

Teamsters can impact the 2008 elections through DRIVE

It is money, money, money! Not ideas, not principles, but money that reigns supreme in American politics.

—Senator Robert Byrd

As the 2008 Presidential elections approach, hundreds of millions of dollars will be raised and spent to try to influence who runs our nation for the next four years. If we, as Teamsters, want to have a say in our future; if we want a National Labor Relations Board that works for fairness rather than for corporate interests; if we want good jobs to stay in America rather than being outsourced to the lowest bidder; if we want protections for our health and pension benefits, then we have to put our money where our mouth is.

Over the years, Teamsters have been able to stop attacks on work rules and bad legislation with an effective grassroots political action program called DRIVE—Democratic, Republican, Independent Voter Education. The purpose of DRIVE is to elect



political candidates who have a proven voting record of supporting working people and their issues – regardless of what political party they belong to. DRIVE is non-partisan and independent from any political party.

Unions may not use dues money for political action, so we must have voluntary support from members to wield the power of our numbers. You can fund DRIVE by giving as little as \$2.00 a week. Get a DRIVE card from your steward or your on-sight political coordinator, fill it out and give it back. Your voluntary contribution can be made through weekly payroll deduction—you won't even feel the big difference you can make.

By supporting DRIVE, your money will be used for voter registration programs, keeping members and their families informed on key issues and voting records, and rallies, news conferences, advertisements, and phone banks to build support on issues of concern to working people.

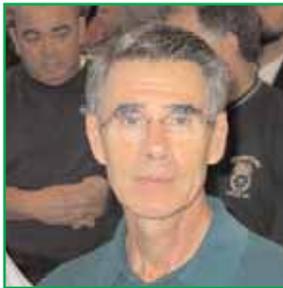
Contribute to DRIVE—your future depends on it!

What makes Local 853 effective?



Kelly Smith
Berkeley Farms

"I like the newsletters so I can see what's going on—even more communication would make the union more effective. When I have a problem and call the union, they're on it right away."



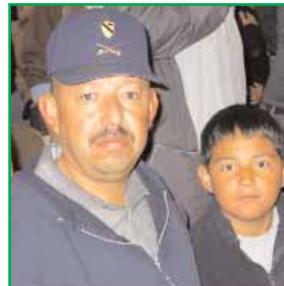
John Harton
Consolidated Printers

"I'm overwhelmed by the number of people—it's a privilege to be here. Last year I was the only one from my shop. This year, there are three of us. Who knows how many we'll bring next year."



Mark Shelton
Reliable Trucking

"This Local's effectiveness comes from persistence and the membership. Our company fought the union for more than two years, but the union finally won. We look forward to seeing how it will benefit us."



Christopher Hernandez
(& Christopher, Jr.)
Gillig

"This is my first time in a union and it's really cool. I have good benefits and I feel more secure because I know somebody's fighting for me."



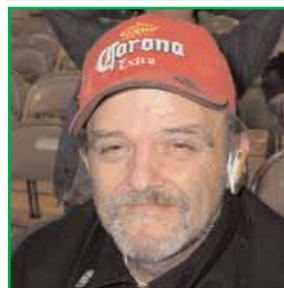
Richard Walrod
Graniterock

"We've been going through a tough 18-month struggle, but Rome and Phil are really there to support us."



Efran Cacas
San Jose Mercury News

"We recently merged into this local because it's bigger. That's important—more members makes us stronger."



Thomas Lent
Genesis Logistics

"Our business agent is always there when I need him. He solves our problems and grievances."



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San Leandro, CA 94577

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Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union

Happy Holidays

from the
officers &
staff of
Local 853



Wishing you and your family
a safe, healthy and prosperous 2008

Local 853 Executive Board

Rome Aloise — Secretary-Treasurer
John C. Becker, Sr. — President
Phil Tarantino — Vice President
Antonio Christian — Recording Secretary
Mike Furtado — Trustee
Julie Molina — Trustee
Jeff Belunza — Trustee

Business Agents

Dan Harrington
Bob Strelo
Pete Easton
Stu Helfer
Bo Morgan
Jesse Casqueiro
Steve Zucker
Lee Lahtinen
Jack Albrecht
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CONNECTIONS

Volume VIII, No. 3

December, 2007

We represent you: Local officers re-elected by acclamation

On November 5, nominations were taken for officers and trustees of Local 853. With no opposing nominations submitted, the current officers were re-elected on a “white ballot.”

“The best honor you can be given as a worker is to have your fellow workers want you to lead them,” said Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise upon being reelected. “I look forward to continuing to serve Local 853’s members with all the skill, knowledge and commitment I can muster.”

Echoing that notion, re-elected President John Becker said that “it’s an honor and a privilege to represent you. This is not a job—it’s a cause.”

The three-year term of office runs from January 2008 through December 2010.



Re-elected on November 5 are Local 853’s officers and trustees. (L to R): Trustee Jeff Belunza, Recording Secretary Antonio Christian, President John Becker, Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise, Trustee Julie Molina, Vice President Phil Tarantino, Trustee Mike Furtado.

Local 853 launches redesigned website to increase member involvement



Some of us get our union news from newsletters like this one. Others prefer to scour the web. Local 853, with the help of member Marc Miyashiro, is working to update the Local’s website and and make it

more user-friendly, more interactive, and more useful a tool for building member involvement.

“What we’re launching now are cosmetic improvements—we’re basically making

the information that’s been on the website more accessible,” explains Miyashiro. “We started with a good base and now we want to expand it, add more content, see more member involvement like member blogs.”

Miyashiro sees the website as a way for members to get involved when they can’t get to meetings. “It can help us become a ‘labor movement’ by getting to know others in the local—in our own industry and in other industries.”

For about 25 years, Miyashiro has run Grafix as a design and web design company. “Grafix was a member of GCIU and I became a Local 853 member when our Local merged in a year ago. So as a member, I really want to include important content that members care about.”

Miyashiro’s goal is to get the site “fully Web 2.0—fully interactive.” Currently the site is easy to navigate and brings you up-to-date labor news, information about the pensions and benefits, FAQs, and links to your business rep and union officers.

Check it out. Go to:
www.teamsters853.org.

Exciting plans as new term begins

By ROME ALOISE

I would like to thank the entire membership for the white ballot I received at the nominations meeting. I am truly humbled by this. Many of you know that I am a second generation union official. What you may not know is that my immigrant grandfather supported his family by shining shoes and doing whatever it took to keep food on the table. My father never forgot the abuse and humiliation his father went through and never let me forget it. Everyday, I want to make them both proud by ensuring that members of Local 853 have dignity at work and security to provide for their families.

As I said at the nominations meeting, workers cannot honor one of their brothers or sisters more than to choose them to lead them in their struggles for a decent living for themselves and their families.

This will be my 11th term of office, and I pledge to you that I will continue to work tirelessly to improve and protect what we all have as members of this great union. Thank you on behalf of all of the Board.

While democracy and divergent ideas make us strong and vibrant, consistency of leadership has served Local 853 well over the years, helping us grow and maintain economic viability. During this term, we will strive to mentor new leadership so as to assure the great legacy of Local 853.

We have numerous contracts to complete and more due to expire in 2008. Most significantly, we will either get a good agreement with Graniterock this year or we will take the necessary action to make sure that Graniterock does not undermine the rest of the ready-mix industry.

Another merger on the horizon

An exciting new merger is in the works,

and I am hopeful that by our next newsletter, we will be able to announce the merger of Teamsters Local 78 into Local 853. This will bring our membership up to around 13,000, making us bigger, stronger, and better able to protect our members and improve their livelihoods.

This merger has been approved by both Local's Executive Boards and awaits the approval of Local 78's members. Pending unforeseen circumstances, the merger will take effect on February 1, 2008.

Working for a new president

Our biggest challenge in the New Year will be the Presidential election in November of 2008.

In the past seven years, we have seen George Bush and his Republican cronies attempt to destroy the protections for working women and men that organized labor has sought for a century. Long-standing labor law precedents have been overturned on the thinnest of reasons; corporations have been given incentives to move good paying union jobs out of our country; and the work to administer unions has been made more complicated and expensive—all in an effort to undermine our effectiveness. In short, another four years of a Republican administration could spell the end of unions and organized labor as we know it.

This is why it is vitally important for **all of our members** to participate in this elec-

tion. We will actively and aggressively work to register 100% of our

members to vote in November. We will actively and aggressively ask our members to participate in DRIVE, so that we can assist the campaigns of our chosen candidates. And, we will actively and aggressively work to get out the vote. Although we haven't selected a candidate to support during the primaries, all of the Democratic Party candidates have committed to support working people, while none of the Republican Party candidates have even given lip service to our core issues. Once the primary season is over, we will get behind one person and work diligently to get her or him elected.

Celebrating the year

In closing, we have come through another tough, exciting and productive year. Our Local continues to grow, become stronger and more successful. Our contracts continue to protect what we have, and improve the livelihood of our members and their families.

We have much to be thankful for. In the spirit of the season, please help those who are less fortunate, spend time with your loved ones, and take time to reflect on the value of our union.



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 at connections@teamsters853.org

Benefits & Announcements

Increased pension allocation

It's official. The Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Plan allocation rate for the year 2008 will be raised to 2.0% (and to 2.65% for active participants with 20 years or more). According to Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise, who serves as a Trustee for the WCT plan, this increase reflects the trustees' commitment to reinstating the accrual rates as responsibly and prudently as possible. With no withdrawal liability, ours is one of the country's most financially healthy and secure plans.

WCT Pension Plan Q&A

On the second Wednesday of every month, a representative from the WCT 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 are held in the West Bay and East Bay:

- 1700 Marina Blvd., San Leandro, or
 - 151 W. 20th Avenue, San Mateo, CA.
- Call 510-895-8853 to confirm location.



Local 853's Annual Membership Appreciation Meeting

Local 853's Membership Appreciation meeting on November 5 was the biggest yet. More than 530 members signed in for the event at the John Muir Middle School in San Leandro.

Every member who attended the meeting received a Teamster tote bag and sweatshirt as a thank you for their involvement in the union. About one in five attendees won a raffle prize—either a Teamster jacket, a small electronic item like i-pod speakers or a DVD player, or one of two 26" television sets. The grand prize was a 37" TV with a surround-sound system.

San Leandro Mayor Tony Santos welcomed the group to his city, and reminded members who live in San Leandro that he has a weekly coffee chat with residents on Thursdays, from 10-noon.

Before giving his year-in-review report, Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise introduced Marc Miyashiro to make a presentation about the new website. "Our goal is to become fully interactive and so far, we're just getting started. At this point, we've changed the look and made the site more user-friendly." Miyashiro took the group on a tour of the website, showing off its ease of use and the many categories of information available—from general news about labor and the Teamsters, to specific news about what's happening at 853, to frequently-asked questions, contacts for information about benefits, and more. "We want to increase member access to information about the Local and we want to increase member-to-member conversations."

Aloise started his remarks by reviewing the numerous industries now represented by Local 853—from dairy and liquor to warehous-

es, from newspapers and printers to construction. "We should appreciate each other in this Local, because when we work together, we win together."

The first issue Aloise addressed was the 18-month struggle with Graniterock's owner, who is "using his economic wherewithal to try to bury our members." The union has filed numerous unfair labor practice charges against this employer and the members have held a few one-day strikes. "We'll continue fighting until we win, and we'll win because of our members," Aloise added.

Aloise then reviewed the recent mergers of three Locals into Local 853, bringing in nearly 800 more members. "This adds to our strength, diversity and assets. It's a real credit to our Local that the members and leadership of these other unions want to join with us."

In addition to mergers, Local 853 is also growing the old-fashioned way—through organizing. In September, 120 drivers at Reliable Trucking ratified their first union contract. "This was a two-year effort," Aloise explained. "The company not only battled the union, they battled their own employees. These drivers stood tough in the face of harassment and we welcome them into our Local." Several Reliable drivers attended the meeting and were given a standing ovation.

Contracts and politics

As most members are aware, health and welfare costs are the biggest problem in every contract negotiation, with most plans costing \$6-7/hour. A portion of these premiums cover the uninsured. "We have got to elect representatives who will fix the health care cri-



(Top) More than 500 Local 853 members filled the John Muir Middle School gym on November 5 for Membership Appreciation Dinner. (Bottom starting at left) Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise, San Leandro Mayor Tony Santos, and Graniterock Shop Steward Carl Mc. and other business reps help raffle prize winners find their jacket size; grand prize TV winners Victor Saldana from Foster Farms Dairy; Terry



acks them in

s—it's not just a problem for the uninsured, but for those of us who are insured as well," Aloise explained. "That's why we've increased our DRIVE sign-ups and will push voter registration. Corporations outspend unions by at least ten to one. Money is the other's milk of politics. Because we cannot use union dues money to contribute to politicians, we need voluntary contributions. Without politicians to do what we need them to do, we're sunk."

Speaking of money, Aloise gave a quick review of the Local's retirement benefits. "Our 401K plan has more than \$400 million—making it one of the nation's largest plans. The Pension trustees had to lower the accrual rates five years ago when the stock market lost money, but with investments now running at \$34 billion, the trustees are pleased to be able to raise the accrual rate in January."

Just a few of the more than 100 contracts negotiated in 2007 include Costco, our biggest single group of members; Young's Market/Southern Wine and Spirits, which was that industry's best economic agreement in 15 years; Dreyer's Ice Cream, which unsuccessfully tried to gut the WCT pension. "Our staff stays busy, negotiating 10-12 contracts each month."

Aloise closed by remembering his dad, who died earlier this year. "This is the first meeting he's not in the audience taking notes so he can brief me on what I should have done differently!"

Aloise then told the group that he's proud of the union and of serving as its Executive Officer. "We've become stronger and larger. If anyone wants to take us on, they'll have to fight our money and all of you!"



by; Web designer Marc Miyashiro; Local 853 trustees and from Bode Gravel; and Michael Watts from Berkeley Farms.

What makes Local 853 effective?



Jim McAvoy
Right Away Redy Mix

"This local is outrageously effective due to the leadership of Rome and Bo and the other business agents. They work hard and keep us at the top of our industry."



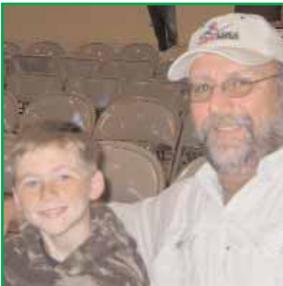
Armando Gonzalez
Caterpillar Tractor

"There have been a lot of improvements in the Local—we're more informed by the business agents and by Rome, and we're kept in the loop of every dollar that's spent."



Brian Baya
East Bay Restaurant Supply

"It's growing really fast. When I first started, there were 5-6 warehouses—now, we have 26. That makes us strong."



Doug Horton (& Ethan)
Foster Farms

"My boss once said that if it wasn't for the union, we'd all be making minimum wage—so I'm glad for the union. We're definitely getting bigger and stronger."



Barbara Betz
Berkeley Farms

"Our leadership is pretty good at their jobs. We're bringing in a lot of people and its growing strong and stronger every day."



Santiago Villanueva
Pregis

"Good educational materials are being sent out to the members. Helping members learn more about the union and the value of it makes the union stronger."