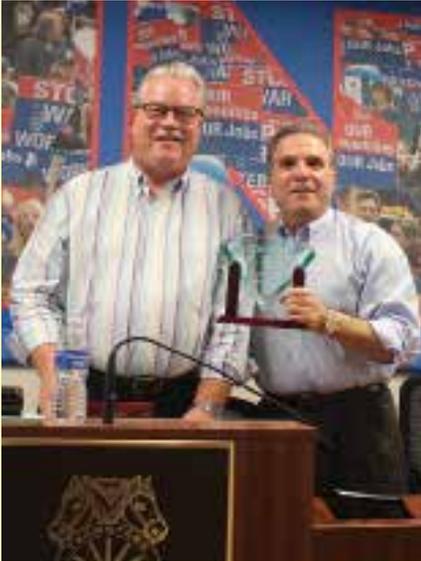


### Local 853 comes through for Teamsters Assistance Program, again!



*President Bob Strelo presents the Local award to Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise.*

The Teamsters Assistance Program offers a range of programs for members from drug and alcohol counseling and support to help navigating any number of social and mental health services. Each year, TAP has a golf tournament and a raffle to raise money.

TAP challenges the Locals and business agents to sell the most tickets, and for eight years in a row, since the award was first given, Local 853 has won the challenge. The prize for the Local that has raised the most money is named for long-time Local 315 leader Vince Aloise, father of Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "It makes me proud each year to win this award," Aloise said.

Winning the Business Agent sales award was Ray Torres, who personally sold \$1,900 worth of tickets.

Congratulations to Local 853 and to Ray for stepping up for TAP.



*Business Agent Ray Torres accepts the award from President Bob Strelo.*

### Local 853 joins fight to increase minimum wage for all Californians

On the whole, minimum wage workers don't have anyone to fight on their behalf. That's why it was so important for the Teamsters to stand up for economic security for all Californians and play an active

role in the fight to increase the minimum wage to \$15.

In April, the legislature passed, and Governor Jerry Brown signed, the "Fair Wage Act of 2016," raising the minimum wage over a number

of years to \$15 per hour. Teamster fingerprints were all over the bill.

"While even \$15 is not nearly enough for someone to raise a family on—particularly in the Bay Area—many workers in our state do just that," said Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "They struggle at minimum wage jobs, trying to make ends meet, deciding which bills to pay and whether to pay rent or feed their children. We hope that by raising the pay levels, we not only help these workers but also give a

boost to everyone else."

Governor Brown asked Aloise to participate in the process of developing the legislation and then to stand with him when he announced that the legislation was complete.

"This act demonstrates our commitment to all working people, and confirms the fact that our influence as Teamsters is sought out by the lawmakers in our state," Aloise added with pride.

This measure increases the minimum wage to \$11.00 per hour, effective January 1, 2017, and by \$1.00 each of the next four years, to \$15.00 per hour on January 1, 2021. Thereafter, the law adjusts the minimum wage annually based on the rate of inflation for the previous year, using the California Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers.



*Rome Aloise stands with Governor Jerry Brown as the minimum wage deal is announced.*



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Local 853  
Open House



# CONNECTIONS

*Returning to our Oakland roots*

## New headquarters for Local 853

After more than 15 years of being in San Leandro, Local 853 has returned to the union’s Oakland roots in a very big way.

“Our local has grown substantially over the last decade and we needed more space, not only for offices, but for meetings with members and employers,” says Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. In addition, construction on the new Kaiser Hospital in San Leandro was causing major traffic disruptions. And, once the hospital was completed, offers from medical groups and others to buy our previous building were getting hard to ignore.

At 22,000 square feet, the new building is nearly twice the size of our old property. After a complete gutting and renovation, the building includes 21 business agent offices, multiple conference rooms, and a large meeting hall.

“Plus, we were able to create a mini-Labor Temple,” Aloise adds. “Our two tenants on the first floor, the Alameda County Central Labor Council and the Alameda



*Teamsters Local 853’s new building at 7750 Pardee Lane –near the Oakland Airport.*

County Building Trades Council bring the strength of Alameda County’s unions into our space.”

Building out the space to meet the Local’s specifications was a greater challenge than anyone anticipated. “In fact, the build-out was five months behind schedule. When we moved in February, there

were no doors on the offices,” Aloise says. “Even now, there are still final details to complete, but we’ve got state-of-the-art facilities that should make our members proud, and should impress any employers who might want to take us on.”

The Local will hold an open house on Saturday, August 27. Watch for details.



*Small Meeting Room*



*Front Office*



*Large Meeting/Training Room*



*Staff Kitchen*



*Union Hall*



*Board Room*

## Your Local is firing on all fronts

By ROME ALOISE

This has been another very busy year at Local 853.

### Teamster Convention

At the end of June, our delegates and alternate delegates will head to the International Convention to discuss modifying the constitution, pass resolutions, and nominate candidates for the national Teamsters General Executive Board. Our Local is one of the biggest in the country and we are sending 13 delegates and 13 alternate delegates to represent all of our members. With all the issues confronting workers, it ought to be a very interesting and, hopefully, a historic convention.

### Local's new home

We have completed our move to our new building in Oakland, the city in which our local was originally chartered in 1937. Our new building is twice the size of the San Leandro building and gives us plenty of room to grow. Our meeting hall is larger, our conference facilities are state of the art, and the building is designed to be member-friendly.

In the past, we've had to pay for hotel rooms for negotiations and meetings. This facility should enable us to keep in-house most of what we do on a day-to-day basis. All in all, having this facility should enable us to do business in a more efficient way.

Importantly, we now have room for two important tenants—the Alameda County Building Trades Council, and the Alameda

County Central Labor Council. Not only does this help defray our costs on the new building, but it brings labor together in one place. In the old days, they'd have called this a "Labor Temple!"

While a building certainly does not make the union, this is an impressive building that our members can be proud of. It is certainly one way to make our friends feel comfortable, and our enemies know that we have the financial wherewithal to take on any fight that comes our way. We will host an Open House on August 27—more details will follow.

### New organizing helps older industries

Our organizing efforts with the tech shuttle bus drivers have produced some significant improvements in their lives in wages, health care and working conditions. We have brought a large number of these new members into our Local, and it has had another amazing effect.

Because we have been able to force up the economics for the tech drivers, our other bus drivers, in many instances, have seen the benefit of this upturn. Our bus drivers who have traditionally worked in low wage school district and para-transit jobs have benefited due to the need that has been created to pay more to keep the drivers from flocking to the tech shuttle industry.

In May, Durham, a company we have battled with over the years for pennies, recognized that they had no choice but to give a significant raise to all of our members who are bus drivers in order to keep them.

What has happened in this industry proves the point that

when you raise the tide for workers, all of the boats rise. Our Local is committed to finding ways to improve the livelihoods of our members and their families. We are continually making progress with our goal.



### Election time

As this paper goes to press, California's presidential primary is in progress. Many of our congressional and statewide offices are also up for grabs.

The Teamsters have not yet made a Presidential endorsement; however, there is only one candidate left on the Republican ticket and he is vowing to undermine labor unions and workers' rights. Trump has publicly stated that he approves of Right-to-Work-for-less legislation nationally; we've seen how this devastates the unions in every state where it has been passed. He'd also dismantle the prevailing wage for construction. This simply spells out his disdain for workers, in general, and for union workers specifically.

We cannot elect someone who would completely undermine the union rights we have. This is an important election to make sure we don't get anything worse by voting for a billionaire who talks right on some issues, but ultimately has no concern for working people. This will be a constant topic of conversation until the election.

## 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 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].

### Check out Local 853's website

Go to [www.teamsters853.org](http://www.teamsters853.org) to see what the Local has been up to between newsletters. Also get business forms and other union resources.

**CONNECTIONS** is published by Teamsters Local 853, 7750 Pardee Lane, Oakland, CA, a non-profit organization. Postage paid at Oakland, CA.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to: Teamsters Local 853, 7750 Pardee Lane, Oakland, CA

**Members:** Send address changes and comments to the above address or e-mail us at [connections@teamsters853.org](mailto:connections@teamsters853.org)

### Charge your union 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.

### Monthly union meetings

Local 853's membership meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the union hall: 7750 Pardee Lane, Oakland. **Note:** Sisters in Solidarity (Local 853's Women's Committee) meets before the meeting, at 6:30, every other month.

### Strike averted; good contract achieved

The contract talks at Westside Building Materials in Oakland were not going well. The 40 members had rejected the company's first offer because it included a two-tier system for new hires who would make \$5-6 less in starting wages, and instead of a pension, they'd only have a 401(k) plan. The company also wanted to freeze wages and give a bonus when the year was over. The members accepted the union's recommendation to reject the contract. Business Agent Efren Alarcon warned the membership at a union meeting that a strike might be imminent.

But it didn't turn out that way. The company has 10 locations, some are union and others are not. The union brought in Mark Woomer from Local 952 who has experience with this company in Southern California. Together, Woomer and Alarcon pushed the company to drop the two-tier plan and withdraw all of their takeaways. We ended up getting a 40 cent increase each year of the contract. By moving the health and welfare plan from one trust fund to another, members were able to save the member \$250/month, or the equivalent of \$1.47 per hour. With those changes, the members voted to ratify the contract overwhelmingly.

Alarcon wanted to thank and acknowledge Mark Woomer for bringing in the power of solidarity; Joaquin Guzman and Andreas Lopez who served on the negotiating team and kept in close communication with the rank and file; and Local 853's Recording Secretary Stu Helfer and Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise for their invaluable advice.

### Good deal at Safeway Dairy

The 80 members who work at the Safeway Dairy in San Leandro overwhelmingly ratified their new agreement in May. "We strengthened seniority bidding, instituted new training procedures, got a signing bonus and wage increases each year and additional money to ensure maintenance of benefits on the health and welfare plan," says President Bob Strelo. "This is a really good contract and the members know it."

### Durham school bus drivers ratify extension with huge increases!



*Durham school bus drivers are pleased to ratify their new contract.*

On May 18, Durham School bus drivers overwhelmingly ratified a contract extension that provides a \$3.50 per hour raise on July 1 for all drivers. The starting wage will also be increased to \$20 per hour. These wages constitute a dramatic improvement from the \$12 per hour starting wage in effect when these drivers first organized in 2012. In fact, in four short years, these drivers have achieved a 67% increase.

"This agreement comes after the record setting increases achieved by the drivers at First Student San Jose and First Student Oakland," says business agent Adolph Felix, who notes that drivers at the Margarite Shuttle at Stanford and in San Francisco recently got the best para-transit contracts in the country.

"These enormous increases can be attributed, in large part, to our successful organizing efforts in the tech industry," said Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "We took an industry with an average wage of \$18 per hour and raised that average to over \$27 per hour virtually overnight. We also got similar improvements to the benefit packages."

Those increases put pressure on bus companies throughout the Bay Area to raise their compensation packages as drivers started flocking to the tech industry.

The Durham extension provides for more annual increases through the life of the four year extension.

### Lucrative grievance settlements at Berkeley Farms

When a member was fired from Berkeley Farms in Hayward, both he and the union felt that the termination was unfair. Business Agent Doug Radonich pursued the grievance, and ultimately the member got a settlement of \$110,000. Although this member is not returning to work at Berkeley Farms, he certainly won a soft landing.

In June 2015, the dairy laid off four members. They were brought back to work in October, but the company did not correct their seniority or give them

the signing bonus for the new contract that the other members received. Radonich succeeded in getting their seniority restored and \$1,500 apiece.

And to ensure that this issue never happens again, Radonich got the company to change a longstanding past practice; Berkeley Farms had believed that they didn't have to honor seniority for anyone laid off for more than one year, but now they'll honor seniority with full recall rights for all employees after 90 days.

## Best contract ever at Goodyear



*The members at Goodyear in Hayward have the best contract they've ever had. Business Agent Ray Torres (L) reports that the members will receive wage increases of \$1.75 to \$6.00, sick and bereavement leave, and a boot allowance. "The company didn't acknowledge that the work these guys do is really a skilled trade," Torres said. "Now they do." Torres wanted to especially recognize and thank Shop Steward Allan Bundy (second to left) for his help on the negotiations and for keeping the membership informed and involved in the process.*

## BART labor agreement ensures more Teamster work

Business Agent Stu Helfer reports a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) reached in January will cover construction of all major BART projects. "This will be huge in terms of hiring Teamsters," he says.

"Teamsters were part of the PLA to build the BART Oakland Airport Connector and that was very successful. It meant we had a lot of people working on it."

Helfer says that the Teamsters are out working on the Hayward Maintenance facility now. As BART progresses with plans to

circle the bay, this should give union drivers in construction and ready—mix significant opportunities in the future.

### New Teamster Companies

Two new companies joined the Teamsters in March and April. They are Tri Valley Water Truck and STL Trucking. Together they bring in about 12 new members who drive water trucks, dump trucks and sweeper trucks. Welcome new Teamsters!



*On April 24, Local 853 members who work in the Ready Mix industry filled the union's new meeting hall for a contract proposal meeting. The master ready-mix agreement expires on June 30. Vice President Bo Morgan says that negotiations are taking place now.*

## Costco contract ratified

Across the west coast, about 11,000 Teamster members who work at Costco voted overwhelmingly to ratify their new three-year contract.

After Costco members on both coasts had rejected the company's first offer—the first rejection in the contract's 40-year history—they voted for the second version, where they got \$.60/hour each year in wage increases, retro to February, and \$.05/hour into the pension. Most importantly, the Teamsters on the east coast will get into the WCT pension plan for the first time, where they had only had a 401(k) plan in the past.

## Sysco gets contract in April

After 20 bargaining sessions, the Teamsters who work at Sysco in Fremont, Sacramento and north, and in Reno were close to a strike. "We had huge struggles over keeping maintenance of benefits for the health and welfare plan and for a contract that included retroactivity, even though the company had stalled negotiations for months," says Business Agent Dan Varela.

"Fortunately, the members stood up and stayed solid, and we got great contracts," Varela says. "The Sysco Fremont contract is the best in the nation."

Bargaining was coordinated with Fremont, Reno, Sacramento and Oklahoma City. Joining Varela to set strategies and do the bargaining was International Vice Presidents (and Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer) Rome Aloise and Steve Vairma and Local 137 President Dave Hawley.

"We had a seasoned group of stewards and just surrounded the company," said Varela. "Being united and having the support of the International made all the difference."

## New unit at First Transit

The 20 people who work in administration at First Transit in Redwood City voted on March 30 to be represented by the Teamsters union. "We've submitted proposals and bargaining is going on now," says Organizer Rodney Smith.