40:** Roy E. Nealeigh (Kathryn); Leroy N. Hart; **Local 54:** Tony L. Ferreira; **Local 63:** Louis

Garcia Jr; Robert L. Powers; Johnna K. Kuhn; Jill K. Trudeau; **Local 94:** Herman Puerta Jr;

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 8: Marcy G. Parks; Elizabeth Coffman; **Local 10:** Precious Warner; **Local 12:** Opal J. Kasch; **Local 13:** Maxine Suggs; Dolores R. Espinosa; **Local 19:** Pauline Harrison; Catherine L. Ryan; **Local 23:** Nyla V. De Paul; **Local 40:** Bernice Clemson; Billie R. Dunne; **Local 98:** Annette Hanke;

Panamanian longshore workers join the ILWU

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Canal every day are operated safely. The Canal Authority has launched a huge expansion project, building new locks capable of handling giant post-Panamax container ships carrying up to 13,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU). The pilots union has criticized the government for not working closely with the union in designing the work rules and procedures for safely handling these larger ships in the new locks. It is especially concerned over a new unilateral government directive that for the first time seeks to have ships pass each other in the narrow, but widened, Culebra Cut. Previously, ships traveling in opposite directions have waited, so that only one ship at a time traverses the cut.

In October Capt. Salas spoke out publicly. "It seems very odd that the most experienced people moving ships through this highly important system have been completely ignored by its governing authority," he charged. "At Panama Canal Pilots (PCP), our

most critical mission is ship safety, yet we've not been consulted."

Panamanian port and maritime unions are also concerned at the government's efforts to decertify the union for the tugboat captains in the canal. They fear that the same legal technicalities could be used to attack the representation rights of other unions as well. That could undermine longshore unions just as they are at the point where they are changing the basic living standards of workers.

"Our main objective as a union was to make a difference in the economic status of our members, especially those who earned least, the longshoremen," Ochoa declares. "I'm not saying that what we've been able to achieve in this new contract will give us a wage that will pay for everything. But it's a lot better than what we had before. And our responsibility as a union is to keep struggling to win better conditions, especially economic ones."

— David Bacon

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