



CONNECTIONS

Volume X, No. 2

December, 2010

Local 853 members appreciate their union—and vice versa!



With a record number of members in attendance—between 900 and 1000—Local 853’s 11th annual member appreciation meeting, held on November 5 at the John Muir Junior High School auditorium in San Leandro, was another huge success.

After signing in, members all received a gift package of fleece vests, note pads, pens, and other Teamster paraphernalia. They were also treated to donuts and flu shots.

The meeting itself had two main events: the first was Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise’ annual State of the Local address, where he recapped recent contract settlements, reviewed the impact of economic changes on some of our employers, and assessed the election

results. The second main event was that more than 100 members won prizes ranging from union jackets and paraphernalia to a 50” flat-screen TV.

“Our local is great because of you and your willingness to support our officers and officials and shop stewards,” Aloise told the members. “Consistency, experience, and know-how are what produces results, and our local has all three!”

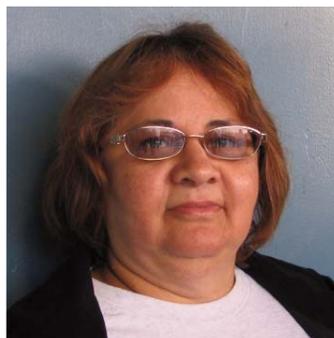
This meeting is always on the first Saturday in November, although the union may need to move to a larger location. Watch for notices in October at your worksite.

What do you think of the 2010 elections, and what should the union focus on now?



Frank Cervantes (& Lily)
Alhambra

“The election was expected. I’m sure people will come full circle and recognize that the republicans aren’t in our corner, and will start taking away our rights. Two years is just down the road. We need to solidify the base and lay the groundwork.”



Rose Noone
Macy’s

“I’m glad that Whitman lost. It was important to get all the union members out to vote. Now we need to focus on keeping everybody’s job. I’m glad I still have my job! And help union members the best we can.”



Rodney Torres (and Kawika)
Costco

“It is what it is. The politicians took a position and need to do the right thing. The unions should just keep building and working to get stronger.”



Catherine & Dominic Frisone
Retirees, SF Chronicle

“There were big changes. But, I’m not optimistic. The union should tell the leaders what the people need.” (Catherine)
“A lot of union members are retired or will be soon. We need to protect social security and we need the COLA back!” (Dominic)

Building on our strength in tough times

By ROME ALOISE

When the year comes to a close, it's always a good time for reflection and making decisions about what priorities to set for the future. As I look back on 2010, I see much that's positive and a number of areas that need improvement.

The recession continues to take its toll and our local has lost too many members as a result. In some cases, the companies remain open but downsize their workforce and lay off workers, hopefully temporarily. However, we have seen several companies close their doors, including companies that we have had contracts with for many, many years. The downturn in the auto industry and the closure of NUMMI was particularly hard on union companies down the supply chain.

We are a diverse local that represents workers in many different industries. Usually, when one industry is slow, another might be hiring. This time however, all of our industries have been affected and the economic downturn has made finding jobs for our sisters and brothers much more challenging.

We are hearing indications that the economy is picking up. I hope this trend continues into the New Year so that we can get everyone back to work.

The challenges we face

We have also had some challenges with our employers in negotiations. For example, VWR has been under contract with our local for more than 50 years, and until they were purchased by a private equity company, they were a decent employer. We have been in negotiations for months, and they have announced that they are closing the facility and moving the work to Visalia, CA. We have been moving to convince their ownership that there are better ways to make the company profitable that include enabling our members to keep their jobs. This fight will go into the New Year.

Also, due to a legal technicality, the armored car company Loomis simply walked away from our members. We will fight until our members see justice in how they have been treated.

Many employers are using the economy

to leverage their positions. While protecting our members' jobs is foremost in this economy, it doesn't mean that we will allow companies to take advantage of our members. This is where our cohesiveness as a local union is most valuable. Our members follow the lead of the officers and officials and that has and will get us through the tough times. We will work on making sure that the employers know, before they try to take us on, that they will have the fight of their life if they try it.

The good news

On a positive note, our members throughout Northern California, but especially in Local 853, again stepped up. You registered to vote, signed up for DRIVE, and played a big part in not allowing the Republicans to buy the elections in our state. Every candidate that we supported for statewide office won, and that can only help us in the future. You have proved, again, that by participating in the process, we can make a difference.

Another outstanding event was our Membership Appreciation meeting. With nearly 1,000 members, it was our biggest to date. Our members were, as always, attentive and boisterous all at the same time. It is always fun to see the diversity of our members and how well they get along. We are an "army of one," and that is for sure when you see a big crowd of our members together. It again, speaks to why we are a successful Local. The members make it successful. Thank you!

In closing, I want to wish you and your family a great holiday season and hopefully the New Year will be a better one for all of our members! Happy Holidays!



Announcements

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. in San Leandro, (except for October, when it is held in San Mateo):

- 2100 Merced St., San Leandro, or
- 151 W. 20th Avenue, San Mateo, CA.

Charge your dues

In our continuing effort to make dues payments easier and more convenient, Local 853 is now offering monthly credit card payments for your dues. For more information on this program, please contact the local union office at 510-895-8853.

Apply for James R. Hoffa Scholarship (2010-11)

Deadline March 31, 2010

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund awards scholarships annually to outstanding high school seniors. For eligibility criteria and an application, contact the Local 853 office or go on-line to:

www.teamster.org/content/scholarships

Check out Local 853's website

Go to www.teamsters853.org to see the local has been up to between newsletters; also get business forms and other union resources.

Teamsters Local 853

CONNECTIONS is published quarterly by Teamsters Local 853, 2100 Merced St., San Leandro, CA, a non-profit organization. Postage paid at San Leandro, CA.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Teamsters Local 853, 2100 Merced St., San Leandro, CA 94577

Members: Send address changes and comments to the above address or e-mail us at connections@teamsters853.org

Scenes from the Membership Appreciation Meeting



Meeting — November 6, 2010



1—Members show appreciation for the union; 2—Signing in for the day; 3—Rome Aloise (L) receives Vince Aloise award from John Becker on behalf of Local selling most raffle tickets for TAP; 4—Organizer Stacy Alvelias, Staffer Jennifer Casqueiro, and Member Pam Talavera; 5—Kaiser reps gave flu shots; 6—Victor Hernandez, Gillig, won the grand prize, a 50" TV; 7—Willy Harrington, JFC, wins one of the 42" TVs; 8—Andy Begala, Bluelinx, wins the other 42" TV; 9—Staff prepares for the first winners to be called.



What do you think of the 2010 elections and what should the union focus on, now?



Ben Walrod
Central Concrete

"We're lucky we got Brown in office. He backs the union and that's who we need. Now it's time to focus on health care... and more union jobs and more organizing."



Dave Mirabella
G. Bortolotto

"We just have to make sure we have jobs. I have one and that's a good thing, but a lot of people don't. And we need to do organizing so more people can get good jobs like we have."



Jim Gauthier
Sysco

"I'm optimistic. Jerry Brown's been governor before and state did well when he was in charge. The union should continue to get good contracts for the members. Keeping good benefits, like health and welfare for the members."



Anthony O'Neal
Loomis

"The union needs to focus on making sure people have their jobs. That's the main thing."



Dan Cabral
Sysco

"I'm glad we got Brown in. I didn't like Whitman's lies and millions of dollars. Now we need to keep people working and keep the employers from cutting hours and raising productivity. I'm thankful to have a job and have the security of the Teamsters."

Local 853 officers elected on white ballot



On November 8, Local 853 held its nominations meeting for candidates to run for the positions of the local's officers and officials. With only one slate nominated, that group was officially elected to serve for the next three years.

Local 853's officers, elected to serve from January 2011 through December 2014 are:

Rome Aloise, Secretary-Treasurer; Steve Mack, President; John C. Becker, Sr., Vice President; Antonio Christian, Recording Secretary; and the three trustees are Mike Amaral, Robert Baker, and Mike Furtado.

Pictured above are Local 853's newly-elected team and its business agents.

Using Teamster investment power at VWR

For 52 years, Local 853 has represented the warehouse workers at VWR in Brisbane. Unfortunately, that good relationship started to sour in 2007, when the company was bought out by Madison-Dearborn, a Chicago-based investment group. The relationship turned rancid when talks for a new contract stalled in May; VWR informed the union that they were moving out of the Bay Area two years earlier than previously announced and they weren't willing to talk about transfer rights or severance.

Looking for leverage, the union launched a strategic corporate campaign. "We used the

power of our multi-billion dollar Teamster pension funds and that of other unions to get the attention of the higher-ups at Madison-Dearborn," Strelo said. As a result, the talks have re-started.

"It goes to show the kind of pressure you can bring to bear on a company if you can identify who they do business with. Our members were—and are—ready to go on strike, but with a company like this, leveraging their investors may be a more effective tactic."

Hopefully the contract will be settled soon. The jobs and future of 68 members in Brisbane depend on it.

Long road to justice



Jimmy Negrette and Local 853 Vice-President John Becker show off the long-awaited settlement check.

Jimmy Negrette was discharged from JC Paper in May, 2007 for allegedly threatening violence in the workplace. The Local took up his case and, in April, 2008, the arbitrator ruled in Jimmy's favor. However, JC Paper refused to honor the ruling and it took another three visits to the arbitrator and three trials in federal court to finally get the company to settle up.

In the end, Jimmy collected a check for \$75,907 which represented 18 months of back pay, as well as pension and health and welfare payments.

"The union is here to fight for our members' rights, even when the company is stubborn beyond belief," says Vice President John C. Becker, Sr.

What do you think of the 2010 elections, and what should the union focus on now?



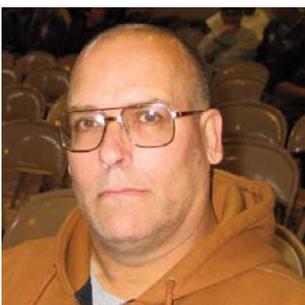
**Santiago Villanueva
Pregis**

"I'm glad Jerry Brown is in the house and Boxer, too. The Teamsters had a lot to do with that and that made me feel good. The main new focus should be growth and organizing and jobs."



**Ray Torres
Young's Market**

"We should all be very happy that Jerry Brown won the election and be proud of California's unions. I give a big thumbs up to our members who voted. The union does a good job, but the rank and file needs to pull together to make the union stronger."



**Dan Wurtenberger
Morton Salt**

"It's time to quit wasting money. The politicians get a free ride. Why don't we? The state's got more money than they can do with. Unions need to prove what they say is true: keeping the electeds accountable."



**Thomas Navarro
Berkeley Farms**

"I'm glad that all the Democrats won. Now we need to work on getting people back to work—union members and others."



Presorted Standard
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 OAKLAND, CA
 PERMIT No. 379

Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union



Happy Holidays

from the officers & staff of Local 853

Executive Board

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

Office Staff

Janine Vanier	Lydia Pinedo
Jennifer Casqueiro	Sue Watkins
Kim Drinkward	Hilda Cornejo
Janice Johnson	Denice Kransky
Lennie Kuhls	Lupe Ramos
Eve Miller	

Advisory Board

Jeff Belunza
 Don Wallace

Sergeant at Arms

Doug Radonich

Newsletter Editor

Debra Chaplan

Webmaster

Marc Miyashiro

Business Agents

Dan Harrington	Dave Ellis
Bob Strela	Adolph Felix
Stu Helfer	Lou Valletta
Bo Morgan	Efren Alarcon
Jesse Casqueiro	Dan Varela
John Arnolfo	Lon Schmidt
Chuck Davis	Dennis Hart