

## Contract Update—Settled with Solidarity

### Graniterock strike ends

Local 853 members working for Graniterock/Pavex, respected the picket-lines of Teamsters Local 287, the Machinists, Operating Engineers, and Laborers for 10 weeks. The union members had gone on strike to oppose Graniterock's insistence on breaking the union members' right to respect future picket lines.

The battle started in June, when Local 287 went on strike over their San Jose ready mix agreement, and escalated in July when workers at the Wilson Quarry in Watsonville struck over their agreement. At its height, more than 500 union members were out of work due to the strike.

The importance of these strikes was not lost on the members of Local 853.

They recognized that the owner was attempting to take away their right to respect picket lines, and the right of other union members to respect Teamster picket lines.

The strike finally ended when the Operating Engineers gave in to the demand to ignore future picket lines. The Teamsters, however, maintained their right to continue to honor the lines of all unions in the event of any future strikes.

### Morton Salt settles

In a unanimous strike vote, Local 853's members at Morton Salt gave their solid support to Recording Secretary and

Business Agent Antonio Christian, enabling him to bring about a successful settlement on a new contract.

In virtually every contract negotiation that Local 853 takes on these days, health care is a major issue. This one was no exception. The ratified contract contained language improvements, additional money to cover health care costs, and wage increases every year.



Local 853 members respected the picket lines at the two Graniterock plants

### Dreyer's finally done, Challenge Dairy also settles

Business Agent Bob Strelor worked on the Dreyer's Ice Cream contract for almost seven months before a successful settlement was reached. After the closure of the manufacturing plant a few years ago, the company took a much more aggressive approach to these negotiations.

After the members turned down three different offers from the company, a long and tense situation developed. With the assistance of Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise, the union and Dreyer's were able to come to agreement. The new contract

calls for significant pay increases, language improvements, and moving to a new company health plan.

Bob Strelor also settled the Challenge Dairy contract. This successful negotiation brought the Local 853 members working for Challenge to parity with those working at other companies in the local, such as Berkeley Farms and Foster Farms. The members were successful in obtaining increases in Health and Welfare money and gaining the Teamsters Benefit Trust Retirement Security Plan.

### More contracts settled

Business Agents Pete Easton and Dan Harrington have been busy in negotiations also. Pete settled Caterpillar warehouse and Impact Distribution recently. Dan has negotiated successful settlements at the

City and County of San Francisco, San Francisco Gravel and JS Guerin Company, and Christy Vault.

President John Becker has recently settled contracts with Clear Channel and Spicer Paper, while chairing the Statewide Costco grievance committee.

Vice President Phil Tarantino has been working with the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to make certain that the *San Francisco Chronicle* is named the official newspaper of San Francisco for advertising purposes. Local 853 is working to ensure that nonunion papers like the *Examiner* and *San Francisco Independent* aren't rewarded with the city's ad dollars.

"This administration is detrimental to the working class. Reagan started the decline of union power; this gang is taking it to the end. I'll try to get everyone I work with as well as my whole family registered to vote."



JR Reynolds  
S.F. Chronicle

"The Bush administration and the Republicans who control Congress are so anti-worker. Bush is out to break unions. This time we really have to vote our pocketbook and save our unions—we can't be distracted by other issues."



Ed Whalen  
Berkeley Ready-Mix

"If Kerry wins, that will bring more help for us as working people. I will try to talk to my co-workers about the issues. It's very important to get as much support as possible for Kerry and to vote."



Maurillio Silva  
Christy Vault Co.



PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SAN LEANDRO, CA  
PERMIT No. 311

## Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union

### Election action steps

#### **Register to Vote:** The deadline is **Monday, October**

**18.** If you've moved since the last time you voted, you must re-register. There are many ways to get a voter registration form:

- Ask your business representative.
- Pick up a form in person at public offices (library, DMV, post office, county election office).
- Call 1-800-345-VOTE to request a form be mailed to you.
- Register on-line at: [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov).

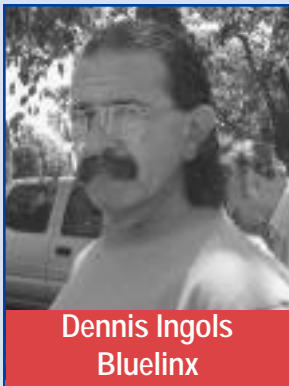
If you're already registered, make sure that your family members and co-workers have registered.



**Request an Absentee Ballot:** If you have any doubt that you cannot get to the polls on time, you will need to request an absentee ballot in writing **by Tuesday, October 26** in order to vote.

**Get involved in your community:** Union members can make the difference in key races. Your local Central Labor Council can find the perfect volunteer job for you—phone banking, precinct walking, stuffing envelopes, looking up numbers. It's fun and beneficial at the same time! If you can't find your local Labor Council, contact Local 853 at 510-895-8853.

"You have to be involved with the elections because it shapes your future. That's what it's all about. I'll



**Dennis Ingols**  
Bluelinx

definitely be voting and I'll make sure my co-workers go out to vote too."

"Abbie Hoffman said that politics is how you live your life. If you want any influence in your life, you have to get involved in politics. By voting, you can directly participate and make choices for yourself and your family."



**Aaron Aragon**  
Macy's

"I'm third generation military, a former marine. I'm appalled by what Bush is doing to our troops and how he treats his cronies—he's reckless. We have to end this. I fly the American flag, but this administration has to change."



**Chris Burwell**  
Graniterock



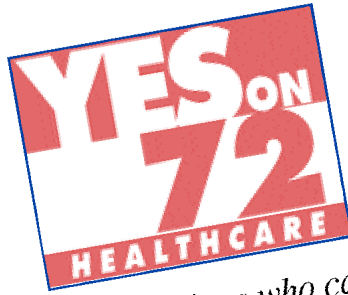
# CONNECTIONS

Volume V, No. 2

Autumn, 2004

## Tuesday, November 2 BALLOT

### Proposition 72 The Health Insurance Act



*This is the ballot for union members who care about their jobs, their union and their future*

*For Local 853 endorsements in federal races, call the Local office to get a printed copy of the newsletter: 510-895-8853*

“This election marks the greatest opportunity in a half century to improve the lives of—and restore hope to—working families.... Over the past four years, we have seen our job market hemorrhage, our economy collapse, and our healthcare system get wracked with skyrocketing costs.... John Kerry offers a vision for restoring this country’s decades-long commitment to working Americans and reviving the economic engine that built the nation.”

*James P. Hoffa  
Teamsters General President*

**Register to Vote by  
Monday, October 18**

**Request Absentee Ballot by  
Tuesday, October 26**

**Vote  
Tuesday, November 2**

## Why is it important to be involved in the elections?

“I’m not happy with what Bush has done. We need somebody in there who will help us out, especially on the medical end. My parents are retired and really struggle with the cost of medical care.”



**Barbara Fernandez  
Gillig**

“I’ve been a union member for 17 years and see the changes; this administration is hammering us. Kerry is a better choice for getting what we need. Getting Boxer elected is also very important.”



**Frank Nunez  
San Francisco PUC**

“I want to make sure we elect a government that takes care of the people. A new administration would give more support to the unions. I’ll definitely help to register people and educate them about the issues.”



**Cesar Martinez  
Costco**



# The most important election of our lifetime

By **ROME ALOISE**

Throughout this newsletter, we focus on the November 2 elections—on how important it is to register to vote and to take the time to vote. In all my years as a union member and officer, I have never witnessed an election more important to workers in general, to their families, and to members of the Teamsters union.

Here are just a few of the issues that should inspire you to do the right thing on November 2.

## Health Care

Each year more workers lose their health coverage; today, more than 42 million people in the U.S. are uninsured. Who pays for their coverage? You and me. We pay higher taxes and increased benefit copayments to subsidize irresponsible companies like Wal-Mart, who provide almost no coverage.

This is why voting YES for Proposition 72 is so important. The cost of health care is escalating faster than ever before and covering that cost is eating up almost all of the money we are able to negotiate in our union contracts.

The Bush Administration has done nothing to solve this problem and they have no plan to do so. Bush's so-called Medicare Reform is a sham. His prescription drug discounts are inadequate, and the plan actually prohibits the federal government from negotiating for lower drug prices! If Bush wins, health care, as we know it, is in big trouble.

## Pensions

At the Republican Convention, Bush stated that pension plans like yours are a thing of the past! His exact words were "Many of our most fundamental systems...health coverage, pension plans, worker training—were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow." Make no mistake, he plans to fundamentally change how these bedrock programs are delivered.

Bush recently signed into law pension legislation designed to help big single-employer pension plans. The law specifically cuts out multi-employer plans from protection because those are the union plans. This is yet another blatant attempt to undermine your retirement and your union.

Your Local 853 pension plan is in good shape, but many plans around the country need legislative relief. Unions need someone in the White House who believes that pensions are important. If Bush wins we may have very serious problems protecting the integrity of our pension plans.

## Social Security

For most union members, Social Security will be a welcome supplement to their union pension and 401(k) plans. But for many people, Social Security is all that they have.

Bush wants to privatize Social Security and give each individual the responsibility to invest their Social Security funds and trust that enough will be left when they are ready to retire. I believe this scheme is designed to benefit his friends in private investment companies who stand to make

billions of dollars off of our **h a r d - e a r n e d** Social Security dollars.

It's nice to know that if Bush wins, the rich will get richer. Unfortunately, the middle class and the poor will get poorer as a result.

## Worker Rights & Union Protection

Bush has already made the National Labor Relations Board an employer haven. He instituted reporting rules for unions that are far stricter than those imposed on corporations—solely for the purpose of reducing union strength. And he banned Project Labor Agreements for federal projects; these are the best tool our construction members have.

Bush has openly declared war on working people during his first term. If he wins a second term, I have no doubt that he will attempt to finish the job.

Of course, I won't tell you who to vote for—I believe each candidate's record speaks for itself.

Please make sure you, everyone in your family, and any friends and neighbors that you can persuade, register to vote, and then go to the polls on Election Day, November 2. As we saw in the last election, every vote counts!

## Teamsters Local 853

**CONNECTIONS** is published quarterly for \$3 per year by Teamsters Local 853, 2100 Merced Street, Suite B, San Leandro, CA, a non-profit organization. Postage paid at San Leandro, CA.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to: Teamsters Local 853, 2100 Merced Street, Suite B, San Leandro, CA 94577

**Members:** Send address changes and comments to the above address or e-mail us: [connections@teamsters853.org](mailto:connections@teamsters853.org)

*Beagle & Bleiweiss Communications  
Debra Chaplan, Editor*

## Benefits & Announcements

### WCT Pension Plan Q&A

On the second Wednesday of every month, a representative from the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Administrator comes to Local 853's San Leandro office to answer your pension questions. Call 510-895-8853 or 800-400-1250 for an appointment.

### SIP 401(k) Enrollment

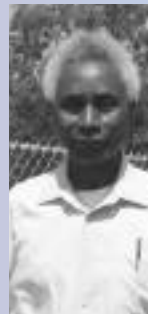
Most Local 853 members are eligible for the SIP 401(k) Plan. If you are not yet enrolled, or wish to increase your pre-tax deferred amounts—check with your

business agent, your company's HR department, or call 1-800-4-PRETAX [1-800-477-3829].

### Monthly Meetings

Local 853's membership meetings are held the Second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. They alternate between the West Bay and East Bay:

- 1700 Marina Blvd., San Leandro, or
  - Laborers' Union Hall, 300-7th Avenue San Mateo
- Call 510-895-8853 to confirm location.



## 120 stewards bring more than 1,500 years of T **Local 853 Stewards learn technique**

If you've ever been a shop steward, you know how much work you put into that volunteer position. You're on the front line representing your co-workers to management, usually well before a union rep gets involved. The boss thinks you're a pain in the neck and your co-workers often feel that you're not doing enough.

So if there's no fame or fortune coming their way, why do people volunteer to become stewards? It's unanimous—people become stewards because they believe in the union and want to be in a position to help their co-workers.

And Local 853 believes in our shop stewards. That's why the union sponsored an all-day seminar for our stewards. "We always say that our stewards are the backbone of the union, and that's absolutely true," said Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "Our goals for the seminar were to show some appreciation, give updates about the elections, workers' comp reform and labor law, and mostly, to teach them how to be as effective as possible representing the members and the union."

With those goals in mind, more than 120 stewards from 80 different companies attended the annual steward seminar on July 10 at Local 853's San Leandro union hall. For attending, stewards received

leather Local 853 brief cases, along with Local 853 polo shirt and other items to assist them in their duties.

All those goals were accomplished and more. "Our members spent a beautiful summer Saturday working on union issues," said Aloise, "but I'm hopeful they got a lot out of it."

### **Political push**

International Vice President, Cliff Mack told the stewards that Local 853 is one of the more aggressive and progressive Local Unions in the country. He commended the officers and officials on their efforts to register new voters—with more than 80% of members registered, Local 853 ranks among the top in the nation for members who are eligible to vote.

Mack went on to discuss the urgency for labor to replace President Bush with John Kerry. He explained the importance of Proposition 72 and of making sure Barbara Boxer is retained as our Senator.

Stewart Boxer, one of Local 853's workers' compensation attorneys, explained the changes in the law covering work related illnesses and injuries to workers.

The new law, passed in March, is viewed by legislators as the best compromise they could get. Govern-



experience to training seminar

## reaching today's workforce

varzenegger was backing a much more worker bill for the November ballot as the new law was passed when it was. But compromises aside, Boxer caud that the changes are “a disaster” for ers and will result in more misery in pting to resolve claims. Many of the ards asked questions so that they d have the right answers for their coers.

oxer’s key recommendations are:  
 1) no matter how minor you think your y is, you must report it. 2) Pre-design-a doctor. (A form was included in the August issue of the *Northern ornia Teamster* newspaper.)

### Learning about today’s workforce

re you a Baby Boomer, GenXer, ener? As the boomers in the work-move toward retirement, the younger ers coming up behind them have difg expectations about work, unions and gement, and require stewards to use rent approaches.

lary Hardiman, Director of the national’s Education Department, led from Washington D.C. to teach ards about working with today’s ” workforce. She gave many statistics

on how the demographics of the workforce and Teamster membership has changed over the years.

Hardiman described different approaches for old and new members, members who speak English as a second language, and members from different cultures.

A full Italian lunch was created by Chef Bhupinder, the former chef to the Italian Embassy, who is now at La Bella Italia Restaurant in San Leandro. Everyone raved about the meal, and most stewards returned for seconds.

After lunch, Barbara Luna, supervising field representative for the National Labor Relations Board, spoke about how to deal with her agency effectively. She explained how workers and Union members could use the NLRB to their advantage and the various in’s and out’s of dealing with the Board. She took questions from a number of stewards about concerns they have in their respective work places.

“Local 853 could not operate effectively without you,” Aloise reminded the stewards as the seminar closed. “Your dedication and commitment to your fellow workers is the cornerstone of our Union.”

Everyone left more prepared for the upcoming election, better educated, and of course, well fed!



*Photos (clockwise from top left):*

- ~ Four views of the participants.
- ~ The Horrocks family receives a \$1,000 James R. Hoffa Scholarship check (LtoR: Kelly’s dad Jerry, Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise, Kelly Horrocks and her mom).
- ~ Chef Bhupinder from La Bella Italia (formerly Pring’s) prepares a sumptuous lunch.
- ~ Vice President Phil Tarantino distributes certificates to stewards.
- ~ President John Becker (R) with RMC steward Rick Freitas.
- ~ Stan Kimotho, Star Pacific with Business Agent Pete Easton and Jerome Doss, Genesis Logistics.
- ~ Recording Secretary Antonio Christian with IBT Vice President Chuck Mack.
- ~ Trustee Jeff Belunza and Business Rep Stu Helfer sign in stewards to the seminar.
- ~ Business Agent Bob Strelo with Retired Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Al Costa.
- ~ NLRB Field Examiner Barbara Luna takes questions.
- ~ IBT Director of Education Mary Hardiman teaches about today’s workforce.
- ~ Workers’ Comp Attorney Stewart Boxer describes impact of workers’ comp reform.

