



THE DISPATCHER

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Supporting the Booker T. Washington Center. [page 3](#)



Organizing for safety: Recycling workers Xiomara Martinez (right) and Alejandra León, explained how co-workers organized to eliminate a nasty rat infestation at their Davis Street workplace in San Leandro, CA. The problem was ignored by Waste Management officials until workers took action.

ILWU Recycling workers organize for better jobs, safer conditions & improved public service

Recycling is supposed to be good and green, but there's plenty that's disturbing and dangerous about this fast-growing niche in the nation's highly-profitable \$55 billion-dollar waste industry. Most recycling workers suffer from poverty wages, meager benefits, hazardous working conditions and dead-end jobs.

"People don't know about the important work that we do to help the environment. In the past we've been mostly quiet, but that's changing now because we're speaking up and organizing," said Alejandra León, who works as a "sorter" at Waste Management's recycling facility in San Leandro, CA.

Out of the shadows

León was one of 150 workers who took an important step forward on Saturday afternoon, February 2nd

by convening a historic "Convention of Recycling Workers" at the ILWU Local 6 union hall in Oakland. While some might be surprised to learn that these workers from four major recycling companies in Alameda County are longtime ILWU members, recognition is growing that the only way to improve conditions in their industry is through organizing and action.

"We have started by organizing ourselves to fight for an industry standard in Alameda County and are reaching out to build broad community and political support—eventually we'll be able to help the non-union recycling workers organize so we can improve standards throughout the industry," said Josefa Solano, a recycling worker employed at the Fremont Recycling and Transfer Station operated by BLT Enterprises.

Workers chair; clergy convenes

Recycling workers, including Marco Hernandez and Alejandra León chaired most of the meeting, with sup-

port from Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker. Waste Management worker José Romero announced each of the four groups of recycling workers who filled the convention hall, generating a loud response of applause and cheers as each workplace declared their presence.

An inspirational convocation and blessing was delivered by two East Bay clergy members with a history of support for social justice causes: Servant B.K. Woodson of the Bay Area Christian Connection and retired Monsignor Antonio Valdivia from the Diocese of Oakland. Woodson, who is also a member of the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice (ICWJ), an affiliate of the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), called on everyone to join together to promote the cause of justice. Monsignor Valdivia urged the convention to work for improved working conditions and an end to injustice. He

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LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to find John Castanho's fine obituary to Jim Santana in January's issue of *The Dispatcher*. Jim certainly deserved to be praised and appreciated for his contributions to the members of the ILWU. Although his most productive years came after I retired, I knew him to be kind, gracious and thoughtful. He made a very special contribution; I'm glad that you saw fit to recognize that.



Jim Santana

Fraternally yours,

Barry Silverman,
Berkeley, CA

Dear Editor,

We're writing to let you know that the January, 2013 issue of *The Dispatcher* was a big hit in our household. My spouse, who seldom looks at *The Dispatcher* unless I give her an article to read, immediately noticed the improved color and higher resolution of the printing in the January issue. She explained that the vivid color photographs motivated her to read the entire issue. For her, this a natural thing, because she is a watercolor painter of some renown, as well as a musician, music teacher and author of several books.

We also wanted to compliment the excellent combination of articles, with a wide geographical spread, from Honolulu to LA. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Emery Nanasy
Lakewood, CA

Dear Editor,

My father, Dorsey Schalk, passed away on December 12, 2012 in Vancouver, Washington. A memorial service was held in his honor on January 12, 2013. I want to personally thank Local 4 members for being there for my family during my Dad's service. I was especially moved by 22 longshoremen walking down the aisle in single file carrying 22 white carnations, each respectfully laying their flower on the presentation table. Thank you for providing a beautiful spray of flowers for the memorial service.

Dad was a second generation member of Local 4 and worked on the waterfront for 32 years. His father-in-law, Frank Kadow, was a charter member of Local 4. They were both ardent union supporters. Dad began longshoring after his return from the South Pacific and Japan after World War II. He was among the first American troops who landed in Japan after the bombs were dropped. He suffered from malaria when he returned stateside and the ILWU allowed him to work when he wasn't sick and to take time off when he was. He was always grateful for that opportunity.

Please know that I have a deep appreciation for your members' presence at Dad's memorial service. It made a difficult day a little less difficult. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lynell Schalk
Portland, OR

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



Distinguished company: ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams was honored with the "C.L. Dellums Award" by the Northern California Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) in San Francisco on February 8, 2013. Also honored with Adams was San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency Director Leona Bridge, American Postal Workers Union veteran Rosa Marshall, and Pastor Calvin Jones, Jr. of San Francisco's Providence Baptist Church.

C.L. Dellums helped organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) that was founded in 1925 by the legendary A. Philip Randolph. They fought a bitter 12-year battle to win their first contract with the Pullman Company that controlled the world's once-lucrative network of railroad sleeping coaches. During the organizing campaign, Pullman fired over 500 union supporters before finally signing a contract in 1937. BSCP members helped lay the foundation for the modern Civil Rights movement by travelling the country, carrying literature and spreading ideas to cities and towns.

After receiving the award, Willie Adams first thanked the CBTU leaders and the audience for honoring him with the legacy of C.L. Dellums, then challenged them to consider the organizing issues of today, including the plight of immigrant workers.

Adams told the mostly African-American audience about the ILWU's efforts to help immigrant workers organize for better conditions in the East Bay recycling industry.

"Immigrants have always been a part of our history. Before any of us were here, the Native Americans were here in America; there were Aborigines in Australia. Employers have always tried to exploit racial and ethnic difference by playing one group off against another. Union leaders have to show that we need to be united and not let those divisions divide us," said Adams.



Organizing solidarity: ILWU Pensioner President Rich Austin joined with Steve Garey of the United Steelworkers and Barbara Cooper of the Washington State Nurses Association to gather petition signatures outside the Skagit Food Co-op in Mount Vernon, Washington State, in February. The trio was supporting members of Teamsters Local 117 who are under attack from United Natural Foods, Incorporated (UNFI) - a major distributor that supplies many food-co-ops. The goal is to enlist friendly food co-ops against UNFI's anti-union attacks. The effort was undertaken by members and supporters of the Labor Democrat Work Group that operates in Northwest Washington. Support for Teamster members is being marshaled by Board members, workers and co-op members at the Olympia Food Co-op, PCC Natural Markets, Central Co-op in Seattle, Bellingham Food Co-op, Terra Organica in Bellingham, and the San Juan Island Food Co-op. Whole Foods, the powerful national chain with an anti-union history hasn't lifted a finger to help the UNFI workers. Whole Foods CEO John Mackey is an anti-union extremist who has equated President Obama's health care plan with fascism. "Union families should only shop at places that respect the rights of workers - and Whole Foods is not one of them," said Rich Austin. For more information see: www.unfidrivenbygreed.com

Local 63-OCU contract ratified: As the *Dispatcher* was going to press, ILWU Local 63-OCU members ratified a new contract with their employers. We will run a full article in our next issue.

DISPATCHER

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Photo by David Bacon

Solidarity helps Castlewood workers win 3-year lockout

Dozens of workers at the Bay Area's Castlewood Country Club approved a contract on February 13 with good job security, more affordable family health care, protections against subcontracting, strong seniority rights, raises, and a substantial signing bonus. The victory followed a lengthy employer lockout imposed when workers refused to accept the Club's concession demands. The mostly immigrant workers returned to their jobs in October 2012 because a National Labor Relations Board judge ruled the lockout was illegal. ILWU members in the Bay Area joined other unions, community groups and interfaith leaders to provide support. "These workers deserved our support because they decided to organize and fight instead of rolling-over," said Local 75 Secretary-Treasurer Patric Kim. "This time it was them; next time it could be any of us." In November of 2010, ILWU members turned out to support the locked-out families. A carload of Local 30 workers locked-out by Rio Tinto in Boron, were prepared to drive 6 hours to join the event, but were stopped by snowstorms. (L-R) Bob Arce of Local 6, Secretary-Treasurer Patric Kim of Local 75, Ron Zampa of Local 6, Albie McCarthy of Local 75, Carey Dall of Local 6 and Charley Lincoln of Local 10.



Celebrating Captain Josh's 80th: On February 8th, over 40 people gathered at HS Lordship's Restaurant, in the Berkeley Marina for a surprise birthday party for Captain Josh Williams of the Local 10 drill team who turned 80 years old. The event was well attended by members of the ILWU family including Local 10 members, President Mike Villeggiante, Local 6 members including Secretary-Treasurer, Fred Pecker and Local 34 members.

The event was organized by drill team members Trevor McCoy and Sabrina Giles. Decorations for the event were made by Elizabeth "Beth" Susim and Janet Smith. Music was provided by Local 10's own "Sonic Boom".

Captain Josh led the effort to start the drill team in 1965. Josh started marching as a young boy as a way to show the pride he felt for his older brothers who fought in the Second World War. He perfected his "call and response" and other skills while in the ROTC and serving in the US Army. The Local 10 drill team has since become a fixture in the labor movement. They have travelled all over the country to delight and inspire labor and community events and have marched with Cesar Chavez and performed for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Helping the Booker T. Washington Center rebuild

ILWU Coast Committeeman, Ray Ortiz, Jr. joined former San Francisco Mayor and political heavy-hitter, Willie Brown, Jr., to support the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center on January 30th in San Francisco.

Mayor Brown was honored at a fundraising event for the Center to

support its expansion efforts. The city has already approved a plan to demolish and expand the Center into a 20,000 square-foot comprehensive community institution with two distinct components – affordable homes for San Francisco families and an expanded community center to better provide assistance and resources to San Francisco's underserved commu-

nities. The Coast Longshore Division of the ILWU has been a strong supporter of the Booker T. Washington Center. In July of last year, they presented a check for \$250,000 to the Center to support the expansion.

The Booker T. Washington Center was launched shortly after World War I as a resource for San Francisco's

African American population. When it first opened its doors, it was responding to the lack of services available to African Americans. At the time, this included union membership. However, ILWU locals in San Francisco have always been inclusive and this is how the initial bond between the two organizations was formed.



Supporting the Booker T. Washington Community Center: Coast Committeeman, Ray Ortiz, Jr., (right) stands with former SF Mayor Willie Brown Jr. at a fundraiser for the Center's new state of the art community center.



Modern facilities: Plans for the new community center include approximately 48 new affordable homes for San Francisco families, transitional aged youth (18-24), and youth who have aged out of foster care. In addition to this residential component, the Booker T. Community center will also include a state-of-the-art gym, a youth center offering academic support, childcare, and technical training, and a new playground, garden and open space area.

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CARSON – MAYOR
JIM DEAR

CARSON – CITY COUNCIL (VOTE FOR TWO)
JULIE RUIZ RABER AND MIKE GIPSON

*Locals 13 and 94 have endorsed Eric Garcetti for Mayor of Los Angeles

ILWU Recycling workers organize for better jobs, safer conditions & improved public service

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also recalled a dramatic episode from his youth when his father, a longtime member of Local 6, arrived home one evening with a bloody head injury incurred while helping co-workers win their strike on the picket line against anti-union strike-breakers.

Speaking in Spanish

Most of the convention was conducted in Spanish, the language spoken by most recycling workers who are predominantly immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Simultaneous English/Spanish translation was provided by a team of professional translators who made it possible for everyone to understand what was said. Translation, childcare and a post-convention dinner were provided to promote the involvement and participation of workers and family members.

Welcome and a warning

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams was on-hand to welcome workers at the convention, despite being stricken with the flu. "I wanted to be here today to welcome you to your union house, and let you know that our entire ILWU family has your back," said Adams. "You have to lead this fight, but we're committed to providing resources that can help you win this important struggle. Filling this union hall with so many of your co-workers, family members and supporters is a great start – and it should serve as a warning to employers if they challenge your campaign for fairness." Adams concluded his remarks by inviting Monsignor Valdivia and Servant B.K. Woodson to join him in signing a "Statement of Support" posted in front of the room, declaring support for better pay, safer working conditions and better public recycling services.

Deadly safety problems

California's top worker safety official, Ellen Widess, who heads the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal-OSHA), attended the convention to underscore the need for better safety and worker protection in the Golden State's recycling industry. She noted last year's tragic death of Evangelina Macias, a waste worker, mother, and Local 6 member who was killed while working at Waste Management's San Leandro facility. The agency headed by Widess investigated the incident and decided to issue three citations against Waste

Management – two of them classified as "serious" with fines totaling over \$50,000 – because the company failed to protect workers by following safety rules required by state and federal law.

Waste Management is refusing to pay the fines and is trying to appeal the serious charges that they violated safety rules that cost Evangelina Macias her life.

Expert advice

The bi-lingual agenda for the four-hour event included three workshop topics of special concern to recycling workers: improving health and safety, defending immigrant rights and providing better recycling services to benefit the public and environment.

A panel of experts – including workers – documented the safety problems that are causing too many injuries and deaths at recycling companies. Amalia Cerillo, a worker at Rock Tenn's recycling operation, explained how she broke her leg at work but was told not to report the injury by management. Similar problems exist at other recycling companies where workers are also discouraged from reporting workplace injuries.

Waste Management recycling worker Xiomara Martinez described how her co-workers organized a successful action to control a rat infestation at their workplace that had been ignored by the company.

Josefa Solano prepared an impressive display to illustrate many of the safety problems facing workers, including samples of dust, improper safety equipment and she explained about unusual hazards such as dead animals, feces, hypodermic syringes and dangerous chemicals. BLT workers recently found an explosive grenade among the items they were sorting to be recycled.

University of California safety trainer Valeria Velasquez explained how a new safety training program is being developed with worker participation to improve safety and reduce on-the-job hazards.

Attorney Nicole Marquez, from the organization *Worksafe!*, explained the need for workers to organize and take action in order to protect themselves from dangers on the job. She pointed to a recent study published by their organization that found waste industry workers were much more likely to be injured on the job than workers in other industries.



Fighting for the future: At the conclusion of the Convention of Recycling Workers, children displayed a paper mural they prepared while playing in the childcare center that was provided for families attending the meeting at the Local 6 hall.

Immigrant rights

Recycling worker Yadira Carrasco from Waste Management kicked-off the discussion on immigrant rights by reminding everyone that "we as immigrant workers need to know our rights in the workplace and raise our voice when there is an injustice, but above all, we need to be willing to take action when necessary." She introduced Waste Management worker Mirella Jauregui, who explained how her company had improperly used the E-Verify system that resulted in three workers losing their jobs. Co-worker Alejandra León told how workers responded to the company's improper use of the E-Verify system by declining to work overtime on Saturday January 19 – sacrificing badly-needed overtime pay – but making a powerful point to the company that abuse and disrespect will not be tolerated. She noted that the company immediately threatened to retaliate against workers for refusing to volunteer for overtime.

Expert immigration attorney Francisco Ugarte explained that Waste Management's use of the government's E-Verify system violated the ILWU union contract and federal rules. He also noted that company attempts to retaliate or threaten workers who take action together to defend their rights is illegal under federal law. Ugarte explained that the ILWU is taking legal action, but he encouraged workers to "stand up for their rights." Ugarte announced that he has been retained by the ILWU to protect workers and advise the union about how to counter abuse of immigrants by employers.

Journalist and photographer David Bacon concluded with details about immigrant workers in other shops who had emerged from the shadows to defend their rights against abusive employers. He explained that immigrant workers have been a part of the U.S. workforce for more than a century, and that their contributions – and rights – need to be respected.

A moving and entertaining musical break was provided halfway through the convention by Francisco Herrera, a talented troubadour who performed a clever song that was perfect for the moment and audience because it told a tale of immigrant workers learning how to protect their rights.

Better pay & better service

The final panel began with Edgar Flores from California Waste Solutions (CWS) who asked why CWS recycling sorters in Alameda County are being paid \$11.97 while CWS sorters in San Jose are making \$19.80. Rock Tenn worker Norma Coronado said her own wage of \$9.35 was several dollars an hour less than what her company is paying in San Jose for the same work.

Besides the low pay, recycling workers said they feel trapped in dead-end jobs with little chance for advancement. BLT worker Santos Lopez said it should be possible to work into better positions – if more training and opportunities were made available.

Sierra Club Zero Waste Committee leader Ruth Abbe was supportive of three goals: better recycling services to help the public – and better-paying, safer jobs for workers. She noted that changes in the industry will place more emphasis on recycling and less on landfills in the future. The need for better training and advancement opportunities should be part of that transition, she said.

Recycling consultant John Hanscom shared some insights from his 14-years of experience in the recycling industry. He noted that public education is essential to successful recycling programs, and said that recycling workers could help perform some of that community education work if more training and opportunities were made available.

Important political support

While the convention appropriately focused on recycling workers and worker-concerns, a healthy contingent of political leaders and community advocates came to show their support for winning better jobs, safer conditions and better services for the public.

Mayor Jean Quan of Oakland joined families after the convention when dinner was served. She signed the Statement of Support and declared her willingness to make recycling in Oakland work better for everyone. She shared her own experiences of growing up in an immigrant family, and encouraged the roomful of children to realize their dreams and aspire to lofty goals, as she had done by becoming Mayor of a major city.

Fremont Mayor Bill Harrison attended much of the convention, as did



Community Allies: Sierra Club Zero Waste Committee leader Ruth Abbe joined other officials who signed a Statement of Support at the convention, calling for improved recycling services for the public, along with better pay and working conditions for recycling workers.

Fremont City Council member Vinnie Bacon. Both addressed worker concerns and signed the Statement of Support.

State Assembly members Nancy Skinner, Bob Wieckowski and Rob Bonta all addressed the convention, signed the Statement of Support and pledged to support efforts by workers to improve conditions.

Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle attended and signed the Statement of Support. Representatives of Supervisor Wilma Chan, State Senator Loni Hancock and newly-elected Oakland City Council member Dan Kalb were also present to show support.

Organizational backing included the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, Sierra Club Zero Waste Committee, Center for Environmental Health, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Green For All, Communities for a Better Environment, Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center, and others.

Ending with an action plan

The convention concluded with the unanimous adoption of standards to improve working conditions in Alameda County's recycling industry. Workers also authorized a committee

of their co-workers to continue directing the campaign – and join forces with other groups who share the goals of better jobs, safer conditions and improved services. The new effort is called the “Campaign for Sustainable Recycling” and it was put to the test several days later at the Oakland City Council meeting.

On Tuesday, February 5th, workers and campaign allies sent a delegation of forty representatives to the City Council's “open forum” where testimony was presented about Waste Management's recent abuse and retaliation against immigrant workers. The testimony moved several Council members to

request follow-up meetings, and some, like Council member Rebecca Kaplan asked to sign the Statement of Support calling for better jobs, safer conditions and better services.

“We're off to a good start,” said workers to the television and radio reporters who came that evening to cover the event.

“It's been a rough road for recycling workers in Alameda County,” said Fred Pecker of Local 6, “but they're moving down the highway now with lots of support, more skills and the momentum to make things happen that were impossible to imagine just a year ago.”

Los trabajadores de reciclaje afiliados a ILWU se organizan para tener mejores trabajos, condiciones más seguras y mejorar el servicio al público

Se supone que el reciclaje es algo positivo y bueno para el medioambiente, pero en el ramo de la recolección de basura, que genera ganancias de \$55 billones en todo el país, este servicio especializado de rápida expansión tiene bastantes aspectos peligrosos y alarmantes. La mayoría de los trabajadores de reciclaje soportan salarios de miseria, beneficios limitados, condiciones de trabajo peligrosas y puestos de trabajo sin porvenir.

“La gente no sabe el trabajo importante que hacemos para ayudar al medioambiente. En el pasado, nos hemos quedado casi siempre callados, pero eso está cambiando ahora porque estamos exponiendo los problemas y organizándonos,” dijo Alejandra León, que trabaja como “separadora” en la planta de reciclaje de Waste Management en San Leandro, CA.

Salidos de las penumbras

León fue una de 150 trabajadores que tomaron un paso importante hacia adelante el sábado por la tarde, 2 de febrero, al convocar una histórica “Convención de Trabajadores del Reciclaje” en el salón del Local 6 de ILWU en Oakland. Mientras que algunos posiblemente se hayan sorprendido de que estos trabajadores de cuatro compañías importantes del reciclaje en el condado de Alameda han sido afiliados de ILWU por muchos años, se reconoce cada vez más que la única manera de mejorar las

condiciones en sus empresas es por medio de la organización y acción.

“Hemos empezado por organizarnos para luchar por una norma de trabajo en el condado de Alameda y estamos trabajando para conseguir un amplio apoyo político y de la comunidad. Después estaremos en condiciones de ayudar a los trabajadores de reciclaje que no tienen sindicato para que se organicen y así mejorar las normas de trabajo en todo este tipo de empresas,” dijo Josefa Solano, una trabajadora del reciclaje que trabaja en la Planta de Reciclaje y Traslado de Basura de Fremont administrada por BLT Enterprises.

Los trabajadores presidieron; el clero convocó

Los trabajadores del reciclaje, entre ellos Marco Hernández y Alejandra León, presidieron la mayor parte de la reunión, con el apoyo de Fred Pecker, el Secretario Tesorero del Local 6. Un trabajador de Waste Management, José Romero, presentó a cada uno de los cuatro grupos de trabajadores del reciclaje que llenaron la sala de convenciones, que provocó una gran bulla y muchos aplausos a medida que cada grupo fue anunciando su presencia.

Dos miembros del clero del East Bay, Servant B.K. Woodson de Bay Area Christian Connection y el monseñor jubilado Antonio Valdivia, de la Diócesis de Oakland, hicieron convocatorias y dieron bendiciones que inspiraron a la concurrencia. Ambos son conocidos por su adhesión a las ideas y objetivos de la justicia social. Woodson, que también es miembro



Apoyo político: La Alcaldesa de Oakland Jean Quan estuvo entre otros Alcaldes, Legisladores Estatales, Miembros de Concilios de Ciudades y Supervisores del Condado quienes estuvieron presentes en la Convención para reunirse con trabajadores del reciclaje y apoyar la campaña. Quan dijo que es esencial que empleadores respeten los derechos de trabajadores, y conto a todos sus experiencias de crecer en una familia de inmigrantes.

del Comité Interreligioso por la Justicia Laboral (ICWJ), una organización afiliada con la Alianza para una Economía Sostenible del East Bay (EBASE), invitó a todos a que trabajaran juntos para promover la causa de la justicia. Monseñor Valdivia instó a la convención a que trabajara para mejorar las condiciones de trabajo y eliminara la injusticia. También recordó un episodio impactante de su juventud cuando su padre llegó a casa una noche con la cabeza ensangrentada. Había sufrido lesiones al defender su línea de piquete contra los rompehuelgas con sus compañeros de trabajo para ganar una huelga.

Se habla español.

La mayor parte de la convención se llevó en español, ya que la mayoría de los trabajadores del reciclaje son inmigrantes originarios de México y Centro América. Un equipo de interpretes profesionales se encargó de la traducción simultánea para que todos entendieran lo que se estaba diciendo. Se brindaron los servicios de traducción, el cuidado de niños y la cena después de la convención para promover la participación de los trabajadores y sus familias.

Una bienvenida y una advertencia

Willie Adams, Secretario Tesorero Internacional de ILWU estuvo presente para dar la bienvenida a los trabajadores en la convención, a pesar de que andaba enfermo de gripe. “Quería estar aquí hoy para darles la bienvenida a su hogar sindical, y asegurarles que todos sus hermanos del ILWU los apoyan,”

dijo Adams. “Ustedes tienen que encabezar esta lucha, pero nos comprometemos a darles los recursos que les pueda ayudar a ganar esta batalla importante. El hecho de que hayan llenado este salón con sus compañeros de trabajo, sus familias y simpatizantes es un buen inicio – y debe servir de advertencia a los empleadores si piensan oponerse a su campaña por la justicia.” Adams terminó sus comentarios invitando al monseñor Valdivia y a Servant B.K. Woodson a que junto con él firmaran la “Declaración de Apoyo” colocada al frente del salón, y declararan su apoyo por mejores salarios, condiciones de trabajo más seguras y un mejor servicio de reciclaje para el público.

Peligros mortíferos

Ellen Widess, una alta funcionaria del estado de California que encabeza la División de Seguridad y Salud Ocupacional (Cal-OSHA), asistió a la convención para subrayar la necesidad de tener condiciones más seguras y mayores protecciones para los trabajadores del reciclaje en todo el estado. Señaló la muerte trágica el año pasado de Evangelina Macias, una trabajadora de recolección de basura, madre y afiliada del Local 6 que falleció mientras trabajaba en la planta de Waste Management en San Leandro. El organismo dirigido por Widess investigó el incidente y expidió tres citatorios contra Waste Management – dos de ellos calificados como “serios” con multas de más de \$50,000 – debido a que la

Continúa en la página 6



Con mucha pasión: Amalia Cerrillo trabajadora del reciclaje de RockTenn dio un apasionante discurso sobre la necesidad de mantenerse unidos y organizados para poder mejorar las condiciones de trabajo.

Los trabajadores de reciclaje (continuación)



Apoyo religioso: Monseñor Antonio Valdivia de la Diócesis de Oakland (retirado) agregó su nombre a la "Declaración de Apoyo" firmada por oficiales electos como muestra de apoyo para condiciones de trabajo más seguras, mejores salarios y mejores servicios de reciclaje. Se unió al Servidor BK Woodson de la Conexión Cristiana Del Área de la Bahía y del Comité Religioso para Justicia de Trabajadores, dando inicio a la Convención con bendiciones pidiendo a empleadores que "escuchen el llamado de justicia" y "traten a todos los trabajadores con respeto y dignidad".

compañía no protegió a sus empleados al no seguir las reglas de seguridad que exigen las leyes estatales y federales.

Waste Management se está negando a pagar las multas y está tratando de apelar las acusaciones serias de que violaron las reglas de seguridad, lo cual le costó la vida a Evangelina Macias.

Consejos de los expertos

La agenda bilingüe del evento que duró cuatro horas incluyó tres temas de especial importancia para los trabajadores del reciclaje: el mejoramiento de la salud y seguridad, la defensa de los derechos de los inmigrantes y la prestación de un mejor servicio de reciclaje que beneficie al público y al medioambiente.

Una grupo de expertos, que incluyó a trabajadores, documentaron los problemas de seguridad que están causando demasiadas lesiones y muertes en las compañías de reciclaje. Amalia Cerillo, una trabajadora en la planta de reciclaje de Rock Tenn, explicó cómo se fracturó la pierna en el trabajo pero los administradores le dijeron que no reportara la lesión. Problemas similares existen en otras compañías en las que desaniman a los trabajadores para que no reporten las lastimaduras que sufren en el trabajo.

Una trabajadora de reciclaje de Waste Management, Xiomara Martínez, describió como sus compañe-

ros de trabajo organizaron una acción para controlar una plaga de ratas que la compañía había ignorado.

Josefa Solano preparó una exhibición digna de admiración para ilustrar muchos de los problemas de seguridad que aquejan a los trabajadores, incluso con muestras de polvo, equipo protector inadecuado y ella explicó los peligros fuera de lo común como los animales muertos, las heces fecales, jeringas hipodérmicas y sustancias químicas peligrosas. Los trabajadores de BLT recientemente encontraron un granada de mano entre los artículos que estaban separando para el reciclaje.

La instructora de seguridad ocupacional de la Universidad de California, Valeria Velásquez, explicó como un nuevo programa de capacitación sobre la seguridad se está preparando con la participación de los trabajadores para mejorar la seguridad y reducir los peligros en el trabajo.

La abogada Nicole Márquez, de la organización Worksafe!, explicó por qué es necesario que los trabajadores se organicen y tomen acción para protegerse de los peligros en el trabajo. Señaló un estudio reciente publicado por su organización que muestra que los trabajadores de recolección de basura tienen mucha mayor probabilidad de lastimarse en el trabajo que otros trabajadores.

Derechos de los inmigrantes

Yadira Carrasco, trabajadora de reciclaje en Waste Management, inició la discusión sobre los derechos de los inmigrantes, recordándoles a todos que "nosotros como trabajadores inmigrantes necesitamos conocer nuestros derechos laborales y hacernos escuchar cuando se hace una injusticia, pero sobre todo, necesitamos estar dispuestos a tomar acción cuando sea necesario." Ella presentó a Mirella Jauregui, trabajadora de Waste Management, quien explicó cómo su compañía usó el sistema de E-Verify incorrectamente, resultando en el despido de tres trabajadores. Su compañera de trabajo, Alejandra León, contó cómo los trabajadores respondieron al uso indebido de este sistema, negándose a trabajar el tiempo extra el sábado, 19 de enero, sacrificando el pago del tiempo extra muy necesario, pero dejando claro a la compañía que no iban a aguantar los maltratos y falta de respeto. Ella señaló que la compañía inmediatamente amenazó con castigar a los trabajadores por negarse a trabajar el tiempo extra.

Francisco Ugarte, abogado experto en asuntos de inmigración, explicó que Waste Management violó el contrato colectivo de ILWU y las reglas federales por la forma en que usó el sistema E-Verify. También señaló que es ilegal, según las leyes federales, que una compañía amenace con tomar represalias contra empleados que se unen para tomar acción en defensa de sus derechos. Ugarte explicó que ILWU está tomando medidas legales, pero animó a los trabajadores a que "hagan valer sus derechos." Ugarte anunció que ha sido contratado por ILWU para defender a los trabajadores y aconsejar al sindicato sobre la forma en que se puede responder a los maltratos de los inmigrantes por parte de los empleadores.

El periodista y fotógrafo David Bacon cerró la sesión contando cómo trabajadores inmigrantes en otros centros de trabajo han salido de las penumbras para ejercer sus derechos ante los empleadores abusivos. Explicó que los trabajadores inmigrantes han sido parte integral de la fuerza laboral en los E.U. por más de un siglo, y que sus contribuciones, y derechos, deben respetarse.

En el descanso musical amenizó la convención el talentoso trovador Francisco Herrera, conmoviendo y entreteniendo a los participantes con una canción ingeniosa muy atinente sobre los trabajadores inmigrantes que aprendían a defender sus derechos.

Mejores salarios y un mejor servicio

El último taller empezó con Edgar Flores de California Waste Solutions (CWS) que preguntó por qué los separadores de materiales reciclables de CWS en el condado de Alameda reciben \$11.97 mientras que los separadores de CWS en San José ganan \$19.80. Norma Coronado, trabajadora de Rock Tenn, dijo que ella ganaba un salario de \$9.35, varios dólares menos por hora que lo que su compañía paga en San José por el mismo trabajo.

Además de los bajos salarios, los trabajadores del reciclaje dicen que se sienten atrapados en puestos de trabajo sin futuro. Santos López, un trabajador de BLT, dijo que necesitan tener la

oportunidad de ir escalando a mejores puestos, siempre que se ofrezca capacitación adicional y más oportunidades.

La líder del Comité de Cero Basura del Sierra Club, Ruth Abbe, declaró su apoyo por las dos metas: un mejor servicio de reciclaje que beneficie al público y empleos más seguros y mejor pagados para los trabajadores. Ella señaló que los cambios en el ramo de la basura llevarán en el futuro a que haya más reciclaje en lugar de depositar la basura en los vertederos. El ofrecer una mejor capacitación y oportunidades de ascenso deben ser parte de esa transición, dijo ella.

El consultor de reciclaje, John Hanscom, compartió algunas cosas que ha sacado en claro de sus 14 años de experiencia en el ramo del reciclaje. Mencionó que la educación del público es esencial para que los programas de reciclaje tengan éxito, y dijo que los trabajadores del reciclaje podrían ayudar a cumplir con esa tarea si se les ofrece más capacitación y oportunidades.

Apoyo político importante

Aunque la convención se centró, como era de esperarse, en los trabajadores del reciclaje y sus inquietudes, llegó un buen contingente de líderes políticos y promotores de la comunidad para mostrar su apoyo por tener mejores empleos, condiciones más seguras y un mejor servicio para el público.

La alcaldesa Jean Quan de Oakland se unió a las familias después de la convención durante la cena. Firmó la Declaración de Apoyo ante todos y se declaró dispuesta a mejorar las condiciones de trabajo y el servicio de reciclaje para todos en Oakland. Compartió sus experiencias como hija de inmigrantes y animó a los niños que llenaron el salón a que hicieran realidad sus sueños, y aspiraran a metas nobles, como ella al convertirse en alcaldesa de una ciudad principal.

El alcalde de Fremont, Bill Harrison, asistió a buena parte de la convención, al igual que Vinnie Bacon, miembro del Consejo Municipal de esa ciudad. Ambos abordaron los temas que interesaban a los trabajadores y firmaron la Declaración de Apoyo.

Los asambleístas estatales, Nancy Skinner, Bob Wieckowski y Rob Bonta, se dirigieron a la convención, firmaron la Declaración de Apoyo y se comprometieron a apoyar a los trabajadores para que puedan mejorar sus condiciones.

El supervisor del condado de Alameda, Richard Valle, asistió y firmó la Declaración de Apoyo. Los representantes de la Supervisora Wilma Chan, Senador Estatal Loni Hancock y el recién electo miembro del Consejo Municipal de Oakland, Dan Kalb, también se presentaron para mostrar su apoyo.

Entre las organizaciones que apoyaron el evento estuvieron la Alianza por una Economía Sostenible del East Bay, Comité de Cero Basura del Sierra Club, Centro de Salud Medioambiental, la Alianza Global de Alternativas a los Incineradores, Ecología para Todos, Comunidades para un Mejor Medioambiente, Comité Interreligioso por la Justicia Laboral, Centro de Libertad de Martin Luther King Jr, y otras.

Continúa en página 7

Sal Colla passes at 93

Sal Colla, Local 34 member, WWII veteran and tugboat pilot died at the age of 93 on February 5th, surrounded by his family.

Colla was born in San Francisco's North Beach in 1919 to Sicilian immigrants. He came of age during the 1934 waterfront strike that gave rise to the ILWU. During his teens, he worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps that were established by President Franklin Roosevelt to provide badly-needed jobs and build public service projects during the Great Depression.

He joined the Navy during WWII and served as a gunner on the USS Astoria, a light cruiser that took Colla and over 1200 crewmembers into the Pacific where they were awarded five battle stars for supporting the invasions of Okinawa, Iwo Jima and liberation of the Philippines. Colla returned from the war, married his wife Josephine in 1946 and lived together until her passing in 2005.

During much of the 1950's, Colla worked on tugboats for Murphy Jud-

son Pacific and Crowley Marine. The completion of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge in 1956 eliminated the need for barges hauling construction equipment and supplies across the Bay, and the remaining work hauling sugar beets in the Central Valley required Colla to often be away from his family. That's when a friend suggested that he talk to Local 34, where he became a member, made many friends and worked for decades as a supercargo.

Former Local 34 President Richard Cavalli recalls that "Colla was always a pleasure to work with because he was just a good guy. I remember him working at the 9th Avenue Terminal in Oakland where they handled a lot of steel, and at Piers 32 and 42 for Marine Terminals in San Francisco."

Among his friends from Local 34 was Jimmy Herman, who served as ILWU International President from 1977 to 1991. Herman and others frequently came to the Colla's house where they enjoyed Josephine's home-cooked meals.

In December of 2011, Colla had lunch with ILWU International Presi-



dent Bob McEllrath at San Francisco's historic Gino & Carlo bar in North Beach, a blue-collar institution that's co-owned by Colla's son Frank, with a loyal following of longshore workers since 1942.

During lunch, Colla reminisced about the 1934 waterfront strike and general strike that followed that summer. "I remember the schools closed and the cable cars stopped running," he recalled from his youth. He admired ILWU founding President

Harry Bridges because the man "could have retired a millionaire, but stayed a good friend of the working class."

President McEllrath said "Sal Colla came from a generation that sacrificed so much and took real risks that made it possible for later generations like us to have a better life. We owe men like Sal a lot for what we enjoy today."

Colla is survived by his sons, Bob, Frank, and John plus nine grandchildren, many great grandchildren and a host of friends and relatives.

Honoring MLK's commitment to economic justice

Note: On Martin Luther King's birthday, a community celebration has been held each year at the Local 6 hall in Oakland. This year, the event sponsors invited a recycling worker of address the large audience on January 21. The remarks below were written by recycling worker José Romero in Spanish and have been translated into English.



Good morning my name is José Romero. I want to thank the organizers of this event for giving me the opportunity to talk with you for a couple of minutes. It's an honor for me to have a space at this event and be able to remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and ask for an appreciative applause for his efforts – and for giv-

ing his own life for what he called a dream, but today it's a reality. Equality and respect for everyone has to be part of our daily lives.

My friends, I work in a company where we recycle the garbage from our community. It's a hard job. It's a dirty job. It's a job where we smell, see and touch unpleasant things each day.

I'm not complaining about my job, and I thank god that I have a job. But I am complaining about the inequality that we experience and the disrespectful treatment that the company shows toward those of us who work as sorters. We are paid far less than anyone else working in the waste industry.

In Alameda County, the sorters are a group of more than 250 workers who are paid far less than sorters in San Francisco and San Jose. We currently have low wages, but just as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "I have a dream," and I know that by raising our

voices to organize and struggle for fairness will make it possible for us to have better communities, better schools and better jobs. To put it into just a few words: a better world for our children, a world with respect, equality and justice for all! Thank you.

Muy buenos días mi nombre es José Romero. Quiero agradecer a los organizadores de este evento por permitirme estos minutos para hablar con ustedes. Es un honor para mí tener un espacio para poder recordar al Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., les pido un fuerte aplauso de agradecimiento por su esfuerzo y por dar su propia vida por lo que él llamo un sueño pero que hoy en día es una realidad. El respeto y la igualdad para todos tienen que ser una prioridad cada día de nuestras vidas.

Compañeros, yo trabajo en una compañía donde se recicla la basura de nuestras comunidades. Es un trabajo

duro, es un trabajo sucio, es un trabajo donde olemos, vemos y tocamos cosas desagradables día con día. No me estoy quejando de mi trabajo, gracias a dios tengo trabajo. Me estoy quejando por la desigualdad con que nos tratan a nosotros los sortadores. Se nos paga mucho menos que a todos los demás trabajadores que trabajan en la basura.

En el Condado de Alameda los sortadores somos un grupo de más de 250 trabajadores que tenemos sueldos muy por debajo de otros sortadores en San Francisco o en San José. Nosotros tenemos muy bajos sueldos pero al igual que el Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., yo también tengo un sueño se que luchando, alzando nuestras voces, organizándonos podremos tener mejores comunidades, mejores escuelas, mejores trabajos en pocas palabras un mundo mejor para nuestros hijos un mundo con respeto, igualdad y justicia para todos. Muchas Gracias.

Los trabajadores de reciclaje (continuación)

Para terminar con un plan de acción

Se terminó la convención con la adopción unánime de normas para mejorar las condiciones de trabajo en el ramo del reciclaje en el condado de Alameda. Los trabajadores también autorizaron un comité de sus compañeros de trabajo para que sigan dirigiendo la campaña y unan fuerzas con otros grupos que comparten las mismas metas: mejores empleos,

condiciones más seguras y un mejor servicio al público. El nuevo esfuerzo se llama "Campaña para el Reciclaje Sostenible" y se le puso a prueba unos cuantos días después en la reunión del Consejo Municipal de Oakland.

El martes, 5 de febrero, los trabajadores y los aliados de la campaña enviaron una delegación de 40 representantes al "foro abierto" del Consejo Municipal en el que se dio testimonio sobre los recientes maltratos y repre-

salias de Waste Management contra los trabajadores inmigrantes. El testimonio motivó a varios miembros de dicho Consejo a solicitar reuniones posteriores, que se programaron en el momento, y algunos como la consejal Rebecca Kaplan pidió se le diera oportunidad de firmar la Declaración de Apoyo.

"Empezamos bien," dijeron los trabajadores a los reporteros de los

medios de comunicación que llegaron a cubrir el evento.

"Los trabajadores del reciclaje del condado de Alameda han pasado tragos amargos," dijo Fred Pecker, del Local 6, "pero vamos avanzando ahora con mucho apoyo, más conocimientos y el impulso para lograr las cosas que hace apenas un año nos hubieran parecido imposibles."



Promotion: Longtime ILWU member Steve Griffen was elected Chairman of the Stockton Port Commission on February 4th. An ILWU member since 1977, Griffen was appointed to the Commission in 2009 by the City Council, after an effort by ILWU members to become more involved in local affairs.

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TRANSITIONS

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A. Griggs; **Local 52:** Robert R. Hammer; **Local 63:** Elroy Lane; Rebecca M. Barra; Anthony Camello; Edward G. Borgonia Jr; Richard L. Coryell; Laura E. Lopez; Denyce L. Bell; Herman J. Porter; Roberta L. Recer; **Local 92:** Peggy J. Maher; **Local 94:** Larkin P. York; Ronald Armstrong; Steve A. Bozan;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

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Local 14: Robt A. Cordero; **Local 21:** Donald A. Nys; **Local 23:** Edwin T. Maijala; **Local 34:** Daniel F. Harrington; Ronald J. Maguire; **Local 54:** Manuel L. Hernandez; **Local 63:** Clourdell Roberson; Norman E. Walden (Clara); David Orozco (Edel); Raymond E. Hurt, Jr.; Joseph D. Calenda; **Local 75:** Richard V. Hornung; **Local 94:** Edward F. Sullivan Jr (Mary); Eldred A. Reynolds; **Local 98:** Harold Hokanson;

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Brogan; Dannie Irby; Marilyn P. Nelson; Grace Scott; **Local 13:** Evelyn T. Sion; Hannah Kapu; Maria E. Espinoza; Dorothy Tillotson; Dolores Hernandez; Clara M. Depew; Celia Bales; **Local 23:** Ethel E. Dobiash; Charlene Parham; **Local 40:** Margaret J. Larsen; **Local 52:** Lida E. Morris; **Local 54:** Beulah Myers; **Local 63:** Carolyn Scala; **Local 91:** Goldie E. Pokorny; **Local 94:** Marguerite C. Page; **Local 98:** Betty L. Mattson;

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

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

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