

# 1245

International Brotherhood  
Of Electrical Workers  
Local 1245, AFL-CIO  
September 1991  
Vol. XL No. 9

# UTILITY REPORTER

Honor Labor!  
Labor Day 1991

## Skills put to the test in 'Lineman's Rodeo'

**L**ineman Max Tellez secured the hurt man with three quick half-hitches, took the slack out of the rope, and then cut the safety. After the hurt man was carefully lowered to the ground, Tellez began his own descent to a chorus of cheers from his fellow crew members.

Tellez, a 20-year union member, was putting the finishing touches on what was a near-perfect day for the crew from PG&E's Walnut Creek yard. Along with Jim Zack, Dan Rand and Tim McCarthy, Tellez was demonstrating his skills during a day-long "Lineman's Rodeo" sponsored by Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric in Livermore, Ca.

With a winning score of 691 points out of a possible 700, Tellez's crew won the right to represent Local 1245 this month at the national Lineman's Rodeo in St. Louis,

Mo., celebrating IBEW's 100th anniversary.

To test their skills, line crews were required to perform in seven competitions: hurt man rescue, rope splicing, hot-stick insulator change, underground dip termination, double dead-end hot tap, crossarm change, and a "raw egg climb" in which each line men had to climb a 45-foot pole with a raw egg in a bucket and then descend with the egg in his mouth...without breaking the egg.

Contestants were scored on work procedures and safety. Time was used for scoring only when needed to break a tie.

The Livermore competition was organized to select three PG&E teams to attend the national competition—one from Distribution Business Units and two from General Construction. However, sev-

See PAGE THIRTEEN



Max Tellez performs the hurt man rescue, helping boost his team to victory in the Lineman's Rodeo.

### New 'Union Privilege' program

## IBEW offers mortgage assistance

**M**any IBEW members will now be able to purchase their first home with only 3 percent down thanks to a new benefit initiated by organized labor.

The IBEW Mortgage Program is part of the Union Privilege program created by the AFL-CIO in 1986. Union Privilege offers a range of benefits exclusively to union members, including low-interest credit cards and discount prices for legal services.

The new mortgage benefit, designed especially to

help first-time buyers, was developed by the AFL-CIO in conjunction with "Fanny Mac", a stockholder-owned corporation chartered by Congress in 1970 to create a continuous flow of funds to mortgage lenders.

The union-owned Amalgamated Bank of New York provides the downpayment loans, GE Capital Mortgage Insurance Co. insures the mortgages, and US Mortgage Corp. administers the program.

The IBEW is one of the first unions to offer the new benefit to its members.

"This program will assist those who have been unable to buy their own home because they don't have the large cash down payment that is necessary," said IBEW President J. J. Barry. "It means the union can help our members realize the American dream of owning their own home."

AFL-CIO Sec.-Treas. Thomas R. Donahue said that the new program deals with the problem of upfront costs in several ways. First, downpayments can be as low as 5 percent, and a qualified

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### CALENDAR

September 7  
Stockton Division  
Stewards Conference  
Stockton

September 14  
Tree Trimmers  
Conference  
Walnut Creek

September 21  
50th Anniversary  
Reception  
San Jose

September 21  
East Bay Region  
Stewards Conference  
Walnut Creek

October 5-11  
IBEW 100th Anniversary  
International Convention

October 19  
General Construction  
Stewards Conference



## Local 1245



## 1941 - 1991

Celebrating 50 years  
of union

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# UTILITY REPORTER

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### Workers here and abroad

## Rolling the union on...

**Few qualified:** Air China is having a hard time finding qualified flight attendants. The Vancouver-Sun says the airline is disqualifying many applicants because they are "unhealthy, near-sighted, or no longer virgins."

**Swiss strike:** Heeding a call from the Swiss Trade Union Confederation, women in Switzerland staged a one-day strike to protest the fact that they are paid 30 percent less than men. Beside staying home from work on June 14, women refused to do housework.



**"It's agreed then. We file for bankruptcy and then go on a world cruise."**

### VDT surveys

The VDT surveys have been received by PG&E Industrial Relations and have been given to Local 1245 for analysis. The union hopes to use the data to find out which company locations are most in need of corrective action regarding Video Display Terminal work stations.

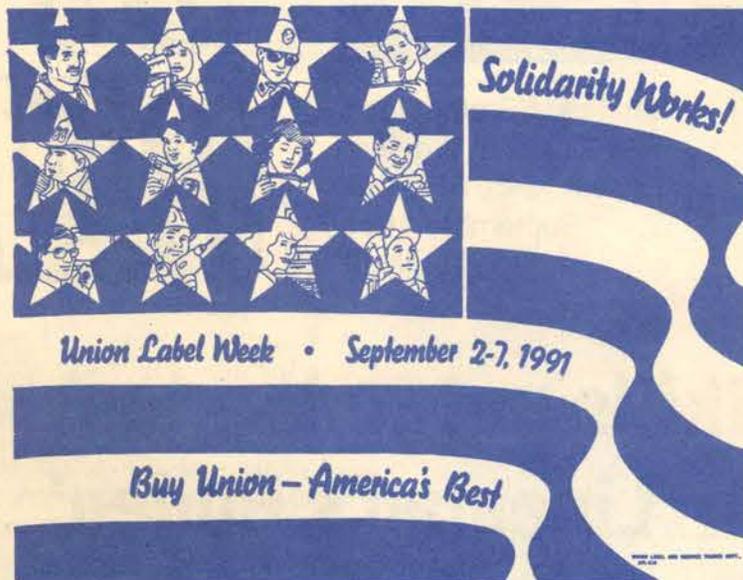
**Participation problems:** After studying over 1,000 US companies, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University found that union shops were as much as 31 percent more productive than nonunion shops, according to a report in the San Francisco Examiner. The researchers also found that sites with employee participation programs were less productive than those without them. Joint labor-management committees were found to do nothing to strengthen job security or improve worker power-sharing.

**Emergency:** The AFL-CIO and 30 of its largest unions asked the Labor Department in late July to issue emergency standards to protect workers from repetitive motion injuries while work continues on establishing permanent safety standards.

**Labor Party:** St. Louis Labor Council President Bob Kelly, who is a member of the Democratic National Committee, said he has "heard more talk about a

### Children's facility

The deadline for registering for the lottery for PG&E's children's facility is Sept. 10, 1991. Registrations must be received by PG&E by this date.



labor party or a labor-farm coalition than I have in the past 15 years. And the guys who are doing the talking aren't the fringe, left-wing radicals who used to do the talking. It's more the moderate, the middle-of-the-road centrists." He was quoted in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

**Safety advantage:** Manufacturing workplaces that are unionized are more likely to receive health and safety inspections, face greater scrutiny during these inspections, and pay higher fines for OSHA violations than comparable non-union establishments, according to a study by David Weil of Boston University's School of Management.

**Layoffs protested:** More than 250 workers at the multi-national company Plessey in South Africa stopped work on May 21 to protest layoffs of 68 co-workers at a Cape Town plant. The Metal and Electrical

Workers Union of South Africa said that the company had acted unilaterally and had not given the union adequate information on the need to cut jobs.

**Jobless blues:** Middle-class men are severely and permanently affected by losing their job, according to a study by Professor Dorothea Braginsky of Fairfield University. All but two of the 46 employees surveyed said their lives had changed for the worse and most never attained the status or salary level they felt they would have achieved if they had remained employed. Most also experienced serious deterioration in family life.

**States target scabs:** Legislatures in two state have passed bills prohibiting employers from hiring permanent replacements during strikes, according to Labor Notes. In Minnesota, Gov. Arne Carlson attempted to veto the anti-scab bill but missed the deadline for filing his decision. In Wisconsin, where the legislature passed a similar bill, Gov. Tommy Thompson had until Aug. 29 to sign or veto it.



Delegates to the Government Coordinating Council No. 1 meeting in Reno, Nev. on July 18-19.



**"I enjoy two vacations every year - mine and his."**

Wages match PG&E

# City of Lodi pact preserves benefits

**A** new Memorandum of Understanding has been ratified by members of Local 1245 working for the City of Lodi, Ca.

The MOU maintains fully-paid premiums for medical, dental and vision plans for employees and dependents, according to Business Representative Gary Mai. Employees who do not carry dependent coverage will receive a \$650 per year contribution to a Deferred Compensation Plan.

The new agreement runs from April 1, 1991 to Dec. 31, 1993.

Under the terms of the new agreement, employees may elect to receive a 30

percent cash buyout for unused sick leave upon retirement, in lieu of conversion to paid medical insurance premiums.

Improvements in the standby duty policy provide that the two hour minimum pay for first call-out will be in addition to the standby pay. Previously, the first call minimum was offset against the standby pay. All overtime pay associated with standby duty will be at 1-1/2 times the straight time rate.

Mai said that wages will be adjusted retroactively to April 1, 1991, to equal the lineman rate at PG&E, with all other classifications to be set accordingly. Wage increases in January 1992 and January 1993 will be the same

as PG&E.

All overtime, except standby duty, will be paid at double time.

Effective July 1, 1992, the City will pay 5.75 percent of the employees' contribution to the PERS retirement system, an increase of 1.25 percent. Effective July 1, 1993, the City will pay the entire 7 percent contribution.

Other provisions of the MOU include a 5 percent equity adjustment for the electrical estimator classification and a \$100 annual boot allowance for linemen, foremen and troubleshooters.

Improvements were also made in mileage allowance, meal allowance, rest periods, and Long-Term Disability benefits.

# Free labor plays key role in democratic society

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

The August upheavals in the Soviet Union tell us something important about democratic institutions.

Unlike our own 200-year-old democracy, the Soviet people are just now getting a taste of what it's like to have a free press, the right to vote, the freedom to assemble.

When Communist hardliners overthrew Mikhail Gorbachev, they called out the tanks, censored the press, and attempted to cancel the authority of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and other democratically-elected leaders.

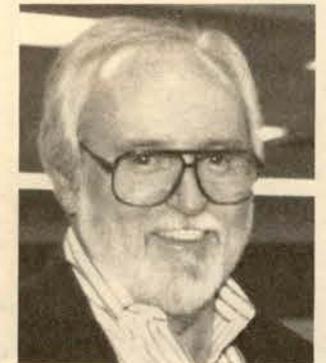
With the whole world watching, Yeltsin vowed to resist the coup and urged Soviet workers to go on strike. Hours later, President Bush publicly supported Yeltsin's plea for Soviet workers to stop working.

When the chips were down, when the coup-plotters were attempting to restore dictatorship, Yeltsin and Bush both appealed to Soviet workers to defend democracy.

Many Soviet miners reportedly walked off the job. But then, for reasons that historians will have to sort out, the coup fell apart. The Soviet Union's young democratic institutions survived.

As we celebrate Labor Day in this country, we should have a renewed appreciation for the role of free labor unions in a democratic society. The right to vote, to speak out, to demonstrate, are fundamental rights.

But just as fundamental is the right of working people to withhold their labor—to strike. It is the most basic tool that people have for resisting tyranny. Because working people—when they are organized—can bring tyrants to their



knees by halting production.

In America, well over 90 percent of all labor disputes are brought to a resolution without a strike. Our union, for example, has never struck PG&E, our largest employer. But our *right* to strike gives us leverage in bargaining and has helped make negotiations successful over the years.

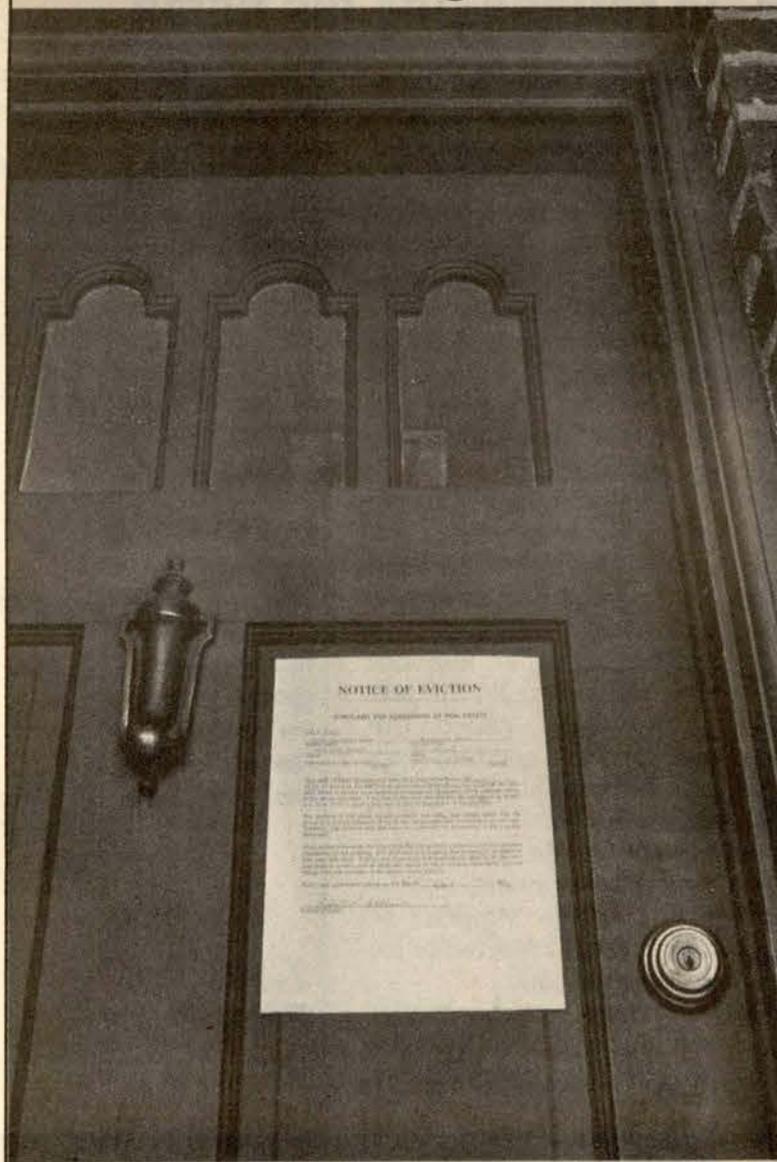
Recent world events show how important a free labor movement is for a democratic society. Unions give working people the ability to bargain with employers, yes. But beyond that, unions help working people understand their own power, to realize they don't have to bend down to authority when that authority is unjust or unfair.

As Soviet workers build strong, independent labor unions, they will be creating institutions that will help make for a freer society.

In this country, we already have a proud tradition of free labor, a tradition that we can keep strong by enacting legislation that protects the right to strike by forbidding employers to hire "permanent replacements".

We should wish the Soviet people all the best on their difficult road to freedom. But we also need to remember that freedom isn't so much a destination as a continuing journey, and we still have some traveling to do ourselves.

# Sometimes, we're a lot closer to being on the street than we think



Jess Dennis, machinist, was on the job when he passed out. Preliminary diagnosis: leukemia. Treatments kept him from work. Jess soon fell two months behind in rent. Eviction became a very real possibility.

It sounds extreme, but the average American worker is just two paychecks away from being out on the street.

**There are solutions.**

Fortunately for Jess Dennis, the AFL-CIO and two United Way-funded agencies were able to help. And contributions from several Machinists' Lodges helped Jess pay his back rent.

When the chips are down, the labor movement and United Way can play a big part in getting people back on their feet. Just ask Jess.

Working together for a better America. That's the common goal of the labor movement and United Way. So, when a union brother or sister approaches you about supporting United Way, please give generously.

*Helping America*  
UNIONS IN COMMUNITY SERVICE  
AFL-CIO



United Way  
It brings out the best in all of us.

## Outside Line Construction in Azusa, L.A., and Minden



Preparing to install street lights in Minden, Nev. (above) are Harker & Harker linemen Donald Eveatt (left) and Armond Otis. At right, Foreman Tom Cooper leads a Pouk & Steinle crew in wire-stringing for the City of Azusa, Ca. Below, Jimmy D'Vanzo, a union steward, runs puller on L.E. Myers job for the Dept. of Water and Power in Los Angeles. (Photos: Bobby Blair)



## Union program offers mortgage assistance

From PAGE ONE

union homebuyers can obtain a loan for 2 percent of the downpayment from the Amalgamated Bank of New York. Thus a borrower would need only 3 percent down.

In addition, more liberal approval criteria is set by Freddie Mac. Homebuyers will be able to spend 33 percent of income on housing instead of the usual limit of 28 percent.

Under the AFL-CIO program, Freddie Mac is committed to purchasing \$50 million in mortgages over a two-year period. This will allow between 750 and 1,000 qualified union families, including IBEW families, to buy homes.

In addition to offering

assistance to first-time buyers, the IBEW program can assist members with refinancing of existing mortgages and with obtaining favorably-priced homeowners and mortgage life insurance.

The union also offers a financial assistance program to help members who are unable to meet their monthly mortgage payments due to a prolonged strike, lockout, layoff or disability.

Unlike other mortgages, the union program will notify members of refinancing opportunities which can help lower monthly payments. Home equity lines of credit are available at closing without many of the usual closing costs.

### Mortgage Program in action

## Member gets quick response in refinancing his home

**O**ne Local 1245 member wasted no time when he learned of the new IBEW Union Privilege Mortgage Program.

This member, who requested that his name not be used, called the toll-free number, said he was a union member, and asked for assistance in refinancing his current mortgage.

"First they asked some preliminary questions regarding my income, debt, etc.," said the member. "It took about 30 minutes."

After doing an in-house check of his credit, the program officer called the member back and said it appeared he would qualify for refinancing if:

1. His credit was good;
2. The payment for the new mortgage wouldn't be more than 33 percent of his gross salary; and
3. His personal debt after refinancing wouldn't be greater than 38 percent.

The member was then advised of his options in terms of type of loan, interest rate, points, etc., and was even given a closing date, pending approval of the loan.

The next day, the program officer took the member's loan application over the telephone, then put the application in over-night mail for the member to sign.

**BUYING A HOME? REFINANCING?**

**Now is a good time to call your union!**

**1-800-848-6466**

*Receptions draw large crowds to Stockton and Chico*

# Members celebrate union's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

**U**nion. It's a simple concept, but one that has had a dramatic impact on thousands of workers over the years who have given their allegiance to IBEW Local 1245.

In celebration of the working people who have supplied the union with power and purpose over the past five decades, Local 1245 this summer held 50th anniversary receptions in Stockton and Chico, attracting hundreds of members, retirees and relations to an evening of food, festivities, and fond remembrances.

In the following pages, many of the active and retired members in attendance on June 28 in Stockton and August 3 in Chico share their thoughts about Local 1245 on the occasion of its 50th birthday.



From left: Manuel Valente, a 30-year union member, and Darrell Maynard, 31 years, both from PG&E GC Gas, along with their wives, Anna Maynard, and Ethel Valente at the Aug. 3 reception in Chico.



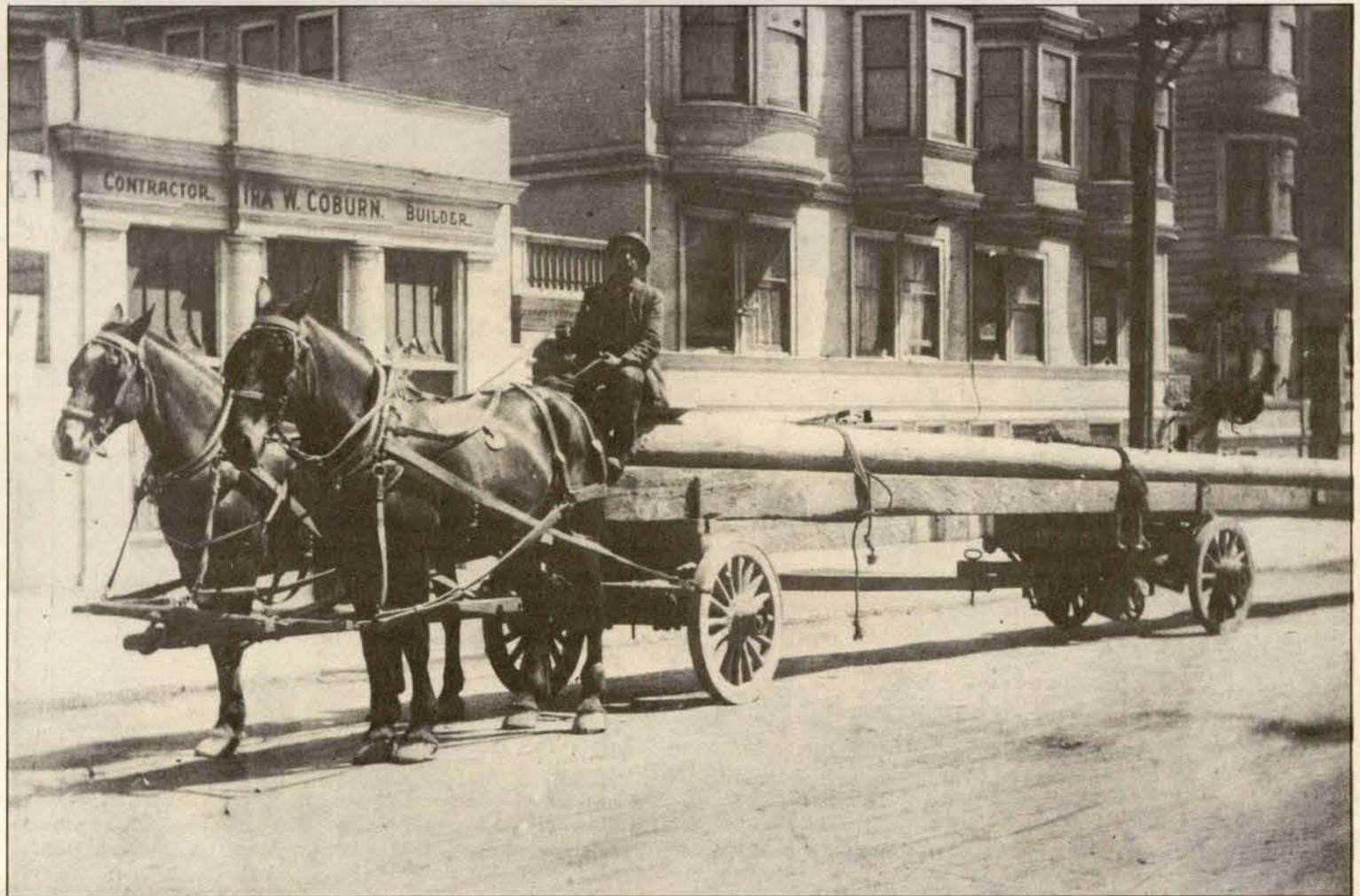
Union members and their families enjoy a hot buffet at the 50th Anniversary Reception on June 28 in Stockton.



Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally greets guests at the Aug. 3 reception in Chico.



John Eide, a retired PG&E gas serviceman and 25-year shop steward, holds the photo of an early horse-drawn line truck that he recently donated to the Local 1245 archives. An enlarged version of the photo appears at right.



"If the foreman didn't like you, he could fire you." But once the union was recognized, "the job became more humane."

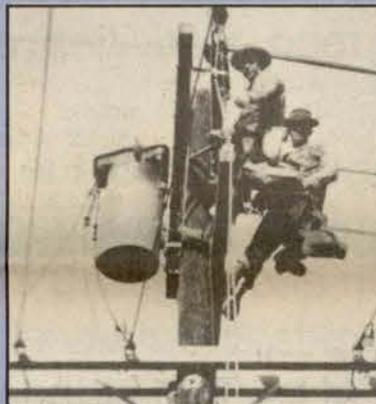
-Al Bloise



From left: Jackie Bloise, Al Bloise, a former shop steward in the San Jose Division of PG&E, Truman LaBonte, retired from PG&E General Construction, and Marge LaBonte.



At left, a Ford flatbed used for PG&E line truck in Marysville. 1960. At right, PG&E linemen Shorty Cope and Stan Banner in Petaluma, Ca. in 1950. (Courtesy Joe Brasher)



Crew greasing lifts on low pressure water lift gas holder at PG&E's Stockton Gas Plant in 1951. (Courtesy Ken McAuley)

## Union members remember...

**T**he union was still struggling for a foothold at PG&E when Al Bloise first went to work for PG&E. Bloise, who worked in the San Jose Division and retired in 1979, said some of the older employees explained to him that it was important to have a union on the property if he wanted a fair shake.

"If the foreman didn't like you, he could fire you," said Bloise. But once the union was recognized, "the job became more humane."

The wage level was a central concern in the early days at PG&E, according to Marvin Brooks, a member of Local 1245 since the early 1940s.

"Everybody was getting better money and we couldn't figure out why we were just getting 50 cents an hour," said Brooks, who retired in 1967 as a light crew foreman in the Gas Department at Modesto.

Through the process of negotiations, Local 1245 won steady increases in the wages, which was an important contribution to the qual-

See *NEXT PAGE*

## Local 1245



1941 - 1991

*Celebrating 50 years of union*

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

ity of life for its members according to Ken McAuley, a member since 1952 who retired from PG&E Gas Service in Stockton. "If we didn't have the union I don't think I would have been as well off financially in my retirement," said McAuley.

### Job security

"For me, it's meant job security and very good wages and benefits," said Mike Stetter, a 29-year union member working out of PG&E's Modesto Service Center.

"In fact, the union's going to enable me to retire at a fairly decent age (55-1/2). Because of the union contract, I'll have earned a full retirement," said Stetter, adding: "The company didn't give me all these things just because they're nice fellows."

"They've kept the company fair and honest," said Clay Follett, a measurement and control mechanic at PG&E's Stockton Gas Load Center and a 21-year union member. "They've protected the rights of the workers."

"It gave you a sense of security," said Dot Martin, a union member since 1966 who retired as a PG&E gas serviceman out of Stockton in 1990. "Especially as a minority working for PG&E, you felt you had somebody on your side, speaking up for you."

### Benefits

The benefits are the most important contribution the union has made to the lives of its members, in the opinion of Carl Johnston, who retired from PG&E building maintenance with 28 years in the union. People may tend to focus on the good wage packages the union negotiates, Johnston said, "but I think in the long run it's the benefits—while you're working and also after you're retired."

When Bernie Schmidt, a retired gas serviceman out of Stockton, began his 34-year career at PG&E, "We didn't even have any hospitalization (insurance)," said Schmidt's wife, Willodene.

But through years of hard bargaining the union secured a wide range of health bene-

*Text Continues PAGE TEN*



Dot and Betty Martin.

"[The union] gave you a sense of security. Especially as a minority working for PG&E, you felt you had somebody on your side, speaking up for you."

*Dot Martin*

At right, Everett Eyroud, powerhouse foreman, and Howard Pace salvage furniture and remove logs around penstocks at Cresta Powerhouse in the early 1950s following an autumn storm. Below, linemen for Great Western Power Co., a predecessor of Pacific Gas & Electric, working in what is now the De Sabla Division in the early part of the 20th Century.





Bob and Barbara Jones.

"We are a union family... [Local 1245 works] "for the upgrading of my pension and I'm grateful for what they do for me."

*Barbara Jones*



From left: Mark Ramirez, PG&E Gas Production & Storage, Orland, 18-year member; Lynn Ramirez; Arnie Garza, PG&E Kettleman Compressor Station, 20-year member; Karen Garza; Marie Oliveira; and Don Oliveira, PG&E Kettleman Compressor Station, 6-year member.



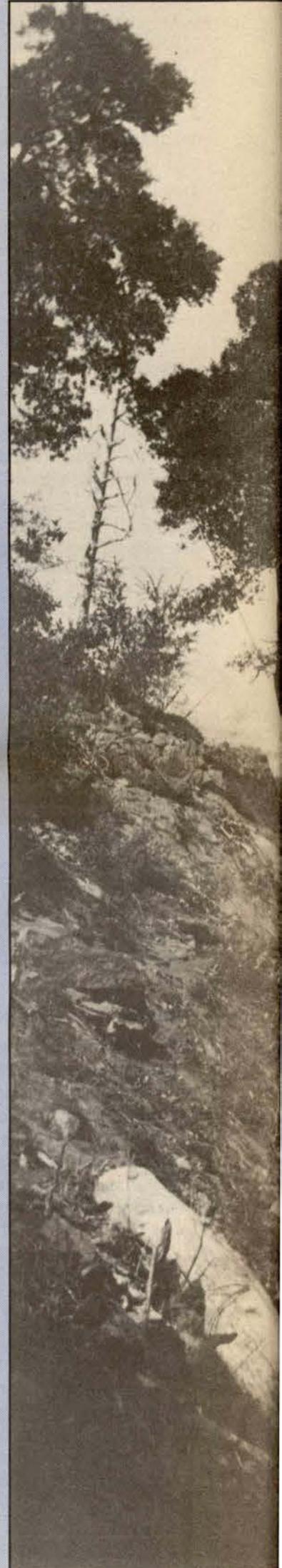
Advisory Council member Jim Dorman with his wife Dale and a special pal.

"Weakley's philosophy [in negotiations] was take some and leave some. Get it next year... We never struck."

*Bill Fleming*



From left: Joe Farmer, longtime Advisory Council member, joined union in 1947; Bill Fleming, former member of negotiating committee, joined in 1945; Dick Cowen, joined in 1948; Bill Francis, who retired from PG&E as garage subforeman in Marysville in 1986, joined the union in 1946. Fleming and Cowen were originally in the UWUA (CIO) before coming over to the IBEW during the great "cross over". (See April 1991 Utility Reporter for the history of how CIO activists joined forces with IBEW.)



Linemen for Great Western Power Co. working on the De Sabla Division in the ea

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

...ion family... [Local  
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 o for me."

*Barbara Jones*



Council member Jim Dorman with his wife and a special pal.



Council member, joined union negotiating committee, joined in 1936, who retired from PG&E as a lineman in 1966, joined the union in 1946. He was with WUA (CIO) before coming over to IBEW. (See April 1991 Utility Reporter for more forces with IBEW.)



Linemen for Great Western Power Co., a predecessor of Pacific Gas & Electric, working in what is now the De Sabla Division in the early part of the 20th Century.



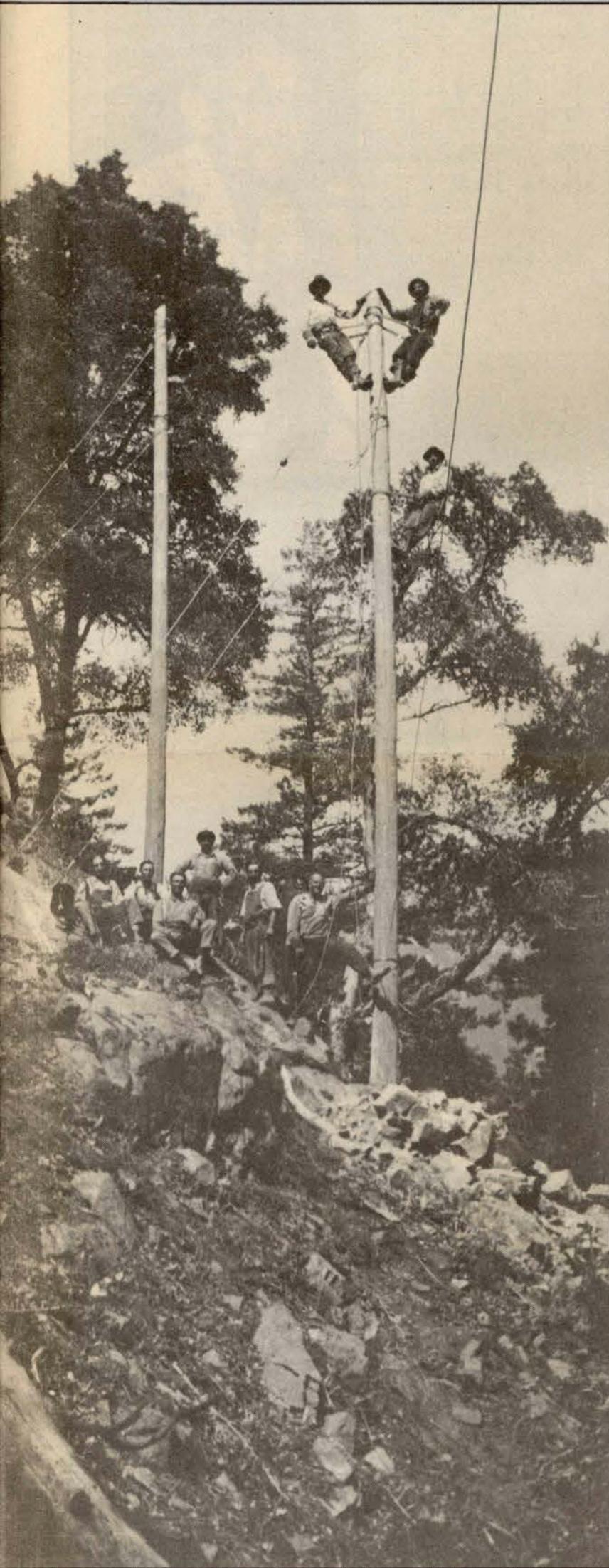
From left: Louis... team member; C... Area Power Adm...



Jay Killgore, former Ad... Killgore with their twin...



Local 1245 Record's granddaughter Tiff and his wife Darlene.



er Co., a predecessor of Pacific Gas & Electric, working in what is now  
ly part of the 20th Century.



From left: Louis Johnson, Sierra Pacific shop steward and negotiating team member; Chris Johnson; Dianne Perry; and Richard Perry, Western Area Power Administration shop steward and negotiating team member.



Jay Killgore, former Advisory Council member, and Darlyce Killgore with their twin granddaughters.



Business Manager Jack McNally chats with PG&E North Valley Division Manager Mike Amerio, a guest of the union at the reception.



Local 1245 Recording Secretary Barbara Symons (second from left), and her granddaughter Tiffany, share a table with Local 1245 Treasurer Ed Mallory and his wife Darlene.

*From PAGE SEVEN*

fits for its members. In the words of John Hanson, a retired service mechanic out of Stockton, "They got better and better and better."

"I was glad to pay my dues," declared Truman LaBonte, who first went to work for PG&E General Construction in Redwood City in 1941. "That's the only way you get decent protection for your job."

Back then, LaBonte belonged to the Utility Workers Organizing Committee (CIO), which organized PG&E in Redwood City in the early 1940s. When large numbers of CIO members crossed over to IBEW in the late 1940s, LaBonte wound up in Local 1245.

LaBonte's wife, Marge, said that Truman's work in General Construction kept him away from home all week back in those days. But, she recalled with a smile, "Every weekend was a honeymoon because it was the only time I saw him."

**Family affair**

Marge LaBonte herself was a member of the Retail Clerks union, making the union something of a family affair for the LaBontes.

And it is a fact that for many union members, unionism was an important part of family tradition, something learned at a father's or mother's knee.

Bob Nimmo, a steward and foreman at the City of Lodi, learned unionism from his father, who was a member of the Carpenters union for 30 years.

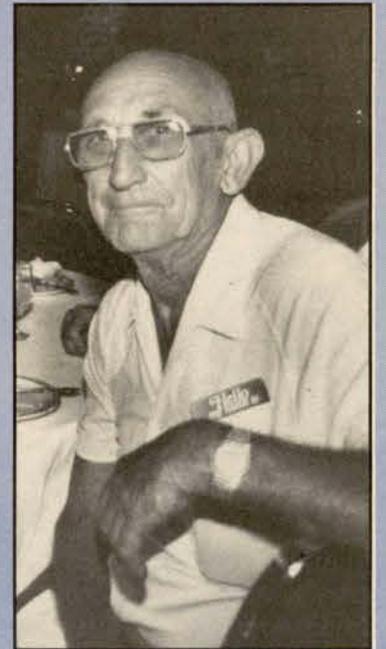
"I'm a staunch union sup-  
*See NEXT PAGE*

**"I'm a staunch union supporter. You have to be a fool not to believe in the union if you're going to be out working."**

*-Bob Nimmo*

**"I worked in the snow on snow shoes. There was about 4-6 feet of snow and you'd sink up to your knees, even in snow shoes. That wasn't fun, that was work!"**

*-Hal Carpenter*



Hal Carpenter



Jay Keller, apprentice water systems repairman, Northern Hydro, Rodgers Flat; Shari Keller; Terri Watts; and Timothy Watts, Advisory Council member employed by Citizens Utilities in Palo Cedro.



From left: Duane Bartlow, Advisory Council member; Hal Carpenter, retired PG&E subforeman with 25 years in the union; Elsie Carpenter, and Norman Bartlow.



Barbara Saunders (middle), a 16-year union member employed by PG&E in Hollister, is accompanied to the union reception by her mother, Frances, and daughter, Sarah.



Linemen for Great Western Power Co., a predecessor of Pacific Gas & Electric, working in what is now the De Sabla Division in the early part of the 20th Century.



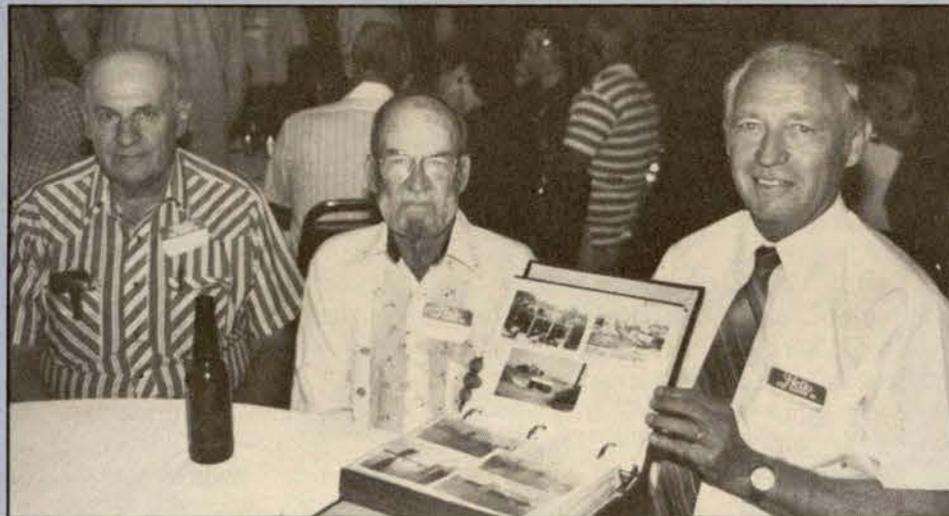
Business Manager Jack McNally greets lineman Don Silva at the Chico reception.



Local 1245 member Thomas Apedaile, working near Winters, Ca. in February of 1967. (Courtesy Tom Apedaile)

The union "went to bat for us over grievances, got us raises... It was good."

-Fred McDermid



Old photos help Fred McDermid, Al Silva and John Killingsworth relive memories of their years supplying water in the Colgate Division of PG&E. The water district was acquired by PG&E from Great Western Power Co. in 1931.

porter. You have to be a fool not to believe in the union if you're going to be out working," said Nimmo, who served as chair of the General Construction Grievance Committee while working for PG&E before going over to the City of Lodi.

"We are a union family," said Barbara Jones, who retired in 1976 from PG&E credit and collections in the North Bay. Her husband, Bob, remembers working in Outside Line Construction on the first 230KV line in California, from Keswick Dam to Madison. He also served a stint as business manager for a United Food and Commercial Workers local.

Barbara Jones, who carried soup for strikers during the San Francisco general strike of 1934, believes Local 1245 today works "for the upgrading of my pension and I'm grateful for what they do for me."

Barbara Saunders, a 16-year union member working for PG&E in Hollister, was escorted to the Chico reception by her mother Frances and daughter Sarah, allowing three generations to enjoy the union's 50th anniversary celebration. Saunders is virtually a one-person federation of labor, having worked for the Retail Clerks, the Communications Workers, and the Railway Trainmen.

As a member of the Trainmen, Saunders worked in food service for Trailways, joking that she "professionally poured food over the travelers."

#### Working conditions

Working conditions have changed considerably since the days when Bill Moden first went to work for PG&E in 1946. Moden, who retired in 1974 as an electric meterman in Stockton, recalls that "We used to damn near make our own meters when I first started."

Hal Carpenter, who retired as a subforeman for PG&E in Chico and spent "at least" 25 years in the union, remembers working under some pretty rough conditions.

"I worked in the snow on snow shoes. There was about 4-6 feet of snow and you'd sink up to your knees, even

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## Local 1245 Founder Profiles



Marvin Brooks in 1958.

## The secret to signing up members? 'Driving and driving' says union organizer Marvin Brooks

**M**arvin Brooks and unions go way back. As a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Brooks fired locomotives while working for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) Railroad during World War I.

Brooks went to work for PG&E in the 1930s and joined Local 1245 shortly after the union was chartered in 1941. Still in its infancy, the union had no contract. So Brooks took a year-and-a-half leave of absence to circulate union petitions "night and day" in 11 PG&E divisions.

What was his strategy?

"Driving and driving," Brooks recalls. "Wherever I see anybody working, I stop and ask them to sign a petition."

Once while visiting PG&E headquarters on union business, Brooks met P. M. Downing, the PG&E executive renown for his violent opposition to unions. Brooks said Downing told him to take a look out the window, where several PG&E employees were at work in the street below.

"That's what I like to see," Brooks remembers Downing saying, "lots of workers." According to Brooks, Downing "believed in low wages and lots of employees... He was a man who didn't believe in putting out much money."

That philosophy translated into hard times for a lot of people, Brooks recalls.

"There wasn't that much work in those days and when you got it there

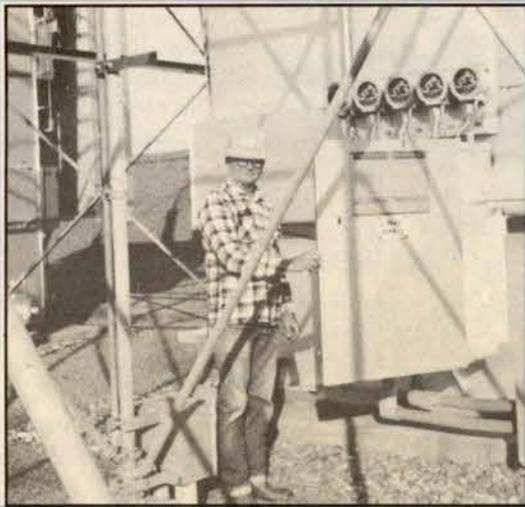
wasn't much money. I worked for 50-cents an hour for years," says Brooks.

Brooks worked to improve the lot of PG&E workers in many ways. He was appointed chairman of the Safety Committee, he recalls, "when they didn't have any safety regulations whatever."

Brooks served as the local union's vice president for 14 years, from 1953 to 1967.



P. M. Downing of PG&E: "a man who didn't believe in putting out much money."



William Fleming at Palermo Substation near Oroville in the 1960s or 1970s.

## Formerly a CIO activist, William Fleming became Local 1245 negotiator

**W**hen William Fleming went to work for PG&E in 1945 in Concord, Ca., he joined the Utility Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC), which was actively organizing on PG&E's Bay Area properties.

When a large chunk of the Utility Workers in the Bay Area, under the leadership of Ron Weakley, defected to the IBEW in the late 1940s, Fleming went with them. By the 1950s, Fleming's commitment and talent, particularly his writing skills, had at-

tracted the attention of Local 1245 Business Rep. Roy Murray, who persuaded him to go on the review committee.

In 1959, Fleming became a member of Local 1245's bargaining team in contract negotiations with PG&E, and participated in every contract bargaining from 1959 through 1970.

"I remember one thing Ron Weakley said years ago," Fleming recalled at the union's anniversary reception in Chico last month. "We were after improvements in sick leave

during negotiations. The company made a survey of sick leave records.

"When they got the survey compiled," Fleming continues, "they were surprised to find that shift employees used less sick leave. Ron said the reason for that is that shift employees feel so lousy all the time they probably don't know if they're sick or not!"

But few workers could match Fleming's own track record on sick leave. In 43 years on the job, he was out sick a total of two days.

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in snow shoes. That wasn't fun, that was work!" said Carpenter.

Thomas Apedaile retired from PG&E in 1973 with 26 years in the union. As an equipment operator, his wife explained, Apedaile "built roads and dug tunnels and everything else" for PG&E.

"And when a heavy line came through, they put me on that heavy line" setting up towers, added Apedaile, who now has two sons employed by PG&E.

For Al Silva, Fred McDermid and John Killingsworth, the 50th Anniversary Reception in Chico provided a chance to recall their work in the Water District in the Colgate Division of PG&E, which was purchased by PG&E from Great Western Power Co. in 1931.

Killingsworth, who started work there in 1948, remembers they irrigated about 16,000 acres at that time. When he retired 38 years later, that number had jumped to 50,000 acres.

McDermid said the union "went to bat for us over grievances, got us raises... It was good."

"The union's always been good to me," agreed Jay Keller, an apprentice water systems repairman at Northern Hydro in Rodgers Flat. "The union stood up for me real well."

That sentiment was echoed by Anthony Campos, who retired in 1972 from PG&E where he worked as a truck driver on a line crew in the San Jose Division. Though retired now for nearly two decades, Campos hasn't lost his conviction that Local 1245 made an important difference in his life:

"You bet it did, mister," said Campos. "I worked previously at other places where there was no union and, believe me, it was rugged sometimes."



# Members' skills put to the test in 'Lineman's Rodeo'



The Walnut Creek DBU team celebrates its first place finish. On the winning crew were: Max Tellez, Jim Zack, Dan Rand and Tim McCarthy, alternate.

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eral other employers also participated in the rodeo. The City of Lodi, the City of Roseville, Sierra Pacific Power Co., and Sacramento Municipal Utility District all sent teams composed of Local 1245 members.

Also participating was the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Competition was tight between PG&E General Construction crews vying for the right to compete in St. Louis. Finishing first among GC crews with an outstanding 689 points was the San Joaquin team of George Soares, Eric Dau, Bob Sholler, and Geraldine Curtin.

Two teams tied for second among GC crews: Stockton and East Bay. Both teams garnered 686 points but judges awarded second place to the Stockton team based on its faster times. The Stockton GC team consisted of Curt Schmidt, Evan Slaydon and Scott Rose. On the East

Bay GC team were Joe Clough, Carl Keaschall and Danny Calahan.

### "Will to win"

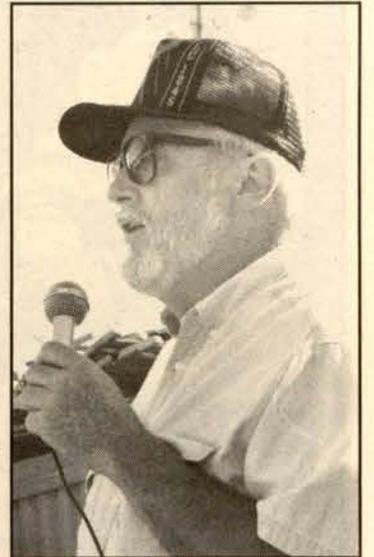
Dan Rand credited the Walnut Creek DBU team's overall best time to "experience and the will to win."

"We're all from the same yard, we all work together. That helps a lot," Rand said. "We enjoy the work and that helps, too."

Linemen rodeos have been conducted nationally for eight years, but this year marks the first time that Local 1245 members have had an opportunity to compete. PG&E agreed to sponsor a local rodeo after Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally suggested the idea to PG&E Chairman Dick Clark.

"I believe we've got some of the best linemen in the world at this local," McNally said. "They work safe and

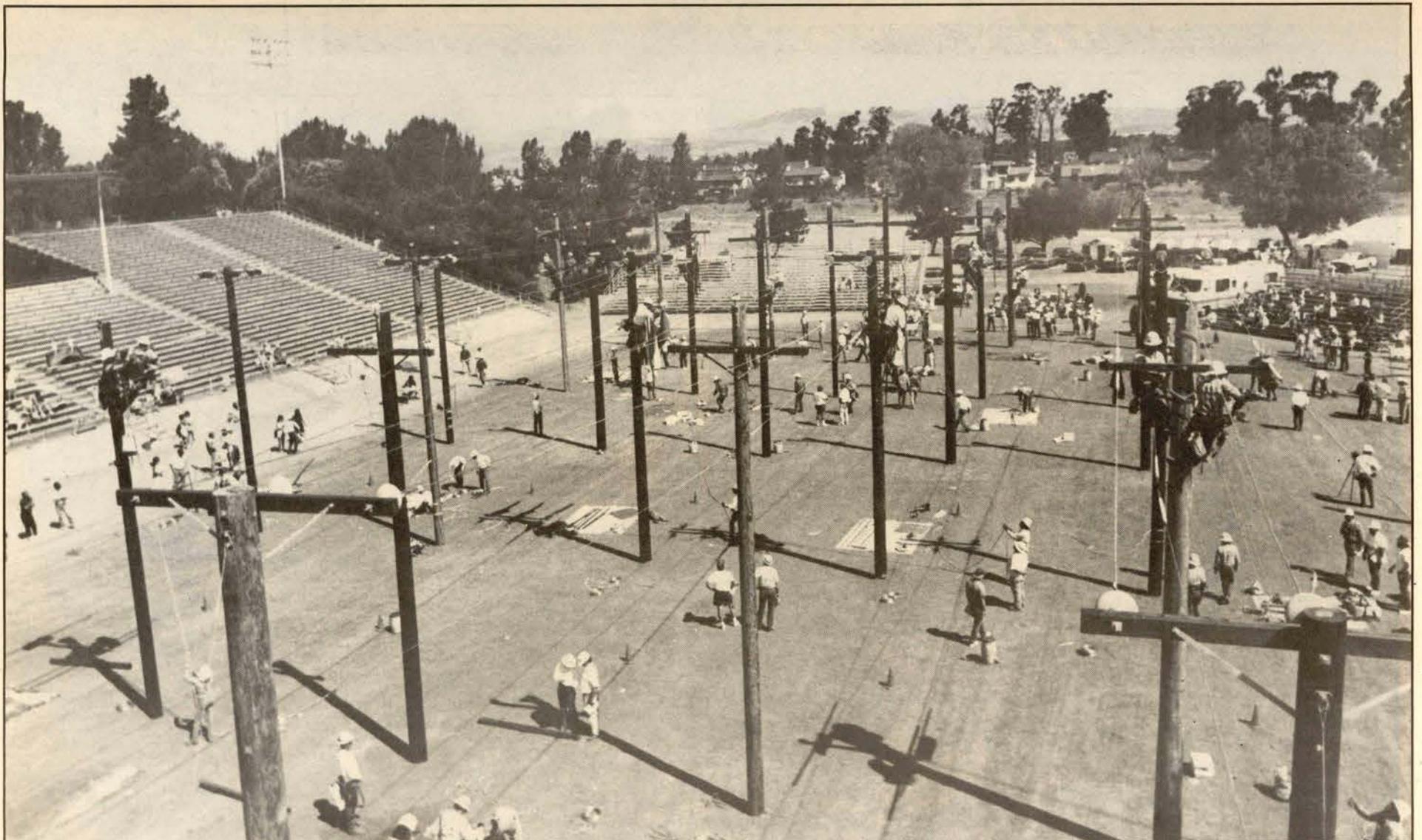
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Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally welcomes contestants.

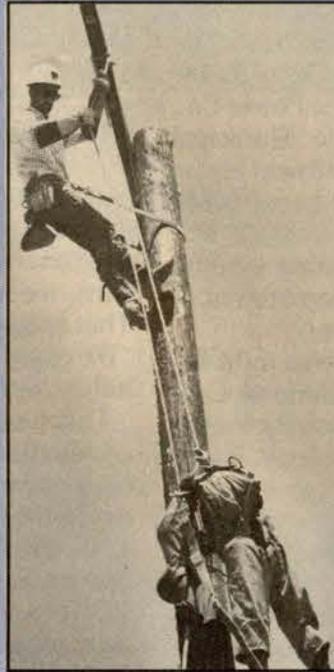


Rodeo contestants are greeted by PG&E's Bill Mazotti (left) and Don Brand (right).

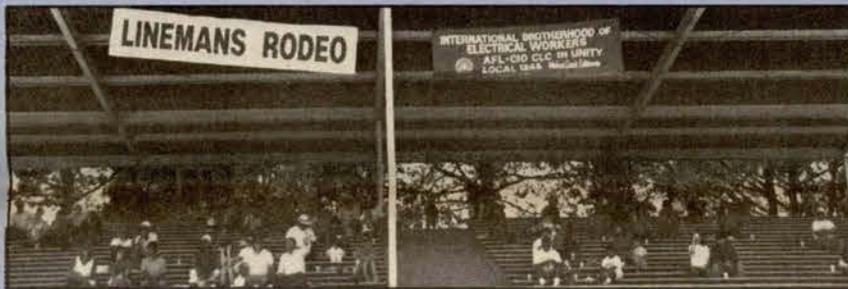


Lineman's Rodeo in Livermore, Ca., brought about 100 electrical workers together to test their skills. (Photos by Eric Wolfe)

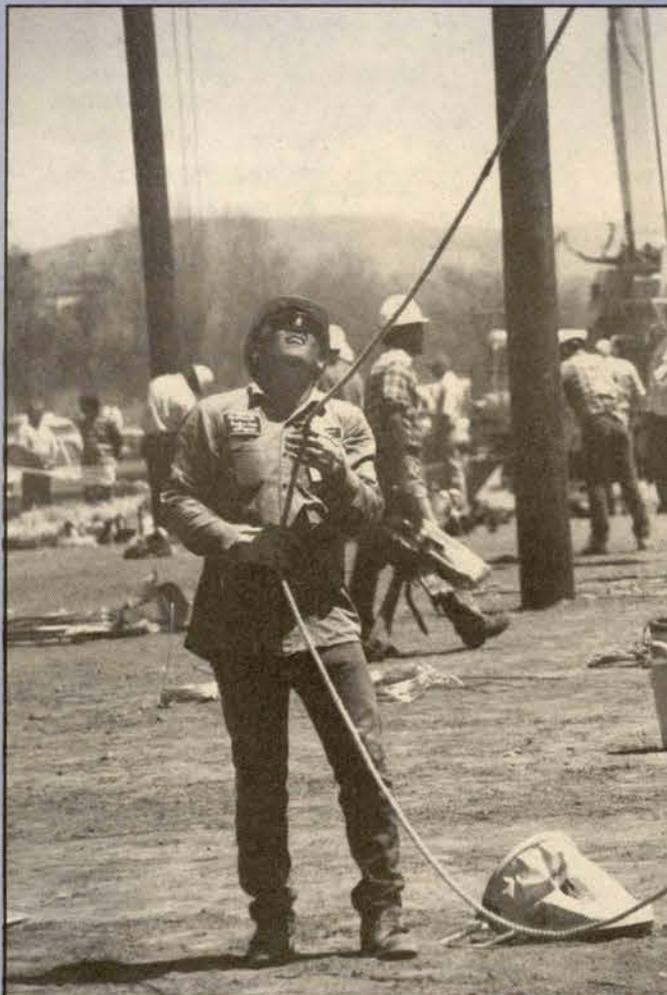
**LINEMAN'S RODEO**



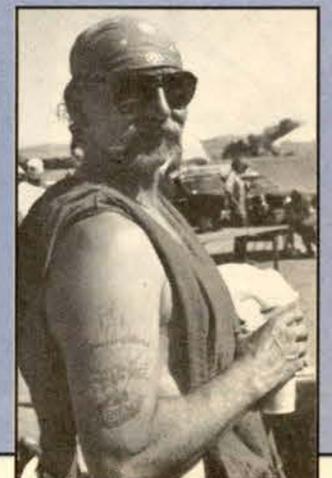
In test of climbing skills, lineman, above, prepares to descend pole with raw egg in his mouth. At right, a member of the first-place GC team performs the hurt man rescue. Below, spectators watch the competition from a shady spot in the Livermore stadium.



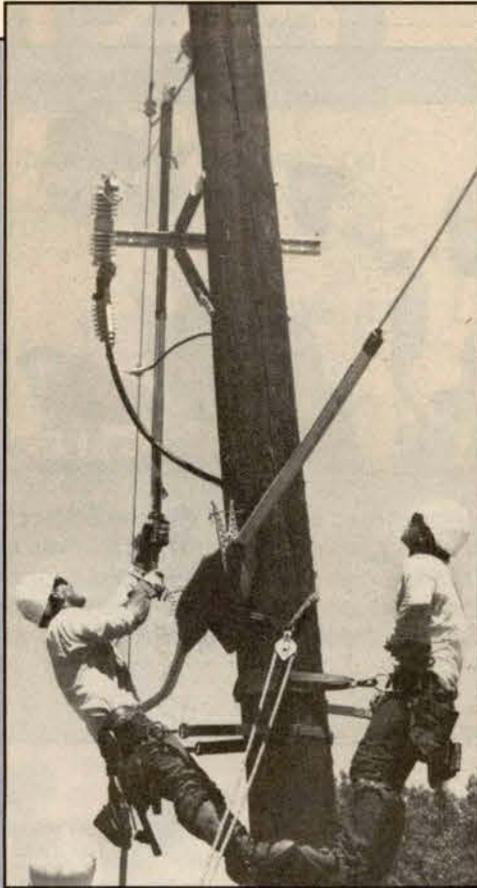
A crew from the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (above) performs the double dead-end hot tap. Below, a DeAnza Division PG&E crew consisting of Simon Cassidy, Mike Garcia, Gregory Schulz and Johnny Texeira (alternate) competes in the rope splicing event.



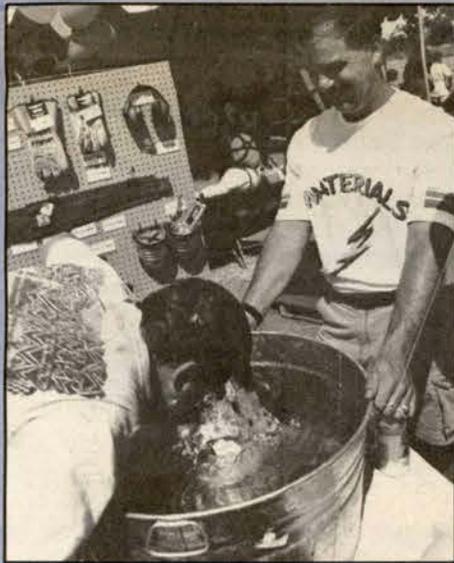
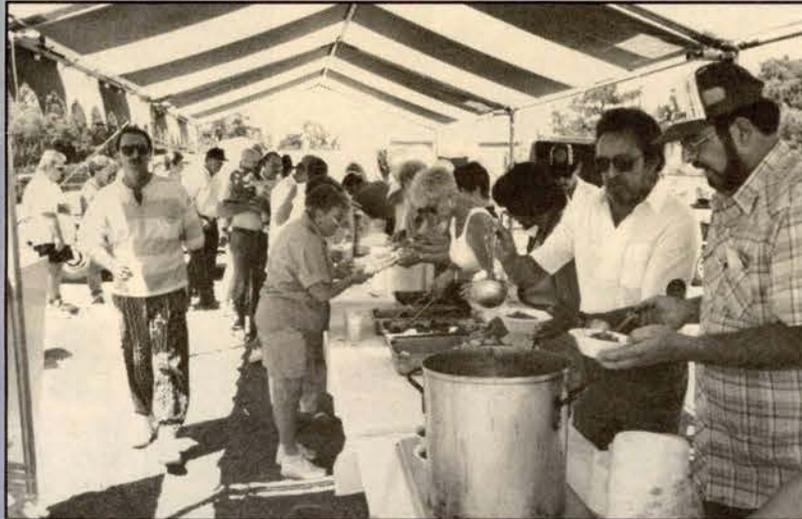
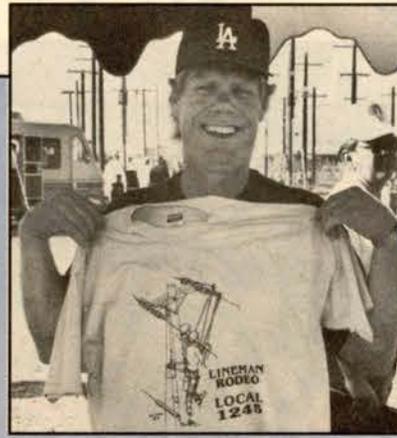
At left, a City of Roseville crew member. At right, "Smiley" Stahl of Sierra Pacific Power, displays his union credentials: a tattoo reading "Hi-Powered Lineman -- IBEW".



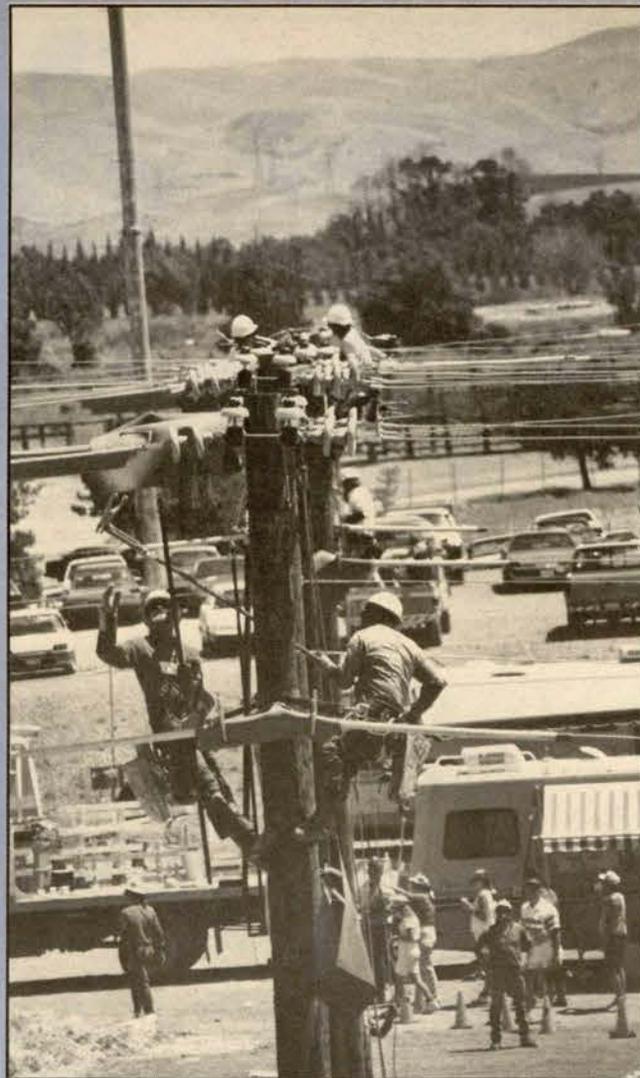
**LINEMAN'S RODEO**



A Sacramento Municipal Utility District crew (left) performs the underground dip termination. At right, Business Rep. Dennis Seyfer shows off a Local 1245 Lineman Rodeo T-Shirt. Below (from right) Business Reps. Ed Caruso and Frank Hutchins are among many union staffers who helped prepare and serve chow to the rodeo crowd.



There was some action for kids attending the rodeo. Below, kids queue up for a chance to ride in a bucket truck. Below, they are given a chance to dip for apples in another sort of bucket. At right, linemen perform the double dead-end hot tap.



*From PAGE THIRTEEN*  
they work smart, and these rodeos give them an opportunity to demonstrate that. "We're proud of these members—not just the winning teams but all the guys who came out here and competed, McNally continued. "They showed why union linemen are worth every penny they get paid."

A Local 1245 team from Sierra Pacific will attend the national Lineman's Rodeo based on its performance at an earlier regional competition in Reno, Nev., according to "Smiley" Stahl, a Sierra Pacific lineman based in South Lake Tahoe. Even with a trip to St. Louis already assured, Stahl's team competed at Livermore to get in some extra practice.

"We learned a lot of things," said Stahl. "We didn't take first and we didn't take last. We finished somewhere in the middle, I guess, but we tried hard."

Along with Stahl, the Sierra Pacific team consisted of Ron Shay, Milan Dohnansky, and alternate Ken McNeal. Apprentice Brett Howard, who accompanied the team to Livermore, will also attend the St. Louis rodeo.

Among non-PG&E teams competing at Livermore, an exceptional score of 686 was turned in by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District crew consisting of Frank Misiewicz, Jim Baird, and Stan Gee. The only non-PG&E team finishing higher was Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, with 688 points.

In addition to the Misiewicz-Baird-Gee team, SMUD will send two others to the St. Louis competition. One team will consist of Ted Warner, Jr., Richard Harper, and Ronald Young. The third SMUD team will be Thomas Hylton, Mike Bazil, and Mike Fisher.

An official for the City of Roseville said budget constraints would prevent the city from sending either of its teams to St. Louis.

*More photos, PAGE SIXTEEN*

## LINEMAN'S RODEO

### Team members and alternates

(Local 1245 teams only)

**City of Roseville:** Larry Layton, Terry Bakkie, David Bakkie, Joseph Reding

**PG&E DBU DeAnza:** Simon Cassidy, Mike Garcia, Gregory Schulz, Johnny Teixeira

**City of Roseville:** Jonathan Langley, Daniel Reid, Buddy Dixon, John Wiltshire

**City of Lodi:** Barry Fisher, Bill Griffith, Richard Willett, B. G. Nimmo

**PG&E GC East Bay:** Danny Calahan, Karl Keaschall, Joe Clough

**PG&E DBU Fresno:** Rick Bimson, Tom Jones, George McNeill, Larry Galvez

**PG&E GC San Jose:** Douglas Mattson, William Beard, Brett Wolterman

**PG&E GC San Jose:** Jack Pennerarass, Gabriel Ranhos, Mark Welsh

**Sierra Pacific:** Milan Dohnansky, Percy Stahl, Ron Shay, Ken McNeal

**SMUD:** Max Fuentes, Gerald Mankin, Gregory James

**PG&E GC San Jose:** Pat Windschitl, Rod Stewart, William Thormann

**PG&E GC San Jose:** David Inouge, Brad Kiel, Michael Sowders

**SMUD:** Frank Misiewicz, Jim Baird, Stan Gee

**PG&E GC:** David Keener, Scott Stalder, Don Matthews, Scott Whitney

**PG&E DBU:** Steven Zerkel, Ben Arvig, Michael Rogers

**SMUD:** Ted Warner Jr., Richard Harper, Ronald Young

**PG&E GC:** Donnie Drake, Jose Ortiz, Doug Elford, William Sparks

**SMUD:** Thomas Hylton, Mike Bazil, Mike Fisher

**PG&E DBU Walnut Creek:** Max Tellez, Tim McCarthy, Jim Zack, Daniel Rand

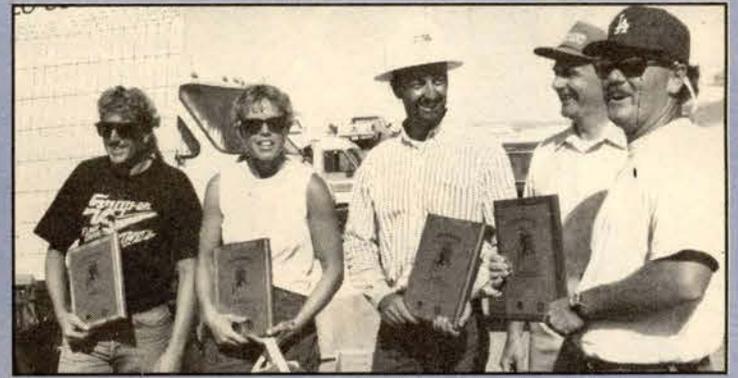
**SMUD:** Jim Wilhelm, Pat Buckley, Thomas Mansfield

**PG&E GC San Joaquin:** George Soares, Robert Sholler, Eric Dau, Geraldine Curtin

**SMUD:** Bob Flatland, Mark Flatland, John Flatland

**PG&E GC Auburn:** Leslie Stiles, Andrew Smith, Eric Rubio

**PG&E GC Stockton:** Scott Rose, Evan Slaydon, Curt Schmidt



At left, in a photo taken from a 75-foot Simon-Telelect ST7070, kids can be seen getting a lift during Lineman's Rodeo. Above, awards are presented to members of the San Joaquin PG&E crew, which had the best time among GC crews: George Soares, Robert Sholler, Eric Dau, and Geraldine Curtin.



Above, Curt Schmidt, Evan Slaydon and Scott Rose receive awards for their second place finish among PG&E GC teams. At left, a Los Angeles Department of Water & Power team is recognized for its first place finish among non-PG&E competitors. Below, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District team of Frank Misiewicz, Jim Baird and Stan Gee celebrate their second place finish among non-PG&E teams.

