

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Workers still have to fight

By Rome Aloise

While we get ready to celebrate our general good fortune in Local 853, we can't forget to think about our sisters and brothers who are still fighting for dignity at their place of work.

Many of our members have never had to spend one day on strike or take any other action to obtain the wages and benefits that they enjoy. No problem.

But those of us who have been on long strikes, fired for union organizing, or who have spent our free time leafleting and boycotting to make our point, feel passionately about these hard-fought gains.

That is why we want to help those who are fighting to gain many of the things that we take for granted in our contracts.

Basic Vegetable Strike

Our sisters and brothers at Basic Vegetable in King City are entering their fifth month on strike against their employer. The company announced that they have "permanently replaced" workers, many of whom worked at Basic for over 20 years, because they will not return to what would amount to slave labor.

The company has proposed as much as a \$4.00 per hour wage cut, large co-payments for the health plan, and the gutting of protective contract language.

Basic Vegetable is the major employer in the town. Because the strikers have maintained solidarity, the company must go as far as the Central Valley to recruit scabs.

Local 853 has vowed to support the strikers financially and any other way that can help. This struggle may not directly affect our members, but any loss for working people takes away from all of us.

Overnite Trucking strike

The International Union began a nationwide strike and boycott of Overnite Trucking. This is the biggest undertaking of our union in many years. This strike is a direct result of the employer's refusal to bargain in good faith with workers who voted to join the union.

Overnite has already spent more than \$20 million to fend off the Union. Their tactics seem to be failing, as more of their employees begin to support the organizing efforts at their respective terminals.

If your company receives freight from Overnite and pickets are following the trucks, treat it like a picket line around the truck. You should refuse to unload the truck.

Tell your supervisor that if this situation occurs, you and your brothers and sisters will refuse to work the truck as long as the pickets are present. Explain that your company would do better to refuse the freight and have it re-delivered by another trucking company.

Local 853 shipping and receiving clerks at several companies have already helped in this effort, costing Overnite Trucking many accounts. I am very proud of those of you who have taken a stand.



No contract at Right Away

We successfully organizing this large non-union Ready Mix company in May. Right Away competes against many of our unionized Ready Mix companies. We've had numerous negotiating meetings with management but progress on getting a contract has been very slow.

If we cannot reach an acceptable agreement soon, we will begin economic action against this company.

We'll need everyone's help, especially those of you working in the Construction Industry.

The workers at Right Away have stayed strong and patient in their struggle for a first Teamster contract. Our members' support will be crucial in winning this potential fight. I hope that we can come to a successful conclusion.

Good year, great expectations

1999 has been a good year for the vast majority of our members. Plentiful work, good contract settlements, and growth for our Local.

The New Year holds the promise of more to come. Our unity and strength will guarantee our continued success.

I wish you and your family Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Local 853 — organizing and building a stronger union

Teamsters Local 853 CONNECTIONS

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'Best ever' statewide liquor pact ratified

Local 853, along with 16 Teamster Locals across California, negotiated a new three-year contract with Southern Wine & Spirits and Young's Market Company. The contract covers all drivers, warehouse, clerical and salespersons for the two major liquor wholesalers.

Local 853's Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise served as spokesperson for the statewide Teamsters bargaining committee and Business Representative Bob Strelo represented the Southern Wine & Spirits warehouse and drivers in the negotiations. No easy task—getting reasonable contract offers took 25 bargaining sessions.

Separate deals for sales and hourly members

The negotiations were divided into two segments, one for salespersons and the other covering all hourly members.

The sales agreement was ratified by a 75% margin. The agreement includes language improvements in territory protection and

other rights. Also negotiated were pension improvements to the Western Conference Teamsters' Pension Plan, contributions into the SIP 401(k) Plan and a cooperative study between the Union, the Company and Compensation specialists to determine the best method to compensate salespersons into the future.

The hourly agreement did not settle as quickly. A large majority turned down the employers' first offer.

The parties continued to meet and eventually hammered out a second offer which passed by more than a two-thirds majority. The contract provides for the highest hourly wage increases in the history of the contract, along with pension, health and welfare and SIP 401(k) contributions.

"This is the best contract I have seen since I have been represented by Local 853," remarked Southern Wine & Spirits Shop Steward Dave Henderson.

Recognition & back pay won at Construction Metals

During a difficult organizing campaign at Construction Metals, Inc., the company illegally laid-off four employees. Numerous court dates and meetings later, the union negotiated a \$29,000 settlement for the employees and union recognition from the company.

With several negotiating meetings behind us, we look forward to getting a good contract here soon.



(L to R) Tony Mello, Shirley Morgado, Bo Morgan, Steve Erickson, Jesse Casquero, Roger Rigdon

Aloise named 'Unionist of Year'

Local 853's Secretary-Treasurer, Rome Aloise, was named Unionist of the Year by the Bay Area Union Labor Party.

The award was presented at a dinner held in San Francisco in October.

Other honorees included San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, San Francisco Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Walter Johnson, and Lipman Insurance President Fred Lipman.

A who's who of Bay Area politicians were on stage and in the audience, including U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzalez, and San Francisco District Attorney Terrence Hallinan.



Local 853's Rome Aloise receives honor from SF Mayor Willie Brown.

Funds raised at this annual event are used by the Bay Area Union Labor Party for political education and organizing.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

This is the last issue of CONNECTIONS before the turn of the century. Inside you'll see where we've come in the last 100 years, and where we hope to go.

We're proud to report on big improvements in the pension plan and important successes in organizing.

One thing that won't change is that Local 853's members come first. Here's to you!

Happy holidays and best wishes for the next 1000 years from the officers & staff of Local 853

Secretary-Treasurer . . .	Rome Aloise
President	John C. Becker, Jr.
Vice President	Pete Gemma
Recording Secretary . . .	Antonio Christian
Trustees	Harvey Gomes, Kenneth Avila, Michael Furtado
Business Agents	Daniel Harrington, Bob Strelo, Pete Easton, Stu Helfer, Phil Tarantino, Ken Sinclair
Organizers	Jesse Casquero, Bo Morgan
Office Staff	Janine Vanier, Office Manager; Henrietta Boe, Jan Johnson, Eve Miller, Barbara Rodriguez

Local 853 supports striking Teamsters at Basic Vegetable



Local 853's delegation of members and officers joined the Basic Vegetable strikers in King City last August.

When 750 members of Teamsters Local 890 went on strike at Basic Vegetable in King City last July, they learned that they weren't alone. Teamsters from across the Bay Area and the state have come to their support, providing food and funds as well as attending rallies.

Local 853 sent delegations to King City in August and November to show solidarity with the workers, now on strike for more than four months. Local 853 President John Becker is proud to say the "we sent Joint Council 7's largest delegation

to the November support rally."

And at the recent membership meeting, members kicked in \$1,001—which the Local's Executive Board double-matched—for a total of \$3,000 in "turkey certificates."

"This strike has already lasted too long, and the employer seems to be set in stone, demanding a wage freeze, reduced hours, and significant benefit cuts," says Becker. "These Teamsters had no option but to strike, and we'll stand behind them for as long as it takes until they get justice."

WCT Pension Trust Fund announces major plan improvements

It's hard to miss reports in the news that the stock market has been going up, up, up. Whether you have your own personal stock portfolio or not, if you have a Teamster Pension, this news directly affects you.

Because as the stock market has risen, so have our pension investments... to the tune of \$2.1 billion. Yes that's billion.

As one U.S. senator once quipped, a billion here, a billion there, pretty soon it starts to add up to real money.

The Teamsters Pension Trust is putting that real money to work on your behalf. Following are some of the benefit improvements adopted at the most recent Board of Trustees meeting:

- 35% increase and extension of Bonus Accruals for 2000-2002 and 10% increase from 2003-2005;
- From 62% now to 85% in the minimum Disability Benefits for new and current Disabled Pensioners;
- Increase from \$362 to \$1,028 per month in the maximum Child Survivor Benefits for surviving children of eligible Participants and Pensioners;
- Restoration of pre-1976 covered hours forfeited under pre-ERISA Break-in-Service rules.
- New safeguards will now apply so that long-service participants can "lock-in" their current PEER coverage; they will not lose their PEER coverage if they stop working either voluntarily or because of layoffs, plant closings, etc., once they have 25 years of contributed service.

These changes are made possible by the continued prudent management of the Trustees in the interest of the members while ensuring that necessary reserves are there to fund these promised benefits. The next edition of the *Pension West* newsletter will contain information about these new benefit changes.

For more information about how these plan improvements might affect you, call Northwest Administrators at 1-800-632-4640.

Teamsters Local 853

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Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor



Prizes on display



Members take home the loot.



Every member gets a bottle of Millennium Cabernet.

In recognition of

The member recognition meeting... it's become an annual November tradition. On Saturday, November 13, more than 400 Local 853 members came to the hall in San Leandro for continental breakfast, to learn about the "state of the union" and to win prizes.

And they weren't disappointed. The prizes were plentiful—more than 100 T-shirts, jackets, hats and sweatshirts, seven television sets, five VCRs, and everyone got a bottle of Teamster Millennium Label Cabernet Sauvignon.

Local well-positioned for future

Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise gave an overview of the year's successes that ranged from local organizing to increased International clout.

"We finally have people in the International who can solve problems rather than create them. This Local has access to the International Union so that we can make a phone call and get things done — and employers know that," explained Aloise.

A few recent successes on a national basis include:

- **UPS** finally hiring 2,500 new full-timers, which they had agreed to do in the strike settlement;
- **Car Haul** got the best agreement in 20 years;
- **Overnite**: in a bold move, the International launched a nationwide strike after a five-year organizing drive has reaped some success but more unfair labor practice charges. How this strike concludes will have major impact throughout the freight industry. Aloise advised members not to accept Overnite deliveries, and to inform everyone you know that you're not using that company.

On the local level, "we're starting to scare people because of our size and economic position," Aloise said. "We've gotten big settlements in the liquor industry as well as in construction and building materials."

Local 853 members are at nearly 100% employment. "If you can get a B license, come see us. We can't fill the available jobs with qualified people," Aloise added.

Another of Local 853's strengths is its commitment and success in organizing. Many of the people at the meeting were there when their company was first organ-

izing, and they understand the challenge of the drive and the joy of victory. "Local 853 is one of the few Locals with not one, but two, full-time organizers, and that's paid off. We've won eleven elections this year, and five new contracts are currently being negotiated, said Aloise.

One of the year's most important victories was at Northern California. "Right now we're concerned about getting a good contract here, and may need help with pickets in the next few weeks."

With the merger of Local 216, the sixth merger in as many years, Local 853 inherited a building. Renovations should be completed by early 2000, and it will be a nice facility to hold West Bay meetings.

"Financially we are one of the wealthiest Locals in Northern California. That's important for our own stability, but also, employers know that we have the wherewithal to take them on," Aloise explained.

Pension improvements mean dignity
Aloise also reported on a series of pension improvements. The Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Trust, with \$26 billion in assets, is the largest union pension plan in the country. This year, the Plan is fully funded, and we had an extra \$1.2 billion to spend on improvements. (See summary on this page.)

"We're pushing for members in every industry to receive a pension that is comparable to what they were earning when they were working," Aloise stated.

Many thanks
Aloise ended his address by thanking the officers and staff for their hard work, and thanking the members for their enduring commitment.

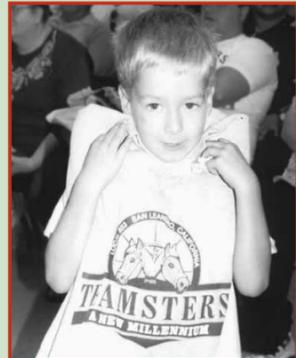
President John Becker then announced that Aloise had been named an International Representative. He presented Aloise with a plaque on behalf of the Local's staff and officers.

Finishing up the program, Vice President Pete Gemma described how he checked out different Locals when he decided to merge Local 291, and, "from the bottom of my heart, I'm glad I made the right choice to merge with Local 853."

And then it came time to thank the members. With a bounty of prizes, everyone left the meeting fulfilled.



Standing-room only crowd of more than 400 members attended annual recognition event.



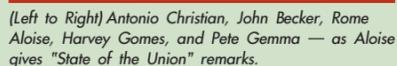
Sam Gunnerson (son of Bob, who works at PACCAR) models the Teamsters' t-shirt for the new millennium.



President John Becker (r) presents Rome Aloise with a thank-you plaque from Local 853's officers and staff.



Fernando Tovar (l) from Central Concrete with his son Fernando.



(Left to Right) Antonio Christian, John Becker, Rome Aloise, Harvey Gomes, and Pete Gemma — as Aloise gives "State of the Union" remarks.

Question of the day:

What do you want the union to do for you in the new millennium?



"The union has already done so much. I've never been so blessed having a job like this."
Marguerite Umbertus
VWR Scientific Products



"Take care of my pension and my future, so I have something to live off of in my old age."
Michael Humbles
Easterday Janitorial Supply



"I hope it'll bring more people together and more understanding between the union and management."
Mike Sharpe
Weber Distribution



"I hope that we stay strong and united."
Lila Kirkland Gillig



"Find us a job. Our company just closed and we need help."
Michael Smith
Grand Auto



"Keep us working... we need steady work."
Veronica Carver
RMC Pacific Materials

Announcements

Prestigious appointments

Local 853 continues to gain recognition through appointments of its staff to positions of leadership within the Teamsters Union. Local 853 Recording Secretary Antonio Christian was appointed to the Board of Directors of the IBT Human Rights Commission by General President Hoffa. Pete Gemma has been appointed to the Western Region Construction Policy Committee.

"These appointments are a result of our Local's high profile and aggressiveness. Pete and Antonio work hard and deserve the recognition. Unfortunately, with recognition comes more work, but I know they are both up to it," Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise said.

Start millennium out right: Enroll in 401(k)

Check out the new web site for the SIP 401(k) plan: <http://www.retirement.ssr.com/sip> Here you can learn about the plan, the administrators, get answers to Frequently

Asked Questions, and find out the status of your personal account. For more information call Ray Brown at 1-800-445-8238 or Suzy Bragg at 1-800-445-8416.

WCT Pension Plan

Local 853 brings a pension counselor to the San Leandro offices on the first Wednesday of every month. Your pension contribution record can be reviewed and your questions answered. Those wishing to fill out retirement papers can also accomplish this at these sessions. Call the office for an appointment.

Bay Cities Credit Union

Local 853 is affiliated with the Bay Cities Credit Union. If you do not have access to a Credit Union, contact your Business Agent to discuss the possibility of bringing one into your place of employment. Bay Cities handles payroll deductions, savings and checking accounts, loans, CDs, and many other functions. Call them at 510-881-8866.