



CONNECTIONS

Teamsters Local 853
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Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union

Propositions on the February 5 ballot

Prop 91

Transportation Funding

The goal of Proposition 91 is to prevent the state from spending gas tax revenue on non-transportation related endeavors. While Proposition 91 was being qualified, the Governor and legislators put Proposition 1A on the November 2006 ballot to accomplish the same thing that Prop 91 set out to do. Labor supported Proposition 1A it voters passed it last year, therefore Proposition 91 is no longer necessary.



Prop 92

Community Colleges: Funding. Governance. Fees.

This initiative would give every Californian the chance to go to college by lowering fees from \$26 per unit to \$15 per unit. It also limits the rise in future fees, ensures stable funding for California community colleges, and guarantees that the community college system stays independent from state politics.



Prop 93

Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office.

Proposition 93 would shorten the total limit on legislative terms from 14 to 12 years, but would permit legislators to serve their entire term in either legislative house. Term limits have had many negative impacts on the legislature—members not having enough time to gain expertise and constant jockeying for position, to name a few. We would like to see term limits reformed, but we are not sure that this initiative solves those problems. *Teamsters have taken no position on Prop 93.*

Props 94-97

Overtake Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts

Under tribal law, casino workers on Indian reservations have no enforceable right to organize into a union unless it is expressly specified in the gaming compacts. These four gaming compacts do not include provisions to protect the rights of these workers, which is why Labor opposes these compacts as referenda. There is no more important issue to workers than the right to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages and improved working conditions.





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SPECIAL MERGER EDITION

Local 78 members approve merger into Local 853



Local 78 members learn details about the merger proposal before voting on it at January 5 Special Call meeting.

(CL): Local 78 Secretary-Treasurer Steve Mack and (CR) Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise both answer questions before the vote.

On the cold and rain-soaked Saturday morning of January 5, members of Teamsters Local 78 braved the elements to discuss and vote on the merger of their Local Union into Teamsters Local 853. Long-time members and relatively new members ultimately voted by an overwhelming 95.5% margin to approve the merger.

Local 78 Secretary-Treasurer Steve Mack opened the discussion by assuring the members that Local 78 is in good financial shape and that the merger is not driven by financial troubles, as is so often the case. Instead, he explained that Local 78 is dealing with increasingly more national and multi-national corporations that are ever more aggressive and anti-worker. Merging would increase the Local's size and assets, putting the union on a more equal footing with these corporations.

Mack assured the members that their dues rates, pension, and health and welfare plans would remain the same and that their contracts would stay in effect until the next negotiations. Responding to a member who asked about the downside of the merger, Mack said "the only downside is probably to me, as I'll no longer be the Principal Officer and to some of our Executive Board members who are stepping down to make the merger happen."

"With nearly 6,000 members, Local 78 is still one of the most viable and successful Locals in the country," said Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "Its members are fortunate to have such selfless officials who are putting the future of the membership ahead of their own interests and ambitions."

Merging benefits members in many ways

Aloise explained that, over the years, the two Locals have grown as a result of 15 separate mergers and that each of these mergers have made the Locals stronger and more effective. "The

mergers create efficiencies of scale; they provide more people with different experience to assist in day-to-day representation, and very importantly, they enable the Local to implement a viable succession plan so that future leaders will have the benefit of the knowledge and experience of the current officials."

Aloise suggested that because the two Locals have many common contracts involving the same employers, combining efforts will give Local 853 more leverage and strength in bargaining. Additionally, the merged Local now has trustees on all of the many health and pension plans that cover all of the members.

As a result of the merger, Local 853 will have about 12,000 members.

"I am excited about this, as Local 853 will be the largest Local in Northern California and one of the three or four largest in the West," said Local 78 Business Agent Dan Varela. "I knew our members would see the value in getting bigger and better."

"Local 853 officials also are making sacrifices to make this merger work," said Aloise. "As Steve Mack becomes the new President, our current President, John Becker is stepping back to be Vice President. Trustees Jeff Belunza and Julie Molina will move to our newly-created Advisory Board. Our members should be proud to have such dedicated people representing them."

The merger has been approved by the Executive Boards of both Locals, by the members of Local 78, and by the Joint Council and International Union and will take effect on February 1, 2008.

In the short term, Local 78's offices will remain open, however, soon, its main office will move to Local 853's San Leandro building. Local 853 will maintain two satellite offices in San Mateo and San Jose. Members will be notified when the address and phone numbers are changed.

Mergers make us bigger, stronger and richer

By ROME ALOISE

Over the past year and a half, Local 853 has completed four mergers: GCC Locals 583 and 468, and IBT Locals 15 and now Local 78. When the leadership of a Local comes to Local 853 to merge, they do so in the belief that they are ensuring strong representation for their members into the future. I am honored by their confidence and believe that each merger signifies a tribute to our Local.

Further, each of these mergers requires a sacrifice by the officers and officials of the merging Local. Some may be giving up their position on the Executive Board; others may lose some authority. In all cases, the sacrifice is made for the benefit of the members of that Local.

The latest merger of Local 78 into Local 853 is one of the biggest mergers in the IBT in memory. By combining two successful, financially viable Locals, this merger creates one of the largest Locals in the nation. This is a case where size matters, because the merger gives Local 853 significant assets and power, enabling us to continue to provide our members superior representation. Employers will know that we have the resources to do what it takes to get our members the contracts they deserve.

Our immediate plans include re-modeling the Local 853 San Leandro Main office, in order to bring all of the staff of Local 78 into our building. The reconstruction may take months, so we will continue

to utilize Local 78's Hayward offices.

Agents and officers will still have their same phone numbers until construction is complete. While we eventually plan to sell the Hayward building, we will maintain the office in San Jose as well as our San Mateo office.

We hope for a smooth transition, but in the case of a few bumps, I ask that you be patient.

In closing, I wish to welcome our new members from Local 78 and I promise you that you will be proud to be a member of Local 853.



Benefits and Announcements

Monthly Union 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 West 20th Avenue, San Mateo.

Call 510-895-8853 to confirm location.

Bakery Division Meeting

The Bakery Division Quarterly meeting will be held March 11, (second Tuesday), 5 p.m. at 492 C Street, Hayward.

Life with Dues increase

The Executive Board of Local 853, effective November 1, 2008, raised the Life with Dues amount to \$10,000 for the death of a member, and \$2,000 for the death of a member's spouse.

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].



Join Local 853's **walk MS** team—the **TeamMSters**—for this year's fundraising event. We walk together with hundreds of thousands of people across the nation to keep moving toward a cure to end the devastating effects of Multiple Sclerosis.

The **TeamMSters** will be walking at **Crown Beach in Alameda on Saturday, May 3, 2008.**

For more info about MS and how this walk benefits patients and their families, to register to walk on our team or volunteer at a walksite, go to <http://walkcan.nationalmssociety.org> or call Janine Vanier at Local 853: **510-895-8853.**

The TeamMSters have been the #1 team in Northern California for 6 years in a row—we're not stopping now!!!

Teamsters Local 853

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Debra Chaplan, Editor

Your Executive Board

Rome Aloise Secretary-Treasurer and Principal Officer
Steve Mack (former Local 78 Secretary-Treasurer) President
John Becker Vice President
Antonio Christian Recording Secretary
Mike Amaral (former Local 78 Vice-President) Trustee
Mike Furtado Trustee
Robert Baker (former Local 78 trustee) Trustee

Advisory Board

Phil Tarantino, Jeff Belunza, Julie Molina, Ron Parades, Don Wallace, Ron Valdez

Retirements

Local 78 President Kenn Hill



Not long after the Executive Boards agreed on the basics of Local 78's merger into Local 853, Kenn Hill announced his retirement. "I have worked a long time representing the members and I wanted to make sure that our Local made the right choice before I left," Hill said. "I feel really comfortable with this merger and with the benefits it will bring to both memberships."

After 23 years as an officer and business agent, he leaves as President of Local 78. The son of a Teamster official, Kenn first joined the Teamsters when he got a job at Lucky Stores in San Leandro in the early 1970s. He learned many of his union skills by watching tough negotiations, participating in a couple of long strikes, and experiencing the solidarity of the Teamsters working in the chain store industry.

When Lucky's moved to Vacaville, Kenn went to work at Hartz Mountain and transferred from Local 853 to Local 655. (This local later merged into Local 78.) Kenn's affinity for speaking his mind and getting his point across clearly led Local 78 Secretary-Treasurer Steve Mack to hire him as a business representative.

Over the years, Kenn represented Local 78 members in almost all of the industries covered by the Local and negotiated some of the finest contracts that exist in their respective industries. He was elected to the Executive Board and soon became Vice President. "Kenn became President of our Local during a difficult time," said Mack, "Working with the staff, he forged a team spirit and a sense of unity of purpose. His good nature, calm demeanor, and good judgement helped many members of our Local."

"Kenn and I are both Teamster brats whose fathers demanded that if we were going to work in the labor movement and represent members, that we had better put our all into it. Kenn is one of the best I have worked with," said Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise

Kenn will be working on his hobby of restoring muscle cars to show quality, where he has won a number of car shows for his work. His attention to detail in this field carried over into his union work. We wish Kenn a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Local 78 Trustee Jimmy Sherrill



James Sherrill, a Teamster for over 40 years, and a member of the Local 78 Executive Board for more than 30 years announced his retirement.

Jimmy, as his friends and the membership know him, was one of the first Black members to hold a position on the Executive Board of a Teamster Local in Northern California. His dedication to his fellow members and his willingness to be there when the Union needed him was noticed early on by then Local 78 Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Corneola. Jerry asked Jimmy to serve the members by taking the position of Trustee on the Board, and characteristically Jimmy said yes.

Jimmy began his career in the freight industry and wound up his career when Albertson's closed their San Leandro operation. Jimmy was a charter member of the Northern California Black Caucus and also a member of the Teamsters National Black Caucus.

"Jimmy has been a great advocate for working men and women. He made sure that they got what they deserved from their employers and were always represented with respect. His big smile, his advocacy for both the union and his Christianity, made his advice and counsel very valuable to all of the staff," said Local 78 Secretary-Treasurer Steve Mack.

"I hope Jimmy will continue to come around and be a part of the newly-merged Local. We need his history and experience," added Local 853 Secretary Treasurer Rome Aloise.

Jimmy and his wife are helping to raise their grandchildren so saying that he is retiring is probably not going to be in the cards for the near future. The members of Local 78 owe him a great debt of gratitude.

**For up-to-date Teamster news,
check your Local website:
www.teamsters853.org**