



# CONNECTIONS

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Trucks on way to placement site from SF cement plant.



A view of workers down in the footings.



Local 853 member Romeo Mays (L) is congratulated for a job well done by VP Phil Tarantino.

## Building new Bay Bridge casts Local 853 in concrete

The members of Local 853 in the San Francisco Bay Area often have the opportunity to exhibit their driving skills on the heavily congested highways. But actually having tens of thousands of people witness their work in making history is a bit different from an ordinary day's work.

On the weekends of January 10-11 and Jan. 31-Feb.1, Local 853 members transported nearly 12,000 cubic yards of concrete over, across and underneath the existing San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The concrete was then placed in footings on Yerba Buena Island for the replacement span of the eastern section of the Bay Bridge. Originally built during the 1930s, the bridge failed during the Loma Prieta earthquake in October 1989 and is finally being replaced. The new eastern span of the bridge is scheduled to open in 2007.

"This is the West Coast version of Boston's 'Big Dig,'" says Rome Aloise, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 853. "Our members who work at RMC Pacific Materials showed their expertise and pro-

fessionalism during the two continuous 30-plus hour pours. They have every reason to be proud of their part in making history."

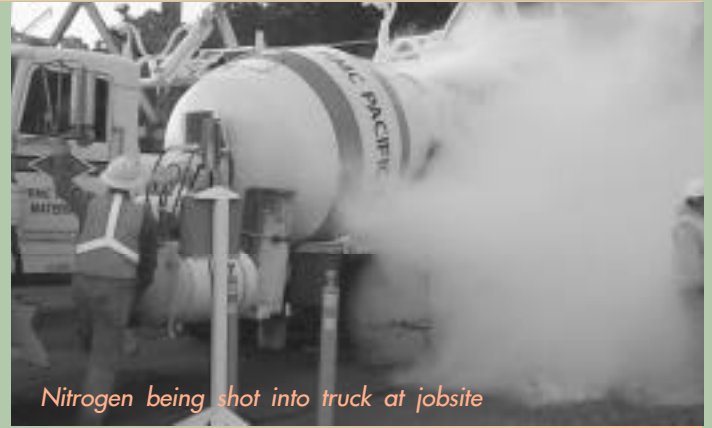
Completing these large pours presented some unusual challenges such as getting 5,000 yards of concrete through rush hour and weekend traffic and set up to pour at the same time on all kinds of terrain.

According to Local 853 Vice President and Director of Construction Phil Tarantino, "All of the work was done with the existing bridge open and traffic going

*Continued inside*



*The Nitrogen Injection unit*



*Nitrogen being shot into truck at jobsite*

## Local 853 members set stage for historic Bay structure

back and forth without a single accident. With the heavy traffic in the area, hauling more than 1,100 loads of concrete without any traffic accidents is an accomplishment. Coping with those conditions is something our members do every-day.”

“It’s a unique process,” says Local 853 Business Agent Bo Morgan. “They had to put two huge blocks of ice into the mixer truck, then dump the concrete on top of it,” “Then they inject liquid nitrogen to cool the concrete down to a constant temperature below 50 degrees,” he explained

Giant cranes now straddle the recently constructed “coffer dams”—huge structures built around the new bridge’s column sites. At high tide, the cranes hook on to the 1,600-ton steel boxes that will secure each column’s pilings, lowering them through the water to the bottom of the bay.

During the pours, which started on Friday nights and continued into the following Sundays, it was common to see two

trucks backed up to each of six pump trucks placing concrete into the massive footings.

Visible from the Bridge and the surrounding Eastbay shoreline, each of the pours went smoothly as shifts of 50 drivers hauled from plants on either side of the Bay.

Both Tarantino and Morgan, along with Local 853 President John C. Becker, Sr., Local 78 Vice President/Business Agent Kenn Hill, Jr., Local 853 Agent Stu Helfer, and others, made trips out to the site to observe progress of the job.

“Our members worked both day and night, in marginal weather and in sunshine, on two different weekends to make this pour happen,” adds Aloise. “What they accomplished will be around for a long time. The members can

feel good about what they did, and can tell their children and grandchildren that they helped build the new Bay Bridge. This gives real meaning to the saying: ‘Proud to be a Teamster.’”



*Space was sometimes scarce as multiple trucks navigate the huge job.*



*Multiple pump booms for footings.*



*Concrete being placed in the footing*



# Three campaigns to protect your future

By ROME ALOISE

Have you ever thought, "I'm not going to vote. Why bother? All the candidates are the same and whoever I support never wins, anyway." If ever there was a time when that attitude was just plain wrong, now is the time.

Several candidates and issues will be on the November ballot that have a direct impact on our way of life, our jobs and our union. You, as a union member, have an opportunity to vote for your interest and win back some of the many take-aways we've lost over the last four years. Or you can leave it to others—who'll vote their own interest.

You may be wondering why I'm concerned about November when it's still spring, and you're just now setting vacation plans and contemplating how best to enjoy the fruits of your labor. It's because I'm working with the leadership of Local 853 to find ways to motivate each of you to get involved. We all hope you have a good, relaxed summer so that you're energized and ready to get active on the key election campaigns that we must win in 2004.

Our top three campaigns this year are to kill the repeal of SB2 with a YES vote on Prop 72, the U.S. Senate Campaign (Boxer vs. Jones) and the Presidential Campaign (Kerry vs. Bush). Due to the new campaign finance laws, I can't actually put our endorsements on the website. But if you're a member of Local 853 and haven't seen our newsletter, I encourage you to call our office for a copy.

Each of these races is important to you—as a union member and a worker—in this state and country.

## Teamsters Local 853

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*Beagle & Bleiweiss Communications  
Debra Chaplan, Editor*

## Campaign 1: Yes on Prop 72

In 2003, the legislature passed and Governor Davis signed SB2—The Health Insurance Act of 2003. This law, set to go into effect in 2006, requires all California employers with 50+ employees to provide health care coverage.

You may ask, "Why is this important to me, a Local 853 member? I have health care because of my union contract." The reason is that our union employers are getting slammed with ever-increasing health care costs and that impacts every contract negotiation we enter into.

Right now, as much as 38% of the cost of our plans can be attributed to the growing number of uninsured workers. This means that our employers are not only paying for your health care, they also underwrite the mostly non-union companies that aren't covering their own workers.

Passage of SB2 was historic, setting an example for the rest of the country. Unions saw this law as a first step toward a much-needed national health care plan. We can save SB2 by voting YES on Prop 72.

But not surprisingly, several big businesses would prefer to keep their unfair competitive advantage. Wal-Mart, McDonalds, and others spent millions of dollars to put an initiative on the ballot to repeal SB2. They plan to spend \$15 million more by November on a media campaign.

This will be a tough fight, but it's one we can—and must—win. Unless SB2 takes effect, health care costs will continue to eat up all the money we can possibly

negotiate with our employers.

## Campaign 2: The U.S. Senate Campaign

It's not all about the man at top—the U.S. Senate and Congress play a critical role in passing the laws and budgets that impact our lives. Issues like the Employee Free Choice Act which promotes the right to organize unions, and pension protection bills are before the Senate now. We can elect someone who will support unions and your economic interests or someone who supports big business above all.

## Campaign 3: The Presidential race

Look at the issues and you be the judge. Do you want a President who promotes policies that lose millions of jobs; who supports the export of U.S. jobs overseas; who attacks overtime pay and who weakens job safety standards, or do you want a candidate who will put jobs and health care first?

## How to get involved

Your political coordinator, shop steward, and business agent will literally be bugging you to register to vote, fill out an absentee ballot request, and get enrolled into DRIVE. Every time I speak to a group of you, you will hear this theme.

These issues are too important to YOU, for me to let them go.

## Benefits Announcements

### 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].

### Monthly Meetings

Local 853's membership meetings are held the Second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. They alternate between the West Bay and East Bay halls:

- 1700 Marina Blvd., San Leandro, or
  - Laborers' Union Hall, 300 – 7th Avenue, San Mateo
- Call 510-895-8853 to confirm the location.

## Local 853 member honored by Central Labor Council

On May 13, Local 853 member Bob Sale was presented with one of two 2004 Committee on Political Education (COPE) Awards by the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

By day, Bob works at Pennzoil in Alameda, and has been a Teamster for 15 years. But when election time comes around, there is rarely an evening that you won't find Bob at the phone bank—calling union members and working to deliver votes for union-endorsed candidates and causes.

"We first met Bob on the Prop. 226 campaign, back in 1996," says Central Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Judy Goff. "He came to the phone bank every night—always with a smile."

With every election since, Goff says it's not a regular night if Bob isn't there at his

favorite seat. "We thank Bob for spreading labor's word to get out the vote," Goff said.



*Alameda County CLC Secretary-Treasurer Judy Goff presents Bob Sale with the 2004 COPE Award*

"We have to admire Bob's persistence, determination and dedication," adds CLC Political Director Sharon Cornu. "He talks to people until they promise to vote his way."

In accepting his award, Bob was almost speechless. "I'm just a working stiff," he said. "It feels good to volunteer."

In addition to the COPE award, Bob also went home with framed resolutions from the Mayor of Alameda, and the California State Senate and Assembly.

Also honored at the dinner at Hs. Lordships in Berkeley was Jim Dupont, President of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local Union 2850 who was named Unionist of the Year and Andrea Gorman from Machinists Local 1584 who received the other 2004 COPE Award.

## Remembering two of our best

### ANDY LUJAN 1944 - 2004

Andy Lujan, a Teamster for 34 years, died suddenly on February 25, 2004, at the age of 59.

A native San Franciscan, Andy joined Teamsters Local 860 in 1969 when he got a job at Cost Plus Stores' Fishermen's Wharf warehouse. He soon became a Shop Steward and was a strong advocate for his fellow workers.

The 1976 negotiations were tough and the Local 860 members voted to strike. Andy was on the picket line for at least 18 hours every day, setting an example for other strikers on the line. The Union won the strike.

After the Cost Plus Warehouse closed in the early 90s, Andy was dispatched to Macy's downtown store and quickly became the Shop Steward at Macy's. During his tenure, Andy participated in several grievance meetings as well as negotiations. As in the past, Andy fought for his fellow Teamsters so they could live a better life.

Andy participated in the activities of the Local as well as the International. Wherever there was a picket line, Andy would be there. Most recently, he was on the picket line supporting Southern California's 70,000 retail clerks fighting for health care.

Andy was a very generous man. Whenever the jar was passed for any cause—supporting members on strike, purchasing raffle tickets for the Teamsters Assistance Program, or donating to the MS fund, Andy was the first to give. With his countless hours of volunteering at phone banks, precinct walks and picket lines, Andy never asked for anything in return or recognition.

In addition to his union activities, Andy was very active in St. Peters Parish in San Francisco. He was also a huge Forty-Niner's fan and a long-time season ticket holder.

Andy was truly unique. He will be missed.

—John C. Becker, Sr.

### ARON COATES 1944-2004

Aron Coates, a 40-year Teamster member, worked as an "over the road" driver at the San Francisco Chronicle. He was 60 years old when he died in March.

Aron was one of the finest and most honorable people I have met in my 29 years as a Teamster official. I was particularly shocked and saddened to hear of Aron's death given his recent decision to take the buyout and retire to enjoy his hard earned rest from the newspaper.

Aron was a true gentleman. As a member of our Union, he was honest, loyal, hardworking, and true to his word. He was always an advocate of his fellow workers, but in a fashion that gave him credibility when he spoke, and made what he said matter to those who listened.

During our most recent negotiations, Aron never let his own plans or interests interfere with his mission to obtain the best deal, and the most protection for his fellow Teamsters who would remain working at the paper. In fact, when asked why he continued to work through the transition period, he said, "I was an officer of the Union and a member of the negotiating committee. It's important that I set a good example for those who remain."

We have all lost one of the best of us. I trust that we will all honor his memory by remembering that our Union is for the good of the majority, and not for the benefit of individuals and what they can personally take from it. Aron set the example of what this means.

—Rome Aloise

## Attention Shop Stewards

If you have not received notices about the **July 10 Shop Steward Seminar**, please call Kim at 510-895-8853 or 800-400-1250 to make sure that we have you listed as a Shop Steward and that we have your correct address.

# Contract Update—Settled with Solidarity

## Unified Western Grocers come to terms

It took nearly 20 negotiation sessions and two strike authorization votes, but the members at Unified Western Grocers (formerly Gourmet Specialties) unanimously ratified a contract that contained the biggest wage increases in the history of the contract. Business Agent Pete Easton negotiated the contract along with Local 78's Kenn Hill.

The issues were many: production standards, disciplinary procedures, shop steward language, and of course, wages and the cost of health and welfare. Members were no longer willing to pay up to \$200 per month for health coverage that came about because costs increased much higher than estimated in the previous contract.

With support from the International Warehouse Division, Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise gained agreement from the Teamster locals at the company's Stockton and Southern California facilities to strike if a deal in Hayward couldn't be reached. The company got the message and agreed to pick up the entire cost of health and welfare.

"I've been through many negotiations, and this is the most satisfying," said Shop Steward Rory Mordinoia. "We got help

from Teamsters in other locations, and it made me proud that everyone was willing to help Local 853. When our Local helps others, it comes back to us when we need it."

## Foster Farms finally gets it

In March, Berkeley Farms agreed to a two-year contract extension that provides for increased wages and substantially more money for health and welfare.

Local 853 saw this extension as setting the pattern for the dairy industry in Northern California. Shortly after the Berkeley Farms members ratified the agreement, Business Agent Bob Strelo offered the same deal to Foster Farms Dairy. The company balked.

Management complained that its employees represented by Local 853 were the most highly compensated in the company. They proposed moving the employees from the Teamster health plan to an inferior company plan. On the recommendation of union leadership, the members rejected the company's final offer.

Local 853 immediately contacted all of the local unions representing Foster Farms employees and enlisted their support if a strike became necessary. The union then informed the company that they could expect to be shut down if they didn't offer

the Berkeley Farms deal by the contract expiration date.

Two hours later, the contract was settled. Foster Farms agreed to the extension, and the members ratified their new contract unanimously.

"Clearly, it was helpful that our Local has strong relationships with other Teamster Locals," said Strelo. "That leverage, and the unity of our members, makes all the difference."



Local 853 gets support from several Locals in Joint Council 38 for an April 14 protest at Producers Dairy corporate headquarters in Fresno.

## Teamster solidarity in first contract fight

About 60 employees at Producers Dairy, with facilities in San Leandro and Ripon, voted in November, 2002, to be represented by Local 853 but they still don't have a first contract. After the election, the union immediately sought to initiate talks. "This company made one excuse after another to avoid meeting with us," says Business Agent Bob Strelo. "But much worse—they tried to intimidate and even fired some workers." The union filed charges against the company, which are pending before the National Labor Relations Board.

On Wednesday, April 14, Local 853 turned up the heat. Enlisting the support of Joint Council 38, the union sponsored a rally at the company's Fresno headquarters. "We want all of the Bay Area dairies to be unionized, so that our good union employers can compete on an even playing field," said Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise. "These workers voted for union representation, and we'll do what it takes to make sure they get it."



## 'Walk of Shame' highlights companies that don't want to provide health coverage

After meeting with key state legislators on April 27, Local 853 members joined the California Labor Federation-sponsored rally and march to oppose the repeal of SB-2 on the November ballot. The "Walk of Shame" went from the Sacramento offices of the Chamber of Commerce to the California Restaurant Association and the California Retailers Association.



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## *Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union*



The TeamMSters joined 225,000 people in 700 cities nationwide on April 18, 2004 for the 16th Annual MS WALK, a record-breaking fundraising event for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Local 853's Mobile Command Center served as "Noah's Ark" on that rainy Sunday—picking up drenched walkers and helping them reach the finish line!

Janine Vanier, Local 853's office manager and team captain, led 32 TeamMSters in the walk through Alameda. With pledges topping \$51,000, the Local 853 team again ranked first in

Northern California. These funds support the National MS Society's relentless search for a cure and provide vital programs to local families facing this devastating disease.

"I am so grateful to all of my teammates, to Rome Aloise and the Local 853 Executive Board, and to all of my co-workers, family, friends and generous donors for their continuing enthusiasm, support and dedication to fighting MS," said Vanier. "Thousands of people took thousands of steps in the fight against MS. Every one is a step closer to a cure."

## **Celebrating Local 853's Hoffa scholarship winner**

Congratulations to Kellie Horrocks for winning a \$1000 James R. Hoffa scholarship. Kelly was one of 75 winners from across the nation,

Kellie is the daughter of Local 853 member and



*Kellie Horrocks*

Young's Market salesperson, Jerry Horrocks. Raised in Redding, she has an impressive array of honors and awards to accompany her school, church and community achievements. She plans on attending Brigham Young University in Utah starting in the fall.

Applications for James R. Hoffa scholarships are due by March 31. Winners are judged based on academic achievement, SAT/ACT scores, character, potential and financial need. It's definitely worth it to apply—your child could be the next winner. For more information, go to [www.teamsters.org](http://www.teamsters.org).