



# PIER PRESSURE

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## Longshore Workers' Coalition News Update February 5, 2010

### ILA AGREES TO AUTOMATED TERMINAL IN JACKSONVILLE

According to media reports, officials of Hanjin Shipping and the ILA tentatively agreed on a contract establishing staffing levels for a highly automated container terminal Hanjin plans to open in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2013.

The Jacksonville Business Journal wrote: "The union wanted each loading and unloading container gang to have 27 workers and each additional gang to have 25 people, but settled for an 18-member gang and eight union workers in the container yard...The terminal will run between two and five gangs, translating to up to 98 union jobs."

New technology was a sticking point during the 2009 contract negotiations. The LWC argued that the ILA must negotiate stronger language on minimum staffing levels, a guaranteed annual income to offset job loss and extended jurisdiction and organizing language to assure that work created by technology remain ILA.

Curtis Watson, a member of the Deep Sea Local 1408 in Jacksonville said he found out about the deal in the newspaper. "The devil is in the details. We were promised all kinds of things when they opened up the new Mitsui/TraPac Terminal in January 2009. And they ended up being empty promises. I'm happy we'll be getting new work, but if this agreement ends up lowering standards for staffing requirements, and doesn't promise that all new work is ILA and more, then we're selling ourselves short for the future."

"We don't know when we're going to get more information or get to vote on the agreement," said Watson.

### MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IN SAVANNAH

ILA Local 1414 and LWC member George Godlock called five days ago to request some LWC materials and the LWC's banner for a membership drive in Savannah, Georgia. This morning he called to tell us he had already signed up 50 new members!

"We want to send a message to the employers and the ILA that the LWC is gaining strength in Savannah," he said. Savannah is one of the fastest growing ports in the U.S.

"We also want to send out a friendly challenge to fellow LWC members in other ports," Godlock added. "The LWC will send you materials and their banner, and then all you need to sign up 50 new members is some pens. We're going keep up the momentum in Savannah!"

Godlock explained that the energy created through the membership drive will be put to good use in an organizing action LWC members in Savannah have been talking about. Stay tuned for details!

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## **DEATHS ON THE JOB**

Working on the docks is a dangerous job. So dangerous that in the last few days of 2009 two ILA members died while on the job.

David Wieland, 43, an ILA gang foreman in Local 970, was killed in Norfolk, Virginia, on December 22 when a straddle carrier dislodged a light pole, causing it to fall on the car Wieland was seated in while processing paperwork.

Virginia Port Authority Police and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) are investigating the accident.

In Staten Island, New York, ILA Local 333/United Marine Division member Ricardo Young, 50, died on December 29 when he became tangled in the lines, or hawsers, that were being used to tow another vessel.

Wieland is the sixth longshore worker to die in Norfolk since 2005. As for tugboat workers, a Local 333/UMD representative estimated that "about one fatality occurs every year on board tugs and barges in the tri-state [New York/New Jersey] area."

The LWC continues to be concerned about the lack of coast wide health and safety standards for ILA workers.

We send our sincere condolences to the families of David Wieland and Ricardo Young. Go to [www.lwcjustice.org](http://www.lwcjustice.org) to read more about both tragic accidents.

Contact the LWC at 718-865-8782 or at [info@lwcjustice.org](mailto:info@lwcjustice.org) to find out about our own network of health and safety activists in each port.

## **LWC PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

In the coming months the LWC leaders from around the country will meet to evaluate our work and make plans for future.

During an upcoming one-day meeting LWC leaders will evaluate the LWC's accomplishments in the past few years, set new goals for the next few years and prepare a strategic plan that will be submitted to the LWC membership for discussion and approval at the LWC's 10th anniversary meeting (date yet to be determined).

The Dockworkers Education & Legal Defense Fund is assisting with this planning process. Two skilled facilitators have been hired: Bill Fletcher, Executive Editor of BlackCommentator.com and Mark Brenner, Executive Director of the Labor Education & Research Project (also known as Labor Notes). Stay tuned for reports!

## **LWC IN BALTIMORE**

The LWC's staff organizer, Marsha Niemeijer, will be meeting with ILA members in Baltimore, Maryland, on Thursday February 11.

ILA members will get a report-back on the LWC's national projects, they will evaluate the LWC's deep sea contract campaign (ILA Local 333 members in Baltimore voted down the contract by 75 percent) and they will discuss pressing issues facing longshore workers in Baltimore.

For more information about the event, contact Local 333 member John Blom at 443-629-0526 or email [info@lwcjustice.org](mailto:info@lwcjustice.org).