POLL THIS: Forget the pundits and politicians, what do real folks think? The Dispatcher talks politics with a Perotista, a “designated wise-ass,” yuppies, caffeine junkies, and (quick, call the INS!) Canadians. p.4
直系Talk

Truth or Consequences

What a campaign! Mud-slinging television ads; unsubstantiated, undocumented, irresponsible accusations, vast public pronouncements with no fear of being held accountable. No wonder voters are turned off.

However baseless, the accusations linger long after the election, proving Mark Twain’s axiom: “A lie travels around the world before the truth has a chance to get its boots on.” Gossip being what it is, the damage done by lies and rumors take their toll. You have two options:

(1) Urn and bear it and hope the lies will self-destruct.
(2) Use some time and energy to refute the lies over and over and over again.

Let’s take a different bead on this. Let’s suppose that your government, APSCME, wants to do something to help. What are they going to do?

FedEx is expected to use the provision to argue that its drivers are covered by the Railway Labor Act, instead of local labor contracts. A special-ordered investigatory subcommittee, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, conducted hearings last week on this issue.

FedEx CEOBlankford, according to the creditors, works welfare recipients to clean the transit system, the ILWU has laboratory tests and inspections for the safety of workers.

The New York City Transit Authority has the spotlight on an issue that will bedevil the U.S. labor movement for the next several years, at least. Threatening to outsource, the NYCTA forced Transport Workers Union Local 100 to accept a contract allowing welfare recipients to take jobs formerly held by its members.

Up to 500 bus and subway cleaning jobs will be eliminated by attrition, while the Authority’s’ contract will begin to make welfare recipients to clean the transit system. If more than 500 cleaners leave in the contract’s three years, the welfare recipients will get preference for permanent jobs.

The issue will only become hotter as federal welfare “reform” legislation becomes law and local governments and independent contractors find work placements for some 20,000 welfare recipients to operate.

The welfare bill is the first time they’ve been able to achieve a sub-minimum wage,” according to Ed Ott, Political Director of CWA Local 1180, which represents some 7,000 New York City administrative workers.

Ott notes that the legislation allows welfare workers to be placed in private-sector as well as public sector jobs and predicts that this will happen “almost immediately in retail and light manufacturing.”

New York’s biggest municipal union, APSCME, District Council 37, negotiated language that bars welfare recipients from filling jobs that are “fiscally responsible.”

That’s what our union forbears did in 1951. There’s no reason why it can’t happen again.

We had our own lessons to learn about accountability at the 1951 ILWU International Convention in Honolulu. A few members created “setbacks” for the union’s elected leadership—internal and external. As such, we have made our people accountable, and we all do our best.

What’s good for the goose is good for the gander. If we want to attract the good and the decent from the “greedy,” we must be willing to act that way too.

ACCOUNTABLE, NOT CYNICAL

It’s a lesson we can apply to the body politic: each of us has a responsibility to remain involved and to get the facts before we react. Instead of lumping the bandwagon, we need to take a little time for critical analysis. Instead of getting our fingers buttoned by nayayers or twenty-second soundbites or hatemongers like Rush Linn-vaugh, we need to participate in a process that either authenticates or repudiates what they say.

That’s what we need to do, that’s self-defense, that’s commonsense. That’s what our union did for itself. It’s not too late. It’s not too late.

We are all accountable.

Consequences

The Farm Workers signed a new contract with Monterey Mushrooms Co. that gives workers pay increases from 20 to 35 percent over the next five years. During the Federation convention signing, UFW President Arturo Rodri-guez also presented union pension changes—one for $16,732—to four re-tired farm workers and the widow of a fifth who didn’t know they were eligi-bly deprived of their retirement.

—Work in progress

What a difference a contract makes

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We are all accountable.
Vessel planners & clerks join Local 34
From Agonizing to Organizing

by STEVE STALLONE

The employees at Centennial Stevedoring Services' operation at the Port of Oakland knew something was up. The workers who plan the stowage of ships' cargo (the sequence in loading and unloading so important to productivity and the balance of weight in the vessel), maintain the cargo's documentation and deal with the firm's customers, were suddenly overloaded with work. They were staying overtime, often until nine, ten or eleven at night. Superintendents were being trained to do vessel planning. More and more their work was being computerized. Management was obviously trying to create friction among them and people who had been there for years were being squeezed out. The workers began to worry about how long they would have their jobs. "They were playing a lot of head games with people," said Cynthia Reyes, who works in customer services.

WHAT'S UP?
The employees asked management what was going on, why was cargo that was bound for Los Angeles being discharged in Oakland? Management simply responded that there were some problems with longshoremen in L.A.

They never mentioned what the workers found out later—that their counterparts at Centennial in southern California had voted to join ILWU Local 63 and when contract negotiations had stalled they went on strike. With a united front of ILWU clerks, longshoremen and walking bosses they closed down Centennial's facility at Terminal Island 218 for eleven days.

So several of the employees turned to the ILWU, contacting Local 34 and its president, Frank Billeci, explaining their situation and asking about the possibility of unionizing. Citing Local 34's success in representing them their chances were good and began working with them to define their bargaining unit.

Once the employees signed the requisite number of pledge cards and the National Labor Relations Board certified them and scheduled a vote on union representation, things began to move fast and curiously at Centennial.

Three days after the NLRA's November 17certification all the workers in the bargaining unit were given large raises, ranging from $10,000 to $15,000 per year. Management told them it had been working on an industry-wide study for many months and had concluded that with the company doing so well it was raising pay to what it had determined to be industry standard.

But the employees saw through the ruse and knew it was the union drive that had forced the issue. "It was a real bad acting job," said Mark Neale, a vessel planner. "It was just time to buy your vote." Management did not stop there.

The end of the year Christmas bonuses, which previously had been in the range of $500 to $700, ballooned to $2,500. Then came the "performance appraisals." They were all perfectly structured to be neither good nor bad, just neutral assessments.

"It was just another opportunity for them to give us another round of raises before the vote," Neale said.

WHINING AND DINING

and then there were the promised promotions and the company-paid lunches and dinners at fancy restaurants.

But like the proverbial good cop/bad cop approach the company's anti-union campaign had its dark side, too. Employees were called into their manager's office for private one-on-one talks and called at home for further propagandizing and intimidation. They were told that if they joined the anti-union people with more seniority would take their jobs, that union people were stupid and no good, that joining the union would be bad for their careers. Passing references were made to shootings and car bombings.

"They wanted you to believe you were joining a bunch of hoodlums, like you were joining the Mafia," Reyes said.

The atmosphere around the office was so tense the employees were afraid to even talk to each other about the upcoming vote. "You were always in your mind this thing worrying that you can't speak what you think," Reyes said. "Because if for some reason the vote didn't go for the union, we knew there would be retribution."

STAND BY ME

But the union was there to counter the company's slander and lend its resources. Billeci assured the employees that no one would take their jobs and they would get a contract to protect them from arbitrary employer sanctions. Officials from Local 63 wrote the workers letters and came to visit them.

"They encouraged us and told us of their experiences," Reyes said. "They told us what to expect from the employer. So we felt we were not alone and there were people supporting us. That gave us confidence."

But ultimately it was an individual decision each one agonized over and talked over with family and friends. Steve Undercoffler, who works in the documentation department, was encouraged by a relative who is in another union.

"He said, 'Do you know how hard it is to get into a union? It's a privilege and a blessing,'" Cortez said.

When the vote was taken February 7the union won.

ROSSIE'S BACKLASH

But there was still a contract to be negotiated in what was now an unambiguously hostile atmosphere.

Shortly after the vote Ed Stellin, the company's general manager and chief negotiator, yelled at Mark Neale, calling him a "troublemaker" and demanding to see him in his office immediately.

"I called [ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Joe] Ibarra (far right) strategizes with Centennial workers (l-r) Cynthia Reyes, Mark Neale, Steve Undercoffler, Eul Cortez and Marissa Guisande at Local 34's Oakland office.

"Money doesn't mean that much when you're a still employee," Neale said. "So what if you get a $20,000 raise if you're fired next year."

That point was driven home last month when they learned that Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), which is part owner of Centennial, was closing its local offices and moving them to Idaho.

"When we found out that I said, 'wow, that was a close call,'" Reyes said. "We would have been a part of that, or no part of that."

Stellin's victory at Centennial the ILWU got the PMA to agree in the new longshore contract negotiated last summer to expanded jurisdiction covering vessel planners. But the union still has to go into each company and win the vote to represent them.

"There's an important message we want the whole waterfront to know," Reyes said. "We want them to know what the companies are doing to prevent them from joining the union. What really counts is that you vote yes and become part of the union. From there you can negotiate anything else.

"It really doesn't matter what the company gives you until you've got a contract. That's the most important thing."
The Labor Party’s first (and maybe last) unofficial, unscientific, uncensored political survey

By KATHY WILKES

REDWOOD CITY, Ca.—It’s 3:00 p.m., Monday, November 4, the day before the general election. If people aren’t thinking politics now, never will be. I’m betting they are. I’m standing in front of the largest Safeway grocery store in the known universe (no kidding), politely asking shoppers to participate in a political survey.

Many don’t. Too busy. And some are somewhat suspicious. But the ones who spare the time are well worth mine and give a lot of thought to their answers. They furrow their brows. They look to the sky. They stare, for a moment, at their shoes. This is work. Nobody’s asked them before what they think about such things, and it takes them a while to get used to it.

Actually, the first interview is in the parking lot, about midpoint between my car and the storefront. I’m trying to avoid a couple of security guards. I worry: They’ll throw me out! “They’ll call the cops!” Then I realize I’m having a flashback. Calm down, Kathleen, you’re not union organizing in Georgia any more.

A little more composed, I forget about the guards and gingerly approach a thirty-something woman putting bags of groceries in the trunk of her Buick. Oh, good, an American car, I think, having just stepped out of my Volvo. She barely looks up when I ask her if she’d participate in the survey. She nods.

WE KNEW IT ALL ALONG

Like most of the people I’ll interview today, she’s not real happy with the candidates running for President or the issues they’ve raised in their campaigns. Down the line, she responds pretty much as expected. File the candidates running for President in Georgia any more.

I’m having a flashback. Calm down, Kathleen, you’re not union organizing in Georgia any more.

Most questions are based on the Labor Party’s “Call for Economic Justice” adopted at the June founding convention in Cleveland: “Yes,” she agrees, everyone should have a job at a living wage and get severance pay when the company closes. “Yes,” there should be quality health care for all, a 4-day-work-week, campaign reform, an end to corporate welfare.

Do the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes? This is the first time she hesitates. “Well, I don’t know. I mean, some people might think my husband and I are wealthy, and we pay a lot of taxes, no...”

Good point. Wealthy is relative, after all. This is California. This is the Bay Area. This is right in the middle of the San Francisco Peninsula where the average three-bedroom house can cost $350,000 or more. This is where only the “wealthy” don’t worry over how to pay the mortgage, and you don’t, as a rule, find them shopping at Safeway. No BMWs or Mercedes in the parking lot today.

I talk about the truly wealthy, the rich and super-rich; she finally agrees she is not. “No,” she says, “I don’t think the wealthy pay their fair share.” She also agrees that workers should have more say in their workplace, in health and safety laws, in the right to support a union, in new technology.

The final question: “Have you heard of the Labor Party?”

“Yeah!” I knew that was coming.

NO REST FOR THE WEARY

And so it goes. The majority of the “survey-ees” (me being the surveyor?) respond similarly on all but one issue: the four-day-work week. Our Lady of the Parking Lot is the only one who’s for it.

“If I make people happy, dammit, I don’t like it.”

“That’s fine,” I assure this overly-conscientious objector. “I’m not trying to sell you on anything. I’m just asking what you think.”

He’s about 60, wears a beat-up canvas fishing hat punctured with lures, wouldn’t work.” Not that they wouldn’t work. They just wouldn’t work their “true” jobs.

He’s a life-long Democrat, Latino, about 40; his hands show a lifetime of hard work. He doesn’t like the four-day-work-week, either, but I think he wants to shout “Commie” at me any minute, but that’s just the remainder of another flashback: peace demonstration, 1971, Union Square, San Francisco. Get a grip, for I’m on my way to the United Nations. “That’s fine,” I assure this overly-conscientious objector. “I’m not trying to sell you on anything. I’m just asking what you think.”

He’s a Perot supporter and says the only thing you really need from the President of the United States is a good face for the rest of the world. In that case, I’m voting for Brad Pitt.

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FUTURE REHAB PATIENT: Bobby Quintero, age 13, says, “Legalize marijuana and lower the drinking age.”

She’s a Perot supporter, distrusts politicians in the main, and says the only thing you really need from the President of the United States is “a good face for the rest of the world.”

In that case, I’m voting for Brad Pitt. “And do you believe that workers should have more say in...”

“Yeah! That would be cool!”

Cool, as in hell freezing over. “OK, thank you,” I say instead.

A young, stressed-out looking mother with an infant stuffed in her shopping cart passes by. She’s a Perot supporter, distrusted politicians in the main, and says the only thing you really need from the President of the United States is “a good face for the rest of the world.”

And drinking? You want to lower...
government, "been real good to me. I got no complaints." Workers should have more say about a lot of things, he says, including the right to organize, bargain and strike. "Unions did a lot for this country," he remembers with something about the Labor Party from long ago.

Less than ten feet from him are the quintessential yuppie couple. I doubt either one of them has ever had a bad hair day. They are, in a word, perfect: straight, white teeth; a healthy glow; lean-toned bodies living testimonials to their personal trainers. They are immaculately groomed and beautifully dressed, she in a chic business suit, he in "dress casual" (and, yeah, I used to think that was an oxymoron, too). I peg them for Young Republicans, so, all right already, there's one BMW somewhere I missed.

I can tell they want to talk and I oblige them. Not everything is as it seems. He, more progressive than she, is agathist at some of her answers. But business to the bone as she is, and personally opposed to unions, she supports workers' rights to join them and have a greater voice in the workplace.

Like everyone else interviewed, they both hold the idea of universal health care, but "the problem is how to pay for it," she points out. True enough, the devil is in the details, and it'd be hard to imagine anything more bedeviling than trying to establish a massive, new social program at a time when both parties are bashing government bureaucracies to bits.

A self-employed man, another Republican, echoes the sentiment. "It's a noble idea, everybody should have good health care. We should at least start a dialog about it." He thinks both major parties are woefully inadequate, but declined to comment further. "I'm too much of a gentleman to tell you what I really think.

The last interview was with a group of about a dozen young people that only an ignoramus would label "slackers." One says he's working on his first million and thinks two million is the starting point for "wealthy." He asks me who I am, what the survey is for, whether the ILWU will the results be published, why it's "not scientific," and since it's not, how could it have any value whatsoever?

Ah, the designated wise-ass. "Hey, I'm the one who's supposed to be asking the questions," I protest. His friends tell him to lighten up. He's the rabid right-winger of the group, denouncing everyone who disagrees with him. (Flashback, Rush Limbaugh, anytime, anyplace.) They start to turn on him, likening him to a "wealthy." He asks me who I am, I tell him what I really think. It's a pretty good sign. And that's a flash forward.

Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with the candidates running for President of the United States?</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with the issues they've raised in their campaigns?</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should workers have jobs that pay living wages?</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should companies with 100 or more workers provide severance pay when they close?</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should there be quality, affordable health care for all?</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should we have a 4-day, 32-hour work week?</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should we eliminate corporate welfare?</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes?</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should there be campaign finance reform to end corporate influence in elections?</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should workers have more say in... the workplace?</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health and safety laws?</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the right to organize, bargain &amp; strike?</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing/implementing new technology?</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of the Labor Party?</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
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Copa Crane Park Support Mounts

SAN FRANCISCO—Members of the ILWU are working with neighborhood activists to establish a park and preserve a piece of Francisco waterfront history.

The Copra Crane, located on the Islais Creek Channel, dates back to a time when coconut meat, also known as copra, was imported from the Philippines and pressed into coconut oil at the nearby Cargill Mill. ILWU Local 10 longshoremen worked the pier, using picks and shovels to break up the large pieces of copra in the ships' holds. A large suction pump known as a blower then moved the copra pieces to the mill where ILWU Local 6 members processed it into oil. The remaining "copra meal" was pressed into pellets, put into 100 pound sacks and the warehousemen prepared it to be shipped across the bay to warehouses at Colgate-Palmolive-Peet and McKesson-Robbins. The crane was used to load the copra meal onto outbound ships.

MOTHERBALLED 20 YEARS

The crane and the mill have not been in use since the mid-1970s. Recently they are owned by the San Francisco Municipal Railway, the city's public transit agency, which plans to demolish the area, organized her neighbors into the "Friends of Islais Creek Channel." The group persuaded Muni to postpone destroying the crane until it could raise the money to build the park, a much-needed open space in the often neglected Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhood, and create a historic labor landmark.

Along with labor preservationist Archie Green, Vierra approached the Bay Area Longshoremen's Memorial Association (BALMA), comprised of active and retired Local 10 members, donating $1,000. Local 91 Warehousemen prepared it to be made into "copra meal" by tooth. My fingers are stiff from being clenched for two hours around my pen and notebook. Back in my car, with the heater at full blast, I pry them open and massage them for a few minutes before bumper zooming off.

At home, I pour a cup of coffee and pore over the survey results. Good answers, good people, really, and not all that different from one another. There's considerable consideration behind their opinions—something most professional pundits seem to lack—and they share many views with the Labor Party, whether they know about it or not.

All things considered, I'd say that's a pretty good sign. And that's a flash forward.

RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY

Walking Boss Local 91 foremen Bud Riggs, Will Whitaker and Joe Ames have been helping to piece together the story of the crane and of Pier 84. ILWU oral historian Harvey Schwartz (author of the book 'The March Inland' on ILWU warehouse organizing in the 1930s) also has been gathering the history of the crane area and the Cargill Mill, interviewing people who worked there. Any worker who wants to add to the historical record should write to The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109.

The Copra Crane Labor Landmark has gathered other union support with the establishment of the Labor Advisory Committee. Jack Henning, recently-retired Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, has agreed to be Honorary Chair. Others serving include Brian McWilliams, ILWU; Gunnar Lundeberg, Sailors Union of the Pacific; Walter Johnson, San Francisco Labor Council; Jay Seccombe, Inland Boatmen's Union; George McCartney, Seafarers International Union; Tom Donnelly, Piledriver's #34; Angelo Balistreri, District Council of Carpenters; Larry Martin, Transport Workers Union; and Leroy King, ILWU.

Bay Area Pensioners serving on the Association are Cleophas Williams, Joe Lucas, Bill Ward and Don Watson, Secretary of the Association. George Romero of Local 10 serves as President. Also serving as Pensioners Representative is Don Burt, retired former Business Agent of Local 6 and a former worker at the adjacent Cargill Warehouse. Helping with incorporation is Board Member Rob Remar, ILWU attorney. Anyone interested in helping build the park and labor landmark can contact Don Watson at 510-652-3116.
The election is over—fortunately. But the spinning by the media, pund- dits, political parties and interest groups has turned into a whirlpool of contradicting assertions.

The facts are as follows: Labor-endorsed President Bill Clinton won re-election by a landslide. Democrats made gains in the House, but not enough to overthrow the Republican revolutionaries. The Senate is more conservative and anti-labor than two years ago.

The Wall Street Journal, mistaking its desire for reality, has exaggerated that organized labor is the big loser in the election because 35 million political education campaign funds every single year of the program. But AFL-CIO President John Sweeney claims working families are stronger than two years ago—but not enough.

Like whales whose nest has been attacked but not destroyed, the Republicans are back and, boy, are they pissed.

Pro-maritime bills pass, anti-worker bill fails

by LINDSAY McLAUGHLIN
Washington Representative

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In the waning hours of the Congressional session, several bills important to maritime workers passed Congress.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act (H.R. 1360), which was vigorously op- posed by the ILWU, died in Senate Committee. This was a tremendous victory for the ILWU, which led the opposition to this anti-worker deregulation bill. We expect to be fighting reprisal legislation well into the future.

The subsidy helps offset the cost of operating a United States flag ship versus a foreign-flagged ship that em- ploy foreign workers at poverty wages.

Last year, the Maritime Adminis- tration allowed American President Lines to operate six foreign flag ships with the understanding that these ships would become United States flag ships if Maritime Security passes.

Despite legal challenges by APL, these ships are expected to employ United States crews very soon. H.R. 1350 passed by a wide margin of 88-10 after a series of anti-worker amend- ments introduced by Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) were defeated. Howev- er, this Maritime Security Act requires Congress to appropriate the necessary funds every single year of the program. Maritime unions will have to work overtime to ensure that Congress finds the money for the program.

Other important pieces of maritime legislation include H.R. 1361/S. 1004, which authorizes the operation of the Coast Guard. An anti-worker provi- sion introduced by Representative Don Young (R-AK) was stripped from the conference bill before it became
THE 1996 GOLDEN TURKEY AWARDS

Shut My Mouth Award

ABC RADIO

... which fired commentator Jim Hightower after he criticized ABC's massive media merger with Disney Corp. for concentrating "that much power in so few hands." Hightower was one of the few voices in talk radio that took aim at abuses of corporate and political power. He blasted Disney for hiring homeless construction workers at minimum wage (and making them foot the bill for their tools and uniforms) while paying CEO Michael Eisner $78,000 an hour. And when ABC News backed off a story because of a threatened lawsuit from tobacco companies, Hightower quipped that the network "had just merged with the Mickey Mouse empire of Disney, Inc." Fortunately, the popular populist is back, this time on the United Broadcasting Network.

Darth Vader Memorial Helmet

KATHY LEE GIFFORD

... the daytime TV talk show host who was caught with her ethics down when it was learned that her Wal-Mart clothing line was made in overseas sweatshops. By the time a Congressional hearing on child labor rolled around, Gifford had reinvented herself as a champion of the oppressed—although her testimony was largely confined to her personal "ordeal" in the hands of the media. In Oklahoma City for a Wal-Mart stockholders meeting, the wholesome-America's-sweetheart-wannabe blamed the fiasco on a "force of evil nature" hell-bent on discrediting her and Wal-Mart's success. May the force be with you, Kathy Lee, and others like you.

First Place, The "How Low Can You Go" Bottom Line Limbo Contest

SENATOR SPENCER ABRAHAM

... the Michigan Republican who stooped to new depths in his letter to Joe Palazzola, father of a 20-year-old son who died in an industrial accident. "I believe strongly that businesses of all sizes need some form of relief from the numerous and costly burdens imposed by federal agencies, such as OSHA," the limber legislator wrote. 'Needless regulations add to the price of everything from paint to potato chips." Apparently the price of funerals doesn't count.

Pinocchio Preeminence in Prevarication Plaque

JOHN JASKE

... who said, "With all due respect, we can't assume that what is printed in the newspapers is true." At the time, this top official of Gannett, America's biggest newspaper chain, was at a hearing of the National Labor Relations Board denying reports about management's labor law violations in the Detroit newspaper strike. Wonder if this guy ever thought about another line of work . . .

Michael Milken Magic Marketeer of the Year

JOHN STOSSEL

... who insists that his job as correspondent for ABC's weekly television magazine, 20/20, is to explain "the magic of the marketplace." His April report slammed the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires prevailing union wages on federal construction projects, as an "outrageous example of how your tax money is being spent." He cited as a source a right-wing activist who declared that only "union thugs' benefit from it. Further, Stossel proselytized, the law hurts poor, unskilled workers because contractors won't hire "inexperienced strangers" at union wages. Great. Let's repeal the law and build a nuclear reactor next to your house, John.

Excellence in Adolescent Indoctrination

K-III COMMUNICATIONS

... which owns Channel One, the commercial classroom television network appearing in schools near you. K-III, in turn, is 82% owned by KKR, the notorious leveraged buy-out kings whose $25 billion purchase of RJR Nabisco (cigarettes and cereal, go figure) was the subject of the book, Barbarians at the Gate. Channel One provides in-school news and commercials to a captive audience of 8 million students daily, with each 30-second ad selling for $200,000. Advertisers include McDonald's, M&M/Mars, and Pepsi; Reebok sponsors a 12-minute show on physical education. (What a concept: learn about sports by sitting on your duff eating junk food in front of TV.) K-III also owns Weekly Reader; distributed to 3 million third-through-fifth graders, the magazine has been under fire from educators for being soft on (cough, hack) tobacco (gasp).
This month we turn to Los Angeles, where warehousemen organized in the wake of the great 1934 longshore strike and the dramatic 1935-1937 northern California warehouse "mutiny into action." We hear from three long-term ILWU activists who were key organizers in L.A. back then.

Nearly 40 years ago Local 26 and the Teamsters began to build what was to become known as the ILWU's "inland operation." We'll see how the Bay Area warehousemen, and those from the San Francisco Bay Area. The LA warehouse local, ILA-314—also became Local 26, ILWU in September—had organized most of LA's warehouse franchises since its chartering in October 1936, but there was still a lot more to be done.

We went down there with a kitty of $20,000: $10,000 had been raised by the Bay Area warehousemen, and $10,000 was matched by the district to hire additional organizers. We had some volunteer organizers and we hired a number from the LA port's longshore local, including L.B. Thomas, Elmer Lawrence; Int'l. VP J.R. Robertson; Loc. 26 Pres. Al Caplan and William Trujillo and Margaret Anderson, Loc. 26. Ted Gavenda, V.P. J.R. Robertson, Loc. 26 Pres. Al Caplan and William Trujillo and Margaret Anderson, Loc. 26.

We had organizing meetings almost every night of the week. And we would be in any warehouse. We'd be at the office about eight o'clock in the morning. The workday would last until ten or eleven o'clock at night, after we were through with the general and special meetings. We had 4,000 workers signed up until the Teamsters started raiding us.

And the dramatic 1934-1937 northern California warehouse strike—a quickie strike—on the employers. We went to the labor board for certification. The employers fired them all. The employers took so much advantage. If they had a lot of work, they'd keep their employees until 6 o'clock at night, straight time. We felt those workers were ripe for organization.

As soon as my beef with Brunswig was over, I was hired to organize the L.A. warehouse local. ILA-314—also became Local 26, ILWU in September—had organized most of LA's warehouse franchises since its chartering in October 1936, but there was still a lot more to be done. We had organizing meetings almost every night of the week. And we would be in any warehouse. We'd be at the office about eight o'clock in the morning. The workday would last until ten or eleven o'clock at night, after we were through with the general and special meetings. We had 4,000 workers signed up until the Teamsters started raiding us.

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At last. Someone's speaking out on behalf of the people who do America's work.

The economy isn't working for working Americans. The old rules — if you work hard you can get ahead — don't seem to apply anymore. What went wrong? And how can we fix it?

Last year, the American labor movement elected a new leader, John J. Sweeney. And now he's written America Needs a Raise, an honest, easy-to-read explanation of how corporations and government have failed America's working families — and what we can do about it.

This is a book for people who want straight answers and hard facts. You can find it at your local book store, or contact the AFL-CIO at (202) 637-5041.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to a special fund to help working Americans organize for higher living standards.

Now available on video: The Killing Floor

Video cassettes of the Sundance award-winning, widely acclaimed labor film, The Killing Floor, are now available directly from Made in USA Productions, the non-profit company which produced the film.

This compelling dramatic feature film (1985, 118 minutes, color) tells the timeless, true story of the courageous drive to build an interracial labor union in the Chicago Stockyards in the face of the brutal efforts by management to divide the workforce during the 1919 Race Riots.

The Killing Floor is an Elsa Rassbach Production directed by Bill Duke and stars Damien Leake, Alfred Woodard, Clarence Felder, Dennis Farina and Moses Gunn.

The research effort was led by scholars David Brody and William Tuttle. Shown on PBS in the 1980s, this union-made production was supported by more than 30 unions and the AFL-CIO, as well as federal and foundation grants.

Reviews have often called The Killing Floor "brilliant." The Village Voice wrote that it's the most "clear-eyed account of union organizing on film." This classic film has long been unavailable but life-of-cassette leases are now available to labor and community groups at prices ranging from $89.95 for one cassette to $49.95 for 100 or more cassettes plus shipping and handling. 16mm rentals are also available.

Made In USA Productions will use all proceeds for new labor film projects.

For information or to order (video orders must be prepaid), contact: Made In USA Productions, 220 East 23rd Street, Suite 707, New York, NY 10010. (212) 679-5008 (phone), (212) 686-1231 (fax) and 76042.2176@compuserve.com (email).

Communities battle racism in Not In Our Town II

Next month don't miss Not In Our Town II, the second one-hour documentary recounting the efforts of various communities to combat racial hatred. The program is set to air on PBS, Monday, December 23, 10 p.m. ET, but check local listings for times and dates in your area.

This sequel is the second endeavor of the PBS Democracy Project to stimulate citizen engagement in civic life. It looks at the media, law enforcement, civic leaders, unions, churches and teaches, and how these different segments of the community responded to hate violence in South Carolina, Illinois, Ohio and Oregon.

The original Not In Our Town, first broadcast in 1995, earned several national awards. It was shown earlier this month on PBS, but, again, check listings to see if you can catch it on stations near you.

Also, remember to watch for We Do The Work, also produced by California Working, labor's only weekly television magazine.
Organizing, bargaining and 1997 convention
Meat-and-potato issues on the table at EB meeting

VANCOUVER, B.C.—Organizing was again at the head of the agenda as the ILWU International Executive Board met here September 12-13. President Harold J. Martin, President-Elect Leonard Hashimoto presented a slide show prepared by the AFL-CIO Organizing Committee for the Tri-Cities. Treasurer Joe Ibarra reported that the International had submitted a recognition petition in Southern California (Southern California) reported that Local 63 has added 31 ship planners, and new leads continue to roll in. The International has hired a new organizing official, Brian McElroy. The Board met to discuss organizing strategies and discussed possible tasks. A national search for more organizers continues, as a steady stream of resumes flows to the International.

340 AND COUNTING

Under the “2-4-24” organizing program approved by the ILWU membership last year, the ILWU has conducted 290 elections and won elections 144 elections won, 13 lost, and 4 pending. Eleven locals are seeking to get on the books of the west coast and all four IBU regions have been involved in organizing drives.

As of July 31, 1996, “2-4-24” has brought in 340 new members. Although the numbers aren’t huge, the program has enabled the union to start focusing on organizing, elections are a real turning point in time. Better yet, our win-loss ratio is better than the national average.

The officers are also exploring the idea of joint organizing with like-minded unions. This would enable the union to have access to AFL-CIO funds targeted for multi-union, industry-wide organizing drives. No organizing can succeed without the understanding of jurisdiction.

Although not a part of the “2-4-24” programs, the ILWU Canadian Area has made organizing a major focus as well. At the August Area Presidents Conference, Tom Dufranc reported 1,000 new members in the last two years, with the announcement that the Division has been successful: 490 new members this year alone. The Canadian Area also made a move to set up an ILWU Web Page by the end of 1996.

CONTRACTS, ETC.

The ILWU also discussed the responsiblities of locals to service newly organized workers. As part of the beefed-up organizing program, regional directors became international organizers, to take care of the unique contract. The ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association have crossed the line of civilized manner in collective bargaining.

Negotiations were on everybody’s mind during a free-wheeling discussion about the Longshore Division’s ratification of its controversial collective agreement with the Pacific Maritime Association. President Brian McElroy informed the Board that he had been talking with the past predominate his calendar in the Tri-Cities. Mc-Williams was also involved in negotiations with the Blue and Gold leaf Agreement. The ILWU is taking over the Red and White Fleet manned by the ILWU. He attended and spoke at the Jones Act founding convention.

In other actions, the Board voted to place the absence of intellect of Bill Clinton to the office of President of the United States and, not coincidentally discussed how the ILWU was the first party to recognize the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association were meeting to pound out a new contract for the next three years. Jurisdictional issues, bargaining system, the primary foothold of any negotiation, and when bad press appears, the ILWU has gone on strike, much to the chagrin of the employers, whose profit margins are almost never divulged. Then, the employer’s response is, “they don’t expose who they’re pimping for. Their aim is to lower our wages, longer shifts and more profits by underpaying their workers, whose profit margins are almost never divulged.

Bad press

It appears the community of the Los Angeles Harbor basin is currently under threat by unscrupulous leaders of living brought forth through political attacks on the labor movement. The Port of Los Angeles, House of Representatives and State Assembly bills. These attacks on workers' rights and organizing are not only the backbone and foundation of the ILWU, but are also part of several adverse newspaper articles which have brazenly bash the ILWU.

The attacks came at a time, and not by coincidence, when the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association were meeting to pound out a new contract for the next three years. Jurisdictional issues, bargaining system, the primary foothold of any negotiation, and when bad press appears, the ILWU has gone on strike, much to the chagrin of the employers, whose profit margins are almost never divulged.

Win some.

When I returned from summer vacation, I found a pile of labor newspapers on my desk, and for once I took the time to read everything, impressed with the news coverage and layout of your paper. And I love the oral histories by Harvey Schwartz! The Archives staff and SFSPU staff also were pleased with you for sending us The Dispatcher. Many thanks.

Lynn A. Benfield
Index, San Francisco State University

I think it is wonderful all the things the ILWU does for its members. I just hope each member appreciates all the benefits, I sure do. I’d have a hard time if I were not for the pension I get. I know my husband (Hubert) would be pleased if he could look back and see how well I am provided for. I am The Dispatcher. Many thanks.

Gloyd H. Lawther

I sure do. I’d have a hard time if I were not for the pension I get. I know my husband (Hubert) would be pleased if he could look back and see how well I am provided for. I am The Dispatcher. Many thanks.

Thax but no-thax.

Lose some.

Please take off my mailing list. I don’t get the paper anymore, and I don’t think it is worth the price. I do not see any issues of your liberal material. I don’t know why you are so interested in me.

I guess I’m just tired of your cheap shots, which I assume are intended to make morons turn this country to shit. And your publication is at the forefront.

Mark Stewart
IPU/Puget Sound
Kent, WA

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In Defense of Brazilian Statements

An important labor and anti-racist struggle is being waged in the Brazilian industrial center of Volta Redonda. The Volta Redonda Strike (DISPATCHEP) (Tourism) — during the previous calendar year, was its declared organization goal to suspend or postpone any salary increase to which its members were entitled. The DISPATCHEP recommendation is only a few months away.

The SALVE workers confederations have held one of its major political campaigns in the United States and elsewhere. It is our responsibility, both as maritime workers and as internationalists, to support and achieve common aims for workers and the DISPATCHEP recommends that the order be enforced.

This recommendation updates the titled officers' salary of the International President, Secretary-Treasurer be clarified.

The Titled Officers recommend that the order be enforced. The DISPATCHEP SALVE workers campaigns and to encourage our national and international sister unions and workers to work towards accomplishing the following:

- Participating in a coordinated campaign against ACUCAST together with other shipping unions on a worldwide basis that unite the port of Liverpool and Medway;
- Promoting the SALVE workers' unity amongst all national and international sister unions and workers in the United States and the United Kingdom;
- Participating in the Liverpool Dockers' International Convention;
- Working towards an international day of action; and
- Promoting the International President, Secretary-Treasurer be clarified.

The Constitution now provides for two divorces—one which is discriminatory and one which is non-discriminatory—both of which must be $32.00. This means that the March diversion is either $1.20 or nothing and that the second diversion is $1.20. We recommend that the amount to be diverted be any amount up to $1.50 for each diversion and that both diversions be discretionary. This will provide the flexibility to make no diversion in a year when the International President, Secretary-Treasurer be clarified.

For one year month and a half, and the DISPATCHEP recommends that the order be enforced.

The DISPATCHEP recommendation is only a few months away.
Hawaii Hotels: From picket lines to peace

Unit chair Lena Stanton (fourth from left) and co-workers won't be pulling picket duty anymore; after a long battle with the management of the Renaissance Wailea Beach Hotel, they've finally won a contract.

The Renaissance is one of many hotels that have come to loggerheads with Local 142 this year—and paid the price.

Demonstrations, informational picketing, roadside sign-waving, and community outreach are all part of the union's strategy to bring public pressure to bear on reluctant employers.

Determined

As Local 142 President Eusebio "Bo" Lagenia recently told his members, "These hotels should know by now that we will hold the line and do whatever it takes to prevent them from turning any of our members into second-class hotel workers."

Two resort condos, the Lahaina Shores and Maui El Dorado, have also come around. With the Renaissance, the new contracts affect a whopping 1,000 members.

Comeback

Although some of the more onerous demands by the hotels during bargaining were more about greed than need, the industry has just recently started to rebound from its slump in the wake of the Gulf War, Hurricane Iniki, and recessions on the Mainland and in Japan.

All the more reason why it's a good idea to have a union contract, says ILWU International Vice President Leonard Hochschild. "With a union, workers can protect themselves in the downgrade and make a comeback when the company comes back."

How to 'register'

The list is getting shorter, but Local 142 still needs your help to reach agreement with several Hawaii hotels. Register your protest with the general manager of each hotel at the phone numbers listed below. Note: The area code for Hawaii is "808." The "800" numbers will connect you to general reservations.

Local of Maui
Kapalua Bay Hotel  669-5656
Royal Lahaina Resort  661-3611
(Owner is Pleasant Travel, largest Hawaii tour wholesaler)

Pleasant Travel in Southern California
(818) 242-9244
Pitz-Carlos Kapalua  669-6200
Diamond Resort  874-0500
Napili Shores  669-8061

Island of Hawaii
Hilton Waikoloa Village  885-1234
(1-800-445-8867)
Hapuna Prince Hotel  880-1111
Mauna Kea Beach Hotel  322-3411
Mauna Lani Bay Hotel  885-6622
Orchard At Mauna Lani (ITT Sheraton)  885-2000
King Kamehameha's Kona Beach  329-2911
Otzka Kona Surf Resort  321-3411
Hawaiian Seacrest Hotel  969-3333

Island of Oahu
Hawaiian Waikiki Beach Hotel  922-2511
Holiday Inn Airport  836-0661
Island of Kauai
Kauai Resort (boycott continues)  245-3931

TACOMA—The Ernest C. "Ernie" Tanner Labor and Ethnic Studies Center was officially named on September 9, 1996, during the first afternoons of the Pacific Coast Pensioners' Convention held in Tacoma. The center was sponsored by the Tacoma Longshore Pension Club, ILWU Local 23, the University of Washington Tacoma and the UW's Harry Bridges Chair for Labor Studies in Seattle.

The selection of Ernie Tanner was a natural choice for the sponsors. He was born in 1889 in Indiana to a father who was a circus trapeze artist and a mother who had been born into slavery in Kentucky. He was an outstanding athlete at Tacoma High School in the early 1900s, lettering in football, basketball and baseball. He earned a place on the academic honor roll.

He attended Whitworth University for three years, but his education was for naught. The only job he could get was as an elevator operator in the Benewah Building in downtown Tacoma where he paid 10 cents an hour.

Strike Leader

On December 6, 1918 Tanner joined the Tacoma Longshore Union, Local 38-3 ILA. He paid an initiation fee of $5, passing rapidly through the ranks of member to A membership. The work was hard and the days were long, but he stood out as a great worker and was soon looked to for leadership in local meetings. When the 1954 Strike started the rank and file elected Tanner to the Northwest Strike Committee, which directed the strike in Washington and Oregon.

After the strike Tanner became a hangdog, a position of great trust. He was a close friend of Harry Bridges and for years worked with Harry trying to get the Tacoma longshoremen to join the ILWU. He was an outspoken opponent of the intervention of American during World War II and he convinced the Seattle Port Authority to refuse the rights of Japanese Americans to return to the coast after World War II. He was to the Remember Pearl Harbor League set up picket lines blocking Japanese businesses, Tanner led the men through the lines.

In 1952 the Tacoma local decided to build a hall. When Tanner was named chairman of the building committee he persuaded the Bank of California to loan the money for the construction.

Mission Accomplished

Tanner died in 1956 with one dream unfulfilled: Tacoma was still not a member of the ILWU. Wherever he was, he must have been pleased when Tacoma finally joined the ILWU in 1958.

For the past year the sponsors have been working together to locate a labor and ethnic studies center in the city. The Center, named the Harry Bridges Chair at the main campus in Seattle has provided internationally known labor and ethnic specialists.

In the future the Ernest C. Tanner Labor and Ethnic Studies Center will be a place for educating unions, students and the community about the struggle of labor and minorities for race and gender equality.

We are conscious of the long history of racism and bigotry in our country and we want the Tanner Center to bring people together across racial, gender and ethnic lines. In this way we will be commemorating the life of Ernest Tanner who gave so much to humanity and unionism.

—Phil Lelli, Local 23, Retired Ron Magdon, Historian Professor Michael Honey

A Helping Hand...

When you need it most. That's what we're all about. We are the representatives of ILWU-sponsored recovery programs. We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcohol, drug abuse and other problems—and we're just a phone call away.