Death on the waterfront

Fatal fall takes life of LA docker

By RUSS BARGMANN

WILMINGTON — Longshore Local 13 member Steve Marinkovich, Jr., 35, plunged to his death March 28 from a four-high stack of containers to the dock apron. The accident occurred just a week after an arbitrator ruled that the ILWU's coast-wide safety program was illegal.

At the time of the accident, Marinkovich and his partner, Brian Van Mulligan, were working on the Italian vessel Cielo De Genova at the Metropolitan Stevedore facility on Terminal Island. They were removing bridge clamps and unlocking locking cones on top of a deck load four containers high and two containers wide. The "Metro Safety Cage" was placed on the off-shore container while Marinkovich and Van Mulligan worked on the in-shore container.

HIT BY SAFETY CAGE

For reasons unknown, the spreader beam began trolleying inshore, dragging the safety cage with it. Van Mulligan apparently saw what was happening in time to grab onto the cage before it knocked him off the stack of containers. Marinkovich was not as fortunate. The cage struck him; he fell to the dock below, landing at the foot of a crane.

The tragedy comes on the heels of another fatal accident last fall in Portland, Oregon: a casual longshoreman was killed when the forklift he was operating overturned and crushed him.

There have been many other serious accidents on the coast involving hun- ders (UTRs). The vehicles—with their drivers still in them—have been inadvertently hoisted off the ground as cranes attempted to lift containers off UTR chassis during vessel loading operations. In at least one case, the UTR jackknifed, causing the driver to crash through the windshield.

SAFETY PROGRAM CHALLENGED

Although the ILWU implemented a coast-wide safety program mid-March, employers said it was an illegal work slow-down and were subsequently upheld in arbitration. Long- shore division members were ordered to resume "normal" operations.

"If the employers had an effective safety program, this death would not have occurred," said ILWU interna- tional President David Arian. "There is too much concern about productivity and not enough about safety.

"We have the right to improve safety on the job. Whether or not the em- ployers take any corrective action, the ILWU will. From now on, you will see a new safety awareness on the waterfront."

At press time, the cause and circumstances of Marinkovich’s tragic death are under investigation.

Family, friends, co-workers mourn loss of union brother

SAN PEDRO, Ca.—Over 1,000 peo- ple came to Mary Star of the Sea Cath- olic Church April 2 to pay their re- spects and say their good-byes to Steve Marinkovich, Jr.

The funeral mass was heard by the overflowing crowd, nearly 500 of them standing in aisles and outside the church. The majority were members of ILWU longshore division locals in Southern California.

The priest conducting the mass had never met Steve Marinkovich. He didn't get the chance.

"Steve was only 35 years old," said Local 13 welfare office Bruce Krieger. "He was starting a new life. He'd only been married for a few years, and he and his wife had just bought a new house a couple of months ago. The priest was going to meet Steve for the first time last night, to bless the house. Instead, he's holding a funeral service the next day."

Marinkovich was the second long- shoreman in his family to die on the job. In 1984 his father, Steven, Sr., a Local 13 crane operator, suffered a heart attack in the crane cab 100 feet above the dock.

"Steve's mother lost her husband at the bottom," Krieger reflected.

Marinkovich's younger brother, Pete, delivered the eulogy at the service. Local 13 member Tom Russell also spoke. John Toussaint, of clerks Local 63, sang. An open letter from Interna-
Safety First

BY DAVID ARIAN

ILWU International President

Throughout our history, the ILWU in all divisions has fought vigorously to protect life, limb and the general well-being of its members. But we face serious obstacles—from government, from business and from a rapidly-changing society.

Over the decades, the US has evolved from an agricultural-based economy, to an industrial one, and now to technology. But for all our technological gadgetry, we haven’t made a safety case. Our jobs are increasingly dangerous. Our environment is perilously polluted.

The trend toward deregulation has placed Americans at great risk, especially in the workplace. Under two successive Republican Administrations, we’ve seen safety laws and enforcement gutted beyond recognition. All in the name of “competitiveness.”

“Competitiveness” that implores the Big Business to rule with an iron fist is either ignored or removed—laws, unions, workers, it’s all the same.

It will get worse. As robotics and other technology begin to replace human beings, the health and safety of workers will face even greater jeopardy. This leaves only one solution: we must protect ourselves.

We learned this lesson the hard way. Between 1985 and 1986 we saw a rash of injuries and deaths on the waterfront in Southern California. Five people died in a six-month period. We believe, as a result of the transition from breakbulk cargo to high-tech container operations. Technol-
yogy increased productivity which increased the pace. Driven to work faster under new methods unfamiliar to them, workers were more susceptible to on-the-job accidents.

In 1986, Southern California locals pushed for a new safety code at the Port of L.A.-Long Beach. By 1987, the majority of the new container safety program was incorporated into the Coast safety code. Among other things, the new program called for safety harnesses to prevent accidental falls, a standard procedure for the movement of containers on and off ships, radio communications among workers and bosses, and a ten-mile-an-hour-speed limit in the container yard.

For a period of time, the new rules were adhered to, and there was some cooperation from employers and the work-force. But in March, the Coast Committee found it necessary to direct Longshore Division locals to return to the safety code.

Some employers viewed this as a form of retaliation. The ILWU had found itself involved in the dispute with Southern Pacific Railroad over SWP’s mass replacement of our Allied Division members at the intermodal container transfer facility (ICTF) at L.A.-Long Beach. We made it clear to shippers and stevedores that our beef was with SWP and not them. Some supported us. But the Pacific Maritime Association ultimately backed SWP with an injunction against ILWU efforts to support our displaced members.

Although our subsequent call for “Safety First” might have confused some employers, there was no confusion on our part. We've seen too many times, and with too many tragic results, employers who pay lip service to safety while pushing workers beyond their limits.

Although no one argues the benefits of an efficient workforce, productivity cannot be taken to precede over human life. Industry, government and labor must develop programs that emphasize safe work practices, worker input and evolving protection standards while allowing nonproductive work to get done.

Unless and until that happens, the ILWU will do everything within its means to ensure that our members make a safer world. Our jobs are increasingly dangerous. Our environment is perilously polluted. As the old saying goes, you can make a thousand dollars a day, but what good does it do if you end up maimed or killed on the job?

Cumulative trauma disorders

Injuries on the increase

From 1982 to 1990 the incidence of repetitive motion disorders rose nearly six-fold, from 4 per 10,000 workers in 1982 to 24 per 10,000 in 1990.

Today, cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs)—injuries sustained through performance of repetitive tasks—accounted for more than half of all occupational illnesses in the United States.

“The increase may be the result of several factors, including improved accuracy of reporting, heightened awareness of the problem by both employees and employers, advances in medical diagnosis, and the ever-accelerating pace of work,” said David M. Rempel, M.D., assistant professor of occupational medicine and director of the Ergonomics Laboratory at the University of California, San Francisco.

When force is applied repeatedly over a prolonged period to the same muscle group, joint or tendon, cumulative forces may cause soft tissue tears and trauma, explains Rempel. The resulting injury may lead to ligament and tendon disorders, degenerative joint disease, bursitis or nerve damage.

In addition to repetition and high force, risk factors associated with CTDs include awkward joint posture and prolonged constrained posture.

In the last two years, for example, occupational medicine specialists have seen an increase of CTDs among writers, editors, word processors and others who work regularly at video-display terminals and keyboards. In many of those cases, modifying the work station—such as raising the keyboard above the level of the keyboard and screen and using a proper chair— as well as getting away from the terminal for brief periods could prevent further injury.

New book examines "basic stuff" of Cal's workers comp

Dorsey Hamilton's book, California Workers' Compensation—Basic Stuff: A Survival Guide, provides vital information for injured workers. With recent attacks on California's workers' comp by employers, legislators, insurance companies and others, unions must have this information for their members to keep abreast of changes in the system.

Basic Stuff about workers' comp is information distributed by the state and insurance companies. Hamilton calls this basic stuff "BS" and follows it with his own observations labelled "No BS," which describes how the compensation system really works and how a labor representative or shop steward can best help to get the rights and benefits each worker deserves.

HOW TO ORDER

Basic Stuff is available through the Labor Center, 3251 Channing Way, Room 300, Berkeley, CA 94720. The price is $8.95, posted ($8.00 each for orders of 21 or more). Pre-payment is required. Make check payable to "UC Regents."

ILWU Titled Officers

DAVID ARIAN
President

BRIAN McWILLIAMS
Vice President

THOMAS TRASK
Vice President

LEON HARRIS
Secretary-Treasurer
Japan dockworkers contribute to ICTF Defense

Tokyo—ILWU International President David Arian, in a telephone interview with The Dispatcher, just before press time, reported that the rank-and-file membership of Zenkowan, the Japan Dockworkers Union here, has donated $10,000 to the ILWU’s “ICTF Defense Fund.”

The fund was established in February for the 330 ILWU Local 13 Allied Division members who were locked out of their jobs at Southern Pacific Railroad’s intermodal container transfer facility (ICTF), near Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor.

“The $10,000 donation was presented to Arian on April 6 by Toshio Ka-
mezaki, Chairman of Zenkowan’s Cen-
tral Committee, during a meeting at the union’s Tokyo headquarters.

COMMON ISSUES

“We exchanged ideas about the situation and a number of other issues,” Arian said. Topics ranged from recent developments in our own union to the question of jurisdiction in and around Alaska harbors and the impact a video slide presentation made in 1987 by the ICTF clients.

“Our leadership expressed a need for our two unions—two super-
power unions—to work together to con-


zkan's Executive Council” at one of Tokyo’s karaoke clubs.

Drugs: The union reaffirms its position against drug testing and talks about our problems, our structures, and how we could help each other,” Arian said.

Arian also met with representatives of Japan’s All Seamen’s Union. “In all the meetings were very positive. The unions here are hungry for building bridges and how we could help each other,” Arian said.

Japan dock union leader Toshio Ka-
mezaki presents ICTF donation to ILWU Intl President David Arian, and that we develop and maintain a close working relationship.”

FUTURE PLANS

Zenkowan officials, Arian said, have invited the ILWU to attend a meeting called by the International Transport Union’s Great Lakes Region, a meeting that included foreign crews and other union members. Arian and Bowers both agreed to commit their unions’ resources to protecting the longshore workers, container tractor drivers and other longshore workers, but all workers in the US.

Canadian Area Convention

Politics, organizing focus of resolutions

New Westminster, BC—The 22nd Canadian Area Convention held here March 29-31 drew sixty delegates from ten Canadian Area locals and an impressive line-up of special guests.

The high point of the convention were speeches by Member of Parlia-

ment joy Logan and Norman Stark, chief executive officer of the Vancouver Port Corporation.

“Iran and Bowers both agreed to commit their unions’ resources to protecting the longshore workers, container tractor drivers and other longshore workers, but all workers in the US.”

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The high point of the convention were speeches by Member of Parlia-

ment joy Logan and Norman Stark, chief executive officer of the Vancouver Port Corporation.
WASHINGTON—The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee has passed a "play or pay" reform bill, which would bring health insurance to approximately 35 million Americans who now lack protection.

The bipartisan sponsored bill would require employers to provide health insurance for all their workers or pay a tax of 7 to 8 percent of their payrolls into an Americare fund. This fund would be targeted to meet health care costs of workers and the unemployed.

Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell (D-Maine) said he will make every effort to win passage of the bill this session.

BUREAUCRATS BLAST BILL

Meanwhile, the measure has come under fire from Bush administration bureaucrats. In a widely-publicized press conference Health & Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan and Labor Department Secretary Les- Martin blasted the Democratic efforts to revamp the nation's health care system.

Using data from a new study released by the Urban Institute, Sulli- van said the plan "would result in lost jobs, higher employer costs, higher taxes and a huge new government-run health program." Martin said it would have "a devastating effect on workers and jobs" and that "pay or play is mis- named. It is really pay and pay and pay by the middle class."

But the chief author of the Instit- ute's study said the two cabinet mem- bers misrepresented the results.

ONE-SIDED STORY

"We chose not to go to the press con- ference because political official's of the Labor Department presented a very inaccurate, incomplete portrayal of our study and gave only one side of the story," said Sheila R. Zedlewski, who has worked for the Urban Institute 19 years. "They did not focus on the bene- ficial aspects of universal access to health care. Our study does not even address the effect of these proposals on jobs."

The study does, however, address cost factors in a "play or pay" system. "Many people would have lower out-of- pocket medical costs," Zedlewski ex- plained. "Many employers would save money under these proposals because the payroll tax would be less than their current health insurance premiums."

GO P, Demos butt heads over 'pay or pay' plan

WASHINGTON

George Bush is pushing his own ver- sion of health care reform, which Dem- ocrats, in turn, have dismissed as a futile life-support for a system that's "mired in crisis.

Here's the Bush plan in nutshell:

• Access for all—eventually.

• Centralized quality control left to the marketplace.

• No required employer spending or 

• Major role for private insurers.

• Tax credits for individuals pur- 

• Health care benefits to be taxed as income.

Since January, the Administration has been examining a proposal to ap- ply the tax on benefits to people earn- ing more than $100,000 a year. But some government insiders say that the new tax would be a foot in the door and that the limit could be lowered in the future.

Kids the biggest losers in health care crisis

The biggest losers in the argu- ment over health care reform, are also the littlest; children.

According to a report by the Child- ren's Defense Fund, employer-based health insurance failed to provide coverage for more than 25 million children last year, and, by the year 2000, more than half of American kids will be shut out from this primary source of health care coverage. The voluntary system of em- ployers provided health insurance is in disarray, and there is no more visible sign of its decline than the unraveling of coverage for children," said CDF president Marion Wright Edelman.

Among the causes:

• Employers who fail to provide coverage for dependents.

• Plans that require employees to pay for dependent coverage at a cost such that they are unaffordable.

• Parents who lose their jobs and, with them, health insurance.

• Children who lose relatives other than parents and, therefore, are not eligible for employer-based coverage.

Sacramento-VIOIJBills target safety, workers' comp

New bills target safety, workers' comp

Sacramento—ILWU Northern and Southern California District Council delegates will lobby California lawmakers for health and safety bills on May 4 and 5. Legislative represen- tatives for the councils are: Don Wat- son, Local 34, San Francisco; Rene Herrera and Gene Banday, Local 13, Sacramento; and Peggy Chandler, Fed- erated Auxiliary 8, Wilmington.

Bills to strengthen Cal/Osha, the state's health agency, include AB 2277 by Assemblyman John Bur- tton (D-San Francisco) which will ex- tend OSHA's jurisdiction to government workers. SB 1742 by Senator Nick Petris (D-Oakland) will give more pro- tection to workers covered under SB 31 (1931 by Senator Bill Greene-D-Oak- land) will prompt OSHA ac- tion in serious safety hazards.

Meanwhile, Republicans seem bent on introducing legislation gutting in- jury prevention programs. The worst

ILWU DISTRICT COUNCILS TO LOBBY CALL LAWMAKERS

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has estab- lished a toll-free, 24-hour telephone hotline. To report emergency threats to worker safety, such as fire hazards, risks of explosion or releases of toxic chemicals, call: 1-800-321-OSHA

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Health Care Debate

SAFETY CALAMITY

Towboat safety bill protects lives, too

By LINDSAY MCLAUGHLIN

One good friend from Hawaii, Rep- resentative Neil Abercrombie, has in- troduced HR 3942, legislation ad- dressing the serious marine safety hazards caused by reduced staffing on towboats. If enacted, this bill could very well save the lives of our brothers and sisters in the Inlandboatmen's Union and greatly reduce the chance of an ecological disaster.

Insufficient staffing has created ex- tremely perilous conditions and near
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THE GOVERNMENT

POTENTIAL CALAMITY

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“Health care is a human right; everybody should have it. I don’t think that just because somebody can afford it, they should have health care, while others who can’t afford it don’t. Nationalized health care would enable everybody to have necessary care. “I see no reason why our tax money can’t go toward national health care. I understand it could affect me; so we change over. But, as I look at other industrialized nations that have national health care, it works pretty well.”
Aristide visits Bay Area, gets ILWU support

Oakland—Deposed Haitian head of state Jean-Bertrand Aristide paid the Bay Area a visit last month to garner American support for democracy in his native land.

Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest, was the first democratically-elected president of Haiti, but was ousted in September after a military coup.

During his Bay Area tour, Aristide called for an international boycott of Haiti to force the military to relinquish its stronghold. He also called upon the Bush Administration to reverse its position toward Haitian refugees: the US government has turned back thousands, declaring that they are fleeing Haiti for economic not political reasons.

The ILWU, along with many labor and other organizations, has demanded Aristide's reinstatement and the restoration of democracy in Haiti. ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Leon Harris reaffirmed the ILWU's support at the March 14 dinner introducing Local 6 member Pierre la Bossiere into the Arista at the March 15 support rally held at Oakland's First Congregational Church.

"The repression continues," la Bossiere told The Dispatcher. "The army has refused to accept the agreement signed between the government and the army and Aristide. The military is trying to stamp out popular organizations and trade unions that support Aristide's return. They're doing whatever they can to break down the will of the people.

Until Aristide's election in December 1990, the island-nation had been ruled by one brutal military dictator after the other. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere and is almost totally dependent on foreign aid.

ILWU Local 53 wins safety award

Portland—Longshore/Warehouse Local 53 received a second place longshore award for the lowest injury rate at the Oregon-Columbia River Area awards banquet held in Portland on February 20.

This Newport ILWU local was presented with the award by John Flinn, Oregon area safety director of the Jones Oregon Steworing Company, along with other maritime representatives and steworing companies honoring Local 53.

Dedication planned for Harry's birthday

Seattle—Contributors to the Harry Bridges Chair for Labor Studies at the University of Washington are helping the project reach its $1 million goal.

"Right now, we've got $713,221.79," said Bob Duggan with precision, and he should know. He's the secretary-treasurer of the Harry Bridges Memorial Committee.

With a number of pledges expected to materialize into cash, Duggan says the committee is "fairly confident" that they will have complete funding for the Chair by July 28, Bridges birthday.

Two told the University that we plan on dedicating the Chair on that day," he said. "Nikki Bridges will be there. And we've got a former ILWU member in the mayor's office here who's working on proclaiming a Harry Bridges Day or Harry Bridges Labor Studies Day. We're also lining up a number of important guest speakers for the event.

As reported in previous issues of The Dispatcher, donations for the Chair go to a special endowment fund at the university. Interest from the fund will be used to underwrite labor studies, which can take the form of a specific faculty position or sponsoring courses and other labor-related activities. The response from ILWU locals, pension clubs and auxiliaries has been generous.

At warehouse Local 6 in San Francisco, one business agent found a unique way to get donations: "I had a little talk with the management of Guilltard Chocolate," said Local 6 BA Joe Duen. "We've got a 140 members there and we've enjoyed good relations over the years, so I asked the company to contribute. They gave us $200."

Although funding for the endowment has come a long way since the project was launched in 1990, neither Duggan nor other members of the Committee are taking anything for granted. They are still requesting donations. Here's where you can send yours:

Harry Bridges Memorial Committee
2900 One Union Square
Sixth Avenue & University Street
Seattle, WA 98101

You can also write to the Committee for more information, or call (206) 624-8844.

Auxiliary 4 earns praise

Everett, Wa.—The membership of ILWU longshore Local 32 are proud of the work accomplished by their union sisters of Auxiliary 4.

"They've worked very hard on projects to raise money for the needy," said Local 32 secretary-treasurer Ron Thornberry. "In the last five years, they've donated over $16,000 to a host of humanitarian causes, such as the Women's Mission, Home for Unwed Mothers, children's organizations, Christmas and Thanksgiving baskets, the Salvation Army, and many others.

Auxiliary 4's fundraising efforts include designing sweat shirts and T-Shirts and selling them to different locals; cooking lunches for members; baking and selling cakes and cookies; and sponsoring drawings for "home-baked goodies" during the holiday season. Auxiliary members also dig deep into their pockets and distributed $500 for the Harry Bridges Chair Fund.

"It's amazing how few can do so much," Thornberry said. "Local 32 members are thankful for such a fine auxiliary.

Thornberry also added a plug for the Bridges Chair: "Every single member of our local donated at least $300 to the Harry Bridges Chair, and we encourage every ILWU member to donate at least one day's pay this year to this very worthy cause. How about Harry's birthday?"

Local 17 backs Diamond Walnut strikers

Stockton, Ca.—ILWU warehouse Local 17 members turned out enforce to demonstrate support for Teamsters on strike against Diamond Walnut. Production workers, predominately Hispanic women, struck in September after the company's "take-it-or-leave-it" bargaining offer. Major issues: race and sex discrimination, wages, benefits, and, inevitably, permanent replacements.

Local 21 beefs up hotel workers' picket line

Longview, Wa.—ILWU longshore Local 21 demonstrated solidarity at the March 7 hotel workers' rally at the Red Lion. Local 21 has had an ongoing beef with the hotel since management bustred the union's strike a year ago with permanent replacements and a subsequent decertification drive. Local 21 has been a staunch HERE ally throughout the dispute.
Final Notice:
May 15 deadline for Elaine Black Yoneda memorial award

SAN FRANCISCO—Applications for the Elaine Black Yoneda Memorial Award will be accepted through May 15.

The $500 award will be bestowed on applicants residing in Oregon, central California, or northern California and who, through study or activism, have demonstrated an interest in the causes of labor, civil liberties, women, peace, and human rights.

Students applying for the award must submit a grade of B or better for the semester in which they are enrolled and submit a copy of their transcripts along with an essay about their activities or studies in the areas defined above. Non-students must submit an essay or any existing written work related to any of the same topics.

To apply for the award, or to obtain more information, write to the Elaine Black Yoneda Memorial Committee, 20 Bertie Minor Lane, #1, San Francisco, CA 94115; or call Don Watson at (510) 652-3116.

$4,000 Typo

In last month's issue, we incorrectly printed that the Elaine Black Memorial Award was for $4,500. The correct amount is $500.

Our apologies for any confusion—or high expectations—our error might have caused.

Sea-Tac dinner honors
Local 98 retirees

SEATTLE—This year's annual Local 98 dinner honors retiring and retired foremen at the Sea-Tac Red Lion Hotel on May 24. All active and retired Local 98 retirees, and their families, are invited to attend this annual event, featuring a banquet, speeches, and a short film about the history of Local 98.

Dockers, widows on pension list

SAN FRANCISCO—Following is the April 1992 listing of dock workers retired under various ILWU-PMA pension plans:


The widows are: Helen Allen (James, Local 10); Virginia Balbinger (Alva, Local 21); Beverly Brown (Robert, Local 24); Dorothy Dessen (Fred, Local 23); Pauline Fisher (John, Local 34); Conception Garcia (Jesus, Local 10); Salemay Harris (James, Local 8); Natalie Helenus (Wayne, Local 10); Leora Bentila (Tom, Local 63); Ana-Alicia Hernandez (John, Local 10); Eddie Jackson (Richard, Local 13); Pauline Jensen (John, Local 91); Elizabeth Johnson (Alvin, Local 18); Doris Keawe (Joe, Local 13); Emily Lavery (Michael, Local 34); Clara Lee (Jake, Local 10); Doris Lawry (Tony, Local 10); Linda Mcknight (William, Local 10); Linda Movin (Walter, Local 10); Audrey Mae Moses (Ellis, Local 40); Martha Presley (Boswell, Local 10); Ruby Richardson (Tony, Local 10); Dolores Swanson (Kenneth, Local 23); Key Thornton (Homer, Local 47); Shirley White (Lee, Local 10); Ardread Wieland (Ray, Local 94);

"Names in brackets are those of deceased husbands."

Across the nation a new women's movement is emerging, built around the struggle for survival and the basic necessities of life.

On May 28-31 at Mills College in Oakland, Ca., the National Women's Survival Summit will bring together leaders of this new movement to discuss, debate and strategize for the future. Sponsored by Women's Economic Agenda Project, 518 Oakland, Ca., 94612; phone (510) 451-7379.

Elections

Canadian Area

Union elections are under way in the ILWU Canadian Area. Ballots were sent to all locals with ballots by April to be completed by April 3. All locals returned the ballots to the Canadian Area office on April 7.

Local 94, Wilmington

New term officials are: President, John W. Vaic; vice-president, George Gilbert; secretary-treasurer, George Kuvakas; sergeant-at-arms, Rino Marconi. Jim Gyerman, H. Bert Lyde, Robert MacKenzie are on the labor relations committee. Trustees are H. Bert Lyde, Paul Peterson, Bill McEvoy. A 15-member executive board was also selected.

Black History column praised by youth group

ILWU International President Dave Arian's February column on "Black History Month," impressed Cathryn Murray, president of the Global Teen Club. "I was deeply touched by the article," she wrote in her letter to Arian. "Although it was written to a particular age group I want you to know that young people read this publication also."

The club, Murray said, is a non-religious, non-political youth group comprised of "socially aware, ethnically diverse" young people ages 13-18, who exchange ideas and views with an emphasis on the differences and similarities between cultures.

The group issues a monthly newsletter, organizes "pen pal exchanges," and publishes a short stories, poems and music column.

Murray particularly liked Arian's message, "There's more that binds us than divides us." Apparently, it's a message these youngsters have already put into practice.
OPEN WIDE—And say, “Ah, that’s big.” Some trucks hold 185 tons and are as tall as a two-story house. BORON, Ca.—Out in the middle of California’s Mojave Desert, the small town of Boron goes quietly about its business. The home site of the U.S. Borax Company—the loading employer in the county—Boron is in the center of the largest deposits of borax and berate minerals in the world. Workers, company, family and community are closely joined at the hip. It’s a symbiotic relationship which, for the most part, has enabled the town to weather economic downturns, foreign competition and a host of other challenges.

“We’re doing fine,” said ILWU Local 30 president Walt Palmer. “We’ve got a solid contract and positive relationships with the company.”

PRODUCTION DECLINE

Prior to 1980, the U.S. Borax operates was almost double what it is today. Products are inextricably linked to the general state of manufacturing and agriculture. The recession of 1982 took its toll. Then there were the Turks, “our major competitor,” said Jim Gude, training coordinator. They modernized their operation and launched a more aggressive marketing program in Europe and here in the States. Turkey boasts a behemoth deposit loaded with high-quality ore. But though production here has fallen off, the Borax operation is “holding close to a million tons a year. It’s paramount to keep a quality product. We all want more market share,” Gude said.

IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

The site may no longer be in its hey-day; the current recession isn’t helping either. But the workers have invested their lives here and plan on being around long enough to retire.

They’ve also invested in their union. The recently remediated Local 30 building—complete with meeting hall, kitchen, administrative offices and even a gym—is a testament to their optimism.

But nothing is forever. Just like the five borax mines that preceded, the pit in Boron has its limits. It will be depleted by the year 2080—nearly 150 years after the first twenty mile team hauled borax ore out of Death Valley. Nobody seems worried about that. Forty years is a long time away.

“Life is good here,” Palmer explained. “There’s no crime to speak of. It’s great for kids—they have the whole desert to play in. It’s a nice place to live.”

Local 21 member stars in...

‘Indiana Fowler & the Runaway Train’

He doesn’t brandish a bullwhip. He hasn’t receive dawels in dis- tress. And he certainly doesn’t He doesn’t rescue damsels in dis-

“He doesn’t rescue damsels in dis-
tress. And he certainly doesn’t switchman on rail cars at the soda ash tinaion of Hollywood’s most creative screen writer. The story begins on Sunday, March 15. Steve was having a bad day. He’d been dispatched to work as a switchman on a car that was some 100 feet deep—alternately blowing it up and digging it up to get at the ore. Dynamite explosions rival the sonic booms of jet aircraft from neighboring Ed- wards Air Force Base. Giant shovels scoop up some 19-1/2 cubic yards of the stuff in a single swipe. They drive huge trucks, laden with up to 185 tons, out of the pit up to the nearby processing plants. “It’s like driving a two-story house,” said Local 30 vice president Walt Palmer. “That’s a task that gets real dice during the rainy season.”

They work in the sprawling 80-acre plant complex that produces borate compounds which ultimately end up in over 200 products: glass, fiberglass, porcelain enamel, ceramics, agriculture supplies, soaps and detergents, fire retardants—the list goes on. They maintain the equipment, staff the control room, do everything, in fact, except “manage.” Management manages, of course.

May is medical, dental choice month

SAN FRANCISCO—Active and retired longshore families in the ports where members have a choice can change medical plans during the open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 1992. The change will be effective July 1, 1992. In San Francisco, Los Angeles and Portland/Vancouver, active and retired longshoremen may change dental plans during the month of May.

The medical plan choice is between the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and the Choice Port Plan for Southern California Locals 15, 26, 29, 43 and 91, and Oregon-Columbia River Locals 4, 8, 40 and 92. In the Washington area, the choices for Locals 19, 23, 47, 52 and 98 are the Group Health Cooperative and the Choice Port Plan. Dental plans may be changed during the month of May.

For Los Angeles locals, dental choice is between the Delta Dental Plan and the Doctors Sakai, Simms, Simon and Sugiyama group plan. For San Francisco locals, dental choice is between the Delta Dental plan and the Naismith group plan. For Portland/Vancouver locals, dental choice is between Blue Cross of Oregon Dental Care, Oregon Kaiser Dental Plan and the Choice Port Plan. DENTAL PLANS

“Life is good here,” Palmer explained. “There’s no crime to speak of. It’s great for kids—they have the whole desert to play in. It’s a nice place to live.”

“We would try to pull four cars and only end up with two or three,” Delbert said.

The problem persisted. And got worse.

“Late that day, there was a slight wobble, and two cars broke away from the train,” Steve said. “They slammed into each other. Two cars were derailed. The others were flung to the four corners of the train. The last one is send. The remaining eleven cars “just started moving downhill all right,” Steve said.

Delbert, driving the vehicle (a “loco”) that was pulling the first four cars, got a call on the radio from Steve, “I told him the cars were moving,” Steve said. “I climbed up to see the brakes. Nothing worked. Not on the first of the eleven runaway cars, nor the sec-

As the train gained momentum, Steve jumped from one car to the other in a futile attempt to stop the train. Meanwhile, Steve, now on the third car from the end, had to make a decision.

“Punishment—” Steve said, philosophically. “So’s my uncle. He told me once never to leave the boat unless the floor board floats by. ’I’ve bent down’ and braced himself for impact.

“HIGH-FLYING CRANE

The train—carrying over 2 million pounds of clay—smashed into the crane, lifting it into the air and shov- ing it down the track. The runaway train, the high-flying crane and “Indi-
an” Fowler traveled some 260 feet to-

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