

# Lessons from a final harvest Hope after HC&S closure

PUUNENE—“Look. I want to show you this,” Fely Corpuz says as she rifles through a care-worn photo album. “Me at the first parade,” she says, smiling as she looks at a photo of herself in a ti leaf-trimmed float for HC&S. “Me at the last one.” She turns to the last page in her album to show the picture on the right and sighs. But continues to smile.

On December 12, 2016, Unit 2101- Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Co (HC&S) made a symbolic day out of their last haul. After 145 years in operation, HC&S completed its 144th and final harvest.

The large crowd, most wearing shirts and hats bearing messages like *A Hui Hou, HC&S: 1870-2016* and *Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Co: Real People Real Values* stepped firmly into the mud to get their last pictures with the tounahauler adorned with *lei*.

“I never thought this closure would happen in my lifetime,” said Willie Kennison, former ILWU Business Agent for HC&S and Maui Division Director. “Before when other plantations shut down, HC&S would grab ‘em and absorb their loss. The skilled workers will be fine, but my concern is the older laborers. I feel for them.”

When the ILWU first unionized sugar workers from 1944 to 1945 there were 33 plantations, with 25,000 workers. Most of the workers were laboring in the fields cutting cane by hand, but by 1970, less than 10,000 workers were doing the work that 25,000 had done in the 1940s because of increased mechanization.

### Education vs. the economy

Technological advancements cut the need for as many workers. Fortunately, however, Hawaii kept up with the technology and the workers adapted and learned the skills they needed to work it. Ben Wilson, unit bulletin editor reflected, “The sugar plantation with all the technology it needed was a very education-based industry. The company provided education and training so people could get



Parade Grand Marshal Fely Corpuz and Beato Vercelluz Jr. aboard the last HC&S float in the 94th Maui Fair parade October 2016.

apprenticeships, learn trades.”

“It was very attractive to stay here on Maui,” said Charles Andrión, a third generation HC&S worker. “I didn’t go to college, but HC&S provided on-the-job training and I was hired as an instrument technician. My grandpa was so happy to learn I would be moving home to work at HC&S like he did back in the day.”

Unfortunately, even education could not edge out the economy. Foreign sugar companies began using the same cane varieties, cultivation techniques, and machinery, while paying their workers a fraction of the wages paid in Hawaii. In 1994, the passage of the so-called free trade agreement with Canada and Mexico, began to open the U.S. market to foreign-produced sugar.

### Union contracts alleviate economic blows

HC&S’s workers continued to be paid well through the very end, even as the global market gained a competitive edge over Hawaii’s sugar. Why? Because of the collective bargaining ILWU and the workers did together.

Through collective bargaining, ILWU sugar workers earned higher wages and

better benefits than any agricultural worker in the US or world, but Hawaii sugar companies could still compete with sugar coming from countries where workers were paid less than one dollar a day.

“The union, by getting better wages for its members here, created a quality of life. So I guess you can say when the union goes away, the quality of life goes away. Plantation culture became a culture of solidarity and mutual respect. It created a middle class lifestyle for a lot of people,” said Wilson.

Dennis Nobriga, lead mechanic at KT&S, said something similar. “The people against cane burning claimed —continued on page 4



Crowds surround the tounahauler as it pulls the last batch of sugar cane to the conveyor belt at the Puunene mill.

ADDRESS LABEL

## On the Inside

ILWU stands with Standing Rock Native Americans .....2

Legislative update - Opening Day at the State Legislature.....3

Message from the President ILWU’s sugar roots made the union strong .....5

Hawaii Division recognition night “You belong to the greatest organization in the islands” .....6

Basketball state tournament .....7

Polynesian Adventure Tours unionized; first contract signed ... 8

The next ILWU Local 142 Executive Board (LEB) meeting is scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. on March 17, 2017, at the ILWU union hall, 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu. ILWU members are welcome to attend as observers.

# News from The Dispatcher

## ILWU pledges solidarity with Standing Rock

On December 6, the ILWU International Executive Board voted unanimously to adopt a statement of policy opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The controversial project is opposed by Native Americans across the continent because it threatens Native lands and water. The pipeline's original route would have crossed the Missouri River upstream from Bismarck, North Dakota, but was rerouted because of concerns that an oil leak would contaminate the City's water supply. Pipeline proponents want the oil to cross just a half-mile upstream from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, buried underneath the tribe's water supply.

The ongoing protest by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe on their North Dakota reservation began in April, 2016. The effort has drawn world-wide attention and attracted thousands of Native American supporters and allies. It has become the largest protest gathering of Native Tribes in recent history.

### International Executive Board Statement of Policy

"The Tribal Nations of the Great Plains rely on the waters of the life-giving Missouri River for present and future existence, and the Dakota Access Pipeline construction poses a very serious risk to that continued existence. The Dakota Access Pipeline threatens the safety of the areas of fish and wildlife, sacred sites and historical archeological resources that lie within and around the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and associated lands," declares the ILWU Statement of Policy.

The International Executive Board also approved a \$10,000 donation to the Standing Rock Sioux from the solidarity fund. The Coast Longshore Committee added an additional \$5,000 donation.

"The ILWU has never been afraid to take a stand on important political issues," said ILWU International President Robert McEllrath.

Support for the Standing Rock Sioux was first expressed by the ILWU's Pacific Coast Pensioners Association that adopted a resolution in September of 2016.

Local 10's Executive Board then passed a resolution on November 8 against the pipeline project and in support of increased funding for workers affected by any jobs lost on the pipeline. The resolution called on the labor movement to support a "just transition" for workers into renewable energy jobs, to help working families, combat climate change and

promote investment in renewable energy.

### Labor unions divided

The ILWU is among a number of unions that have pledged support for protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux. The Amalgamated Transit Union, American Postal Workers Union, Communications Workers of America, National Nurses United, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the United Electrical Workers have all issued statements supporting the protest. Support has also come from six AFL-CIO constituent groups, including the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

However, last September, the AFL-CIO issued a statement supporting the pipeline project, thought to be the result of pressure from the Building Trades Department. The Building Trades issued a letter to their membership that sharply criticized unions who have opposed the pipeline project.

### ILWU delegations lend a hand

Local 4 members Steve Hunt, Jamison Roberts and Josh Goodwin were the first ILWU members on the ground in Standing Rock in November of 2016. They drove 3,000 miles round trip to deliver over \$7,000 worth of supplies to the camp. Hunt said he decided

to go after seeing media video of protesters being attacked by private security guards and he wanted to see first-hand what was happening.

"I wanted to know the truth," Hunt said. "When we were locked out of the grain elevators in Washington, I saw the tactics used by private security, police, and the military. I know they aren't there to protect the green grass. They have the backs of the oil companies. It reminded me of the grain lockout when the Coast Guard would just push us out of the way when they wanted to bring a ship in."

When word got out that Hunt was planning a trip to Standing Rock, donations from Local 4 members started rolling in. Hunt said he had to take a

**"The conflict at Standing Rock has been a great example of the battle between the one percent and everyone else . . . Many of us are realizing that the cards are stacked against us by the elite, and that the only way we can survive is through working-class solidarity."**

—ILWU Local 23 President Dean McGrath



**Solidarity at the Standing Rock encampment: (L-r) Isaiah Barnes of the Sioux Nation with Jamison Roberts and Steve Hunt of ILWU Local 4.**

larger truck and rent a trailer to fit all of the donated gear, food and toiletries. Hunt financed the trip out of his own pocket, but at a recent meeting, Local 4 members voted to reimburse him for expenses.

A delegation from ILWU Local 23 went to Standing Rock just after the Thanksgiving holiday to deliver \$6,000 in donated supplies. The delegation included Local 23 President Dean McGrath, Local 23 members Theresa Sammalisto and Brendan Winders and Local 23 casual Brian Skiffington.

McGrath said that "solidarity was the one word that sums up the vibe at the Standing Rock encampment."

He met people there from all over the world who came together to brave the harsh North Dakota winter to provide support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who are fighting to protect their land and way of life.

"The conflict at Standing Rock has been a great

example of the battle between the one percent and everyone else," McGrath said. "The concern of the Standing Rock Sioux for the water on their land has been met with violent attacks by private security and police. Hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars are being spent to protect the interests of the pipeline company. Many of us are realizing that the cards are stacked against us by the elite, and that the only way we can survive is through working-class solidarity."

Delegations from Locals 10 and 13 arrived in the beginning of December, just after the International Executive Board passed its Statement of Policy.

"Despite enduring long periods of sub-zero weather and violence at the hands of law enforcement, the brothers and sisters at 'Oceti Oyate' (the People's Camp) are all in. They are firmly resolved in effort and purpose to protect their land and their water supply," said Local 10 President Ed Ferris.

"I was inspired by the courage, kindness, and solidarity that I witnessed at Oceti Oyate. It was an experience that I will never forget," Ferris added, "I am very proud of our union for putting significant

resources and boots on the ground to support this struggle. By doing so, we have honored the ILWU's rich tradition of fighting for social justice. We have honored our slogan 'An injury to one, is an injury to all.'"

"It was an extremely humbling experience," said ILWU Local 13 President Bobby Olvera Jr. Olvera was inspired by the teamwork by all ILWU members from different locals who stepped-up to do whatever jobs were needed to assist the Sioux. "Everyone pulled their weight. There were no titles there. We were all lending our hands to build structures or whatever tasks were needed. The ILWU has always taken stands on social issues going back to Harry's day. With Trump coming into office, we are going to need even more of this," Olvera said.

Tim Hernandez is a registered Class B longshore worker from Local 13 who was a part of the Local 13 delegation to Standing Rock. Hernandez, who is Lakota, was an important part of the ILWU team. His knowledge of the culture and language helped to strengthen the ties between the ILWU delegations and the Standing Rock Sioux and to help teach the ILWU delegations the proper protocols of being on sacred lands, Hernandez said.

"It was a blessing to be able to return home for the first time," Hernandez said. "I'm not from Standing Rock, I'm from Pine Ridge, but we are a part of the Lakota Nation, and we are relatives. I knew it would be a life changing experience and that the ancestors would be present. The Seventh Generation—my generation—is experiencing an awakening. We need to take care of the earth and fight for all life."

### End game unclear

President Obama's administration reviewed the pipeline project and determined that the company should re-route the project in order to protect the tribe's water supply and sacred sites. And on December 6, Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault asked supporters to leave the encampment due to dangerous blizzards that would continue to pose a hazard throughout the winter.

On January 24, 2017, President Donald Trump signed executive memorandums to push construction of both the DAPL and the Keystone XL pipeline. The DAPL action calls for expedited approvals, including for rights-of-way and permits, and withdrawal of the intent to conduct a full environmental assessment. Standing Rock Sioux and allies have denounced the administration's decision.



**From left to right: Local 10 President Ed Ferris, International Executive Board member Julie Brady, Jason "Biggie" Umtuch and Local 13 President Bobby Olvera Jr. Umtuch and Oscar High Elk housed ILWU members during their stay at the camp and welcomed them with open arms, said Local 13 delegation member Tim Hernandez.**

# Legislative Update

## ILWU presence at the state capitol shows the importance of political engagement

HONOLULU—On January 18, 2017, over 80 ILWU members and retirees from all divisions went to the state capitol for the opening day of the Hawaii State Legislature. Opening day is the official start of the annual legislative session, which runs from mid-January to early May. Within the span of those less-than-five months, state legislators make decisions on which bills become the laws that impact our lives every day.



Kauai in the house...and Senate! L-r: Stanley Dotario, Joey Silva, Pamela Green, Ernesto Domingo, Senate President Kouchi, Rhonda Morris, Jesse Vaughn, and Jesus Guirao.



Members from Maui Division with Speaker Joe Souki. (l-r): Emmanuel Baltazar, Orlando Deleon, Rita Tabanao, Danilo Baldos, Speaker Souki, Amparo Pardo, Conchita DeCambra, William Kennison, and John Simpliciano.



Members from Oahu Division with Representative Henry Aquino of House District 38, Waipahu. Front, l-r: Jose Miramontes, Representative Henry Aquino, and Cherise Couch. Back, l-r: Sofala Laloulu, Jason Coronel, and Dexter Nakayama.

The ILWU secures leaves of absence from work for a large group of members so that they are able to visit the capitol on opening day every year. The union's goal is to build a connection between elected officials and their constituents. Workers wield a lot of collective power, and it is important for lawmakers to remember that workers' votes and voices matter all the time—not just when candidates are running for office.

"We need to show them that the ILWU is still in the house!" said Secretary-Treasurer Guy Fujimura to the group before they dispersed on buses to the capitol building. "We are there to show our support, but also there to remind them that we have concerns. And that the union's concerns are the concerns of the

community."

Hawaii Division Business Agent and first-timer to opening day Tristie Licoan echoed Fujimura's idea. "We need to be involved," she said. "I see all those rallies happening on the mainland and I think, 'What are we doing?' So I'm glad to go to opening day and use our presence to show I care about the issues, too."

All rank-and-file ILWU members can and should become involved in the political process through the union's program. For more information on political action, talk with your Business Agent or call your Division Office: Hawaii Division - (808) 935-3727; Maui Division - (808) 244-9191; Kauai Division - (808) 245-3374; Oahu and the Hawaii Longshore Division - (808) 949-4161.



Members from Hawaii Division with Economic Development and Business Committee Chair Representative Mark Nakashima. Nakashima was formerly the chair of the House Labor Committee. Front (l-r): Apolonia Valledor, Jean Funai, Barbara Hanog, Rep. Nakashima, Jovena Moses, Corinna Salmo, Theresa Cabulizan, and Clyde Kihara. Second row (l-r): Roland Shimaoka, Jr., George Martin, Dwight Takamine, Lloyd Matsubara, Frankie Pang, Elmer Gorospe, Tristie Licoan, and Alvin Akina. Back row (l-r): Clyde Silva and Michael Dela Cruz.



Members from the Longshore Division representing (l-r): Longshore Division Director William "Baba" Haole IV, Peter Morishige, Finance Chair Representative Sylvia Luke, Mike Kapeliela, Sam Kaaihue, Mike Victorino.

**"I like coming to opening day. I always see every experience as education. Every opportunity we get is a chance to learn and take things back to share with our members."**

—Dexter Nakayama, Unit 4405 - Hawaii Logistics

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Editor: Mie U. Omori

Photo courtesy of Hawaii Division Business Agent George Martin.

# Hope after HC&S closure—continued from page 1

there's lots of jobs for all of us who were laid off. There are lots of jobs, but not a lot of good-paying jobs that let you live in Hawaii as it gets more expensive. The union got us good wages. It's hard to find another job that will pay like that."

"As we were going through the current contract, we could tell our forefathers knew the climate well, and had planned for a company closure. That's where severance package came into play," said Kelly Ruidas, the sugar representative on the International Executive Board. There was strong language in there that benefited rank-and-file members that very few of us knew existed. But when we came across the severance language and other favorable provisions in the contract, we felt so thankful for those who came before us who had a hand in crafting our contract. I felt so humbled to be part of ILWU and what it stands for – looking out for the workers and their future."

## The legacy of family

The final harvest event attracted a groundswell of media attention, the presence of every news crew and cameraman pushing a

**"Something of this magnitude takes huge planning each year. Just think you grind for nine months out of the year, take the factory apart and put it back together across every division. It's so repetitive your body, mind and spirit adjusts to the season. Now that it's gone it's like breaking a tradition. This time of year we would be getting the factory back together. Good or bad we were still family. I miss that camaraderie."**

—Koa Martin  
Millwright Specialist for 20 years



Workers at the final harvest listen to speakers, including Father Terry Watanabe, who said plantations served as a reminder that "we don't do anything alone." ILWU members were joined by union leaders, community supporters and elected officials at the event.

determined remembering of sugar and "how it used to be."

But how about what will be?

A month later, on January 14, 2017, Alexander and Baldwin threw a Mahalo Luau at Maui Tropical Plantation for HC&S employees. The mood was softer, gentler than the one at the Final Harvest, the aftermath of the closure framed less by media frenzy and more by the resilience of the human spirit. "I still waking up early like I gotta go work," laughs Michael Miller, an electrician. "But you just gotta move on."

Wes Bissen, a machine specialist who passed away days before, was honored that night. "He was like everybody's uncle," said Daniel Martinez, unit chair and millwright at HC&S for eight years. "He's actually the one who encouraged me to run for the chairmanship position. And pushed me to go to a union meeting. We all learned from each other not just because the plantation had so much range of skill sets, but we learned from each other just by looking out for each other too." The technical part of the job was just one layer of the work experience at HC&S; the core of the HC&S work experience was the camaraderie—that void will be harder to fill.

## Lessons moving forward

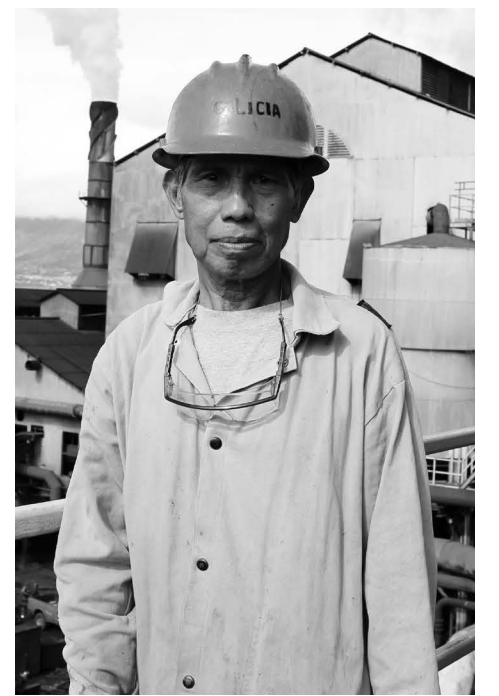
The end does not imply failure. Especially if one can learn from the past.

The resilience of HC&S unit negotiating members showed a fighting spirit that all members can remember for the future. Or better yet, apply to their own industry. "I've learned that it's so important to be aware of the internal and external workings of one's industry. You should know your company well, and try to keep your eyes on other moving parts like economics and laws that can affect your industry. Protect your livelihood. See where your industry is going. If you have the opportunity to make a positive impact to help your industry whether it's legislatively or within the company, by all means, do it," Ruidas said.

HC&S was the last company of its kind in Hawaii, and the finality heightened the stakes in negotiations. How does one push for change even when your destiny seems so final? Unit chair Martinez offered, "Don't be afraid to ask questions. I didn't know a lot about contracts and stuff. But the one thing I learned was that no matter how dumb I think the question is, I'll just keep on not knowing til I ask. So it's not a dumb question, it's just something you need answered. You can always learn and empower yourself that way."

## What's next?

The contrast between the muddy day at the final harvest compared to the lush grounds at Maui Tropical Plantation for the employee luau could serve as a fitting



**"No can beat Maui. This is home sweet home. I will miss the bond and the feeling. I worked with these guys every day,"** said Miguel Galcia, cane hauler with HC&S for 45 years.

metaphor: a lotus blooms in the mud. Or as Ruidas said, "When one door closes, another one opens. I'm pressing the reset button. I'm going back to school with the TAA money."

"Who knows what's next?" Fely Corpuz whispered to me at the final harvest, clutching her photo album close to her chest. "But God is good, eh?"



"I cried at the final harvest. Tears just came. I remember taking care of my family in those days. The hard work. So now I tell my grandkids, 'Study hard. Please just study hard.' We worked for this," said Conchita Decambra (far left). L-r: Decambra, Virginia Domingo, Fely Corpuz, Amparo Pardo, Filomena Valdez, Avelina Bulosan and Teresita Garcia.



L-r: Local Secretary-Treasurer Guy Fujimura, Maui Division Director Steve Castro, Unit Chair Daniel Martinez, Local President Donna Domingo, Unit Treasurer Ian Cabtingan, Koa Martin, Karl Kahui (Unit Chair/Steward for HC&S Clerks and Technical Employees), and Unit Bulletin Editor Ben Wilson at the employee luau.

# Message from the President

## Looking back to move forward: ILWU's sugar roots make us strong

by Local President Donna Domingo

On behalf of Local 142, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the workers in the sugar industry who helped make the union strong. With the closure of HC&S, we saw the end of an entire industry that created so much of life as we know it here in Hawaii. Sugar is *pau*. However, the values we treasure as a union and as a community will live on.

We are in a time of dramatic change as a nation and state. In order to ground ourselves moving forward, we need to remember our foundation. The ILWU played a crucial role in uniting the different ethnic groups in the sugar plantations. The Big Five—the five companies that monopolized Hawaii's politics and economy—used a divide-and-conquer strategy, and kept all the races separate. Unionizing industries like sugar and pineapple through the ILWU brought the different ethnicities together. Sugar

bolstered our economy, and along the way the workers banded together across racial lines to fight for fair treatment and wages through the union's structure and principles. The union brought about great social progress in Hawaii and fostered the values we continue to prioritize today: cooperation, trust, and mutual respect.

It was only natural that so many of our union forefathers were from the sugar industry. Let us remember some of these leaders of our union: past Local Presidents like Eddie Lapa, Eusebio "Bo" Lapenia,

Fred Galdones, and Isaac Fiesta. Past Division Directors were also from sugar. We are so blessed to have had guidance from the very people who experienced the value of the union in their own sugar companies and wanted to give back.

To the workers of HC&S, it is my hope that as you move on to other industries, you will remember the union principles that helped make our sugar workers some of the highest paid sugar workers in the world. Everything worth having takes work. I want to commend HC&S members for their union solidarity and negotiating for what they deserved until the very end. It took so much discipline and guts to negotiate with the company in the midst of all the chaos the closure brought.

Tourism is now the economic engine

of Hawaii. Most people come here to experience paradise. But what really makes Hawaii paradise is the values of its people. ILWU members, I am proud to say, are people who are unafraid to take stands on how others should be treated, what benefits they're entitled to, and their right to make a better future for their family.

The experience many members gained from HC&S's closure centered around perseverance and sticking together for a common goal. The power of these lessons will endure through the choices you make and the way you continue to stand for what is right no matter what. Thank you for shining your example and being the light we navigate by.

Endless thanks to you and *aloha*.

Sugar workers in Hawaii strengthened the union and our communities. *Aloha* and *mahalo* to the workers at sugar units that have closed over the past twenty-five years:

Hilo Coast Processing Co. - 1994

Waialua Sugar - 1996

Mauna Kea Agribusiness - 1994

McBryde - 1996

Hamakua Sugar Co. - 1994

Pioneer Mill - 1999

Oahu Sugar Co. - 1995

Amfac Kauai - 2000

Ka'u Sugar - 1996

Gay & Robinson - 2009

Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company - 2016



"The generations here made HC&S such a unique place to work. We were family immediately because our families before us worked here," said Teven Cordero, a fourth generation HC&S worker. L-r: Michael Miller, third generation HC&S worker Ray Mauad, and Cordero.



One of the last times the smoke billows from the mill.



L-r: David Gamurot, Calisto Palos, Lloyd Taguchi, Steven Onaga, and Amado Nacapuy. "If the mill got off track for whatever reason, every minute it's down they lose a thousand dollars. We lived close to the mill in case of emergencies like that. Everybody was so tight, everybody would help each other," said Palos.



**Unit 1413 - Big Island Toyota accepting their award for Outstanding Unit (1-29 members). Front (l-r): Jordan Matsuno, Cody Baptista, Unit Chair Gregory Wagner, Jr., Lawrence Cabral, Rose Bautista (Mayor Harry Kim's representative, Business Agent George Martin. Back (l-r): Casey Shinshiro, Business Agent Michael Dela Cruz, and Hawaii Division Director Elmer Gorospe, Sr.**



**Unit 1402 - Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Corp accepting their award for Outstanding Unit, 100 members and over (General Trades). Front row, l-r: Marilou Akamine, Adele Aguinaldo, Unit Secretary Jeanne Yoshizawa, Celina Zuniga, Felomina Alonzo. 2nd row, l-r: Delia Prado, Jocelyn Ucol, Remedios R Gani, Unit Treasurer Sonia Tejada, Anabelle Shimasaki, Wilma Ventura, Unit Chair Melecio Eugenio, Jr., Mayor Harry Kim's representative Rose Bautista, Fermina Dalmacio, Elvira Alonzo, Josephine Chow Hoy, Myrna Valdez. 3rd row, l-r on stage: Division Director Elmer C. Gorospe, Sr., Business Agent Delbert DeRogo, and Unit 1st Vice Chairperson Mercedes Habab.**

## Hawaii Division hosts 40th annual recognition awards

HILO—"Welcome. You belong to the greatest organization in the islands," said emcee Clyde Silva, greeting over 160 members, pensioners, and their families at Nani Mau Gardens. Hawaii Division's 40th Annual Recognition Awards Banquet was held on February 4, 2017.

Hawaii Division started these recognition nights back in 1978 as a way to honor

the efforts of the members, units and pensioners. The event has a reputation for its robust attendance and this year's gathering was no exception, proving that the union's proudest asset is its membership.

"We use recognition night as an additional boost of support. It says we recognize our members' efforts and that we hope they continue doing what they're doing," said Hawaii Division Director Elmer Gorospe, Sr. "We know what it takes for the members to take initiative within their unit and that makes the union strong."

"At every union meeting we make sure to eat together," said Gregory Wagner, Jr., Unit Chair for Big Island Toyota. "It helps us all get along better," he said laughing. "And that can only help us go places as a unit."

Big Island Toyota won the award for Outstanding Unit, 1-29 members. The other units recognized (see box at left) also had members in high attendance, and filled tables with their families and significant others. Awardees were decided based on criteria such as: how active the units were in conducting regular meetings, following up on grievances and political action. All the efforts in these areas matter, and are worthy of acknowledgment and celebration.

year for Hawaii Division," said Gorospe in his speech. "We continue to negotiate to benefit our membership. Collective bargaining is a key component of the ILWU's program, and we look to improve on the union contracts that benefit our union membership." Bargaining requires teamwork and solidarity within a unit; the members commit to these values and it translates to success in negotiations.

The ILWU is proud to have members from the past, and the present, who continue to take these values seriously. "You don't know how often when I'm at the legislature, even young representatives will tell me things like, 'Oh, my grandfather worked at Waialua Sugar.' Or, 'Oh, my family on Maui comes from a sugar family or pineapple family,'" said Secretary-Treasurer Guy Fujimura. "They understand that the fundamental basis of the ILWU is the fundamental basis on which progress in Hawaii was made. And they want that connection to it," Fujimura said.

### The union as family

Division Director Gorospe's speech also highlighted the pensioners as another key component of the ILWU's strength. Members from seven of the eight pensioner clubs on the Big Island were in the audience, and he pointed out certain pensioners like Gilbert DeMotta who "like many ILWU pensioners, made

a commitment to the ILWU long ago, and they have been loyal and dependable all these years."

The ILWU inspires this kind of loyalty because of the bonds members form with each other and to a cause larger than themselves as individuals. "In spite of the challenges that we face, economically, organizationally and in our nation, this union, your union, is going to do its job," said Secretary-Treasurer Guy Fujimura in his speech. "We will provide leadership the support needed, for those leaders that step forward and take a chance, and stand up. We're going to support them and in order to do that we depend on you. The members, retirees, pensioners, and families. Because all of us together have proven historically, that that's what makes this work. All of us sticking together. What does ILWU mean? I. Live. With. yoU! We're all one family."

As in any family, there are many generations. The range of generations in attendance served as a testament to the strength of the union and the power of togetherness. To celebrate the rousing camaraderie from the speeches, members hit the dance floor for the Electric Slide and other songs performed by the band Makanau. There was so much to celebrate, from the ones being recognized with awards to the solidarity felt amongst everyone that night.

### RECOGNITION AWARDS

*Outstanding Unit (1-29)*

**Unit 1413 - Big Island Toyota**

*Outstanding Unit (30-99)*

**Unit 1421 - Foodland Kaaau (Store #41)**

*Outstanding Unit (100+)*

**Unit 1402 - Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Corp. (General Trades)**

**Unit 1503 - Mauna Kea Beach Hotel (Tourism)**

*Pensioners Most Activities Club: Papaikou*

*Pensioners Most New Members: Pepeekeo*

*Special Unit Recognition*

**Myra Spencer • Unit 1516 - Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows**

*Unit Editor Participation Recognition*

**Anna Ater • Unit 1421 - Sack N Save (Puainako/Downtown Hilo)**

**Mary "Swanee" Rillanos • Unit 1503-00 Mauna Kea Beach Hotel**

### Union values create proud legacy

"2016 was another successful



**Members of the Pepeekeo Pension Club with Edith Tumpap of the Papaikou Pension Club. Sitting (l-r): Norma Felipe, Aurora Arau, President Barbara Hanog, Leonor Corpuz, Harumi Koga. Standing (l-r): Tumpap and Secretary Flora Reyes. Pepeekeo had the most new members out of eight different Pension Clubs on the Big Island. Members from Pahala, Hilo, Papaikou, Hakalau, Laupahoehoe, and Kona Pensioners Club also attended the banquet.**



**Unit 1516 - Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows members present their 1st Vice Chairperson Myra Spencer (center) with an award to thank her for her many years of service to the union. (L-r) Tina Lukzen, Spencer, and Unit Chairperson LeeAnn Perez. "She's my sunshine," Perez said. "She taught me everything I know." Spencer, who is retiring this year, expressed surprise at receiving the award. "I didn't know what a union was until the ILWU. But in the ILWU, I learned how to fight for what was right, how to interpret the contract, and how the pieces work together."**

# Big Island at the buzzer: “Da Crew” beats Maui in state championship game

HONOLULU—On Saturday December 10, 2016, ILWU held its 36th Annual State Basketball Tournament at Kaimuki Community Park Gym. Players, anxious to get started, practiced on the outside courts while they waited for the gym to open.

## First Semi-Final Game: Maui “Kaanapali Mixed Plate” vs. Oahu’s McCabe

At the Oahu playoffs in November, McCabe defeated Pepsi to represent Oahu at the state tournament. Maui’s Kaanapali Mixed Plate (made up of members from Andaz, Westin, Kaanapali Beach Hotel, and Hotel Wailea) beat HC&S to represent Maui. The game could have gone either way at some points, but Maui ended up winning at 47 to 38. Kaipo Bee, McCabe’s coach said, “We thought we coulda won, but it’s ok. We’ll be back next year.” Jansen Agapay was Maui’s high scorer with 25 points, and McCabe’s was Pio Pelesasa, who contributed 15 points.

## Second Semi-Final Game: Kauai vs. Big Island’s “Da Crew”

The Big Island’s Da Crew (made up of members from Waikoloa Village Golf Course, Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and Fairmont Orchid) beat Kauai at 66 to 26. Kauai’s Bryon Ponte scored the highest for his team at 7 points and Big Island’s Cameron Naihe-Tabiolo scored his team’s high at 18.

## Consolation Game: Kauai vs. McCabe

Kauai sent each other better passes than they did when they faced the Big Island. McCabe won, but Kauai gave them a run for their money at some thrilling moments. McCabe’s high scorer in this game was Kaipo Sarkissan who contributed 12 points to their 54 to 38 victory over Kauai.

## Thrilling Final Game: Big Island vs. Maui 36-35

“That rim is unforgiving,” Maui’s Michael Tofanelli told me while on the sidelines. Maui played valiantly, but sent too many shots that hit the rim with a defiant wobble, and lost precious opportunities to gain a more solid lead against the Big Island. Maui held a slight lead throughout most of the game against Da Crew’s hustle.

Then, in a satisfying climactic movie-like moment, Big Island won at the buzzer. It looked like Maui’s game as the clock ticked down, but Big Island high scorer Cameron Naihe-Tabiolo sank a three pointer to win the game by one point.

“You practice that shot every day. You never think it’ll happen,” Tabiolo said in shock.

“That’s always a 50/50 shot, and he took it. It’s fair,” said Maui team captain Junne Arcilla.

“Send this to ESPN game highlights tonight! Send ‘em!” whooped Big Island team member Reeve Cazimero. The whole

team could not calm down and neither could the whole gym. Congratulations to Da Crew for winning, and Maui for a hard-fought game. Maui’s high scorer Kainoa Chung contributed 14 points to the final score.

## Camaraderie at the hall

Fourth place Kauai good-naturedly celebrated alongside a buoyant Big Island team at the union hall for dinner and awards. The event was organized by Oahu Division Sports Coordinator Brian Tanaka. Thanks also go out to Sports Coordinators Jose Miramontes and Paris Fernandez from Oahu, Claro Romero from Maui and Corinna Salmo from the Big Island.



Big Island champions Da Crew in a celebratory pose: Front row (l-r): Ian Carvalho, Joey Giltner, and Darin Puckett. 2nd row (l-r): Reeve Cazimero, Cameron Naihe-Tabiolo, and Reyn Matsu. 3rd row (l-r): Chase Cazimero and Kenneth Kapeliela. Top row: Chadwick Osaki.



Team Maui took second place in the tournament. Front row (l-r): Joel Alegado, Junne Arcilla, and Shawn Arcilla. Back row (l-r): Jansen Agapay and Rowen Arcilla.



Too close to call...



Three seconds to go...then Cameron Naihe-Tabiolo made a three-pointer at the buzzer!

## Most Valuable Player:

Cameron Naihe-Tabiolo - Hawaii

## 3 Point Shooting Contest:

Junne Arcilla - Maui

## All-Tournament Team:

- Cameron Naihe-Tabiolo - Hawaii
- Joey Giltner - Hawaii
- Jansen Agapay - Maui
- Joel Alegado - Maui
- Kainoa Chung - Maui
- Pio Pelesasa - Oahu
- Brashton Satele - Oahu
- Francisco Baniaga - Kauai



Third Place, Oahu’s McCabe, Hamilton & Renny Co. Front row (l-r): Vernon Polowski, Eric Valdez, and Haven Valdez. Second row (l-r): Matt Coleman, Brandon Ching, Kaipo Sarkissan, and Brashton Satele. Back row (l-r): Jordan Salud, Jason Smith, Coach Kaipo Bee, Pio Pelesasa, and Joshua Watts.



Fourth Place, Team Kauai. Front row (l-r): Aaron Medina, Kelvin Morano, Joel Green, and Freddie Bautista. Back row (l-r): Scott Remigio, Samuel Dias, Francisco Baniaga, Ronnel Constantino, Bryon Ponte, and Arjay Baniaga.

# Organizing journey propels Polynesian Adventure Tours to first union contract

Welcome to the union, Polynesian Adventure Tours. Unit 4416 - Polynesian Adventure Tours, or "PolyAd" as the workers call it, is the third largest tour bus company in Hawaii. Organizing campaigns are always tough, but the Oahu drivers at PolyAd persisted, and on December 22, 2016, their first union contracts were distributed.

"This contract we got was a huge blessing. Everybody was watching us because they all thought it was impossible for a transportation tour company to have a union, just impossible. Us getting the union was a shock to the industry. I've seen it all from 1990 when I started 'til now, and it took THIS long for something major to happen. Something had to break. We broke that wall down," said Rodney "Roddy" Akau, a member of the negotiating committee and driver with PolyAd for 27 years.

## The ILWU family

The Oahu workers got off to a promising start when other ILWU members encouraged them to start organizing. ILWU members from both Hawaii and the mainland broached the appeal of the union to different PolyAd workers.

In the first instance, Local 142 member Henry Kreutz brought up the ILWU to a PolyAd driver in a conversation that started as small talk. They discussed the possibility of PolyAd unionizing and Kreutz asked ILWU organizers to call the driver.

Then, in April 2015, the ILWU connected with PolyAd workers again, this



Unit 4416 - Polynesian Adventure Tours driver Rodney Akau transports ILWU members to the State Capitol on opening day at the state legislature, January 18, 2018. Rodney was a member of the union negotiating committee that bargained the drivers' first union contract.



Primary Business Agent Jose Miramontes (far right) goes over the contract with Polynesian Adventure Tours members.

time in the form of Luke Hollingsworth, a member from Local 13, who was on vacation in Hawaii from Southern California. Hollingsworth was enjoying a PolyAd bus tour when he started talking to his driver about the ILWU. That driver happened to be Robert Lemafa, someone who had heard the first whispers of unionizing from the time Kreutz brought it up, and wanted to continue the conversation. Lemafa went on to lead the negotiating committee as Unit Chair for a term.

"So we called the ILWU number back. We arranged to check this thing out," said Cody Sula, a driver with PolyAd for four years. "We met with ILWU organizers under Moanalua Bridge late one night all sketchy just to see what it was all about," he continued.

## Organizing despite challenges

The process of organizing to win union recognition can be challenging. Some organizing meetings were held as late as nine or ten at night to accommodate the workers' demanding schedules. Workers do not know their driving schedule until the day before, so the drivers kept in touch with the help of a shared private Facebook page to determine possible meeting times. Even drivers who would need to start a new work day at four the next morning for a sunrise route would attend meetings scheduled for late nights.

"What I really admired about this group was their dedication to organizing," said International Representative Tracy Takano. "They stuck together and even got their families on board. I remember one time they organized a picnic for the workers' families so their loved ones could understand and support what they were spending all that time away from home struggling for."

"It was hard and a lot of stress, especially in the first months. But there were too many unfair things going on," said Akau. "People would get upset, people get let go and fired for nothing and everybody would see the unfairness. Some don't want to make trouble or cause waves, but for me I gotta speak up to feel right with myself, if not how can I help other people?"

"I just didn't feel valued by the

company," said Peter Terry, Chair of the recently-elected Unit Executive Board. "I remember there was a flash flood, and I asked if I could stop the tour; the weather was so bad. No one was even there to answer the radio. When you don't feel valued, of course there will be low morale."

## A commitment to change

The union functions as a way for workers to speak up when it is difficult to have a voice otherwise.

Banner Fanene noticed that "all was not well with this company," in November 2015 when he started as a new employee. "The most alarming and sad thing that I learned was that some of PolyAd's best drivers and long-time employees were leaving to other jobs. Based on that alone, I felt that changes were absolutely necessary. I did not know everything about the union, but I knew that the union was change. And that's why I supported it," said Fanene.

## Persistence pays off

It was important for the workers to stick together and show their support for the union through not only the organizing process but the bargaining process as well. Akau took a philosophical view to

negotiating. "My job is a spiritual practice because I work with people, I work with life and death driving a 45-foot machine that can just run you over. So, I got involved because I saw nobody's exempt from the laws of cause and effect. I don't care if you're a supervisor or not. It's a matter of doing the right thing. Doing it no matter what 'cause it's going to come back to you. We made sure this didn't go on longer than a year. It had to happen and I'm glad it happened in this amount of time," said Akau.

During negotiations, workers were also at the mercy of external forces like company ownership changing hands. "When PolyAd was bargaining, they were being sold to Roberts, but now they are not. Now our workers are getting four to five dollars more per hour, and we have parity with other bus companies. We shook up the industry," said Oahu Division Director Michael Yamaguchi.

"Before we got the union contract, we had things like guys who worked 34 years at the company getting paid less than new hires. Now we have more protection and we have rights," said Unit Executive Board First-Vice Chair Joyce "Lehua" Fua.

The company is now looking for more drivers and will pay for their training. All new drivers will of course be union, too. Business Agent Paris Fernandez said, "I'm excited to have Polynesian Adventure Tours as part of the ILWU family. I look forward to working with the unit and company on any challenges and issues we can solve."

**Before we got the union contract, we had things like guys who worked 34 years at the company getting paid less than new hires. Now we have more protection and we have rights."**

—Lehua Fua, Unit 1st Vice Chair



"There have been more in attendance at union meetings. To me this is a good sign," said Banner Fanene, Unit Secretary, far left. (L-r) Unit 4416 - Polynesian Adventure Tours Executive Board members: Fanene, Joyce Fua, Peter Terry, Wallace "Kimo" Ayau III, and Faavevela Tuigamala.