

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

International leadership finally takes office

By Rome Aloise

Finally, on Friday, March 19, 1999, the federal government certified the IBT election of officers.

After the overwhelming victory by the Hoffa Slate last December, the losing slate filed objections to the election. In my opinion, these were nothing more than delay tactics designed to interfere with the legitimately elected leadership.

The federal government then took its sweet time overruling these obviously frivolous charges. This allowed the past administration to continue to collect paychecks for doing absolutely nothing!

This travesty is further proof, as far as I am concerned, of the government's desire to destroy the Teamsters Union.

James P. Hoffa is now our General President. Together with our own Joint Council 7 President Chuck Mack as our regional Vice President, I hope and pray that they will be allowed to make the changes and do the things that will result in making our International Union strong and respected again. They will have the support and cooperation of Local 853 to make this happen.

Contracts settled

In the last few months we have settled several difficult contract negotiations.

After a strike, unfair labor practice charges and a number of tough membership meetings, our members at Davis Wire finally ratified their contract. This situa-

tion occurred after the membership turned down a contract offer that was recommended by the officers of Local 853.

The final agreement, settled three months later, did not include many of the improvements in the first recommended offer.

Although the officers fully affirm the right of our members to disagree with our contract recommendations, unfortunately, this all too often results in disaster for the negotiations.

The members of Copper and Brass Sales were almost forced to strike over their contract, but the Company blinked at the last minute and an agreement was ratified. The wage increases will be paid retroactive to September, 1998.

The members at Earl M. Jorgensen voted unanimously for their newly negotiated contract. The agreement contained wage, pension, and health and welfare increases, along with the new TBT Retirement Security Plan.

Organizing

I am committed to organizing new employers and our program continues to show results. We are concentrating on the construction industry, but the organizing has been successful in our other divisions as well.

Our win at Right Away Redy Mix was a total team effort. I want to especially thank our members working in the ready



mix industry, as they played an important part by encouraging the Right Away workers to vote union.

The newly organized workers at Serco, Inc.'s Oakland operation received an almost \$6.50 per hour total package increase in their first Local 853 contract, ratified in March.

We are presently in negotiations with newly organized companies Weber Distribution, Post Tool and Trenchplate.

Local 216 merger

Construction and Building Material Local 216 (San Francisco and San Mateo Counties) members voted to merge into Local 853 by an overwhelming margin on February 1, 1999.

We have just written to General President Hoffa asking for the IBT's approval of this merger. We are hoping for a May 1 effective date.

This merger will make Local 853 the largest Construction Local in Northern California, and will continue to build our strength within the industry.

We will use the offices of Local 216 to serve as the Local 853 West Bay Division offices after some remodeling is finished.

We welcome the Local 216 membership into Local 853.

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Teamsters Local 853

CONNECTIONS

Volume II, No. 3

APRIL/MAY 1999

"Most significant election in the Ready Mix industry in 25 years"

'Union Yes' at Right Away Redy Mix

The drivers, yardmen, pumpers and mechanics at Oakland's Right Away Redy Mix voted March 10 to join Teamsters Local 853.

"This is the most significant election in the Ready Mix industry in 25 years," says Pete Gemma, Construction Division Director of Local 853. "Right Away was the largest concrete and ready mix company in Northern California not represented by the Teamsters."

Right Away has many people working in outlying depots. "We expect this victory to be a launching point for unionizing the rest of this company, as well as the rest of the ready-mix, construction and material haul industry throughout the Bay Area," Gemma continued.

Prior to this election, an in-house union, the Concrete Workers Association, repre-



Local 853 organizers Bo Morgan (L) and Jesse Casqueiro (R), and Right Away driver Jim McAvoy (C) celebrate the election victory

sented the workers.

The final vote was 28 in favor of Teamsters Local 853, to 17 for the Concrete Workers Association. "No

Union" received no votes.

Rome Aloise, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 853, said "this company stayed non-union because they paid wages close to the Teamster hourly rate. That strategy worked as long as the crew stayed young.

"But once the people started to get older, pension and health benefits became more important to them. Our ability to provide a good benefit package was the key to this election victory.

"We've made important inroads into the construction industry. We are negotiating contracts now with Trenchplate in Union City, and with Post Tool in Hayward.

"Construction is booming, and the contractors are making big money," continued Aloise. "We want to see that prosperity shared with the people who do the work."

Cost Plus contract includes largest wage increase ever

Local 853 members working for Cost Plus ratified a new three-year contract by a 97% margin on March 16.

The new contract includes the largest wage increases negotiated in the last ten years, many beneficial language changes and an upgrade in starting salaries.

Business agent Dan Harrington headed up the negotiating committee.

Chief Shop Steward John Joseph commented, "Local 853's commitment to its mem-

"Management had to know we were unified."

bers at Cost Plus was critical. They started working with us months ago to organize members at each store. Management had to know we were unified.

"This commitment made the

difference between an okay contract and an excellent one," Joseph said.

Local 853's contract covers the Cost Plus stores in San Francisco, Hillside, Oakland, Stevens Creek, Almaden, San Jose, Serramonte Center, Larkspur, Fremont, Concord, Santa Rosa and Mountain View.



Negotiating team members Jane Nakamura-Dimoff, John Joseph, Gail Larsen, Rose Fitzsimmons and Dan Harrington at the Cost Plus vote

Locals 228 and 431 also participated in the negotiations on behalf of their members in Sacramento and Fresno.

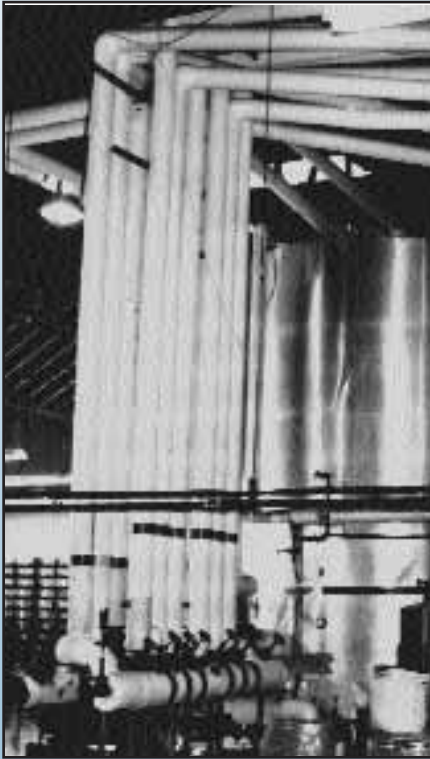
**INSIDE
THIS ISSUE**

Teamsters Local 853 has more than 5,000 members across the Bay Area who work in many fields — warehouse, construction, dairy, manufacturing, trucking, the public sector, and much more.

Each **CONNECTIONS** will highlight an industry or a few shops to let you meet your fellow members. In this issue, we go to the West Bay and see some of the folks at VWR and Dussek-Campbell.

"Dump, pour, scrape the floor. Out the door... before four"

Dussek-Campbell Wax makers extraordinaire



Bet you were wondering where they get the wax that covers the corks on wine bottles and seals in the freshness. The answer is Dussek-Campbell in South San Francisco, and eight members of Local 853 make it.

Once a family-owned company, Paragon Wax, this British-owned manufacturer produces more than one million pounds of wax every month for industrial uses.

"This isn't rocket science, but it's a real good job," says Mike Tobin. "We come in each morning and empty the 12-15 pound wax trays we poured yesterday. Then we pour hundreds of new trays, clean up, and get it all shipped out."

A new four-year contract was ratified in June, 1998. When the company didn't come into negotiations with any significant issues, the union was able to bargain for good wage and pension increases, improved 401(K) language, and full payment of health and welfare for the life of the contract.

And all this took a whopping three hours to negotiate!



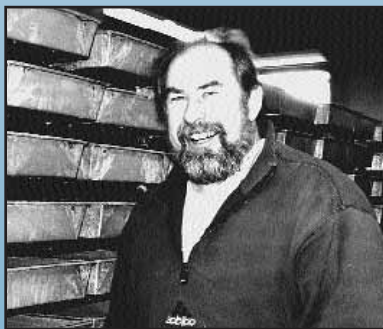
*Edgar Gomez
ships the product*



*Bob Cirimele
maintains the vats*



Mike Tobin fills the wax pans



Mike Knudsen checks the wax



*James Sotomayor packs
the wax for shipping*



*Tommy Bynum moves
boxes out*

Teamsters Local 853

CONNECTIONS is published bi-monthly for \$3 per year by Teamsters Local 853, 2100 Merced Avenue, Suite B, San Leandro, California, a non-profit organization.

Postage paid at San Leandro, California.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:

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2100 Merced Avenue, Suite B
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Communications

Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor



Local 853 officer wins C.L. Dellums Award



Antonio Christian receives Dellums Award from Joyce Lawrence, President, No. Calif. CBTU, and Dorothy Fortier, President, Alameda County Central Labor Council.

Local 853's Recording Secretary and Business Agent, Antonio Christian, received the prestigious C.L. Dellums Award from the Northern California Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Named for the founding President of the International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the Dellums award recognizes Antonio's service to the labor movement and to African American workers.

Antonio also serves as Board President of Greater St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church.



VWR: A growing distributor of scientific products

Just a few years ago, VWR, a warehouse and distribution center for scientific products, had only 46 employees. But after buying Baxter Scientific, a non-union competitor in Hayward, VWR more than doubled in size, bringing the Teamster membership here up to 110.

First organized by Local 860, this Brisbane shop merged into Local 853 in 1994. Many VWR employees have been with the company and the union for more than 30 years.

With \$230 million in sales annually, VWR's customers include hospitals, laboratories, universities and coroner's offices. The workers here process more than 580,000 orders annually.

"Labor relations are good here," explains John Becker, President of Local 853. "In the past 15 years, the contract has been accepted by 75-95% of the members each time. We have monthly labor-management meetings to go over how the company is doing financially, review grievances, and raise other issues. They have picnics, a holiday party. . . it's a good place to work."

VWR owns several facilities around the nation, but the Bridgeport, New Jersey warehouse is the only other one that's union. "When Teamster Local 676 goes into negotiations, you can be sure they get a copy of our contract to see if they can catch up," says Becker.

Clockwise starting from upper right: Eugene Thomas, 30 year member • Dennis Koenig, helped negotiate the last 6 contracts • Albert Cobbs • Melanie Becker • Bruce Caires • Mike Boyce • Mirna Paniagua • Albert Taguas • John Thomas • Tony Papadopoulos, second day on the job • Emil Tallerico, Night Steward • Tim Guldbach, Day Steward • Chuck Gee, Senior employee at VWR with 38 years • Donald Woods • Ron Floyd, 35 year Teamster • Phil Carter • James Quan • Rene Weil, 34 years at VWR • Elijah (EJ) Harrell, 28 year member • Delmy Manzano