



# THE DISPATCHER

www.ilwu.org

VOL 77, NO 11 • DECEMBER 2019

## THE INSIDE NEWS

- Anchor workers win!** 2
- Bridges Center scholarships** 3
- Christmas strike solidarity in Canada** 5
- Alaska port picket** 8
- LETTERS TO DISPATCHER** 8
- TRANSITIONS** 8



**Candidates questioned:** Former Vice President Joe Biden (right) and former investor Tom Steyer (left) came to talk with ILWU leaders in December. Both candidates answered questions, outlined their concerns and proposed solutions to help America's working families.

## ILWU Executive Board holds final session with Presidential candidates

**F**ormer Vice President Joe Biden and retired investor Tom Steyer became the 4th and 5th 2020 U.S. Presidential candidates to visit ILWU headquarters in San Francisco where both had separate free-ranging discussion with members of the International Executive Board.

Candidates Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren met with the Executive Board in August, as did Senator Kamala Harris who dropped-out of the race last month.

"We invited all candidates to talk with elected ILWU leaders about the issues that matter most to working families and union members," said International President Willie Adams. As he has done with all candidates who visited the ILWU, Adams greeted each with a warm welcome and provided a short introduction – then stepped back so they could deliver their own "stump speech" – 15 to 30 minutes of carefully crafted remarks that sounded fresh, passionate and personal – despite having delivered something similar at hundreds of events in recent months. Adams then opened the deck for questions from Board members and officers.

### First up: Tom Steyer

Tom Steyer chose the morning time slot and received a warm round of applause after being introduced by President Adams, who explained

the candidate's unusual background as a hedge-fund CEO who became a billionaire before retiring and now uses his wealth to advocate for progressive causes, including climate change, fighting the Keystone oil pipeline opposed by Native Americans and ILWU members, and urging Congress to hold President Trump accountable for abusing the powers of his office for personal gain and obstruction of Congress.

Steyer began by explaining why he chose to run for president.

"For the last ten years, I've been part of coalitions of ordinary Americans who are taking-on the unchecked power of corporations," Steyer said. "The reason I'm running for president is simple: I think corporations have bought the government. Until we take the government back, we are not going to get any of the progressive policies that every single person in this room wants."

Steyer said he supports affordable healthcare, quality education, living wages, clean air and a fair vote. "These are rights that every American should have," he said.

### Funding progressive initiatives

Steyer says he has contributed over \$130 million to fund progressive ballot initiatives in California, starting in 2010 with his role in defeating Prop 23, that would have rolled-back the state's global warming law. He also contributed to initiatives that aimed to

improve public transportation and increase taxes on the wealthy to fund public education.

### Long-standing ties with unions

Steyer has made a point of working with unions, mobilizing his group called NextGen America, and with the California Labor Federation knocked on millions of doors to increase voting in the last two election cycles.

"My first partner in everything I have done is organized labor," he said. "My best partner in everything I have done has been organized labor and unions."

### War on workers

Steyer believes corporate American "has a strategy to break the power of unions in order to make it easier for them to keep all the money, which they've been doing for the past 40 years. The Republican strategy is to cut taxes for the wealthy, cut education, cut healthcare, attack organized labor, and allow as much pollution as they want.

### Political outsider

Steyer said his position as a political outsider who came from the world of finance, is an asset.

"I think an outsider who has been successfully fighting corporations for decades, is the person you want to take back the government," Steyer said, adding that he sup-

*continued on page 6*



ILWU Feed the Community Day  
page 4

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800.



## Anchor workers ratify their first contract



One of the nation's most famous breweries that kicked-off the craft-brew revolution, now has an ILWU contract. The 65 workers who create *Anchor Steam* and other fine brews began their union campaign with personal outreach that united newer and veteran workers, then secured community and political support and made international solidarity contacts with workers in Japan and Canada who are also employed by Sapporo, the legendary Japanese

brewer that now owns Anchor. Workers negotiated their first contract with wage increases, better benefits and a voice in decision-making. While Sapporo initially hired anti-union consultants, workers held their ground and management chose a more constructive and cooperative path with the well-organized workforce.

"Anchor workers took leadership and responsibility from the beginning and stayed focused throughout their

campaign," said International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr.

"We followed the ILWU advice to take it slow and steady," said John Ezell, a Brewer at Anchor and member of the elected Negotiating Committee. "One of the most important things we did was one-on-one conversations that got everyone involved." That communication and involvement continued through the union vote and contract negotiations. We want to keep those lines of

communication open so we can deal with things down the line."

Anchor workers first contacted the ILWU in April 2018. Their internal outreach effort began that June and continued with an election on March 13, 2019 that was overwhelmingly in favor of the union. The first contract negotiating session was held on May 23, 2019. Their first contract was ratified on December 20 by a vote of 49 to 3.

### ILWU Staff Changes



**Bridget Wack** is the ILWU's new Researcher. She joined the staff in October and works closely with the Organizing Department to gather and analyze information that will help more workers join the ILWU.

Bridget grew up in Boston. After college she worked at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a team who researched the importance of good jobs in reducing poverty. Before that she was Research Assistant for education expert Jonathan Kozol, known for his ideas and books about how to improve public schools by addressing racial and economic injustice – and opposing anti-union, private charter schools.

"I'm very excited to be part of such a strong, member-driven union," she said, "and grateful for the opportunity to learn from everyone here!"



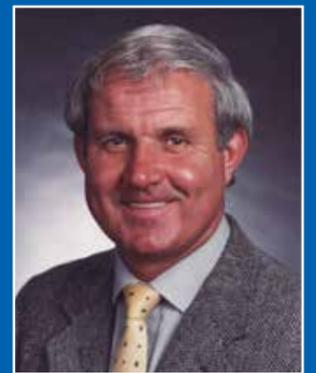
**Ryan Dowling** was recently promoted to become the ILWU's Organizing Director. Before joining the staff three years ago as Assistant Organizing Director, Dowling was organizing for 13 years with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

"The International Officers have mapped-out a great plan for organizing – and the response from local leaders and members has been encouraging," says Dowling who participated in the first two Regional Organizing Meetings, held recently in LA and Tacoma. The next will be held in the Columbia River Region on January 27-28.



**Jon Brier's** new role includes serving as the ILWU's Assistant Organizing Director. Until now, Brier has been the Puget Sound's Lead Organizer. He'll continue to be based there, but will take on new assignments, including efforts to help workers employed in the supply-chain, logistics and transport sectors.

"Helping ILWU and IBU members organize has been incredibly satisfying," he says, "and I'm looking forward to helping us move to the next level." He recently attended the Alaska Longshore Convention where organizing was a key concern. "Working together is the key," he says.



### Randy C. Vekich

As *The Dispatcher* was going to press, we learned that longtime ILWU leader Randy C. Vekich had passed in early December. The January 2020 issue will include an obituary honoring his life and contributions to the ILWU.

## DISPATCHER

Craig Merrilees  
Communications Director and Managing Editor  
Roy San Filippo  
Editor

ILWU TITLED OFFICERS  
William E. Adams, President  
Bobby Olvera, Jr., Vice President, Mainland  
Wesley Furtado, Vice President, Hawaii  
Edwin Ferris, Secretary-Treasurer

The *Dispatcher* (ISSN 0012-3765) is published monthly except for a combined July/Aug 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.



# Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies celebrates new growth and ILWU support at awards banquet

Each year the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington holds an awards banquet in Seattle to thank students, faculty, and union members for their contributions to labor research and advocacy. The banquet also honors new scholarship recipients who are studying labor history and are passionate about social justice.

The Harry Bridges Endowed Chair in Labor Studies was established in 1992, following a grassroots fundraising campaign by ILWU members and pensioners to honor their late union president.

The Center's Chair is currently held by Kim England, Professor of Geography. The appointment provides financial support to faculty members for researching and teaching labor studies. During the 27 years since the Chair was established, the position has grown to include activities at the Labor Archives of Washington, launched in 2010.

This year's banquet on Sunday, November 10th was the largest so far – with more than twenty students receiving scholarships in front of a room packed with over 350 supporters. The banquet opened with a video introducing the Bridges Center, noting the ILWU's past and ongoing role with the organization (see it at [www.tinyurl.com/bridges-videos](http://www.tinyurl.com/bridges-videos)). Those interviewed on the video included Local 19 President Rich Austin Jr. and ILWU pensioner Gene Vrana – both of whom serve as advisors on the Harry Bridges Center Visiting Committee.

Much of the Center's recent growth has been possible thanks to generous contributions from ILWU members and pensioners. Those efforts include two new scholarship awards: the Frank Jenkins Jr. Fellowship in Labor Studies and the Michele Drayton and Ian Kennedy Scholarship in Labor Studies.

## Frank Jenkins Jr. Fellowship

The Jenkins Fellowship provides students with a \$6,000 grant for two years to explore issues of social and economic justice, equality, and diver-

sity. It was established last year in honor of Seattle civil rights activist and ILWU leader, Frank Jenkins, Jr., who came to Seattle in 1909 as the grandson of a runaway slave, son of a Buffalo Soldier and Filipino mother. He spent a half-century on Seattle's waterfront, participated in the 1934 West Coast Maritime Strike and was a founding member of ILWU Local 19. Jenkins was a devoted labor activist who advocated for equal opportunity decades before the Civil Rights movement gained critical strength in the late 1950's and 60's.

The Jenkins Fellowship was introduced with a short video (also see this video at [www.tinyurl.com/bridges-videos](http://www.tinyurl.com/bridges-videos)) featuring Local 19 pensioner James Barnett who helped establish the award and worked closely with the Jenkins family to secure their support. While Barnett never met Jenkins, he said the man left an enduring legacy.

"Frank was a legend on the waterfront," said Barnett on the video. "He was a part of a group of great leaders for the union."

Former Local 19 President Herald Ugles was also interviewed for the video and praised Jenkins for being widely respected as a leader who showed that "the ILWU was diverse, not just in words but by action."

Also appearing in the film was Local 19 Night Dispatch Manager Jerome Johnson, who noted that Jenkins didn't get "a lot of acknowledgement in the past, so for him to get it, it's overdue, but it's here and hopefully people can benefit from the Fellowship."

Ugles congratulated both winners of the Jenkins Fellowship – Alika Bourgette and Paulette Thompson – noting that they stood-out among an impressive group of 50 applicants.

Bourgette is a graduate student at UW's History Department who will use his first year of funding to buy books and attend conferences to share his work with other scholars. During the second year, he plans to "engage the ILWU and Frank Jenkin's legacy directly because part of my project will focus on longshore workers in Honolulu who were active when the ILWU was founded there."



**Jenkins Fellowship:** Former Local 19 President Herald Ugles (right) congratulates Jenkins fellowship recipients Alika Bourgette (left) and Paulette Thompson (center).

"It was also great to meet several ILWU pensioners and members at the awards banquet," Bourgette said, "so I could see the people who are supporting me and the people I hope to honor with my work."

The other Jenkins Fellowship recipient, Paulette Thompson, is getting her doctorate in Education. She's the granddaughter of a longshore worker on the gulf coast and has been an anti-racist, social justice educator in Seattle public schools for over thirty years.

"I'm honored to receive an award named after such a great man in history," said Thompson, who plans to meet more ILWU pensioners in the future and learn more about their history.

"Seeing multiple generations of the labor movement at the banquet was something that really stuck out to me," she said. "It made me realize how far we've come, what it's taken for us to get here, and how important history is to knowing where we can, and should go, in the future."

## Kennedy Drayton Scholarship

The second new award is the Kennedy Drayton Scholarship in Labor Studies, created by former Local 52 members Ian Kennedy and Michele Drayton, both now officers of the Seattle Pensioners Club. The scholarship provides \$5,000 for working-class

freshmen in Labor Studies. Kennedy and Drayton established their award to promote education and organized labor, hoping it will provide support for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Michele Drayton presented the scholarship to winners Dianna Laguan and Lilya Garzon-Boyd. Both are recent high school graduates who have proven themselves as activists and change-makers committed to social justice and workers' rights. Laguan is the first member of her family to attend college and has been organizing for immigration reform and rights of undocumented workers. Garzon-Boyd shares the same passion, having attended actions at the state capitol to lobby legislators for the "Keep Washington Working" bill that would protect the civil rights of undocumented immigrants.

## The Future of Labor Studies

Both new scholarships were made possible only with ILWU financial support. The Jenkins Fellowship was spearheaded by members of the Seattle Pensioners Club and Local 19 members who voted last year to contribute \$100,000 toward the award. The Coast Longshore Division followed with an additional \$100,000 donation that launched the Jenkins Fellowship. The Kennedy Drayton Scholarship was established thanks to a generous donation from Ian Kennedy and Michelle Drayton that was matched by the University of Washington.

## Legacy scholarships

The two new awards join three existing scholarships established by ILWU members: the Gundlach Scholarship, the Martin and Anne Jugum Scholarship, and the Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes Scholarship. These five scholarships, along with other Bridges Center awards and grants, now provide over \$100,000 in labor scholarships each year.

## Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes

Gray Taylor and Tania Santiago received this year's Domingo Viernes Scholarship, honoring ILWU activists Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes who

*continued on page 8*



The 2019 Bridges Center scholarship award winners.

# ILWU's "feed the community day" marks 22 years of volunteering



**Young people power:** Among the hundred volunteers who helped Feed the Community this year were dozens of young activists.

**D**ozens of ILWU volunteers donated long hours during the holidays to help less-fortunate families enjoy a beautiful Thanksgiving dinner.

The annual "feed the community" event has become a tradition for Harbor Area ILWU members. This year, there were fewer work opportunities on the docks at the twin-port complex of Los Angeles/Long Beach, but that didn't seem to dampen the volunteer spirit.

"When work on the docks get tighter, this tradition becomes even more important," said Local 13 member Katy Witkowski, who co-chairs the Holiday Committee with Jose Alvarez. "We know that when things get slower for us, it gets even harder for everyone else."

## Ten-thousand pounds of food

For more than two decades, the ILWU has donated thousands of dollars and volunteer hours to feed the community during Thanksgiving. Together with union grocery chains, restaurant suppliers, produce distributors, and shipping companies, the volunteers gather more than 25 pallets of food – each weighing up to 500 pounds.

All the different food items are then assembled into "baskets" which have evolved over the years into large, topless cardboard boxes, filled above the brim with everything needed for a family of eight to enjoy a complete Thanksgiving Dinner.

## A year of preparation

The process takes months to plan and prepare, then two days to execute. Each year, Committee volunteers are recruited from Locals 13, 63, Auxiliary 8 and the Southern California Pensioners Group. They begin with fundraising and try to secure donations from local unions and the Credit Union beginning in March. By May, the Committee reaches-out to existing partners and potential new ones to coordinate the food logistics. By the time Thanksgiving week arrives, months of work come together on Monday and Tuesday, when the heavy baskets are assembled and delivered.

## Assembly of the food baskets

On Monday, November 25, dozens of volunteers arrived at the ILWU Memorial Hall early in the morning for the "prep" day when 1,500 boxes were assembled, padded, and labeled. More than 6,000 pounds of beans and rice were scooped out of large sacks, then portioned into smaller two-pound bags. Meanwhile, other volunteers unloaded pallets full of stuffing, cornbread, canned corn and green beans.

Dozens more volunteers arrived Tuesday morning to sort and portion fresh produce, including celery, onions, lettuce, tomatoes, apples, carrots, potatoes, and radishes. The vegetables were stored overnight in a refrigerated container that was donated. The final addition was a frozen 14-pound turkey added to each box.

The boxes were then lovingly pushed down a gigantic assembly line. When the first box arrived at the "front of the line" about 11am, it received a non-denominational blessing from clergy members, union officials and community leaders.

While volunteers worked inside, 1500 families gathered outside in a line that stretched around the block for their turn to receive a basket. Each family had already filled-out an application in September, provided by a social service agencies or organizations that serve low-income households.

"Tariffs and taxes don't matter when people are hungry," said Holiday Committee Co-Chair Jose Alvarez, referring to lower cargo volume on the docks caused by decisions made in the White House.

"All that matters to these families today is that we can still provide them with a beautiful meal on Thanksgiving," he said. Alvarez, Witkowski and members of the Holiday Events Committee didn't have much time to rest and recover after Thanksgiving. Their annual Christmas toy program began just a few weeks later.

*Reporting by Vivian Malauulu*



**It takes a village and a team:** The Holiday Committee depends on ILWU friends and family.

# Alaska Longshore picket for good jobs



Alaska longshore workers organized a picket line on December 17 at the Port of Homer to protest a cut-rate contractor who ignored local workers and paid substandard wages and benefits to outsiders. The job involved the transfer of sulphur generated at a local refinery onto a vessel, the Iberian Bulker. "We put out a media release and got good local news coverage," said Alaska Longshore Division President Dennis Young. "Homer and other communities need good-paying jobs for local residents, and we're leading the fight." Young was interviewed by radio and print outlets, including the Peninsula Clarion, Homer News and KBBI radio.

## Christmas strike solidarity in Canada



ILWU members from Local 508 in the town of Chemainus on Vancouver Island spent some of their holiday season supporting a toy drive to help nearly 3,000 forestry workers who have been on strike since July. These striking members of the Steelworkers Union are employed by Western Forest Products, a profitable company that is refusing demands for more reasonable shifts to make jobs safer and more family-friendly.

ILWU Local 508 member Brittini Paquette helped organize the toy drive. "These guys are heading into their sixth month. My husband is one of the striking members. I'm part of such a great union and organization at ILWU that I wanted to use our local to get out and find a cause to support the community," Paquette said. Paquette received some funding from the Local to get the toy drive rolling. On December 8, Santa Clause and the Grinch stood outside the toy drive in a community hall donated by the town of Ladysmith. Inside, volunteers

sorted toys and other donations. Sponsors joining the ILWU effort included local grocers, a tire repair shop, firefighters, a café, restaurant and other small businesses. Besides donated toys, the effort raised over \$2,500 in cash plus another \$1,000 in gift cards. "I'm hoping to inspire other young workers to get involved and see how the community and unions can come together to support each other, especially in hard times like this," Paquette said. Local 508 President Brett Hartley says the community is hurting because

WFP is refusing to settle the strike. He also noted a recent decline in log shipments that is impacting Local 508 members, and praised Paquette for organizing the toy drive despite these challenges. "She's one of the young workers who have stepped-up to make things happen and we welcome their help." Local 508 received positive publicity in the local newspaper for the efforts to help the strikers, and may consider making the toy drive an annual event in the future.

# Presidential candidates visit ILWU again

continued from page 1

ports congressional term limits and a national ballot initiative system, similar to California's.

## Questions from the Board

Local 63 OCU President John Fageaux led the questions with one that was on many minds, asking Steyer, "What's it like to be a billionaire?"

Steyer said he plans to give away at least half of his wealth to good causes while he is alive, explaining that he is using that money to help make America a better country.

"There's a larger question about what we are doing on this earth. I'm deeply interested in having a meaningful life and feeling like I've left the campsite better than I found it," he said.

## Immigration

Local 34 Board member David Gonzales asked about Steyer's position on immigration. Steyer said the Trump Administration's policy was rooted in racial discrimination and that the practice of separating children from their parents at the border violates human rights and international laws that protect people seeking asylum.

"We have a president who, on his very first day of running for office, vilified and attacked Latinos. He's has used immigration as a racist attack on people of color," Steyer said.

## Support for the Jones Act

Marina Secchitano, President of the Inlandboatmen's Union, asked Steyer if he supported the Jones Act that protects good union maritime jobs and whether wind turbines off the California Coast should be covered by the Jones Act. Steyer said he supported the Jones Act and clean energy policies that will create millions of good-paying jobs.

"I'm the person in this race who first pledged to make climate their number one priority," Steyer said. "If we do it the way I propose, we will create 4.5 million jobs, and they will be good-paying union jobs."

## The right to clean air and water

Responding to a question by Local 26 President Luisa Gratz about whether oil companies should be allowed to use fracking to get more oil, Steyer said, "Nobody has the right to poison you and your family so they can make more money. In terms of fracking, if a company is poisoning the water and causing cancer, that has to stop."

Gratz also asked Steyer about his plan to defeat Trump.

"The Republicans are going to run on the economy. The Democratic nominee has to run on the economy and I can do that," Steyer said. "Donald Trump is a total fake. He's a fake business person. He played a business person on a reality TV show, and he's a fake as a president in terms of economics, and I'm going to expose that."

International Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris asked Steyer for details about his climate action plan, to which Steyer pledged to declare a "state of emer-

gency" on day one – then establish 'something like' the Green New Deal, and adopt a justice-based approach to the environment by cleaning-up air and water pollution in communities where it is unsafe to breathe the air and drink the water."

"America is the only country that can lead the world in this, and if we don't, it isn't going to happen. This also gives us a chance to rebuild the United States, and make our country more just, while creating millions of good-paying union jobs. It's the biggest challenge in the history of the planet and we have to succeed together."

## Student loan debt

Local 22's Dax Koho asked Steyer about the growing problem of college student debt. Steyer said, "Banks are loan sharking a bunch of kids. The interest rate on student loans should be one percent. And students who take a job that serves our country – in the military, teachers, nurses, social workers— your loan should be forgiven as part of your pay,"

## Criminal justice reform

International Vice President Bobby Olvera, Jr. asked about criminal justice reform and Steyer said he supports reforming policing practices, eliminating cash bail, getting rid of mandatory minimums, and combatting discrimination against formerly incarcerated people for voting, housing, and employment.

"The Department of Justice should make sure that police officers who misbehave, especially in regards to race, must be corrected, Steyer said."

## Public option, not Medicare for all

Local 19's Dan McKisson asked Steyer about his views on healthcare reform. Steyer said health care was a right and that he supports a public option along with private health insurance, but opposes Medicare for All.

"Over 160 million Americans have negotiated for health insurance. I just hate telling 160 million people that we know better than you do about your life," he said.

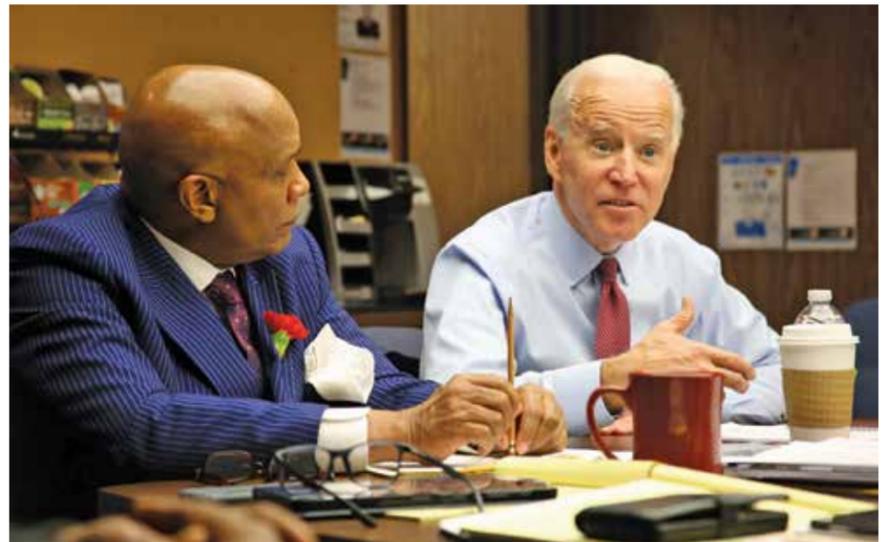
## Biden arrives

Former Vice President Joe Biden – current leader of the pack hoping to challenge President Trump – was escorted into the room by President Adams – and the entrance was telling. He shook hands and greeted Board members and guests as if they were old friends – quickly established rapport with many in the room.

His stump speech was sometimes emotional and occasionally brash, but aimed more often for sincerity and heart-felt conviction. There were also a few slips of the tongue – an old Biden habit that some find endearing and others see as a weakness. He addressed the flaws by telling a story about him stuttering as a child and confronting the neighborhood bullies who taunted him.

"I know how to deal with bullies and win," he says, making an obvious reference to defeating Donald Trump.

And Biden isn't shy about promoting his frontrunner status and "elect-



**Candid conversation:** Former Vice President Joe Biden took questions and discussed his strategy to win in 2020.

ability" – a label he wears proudly that is confirmed by polls showing him ahead of fellow Democrats and beating Trump in a match-up. At the ILWU, he emphasized the impressive support he's attracted from African American voters that should help him in South Carolina after the dust settles in Iowa and New Hampshire. Biden explains that support by emphasizing his eight years with President Obama, connections with the civil rights movement and 36 years of service as Senator for Delaware, which he said has the 8th largest percentage of African Americans in the nation – over 20% – which is higher than North Carolina and over three times greater than California.

After establishing his political cred, Biden pivoted to what most wanted to hear: his views about working families and unions. Biden began by citing some well-known facts, beginning with the decline of union density in the private sector that was 25% when he was first elected to the Senate in 1972, down to just above 6% today. He quoted from the National Labor Relations Act, passed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1935, saying, "it calls on the government to actively promote unions – not just legalize them." And he repeatedly expressed support for the latest labor law reform bill in Congress, called "Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or PRO-Act."

Responding to a question from Local 30 member Kevin Martz about the decline of aerospace jobs in the Antelope Valley, Biden said the federal government has enormous purchasing power plus the ability to create jobs and influence investment. He added that federal contracts should include a requirement that forces companies to obey labor laws or lose their contracts.

Local 34 member David Gonzales asked how Biden would make changes at the border and with immigration. "It's all about family – and family separation must end," said Biden. He also pledged to provide fair hearings for asylum seekers escaping violence – and said he would do more to combat poverty and corruption that contribute to migration.

Biden responded to an inquiry from Marina Secchitano, President of the Inlandboatmen's Union, about the Jones Act, saying he remains a strong supporter. He then pivoted to the need for more good union jobs that would result from his \$100 billion

renewable energy program that would be funded with tax credits to spur private investment.

Vice President Bobby Olvera, Jr., asked Biden what he would do to help the next generation make the world a better place. That question became an opportunity for Biden to talk about some personal experiences – including the loss of his son Beau to cancer, that helped shaped his own priorities for the future.

Biden said as a young man, he was influenced by the civil rights movement and decided to leave a fancy law firm in order to become a public defender. He ended his talk with a rallying cry.

"We're in a battle for the soul of America," he concluded, "and you're gonna see the U.S. coming back."

## Samantha Levens welcomed

President Willie Adams introduced the Board to Samantha Levens, the newly-hired Inspector for the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) who will be working out of the Bay Area. A longtime activist and elected leader from the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) San Francisco Region, Levens has also worked as an ILWU Organizer.

"I'm honored to be working as an ITF Inspector and look forward to help seafarers organize for their rights and build solidarity between all maritime workers," they said.



**Samantha Levens:** new ITF Inspector for Northern California



**Warm welcome:** President Adams welcomed new Board member John Simpliciano from Hawaii.

### Organizing Reports

International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr. led a series of presentations on the union's new organizing program that he's overseeing to support and involve all parts of the union.

"We're developing a comprehensive program with some new and different approaches," said Olvera, Jr., who called on several organizing staff to make brief presentations to the Board, including Organizing Director Ryan Dowling, Assistant Organizing Director Jon Brier, Bay Area Organizer Agustin Ramirez and Researcher Bridget Wack. Each detailed the new work they're doing to protect good jobs for existing members and help grow the union.

Signs of progress include a newly-negotiated first contract secured by 65 workers at the Anchor Brewery in San Francisco, where employees organized to win significant pay and benefit improvements. Another report detailed an ongoing successful campaign to help 65-110 maritime-related workers at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography/University of California, who are in the process of affiliating with the ILWU's Marine Division – the Inland-Boatmen's Union (IBU). These University employees operate and support a fleet of four scientific research vessels near San Diego. They've already signed

union cards and are preparing for the next steps to organize.

"I expect we'll have more good news to share with you at the April Board meeting," said Olvera, Jr.

### New Board member John Simpliciano

President Adams administered the oath of office to new International Executive Board member, John Simpliciano, who was welcomed with a warm round of applause from fellow Board members. John currently works as a temporary Business Agent at the Maui Division Office where he helps Local 142 members.

### \$93 million jury verdict discussed

Other action at the Board included a briefing and discussion about the \$93 million jury verdict against the ILWU, that was covered in last month's *Dispatcher*. The Board held their discussion in executive session. The verdict is the subject of a federal court hearing scheduled for February 14.

### Resolution to save historic art

A resolution submitted by Local 10 passed unanimously, calling on the ILWU to help preserve historic murals at Washington High School in San Francisco that were created by artist Victor Arnautoff in the mid-1930's. They depict injustices inflicted on

Native and African Americans by the "founding fathers." The artist also created many murals celebrating the contributions of working people and their struggles to establish labor unions – including the ILWU.

### Legislative Report

In addition to detailed reports provided from each Board member about developments in their local or region, an extensive report on legislation and political action was presented by Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin. Recent legislative efforts include influencing the National Defense Authorization Act – a mammoth spending bill. McLaughlin said the ILWU was successful in securing language that allows longshore workers to work on defense installations using TWIC credentials. The Pentagon is objecting and wants further background checks, so McLaughlin will continue working on the issue. The union was also successful in seeing that the Maritime Committee on Occupational Safety and Health would be treated as a "standing committee" which requires regular meetings. The effort was needed because the Trump administration was preventing the Committee from meeting. Finally, the ILWU successfully stopped efforts to use federal dollars for port automation projects. The law will prevent funding for automation unless it can be shown that no jobs would be lost.

In other legislative work, the ILWU helped influence House appropriation language that instructs government grain inspectors to not cross picket lines. In another matter, California Senator Dianne Feinstein wrote a letter expressing concern about dangerous shipments of cyanide from China that could arrive at the Port of Oakland for use in gold and silver mines. She requested the Department of Homeland Security to review that matter prior to any shipments arriving from China. The potentially lethal material is not properly packaged to protect workers and nearby residents from what could become a catastrophe.

There was an update on a pension "reform" bill that would punish current workers to help pay for ailing pension plans. The ILWU wants pension benefits protected for all workers and is seeking federal funds to help – a policy opposed by the Trump administration.

### Resolution on Political Action

McLaughlin's report concluded with a focus on political action – emphasizing the importance of member participation and involvement in the fight for good jobs, protecting pensions, Social Security, Medicare, and other concerns for working families. The Board unanimously passed a resolution calling for a plan to improve political action at the local union level. International President Willie Adams announced that Secretary-Treasurer Ed Ferris had been assigned to visit local unions and help them build a political action program that includes education, voter registration, and voluntary contributions to the ILWU Political Action Fund.

"I'm planning to hit the road after the holidays to help locals get rolling with political action work that's so important now," said Ferris. "We can't allow our jobs and the union's future to be dictated by the powerful interests who control politics now," he said.

### Resolution supporting Local 9

Finally, the Board unanimously passed a resolution carried by Local 22 that calls for the International Union to express support for Local 9 members working at SEATAC Airport who are trying to negotiate a new contract.

The next meeting of the ILWU International Executive Board will take place in April, on a date yet to be determined.

"There's a good chance the Board will consider endorsing a presidential candidate at that meeting," said International President Willie Adams.



## Ian Ruskin films *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks* and *To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine* now available for download

"The words and ideas of Harry Bridges, a truly visionary labor leader, and Thomas Paine, the one truly radical Founding Father, are more relevant and vital today than at any time since they were first spoken. We now have, with the up-coming election, less than a year to do what both men would want us to do: help to educate the public as to the issues in this election, fight all and any suppression of the vote, and encourage everyone to vote! This is why I have created streaming versions of *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks* and *To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine* that are available for all union members and everyone fighting for social justice, at the special price of \$3 each. They both have new introductions and optional Spanish sub-titles and closed captioning, because as many people as possible need to hear these stories! I hope that you will download the films and watch them with you families and friends. We all need all the encouragement that we can get, and I believe that these films, and the words of Bridges and Paine, will encourage you!"

– Ian Ruskin

You can purchase these videos for \$3 through the following links:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/thomaspaine>

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/harrybridges>



Local 23 members from Tacoma sent a large delegation to the Bridges Center Awards banquet.

## Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies celebrates new growth and ILWU support at awards banquet

continued from page 3

were murdered in 1981 on orders from Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Ligaya Domingo, Silme's daughter, presented the award, along with a copy of the book *Remembering Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes: The Legacy of Filipino American Labor Activism*, published by the University of Washington Press in 2012.

"I'd read a lot about Domingo and Viernes and was inspired to meet Domingo family members at the banquet and humbled to receive this award," said Taylor, who's getting her Master's Degree in public health and hopes to help working women. She comes from North Carolina, "a state where labor and union are almost dirty words, so it was heartening to see how strong and supportive the labor community is in Washington," she said.

The Jugum Scholarship is named for longtime Local 19 leader Martin "Jug" Jugum and his wife Anne. Both helped establish the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies. This year's quartet of Jugum award winners were Jasmine Fernandez, Clara Raftery, Rhiannon Rasaretnam, and Oloth Insyxiengmay. Raftery is a leader of United Students Against Sweatshops – a national net-

work of campus groups including the University of Washington.

"The Bridges Center has been a really important place of support and community for me during my time at the UW, so it feels fitting to receive an award named for Jugum," said Raftery. "It was nice to be recognized at the banquet for my work and service. I also know that there are many workers and activists in less privileged positions than myself, so I plan to use this fellowship and my platform to continue advocating for them," she said.

### The Bridges Center is growing

This year's banquet also celebrated a year of growth at the Center, with record enrollment in the Labor Studies Minor program and more scholarship applications than ever. Funding from the Washington State Legislature has also helped the center.

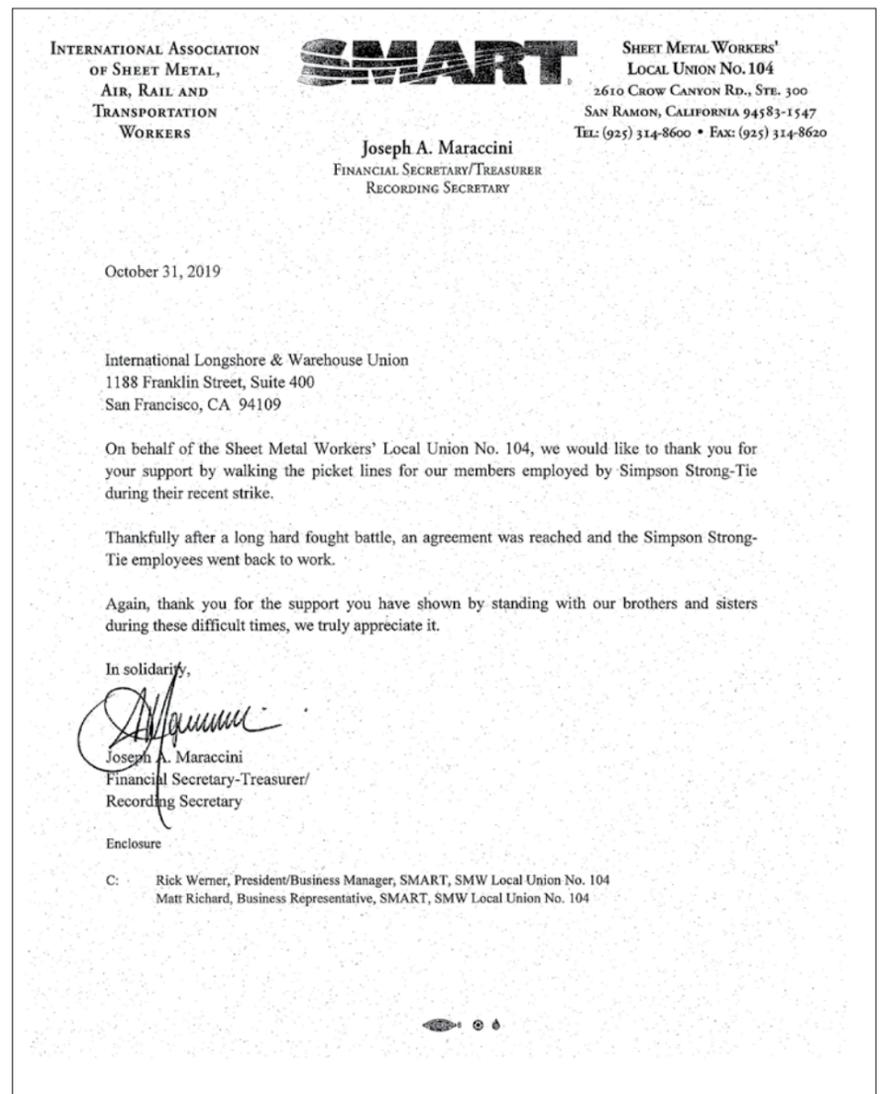
Associate Director Andrew Hedden says the new funding has allowed the Center to improve staffing, add new classes and begin developing an internship program for UW students to gain experience in the labor movement.

For more information about the Bridges Center, visit the website at [labor.uw.edu](http://labor.uw.edu).



**Helping hands:** Representative and friends of the ILWU Northern California Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Program (ADRP) met on December 2 in San Francisco to learn about new trends and treatment strategies. These rank-and-file ILWU members serve as program Representatives on the job. "Our goal is to be present whenever someone is ready to ask for help," says Coordinator Hunny Powell.

## LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER



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)

## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 8:** Richard D. Gilstrap; Gordon L. Wescott; William R. Moore;  
**Local 10:** Meredith N. Suttice;  
**Local 13:** Robert J. Foster; Rolondo A. Harvey; Roger D. Norris; Christopher A. Reynolds; John E. Perkins; Ruth A. Andrade;  
**Local 18:** Laura L. Noteman;  
**Local 19:** Mike R. Hansen; Michael S. Wagener, Sr.; Christopher G. Moore; Roger H. Wiest;  
**Local 21:** Lynn A. Higgins; Garris L. Nordquist; **Local 23:** Kirk D. Gipe;  
**Local 26:** John N. Califano;  
**Local 29:** Guillermo Luna; Gary T. Veldman; **Local 34:** Kevin Gibbons; Racine Fowler; **Local 52:** David C. Lewis; **Local 63:** Ruben D. Becerra; Glenn S. Katsumata; Maluisa Gregory; Guillermina C. Carrillo; Bernice V. Rios; Janet M. O'Neill;  
**Local 94:** William H. Kirchenschlager;

### DECEASED PENSIONERS:

**Local 8:** Lewis J. Lundy Jr.(Violet);  
**Local 10:** Cleo Hudson; Lonnie Reed; Refugio Salgado (Nohema); **Local 13:** Raymond Smart; Harry Weisman; Jack J. Hernandez; **Local 23:** Tom F. Harman;  
**Local 34:** Felix Franklin; William D. Gomes; **Local 52:** Kenneth D. Field; William Peck; **Local 63:** David C. Heredia; Marshall Herrera Jr; Hugh E. McIntyre; **Local 94:** John W. Greenwood;  
**Local 98:** Leonard G. Hudson;

### DECEASED SURVIVOR:

**Local 4:** Ila L. McCourtney;  
**Local 8:** Virgeen F. Piltz;  
**Local 10:** Lucy M. Rocha; Iola Moore; Eddy M. Lewis; **Local 13:** Gloria Ramirez; Harriett H. Taylor; Marie L. Helm; **Local 19:** Constance M. Bogert;  
**Local 23:** Martina M. Foundation; Martina Davis; **Local 34:** Janice Brown; **Local 91:** Grace C. Hislop;  
**Local 94:** Maurine Reynolds;

*Happy Holidays*  
**from the  
 ILWU International Officers  
 and Coast Committeemen**

