Arnold: California's son-of-a-Bush

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

Arnold Schwarzenegger rode a wave of populist discontent and Hollywood star power into California's governorship. He played the role of the outsider taking on the status quo, the new sheriff come to clean up the town. The newspapers never mentioned the bankers and railroad barons funding his efforts. He never denied that his plan transparently favors the ultra-wealth and political ultra-power are not enough—they will profit from administering all those millions of individual private accounts he wants us to have. Never mind that the plan will foist another two trillion dollars of debt onto the very young generation of workers—the workers Bush claims to be trying to help. And never mind that this scheme is the most inane boondoggle a delusional neo-conservative theorist could devise.

Even so, the corporate media treats it with respect, as if it bears some resemblance to reality and why not? The parent companies of those media outlets have more than a passing interest in those investment firms and more than a passing interest in proposals now before Bush's Federal Communications Commission to further ease regulations controlling media consolidation.

And by so many levels even the opposition wants to argue it on Bush's terms. They argue the numbers don't add up to such an immediate disaster, that there is no way to predict what will happen to the economy in 20, 30 years. At the same time, while posing such unknowns, they are all too willing to continue to push such proposals as raising the retirement age so they can sound reasonable, like they want to 'bypass the pain' of the reform, as if the rich were ever hurting here.

As ILWU Legislative Director Lindsay McLaughlin points out on page 4, Social Security is so much more than a retirement program. That is not having a minimum safety net for retirement isn't an option in recent history.

Many of the "special interests" Schwarzenegger's say he is boldy taking on one thing in common—they are workers organized in unions with good contracts affording them livable wages and care coverage and pensions. Among his top targets are teachers and government workers. Going after the "health care providers," for who we care for our sick family members and who the teachers, is particularly perverse.

If you have ever spent any time in the hospital, you know the kind of stress that is involved in working as a nurse, the front-line care providers, are under with the number of patients that they must oversee. And you know who pays the price for their being spread too thin.

The nurses' unions have pushed for lower patient-to-nurse ratios before care. In fact, the state legislature passed a law, signed by then-Governor Gray Davis, empowering the state Department of Health Services to set nursing ratio standards. But at the behest of the health care industry, which apparently can't seem to manage enough money no matter how rich or many the raise rates, Schwarzenegger single-handedly stopped the implementation of that law last November. Citing what he claimed was a shortage of nurses, he declared an "emergency" that would have reduced prescription drug costs. He has also lowered workers' compensation payments for disabled workers.

And never mind that this is a state that rejected George W. Bush by large margins in 2000 and 2004, Schwarzenegger is pushing an economic agenda that is a clone of Bush's—attacking union workers, their working conditions and pensions and privatizing as much of the social wealth as possible. He speaks of getting rid of "special interests" to allow the "business of the people" to proceed. Translated, what he really means is getting rid of the protections working people have won through decades of long, hard struggle in California and thereby allowing his rich friends and donors to reap ever-larger profits.

In the short time he has been in office, Schwarzenegger has vetoed legislation that would have raised the minimum wage, that would have reduced offshoring of American jobs, that would have made health care accessible for millions more California workers and that would have reduced prescription drug costs. He has also lowered workers' compensation payments for disabled workers.

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Restaurant Assn. ($131,000) and Outback Steakhouse ($68,000). And while the special interests of workers and their unions are being attacked loudly and publicly, corporate interests are quietly taking over Schwarzenegger's administration. In fact, the state legislature passed a law, signed by then-Governor Gray Davis, empowering the state's Department of Health Services to set nursing ratio standards. But at the behest of the health care industry, which apparently can't seem to manage enough money no matter how rich or many the raise rates, Schwarzenegger single-handedly stopped the implementation of that law last November. Citing what he claimed was a shortage of nurses, he declared an "emergency" that would have reduced prescription drug costs. He has also lowered workers' compensation payments for disabled workers.

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—Steve Stallone
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Marching in the streets of Johannesburg. Far left, International Executive Board member Trinidad Esquivel; center, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams; and far right, ILWU Local 20 President Mike Diller.

At the Mandela House Museum: (Left to right) Keith McCorriston, MUA Branch deputy secretary for Western Australia, ILWU Local 30 President Mike Diller, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, and ILWU International Executive Board member Trinidad Esquivel, the Mandela Museum curator and three Australian miners.

ILWU attends solidarity gatherings in South Africa

By Steve Stallone

The ILWU sent three delegates to represent the union in South Africa at the tenth year commemoration of the end of apartheid and an International miners conference last November.

International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, International Executive Board member Trinidad Esquivel (representing the Southern California mining Local 30 in Boron) and Mike Diller (president of Local 20 that processes and packages the mined borax products for export in Wilmington) made the 20-hour flight to Johannesburg with excitement and anticipation. The parade celebrating the end of South Africa’s institutional system of racism and segregation and the beginnings of its democracy was the highlight of the trip for the ILWU delegation. It was a victory not just for the people of South Africa, but for the ILWU as well, which was very involved in the international movement to take down the old regime through its boycott of South African ships and other actions.

The South Africans themselves recognized the union’s central role in the struggle by asking the ILWU delegates to lead the march through the streets of Soweto. They then issued a banner proclaiming “United Against Apartheid, Together in Freedom.” An injury to one is an injury to all” along with the ILWU insignia and signed by the Team Officers and the Coast Committee.

Adams was transported by the experience.

“I felt like we were riding on the wings of angels,” he said. “Especially hearing the feet on the pavement. I thought to myself, ‘This is what Martin Luther King Jr. must have felt like on the march to Selma.’ The ILWU had pushed the fight against apartheid, so I couldn’t have been more fitting for us to be there front. People were coming out of the buildings and onto the street to join the parade. It doesn’t get much better than that.”

Diller too was swept up in the emotion of the moment, recalling memories of past struggles.

“I remember marching in 1985 at the University of California in Berkeley to divest its capital in South Africa in an effort to end apartheid during our International Convention,” he said. “This was just as much of an uplifting experience as that was.”

After the parade Adams, Diller and Esquivel gave their banner to the Nelson Mandela organization that led much of the fight against apartheid. It now hangs in the ANC headquarters.

As time allowed the ILWU delegates also visited the black township of Soweto, where much of the revolutionary movement was sparked, and the modest home of Nelson Mandela before he was jailed by the repressive government. The house has since been transformed into a museum of apartheid, a remembrance of a brutality that reigned not far in the past.

“It was a very somber experience,” Diller said.

The humble structure also houses numerous plaques, memorabilia and awards Mandela received over the years, including Sugar Ray Leonard’s welter weight boxing belt.

“Sugar Ray was so moved by Mandela he gave him his championship belt,” Adams said, noting that Mandela had been a boxer himself in his younger days.

In the two days prior to the parade the ILWU delegates attended the World Conference for the Mining Industry hosted by the 20 million-member International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers Union (ICEM). Representatives from mining unions around the world gathered to support each other in their struggles against international mining conglomerates.

For example, Rio Tinto, the company that employs ILWU Local 30 borax miners in the Southern California desert and the Local 20 chemical processing and packaging workers at the Port of Los Angeles, is the largest mining company in the world and is notorious for its anti-union activities in South Africa, Australia and many other countries.

“At the conference we learned that Rio Tinto has joined groups like the International Council for Mining and Metals (ICMM) to make themselves look good throughout the world,” Esquivel said. “But Rio Tinto has yet to sign onto to global agreements to better the lives of working people.”

As part of the ICEM’s four-year work plan, the conference called for meaningful, inclusive and regular social dialogue with employers at the highest level and with the employer group ICMM to monitor basic international standards set by the United Nation’s International Labour Organization. The plan also calls for all the union to get all countries with mining interests to ratify ILO Convention 176 on Mine Health and Safety; to move forward to implement ILO Convention 162 on employment and social impacts of a ban on asbestos mining; to use the global union federation and global agreements to push and organize the workers worldwide; and to continue to build local partnerships in mineral extraction.

The plan also calls for immediate action toward a just settlement of the Palestine-Israel conflict that includes the top public health issue throughout Africa.

Another part of the work plan calls for the mining industry to meet the human needs of its workers, families and communities. It sends a clear message to both private and public financing organizations that the “one-size-fits-all” mine privatization and restructuring model is unacceptable, that the ILWU stands with the local communities in countries that have rapidly liberalized mining enterprises, that the work plan warns such financing bodies “that the unilateral imposition of any restructuring that is socially sustainable is bound to fail.”

The work plan concludes with a resolve committing the international unions to the invasion of Iraq, and a call to the international community for early elections in Iraq and for withdrawal of all occupying forces. The plan also calls for immediate action toward a just settlement of the Palestine-Isreal conflict that includes an independent and viable Palestinian state.

“I left Johannesburg with a tremendous feeling of solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world who belong to the labor movement,” Diller said. “The delegations want us to end the war in Iraq. They love our people, but hate George Bush and the policies he stands for.”

Adams, who attended the last ICEM conference in Australia in 2002 along with Director of Political, Social and International Affairs Ray Famulato, was pleased with the delegation’s short but productive trip solidifying the ILWU’s relations with other workers and planning further collaborations.

We were where we needed to be, getting done what we needed to do,” he said. “Our visit also laid the groundwork for the Maritime and Mining Conference the ILWU will be hosting in Southern California this May.”
Bush Social Security scheme on deck

By Lindsay McLaughlin

WASHINGTON Post

January 2005

D uring the 2004 Presidential election campaign, Governor George W. Bush refused to speak truthfully about Social Security privatization. After his alleged victory over Senator John Kerry, he is moving quickly to destroy a Social Security system that has worked remarkably well since 1935. During the campaign, Bush promised that there would be no pain, only gain in forcing younger workers to gamble on the stock market for their retirement needs. He promised that current beneficiaries would not be affected by the scheme. He promised that he wanted "private accounts" for almost all workers, not just the fit of workers, not for his friends on Wall Street. He was lying.

In August, the Republican leader of the House and Senate told them they may have to raise Social Security premiums quickly by almost one-third. "Many Social Security beneficiaries with families to take care of them could retire in dignity. If a worker was too old or disabled to work and did not have to worry about impoverishment, Social Security is particularly important to workers of all ages," Bush's secret plan to take one-third of their Social Security check from them has been unearthed. Again, he is lying.

Under this leaked proposal, the trust funds currently carry enough reserves to pay full benefits through 2042. After 2042 the trust funds will still have enough in revenue to pay approximately 75 percent of benefits. What are needed are minor adjustments to the system, not a complete demolition of a traditional system that has worked and provided real security to its citizens.

Prior to the enactment of Social Security, people who worked long as their bodies and minds realized they are being sold a bill of goods. The administration plans to present a bill to Congress in late February or early March. In the interim, Bush has instructed his aides to sell Social Security to the American public. Social Security is a state of crisis, and insurance companies want the profits from administering private retirement plans. Snyder and insurance companies want the profits from administering private retirement plans. Under Bush's privatized retirement system, investment companies are charging fees of 15 to 20 percent.

Many workers believe they are impervious to making wrong decisions in the stock market and they will always make money. Not true.

Since 1989 there have been 10 major downturns in the stock market, during which stock prices have tumbled by 20 percent or more for months and even years. Starting in 1973, for example, stock prices, as measured by Standard and Poor's 500 Index, tumbled by 48 percent before they finally bottomed out nearly two years later. The stock market did not reach its January 1973 level again for more than seven years.

Stock market declines as big as the one in 1973 and 1974 have a catastrophic impact on retirement income under a system in which personal retirement accounts replace Social Security. Assuming the amounts set aside in personal accounts were fully invested in the stock market, two workers with identical work histories, wages and retirement account contributions could see their retirement nest eggs vary by more than 50 percent, depending on whether they had the good luck to retire in 1973 or the bad luck to retire in 1975.

When George W. Bush became president, the stock market took a dramatic dive and has just recently started to recover. In 2000-2001, many workers saw their 401(k) plans lose half or more of their value. Many workers had to postpone their retirement because they had counted on a healthy 401(k) to strengthen their retirement security.

Suppose the stock market crashes only twice a century. Most people will live into their seventies, eighties or nineties. The odds are good that most workers will see at least one big crash. Retirement accounts tied into the stock market would be devastating to the country's retirees and disabled workers.

Under the Bush's hand-picked commission's plan, one-third of workers' contributions to Social Security would be diverted to the trust funds into private accounts. The trust funds would lose almost $2 trillion in the first 10 years of the plan. Even if this does this diversion hurt the trust funds that the State Social Security would be unable to pay full benefits would be moved up (from 2042 to 2031).

How does that fix the long solvency of Social Security? It doesn't.

Bush's plan actually creates a crisis in the system that does not exist today. In fact, in order to give a boost to Wall Street, Bush is banking on the fact that you will believe his lies that the system is in crisis and rally to support his ill-conceived scheme.

SOCIAL SECURITY WORKS FOR WORKERS

Social Security is one of the most successful government programs in our history. According to Treasury, for the first time in 1935, it has played a crucial role in making sure that in order to make sure that families never experience a career that retires, dies or becomes disabled.

To stay strong, Social Security will need to retain the principles that make it successful and to undertake modest, reasonable changes. Bush has teamed up with right-wing demagogues and politicians to create an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty around Social Security. Social Security is the strategy for the Bush administration to perpetuate a number of issues, including Social Security. Social Security is the system that does not exist today. In fact, in order to give a boost to Wall Street, Bush is banking on the fact that you will believe his lies that the system is in crisis and rally to support his ill-conceived scheme.

JUST SAY "NO!"

Recent news reports say that Bush and his cronies are making a lot of noise that they touched the third rail of politics, Social Security, and survived. Congress has made a major decision to go in, change a working program, siphon profits off to their friends and interest groups under collective bargaining agreements. The Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC), the federal agency that is supposed to insure pensions, itself is in financial trouble. Workers have great difficulty in those institutions because wages have stagnated for so long and the cost of health care and other personnel needs spirals out of control. Social Security is the most stable of the three legs of retirement, because it is the retirement income guaranteed to stay stable even if the stock market drops. Why would we want to create another wobbly leg on a stool?

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January 2005

The Dispatch

The New York Times
by Tom Price

The wind was howling and the waves churning in the Bering Sea when the bulk carrier Selendang Ayu's engine failed. At about 1 a.m. Dec. 7 her captain put out an urgent plea for help to the tugs at Dutch Harbor, 50 miles away in Alaska's Aleutian Islands.

The Inlandboatmen's Union-crewed tug Sydney Foss answered the call and battered its way through icy foot waves. "We were going at 550 p.m. That's as hard as we could pull," Alton said. TheSydney hauled for nearly 12 hours, until 8:00 a.m.

"We were going at 550 p.m. That's as hard as we could pull," Alton said. "We were able to slow her down so there could be a daylight rescue, and we altered her course a bit so she could drop her hooks," Miller said. "When we started they were going to be aground in about three hours. We bought them 12 to 14 hours more. But the line parted before she got her hooks down. It was our intention to hold her there, and hopefully to tow her out." Still the Selendang got two anchors down, buying precious time. The James Dunlap, another IBU crewed tug, also got a call to help and headed out.

"We took off at 7:30 p.m. on the 7th at full speed," James skipper Rob Campbell, a member of the Masters Mates and Pilots union, told TDispatcher. "We weren't 10 miles out of harbor when we started getting 75-80 mile an hour gusts and seas coming directly ahead of us. We were slamming into them and making only about six knots.

The James is a tractor tug, designed to work in harbors and along the open sea in a gale. At about 4:30 a.m. on the 8th we arrived on the scene," Campbell said. "It was way too rough to let anybody out on a deck, and we stayed until daylight to see if we could help the Sydney pull."

The Sydney jogged into the weather after her line parted.

"It was three or four hours from the time we pulled the line, spliced a new eye in it, and got back to the ship," Alton said. "At that time it was just too nasty to get a line up."

The waves grew larger in the shadow of the waves. The anchors held most of the time, long enough for the Coast Guard to get 19 of the 26 crew off using a Jayhawk helicopter. But it only took only a couple big waves and the last anchor let go. About 6:00 p.m. the ship ran aground.

The engine crew of seven and the captain remained on board, desperately trying to restart the ship's engine without success. A Coast Guard swimmer was also put aboard to help in the rescue. The Jayhawk, together with a Dolphin helicopter commanded by Lt. Tim Eason from the Haley, flew in to rescue the last eight sailors.

"They got seven of the eight sailors up into the copter before a big wave broke over the bow of the ship and the Jayhawk either flamed out or was driven into the water," Campbell said. "The little [Dolphin] 'copter dashed in to pick who he could out of the water. The Sydney and myself on the James ran in to be as close as we could."

The Jayhawk's three crew members and one seaman were rescued, the remaining six sailors are presumed to have drowned. The Coast Guard crew wore survival suits, the ship's crew did not.

The ship's captain and the Coast Guard swimmer stood on the fo'cile of the doomed ship.

The James moved in close to act as a radio relay between the rescue swimmer, who only had a walkie-talkie, and the Haley. At 7:15 the Selendang broke in two.

"About the only way you could see the bow section was when the waves would break over it in a sheet of white water," Campbell said. "At about 10:30 that night the 'copter came back and rescued the swimmer and captain."

While the Haley jogged into the weather through the night, the Sydney and the James found some protection in Putmechine Bay, about eight miles away.

"We pulled into the bay and got a good night's sleep," Alton said. "We'd been up for days. Even when we got to lay down, we'd be thrown off our mattresses by the weather. Our entire crew, from the captain to the cook, did an awesome job."

Back on shore, ILWU Local 200 members in the Harbor Master's office were already on the move when the Haley sailed into Dutch Harbor with the surviving sailors.

The crew were rescued with just the clothes on their back and no shoes, ILWU member Heather Hendrickson said. "It wasn't affect the movement of cargo per se, and there are commercial salmon fisheries right there. But a lot of people catch their subsistence from the sea, and a number of us are part-time fishermen. Some of us fish haliut, cod and other fish. It's common for people in our part of the world to catch a good part of what they eat."

The cause of the accident is still under investigation. The engine had suffered a crack in a cylinder lining, according to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. The ship can lose as many as two of its six cylinders and still move, but the engine must be stopped to bypass the affected cylinder. Restarting the 340-ton engine at sea can be difficult, especially in heavy weather.

"This emergency demonstrates the professionalism that our sailors have shown for years working in the dangerous waters of Alaska," IBU President Dave Freiboth said. "We're on the front lines. The water side of the maritime industry is increasingly important. Tanker escorts and ship rescues are an important part of our work. You need a lot of gear to tow a ship that size in that weather, and 'heroic' is really the word for their efforts. What's that IBU guys do."

Taylor said. "Zoooy Sewell, [a Local 200 member] and I called around to friends and local restaurants for clothes and shoes for the crew. Within a matter of two hours we had new shoes for each one of them, socks, underwear, tee shirts, sweatsuits and phone cards so they could call home."

IBU members (left to right) John Weber and Steve Devitt, with skipper Rob Campbell onboard the Haley. They are holding the towline they had ready to put on the Selendang.
California’s newest port could be humming in the high desert within five years, if the City of Victorville and its corporate partners make good on their plans. The city owns the site of the former George Air Force Base. The site, now called the “Southern California Logistics Airport,” holds a 5,000-acre business complex that includes office, manufacturing and industrial space as well as an international all-cargo airport. For two years now, Victorville has been working with the Pasha Group, a logistics company which manages terminals out of Los Angeles and Long Beach. They plan to develop a full intermodal yard, a distribution center and other port facilities some 100 miles from LA.Long Beach Harbor, in the back yard of ILWU mine-mineral processing Local 30 in Boron. That could spell trouble, said Trinidad Esquivel, ILWU International Executive Board member from Local 30. “If you take cargo that will be shipped into the desert, it will be good business for our ports.” Esquivel spoke at the Dec. 8 meeting of the new ILWU Elected Leaders Organizing Task Force. That meeting brought together members of the IBEW, the ILWU’s warehousing and marine divisions, staff from the International Organizing Dept. and top organizers from the AFL-CIO. They took a hard look at the strategies and resources the union will need to organize successfully in the face of a hostile government, feeble labor laws and a rapidly changing economy.

Recognizing that winning strategies will have to be grounded in an understanding of the ways the cargo-handling industry is changing, the Task Force spent part of the day reviewing research done last year for the Longshore Division by a team from the Institute for Labor and Employment Research at the University of California. That team included Peter Olney, now back at the ILWU as International Organizing Director; Amy Willis, now an International Organizer/Researcher for the union; and Arin Dube, Rhonda Evans, Peter Hall, Van Swearingen and Goetz Wolff. The information below comes largely from that research.

Globalization, deregulation, and changes in technology and retailing have spurred ongoing change in the cargo-handling industry. Information and information workers are playing a greater role. Companies with long histories in the industry are losing on new functions and new kinds of companies are popping up. Work is moving inland and out of ILWU jurisdiction.

The ILWU works at a key link in the cargo-handling chain. The chain brings raw materials and manufactured products into the U.S. and brings goods produced in this country to ports for export. The major links in the cargo-handling chain include water transportation by rail, truck transportation, warehousing and distribution, and "services incidental." Workers in the “services” sector include brokers, freight forwarders, reservations agents and many others who deal with information and arrangements. They make up the fastest-growing part of the industry.

ILWU employment in West Coast ports held steady at about 10,500 between 1980 and 2000. But in that time, the amount of cargo moving through those ports more than doubled and overall employment in the cargo-handling industry declined steadily from now and out of ILWU jurisdiction.

There’s work. It’s just not ILWU work.

In fact, it’s not union work at all. The chart on the right shows that non-ILWU employment has nearly doubled in the same period. There’s work. It’s just not ILWU work.

For many cargo-handling companies control many links of the chain at once. A typical company may have a branch that helps manufacturers plan the best way to send goods, one that owns ships and one that runs the distribution center that holds the goods before their final trip to the retail store. Maybe it also owns an airfreight operation and a trucking fleet.

The giant employers who are signatories to the PCLCD (Pacific Coast Longshore Contract Document) are all becoming fully integrated logistics firms, according to the ILE report.

"Logistics" gets defined many different ways. According to the Council of Logistics Management, it means “the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient, effective flow and storage of goods, services, and related information, from point of origin to point of consumption for the purpose of conforming to customer requirements.” In other words, it covers the information and planning parts of moving goods as well as transportation and storage.

A new type of company called the “third party logistics” provider (3PL) has sprung up over the last 15 years. These 3PLs may have branches of other firms. APL Logistics and the container shipping company American President Lines both belong to the NOL Group, for example. Many 3PLs grew out of freight forwarders and NVOCCs. (NVOCCs, non-vessel operating common carriers, make arrangements and take responsibility for cargo that travels on vessels owned by other companies. But 3PLs may own any ships or trucks or warehouses. These “non-asset based firms” use information and contacts to help other companies use the cargo-handling chain as efficiently and cheaply as possible.

Deregulation and the evolution of technology have made integration possible and necessary.

DEREGULATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Before the passage of the federal Ocean Shipping Reform Act in 1998, shipping companies had to make their rates public. They agreed among themselves to keep rates within a certain range and they enjoyed protection from anti-trust laws.

Shipping "reform" allowed them to make secret deals and the rate agreements fell apart. Competition intensified. Rates fell. Profits fell with them, so shipping companies began to branch out. This diversification helped them cut costs and make profits at other links in the cargo-handling chain.

Changes in information technology have changed work and work flow for cargo-handling companies, shippers and ILWU workers as well. Maritime clerks used to mark the docks with chalk to show where containers should go.

“We went from chalk and clipboards to calculators and computers,” said Ron Costa of maritime clerks Local 63.
The International Longshore and Warehouse Union has approximately 42,000 members in over 60 local unions in the states of California, Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii. An additional 3,500 members belong to the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific, which constitutes the Union's Marine Division. Another 14,000 members belong to the autonomous ILWU Canada.

The organization of the ILWU began in 1934 when it was the Pacific Coast District of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), with headquarters in New York. The ILA was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which was identified with conservative politics and an approach to organizing narrowly focused on skilled craft workers.

The membership of the Pacific Coast District voted to disaffiliate from the ILA in the summer of 1937, and formed itself into the ILWU as an independent union. The new union soon affiliated with the militant Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)—based primarily in the newer mass production industries like auto, steel and rubber—which sought to unionize all the workers in an industry, skilled and unskilled, into one union for maximum unity and strength. This approach was known as industrial unionism.
The International Union

The ILWU's internal structure was put in place by delegates to the Union's first International Convention in 1938, and later modified by the 1945 Convention. The highest governing body of the Union is the International Convention, which, since 1938, meets every three years. The Convention is made up of delegates elected by direct rank-and-file vote in each local or affiliate. The Convention has the authority to adopt resolutions and statements of policy on political, economic, and other issues, and to amend the International Constitution which, according to the preamble, serves to "guide our conduct and protect our democracy within the union" by defining the rights and responsibilities of ILWU members, local unions, International Officers, affiliates, and decision making bodies such as the International Convention and Executive Board.

International Officers and members of the International Executive Board are nominated at the Convention and elected later in direct rank-and-file vote by secret ballot. At the present time there are four such officers (an International President, two Vice Presidents, and a Secretary-Treasurer) who run the day-to-day affairs of the Union and supervise the staff. The Nominated Officers also make up the National Organizing Committee, which coordinates and administers funds and personnel used in organizing activities throughout the Union.

The International Executive Board, which meets at least three times a year, is the highest governing body of the Union between conventions. The Board has the authority to take all actions necessary to implement the provisions of the Constitution and the decisions of the Convention delegates, including any necessary adjustments in the budget.

The ILWU National and Local Unions

The ILWU is made up of the Local Unions, affiliated with the ILWU, that are autonomous within the International. The Local Unions are the basic organizations of the ILWU in the regions of the United States and Canada. Local autonomy in this context means that the locals set their own dues structure, and that the most successful organizing campaigns were those involving the mobilization of an entire local. The locals are responsible for requesting and making use of International services, and for implementing ILWU programs.

In relation to organizing, for example, the collective wisdom through the 1960s was that rank and file were the most effective organizers, and that the most successful organizing campaigns were those involving the mobilization of an entire local. In this framework, the development of staff services to supplement and complement the locals was not to take the place of organizing efforts by locals and the rank and file, but to make local activity more effective through efficient allocation of the International's resources in response to local requests for assistance—and through coordination with other locals and regions.

The Local Unions

Each local has its own constitution, which guarantees democratic procedures, controlled by the rank and file, and spells out the duties of the various officers and committees. In general, most locals have one or more full-time elected officers, as well as a series of elected committees, including an executive board, a board of trustees (who administer the local's finances), and others such as publicly and sports.

The locals set their own dues structure, and pay a per capita payment to the International, for which they receive their per capita payments. The locals are autonomous within the International, the separate locals are autonomous within the Longshore Division, and the Contracting locals are autonomous within the Longshore Division. They are responsible for negotiating local agreements and working rules, and for making sure local employers abide by the contract.

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The Coast Labor Relations Committee members are collectively responsible for running the affairs of the Longshore Division between conventions. Specifically, they serve on the negotiating committee, administer the top level of the grievance procedure, and respond to requests from locals for assistance and information.

The same group of officers, under the title of the Coast Pro-Rota Committee, conduct the financial affairs of the Longshore Division.

The Coast Pro Rota Committee pays the salary of the two Coast Committee members, the support staff, and all costs of the Longshore Division, including the Caucus, legal fees, negotiating contracts and conducting strikes.

These activities are funded by members of the Longshore Division, who pay their share to their local. The payment is collected with the local's dues and sent to the Coast Committee at the International Headquarters in San Francisco.

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The Ten Guiding Principles of the ILWU

The ILWU began with a set of cardinal principles upon which it continues to operate. These were memorialized by the unions Tenth Biennial Convention held in San Francisco in 1953. They are reproduced here for the benefit of all generations of ILWU members, who have been and continue to be instrumental to the union’s success.

I. A Union is built on its members. The strength, understanding and unity of the membership can determine the union’s course and its advancements. The members who work, who make up the union and pay its dues can best determine their own destiny. If the facts are honestly presented to the members in the ranks, they will best judge what should be done and how it should be done. In brief, it is the membership of the union which is the best judge of its own welfare; not the officers, not the employers, not the politicians and the fair weather friends of labor.

Above all, this approach is based on the conviction that given the truth and an opportunity to determine their own course of action, the rank and file in 99 cases out of 100 will take the right path in their own interests and in the interests of all the people.

II. Labor unity is at all times the key for a successful economic advancement. Anything that detracts from labor unity hurts all labor. Any group of workers which decides to put itself above other workers through craft unionism or through cozy deals at the expense of others will in the long run gain but little and inevitably will lose both its substance and its friends.

No matter how difficult the going, a union must put aside all internal differences and issues to combine for the common cause of advancing the welfare of the membership. No union can successfully fulfill its purpose in life if it allows itself to be distracted by any issue which causes division in its ranks and undermines the unity which all labor must have in the face of the employer.

VI. The days are long gone when a union can consider dealing with single employers. The powerful financial interests of the country are bound together in every conceivable type of united organization to promote their own welfare and to resist the demands of labor. Labor can no more win with the ancient weapons of taking on a single employer in industry any more than it can hope to win through the worn-out dream of withholding its skill until an employer sues for peace. The employers of this country are part of a well-organized, carefully coordinated, effective fighting machine. They can be met only on equal terms, which requires industry-wide bargaining and the most extensive economic strength of organized labor.

X. Jurisdictional warfare and jurisdictional raiding must be outlawed by labor itself. Nothing can do as much damage to the ranks of labor and to the principle of labor unity and solidarity as jurisdictional bickering and raiding among unions. Both public support and strike victories are jeopardized by jurisdictional warfare.

This code for rank and file unionism is implemented by the membership’s participation in organization, negotiations, strike machinery, contract enforcement and every other aspect of union life. Thus, its discipline springs out of participation, conviction and the right of the membership to decide its own course of action. The above principles and steps to implement them, and an informed and alert membership make the union what it is.
Before computers, paper followed the goods and went through many different hands. Now information can be put into a computer when the goods leave the manufacturer and tracked by computer till the goods arrive at their point of sale. Computerization has enabled employers to send documentation and planning work off-dock and even overseas.

As early as 1989, shipping lines began moving their agency work inland and out of state so they could ship their contracts with ILWU Local 63 OCU. Workers in the industry caught on quickly and flocked to 63 OCU so they could negotiate job security.

Revealing Services of America, one of the most anti-union of the PMA employers, moved its yard and vessel planning work to Lake City once the work was computerized. Implementation of new technology proved one of the gnarliest negotiations. The union insisted strongly that clerks should retain the work specified in Section 1 of the PCLC, which governs jurisdiction, and keep control over the work process as the technology changed.

Technology has also reshaped retailing practices, and the changes have rippled through the cargo-handling chain.

WILL OUR MOTHER’S WAREHOUSE

Big retailers like Wal-Mart, Target and Payless now rank among the top importers. They flexed their influence in the West Coast Waterfront Coalition during the 2003 contract fight. Their business practices mold the warehousing end of the cargo-handling chain.

As retailers no longer store inventory in warehouses and hope their good marketing instincts will sell out the amount of stuff they store but don’t sell.

Now they demand more frequent, smaller deliveries tailored to customer demand and delivered “just in time,” ready to put on the store floor. Bar codes and computers and the ability to transfer large quantities of data electronically can enable stores to collect exact information on sales trends and inventory that needs to be re-stocked.

Most modern distribution centers aim to move goods out as quickly as possible.

Highly automated, they often “cross-dock,” taking items out of one truck, sorting them and then sending them by conveyor to other waiting trucks. These facilities also provide a range of services to get products “store-ready,” such as labeling, shrink-wrapping and even assembling.

The labor costs at warehouse and distribution centers, which aim to move goods out as quickly as possible.

Firms watch out for unions when they decide where to locate, logistics expert Evan Armstrong told a trade publication. He put commuting distances, availability of labor and “union activities” on a short list for site selection criteria. “Different parts of a city can have different levels of union activity,” he said.

GLOBALIZATION PUSHES PORTS INLAND

Shippers are paying more attention now to handling logistics cheaply. “We are at the point now where logistics will make or break a company’s profits in the marketplace,” the president of a small logistics company told a trade publication.

“Everyone can buy the same stuff inexpensively if it’s made in China,” he said.

Capital chases the lowest wages around the world. Employers siphon jobs from the U.S. to countries where they can pay non-union workers that barely support life. No news here. But then the goods produced overseas must get shipped to the U.S. market for sale. The huge influx of goods is swamping West Coast ports.

Cargo volume in ILWU ports has more than doubled in the last 20 years. For the last several years, industry analysts have predicted this volume would double and triple by 2020. And the new generation of container ships is coming on line. These new ships will handle nearly 40 percent more cargo than the older models.

“Operations are moving inland, away from the docks, in response to scarce land, overcrowded transportation corridors, and higher labor costs at the port,” the ILE researchers found. “Sometimes functions that historically were done on dock are being performed hundreds of miles inland.”

Southern California has seen warehouses and distribution centers mushroom in the “Inland Empire” area, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. In Northern California, the river port of Stockton boasts the largest concentration of distribution facilities in the country. Warehouses are blooming near Sacramento in Dixon and Woodland, and as far out as Sparks, Nev., where the costs of industrial space run half those in California.

Washington State warehousing has grown in the Kent Valley south and east of Seattle.

If you visit Victorville today, you see the skeleton of the abandoned Air Force base, with jumbo UPS, United and Airborne Express cargo planes taking off and landing in one section. But when the development is complete there, cargo will arrive on bills of lading marked for the “Port of Victorville.”

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BIRTH OF THE OCTOPI

PMA member companies have branched out just as others in the industry have. Their parent companies have tentacles in everything from logistics to warehousing.

“The mobility, flexibility and organizational reach of cargo-handling companies operating in this more integrated supply chain provide companies with a greater capacity to evade the jurisdictional reach of the union,” the ILE researchers noted. The organization surrounding a typical PMA company looks like the model in the chart above.

Retired ILWU International Representative Abba Ramos always advised organizers, “Follow the container!” To survive and thrive in the changing cargo-handling industry, the union will need to “follow the bytes” as well, and understand the path of the information about cargo as well as the cargo itself.

As the ILE researchers concluded, “The ILWU must confront the challenge of thinking industrially beyond the docks and organizing the full cargo-handling supply chain whether on or off the docks.” This will require strongly determined and strategic organizing, but close collaboration with the rest of the labor movement.

To get a copy of the Institute for Labor and Employment Report, “On the Waterfront and Beyond: Technology and Cargo-related Employment on the West Coast,” send an e-mail to peterolney@ilwu.org.
COLUMBIA RIVER DREDGING TO PROCEED

Most of the world's largest ships will soon be able to call on Columbia River ports, thanks to years of lobbying by the ILWU and its coalition partners. The Army Corps of Engineers announced Dec. 9 it would begin dredging the Columbia River as early as this spring.

The Columbia Channel Improvement Project will clear the shipping channel so it will be at least 43 feet deep from Portland to the area. This comes as a result of political action by the ILWU and its allies—a list of more than 200 unions, cities, ports, business and community groups. The channel should be ready for use by the summer of 2007. The only hang-up would be the need for federal matching funds of $40 million for fiscal year 2006, and that might require additional political work from the coalition if Congress or the president balks. In that case more political action would be required.

Longshore Local 8's Jeff Smith, in his role as Columbia River District Council President, has been working on the plan. In the process, Smith, the CRDC and the ILWU Legislative office in Washington, D.C., provided the administration, local governors and Members of Congress for the plan. Congratulation is due up and down the Columbia for the project this year, in addition to several million dollars and years that's enough to get started. The states sharing the river as a boundary, Washington, Oregon and Idaho, are all checking in on the third of the cost between them.

"The river transports 33 million tons of cargo worth $15 billion each year," Smith said. "The total project cost is estimated at $150.5 million. The states have matched up $25 million for the 600-foot wide navigation channel, not in the shallow areas that host endangered and threatened species. Only 35 percent of the total river route is dredged.

The news comes at a good time for the port. While Portland enjoyed a large tonnage gain, winter's $15 billion in exports. Exports last year gained 20 percent over 2003—but the boom caused unprecedented congestion, which cost the port $150.5 million.

"It's real important that the river stay's dredged because if they had to truck cargo from Seattle to the river it would cost us a lot more," Smith said. "The Columbia River ports are number one in the country in terms of exports, but the ships can't leave fully loaded. With the extra three feet of draft a ship could be able to load 8,000 tons more on their vessels. The corn, wheat and grain from upriver states that come down our river come from as far away as Idaho, Minnesota, Nebraska and the Dakotas.

Agriculture is one of the few areas where the U.S. exports more than it imports. Exports last year reached a record $61.5 billion, while imports hit a record $51.3 billion. The U.S. is a net exporter of agriculture, and in pork, grain and wheat.

"If we don't have the river deepened those farmers will have to send their produce by rail or truck to get to going to cost them more money," Smith said. "The livelihoods of people all over the country will be affected. More than 40,000 local jobs all over the country are involved." Smith noted that 3.5 percent of the total river route is dredged.

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Ohio vote count challenged

COLUMBUS, OHIO—JAN. 3, 2005: Charging that George Bush's victory in the Presidential election was tainted by cheating in the key battleground state of Ohio, nearly a thousand activists rallied her to demand that all votes be counted and that an investigation of irregularities be conducted.

Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell has certified results showing that Bush defeated John Kerry by 119,775 votes in Ohio. Had the state gone the other way, Kerry would have been elected President.

But opponents say there were too many problems on Election Day in Ohio to be incidental. They cite long lines that forced voters in some heavily African-American precincts to wait hours to vote, sometimes in the pouring rain, because fewer voting machines than usual were delivered, while voting machines were adequate and lines short in Republican districts.

"I waited for one and one-half hours but heard that it was a three-hour wait," Heather Shannon, a Columbus voter, said in an affidavit.

"I did not see any evidence that Bush's margin was in any way a result of fraud or cheating," he added. "I do not believe that Bush's narrow margin was in any way a result of fraud or cheating."

Rev. Jesse Jackson and Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones were in attendance.

"We still find workplaces that haven't been changed to help relieve worker stress and health. But one area we're improving in is our ability to focus on enforcement," Sweeney said.

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"Sweeney noted that the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, an independent federal agency, recently criticized OSHA's lack of enforcement and "business representatives often rejected safety and health recommendations, and OSHA consultations built-in part of the job, and the agency does not just concentrate on enforcement."

In past years, corporate executives often rejected safety and health concerns, Sweeney acknowledged. His industrial hygiene colleagues reported similar resistance. Even now, not all businesses accept safety and health concerns, he added.

Despite OSHA's emphasis on cooperation and concentration on most-hazardous industries—such as construction, health care and food manufacturing—Henshaw said there are still companies that have the old view of OSHA as an enforder. "We're changing the image of the 'OSHA Cowboy,' and that we're not just out there enforcement," he said.

OSHA created a culture of "safety and health," and workers "will do more to improve it themselves," he said.

OSHA's budget. Bush had more than five times the allotment Bush's predecessor, President Bill Clinton, provided for OSHA, Sweeney said. "President Bush recognizes that OSHA is a part of the infrastructure that keeps the workplace safe and healthy," he said.

"Current safety and health standards are not regulated at all or subject to weak and out-of-date requirements," AFL-CIO Safety and Health Director Peg Seminario said in an Internet statement.

"For example, OSHA has been unable to update permissible exposure limits for toxic chemicals. The levels in place are largely 1968 limits adopted as standards in 1971," she said. "Those standards were set in 1968, and the 1970 passage of the Clean Air Act guaranteed that their vote matters, that the vote is counted, and that in the voting booth of their community, that vote is counted."

"I had to leave because I didn't have anyone else to watch my child. At the time I was there, they were working," she said.

"I was there when they were working," she said.

"Everyone of this country who is registered to vote should be guaranteed that their vote matters, that their vote is counted, and that in the voting booth of their community, that vote is counted."

Fellow Ohioans:

"UNLESS WE DECIDE YOURS "SHOULDN'T"

SHOULD?

UNLESS WE DECIDE YOURS "SHOULD"
ILWU Locals spread holiday goodwill

E ach year during the holidays, ILWU locals coastwise feed homeless families, visit sick children in local hospitals and promote education of underprivileged children with their generosity and volunteerism. Activities vary from local-to-local, but all are aimed at commitment to give back to their communities, to help the most vulnerable and lift up the spirits of children and children in need.

In Portland, clerks’ Local 40’s Dawn DesBrissy helped coordinate a toy drive for Caring Communities of North Portland and the Tri-City Food Bank. Local members also delivered donated toys to the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children.

Helping DesBrissy manage the gift drive is Art Easterly (Local 40 dispatcher), Jerry Bitz (Local 40 dispatcher), Jeff Smith (Local 8 Vice President) and Pat McDonald (Local 8 Public Relations Director). Kathleen Harrison (40), Mark Drost (40), Edwinna Kirk (8), and Gayle Sartain and Bob Yates (Locals 8 and 8 federal credit union) were all instrumental in making this year’s toy drive a success. Some locals 8, 4, and 92 collected and delivered nearly 700 gifts, including 100 bicycles and helmets, to the Caring Community for their 2004 Holiday Gift Drive. This is the third year the ILWU has been involved and was the main sponsor of the event.

“It is so gratifying to say, that because of the ILWU’s generous donation, a thousand people in Multnomah County received a gift this holiday season,” DesBrissy said.

In Longmire Local 53 in Newport, Ore., members made a $500 donation for the second consecutive season in support and take care of the poor, themselves, we do it through the democratized procedure called organizing that serves a holiday lunch to over 1,200 people.

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In Longmire Local 53 in Newport, Ore., members made a $500 donation for the second consecutive season in support and take care of the poor, themselves, we do it through the democratized procedure called organizing that serves a holiday lunch to over 1,200 people.

ILWU locals coastwise feed homeless families, visit sick children in local hospitals and promote education of underprivileged children with their generosity and volunteerism. Activities vary from local-to-local, but all are aimed at commitment to give back to their communities, to help the most vulnerable and lift up the spirits of children and children in need.

ILWU Locals spread holiday goodwill

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Remembering Ottile Markholt—Labor Historian/Activist

By Ron Magden

Ottile Markholt’s passing on November 25, 2004, in Tacoma, Washington, was a major vacuum in the field of the history of labor in the Pacific Northwest. For 69 years she dominated the field as the tireless and sometimes controversial author of a dozen books and hundreds of articles on unionism. Her controversial author of a dozen books and hundreds of articles on unionism. Her

Ottile Markholt was also a labor activist, particularly in the activities of the Pierce County Central Labor Council. In spite of her desire to be an indifferent. "Art was a great longshoreman," Paich said. "He was proud to be considered a member in good standing of The Club of Longshore workers up and down the Coast," Ylonen said. "When he was here we always had a shot of scotch when we finished work. Last time he bought. Next time I see him, it's my turn to buy.”

Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

RECENT RETIREES:
Local 4—William Rasmussen, Local 8—Luis B. Baker, Philip Lewis, Albert Oliver Jr., Andrew Sims (Barbara), John Palica (Trujillo), S. R. Gutierrez (Esther), Ricardo Oteh (Sandra), John Hazard (Anne), Local 19—Johns Wilson, Frank Oligin, Bobbie King (Howard), Local 21—Robert Heulin, Anna Allahyar; two great-grandsons, Dustin Markholt and Kelly Allahyar; and one great-grandson, Caleb Crockett. She was often joined on union picket lines by her sons and grandchildren.

A memorial celebration of Ottile Markholt’s life was held January 30, 2005, with the time and place to be announced. She asked that memorial donations be sent to the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association, PO Box 75048, Seattle, WA 98125.

DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 8—Anne Suei, Local 10—Carrie Randolph, Naomi Milton, Willie Ozone, Local 12—Ester Russell, Local 13—Ann Marie Purcell, Lucia Donatoni, Josephine Martinez, Elia Knox, Oterina Lavarini; Local 19—Gloria Dorris, Miriam Mirak, Didi Schwartz, Lorraine Spellacy; Local 21—Flavie Hansen, Esther Raappana; Local 24—Leona McNeice, Gertrude Mackenzie; Local 26—Emily Lease; Local 34—Claire Markholt, Dora Beason, June Stone, Local 52—Ellen McNamee; Local 63—Helen Meyer, Virginia Buth, Joyce Taber; Local 75—Mary Wani, Dolores Espinoso; Local 98—Helen Bokovitch, Mabel Thorsen.

Art Johnson remembered by his friends

by Tom Price

L ongshore Local 83 lost its president last July when Art Johnson passed away after a battle with leukemia. The illness took him swiftly, and much too soon, his many friends and family say.

Johnson was born July 17, 1947 in Port Angeles, Washington. He moved to Portland when he was two and he grew up there. He attended Portland’s Grant High School, graduating in 1965. Then he moved to Newport, Ore., in 1969, worked as a casual for about 13 years and joined Local 83, where he learned much from Johnson.

He traveled, sleeping in his camper, he taught us of the hardships of longshore workers moving between ports. "Chaplin was a close personal friend of mine," he said. "Someone I could frustrate, and he'd just sit back calmly, and nothing would get to him. But when he had a vision to go somewhere, he'd follow that through. He never dropped the ball, and if he said he'd do something, he did it. You could always count on him."

Johnson stood for the ten-worker rule at the small ports, and he is given much credit for getting the rule established in the 1999 longshore contract.

Other people started the battle, but Art finished it off," Burchett said. "That means no port can go below ten jobs in his O&A. In Newport, we were down to eight guys, it was hard to fill a gang. This helps with the big ports, and in this way no port comes up short when they need people. He just kept beating on the door until we got it.

"We traveled to Seattle, Olympia, Tacoma, Aberdeen, you name it. He had a wife and one son, Matt. We just took him in. It was his dad's wish that he should work on the docks if he wanted to."

Ylonen remembers the brotherhood Johnson showed his fellow workers.

"He was proud to be considered a member in good standing of The Club of Longshore workers up and down the Coast," Ylonen said. "When he was here we always had a shot of scotch when we finished work. Last time he bought. Next time I see him, it's my turn to buy."

Art Johnson at the 2002 longshore contract caucus with his Columbia River area friends. (Left to right) Doug Getchell (Local 12), Jim Daw (Local 8), Jerry Ylonen (Local 8) and Bruce Hoite (Local 8).
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- Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s By Bruce Nelson: the most complete history of the origins, meaning, and impact of the 1934 strike. $13.00
- The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront By David Wellman: the important new study of longshoreing in the ILWU. $15.00 (paperback)
- A Terrible Anger: The 1934 Waterfront and General Strike in San Francisco By David Selvin: the newest and best single narrative history about the San Francisco events of 1934. $16.50
- The March Inland: Origins of the ILWU Warehouse Division 1934-1938 By Harvey Schwartz: new edition of the only comprehensive account of the union's organizing campaign in the northern California warehouse and distribution industry. $9.00

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