



CONNECTIONS

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Holiday edition, 2016

Members and elected officials open Local's new headquarters in style

Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff join Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise and other local elected officials to cut the ribbon for the Local's new Oakland office building on August 27.

More than 500 members attended the Open House event that included a full barbecue lunch, a tour of the new building, live music, face painting for the kids, and more.

"As we see prosperity and jobs come into the Bay Area, we want the Teamsters union to survive and thrive," Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff told the members in attendance. "You have been great supporters of mine, and I've got your back."

"We've created a state-of-the-art facility that will last our Local and the labor movement well into the future," Aloise told the crowd.



(Above) U.S. Congressmember Barbara Lee and Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff help Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise cut the ribbon to Local 853's new Oakland headquarters building. The August 27 ceremony brought together hundreds of members and their families. (Below) Members enjoy a beautiful day and a great lunch at the union's new building.



Local's leadership team re-elected on white ballot

On September 1, Local 853 re-elected its leadership team to a three-year term that runs from January 1, 2017-December 31, 2019.

From the left: President Bob Strelo, Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise; Vice President Bo Morgan; Recording Secretary Stu Helfer; and Trustees John Thomas, Scott Gonsalves, and Lou Valletta.



After an eventful year, challenges ahead

By ROME ALOISE

2016 has been a momentous year for Local 853 in so many ways. We moved from San Leandro to Oakland, into a new larger building. With two tenants, the Alameda County Building Trades and the Alameda County Central Labor Council, we not only offset the costs, but now our building is the center of all of organized Labor's activities in the East Bay. Additionally, our new offices give us room to host negotiations, arbitrations and many of the activities that we previously held out of the office. Although the purchase, and especially the build-out, were very challenging, in the end, I believe we have a great facility that you can be proud of and that will last us many years into the future. The building is a symbol of our local's prominence within the Teamsters and the entire labor movement.

Success at the bargaining table

Some of our biggest negotiations for our larger units were finished this year with overwhelmingly good results. Costco, our single biggest unit, had the highest settlement in a number of contracts. Because of the solidarity of our members, and all the members working for Costco in the West, we were able to assist the East Coast Costco members in obtaining the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Plan—something they'd wanted for the last three contracts. Our members turned down a reasonable offer so that the East Coast Costco members could fight for their pension.

Our Ready Mix drivers stood strong and obtained one of the better settlements in their bargaining history, keeping them the best paid drivers in the industry in the nation.

Gillig members agreed to a long extension on their contract, which was very

lucrative and also gave the company the security to continue building the new plant in Livermore. We expect our members to be moving from Hayward to Livermore in mid-2017, where they will all maintain their jobs and continue to be the best paid and benefited manufacturers in the industry. Much of this success can be attributed to our political strength in being able to obtain a number of variances and waivers so that Gillig could build their state-of-the-art facility right in our area. This is important, as many states offered to build the plant for free if the company would move the almost 1,000 jobs, of which more than half are Local 853 members' jobs. We were able to fend this off and keep our members secure for the next 50 years.

Monthly union meetings are the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the union hall: 7750 Pardee Lane, Oakland. Now is the time to show up and get involved!

In the Tech Shuttle industry, we are continuing the life-changing contracts that have nearly doubled the shuttle drivers' wages and benefits and have also helped us gain increases for the rest of our bus drivers because of the pressure we have put on the industry to retain these drivers. This is exactly what a union can do for our members when everyone is heading in the same direction.

Many other contracts have gotten settled this year, all with decent increases and with very few negative results. All of this was accomplished without the loss of one dime in wages due to a strike. This again speaks to our reputation of doing what we say and getting done what we need to for our members and their families.

Trouble ahead

Unfortunately, this year has also resulted in the election of a President who put himself out there as the savior of the middle/working class. I am convinced that many of our members bought into this charade and voted for him. True to what many of us suspected, he is not even in office yet and his cabinet appointments signal nothing

but disaster for working people.

His Secretary of Labor owns fast food restaurants and has actively fought the minimum wage and workers rights. He has been fined by the Department of Labor for safety violations, and this is the person who is supposed to look out for workers in our country! Not what was promised by this candidate.

Also, the new Republican Chair of the House Labor committee stated publicly that she doesn't see a need for unions or the National Labor Relations Board.

The President-Elect has appointed cabinet members who are insiders, Wall Street operators and encompass a who's who of the billionaires club. None of this looks like it will help workers in the least!

Oh yes, and his daughter moved her shoe manufacturing work from China to another third world country that pays even lower wages.

All in all, I fear that we are in for a volatile and frightening four years. NLRB appointments and, most importantly, Supreme Court appointments will last for many more years into the future.

All of this is designed to undercut what you do, the wages you make and the benefits that protect your families. My hope is that organized labor and our members band together to fight off bad legislation, bad policies and any attempts to undermine our ability to bargain and obtain the best for our members. If we let ourselves be divided, we are doomed to failure.

From me to you

On a personal note, I was re-elected as an International Vice President, along with General President Jim Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall, to another term at the International. Also, I was recently re-elected without opposition as the Joint Council President. None of this could be possible without your support and the trust that you have placed in me.

I very much want to thank you and pledge to keep working tirelessly for you and your families. In closing, from all of the officers, officials and staff of Local 853, we wish you safe, healthy and happy holidays.



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Organizing for the future

More shuttle bus drivers come on board

The 15 drivers who work for We Drive U and shuttle workers to Salesforce in San Francisco and San Mateo succeeded in getting card-check recognition for the union in November. Negotiations for a first contract are just getting under way. “We have good momentum going forward,” says Business Agent Stacy Alvelais, “and we’re hopeful to have a contract very soon.”

Organizers Rodney Smith and Tracy Kelley are talking with the drivers at several other shuttle companies, and are hopeful to be able to report many more organizing victories in the near future. “As always, our goal is to drive up standards and organize the industry,” says Smith.



The crew who helped organize Golden State Lumber attended Local 853's Open House. From left: Nick Guinea, Business Rep Stu Helfer, Francisco Estrada, and JC7 Truck Driver Ron Valdez.

Workers at Golden State Lumber want union representation

By a three-to-one margin, employees at Golden State Lumber in Newark, voted to be represented by Local 853 back in August.

The 26-person unit which includes drivers, load builders, yard men, saw operators, forklift operators, lumber handlers, lumber shippers and receivers chose Local 853 despite the meetings held by management that tried to convince them otherwise.

After working at Golden State for a year and getting injured twice, Francisco Estrada said he supported the union to get something better for himself and his family. “Also, I wanted protection from the boss’ bad attitude.”

Golden State Lumber operates both union and non-union facilities in Northern California. “The company did not charge any less for their products in an unrepresented yard, but put the additional profits in its pocket, rather than compensating those doing the work,” explains Organizer Rodney Smith. “The employees in Newark have been doing the same work as those in the unionized yards. They deserve the same compensation.”

“I’m glad we voted for Local 853 and look forward to a better future as Teamsters,” said Nick Guinea, a driver who comes from a union family and is credited with initiating the organizing drive.

According to Business Agent Stu Helfer, negotiations for a first contract are underway, but going slowly. “At some point, we may need to take some action to push things along.”

How do the elections impact you as a union member and Teamster?



Leonard Lockett
Bake-Mark
10-year Teamster

“Hopefully, the Dems will keep it going. That will help the unions. We sure don’t need any union busters like Trump in there.”



Bill Covington
Anixter
3-year Teamster

“I hope for the good. I don’t want a womanizing racist in there. Trump could press the button, or send us in to war.”



Lucia Prieto
Costco Business Center
19-year Teamster

“I’m concerned about medical coverage and prescriptions. And the soda tax -- the cost of living impacts everyone.”



Robert Preston
Peerless Coffee
40 years

“If we get the right people elected, it could help us as far as the economy and jobs go. It could have a big impact over the next four years.”



Berta Gamero
Macy's
28-year Teamster

“Hillary will do better than the other one (who will remain nameless). She has the experience and knows what it takes.”



Strong unions are made up of three key ingredients: effective leadership, a trained and dedicated staff, and the most important is an active and involved membership. With about 10,000 members at 300 different locations across the Bay Area, Local 853 has all three in just the right mix.

About one in ten of Local 853's members turned out for the 17th Annual Membership Appreciation Day, held Saturday, November 5, 2016, at John Muir Middle School in San Leandro.

As always, breakfast was served. In addition to the traditional donuts, coffee and juice, this year, members were treated to eggs and breakfast meats cooked on the Local's grand BBQ grill.

Every member in attendance received a stylish long-sleeved t-shirt emblazoned with the union's logo. They could also get their flu shot on site.

In his annual "State of the Union" address, Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise talked about the diversity of our local union—by industry, color, race, religion, gender—and how we "use those differences to build unity, strength and power."

Aloise spoke about the many excellent contracts that the union was able to negotiate in 2016, "all of them accomplished without one minute lost to a strike," he said. These include construction, Costco, dairy, liquor, Gillig, and many more.

Aloise was quick to remind members that "it is essential to appreciate what you have, and not take it for granted, especially because many of you have had it handed to you because some members, many years ago, took their company on to set the foundation. Please appreciate what others have done for you!"

The main core of his speech



MEMBERS—NOV. 5, 2016!

was to urge members to participate and vote in the 2016 elections—for Teamster offices and for the national, regional and local elections. Aloise carefully reviewed the records of the two Presidential candidates and some of the local races. “You may not know this, but we spend a lot of time on interviewing, following the voting records, and vetting the people that run for office. Having influence with elected officials is one of the ways we maintain our strength and ability to get things done.”

The raffle quickly followed Rome’s speech. Prizes included union jackets, hats and shirts, and a wide variety of electronics, including seven huge television sets.

What does it take to get appreciated by your union? It takes showing up. Mark the date—November 4, 2017, and be there.

(A) More than 800 members attend the annual meeting;

(B, C) President Bob Strelo and Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise address the members;

(D) Local 853’s staff at the meeting;

(E) Members from Amports in Benicia attend in force;

(F) Young’s Market members show their stuff.

(G, H, I) Prizes: Two members show off their winnings; all members have to sign an acknowledgment of receipt of their raffle prize; some of the dozens of prizes;

(J) The members who won TVs;

(K) Kaiser Permanente is on hand to give flu shots;

(L) Strelo and Aloise pick the winners;

(M) Marsi Newman from the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council distributed information about the upcoming election;

(N) The raffle alternated between electronics and union swag;

(O) Organizer Tracy Kelley and a member cook breakfast for the crowd.



B



C



D



E



G



H



I



F

How do the elections impact you as a union member and Teamster?



Ernie Aguilar
Cargill Salt
8-year Teamster

If the Teamsters come out strong for a candidate, then I'll support them. I don't love the choices this time, but have to pick one."



Scott Schilz
Berkeley Farms
30-year Teamster

"I want the Dems. Trump's against organized labor and workers."



Michael Stoddart
Amports

8-year Teamster
"I'm glad that the Teamsters are involved in the presidential system and are not just watching from the sidelines. Having influence gives us strength as a union."



Jesus Ramirez
Young's Market
16-year Teamster

"We want to keep our union strong. We want our President to support the union so we can keep our jobs and support our families."



Stan Miller
Tetratex
10-year Teamster (retired)

"It's all about job security. We need to protect what we have and won't be able to with a Republican. It's scary that one of our choices is a non-qualified person who hates women and the disabled."

Sisters in Solidarity



To support people in need in our community at the holiday season, Local 853's Women's Committee, Sisters in Solidarity, went shopping for clothing and food, and on December 7, brought the goods to the Eastmont Garden of Hope in Oakland. Many thanks to (from left) Teamsters Rodney Smith, Lynn Door, Tracy Kelly, Stacy Alvelais, Eastmont's Assistant Director Evon Ufland and Director Pertrena Coleman, and Teamster Steve Bender.



Giving back to our local community

Having a good Teamster job is something to be thankful for, and in that spirit, Local 853 members donated about \$1,000 at the Member Appreciation meeting on November 5 and the Local matched those donations. Sisters in Solidarity went shopping and spent about \$1,400 on clothing and food to fill the shelves of the Eastmont Garden of Hope in East Oakland. They donated another \$600 to the Davis Street Community Center in San Leandro.

Eastmont Gardens was started five years ago by Pertrena Coleman, who continues to direct the program and its sister program in North Oakland. The Teamsters was one of their first donors and has been making donations during the holiday season each year ever since.

"We really depend on you to stock our shelves and carry us through the new year," says Coleman. "People are so grateful. Social services should not be just about pushing paper, but it can be about directly helping people. We appreciate our partnership with the Teamsters," Coleman adds.

Announcements

WCT Pension Plan Q&A

On the second Wednesday of every month, a representative from the WCT Pension Trust Fund comes to Local 853's Oakland 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].

Getting the Best Contracts

Canteen Vending

By a total vote of 162 to 17, the members at Canteen Vending in San Leandro and San Jose and at OCS in Hayward ratified a new three-year agreement on November 17.

The members in San Jose and San Leandro service and install both traditional vending machines and new style automated kiosks. The Hayward facility is primarily an office coffee service, with other beverages and snacks as well.

The contract included raises of as much as 60 cents for the OCS employees and an increase in the employer medical contributions of \$200/month in San Jose. "Getting a good contract stemmed from having a strong committee who understood the issues and communicated well with all of the members," said Business Agent Jesse Casqueiro. "We also had a strong group who were willing to threaten a strike if it came down to that."

Casqueiro especially wanted to thank Shop Stewards Leonard Martinez, Gary Harryman, David Gordon, Mike Baxter, Greg Stuart, Bill Webb, and Pete Ramirez.

Le Boulanger Bakery

It took almost a year, but the 25 employees at Le Boulanger Bakery in Sunnyvale finally ratified their first contract in December, after having voted for union representation back in January. "The collective bargaining agreement includes wage and benefit increases of about 20% across the board, which is excellent for a first contract," says Business Agent Lou Valletta. The new members ratified the contract by a vote of 18-3.

SFO Shuttle Oakland

The 34 members who work at the shuttle the public between the Oakland Airport and the Oakland Rent-a-Center ratified their new contract on November 2.

According to Business Agent Phil Ybarrolazza, wages were improved by 12.5% for the drivers and 15% for the customer service agents over the next three years. They also secured a 15% increase to the employer's medical contributions over the same time period, as well as getting pension increases and other contract improvements.

Ybarrolazza wanted to acknowledge and thank Shop Steward Amin Abdullah, who was instrumental in helping secure one of the best contracts ever at SFO Shuttle Oakland.

Aramark

The 94 members who work for Aramark in Fremont, the refreshment and office coffee company, have a new four-year agreement. "It's the best contract that they've had in the 11 years I've been an agent," says Lon Schmidt. "With major improvements in wages and health and welfare, the members overwhelmingly ratified the contract."

Arbitration victory at Berkeley Farms

Having a union means that somebody's got your back, and that's just what it meant for a seven-year employee at Berkeley Farms, who had been fired for violating company policy by taking long breaks.

It turns out, the company relied on the use of video monitoring to determine the discharge. "The union had previously bargained that video surveillance could be used against its members only if it is not the sole source implicating a worker of wrong-doing," explains Business Agent Doug Radonich.

The case first went to mediation in the spring, and when the employee refused a settlement, the union took it to arbitration. The union was represented by Andy Baker from Beeson, Tayer and Bodine.

The arbitrator found the company had failed to prove just-cause and agreed to sustain the union's grievance in full. He ruled that, after 11 months of being off work, the employee should be returned to work with all back pay and benefits, plus interest at 10% per annum. In December, she received a check for about \$65,000 and is back at work.

Supporting our kids with scholarships

Helping our kids reach their career dreams is part of what the Teamsters are all about. Union scholarships are available on the local, Joint Council and national levels.

Here, Joaquin Soto (L), son of Juan Soto, who works at Central Concrete, received a \$1,000 James R. Hoffa Scholarship.



Sara Bruce (L) is the daughter of David Bruce, who works at Macy's. She received a small scholarship from Local 853. Cristina Piscitello (R), the daughter of Frank Piscitello, Jr. who works for the City and County of San Francisco, received a \$1,000 Harry Pollard/Bob Morales scholarship from Joint Council 7. The two young women redeemed their checks at the August membership meeting from Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. President Bob Strello is in the back.



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Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union



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This is a composite photo of the new mural, painted by Mike Thornton, in the lobby of Local 853's new Oakland office.