Congratulations and a hearty wel- come are due the almost 65 new members that have voted to join ILWU Officer Coordination Local 19 in Long Beach, CA.

The bulk—60 in all—work in San Pedro at the corporate yard of Evergreen Shipping. Like other Local 63 clericals they handle inter-modal, freight handling, import service, equipment control, billing and other office work. Organizing them, said Local Presi- dent Jerry Rich, is "a move toward the future. The term limits rely on computers to truck stacks, so more they rely on the agencies to input all the information the marine clerks need to do the job."

The organizing drive took over eight months and concluded with a majority vote early December. "A lot of hard work and long hours went into it," reflected Rich, who headed up the campaign with Local Vice President Jeff Powell, Secretary/ Business Agent Manny Garcia and ILWU Southern California Organizer Mike Diller. "It didn't come easy, but it was worth it."

Another group voted to join the ILWU family on the same day and with the same result. Four workers at the Maersk Victoria Street con- tainer freight station (CFS) in Long Beach now belong to Local 63 Cleri- cals, and the future looks pretty good there, too. When America President Lin- dsey zzaa into breach of contract and Weil on Terminal Island, Maersk will be doing the CFS work, i.e. stuffing and unstuffing containers.

"This is the first time we've ever had two elections on the same day and won both," Rich said. "That's very exciting." Both units are preparing for bar- gaining and an update in fu- ture issues of The Dispatcher.

Mark your calendar

Get ready for the Western Workers Labor Heritage Festival!

Hold annually over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, this gathering brings together artists and activists in a joyous celebration of labor arts.

Through music, drama, posters, paintings, poetry, storytelling, comedy and more, the festival is a weekend of inspiration, solidarity and worker culture that entertains and educates. And you can get in on the action. Join in the song and poetry swaps. Sing in the Sunday evening concert tribute to Dr. King. Whatever your style, you'll find plenty of music and lots to do and plenty to like.

The festival starts Friday, January 17, 7 p.m. and runs through Sunday, January 19, at the South of Market Cultural Center (SOMAR), 894 Brannan Street, San Francisco.

Registration fees are $35 weekday, $20 Saturday only, and $10 Sunday night benefit concert only. Child care is available for a nominal fee by advance reservation. Low income rates and scholarships are available based on need.

Info: David Winters, (408) 426-4940; Shelley Kessler (415) 572-8848.

ILWU just says no to Journal of Commerce

SAN FRANCISCO—Until further notice the ILWU International will refuse all press calls from the Journal of Commerce.

That's the message the union sent early this month to the business daily of San Francisco Bay.

"We don't take this action lightly, in fact, yours is the only publication with which we have ever taken such an extreme measure," wrote Commu- nications Director Kathy Wilkes. "But, in our opinion, it is not only warranted, it's necessary.

PLAYING CHICKEN

In story after story the JOC played Chicken Little, crying about skyrock- eting labor trouble, failing profits, etc. Most recently, "dire conse- quences for anyone with business con- nected to the waterfront."

The culprit, of course, was the ILWU, and more specifically our members as portrayed by the JOC and its employer sources, couldn't. The Longshore Division has had exactly one coastwise shutdown in a quarter-century—and that in- volved a contract dispute.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Traffic World's Bob Rast criticized the ILWU (on Labor Day, no less) for its round one rejection of the then- tentative agreement with PMA.

"From our vantage point, the union looked more than reasonable," Rast opined, concluding, "the ILWU's strong-arm grab for all it can get is a throwback to the bad old days."

Apparently befuddled by the sub- ject, whose major employers are securing union democracy, Rast never clarified what he meant by his "last three days" or "strong- arm grab."

The union, after all, recommended a "yes" vote on the pact, and in keeping with our democratic prin- ciples, the mem- bers made their decision. Of a vari- ety of reasons, we'll vote yes on the pact right under the ILWU Constitu- tion and, not co- incidentally, fed- eral law.

MARKING WITH THE PACK

Pacific Shipper joined the pack and no one was more rabid on the subject of the ILWU than reporter Patrick Burns, whose major employers are securing union democracy and the Journal of Commerce. He re- peatedly repeats misrepresentations promulgated by both ILWU leaders and employers to accurately report the ILWU's re- sponse.

And in one story he devoted several paragraphs to an employer who slammed the ILWU "as if they were spoiling gospel and not once pointed out that they were breaking federal labor law by bypass- ing the union and bargaining directly with ILWU members.

CREATURE FEATURES

Perpetuating the "greedy longshore- man" myth, the JOC continually over- stated average wages, yet made no comparisons with employers' profits.

Nor did the publication ever men- tion that the wage levels they were using included overtime and "side deals," both of which are creatures of the employers and opposed—on the record—by the ILWU Longshore Divi- sion.

The JOC is not the only offender.

Pacific Maritime writer Jim Shaw recently made the sweeping—and wholly inaccurate—statement that, in the last three years, "the ILWU shut down West Coast ports several times because of various grievances, none of which related to job condi- tions or wages."

Shaw, of course, provided no specifics to support his claim. He
Local 6 helps rally support
Rubber Stamperede workers wildcat over unfair labor practices

BY STEVE STALLONE

In one of its largest organizing efforts in recent history, Local 6 is en- tangled with an intranet owner of a rubber stamp manufacturing plant in Oakland.

Last April the largely Latino and mostly female workforce at Rubber Stamperede signed a authorization card with the National Labor Relations Board to decide whether Local 6 would be their representative in negotiations with their employer. But the union lost the vote 75 to 114.

The union filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board alleging manage- ment intimidated the workers, threatening them with deportation and termination and promising some raises and promotions if they voted against the union.

On October 31 the legal staff of the regional office of the National Labor Relations Board filed charges alleging intimidation, discrimination and coercion by the owner of the company, Samuel Katzen, in the election.

But the workers, fed up with the unremedied labor law violations, got tired of waiting for the long legal process. The last straw came when Katzen changed the wages of the workers from an hourly rate to piece work in a way that had an approximate 230 workers, many of them the sole wage earners in their families, have been left out of the picture since November 13 and are seeking support—moral and financial—in the community and among other union members to get them through the holiday season.

CHIPPING IN

At its December meeting the ILWU’s International Executive Board passed a Statement of Policy in support of the Rubber Stamperede workers, contributing $2,000 of union money to the cause and calling on all ILWU members to join in. Board members also donated another $400 out of their own pockets.

Already ILWU longshore Local 10 has donated $650 and a batch of turkeys and hams and marine clerks’ Local 34 has added $2,000 plus another $500 to rent an office to coordinate the strike actions. These locals have also found some temporary work for the Rubber Stamperede work- ers to sustain them during their struggle. The Alameda Central Labor Council has endorsed their action and the company’s products are now on the AFL-CIO’s official boycott list.

Members of the local Labor Party chapter have joined workers leaflet- ing stores that sell Rubber Stamperede products, including CostCo, Target, Michael’s Arts and Crafts and The House of Fabrics, asking consumers to boycott the items.

California’s new Assembly Speaker, Cruz Bustamante, has met with rep- resentatives of the workers and offered his support. Local politicians, including Oakland Mayor Elihu Harris and City Council members Ignacio De La Fuente and Sheila Jordan, have called on management to settle with the workers.

Hawaii dockers ratify new pact

HONOLULU—By a 92 percent margin, Hawaii members approved a new three-year agreement that makes major improvements in wage, pension, retiree benefits, ju- risdiction over longshore work and work-related grievances. The tentative agreement was reached on October 31 between the ILWU Local 142, on be- half of the 510 longshoremen, and the Hawaii Stevedore Industry.

The basic longshore wage of $22.12 per hour for skilled workers will be increased to $24.62 per hour for longshoremen and marine clerks last summer. The agreed upon $500 will be paid as a one-time bonus, bringing the hourly wage to $25.12. The $500 bonus is in addition to the $600                           
Longshoremen worldwide attend International Dockers Conference in Liverpool, England

By NORM PARKS

As an International Executive Board member and a member of the International Committee, I was asked by the Coast Committee to represent the ILWU at the Second International Dockers Conference held in Liverpool, England from August 31 to September 1, 1996. I seized the opportunity and asked my father, Ezra Parks, a Local 5 pensioner, to go along with me.

We arrived in Manchester, England Friday, August 23 and were met at the airport by Ron Bibby, a rank and file member of the Liverpool Dockers' Union, and taken to a Port Shop Stewards meeting aimed at our Executive Board. A progress report on the strike was given and their standing with the International Transport Worker Federation (ITF) was reviewed. Mersey Dock and Harbor Company, of the directors of Mersey Docks. Because of the job actions on the East Coast of Canada, particularly at Montreal, and in the United States at Baltimore, ACL Steamship Line left the Port of Liverpool for four weeks before returning.

GLOBAL DISPUTES

On the second day of the conference the international delegates gave reports on what was going on in their own ports. All over the world dockers are under attack—in almost every case by their own government. The key words that kept being repeated were "casualization" and "privatization."

Capitalism has gone increasingly international and we have to go international as well to protect the interests of labor. The conference determined that the Liverpool dockers need more world-wide action on ACL Steamship Line and Cast Canada.

CHEERING FOR CHINESE WORKERS

Xia Xiaomei, Director of the International Liaison Department of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), made the ILWU a stop on her tour of the United States. The trip gave her the chance to tap into the U.S. solidarity network and learn about our unions and labor strategies. She was accompanied by her interpreter, Zhang Guo Xian, a distinguished trade unionist in his own right.

Above, Madam Xiaomei (front row, third from right) is flanked by ILWU International President Brian McWilliams, Secretary-Treasurer Joe Ibara, Vice President Leonard Hoshijo, and International Rep Abba Ramos.

All over the world dockers are under attack—in almost every case by their own government. The key words that kept being repeated were "casualization" and "privatization."

the main employer in Liverpool, reported a loss of 17 percent in the first six months of the year. The membership subsequently voted 100 percent to continue the strike.

After the Shop Stewards meeting we were invited to a regular membership meeting. About 400 members attended and it was covered by reporters from the television media. During the meeting I presented two checks I brought with me, one for $1,111 to Local 8 and another for $2,220 from Local 40. The Coast has $4,341 from Local 8 and another for Spain, Italy, Sweden, the United States and Turkey. During the conference and reports from the television media.

The police came and broke up the picket line where we closed the main gate at the Port of Liverpool Liverpool Freeport for approximately one hour. The police came and broke up the pickets and cleared the entrance road.

On September 4 Ezra Parks attended a pensioner meetings of retired Liverpool dockers and sailors. They have their own hall and even though their benefits have not been affected by the strike they are in full support of their union brothers.

An international alliance of dockworkers was formed at the Conference. The ILWU has joined and the International Executive Board has gone on record in support of the proposals adopted by the Conference and at the IEB's last meeting in September in Vancouver, B.C. it passed a Statement of Policy in support of the Liverpool dockworkers (see The Dispatcher, November 1996) pledging the ILWU's assistance by whatever means available.

Norm Parks is a member of ILWU longshore Local 8, Portland.
ILWU solidarity helps Filipino sailors challenge ocean-going colonialism

By DAVID BACON

In an era when only a handful of people operate giant ships with cargo valued in the millions, a small band of twelve Filipino sailors along with a chemical tanker has challenged the system of shipboard colonialism that plagues the world's huge shipping lines.

When their vessel, the Mundagud, pulled into a calm dock in the central California city of Stockton on September 29, the ship's officers went on strike warning to their captain, yelling "Carteles! Carteles!" ("Picket signs!") A dozen Filipino deck officers and crewmen stood at the gangplank and along the ship's railing, holding hand-lettered signs announcing "Crew the ship's railing, holding hand -

CONDITIONS WORSEN

This quick job action highlights the growing pressure to change the working conditions of the world's sailors which over the last quarter century have become nearly as barbarous as those of a century ago.

Over the last 30 years U.S. and European shipping companies have re-flagged their huge, ocean-going ves- sels, registering them in countries like Panama and Liberia under "flags of convenience." Reflagging ships ex- cludes them from government regula- tions and union contracts in their original countries where high wages and good conditions prevail.

Shipping companies have then dumped their U.S. and European crews, replacing them with seamen and deck officers from countries around the Pacific Rim, especially the Philippines. More than 250,000 Filipino seamen now sail the high seas, more than any other nationality.

Romanian sailors strike, with a little help from their friends

Piracy on the high seas these days has a decidedly class nature—ship- ping executives hijacking sailors' wages. It happens all too frequently, even when we were afraid of being fired," Lamadrid said.

Meanwhile, Filipino deck officers held secret meetings while the ship was at sea to decide what action to take to get paid. "We had to talk in se- cret because we were afraid of being fired," Lamadrid said.

Behind concern for their jobs was an even bigger fear—the blacklist. Bad pay and conditions on board are reinforced by an elaborate sys- tem under which Filipino seamen can be kept from working on ships again once they return home. The Mundagud's sailors were able to count on support by U.S. longshoremen, and the history of job action in support of foreign crews. When the Mundagud arrived in Stockton on September 21, Heyman came on board. The deck officers had already agreed among themselves to take action and they ap- proached the crew for support. In the Philippines there is a shortage of deck officers, who can therefore move from ship to ship. But for seamen there is a labor surplus, making the loss of a job much riskier. As a result the Mundagud's crew split, with a little more than half decid- ing to support the Filipino offi- cers.

Then the ship moved from Stockton to Portland. Filipino officers made a list of safety viola- tions, including a leak in one of the tanks, and problems with the steering gear and oil/water sepa- rator, and turned it over to the Coast Guard. A day later, along- side the dock in Stockton, the Fil- ipinos struck.

Key to the action was preventing the hose from being hooked up dis- tinguished from the Johns crew, and putting our bodies between the hose and the connection if necessary," Lamadrid said.

Stockton ILWU Longshore Local 54's president Danny Caruso was on the picket line with the Filipino crewmen began to yell, "They have a right to strike!" After seeing a bonus fide picket line, which their contract al- lows them to respect, Local 54 mem- bers decided to refuse to work the ship. Local 6 members, seeing the evi- dence danger of a leak of toxic ammo- nium, stood by on a health and safety beef.

BACK DOWN, SETTLE UP

The shipping agent in Stockton, Trans Navigation Co., which was fa- miliar with the ability of longshore- men to handle such situations and BIS-Manila to settle with the sea- men. After intense negotiations, the ship's owner finally relented and agreed to puting the crew to sign a new ITF agree- ment.

Fearing the captain's blacklist, the Filipino seamen decided to seek jobs with other shipping lines. "I know we will have big conse- quences when we arrive in the Philip- pines," said Balmonte, the ship's radio officer. "I know this will affect my family. But the treatment was in- humane and I'm still upset about it. I just couldn't take anymore." Lamadrid, however, said that the crew's action opens the door to improving conditions on other ships. "We're going to tell other Filipino seamen what happened here," he said. "Other seamen can do what we did if they stick together. And Filipino seamen in different countries can also do what we did if they stick together, we can all win something better. That's what we did in Stockton." "We didn't have to do this alone as the same shipping companies," Heyman said. "As things stand now, we're all pitted against each other as shipper's look from country to country for lower wages. But we can learn to cooperate."
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We Do The Work
What Labor Notes is to print media, we do The Work is to television. This week's TV magazine does what no other show does: it brings insightful stories about working people to the small screen and teaches us about the dignity of labor, the benefits of solidarity, and the rewards of empowerment.

TV Nation
He's baasack! We get more of Michael Moore in the return of his controversial television series, which first aired on NBC in the summer of 1994. Too hot for the mainstream, he bounced over to the Fox network for awhile but was soon off the air. And not for lack of audience. Ever since his film Bowling for Columbine, he's found himself to be subject to waves of backlash. Moore has had a solid following of people thirst for his brand of dogged, in-your-face video journalism. Politicians and corporations are his favorite targets, but he manages to expose hypocrisy, greed and downrightness just about everywhere he goes. Only a downer if you're on the wrong side, otherwise hilarious.

Political Junkie
We're filled with the day's political junkies will appreciate the political junkie, or just blowing off steam, cast-iron recent Rain- bow Coalition conference and several minutes for refusing to air the historic founding convention of the Labor Party.

The Daily Show
Craig Kilborn oozes with smart-alecky charm as he hosts this half-hour news satire. An equal opportunity offender, The Daily Show routinely pillories the high and mighty, from the Hollywood Hills to the Capitol Steps, from the left to the right and the self-righteous. Fun, irreverent and definitely not for everyone.

C-Span
Where else will you find the director of the CIA being yelled at for an hour and a half by outraged citizens over reports of the agency's involvement in drug smuggling into Central Los Angeles? Without pundits to tell us what we're seeing, C-Span gives us the credit to make up our own minds on the events of the day. Political junkies will appreciate the gavel-to-gavel coverage of Congress in action. There are also interviews with authors, phone-in shows with reporters answering questions, and all kinds of political and community events. C-Span gets a plus for broadening.
Over the years, several books have been written about the ILWU. The following list details the author, title, publisher, price, main subject or theme, and availability of these books. These and other publications about the ILWU can also be read at the ILWU Library.

- Bukke, German. Longshore Leader and ILWU PMA Arbitrator. Boncrito Library. Oral history Office, University of California at Berkeley. 1984. The oral history and anecdotal account of Bukke San Francisco career as a member and officer of the ILWU. University libraries.


Selvin's account of 1934 strike is partisan but dispassionate look at the big picture

Selvin makes a convincing case that the employers, with the cooperation of state and local police agencies, provoked the tragic events of Bloody Thursday to justify the eradication of militant unionism on the waterfront.

sues of 1934 in a brief and remark- ably dispassionate product. The maritime workers and their bosses at one time when the employers' objective was to destroy the unions and legislate the shop open.

Selvin, long retired from decades as editor of the California Labor history, was an observer of the 1934 strikes from his post as staff re- searcher with the federal National Longshoremen's Board and the Pacific Coast Labor Bureau. In that capac- ity, he attended meetings of the San Francisco Labor Council with Sam Longshore Board about pre-strike meetings, shipowners and media moguls). The net effect of this weaving to-

the employers who are divided among themselves over whether their self-interest is best served by trying to de- stroy the unions or, as represented by Roosevelt and the New Deal, to save and expand capitalism through stabi- lizing labor relations by representing the workers' rights to organize and to be represented by leaders of their own choosing.

Fortunately for the reader, the ex- ploration of these grand themes takes place through a careful recounting of the day-to-day events of the 1934 strikes as expressed on both sides of the picket lines. It is this well-rea- soned combination of themes and per- sonal experiences that have, in Selvin's book so unique and useful— as do also his ex- tensive bibliography and informative footnotes.

Unfortunately there is also an an- noying downside to A Terrible Anger, while Selvin has reviewed just about everything written about the 1934 strikes, and conducted some of his own archival research, there is noth- ing really new here, nothing that gives us a pause to think about the meaning of it all. While his main con- tribution is to provide many more di- mensions of the events and their meaning than any one writer has so far, it is all remarkably unoriginal.

And when he chastises Mike Quin's classic narrative The Big Strike for looking the tactic of the strike as a "handicap," simply wrote a generally accurate, if slightly incomplete, partisan account of the strike.
ILWU President Jimmy Herman joins the Ferry Workers’ picket line.

“The state negotiator, told me, ‘If you strike, I’ll have you in jail.’”

I was born in Duwamish, Washington, in 1938. My step-dad was a staunch union guy. In any house he was in you was going to know about unions; that was what he talked about. He got a job in a feed mill in Tacoma, Washington. The Butcher Workers’ Union was there. Everything my step-dad told me over the years about the union suddenly made a lot more sense now that I was on that job.

After two years I got laid off from the mill and came to Portland. I worked in a rubber mill for ten years as a member of Local 504, United Rubber Workers. I held all the local offices—president, sect.-treas., shop steward. I was fired for union activity and got my job back through arbitration, but my days were numbered. So I started lookin’ around and found out they were hiring at Western Transportation. That was an IBU bargaining unit. I applied and was hired there in 1969.

In the late 1970s, the IBU was affiliated with the Seafarers International Union (SIU). The IBU national president, Merle Adlum, wanted the IBU to give up its autonomy and become part of the SIU’s Atlantic and Gulf (AG) District. In my opinion, it was not in the best interest of the IBU members to merge with the AG District and lose control over our local affairs. We wanted to continue to have a democratic union, where we elected our people. The AG District did not have union democracy like we had. They didn’t elect their business agents and patrolmen like we did. Those people were all appointed.

There were also conspiracies between Merle Adlum and some of the officers of the IBU to give us our affiliation to the AG District. In 1978, they allowed the SIU and Crowley Maritime Corp. to throw 200 southern California IBU guys out of their jobs and then replace them with SIU AG District people.

So we had an enormous philosophical difference between factions over where this union was going and what it was going to be. Because of all that, in 1978 I decided to run against Merle Adlum for IBU president. I was elected and took office in early 1979.

After I became president we continued to meet and negotiate with the SIU International and the officers from the AG District about getting those southern California jobs back. The SIU held out carrots. Maybe something could be worked out. But there were always conditions, and eventually the SIU said, “We can do this and this, but you’ve gotta have merger with the AG District within a year.” They knew we were not going to agree to.

While this was goin’ on, they again took some IBU jobs away in Santa Barbara, and assigned them, through backdoor deals, to the AG District. Well, in our affiliation agreement with the SIU, our rights were spelled out just like in our later agreement with the ILWU. If the SIU took work from IBU members and assigned it to other parts of the International, or to people outside the International, that would be grounds for us to disaffiliate. So I held an IBU Executive Council meeting in October 1979 and we voted to disaffiliate from the SIU. Our IBU convention unanimously ratified the decision that December.

The SIU tried to ruin us in as many areas after we went independent. They attempted to take over our members in Alaska and Hawaii. We took it on heads up with state supervision. Their argument was, “Yeah, but we’re free to continue to have the kind of union people want.” And we won overwhelming.

In April 1980, we had a serious confrontation with the Washington State Ferry System that indirectly led to our affiliation with the ILWU. The Ferry System was determined to have part-time workers who would only work during peak hours. We were very opposed to an open-ended part-time employee situation. Of course, there was money. Our membership had not been keeping pace with the cost of living. The other big issue was hiring practices. We wanted the hiring hall for people to gain access to Washington State Ferry employment. The Ferry System wanted no part of that.

During bargaining, when it was apparent there might be a strike, Fred Peil, the state negotiator, told me, “If you strike, I’ll have you in jail.” I said, “I don’t think you can do that, but have at ‘er!” That broke the meeting up. So that threat was out there the last couple weeks of bargaining. When the strike deadline arrived, our 700 Ferry System members voted to reject what the employer had on the table and we went on strike.

The next thing I knew I was up before King County Superior Court Judge T. Patrick Corbett in Seattle. He told me to order the membership back to work. Well, I had no authority as IBU President to force anybody to go to work. I said, “I can’t do that.” He said, “You’ll do that or you’ll stay in jail til you do.” Myself and Larry Miner, our Sect.-Treas., then went to jail.

When we went to jail we had some of the things resolved. We got hiring through the union. We had the part-time issue resolved; we agreed to a formula where they could have a few part-time people. I know wages weren’t resolved because after John Burns, our attorney in Seattle, got me out of jail in a day and a half, I remember going back to bargaining over wages. This is about when Jimmy Herman got involved. He was the ILWU president then. He wanted me to contact him. I did.

we met, and things happened. I told Jimmy what the issues were, where our membership was, and why we weren’t doing what we were doing. He said the leadership had just had a meeting and wanted to help. One thing led to another. Soon the longshoremen were shutting the waterfront down in the state of Washington. That got the talks gain’t and got the settlement done.

There’s a great appreciation from myself and the IBU membership for Jimmy Herman’s help. Beyond that, what Herman and the ILWU did was what you were supposed to do in those days. They were union people thought “We can do something to help shelve this thing off dead center and help those workers, we should do it.” There was never any talk about or hint at any condition attached to that help. Herman made that real clear from the first moment because there were a number of union wantin’ us to affiliate with them. He said, “There’s no strings attached.”

The strike came out very good. We got some raises with rest of living factors hiked on too. “Not less than 9%,” which amounted to over a dollar an hour back in three days. We’re talking about some really good raises over a three year contract. Hey, we were only on strike for 12 days. I was really proud of that outcome.

After the strike, the state legislature instituted civil service to take away our ferry workers’ collective bargaining rights. I had no idea. I told Jimmy, “What if I talk to the governor and tell him that, Jimmy Herman, are suggesting that they create a blue ribbon panel of labor, politicians, and Ferry System people to study the possibility of replacing that law with a process where we still have collective bargaining, but with binding arbitration instead of the right to strike?” He said, “Anything is better than that nonsense.”

I talked to the governor and the blue ribbon commission became a reality. Out of that commission we were able to adopt some legislation that fine up the civil service stuff and preserve the essence of collective bargaining.

While we were in independent organization we developed some great relationships with the unions that offered us affiliation. But I always had a great deal of respect for the ILWU, Harry Bridges, and that whole tradition. The ILWU was my first pick for affiliation, although I never professed that until mid-1980 when we got to the point where we really needed to do something to put some foundation under our union. I started raising the issue of affiliation at membership meetings up and down the coast. We had two special meetings in every region, and I attended every one. At the second meeting we would vote on which organization the members would prefer. The ILWU was the uncontested favorite. I was having talks with Jimmy Herman, obviously, about this. I talked to some of those other unions, too.

Then we had a mail ballot vote of every member asking whether we should affiliate with the ILWU, the number one choice in those meetings. It passed with 82% in Oct. 1980. The ILWU International Executive Board officially approved the affiliation the next month, and we became the IBU, Marine Division of the ILWU.

We were never concerned that, “We’ve gotta affiliate with the ILWU because if we get in a beef they can really impact us for ‘cause we’re right on the water with them.” We believed that would be there whether we were affiliated with them or not. But we believed therefore that we should belong to that organization “Hey,” we felt, “they can help us, we ought to be in the family with them. We ought to be there for them.”

The ILWU Oral History Project started in the 1980s with grants to the union and U.C. Berkeley from the NEH and the Skaggs Foundation. The interviews excerpted here were conducted by Daniel Beagle, U.C. Prof. David Well, and Harvey Schwartz.
George Irwin, Organizer, activist, and advocate for the underdog

George Irwin, a longtime ILWU activist and leader and former mayor of Aberdeen, Washington, died of a heart attack October 13, 1996. A longshoreman since 1965 until his retirement in 1987 following a back and neck injury, Irwin served as president of Local 24 for three terms as well as vice president, was a member of the International Executive Board, the Puget Sound Council and the Labor Relations Committee. In 1983 he ran for and was elected mayor of Aberdeen after spending three years on its city council.

Irwin is remembered as a tireless organizer and activist, both in his union and his community. He was a unified force for labor movement of coastal Washington, turning the labor council there into an activist organization and using his influence to get working people elected to public office.

MENTOR
Glen Ramiskey, Coast Committeeman from Aberdeen, said he learned the ropes from Irwin.

"In my experience, inside and outside the union. I have never run into anybody who had a better knack for recognizing and portraying the underdog in any cause," Ramisky said. "He was my mentor. I wouldn't be where I am today without his friendship and his counsel."

Irwin died at his wife's home in Poulsbo where they had planned to move that summer. He was survived by his wife Barb Irwin, his daughter, Donna Grasdock, three brothers, Don Irwin, Russell Irwin and Dick Irwin, and two grandchildren.

In memoriam and to all members of the ILWU
Dedicated to Terry Ebel
In memory and to all members of the ILWU

WILMINGTON—More than 200 ILWU members and their guests turned out for longshore Local 13's Seventh Annual Bob Olvera Christmas dinner dance December 7 to honor the former Coast Labor Relations Committee Teamster and to raise funds for its new library. Partygoers feasted on prime rib with all the fixings, drank complimentary champagne and danced to the sounds of Local 13's own disc jockey, Ed Borger, Jr. at the Madero Restaurant in the San Pedro Marina overlooking the harbor.

Olvera has remained disabled since late 1990 when he was struck by a sudden and debilitating illness. Every Christmas since then Local 13 has sponsored a benefit dance for Olvera and presented it to his son, Bob Olvera Jr., a local 10 longshoreman who will take it to his father being cared for in a nursing home in Concord, California.

The new video library, named in Olvera's honor, opens at the beginning of 1997. It contains labor videos obtained from the ILWU's International office, the Harry Bridges Institute and other unions. Members may check out the tapes for a week at no charge.

Richard Austin has a little hate piece on who he calls the spin doctors. So what I gather is that if you believe in property rights, equal employment rights and Big Government ideas. You also forget the politicians in Washington do from both parties who you represent. I am a Union man and proud of it. There is a need for it, there is a need to be represented in the Republican Party, and there is a need for people of both parties who care about their kids, country and values such as honesty and integrity. Let's hope that we can get back to where families can grow up in neighborhoods without gangs, drugs and crime. Let's hope we can get back to unions who command the respect from political parties and their members.

Mick Sheldon
IBU Puget Sound
Kingston, WA

Stupid is as stupid does
"Tutus mundis stultitiat." These are the words spoken by Emperor Joseph of Hungary in the 1800s. Translation: "The whole world is growing stupid."

Opening up The Dispatcher, Rich Austin has a little hate piece on who he calls the spin doctors. So what I gather is that if you believe in property rights, equal employment rights and Big Government ideas. You also forget the politicians in Washington do from both parties who you represent. I am a Union man and proud of it. There is a need for it, there is a need to be represented in the Republican Party, and there is a need for people of both parties who care about their kids, country and values such as honesty and integrity. Let's hope that we can get back to where families can grow up in neighborhoods without gangs, drugs and crime. Let's hope we can get back to unions who command the respect from political parties and their members.

Mick Sheldon
IBU Puget Sound
Kingston, WA

More turkey, please
Thoroughly enjoyed reading "The Fables of Aesop." However, I would think the ILWU, of all people, could have found at least one maritimes-related agency, company or individual deserving of such recognition.

By John Fern

Dedicated to Terry Ebel
In memory and to all members of the ILWU

Defending the deregistered
In the September issue of The Dispatcher Norman Leonard, former lawyer for the ILWU, had a letter on longshoremen's side. Why? Because it still rankles, not just with me, but with a lot of other longshoremen in Local 10, who I dont agree with.

Of those eighty men, I'd say that perhaps 30 of them may have got what they deserved. They were deregistered for chronicabling work hours, screwing up on the job, whatever. But the remaining 50—not just Stan Weir but all the rest I got to know as good, honest, hard-working longshoremen from having worked with them over the previous four years—got shafted.

They were deregistered, run off the waterfront without so much as a trial or even a hearing, because of vendetta's by people now long gone—a few officers in Local 10, at least one on the International level, even individual gang bosses and walking bosses.

Their deregistration was so outrageous that Leonard tried to come to their rescue. At the very next union meeting President Jim Kearney made a motion to restore these men to their jobs until their cases could be straightened out at a fair hearing.

The motion passed overwhelmingly, but it very deliberately got way-laid at the follow-up Port Labor Relations Committee meeting. After this happened, 50 of these men got together, hired a lawyer and went to court.

The legal proceedings dragged on for seventeen years, giving all the way to the Supreme Court, finally being thrown out for reasons that are still not clear.

Norman Leonard now brings this all up again. Apparently it rankles him, too. Leonard is active throughout every phase of these men's deregistration. But why now?

Perhaps the answer is contained in another question: Why did 50 men, many holding down such badly paying jobs as dishwashers, janitors, gardeners, etc., gather their dimes together and fight through the courts for over 17 years to prove their innocence? The reason is obvious: They were innocent! They were unjustly run of the waterfront. Norman Leonard was one of the lawyers who participated in that action, part of the apparatus that did it. Norman Leonard can write all the letters he wants, but the truth always has a way of coming out.
### Season's Greetings

**from the**

**International**

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<th>Kathy Wilkes</th>
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|                              | Brian Davidson         | International Rep              |

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|------------------------------|------------------------| Organizer                      |

| No. California Office        | Abba Ramos             | Organizer                      |
|------------------------------|------------------------| Secretary                      |

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|------------------------------|------------------------| Benefits Specialist            |
|                              | Sandy Babich           | Admin. Assistant               |

| Coast Committee              | Glen Ramiskey          | Committee, Northwest           |
|------------------------------|------------------------| Committee, California          |
|                              | Richard Olson          | Benefits Specialist            |
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|                              | Lucienne O0Keefe       | Admin. Secretary               |
|                              | Christina Courter      | Secretary                      |
|                              | Scarlett Davis         |                                |

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**Have a Happy and Safe New Year!**