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Retirees in the crosshairs

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

The living standards of working people in the U.S., Canada and, for that matter, the whole world, are being smashed, shredded and ripped apart in the 21st century. Real wages—adjusted for inflation—are easily calculated and undeniably declining for the last 30 years. Health care coverage is becoming a luxury beyond the reach of an increasing portion of the U.S. populace. But perhaps the most insidious thievery of workers' wealth is the ever-expanding robbery of their pensions and retirees' health care coverage.

Employers are always looking for ways to cut costs and those decisions are usually made on the basis of efficacy and efficiency—what they can get away with the most easily. Rarely do issues of morality factor in. Even legal, contractual obligations are viewed as just another hurdle to get over. They may have to buy some lawyers or politicians, but that's usually doable and cost effective.

So when employers look around for weak links in the chains restraining their profits, they are turning more and more to retirees. They figure if unions are having harder times defending their active and dues-paying members, how much easier a target are retired workers? It's not like they can strike or otherwise take economic action against the company. They are usually not organized and often geographically scattered, having left their jobs. In the heartless landscape of corporate board rooms, they are almost too tempting a target to turn down.

We can see this corporate debt dumping in many ways. For instance, U.S. steel, and many other companies that had good contracts negotiated with the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) are declaring bankruptcy and dropping their pension payment obligations on the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (PBGC), the government agency charged with insuring long-term pension funds. But the PBGC is so overwhelmed by such cases, and so few companies are contributing to its fund these days (as employers move increasingly to 401(k) retirement plans if any at all), the PBGC is capable of paying only pennies on the dollar. Other steel companies are "going out of business" and selling their plants to new companies. The old ones assert there is no need to provide their former workers with pensions and health care.

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The long-term solution to the health care crisis is, of course, a national, single-payer system with controls on prof- it and prices. It is almost unfathomable how the health care industry, which is becoming less competitive as it consolidates more, can get away with driving up the costs of every other industry in the country and yet employers refuse to join the movement for national health care.

Even the Pacific Maritime Association, the employer group the ILWU Longshore Division negotiates with, won't move. In our 2002 contract the employers signed a letter of understanding saying they would work with us towards national health care to deal with their skyrocketing costs. But three years later they still haven't done one thing towards that goal.

Against all odds the ILWU has always fought not just to provide their retirees pensions and health care, but to improve them—and we will never give up on that tradition.

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Cracks in cranes prompt work stoppage, arbitrations at Port of Long Beach

By John Showalter

During a routine inspection, ILWU maintenance and repair workers discovered stress fractures, some as long as nine inches, in two hammerhead cranes at the Port of Long Beach’s APM Terminal around 10 a.m. on Feb. 21. A subsequent round of inspections by M&R workers found cracks on the lower section of the portal beams of four other cranes. In all, an area relief arbitrator declared that five and six cranes at the terminal had cracks that caused a structural failure.

"The employer wanted us to work the cranes with cracks before a certified engineer had a chance to inspect them," said Pete Favazza, a member of the Longshore Division Safety Committee. "We believe the cracks pose a serious potential health and safety concern to ILWU crane operators and all those working around them."

The Feb. 21 report by Relief Area Arbitrator Bruce Weule states that "the cracks...measured from five to nine inches, with most radiating not only across the bottom, but also several inches up the vertical plane."

Favazza explained that as the cracks were noticed that morning, Business Agent Gilbert Fernandez contacted the APM superintendent. On the basis of the damage to cranes #7 and #8, APM ordered the two shut down, and Fernandez visually inspected the remaining eight cranes. Of these eight, Fernandez found four to have visible cracks and ordered all crane operators at the pier to stand by on safety and concern until a certified inspector arrived.

APM disputed the danger, insisting the crane operation was "sufficiently safe for the employers' purposes." Fernandez was ahead to follow up, and he listened to both sides' arguments and to Holland's comments. He then went to the dock, having a man-basket inspect the cracks and make chalk marks for what he considered to be their safest, maximum extension. He also said that—since five of the six damaged cranes could not be certified as "safe"—they presented a bona fide health and safety issue and must be removed from operation until a "competent authority" judged them to be safe.

Weule permitted cranes to continue operating under the condition that maintenance and repair workers check the damage prior to the start of each shift, and he ruled that standby time be paid. He also stated that cranes #3, #5 and #9 must be inspected for cracks along their portal beams.

Meanwhile, APM awaited word from the cranes' German manufacturer about its opinion on the cranes' condition. Fernandez sharply disagreed with APM's reliance on the manufacturer's opinion.

"I kept insisting that they needed to bring in a qualified, neutral, third party—an OSHA-certified engineer—to inspect the cracks, which were large enough that you could fit a pencil up into them," Fernandez said. "APM wanted Noell to determine whether these cracks were dangerous on the basis of some faded photographs."

Favazza noted that neither Weule nor Holland had an engineering degree and are not fully qualified to be making judgments about the structural integrity of the cranes. In fact, Weule notes in his first report that "Hoyland (sic)...is unfamiliar with the stress loads placed upon the portal beams of, and will not certify the operating condition of, these cranes without the assistance of a structural engineer."

Despite Fernandez's insistence, APM did not call in a structural engineer to inspect the cracks on that evening's night shift. The damaged cranes, with the exception of #7 and #6, were operated throughout the night. When Fernandez learned of this the next morning, he immediately called for a second arbitration.

In the second arbitration with Weule and PMA Feb. 23, Local 13 President Dave Arian and Fernandez contended that until such a qualified expert could inspect the cranes, their operators would stand by on the union's health and safety concerns. In response, PMA argued that "the Union is using the alleged health and safety issue as a gimmick for a work stoppage" and that Noell's interim plan (1. surveillance of the cracks; 2. drilling of the crack ends to stop the damage process; and 3. reduction of trolley speed to 80 percent) were being taken and were ade-quate. The relief arbitrator then decided that longshore workers must operate the cranes under the remedial measures, but that the ILWU did have a bona fide health and safety issue and that crane operators would be paid for stand-by time.

A special meeting of the Joint Longshore Labor Relations Committee for Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor was then held around noon Feb. 23 to discuss the crane operators' health and safety concerns. PMA and ILWU representatives agreed that APM Terminals would conduct visual inspections from a man-lift of all the cranes "...before the start of the shift, at the meal break and at the end of the shift." The inspections would end once a Noell representative arrived March 1 to perform in-person inspection, and APM began a repair plan specified by the crane manufacturer.

ILWU crane operators and mechanics were further indemnified against any structural failures in the cranes until the repairs were made.

"What really bothered me was that PMA didn't take the time to hire someone to look at those cracks. These cracks have been there for some time," said Fernandez. "When it comes to safety, the employer doesn't pay attention to it."

At press time, repairs had been made to cranes #7 and #10, but not to others at Pier 400. These two cranes are now operating despite the protests of ILWU that the repairs must first be approved by an OSHA-certified inspector, and a complaint has been lodged with the area arbitrator.

According to Local 13's Dave Beeman, Chairman of the Joint Accident Prevention Committee, the cracks in these cranes may foreshadow other structural problems with other cranes, such as the new ZPMG cranes just arrived to the Port of Oakland.

"There are identical structure failures with the Noell and ZPMG cranes. Other cranes with the same design flaw may be affected," Beeman said.

The San Francisco event was endorsed by all the Central Labor Councils in the Bay Area. After a drenching rain storm subsided late that morning, some 25,000 people marched through the city, starting in Dolores Park and ending in Civic Center for a rally. Speakers included: ILWU Local 10 President Trent Willis, San Francisco Labor Council Executive Director Tim Paulson, California state Assembly member Mark Leno, San Francisco Supervisors Tom Ammiano and Ross Mirkarimi, and Rev. Cecil Williams of the Glide Memorial Church.

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW

Photo by Steve Zettzer

The ILWU Local 10 Drill Team and Bay Area members led the labor contingent through the streets of San Francisco in the anti-Iraq War protest March 19. The demonstration coincided with hundreds of similar actions in cities and towns throughout the U.S. that day calling for an end to the war and occupation and withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The Bay Area longshore locals moved their stop-work membership meeting from its regular third Thursday of the month time slot to the first Saturday that Saturday, closing the Port of Oakland and all the other local ports in protest of the war.

Photo by Steve Zettzer

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By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

The ILWU International Executive Board reiterated its opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) at its meeting April 1, 2005. This free trade agreement, signed by the United States, five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, is modeled after the failed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The ILWU takes this position not only because free trade leads to more job loss, misery, lower wages and exploitation of poor workers, but also because free trade is not in the interest of workers in developing countries either.

The Guatemalan government had to use cannon fire, tear gas and water cannon March 8 and 9, 2005 to beat down workers protesting their government's acceptance of the ratification of CAFTA. Having managed to delay the vote the previous week through large protests, Guatemalan workers took to the streets again to try to prevent their Congress from voting against the working class of their country. In the end the worker lost, and the ruling class got their wish to have their Congress ratify entering into the free trade agreement with the US.

Early in the CAFTA negotiating process, unions in Central America warned workers with a militant labor movement to articulate a shared demand for a regional economic integration. In a series of joint declarations the unions called for any new trade agreements in the region to require adherence to the core labor standards of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and to enforce this obligation through trade sanctions. The unions also vowed to fight any agreement falling short of this standard and demanded that the current workers' rights tools in U.S. trade preference programs not be weakened in any eventual free trade agreement. But these propositions were ignored by government negotiators.

Twelve years ago the ILWU opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement for many of the same reasons that unions are opposing CAFTA. The ILWU said NAFTA would hasten job losses in the US, depress wages, increase the trade deficit and continue the exploitation of Mexican workers by large multinationals. Then-President Bill Clinton said that NAFTA would lift up living standards in Mexico, given that the Hawaii sugar industry only suggests that countries enforce their own labor laws. It does not proscribe any country from adopting weaker labor laws and enforcing those. More ominous for workers, CAFTA is intentionally written to weaken existing labor laws.

The only tool that has helped create the political will to reform labor laws in Central America in the past is the American unilateral system of trade preferences—a system that will no longer apply if CAFTA goes into effect. U.S. unilaterall trade preferences provide for the withdrawal of trade benefits if steps are not taken to meet international labor standards, including steps to reform weak domestic laws.

This is a higher standard than that found in CAFTA. Under CAFTA, employers and governments will actually enjoy more freedom to deny workers their fundamental human rights than they currently have under U.S. trade preference programs. While the labor rights provisions of these programs are not perfect, they have led to some improvements in labor rights in the region. In fact, nearly every labor law reform that has taken place in Central America over the past 15 years has been the direct result of a threat to withdraw trade benefits under U.S. preference programs. Despite these successes, the administration is preparing to give up those workers' rights clause once the weaker labor provisions of CAFTA go into effect.

Many ILWU members may lose their livelihoods if CAFTA is enacted. CAFTA places 146,000 sugar producing and related jobs in jeopardy—many of them good union jobs. At least 1,000 ILWU jobs tied to the sugar industry could be lost if CAFTA goes into effect. ILWU sugar jobs could be the first to go given that the Hawaii sugar industry must pay additional transportation costs to the West Coast for refining. CAFTA would more than double CAFTA countries duty free access to the US sugar market over 15 years, but it cannot be looked at in isolation. Countering in—South America will demand a doubling of their sugar export quota to the US. As part of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a similar free trade agreement encompassing every country in North and South America except Cuba. Additional sugar on the world market will collapse its price or force many domestic sugar producers to cut back on production or go out of business.

Some proponents of CAFTA think the ILWU is being selfish in trying to protect these sugar jobs. They believe the American unilateral system of labor rights in the region should allow Central American and other countries to supply our market with as much sugar as they can produce. They contend an expansion of the sugar industry in Central America would create jobs and lift the living standards of those workers. But in reality it would only serve the interests of rich landowners who would continue to exploit their workforce.

The Department of Labor's own publication, "By the Sweat and Toil of Children," documents children in Guatemala working along side their fathers in the cane fields with machetes to cut down the cane. These are dangerous jobs and any incident of child labor in the sugar fields violates a basic tenet of International Labor Organization standards. The minimum wage for a sugar cane laborer in Guatemala is 64 cents. The Bush administration is asking our Hawaii sugar workers to compete with workers who make pennies for their labor. Worker Rights exist on paper in Guatemala, but in practice the government does not enforce labor laws effectively or protect workers who exercise their rights, according to the US. State Department's Human Rights Practices report. Only one sugar mill out of 17 in Guatemala has a labor union.

ILWU sugar workers are asked to compete with an industry in Guatemala that has inadequate environmental law enforcement. Only about three-fourths of the mill boiler stacks have scrubbers to reduce air pollution. There are no standards for air and water quality in Guatemala. In contrast to Guatemala, water and air quality standards and monitoring activities in the U.S. are rigorous and translated to the cost of products. Agencies.

The ILWU Executive Board took the position that a new trade model should be developed that would be in the interest of working people here and abroad, a model embraced by unions in America as well as Central and South America (see "Statement of Policy opposing CAFTA" on page 8). Despite the consistent lobbying by George W. Bush and multinational corporations, Congressional representatives have not brought CAFTA to the floor for ratification. They have not done so because the proponents do not have the votes to pass the trade agreement. Only one Democrat in the House of Representatives, Henry Cuellar (D-TX), has expressed solid support for CAFTA. Last week, Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), a member of Congress who has supported free trade agreements with Chile and Singapore, announced her opposition to CAFTA. Even Democratic members of Congress in the Pacific Northwest who have a history of supporting free trade agreements have signaled their reluctance to support CAFTA. American workers, who are sick and tired of the job losses and the race to the bottom, are finally getting through to their elected officials. There is even significant opposition to CAFTA from Republican members of Congress.

We need to keep up the heat. The only way to kill CAFTA is to get members of Congress on the record opposing the agreement. Democrat or Republican, your member of Congress needs to hear that American workers are sick of the exploitation of workers both here and abroad. Congress needs to adopt trade agreements that are rooted in respect for labor, environmental and human rights.

Your member of Congress can be reached at the following address:

The Honorable
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

For more information about CAFTA visit these websites:
http://www.ilwuc.org/unionpolitics/globalexchange/cf...eau/illaw+cafta.htm
http://www.citizen.org/trade/cafta
http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/cafta

www.solidarity.com/wartoons - JULY 4, 2005

HUCK/KONOPACK1 LABOR CARTOONS

http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/cafta

WWW.SOLIDARITY.COM/WARTOONS - JULY 4, 2005

HUCK/KONOPACK1 LABOR CARTOONS

http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/cafta
By David Bacon

Puerto Cortez, Honduras—When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed in 1994, the representatives of the Central American Free Trade Agreement met in San Salvador, Honduras. The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) was signed in 2005, over a thousand miles away, on the shores of Tegucigalpa, angrily denouncing the effect the agreement would have on the country. CAFTA anyway, but the crowd was so angry that terrified deputies quickly fled.

"We chased them out, and then we went into the chambers our- selves," said Erasmo Flores, presi- dent of the Sindieato Nacional de Trabajadores Seguros Social y Telefónicos de Honduras (SINAMEQUIPH), the union for Honduras' port workers. "Then we constituted ourselves as the congress of the true representa- tives of the Honduran people, and voted to scrap Congress' ratification." Similar demonstrations have multiplied across Central America, and just weeks ago police shot into a crowd of protesters in Guatemala, killing one. Meanwhile, however, growing controversy has not helped the treaty's main supporter, U.S. President George W. Bush, in the votes he needs to pass it in Washington.

While militantly an act of politi- cal theater by the left-wing Bloque Popular, the Honduran protest showed dramatically how unpopular the agreement is in Central America, at least among workers and farmers. This is quite a change from Mexico, where the promises of then-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari drew large sections of Mexican society, especially its labor unions, into sup- porting the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1991 and 1992. While U.S. workers might suffer job losses, Salinas calmed Mexican workers who would get those jobs. The country would be a "first world" econo- my, he promised, with first world liv- ing standards.

The truth was bitter. Currency devaluation cost the jobs of a million Mexicans in the first year after NAFTA went into effect. While U.S. President Bill Clinton bailed out investors threatened by the crash, he maintained it contingent on Mexico using its oil revenues to guarantee the loans, instead of using them to promote econo- mic development. Tying hundreds of thousands of low-wage maquiladora workers to the U.S. economy also made them vulnerable to it. When con- sumers north of the border stopped buying goods during the 2000-2001 recession, 400,000 border workers were laid off. And export-industry wages, far from rising, remained flat, while prices of milk, tortillas, gasoline, bus fare and most working-class necessities skyrocketed.

But the most devastating effect on workers came from privatization, enforced by NAFTA's mandate to make Mexico more investor-friendly. As ports, railroads, airlines, mines, telecommunications and many other large national enterprises were sold off, sometimes for just a fraction of their worth, new private owners cut labor costs by slashing jobs and gutting union contracts. In NAFTA's first decade, Mexico's privatization creat- ed more billionaires than any other country in the world.

CAFTA is built on the same polit- ical premise. It seeks to reinforce the transformation of Central American economies, maintaining a low stan- dard of living as a means to attract investment in factories producing, not for an internal market, but for export to the U.S.

Understandably, this vision is hardly popular among workers and unions. But hundreds of thousands of Central American jobs are already tied to export production, and the Bush administration can and does use them as bargaining leverage, threatening economic disaster by raising the specter of import barriers against countries that won't adopt CAFTA.

CAFTA promises to extend the harmful impacts of NAFTA to Mexico's weaker southern neighbors. Most Central American nations already belong to the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which requires par- ticipating countries to uphold inter- nationally recognized labor norms. CAFTA, however, uses the example of NAFTA's notoriously ineffective labor side agreement, only requiring that governments enforce their own laws, which are often far weaker.

Central American public sector workers have been especially keen observers of the Mexican experience. Honduran longshore workers' union has twice beaten back government efforts to privatize the docks of Puerto Cortez, successfully mobiliz- ing the whole town in the process. "They put our union's same soccer field and clinic, at the service of the town," explained Roberto Con- treras, the town's two dozen California cities and towns marked the Chavez holiday with marches, programs or community service days, including San Diego, San Pedro, Los Angeles, Fresno, Salinas, San Jose and San Francisco.

SACTO WORKERS CATCH SPIRIT OF CESAR CHAVEZ

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Phanter Sallie, February 1945. During and of the Purple Hearts.

1936-1951

“Button Girl" -

March 2005

Local 6 women marching in the Labor Day Parade up Market Street in San Francisco, 1945.

The bosses hated us. We were there pretty rough times. Whenever anybody struck, we were on that picket line. This little Judy was always working for a long sock with a Sweetheart Soap bar in it. If she was bothered by scabs, they'd get hit with a “sweetheart.”

My husband and I divorced before very long. Then I married a man named Roberts. While I was working at Distillers Distributors I became pregnant. When my daughter Sallie was 18 months old, Roberts left me to marry someone else. But by then I had a good Local 6 job. I became convinced that I should keep care of my little girl.

I started working for a group called Working Mothers with Children. As my daughter grew up, I was very busy. She was always very busy. While I was working at Distillers Distributors I became pregnant. When my daughter Sallie was 18 months old, Roberts left me to marry someone else. But by then I had a good Local 6 job. I became convinced that I should keep care of my little girl.

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The boss said, “Are you afraid to go downstairs to our second home? Everybody knew Sallie at the union hall for whom we were dispatching out of the union hall. Jobs were sent to a place that wasn't organized. We would talk union to the workers. Then we would vote to get rid of the union. We would call ourselves "Red Hots" because we organized around the government stamps intact. I took in supplies for the machine shop, too. All the boys were helpful, although there was one old man who used to say, "You know, stuff like that. But when I found out

Inspector Sallie, February 1945. During

1936-1951

1936-1951

"Button Girl" -

March 2005

Local 6 women marching in the Labor Day Parade up Market Street in San Francisco, 1945.
The ILWU's International Executive Board (IEB) will hold its annual budget-setting gathering this week. In recent years, the ILWU has come under increased scrutiny from the federal government and the AFL-CIO for its financial and political activities. The IEB will be discussing the board's budget for the coming year and will likely address issues such as workforce reduction and worker benefits.

The ILWU, one of the largest unions in the United States, represents workers in the maritime industry, including seafarers, longshoremen, and harbor workers. The union has a long history of activism and has been involved in a number of high-profile labor disputes.

In 2000, the ILWU received national attention when it went on strike against the port of Seattle, which affected the East Coast. The strike lasted for several months and ended in a settlement that included improvements to workers' benefits and working conditions.

In recent years, the ILWU has faced challenges from the federal government and the AFL-CIO over its financial and political activities. The union has been accused of using its political influence to advance its own interests and the interests of its members.

The IEB's budget-setting gathering this week is an opportunity for the union to address these concerns and to set a course for the coming year. The union's leaders will be looking to the future as they prepare for the challenges that lie ahead.
jobs tied to the sugar industry could be increased the threat of terrorism and security of the United States. But there therefore posed an immediate threat to many domestic sugar producers to force them to deploy their weapons or the capability to struggle peaceably against below poverty wages of 9.30 per day (equivalent to 20 cents), the withholding of poverty wages of P9.50 per day (equivalent to 10 cents), the withholding of the police, as presently encountered by the striking Hacienda Luisita workers.

The ILWU Executive Board took time out of its meeting March 31 to join some 1,500 other unionists and seniors to demonstrate outside the offices of Charles Schwab Corp. in downtown San Francisco to press the major financial firm to stop supporting Bush's plans to privatize Social Security. The protest was part of a national day of action called by the AFL-CIO against Schwab and Wachovia Corp. with actions happening in more than 70 cities across the country.

UNIONS and other groups are targeting Wall Street investment firms because they "support the war," the ILWU says. These companies stand to make billions in fees and commissions for managing privatized Social Security accounts, money that will be siphoned off workers' retirement funds.

At Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, captured the tone of the noon demonstration when he informed the noisy crowd spilling over police lines and into the streets of the financial district that: "Chuck [Charles Schwab] isn't coming out to lunch today."

Pulaski noted that Schwab's company line is neutral on the Social Security privatization issue, claiming there's no real money to be made in private accounts, but the company won't come out against Bush's plan.

"He says he doesn't care about Social Security privatization, but we know he's lying," Pulaski said, leading the crowd in a chant of "Chuck Schwab, don't lie!"

ILWU longshore Local 10 President Trent Willis grabbed the mic to tell the workers "We're on the front lines of the war against Social Security privatization."

"The bottom line is that public wealth is being put in private hands," Willis said. "We can't let Schwab do what Enron did with our retirement money."
The book is available for $24.90 at: Local 98, 7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI, 48210. For credit card sales only, call (313) 842-6268 or fax to 313-384-4227. Or order online at www.labornotes.org

Local 98 Foremen and Walking Bosses honors retirees

ILWU Local 98 will host its annual dinner to honor retiring and retired foremen on Thursday, May 12, 2005 at the Doubletree Hotel in Sea-Tac. All active and retired ILWU members and their spouses or guests are invited to attend.

For more information contact Local 98 at (800) 824-7945.

MAY IS MEDICAL, DENTAL CHOICE MONTH

Active and retired longshore families in the ports where members have a choice can change medical and/or dental plans during the open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 2005. In addition to the May open enrollment period, members may change their health/dental coverage once at any time during the Plan Year (July 1-June 30).

To apply for the ILWU Union Plus MasterCard, call 1-800-522-4000. For eye care discounts, call 1-800-222-3023. For legal services, call 1-800-993-8899.

Part of the Union Prestige family of benefits available exclusively to union members.

Please join Ian Ruskin as Harry Bridges

May 11th
at the San Francisco Main Library, Koret Auditorium
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For an evening looking back at the M&M!

• Introduction by “Harry Bridges”
• Screening of our film of interviews
• Panel discussion
6 – 7:30 PM Free!

52nd Annual ILWU Golf Tourney on Kauai

The Kauai Division Sports Program will host the 52nd Annual ILWU State Mixed 36-Hole Golf Tournament at Princeville Resort over the September 3&4, 2005 Labor Day weekend. Applications will be accepted until June 15th. The registration limit is 144 golfers. Deadline for applications is Friday July 29, 2005.

For more information please call Pamela Green at (808) 245-3374 or (808) 645-0197 or email pag142@verizon.net.

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Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

RECENT RETIREES:

DECEASED:
Local 4—Addison Garlock (Rosemary); Local 4—Glen Burns (Evelyn), Louis Dennis (Leewone), Glenn Yandell (Virginia), Earl Anderson (Marcella), Benjamin Barber (Shirley), Steve Fitterer (Pauline), Frank Pays (Margaret), Robert Gillett, Ralph, Kirkland, Local 10—Ellis Coombs (Helen), Ramiro Hernandez (Kumiko), Robert Mosley (Anne), Robert Radcliff (Dona), Ophyes Connors (Sashannah), Edward Owens, William Tomasik, Jon Ben, Louis, Robert Terry, John Galney, James Cannata, John Gaspalina, William Johnson, Local 12— figured Sandquist (Jo Ann); Local 13—Moss Yokoyama (Betty), Robert King (Kimberly), Efren M. Tostado (Beatria), Rex Lisenby (Carolyn), Wayne Spigner Sr., Local 26—Clell McKnight; Local 29—Nathan Freeman (Esther), William Scholze; Local 34—Helen Cebriain, Ethel Benedetti, Olga Corsiglia; Local 40—Donald Haerling (Lila), David Enyeart; Local 46—Stanley Sumalpong (Joanne); Local 52—Russell Akana (Mary), Clyde Payne (Patricia), Dudley Ayers (Bess), Local 53—Lyle Allison, Local 57—Lyle, Allen and Gertrude Lomax, Local 63—Marvin Cortes (Bobby), Robert Ganten (Helen), Anise Musil (Lorraine), Local 70—Arley Mizar (Lorraine), Local 98—Howard Fry (Carol), Raymond Di Mercurio, James Stone, Jerry Bachich; Local 92—Rex Lisenby (Carolyn), Wayne Spigner Sr., Local 94—William Pearson, Rafael Eriksen (Lula), Harold Bjorndahl.

DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 7—Lucille Olson, Local 8—Iva Shain, Myrtle Noah, Debra Clark, Evelyn Tyler, Emma Hyden, Local 10—Alice Capull, Elizabeth Morris, Mildred James, Dorothy Desprez, Rose Row, Betty Gomez, Mahle Montgomery, Vonda Davis, Anna Gacy, Magda Costa, Roberta Hunter, Local 12—EDITOR Koivunen, Marie McCoy, Local 13—Barbara Sina, Maria Morales, Gloria Graham, Beatrice Petrich, Melis Christina, Cyley Ottoman, Vonda Davis, Margaret Garcia, Ellen Harold, Mary Fintanich, Earl Johnson, Vivian Bench, Local 14—Allan McLean, Tania Gebara, Paul King, Local 98—Tyra Nett, Emma, Lucy Michelich, Local 10—Teresa, Donald topic, John Torr, Local 12—Patricia Olson, Margaret Scholze; Local 19, 23, 32, 47, 52 and 98 are Group Health Cooperative and the ILWU-

PMA - Choose Our Future

The book is available for $24.90 at: Local 98, 7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI, 48210. For credit card sales only, call (313) 842-6268 or fax to 313-384-4227. Or order online at www.labornotes.org

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May is Medical, Dental Choice Month

Acted and retired longshore families in the ports where members have a choice can change medical and dental plans during the open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 2005. In addition to the May open enrollment period, members may change their health/dental coverage once at any time during the Plan Year (July 1-June 30).

The July 1 Memorandum of Understanding between the ILWU and PMA provides that new registrants in the ports where members have a choice of medical plans shall be assigned Kaiser HMO Plan or Group Health Cooperative HMO Plan for the first 18 months of registration. After 18 months, those registrants who have qualified for continuing eligibility under Mid-Year/Annual Review hours will have a choice of medical plans. New registrants in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver and Washington State will have a choice of dental plans on the first of the month following registration, and may change dental plans during the Open Enrollment period and one additional time during the Plan Year.

Medical Choice: The medical plan choice is between Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and the ILWU-PMA Coastwide Indemnity Plan for Southern California Locals 13, 26, 29, 63 and 94; Northern California Locals 10, 18, 34 (San Francisco), 54 (Stockton), 54, 75 and 91; and Oregon-Columbia, River Locals 4, 8, 40, and 92. In the Washington State area, the choices for those Locals 19, 23, 32, 47, 52 and 98 are Group Health Cooperative and the ILWU-PMA Coastwide Indemnity Plan.

Dental Plans: For Los Angeles Locals, dental choice is between Delta Dental and the Harbor Dental Associates (formerly Sakim, Simms) group plan. For San Francisco Locals, dental choice is between Delta Dental, City Center, Dental and Gentle Dental San Francisco group plan. For Portland/Vancouver Locals dental choice is between Blue Cross of Oregon Dentacare, Oregon Kaiser Dental Plan and Oregon-Washington Dental Service. For Southern California Locals dental choice is between Washington Dental Service and Dental Health Services.

Information on the dental plans, and Coastwide Indemnity Plan, Kaiser and Group Health Cooperative HMO Plans to change dental plans can be obtained at the Locals and the ILWU-PMA Benefit Plans office.

All enrollment cards must be completed and submitted to the Benefit Plans office by May 31 for the change to be effective July 1.
LONGSHORE SHIPBOARD GRAIN CONTRACT RATIFIED

Shipboard grain workers in the Puget Sound and Columbia River areas bargained a new contract that protects profits and firmly establishes manning levels. Proper manning, or “parity,” became an issue when the employers short-staffed some operations.

“The union felt the employer had not lived up to what they said they would on manning levels, and this time we decided we would make sure parity was achieved,” Coast Committee member Joe Wenzl said. He chaired the bargaining committee with former Local 21 President Ty Gorton as co-chair. “The employers had unilaterally hired workers for not others, so we called for parity for all ports and we got it.”

Bargaining began early last August and finished Jan. 8 after members ratified the agreement by an 88.6 percent “yes” vote. The contract affects 2,500 workers.

Workers at longshore Locals 4, 8, 19, 21 and 23 who take grain loading jobs out of the hall will have wages and benefits protected under the Pacific Coast Longshore Contract Document (PCLCD) signed July 1, 2002.

“The contract used to say people would be hired ‘as needed,’ now it spells out how many people will be hired at minimum for given operations,” Wenzl said. “With the minimum manning now established, even more can be hired if required.”

Another improvement—workers will now be told at dispatch how long the shift will last, especially if it goes over eight hours.

With a contract that was a big deal, getting that language notifying members at the beginning of a long shift was crucial. That way if you have something to do at five o’clock, you can do it. You might have to pick up a kid. This way you can live a more normal life,” said Gorton, who recently took the position of Benefit Specialist for the Columbia River area.

The six-year grain deal expires July 1, 2010.

By agreement with the employer, the Pacific Maritime Assn., the PCLCD contract expires at dates different from the PCLCD. This simplifies bargaining, guarantees more freedom and attention to the needs of grain-loading workers.

The process was time consuming, Wenzl said.

“All decisions of the union committee were made by consensus, a process that takes longer,” Wenzl said.

“This bargaining was a classic case of the union once again sticking together, with various locals and across different areas,” Gorton said. —Tom Price

IBU FOOD SERVICE WORKERS NEAR AGREEMENT WITH CONCESSION OPERATORS

Washington State Ferries had food service for as long as anyone could remember. But that changed on New Year’s Eve 2003, when the giant catering company Sodexo closed down the food service at the ferries. The union hired workers and laid off 130 workers. The workers set up an informational picket line, while the ferry operators short-staffed the terminals.

For more than a year, passengers on the largest ferry system in the U.S. had no hot food, decent coffee and sometimes no beer for their rides across the Sound. The ferries carry 25 million passengers and 11 million cars per year.

Sodexo had asked the IBU for concessions in previous contracts, and the union had helped out. But WSF suffered major budget cuts when ballot Initiative 695 cut the state’s car tax in 1999. Much of that tax money had gone to mass transit projects like the ferries. Some of that revenue would be made up out of the pockets of vendors like Sodexo and workers like the IBU members.

With Sodexo out, it was time in early 2004 to find new vendors.

“At that point WSF re-bid the contracts, but they left out the union shop clause, IBU National Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast said. “We filed a complaint with the state Marine Employees Commission and won, so they had to re-bid the contracts with the union clause in.”

WSF did two other things that complicated the process, Mast said. It separated the vending machine contract from the food service contract, and it divided the ferry routes into three parts, with three separate bids. So the IBU team spent more than a year hammering out agreements with two of the three bidders.

“We had to educate the new employers, because they knew nothing about maritime,” IBU Regional Director Dennis Conkin said. “We had to explain to them things like how vessels run, or how you have to schedule the shifts so people can get off where they start.”

The union signed contracts with Sound Food and CDX for two of the three runs. Wages will be $13.50 to $14.50 an hour, a slight reduction from the former contract. But that was made up by saving on worker-paid medicals. Workers maintained pension, vacations, overtime and working conditions. The union gave the company more flexibility on shifts, but workers made money in the overall package.

Bargaining has been more difficult with Cascade Olympic Concessions, the third employer. Apparently Cascade thought it might not have to negotiate with the IBU.

“The state appealed the earlier ruling that said the companies had to agree to union shop, and lost again in August, 2004,” Mast said.

Mike Anderson, the new Executive Director at WSF, called Cascade and the IBU together and asked for some serious bargaining.

He gave the parties until March 18 to come up with an agreement.

“It's time—the ferry system and our passengers need to know whether we'll have on-board food service this summer or not,” Anderson said in a March 9 press release.

“Operators sometimes sounded like they’re someone we can work with,” Mast said. “They have progressive ideas, they want to have fair-trade coffee, bottled water with their own names on it with part of the profits going to saving the orca whales locally. They have new and inventive ideas and they’re going to capture the hearts of local commuters.”

After meeting with WSF, Cascade and the union sat down. Bargaining team members Conkin and Mast, BA Jay Ubeltar, and rank and fileers Judy Kandlik and Peggy Wilkes stayed up all night with the employer, and by March 19 members ratified an agreement that pays wages similar to the other units and includes profit sharing. Most of the laid off workers will return, and by mid-May the ferries will again have galley service.

—Tom Price
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. $15.00

The Big Strike By Mike Quin: the classic partisan account of the 1934 strike. $6.50

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 Weltman: the important new study of longshore organizing 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 meant 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 $5.00

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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