



THE DISPATCHER

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THE INSIDE NEWS

LETTERS TO DISPATCHER 2

Bill Carder: a humble, effective fighter for the working class 5

IBU fights to protect members from COVID-19 impacts 6

ILWU legislative report 7

First Blood memorial honors fallen workers in SoCal 8

TRANSITIONS 8



Alaska Longshore workers arrested in campaign for good jobs [page 4](#)



Photo by Brooke Anderson

Black Lives Matter: Thousands of Bay Area activists participated in a car-caravan protest on May 31 that went by the Port of Oakland to protest the police killing of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police. The killing has sparked ongoing protest in over 140 cities affecting every state in the union.

ILWU responds to a triple crisis:

- George Floyd murder launches national action
- COVID-19 death toll in U.S. claims over 100,000 lives
- Trump threatens to block voting & deploy military

International Officers & Executive Board take action

Americans were already reeling in late May from the COVID-19 pandemic that claimed its 100,000th victim – the highest death toll in the world – and pushed over 40 million out of work – made worse by a chaotic, bungled federal response.

The pandemic was still raging out of control on May 25 when a group of four Minneapolis Police officers were caught on a cell phone video brutally murdering George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man who suffered a painful, horrifying death that lasted almost nine minutes. The incident triggered nationwide protests that were continuing as *The Dispatcher* went to press.

“America is facing our largest and most challenging crisis in decades,” said ILWU International President Willie Adams. “Our response must be thoughtful, determined and guided

by our union’s principles of justice and racial equality,” he said.

Strongly-worded response

The ILWU responded immediately to Mr. Floyd’s murder with a strongly-worded letter sent by President Adams on behalf of ILWU members to Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, State Attorney General Keith Ellison, and Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo.

The letter called for the police officers responsible to be charged and tried for murder, noting that the ILWU, “...has a rich history of fighting for racial and social justice. We cannot sit back and watch the same scene unfold time and time again.” (See the full text of President Adams’ letter on page 3 of this issue.)

The ILWU followed-up with a letter sent to Mr. Floyd’s family, conveying condolences on behalf of the union’s membership and expressing solidarity with the suffering and

hardship inflicted on the family and the nation.

“The ILWU has a long and proud history of fighting for racial and social justice and our union stands in solidarity with you today. We will continue to fight for a world in which black and brown people do not have to live in fear. We will continue to fight for a world where everyone can live with dignity and respect. We will continue to demand justice for Brother Floyd.” (See the complete letter to Mr. Floyd’s family on page 3 of this issue.)

Movement for Black Lives

Protesters across the country responded to Mr. Floyd’s murder, including ILWU members and leaders, who participated in predominantly peaceful demonstrations. Many of these actions were organized by the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), a growing national network led mostly by young people of color.

continued on page 3

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LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

May, 2020

Dear ILWU members and friends,

Your Federated Auxiliaries are alive and active. I would like to share with you who we are and what we do. My name is Victoria Sowers and I was elected President last May at our Convention in Longview, WA.

There are Federated Auxiliary chapters currently active in the ports of LA/Long Beach, San Francisco/Oakland, Coos Bay and Portland. Washington offers several Auxiliaries starting with the ports of Vancouver, Longview, Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle and the port of Everett. We also have an Auxiliary in Boron, CA that has an active chapter but currently is on hiatus. Many of our Auxiliaries have close ties with their local Longshore divisions. Some Auxiliaries work with ILWU Pensioners to provide meals at meetings and host memorials for Brothers and Sisters who have passed.

At the first Federated Auxiliaries convention in 1941, ILWU President Harry Bridges wrote a letter to our group that is as relevant now as it was then. He encouraged the Auxiliaries to be of service to the union and its' principles; promoting unionism in the community with education and political action. Buying products made and distributed by other union members and assisting workers whenever possible to improve conditions, is also included part of that directive.

The Federated Auxiliaries have been growing and changing in recent years because a new generation of younger women are embracing the ideals of solidarity and service established by our matriarchs. These

young women have encouraged us to carry signs supporting teachers and advocating better schools; to support struggles by unorganized workers and help those fighting for justice in other unions. We now have members who hold elected public office and are not afraid to speak-up for workers' rights or question who benefits from automation. Being legally autonomous from the ILWU labor force has sometimes allowed us to take action and show support in ways that our Brothers and Sisters of the ILWU cannot.

We also have fun! Our Auxiliaries raise money for charitable organizations that give back to those who are not as fortunate as ILWU families. We have held movie nights and "Trunk or Treat" events for Halloween. Some of our groups sell Valentines and Mother's Day flowers at local's halls. Children's Christmas parties are supported by many Auxiliaries. Tacoma's Auxiliary hosts a car show while Coos Bay holds a holiday bazaar and all of our Auxiliaries participate in Bloody Thursday and Labor Day activities.

We are always looking to welcome new members. To join, you must be a relative of an ILWU Brother, Sister or pensioner. If you have any questions regarding the Auxiliaries, please feel free to contact me at ILWUFedAux@gmail.com.

Thank you – and we hope to see you soon wherever there's action and workers who need help.

**Victoria Sowers, President
Federated Auxiliaries**

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



Service and solidarity: Members of Auxiliary 8 were busy producing an Easter Luncheon for Pensioners when they took a break to pose for this photo, said President Lidia Lopez, who added: "I have an awesome group of sisters and we are always ready to serve."



Car show for a good cause: Auxiliary 35 members sponsor Tacoma's annual "Show us your Rod" event at Local 23 that features hotrods owned by union members.

ILWU LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

How Trump's COVID-19 response caused needless deaths & economic damage – and what we can do about it

Our union's legislative staff in Washington are working with the International Officers to help ILWU families cope with the COVID-19 pandemic that's causing so much death, job loss and economic hardship for working families.

It didn't have to be this way. Since Trump took office over three years ago, he repeatedly cut funds for public health, pandemic response and the Center for Disease Con-

trol. These cutbacks weakened our nation's pandemic response team and ended a program that tracked disease outbreaks in China. He also ignored multiple congressional directives to increase our national stockpile of emergency medical supplies – along with calls to protect transportation workers in the supply chain from a pandemic.

His reckless spending cuts made the COVID-19 outbreak much worse when it arrived early this year, leaving us with two painful conclusions:

Public health programs are wise

investments that our country needs to save lives and protect our economy – including 40 million good jobs for working families that have vanished. The President's refusal to follow public health guidelines made the pandemic much worse, confirmed in a new study showing that over 30,000 lives would have been saved if Trump had listened to experts and acted just one week earlier to encourage "shelter-in-place" guidelines. Over 50,000 would be alive today if he'd acted just two weeks earlier.

Second, we're reminded that health care for every American should be a basic human right – because losing it causes both personal pain and damage to our economy, especially during a pandemic. Before COVID-19 hit, Trump took away health coverage from seven million Americans. Now with 40 million Americans unemployed, 27 million of them have lost their health insurance. This means millions of Americans are much less likely to be tested or see a doctor –

continued on page 7

DISPATCHER

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ILWU responds to a triple crisis:

- **George Floyd murder launches national action**
- **U.S. COVID-19 death toll claims over 100,000**
- **Trump threatens to block voting & deploy military**

International Officers & Executive Board take action



continued from page 1

Military against protesters

President Trump chose to ignore the vast majority of peaceful protesters and focus instead on the tiny number of violent actors, in order to justify a broad new “law and order” campaign to violently suppress peaceful demonstrators. The President also threatened to send U.S. armed forces into America’s cities and towns. In Washington, DC, the President’s team sent dozens of armored vehicles onto city streets, put military helicopters into the air with instructions to intimidate protesters and readied thousands of troops to march on protesters with bayonets fixed on automatic weapons.

Voter suppression

Political analysts said President Trump was involving the military and smearing peaceful protesters in order to gain votes for his troubled re-election campaign. The President seemed to confirm his political motives by also launching a campaign to block states from encouraging voters to cast ballots by mail – now a practical necessity because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Trump threatened to withhold funds from states who encourage vote-by-

mail, falsely claiming that mail ballots are somehow more likely to be fraudulent. In fact, voting-by-mail has long been used successfully in dozens of states, with no evidence that it is in any way associated with fraud.

Military leaders draw the line

Trump, who dodged the draft with five deferments because of “bone spurs,” surrounded himself with military brass from the beginning of his term, calling them, “my generals.” Some of those, including General Mattis who served as Trump’s Defense Secretary, are now criticizing the President as a danger to the nation.

ILWU leaders take action

On May 11, the ILWU International Executive Board (IEB) held a special meeting – on Zoom video because of the COVID-19 pandemic – to address the nation’s political circumstances and choose the best candidate to help working families and union members in the November Presidential election. After a brief discussion, Board members voted overwhelmingly to endorse former Vice President Joe Biden for President. Three Board members voted against the endorsement.

Statement of Policy adopted

A Statement of Policy concerning the Presidential election was adopted by the Executive Board. It began by outlining the challenges facing American workers and the need for new leadership in the White House:

“As the nation faces the weight of an ongoing pandemic, the corrosion of labor law, environmental protection, budget cuts in education, public services, growing tolerance of racism and gender prejudice, the collapse of the health care system, and ongoing economic recession, there has never been a more urgent time to defeat Donald Trump than in this presidential election. Vice President Joe Biden is the only candidate for the task of uniting Americans and other candidates. He has a solid record of supporting working families and their interests. We are confident the Vice President will support sensible tax policies (rather than tax cuts for the one percenters); public education (rather than charter schools and vouchers); expanded health care coverage; reform of our labor laws, fairer trade agreements, and reasonable immigration policies.

“Over the past several months, Vice President Biden has demonstrated a remarkable ability to campaign and activate voters. His campaign, once thought to be moderate, stormed back to build an insurmountable lead in the Democratic Party forcing the other candidates to drop out in unity and endorse him for President. His electability is critical if we are to have any hope of removing the current occupant of the White House. Simply said, we need a candidate who can beat Donald Trump in November and Vice President Joe Biden is that candidate at this time in U.S. history.” See the complete Statement of Policy at: <https://www.ilwu.org/international-executive-board-endorses-joe-biden-for-president/>

Other IEB action taken on May 11

Local 142 member Denise Sherman was sworn-in by President Adams as a new member of the International Executive Board for Hawaii.

It was also announced that the August IEB meeting in Canada has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The next International Executive Board meeting will be held on June 18-19, again using Zoom internet video because of COVID-19 restrictions.



**INTERNATIONAL
LONGSHORE &
WAREHOUSE UNION**

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May 29, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
Office of the Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Governor Walz,

On behalf of the membership of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), I am writing to demand that the Minneapolis Police Officers who brutally arrested and killed George Floyd be charged and tried for his murder.

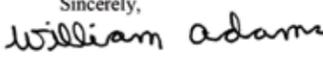
With a heavy heart, the whole world watched as George Floyd begged for his life. Mr. Floyd was killed at the hands of an officer with a dozen complaints against him as the other officers sat and watched. Tragedy has turned into rage. The officers must be arrested and held accountable for their actions.

We demand justice. We demand justice for George Floyd and his family. We demand justice for all persons of color that are subjected to police brutality on a daily basis. We demand justice for every person of color who lives in fear of losing his or her life at the hands of brutal, racist, oppressive, and intolerant police officers who believe they are above the law. We demand justice for those who are persecuted and oppressed based on the color of their skin.

We the ILWU are a union that has a rich history of fighting for racial and social justice. We cannot sit back and watch the same scene unfold time and again. We will not sit back and not fight for change.

Now is the time for you to act and bring justice for George Floyd.

Murder is murder.

Sincerely,

William E. Adams
International President

WEA/akj cwa 39521

cc: Keith Ellison, Attorney General, State of Minnesota
Jacob Frey, Mayor of Minneapolis, Minnesota
Medaria Arradondo, Chief of Minneapolis Police Department



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June 3, 2020

The Family of George Floyd
c/o Ben Crump Law, LLC
717 D Street, N.W. Suite 310
Washington D.C. 20004

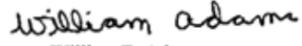
Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On behalf of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), we are writing to express our heartfelt condolences on the loss of George Floyd. We know that nothing we say or do can return Mr. Floyd--father, son, brother, uncle--to your family, or ease the pain of your loss. I hope you find some comfort in your memories of him and some strength in the knowledge that people across the country and around the world are mourning with you.

The ILWU has a long and proud history of fighting for racial and social justice and our union stands in solidarity with you today. We will continue to fight for a world in which black and brown people do not have to live in fear. We will continue to fight for a world where everyone can live with dignity and respect. We will continue to demand justice for Brother Floyd.

Enclosed you will find a letter we sent to Governor Tim Walz to demand justice for Brother Floyd and the immediate arrest and murder charges for the police officers involved in his death.

Sincerely,


William E. Adams
International President


Robert Olvera Jr.
International Vice President


Edwin R. Ferris
International Secretary-Treasurer

cwa 39521

Alaska Longshore workers arrested in campaign for good jobs



Photo by Suzi Ramsey Towsley

Arrested for a good cause: One of the “Seward Five” was taken away on May 21st during a peaceful protest for good jobs.

The month of May is usually a busy time for residents in the small port of Seward in southern Alaska – located at the foot of majestic Mount Marathon and deep blue waters leading to Kenai Fjords National Park. In most years, residents are preparing for a flood of summer visitors, many arriving and departing on massive cruise ships.

This year the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled cruise ship traffic and kept most tourists away, so it was unusually quiet when members of ILWU Unit 60 began picketing for good jobs at a local dock where generations of union members have done the longshore work.

Signs carried by ILWU workers in front of a privately-managed, publically-owned dock, announced that

the picketing was over a legal dispute involving something called “area standards,” but ILWU leaders tried hard to translate that legalese into something everyone could understand.

“Alaska Logistics is disrespecting our community in Seward and the good union jobs on that dock where local union members have always worked,” said Chuck Wendt, who helped to coordinate the effort with Alaska Longshore Division President Dennis Young and Vice President Jeff Hancock.

Long before there was any picketing, ILWU leaders tried to reach Alaska Railroad officials who operate the town’s dock, and the owners of Alaska Logistics, in an effort to reach terms on an ILWU agreement. Those efforts were ignored by the Alaska Railroad, which maintains that their facility is open to any employer, including non-union.

The dispute involved a load of special sand that arrived on a bulk vessel which discharged cargo at the Seward dock in early January. The ILWU secured the material in the terminal area and loaded-out the first set of Alaska Railroad cars shortly afterward for shipment and delivery to big energy companies that use it for fracking oil and gas wells. A German logistics corporation, Possehl Erzkontor, canceled their contract with ILWU employer North Star Stevedore in March. Instead, they hired Alaska Logistics – a company based in Seattle, WA, that used lower-paid, non-union workers – many coming from 1,500 miles away in Washington – for the remaining load-out of fracking sand onto the rail cars.

The picket line was directed at Alaska Logistics, not the Alaska Railroad.

Picketing began on May 20, 2020 and continued for 6 days until it ended on May 25, 2020.

Five members of ILWU Unit 60 were arrested for civil disobedience on the morning of Thursday, May 21, when they peaceably resisted efforts by Alaska Logistics to delivering non-union workers to the docks. One car briefly inconvenienced was driven by Allyn Long – President of Alaska Logistics – who was personally delivering non-union workers to work on the

dock. The five who were arrested, cited and released were: Sonya Hibbetts, Jesse Groom, Chuck Wendt, Charles “Red” Marshall and Brad Entwisle.

Media coverage of the picketing was disappointing, with little to no interest from the local paper, radio or larger news outlets in Anchorage. The lack of media coverage prompted the Alaska Longshore Division and Unit 60 to take out a full-page color advertisement in their local newspaper. “We want to talk directly with the public and make sure they understand this is about good jobs for everyone,” said Jesse Groom, Unit 60 President.

Social media coverage was the most helpful, especially on Facebook (ILWU Unit 60) and Twitter (#Seward-Strong). Unit 60 used the platforms to send updates and thank many small businesses for their support and solidarity, including Hillary Bean, Seward Brewing Company, Micheley and Mike Kowalski, Res Art Coffee House, Sharen Meehan Adelmann at the Bears Den Bed & Breakfast, Red Taxi, and Riaan Dunham at Seward’s Cup.

“The solidarity from people in town, small business owners and other workers, was incredible,” said Chuck Wendt.

The Seward picket line received many offers of support from Brothers and Sisters all over, including Unit 16 in Juneau, Unit 223 in Dutch Harbor, Local 502 and ILWU Canada, just to name a few of the initial groups who helped by purchasing coffee, meals and other supplies. “The Alaska Longshore Division and Local 23 helped Unit 60 with the legal expenses incurred by our Brothers and Sisters who stood up for good jobs in Seward,” according to Dennis Young.

“Alaskan ports are not for sale to the cheapest employer!” Young continued, “We will stand firm against companies like Alaska Logistics and Possehl Erzkontor, to protect Alaska’s Area Standards that have been hard fought for over 75 years. This wasn’t the first picket in Seward, and it won’t be the last – but building support in this community for good jobs – and focusing attention on outside corporations who are trying to tear-down local standards, must be part of a long-term campaign to protect and expand good jobs here and throughout the state of Alaska.”



Photo by Suzi Ramsey Towsley

United in Seward: (L-R) Unit 60 members Charles “Red” Marshall, International Executive Board member Chuck Wendt, Secretary-Treasurer Sonya Travis, President Jesse Groom and Brad Entwisle.



Photo by Suzi Ramsey Towsley

Bill Carder: a humble, effective fighter for the working class

William “Bill” Carder, who served as the ILWU’s top legal counsel for nearly two decades, passed away on May 21 in Oakland after a long illness at the age of 78.

Carder was raised in a Southern California working-class family. His father was a short-order cook who eventually saved enough to open a chain of restaurants. Carder did well in school and graduated from the UC Berkeley School of Law in 1966. He quickly secured an important job at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Enforcement Division in Washington, DC. Before long, a law school friend encouraged him to leave the new job behind and join the legal team for the newly-formed United Farm Workers of America (UFW) – created a year earlier when César Chávez merged his group with a seasoned network of militant Filipino farm workers. Carder and his then-wife Joanne, left Washington with their newborn daughter and headed to the small agricultural town of Delano in California’s Central Valley where the Farmworkers Union was based. During the next decade, Carder and his wife contributed long hours to help workers organize in the fields, win strikes and conduct consumer boycotts that made it possible for thousands of farmworkers to improve working conditions with union contracts. The effort gained national attention and was seen by many as an extension of the Civil Rights Movement.

An excellent lawyer

While at the UFW, Carder handled important cases, including one requiring him to persuade the California Supreme Court to release UFW President Cesar Chavez from jail on Christmas Eve in 1970. Chavez had been given an indefinite jail sentence by a grower-friendly judge on December 4 until the union leader agreed to end a nationwide boycott of lettuce grown

in the Salinas Valley. As he was being taken away to jail, Chavez defied the judge by shouting to union members, “Boycott the hell out of them!”

Fighting Teamster corruption

During the previous summer, the UFW signed contracts with most of the state’s grape growers in California’s Central Valley. At the same time, vegetable growers in the Salinas Valley signed “sweetheart contracts” with Teamster officials in an effort to sabotage the more militant Farmworkers Union. The ILWU joined with other unions to oppose the Teamster/grower alliance against the UFW in Salinas, and did the same when Teamsters tried to thwart the UFW’s progress with Central Valley grape growers.

Early ILWU connections

Local 34 activist Don Watson and other ILWU members organized weekly caravans that delivered volunteers and donations to the besieged union in Salinas. Carder’s contribution to the high-stakes struggle in “the nation’s salad bowl” was to design a federal anti-trust legal challenge to the Teamster/grower alliance – an innovative strategy that ultimately pressured Teamster officials to yield jurisdiction to the UFW in 1977. That effort and other work led UFW General Counsel Jerry Cohen to hail Carder as “the best labor lawyer in the country.”

Leaving the Farmworkers union

In 1974, Carder left the UFW. Thirty-seven years later, he attended a community forum at the ILWU headquarters in San Francisco where author Frank Bardacke was presenting his important book, “Trampling Out the Vintage – César Chávez and the Two Souls of the United Farmworkers Union,” which offered a candid and constructively critical appraisal of Chávez. In his usual way, Carder listened patiently, then added a few clarifying facts and well-reasoned opinions in a respectful manner that furthered the discussion.

A new partnership

After leaving the UFW, Carder initially started his own labor law practice, but soon partnered with another well-respected, older labor attorney, Norman “Norm” Leonard, who had been the ILWU’s lead counsel since the 1950’s. Over the next ten years, the two worked together with Carder eventually becoming the ILWU’s lead counsel in 1986. The law firm is still known today as “Leonard Carder, LLP” a name that reflects their longstanding partnership.

Advocating for the ILWU

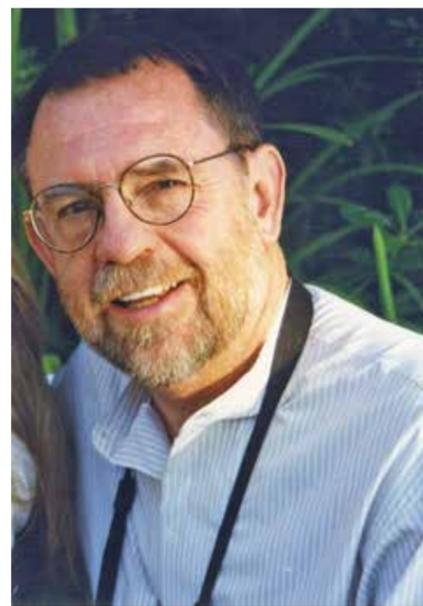
During his three decades at the firm, Bill oversaw and personally litigated the ILWU’s most important legal matters. He and ILWU attorney Richard Zuckerman won a thirteen-year battle to secure ILWU longshore jurisdiction in the face of new technologies, establishing legal precedents that benefited all unions nationally. He also developed the legal foundation for new ILWU longshore worker registration programs that were needed in the mid-1980’s when demand for dockworkers was growing. He also successfully defended the ILWU against new legal strategies developed by management lawyers to weaken unions, including abuse of RICO and antitrust laws.

Opposing war in Central America

In the late 1980’s, Carder became increasingly concerned with the government’s covert war in Central America, which allied the U.S. with repressive, anti-union regimes. He arranged a meeting between ILWU International President Jimmy Herman and *Neighbor to Neighbor* leader Fred Ross, Jr., to discuss efforts that could help end U.S. funding for the Contras in Nicaragua – and seek an end to the civil war in El Salvador. That meeting led to an international boycott of Salvadoran coffee. ILWU members in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Vancouver, Canada, refused to cross *Neighbor to Neighbor* picket lines over Salvadoran coffee shipments. Those actions, along with many others, contributed to a negotiated end of the civil war in El Salvador. Carder defended the ILWU against employer lawsuits that were filed against the union for honoring picket lines and the coffee boycott.

Working as a community organizer

In the early 1990’s, Carder took a leave of absence from the law firm to do community organizing work, first with *Neighbor to Neighbor*, where he travelled to the state of Maine and organized citizens to pressure Republican Senator Olympia Snow to end the war in Central America. He then took an assignment with the Bay Area Organizing Committee, a project of the the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), founded by Saul Alinsky. Both projects aimed to empower communities afflicted by poverty and injustice. He returned to the law firm in 1995 where he devoted another decade of work to the ILWU.



Helping organize new workers

During his final years with the ILWU, Carder increasingly focused on providing legal support for the union’s new-member organizing campaigns, first under the direction of ILWU Regional Director Leroy King and later with retired Organizing Director Peter Olney. Carder played important roles with two campaigns that inspired a new, younger generation of workers to join the ILWU. One was the San Francisco Bike Messenger organizing drive that involved a partnership with ILWU Local 6, spearheaded by Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker. The second campaign involved helping hundreds of workers organize at Powell’s Books in Portland, Oregon. That successful effort led to the creation of ILWU Local 5.

Man of many interests

Carder made a point of creating a life that went beyond his devotion to organizing and unions. His partner of 38 years, Sonia Lifshay, says Carder was a very good photographer who explored subjects ranging from Oakland storefronts to remote locations that they visited in Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. His enjoyment of music ranged “from hip-hop to Beethoven,” she says, and his reading lists covered the classics to political journals. The last book he purchased, but didn’t finish, was “Fear – Trump in the White House,” by Bob Woodward.

“Bill wasn’t a typical alpha-male,” says Sonia, speaking to *The Dispatcher* from the modest Oakland bungalow that she and Bill shared for nearly four decades without being formally married. “We lived in sin for all those years,” she says.

Continuing despite poor health

Carder retired from the law firm he co-founded in 2004, but remained active with the ILWU, volunteering to help many more organizing campaigns during his remaining years. He also donated his skills to help low-income and immigrant workers in the East Bay.

Helping workers in Boron

In 2009, Carder helped over 400 ILWU members at Local 30 in Boron to prepare for a successful battle against Rio Tinto, one of the world largest and most powerful mining corporations. The company was demanding concessions at the negotiating table and using hardball tactics on the job – all aimed at forcing workers into a hopeless economic strike. Carder helped develop a counter-strategy to increase members’ power on the job and provide the

continued on page 8



Released from jail: United Farmworkers Union President César Chávez was released from a Monterey County jail on Christmas Eve in 1970, thanks to excellent legal work by Bill Carder, on far right.

IBU fights to protect members from COVID-19 impacts

There's no doubt about it," says IBU President Marina Secchitano, "the COVID virus has had a big impact on workers and communities served by IBU members." Secchitano represents three thousand workers who belong to the Inland-boatmen's Union of the Pacific – the ILWU's Marine Division.

Winter in the Pacific Northwest ended on a sad note this year, when many IBU members learned about the passing of Esther Bryant-Kyles, a beloved Seattle-based ferry ticket agent who was struck-down by the virus in March. She served in the Washington State Ferry System for 25 years and was "beloved by co-workers and regular customers alike," said Puget Sound Regional Director Peter Hart.

Ferry workers: essential workers

IBU ferry workers in the Puget Sound, San Francisco Bay and Alaska Region are continuing to provide essential transportation services while coping with layoffs, severe scheduling cuts and the hazards of working during a dangerous pandemic.

Bay Area cuts

Like all public transit agencies, the Golden Gate Ferry System has slashed weekday service and cancelled weekend operations entirely – although most of the regular workforce remains on the payroll, according to IBU Regional Director Robert Estrada. Many of the nearly 40 IBU members are now doing additional maintenance work, he said.

Golden Gate received \$14 million in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds for operating assistance from the CARES Act that can be used for employee wages and benefits. It was very disappointing to hear that they decided to save 1/3000th of those funds by cutting 5 jobs," said Secchitano.

The San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), which is operated by Blue & Gold Fleet, now carries roughly 2% of their usual passenger count, says Estrada. They also received CARES Act FTA funds, amounting to \$10.5 million with 75 IBU members. The WETA Director and Board of Directors expressed their appreciation at an April 23rd meeting by using the federal funds to keep employees on the payroll.

The Red & White Fleet, a private bay cruise and charter company, has been shuttered since mid-March. Their goal is to resume full service as the situation allows. The Blue & Gold Fleet, also a private company, has closed their bay cruise and charter business, resulting in layoffs of IBU members. Blue & Gold has applied for federal paycheck protection funds and expects to receive them soon.

The IBU's newly organized water taxi company, Tideline Marine has shut-down entirely.

Estrada says that passengers who ride any of the boats remaining in operation are required to wear face-coverings at all times. "There's a lot more maintenance and sanitizing work being done on the vessels now, but far fewer passengers and trips being made each

day," he says, estimating that about 50 steady IBU positions have been lost in the region due to COVID-19, along with casual/fill-in work which supported approximately 70 people. Most of the lost work has been on tour-boats and ferries.

Abrupt unemployment at Foss

Foss San Francisco laid-off 6 steady workers with only 48-hours notice provided to the IBU. The company's abrupt and unprecedented move left highly skilled mariners suddenly unemployed. The IBU continues pressing Foss to provide some benefits for these members to assist with their transition.

Devastating fire

A massive early-morning fire destroyed portions of San Francisco's Pier 45 on May 23. The raging fire destroyed much the crab fleet's equipment along with offices and an engineering shed for the Red & White Ferry fleet. Both Estrada and Red & White Fleet officials described the fire as the latest blow in an already difficult year – but said they were confident the company would recover. ILWU Local 10 member Kelly Kane responded to the disaster by encouraging fellow long-shore workers and friends to donate funds to help the devastated crab fishermen, using a "Go-fund-me" page that raised almost \$80,000 in the first week.

Washington State Cutbacks

Washington State Ferries have extended their reduced Winter schedules up to June 20 – and they may continue it further into the Summer. Ferries are carrying essential workers who need to reach their jobs and provide supplies to remote communities. "Right now there are fewer vessels operating – and the busy summer season just isn't going to happen this year," says Regional Director Peter Hart. He added that a push for Personal Protective Equipment has resulted in most workers now receiving the equipment they need. Canada's borders are closed to most traffic, including ferries, which forced the Black Ball Ferry to close and lay-off workers until the border re-opens, but they have applied for and received paycheck protection money from the Feds. The Bellingham terminal for Alaska's Ferry System is also impacted.

Alaska ferry fight

Alaska's public ferry system was already hurting from last year's budget cuts imposed by Governor Mike Dunleavy. He wants a private system that would serve far fewer communities and eliminate good union jobs. As of mid-May, the system was down to one ferry serving Ketchikan, plus the nearly-new "Tazlina," christened in 2018, that now runs from Juneau to remote coastal villages before reaching Haines and Skagway. More vessels may soon be added, but they would still amount to a fraction of normal summer operations.

Communities suffer

"The Governor's cuts have severely hurt ferry workers and the communities we serve," said IBU Alaska Regional Director Trina Arnold. She said dozens of communities no longer have ferry service, including ones with little or no road access. She added that

many have significant Native populations and small business owners who depend heavily on the ferries.

A vital lifeline

"Ferries are a lifeline to those communities, so when the Governor made deep cuts last fall, it was devastating," says Arnold, noting that everyone was hoping for a strong Summer season until the COVID-19 pandemic hit. "Summer is when many Alaskans make a majority of their income, so now we're just taking it day-by-day – and pushing hard to restore ferry service that workers and communities desperately need."

Help from the union

IBU President Marina Secchitano and Regional Director Arnold worked with state legislators, the ILWU's International Officers and Legislative Office in Washington, DC to secure more funding for the ferries – and help for furloughed ferry workers.

"Without a union, none of this would have been possible," says Arnold, who thanked the ILWU for the joint effort that succeeded in Congress.

Despite the added funding, IBU members still face resistance from management dispatchers at the Ketchikan central office, who "always seem to be searching for new ways to avoid paying crewmembers," says Arnold. "We won't stop until all IBU members are paid for what they would have worked, but couldn't because of the pandemic," she says.

Airline goes bankrupt

Part of the Governor's excuse for destroying his state's Marine Highway system was based on faulty claims that air travel could replace the ferries. That scheme ran aground on April 2 when Ravn Air declared bankruptcy. It was the state's largest regional carrier with 72 planes and 1,300 employees who served 115 Alaskan communities – including 20 towns with no other carrier. Alaska Airlines has begun serving some, but not all, of Ravn's previous routes. Ravn initially talked about re-organizing, then liquidated their planes and other assets in late May. One week before declaring bankruptcy, the Trump administration approved a set of bailout grants for the troubled airline. Less help has been available for residents and seasonal workers trying to reach remote communities, including Dutch Harbor and Unalaska on the Aleutian Peninsula.

Dutch Harbor

The IBU negotiated a new contract using Zoom internet video for members in the City of Unalaska. "That was a first – and we reached agreement on a good package for members in just two days!" said Arnold.

Valdez

Workers at Alaska Nautical in the remote port of Valdez have been impacted by the lack of cruise ships due to COVID-19, along with a drop in oil production, but IBU members continue to work.

Privatization push continues

Alaska's pro-privatization governor continues pushing his agenda to replace the public system with one that's more private with weaker unions. His latest buzzword for privatizing is

"re-shaping" and he's created a business-heavy committee with just one labor representative to carry out his will. Regional Director Trina Arnold monitors the process closely and keeps in contact with the sole union representative in order to make sure IBU members have a voice in the process, even if it appears to be rigged from the beginning.

"Alaska's IBU members have been through a grueling year, but there's no alternative except giving-up or giving-in, and that's just not in the cards," says President Marina Secchitano. "Too many people depend on a good public ferry system, both customer and workers, to let it go down the tubes," she said, vowing to continue the fight, "as long as it takes to win."

A significant success

An intense public pressure campaign during the past year appears to have resulted in a significant victory: funding is now being restored to Alaska's Marine Highway System! The IBU joined with labor and community allies to create Friends of the Alaska Marine Highway System. The Friends group contacted hundreds of thousands of Alaska voters with legislative and funding updates. They also pressed legislators to fully fund the state's Marine Highway System. As *The Dispatcher* was going to press, 90% of the System's funding had been secured. Friends is now working with leading legislators to protect funding in the future. "While the AMHS funding is not yet complete, the danger we faced six months ago has passed. But we must remain vigilant and continue the pressure on state legislators while keeping voters informed with regular updates. We can't be complacent with this Governor. Although he lost this round, he will keep fighting if we let our guard down. Friends of the Alaska Marine Highway has been successful, and we must continue our support for this important effort," says Secchitano.

Concern for cannery workers

Five hundred members of IBU's Region 37 who work in Alaska's salmon canneries each summer have been unsure whether the COVID-19 pandemic will allow them to work this year. In a typical season, workers begin arriving in early summer, many coming from Seattle and other out-of-state locations. This year Alaska imposed a two-week quarantine on everyone entering the state, including seasonal workers. Some cannery workers have been allowed to quarantine in Seattle, then fly to work in canneries via special arrangement with state officials, while others are being paid by employers to quarantine in Alaska.

Alaska's economy has been hit hard by falling oil and gas revenue – along with tourism that vanished this summer as cruise ships shut down. Fishing is another significant source of jobs and income for the state. The IBU is pushing for safe working conditions in fish-processing plants so employees could resume their seasonal jobs without unnecessary risks from COVID-19. One problem is that some of the facilities are in remote areas with minimal medical resources – requiring evacuation if anyone becomes seriously ill.

continued on page 7

Hawaii & Southern California

IBU tug and barge workers in Hawaii are trying to hold onto jobs as the local economy is battered by COVID-19 and the resulting loss of tourist income. Sause Brothers inter-island barge service recently eliminated one barge, resulting in 11 layoffs. The company provided each laid-off employee with a \$4000 lump sum payment to assist with their transition. A one-year contract extension was also signed with a 2% wage increase in 12 months.

Elsewhere on the islands, workers at Foss-Harbor recently agreed to

temporary wage reductions in order to avoid layoffs.

Young Brothers agreed to nine temporary lay-offs, and no wage reductions. The company applied to the State of Hawaii for \$25 million of the State's \$600 million in COVID-19 federal relief funds. They said inter-island service will be cut to local communities unless the company receives more funding.

Harris L3 agreed to a 2.25% wage increase for IBU members and a 1-year extension. P & M Services received federal paycheck protection funds and will continue honoring the contract despite the loss of cruise ship assist work this year.

As *The Dispatcher* was going to press, IBU Southern California Regional Director John Skow was meeting with Foss in order to find creative ways to avoid layoffs.

Healthcare

In an effort to assist IBU members who were laid-off due to COVID-19, the union proposed that the IBU Health Plan offer 3 months of coverage at reduced rates for plan members who were covered for May 2020. The discounted rate will cost \$250 per month and was approved by a majority of the trustees.

IBU President Marina Secchitano says the COVID-19 pandemic "has

dramatically changed our lives – especially for members who meet the challenge each day as essential workers on the front line. Their efforts to keep commerce moving is noble and appreciated by our communities and the nation. Wearing masks, and observing social distancing when possible, is how we are going to protect ourselves and others. We will continue fighting to protect IBU members and their families – on the local level and in Congress. This is a difficult time, but we have seen tough times before and we will pull through this."

ILWU LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

How Trump's COVID-19 response caused needless deaths & economic damage – and what we can do about it

continued from page 2

and much more likely to spread the virus and/or be harmed by it.

The President wants us to believe that the COVID-19 problem can be solved by "opening the economy" – just in time for his re-election campaign – but scientists say the facts tell a different story:

- The number of COVID-19 deaths will grow 50% by August to 150,000.
- Those numbers will continue to increase if Trump "opens" the economy without protecting workers and the public.
- The number of COVID-19 cases is already rising in a dozen states, including some where virus controls are being eased.

Trump's unwillingness to rely on health experts and admit mistakes – while spreading rumors and false claims about cures and treatments – has also made the pandemic worse:

- In late January, top Trump advisor Peter Navarro warned the President that COVID-19 could cost trillions in economic damage and kill many Americans.
- On February 25, Trump told a news conference that the coronavirus is "well under control" and there are "very few people with it."
- The same day, his top economic adviser Larry Kudlow told CNBC that the U.S. had "contained" the coronavirus and it was unlikely to become a "tragedy."
- Trump later tweeted, "Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA. ... Stock Market starting to look very good to me!"
- A follow-up Tweet from the President said: "the risk to the American people remains very low. ... When you have 15 people, and the 15 within a couple of days is going to be down to close to zero. That's a pretty good job we've done."

Since then, Trump has bragged that "anyone who wanted a test could get one," and claimed the U.S. was doing a better testing job than any country in the world.

While the President was making those claims, frontline health and supply chain workers, including ILWU members – weren't always getting the personal protective equipment they needed.

In the face of these two disasters – the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump presidency – ILWU International officers and the Washington, DC legislative staff have been fighting to secure emergency relief for the unemployed and vulnerable, with better protection for essential workers.

ILWU leaders have gone into overdrive, holding calls almost daily to direct the union's lobbying operation – reaching out to senior elected leaders and federal agency heads, and leading coordinating campaigns with other maritime labor organizations and port industry stakeholders. Like everywhere else, COVID-19 physical distancing rules have complicated advocacy in Washington DC, because congressional staff are now working from their homes and Congress members have been reluctant to gather after a number tested positive and were sickened by the virus. Most federal agencies have also sent workers home until the COVID-19 rates drop. These obstacles have not stopped the ILWU leadership from working 24-7 through emails, texts and calls to reach key congressional staffers and agency officials.

The House and Senate have already sent four separate emergency relief packages to Trump's desk to address the coronavirus emergency. The first relief bill provided emergency funding to federal agencies that were responding to the pandemic. The second provided money to hospitals, state and local governments and small business loans. This second bill also required some mid-sized companies to provide workers with paid sick leave during the crisis.

It quickly became apparent that the first three relief packages fell short of helping all the workers and companies who needed assistance. The need became clear when tens of millions started losing their jobs as businesses closed. This led to the \$2.2 trillion package, called CARES, which

extended unemployment benefits, covered many independent contractors and added \$600 per week to unemployment benefits through July 31. Congress also created the Paycheck Protection Program that offered forgivable loans to help businesses with under 500 employees continue their payrolls during the COVID 19 crisis. The CARES Act also included a stimulus check of \$1200 per adult and \$500 per child in a household. Local transit agencies, including ferry operators on the West Coast and Alaska, received over \$26 billion – money that is helping many members of the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) remain on the job.

An "interim" relief bill costing over \$480 billion was passed shortly after the CARES Act to cover more employees working at small businesses, provide help to hospitals, and pay for widespread testing. The \$25 billion testing program will finally establish a national workplace COVID-19 testing system and provide additional money for protective equipment. This last allocation should help ILWU members who return or remain on the job.

Along with these programs intended to help workers and small business was a demand from the Trump Administration for a \$500 billion corporate bailout fund. Without a labor-friendly majority in Congress, it was impossible to stop Trump from giving these public dollars to corporations that have been earning record profits and rewarding top executives – while skimping on worker pay and benefits. The ILWU supported labor-friendly legislators who were able to add a few safeguards, including an Inspector-General to protect funds from being abused – a measure Trump immediately dismissed and tried to weaken. The ILWU and worker advocates also succeeded in passing a measure barring executives from collecting corporate bonuses if they took any bailout money.

As the economic damage from COVID-19 continued to mount during the month of May, a worker-friendly-majority in the House of Representatives passed a bill on May 15,

which included many ILWU priorities. Work is now underway to make progress in the Senate, where worker-friendly members are in the minority and face opposition from Majority Leader Mitch McConnell who says he will oppose any further aid for working families. Despite his opposition, the ILWU will continue working with labor-friendly representatives to advance these provisions in the bill passed by the House:

1. A bonus of up to \$10,000 for longshore workers, maritime workers and other essential workers who are risking their lives to keep the supply-chain open.
2. Automatic enrollment in the Longshore and Harbor Workers Compensation program for longshore workers who are diagnosed with COVID-19.
3. An additional \$16 million to the Federal Transit Administration that would help ferry systems survive the crisis.
4. Assistance to ILWU members who have difficulty paying rent during the crisis.
5. A temporary ban on credit agencies from reporting negative information about worker finances during the crisis.
6. Short term relief for ILWU pension plans during the downturn.

Despite facing the most anti-union President in many decades, ILWU leaders will continue advocating to help workers survive the COVID-crisis with support for families as we try to rebuild our country.

"The ILWU has faced opposition from anti-union forces in the past and we didn't back down. We won't back down," said International President Adams. "We will keep pushing to make more progress in Washington – despite opposition from the White House and Senate."

This report was compiled by ILWU Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin and Legislative Consultant Kyle Mulhall

Bill Carder: a humble, effective fighter for the working class

continued from page 5

union with more leverage. He participated in training sessions where members learned how to refuse company demands for overtime, and respond creatively to other company provocations by organizing on the shop floor. He explained how allowing the contract to expire – and continuing to work without a contract – would provide workers with powerful rights on the job – including the ability to conduct job actions without fear of reprisal or replacement. His efforts helped avert a potentially disastrous economic strike and put Rio Tinto on the defensive after the company locked-out workers on January 31, 2010 for 15 weeks. The lockout helped the union to win sympathy and support from communities in the high desert, throughout Southern California and around the world.

Former ILWU Organizing Director Peter Olney said, “Bill provided us with invaluable advice over the many years that he helped ILWU workers win organizing campaigns. He was generous with his time and did it all while facing real health challenges, which made Bill so extraordinary.”

Help for Rite Aid workers

In 2011, Carder provided advice and support that helped almost 500 workers at Rite Aid’s Regional Distribution Center in Lancaster win their first contract. Using his expertise with consumer boycotts learned during his time with the United Farmworkers Union, Carder advised the ILWU how to organize a successful boycott of Rite Aid’s lucrative prescription drug business.

Supporting recycling workers

During the same years, Carder donated time to help low-wage recycling workers in the Easy Bay win dramatic improvements. The multi-year effort was organized jointly with Local 6, but complicated because Teamster officials were colluding with employers to undermine the campaign – the same tactics Carder faced decades before at the Farmworkers Union. Carder sat patiently with recycling workers in dozens of bi-lingual meetings and trainings. His advice and reassurance – including the right of workers to take action during an expired contract – helped members gain confidence, win their strikes and secure dramatic contract gains.

Praise from ILWU President

ILWU International President Willie Adams said, “Bill Carder was one-hundred percent devoted to helping working-class people learn about their rights to organize and build power. He was patient, took time to listen and took direction from workers, whether they labored in the fields, in a factory or on the waterfront. Those are special qualities that are rare among attorneys, and we remain eternally grateful for all his contributions.”

Carder is survived by his partner of 38 years, Sonia Lifshay; his daughter Sara Carder, her son (Bill’s grandson) Leo Paasch; Bill’s son, Benjamin Carder; his brother Donald Carder and five nieces and nephews.

Honoring fallen dockworkers at SoCal First Blood memorial



COVID-19 required a smaller ceremony: Far fewer were able to attend this year’s annual “First Blood” event in San Pedro, but the ceremony was just as dignified and heartfelt.

On May 15, ILWU members, pensioners, auxiliary and officers from Locals 13, 63 and 94 gathered at the Longshore memorial in San Pedro’s Gibson Park for the 18th annual First Blood Memorial to honor longshore workers who died while working at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. During the ceremony, Pacific Coast Pensioner (PCPA) President Greg Mitre read the names of each the fallen workers. A bell was rung following each name.

This year’s ceremony also honored members from the Inlandboatmen’s Union, the ILWU’s Maritime Division, and Port Security Guards from ILWU Local 26, who were killed on the job.

First Blood in ’34

ILWU members gather each year in front of a bust of ILWU co-founder Harry Bridges and a plaque bearing names of ILWU members who have been killed while working on the docks. In addition to honoring ILWU workers killed on the job, the event commemorates the early struggles by West Coast longshore workers for fair wages, hours and working conditions.

The First Blood ceremony recalls a violent clash between dock workers and company-paid strikebreakers on May 15, 1934.

Remembering Jose Santoya

This year, Mitre read a new name into the record after Jose Santoya became the 69th dockworker added to the memorial plaque. Santoya, a 58-year-old father and ILWU mechanic, was killed one-year ago on May 15th when a tire exploded, killing him and severely injuring his co-worker, Pedro Chavarin.

Members of Santoya’s family were on hand to mark the anniversary. They wore white t-shirts with Jose’s registration number written on the back.

The First Blood memorial is an important tradition in Southern California that typically draws hundreds of ILWU members, pensioners and supporters. Mitre said that COVID-19 concerns made a large event impossible so the gathering was scaled-down. Participants were physically-distanced and all wore masks to ensure everyone’s safety. Mitre said it was important to hold the event this year, despite the pandemic, to underscore the dangers of waterfront work. Dockworkers are considered “essential” and have been required to work during the pandemic to keep the global supply chain moving. Elected officers from the Southern California Pensioners Group were the only pensioners invited this year, in an effort to keep the gathering small and safe.

ILWU Local 13 President Ramon Ponce De Leon and Local 13 Vice President Jesse Enriquez both attended the event.

As has been a tradition for many years, flowers were provided Locals 13, 63, and 94

“I wasn’t going to let the tradition die on my watch, so I proposed a smaller, social-distancing event,” Mitre said. “It was especially important because our brother, Jose Santoya, had been killed exactly one-year prior in the Fenix Marine terminal accident. His entire family contacted me to express their wish to attend and observe our putting Jose’s name on the stone plaque where Harry is located. Jose’s is the 69th name we’ve had to etch into the plaque, and his death was a real tragedy.”

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Jerry W. Hill;
Local 10: Gregory L. Barnett; James H. Bigelow; **Local 13:** Alfred Jimenez; Miguel A. Vega; Stacey Lawson; James R. See; Robert G. Heberer; Paul Julian; Mark A. Storr; Donald A. Ott; David C. Renn; Joseph P. Albert; Roberto S. Jimenez; Catalina C. Armendariz; Michael H. Baker; **Local 19:** Mark R. Taylor; Dana J. Schmitz;
Local 23: Patrick A. McClure; Lynden M. Louderback; John E. Bechtold; Terrence Finn;
Local 34: Dwain L. McCloud;
Local 40: David E. Strader;
Local 63: Roberto Cerda; Kevin B. Keenan; Gary D. Miley; Carol L. Randolph; Donald R. Bulaich; Carl S. Mckennon; John A. Hobbs;
Local 91: Richard D. James;
Local 92: Karl A. Lunde;
Local 98: Mike D. Hebblethwaite; James A. Johnson;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 10: Joseph M. Diaz Jr. (Sandra);
Local 12: Eaino A. Pajari;
Local 13: Richard J. Mondor; James W. Osborne; **Local 18:** Richard Kahoalii Sr. (Edith); **Local 19:** Russell C. Alexander; Ralph W. Bolson; Edward C. Camacho (Marie); Harold A. Ross; **Local 23:** Arturo Arboleda; Werner Polarczyk; Ben R. Frai; Leroy D. Strub; **Local 34:** Basil Parker (Irma); Local 40: James A. Dodge; Robert L. Carson; **Local 52:** Terry J. Hinch (Irene); **Local 54:** Joe A. Santistevan; **Local 63:** Fred L. Marcus; Lizabeth A. Trani; **Local 91:** Samuel T. Odom; **Local 94:** Edward M. Flores; Ronald A. Marinkovich
DECEASED SURVIVOR:
Local 8: Eune Carey; **Local 10:** Alice R. Silva; Johnnie P. Robinson; Ramona Morales; Ollie R. Dacus;
Local 12: Ruthia C. Cox; Sandra K. Wilmot; **Local 13:** Vera L. James; Yolanda Short; Catalina Carreon; Marlene Stumpp; Raphael F. Brooks; Mary E. Gomez; **Local 18:** Mary V. Peterson; **Local 19:** Gayle Gilchrest; **Local 34:** Gertrude Boyce;
Local 63: Joan Bivinetto; Winifred A. Tudor; **Local 92:** Elaine V. Sullivan;
Local 94: Geraldine Love