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DEAR GOVERNOR

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

Just wanted to drop you a quick note to say how impressed I am with your November special election idea. I’m sure no one will really care about the extra $80 million it will cost, even in a time of budget deficits. If you pass your initiatives, you can just slash that out of all the other important things that need the poor. And those people never turn out for special off-year elections anyway, so they don’t get included. And then you can line all those other nasty initiatives—boy, you’re good.

Don’t let the fact that you’re behind in the polls on nearly every one of them. You’re ahead on your most important one, Prop 75—taking public employee unions out of the 21st century globalized economy. Last the vibe, baby.

And who cares about those whiny teachers? What do they contribute to erasing our trade deficits? What makes them so special that they should be the ones with job security? It’s time for them to toughen up and compete in the 21st century globalized economy. Go ahead and give those girly special interests a good spanking.

So far you’ve been able to coast on the dualing prescription drug initiatives. The pharmaceutical companies can carry it on their own. It’s not like either the drug companies, plan Prop 79, or the labor-consumer initiative, Prop 80, will give your gym rats pals more affordable access to steroids.

You can turn those poor poll numbers around with a few slick television ads paid for by the millions of dollars you’re raising. That idea of selling tickets in your luxury box for $100,000 a pop was brilliant. So another make-work program for the labor-consumer initiative, Prop 80, will give your gym rats pals more affordable access to steroids.

Some people may try to make hay out of the fact that you didn’t spend much time in California to work out a compromise with the legislature so the special election wouldn’t be necessary or that you are going to miss the opening of the first new University of California campus in 40 years, but that’s just another make-work program for teachers. Besides, you had important fundraisers to attend.

Don’t pay any heed to those who say you’re reality challenged or that the only way you’ll ever win an Oscar for your performance as governor is if he create a new category for most pathetic impersonation. Those people are just obsessive fact-checking fringe theorists. It’s not like they have any credibility.

Yours truly,
Steve Stallone
Editor

CORRECTION
In the June 2005 issue the president of foremen’s Local 94 was mistakenly listed as Stuart Anderson. The actual president of Local 94 is Danny Miranda. The Dispatcher regrets the error.
AMFA workers lose health care in court

by Tom Price

Warehouse workers lost health care benefits after Hasbro moved to Ontario, Calif.

People were set back in their efforts to secure health care benefits for laid-off and retired workers. Hasbro's closure of the Port of Seattle when it moved to Ontario, Calif., took away the benefits Hasbro had promised. The port was a part of the medical plan covering Local 9 members and retirees as their employer. The plan said the port would cover retiree health care benefits. But when the port ceased to participate and no more money was paid into the benefits fund, the obligation to pay retirees evaporated, the port claimed, and the union lost its claim.

"It's as if the judge expects the members to appeal to a higher court, and that's just what we will do," Local 9 Secretary-Treasurer Tony Hutter said.

The workers' position is that those who retired or were eligible for retirement were owed the benefits if they vested before the warehouse was closed. They filed as individuals in a class action suit, not as Local 9 members.

The trouble began May 20, 2002 when Hasbro abruptly announced it would move to Ontario, Calif. to solidate its operations. The layoffs at the 400,000 square foot facility for Local 9 began 11 days later. Local 9 filed a grievance.

Eventually, Local 9 would lose 150 jobs, nearly half its membership, and a contract that stretched back more than 38 years.

Southern California is a huge market for toys, and trucks leaving the facility for other parts of the country will be able to re-layout pallets of others that market. That provides a competitive incentive for moving the pallets, the analysts said.

Local 9 workers unloaded sea-borne containers and packed trucks with pallets arranged for the stores.

They worked directly off the docksides and were a day closer to the Asian producers than Southern California, a competitive advantage in its own right. One advantage they could not overcome, however, was the non-union labor available to Hasbro in the south, where warehouse workers often make less than $8.00 an hour.

Even though the port knew Hasbro was gone for good, it issued temporary layoffs to most of the workers. That meant they were not eligible for severance pay, extended health care, career counseling and the potentiality to bid for other port jobs. In the fall of 2002 the port offered the workers another contract that slashed wages from $19.97 to $8.62 an hour. It was turned down by 74 to 14 vote.

However, Local 9 entered into negotiations bargaining with the port. The port agreed to keep funding the pension for its retirees and allow them to join the port's health care plan for non-represented employees at the pensioners' expense. Recently the port added $2 million to the pension trust and agreed to add $1 million a year in the future.

"The port was never seriously looking to hire two tenants after Hasbro left," Hutter charged. Despite its recent $4.2 million investment in computer equipment, it never once announced to the port's request, the port started looking for a buyer. It sold the property last year to Charlie's Produce, which sold it within a year at a 73 percent profit. Charlie's never occupied the property. The new owners did a major clean up, but at this time the building sits empty. The judge's one paragraph decision is a bad decision, and we're very disappointed in it," Hutter said. "She didn't look at the facts, and gave no explanation for denying the suit.

'Reluctant to give up the fight for health care benefits, the workers appealed the judge's decision to the State Court of Appeals Aug. 25.

"It's not that the port can't afford these benefits, they just decided they wouldn't," Hutter said.
AFL-CIO Convention

July-August 2005

By Steve Stallone

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney (right) called the ILWU delegation up on stage during a recognition of unions that mobilized for the November 2004 election. (Left to right) International President Jim Spinosa, International Vice-President, Mainland Bob McEllrath, International Vice-President, Hawaii Wesley Futardo, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams and Coast Committeeeman Joe Wenzl.

T he ILWU made that its policy at its AFL-CIO’s 50th anniversary and turning back right-to-work-for-less the convention with an extensive and significant and far-reaching actions by the remaining delegates eluded the national media's reporting.

Still, the disaffiliation of the SEIU and the Teamsters, and a week later the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and the boycott by UAW and UNITE-HERE of the United Farm Workers (UFW), hung like dense fog over the convention hall, dampening the celebration of the AFL-CIO’s 50th anniversary and obscuring the road ahead.

THE AFL-CIO PROGRAM

The Washington, D.C., meeting represented the convention with an extensive and ambitious program to expand organizing and collective action, both as interdependent activities for building the labor movement. For the last five years, disaffiliation has been among its member unions to devote 30 percent of their resources to organizing. (The UAW made its pledge at its 2000 Convention.) And while several million workers have been organized over the years, the loss of union jobs due to outsourcing, outsourcing and outsourcing has resulted in fewer union members overall.

So the AFL-CIO Executive Committee commissioned the Teamsters to delegate adopted, a two-pronged strategy. The federation will help its member unions to develop their capacity to organize, especially outside the National Labor Relations Board procedures. And it will ramp up efforts to change public perception of union rights to organize and bargain collectively that has been whittled down ever since the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and accelerated under George W. Bush.

The federation will create a $22.5 million Strategic Organizing Fund. Two-thirds, or $15 million, will be returned as grants to unions that meet organizing standards. The other $7.5 million will support strategic organizing campaigns important to the entire labor movement, providing expert training and expert campaign research and organizer training.

On the political front, the federation plans to move from focusing on biannual get-out-the-vote efforts to building year-round capacity for influencing the lives and livelihoods of millions on legislative and public policy issues. The AFL-CIO plans to build a potent anti-war coalition that includes anti-war politicians at all levels, turning back right-to-work-for-less and taking real action to expanding union membership and bargaining power and fighting attempts to destroy defined-benefit pensions and health care programs. The AFL-CIO plans to build up to recruit, train and elect union members to public office.

The federation will also step up its efforts to bring more diversity to union leadership at all levels. To accomplish this it will increase training and leadership development at the local levels, do more to recruit a diverse pool of young people into the Union Summer and other programs, and establish as policy that each union’s delegation to the AFL-CIO generally reflect the racial and gender makeup of its membership. The AFL-CIO will work to include more racial and gender diversity on its Executive Council.

WATCH OUT, WAL-MART!

No single corporation is doing more to destroy good jobs, drive down wages and living standards and generally exploit workers than Wal-Mart. Its poisonous tentacles reach throughout the global economy, forcing unscrupulous competitors to compete like a rapidly multiplying cancer.

As the biggest employer in the U.S., Wal-Mart’s poverty wages and poor benefits force many of its 600,000 workers into public assistance and health care programs, costing U.S. taxpayers $2.5 billion a year. The company has been found guilty of child labor violations and exploiting immigrant labor, and is currently the defendant in a gender discrimination lawsuit affecting two million current and former female employees. Wal-Mart consistently fights unionization and has even closed a store after workers initiated an organizing drive.

Many unions have been impacted by Wal-Mart, but none as much as the IBT, whose members work at grocery and retail stores have long enjoyed decent wages and good benefits. Those are eroding quickly and will disappear soon if Wal-Mart isn’t stopped. Understanding this, the UFCW launched its “Wake Up Wal-Mart” campaign to change the moniker retailer by moving to build local community coalitions at every Wal-Mart location in the U.S. in concert with other unions and prominent community leaders.

Even though the UFCW boycotted the convention as part of the Change to Win (CW) coalition, the union’s delegation to the AFL-CIO put its resources behind the action. The CW will see a campaign like never before,” AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka said introducing the resolution.

The delegates voted unanimously for the resolution to join the campaign.

CAFTA LOSS

During the convention the U.S. House of Reps, whose key issue was the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which would cover all Central American and Caribbean countries except Cuba. Like NAFTA and other free trade agreements, CAFTA will send American jobs overseas, worsen the exploitation of Central American workers and increase the U.S. trade deficit. It will also be used as a threat to crush union organizing drives and to squeeze out union and others in collectively bargained agreements.

The Senate had already passed CAFTA June 30, so this was the last stand for one of labor’s top priorities. The resolution on CAFTA prepared for the delegates’ consideration, besides listing its sins and pledging the labor movement’s energies to fight it on all fronts, also committed the AFL-CIO to “hold elected officials and candidates accountable for their position on flawed trade deals such as CAFTA.”

In his keynote address AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, when speaking of political officials, declared, “The ones who betray us will no longer be with us, regardless of party.”

So when two days later the House voted 217-215 to pass CAFTA, the outrage and anger in the convention hall was palpable as the delegates turned their backs on the President and legislators who supported the trade agreement.

A list of the 15 House Democrats that was quickly assembled, copied and distributed throughout the hall. The only one from ILWU jurisdiction was Rep. Norm Dicks of Washington State.

DISAFFILIATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The unions disaffiliating from the AFL-CIO—the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and a week later the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)—and the unions that sided with them, boycotted the convention but not disaffiliating—UNITE-HERE, the Teamsters, Service Employees InternationalUnion of North America (LIUNA), and the United Farm Workers (UFW)—joined the quantum leap to the “Change to Win” coalition (CW).

At a press conference the day before the convention was to begin they announced they were all boycotting it. (LIUNA President Terrysterner said that the delegation was going to attend since he hadn’t had time to talk with his members and decided not to lose the battle that he supported the CW program.)

Because current AFL-CIO President John Sweeney had been from both parties he prepared for the convention and reelection, they said, they didn’t see the point of attending and debating. They also proclaimed that not enough votes were there to disaffiliated in the capacity in the AFL-CIO.

SEIU President and CWU leader Andy Stern called their differences with the AFL-CIO “so fundamental” they could not change course. “The AFL-CIO has adopted the language of reform, but not the substance,” Stern said. “The SEIU is putting a hold on its program.”

All the leaders of the CW unions restated their contention that the fundamental principle behind their actions was that they wanted to put more money and resources into organizing. The AFL-CIO was putting too much into political campaigns, like John Kerry’s run for president, and reaped no results, they said. The next day, CW held another press conference to formally announce that the SEIU and the Teamsters were disaffiliating from the AFL-CIO. The other unions stayed in (with the UFCW disaffiliating the following week), but proclaimed, their allegiance to the CW program.

The AFL-CIO countered they were acting because of the SEIU and the Teamsters’ lack of promises and support and adopted much of the CW program, including putting more money and resources into political campaigns and giving rebates to unions that failed to deliver their end of the bargain. A list of the 15 House Democrats that was quickly assembled, copied and distributed throughout the hall. The only one from ILWU jurisdiction was Rep. Norm Dicks of Washington State.

Reporters at the press conferences had trouble nailing the differences between the CW and the AFL-CIO in ways their editors could understand and that added drama to the big national news story. One of the big stories that they were sent to Chicago to cover. They kept asking CW to explain it all. Percentages of funds put into organizing versus political action seemed more like splitting hairs than to positions to split the labor movement over. The scene at the CW press conference announcing the disaffiliation at the SEIU’s continued on page 5
The organizing must go on

In the thick of the swirling rumors and buzzing tensions that filled the days before its convention opened, the AFL-CIO pulled out all the stops to mount a day-long organizing conference. It was called “Organizing for Power” featured PowerPoints on a giant screen and ran for more than three dozen sessions from as far away as Taiwan, Cambodia, Chile, and Afghanistan. The panel, which ran from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with a break for the “United to Win” pep rally at noon.

“Terrorism is a worldwide movement that has a core to channel this power into change. It requires a well-resourced, fully strategic campaign,” said International Union (now the Graphic Communications, Computers and Other Interactive Media) International Union (now the Graphic Communications, Computer and Other Interactive Media) General Secretary Guy Ryder in closing remarks. Ryder hit the mic first. He offered an amendment to the amendment that would turn it upside down. McEllrath proposed that rather than reduce the council from 51 to 43, the council should be expanded to 56, giving each union remaining in the federation a seat on it.

“As an amendment this hurts no one,” McEllrath said. “This is the House of Labor of the AFL-CIO and everybody on this floor has a right to get up and speak and I say every union in this hall has a right to have their president sit on that council. I’ve heard statements that said, you’re too small. I know your union doesn’t have a million, but I will tell you this: you gotta start with one to get to a million, and an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Both sides are finding some resistance from their local officers and rank and file to the splits and acrimony at the top levels of the movement. But the resolution was drafted in a way that the CW leadership was able to find things in the fine print to object to. They demanded the locals continue to participate in the CLCs and state federations on the same terms they had in the past.

The organizing must go on.


The gates for three days, no armed forces were dis-
termined to dislodge them. That enabled the
port workers union to unite even officials of Iraq's

Radio, head of the Um Qasr branch of the union.

The company, however, was never able
to vote, however, Port Director Abdel Razzaq told
the demonstration only ended when

March 2, 2005, 600 longshoremen,

They were only able
to return to their jobs once the company was gone.

Meanwhile, the CPA's Order 30 on Reform
Salaries and Employment Conditions of State
Employees in September 2003 lowered the base
wage to $40 per month and eliminated housing
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Yusef Abdul Samat, Murat Nasser and Luay Abdul Hussein, engineers in the control room of the Zubair
port, were thrown out of their jobs by the Maersk shipping company when it took over the port at the
beginning of the occupation. Once Maersk was expelled, the men got their jobs back.

driven in large part by low wages. Following the
arrival of U.S. troops, Iraqi public sector workers
began receiving emergency salaries dictated by the
U.S. through its Coalition Provisional Authority
(CPA)—roughly from $60 to $120 monthly.

Like other workers, Iraqi longshoremen in Um
Qasr began organizing a union to respond. Within
a few months, they were ready to elect officers and
establish their structure. On the day they were set
to vote, however, Port Director Abdel Razzaq told
them the election was cancelled because Law 150,
1987 Saddam Hussein-era decree prohibiting
unions in the public sector, was still being enforced.
In November 2003 he fired three port workers for
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"This is a serious problem for us since we have no
resources to organize," explained Murat Nasser.
"Still, we’ll figure something out. The main thing is
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"We are very proud that we have been able to
regain our ports for the Iraqi people," said Nathan
Radi, head of the Um Qasr branch of the union.

Southern Iraq has been the scene of intense
labor activity since the beginning of the occupation.

Narram Radi, head of the union for longshoremen in the port of Um Qasr, recounts the many battles they
gave an accurate picture of the real relations
between SSA and the White House. Those were

Private Umm Qasr began an effort to trans-
form Iraq's economy—from one based on national-
ization and production for domestic welfare, to one
based on ownership by transnational corporations,
sending their profits out of the country. The port
was built following the revolution of 1958, when
nationalist governments spent Iraq's oil income on
a big program of industrialization. Eventually, a
thousand longshore workers labored on Um Qasr's
docks.

Even in the years when Iraq had a progressive
government, however, they still had no guarantees
for their rights and jobs. At first, subcontracting
companies were allowed to hire dockers in a daily
payroll. Finally, workers rebelled. After winning
recognition for their union, they demanded and
won a hiring system under their control, and a
daily guaranteed wage whether or not there was a
ship to work.

Those achievements were reversed under
Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Law 150 banned
the port workers union, a major attempt to control

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revealed in 2002, during the negotiations between the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the ILWU Longshore Division. SSA was widely viewed as the leading player in the PMA. The Bush administration intervened directly on the side of SSA and the PMA, issuing a Taft-Hartley injunction against the ILWU if the union exercised its labor rights.

For its part, SSA had set the stage for a confrontation with the AFL-CIO by demanding an even closer relationship with the government in an area with a great impact on the jobs of longshore workers. The battles over the ILWU longshore contract finally ended with a new agreement in November 2002. SSA then was already ramping up its preparations for the invasion of Iraq, as the Downs Street memos now clearly show. The relationship established between SSA and the administration during the longshore labor war made SSA the logical choice to win the contract to reopen the port of Umm Qasr once troops seized it just a few months later.

In the invasion of June 2003, under way, San Francisco's Bechtel Corp. began dredging the Umm Qasr port, which had been closed as part of the original contract. The decision to grant that contract basically excluded the Iraqis who historically did this work. Even before the invasion, accepting commercial cargo, including container, break-bulk and roll-on/roll-off shipments. Despite its dilapidated state, Umm Qasr is still a developed facility, with 23 berths for ships, four modern container cranes and a grain and cement dock. (Oil exports are handled through an adjacent facility.)

The possibilities for the profitable employment of the port, and the economic opportunity they pose for operators who would have liked the plun themselves. The British shipping giant, Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation (P&O), it was reported, was the first to run Umm Qasr, inasmuch as the British were given responsibility for operating and administering the port of Iraq. The firm complained bitterly that only U.S. companies were getting the profitable concessions created by the occupation. Alan Larson, U.S. undersecretary of State, responded to a complaint that U.S. companies seemed to have the inside track, since it didn't have the normally required security clearances needed to do business abroad. However, USAID dropped the security requirement. It was under the pressure of favoritism accusations that Maersk was awarded the contracts.

U.S. shippers complained of "gross profiteering" at the high tariffs charged for handling cargo. Umm Qasr SSA denied that it profited from the tariff charges themselves, and said they were set by USAID during the period when Iraq was ruled directly by the U.S. occupation overseer Paul Bremer and the CPA. SSA, however, advised USAID on the rates required to make the port "self-sustaining." When USAID was slow in taking SSA's "advice" in July 2003, the agency got a call from Congressman Norm Dicks (D-WA) telling them to pay more attention to the company's recommendations.

PRIVATEIZATION EXPANDS

Bringing SSA into Umm Qasr was part of a much bigger strategy for privatization, the free trade idealogy of the Bush administration see the occupation of Iraq as a beachhead into the Middle East and south Asia. A free-market Iraq, they hope, will set new ground rules for the rest of the area, much as the North American Free Trade Agreement first helped to transform Mexico's economy, and then became a prototype for the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Nothing of this scale had even begun in the invasion, with the granting of the first contracts for servicing the military and its dependents, only to make the case for the Bush administration's own preferred model. Those were followed by others for rebuilding the infrastructure of the country itself, destroyed by war and sanctions. But this transformation is limited simply to reconstruction contracts. The pre-existing economy of Iraq is set to be transformed as well, as state-run enterprises at their heart are to be sold off to private, foreign investors. On Sept. 19, 2003, the CPA issued Order No. 39, which permits 100 percent foreign ownership of businesses, except for the oil industry, and allows profits to be sent out of Iraq to the foreign company's home country. Tom Foley, a Bush fundraiser who then directed private sector development for the CPA, announced a list of state enterprises to be sold off, including cement and fertilizer plants, textile and pharmaceutical factories and the country's airline.

Order No. 57, also issued Sept. 19, suspend pend the right of union to strike. The order, in effect, imposed a flat tax on individuals and corporations in the future of 15 percent. Right-wing ideologues welcomed it.

Meanwhile, conferences began to take place once or twice a week in Washington, D.C. and London, in which Iraqi enterprises and contracts were put on display, and transnational corporations came to examine profit-making opportunities. Just one conference held Dec. 10, 2003 at Washington's National Press Club by Equity International, a business consulting service, featured the attendance of executives from Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Rockwell Automation, Foster Wheeler, The Livingston Group, Nissan Motor Co, MA.COM, Federal Security Systems, Danimes Communications, Global Transportation Systems, Addison Industries, Compers, Cetrex Health Services, Washington Group International, and International Truck and Engine Corporation. In addition, the conference featured diplomats from countries participating in the occupation coalition.

International meetings to showcase Iraq concessions began as early as May 5, 2003. Featured speakers included U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Lincoln Bloomfield, U.S. Treasury Under Secretary John Taylor; Congressman Curt Weldon (R-PA), Vice Chairman, House Armed Services Committee; Congressman Christopher Shays (R-CT), Chairman, House Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations; as well as executives from Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR), BearingPoint, Creative Associates and USIProtect, and top officials from the Coalition Provisional Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. State Department, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Commerce Department, U.S. Small Business Administration and the United Nations.

MEET THE NEW BOSS

When President Bush ordered a supposedly independent government in June 2004, the transitional law enacted at the time froze the Bremer orders in place until a new government could be written and a new government elected. That has yet to happen. Meanwhile, the deteriorating security situation and the inability of sales and an occupation government discouraged would-be corporate buyers, and the plans for a fire sale of Iraq's national assets were temporarily shelved.

But Iraq's Industry Minister revived them in the spring of 2005, listing again a number of enterprises the government intends to sell off.

Privatization is not popular in Iraq. Nationalist sentiment views the public sector, especially oil, as a guarantee of sovereignty and a key to future economic development. Iraq's new unions are privatization's most vocal critics. To keep their critique at a gaining a political base, Bremer kept in force Saddam Hussein's decree outlawing Iraq workers' right to organize unions in the state-owned sector. That ban affects workers employed in the enterprises set to be privatized, and that is why it hasn't been repealed as hundreds of other Saddam-era laws have been. If those workers have no legal union, no right to bargain and no contracts, then privatization and the huge job losses that will come with it will face much less organized resistance.

On June 5, 2003 CPA head Paul Bremer put another weapon into the anti-union arsenal. He issued a decree called Public Notice Number One, prohibiting "pronouncements and material that incite civil disorder, rioting or damage to property." The phrase can easily be interpreted to mean strikes or other organized labor protest. Those who violate the decree "will be subject to immediate detention by Coalition security forces and held as a security internee under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949," in other words, as a prisoner of war. That order also was frozen in place by the transitional law under which Iraq functions today.

Unions therefore occupy a critical, but perilous, position. They confront the occupation's economic plan directly, and are its most vocal opponents.

It was therefore an important achievement for Iraq's port workers' union when, in mid-2004, SSA agreed to leave its concession in Umm Qasr.

"We are very opposed to privatization," radii said. "And we don't want any private operators in the ports, which belong to the Iraqi people."
IWB plans for now and future

The ILWU gets out of its membership in the AFL-CIO's Executive Council, but International President Jim Spinosa, local organizing committee have built a solid committee in the plant of 55 workers. The board reviewed an Article VIII complaint reported to the board on the ongoing review of the International Secretary-Treasurer Treasurer Willis Adams and set policy.

The board's trustees, Dave Freiboth of the IBU, Southern California representative Barry Corvino of Local 46 and Arthur Reeves of Local 142, reported that the union's finances were in good shape. The International spent $154,000 less than it took in during the second quarter of 2005. The trustees also reviewed a draft status quo budget for 2006-2009 to be used as a starting point for the budget proposal to bring to the International Convention in May 2006. The trustees with the help of October 9 prepare a revised draft for the board to consider at its December meeting so that a budget will be ready for the Convention to review and decide upon.

The board also reviewed the union's financial report for the first half of 2005, making sure everything is in order.

International Vice President, Mainland Bob McElrath reported to the board on the officers' attendance at the AFL-CIO Convention in Chicago the month before. McElrath, International President Jim Spinosa, International Vice President Wesley Furtado, International Secretary-Treasurer Treasurer Willis Adams and Committee Member Joe Wenzl were the ILWU's delegates to that convention. Alternate delegates Local 142 President Fred Galdones, warehouse Local 315 President Fred Pecker and IBE Region 37 Director Richard Gurtiza also attended. The officers' trip to pass a motion that would have given the ILWU a seat on the AFL-CIO Board, but it failed to pass (see page 5).

The board then discussed what the international gave out of its membership in the AFL-CIO and whether it should remain in the federation. No decision will be ready for the Convention to be further discussed at the IEB's next meeting.

Organizing Director Peter Oleny reported to the board on the ongoing campaign on behalf of workers at the Blue Diamond Growers' processing plant in Sacramento, the highest paid plant in the country. The company is waging a nasty anti-union campaign, but the organizers and the Local 30 committee and local organizing committee have built a solid committee in the plant of 55 workers. They gave me power to have various angles to gain support and pressure the company to negotiate.

The board also dealt with issues brought by members of mining and milling company Local 30 in the Southern California desert. The board reviewed an Article VIII complaint and decided that the International will oversee a rerun of the local's recall election.

The board also passed three Statements of Policy (see below), one of which calls for the ILWU to get out of its membership in the AFL-CIO. The statement is a coalition of businesses and right-wing activists. These false friends of workers' voices in public debate.

The group sponsoring Prop 75, "The Coalition for Employee Rights," is a coalition of businesses and right-wing activists. These false friends of workers' voices in public debate.

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Arnold Schwarzenegger's remark carry a special off-year election for Nov. 8, 2005 so he can put before the voters a batch of initiatives that slam workers now and give him more power to bash them in the future. This stult will cost the financially strapped state an expensive election. The board's trustees, Dave Freiboth of the IBU, Southern California representative Barry Corvino of Local 46 and Arthur Reeves of Local 142, reported that the union's finances were in good shape. The International spent $154,000 less than it took in during the second quarter of 2005. The trustees also reviewed a draft status quo budget for 2006-2009 to be used as a starting point for the budget proposal to bring to the International Convention in May 2006. The trustees with the help of October 9 prepare a revised draft for the board to consider at its December meeting so that a budget will be ready for the Convention to review and decide upon.

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Canadian unions pledge unity, solidarity and a good fight

by Tom Price

The Canadian Labor Congress, Canada’s union federation, met in Montreal, Quebec June 13-17 and reaffirmed the solidarity of Canada’s many unions and its million union workers. At the gathering, the CLC celebrated its nearly 50 years of history and made plans for the future.

The CLC retained Ken Georgetti as its President and upheld its commitment to its smaller unions by electing ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne as one of its vice presidents. A caucus of 28 smaller unions chose him along with 14 other VP’s to represent their interests on the CLC’s Executive Council. Dufresne was accompanied at the meeting by ILWU Canada Third Vice President Al Le Monnier.

“ILWU Canada will continue to play an activist role within the CLC,” Dufresne said.

The CLC represents unions, provincial labor federations and 137 district labor councils. It exists to promote workers’ interests by confronting employers or governments it considers increasingly hostile to their interests.

This year’s triennial convention pledged support for political action, coalition building, media campaigns and trade union solidarity.

The CLC will support its members by conducting training for campaign organizers and educating organizers and representatives. Members will be trained in communications and preparation of briefs for disputes, hearings and governmental bodies.

The CLC will fight for Canada’s highly publicized pension crisis, rate deregulation of the health care system, the corporatization of education, corporate forces and right-wing politicians who want to end public education, and environmental bodies.

The CLC’s Executive Council issued a statement against corporatization of Canada’s universities and the privatization of the national health care system. Canada’s health care system, the CLC says, must be expanded and improved, and must be publicly controlled.

The CLC will carry the message of the need for union organizing, collective bargaining and the need to give voice to the unorganized workers when key issues are at stake, such as a corporate-led pension crisis or the privatization of public services.

Canadian unions pledge unity, solidarity and a good fight because of “the seriousness of the challenge.”

The ALRB found merit in the allegations and issued a formal complaint against Gallo in April 2003 and in the following December a state labor board ruled the company had violated state labor law. Since then Gallo has failed to bargain in good faith with the employer’s refusal to knock out a number of programs that would benefit workers and the CLC wants to see them canceled. New agreements must support workers.

The convention passed policy papers on privatization. In the face of trade agreements sanitizing the “investor rights” of foreign companies, the CLC warns that Canada’s vast resources could be used for grabs by multi-national corporations. NAFTA and WTO rules could allow them to be privatized.

As part of its inclusionary policies, the CLC allows individual locals to make proposals to the body. ILWU Canada’s longshore Local 500 proposed a resolution to set up a committee to recommend how to finally implement a resolution passed at its founding convention in 1968 that called for the establishment of “an alternate political force based on the needs of workers, farmers and similar groups...interested in basic social reforms and reconstruction through our parliamentary system of government.”

In another resolution, Local 500 proposed that all candidates supported by labor should also support the CLC’s legislative program.

CEC members, including ILWU Canada, can rely on the CLC for support from the worksite to the halls of Parliament whenever their issues are on the line.

“The CLC continues to support the ILWU in opposing unfair background checks and screening of dockers,” Dufresne said.

IEB STATEMENTS OF POLICY
continued from page 8

WAKE-UP WAL-MART CAMPAIGN

Wine-grape workers at Gallo of Sonoma, the largest wine-making family in America, voted overwhelmingly in 1994 to join the United Farm Workers. For five years the union tried to get Gallo to sign a contract, but the company refused the workers’ key demand—extending benefits such as health care, average and paid vacations to employees of farm labor contractors who were hired in the fields.

In 2000 the workers finally agreed to a first contract offering some protections and grievance and arbitration procedures, hoping to win benefits in the future. The CLC had joined in the negotiations. By 2005 it had doubled hourly wages, increased the farm labor contractor to employees about 75 percent of its workers.

Gallo then began an illegal campaign, threatened to decertify the union, with company foremen and supervisors directing workers to sign decertification petitions and promising better pay and benefits in exchange for ousting the UFW. The union protested the company actions and the Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) impounded the ballots because of “the seriousness of the allegations.”

The U.S. Food and Commercial Workers (UPW) has launched the Wake-Up Wal-Mart campaign to build a national coalition of workers across the country to stop Wal-Mart, the head of building local community coalitions at every Wal-Mart location in Canada, to continue this fight.

Canadian unions pledge unity, solidarity and a good fight, with high deductibles and costly premiums, combined with poverty-level wages, forces tens of thousands of its employees onto taxpayer-funded public health care, resulting in costs of $2.5 billion per year in public assistance programs.

Wal-Mart has been found guilty of child labor violations, exploiting immigrant labor to a large extent, and being a defendant in a gender discrimination suit affecting 2 million current and former female employees. Wal-Mart has also consistently denied workers their democratic right to organize and has even gone so far as to shut down a store to prevent it.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UPW) has launched the Wake-Up Wal-Mart campaign with the goal of changing Walmart’s anti-union business model by building local community coalitions at every Wal-Mart location in the U.S. The CPUC, in conjunction with the AFL-CIO, is building a global coalition of unions, among union governance federations and other groups that speak for the workers who are affected by Wal-Mart’s business practices.

The Wake-Up Wal-Mart campaign is not just a battle at one location, but a global campaign to organize Walmart stores and Walmart workers across the country to build local community coalitions at every Wal-Mart location in the world, to stop Wal-Mart’s anti-union business model from becoming international.
Bloody Thursday—solemn and joyous

by Tom Price

Longshore workers took July 5 off to remember the tragic incident that led to the founding of the ILWU.

On that day 71 years ago Marine Cooks and Steward’s member Nick Daffron and longshoreman Howard Sperry were gunned down by police in San Francisco. Dozens were wounded by gunfire. Workers were so furious they turned it into a coastwide maritime strike into a general strike in San Francisco that closed the city down.

Daffron and Sperry were both 19. Bloody Thursday honors their memory and hundreds of others who were killed.

In San Pedro, more than 4,000 ILWU members, retirees, friends and family members gathered on Bloody Thursday at Peck Park. Newly elected Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa spent two hours shaking hands with his many supporters, and the kids had water slides, face painting and plenty of hot dogs.

"Art Almeida was our historian for the day," said David Ross Sr., one of the event organizers. "He explained what the guys in 1934 did for us. If they could only see what we have now.

The remembrance finished with dancing to several bands, including SFPA, a band featuring members’ kids, and Sal Rodríguez and the All Star Band, with musicians from Ray Charles’ band and other famous bands.

In San Francisco, retirees, friends and families joined with longshore Local 10 members at the big hall on North Point St. to remember the two strikers gunned down a few blocks away. As the ILWU Drill Team stood at attention, everyone bowed their heads and looked at the silhouettes of the two brothers painted on the sidewalk.

"We also here to celebrate the fact that we have something to remember," longtime Local 10 President Trent Wink said. "The only time a person, a dream, or a union ever dies is when we forget about it, when you forget what it took to obtain what we have today.”

Longshoreman Ben Johnson read a passage from South African feminist Olive Schreiner’s “Story of an African Farm.”

"Where I lie down worn out, other men will stand, young and fresh,” he read. "You remember the steps that I have out; they will climb, by the stairs that I have built they will mount. They will never know the name of the man who made them.

Ben is the son of Local 10’s Joe Johnson, a former secretary-treasurer of the Marine Cooks and Stewards union and a longtime speaker at Bloody Thursday rallies before his death in 2000.

Portland area locals remembered Bloody Thursday at Oaks Park. Members and retirees laid a wreath on the river in honor of those who died or were wounded 71 years ago.

Local 5 President Kristi Lovato recalled the significance the remembrance has for Local 5 people.

“We got our charter five years ago and it’s good to be around folks who have been in the ILWU for a long time," Lovato said.

“It gives us a sense of the larger community of the ILWU, to celebrate who we are with the larger community.”

Local 8 President Leal Sundt brought the past into the present and future.

"It was in times of uncertainty and hope that our modern union was formed," Sundt said. "It was formed from the blood of July 5th and struggle of that generation. It was that generation and generations to follow that made us what we are today—a proud, powerful and well-respected defender of not just longshoremen, but also the working class.”

Sundt finished with: "Today we honor the dead on this holy memorial day we call Bloody Thursday. Tomorrow we reenter the never-ending struggle to survive.

Seattle retirees laying a wreath at Shelby Daffron’s grave. Left to right: Bob Swanson, Pete Kollen, Rudy Martinez and Bob Rogers.

Seattle area retirees began the day by laying a wreath on Shelby Daffron’s grave. Later longshore Local 19 retiree Art Mink spoke from the stage at the union’s Vasa Park picnic. He told the story of the 1934 strike and how that victory led to the end of the humiliating “shape up” system of hiring and the beginning of a real union hiring hall.

Nearly 1,300 members, friends and family turned out. Members of the Federated Auxiliaries, retirees, clerks’ Local 52 and bosses’ Local 98 helped. The band “Hott Cargo,” composed of ILWU casuals, sang labor songs.

"We wanted the casuals to know they were welcome," Scott Martinez, one of the event organizers said. "That way, when contract time comes around, they’ll know what family they belong to.”

Seattle: We call it Bloody Thursday. Tom Price wrote earlier this summer that this day was "for selection." With limited accommodations, everyone shared beds or slept on the floor before venturing out onto the dock at 1 a.m. in torrential rain and gusting freezing winds.

While the actions on the dock at Whittier were sold and ongoing, many others were also active for the cause. After the first brother was arrested, ILWU Canada President Tom Dufrene and Local 500, Vancouver, President Bob Ashton were immediately contacted.

With the Carnival Spirit homeporting, in Vancouver, Canada, they went straight into action, advising the port and stevedoring companies of Local 500 workers’ potential reaction to the injustice taking place in Alaska. Arresting longshoremen for freedom of speech was definitely not on.

A call was then made to the ITF’s West Coast Coordinator Jeff Engels in Seattle to inform him of what had transpired. Within half an hour (midnight, European time) I received a call from ITF’s Dockers’ Secretary General Rees and being informed us that the ITF was ready to support world-wide action against the Carnival Corporation if needed.

On returning to Vancouver, I went to the dispatch hall and was surrounded by rank and file members wanting to take immediate action against Carnival’s subsidiary companies, Holland America and Princess Cruises, who had ships in port over that weekend.

ILWU Canada Local 514 President Frank Scigliano and his foremen also pledged their support.

By the time Local 10, San Francisco had already shown their support affecting the whole port and at Seattle, Herald Uges, Local 19 President, had already advised cruise lines of possible job action.

It was not until the day before the Carnival Spirit arrived in Vancouver that correspondence satisfactory to ILWU Alaska was received and US jobs were returned to US citizens. ILWU Alaska President Carl Norman has to be commended for his actions and leadership in an unpredictable and, at times, hostile atmosphere.

Brothers and sisters, solidarity such as this will be key to our future.

Long live the ILWU.

Tim Footman
Second Vice-President
ILWU Canada
Longshore retired, deceased and survivors

**RECENT RETIREES:** Local 8—Jonathan Woodworth (Jay), Marie Storvik (Betty), Steven Jacroux (Merridee); Local 10—Alfred Blevins Jr., Shirley Storvik (Betty), Jerry Tyler, Robert Pelland; Local 11—Lester Roberts (Leona), Wayne Erickson, Local 23—Morris Kibmough (Barbara), Local 24—Ruben L. Smith, Local 34—Terry Conklin, Local 54—Terry Conklin, Local 75—Nolan Walker (Lois), Local 25—Vladimir Jovetic, Local 52—Ronald Bjornson, Shirley Gardenhire, Local 94—Robert Nelson (Glennie), Raymond R.

**Friends mourn Margaret Howell**

By Marcy Rein

Friends and co-workers at Powell’s Books in Portland, Ore. are grieving the loss of Margaret Howell, who died July 29 at age 32.

Howell worked at Powell’s for nine years, mostly as an e-mail runner, one of the people who collect books from the store shelves to fill Internet orders. She belonged to ILRUI warehouse, retail, and allied workers Local 5.

Local 5 President Kristi Lovato talked about a day when Howell was leaving the house to go to work and noticed a baby sparrow that had fallen out of its nest. Though she was already in trouble for tardiness, she took the bird to the Audubon Society. The people there sent her to another first longshore woman worker killed on West Coast docks.

The accident is still under investigation, by the appropriate agencies.

Kimberly Kuchman-Miles was always there for people. She was born in Olympia and spent her entire life in that area. She attended Timberline High School and her surviving parents, Tom and Ginni Kuchman, still live in Olympia, where her family had been home- steaders. She is also survived by her two children, Joshua Miles, age 10, and Brittany Miles, age 14, and her partner of eight years, David Zahradnik. She is also sur-
vived by her brothers Kelly and Jeffrey and two sets of grandparents.

Local 23 held a memorial for Kuchman-Miles Aug. 25. It included a silent auction and an open mic so people could share their experienc- es. Area Longshore Locals and organ- ized labor came out in force sup- porting the memorial and the trust fund. Her friends and family have established a trust fund for her chil-
dren at Fibre Commercial Bank, 2629 Pacific Highway East, Fife, WA 98424 - Phone # 253-922-5100.

**Save the date**

**Coast Education Committee Benefits Workshop**

We all know we have good benefits. Learn how to use them wisely and protect them into the future. Each area will have an area benefits workshop on the dates above. Notice of the locations will be provided in your Local Bulletins and by mail to your home.

Coast Education Committee, Area Directors and Coast Benefits Specialist urge everyone to plan on being there. Lunch will be provided.

Howell grew up in Marietta, Georgia and had lived in New York, Montana and Arizona before settling in Portland 10 years ago. She loved to travel. On one of her trips, she ventured into Area 51 of “X-Files” fame, the Air Force base also known as Area 51, and was taken there by a black helicopter in the middle of the night.

Besides the “X-Files” and “The Sopranos,” Howell loved all sorts of films and devoured books on a whole range of subjects. She was a supportive union member, said Local 34 President Mallia (Dorothy), Howard Hanson, Francisco Jovel, Local 52—Raymond Bjornson, Shirley Gardenhire, Local 94—Robert Nelson (Glennie), Raymond R.

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

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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

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San Pedro, CA 90731
(310) 547-9966

ADRP—Northern California
Norm McLeod
400 North Point
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 776-8363

ADRP—Oregon
Jim Copp
3054 N.E. Glisan, Ste. 2
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 231-4882

ADRP—Washington
Donnie Schwendeman
3600 Port of Tacoma Rd. #503
Tacoma, WA 98424
(253) 922-8913

ILWU WAREHOUSE DIVISION

DARE—Northern California
Gary Atkinson
22693 Hesperian Blvd., Ste. 277
Hayward, CA 94541
(800) 772-8288

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