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Handling cargo surges

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

Last summer and well into the fall West Coast ports went through a phase when we had 30 or 40 or more vessels a day sitting in the LA harbor. We didn’t have the manpower or the training to accommodate that surge coming at us from Asia. The employers tried to lay the blame on the ILWU in the media and in our communities. They claimed we were part of the problem, that we weren’t answering the call to the job, and they branded us as a fat workforce that was overpaid, under-worked and not willing to cooperate with the industry.

But the record showed we had been calling for more registration, more casual hiring and more training for months before the backup in the harbor. The port infrastructure was so overwhelmed that it was obvious to any honest observer of the industry this was not a union problem. Eventually the employers succumbed to the wisdom of our proposals and registered some 2,000 new Local 13 members and worked with us to develop a new system for selecting more casualties, and hired and trained some 5,000 of them. Clerks’ Local 63 has increased membership too, going from just 1,000 to nearly 1,300 members, and more foremen have been taken in.

We’re continuing to beef up our workforce to accommodate this year’s surge which industry analysts suggest will be even greater. Tacoma alone is expecting a 30 percent increase and Los Angeles/Long Beach will grow from 12-18 percent or higher.

Given this situation, the employers have to work with us to accommodate the long-term needs of the industry. But instead they have been taking a band-aid approach. They are hot to trot when the cargo is at the doorstep, but the minute it slows down, rather than build for the next surge, they back off to save pennies and then throw away millions of dollars when cargo hits and they’re not ready. That’s the shortsighted kind of subterfuge rather than live up to what they agreed to. They didn’t make much difference in March. They have backed away from their commitment in Southern California to register more workers and to bring in the proper number of people into the casual pool to be trained and ready for the next surge. Their penny-wise, dollar-foolish approach threatens to bite them again this year with a shortage of truck drivers. They have not big enough facilities with sufficient equipment for us to simulate real working conditions. When everyone is more mindful than ever of the hazards the cargo surge and dock congestion bring.

As we approach this year’s peak season we have to be more mindful than ever of the hazards the cargo surge and dock congestion bring.

we’re supposed to be working for a living.

Steve Stallone
Editor
By Steve Stallone

February 2005

“A Call to Conscience”

Black History Month celebration in Tacoma

After taking a year hiatus, ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams produced another one of his Black History and Labor celebrations. With George W. Bush having been re-installed in the White House for another four years and the nation and the world facing an ever-increasing onslaught of neo-conservatism, Adams entitled this year’s event “A Call to Conscience.” The star-studded program presented at Tacoma’s Pantages Theater Feb. 22 proved to be up to the challenge.

“At this time people have to get off the sidelines and do something,” Adams said. “We have to do some soul searching. We have to question everything, decide what action to take and take responsibility. If we don’t, we’re saying it’s okay.”

With that call in mind, keynote speaker and actor/activist Danny Glover put the concept of Black History Month into the current social context. The popular approach of recognizing “firsts,” the first African American to do this or accomplish that, diverts us from seeing Black history as a collective movement, he said. “Black history takes place in an historical and political context that includes the history of many other struggles for social justice,” Glover said.

He noted that racism started when Columbus killed the first Native American and has now taken a new mutation against Muslims and Southeast Asians.

“The role of racism determines who goes to school and who goes to jail, who receives health care and who doesn’t,” Glover said. “We have to fight against racism against Arab Americans and Muslim Americans as vigilantly as we fought racism against African Americans.”

Glover had been introduced by Bill Fletcher Jr., the president of TransAfrica Forum, a former assistant to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and the AFL-CIO’s coordinator of the federation’s Charleston 5 campaign. Fletcher opened his remarks with a tribute to Ossie Davis, the great African American actor and activist who had headlined the Black History event in 2002 and had been scheduled to appear again this year, but died a couple weeks before.

The event that day was dedicated to Davis’ memory and a tribute to him included a short video clip of his keynote speech from 2002.

“The Ossie Davis I will miss the most was the Ossie Davis who read the eulogy at the funeral of Malcolm X, the Ossie Davis who was an outspoken opponent of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the Ossie Davis who stood with the workers and their unions in their struggles for social and economic justice, the Ossie Davis who refused to let the red-baiters and the black-baiters silence his voice for freedom, peace and justice,” Fletcher said.

Glover noted that the day before, Feb. 21, was the 40th anniversary of Malcolm X’s death. The New York Times decided to write about the 40th anniversary of “The Sound of Music,” but ignored Malcolm X.

“Nonetheless, Fletcher said, Malcolm X cannot be ignored. Being new in the face of oppression. He said what needed to be said and he said it unapologetically and eloquentiy. He situated the African American struggle in a global context. But most importantly, he spoke for the black working class and the marginalized sections of the black communities.

“He was the voice of the voiceless,” Fletcher said.

Also on the bill was Chuck D, leader of the rap group Public Enemy, author and radio talk show host on the Air America network. He tried to weave together themes of hip hop, its place in Black culture and how the strangle on the people of the arts is a disservice to the aspirng of us finally being equal.”

Chuck D also admonished his audience to really know Black history.

“A system that works against people who know not who they are, you’re fodder for the machine,” he said. “You must rage against the machine.”

This year’s program highlighted women’s issues and featured on the speakers list Naomi Tutu, daughter of Nobel Peace Prize winner South Africa Bishop Desmond Tutu, political commentator and author Arianna Huffington and three-time Olympic gymnast Dominique Dawes.

Tutu spoke directly to the issue of conscience and doing the right thing. She noted that during the time of slavery, white slave owners would talk about how savage the Blacks were and how they wanted to ravage and kill.

“Meanwhile it was the slave owners who were ravaging and killing and brutalizing. But the best way for them to deal with their conscience was to blame the person they were oppressing,” Tutu said. “Our responsibility as people of conscience is to say we are not going to fall for those lies.”

Arianna Huffington railed against the Bush administration and all politicians who are not dealing with the crises in education and health care in this country, but are instead spending billions on an immoral war in Iraq while giving tax breaks to the rich.

She chided the audience to heed the call to conscience and take action to change the world.

“We have to follow our own conscience,” she said. “We need to look at ourselves in the mirror and see the leader in the mirror. The leadership has to come from ourselves, our communities, from the grassroots.”

Dominique Dawes talked about focus and work to become an Olympic gold medalist and encouraged the young people in the audience to discover what they could accomplish.

“You all have something to offer, not just to other people, but to yourself,” she said. “You have to go out there and find out where your talent lies if you don’t know.”

Between speakers ILWU Tacoma Local 23 longshore worker and spoken word artist Zeek Green delighted the crowd with his provocative rhymes and Darren Malamed & Co., sometimes with vocalist Josie Howell, provided jazz funk grooves to ease the heavy messages.

The night before the Pantages Theater was filled with the beautiful sounds of pianist Todd Cochran’s original compositions accompanied by Hubert Laws on flute and Bennie Maupin on saxophone. That was followed by the premier showing of a new film produced by Willie Adams entitled “The Black Composer” about African American musicians who broke into the world of movie music. This “work in progress” features interviews with Quincy Jones, Herbie Hancock, Isaac Hayes, Curtis Mayfield, Stanley Clarke, Patrice Rushen and others, as well as clips from some of the old films they worked on.

The entire Call to Conscience event can be viewed as streaming video at www.museumentertainment.com where it was broadcast live around the world.
A national budget speaks to the values and priorities a president holds for the American people. It is a clear outline of his agenda and a document that should capture the hopes and aspirations of the American people. But the budget George W. Bush has proposed captures the hopes and dreams of the wealthy. For everyone else he offers only despair and nightmares.

Bush’s base is that billions of dollars in tax cuts for the super-rich must be made permanent. To achieve that goal, he is playing reverse Robin Hood, slashing critical programs for women, infants and children, the sick, the poor, and the disabled.

It appears that Bush is listening to Grover Norquist, the right-wing Republican leader who has a habit of dictating to the Republican Party what it can and can’t do. He expressed his views of government spending on the needy in unmistakable terms.

"We must cut government in half to get down to the size where we can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub," he said.

Programs that target low-income families to provide food assistance to pregnant women, infants and children, programs for early childhood education and child care, and home ownership programs would all be subject to substantial cuts by 2010. These cuts could significantly reduce the number of low-income families who are served by these programs. According to figures provided by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, by 2010 about 670,000 fewer women, infants, and children would be served under the Special Supplemental Nutrition program for women, infants, and children; 300,000 fewer children in low-income working families would be provided child care; 170,000 fewer elderly and disabled individuals would receive rental assistance and vouchers; and nearly 120,000 fewer children would be served through Head Start.

Bush’s budget cuts and shifts of at least $60 billion in Medicaid costs to the states over 10 years. This level of cuts and transfers would completely eliminate coverage for a substantial number of low-income people, increasing the ranks of the uninsured.

What kind of country would tolerate this kind of cruel policy? What kind of compassionate conservative would offer new tax cuts to the wealthy, spend a week on a war and at the same time tell poor women and children to stick it up and tighten their belts.

The budget is a slap in the face to the very U.S. troops Bush implores us to support in his war in Iraq. It requires veterans to pay $250 to enroll in health services and doubles their co-payments for prescription drugs. It provides for a paltry 1.7 percent increase in spending on the needy in unmistakable terms. This level of cuts and shifts means that workers look to gain new skills to compete in an increasingly tight job market. Dislocated workers will be hurt the most, as there no longer would be dedicated funding guaranteed to help them find new jobs. At-risk teens also will find fewer sources of job opportunities.

The Bush budget eliminates the Employment Service, the very program that connects unemployed workers with jobs. This comes at a time when millions of workers continue to struggle to find jobs. Last year, the Employment Service served over 15 million workers.

The Bush budget proposes massive cuts for the Department of Labor, the federal agency charged with enforcing the laws and programs that protect the American worker. The Department of Labor budget is cut by $435 million, a reduction of 3.6 percent. These reduced resources mean less job protection for American workers.

Every year, Bush has proposed eliminating funding for the Migrant and Seasonal farm workers training program. This critical program provides job training and referrals for farm workers who are employed in an industry characterized by chronic seasonal unemployment and under-employment.

The Bush budget cuts U.S. commitment to raising international labor standards. American workers could be expected to face workers earning substandard wages and benefits. However, the Bush administration’s elimination of the Bush budget’s $2 billion for programs to raise wages and benefits for workers in nearly $200 million.

The Bush budget block grants critical job training programs. Currently, there is a separate funding stream for each of the training programs: Adult Training, Dislocated Worker Training, Dislocated Worker Training, and the Employment Service. The Bush budget eliminates or blocks grants to the adult, youth and dislocated worker programs. Historically, Congress tends to cut overall funding when different programs are combined. This risky scheme jeopardizes critical training resources just as workers look to gain new skills to compete in an increasingly tight job market. Dislocated worker programs will be hurt the most, as there no longer would be dedicated funding.

The Bush budget cuts hundreds of millions of dollars in tax cuts for the rich, creates huge deficits, and outcuts for the working class.

On the issue of homeland security, Bush’s budget fails to protect us. The budget includes NO specific amount for port security grants, which were funded at $150 million in 2005 (about 10 percent of what the Coast Guard estimated would be necessary in 2005 to meet the requirements of the Maritime Transportation Security Act). For 2006, the budget proposes to combine ports with other non-aviation targeted infrastructure projects such as energy infrastructure. This budget is possibly the most dishonest of all budgets submitted to Congress. It does not include the true cost of the “war on terrorism” in Iraq or Afghanistan. Nor does it reflect the transition cost of Bush’s Social Security privatization scheme, estimated at several trillion dollars.

The U.S. taxpayer is being sent a bill for a war in Iraq that costs well over a billion dollars a week! The Bush administration has requested another $82 billion in supplemental spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as some aid to help countries devastated by the Asian tsunami. This funding request is classified as “emergency spending” and not part of the budget. About $61 billion is for the Iraq war cost. Congress is expected to approve Bush’s request. Upon approval, total spending for the Iraq war will reach nearly $210 billion, including military, reconstruction, and other Iraq war-related expenditures.

When Bush dragged the country into this war, his minions told Congress not to worry—Iraq can finance its reconstruction from revenues from the oil. Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of Defense, said in sworn Congressional testimony, “The oil revenues of Iraq could bring between $50 and $100 billion over the course of the next two or three years. We are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon.”

In the two years of occupation so far, the revenues have not been dedicated to the reconstruction of Iraqi infrastructure that the U.S. destroyed, and probably never will. The U.S. taxpayers are stuck with that bill.

Bush’s plan to “save” Social Security is to create private investment accounts, but the enormous costs of this change are not in his budget. Economists Peter Diamond and Peter Orszag have estimated that the general revenue transfers required to finance the transition costs would be $2 trillion. Bush’s plan would divert payroll taxes from traditional Social Security and put it in private accounts for the benefit of Wall Street financiers. The $2 trillion dollar diversion would destabilize the system so much it would assure the bankruptcy of not just retirement fund, but the fund to support disabled workers and the widows and orphans of workers who die young.

Diamond, an Institute Professor at MIT and Orszag, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, have written extensively on solving long-term solvency issues concerning the Social Security system. They contend that it “is unsustainable and unnecessary to destroy the program in order to save it.”

Finally, the Bush’s budget sets a new record deficit of $427 billion. This wipes out the $5.6 trillion surplus Bush inherited from President Clinton just four years ago. The budget pretends to reduce the deficit in half over five years, but it doesn’t even start.

Bush’s plan for reducing the deficit is to take from the poor and needy and to give as much as possible to the rich and greedy. Bush has shown his true heart in this budget proposal and it is the same as Grover Norquist’s. He wants to weaken the American worker and the poor so much that they can be dragged into a bathtub and drowned.

Call your Senator and member of Congress today at 202-225-3121 and express outrage over the President’s Budget.
Local 6 sees no rest ahead

By Marcy Rein

Each speaker at the 58th convention of warehouse Local 6 argued. Members of the local will need to keep up their work in the political arena and step up organizing if they hope to slow the steady rain of attacks by the government and their employers.

"The recent Bush and Geo. Schwarzenegger are promoting attacks on the progress that have made for a better life since the dark days of the Great Depression," newly elected Local 6 President Efren Alarcon said in the Officers' Report. "Now is the time to step out of our comfort zone and participate in our union."

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams hit the point even harder. "The ILWU has always aimed high, set the goal high," Adams said. "We've worked in the very beginning a new March Inland. We have to look at our commitment. Each of us has to look inside and ask, 'Am I doing everything I can?'"

Two registered delegates and 31 guests attended the convention. Mayor Barbara Lee and Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown joined Local 6 Officers' Report. "Now is the time to participate in our union." Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus Leon Harris, San Francisco Central Labor Council Executive Secretary-Treasurer Tim Paulson. As a warehouse worker, union activist and insightful strategist, Goldblatt played a key role in the 1934-38 warehouse organizing drive known as the March Inland. He served as Local 6 vice president in 1937, then as Local 6 president until 1957.

Secretaries and Treasurers of the various ILWU locals were called to address the convention.

"We still need some Paul Revere of conscience to alert the working people that the struggle is still at hand," he said. "To an extent, leadership is like a lantern in the darkness of the world."

"The law no longer protects workers who desire union representation," Alarcon said. "We are learning that the way to prepare workers who are organizing is to take direct action like the brothers and sisters at Republic Landfill did last summer. Management agreed to bargain after the workers walked off the job and demanded Local 6 be recognized as the union that represents them.

Workers at Republic are now negotiating a contract, as are Local 6 members at 11 other houses. Eight contracts were negotiated and ratified last year, and four are up this year, including Bayer and Waste Management Landfill, two of the local's largest and most active houses.

After Alarcon gave the Officers' Report, Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker presented the budget. Members followed along intently as Pecker broke down the income and expenses. By watching every penny, the local should be able to keep its head above water this year, Pecker reported. The budget passed unanimously, as did the three resolutions before the convention.

The first resolution amended the local's constitution to allow its Board of Trustees from nine members to eight. The second expressed Local 6's solidarity with striking farm and sugarcane workers at the Hacienda Luisita in the Philippines. Fourteen people died, more than 100 were arrested and more than 440 remain missing after the army and national police attacked the strikers in November 2004. The third resolution called on President Bush to bring the troops home from Iraq now and provide adequate services for veterans and their families. It was passed unanimously by all 45,000 members and supporters.

"The ILWU is as whole and the various ILWU locals to take the same position."

In the discussion of the anti-war resolution, Jim McMahon from the International Organizing Director Peter Olney pointed out a breed of unionism to the convention on the ILWU's organizing program.

"I accept this award on behalf of the 45,000 men and women and their families of the ILWU, a union which is moving with majesty and com for risk and danger to continue to better the lives of working people," Adams said to audience of several hundred, including dozens of ILWU officers, members and pensioners. "I accept this award as a trustee, for in the depths of my heart I am aware that this award is much more than an honor to me personally. The membership is the salt of the earth. Leaders come and go—the members remain forever."

Adams cited the ILWU's long history of commitment to civil rights, from the union's beginnings in 1921 when its founder leader Harry Bridges promised the Black community that if they did not scab on striking longshore workers, they would make sure they got into the union, to 1942 when then-ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Louis Goldblatt was the only union leader to speak out against the Japanese-American internment during WWII, to the union's boycotts of apartheid South African ships.

Adams went on to assert that the current times require more of that progressive vision and activism.

"We still need some Paul Reveres of conscience to alert the working people that the struggle is still at hand," he said. "To an extent, leadership is like beauty—it's hard to define, but you know it when you see it."
emboldened by the Bush-Republican government's aggressively anti-worker policies, companies everywhere are coming to bargain tables and courts looking to slash their workers' share of the wealth they produce. Unions everywhere are entering negotiations on the defensive, facing employer demands for deep cuts in health care and pensions, two-tier compensation changes and looser rules on outsourcing jobs.

Responding to the latest bargaining climate the ILWU held its first Advanced Leadership Education and Development Institute on contract negotiations for 84 local officers and rank-and-file activists—the majority of whom were selected to participate because they had previously attended basic LEAD programs put on by the ILWU's Southern California and Rick Ogelsby from the Puget Sound discussed approaches for retesting (or not) to employer negotiators—or to members of the union's own committee who may stymie or obstruct the process.

Then Joel Schaffer, a national mediator who sat in on part of the 2002 ILWU Longshore negotiations, and has previously assisted with LEAD programs, talked about the need to write effective contract language. Keep it simple, he said, so that workers and frontline supervisors will understand it and an arbitrator will enforce it in agreement with the union. Good language should define, protect and expand the contract, build a truce with management and build the union.

Schaffer also urged taking good notes during meetings, touting those notes during negotiations and trying to bring them through arbitrations. This, he said, is the key to winning negotiations.

"You have to have the rank and file behind you," Spinosa said. "That's the ILWU tradition."

Gould concluded the panel with the observation that all sections of the ILWU are confronted with change and are meeting that challenge by relying on traditions of rank-and-file democracy to forge difficult solutions in these troubled times.

On Wednesday morning a couple of regional mediators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services, a government agency that provides help in resolving labor contract disputes, reviewed negotiating styles. Linda Gonzales from Southern California and Rick Ogelsby from the Puget Sound discussed approaches for retesting (or not) to employer negotiators—or to members of the union's own committee who may stymie or obstruct the process.

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The negotiations and said the negotiating team should assign a chief note taker to focus on the task. Such notes can be critical in later arbitrations when trying to determine the intention of language that may be in dispute. Who proposed what when and what problem was trying to be solved, what other formulations were rejected and if a particular clause was tied to the acceptance of another clause could all give clarity in an arbitration.

Scheffer then led the seminar participants in a couple of exercises, rewriting some poor contract language and then having them play arbitrator and interpret some contract language that was ambiguous.

That afternoon participants were divided up into three sets of union and employer negotiating teams for some role playing exercises that turned the negotiations and said the negotiating team should assign a chief note taker to focus on the contract. The ensuing discussions gave them a good glimpse of how difficult finding agreements can be.

The difficulties in negotiating health and welfare provisions were underscored the next day. With health care costs increasing by double digit percentage every year and becoming more and more the issue in bargaining, Professor Ramon Castellblanch of San Francisco State University addressed the national crisis.

"Unions usually look at health care as a black hole we just throw money into, either us or the employers," Castellblanch said. "But it doesn’t have to be that way."

Canada, Japan and most European countries have national health insurance and the cost to society is about the same as in the U.S. except that all citizens are covered, where here more than 45 million Americans are uninsured. And most of those countries have a higher quality of care, longer life expectancies, lower infant mortality rates and lower prescription drug prices. The reason, Castellblanch said, is that the health care industry faces little accountability in the U.S. and care is profit-driven. Employers are responding with a new level of aggressiveness, pushing increasing costs onto their workers. Unions need to ally with public sector health care workers and those without health care, Castellblanch said, to defend against cuts in Medicare and Medicaid and to demand more accountability and better-run health care plans.

ILWU Longshore Benefits Specialist George Romero pointed out that while the union has always supported national health care for all, Bush is moving in the opposite direction pushing for individual health savings accounts similar to 401(k)s with all the same financial risks. Romero noted that a recent study by Johns with Justice concluded that eliminating the excess administrative costs of health care with a single-payer system could cover all uninsured Americans.

This was followed by a panel discussion of health care bargaining in specific ILWU contracts. Research Director Bargmann, who the International Officers assigned to assist the Local 30 borax miners in the Southern California desert in their recent negotiations, said the company came to the table determined to squeeze concessions out of the workers. The union negotiators fought it off as much as they could and did maintain their long-term disability and even raised the life time cap, but in the end they had to accept a 20 percent copay on their premiums as well as increased drug copays and the loss of some of the benefits such as orthodontic and chiropractic coverage.

Local 30 President Lamour Riddle acknowledged his group took a bit in the negotiations because they hadn’t prepared sufficiently in advance.

"If you don’t prepare, you will take some licks as we did," Riddle said.

Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyatt said that in the Northern California Master Warehouse negotiations last year they spent 10 weeks of the three-month bargaining just on health care and pensions. The union team costed out each benefit and then tried to figure out how to maintain as many of them as they could. They still ended up with increased copays.

IBU National Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast spoke about the Alaskan seafood processing contracts that used to have good health care coverage. But the workers lost leverage over the years.

"We thought they couldn’t move the fishing grounds, like they can’t move the docks," Mast said. "But then they started farming fish."

The benefits have been cut so drastically there’s little more to cut and still have a plan, she added.

Romero addressed the 2002 Longshore negotiations that ended up spending more than three months dealing only with health care. He said the union’s strategy was to find ways to lower costs while maintaining or improving benefits.

"We’re paying for it," he said. "Otherwise we would be taking the money as wages.

Romero cited an example where the employer wanted to put all B registrant longshore workers in the HMO instead of the Preferred Provider Plan as a way to reduce costs. The union eventually agreed to require all new B registrants to be in the HMO for their first 18 months, but only if they got their benefits immediately after registration and not six months later as the previous contract required. The employers got reduced costs, but the workers got medical coverage for themselves and their families sooner.

"But the only way to really get a handle on rising costs is with a national health care program," Romero concluded.

Warehouse Local 26 President Luisa Gratz then spoke on selling the settlement to the members after the negotiating team had gotten the best they thought they could. Gratz said the members continued on page 8.
The art of contract bargaining

should be given the time to read and reflect on the contract so ratification discussions are focused and not faltering along the way being pulled over their eyes. She emphasized that the democratic process and that of the officers, the negotiating committee and to the ratification process in the ILWU.

Local 5 President Kristi Lovato and Vice President Ryan Gratz led a joint committee with the Teamsters to deal with the labor relations disputes they were having with management. The members were informed and united, and better prepared for the next set of negotiations.

Local 142's Galadones told how in negotiating hotel contracts in Hawaii, they have bargained to organize the workers that santé the language that says for new operations by the employer will be covered by the contract.

Professor Kathleen McGinn from the Harvard Business School wrapped up the Thursday session with a talk entitled "The View from the Top: What tomorrow's business leaders are learning today at Harvard Business School and what it means for the future of the ILWU."

McGinn had been in Seattle during the 2002 longshore lockout and was intrigued by the situation, especially after the Taft-Hartley injunction. She met Peter Hurtgen, the federal mediator assigned to the negotiations, and invited him to the ILWU Coast Committee and Joe Minnaci, the head of the employer group the Pacific Maritime Association, to a panel discussion on the conflict for her Harvard class. The session was a real eye-open-er for her students, she said, since, although 20 years ago business students took labor law and negotiation classes, labor relations are rarely taught in business schools. With unions representing less than eight percent of workers in the private sector, they are needed to effectively and are certainly treated that way by business leaders.

McGinn posted that collective bargaining and even strikes can't be effective if 90 percent of the country's workers aren't involved. She said unions have to be part of a larger social movement, and to organize on the moral grounds that work-er's rights are civil rights.

"That's the way to win," she concluded.

ILWU International Organizing Director Peter Olney presented the Friday final session on organizing tomorrow and bargaining to organize. He noted that union density, the percentage of workers organized in a particular industry, greatly determines the strength and leverage the union has in bargaining.

The decline in overall union density in the U.S. from its height in 1955 of 35 percent to the current less than 15 percent in the combined public and private sectors is the major reason for the corresponding decline in wages, conditions and political legislation workers now face.

Olney emphasized that in preparing for bar-gaining the union must research its enemies and friends and understand and exploit the employers' vulnerabilities to make it in their interest to settle rather than fight. He then led the participants in an exercise on getting a contract with the company the earlier mock negotiations had been with, particularly in areas of research and using leverage to get the contract.

Taking it to the ranks

Grassroots member education in Local 13

The ILWU's educational seminars have been enthusiastically received by most everyone involved, but some have been further inspired to take the word back to their home locals. Longshore Local 13 already had an education committee in place, but it didn't really coalesce and activate until the Longshore Traditions and History seminar held last September, committee chair Patricia Aguirre said.

"I attended the seminar in Palm Springs," Aguirre said of the tight-knit group, most of whom also attended the International's Union's Advanced LEAD program in January 2005.

With the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach booming, Local 13 has brought in thousands of new members over the last five years and thousands more new casuals. The need for membership education about the union and the labor movement was evident, but the desire for it among the new people wasn't—until the committee gave them a taste.

"I was inspired by what I heard," Aguirre, who has since transferred to clerks' Local 61, said. "Our difficulty was to figure out how to do it, what seminar to do it.

The committee decided to take nine topics, most covered in the Traditions and History seminar, and break off into smaller groups with each one using a combination of a handout, a power point presentation, handouts and a "take action" session, and drawing on the resources of the International's Education, Research and Communications staff. The nine subjects covered in the Traditions and History seminar, and other seminars, include early maritime history, rank-and-file democracy, Wal-Mart and big box corporations, contract crossroads, international ports and solidarity, how the Longshore Division works, how the local works, political action and safety. Different committee members took on the responsibility of chairing a class to put on each class and they do it at the local's membership meetings.

Regardless of the class the committee is also taking its classes to the casuals.

The committee's goal is to prepare the membership for the 2008 contract and beyond. Continuing education will take place in each class with handouts emphasizing certain aspects of the safety code, the longshore contract, the union's constitution and bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order, and political action where appropriate.

The committee has some 50 members who meet twice a month. The core committee, consisting of the subcommittee chairs, meets one more time a month to report on their subcommittee's progress and prepare for their next meetings. The committee has enlisted the assistance of UCLA Professor Goetz Wolf who has worked closely with the ILWU and other unions over the past couple decades.

Much of the committee's core strength comes from its own diversity. Sunshine Campbell works breakbulk, Mike Piazza and Jerry Pomale are lashers, Angel Blanco and Laura Hansen are clerks, John Angel is a yard driver, Frank Bryan is a gearman, Donald Clark is a clerk, and Joshua Flores and Martha Martinez are drivers. Breaking tradition even further, the committee itself includes casuals Zakiya Filami Jendayi and Angel Blanco, Jr.

"When I started as a casual, we were treated as outsiders," Blanco said. "I didn't want to see that continue.'

Piazza too said he thought the casuals should be included in education from the start. "They will be the ones protecting our pensions in the future," he said. "And through understanding the history of the union, maybe they will care about the future."" Power."

The committee's high energy has been infectious and the program is spreading—both clerks' Local 63 and walking bosses Local 94 are supporting it and have members involved. Some committee members are taking classes and using resources at Cal State Long Beach and UCLA to learn more and bring that knowledge to local mem-ber. They are motivated by their desire to prepare for 2008 longshore negotiations and to give back to the union, to share what they've learned.

"I went to the education seminar and learned how much we didn't know and how much resources there were," Bryan said. "Knowledge is power."
The European Commission enraged dockers once again late last year when it resurrected the union-busting European Port Directive. The Directive would eliminate union jobs at 450 of Europe’s ports by allowing shippers to use ship’s crew to load and unload vessels in a process called “self-handling.” It would also allow employers to hire temps to perform port services, a ghostly reminder of the “shape up” system in U.S. longshore history.

Port services include longshore work such as cargo loading, lashing and discharge. It also includes piloting, towing, mooring and passenger service.

Spaniard Loyola de Palacio, the outgoing European Commissioner for Transportation, announced the port services privatization scheme Oct. 13, 2004. This brought immediate protests from dockers, port authorities and the British government. Port workers had battled a similar proposal from 2002-2003 over the right to collectively bargain and form a union—first in Rotterdam, then in the United Kingdom. The ILWU-affiliated International Longshore & Warehouse Union joined Dutch dockers from the Federation of Dutch Transport Workers’ Unions (FNV Bondgenoten) in a massive Sept. 2003 protest in Rotterdam that effectively closed that port and others in Europe.

“Maybe we should involve the rest of the world in our struggle,” said Nick Stam, Coordinator for the Dutch dockers’ union FNV Bondgenoten in Rotterdam, who was arrested during the protest. “Our answer on this Directive will be not different than in 2003,” he told The Dispatcher. ILWU members joined Dutch dockers in a massive Feb. 1-3 protest until Nov. 2003, when the European Parliament narrowly voted to allow the Directive to proceed.

“Maybe we should involve the rest of the world in our struggle,” Stam added. “After all, it is the shipping industry that wants self-handling. They are everywhere. And so are we!”

The ILWU-affiliated International Dockers’ Workers Council issued a blunt statement Oct. 18 that read in part:

“Excluded. That is how dockers all over Europe feel about the EC’s announcement. For de Palacio, workers do not appear to have a voice or a vote. This attitude led to the failure of the last Directive, and if the libertarian stance is maintained, this failure will happen again.”

The Directive was introduced in Valencia Oct. 19 and 20 and planned further mobilizations. The Directive is on the agenda again for the next IDC meeting March 14-18 in Barcelona, Spain.

About 2,500 German dockers and 300 pilot launch drivers stopped work Nov. 19 for an hour in protest.

European Transport Workers’ Federation delegates representing 18 unions in 18 European countries met Dec. 2 and 3 for discussions. The ILWU is affiliated with the ETF through the European Transport Workers’ Federation’s ETF Dockers Section. ETF Secretary Eduardo Chagas said at the conference that European dockers would fight the new Directive as vigorously as they fought the last one.

“European ports are amongst the cheapest and most efficient in the world,” Chagas said. He urged the European Council and Parliament to stop the process and discuss with workers and industry what could be done to promote the maritime sector and “avoid unnecessary social unrest.”

The Belgian dockers have drawn a line in the sand at the Port of Antwerp. They see the proposed Directive as a “Trojan horse” that will ultimately lead to the loss of their jobs.

“The proposal.. .will again pro-voke workers and justified resist-ance in the ports,” Belgian Green Party member Bart Staes told The Dispatcher. “It would have dire consequences for both the social situation of the dock workers and for safety and security in our ports. We will do everything to block it.”

LOCAL 8 BRINGS HOME COLUMBIA RIVER CONTRACTS

Medical examiners in Clark County, Wash., have a new pact. The three-year agreement between the hospital and the Local 8 of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union will provide raises of two percent for each of the first two years and 2.2 percent for the third.

Workers in the five-member unit investigate all non-hospital deaths in the five southeastern Washington counties. They also assist in autopsies, and the new contract provides bonus pay for that work. The terms are retroactive to Feb. 2004.

The workers will avoid any medical co-pays for the first year. If med-ical inflation hits just under the 11 percent mark in the later years some co-pays could be installed. County workers have a somewhat different health plan.

Local 8 LRC member Stuart Wilson explained:

“There are a number of different unions that work for the county,” Wilson said. “They all cooperate together and we have a (union) committee that actually manages our own payroll and human resources policy with the county. The committee manages the costs, chooses the healthcare providers and saves employers a lot of money.”

The practice of “lending” workers to subcontractors will be restricted, he said, which means they will work for subcontractors. Local hosp-itals had been using the county facili-ties for work such as washing workers for the extra work.

Workers approved the contract Nov 2

"Hands off our lunch break!" shouted the crowd gathered on the steps of the State Building in San Francisco Feb. 6 to protest Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's latest shot at worker rights. Their enthusiasm caught on with the children playing in Civic Center Park across the street, and soon a couple dozen youngsters were yelling back at them, "Hands off our lunch!"

Some 75 restaurant and retail workers, bike messengers and garment workers and others came to the noontime rally and press conference to explain the price they would pay if the Governor's proposed changes to state wage and hour law go through.

"If they change the law, our situation will get even worse," said Liliana Sanchez, a former farm worker. "I'd like to put Gov. Schwarzenegger in our shoes, and have him work eight hours a day in mud up to his knees with no break," she said.

Current state rules require employers to give workers a thirty-minute unpaid meal break after six hours of work or pay an hour of wages. Under Schwarzenegger's proposal, employers would no longer have to actually pro-vide a break. They would merely have to notify workers of their right to one. The proposed regulations also make it harder to for workers to sue their employers for breaking the law.

Gov. Schwarzenegger tried to sneak in the rules changes as an "em-ergency" in December, but public outcry slowed him down. The Feb. 8 event coincided with a public hearing at the State Building on the rule changes, one of three held around the state by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement.

"This change is totally consistent with the governor’s pattern of rewarding his corporate contributors at the expense of working Californians," said Tom Paulson, Executive Director of the San Francisco Central Labor Council. Paulson noted that one of the rule changes would shrink the amount of time employers could be held liable for not providing breaks from three years to one year.

This would help Wal-Mart and other companies currently being sued for cheating workers out of breaks. Wal-Mart alone contributed more than $150,000 to Schwarzenegger and the Republican Party in 2004.

A broad coalition of unions and community groups put on the rally, among them the California Labor Federation AFL-CIO, the Day Labor Program & Women's Collective, the San Francisco Labor Council, the Chinese Progressive Association and Young Workers United.

Workers approved the contract Nov 2
Marine clerk turns to longshore family in fight with leukemia

By Bill Orton

Richard Ross, 64, considers himself a lucky man. With 40 years spent as a longshore worker at the Port of Oakland, doing the job he always wanted to do, he wouldn’t be more blessed in his career, he said. Happily married, a father and living a comfortable life are all part of his good fortune.

But Ross is hoping for the biggest lucky break someone can get—a new lease on life. Diagnosed with leukemia in July 2000, Ross is now searching for someone who will donate bone marrow to help him kick the disease.

Ross, 64, a married father and living a healthy and in remission. “She’s been a Godsend.”

Richard Ross and his wife Crystal.

When first went in to the doctors five years ago, I thought that I had the flu or a really bad sinus infection,” said Ross, who worked as a longshore worker and marine clerk, he couldn’t begin chemo therapy.

Bone marrow for a transplant is usually obtained from a relative or parent, which is not an option for Ross, who is an only child and both of his parents are deceased. Matching tissue type from an unrelated donor can be determined by a simple blood test. The best chance for a match, say doctors, is to find a fellow African American.

Only 10 percent of the 5 million volunteers in the National Marrow Donor Program registry are African American, Caribbean, African or black Puerto Rican. So far, no one on the registry is a match.

Ross is now turning to the thousands of fellow brothers and sisters in the longshore family for a potential donor. While he doesn’t know when a donor will come forward for the critical transplant, Ross said he feels lucky.

“The biggest jackpot in the world for me is for just one person to come forward to donate,” said Ross.

The disease is showing the 64-year-old marine clerk just how blessed he is. “I’m one of the luckiest men alive,” said Ross, referring to his wife and the couple’s 12-year-old son, Brandon, and union. Ross credits his wife, Crystal, with helping him to stay on top of complex medical information and options avail-

The couple agrees that their luck included the “fantastic” health coverage offered by the ILWU.

“Without it, we’d be on the streets, they say in union. Originally from Middletown, Ohio, Ross moved to California in 1958 with the U.S. NAVY and became a longshore worker in 1965, joining Oakland’s Local 63 after mustering out of the military.

In 1981 Ross and his wife moved to the Los Angeles area, where he spent eight years as a longshore worker with Local 13 before joining Local 63 as a clerk in 1989.

Anyone wishing to help Richard Ross can contact his wife by e-mail at <crross@cox.net> or by calling Gwen Spencer with the City of Hope National Marrow Donor Program at (626) 301-8483 or (626) 359-8111, ext. 63763.

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Attention: Local 10 members

Trustees of the Smolin-Melin Scholarship Fund are prepared to accept applications for scholarships for the academic year 2005-2006. Now is the
time to indicate your interest. The application deadline is June 1, 2005.

Victor Smolin and Carlton Melin were long-time members of Local 10. They left a sum of money to establish the scholarships. They specified that the scholarships were to be available to children of longshore Local 10 members to further their collegiate education. Trustees of the Fund interpret "members" to mean active and retired members in good standing at the time of their
death. The Trustees are Richard Zuckerman, counsel for the ILWU and for Local 10, David Ekrkila, a retired member of Local 10 and a Friend of Victor Smolin, and Eugene Vraas, Director of Educational Services and Librarian for the ILWU.

If you have a son or daughter who is applying to enter college next fall, or is already a college student who is planning to continue, and the above requirements are met, you may want to apply for one of these scholarships.

To request an application, simply call Mathilda Mendonca, secretary to Mr. Zuckerman, at (415) 771-9490. She will send you the application form with the necessary explanatory material.
Local 6 man killed in incident

Douglas Espinosa, a worker at California Waste Solutions, was killed Feb. 22 when he stepped into a paper bale. Espinosa, a member of Longshore Local 16, worked at the Oakland recycling facility for five years. He was 32 years old.

Espinosa was known as a hard worker who had a positive attitude, Local 6 President Efren Alarcon said.

"He played soccer with a group of other locals from the 6th, 7th and 8th, but that's not what he called everyone. He was born June 12, 1941 in San Pedro. He graduated from high school in Los Angeles harbor. He had been supervising container discharge when an accident occurred. The exact cause remains under investigation.

"He was a happy-go-lucky person. Thayne was a charter member of ILWU Local 13 in Wilmington, Calif. As a marine 함, Thayne earned in peacekeeping service and no foul language on the line. He learned his union beliefs from an Englishman who told him that "the greatest thing in the world is unionism. Every worker needs a union for better wages and working conditions," Thayne recalled, "I didn't know what a union was until then."

Thayne retired after 54 years of dedicated service to his union. His wife, Pearl Habert Thayne and his son Ronald Edward have since passed away.

"The cause of the Jan. 26 accident at the Port of Redwood City appears to be a sheared pin that supported the walkway of a Stiwtel loading machine. Padgett, a registered member of longshore Local 10 with 14 years of seniority, was working as a walking boss when it happened. Apparently he had to walk to the far end of the machine to check the control panel. This meant he had to go out on the walkway and over the ship. When the walkway fell it took Padgett with it. The exact cause of the accident will be determined by an OSHA investigation."

Padgett was among those who had witnessed a century of union struggle, including tremendous heartbreaks and wonderful victories. The Living Newspaper, directed by Theresa Larkin, presented a 20 minute dramatic reading in the actual words of Eddie Thayne, taken from interviews and writings. His words revealed great perception of the changing labor movement.

Thayne died on Jan. 23, 2005 at the age of 100 years and 7 months.

Local 10 man killed in Redwood City

Robert Padgett

by Dan Paisley / Harry Bridges News

Edward "Eddie" Thayne was born on June 22, 1904 in Washington, Utah, as town of approximately 300 people. Thayne lived in Utah until he was 18 years old. He and a friend worked in Las Vegas as miners for American Borax (Thayne’s first union job) before coming to Los Angeles where he worked as a grocery worker, deliveringman and even drove a horse-drawn milk wagon. He returned to Utah briefly before joining two of his brothers on the docks in Wilmington in 1925.

Thayne was among the union longshore workers who gathered on May 15, 1934, during the waterfront strike that established the union, to march with the pickets to the dockside where strike-breakers were being quartered in contravention of the articles governing the city’s leases. At the first demonstration of denouncing the strike, the private guards opened fire on unarmed union members, killing two. John Lindgren lingered for a few days, but Dickie Parker, who had just joined the union the day before, was dead almost immediately.

"A gentle soul, beloved by all, " said Local 94 President Danny Miranda, who considered him a dear friend as well as working partner. "He was very generous. If you ran into him in a restaurant he would immediately buy you a meal and a drink. He always gave more than he took.”

Thayne was a charter member of ILWU Local 13 in Wilmington, Calif. As a Mormon family man, Thayne worked in peacekeeping service and no foul language on the line. He learned his union beliefs from an Englishman who told him that “the greatest thing in the world is unionism. Every worker needs a union for better wages and working conditions,” Thayne recalled, “I didn’t know what a union was until then.”

Thayne retired after 54 years of dedicated service to his union. His wife, Pearl Habert Thayne and his son Ronald Edward have since passed away.

"He made our daughter his assistant, and they would spend hours and hours together building things in the garage," Donna said.

Paisley was pleased to work in Redwood City on the day of the accident. It was close enough to home that he had hoped to get back in time to go to Becka’s first after-school carpentry class. He is survived by his wife Donna, daughters Courtney, Jennifer and Becka, and grandson Kaj.
ILWU Book & Video Sale

Books and videos about the ILWU are available from the union’s library at discounted prices!

BOOKS:
The ILWU Story: unrolls the history of the union from its origins to the present, complete with recollections from the men and women who built the union, in their own words, and dozens of rare photos of the union in action. $5.00
The Big Strike By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. $6.50
Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremens, 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 longshoring 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

VIDEOS:
We Are the ILWU A 30-minute color video introducing the principles and traditions of the ILWU. Features active and retired members talking about what the union means in their lives and what it needs to survive and thrive, along with film clips, historical photos and an original musical score. DVD or VHS version $55.00
Life on the Beam: A Memorial to Harry Bridges A 17-minute VHS video production by California Working Group, Inc., memorializes Harry Bridges through still photographs, recorded interviews, and reminiscences. Originally produced for the 1990 memorial service in San Francisco. $28.00

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