

### Bringing together two groups of drivers now at the same company



When Tesla decided to contract only with WeDriveU to manage its tech bus service, the drivers who had previously worked for Compass did not lose their jobs. Rather, as the contract stipulated, they were brought on to the same contract, merging their service with the drivers who had been with WeDriveU from the beginning. Unfortunately, due to the merger of the two groups, some members were losing their previous place in the seniority line.

In order to smooth the merger, Local 853 hosted a BBQ

on September 29, and served hot links, chicken, ribs, and sausage as a way to break the ice and get the two groups together before the October 1 merger launch. For the 30 or so drivers who attended, the event was capped with a union-made cake decorated with the slogan "We're not the best cuz we're the biggest ... We're the biggest cuz we're the best!"

### Arbitration win at First Transit

The members who drive for First Transit on the Stanford Campus recently won a big arbitration. While they were set to receive the 10% split differential that tech bus drivers have, there was not clarity of when that split kicked in. The union maintained that the additional monies would start after one hour while the company said it was after two hours.

"This issue came up when TransDev had the Stanford contract and continued when First Student took over," explained Business Rep Stacy Murphy. "To everyone's surprise, the arbitrator ruled for the union." Retro checks are yet to be determined.

### A deal at Macy's

The 30 or so members who do warehousing at nine Macy's locations across the Bay Area now have a new three-year agreement, reports Business Rep Dan Harrington. The contract includes wage and pension increases all three years.

### Good contracts at MV

Business Rep Pablo Barrera reports that the 40 members at MV Transportation, who work in Mission Bay and in Half Moon Bay ratified a two-year agreement with substantial wage increases, finally breaking the \$25/hour threshold.

Barrera also negotiated a two-year deal at MV Transportation in the Presidio for about 20 members who are very pleased

to have full Maintenance of Benefits with their health care in the TBT plan.

### Contracts across the South Bay

Here are some of the newly-ratified contracts across the South Bay.

- Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties
- SP Plus Services (San Jose Airport)
- Mondelez/Nabisco
- Spicer/Kelly Paper

Good work to the members on the bar-

### Kidney donor sought

To my brothers and sisters at Local 853,

My name is Gabriel Gasca and I work for DHL. I'm reaching out to as many people as I can.

My family recently endured a medical crisis when my stepson Marco Alvara was diagnosed with acute kidney failure. I can not express enough how devastating this is for my family. Marco works as a Police Officer in San Francisco; he has a long history of helping communities since the young age of 15.

I ask that my brothers and sisters in Local 853 come together to help my stepson. He has two options: dialysis and/or a kidney transplant. He began dialysis but his need for a kidney donor is the priority.

If you might be a kidney donor or know of someone who could be, please contact me ASAP. You can reach me at: [gabrielgasca@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gabrielgasca@sbcglobal.net)

### UPS overtime checks



Business Rep Johnny Gallegos (L) may not be Santa Claus, but he has the great job of handing out "9.5 checks" to UPS members. These come as the result of a grievance, where the company must pay double-time if a worker has to work more than 9.5 hours in a day. Here, Javier Olivares, an 8-year Teamster, says that he's regularly been working 60-hour weeks and has collected more than \$5,000 in the last two months.

gaining teams and to Business Rep Jerry Cordova who led the negotiations at the first two, and Vice-President Lou Valletta, who led them at the second two.

### New construction members

The workers at two small but growing companies have voted to join Local 853.

Business Rep Eddie Venancio reports that the ready-mix and low-bed drivers who work at QLM Construction in San Jose are now Teamsters.

Also, Organizer Mike Fritz got a unanimous vote from the drivers at Argent Materials, an Oakland-based concrete and asphalt recycling yard.

"The mergers of Locals 287 and 912 into Local 853 create a wonderful opportunity for organizing new members in the construction field, and we'll explore all opportunities to expand our footprint into covered occupations," said Recording Secretary/Business Rep Stu Helfer who also heads the Northern Cal Teamsters Construction Division.

### Coming parity

The members who work at the San Francisco Unified School District recently ratified their new contract. "It's a good agreement given all that's going on with school districts," says Business Rep Dan Harrington. "And we have a commitment to meet early next year to talk about reaching parity with the City/County of SF."



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# CONNECTIONS

## Membership Appreciation remains drive-thru event for safety

Since 1993, Local 853 has held an annual event to show our members how much we appreciate them. This year was no exception, although like in 2020, the Membership Appreciation event was a drive-thru affair due to the pandemic. This year, it was held on two mornings at two locations—Saturday, November 6 in Oakland and Sunday, November 7 in San Jose—for our members' convenience.

Members were invited to drive into the Local's parking lots in each location so they could pick up a stylish logo-embossed windbreaker. Then they complet-

ed a card to enter the raffle. In and out – the process was swift.

Nearly 500 members turned out on one of the two days. And for ten of them, the party continued at the November regular membership meeting the following Thursday when their names were chosen to win a new TV.

We all look forward to the day when we can get back to meeting in person, having the local staff make breakfast for the members, offering convenient flu shots, hearing the state of the union, and holding the live raffle. Hopefully 2022 will be that year!



Scenes from the 2021 Member Appreciation Drive-Thru events in Oakland and San Jose, and member Jose Perez, from A-B, picks the TV winners at the membership meeting.

## CONNECTIONS is now (mostly) on-line Here's how to sign up to stay in the know!

If you want to keep up with news about your union and your industry, you'll want to get on the Local 853 email and text list.

We used to send out 3-4 of these newsletters each year, but like most organizations, we have migrated to producing on-line newspapers, posting stories on our website ([www.teamsters853.org](http://www.teamsters853.org)), and sending out occasional text alerts.

If you are already on the list, thank you! If not, here's how to sign up:

- 1) Go to our website: [www.teamsters853.org](http://www.teamsters853.org) and complete the "Stay Connected" box.
- 2) Text **853MEMBER** to the number 833-515-3055. Follow the prompts so we get all the info we need to get you into the system.



## Congrats to the lucky raffle winners

- 32" TV: Steven Wheeler, SFO Rock & Park
- 43" TV: Zhi Xin Li, We Drive U
- 43" TV: Rosanna Lyles, LAZ
- 55" TV: Jose D. Cueva, Anixter
- 55" TV: Riccardo J. Reques, UPS
- 55" TV: Scott McCole, Sukut
- 55" TV: Maria del Pilar Juarez Garcia, Trade Shows
- 65" TV: Rich Walrod, Granite Rock



Left: Maria del Pilar Juarez Garcia (C) picks up her 55" TV; Right: Richard Walrod (L) picks up the Grand Prize—a 65" TV!

## My final column

By ROME ALOISE

By the end of January, I will no longer be Principal Officer of Local 853. These past 54 years as a Teamster, and more than 46 years serving as a Teamster official on the Local, Joint Council and International levels, have been an amazing ride. It has been the honor of my life to serve the growing roster of members of Local 853 and to do all in my power to improve your working conditions, wages, benefits, and lives.

When I started as Secretary-Treasurer in 1992, the Local had \$39,000 in the bank, and about 3,500 members, mostly in the East Bay.

Today, through organizing and through mergers, we've grown to about 15,000 members across the Bay Area down to Watsonville, with some members in the Valley and around Sacramento. We've got assets of over \$15 million, including several buildings.

But more than that, we have an amazing staff of 24 business representatives who oversee more than 300 contracts in a wide range of industries—from drivers of school, tech and paratransit buses to ready mix and construction vehicles; from sales to driving and merchandising dairy, soft drinks and liquor; from retail sales to UPS/DHL package delivery to concessions at sports are-

nas; we manufacture food and commercial products, buses, and more. Our members are as diverse and interesting as our industries. I'm proud to say that in many industries, our contracts are the most lucrative in the nation.

On top of all that, our office staff is second to none. We've got a well-oiled machine that processes the contracts and membership rolls and keeps the myriad of administrative procedures humming.

One of my passions, over the years, has been to build, improve and strengthen our benefits programs, from health insurance, to 401K plans to pensions. The Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Trust, for which I chaired the investment committee for many years, is now the largest and strongest union plan in the nation, with more than \$57 billion in assets.

This is not an easy time for the labor movement. The downward trend that started in the 1980s with deregulation has continued on steroids over the decades. Our ability to organize new members and keep the members we have has been hindered by labor laws that promote union busting, replacement workers, and challenges that only the heartiest of union supporters could overcome.

And yet our members continue to step

up, taking action when needed and fighting for their own rights and those of other working people. We're now starting to take on perhaps our biggest challenge, which is the growth of Amazon—a giant that directly threatens our members at UPS, and will indirectly impact members who work in numerous other industries. I can't predict the future, but I know that this will be a make-it or break-it fight for our union.

I thank our current staff and the dozens of people who have worked with us and worked for you over the last 46 years. You have made Local 853 the preeminent powerhouse that we've become—and will remain into the future.

I can't say enough good things about current President Dennis Hart, who will be taking over as Secretary-Treasurer and Principal Officer. He has been a fabulous partner and I have great confidence leaving the union in his able hands.

And I thank all of you—our members—for giving me your trust these many years and for enabling me to do what I've loved.



## Announcements

### Monthly union meetings

Local 853's membership meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. They're currently being held both in person and on Zoom. You must register in advance to attend on zoom. Go to [Teamsters853.org](http://Teamsters853.org) for the link.

### 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.

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**Postmaster:** Send address changes to: Teamsters Local 853, 7750 Pardee Lane, Oakland, CA 94621.

**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

To help members make retirement decisions, the WCT Pension Trust Fund is holding in-person meetings as follows:

**Oakland:** Second Wednesday of each month

**Watsonville:** First Weds. & Thurs. of each month

**San Jose:** Last Friday of each month

Call 510-895-8853 or 800-400-1250 to make an appointment.

### 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.

### 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].

# UPS members learn about the threat from Amazon—and what they can do about it

“Ten years ago, there were zero Amazon warehouses in California,” said Shaun Martinez, IBT, Strategic Research & Campaigns Department “Today, they’re the state’s largest employer.”

Speaking at a training about Amazon for about 100 Local 853 UPS members at the San Jose Teamster office on November 13, Martinez reviewed Amazon’s growth, from bookseller to major customer of UPS to now being UPS’ biggest competitor—already surpassing FedEx’s market share.

With 300,000 people under the one contract, the contract with UPS is not only the Teamsters’ largest, but is the largest single union contract in the world. Today, UPS sets the bar for wages and benefits. “When we organize FedEx or Amazon, it will raise the standard for everyone. If we can lift the standards for everyone, that protects our benefits,” Martinez added.

Here are a few facts about Amazon today:

- Most workers don’t work for Amazon for more than a few months. They stay long enough to collect their welcome bonus and then they quit. Martinez says that’s by design. “Who wants workers who, with added seniority, get higher wages and more benefits?”
- Amazon went from 150 facilities to 740 in just two years. Their goal is 1,500.
- According to an Amazon worker who attended the event with her fiancé, “those



**Moses Ceballos (& Eric)**  
**UPS**

**5 year Teamster**  
I’m here to be part of the union. I want to take part to fight any threats to my job.



**JT Hayden**  
**UPS**

**2 year Teamster**  
They pay Amazon workers less, they don’t have a lot of benefits; they work many more hours than we do. It’s hard for UPS to compete.

of us who have been there for a while get screwed because the company keeps bringing in new people and moving us around. We constantly get write-ups. People don’t want to use the restrooms because they’re too far away. They gave us an additional five minutes for handwashing during COVID, but then they took it away again.”

“Everyone has to get activated to fight Amazon,” Martinez says. “We can do it, but it’ll be hard.”

The battle has already begun. Several Teamster locals, including Local 853, are working in coalition with environmental groups, other unions, land use attorneys and local Labor Councils.

In just the last few months we’ve succeeded in stopping Amazon’s attempt to open local facilities:

- In San Jose, the City Council unanimously voted down a proposed Amazon Distribution Center in the Coyote Valley the size of six football fields.
- In Gilroy, the City Council pushed off a vote until December 6 for a proposed Delivery Station after Local 853 and Gilroy community members flooded the meeting with concerns.
- In Hayward, Amazon withdrew their application for one of three sites they are considering.

There are still fights going on in San Francisco, Richmond, and Hayward. But we’ve already seen that winning is possible if we all get together to write letters, make phone calls, picket, and do whatever is necessary to stop the Amazon behemoth from taking over our cities and ruining our good union jobs.

President Dennis Hart told the group of UPSers that he had been a UPS Business Agent when the 1997 UPS strike took place. “We won that strike by sticking together, and we also got great support from our customers. We can win against Amazon too, but we need to stick together, get focused, and get the community involved.”

When the union contacts you to get involved, please follow through. It’ll be in your best interest.

## What’s bad about Amazon & why do you care?



**Lucas Bernal**  
**UPS**

**10 year Teamster**  
33% of our volume is Amazon. If they take that away, drivers will lose their jobs. I knew that Amazon was big, but I didn’t realize they were this big!



**Bianca Garza**  
**UPS**

**7 year Teamster**  
My fiancé works for Amazon. They pressure the workers way too much to meet their crazy numbers. They don’t treat people like they should be treated.



**Juan Montes**  
**UPS**

**9 year Teamster**  
Amazon workers are pushed to a point where they’re dangerous to public safety. It’s not the workers’ fault—they’re just trying to keep their jobs.



**Louie Vidal**  
**UPS**

**1 year Teamster**  
I’m here to be part of the union. I want to take part to fight any threats to my job.



**Dustin Tilbury**  
**UPS**

**18 year Teamster**  
I’m here to learn about the spread of Amazon and how it will affect UPS—and how fast.

# What do you appreciate about Local 853?



**Edith Johnson**  
**Durham Trans.**  
**10-year Teamster**

I appreciate how the union helps us. Some of the things that we needed to get done have gotten done—including getting us a big raise. The union is just there when we need it.



**Joe Simao**  
**Cargill Salt**  
**40-year Teamster**

I appreciate that the union keeps law and order on the job and fights for my rights. I also appreciate the health benefits.



**Duane Thompson**  
**Southern Wine & Spirits**  
**8-year Teamster**

The union has done a lot for me over the years. As workers, we have the ability to act on our own behalf as a group and the employer doesn't dictate the terms.



**Harry Arroyo**  
**EMJ**  
**21-year Teamster**

I appreciate the pension and some of the benefits.



**Javier Maciel**  
**Bimbo Bakery**  
**31-year Teamster**

I appreciate the steady medical benefits for me and my family. And I feel more secure in my job.



**Tom Gent (& Sonny)**  
**Westside Building Materials**  
**30-year Teamster**

With the union, I have a voice. It provides me a way to get paid a legitimate wage and I have representation. The union continues to negotiate good contracts for us.



**Antonio Caguimbal**  
**Martinelli's**  
**20-year Teamster**

Being in a union, I have a lot of advantages over when I worked non-union. It's great to have a good job with good benefits. If I got in a dispute, I have someone to talk to.



**Daljeet Nijjar**  
**MV Transportation**  
**16-year Teamster**

Whenever we get in trouble, the union helps us. It's extra protection.



**John Jaurigue**  
**Young's Market**  
**27-year Teamster**

Brotherhood. Togetherness. Unity. Strength. Focus. As one.



**Jarret Grushkowitz**  
**(With Sunji & Slade)**  
**Cemex**  
**22-year Teamster**

Solidarity. And I appreciate the benefits.



**Pablo Martinez**  
**Central Concrete**  
**19-year Teamster**

The union makes my workplace better in every way. It makes me secure. If I have a problem, I can call the union and they'll take care of it.



**Ivan Mendoza**  
**Gillig**  
**8-year Teamster**

I appreciate the brotherhood, the family, the unity, and the hard work that everyone puts in for us. The union is there to defend us. It feels good to be part of the community.



**Marcella Flores**  
**Avis**  
**9-year Teamster**

I appreciate that the union acknowledges the employees and workers because the employer certainly doesn't.



**Brenda Mora**  
**MV Transportation**  
**12-year Teamster**

I appreciate knowing that our Business Agent is into helping us. And I like that the union appreciates us – the members – and is letting us know that!



**Wayne Julian**  
**Costco Business Ctr.**  
**30-year Teamster**

I appreciate everything about the union, especially Rome for all his hard work. I appreciate my pension and that I have a lot of job protections.