

# UTILITY REPORTER

Honoring Hank Lucas  
See Page 9

## Davis vows to restore overtime premium

**G**ray Davis pledged to restore the eight-hour day and to give government back to working people if he is elected governor of California in the November election.

"I want an environment in which every person's work

is valued, in which every contribution is recognized as just that—a contribution to our productive society," Davis told about 500 union delegates to the California Labor Federation's 22<sup>nd</sup> biennial convention, held last month in Oakland.

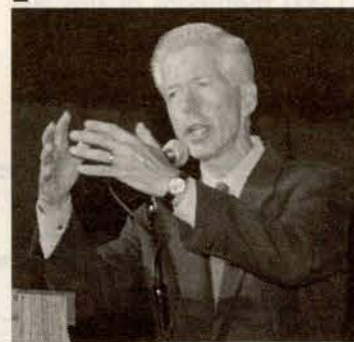
Davis congratulated the delegates on labor's suc-

cessful campaign to defeat Prop. 226 in the June primary election, and won cheers from the crowd when he promised to fight "the son of 226, daughter of 226, grandson of 226" in the years to come.

Davis drew a sharp distinction between himself and his opponent—Attorney General Dan Lungren—by pledging to restore the eight-hour day if elected. Lungren opposes paying overtime premiums to workers who put in more than eight hours in a day.

The California Legislature voted to restore the daily overtime premium last year, but the bill was vetoed by Gov. Pete Wilson.

"Pete Wilson stole our eight-hour day and Dan



Gray Davis, labor-endorsed candidate for governor, calls for the restoration of the overtime premium at last month's California Labor Federation convention.

Lungren, if elected, will keep it that way," declared California Labor Federation leader Art Pulaski, who urged unionists to support Davis with the same enthusiasm they gave to the fight

See PAGE FIVE

## Unions call for defeat of Prop. 9

At the urging of Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally, the California Labor Federation officially endorsed a "No" vote on Proposition 9.

McNally, who serves on the Executive Board of the two-million-member federation, warned the federation that Prop. 9 would abolish major provisions of AB 1890, including important worker protections provisions.

Prop. 9 would sharply limit the state's major utilities, including PG&E, from collecting Competition Transition Charges (CTCs).

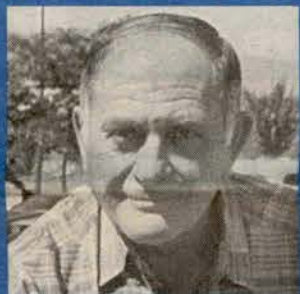
The CTCs were created by a unanimous vote of the California Legislature in 1996 to allow the utilities to be compensated for "stranded assets" during the transition to a competitive market.

See Business Manger's Column on Page 3

### David Reese, 65

Retired Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager David Reese died last month. A remembrance of Dave will appear next month.

### STRALLA RETIRES



SEE PAGES 6-7

## New Executive Board takes office



Local 1245's new officers and Executive Board members were sworn in at the Walnut Creek office on July 24. Taking the oath of office were (sitting, from left) President Howard Stiefer, Business Manager/Financial Secretary Jack McNally, Vice President Jim McCauley; (standing, from right) Recording Secretary Ed Mallory, Central Area Executive Board member Anna Bayliss, Treasurer Mike Davis, Northern Area Executive Board member Kathy Tindall, Southern Area Executive Board member Chris Habecker, and Executive Board Member-at-Large John Mendoza. (Photo: Austin Lea II)

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## CALENDAR

August 1-2  
Advisory Council  
Reno, Nev.

August 22  
Sierra Pacific Power  
Stewards Conference  
Reno, Nev.

October 5  
LAST DAY TO REGISTER  
FOR NOV. 3<sup>RD</sup> ELECTION



## UTILITY REPORTER

August 1998  
Volume XLVII  
Number 8  
Circulation: 26,800

(925) 933-6060

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Published monthly at 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, California 94598. Official publication of Local Union 1245, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Periodical postage paid at Walnut Creek and at additional mailing offices. USPS No. 654640, ISSN No. 0190-4965.

**POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579, Change of Address, and all correspondence to Utility Reporter, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Single copies 10 cents, subscription \$1.20 annually.

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### Workers here and abroad

## Rolling the union on...

**Auto Pact?:** As Utility Reporter went to press, the United Auto Workers were reported to be nearing an agreement with General Motors to resolve the issues that led to a union strike earlier in the summer.

**Healthy Move:** The 11,000 members of the National Clinical Social Work Federation, who are mental health counselors in 31 state societies, affiliated with

OPEIU's National Guild of Medical Providers last month.

**Orthopedists Organize:** After several years of frustrations with managed care health plans, more than 80 Cincinnati orthopedists joined the Federation of Physicians and Dentists, an affiliate of AFSCME. "As a small group, doctors really have no power in the marketplace to do any

negotiating with these big national insurance groups," said Dr. John Larkin, past president of the Cincinnati Orthopedic Society.

**Harvest of Shame:** Following violence in the strawberry fields, pro-union farm workers walked off the job to protest a sham election forced by a front group for growers at Coastal Berry Co. in Watsonville, Ca. The UFW refused to participate in the

July 23 charade, which the state's Agricultural Labor Relations Board held even though a leader of the pro-management group was arrested for allegedly attacking a police officer during a violent assault on pro-UFW workers earlier this month. "This isn't a union election. It is a modern-day harvest of shame," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

**Folding Their Tent:** Faced with mounting pressure from working families and Colorado nonprofit organizations, backers of a proposed ballot initiative similar to California's Prop. 226 Paycheck Deception Act folded their tents and announced they were halting their drive to get the measure on the November ballot. Colorado AFL-CIO President Robert Greene said the move by the measure's backers "showed uncharacteristic good sense."

**Threat to OSHA:** President Clinton has threatened to veto the FY 1999 Labor/HHS spending bill over education and training funding cuts and riders aimed at OSHA and the Mine Safety and Health Administration. Passed by the House Appropriations Committee last month, the bill "undermines the work of OSHA and MSHA and their efforts to protect the health and safety of America's workers," said Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman.

**Solidarity Strategies:** The Machinists are joining with counterparts in Brazil and Germany to respond to the challenges posed by multinational corporations. The first target will be Daimler-Benz AG, where workers will be involved in each other's collective bargaining processes to achieve contracts that expire at the same time. That action would reduce the leverage Daimler and other employers wield when they threaten to shift work to other countries.

URGENT ALERT!

## CALL CONGRESS

Call 1-888-898-7717 and tell your senators and representative to

**Make Health Care Work for Working Families!**

INSURANCE COMPANIES AND HMOS are turning health care into big business. They get the profits—and too often we get stuck.

America's health care system should work for working families. Right now, our members of Congress are considering the Patients' Bill of Rights Act (H.R. 3605/S. 1890), which would provide:

- ▶ The right of doctors and patients to have more say about our medical care.
- ▶ The right to emergency room care.
- ▶ The right to see a specialist when we or our children need one.
- ▶ The right to appeal insurance company and HMO decisions.

We work hard to take care of our families. The Patients' Bill of Rights Act is a common-sense approach to making sure that every family participating in a health plan can get the quality health care they deserve.

### WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU CALL:

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a member of [local union affiliation] calling from the representative's/senator's district. I am calling to ask my representative/senator to support H.R. 3605/S. 1890, the Patients' Bill of Rights. What is the representative's/senator's position on this bill? [Wait for response.] Please tell the representative/senator how important this is to me. Thank you very much.

**You have a voice. Make it heard.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE 13 MILLION WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO

## Brocchini memorialized at PG&E



Former Local 1245 Treasurer Mike Brocchini, who died last year at age 38, was memorialized with a plaque to be hung in a place of honor at PG&E's Training Center in Livermore.

Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally and PG&E Industrial Relations Manager Mel Bradley shared memories of Brocchini at the dedication ceremony on July 6. Bradley was Division Manager in San Joaquin when he first encountered Brocchini, and told of how he grew to respect Brocchini's straight-forward style. McNally recalled Brocchini's tireless efforts on behalf of the union as a steward, Advisory Council member, and treasurer.

Along with McNally and Bradley, Local 1245 members attending the ceremony were (from left) Vice President Jim McCauley, stewards Katie Wagner, Bob Olsen, and Dan Mayo (holding plaque), Executive Board member Chris Habecker, President Howard Stiefer, (McNally), Executive Board member Anna Bayliss, Business Rep. Gary Hughes, and Executive Board member John Mendoza.

### APPOINTMENTS

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC CO.

GT-NW Negotiating Committee  
Rick Hufstader  
Pamela McKean  
Gary Withrow

### CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

A. Philip Randolph Institute 29<sup>th</sup> Annual National Education Conference  
Dorothy Fortier  
Lula Washington

Western Labor Communications Association  
Eric Wolfe

Local 1245 Safety Committee  
Ralph Muraca  
Ray Thomas

### Hunters Point to close

## CPUC approves auction of PG&E power plants

The California Public Utilities Commission last month approved the auction process for four PG&E "group 2" plants, triggering the provisions of Letter Agreement 97-53.

That agreement provides financial incentives to power plant employees to remain at the generating facilities for at least two years. AB 1890, the electric restructuring law, requires the seller of a generating facility to operate that facility for two years following the sale. LA 97-53 provides PG&E with a stable workforce so that the company can fulfill its obligations under AB 1890.

Plants where LA 97-53 now takes effect are Pittsburg Power Plant, Con-

tra Costa Power Plant, Geysers Power Plants, and Potrero Power Plant. LA 97-53 was triggered at Moss Landing and Morro Bay Power Plants in 1997.

Hunters Point Power Plant will not fall under the provisions of LA 97-53 due to an agreement reached last month between PG&E and the City and County of San Francisco to close that plant once reliable alternative electricity resources are operational.

Business Manager Jack McNally has requested that PG&E officials meet with him as soon as possible to discuss the concerns of union members at Hunters Point Power Plant in the wake of the announced closure.

## Proposition 9 puts members in line of fire

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

The dust has barely settled from the battle over Proposition 226 and already our members face another threat at the ballot box.

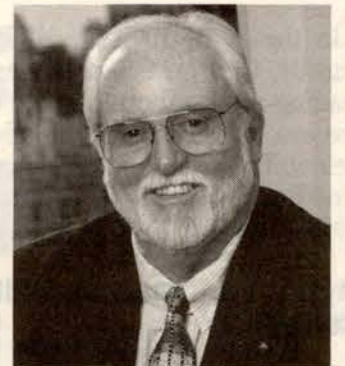
In November, California voters will be asked to vote on Proposition 9. This proposition would overturn many of the provisions of AB 1890, California's electric restructuring law. In doing so, Proposition 9 represents a very real threat to the financial health of PG&E and to the job security of our members.

AB 1890 established a formula that permits utilities like PG&E to be compensated for past investments in generating facilities that will be uncompetitive in the new electric market. Proposition 9, if passed, would severely limit the authority of electric utilities like PG&E to collect this compensation, known as Competition Transition Charges or CTCs.

AB 1890 also provided for rate reduction bonds to finance immediate rate relief for residential and small business consumers. Proposition 9 would prohibit the issuance of rate reduction bonds, and raises serious questions as to how the bonds already issued would be paid off.

This attack on AB 1890 is an extraordinary political maneuver by people who view utilities as an enemy, and who seek to punish utilities for past investments made in good faith and with full regulatory approval.

AB 1890 was not a perfect law, but it was approved unanimously in 1996 by both houses of the California legislature



because it tried to balance the interests of all the various stakeholders in the electric deregulation debate. The new Electric Service Providers were given an opportunity to compete in an electric market in California, and existing utilities were provided with CTCs to ease their transition into that competitive market.

Among other things, those CTCs provide funding for voluntary severance, early retirement, and re-training programs for utility employees directly affected by electric competition.

The abolition of CTCs would significantly reduce the utilities' operating revenue, which would almost certainly lead to a scaling back of work and the reduction of the workforce.

Proposition 9 represents a gun aimed at the heart of the major utilities, and our members are right in the line of fire.

Last month the California Labor Federation took our union's advice and voted overwhelmingly to oppose Proposition 9. Our union will seek to further broaden that opposition to Proposition 9 as we approach November.

Please assist your union in this important effort.

# Electric deregulation: the reliability question

In the April 15 issue of *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, George C. Loehr described some of the leading myths about the fate of reliable service in the era of electric deregulation. Excerpts appear below. Loehr served as executive director of the Northeast Power Coordinating Council from 1989-1997.

## Myth: The Market Will Take Care Of Reliability

(If you really believe this one, I'd like to talk to you about some land in Florida.) **Reality:** There are two kinds of bulk power system reliability: generation reliability (or adequacy) and transmission reliability (or security). Generation adequacy is virtually all anyone ever talks about when discussing reliability—yet it constitutes less than 10% of bulk power system reliability concerns. Transmission security, on the other hand, is responsible for more than 90% of all reliability problems...

Generation shortages, when they do occur, are usually predictable and controllable; you can use voltage reductions, public appeals or, as a last resort, rotating feeder outages. Transmission contingencies are usually unpredictable and uncontrollable; they happen suddenly, often cascading over widespread areas in a matter of seconds...

The market can deal to some extent with generation reliability; mostly through the types of products marketers will offer customers. While acceptability problems may emerge when folks start to get cut off, letting the market act is theoretically possible. This possibility is not true for transmission reliability. There's no way to keep some customers on, no matter how much they're willing to pay, when the bulk power transmission system collapses. Think of the 1965 [East Coast] Blackout. When the system went down, everybody went down—even the wealthy folks in their million-dollar condos on Central Park West.

## Myth: Today's Reliability Criteria Are Too Stringent And Restrictive.

**Reality:** Today's transmission criteria are based on the ability to survive, without blackouts or loss of customer load, the "worst single contingency." This standard holds true universally across North America and throughout most of the developed world. You can't just make the system "a little less reliable." You either design it to survive the worst single contingency, or you don't; there's no in between...

The larger problem with relaxing reliability standards is a human inclination best described in Nobel Prize winning physicist Richard Feynman's book, *What Do You Care What Other People Think?* Mr. Feynman served on the president's special commission investigating the tragic accident of the space shuttle Challenger.

He describes in his book how he asked many NASA officials why they had lowered the shuttle's design standards. He was shocked when he repeatedly received the answer, "We hadn't had any accidents, so we figured we could lower the standards." As Feynman points out, the reason they had not had any accidents was precisely because they had high standards. Lower the criteria, and you're entering unexplored terrain.

## Myth: "If You're Focusing On Reliability, You Haven't Gotten The Message."

**Reality:** That's an actual quotation. So are these: "If your company is focusing on reliability, I'd downgrade your bonds right now." And, "Competition should be your top priority." It's difficult to comprehend, except for hubris, how anyone could make such a statement today. As a society, we are totally and irreversibly dependent on reliable electricity. Next to food and shelter it's probably the most essential of our everyday needs. We live in the Age of Information; its almost instantaneous acquisition and availability lie at the core of our economy. Without a reliable supply of electricity, almost nothing can happen. Yet intelligent people act like it isn't important. Would we tell American Airlines, "If you're focusing on safety, you haven't gotten the message?" Yet reliability is to electric power supply as safety is to air travel. Reliability should be everyone's top priority. It's in everyone's best interest, whether generator, marketer, transmission owner or customer.

## Myth: Reliability in the Restructured Industry Will Be Just As High As In The Past.

**Reality:** Don't bet on it! In fact, it's far more likely that deregulation and restructuring will lead to major degradation in bulk power system reliability. There are many reasons for this, some of which have already been touched on above. But here are a few of the most important:

**Complication.** Assuring reliability used to be fairly straightforward. There were few players, a relatively simple infrastructure, and near-universal commitment to the goals of reliability and conformance with criteria. Perhaps most important, there was a culture best characterized by cooperation and coordination. We now have an almost limitless number of participants, an increasingly complex infrastructure, little commitment to the goals of reliability, a "how can we beat it?" attitude toward criteria by many and a culture characterized at best by competition and confidentiality, and at worst by distrust, litigation and authoritarianism.

**Legalism:** Conformance with criteria is becoming an exercise in what we can get away with; how far can we go to just avoid violating the rules; and a search for loopholes. Conformance is "mandatory," and punishment assured. What

a far cry from the days of so-called "voluntary" conformance, when players obeyed the rules because it was the right thing to do (how quaint!), and because they understood that reliability was in the best interests of all...

**Politicization.** Now that the reliability infrastructure has made conformance with reliability standards "mandatory," which apparently it cannot legally do without governmental authorization, Pandora's box has been opened to politicians and bureaucrats. But, of course, this is the inevitable outcome of the regulatory takeover of the industry's own organizations. A federal "back-stop," we are told, must be provided. Government must review and sanction all standards. And reliability is OK if it doesn't get in the way of the market. Political expediency will replace the judgment of professional experts.

**Expediency.** Many of the industry's own organizations, which were established to promote reliability, have in essence sold their birthright. They have judged that the pragmatic course is to follow the politically correct approach, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Some did this because they genuinely believed they had no alternative, and this was a less-than-perfect way to maintain at least some leverage vis-a-vis reliability. Some did it to survive. Some saw opportunities to build new empires. A few became "true believers." And some simply lacked the courage. All have been, in my view, misguided.

## The Bottom Line

We will see more blackouts. It may take just a few months, or it may take years (we are dealing with the subtleties of probability), but it will happen, make no mistake about it. If this is so, one might ask, how come so few people have said it? ... There's been a kind of blanket of silence thrown over the whole industry. It's not written down anywhere, but everyone knows that speaking out, even in private meetings, may, to paraphrase the Surgeon General, be dangerous to your career...

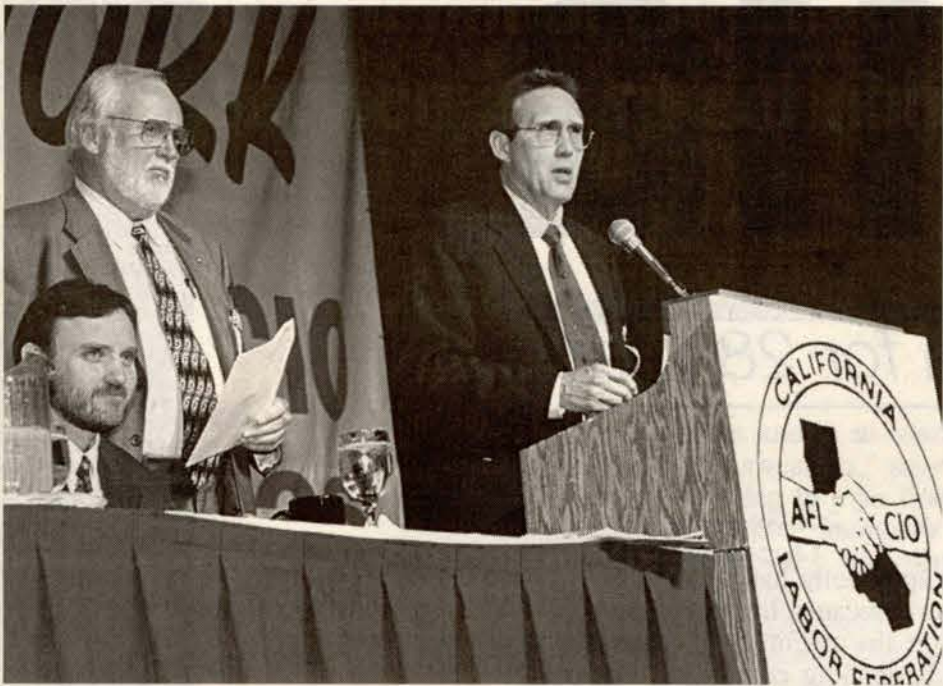
What happens next? Well, it's far too late to stop this train, no matter what happens in the near term. We'll all have to sit tight and hope for the best. And do what we each can. Because, in the end, that's all we can do.

*(For subscriptions to Public Utilities Fortnightly, write to Public Utilities Fortnightly, PO Box 99400, Collingswood, NJ 08108-0601)*

Hey, what happened  
to the lights?



# Davis vows to restore state overtime pay protections



From PAGE ONE  
against Prop. 226.

## Gephardt Urges Fair Trade

House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri promised the delegates he would continue his efforts to promote fair trade, and would oppose trade treaties that don't respect labor and environmental standards.

Gephardt said that Mexican workers working just south of the US-Mexico border "live in huts made of cardboard boxes next to raw sewage and work for less than \$1 an hour."

Corporations will seek the cheapest labor to make the most profit, Gephardt said. Without labor protections, he said, "trade treaties represent "a race to the bottom."

Gephardt said that Congress will outlaw the use of permanent replacement workers during strikes if Democrats recapture a majority in the US House in November.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the delegates that the news of labor's victory over Prop. 226 ran through the nation's Capitol "like a sizzling burst of lightning." He urged California union to mobilize their members to get out the vote for pro-labor candidates in November and beyond.

Above: AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. At left: Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally (center) served as chair of the Federation's Constitution Committee. He is flanked here by California Labor Federation Executive Secretary Art Pulaski (seated) and President Tom Rankin. Below: House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt. Photos: Eric Wolfe



Corporations will seek the cheapest labor to make the most profit, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri told the union convention. Without labor protections, he said, "trade treaties represent "a race to the bottom."



## Boycott Wells Fargo

After his keynote address to the California Labor Federation Convention, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney led 500 delegates and guests on a two-block march to a Wells Fargo Bank in Oakland to show solidarity with 1,100 embattled Colorado steelworkers.

At the request of the Steelworkers union, the AFL-CIO has taken the rarely-used step of calling for a national boycott of two companies—Oregon Steel Mills and its main financial backer, Wells Fargo Bank—to protest the war they are waging on the Colorado steelworkers at OSM's CF&I mill in Pueblo, Co.

"We're sending a message to Oregon Steel that you can break the bonds of human decency, you can break the law, but you can't break our spirit or our unions," Sweeney told the cheering delegates.

The California Labor Federation closed 9 accounts at the bank.

# Stralla

*Business rep to Nevada for 28 years*

By Eric Wolfe

**I**t was not a good day for the local union shop steward when John Stralla hired on at Sierra Pacific Power Co. in 1964.

"I didn't like what the steward was doing," says Stralla. "I kept asking questions. After about six months the steward got pissed off and said, 'If you don't like what I'm doing you can be the steward.' "



John Stralla as a young union negotiator.

Stralla apparently had a talent for union work because he soon found himself on the negotiating committee and the bargaining committee. But he confesses to being "a little overwhelmed" when he was invited to join the union staff in November of 1971 after just seven years on the job.

"I wasn't sure I could do it," Stralla recalls. "I thought, well, I'll give it a shot."

It was quite a shot. When Stralla retired last month, he was the longest-serving business representative on the staff—surviving the administration of three union business managers, six American presidents, and numerous contract negotiations.

Think of it this way: When Stralla became business rep in Nevada, Sierra Pacific Power had been under a union contract for a total of 25 years. Stralla saw that relationship through an additional 28 years—longer than all previous Nevada reps combined.

His early years as business rep weren't easy, Stralla says. A wage and price freeze imposed by President Richard Nixon made bargaining difficult. And the Public Service Commission took away the employee discount.

Furthermore, Nevada was—and remains—a "right to work" state, meaning bargaining unit members could not be required contractually to pay union dues.

The company even insisted that all meetings with the union be held in the basement—apparently trying to keep the union out of sight as much as possible.

But if management thought Stralla might get discouraged and just go away, they misjudged the man. Stralla knew how to build the union by recruiting good stewards and committee members.

**"John could be very aggressive when he wanted to be and very cooperative when he wanted to be, and he used both to his advantage."**

*Perry Zimmerman  
Assistant Bus. Mgr.*



Stralla takes a break during 1997.

# Stralla

Stralla for 28 years

Stralla apparently had a talent for work because he soon found himself on the negotiating committee of the bargaining committee. But he confesses to being "a little over-enthusiastic" when he was invited to join the union staff in November of 1971, just seven years on the job. "I wasn't sure I could do it," Stralla says. "I thought, well, I'll give it a

was quite a shot. When Stralla died last month, he was the longest-serving business representative on the bargaining committee—surviving the administration of seven union business managers, six American presidents, and numerous contract negotiations.

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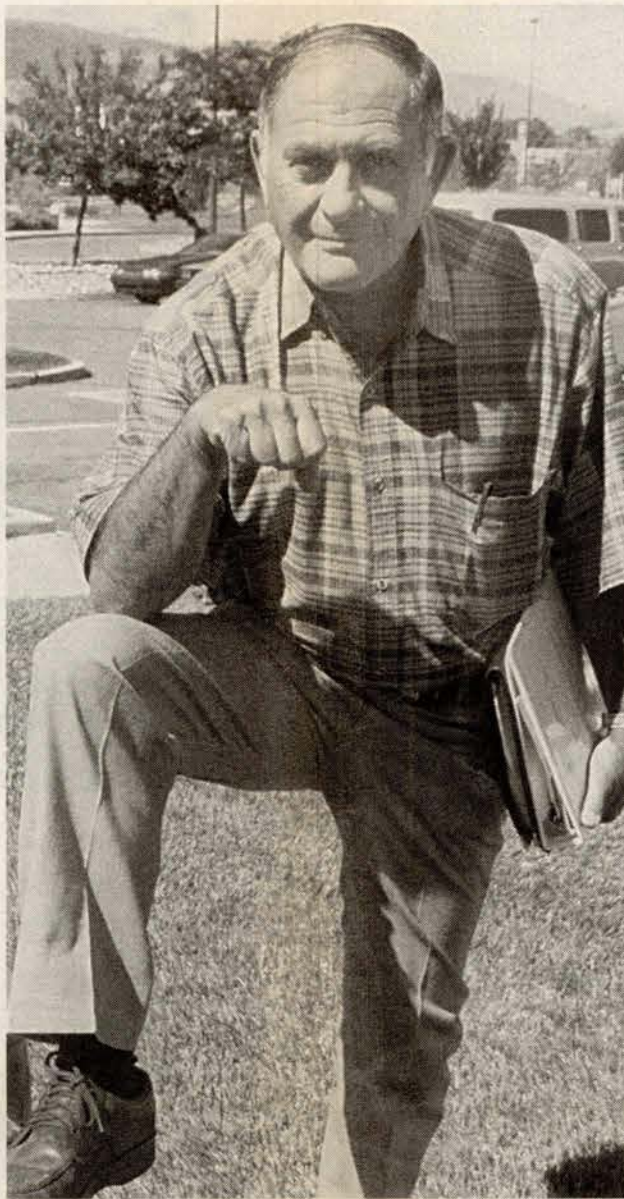
In his early years as business rep, it wasn't easy, Stralla says. A wage and benefit freeze imposed by President Richard Nixon made bargaining difficult. The Public Service Commission took away the employee discount. Furthermore, Nevada was—and still is—a "right to work" state, meaning bargaining unit members could be required contractually to pay dues.

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**John could be very aggressive when he wanted to be and very cooperative when he wanted to be, and he used both to his advantage."**

*Perry Zimmerman  
Assistant Bus. Mgr.*



Stralla takes a break during contract negotiations in 1997.

"That's how you succeed in a right-to-work state," says Stralla. "Get the members to participate. If the companies did all the right things we wouldn't be in business, but they don't always do the right thing and that's why we're still around."

Stralla's skill in dealing with the company is held in high regard by stewards who have worked with him through the years.

"What amazes me about John is he can look at a proposal and see the global picture—he can predict what effect it will have on other things," says Rita Weisshaar, a steward and bargaining committee member in 1994 and 1997. "I don't know whether it's intuition or just years of experience, but he can really put things together."

Stralla is not a man to mince words. According to Weisshaar, when the company put forward proposals that Stralla didn't like, he would be likely to say something along the lines of "This is a bunch of s—."

**"What amazes me about John is he can look at a proposal and see the global picture—he can predict what effect it will have on other things," says Rita Weisshaar, a steward and bargaining committee member in 1994 and 1997. "I don't know whether it's intuition or just years of experience, but he can really put things together."**

"John has been known to cough up his share to the swear jar," says Weisshaar, referring to a jar that the bargaining committee members used to toss a dollar in every time they swore.

But good bargaining takes more than blue language. Shop Steward Perry Zimmerman credits Stralla with being knowledgeable and thorough.

"I think we've always gotten a good contract. I think without John we wouldn't be where we are today," says Zimmerman.

If numbers mean anything, Stralla's success is certainly true. When Stralla started his job in 1971, Local 1245 had 200 members at Sierra Pacific Power. Today the number is around 700. Stralla worked with the stewards and union committee members who have kept the union strong.

"Working with a lot of good people—that's been my success and the success," he says.

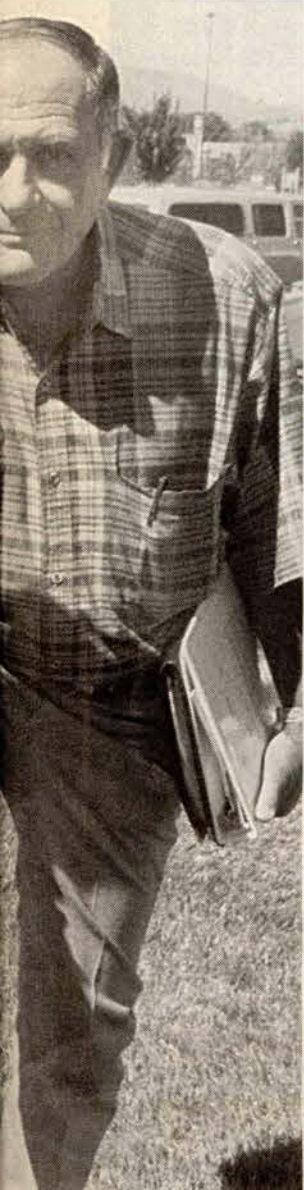
Building a strong local base among the members was especially critical in a location like Nevada, on the edge of Local 1245's jurisdiction. But Stralla seemed to enjoy the challenge of being out on his own.

"I've been fortunate in terms of my bosses," he says, noting that he worked under Local 1245 assistant business manager's ranging from Perry Zimmerman to Orv Owen to Perry Wilder. "They allowed me to do my thing out there—they gave me a long leash and they let me do what I had to do."

"John could be very aggressive when he wanted to be and very cooperative when he wanted to be, and he used both to his advantage," says Zimmerman. "What I was most impressed with was John's ability to bring together teams that had credibility only with the bargaining unit management."

"He utilized his committees to the utmost," agrees Owen, adding that Stralla was "a tough negotiator who had all his facts together when it was time to bargain."

Stralla acknowledges it took time to figure out the best way to do



g contract negotiations in

**“What amazes me about John is he can look at a proposal and see the global picture—he can predict what effect it will have on other things. I don’t know whether it’s intuition or just years of experience, but he can really put things together.”**

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Local 1245 steward*

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“I think we’ve always gotten a really good contract. I think without John we wouldn’t be where we are today,” says Baber.

If numbers mean anything, that’s certainly true. When Stralla started the job in 1971, Local 1245 had 226 members at Sierra Pacific Power. Today that number is around 700. Stralla says it’s the stewards and union committee members who have kept the union strong.

“Working with a lot of good people—that’s been my success and their success,” he says.

Building a strong local base of support among the members was especially critical in a location like Nevada, out on the edge of Local 1245’s jurisdiction. But Stralla seemed to enjoy the challenge of being out on his own.

“I’ve been fortunate in terms of bosses,” he says, noting that he has worked under Local 1245 assistant business manager’s ranging from Perry Zimmerman to Orv Owen to John Wilder. “They allowed me to do my thing out there—they gave me a pretty long leash and they let me do what I had to do.”

“John could be very aggressive when he wanted to be and very cooperative when he wanted to be, and he used both to his advantage,” says Zimmerman. “What I was most impressed with was John’s ability to put together teams that had credibility not only with the bargaining unit but with management.”

“He utilized his committees to the utmost,” agrees Owen, adding that Stralla was “a tough negotiator” who had all his facts together when it came time to bargain.

Stralla acknowledges it took time to figure out the best way to do the job.

“To be a good business representative I think it takes you at least 10 years. You learn all the ins and outs and learn who to deal with and how to deal with the problems. It’s an educational thing—it’s not something you learn over night.”

But Stralla figured it out, and crafted an effective role for himself and the union at Sierra Pacific Power.

And don’t be fooled by those hearing aids he’s always fiddling with.

As Weisshaar observes:

“Even though he’s sitting there calm and quiet and you think he has his hearing aids off, he knows everything that’s going on all the time.”



Stralla gives his last report at Local 1245’s staff meeting in Walnut Creek on June 29.

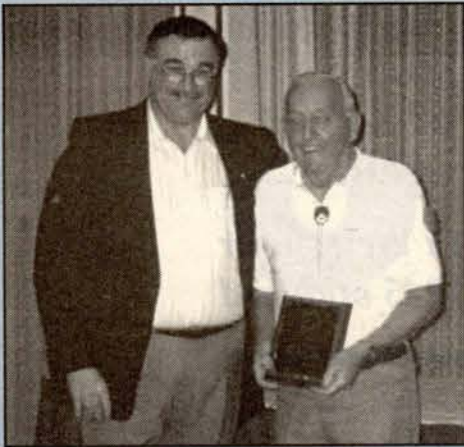
“That’s how you succeed in a right-to-work state,” says Stralla. “Get the members to participate. If the companies did all the right things we wouldn’t be in business, but they don’t always do the right thing and that’s why we’re still around.”

Stralla’s skill in dealing with the company is held in high regard by stewards who have worked with him through the years.

“What amazes me about John is he can look at a proposal and see the global picture—he can predict what effect it will have on other things,” says Rita Weisshaar, a steward and bargaining committee member in 1994 and 1997. “I don’t know whether it’s intuition or just years of experience, but he can really put things together.”

Stralla is not a man to mince words. According to Weisshaar, when the company put forward proposals that Stralla didn’t like, he would be likely to say something along the lines of “This is a bunch of s—.”





## Union honors members at service award ceremony

**Eureka, Ca.  
May 16, 1998**

*Photos by Dave Mauldin*

### 45 Years

Hank Lucas (award presented by Bob Choate, left)

### 45 Years

Hank Lucas

### 35 Years

Roger Edwards  
Lawrence Watts

### 30 Years

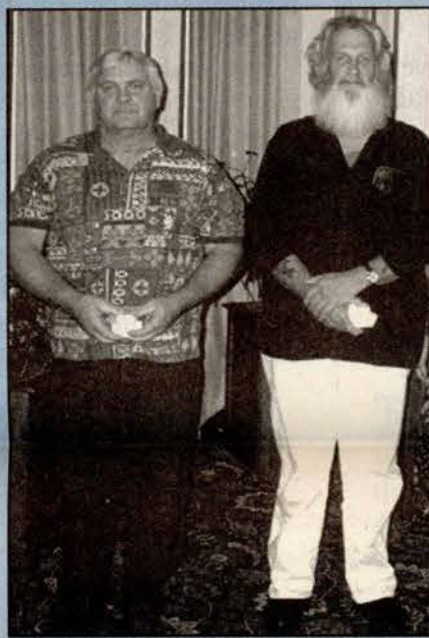
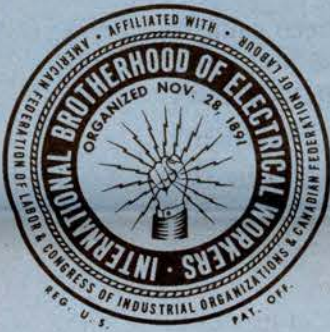
Darrell Gillette  
Kirk Schmidt

### 25 Years

Pedro Arias  
Randy Bollan  
Harold Connerly  
Dennis Costa  
Erica Costa  
Kenneth Cunningham  
Robert Echeveria  
Daniel Flanagan  
John Girdis  
Dale Hubbard Jr.  
Aileen Koppenberg  
Guy Lund

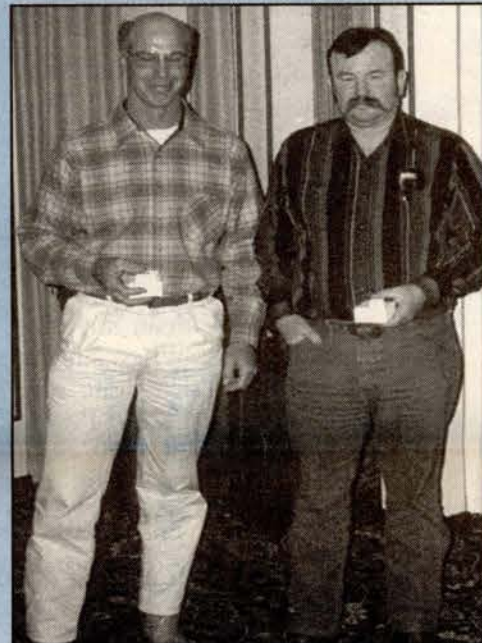
### 20 Years

Gloria Eisan  
Dennis Elvey  
Lee Hardwick  
Shi9rley Jackson  
Bernard Johnson Jr.  
Kevin Jones  
Karen Lamb  
Fred McKee  
Carlos Mier  
William Morris  
David Olivieri  
Michael Pinske  
Ed Pontious  
Edwin Quier  
Paula Ramsey  
Eric Robertsen  
Kenneth Stephens  
Kaye Swanson  
Linda Toler  
Cathy Wood



### 35 Years

Larry Watts, Roger Edwards



### 25 Years

Ken Cunningham, Dan Flanagan



### 30 Years

Darrell Gillette, Linda Jurado (presenter)



### 20 Years

Callos Mier, Kaye Swanson, Linda Jurado (presenter), Ed Quinn



Hank Lucas and Florence (Photo: Dave Mauldin)

## Hank Lucas: Local 1245 honors one of its pioneer

By Bob Choate

**"If we don't continue to organize, then you here tonight may not be in a position to retire at a decent age and enjoy all that you have earned."**

*Hank Lucas*

**W**hen Hank Lucas received his 45-year service award during ceremonies in Eureka, the union was honoring one of its pioneers.

Hank, who was a business representative for 18 years, turned the award ceremony into an opportunity to share stories that completely captivated his audience.

He talked about his days in Humboldt as a lineman. "Humboldt," he noted, "was known for the activists who were serious about this union. We were at times considered 'radicals.'" Every working PG&E employee was in the union, he said, even though the union did not yet contain a union security clause.

When Hank became a business representative, he spent some time in Humboldt and kept the union spirit active.

"We had a full house at every unit meeting," he said. "We had a full house at pin dinners. We all backed this local, no matter what it was, we were out there."

Hank believes the union has its hands full today, and said the need to stick together is more essential than ever in dealing with changes in the employers and changes in the political arena.

"Being a member of Local Union 1245 is a pretty good life. We had it good for a long time. Now it becomes necessary to

organize ourselves to become good union members so we can go out into the industry and organize by example," he said.

"If we don't continue to organize, then you here tonight may not be in a position to retire at a decent age and enjoy all that you have earned. I want to see you all back here in five years," he told those attending the Service Award ceremony.

Hank went to work for PG&E in 1947, when the union organizing drive at the company was entering a critical phase. He worked as a lineman, and became involved in the union as a steward, unit chairman (Eureka), and eventually as the union's recording secretary.

Ron Weakley hired Hank as a union business representative in 1964. In his career as a rep Hank had assignments in Stockton, San Joaquin, Yosemite, SMUD, and organizing Pacific Tree. Hank was also active in all the Central Labor Councils in his assignment areas. He went off on LTD in 1981 and retired in 1991.

Hank was a real pioneer in the development of our union's labor agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric. His hard work and dedicated service to his members was a major factor in Local 1245's success. It was a privilege and an honor for me to present him with his 45-year award.

# New study links EMF exposure to heart attacks

By Dan Mayo

**D**oes occupational exposure to EMF increase your risk for heart attack? That's the question recently explored by Dr. David Savitz and other scientists. Re-examining an existing database, Savitz investigated whether magnetic field exposure was associated with cardiovascular disease mortality among electric utility workers. This study, recently released for peer-review, seems to point in that direction.

Most EMF epidemiology to date has studied possible associations between magnetic fields and certain types of cancer. Why would researchers want to look in this new direction?

The authors of this study comment, "Laboratory studies on human volunteers suggest that magnetic field exposure may affect heart rate and HRV."

HRV (heart rate variability) is a normal, healthy function of the autonomic nervous system. Accordingly, Savitz and his colleagues looked specifically for associations between cumulative magnetic field exposures and risk of death for cardiovascular diseases thought to be related to autonomic nervous system impairment.

First, the bad news:

For arrhythmia-related deaths (related to changes in heart rhythm) and for myocardial infarction (heart attacks), estimated cumulative magnetic field exposure was associated with a 1.5 to 3.3 times greater risk in the highest exposure categories. Although a relative risk of 1.5 is not considered large, it can still translate into a significant number of deaths when linked with something as common as heart attacks.

For job titles of lineman, electrician and power plant operators, the risk ratios were all consistently elevated and statistically significant (unlikely to have happened by chance). Importantly, these findings are also significant because of a dose-response trend—the higher the exposure, the higher the risk.

The medical community already recognizes that cigarette smoking is a risk factor for heart disease. Did cigarette smoking confound these results? Probably not. A previous analysis failed to find a link between magnetic field exposure metrics and lung cancer in this same database. If smoking were a confounding factor, an association would be expected.

Furthermore, one would expect increased risks among all types of cardio-

vascular disease, not just those related to the autonomic nervous system.

Last year, Kelsh and Sahl reanalyzed data from a smaller cohort of Southern California Edison workers, reporting increased risks of death from cardiovascular disease for linemen, meter readers, field service personnel, plant operations and trade/craft workers. This analysis lacked the kind of exposure information and cardiovascular disease groupings that would shed more light on this issue.

Now for the good news:

Interestingly, there appears to be no additional risk associated with other cardiovascular diseases thought to be unrelated to the autonomic nervous system, namely atherosclerosis (blockage in the blood vessels supplying the heart) and chronic coronary heart disease (blockage of the blood vessels over long periods of time).

It should also be noted that the rate of death for all forms of cardiovascular disease was approximately 25% lower for these utility workers than for the general U.S. population. Such sweeping generalities can lead to the wrong conclusions, however. That is why epidemiologists prefer to confine their study to differences within a cohort, or group.

PG&E was one of five utilities participating in the original Savitz study funded by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), of which PG&E is a member. We applaud PG&E for its continued support of EMF research in the face of uncertainty in the utility industry. We particularly appreciate the forthright manner in which PG&E shares information with its customers and its employees. Clearly more can be done, but PG&E is still in the forefront of comparable utilities.

What does this new analysis mean?

It is too early to tell. This analysis is the first study of its kind with this level of detail. Like all epidemiological studies, it has its

strengths and weaknesses. Unlike previous studies examining EMF and cancer, this hypothesis is already bolstered by a plausible mechanism of biological interaction. If these results are corroborated over time, this will be considered a landmark study.

The authors themselves conclude, "These data suggest a possible association between occupational magnetic fields and mortality due to arrhythmia-related heart disease and acute myocardial infarction. The fact that we found positive associations for the types of cardiovascular disease that might be expected to be affected by reduced heart rate variability and not for the other categories of heart disease makes it less likely that there is some flaw in the way the data were collected or analyzed that explains the pattern."

"However, this hypothesis has not been examined in other studies to date, and the lack of supportive data from other epidemiological studies argues against assigning too much weight to these findings unless it is observed in other populations..."

Michael Herz, PG&E's EMF consultant, says, "EPRI gave the recommendation that we should pursue additional research in this area. The fastest way to perform this type of analysis is to evaluate other recent utility EMF cohort studies for EMF exposure and heart disease. PG&E is having EPRI start analysis of the 1993 Southern California Edison utility worker data in the same way Dr. Savitz evaluated his study."

Herz assures us, "PG&E will continue to support EMF research to respond to the concerns of employees and continue to provide information to employees about the status of EMF research."

## Other Developments

In June, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) assembled an international working group of 30 scien-



tists to review the available body of evidence linking EMF to potential health endpoints. In order to facilitate arrival at some conclusions for their report to Congress due at the end of this year, NIEHS used criteria adapted from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) for classifying potential carcinogens.

The working group was charged with the task of using scientific data to place EMF into one of the following IARC categories: (1) sufficient, (2A) probable, (2B) possible, (3) not classifiable, and (4) probably not carcinogenic. The group's vote tallied up as follows: 19 members voted to classify EMF as 2B (a possible human carcinogen), eight votes were cast for category 3 (not classifiable), and one vote went to category 4 (probably not carcinogenic).

The largest influence for the majority vote came from limited epidemiological evidence of leukemia in children exposed to EMF in the home, and of chronic lymphocytic leukemia in adults exposed to EMF at work.

The group found data for other health outcomes to be inadequate to classify yet. These include "other cancers", various reproductive problems, depression, neurodegenerative diseases such as ALS and Alzheimer's, and cardiac diseases. A draft report should be available for public comment for two months beginning in late July.

The Joint PG&E/Local 1245 EMF Committee continues to monitor these and other developments in the world of EMF research. We will report further findings on an ongoing basis.

*(Dan Mayo, a PG&E lineman and Local 1245 shop steward, represents the union on the joint EMF committee)*

**For job titles of lineman, electrician and power plant operators, the risk ratios were all consistently elevated and statistically significant (unlikely to have happened by chance). Importantly, these findings are also significant because of a dose-response trend—the higher the exposure, the higher the risk.**

# Seniors can show real power at polls

By Orv Owen

**T**his is an election year and all 435 seats in the US House of Representatives and 34 seats in the US Senate are up for election.

Our current Social Security and Medicare programs are at risk and in harm's way by those politicians who bow to the influence of the insurance companies and Wall Street investors who would

**Our current Social Security and Medicare programs are at risk and in harm's way by those politicians who bow to the influence of the insurance companies and Wall Street investors.**

like to privatize both programs and get their greedy hands on the money they

would pocket in commissions for administration of Social Security and Medi-

care funds.

Because senior citizens vote in larger numbers than any other segment of the population, we have the opportunity on Nov. 3 to demonstrate exactly what happens to politicians who mess with Social Security, which is the nation's universal pension and family insurance system.

## We Have the Power

The nation's older men and women have the power to end, once and for all, any privatization threat to the Social Security and Medicare systems. What we have to do is *vote!* But first, we must communicate with our elected representatives now. We must get our message to our representatives when Congress adjourns in August and through to Election Day. During those 90 days, seniors have to go on the offensive and force candidates to take a pledge not to privatize Social Security or Medicare if they want our votes.

If our representatives do not hear from us, they will assume that we do not care about protecting Social Security and Medicare as government-backed entitlement programs guaranteeing monthly income and health care for retirees, worker's survivors and the disabled. We can't let that happen!

Keep the faith!

## Don't be hoodwinked by Wall Street

# Leave Social Security alone

By Paul Wellstone

**B**efore Wall Street hoodwinks the country into privatizing Social Security, let's take a moment to consider how tremendously successful the program is right now.

Social Security serves an enormous number of people. It pays benefits to 44 million. Roughly 147 million workers—96% of the work force—pay Social Security contributions to support the program and stand to benefit from it as they grow older.

Social Security has dramatically reduced poverty among the elderly. As late as 1959, more than 35% of old people lived in poverty. With the expansion of Social Security, poverty among the elderly has dropped to near 10%.

Social Security does more to reduce poverty and income inequality than either the tax code or the welfare system.

Social Security succeeds at this because it is a progressive system. Low-wage earners, who have less income from which to save during their working years, get back more relative to what they put in. Social Security retirement benefits replace approximately 60% of the pre-retirement earnings of a low-wage earner, 42% of an average-wage earner, and 26% of a high-wage earner.

Social Security also helps the children of retirees, who need to put aside less to care for their parents and thus can spend more on their children.

And Social Security provides benefits beyond retirement. For example, survivors collect when a wage earner dies, easing their financial problems.

Americans face roughly a 1-in-5 chance of dying before they reach the age of 65. Social Security survivors' benefits are the equivalent of a \$322,000 life insurance policy for an average family with two children. More than 7 million Americans, including millions of children, receive Social Security survivors' benefits today.

The odds are high—3 in 10—that a worker will become disabled before age 65. Few workers have private, long-term disability insurance, but Social Security provides nearly all workers with such protection—the equivalent of a \$200,000 disability policy for an average family with two children. More than 4 million disabled workers under 65 and nearly 2 million of their dependents receive Social Security disability benefits.

Contrary to the privatizers' propaganda, the elderly are not an affluent group. A majority of Americans 65 or older depend on Social Security for most of their income—nearly a third for 90% of their income. The average retired beneficiary gets

a little more than \$9,000 a year from Social Security. Most of the elderly get less than \$6,000 a year from all other sources. Fully two-thirds of the elderly have non-Social Security incomes below \$11,000 a year.

Without Social Security income, 54% of America's elderly would live in poverty.

When the privatizers say, "Let's cut Social Security benefits to fund individual savings accounts," they're really saying, "Let's take some of that \$9,000 a year future retirees hope to get from Social Security and put it at risk."

Social Security is not facing bankruptcy. Yes, we will have to modify Social Security to keep it solvent over the next 75 years, but there's no need to scrap its fundamental benefit structure. Even under pessimistic assumptions, the current system will work without any change whatsoever through 2032. Even under these pessimistic assumptions, modest steps taken now can keep Social Security solvent over the next 75 years.

Social Security is the most successful government program in history. It is one of America's proudest accomplishments. We should sustain that success, not destroy it.

*(Paul Wellstone is senior Senator from Minnesota. This article was excerpted from The Nation. For subscriptions, write to The Nation, POB 37072, Boone, IA 50037)*

IBEW  
Local  
1245



Retirees Corner

## Retiree Club dates

**East Bay Chapter:**  
Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at Local 1245 headquarters, 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, Ca.

**San Jose Chapter:**  
Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m. at Local 332, 1870 Stone Ave., San Jose.

## AARP appeals benefits case

The American Association of Retired Persons has asked the US Supreme Court to review a federal appeals court ruling that retirees at General Motors and surviving spouses are not entitled to free lifetime health care coverage despite written agreements with the employer guaranteeing the benefits.

The GM retirees contend that their benefits vested upon retirement and, therefore, cannot be changed. Retirees also claim they gave up their jobs on the promise of lifetime health care coverage.

## Congratulations to the newly-retired!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club extends its congratulations to these recently-retired members of the union. We invited you to participate in a Retirees Club chapter in your area, or to start one in your area if there is none! Call Austin Lea at 925-933-6060 Ext. 240.

Name	Residence	Yrs/Srvc.
Dorothy Little	San Jose, CA	18
Robert J. Tainter	Pacifica, CA	42
Lawrence Bruce	Redding, CA	33
Elsie DeLeon	Novato, CA	7
Donald Jefferies	Cupertino, CA	36
Everett Meridieth	Sacramento, CA	41



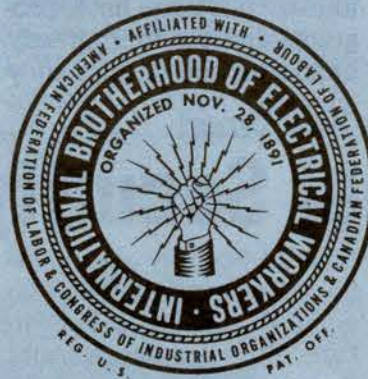
# Ceremony honors members for long-time union service

**San Jose, Ca.  
March 27, 1998**



## 30 Years

Gerald Mills, Rich Culbertson, Ted Altman, Robert Ramirez.



## 25 Years

Back row: Gerry Roza, Hugh Manix, Steven Camarena, Rick Bustamante, Jim Drapchaty, Martin Savage, Rod Ulibarri. Front row: Paul Shirley, Jess Martinez



## 20 Years

Johnny Villanueva, Robin Morrison, Susan Poore, Bob Koval, Todd Harris

## 40 Years

Norm Schirle

## 35 Years

Connell Allison  
Dave Mackley  
Ralph Riplinger

## 30 Years

Ronald Airey  
Ted Altman  
Gary Anderson  
Charlie Bailon  
Richard Culbertson  
Gilbert De La Rosa  
C. A. Dotson  
John Edwards  
Eli Hernandez  
Paul Herrera  
Carroll Love  
Gerald Mills  
Larry Packer  
James Pendry  
Robert Ramirez  
Richard Sinnott

## 25 Years

Roger Beam  
Albert Beltran  
Jeffrey Bishop  
Dennis Blakley  
Warren Brown  
Edward Bruno  
Richard Bustamante  
Steven Camarena  
Joseph Cardinale  
Manvel Contreras

Dave Decloedt  
Gary Dewitt  
Jim Drapchaty  
Harry Guilford  
Dan Gulizia  
James Hall  
Kirk Hazel  
Jerry Hernandez  
Anthony Herrera  
Dennis Heyeck  
Timothy Lohr  
Hugh Manix  
Jess Martinez  
Lupe Martinez  
Patrick McCullough  
Carmen Messado  
Robert Nimrod  
Joe Ontiveros  
Steven Panighetti  
Reynoldo Perez  
Rudy Perez  
Ray Ramos  
Margaret Rector  
Joseph Rodriguez  
Gerald Roza  
Martin Savage  
Robert Schroeder  
Paul Shirley  
Kelly Smith  
Joseph Soza  
Gergory Stokes  
Ronald Taylor  
Tyrone Taylor  
Richard Trask  
Rodney Ulibarri

## 20 Years

Dogoberto Balcazar

Joanne Barnes  
Richard Bohn  
Allan Bomagat  
Joan Brannelly  
Sharon Burnam  
Harvey Craig  
Noel DeGroof  
George Dickinson  
Benjamin Dreese  
Robert Gault Jr.  
Filomena Goble  
Todd Harris  
Michael Hendrix  
Gail Klein  
Robert Koval  
Gary Langworthy  
Gene Lighty  
Mike Livingstone  
Robert Martin  
Chris McKernan  
Robin Morrison  
Cara Morrow  
Rosie Murillo  
Barbara Najjar  
David Olivo  
Dave Painter  
Susan Poore  
Sandra Preston  
Ronald Sheppard  
Pieter Tibbertsma  
Johnny Villanueva  
Donna Walsh  
Neil Ware  
Danny Wendel  
James Whitecar  
Claire Yeater  
Debra Zerbaugh