

Updates from around the Local

The good news!

Graniterock loses at 9th Circuit Court of Appeals: The 9th Circuit Court of Appeal overturned the jury trial against Local 287 and upheld the dismissal of the frivolous lawsuit that Graniterock filed against Rome Aloise, in his capacity as the Assistant to the IBT General President. "In typical fashion," Aloise said skeptically, "we expect the owner to use his inherited fortune to appeal the case and throw more money away."

MV Transportation: Two hundred bus drivers, maintenance workers and mechanics at MV Transportation became members of Local 853 when they accepted their first-time contract by a 99% margin. The agreement, negotiated by Adolph Felix and Efrén Alarcon, provides for wage increases, an increase in health care contributions, and most importantly, contract language that protects the employees' rights. We welcome these new members.

Local 853's building: In November, we completed construction in our San Leandro building on a new meeting room, a state-of-the-art conference room, and seven new offices for business

agents. From now on, we'll be able to hold most of our meetings right at our main office. The new conference room offers us video-conferencing capability and provides for on-line capabilities and all the amenities that any modern negotiation requires.

The bad news!

The worst economy since the great depression has taken its toll on our membership. A number of companies have gone out of business in the last two months including Mother's Cookies, which was in Oakland for 100 years, Good Chevrolet, which closed after 58 years in Alameda, and several other car dealerships.

Parking and car rental agencies have experienced up to 50% layoffs, just before the normally-busy holiday season. And, we've seen layoffs in the ready mix and construction industries.

Local 853 business agents are working with a number of employers and the unemployment office to create job sharing so that our members can continue to work at least 80% of the time to keep their benefits active.

What's the first thing the new president needs to fix?



Linda Butler
PCA Parking—Kaiser Oakland

"Fix the housing crunch. He needs to help people with their mortgages."



Chae Son
Recall (2 years)

"Fix the economy. We need to continue working so we can put more money into schools, so kids have a chance to get good jobs in the future."



David Drapeau
Penske (20 years)

"He needs to fix health care—the high cost of medical is ridiculous!"



Roman Ortiz
Southern Wine (4 years)

"Fix health care. It's not equal for everybody. Lots of people don't have insurance because it's so expensive."



Martha Woodley & Pat Tarango
SF Chronicle (28 & 29 years)

"Fix the economy. People are losing their homes and their jobs. We'll be losing our jobs next year because the Chronicle is planning to outsource our work."



Joe Viera
California Glass (8 years)

"Fix the mess we're in with the financial system. We need oversight of the bankers."



Tim Butler
Central Concrete Pleasanton (12 years)

"Fix the economy—housing, wages. I have a big list. Hopefully he can turn things around."



Robert Alcorn
Costco (17 years)

"Fix the economy. In particular, the housing situation—all the foreclosures, bum rates. They're bailing out the companies doing it but there's no bailout for the people losing their homes."



CONNECTIONS
 Teamsters Local 853
 2100 Merced Street
 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

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 Steve Mack—President
 John C. Becker, Sr.—Vice President
 Antonio Christian—Recording Secretary
 Robert Baker—Trustee
 Mike Furtado—Trustee

Business Agents

Phil Tarantino	Chuck Davis
Dan Harrington	Dave Ellis
Bob Strelo	Ron Paredes
Pete Easton	Adolph Felix
Stu Helfer	Mike Amaral
Bo Morgan	Lou Valletta
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CONNECTIONS

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2008 election a victory for America's workers

By all counts, the election last month was historic. Americans decisively voted *against* war, corporate greed, transferring wealth to the wealthy, environmental devastation and the anti-union policies that we've lived with for eight years. We voted *for* Barack Obama and going in a different direction; while rejecting racism and fear, we voted for the most worker-friendly President since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

"This was a make or break election," said Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "Our union's very existence and the wages and benefits we've won over the last 70 years were at stake. That's why we went all out—involving hundreds of members as jobsite political coordinators, registering members to vote and sending out mailings. Not only did we have a strong turnout for Obama, but we succeeded in electing most of our other endorsed candidates in the Bay Area."

Impact on unions and the economy

History shows that unions are the critical factor in building a strong middle class in this nation. However, since Ronald Reagan busted the air traffic controllers union in 1981 and the Bush administration did all it could to limit the right to unionize, the numbers of workers in unions declined as did the standard of living for most Americans.

For that reason, unions have worked to build support for the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). This bill will finally give workers who want to join unions a fair chance to do so. The EFCA sets up "card check," which means that when a majority of workers sign union cards, they'll be unionized. The bill also mandates that employers negotiate a first contract fairly or go to arbitration. The Bush administration and



Senator Barbara Boxer explains to Local 853's political coordinators at an October meeting how Obama will be more supportive than McCain of working people.

big business oppose the EFCA, but Barack Obama co-sponsored the bill and has promised to sign it when the new Congress sends it his way. This bill is a top priority for labor.

In addition, unions and their members expect and deserve a seat at the table when issues of jobs and the economy are being debated. The Change to Win Federation has assembled a list of candidates for top jobs in the administration—not only in the Department of Labor, but also in Health and Human Services, Commerce, Homeland Security, and other agencies that affect union members.

As the stock market has fallen, so too have the investments of many union pension funds. However, while the Bush Administration was eager to bail out Wall Street, they had no interest in our multi-employer plans. Fortunately, even before the election, the Obama transition team had contacted union leaders to get ideas about how best to support the hard-won union pension plans.

Staying vigilant

"We made history by getting Obama elected," Aloise said, "but now we have to do more. We have to make sure that workers and our unions have a role in shaping how the American economy is rebuilt. We have to make sure that health care reform and pension reform are in the forefront and that labor is again a part of the Labor Department."



Local 853 staff, wearing Teamsters for Obama t-shirts, is ready for political coordinators to register for meeting.

Obama election marks historic turning point

By ROME ALOISE

I am writing this report right after the election returns have come in, and couldn't be more proud that our nation has elected Barack Obama to be President.

Not only is Obama the best man for the job in these challenging times, but in addition, the ramifications of electing a black man to serve as President of the U.S. are incredibly significant. The polls show that white America voted for him, that the black vote was not the deciding factor, and that almost every sector of the voting population supported him.

This is a truly historic turning point. We can now say, "The United States of America," and mean it. No one is disenfranchised; no one can say that we let race, religion, bigotry, or prejudice get in the way of voting for the person that the majority thought would do the best job.

This is one of those events that people will remember where they were when it Obama's victory was announced. In my lifetime I have had a number of those events—but most are bad memories. This event truly makes me proud that it happened in my lifetime!

As you know, the officers, officials, and political coordinators of Local 853 worked very hard on this election, and the Local allocated funds to help those working to get Obama elected in the swing states.

We now will have a President who truly believes in the rights of workers to organize into a union for their mutual protection. Obama understands that unions are the reason for the middle class, and that without a vibrant and flourishing middle class, our country cannot survive. He gets that good wages, decent health care plans, and pension plans are essential to the well being of

everyone in our country. Good jobs enable people to spend money on cars, houses, and the goods and services that in turn drive our economy.

The fact that Obama has committed to sign the Employee Free Choice Act will change the face of labor relations in our country. Once workers realize that they can seek representation and have a reasonable shot at gaining the advantages that union representation brings them, we will begin to see a resurgence in our power and ability to negotiate for the wages, terms and conditions that we need as workers.

However, the fact that legislation gets passed in only the first step. Unions need to be ready to move forward, get people signed up, and get the first-time contracts in place.

At Local 853, this means that we will go after the competitors that undermine our employers' ability to compete fairly. We need to make sure that the companies that compete against our employers do not have an advantage because they pay cheaper wages and benefits.

Additionally, the Obama administration has to move on a national health care system and work with us to preserve and protect our pensions. There are many problems that need to be solved, some of extraordinary magnitude. By having a unified front, we can overcome these and move forward.

Thank you, again

As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, we again had a very successful membership appreciation meeting. Hundreds of our members enjoyed the morning, won prizes and felt good about being a member of Local 853.

We celebrate our union each year to make sure that our members realize that this is their union. And it's a good way for members to realize the diversity of our Local, which makes us strong and vibrant. I especially want to thank everyone who came to the meeting and our staff for doing the hard work to make it a great success.

On another front, I need to tell you that we are continuing our fight against Graniterock and its tyrant owner. The courts have ripped away his ability to lie about the unreasonable changes in our contracts that he is demanding. We will continue to work to make sure that, as a non-union, standard employer, he cannot unfairly compete against our legitimate employers.

Finally, I want to wish you and your families a happy holiday season. I also wish that we all see a more prosperous New Year, as we now have the hopes and dreams of a society that has finally overcome one of the great stigmas in our history.



Teamsters Local 853

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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:

- 2100 Merced St., San Leandro, or
 - 151 W. 20th Avenue, San Mateo, CA.
- Call 510-895-8853 to confirm location.



Local 853 appreciates its members

“If you build it, they will come,” was the line Kevin Costner’s character heard in *Field of Dreams*. It’s certainly true for Local 853’s membership appreciation meeting. For the ninth year in a row, the members came, filling the auditorium at the John Muir Middle School in San Leandro on Saturday, November 1.

“This event is always fun because it has a simple agenda—for us to say thank you to our members,” says Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. “Each year we have two big decisions to make in planning the event: whether it’s time to move to a bigger venue and what kind of gifts and prizes to provide. We just want everybody who attends to know that, as a group, they are what makes this union strong and that we appreciate them.”

If you’ve never been to one of these meetings, you’re missing out. The event is fast paced, only has a few speeches and the main focus is on distributing the prizes.

After calling the meeting to order, President Steve Mack passed the gavel to Vice-President John Becker, who announced that, for the fifth year in a row, Local 853 had won the Vince Aloise award for having sold the most raffle tickets to benefit the Teamsters Assistance Program (TAP). He presented the award to Rome Aloise, who was particularly touched

because the award was named for Rome’s father, who had long been involved in promoting and building TAP.

Rome then presented a brief “State of the Union” speech, which focused on three main issues: the impact of the merger with Local 78, taking on Granite Rock Construction and the state of our pension plans.

First, Aloise explained that Local 853 joined forces with Local 78, a strong local that brought resources of its own to the table. “This makes our union even more diverse than ever before. With our combined size, strength and resources we can set the standards and set the trends,” he said with pride. However, he also thanked the members for their patience because a merger of this complexity has been more difficult to manage than anyone anticipated. “But I’m confident that we finally have it all together,” he added.

The Granite Rock issue will be harder to resolve. “We’ve been fighting this company and it’s spoiled little rich boy owner to get a contract for more than two years. In the end, the only way we’ll succeed is with the help of all our members.”

And finally, he assured members that, for now, the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Plan is fully-funded and secure. However, the stock market has hit all pension



① More than 500 Local 853 members packed the John Muir Middle School gym on November 1 for Membership Appreciation Day (Arvin Levander from Costco wasn’t there to redeem his winning ticket!) ② Trustee Mike Amaral hands over to Jonathan, who works prizes. ③ Prizes ranged from Teamster gear to a wide array of electronics. ④ Recording Secretary Antonio Christian and Secretary of a company she helped organize in 1981. ⑤ Doug Radonich, Stan Miller and Guadalupe Pinedo won gift certificates for turning in t



bers

ans hard. The good news is that Obama's transition team is contacting unions for suggestions about how the new administration can help shore up the multi-employer pension plans. "This has never reached the agenda of the Bush administration, who's busy bailing out everybody else. So clearly, change is in the air," he added.

Speaking of the upcoming elections, he quickly moved to acknowledge and give prizes to the three individuals—Stan Miller, Doug Radonich and Guadalupe Pinedo—who registered the most new voters.

The final event, before distributing about 225 prizes, was for Aloise and Recording Secretary Antonio Christian to present a plaque from local 853's executive board to Peggy Kendall, who's retiring from Macy's. "She helped organize this 100-person shop in 1981 and has been there every day working on behalf of the members as the company has gone through changes of ownership and downsizing. We, and the members there, will miss her."



Thomas Navarro from Berkeley Farms wins the 42" TV (only after the City/County of San Francisco. ④ Members pick out small electronic prizes. Rome Aloise honors Peggy Kendall, who is retiring from Macy's—most voter registration forms.

What's the first thing the new president should fix?



Moises Loza Gillig (8 years)

"I want Barack Obama—and he needs to fix the economy—the banks, the houses, pensions, schools, everything!"



Kimo Chun CertainTeed (10 years)

"Fix the economy—that's important for our quality of life."



Thayer Dawson Cemex Oakland (2 years)

"Other than the economy, he needs to get everybody back stable and working. He needs to get things back together—we need some stability!"



Phuong Tran (and daughters) Gillig (20 years)

"Fix the economy. Keep jobs in the U.S.—don't send them overseas."



Kelly Wilson Berkeley Farms (13 years)

"End the war and bring our boys home!"



Gary Miller Central Concrete (3 years)

"Fix the economy—construction is really slow and that's a big problem."