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LONGSHORE WORKERS' COALITION NEWS

August-December 2008

LWC Members Win Office

Various LWC members have won office in the last few months. LWC members won the highest ranking local union officer positions in ILA Local 24 (Houston, Texas), Local 1410 (Mobile, Alabama) and 1422-A (Charleston, South Carolina). In addition LWC members won other positions in those locals, as well as in Local 1359-1860 in Fort Pierce.

The LWC will be working closely with the new officers. There is little time to celebrate given the need to build local-wide support for the LWC contract campaign for the 2010 deep-sea master contract negotiations.

2010 Deep-Sea Master Contract Campaign

The LWC has started mobilizing members for the ILA-USMX (United States Maritime Alliance) negotiations. The LWC is fighting for a strong 2010 deep-sea master contract that will guarantee good jobs now and for the future.

Many LWC members ran for, and won, positions as delegates to the Wage Scale Committee, the ILA body that will negotiate with the employer.

Meanwhile, the LWC has been conducting many conversations with ILA members to determine the most important issues. The rank and file supports longstanding LWC demands (which have since been officially adopted by the ILA leadership) for the elimination of wage, benefit and container royalty tiers, stronger health and safety language and protecting ILA work from new technology and nonunion employers.

All this important organizing work has not gone unnoticed! On December 17 Joseph Bonney wrote in the *Journal of Commerce* (a prestigious transportation industry magazine) that: "Opposition to the last contract was led by the Longshore Workers Coalition... This time around the LWC appears to be better prepared and determined to become involved from the outset [of the contract negotiations]."

In preparation for the first meeting of the Wage Scale Committee, January 5, 2009, in Tampa, Florida, the LWC will publish a list of key demands for a strong deep-sea master contract. Check the website at www.lwcjustice.com for this list.

A contract campaign is more than determining our demands: the rank-and-file must build widespread support for its proposals. The USMX must understand that ILA members are serious and will not settle for concessions! LWC members and progressive locals will organize caravans up and down the coast to get the word out about the negotiations, we will hold contract campaign conference calls, we will publish special contract issues of our newsletter, *Pier Pressure*, and we will distribute flyers to ILA members. Stay tuned for this exciting and important campaign!

September 2008 Quarterly LWC Meeting in Mobile, Alabama

ILA members attended the September 2008 Quarterly LWC Meeting in Mobile, Alabama. We made plans for the 2010 deep-sea master contract campaign, and discussed in great detail many of the problems facing longshore workers in Local 1402.

This meeting was successful in building the LWC, as many new ILA members joined and many also gave generous donations towards the new office.

Fundraising Campaign for New LWC Office

In September 2008 we informed you that we were embarking on a major fundraising campaign in order to establish a permanently staffed office for organizing and support work for the LWC. Our goal was to raise \$130,000 for the year.

Thanks to the hard work and generous contributions from many of you, we are proud to announce that the LWC is well on its way towards completing that fundraising goal! As a result we have been able to pay someone part-time to do a lot of administrative work for us, we have a permanent office, an updated website, and support for organizing work.

Soon we will be able to officially hire a staff person, Marsha Niemeijer, who has already played a valuable role with some of the above mentioned work. Currently she is working on the latest issue of our newsletter, *Pier Pressure*.

Maintain Your LWC Membership!

In January you will be receiving a dues payment reminder for 2009. Please pay your dues promptly to maintain your LWC membership status. As a member you will be informed and asked to participate in all LWC campaigns. You also receive a free copy of each issue of *Pier Pressure*. And you can call the LWC office at any time for information and assistance with whatever problems you are facing in your local or on the job.

Remember, as a LWC member you are our key organizers. We need you in the movement, so please renew your membership promptly. It's well worth the \$40 per year investment!

Finally, best wishes for the New Year from the LWC Steering Committee! May you and your families be healthy and may we all continue to organize in solidarity for a stronger and more democratic ILA.

