

Staying strong in the face of a daunting future

By ROME ALOISE

I have finally gotten old enough to appreciate what my parents were always saying about "time flying." It seems like I was just writing this article for last year's Holiday newsletter, and here I am doing it again. Time does fly!

I wish I could say that the time flew because we are having fun, but given the recent election, the ongoing escalation of health care costs and the struggling economy, I can't say that we had much fun in the past year.

I fear that the Bush Administration is going to continue to make the rich richer and take away most of the protections that working people now have.

With the "mandate" that he thinks he has, President Bush has already started to push forward his first priority, which is to "privatize" social security. Of course, this is another scheme to allow big investment firms to make trillions of dollars off of workers who will "trust" them to hold their investments.

Bush's attack on traditional pension plans will be another way to force people into alternative types of plans, which again will assist his buddies in the investment industry to make even more money.

The Bush administration's refusal to do anything about national health care will continue the upward spiral of costs to our health plans, and will force the union to negotiate money on healthcare that could instead be going to wages and pension.

The Department of Labor has issued new, draconian and useless reporting guidelines for Unions that will force us to spend more money on accountants and clerical help to complete. The Bush Administration will, no doubt, have many other initiatives to hurt working people—unfortunately, this is just the start.

We will overcome the adversity as we always have, and we will continue to protect the membership by sticking together and striving to improve our livelihoods—for ourselves and for those who follow us.

Reasons to be thankful

All that said, there are many things in Local 853 to be thankful for and that give me hope for the future.

The majority of contracts that we negotiated in 2004 were ratified overwhelmingly by the membership and contained decent increases and improved protections.

We didn't have to take strike action against any employer due to the good job our Local Union did in completing what we needed to do in a reasonable fashion. However, by respecting the picket lines of another Local Union at Graniterock, our members were very much involved in a long strike. These Ready Mix members rallied behind their brothers and sisters at Graniterock by contributing money each

week so that they could survive the 13-week fight.

This is one more example of the solidarity that makes Local 853 a strong and effective Union.

I want to give thanks to all the members of Local 853 who registered to vote, gave money to DRIVE and got involved in the 2004 elections. We certainly did our part in Northern California.

And I want to congratulate Janine Vanier, our office manager, who was inducted into the MS Society Hall of Fame for her fundraising work to fight the devastating effects of this terrible disease. Her accomplishment has brought honor to another Local 853 team member.

Additionally, more than 400 members attended our Membership Appreciation meeting last month. They showed that we can be strong and solid in the face of a daunting future.

I am thankful for the good things that have blessed us this year and thoughtful about the not-so-good things.

We will overcome the adversity as we always have, and we will continue to protect the membership by sticking together and striving to improve our livelihoods—for ourselves and for those who follow us. Be happy and confident in this.

On behalf of the entire staff, Officers and Officials at Local 853, I want to take the opportunity to wish you all a happy holiday season, and a happy and healthy New Year!



"First of all, I thank God. And my employment—I'm glad to be employed right now. And also I'm thankful for peace."



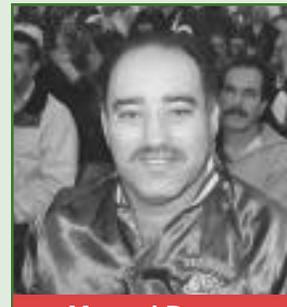
Ramon Jimenez Gillig

"I'm thankful just for feeling good—for my good health and for my family."



Rod Garcines
Excel Global Logistics

"I'm thankful that the union is here to keep our jobs strong. And I'm thankful for the dispatchers who are great at what they do."



Manuel Braga
Ready Mix hiring hall



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Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union

This holiday season, don't shop at Wal-Mart

Like the 12 days of Christmas, here are 12 good reasons to stay out of Wal-Mart:

- 1** The low wages they pay their “associates” undercut good union wages.
- 2** The health benefits they offer are not affordable for 75% of their employees—this drives our health care costs up.
- 3** Wal-Mart was the largest donor in the campaign to defeat Prop 72—The Health Care Initiative.
- 4** Wal-Mart has successfully and illegally fought every union drive at their U.S. stores.

- 5** The only union they’ll accept is the government-run union in China, whose main job is to encourage people to work harder.
- 6** Wal-Mart forces manufacturers to off-shore their production to China, rather than keeping good jobs in the U.S.
- 7** In fact, most goods sold at Wal-Mart are produced in China.
- 8** The glass ceiling—women can only rise so high in Wal-Mart management.
- 9** Where Wal-Mart stores open, mom-and-pop shops close.

- 10** Until caught, Wal-Mart paid undocumented workers subminimum wages to clean their stores.
- 11** Wal-Mart ruthlessly overruns local zoning ordinances to site its stores where it wants.
- 12** When a Wal-Mart store closes, they leave huge, unsightly big boxes in their wake. Wal-Mart has the largest inventory of empty buildings in the U.S.

**Don't shop at Wal-Mart—
for your job, community & future!**

“I’m thankful for having a job. That’s the most important thing.”



Scott McCole
Tudor Saliba

“I’m thankful for my family and friends, as well as for my job and my union.”



JR Reynolds
SF Chronicle

“I’m thankful for good health benefits, having a job and having my family for support.”



Jennie Lyon
Granite Rock



CONNECTIONS



Happy Holidays and best wishes for a prosperous new year

From the officers and staff of Teamsters Local 853

Local 853 officers are re-elected to new three-year terms on a white ballot at the November 8 nominations meeting. (L to R) Jeff Belunza, Rome Aloise, Julie Molina, Antonio Christian, Mike Furtado, John Becker, Sr., Phil Tarantino.



Officers: Rome Aloise, Secretary-Treasurer
John Becker, Sr., President
Phil Tarantino, Vice President

Antonio Christian, Recording Secretary

Trustees: Jeff Belunza • Mike Furtado • Julie Molina

Business Agents: Bob Strelo • Pete Easton • Stu Helfer
Bo Morgan • Dan Harrington • Steve Zucker

Organizer: Jesse Casqueiro

Office Staff: Janine Vanier • Kim Drinkward • Janice Johnson • Jennifer Casqueiro • Lydia Pinedo • Eve Miller

What are you thankful for this holiday season?

"I'm very thankful for my health. As a breast cancer survivor, I've been off work for a year—but my job is still there for me. I'm thankful to the union for making that happen."



Joan Nunes
Unified Western Grocers

"I'm thankful for good health and to work for a company that you don't have to worry about getting laid off from. No matter what happens, people keep drinking!"



Edward Drysdale
Southern Wine & Spirits

"Life. My father just passed away, so I'm thankful for my life and for my son."



Jane Nakumura-Dimoff
Cost Plus

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.

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: connections@teamsters853.org

*Beagle & Bleiweiss Communications
Debra Chaplan, Editor*

MS Society inducts Local 853's Janine Vanier into Volunteer Hall of Fame

"I was very honored, humbled and inspired by attending this National Multiple Sclerosis Conference because I found myself among some of the most incredible people who are from every walk of life who are so dedicated to ending this damn disease," says Janine Vanier upon returning



Janine organizing the first TeamMSters team in 2001.

from Denver, where she was inducted into the MS Volunteer Hall of Fame. "The theme of the conference was "Believe." and by hearing, seeing, and being among so many who do believe, I am sure that the cure for MS will be found soon."

Janine received her award on November 11, 2004. She was one of 30 people honored from around the nation in the categories of advocacy, client programs, fundraising and health professionals. The MS Society chose these Volunteer Hall of Fame members for their "generous contribution of time, tal-

ent, leadership and commitment to our mission."

For 12 years, Janine worked as the Local 853 office manager but never disclosed that she had MS herself. But after getting involved with the Northern California Chapter of the MS Society, it didn't take much for her to con-

vince the Local to make reasonable accommodations, and together they have formed one of the nation's top workplace fundraising teams. To date, Janine and her Teamster supporters have raised more than \$150,000 and have connected the Society to many new donors.

For each of the past four years, the TeamMSters have increased the number of people and amount raised in the MS Walk-a-thon, held at Crown Beach in Alameda. The 2005 Walk-a-thon is already planned for April 10, and Janine hopes to break all records.

Get ready now!
The 2005 MS Walk is on
April 10th • Crown Beach, Alameda

Local 853 invites you to join the walk
as a walker and as a donor!

For more info, contact Janine at 510-895-8853

Joseph, the son, translated for his dad: "I'm thankful God has given me health, life, my wife and kids, and I just bought a new house."



Joseph & Jose Esterripa
Costco

"I'm thankful that I have a job and Teamsters Local 853 to back us. We need a union in all the Costco stores to keep us protected."



Kurt Braithwaite
Costco-Redwood City

"I'm thankful that I still have a job to feed my family and that I'm in good health."



Eugene Chin
SF Dept of Water & Power

400 members are apprec

Bright and early on Saturday, November 6, more than 400 current members and retirees came to Local 853's meeting hall in San Leandro to hear the State of the Union and to be appreciated by their union.

Members came from every industry represented by Local 853—dairy, construction, warehouse, sales, liquor, newspaper and more. They came from across the greater Bay Area; they came with their spouses and with their kids. This was, by far, the biggest crowd ever.

After coffee and donuts, they heard Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise, in his



Collection box for troops in Iraq.



Members wait to hear their names called to see if they've won a TV, DVD player, jacket, hat or other assorted goodies.

Top: Sr. of Trust mem on and

ciated at annual meeting

first post-November 2 election speech, talk about what union members might expect in the coming years. In short, unions will face the fight of their lives, but Local 853 is strong, its funds are viable, and if members can maintain the solidarity they've shown in past months and years, we'll be able to weather the storm.

The meeting quickly turned to the Raffle Prize give-away. Prizes included 32-inch TVs, DVD players, other electronic items, jackets, hats and assorted goodies.

Even if their name wasn't called, everyone left a winner, taking home a Local 853 t-shirt and a sleek embossed swiss army knife and travel mug.



President John Becker, opens the meeting; Middle: Julie Molina signs members in; Bottom: Members bikes make grand entry exit.



If our children understand the value of the union, it will thrive for years to come! Lots of union parents brought their kids to Member Appreciation Day.

