

SEATTLE ILWU-PENSION CLUB

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VOLUME 23 – No. 3 Summer 2015



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The Organizer

By Dave Chaddock

Although I could only recall a couple of scenes from this movie, which appeared in 1963 and which I must have seen a few years after that, I remembered it as giving a truthful picture of the struggle of working people, and doing it so magnificently that it was one of the best films I had ever seen. Recently I found myself in Suzzallo Library walking past piles of DVD's and I thought to myself: "Maybe they have a copy." Sure enough, they did, and I could take it home for a week with my alumnus card. My memory had not deceived me. Watching the film anew I was enthralled all over again.

One of the advantages of watching a DVD is that you never miss a bit of dialogue because you can stop it and replay it. In this case, being an Italian film, it had subtitles. And another feature of this DVD is that it also included a lengthy interview with the director, Mario Monicelli. The setting of the film is a textile factory near the end of the 19th century. Monicelli was able to find an old factory that still contained the vintage looms of that era. He insists that nothing in the film was fabricated. He and his staff thoroughly researched it all to bring the past back to life.

Though the film deals with a serious situation, a strike waged against an uncongenial workplace, it is filled with humor. Monicelli explains that, like all his films, he tells stories about people who are struggling to cope with difficult situations which sometimes get

the better of them, and this can be amusing. The factory requires the workers to put in a 14-hour day. Naturally they become exhausted, and this causes accidents. The workers devise a plan. They will blow the whistle an hour early. But who will do the deed? They will all put their names on little pieces of paper and put them in a box. But most all of these poor workers are illiterate. Some have tried to go to night class but they learn little because after putting in such long workdays they can't stay awake. A "name" is drawn from the box. But a cry goes up. "Who signed their name with an 'X'?" Six or eight people all raise their hands. Finally one brave fellow, Pantasso, declares: "Never mind, I'll do it!"

To play the part of the organizer, Monicelli recruited his friend the great actor Marcello Mastroianni, better known for his starring role in many Fellini movies. Just as the workers, frustrated after being caught out blowing the whistle too early, decide to achieve the same aim by appearing next morning one hour late, the organizer happens on the scene. He makes a suggestion. He tells them it is praiseworthy that they have established a unity of intention. But it would be a shame to waste this solidarity for a trivial gain. Instead of fighting for just an hour they should draw up a list of demands and if the bosses will not grant these demands they should go on strike. Besides the shortened workday, it is decided to demand a lunch hour, accident insurance, and most

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important, dropping of all charges against Pantasso, the man who snuck upstairs and blew the whistle an hour early.

A great strength of the movie is that it does not center itself completely around the role of the organizer. His role is important, but many other characters in the film play crucial roles in the telling of a full-bodied story. For example, there is the woman on the negotiating committee that is sent to present the workers demands. When the company official tries to soft-soap the delegation by granting a minor concession, she is the one who declares: "We cannot go back to our colleagues with a mere consolation prize."

Then there is the Sicilian who is new in town. It had been part of the plan for the workers not to declare their intention to strike until they had first stocked up on provisions by purchasing grub and other necessities on credit, since credit would be suspended as soon as the bosses knew about the strike. But the Sicilian, a stranger at the company store, is unable to get supplies on credit. While the rest of the workers go on strike, he intends to report for work. But in deference to his fellow workers, he asks the strike committee for their permission. At first the consensus is that such breaking of ranks cannot be tolerated. Granting of an exception would jeopardize the strike. However, after visiting the hovel where the large family of the Sicilian are living in misery, Pantasso tells him "Oh, go ahead."

When the poor little man, all by himself, reports for work in the huge deserted textile mill (one of the two scenes I remembered) the bosses ask him what is going on. He tells them he has permission of the workers. The bosses are outraged. The mill cannot be run by this one man. And the fact that the workers have the audacity to act as if they were running the place – Why it was intolerable. They tell him to go back to his friends. "Beat it!" they say. But the little man is at the end of his rope. He refuses to leave. He pulls a jack-knife out of his pocket and struggles without success to open it. Soon he is frog-marched off to jail.

As the strike goes on, the bosses try to stir up resentment against the organizer. They tell the workers: "Get rid of the professor. You've let that rabble-rouser and a fugitive from justice to stir you up! You know how many unemployed there are, willing to work this minute, under worse conditions?"

A train-full of scabs is brought in. This is the other scene I remember. As the workers engage in physical struggle against these potential strikebreakers, the organizer keeps trying to talk to them, even while exchanging blows. "Don't play the bosses game," he pleads, "We're starving too."

The workers come very close to winning. We see the frustration of the top absentee owner as unfilled orders keep piling up. Competitors are stealing customers. The side holding out one hour longer than the other is the side that will win. So frustrated is the top boss as he berates his underlings that he says, without immediate action "we'll have to throw in the towel and give them everything they want."

At last the bosses call in their ultimate weapon, armed troops. The strike is finally broken.

Director Monicelli insists on calling his film a "comedy" but in the tradition of Dante's Divine Comedy. He says an Italian comedy does not require a happy ending. But even as the organizer ends up in jail, he has inspired another worker to take up the cause, and set off to help a worker struggle in some other location.

The film is true to life. It was the fate of many a union struggle in those early days to meet with defeat. During the great railroad strikes in the U.S. in 1877 The Nation (whose editorial views were later to evolve in a different direction) condemned the "wild desires and wilder dreams" of the "great multitudes of untaught men [from Europe] who have been received on these shores" -- "day laborers of the lowest class" - who imagined that they had the right to "suspend, even for a whole day, the traffic and industry of a great nation." Who did they think they were? As the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher declared, in a sermon delivered that same year, "European theories of combinations between workmen" ignored the fundamental fact that "God has intended the great to be great, and the little to be little." Unions have embraced the "preposterous" theory that "good workmen" should be placed "on a level with poor workmen" (Samuel Yellen, American Labor Struggles, pp. 34, 37-8).

In that early age, labor unions were vilified. But working people never stopped agitating for their rights.

2015 Longshore Caucus Honolulu HawaiiBy Ian Kennedy

The Caucus convened the Monday following the Convention. While everyone was in a good mood after the protracted contract negotiations, there was an underlying concern regarding the PMA's efforts in Washington D.C., but I'm getting ahead of myself. We did get a contract, ratified by 82% of the membership. The only locals that returned a vote count under 82% was Local 13 at 74% and Local 34 at 67%. The length of negotiations and the resulting contract tells us how strong the Union still is, even though the union movement as a whole is loosing ground. This is why a full scale attack on us has taken place by the employers, politicians, and Business groups.

Our main concern should be, what is happening in Washington D.C. Talk has been going around that unionized port workers should be put under the Railroad Labor Act, restricting our right to strike. A bill, (S. 1298) has been presented in the Senate and sent to committee, that would require Ports to submit performance statistics that would be reported to Congress annually. Also, three months prior to expiration of the maritime labor agreement and monthly thereafter until a new labor agreement has been reached. What does this mean? During Negotiations, employers can cause the production numbers to fall below the averages, as they did during these last ten months, thus giving Congress the right to intervene. And an amendment was introduced to the "fast track" that sought to remove a union from sole representative of employees if the union was found guilty of directing a slow down. It was not considered because it was not germane to the trade bill. There is no question a similar bill will surface in the near future.

Senator Cantwell drafted a bill that could supply port authorities with grants that could facilitate automation. The Union has pointed out our concerns. Also, in June a bill to amend the Taft Hartley act that would empower the President to intervene and halt port labor slow downs as well as strikes and would allow state governors to initiate the process. (PORTS.) Act.

By this time everyone should have had the opportunity to read the MOU (contract) and know of the improvements. A sticking point is in the changes to the arbitration system. The deadline for the change over has been extended to July 20, 2015 due to the inability to select the third arbitrator.

Automation continues world wide as the Terminal Operators desire to move the work force off the point of production without the concern of cost nor productivity. The Union is countering this by negotiating for all maintenance work of the machines, thus insuring ILWU mechanics will be present on all PMA facilities. The employers are also using automation as a subterfuge for bringing in permanent subcontractors referred to as IT workers. Another way the Union has working for it, is it's efforts to build solidarity with other maritime unions around the world. We hold major positions in the ITF, have recently joined the ETF and are founding members of the IDC. We continue to evolve as the industry evolves.

There were only eleven resolutions presented, four were withdrawn, and one referred. One dealt with increasing the size of the fighting fund and another called for the Caucus to be held in Panama in 2016 and then one was for the recognition of Glen Anderson for his dedication and service to the Union.——Glen, CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT—

Ray Orttiz has decided not to run again for Coast Committee and the only person to run in his place is Frank Ponce De Leon. While the position in the Northwest had three candidates, Leal Sundet, Roger Boespflug and Cam. Williams. As the Division Bylaws limits the ballots to no more then two candidates for any one position, a vote of the delegates was taken and Sundet and Williams are the candidates.

Conversations With Harry

By Ian Kennedy

I took a detour returning to Seattle from Honolulu, following the Longshore Caucus and Convention, stopping in San Francisco, knowing Harry would like an update. I had to take a Red Eye flight, getting me into San Francisco proper by ten in the morning. Dead tired, can't check into my hotel until three in the afternoon, I wondered around Union Square for a while, then headed over to the Art Museum. By one, I couldn't stay awake any longer, so I headed back to the hotel. Yes, they had my room ready, I flopped down on the bed and was out like a light.

By the time I woke up, I realized I'd miss Harry if I didn't get going. Not bothering to clean up, I grabbed a cab and headed for the Bar. As I entered, I saw Sue sitting at the bar, tables were empty, the first time I'd found it so empty. When she saw me, her face lit up, she grabbed a fresh glass and filled it with beer, picked up her coffee and headed for our table. Arriving just as I sat down.

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"God it's good to see you. This place has been like a tomb all evening. Is Harry coming?" Almost all in one breath. "It's good to see you too. And I hope he shows up, I don't want to stay more then one night." I responded. She smiled, "Sorry, it's just that it's been so quiet in here that I was beginning to think I should just call it a day and go home. It is good to see you." She looks at her watch, "If Harry is coming, he should be here in about five minutes. Can you wait that long?"

"Well, only if you could find me something stronger then this." I'm holding up the almost empty glass of beer and giving her my brightest smile. She jumps up and responds, "It's on it's way." Within two minutes she was back, set down a tumbler of whiskey, neat, no milk. "That should keep you for a moment or two." she states as she Sits down smiling. We then exchange small talk as we wait for Harry.

It isn't long before Harry walks in, he's in his topcoat even though the temperature was still in the low seventies. Taking off the topcoat, he g drapes it over the extra chair and sits down. Sue jumps up, gives him a hug, then asks, "What will it be, beer or whiskey?" He nods, "Let's start with beer and see how it goes." Harry is hardly settled when Sue returns with a pitcher and three glasses, sitting down she pours the beer.

"Cheers." The three of us raise our glasses and drink followed by sighs. It's cool, refreshing after the hot day. Harry is looking at me waiting for whatever news I might have. "Am I correct in thinking you've just returned from the Convention and Caucus" he asks. I nod, "Yes, and it was a feel good time. after ten months of negotiations, I don't think anyone wanted to get into any fights. All week long they paraded before us Union Leaders from around the world, all of whom praised the ILWU for the aid we rendered to them in their struggles and support for us." I've finished my whiskey and downed my first glass of beer. Sue quickly refilled my glass. "I wonder if I knew any of them?" Harry interjected. "Yes," I responded, "you probably knew Paddy Crumlin of the MUA. He must have been a young turk in your time, but he was up and coming." Harry gives a shrug.

I continue "The Panamanian Pilots, with the help of the International have taken in the Dockers from both ends of the Canal. and the Dockers President was introduced." Again Harry interrupts me, "If it was all peaches and cream, I suppose that all the

unopposed." I'm smiling at him now, "You must be clairvoyant, yes, all four officers will be around for another three years. And by the way, Panama was added to the rotation for conventions and Panama will be in the location in six years, (2021.) So we won't be in Hawaii again for twenty-one years." Harry's smiling, "And you'll have joined me by then." he finishes his beer, looks over at Sue, "I think this calls for a toast with something a little more substantial." Sue jumps up, heading for the bar she asks, "With milk I suppose. We hardly have time to smile before she returns, empty glasses, a glass of milk, and a bottle of whiskey. She plops them down and then sits and pores.

We sip the whiskey, "One item of interest that might give you a chuckle, when Paddy Crumlin was giving his speech, he made a derogatory comment about Harold Daggett, he's president of the ILA," Sue interrupts, "what's the ILA?" she asks. Harry jumps in to respond. "The ILA is a bunch of jerks who call themselves Longshoremen." I interrupt him before he can say more, "The ILA is the east coasts equivalence of the ILWU, they're the International Longshoremen's Association." I have another sip of the whiskey. "If I may continue," they turn to me with deadpan looks, "anyway, someone in the back of the room is videoing Paddy with his smartphone, and he puts it out on youtube and someone on Daggett's staff sees it and shows Harold. He's pissed, calls McEllrath, whom he is supposed to meet with a couple of weeks later on, and cancels the meeting." By this time Harry is chuckling, "I bet McEllrath is pissed also." he adds. "Well," I respond, "he wasn't the happiest I've ever seen him."

Harry looks over at the clock, he starts to rise, "That damn topcoat is too heavy for this weather, but if I leave it I'd never get it back." he struggles into it, "You'll have to give me more the next time. And make sure you give my lady a big tip, doesn't look like she'll be making much tonight." and he walks out the door. Sue is still seated, starts to get up and goes to prepare the bill. When she returns, hands me the Bill, "Don't forget, he said a BIG tip." She smiles as i empty my wallet.

In our next edition

We will include a letter from Jr. Nelson's Daughter And information on donations to the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies and the Labor Archives

2015 International Convention

By Ian Kennedy

The convention convened the morning of June 8th at the Sheraton Waikiki with President McELLRATH calling the meeting to order at about 9:30 a.m. He then turned the meeting over to the host committee of Local 142. After the Royal Hawaiian band played the anthems of the three divisions as well as that of the state of Hawaii, International Vice President Wesley FURTADO introduced the Governor of Hawaii. The Governor thanked the ILWU for all it's support throughout his political life. He also thanked the Local for the work they do at the ports and for the ILWU staying current and keeping the labor movement alive and well. He closed with the statement that "When we work together we can accomplish so much more than we can individually."

Following the Governor, Willie ADAMS gave President McELLRATH an arousing introduction, referring to the battles the Union has been through, he referred to him "not as a rock star but as solid as a rock." President McELLRATH then took the podium, thanking the host committee, his fellow officers and praising them for the work they have done. Following a video showing the struggles the ILWU has gone through over the last 8 years, he commented on the difficulties of getting a contract when other Unions are trying to take your work and crossing your picket lines. And when the Washington State Labor Convention that took place in Vancouver WA. wouldn't support our picket line taking place 5 blocks away. McELLRATH talked about how the PMA tried to get us to strike during the protracted negotiations, the TransPacific Partnership, as well as legislation that is before congress that would tie our hands.

This was followed by the delegates adjourning into committees. I sat on the Resolutions Committee.

Tuesday, after calling the convention to order, President McELLATH introduced STEVE COTTON the General Secretary of the International Transport Federation (ITF) who stressed three key points; 1) the importance of strong international relationships, 2) the never ending changing face of transportation and it's meaning to workers, and 3) the changes labor unions are making to respond to these issues. He praised the ILWU and it's work in solidarity with other unions against the neo liberal agenda. Following Brother Cotton's speech, McELLRATH presented him with a hook and then introduced Brother Gustin to the delegates. (Prior to the convention, President McELLRATH contacted our own RON GUSTIN and asked him to cast a number of bronze hooks to be presented to the various speakers.)

Final Dispatch

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McELLRATH then went on to present Paddy CRUMLIN, National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and President of the ITF. Brother CRUMLIN, after explaining his surfing accident, went on to praise the Local 142 for it's history and the great struggle in Hilo in 1934, referred to as "Bloody Monday," He then went on to reflect on the past history of the joint struggles of the ILWU and the MUA and how the employers are intent on pulling us apart, to separate us by race and sex. How the struggles of '34 are the same struggles we face today. He told how the ILWU is responsible for the fact that San Francisco is such a progressive city. He talked about how we must continue to fight the fight. to work with other maritime unions to gain better jobs, better working conditions, and wage parity.

Vice President FAMILATHE then gave a brief history of our outreach into Panama and how the Panama Canal Pilots and then the dock workers on the two coasts affiliated with us as the ILWU Panama Division. He then introduced Alberto OCHOA,(He spoke no English, so Raniero SALAS translated for him.) He told about the struggle with the employers and how we have helped them and how the fight continues.

After a report by the Credentials Committee, the Convention was recessed so that committees could continue their work.

On Wednesday morning, after house keeping was completed, Brother Adams introduced Chris CAIN, Secretary if the MUA's Western Australia Branch, he gave us a history of Brother CAIN'S rise in union politics and how his branch has grown from 1000 members to 5000 and how they are becoming more active in work place struggles. Brother CAIN praised our International Officers as well as Local 23, who attended their convention.

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He stressed organizing and the need for organized labor to grow. He talked about Chevron and what is called "free trade" and how its exploitation of workers.

Vice President FURTADO then introduced Kozo MATSUMOTO, president of the All Japan Dockworkers' Union, Zenkowan., (10000 members.) Using an interpreter, MATSUMOTO told of the make up of the Japanese dockworkers and that they are only a part of the larger national federation, Zenkokukowan, with 57000 members working on 92 docks. And how they held a one day strike in support of the ILWU during our negotiations, with the slogan "Struggle like the ILWU and with the ILWU."

He told of the issues that are facing Japan, including the fight against the nuclear power plants as well as the struggle over the construction of the new military base in Henoko, Okinawa. He concluded by stating "With the ILWU members, Zenkowan is committed to improve the lives and the environment."

FAMILATHE introduced Nick STAM, a Netherlands Docker and activist with the ITF. Brother STAM told of the one year battle over Pensions at the 'Rotterdam World Gateway,' the most automated terminal in the world. Pickets were put up in Sydney, San Francisco as well as Holland. The cry was "PUT THE MONEY BACK," first uttered by Big Bob McEllrath. The companies offered 80 million Euros, finely settling for between 688 and 775 million Euros.

Thursday, after all the housekeeping was taken care of, President McELLRATH introduced Stevie TODD of the National Union of Rail and Transport workers. Brother TODD talked of the international unity that is required to sustain the working class, and individually the need for strong leadership within the ILWU, MUA and ITF.

McELLRATH then introduced Joe FLEET-WOOD, General Secretary of the Maritime Union of New Zealand. He stressed the need for education and organizing. They have just emerged from a 3.5 year struggle with some of our same employers. When the call want out for support, the ILWU and MUA along with other unions were on the picket lines.



FAMILATHE then introduced Mark LORI-DAN, National Secretary of the Belgian Dockworkers, BTB. And told us the BTB is one of the few European maritime unions with a hiring hall. Brother LORIDAN spoke of the importance of maintaining the hiring hall and compared our struggle this past year with BTB's fight with the European Commission

Sprinkled through the first three days and much of Thursday, the Coast Committee Report and the Resolutions that amended it, was read into the record and discussed. The Report told about the struggles of the Longshore Division with the Grain and Contract negotiations before going into Organizing on the mainland and Panama, followed by Hawaii, then Canada. This was followed by what is going on in each Division, including the Federated Auxiliaries and Pensioners, (Including our upcoming dedication in Nanaimo on the 29th of July.)

Along with the various staff activity reports, was the Washington D.C. Legislative Report covering the happenings in Congress that affect the Union. Our office has gotten a bill into both houses to level the playing field on taxation of inbound cargo; they prevented attempts to repeal the Jones Act. They lobbied the Congress heavily to halt intervention into our contract negotiations and are lobbying to have TWIC expire. During this past year, members of the Legislative Committee were shuttling back and forth, lobbying Congressional Members from our three states.

Of the Resolutions, many are either area or local specific, I'll skip those that don't pertain to us. CP-1 calls for the addition of Panama into the Convention rotation, to be held in 2021. CP-5 increases the officers' housing subsidy to \$4000 per month and adds the Hawaii Vice President. CP-7 adds relatives to the membership of the Auxiliaries. (It still doesn't include men.) Two resolutions cover organizing.

Resolution R-8 calls for participation in a boycott of Sakuma Brothers Farms. And R-12, buy Maui Gold or Dole's gold MD-2 Pineapple. R-13 calls for the opposition of the TPP and R-15 for support of the Jones Act, with R-18 calling on us to Organize the unorganized while strengthening Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, (R-19) R-25 calls for the preservation of Pension Plans, while R-30 supports a day of action for Medicare's 50th Birthday.

Correspondence

From **ANTON OBLACK**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment and \$100.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much **ANTON**.

From **PHIL JOOST**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$2.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **PHIL**.

From **JOE WENZEL**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$2.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **JOE**.

From **SCOTT MARTINEZ**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$12.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **SCOTT**.

From **JIM KOPF**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$12.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **JIM**.

From **IMRE DeJONY**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$12.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **IMRE**.

From **BOB RINALDI**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$12.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **BOB**.

From **AL VREY**, \$56.00 for 2015 & 2016 dues and \$144.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **AL**.

From **JON ENGLES**, \$100.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much **JON** and we are glad you enjoy the Rusty Hook. We'll keep it coming.

From **PAUL PEMBERTON**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$12.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **PAUL**.

From **JOAN RETTINGER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$2.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **JOAN**.

From **BENNIE JEFFERIES**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$72.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you, thank you **BENNIE**.

From **AN ANONYMOUS DONOR**, \$50.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much whomever you are. Thank you.

From **ED & SUE HICKS**, \$20.00 for 2015 assessments and \$80.00 donation to the Rusty hook. Thanks so much **SUE & ED**.

From **BILL URLEVICH**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **BILLY**.

From **SVEN LERBREK**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **SVEN**.

From **JIM BURNS**, \$20.00 for 2015 & 2016 assessment. Thanks **JIM**.

From **CARY BODEN**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **CARY**.

From **JAY WILLINGHAM**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **JAY**.

From **ROD CLUPHF**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment. Thanks **ROD**.

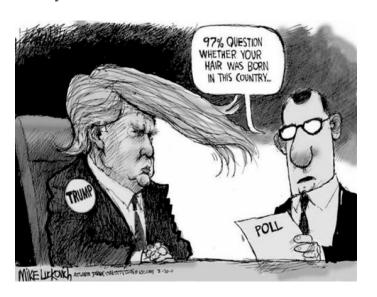
From **JACKIE ANNIBAL**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **JACKIE**.

From **BILL PROCTOR**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **BILL**.

From **BOB DELEO**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment and \$40.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **BOB**.

From **STEVE SNOW**, \$500.00 for dues from 2003 to 2019 and \$100.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much **STEVE**.

From **BILLY ARTHUR**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you so much **BILLY & SHARON**.



Correspondence

From **LEO WALKER**, \$20.00 for 2015 & 2016 assessments and \$60.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **LEO**.

From LANNY McGREW, \$56.00 for 2015 & 2016 dues and \$44.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thanks so much LANNY.

From **RUDY FINNE**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$22.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **RUDY**.

From PACIFIC COAST PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION, \$1000.00 donation for the NANAIMO MEMORIAL PLAQUE. Thank you, thank you PCPA.

From **BUTCH PETERSON**, \$20.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **BUTCH**.

From **BOB WOECK**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$32.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **BOB**.

From **RICHARD HOPPER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues & \$50.00 to the Hook. Thanks so much **RICHARD**.

From **ROD ULMER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$2.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you **ROD**.

From **CHUCK ROSS**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$172.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you, thank you **CHUCK**.

From **ALEX & DARLA BAROUMES**, \$25.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much **ALEX & DARLA**.

From **CARL CHRISTENSEN**, \$100.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much **CARL**.

From **JIM PICINICH**, \$100.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **JIMMY**.

From **SHIRLEY McCABE**, \$25.00 donation to the Rusty Hook in memory of **BROTHER RICHARD** "**DICK" NELSON**, and another \$25.00 donation in memory of **SISTER PAT SWANSON**, wife of **BROTHER BOB SWANSON**. Thank you **SHIRLEY**.

From **FRANK O'BRIEN**, \$60.00 for 2015 thru 2020 assessments. Thanks **FRANK**.

From ELVALENE AARBAK HAYWARD, \$100.00 donation to the Rusty Hook in memory of her father, BROTHER ANDREW (ANDY, HANK, SLIM) AARBAK.

Thank you so much **ELVALENE**.

From **BONNIE McHENRY**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$22.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **BONNIE**.

From **WERKU DEMISSE**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **WERKU**.

From **BARBARA LOFTUS**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$72.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thank you so much **BARB**.

From **MARLAND SYBOUTS**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$72.00 to the Rusty Hook. Thanks so much **MARLAND**.

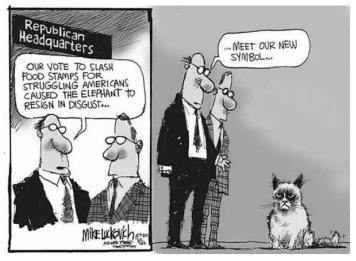
From **CLARENCE ELLSWORTH**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **CLARENCE**.

From **RICHARD SULLIVAN**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **RICHARD**.

From **DON KEZELE**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **DON**.

From **URSULA ALEXANDER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **URSULA**.

From VIRGINIA MALETTA, \$50.00 donation to the Rusty Hook in memory of her husband BROTHER RICHARD MALETTA, who passed away March 8, 2013. Thank you so much VIRGINIA.



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From **ERNIE WILLIAMS**, \$56.00 for 2014 & 2015 dues. Thank you **ERNIE**.

From **SCOTT TEUBER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **SCOTT**.

From **JOHN SCHNEIDER**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment. Thanks **JOHN**.

From **GARY JOHNSON**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **GARY**.

From CHERYL MILLER, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks CHERYL.

From **STEVE PERKINS**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment. Thanks **STEVE**.

From **JEFF VAUGHAN**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **JEFF**.

From **RICH ULRICH**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment. Thank you **RICH**.

From **BOB TAYLOR**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **BOB**.

From **BILL SODDEN**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **BILL**

From **ROGER MURRAY**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **ROGER**.

From **BILL CRAWFORD**, 28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **BILL**.

From **RANDY WILBUR**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **RANDY**.

From **RAMON DELAO**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **RAMON**.

From **DAN MARTINEZ**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **DANNY**.

From **STEVE GEHRKE**, \$20.00 for 2016 & 2017 assessment. Thanks **STEVE**.

From **JUDY HOLMES**, 28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **JUDY**.

From **BUFORD SCHACHERE**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$7.00 donation to the Rusty hook. Thanks **SCHACHERE**.

From **AL FORSYTH**, \$20.00 for 2015 & 2016 assessments and \$50.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks so much **AL**.

From **RICHARD HOPPER**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessments and \$40.00 donation to the Rusty Hook. Thanks **DICK**.

From **BILL ROMISCHER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues and \$72.00 donation to the Rusty hook. Thanks **BILL**.

From **JACK BLOCK**, \$25.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **JACK**, but you still owe \$3.00. Dues have always been \$28.00. Come on **JACK!!**

From WALLY STYRK, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks WALLY.

From **RUSS ALEXANDER**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **RUSS**.

From **ERNIE WILLIAMS**, \$56.00 for 2014 & 2015 dues. Thank you **ERNIE**.

From **JEFF VIGNA**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thank you **JEFF**

From **STORM KING**, \$28.00 for 2015 dues. Thanks **STORM**.

From **DAVE BRENNEN**, \$10.00 for 2015 assessment. Thanks **DAVE**.



RUSTY HOOK / Summer 2015



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