



# CONNECTIONS



## Local 853 hosts another record crowd for annual membership appreciation event

With more than 11,000 members, Teamsters Local 853 is one of the largest locals in California. “The Local would be nothing without our members,” says Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Hart. “That’s why we celebrate the tradition of Membership Appreciation each year, where staff and officers prepare and serve a great breakfast to our members, and we give away cool gifts and raffle prizes.”

The 2018 event, held on November 5 at a new and larger location — San Leandro High School—did not disappoint. Nearly

800 members were in attendance. In addition to a delicious breakfast (egg, sausage and cheese burritos), each member got a Teamster cooler bag, an opportunity to get a free flu shot, and a chance to win one of about 50 prizes—medium to super-sized TVs and other gadgets and electronics.

Hart’s “State of the Union” address was brief but to the point. He talked about the Local’s on-going commitment to organizing as a way to keep the union strong. He touted the recently-ratified shuttle bus master agreement and how that contract

not only brought up the wages and benefits of shuttle bus drivers, but also for school and paratransit drivers whose companies now have to compete to get good workers.

And, with the November elections coming a few days after the event, he stressed the need for members to get involved with DRIVE and to vote their interest as union members.

All in all, it was another great celebration of Local 853 members and the value of our union in building good jobs and better communities.



Top Row: Local 853 staff and stewards prepare breakfast for members. (From left: Stacy Murphy, Lennie Kuhls, Lydia Pinedo, Ray Torres, Mike Fritz, Joel Bellison, Lon Schmidt and volunteers). Bottom Row from left: (1) President Lou Valletta opens the event; (2) Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Hart gives the “State of the Union,” (3) a view of some of the raffle prizes; (4) the winners of 50+” TVs: Sandra Albert, Ishmael Florez, Aung Kyaw, Rose Noone, Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Hart (who did NOT win a TV!); and Doug Radonich; (5) a member and his daughter picks up their winnings from Tracy Kelley.

### A good year for contracts and elections

By DENNIS HART

Another year comes to an end. It is hard to believe, but it is time to turn the page on 2018 and welcome in 2019.

I'm pleased to report that 2018 was another good year for our Local. We have negotiated numerous contracts this past year, and many of them with historic settlements. We continue to set the standard across the country in many industries. We also continued our success in organizing and getting first contracts for our new brothers and sisters.

The past year was also a watershed year in the world of politics. Locally, we elected numerous pro-labor candidates, including San Francisco Mayor London Breed. Our retired Business Agent, Chuck Davis, and his wife helped to raise London; she is a Teamster through and through.

In the state elections, we also helped elect many pro-labor candidates, including our old friend from San Francisco, Governor-Elect Gavin Newsom.

But probably the most important elections in the past year involved taking back the House of Representatives for the Democrats. Having the House in more labor-friendly hands should hopefully put a check on this anti-worker President!

This brings me to the Teamsters Political Action fund known as D.R.I.V.E. (Democrat, Republican, Independent Voter

Education). I cannot overstate how important it is for you to contribute

to D.R.I.V.E. This Local has committed to making every effort to help support D.R.I.V.E. in the coming year.

The past year has also, sadly, been a rough one for many Teamster families who have lost everything in the recent fires—in both southern and northern California. To help those families through this period, we should keep them in our thoughts and prayers during this holiday season and try to contribute to the many charities that can help, including Teamsters All-Charities. Please see the green box to send a donation to the All-Charities Fund.

I would like to thank all of you for your support during the past year and wish you and your families a happy and safe holiday season.



### How you can help Teamsters who lost their homes in the fires

Donations can be sent to the Joint Council 7 All-Charities Fund. If you are writing a check, please make it payable to All-Charities Teamsters and indicate your donation is earmarked, "Camp Fire Relief." Mail it to Joint Council 7, 250 Executive Park Blvd., Suite 3100, San Francisco, CA 94134. Donations to the Fund are tax-deductible (Tax I.D. #94-3039754).



The Teamster Horsemen is a group of Teamsters who ride motorcycles and raise funds for local children's charities. By the time you get this, you'll have missed the December Toy Drive ride (December 15), but it's never too late to get involved.

For more info about how to join the JC7 Teamster Horsemen, contact Local 853 Business Agent Ray Torres at 661-903-2980.



Long time 853 member and Canteen employee John Tacata was taking a well deserved vacation in Honolulu when he came upon a Hotel Workers' picket line. Being a solid Teamster, he took time to walk the line and give his support.

## Announcements

### Death benefit for members

Members in good standing are eligible for a \$10,000 death benefit. For your beneficiary to collect, your dues must be current. Be sure your beneficiary information is up-to-date. Contact the office at 510-895-8853 to get a form to update your information.

### Charge your union dues

What's more convenient than paying your union dues with a credit card? For more information on getting set up, call 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, CA, 94621.

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

### 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].

## What's the best thing about being a union member?

**Ricardo Miranda**  
Certain Teed (14-year Teamster)

When the company has an incident with a worker, the union comes in to help.



**Pamela Kirk-Veasey**  
AEG—Oakland Coliseum (15-year Teamster)

The union helps us with our benefits, cohesion, and keep the job from running over us. No more non-union folks are taking our work.



**Phuong Tran & Serenna Gillig** (30-year Teamster)

Job security. They protect you and your benefits—nobody will do that except for the union.



**James Reed**  
Berkeley Farms (Retired 38-year Teamster)

The retirement is great!



**Anthony Perry**  
BASF (3-year Teamster)

Knowing that if I was in need of representation at work, someone would be there for me.



## Welcome Nvidia drivers!

Twelve tech shuttle drivers who work for WeDriveU and shuttle the staff of Santa Clara-based Nvidia are now represented by Local 853.

“These drivers work out of the same parking lot as those at LAM,” says Local 853 business rep Tracy Kelley. “When they saw the LAM group join the union and get wage and benefit increases, they wanted the same for themselves.”

The group started working with Local 853 in October, and submitted their cards for card check recognition on November 6. A week later, the company recognized the unit, making them full union members with coverage in the master agreement.

Kelly wanted to give special thanks to Local 853 Organizer Steve Bender and to driver Esperanza Garcia, who was instrumental in getting her fellow drivers to sign and submit their union cards.

## Meet SF's new mayor



*853 staff and officers with San Francisco Mayor London Breed at Holiday Inn shortly after she took office. (From left: Stu Helfer, Steve Beck, Joel Bellison, Mayor Breed, Rodney Smith, Scott Gonsalves, Steve Bender.)*

## Arbitrator awards members back pay

Local 853 represents three Mobile Equipment Supervisors at MUNI who oversee the work on cable car and street car rails throughout San Francisco. Business Agent Dan Harrington reports that he recently prevailed in an expedited arbitration on their behalf.

According to the contract, they're supposed to be compensated at a rate 5% higher than the highest-paid person they supervise. The City initially refused, but on November 20, the arbitrator ruled that they get that increased wage going back to April 2017. “The check hasn't been cut yet, but it will add up to many thousands of dollars for all three members,” Harrington said.

## What's the best thing about being a union member?

**John Poncey**  
Gillig (5-year Teamster)

Knowing I am secure being part of the Teamsters and that my rights are well-protected.



**Michelle Blanton**  
Bon Appetit-AT&T Ballpark

The benefits are wonderful. The way our local works for us is amazing. Thanks to Local 853, we have things we never had before.



**James Bulcao**  
Fair & Swanson (15 year Teamster)

Brotherhood. It means support, stability and job security.



**Ramon Fonseca**  
Costco (17-year Teamster)

I feel proud to belong to the union. I like the benefits and they support us with any problems that we have.



**Esmeralda Martinez**  
Costco (2-year Teamster)

More benefits. I'm happy to be a union member.





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*Happy Holidays  
and best wishes  
for the new year!*

*from the officers & staff  
of Teamsters Local 853*

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Lou Valletta President  
Stacy Murphy Vice President  
Stu Helfer Recording Secretary  
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Joel Bellison, Mike Fritz

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