

Educate Imagine Organize For Power

Elect Bob Dickey

President of ILA Local 1588

**Thursday, December 12th
7AM-7PM
PLCT (GCT) WEST LOT**



Here are a few seemingly small but important safety items that grind my gears. Our equipment is filthy. Always. The last time I was in an RTG, new life forms were being spawned. PLCT needs to hire a dedicated cleaning crew and train them as dental hygienists. If 1804 doesn't want it, plenty of 1588 members could use a guaranteed 40 hrs a week. Working AC in all equipment. We're gaining on this score, but we're not done. The terminal is a moonscape. There are back-breaking rim rockers all over the terminal. I get it. We want to deliver, but if the company refuses to respect us, we need to protect ourselves through collective action, as a union, not as individuals. At some point, we need to draw a line. Speaking of lines, would it really break the bank to paint some? With respect to safety, we need ongoing training and well defined protocols.

One of the most important issues facing us is locking in the 2 man teams. Ideally, this should be in the portwide agreement, a demand I submitted last year, or, at the very least, we need a terminal-level MOA. As it stands, it is dangled over our heads every time a switch takes too long, or someone takes a few minutes too long in the strad room. Another issue is loosing work. I'll make sure we keep it. No freebies.

I'll make sure we continue to abide by the local's seniority principles and address perceptions of favoritism immediately.

As I plan to be a working president to make my hours and keep in touch with the job, I will be highly motivated to deal with these important daily issues since I'll have to deal with filthy machines and potholes. In fact, I look forward to it.

Now, to move from the effects to the big picture causes. Democracy is power. We need direct elections of all our officers, particularly our International and District officers: One Member; One Vote! In addition, we need term and age limits. No more back room deals at the Delegate Assembly.

We need a union where the officers and the members are all in the same boat; that means eliminating multiple salaries and emeritus salaries and multiple retirement plans and tying salaries to no more than the average top quintile of earners. If our officers had to retire into poverty like so many in the ILA, we would see a national defined benefit pension asap. Our officers work for us and we pay them with our dues money. This is a zero-sum game. That means money used for self enrichment is not money used for organizing, research, or education. To put things in perspective, the President of the United States salary is \$400,000. Many of our district and international officers are double dipping and make much more than the POTUS and yes, Virgil is one. If you want to know why our starting salary is half the West Coast's and their starting salary is higher than our top rate, or why we have either disgraceful local pensions, less than half

the West Coast's national pension, (if we have any pension at all) or over half the longshore labor down south is non-union or why we have more deaths per capita and more lax safety rules, look no further.

We need to dismantle the patronage machine, which weakens the union and twists the objectives of our officers. Direct elections - One Member, One Vote - and the elimination of double dipping will go a long way toward eliminating this sort of patronage and its corrosive effect on our union. We must establish transparent protocols for new hires: a publicly displayed and maintained section 14 seniority list with FIRST right of refusal for new jobs in the section and a transparent lottery system for new hires for the remaining jobs. No more backroom deals or favoritism. No more patronage machine.

The bedrock of a union contract is the ability to defend a member's job through a strong Just Cause Standard, an efficient grievance procedure, progressive discipline language focused on correcting behavior, not punishing it, and the willingness of the union officer to fight. On this score, the ILA, Virgil and 1588 have fallen down, certainly in Gerry Feeney's case. There was no progressive discipline. Virgil refuses to write requests for information (RFI). His stated position is to accept the company's evidence ONLY. He has begrudgingly submitted RFIs, which the grievant has written, but has steadfastly refused to file an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against the company when they have refused to comply with the RFI. Virgil has allowed the use of zero tolerance to remove members from the PLCT list. This is absolutely unacceptable and outrageous. He is either throwing the fight intentionally, or, he doesn't know what he's doing. It turns our grievance process into a kangaroo court. As President, I will aggressively pursue all grievances. I will submit thorough RFIs and file ULPs if the company doesn't comply. There MUST be progressive discipline in ALL cases! There can be no zero tolerance without state intervention. And, if I lose, I hope Virgil takes this criticism to heart and fights to get Gerry and others back. After 22 years of an impeccable record, he certainly does not deserve to lose his job over a non-event and a vacuous accusation based on virtually no evidence: in the wrong place and operating in an unsafe manner - two things, if twisted, every operator is "guilty" of. It should be an easy grievance to win. In fact, during the pier construction, the company forced us all to operate unsafely, at speed, and in close quarters.

Foremen can not simultaneously be union officers. They are proxies for management. Our members pay dues for our officers to take their side and defend them. This is a clear conflict of interest; it is even in the International Constitution. I will insist that no executive board member also moonlights as a foreman; one or the other, but not both. If they choose to be foremen, we will have elections for their positions very soon.

We need to improve union education, union imagination and union organization. We need to develop additional layers of leadership. We need to establish rank-and-file safety committees, contract action teams, and election committees, selected by lottery. Using lottery will increase participation and help eliminate partisanship and reduce tensions between the various divisions and factions. These committees will easily be paid from the money saved by eliminating double dipping and capping officer salaries. The committees will need to network with other such committees in the ILA and the ILWU, creating member-to-member networks supported by both Internationals. It's essential we build rank and file bridges between the different locals and unions to understand each others contracts and conditions. Education and information is essential to a strong union. Of course this is major disagreement between Virgil, the Exec and myself, they prefer to keep the members in the dark. This was clearly and unequivocally displayed when Mark at a recent GM stated that members SHOULD NOT know other unions contracts and the Exec denied my request for a BMW contract. Virgil agreed. It's an old story: control knowledge and information = control of the power = (in this case) control of the dues trough. This is why it takes dynamite to get anything out of them. Hey, don't believe me, try it yourself. Go to a union meeting, ask a question, sit back and watch the game of dodge ball.

An organizations budget is a moral document. I intend to submit an estimated annual budget for approval. I will insist on presenting a PowerPoint with infographics of the union's financials at every meeting. I will increase the number of union meetings from 4 to 12 and they will be stop work meetings. These meetings will be "round table" with important topics presented at every meeting. I will undergo an extensive and participatory rewrite of our bylaws to simplify, clarify, and strengthen them. I intend to expand the functionality of our website and develop regular, multichannel communications. I will establish listening forums such as contract demand meetings.

If you made it this far, thank you! I know I've violated the cardinal rule of a flyer: K.I.S.S. and less is more. The union is one of the most important institutions in our lives, there's a lot to say and I want to see it live up to it's potential. Please join me in continuing the discussion. Click on the QR code if you are viewing it online as a PDF or use your phone's camera to go to a webpage for more information and to see the contract demands I submitted and the flyer I made for delegate.

