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Seattle IWW

Price: free for all workers



# Seattle Worker

Nov-Dec 2022

Vol. 5, Iss. 6

4 HOURS WORK  
FOR 8 HOURS PAY  
PUTS MORE  
WORKERS ON THE JOB  
EVERY DAY!

A stylized illustration of a worker's head and shoulders. The worker has a determined expression, with one hand on their chest and the other pointing forward. The text 'WORKERS ON THE JOB' is written in a circular arc around the worker's head. There are three lightning bolts to the right of the worker's head.

IWW  
2422 N. HALSTED CHICAGO IL

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**Submissions welcome!** Email articles, article ideas, news items, editorials, artwork, and photographs to:

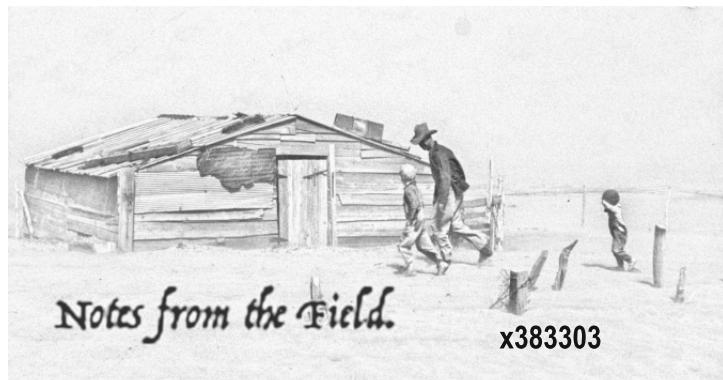
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Cover image by Carlos Cortez, as printed in the Industrial Worker.



For this month's "In November, We Remember," we have a special treat: reflections on Frank Little by his great-grandniece Jane Little Botkin. It's a reminder that people who seem larger than life also have families, people who care for them and keep their memories alive.

The Seattle Worker editorial staff decided we would like the Seattle Worker to have a more regional focus, with voices and news from around the Northwest. Thanks to Dave "Tuck" Tucker for stepping up as regional editor!



In November, the IWW remembers its heroes and martyrs. However, workers are dying and being injured every day. During 2020, almost 5000 workers died on the job in the US. The most dangerous jobs are in fishing, logging, transportation/warehousing, and construction.

Amazon delivery drivers have an injury rate that is two-and-a-half times the national average, reports The Strategic Organizing Center (SOC). The same is true for Amazon warehouses, where the accident rate is much higher — almost 3 times the industry norm. Of special note is the Lacey warehouse (OLM1) with a recent distinction of the highest accident rate of ANY warehouse in the US. With that in mind, we might expect to see Amazon working hard to protect their workers. However, it's doing the exact opposite.

Recently in New York, a fire in a warehouse caused so much smoke that workers were forced off their jobs. Amazon's reaction wasn't to inquire as to the well-being of their workers — nope — they suspended all 100 workers. This seems faintly reminiscent of the warehouse where the workers were threatened if they left their stations — just before it was mowed down by a tornado, killing four in Edwardsville, Illinois on December 10th, 2021.

Amazon's warehouses are being examined by the WA Dept. of Labor and Industries for their accident rates. The state has cited the Kent warehouse (BF14) this summer for being especially dangerous. The citations single out Amazon's violations as "serious willful violations of safety rules." What would you think Amazon's reaction would be? Working to ensure that their workers are safe? Well, no.

*continued on page 8*

# Frank Little, Revered Grandfather of the IWW



by Jane Little Botkin

**O**n August 1, 2017, in Butte, Montana, I was honored to give Frank Little the eulogy he never received. He was a revered IWW leader who minced no words. I wanted those in attendance marking the centennial of his brutal murder to know that he had had a family and an upbringing that led to his hate of corporate greed and empathy for the common worker. His fight is still alive today.

Frank Little was my great-grand uncle, and I had grown up knowing little. My family had protected Frank from prosecution with their silence. Even after his murder, they stopped talking. They had been afraid of the Bureau of Investigation, today's FBI. My research took me almost ten years while I walked his path across ten states.

Frank hadn't been afraid. He traversed the West speaking out against big corporation mining, logging, and farming, its hired thugs and free speech suppression. That is why he was murdered. He spoke too vehemently — and honestly.

For young IWW members, let me tell you something about one of the grandfathers of the organization. Frank Little was born in Illinois but moved first to Missouri, a hotbed after the Civil War, and then to northeast Indian Territory when he was about nine.

He attended an American Indian mission school—not because he was Native American, but because his father doctored in the area. He grew up reading dime novels about heroes, and he had firsthand knowledge of famous outlaws: the James and Dalton gangs, who were born of the same stripe as he, and who fought against unfair capitalist ventures in Missouri and the Territory.

After his widowed mother lost the family farm to a local cattle baron who had shrewdly loaned money to Frank's desperate father, young Frank left the farm, heading for the gold mines of Arizona. His heart, full of resentment for Oklahoma's indifference to struggling farmers who became slaves to merchants and cattle barons, guided him.

In Mojave, California, Frank first joined its Western Federation



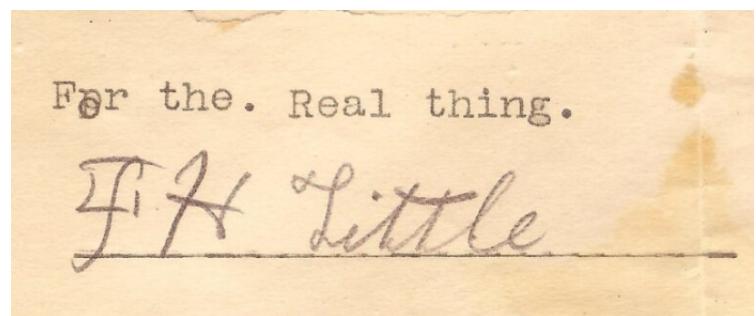
of Miners (WFM) #51 because Bisbee, Arizona, where he worked, was a closed shop. In Bisbee, he radicalized and soon became a “walking delegate” for Globe’s WFM local #60. There, with little to no pay, Frank found his voice and organized miners, arguing for a three-dollar eight-hour-day and better working conditions. By 1907, Frank Little had become a Wobbly.

Fresno’s Free Speech Fight (1910-1911) brought Frank’s activism to the forefront. Exposing how city governments shut down dissident speech, Frank led three waves of free speech fights. He taught local members how to soapbox in the face of law enforcement, even if only reciting the Declaration of Independence, to purposely get arrested and pack the underfunded jails. He learned legal defense strategies, argued for impounded workers and their rights to the first and fourth Constitutional amendments, and lustily sang, “Solidarity Forever.”

IWW GEB Chairman Frank Little was jailed, and often beaten, multiple times in Missoula, Spokane, Fresno, Peoria, Duluth, Superior, Virginia (MN), and Kansas City; kidnapped in Superior and Duluth; beaten in El Paso; given the “water-cure” in Fresno; mock-hanged in Iron River (MI); and starved in Spokane.

After arriving in Butte to assist with an ongoing strike, Frank was kidnapped out of his boarding house room at three in the morning, brutally beaten, tied to a Cadillac’s rear bumper, and dragged through the granite-paved streets. Under a railroad trestle and atop the black car, an unconscious Frank Little, “half-breed hobo agitator,” was hanged. All because of his words.

Frank Little had fought “for the real thing”—a voice.



# Our Bright Future: Remembering our Past and Embracing Revolutionary Joy

by FW Noah

For this issue, "In November We Remember," we often focus on the labor struggles of the past, the lessons we've learned, those who have died — not just for the Industrial Workers of the World but for the labor movement as a whole — and what these lessons mean to us as fellow workers in the present day. However, there is something often unspoken in our publication: the joy we as fellow workers have found in long-standing solidarity with each other against the common enemies of the working class. That by maintaining "The Long Memory," as fellow worker Utah Phillips once put it, we hold out for the hope of a better tomorrow for the workers of the world.

The suffering that we feel under the current socio-economic arrangement of the world as the working class is very real and very much a part of our daily lives. Racial inequity on a systemic level, oppression on the basis of sex, discrimination against those who do not fit in a cisgender or heterosexual mold, and so many other lines of class division continue to inflict great harm not only to the individuals targeted but to the well-being of us all.

The continued lack of education regarding labor history and its importance continues in many of our educational institutions, even at the college level, depriving us of the tools and lessons necessary to understand the life that they are about to face. The labor movement as it currently exists here in the United States and in many other nations continues to pale in comparison to what it used to be. It's easy to face all of these struggles, or even just some, and to think to ourselves that we face an uphill battle so daunting that we feel as if we are completely powerless against the current order.

Joy is the organized power and play of workers to shape the world around them

It's a very subtle and even intimate form of disempowerment, and it's one that our bosses exploit all

too well even on the shop floor. To believe that the boss is an unquestionable, inalienable authority over the waking half of our lives that we labor for others is very much an emotional and mental aspect of the labor organizing that we do that is not often acknowledged.

As you read these articles, and the issues that came before this one, you help in carrying on the long memory of the working class struggle in this country and many others. Which is why it's all the more important to remember fondly not just the struggles of the past, but that there is a revolutionary joy to the work that we do here in the present. Our organized power, even in the smallest of expressions, helps change the dynamic of our working lives, and while we recognize that the cause for organized labor is a struggle, it is a struggle which ultimately yields a better life for all who labor under the current system.

There has always been violence, strife and grief when the working class stands up with a straight back and faces its oppressors. Some of the IWW's biggest strike actions, such as the Lawrence strike, the Patterson Silk strike, and many of our general strikes in the lumber, mining, transportation and agricultural industries that took place in the first two decades of the 20th century all faced significant legal crackdowns, vigilante violence, and capitalist oppression against the union.



However, the Wobblies took these struggles to heart and found ways to fight against pessimism in their ranks. The IWW formed not just an optimistic vision for labor organizing but also a culture of music, speeches, and motivational tactics to galvanize otherwise disheartened workers to stay strong and stay optimistic. Wobblies wrote songs, often starting from old hymns used by religious groups such as the Salvation Army, and changed the lyrics to improve morale, spread the message of working class solidarity and to poke fun at the pro-capitalist religious hypocrisy of the day.

Local labor halls hosted dances, benefits and fundraisers to build community support and mutual aid in times of need. "Free speech fights" against local laws banning public speaking in favor of the IWW or "radicalism" often drew police violence, but even when those brave speakers were hauled off by the police and thrown into jail for "disorderly conduct" or "attempting to provoke a riot," they continued their speech fights in jail by resisting the demoralizing tactics of their wardens and educating their fellow prisoners of the labor struggle outside those iron bars. The workers knew full well that such violence was to be expected, but with a red card in their hands and with the hope for a future worth living in their hearts, they continued onward. By looking back on the great work that we have done in the past, as workers collectively looking out for one another and demanding better wages, hours and conditions, we can see some of the greatest lessons that history has ever told, lessons which often go untaught in our public education institutions or even in our own homes.

Even in the current era of COVID, armed conflict and class struggle, many of these same lessons are continuing to be repeated. Many of the major organizing campaigns and strikes that we see today are not just a reflection of the ones previous but a new chapter of the labor movement, one where the values of the IWW continue to be expanded, even in the trade unions. Our struggles are the same, though the battlefield is set in a different year and in a different place. So too, is the suffering at the hands of the police, of private security agencies and intelligence services, and of the boss who clings onto what power they have over workers in their shops. The despair of the past is the despair of the present, yet the same revolutionary passion for an organization of labor to the benefit of the workers and not the owner has been the one torchlight that has kept us warm.

What do I mean when I say that we must embrace revolutionary joy? It is simple: that the struggle to create a new world in the ashes of the old is worth suffering for, even though that suffering is very real and not deserved, and the new world that we are attempting to create is one where working class joy is placed at the center.

Joy, in this sense, is the organized power and play of workers to shape the world around them in such a way that they reap the full fruits of their labor, the joy that is found at the abolition of capitalism and the bosses as oppressive forces that hold back our organized productive power, of seeking a future where separation on the basis of race, sex and class are impossible both in the shop and the neighborhood. Joy is found in the revitalization of a working class culture that is conscious, motivated and fights against the apathy that the bosses and capitalists depend on to stay safe and unchallenged.

**With a red card in their hands and with the hope for a future worth living in their hearts, they continued onward**

**A**fter all, is there not joy to be found in the intimate, "forbidden" one-on-one conversations that we have with our fellow workers about how little we are paid, how poor the conditions, how long the hours and how cruel the boss? Is there not joy in every direct action, whether by slowing down, working to the exact rules of the workplace or by the strike? Is there not joy in union victory, whether by solidarity or by vote? Is there not joy in spreading the revolutionary message that the world as it is and has been should not always be? That a better arrangement of our labor and our daily lives — indeed the whole world — is achievable and at the tip of our fingertips, should we collectively act in its favor? That answer can be found by your hands, fellow workers, just as it has in the hands of workers past. Demoralization and disillusionment are a dry rot in any organization, but by offering support to our fellow workers in need, providing aid for the unemployed and houseless, and getting involved in organizing, we craft a potent tonic against it. When we sing our songs, walk off the job and take up the picket and agitate others to join us, we find a common happiness in our solidarity. While we bear the weight of the world on our shoulders as the workers who made it, we know from our past that every step we take is a step in the path to a better world.



# Workers at Bellingham Retail Store Unionize with Industrial Workers of the World

by x331980

**R**etail employees at West Marine in Bellingham, a boat and fishing supply retail shop, have unionized with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Workers informed management on September 13 that they are members of IWW's Industrial Union 660 and are now a union shop. The new union is affiliated with the IWW's Whatcom-Skagit General Membership Branch and is the first IWW retail shop in Whatcom County.

The workers organized over the preceding week. They talked about how to organize and made a list of issues they wanted to resolve. The IWW was the only union they considered. On Friday the 9th, they arranged a meeting with an IWW delegate to take out IWW membership cards. One new IWW member at the shop enrolled in the Organizer Training 101 workshop held in Seattle September 24-25th.

On September 13 two employees met with management to announce the formation of their union. "Management was surprised by the announcement, but overall the meeting went well. We decided that making a union was the best and safest way to get management to agree to changes to working conditions" said union member Austin Carlson.

At the meeting, two immediate demands were presented: one-on-one meetings will no longer be tolerated, and water would be available in the break room. According to Fellow Worker Austin, "The immediate reaction from the manager was, 'I already don't like doing one-on-one meetings with workers for the safety of myself and the employee' and bottled water is now in the break room. At this time all requested demands have been met."

During the meeting with the manager, a dozen Bellingham IWW members gathered in the parking lot to show solidarity with the new union. When the meeting ended, they went into the store — union flags, signs, and all — to congratulate members and to let the boss know that there is strength outside the shop. The Whatcom-Skagit IWW sent press releases to area media, and the story was reported in the Bellingham Herald and on KGMI radio.

West Marine is owned by private equity firm Monomoy Capital Partners, with corporate headquarters in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Bellingham store is one of 240 owned by the company. We are unaware of any others that are unionized.

The new union will apply for a Union Shop Card from the IWW General Administration to display in the store. Union members anticipate that management will insist on a National Labor Relations Board election, and the members will determine the next steps regarding formal recognition of the union. As shop union membership is nearly unanimous, the union will aim for a much simpler "card check" union certification in place of an election. Union members will also decide whether they wish to negotiate a contract, or forego a contract to practice the IWW's brand of "solidarity unionism," focusing directly on issues as they arise in the workplace. So far that has worked pretty damn well.

Solidarity with the West Marine Workers!



# Whatcom-Skagit IWW's "Driveby Soapbox" Spreads the Word

By x331980

IWW members in Bellingham continue their "Driveby Soapbox" sign-waving campaign on city streets. We hold a series of painted signs along the curb facing traffic to spread the IWW idea and encourage union organizing. Slogans include "Low Pay? Bad Conditions? UNION!," "One Union, All Industries, All Workers- Join the IWW!," and "Capitalism Robs you at Work-Strike Back on the Job".

Inspired by the "Burma Shave" signs that lined highways in the 1950s, Fellow Worker Thad came up with the idea of the branch painting slogans on 2x3 plywood rectangles. Drivebys are held weekly, more or less, along different arterials at rush hour. Drivers respond with lots of friendly waves, solidarity fists, and honks, and only a few less supportive gestures. Occasionally someone will pull over to talk, or take a leaflet about the IWW. Our favorite response this summer was on a hot day near a drive through coffee stand — a barista brought big cups of ice water.

One person has signed up with the IWW, and several others have contacted the Whatcom-Skagit IWW branch through the website to get on our "Solidarity Alert" email list.



## Notes from the Field (continued)

Amazon has filed suit against L&I claiming that while Amazon is appealing the citations, they shouldn't be required to correct the workplace safety issues or pay the fines.

Amazon is trying to destroy a system of worker protections that goes back 100 years. This suit and the attitude of Amazon endangers all workers. By delaying safety improvements, worker justice is being delayed — and justice delayed is justice denied.

The Strategic Organizing Center (SOC) can be followed at: <https://thesoc.org/>

The National Labor Relations Board has some great news showing that unionization is on the rise. They report that there's been an increase in union election petitions of 58%. From about 1200 in 2021 to almost 1900 so far in the current year. The report went on to say, "By May 25, FY2022 petitions exceeded the total number of petitions filed in all of FY2021."

Unfortunately, the report went on to note that "At the same time, unfair labor practice charges have increased 16%—from 11,082 to 12,819."

The full NLRB report can be read at:

<https://www.nlrb.gov/news-outreach/news-story/correction-first-three-quarters-union-election-petitions-up-58-exceeding>

If you're a worker who wants to be in the know about labor solidarity, we suggest you follow The Valley Labor Report on YouTube. The report is the only union talk show in Alabama. They bring news and education to the South and beyond.

Some of their recent topics include: What is Union Busting, Selma Strike Update, Alabama Prison Strike, How to Form a Union, and much more.

I was very impressed by the short: "Union Busting Runs in the Family." The VLR discussed how anti-union attitudes are multigenerational and run in families.

We encourage you to follow them at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheValleyLaborReport/>

# The Centralia Tragedy, 103 Years Later

by fw Phil

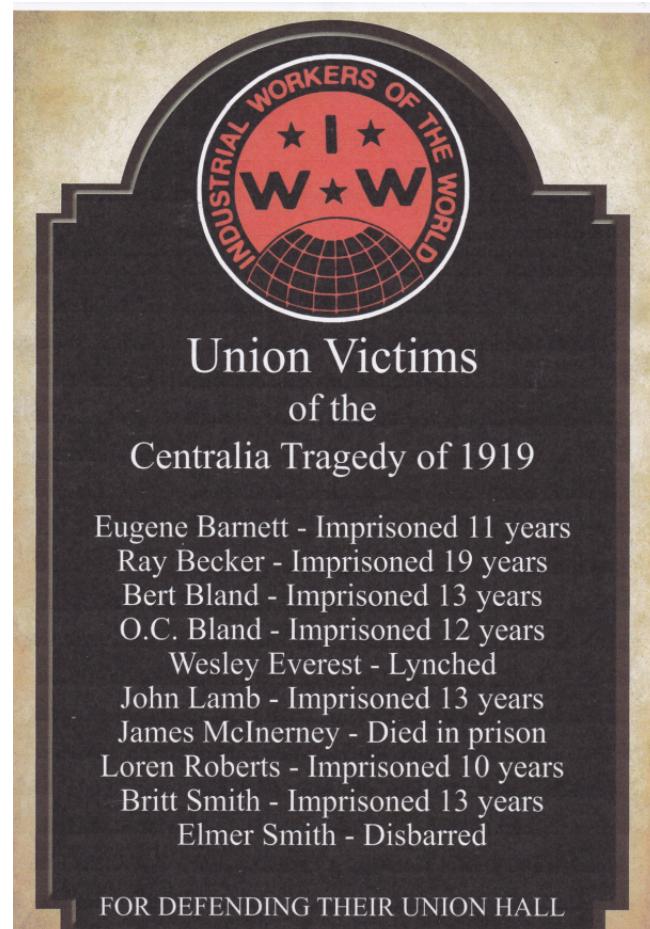
Thanks to four years of intense effort by Fellow Worker Mike Garrison, the Centralia City Council has approved the IWW design for a monument to the 1919 assault on the Centralia Washington IWW Hall.

In the 1910's and '20's, the combination of mining, logging, fishing, and railroads made Centralia a major industrial hub. The IWW had been organizing in the city for years. In 2019, the local chapter of the American Legion openly threatened to burn the IWW out of their hall, as the Elks had done in 2018. The attack of November 11, 1919 resulted in the lynching of fellow worker Wesley Everest and the death of five Legionnaires. A subsequent sham trial resulted in almost a dozen Wobblies going to prison for decades with one dying there. We now have a unique opportunity to honor these long fallen Fellow Workers.

The IWW monument is planned to go up next to the current monument, The Sentinel. That statue was erected in 1924 to honor the perpetrators of the Tragedy. The city council had shot down our ideas over and over again, resisting a more balanced public telling of the history. However, fellow worker Mike finally prevailed. As he says, "I think what broke the log jam was our focus on the upcoming 100-year anniversary of the dedication of the Sentinel. They, up till now, had hoped that with the 2019 anniversary past, we would just fade away." The 2019 Centennial was commemorated by hundreds of Wobs over a long weekend with lectures, shows, discussions, tours, solidarity, and food.

Every November, rain or shine, Wobs journey to Centralia. We sing, tell stories, and show reverence for lost fellow workers. Come join us.

Contact The Seattle Worker for more information:  
[seattleworkeriww@gmail.com](mailto:seattleworkeriww@gmail.com)





by FW Gordon (Bremerton), FW Sean

Over the summer, a group of Bremerton-Kitsap IWW members and supporters formed and has been spreading the word about the One Big Union in Bremerton. Recognizing local union interest, we're working on a campaign to expand membership and establish a Bremerton-Kitsap IWW Organizing Committee and then a General Membership Branch. We've recruited four new members with more FWs interested in lining up. The group has focused on mutual aid opportunities to provide welfare and educational services to the community in an effort to recruit new Wobblies and ensure that the IWW stays diverse, active, and revolutionary.

We're distributing copies of the Seattle Worker at five locations, including Bremerton's Charleston Theater, known as "The Chuck." The Chuck was once a local second-run movie house, and has for a few years been transformed into a venue for local and regional Punk genre music, with an all-ages policy and a bar for adult patrons. FW Billy has organized a benefit concert at The Chuck for Food Not Bombs and The Pacific Harm Reduction Alliance that will be taking place on November 12, doors opening at 8pm.

Bremerton-Kitsap IWWs are volunteering with Food Not Bombs to share meals with our fellow workers forced into the streets by the bosses. The Starvation Army has engaged in LGBTQ and disability discrimination in Bremerton, so on October 1, the Bremerton-Kitsap Wobs participated in a picket at a fundraiser held in Bremerton.

While guests arrived for \$75 plate dinners, IWWs led the group in singing "The Preacher and the Slave," written in 1911 by Joe Hill, and others handed out educational fliers and picketed. In spite of some holy rolling, the line held strong. We're hoping this is the first of many direct actions as we continue to agitate, educate, and empower along the shores of the Salish Sea.

## THE PREACHER AND THE SLAVE

By Joe Hill

(Tune: "Sweet Bye and Bye")

Long-haired preachers come out every night,  
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;  
But when asked how 'bout something to eat  
They will answer with voices so sweet:

### CHORUS

You will eat, bye and bye,  
In that glorious land above the sky;  
Work and pray, live on hay,  
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.

And the starvation army they play,  
And they sing and they clap and they pray,  
Till they get all your coin on the drum,  
Then they tell you when you're on the bum:

Holy Rollers and Jumpers come out,  
And they holler, they jump and they shout  
"Give your money to Jesus," they say,  
"He will cure all diseases today."

If you fight hard for children and wife—  
Try to get something good in this life—  
You're a sinner and bad man, they tell,  
When you die you will sure go to hell.

Workingmen of all countries, unite,  
Side by side we for freedom will fight:  
When the world and its wealth we have gained  
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain:

### LAST CHORUS

You will eat, bye and bye,  
When you've learned how to cook and to fry;  
Chop some wood, 'twill do you good,  
And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye.

I remember these dear friends and Fellow Workers from the  
resurgent IWW in Bellingham, Washington

## REST IN POWER, FELLOW WORKERS

—FW X331980

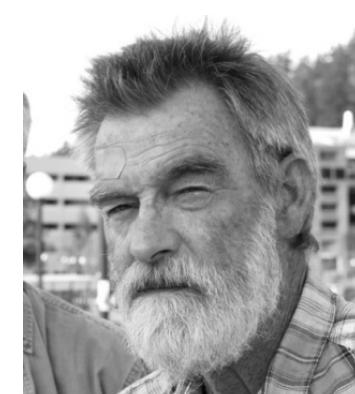


Mary Charlotte Thurtle  
1961-2012  
Musician, filmmaker,  
troublemaker.  
Branch Secretary and delegate

Doug Smith  
1958-2015  
Musician, printer, tireless  
anti-capitalist activist.  
IWW delegate



Jill Fugate  
1946-1998  
Teacher, artist,  
union organizer,  
mountaineer, mother,  
poet, wife



Bill Distler  
1947-2017  
Veteran, peace activist,  
family man.  
Miller in  
IWW shop at Fairhaven  
Co-op Flour Mill



Karen Weill  
1957-2020  
Fearless activist, legal worker,  
feminist, environmentalist,  
friend, and Fellow Worker.  
Wife of FW Larry Hildes.



Larry Hildes  
1965-2021  
Civil rights attorney, defender  
of Wobs and political outcasts,  
friend, Fellow Worker.  
Husband of FW Karen Weill.

## About the Seattle IWW

Founded in Chicago in 1905, the IWW is open to all workers. Don't let the "industrial" part fool you: our members include teachers, social workers, retail workers, construction workers, bartenders and computer programmers. Only bosses and cops are not allowed to join. If you are currently unemployed, you can still join. We are a volunteer-driven union, and this means we run the union. Membership dues are used to maintain the union and assist organizing campaigns. As a result, monthly dues are low. To join, visit:

<https://iww.org/membership/>

### Take the Organizer Training!

The Organizer Training 101 (OT101) is an intensive, four-day training that teaches you all the basic skills and tools they need to build an organizing committee at your workplace—from the ground up. You will learn what constitutes a union, how to have one-on-one conversations with coworkers, the basics of labor law, and how to organize and carry out a direct action.

The Seattle General Membership Branch holds regular trainings—free during the pandemic. If you'd like to be notified of the time and date, visit:

<https://forms.gle/q9edxoGrEVXhMVd89>

### Organize Your Workplace!

The Industrial Workers of the World want to help you improve the conditions of your workplace. If you have questions, or would like to begin organizing your workplace, visit:

<https://seattleiww.org/organize-your-workplace/>

# Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

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