INSIDE
President’s Report: The dispatch hall is our solidarity center ..............................................page 2
ILWU watchmen nab port intruder in Long Beach .................................................................page 3
ILWU Canada Convention builds future on solidarity ..............................................................page 5
Letters to the editor: Members talk back ....................................................................................page 7
The dispatch hall is our solidarity center

By James Spinosa
ILWU International President

Are we revisiting 1934, back before the dispatch hall, when longshore labor was hired through favoritism and individual deals, when some had work and others had none? Are we headed back to the days of the ship up, with the way employers are luring steady workers with enticements and leaving fewer jobs for those working out of the hall?

Back in 1934 there was an ILWU, longshore work was not considered by most people to be a desirable job. You hailed heavy cargo in and out of a ship's hold on your back at a fast pace until the ship was finished. If you couldn't keep up, there was always someone ready to replace you. If you collapsed from exhaustion, you were fired. If you got hurt, that was your problem. And to add insult to injury, you had to beg or bribe the foreman for a chance at that. Longshore work was demanding of the body and demeaning of the soul.

That's why when West Coast longshoremen went out in the great maritime strike of 1934, they didn't just demand union recognition and higher wages. They demanded union control of the dispatch hall and a six-hour day to bring dignity and equality to getting a job. The dispatch hall would end the employers' favoritism and control by ending the system that pitted workers against each other. The six-hour day would help guarantee there was enough work to share.

The longshoremen of 1934 stood out on strike for three months, withstood being beaten, shot and killed, for that vision of solidarity. We still commemorate the bravery of our union every July 5, Bloody Thursday. All West Coast ports, from Seattle to San Diego, hold dispatch halls and a six-hour day to bring dignity and equality to getting a job.

We are so privileged to be able to share in the bounty those before us gave so much to gain. And sharing is exactly what they fought for, for the right to share the work opportunities and the wealth among all our longshore brothers and sisters.

As we look at the subterfuge and how the employers are using technology to outsource our jobs, we must also see how they are trying to use technology to set us against each other.

We cannot let them choose one section of our union over another. Instead we have to reinforce each others' contracts and jurisdictions. As it is, technology will make some jobs we do disappear. But that makes it all the more important to protect the ones that remain and to make sure we equalize work opportunities.

We must not allow ourselves to become pawns in the employers' quest to disenfranchise our great union. The ILWU stands on principles that support equal work opportunity and social justice for all. The employers see the success of our industry and use not force, but 21st century strategy to frustrate us and pit worker against worker.

Harry Bridges, our great founder, always said we must never find ourselves in a position where special interests groups are formed in our union and are recognized by the employers. Our rank and file has an obligation to steer clear of enticements and gratuities offered them. We must continue to abide by the contract and other union by-laws that have preserved the dispatch system we live by.

We have the greatest work force in the world. Whether we are workers out of the hall, steady or preferred, our obligation is to move cargo and meet the needs of our industry. In doing this task we must recognize that every job plays an important role and requires skills to accommodate the industry's needs. The hall worker must never be considered second-class.

The success of past and future contract negotiations relies on the strength of our hiring system. Skill work must be available to ensure hall men and women that work in our industry and equal earning capacity.

The 2008 negotiations are only two years away from starting. Focusing on problems that weaken our dispatch system must be a top priority for all of our longshore workers, marine clerks and walking bosses.

The dispatch hall is our solidarity center.
By Nancy Reid

SACRAMENTO—With their yellow vests, reflective gear, and red and blue lights glowing, ILWU watchmen nabbed port intruders at the Tower Bridge during Sacramento’s César Chávez parade. Marchers honored the UFW founder and shouted their support for the rights of workers and of immigrants—becoming part of a huge national wave of protest against anti-immigrant bills in Congress.

The ILWU contingent crossed the Tower Bridge during Sacramento’s César Chávez parade. Marchers honored the UFW founder and shouted their support for the rights of workers and of immigrants—becoming part of a huge national wave of protest against anti-immigrant bills in Congress. Immigration reform. These include:

- A path to legalization and documentation for undocumented workers who now live in the U.S., paying taxes and contributing to their communities.
- Enforcement of workplace standards. "Last, enforcement of labor and employment laws gives unscrupulous employers an incentive to exploit immigrant workers and penalizes employers who abide by the law," Spinosa wrote.
- Replacement of employer sanctions with a system that targets and criminalizes employers who recruit undocumented workers from abroad for economic gain.

The ILWU itself was founded by an immigrant in 1937 seeking worker parity, regardless of national origin or race," Spinosa wrote.

"In 1997 the ILWU [International Longshore and Warehouse Union] passed a resolution stating in part, 'it is a well known fact that America is a land of immigrants and we made up as an Asian, red, creased, or color, and it is also a well known fact that under the United States Constitution all people are created equal and every citizen and non-citizen living in the U.S. has the right to be protected...'"
ILWU takes Capitol Hill

By Lindsay McLaughlin
ILWU Legislative Director

ILWU warehouse Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker (left) lobby Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the House Democratic leader, as longshore Local 13’s health care lobbyist, George Bacon. Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal. Sick Americans become consumers of health care services instead of patients, forced to worry about the costs of every procedure and test that their doctors order. As a result of lobbying by ILWU, the House Democratic leader in Representatives, addressed the Conference. She made a promise to the ILWU that if she became Speaker in November, she would place the Leaders’ agenda to protect longshore pensions from being adversely affected by legislation currently being considered by Congress. An ILWU-supported amendment to the Pension Protection Act would protect the ILWU plan from reductions in benefits. The same checks, then every individual with access to terminals, including truck drivers, must be subjected to the same checks. The Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Peter King’s (R-NY), spoke at a Congressional hearing on the subject. In the hearing, Joe L. Maguire referred to his meeting with longshoremen when he discussed the issue of access control. Longshoremen brought to his attention the case of a man who breached security on three occasions and traveled on board ships bound for Los Angeles, San Francisco, and China. It was a man who entered the Coast Guard as longshoremen’s help in keeping this individual off the docks. As a result of information given to him by ILWU members, Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) spoke of the need to address the threat of empty container theft, and later introduced an amendment to the bill that sets up a pilot program to evaluate the empty container threat. Joe Radisch, President of the Southern California District Council, spoke on our second topic: saving lives by promoting greener ports. He spoke of working with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in setting goals for a 20 percent ship emission pollution reduction by the year 2010 for all carriers that call at U.S. ports. He also noted that the efforts in Los Angeles have peaked the interest of the mayors of Seattle and Oakland. Rep. George Miller (D-CA) mirrored our concern on pension security. March 13-17, ILWU took Capitol Hill. The ILWU has long advocated high quality comprehensive universal health care coverage for all Americans. We believe that health care is a basic human right, one of a civilized society’s central precepts. Rep. Conyers has introduced the United States National Health Insurance Act establishing a publicly financed, privately delivered health care system. It would use the already existing Medicare program, improving it and expanding it to all U.S. residents and all residents living in U.S. Territories. This bill absolutely is the only provision that is comprehensive throughout the history of the ILWU. We are still studying it and may suggest amendments to make it a more feasible program to put into practice. Delegates also discussed and lob- bied on our union’s opposition to health savings accounts. People who create these accounts are permitted to save a portion of their income in a special tax-free shelter, to be withdrawn to cover medical expenses. These accounts are then combined with high-deductible health insurance. On the most basic level, these health savings accounts destroy the risk-pooling system of insurance we have used since the days of Franklin Miller is outraged that corporate CEOs have written pension plans for themselves that cannot be taken away, but have no problem breaking the promise to their workers for life-time benefits. Miller has introduced a bill to require employers to provide workers the right to hear appeals when a worker is denied a TWIC card by the Transportation Security Administration. It appears that an ALJ process may become law given that a provision is included in the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act that mandates an Administrative Law Judge process for port workers denied a transportation security card. The ILWU has lobbied hard for fair due process for our members and it looks like that work is finally paying off. During the Conference, ILWU members spoke at the Homeland Security Committee hearing on port security legislation. Subcommittee Chairman Joe L. Maguire (R-CA) introduced the SAFE Port Act and scheduled this hearing on the subject. In the hearing, Rep. Lungren referred to his meeting with longshoremen when he discussed the issue of access control. 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George Miller (D-CA) mirrored our concern on pension secu-
ILWU Canada Convention builds solidity on future

by Tom Price

ILWU Canada looked back and then forward at its 29th Convention. As the 11th Biennial as it charted its course for the coming year.

The union pledged during its March 21-24 gathering at its Maritime Centre in Vancouver to continue working locally in municipal and provincial politics, nationally with the International Transport Workers' Federation and any workers who find themselves in distress. The officers reported on the struggles of the last two years and how the previous convention resolutions had been implemented. Many resolutions were passed, including one supporting the Canadian and U.S. integration.

In his opening remarks ILWU Canada President Tom Dufresne announced that the Convention would honor the memory of Canadian Area President Roy Smith and the nine locals that went to jail with him for three weeks 40 years ago. "When we leave here we will do something," he said. Dufresne also presented a biography to brother Les Copan at the convention.

"We can’t do anything about yesterday, we can only look forward to tomorrow, and that’s why we’re here," McEllrath told the convention. "We have to plan real actions, do something about tomorrow, and tomorrow we’re going to do something about the day after tomorrow."

McEllrath complimented ILWU Canada President Fred Roycroft for his recent efforts "to get a tongue in the hold of the ship, and that has all changed, our job is different, we’re separated work is different, we’re separated." McEllrath went on to say that the union is also pressuring the government to expand and upgrade the facilities.

National strategies for the next parliament. The delegates voted for a dues increase of $2 per month beginning in 2006.

RESOLUTIONS

The convention congratulated the crew of the ferry "North Star" for their heroic efforts in rescuing 96 out of 101 persons from the ill-fated 8,806-ton ferry sank 70 miles south of Prince Rupert March 24. The resolution called for an investigation into the cause of the accident, and a safety review of other single-compartments service.

ILWU Canada will continue to oppose the privatization and deregulation of the economy.

Free-trade agreements continue to close Canadian factories and erode the government’s power to act on behalf of citizens in a sovereign manner.

ILWU Canada reaffirmed its opposition to them and will lobby and protest for their repeal.

ILWU Canada will demand an immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from our soil and will participate in further demonstrations. The delegates resolved to increase our presence in the community, especially those in the trade union movement.

The union will work with the Council of Canadians to oppose “deep integration” of the Canadian and U.S. economies. That policy would mean losing national control of oil and natural gas, and the loss of sovereignty over foreign workers, social programs, defense and culture.

The delegates reaffirmed their commitment to bargain benefits for pensioners.

Theilsen said that service union growth is happening inland, the ILWU should target that growth for organizing.

The ILWU sends representatives to the April 28 Day of Mourning ceremonies to observe one minute of silence at 11 a.m. that day on the job.

Resolved to hire a full-time organizer, when deemed necessary by the organizing committee.

The Convention called for the creation of a commission to study the causes of increased log exports while Canadian jobs in milling are being exported.

ILWU asks the CLC to study the formation of a new Bill of Rights for Canadians. It should guarantee free health care, children free of pollution, our grain, potash, meat, steel, pipe, petroleum, but most we want we will have to struggle for. Everything we have to get, we have to struggle for. Everything we got, we fought for. And everything we are going to have to struggle for. We have to fight to keep," Georgotti said.

The convention congratulated the CLC’s Georgotti praised ILWU Canada for its commitment to solidarity. He reported that Canada’s Parliament had passed a protection plan for workers’ paychecks and pensions when employers go bankrupt.

The law allows employers with 100 or fewer workers to fire them for no reason at all. Larger companies can fire anyone for vague “operations reasons.” Employers will be able to force individual contracts on workers and fire them if they refuse. The new law undermines union agreements and allows employers to set new deals without workers’ input.

The NDP’s Jack Layton praised the support the ILWU gave in recent elections.

“Anybody who is associated with the ILWU is a friend of mine,” Layton said. “I’m proud to lead the party that is supported by your union and is on the side of working people.”

Fraternal delegates included pensions Frank Kennedy; Mike Marine and Dan Duncan; and Jean Ordano, President, Federated Australian delegates from affiliated unions included: the Retail, Wholesale, and General Division President Fred Boycroft and its Provincial Representative Brian Debeck; RWDU’s Diane Menigge and its Secretary-Treasurer Chris Banting; Grain Services Union President Michael Raine and its General Secretary Hugh Wagner.

The convention nominated candidates for its upcoming national elections. Dave Pritchett will challenge incumbent Tom Dufresne for President. Ken Ashton is unopposed; Pat Bolen will run against incumbent Tim Footman for Second Vice President; Third Vice President Al Le Monnier is unopposed; and Gordon Westland will challenge incumbent Secretary-Treasurer Ken Bauber.

Results will be announced May 1.
Pollution is a workers' safety issue.

Thank you for your October 2005 story on oil and gas emissions and the environmental health hazards reported at the Southern California Maritime Terminal. The ILWU is actively involved in combating the Dirty Diesel Coalition stories in these two editions were cut from the same cloth.

Many of these kinds of issues are part of the work we do at the San Francisco Landboatinmen’s Union strike of 1987, where we resolved to mourn the dead and find the living who were being exposed to terri- fying amounts of hydrocarbon vapors during the strike. We passed International Executive Board policy in favor of vapor recov- ery for all cargoes at that time and we won Air District regulations in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Our work continues to change dramatically, almost instantly, even though the employers never really understood the issues in bargaining.

Today the issue has arisen again, for the situation includes people included in San Francisco regula- tions, and because the regulations are not being enforced. The vapors from many fuel oil cargoes are not being recovered, including bunker fuels, a practice that is very concerning about these matters. Coastwise, by the early 1990s, close to $6 million were spent in engi- neered vapor recovery systems along the West Coast, and it seems the recovery systems were accomplished by that time. Others are still left to be done, up to 80%, and in some ports, or to include more cargoes, as is now the debate in San Francisco.

The national and international situation that began some 20 years ago still has potential and urgency today. Maritime workers from both the oil cargo and dry cargo industries are still being exposed in all ports, particularly fuel oils, including bunker fuels. Our victories can be renewed, and we can be reconstituted to call the shots into the future with good effect, for our wages, our hours, our conditions, for ports, for our political gains, for the port environments throughout our West Coast jurisdictions, as well as throughout the world.

Jeff Quam-Wickham
IBU San Francisco Region

The story tells some of the his- tory of the workers throughout the world. The “reserve economic power” stated in the 8th Guiding Principle was evident. We, in turn, must always be ready to continue to assist our broth- ers and sisters worldwide whenever they are under attack.

The Washington Report spells out crucial issues that we as workers must work to achieve. We must never forget to make sure our participation in the union and its policies and programs is what has brought us success over the years. To defeat them may be trying another union tactic by trying to destroy the very union that makes them, the longshoremen and teamsters on the East and Gulf coasts. We know already Homeland Security’s phony longshore screening rules. Who’s next, the ILWU in 2006.

Al Perisho, Local 63, retired
President of the So. Cal. Pensioners

Hiden agenda

Bush’s threat to veto any legis- lation regarding the Dubai Ports World deal raises a question in the mind of our retired member Hugh Hosner of the So. Cal. Pensioners. The recent report on the health issue looks over there against dissenters, women and chil- dren, no mention of trade unionists (if there are any allowed) reminds Hugh of where the Australian government against dissenters, women and children, no mention of trade unionists (if there are any allowed) reminds Hugh of where the Australian government military types and wars were trained in the failed attempt to destroy the Maritime Union of Australia; Dubai, Hawaii!”

President of the So. Cal. Pensioners

League ports for all

I would like to call to the atten- tion of all members and friends of the ILWU the story in the August 2006 edition of The San Francisco Chronicle, Business Section, “Shipping’s Dirty Cargo” by Scott Fairclough. There are many issues such as civil rights and equality and I see that “for the union” guys. (We didn’t have any females back then in longshore.) We need to look out for our brothers and sisters in the remaining members.

We are “the one and only ILWU” We used “patriotism” then. They’ll use Homeland (port) Security now.

They didn’t succeed back then. And, unless our union’s done a com- plete about face, their new blacklist will wind up on the same trash heap of history with the old ones.

They’re back!

Bruce yourself! They’re back! A few years ago most current ILWU members were not afraid to put on the line. Their aim back then was to root out the “for the union” guys. (We didn’t have any females back then in longshore.) We need to look out for our brothers and sisters in the remaining members.

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They’re back!
Leonard won a big one! Harry Bridges (left), Henry Schmidt (standing) and Bob Robertson (center) celebrate after the Supreme Court decided in their favor in 1953 at the end of the "BRS" trial. Norman Leonard, their stalwart attorney, is all smiles too.

ILWU Attorney Norman Leonard, 1914-2006

By Harvey Schwartz
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

T
he ILWU lost a great friend and champion when former ILWU Attorney and ILWU legal counselor Norman Leonard died recently. Leonard, who twice successfully defended Bridges before the U.S. Supreme Court, practiced law in San Francisco from 1938 until his retirement in 1986, except for four years in the Navy during World War II. Throughout his life Leonard's distinguished career represented the ILWU tirelessly and with consummate skill. He died on March 7.

In 1986 ILWU International President Jimmy Herman authored an introduction to a rich oral history Leonard completed with interviewer Estolv Ward of the Regional Oral History Office at the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Herman wrote:

"For nearly half a century Leonard's working life has been devoted exclusively to the defense of working class people, organizations, and causes," Herman wrote. "The very existence of the ILWU today, the fact that we survived all the attacks to which we have been subjected, in no small measure is a reflection of his ability and dedication."

By Harvey Schwartz
Curator, ILWU Oral History Collection

Out of the Coast Appeals Officer Rudy Rubio, who served as ILWU International Vice-President from 1959-1967, Leonard emerged as a man with a brilliant legal mind.

For all his prodigious legal talent, Leonard was an unpretentious, unassuming person. Rubio described him as "a plain, down-to-earth guy who got on great with union officers and rank-and-file members alike. He communicated in every-day language and never played the intimidating lawyer. Norman made you feel comfortable with him. He was a guy you could relax and drink in or his office discussing complex legal issues."

Herman commented glowingly about how Leonard functioned as the International's legal advisor and how he would sit in with the International officers during decision-making sessions. "He could be there to give legal advice and to keep us out of trouble. Norman always found a way to do what we wanted that was actually within the law. He had a great capacity for this." Leonard was a four-term Local 10 president between 1967 and 1978 and the first African American elected to that post, recalled Leonard best as Local 10's attorney.

"He labored through all our legal problems with us," Williams said. "When we were forced to make certain correct legal moves, he was always there to help. He would figure it out if there were legal representations about which we had no idea."

"When there were, Norman always did all he could to get us out of any jam we were in. We never failed to attend our union meetings, listen patiently to our questions and the demands of the membership.

The bottom line is, Norman was a good man who hung in there in good times and bad. He never turned his back on us."

While Leonard argued several cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, he actually did not perform in the courtroom very often himself. During his lengthy career most people thought of him as a consummate legal strategist rather than a courtroom showman. Among his peers, who could seriously understand his work, he was especially well respected for his superior research and writing skills.

Bill Carder was Leonard's last partner. He emphasized that there were several high-profile cases in which well-known people like Bridges got their trial convictions overturned on appeal because of Leonard's briefs.

"Through it all, Norman was truly unassuming," Carder recalled. "He didn't care about grabbing the courthouse spotlight. All he wanted was what was right for his clients."

When Carder joined Leonard's law firm in 1988, he was already a seasoned attorney with much experience representing the United Farm Workers. Still, he characterized practicing law with Leonard as "a great opportunity to learn from a guy with such a long perspective." Carder was especially impressed because "Leonard usually did not waste many words with judges and lawyers. He didn't waste many words with people like Bridges got their trial convictions overturned on appeal because of Leonard's briefs."

The firm had a high public profile by the early 1940s, while World War II was on. Leonard was the attorney for the ILWU during World War II. Throughout his life Leonard had argued, that Bridges had done all he could to get us out of any jam we were in. We never failed to attend our union meetings, listen patiently to our questions and the demands of the membership.

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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 Wellman: the important new study of longshoring in the ILWU. **$15.00** (paperback)
- 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 **$15.00**
- We Are the ILWU DVD: **$9.00**
- We Are the ILWU VHS: **$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**
- Life on the Beam DVD: **$16.50**
- Life on the Beam VHS: **$5.00**

Limited numbers from earlier decades also available. Contact The Dispatcher at: The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109. (415) 776-8363. Make check or money order (U.S. Funds) payable to “ILWU” and send to ILWU Library, 1188 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Prices include shipping and handling. Please allow at least four weeks for delivery. Shipment to U.S. addresses only.