



THE DISPATCHER

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Alcatraz City Cruises workers strike page 8



Photo by Zack Pattin

On March 21, nearly 200 workers at Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics in the Port of Tacoma voted to join Local 23.

Logistics workers use supply chain power to win

Two hundred workers at Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics in Tacoma join ILWU with grit, determination, and solidarity

Our union makes us strong!" After paralyzing their employer with a massive strike in February, almost 200 workers at Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (WWL) in the Port of Tacoma organized around this central message for a sweeping victory in an NLRB union election. On March 21, employees overwhelmingly voted to become certified as members of ILWU Local 23. "Once we stood up and saw what power we had," said Jessica Roberson, a lead distribution driver, "we knew we could stick together and win big."

Signatory sweatshop

In 2018, WWL signed a 30-year lease with the Port of Tacoma and opened a Vehicle Processing Center (VPC) directly across from the East Blair waterway, while the Northwest

Seaport Alliance also signed a ten-year vessel services agreement with Wallenius to manage cargo-handling operations. The car transport operation began to escalate in volume and velocity, as Local 23 members moved hundreds of thousands of automobiles annually off the ships into the processing facility, where VPC workers install accessories and load vehicles into railcars for domestic transport.

But as the non-union VPC got up and running, it became abundantly clear WWL was degrading standards for processing employees and running a sweatshop operation. "Since this place opened, we have seen workers chewed up and spit out," said Jon Nino, an installer inside the shop. "There is such a basic lack of respect for people from managers that they regularly lose employees and must constantly do hiring events."

"They refused to follow any kind of fair and transparent rules here, whether its regular raises, promotions,

or consistent schedules," said Jose Camacho, a distribution driver. "As for health and safety, managers regularly encouraged us to speed up our driving and break limits so they can move more vehicles for greater profit."

Churn and burn

Over the last two years, several workers had begun meeting and talking about getting together to confront the dire conditions facing Wallenius employees.

"We are not paid what we should be getting, doing this kind of heavy, dangerous job loading railcars," said Rob Zacapu, a rail loader. "There was no question we had to step up before the company pushed us out."

"There were so many people getting fired or leaving an unworkable situation," said Tammie Bredeson, another driver in distribution. "It took a bunch of starts and stops over months to get people showing up regularly."

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ILWU members gather to honor fallen workers on 90th Anniversary of 'First Blood'

On May 15, more than 400 ILWU members, pensioners, and officers from Locals 13, 63, 63-OCU, 94, 26, 56, Inlandboatmen's Union, the LA Port Police, and Federated Auxiliary 8 gathered in Gibson Park for the 22nd Annual First Blood Memorial.

The event also marked the 90th anniversary of the violent clash between dockworkers and company-paid strikebreakers that occurred in Wilmington on May 15th, 1934 which led to the deaths of longshore workers Dickie Parker and John Knudsen. Parker, a 20-year-old San Pedro High School graduate, was shot and killed during the 1934 melee. Knudsen died on June 5, 1934, from injuries he sustained on May 15. Several more workers and allies were subsequently killed during the strike which is commemorated annually as Bloody Thursday.

The event is held every May 15th at noon behind the bust of ILWU co-founder Harry Bridges that faces Harbor Boulevard in downtown San Pedro. The granite stone base lists the names of 70 longshore workers who have died from injuries sustained while working. The names

are inscribed in the stone monument as a reminder to all who visit how dangerous the waterfront can be.

The First Blood memorial was initially started to honor the first workers killed during the 1934 West Coast strikes that led to the formation of the ILWU. The memorial event has grown to honor ILWU workers who have been killed on the docks.

The ceremony began with a bagpipe rendition of Amazing Grace followed by the Wilmington VFW Honor Guard and an invocation by Local 13's Jesse Lopez. During the ceremony, the names of fallen workers were read aloud by pensioners Herman Moreno and Jerry Garretson, and a bell was rung by pensioner Dan Imbagliazzo. The ceremony honors members from the Longshore Division, the Inlandboatmen's Union, the ILWU's Marine Division, and port security guards from Local 26.

Southern California Pensioner President Greg Mitre was the event emcee. He connected the importance of remembering the workers killed during the 1934 West Coast Waterfront Strike and those who died in tragic accidents on the waterfront. "Workers put their lives on the line for what they believed in. And that's one



Local 13 President Gary Herrera paid tribute to Dickie Parker and John Knudsen and the generations of longshore workers who fought for the conditions enjoyed by longshore workers today.

of the reasons why we come here every May 15. We commemorate and we honor them," Mitre said. "Tragically, we've had to put 70 names on this memorial. We all know we work in a very dangerous industry. We move more cargo here than anybody else in the world and accidents happen. We've had to learn to deal with it. But we don't want to ever forget it."

ILWU International Vice President (Mainland) Bobby Olvera, Jr. spoke about the importance of honoring legacy and fostering intergenerational connections.

"Giving back is for both sides, for the young to ask the questions of the old-timers and for the old-timers, it's incumbent upon us to talk to the young workers that have some passion, to continue to have this going for another 90 years," Olvera said. "If you're an old timer, grab a youngster and tell them something they don't know about how the jobs used to be. For young workers, talk to the old timers and ask them how we got the safety code that we have. It wasn't because the employers gave it to us. It's because of the sacrifices of the men and women who worked on the waterfront for over 90 years—trial and error, accident and injury, accident and death. That is how we got the safety book. It's not just something to prop up your stereo in the UTR. It's not just something to have in your work bag. It's something to live by every single day."

Local 13 President Gary Herrera expressed his gratitude for the generations that came before him that helped build the foundation that the ILWU is built on.

"We must remember how blessed we are every day we wake up," Herrera said. "Dickey Parker was one day registered and he took it upon himself to fight for what we don't fight for in our lifetime. I make it a point to come by this park every day and give a salute to Harry Bridges and all the men who have died listed on this plaque behind me. I hope and pray as a third-generation longshoreman that I'm making my dad and grandpa proud."

Special guests at the memorial included Los Angeles City Council member Tim McOsker and a representative from Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn's office.

Immediately following the ceremony, a picnic lunch was served featuring tacos, bacon-wrapped hot dogs, corn on the cob, and commemorative "First Blood 90th Anniversary" cookies.



Pensioner Herman Moreno reads the names of the fallen workers while pensioner Dan Imbagliazzo tolls the bell.



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IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast, 'Mother Jones of the Pacific Northwest,' retires

Sister Terri Mast, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Inland-boatmen's Union (IBU), the Marine Division of the ILWU, retired in December 2023. After serving 30 years as an elected IBU officer, Terri leaves behind a monumental legacy. Her long tenure meant that Terri has been and remains a voice of continuity and integrity for the ILWU/IBU in the Puget Sound region. She transcends her union and is one of the most respected labor leaders in Washington State. She is well known on the waterfront and in Olympia, the state capital.

Political activist to union activist

Born and raised in Seattle, Washington, Terri was surrounded by social activism early in life. She was involved in the anti-war and women's movement. She began her life-long work with ILWU Local 37 as a seasonal worker in the Alaskan canneries. Exposed to the harsh conditions in the canneries, she also witnessed racism and misogyny. At the time, Local 37 was beset by corruption and functioned as a "company union" that ignored the poor working conditions of the workforce and allowed management to continue its exploitation. As a result, several young workers formed the Alaska Cannery Association (ACWA) in the mid-1970s. Terri soon found herself involved, along with her partner Silme Domingo, Nemesio Domingo, Gene

Viernes (and others) and they formed the Rank and File Committee of Local 37 to lead a reform effort to democratize Local 37, build worker power, and challenge the local's corrupt leadership.

Fighting corruption

In 1980, the Committee won control of the local when Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were elected to top-level positions. Tragically, they were gunned down in 1981 in the Local 37 union hall. The trigger men were two Tulisan gang enforcers tied to the local's corrupt ousted leader, Tony Baruso, who was eventually convicted of first-degree murder for his role in the killing of Viernes. The conviction of Baruso was the result of the legal work of the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (CJDV) formed by Terri and Cindy Domingo, Silme's younger sister. The CJDV also determined that Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Imelda had ordered the murders because of the anti-Marcos activism of Domingo and Viernes. In 1989 a federal jury agreed and Marcos became the first and only foreign head of state to be held responsible for the deaths of Americans on U.S. soil.

After the assassinations of Domingo and Viernes, Terri, along with other Local 37 members and the Filipino American community quickly took the reins of the reform movement. With two small daughters, Terri bravely weathered the political storm as a newly elected officer of Local 37.



Terri Mast (center) with her daughters Ligaya Domingo (left) and Kalayaan Domingo

She remained an officer with Local 37 until 1993 when she was elected the first woman national officer of the IBU. Through the years, the continuous work of seeking justice for Domingo and Viernes occupied much space. But Terri steadfastly grew into her position as IBU Secretary-Treasurer, earning the trust of the members, as well as government and political leaders in the region.

Lifetime achievement

On May 10, 2024, the MLK King County Central Labor Council honored Terri with a "Lifetime Achievement Award" for her years of dedicated service. She remains an active member of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies Visiting Committee, active in the cause for women and labor rights in the Philippines, and has played a central role on the Women's Committee for the International Transport Federa-

tion (ITF) since 2010. Earlier this year, she joined the ITF bargaining team in Zurich in negotiating language on waterways and seafarers' rights. Her vision will continue to stay the course, as she works with the regional maritime/government leaders on wind/solar power sources for future transport needs.

Her daughters, Ligaya Domingo, is SEIU 1199's NW Education/Racial Justice Director, and the National APALA President, and Kalayaan Domingo, is a Program Manager in King County's Health Services Division. Families with grandchildren will keep Terri busier than ever.

Salute to Sister Mast for a healthy and happy retirement! She will be missed by the ILWU family and the broader labor movement.

— Maria L. Abadesco, formerly with UC Berkeley Labor Center



Tacoma longshore team raises \$16k in the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk

April 13th 2024 was a beautiful day at Chambers Bay Golf course in University Place, Washington for the Local 23 team to participate in the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk. There was a great turnout with longshore, family, and friends all proudly wearing union-printed ILWU team shirts and walking for the cause.

Co-captains Holly Hulscher and Lisa Reed noted the longshore team came in at second place by raising \$16,250 this year and over the last 21 years of participating they have raised a total of \$192,700 to help fight MS.

"Here in the Pacific Northwest, we have one of the highest rates of MS," said Lisa. "Fundraising for research, treatments, and finding a cure are vital and our dedicated team of volunteers look forward to contributing year after year."

Many of the walkers know someone who is living with MS and are familiar with some of the challenges they may face and the strength they have. "Don't take a disability as an imperfection," said volunteer and walker, Chalontae Burns. "Take it as a superpower because most of us couldn't walk a step in their shoes."

— Holly Hulscher



Local 4 Labor Notes delegation: This year Local 4 was able to send four delegates to the Labor Notes Conference in Chicago. Grant Whitmore, Stephen Saldivar, Alex Lewis, and Rich Plantinga. In addition the Local 4 Young Workers Committee Raised \$3,400 with a biscuits 'n gravy feed and a raffle and were able to send four more: Sarah Minich, Angela Taylor, Timothy Bosso, and John Clark. Angie Taylor said she learned "the importance of understanding the contract" and John Clark said his eyes were opened to the "struggles of other unions and how good we have it."

— Josh Goodwin

LWU-PMA Maintenance and Repair Training Center opens in the Port of Los Angeles

President Adams says the facility is just the beginning; ILWU will hold PMA to its promise for M&R training facilities in Oakland and Puget Sound/Columbia River



ILWU International President Willie Adams and Local 13 President Gary Herrera joined with representatives from the PMA, the Port of LA, LAUSD and local officials to open the new M&R training facility on Terminal Island.

ILWU International Officers, Coast Committeemen, and officers from locals up and down the West Coast joined representatives from the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), and local officials for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 31 to mark the opening of the ILWU-PMA Maintenance and Repair (M&R) Up-skill/Re-skill training facility in Los Angeles.

Additional M&R training centers will be opened to serve Northern California and the Pacific Northwest. The centers are part of an agreement between the ILWU and the PMA to establish a program to train dockworkers in new skills to maintain and repair existing and emerging technologies.

The \$16.4 million, 20,000-square-foot facility is located on 4 acres on Terminal Island. The property has a 10-year lease from the Port of Los Angeles. The facility includes space for classrooms, and hands-on training areas for equipment such as a Wiggins EV Heavy Forklift, column lifts, welding stations, a 16-foot jib crane, Steril-Kone Mobile Column Lifts for handling large vehicles, and an air compressor with a 240-gallon tank.

The program will provide “re-skill” and “up-skill” programs for ILWU members including a mechanic up-skill program to train current ILWU mechanics and continue their technical education in maintaining and repairing current and future equipment, and a re-skill program to train longshore workers to become

journeyman mechanics; it also will provide exposure to other mechanic roles workers could potentially pursue in a future training program.

Los Angeles Harbor Commissioner Diane Middleton spoke at the event and placed the training center in the context of the fight for ILWU jurisdiction on the waterfront.

“Believe it or not there was a time when there were questions whether mechanic work was ILWU work. I remember talking with David Arian about his vision that everything on the waterfront—top to bottom—would be organized by the ILWU,” Middleton said. “That vision has become a reality. This center will make it easier to train the workforce we need for the future. With new equipment coming online, there’s going to be a need for new skills and a newly trained workforce. This facility is going to help us do it.”

Commissioner Middleton also recognized the tenacity of Local 13 President Gary Herrera in making the center a reality. “Besides showing up, the other thing that matters in life is not giving up, always keeping your eyes on the prize, and knowing you’re going to get there, if you have the right team.”

“The men and women of the ILWU look forward to receiving training in a state-of-the-art facility such as this,” said Herrera. “Our agreement with the

PMA is to ensure that we’re brought forward with ongoing technological changes in the industry. I’m excited for today. I’m excited for the ILWU’s future. We belong down here. We fight down here, and we provide for the community down here.”

ILWU International President Willie Adams said the training center in the Port of Los Angeles is just the beginning. He brought a copy of a Letter of Understanding agreed to by the PMA and Longshore Negotiating Committee to establish two other M&R training centers on the West Coast.

“It says here in this letter, that the PMA will have a M&R center in LA/Long Beach, that you’re going to do something in the Port of Oakland, and that you’re also going to do something in the Columbia River/Puget Sound. The officers and the rank and file will hold you to that commitment. The members of the ILWU deserve the best,” Adams said. “We must prepare the next generation of longshore workers. They must be able to upgrade their skills, to be the best workforce today and be prepared for the future.”

The first re-skill training program is slated to begin this summer and includes the fundamentals of electricity, taught in partnership with instructors from Los Angeles Unified School District’s Adult Education team.

Local 23 adopts locked-out Boeing Firefighters picket line

On May 4, the Boeing Company directed their firefighters to turn in their badges, empty their lockers and leave the premises. Boeing formally locked out 125 members of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) on International Firefighters Day, after workers narrowly voted down the “last, best and final offer.”

IAFF I-66 is a unique industrial work group within IAFF. They are private sector, direct employees of Boeing. They live on-site for 24 hours at a time and are trained to perform specialized functions beyond the scope of normal firefighter training. They have certifications for hazmat response, confined space rescue, and get called in to retrieve astronauts from spacecraft.

Traditional Firefighters are public sector workers and when they have to struggle, it’s usually against a local municipality. Their success relies on strong public support or winning arbitrations. It’s been several decades since any firefighter group - public or private - was locked out or went on strike.

Local 23 passed a motion at their May Executive Board to adopt the closest picket line in Fredrickson, WA and

formally deploy picket teams. Two locked out firefighters were invited to speak and the local passed a hat and raised over \$3,000 for their lock out. The membership unanimously upheld the recommendation to call out picket teams.

The Boeing lock-out affected workers in Everett, Seattle, Renton, Auburn, Fredrickson, and Moses Lake. Being a small union, trying to maintain a picket presence was a real challenge for IAFF I-66. Local 23 was able to adopt one of the sites and make sure there were always bodies staffing that line. Without a physical picket, adjacent union workers who enter these facilities would be free to cross. In one instance, there was nobody staffing their Auburn picket, and security came out and confiscated their canopies, burn barrels and supplies. Local 23 was able to help maintain 24 hour pickets in Fredrickson, a facility with 3,000 employees.

After 4 years of Trump, followed by COVID and concerns over vaccines, which divided and stretched our unions near the breaking point, it felt like in helping these firefighters, we actually helped ourselves. Workers from opposite shifts, workers who were on opposing sides of social issues, all united with a common purpose doing a thing together as a union.



Boeing invited I-66 back to the table after initiating the lock out. They offered a new agreement that the rank and file rejected flatly on May 22. On Tuesday, May 28, the union countered with their proposal. It resulted in a new tentative agreement the following day, and on Thursday, May 30, the rank and file voted yes on the new contract.

I hope that this inspires other ILWU locals to get involved the next time workers in our communities are in a boss fight. Our ancestors laid the groundwork for a dynamic militant union. Our generation has to pick it up and answer the call.

It’s in the interest of all workers to help each other win against these large billionaire corporations. The solidar-

ity of labor isn’t what it used to be, but ILWU members have a part to play. We need to keep our values and traditions alive and bring them to labor struggles like these. Every picket must be respected as if it were our own. The solidarity of labor stands above all else. We have a lot to teach the current labor movement about how to struggle and win. We have a lot to learn too. It’s a great training ground for our members to get out on other workers’ pickets and learn firsthand what it means to put it all on the line.

Brian Skiffington is a Tacoma longshoreman and 3rd generation ILWU member who helped found the Local 23 Young Workers Committee. He currently serves on the Washington Area District Council.

Local 5 re-structures as new industries are organized

New 'Division' structure modeled after Local 142

In 1999, the ILWU took yet another step in expansion of the union — setting its sights on supporting around 500 bookstore workers in Portland, Oregon as they unionized and negotiated their first contract. That organizing effort ultimately paved the way for the charter of Local 5, often referred to as “the Powell’s Union.” After ratification of that first contract, workers dug in on the effort to build a local from the ground up. Firmly anchored to the ideals of rank-and-file democracy, workers developed a constitution, elected their own leadership, and through the example of longshore locals in the area, learned how to run a union and build ongoing union culture within the local.

Over the next 20 years, Local 5 slowly added several groups to the union, including Aramark and the Oregon Historical Society. However, in large part, Local 5 remained “the Powell’s Union.” In 2019, things began to change. First, there was the addition of Columbia River Veterinary Specialists (CRVS) and Northwest Veterinary Specialists (NWVS), both organizing drives led by Organizing Department Director Ryan Dowling. Then, by Convention resolution, the ILWU hired an Area Organizer, Ryan Takas, who took the reins in bargaining, and became involved in organizing efforts with workers at several local preschools, one of which — Growing Seeds — took their efforts public and won their union election in a landslide victory on March 19, 2020.

The next day, everything closed due to the pandemic — “Stay Home. Stop the Spread.” But that didn’t last long. Soon employers were demanding workers’ return, labeling themselves “essential” businesses. Workers, in turn, made their own demands: better pay, more sick leave, improved safety procedures, and protections; and they generally wanted more than empty promises. Workers knew to maintain any gains, they would need to unionize and negotiate a contract. At this point, Local 5

and the ILWU Organizing Department were being flooded with workers looking to organize and push back against these workplace realities. It quickly became clear that Local 5 could not reasonably take in every group seeking to organize and, looking to how other locals had successfully organized themselves, settled on the Local 142 model of industry “Divisions.” Naturally, Powell’s would be the first Division, “Warehouse/Retail.” Oregon Historical Society (OHS) was squarely in the world of “Nonprofit,” and with the newly organized workplaces of CRVS and NWVS, the third Division, “Vet Med,” was decided. Finally, with Growing Seeds and a sustained interest from other workers in the industry, the fourth Division, “Early Ed,” was created.

With the establishment of the four Divisions, Local 5 provided the Organizing Department with a map of where to prioritize time and effort in a way that would be sustainable for the Local in terms of administering contracts and continuing the process of internal organizing, once first contracts had been ratified. By focusing organizing efforts in those four Divisions, Local 5 has seen tremendous growth over the last three years with new organizing in every Division including:

Warehouse/Retail

Warehouse and retail work is marred with terrible wages and oftentimes few benefits except those that have been mandated by the state. Far too often, workers in the industry are paid scarcely above minimum wage and have difficult times paying even the most basic of bills. Workers know their bosses are making money off of their labor and the sales of products, etc.

Salty’s & Fang!

Workers sought a union at their workplace largely due to low wages and an acknowledgement that that employer could certainly do better. After winning their union vote, and months of negotiations, the owner abruptly decided to close the business. Undeterred, workers negotiated severance and then continued to support each other, including an attempted collective purchase of the business. However, when a community member decided to

take ownership of both stores, workers were recalled and the remaining provisions of the contract were quickly resolved, whereby workers have enjoyed substantive increases to wages, paid time off, and many other improvements to their working conditions. They will begin negotiations for their second contract in August 2026.

Nonprofit

In the work of nonprofit, most workers are motivated by the mission of the organization in which they work. Nearly all sincerely care about the success of the organization and have concerns about how a public campaign could negatively impact their employer’s ability to carry on the mission. Equally shared is a widespread concern over the sustainability of working in an industry that relies on workers’ goodwill and self-driven desire to make a difference. It is for these reasons and more that workers in the nonprofit industry have been organizing their workplaces.

Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIrJ)

As frontline activists, the workers of IMIrJ were deeply concerned with creating a workplace that reflected the values the organization held and addressing the ever pressing workload they were faced with in terms of community need. The pressure to “do more with less” was one workers wanted to push back on and establish clear boundaries, as well as create a framework for what it meant to care about the mission of the organization while at the same time centering self-care and care for fellow workers. As the first organizing drive in nonprofit since OHS, it was the first contract ratified and currently workers are negotiating for their second contract. They have already made significant gains and will be looking to ratify a second contract that continues to build on the efforts of the original campaign.

Community Cycling Center (CCC)

Initially, workers organized without a union and were able to achieve a living wage. However, with inflation those gains were beginning to disappear. After seeing unfair discipline and terminations, they knew they needed a union and, less than a year later, had negotiated a first contract. Due to intense economic uncertainties surrounding fund sources for business, but anticipating improving conditions over the next year, workers opted for a 1-year contract and will return to the bargaining table in January 2025 to secure a successor agreement.

Free Geek (FG)

For years, FG workers were part of another union. However, extremely dissatisfied with their representation, after discussions with that union’s President, the union voluntarily relinquished representation. Workers immediately reached out to the ILWU, asking to join where they knew they would have solid representation as well as be a part of a

bottom-up, rank-and-file union. They are nearly done with negotiating their first contract as members of the ILWU.

Neighborhood Partnerships (NP)

Staff at NP went into their unionization efforts with a singular goal: codify the 32-hour work week. In most ways, the economic conditions for workers at NP were good. They had decent pay, good healthcare, and a fair retirement plan. However, they had seen coworker after coworker burn out, and knew in order to both preserve what they had as well as reduce worker fatigue, they needed to make their jobs more sustainable. After multiple promises from the Employer of a reduced work week on the horizon, staff decided to take matters into their own hands — with a union contract. At present, an agreement for a first contract is imminent. More importantly, workers’ first priority has been agreed to at the table: paid time off that would allow workers to both enjoy regular 32-hour work weeks and have reasonable vacation time. In addition, despite the reduction of work, staff will continue to be paid as if they work 40 hours per week and retain all full-time benefits. A ratification vote for their first contract will be held in the coming weeks.

American Federation of Musicians Local 99 staff (AFM99)

Even workers for unions need to have someone in their corner. For the staff of AFM99, while happy with their employer, they had identified some things that needed to be improved. Mostly, these were issues common to a small workplace: lack of training, unclear policies, etc. By joining Local 5, workers were able to come together in a structured way — developing a contract that addressed those issues, and most importantly, being provided the opportunity to voice their concerns in a protected and supported way. Negotiations are well underway with many of the non-economic issues workers had identified getting squarely addressed at the bargaining table.

Northwest Workers Justice Project (NWJP)

Lawyers and paralegals of NWJP strongly believe in their work. They assist workers who are suffering wage and hour violations and hold employers accountable to state law. As an ongoing thread, workers engaged in mission driven work oftentimes find themselves getting burned out. The workers of NWJP are looking to build systems of sustainability into their workplace and to put into writing many of the benefits they currently enjoy, as well as meaningfully build upon them. In addition, they are looking to enact real workplace democracy including ensuring workers have a real say in hiring and how the workplace functions overall.

National Council for Occupational Safety (COSH)

The most recent addition to ILWU Local 5, after having tried to start an independent union on their own, the

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Workers at Joyful Noise are some of the many early education workers that have recently voted to join Local 5. Workers in this industry suffer from chronically low wages, insufficient PTO and sick time and above all, a pervasive lack of support to do their jobs well.

Powell's workers defend free speech of booksellers

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

—The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

Powell's Books has long maintained that their core values are free speech, anti-censorship, and anti-book banning. In the past year, Powell's put these values to print in an in-house "Brand Book" that's now given to all new employees when they are hired. On page one of their Brand Book, Powell's encourages us to share the thoughts found within widely. So, in their own words:

"Culture Has a Problem We Can Take On. Unfortunately, people aren't reading enough books. [...] Our culture has broken into two big chunks. On any given day, one side is canceling the ideas and the people it finds offensive, while the other side wants to censor all the 'offensive' books anyone might read. And vice versa. None of this is good for anybody."

"Powell's Books exists to inspire people to read more books and incite free-thinking independent culture."

"Powell's Books isn't: Here to convince people how to think."

Or at least, this is what Powell's Books would like everyone to believe. Because while these values are proudly stamped on branded items like the website, employee handbooks, shopping bags, and other promotional materials, on the shop floor where union booksellers are doing the actual work of upholding the values Powell's claims they stand for, union workers are being silenced for their efforts. Shelf-talkers (those little cards with recommendation blurbs tucked under books on the shelf) are altered or rejected out of hand for erroneous "violations" of guidelines — except those violations are nowhere to be found. The books workers promote on displays are removed. Managers question whether books by certain authors (you know the ones they mean — authors who don't fit strict parameters of "socially acceptable") should be brought in for events because of "potential push back" from customers.

Shortly after October 7, 2023, a bookseller placed a Palestinian cookbook on display at the information desk in the Orange Room, which sells cookbooks at the downtown location. Ad hoc book promotions at the information desks in the stores had been a common practice for decades, serving to highlight newly award-winning books, promote upcoming events, acknowledge the death of an author, or respond to a sudden spike in customer interest around a particular author, title, or subject. The information desks have been used for "blitz" displays like these to meet customer needs or highlight a major event for literal decades with no complaint from management — until this Palestinian cookbook landed on the counter. This time, Powell's

said booksellers broke the rule about merchandising at information desks. Except there was no formal policy or rule to be broken.

Instead of admitting fault, Powell's took it one step further and informed everyone that impromptu book displays were no longer allowed at the information desks. They cited a myriad of reasons that had nothing to do with the actual reason: they didn't like that a bookseller had promoted a Palestinian cookbook. Unfortunately, this was only the beginning.

Genocide is "Too Political" for Powell's

Since the cookbook fiasco, booksellers have seen the shelf-talkers they write face heavy managerial oversight; they've been pulled into meetings and had guidelines cited at them that don't exist; they've been told their shelf-talkers were too personal or not personal enough; the shelf-talker is too political and we should strive to be apolitical when talking about genocide because we "don't want to force our views onto customers." One worker has received multiple steps of performance discipline for not adhering to Powell's ever-changing rules around shelf-talkers and daring to challenge the silence of Powell's via a shared whiteboard in an employee-only space where we used to be able to have collaborative discussions. Not anymore.

Local 5 has filed a grievance for the performance discipline, challenging Powell's ludicrous decision that workers' political opinions warrant discipline at all. In addition, during the investigation that ultimately led to discipline for one member, Powell's cited another policy that does not exist in writing. And so Local 5 is also fighting the policy component through the grievance procedure, challenging Powell's practice of inventing policies to justify the actions they are taking in censoring workers. Either a policy exists or it doesn't, and if it doesn't exist, workers cannot be disciplined for not following it.

While it started with Palestine, it hasn't stopped there, showing just how dangerous the idea that "this is too political" actually is in practice. Because who is defining what is "too political?" This overly broad new rule that "politics don't belong" led a shop floor manager to almost decline a storytime event at the Burnside store because they were concerned that promoting a children's book, written by a nonbinary author, about why it's okay to be different might prompt "pushback" from "less open minded" customers. While the outrage of the booksellers in that moment saw that event stay on the calendar, Powell's remains vague on their ideas of what "too political" means. And that vagueness opened the door for that manager to take that action in the first place. It's a silent, tacit permission that anything could be perceived as "too political" or something else worth censoring.



Powell's Brand Book promotes free speech but Local 5 members working there say the company isn't living up to this value. Local 5 says workers have been unfairly disciplined and Powell's is censoring which books are promoted to customers by silencing their own booksellers.

More strangely, these positions have spread to workers having any opinions that are "too personal" despite the Powell's merchandising guidelines explicitly stating that workers should be personal when writing shelf-talkers, promotional materials, and internal newsletters to help coworkers sell books — such as the internal New Book Buyer's Newsletter. One of the New Book Buyers who purchases books for the Business section (among others) was told they were too personal, that their voice was too present — on an internal newsletter highlighting new books coming to the business section. So what was it that was so objectionable to Powell's? The New Book Buyer had written a blurb under the "News & Updates" section about the recent layoff of YouTube Music employees, which at the time was big news in the business world. But to Powell's, it was "too political."

Workers Take Action

Unsurprisingly, workers have had enough. They've had enough of being told "do this" only for it to immediately be followed up with, "no, not like that." They're tired of their shelf-talkers being pulled for "not following guidelines" but not even being told what those guidelines are. They're fed up with their books being pulled from displays without a word from management on why, until they demand answers. They're done with Powell's citing policies that don't exist.

Hungry for action, Powell's workers formed the Powell's Union Anti-Censorship Committee, keenly aware that Powell's is not standing true to its purported values when it comes to their own employees. The Committee seeks to hold Powell's accountable for its lack of clear guidelines about what booksellers can and cannot say — if they want to claim something is a policy, then it needs to be in writing (and it needs to follow the notice provisions of the contract).

Workers rallied to form a committee to fight back. Even though we may disagree on political positions, one aspect of our work we have always enjoyed at Powell's is that we have been

free to write shelf-talkers for the books we read, regardless of the topics they cover. That's something that unites us, regardless of our personal opinions. To that end, the Committee created a form for workers to report instances of workplace censorship (books removed from displays, shelf-talkers edited, shelf-talkers rejected, etc.) so we have a running log of these occurrences as they happen. Additionally, the Committee wrote a letter to Powell's management, outlining exactly what the Committee is demanding on behalf of workers in regards to workplace censorship. In that letter, the Committee also called for a meeting with Powell's management to open conversation between the union and Powell's. While what we are facing is unacceptable, we always remain hopeful that disputes can be resolved through conversation. Only time will tell if Powell's agrees.

Looking to the Future

While Powell's stands behind a facade of promoting free thinking and wanting to be a place where people can explore ideas that are new to them, the truth is somewhat more nefarious. Because while books are being stocked around a variety of topics, the reality is that Powell's is censoring which books are promoted to customers by silencing their own booksellers. It's all well and good to hide behind ideals and pretend their hands are clean because the books are on the shelf, but when books promoting ideas not in alignment with Powell's leadership's views are intentionally removed from displays, and when shelf-talkers for books talking about the genocide in Palestine are actively removed by management, that begs the question... does Powell's actually want you to think freely?

The Powell's Union Anti-Censorship Committee is determined to force Powell's to put their position in writing. Standing behind pretty words while actively acting against them will no longer be tolerated. The campaign to bring about a reckoning has only just begun.

— Myka Dubay (they/them)
Local 5 Union Representative

Logistics workers use supply chain power to win

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Eventually, in late 2023, meetings started growing, as things went from bad to worse. “So many of us were thinking ‘it’s now or never—either we go union or we go work somewhere else,’” remembers Jessica Roberson. Workers faced ever-worsening health and safety conditions, including constant injuries from employer negligence; forced overtime; imposition of 10 and 12-hour schedules; pressure to violate speed limits; lack of adequate equipment; failure to train and certify drivers and forklift operators; all combined with severe workers’ rights violations by managers and drastically substandard compensation.

Worker heat finds union hammer

So at the end of January 2024, workers marched on the boss to demand respect for health and safety, presenting a petition signed by most employees. The general manager and supervisors then immediately violated federal law by threatening to fire marching workers; unlawfully interfering with workers distributing union gear on break; and illegally telling employees they could not engage in protected action, among other unlawful acts. On February 7, more than 150 workers walked off the job on an Unfair Labor Practices strike, disrupting car ship offload operations for an entire day. “What an incredible moment it was when we all realized longshore workers were in solidarity with us,” said Ladda Hilyard, a distribution van driver. The following morning, employees returned

to work and resumed their jobs after having been successfully reinstated.

Busting the busters

Later that day, workers demanded recognition as Local 23 members. Instead of recognizing the workers’ union, WWL began holding captive union-busting meetings, committing many further illegal acts against employees, and eventually filing for an NLRB election on February 21. Over the next month, workers fought intense battles to overcome incessant union-busting while advancing mass support.

WWL flew in corporate union-busters from at least five states; brought in anti-union employees from other WWL sites; tried to impose a different union on employees; forced workers to attend more than 20 captive meetings to bombard them with misinformation; and committed more than 15 additional violations of federal law over which Unfair Labor Practices charges were filed, including discriminatory surveillance, write-ups, demotions, suspensions, and terminations.

“It was unbelievable how the union busters would say anything to try to get people to vote ‘No,’” said Juanita Garrido, an accessories installer. “They kept trying to fool employees into thinking ‘the union’ is some outside, third party—but we are our union, and those shameless corporate busters they flew in from everywhere to mess with us are the outsiders.”

With unyielding supply chain solidarity from Local 23 leadership and members, workers re-centered

coworkers day and night around a strategic vision of union power while dismantling the distortions, misinformation, and lies rolled out every day in meetings, memos, and daily management texts to all employees. “After each round of busting, we could look over at the ships and remember how strong we are and how scared they were,” said Milton Turner, Jr., a warehouse worker.

Messages of solidarity poured in from the Maritime Union of Australia, the Maritime Union of New Zealand, and the International Longshoreman’s Association, whose members work at Wallenius-owned job sites. MUA’s message to workers highlighted Local 23’s strong stance to back up Australian longshore for victory in their fight against WWL in previous years, and MUA’s readiness to do the same in return. Meanwhile, workers from P&B Intermodal just down the road in the Port of Tacoma shared with WWL employees their experience of striking to shut down their job site, winning a union through Local 23, and the incredible, transformative gains they secured in their first union contract.

Locking down the count

After multiple weeks of illegal manager misconduct and targeted busting, employees finally made it to election day on March 21, 2024 and voted 104 to 56 to become members of Local 23. WWL could find no legal objections to the election win, and the NLRB certified the new bargaining unit on March 29. “We were over-

whelmingly excited,” said Richard Booth Jr, a distro driver. “We put it all on the line and won.”

This landmark victory in organizing with sweatshop logistics workers comes through ILWU’s Supply Chain, Logistics, and Transport (SCLT) program. Rooted in the March Inland campaign, through which tens of thousands of warehouse workers backed by longshore power organized through ILWU after the Great Strike of 1934, the SCLT program focuses on combining union hammer (ability to use supply chain power) with worker heat (readiness to fight), and works in partnership with the International Transport Workers Federation.

“Every day since we won the election, we have backed each other up to deal with unfair discipline and other issues,” said Ramo Natalizio, a quality control inspector. “And we’re locking arms as we go get that first contract.”

After effectively using strategic power to organize and win, logistics workers are now moving ahead to secure protections and respect on the job. “Our strength does not come just from our collective bargaining agreements, dispatch halls, or any other formal designation,” said Jared Faker, Local 23 President. “Our strength comes from our solidarity and organizing the unorganized, uplifting standards in our community, and making lives better for all working people. We could not be more proud to be a part of that for nearly 200 new members.”

—Jon Brier

Local 5 re-structures as new industries are organized

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workers of COSH realized they would be better off being part of a larger union. Faced with issues specific to an exclusively remote workplace and coupled with a wide geographic spread (workers live in six different states), workers are looking to create consistency in terms of the benefits. They are just starting their journey and will have their first bargaining session in late June.

Vet Med

Thus far, the experience in organizing in vet med is a story of workers reacting to a rapidly consolidating industry. Large companies (such as MARS) and hedge funds (such as KKR) are gobbling up smaller clinics and hospital groups, and in their wake, stagnating wages and reducing benefits. As workers at independent hospitals watch their workplaces degrade, they are reaching out to the union to try and stabilize their working conditions and regain some of what has been taken from them.

All Creatures Animal Hospital (ACAH)

ACAH staff saw the writing on the wall when their clinic was purchased by a local corporation: stagnant wages and reduced benefits. With support from the National Veterinary Professionals Union, workers bargained hard and were able to reverse the race to the bottom by securing wage increases at ratification (the first they had seen

in years); a cost of living adjustment in the second year of their contract; substantial increases in PTO; as well as other benefits such as allotments for scrubs. They return to the bargaining table for round two in May 2025.

Early Ed

The reasons for early ed workers organizing are strikingly similar from workplace to workplace. Workers in this industry suffer from chronically low wages (often just above minimum wage); exceedingly insufficient PTO and sick time (a critical issue given the amount of sickness that workers come in contact with as well as multiple “excludable” events that prevent workers from reporting to work); and above all, a pervasive lack of support to do their jobs well (including lesson planning time, teaching team meetings, and support for required yearly job training). All of these issues have repeatedly been focal points at the bargaining table and each successive contract has been informed by how other early ed workplaces have attempted to solve those problems.

Wild Lilac (WL)

Inspired by the unionization of Growing Seeds workers in 2019, WL teachers wanted to deal with many of the same issues at their school. They also wanted to be sure that teachers had a higher level of autonomy over their classrooms, and had specific issues

regarding building safety and temperature standards they wanted assurances for in their contract. The first contract was short in duration (around one year) as both the union and employer acknowledged a contract in this newly unionizing industry could have a large number of kinks to work out. Currently, workers are bargaining for their second contract and after nearly six months of mostly collaborative negotiations, WL workers are honing in on a tentative agreement. They will be the first Local 5 preschool to achieve a second contract!

Joyful Noise (JN)

JN workers are a huge group of teachers with around 80 staff members at four different centers. After returning to work from the pandemic, they saw numerous safety issues that they wanted to address. They also discovered that the wage system was not being adhered to and generally workers were not being given the time they needed to get their jobs done — all to the detriment of the children in their care. Through negotiations, they were able to put formal structures in place to address safety concerns; get guarantees for planning time and ongoing educational needs; and develop a transparent and fair wage system that would apply to all workers. The contract was enthusiastically ratified in December 2023. They will begin to negotiate their second contract in February 2027.

Next year, Local 5 will celebrate its 25th anniversary of being a part of the ILWU story. Based on the organizing success of the last several years and the continued levels of interest workers have in joining the union and being a part of the industry Divisions, the Local is certain to reach a point where Powell’s workers will no longer be a majority of Local 5. The Local 5 Executive Board will continue to expand and include a diversity of voices representing all Divisions, each with their own unique experience of what it means to be a part of the union. More and more new voices from Local 5 will join fellow ILWU members at Lead, Young Workers, and the ILWU Convention. And very soon, within the year, ILWU Local 5 can no longer be called “the Powell’s Union.” The majority of Local 5 will be composed of other members from a diverse set of workplaces, all of whom share the common thread: a desire to create a better life for themselves and their coworkers; and a recognition that collective action, and a union contract, is not only the best, but also the most sustainable way to achieve that goal.

—Ryan Takas

Alcatraz City Cruises workers strike

Four-hour Unfair Labor Practices strike underscores worker frustration with 'employer stalling tactics'



San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin was among the community supporters who came out to show solidarity with Alcatraz Cruises workers.

Workers at Alcatraz Cruises represented by the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU), the Marine Division of the ILWU, went out on an Unfair Labor Practices strike on Saturday, May 25. The workers voted by an overwhelming 91% majority to authorize the strike. The unit includes captains, officers, deckhands, food and beverage workers, mechanics, and ticket takers.

The four-hour strike began at 8:30 a.m. at Pier 33 on the Embarcadero in San Francisco. The picket line was joined by members of the ILWU family including Locals 10 and 6 along with other community supporters. Key issues still to be resolved at the bargaining table include wages, dependable work schedules, and improved benefits.

Fed up with stalling tactics

Workers say they are fed up with the stalling tactics of the employer who they say is not making a serious effort to reach a fair agreement.

"We've been at this for over two years," said IBU President Robert Estrada. "It started with the company spending tens of thousands of dollars on anti-union consultants. Despite that, workers voted with a 90% majority to join the IBU in 2022. Since then, we've been trying to negotiate a contract and the company is only willing to come to the table about twice a month—the bare minimum to be within the law's bounds. The unwillingness of the employer to bargain in good faith is becoming clear to the workers. Ultimately the decision to strike was worker-driven."

Fighting for area standards

Alcatraz is the most visited National Park in the country. The National Park Service has granted Alcatraz Cruises the lucrative contract granting them exclusive rights to run ferry service to the island. Estrada said workers only

ask that the employer meet the existing area standards upheld by every other ferry service on the Bay. "Blue and Gold, Golden Gate, Red and White, and Prop SF all have fair contracts with their workers and are all very successful companies," Estrada said.

Tristan Senft a First Officer at Alcatraz Cruises and member of the bargaining committee said workers are tired of the games and delaying tactics by the employer. "We are tired of the company's ongoing Unfair Labor Practices. We've been trying to work with the company to resolve ongoing issues but they are unwilling to work with us," Senft said. "We would have preferred not to take this action but felt like we had no choice. Until our rights are respected, our concerns are heard, and we have a contract, we will continue to take action."

Community support

A delegation from the Filipino Community Center came out to support the IBU and their fight for a fair contract

"When Filipinos working on container vessels dock in ports like Oakland we have seen ship-to-shore solidarity and understand how important it is," said Terry Valen from the Filipino Community Center. "During COVID a lot of seafarers were trapped on ships and the ILWU and the ITF came out to support those workers. The workers here at Alcatraz Cruises are fighting for a fair contract and we want to come out in solidarity and support. As Filipino community organizers, we are fighting for the rights of workers everywhere."

San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin was also there in solidarity to back the union workers. He addressed the workers on the picket line saying, "This is a working people's waterfront. It has been for a hundred years, and it is time for Alcatraz Cruises to stop stalling." Peskin has been a consistent supporter of Alcatraz Cruise workers and has spoken in support of the union at a number of rallies.

MEDICAL, DENTAL PLAN CHOICE ENROLLMENT PERIOD

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 June 17, 2024. The change will be effective July 1, 2024. In addition to the Open Enrollment period, members may change their medical plan and/or dental plan once at any time during the Plan Year (July 1-June 30).

The July 1, 2008 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 enrolled in the Kaiser Permanente HMO Plan for the first 24 months of registration. After 24 months, those registrants who have qualified for continued eligibility under the Mid-Year/Annual Review hours' requirement will have a choice of medical plans. New registrants in all ports located in California, Oregon, and Washington 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 choices are Kaiser Permanente or the ILWU-PMA Coastwise Indemnity Plan for Southern California Locals 13, 26, 29, 46, 63 and 94. Northern California Locals 10, 18, 34 (San Francisco), 34 (Stockton), 54, 75 and 91; Oregon-Columbia River Locals 4, 8, 40, and 92; and Washington State Locals 19, 23, 32, 47, 52 and 98.

DENTAL CHOICE: For Los Angeles Locals 13, 26, 63 and 94 the dental plan choices are Delta Dental of California, Harbor Dental Associates or Dental Health Services. For Southern California Locals 29 and 46 the dental plan choices are Delta Dental of California or Dental Health Services. For San Francisco Locals 10, 34, 75 and 91 the dental plan choices are Delta Dental of California, Dental Health Services, or Gentle Dental San Francisco. For Sacramento and Stockton Locals 18, 34, and 54, the dental plan choices are Delta Dental of California or Dental Health Services. For Portland/Vancouver Locals 4, 8, 40 and 92, the dental plan choices are LifeMap-Willamette Dental, Oregon Kaiser Dental Plan or Oregon/Washington Dental Service. For Washington Locals 7, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 32, 47, 51, 52 and 98 the dental plan choices are Washington Dental Service or Dental Health Services.

Information on the medical and dental plans, and forms to change plans, can be obtained at the Locals and the ILWU-PMA Benefit Plans Office.

All Medical and Dental Program Choice Forms and enrollment forms, as applicable, must be completed and received by the Benefit Plans office by June 17 for the enrollment change to be effective July 1.

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 4: Georgina D. Copp;
Local 8: Mark Hartman;
Local 10: Gayle D. Day; Theo E. Frazier; Alem Negash; **Local 13:** Robert A. Aguilera; Steven M. Bebhich; Amedeo D. Castagnola; Henry B. Cervantes; Cesar J. Garcia; Raudel C. Huizar; Pinto Manoylovich; Jack E. McConnachie; Nick F. Plancich; Jorge G. Salazar; Deborah A. Tammen; Lupe R. Valenzuela; Karl H. Wahlers;
Local 19: Patrick S. Sweeny; Michael T. Scott; **Local 23:** Michael L. Miesse; Robert N. Reichl; **Local 29:** Fredrick Soltero; **Local 40:** Mark S. Sumner; **Local 54:** Jack H. Tinsley III;
Local 63: Joseph G. Camello Jr.; Becky A. Luna; John W. Whitt;
Local 75: Eric G. Cobbs'

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Harold L. Allen; Edwinna M. Kirk; **Local 10:** George Gaar; Danny R. Johnson; George Landry;
Local 13: Joe L. Braggs; Bertrom Calhoun; Edwin E. Howard; Manuel

Martinez; Steve P. Moisen; Javier P. Solorio; **Local 19:** Virgil H. Lund; Marland A. Sybouts; Kenneth I. Taylor; Robert W. Watson;
Local 24: Robert D. Smith;
Local 46: John C. Lewandowski;
Local 63: Frank Curiel Jr.; Mike Riggs;
Local 94: James P. Winston;

DECEASED SURVIVORS:

Local 8: Barbara A. Chimienti; Edwinna M. Kirk; **Local 10:** Ozella Piggee; **Local 12:** Loita J. Colebank; Gayle J. Martin; **Local 13:** Virgie V. Crumby; Barbara A. Geyer; Amelia Herrera; Suzanne L. Kallemeyn; Helen B. Luna; Josefina Navarro;
Local 21: Donna Beam;
Local 34: Leslie N. Robb; Dorothea M. Tadlock; **Local 40:** Charlene G. Elich; **Local 46:** Charlene Valdivia;
Local 52: Virginia F. Bakken;
Local 94: Bobbie Ford;
Local 98: Dorothy Godfrey;