



Happy Birthday, Ronald Weakley!



Although it's been almost 35 years since Ron Weakley retired as Local 1245 Business Manager, and nearly 65 years since he led the effort to organize a union PG&E, his accomplishments are still relevant to every Local 1245 member who draws a paycheck today. Last month Weakley celebrated his 90th birthday in Hawaii, where he now lives. He's shown here as a young man of 88 being honored at the 2003 IBEW Ninth District Progress Meeting in Hawaii. Honoring Weakley are Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, background, International President Edwin Hill, left, and International Sec.-Treas. Jeremiah O'Connor, right.

Landis Marttila

PG&E's weatherization work raises public safety concerns

The contractors who perform weatherization work for Pacific Gas & Electric got an unexpected gift from the company last year: After PG&E laid off more than 70% of its Central Inspection Program (CIP) employees, inspections of the contractors' work was left largely to the contractors themselves.

Interviews with former CIP employees suggest that the quality of inspections could suffer, with possible consequences for public safety.

"If you have a guy who's doing the work inspecting his own work, it seems like he wouldn't do it as good," said Doli Lee, a former employee

with the Central Inspection Program. "I thought the whole purpose of having us inspect the [contractors'] work was we had no biases for passing or failing a job. We would pass it or fail it purely on the work itself."

The PG&E program had 45 employees inspecting the work of contractors who perform weatherization and install energy efficiency devices, primarily in low-income households. The work is mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission and is monitored by the Low Income Oversight Board, which

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Hank Lucas, 78, Business Rep.

Former Local 1245 Business Rep. Henry "Hank" Lucas, 78, died Jan. 17 in Central Point, Ore.

Lucas, initiated into the union in 1952, worked as a lineman at Pacific Gas & Electric in Cupertino and Eureka before hiring on to Local 1245 in 1964.

Gary Mai, who served on a union negotiating committee headed by Lucas at the City of Lodi, said Lucas wore the persona of a rough-talking Boston unionist.

"He put on this hard line

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Layoffs are backdrop to TransCanada bargaining

By Darryl Norris

TransCanada bought Gas Transmission Northwest, a subsidiary of PG&E's National Energy Group who filed for bankruptcy protection for \$1.7 billion. Gas Transmission Northwest's worth was thought to be around \$1 billion at the time of the sale. The contract was extended for three months to allow for negotiations between IBEW Local 1245 and the new owner.

Currently Local 1245 represents 84 members at TransCanada. There were 120 members 10 years ago.

TransCanada has said that there will be layoffs during the term of the new agreement, but said it did not know how many, nor where these layoffs would occur.

TransCanada has proposed a new

classification, a Multiskilled Technician, which would replace existing Physical classifications.

TransCanada has also proposed to eliminate a section of the agreement which prohibits contractors while dispensing with employees

performing maintenance or operating work.

We have met five times so far. The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 17 and 18 in Portland, Ore.

Darryl Norris is a Local 1245 Business Representative.

Serving on the union Bargaining Committee at TransCanada are, top row: Jeff O'Donnell and Sue Corey; bottom row: John Felts and Neil Isley. Also serving on the committee are Business Rep. Darryl Norris and Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell.



Darryl Norris

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FEBRUARY 11
Service Awards
Sacramento, CA

FEBRUARY 12
Stewards Conference
Sacramento, CA

FEBRUARY 25
Service Awards
Redding, CA

MARCH 4
Service Awards
Chico/Oroville, CA

MARCH 5
Service Awards and
Stewards Conference
San Jose, CA

APPOINTMENTS

AVISTA GAS

Negotiating Committee
Dave Rust

CITY OF YERINGTON

Negotiating Committee
Sylvia Banta
Jack Smith

**CITY OF FERNLEY
Negotiating Committee**

Dale Groves
Kathy Hunerbein
Don Parsons

FRONTIER

Uniform Issues Committee
Thomas Greer
Monte "Toot" Nelson
Eric Tanaka

NCPA

Meet and Confer Committee
Frank Carter
Paul House
Terry Macleod

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC

**Building Department Labor
Management Committee**

Gloria Flores

**CONFERENCES, COUNCILS &
CONVENTIONS**

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
National Executive Board Meeting**

Dorothy Fortier
Kathy Tindall
Chris Habecker
Cecelia De La Torre
Anna Bayless-Martinez
Peggy Daniel

YOUR UNION

The Union's Aging Membership

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager



As you know if you read this column regularly, I usually write about a specific issue that is particularly relevant at the time. This month my topic is no more relevant this month than it was last month or than it will be next month, but it is critically important to the survival of Local 1245 as a trade union advancing the collective bargaining interests of its membership. And, as I did with the high cost of housing/living issue, I am asking for your ideas.

In the simplest of terms, our membership is aging. In not too many years, a large number of young workers will take the places of the large number of retiring workers. If we do not reach that new, young membership, we will not survive.

We estimate that 25% of our mem-

bership is now eligible for retirement, with about the same percentage (28%) now under the age of 40, of whom 11% are under the age of 30. In five years, 42% of our membership will be eligible to retire, and we could see a majority of the workforce under the age of 40.

Why does this matter?

First, we face a challenge of human resources. While our full-time staff is the most visible face of Local 1245, we rely on the energy, dedication, and knowledge of thousands of our active members to an extent that may not be fully realized. From the members of the Executive Board who give us several days a month, to the 30-plus members of the Advisory Council who give up a weekend four times a year, to the hun-

dreds of unit officers, to the thousand shop stewards who are on the job protecting their contract every day, we depend on these leaders to keep Local 1245 in touch with the needs of the members and to protect and advance their interests. If half of our current shop stewards have retired five years from now, we will have to recruit and train more than 500 new shop stewards to take their place.

Second, we face a challenge of institutional memory. One advantage of a seasoned staff and active membership is the institutional memory that comes with those years. As new supervisors and managers come onto the scene, it is only natural that they attempt to interpret contract language in a pro-management light. Time and time again, our experienced staff and members have been able to instantly point to past settlements and past practice that settles the question on the spot, or if not on the spot then in the grievance procedure. We are working on ways to record and transmit the knowledge of our seasoned staff and members, but it is a daunting task because so much of the wisdom that comes after 30 years on the job is intuitive and subjective.

Third, we face a challenge of values. A collective bargaining agreement is shaped by the values and priorities of the employer and union, with the union values and priorities shaped by the membership. The priorities of our 2002-2003 negotiations with PG&E are an excellent example. Just ten years earlier, the focus of our membership had been on job security, not retirement, and our members were willing to place a cap on post-retirement



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Members offer views on cost-of-living issue



Editor's Note: The following letters were e-mailed to Business Manager Perry Zimmerman and are reprinted with the authors' permission. Due to the strong feelings members have on this issue, we have withheld some authors' names at their request.

Pay Premiums Would Retain Good Employees

To Perry Zimmerman:

My name is Jerry Stinson, Subforeman overhead electric, San Francisco GC.

[Regarding the high cost-of-living issue] I can see both views. I don't want to be paid more or less than my brothers in other areas for the same work. But I also see hard working employees leaving the Bay Area so their families and themselves can have a better life.

I live outside Fairfield and on a good day I can get to work in 50 minutes; getting home is a minimum of an 1 1/2 hours. I pay gas for 100 miles round trip, plus two bridges. I hear they want to raise the tolls even higher.

A pay premium would offset some cost, but not all of it and it would keep good employees in the area and may bring in some new ones. No pay increase will ever change my mind about living in San Francisco, but then again that is my choice. Like many in the city I have my bids out. Same pay and closer to home is better than same pay and away from my family.

Jerry Stinson
San Francisco

Utilities Will Lose Talented People

To Perry Zimmerman:

I read with interest your article about the cost-of-living issue. This is an issue that not only affects the

utility industry but all residents in areas similar to California. One cost-of-living index shows 366.8 in California as compared to 87.6 in Seattle and 100 being the national average. In fact, the overall [index] in San Francisco is more than double the national average at 209.5.

The utility workers that are hit the hardest probably are the ones that are entering the labor market with no previous home equity to apply to a current home.

In the long run the utilities probably will lose some very talented people as they leave to work in areas that have affordable housing. The end result being that the utility became a training opportunity for the employee that didn't want his or her kids growing up in a rental house or apartment. A home is usually one of the investments we make for the benefit of our family and our retirement.

Perhaps the utilities could subsidize the regular full time people, giving them enough of an advantage to get into that first home. This is a method that has been used in this country in areas where a workforce was needed and for various reasons was the logical solution to the housing problem.

Raymond Curtis
Pollock Pines/Fresh Pond

Low-Interest Loans

Mr. Zimmerman:

I am a CSR in the San Jose Call Center and wanted to comment on what would help me most in this high cost area. Buying a house is high on the priority list. The problem is that there are few programs that will help with zero down.

My idea is slightly different from what some companies have done to help keep their employees local. The company would carry a very low interest loan for full purchase price or the difference of the employee's

base salary qualification for a loan and the price of the home.

An example would be if the employee qualified for a loan of \$250,000 and the home for purchase was \$600,000 the company would make the loan for \$350,000. The interest rate should only cover the cost of administrative costs, maybe 1-2%. This would only apply to one residence at a time and to help defer trying to make quick money on equity. The loan could have a clause that accrued equity above the purchase price would be vested where the employee would be fully vested in the equity after a stated period like 10 years. If the house was sold before the employee was fully vested the difference would be kept by the company to reinvest in the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this important issue.

Todd Bradford
San Jose

Use Median Price

To Perry Zimmerman:

In regards to the high cost-of-housing problem, rather than set areas with boundaries, why don't we go by the median price of a house in all areas and make the adjustment whatever percentage is appropriate for the area? I don't care for the "Bay Area is the only place that is expensive" theory because there are pockets throughout California that are equally expensive. I live in San Luis Obispo County where the median price is now \$460,000.

Jerry Camacho
Templeton

Housing Cost Shouldn't Be Top Priority

Dear Mr. Zimmerman,

Recently I noticed and read the various articles regarding the high cost of living to our members in

Speak Out!

Got something to share with your fellow Local 1245 members? Send letters (with name and phone number) to:

Utility Reporter Letters
IBEW 1245
PO Box 2547
Vacaville, CA 95696

Note: We can't print personal attacks on members or letters dealing with union politics. Opinions expressed in Speak Out are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IBEW Local 1245.



various areas of PG&E's service area. I agree that this issue needs to be addressed in a manner beneficial to our members. What concerns me is that the emphasis is being placed on the cost of housing and this in my opinion, although not to be ignored, should not be at the top of our priority list. For these reasons:

1. Other costs are rising at a faster pace than housing.
2. Although entry costs and mortgage payment are hard to meet, you do build equity once you're in.
3. I feel confident that a survey of our members would show that the majority of members already own their home.

I could go on and on with addi-

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tional reasons why housing costs should not be at the top of our bargaining agenda but no need. The company has neither the money nor the desire to meet each and every one of our bargaining requests. They will meet at negotiations with a maximum dollar amount willing to outlay (or less if lucky) and could care less how it gets spent. Our negotiations should center around getting the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

I think that due to the obvious demographics of our members (i.e. we're about to retire) the emphasis should be placed on our total retirement compensation. The company has stood tough appearing to ignore our request for needed compensation for the rising cost of housing. They will continue to do this until we are ready to forgo other reasonable items of negotiation and finally [the company will] throw us a carrot in the cost-of-housing arena and we'll dive for it like a monkey for a peanut in a petting zoo and you'll congratulate the members for being so hard nosed in negotiations. Five years later, after having given up most of any increase in compensation, we will retire unable to afford the basics like medical coverage etc. so that a smaller population of others can still not be able to afford a house.

Please don't be overwhelmed with the crowd at the cost of housing and forget that this is but one area of concern.

Name withheld by request. The author is a Traveling Control Technician at Diablo Canyon Power Plant

Commuting Allowance

To Perry Zimmerman:

I agree that both sides of the issue present a very valid platform for debate. We must all understand as you have stated the problem is here and needs to be addressed and rectified.

A lineman is a lineman anywhere just as an operator is an operator anywhere. The objective is to understand that the company needs people to conduct business in the Bay Area and retain vital experience in which

to provide safe, reliable service to our much populated, much taxed, much timely commute area.

Management has provided pay level increases to Bay Area people to compensate for some of the issues at hand. Everything from the 3 dollar bridge tolls to Bart taxes to parking incentives. We, too, should be equally addressed.

We need to create a pocket level of additional compensation to targeted union employees that will fall under commute taxable federal tax guidelines. This will assist the company while providing to the members.

Starting at a commute allowance as a positive measure of assistance will open the door toward future housing, and other add-on incentives to members. Just as any profession, additional measures of complication need to be compensated. And that includes just what we have to do to commute, live, and retain our highly trained professional union members within an area of financial geographic complexity.

To all people, union and management the Bay Area no matter how you cut it deserves experienced committed professionals being compensated and meeting today's geographic, economic and commuting concerns which has provided an unequal burden to some and a desire to change venue to many.

D. Steves
Oakland

We Need Help

To Perry Zimmerman:

Something has to be done. I cannot keep working around the clock just to make it. I never spend a lot of time with my kids to see their sports or spend time with my wife. *We need some type of help!*

Rodney Simon
San Carlos

Target Incentives

Mr. Zimmerman,

I live in Dixon and I'm a system operator at Vaca-Dixon substation. My commute is only about 12 min-

utes. This probably affects my opinion but I try to be fair in my views.

I agree with the principle of "same work/same pay" but I also agree that the company needs to do something to maintain a qualified workforce in the Bay Area. Quite a dilemma.

I see some problems with the union proposal of a 20% premium for those who work in certain headquarters. The issues seem to be mostly based on the higher cost of housing in those areas, but there's no requirement that the employees live in those areas. If I have a neighbor in Dixon who commutes to San Francisco to do the same job that I do, should he make \$16,000/year more than I do? I can see a commute allowance, but an extra \$1300/month will buy a pretty nice house in Solano county. What's to say that these employees won't "take the money and run." Granted, that's their choice, but is it fair?

Also, what about employees who live in the higher housing cost areas but have owned their own homes for many years. They now have hundreds of thousands of dollars in equity. Should they now be paid \$16,000 extra? Why?

As stated in the Utility Reporter, I have a concern that increasing compensation for those in the high cost areas will create downward pressures on the compensation of those of us in the "affordable" areas. (I believe the median house price in Dixon is now about \$370,000. Is that considered "affordable"?)

The company wants to target the incentives to certain classifications and the union wants an across the board incentive. As a veteran meter reader the union position has a certain appeal. But I can see the company position as well. Many people live and work in the Bay Area and make less money than a PG&E meter reader. If the company is not having a problem filling those positions, why would they want to increase their pay. I'm not saying that I agree, just that I see their point. When I read meters in Vacaville, I couldn't afford a house in Vacaville. That was just a fact of life. I would have loved a 20% raise. Home prices in Vacaville have tripled since I left meter reading. If I

was still a meter reader in Vacaville, I would be very offended at the thought that my co-workers in the Bay Area were getting 20% more than I was.

These are just my rambling, random thoughts on the subject. As you've said, it's a very complex issue and no proposed solution is going to make everybody happy.

I guess my opinion leans toward this: Any incentive should be formulated in such a way that it's targeted at those who it's intended for. People who want to live close to work but cannot afford to. People who will not work in the higher cost-of-living areas unless they get these incentives. Maybe some sort of "retention bonus" at the end of each year, like upper management gave themselves for going into bankruptcy.

Name withheld by request.
As stated, the author is a
System Operator at Vaca-Dixon.

Company Could Assist in Home Purchases

Perry,

It is agreed that in large areas of PG&E's service territory it is impossible to own a home or rent one on wages paid by them. One solution is to have the company provide assistance in purchasing a home. Another would be to increase pay for those folks that work in that area. A third is a sizeable one-time wage increase to all members to catch us up with buying power lost over the years and a cost of living clause to keep us current. Had the cost of living clause that was in place during the 1970s stayed, this would be a moot point.

Of the three, the last is the best for *all* members. If the board can receive retention bonuses to stay, I submit the rank and file should also.

As far as transferring from one area to another more affordable area, the same boundaries are in place now as they were when I bailed out of the Bay Area 20-some years ago. I had to go from a journeyman back to an entry level position to accomplish my move back then. I expect it's the same today.

Todd Gibson
GSR Sacramento

Contracted work raises safety concerns

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reports to the CPUC.

About a year ago, CIP employees learned that PG&E was planning layoffs, but received no assurances that they would get the severance pay accorded to other PG&E employees. In April of 2004 the CIP employees took their concerns to Local 1245. Although the union was not in a position to stop the already-scheduled layoffs, a union organizing campaign was launched to help strengthen the inspectors' bid to win severance pay.

A week after the union filed for election, PG&E informed the CIP employees that laid-off employees would receive severance. The company then laid off 32 of the 45 CIP employees. Ten lead inspectors were demoted into the inspector classification.

"The company decreased the lead inspectors' pay by \$10,000 and increased the inspectors' pay by \$2000—kind of a neat trick prior to a union election," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Landis Marttila, who led the organizing campaign.

Meanwhile, much of the work formerly performed by the CPI em-

"I found myself having to explain a lot of times (to the contractor) why I had to fail a job because of safety concerns."

Doli Lee, former CPI inspector

ployees was turned over to contractors, who now became responsible for inspecting their own work.

Doli Lee was among the laid-off inspectors. He was then hired by one of the contractors and was astonished at "how many rules they didn't know."

"PG&E required us to carry a manual with us. None of the contractors had it in their cars," Lee said.

While CIP employees had received a regular wage, contractors were paid by the piece, "so sometimes they'd do work that wasn't needed," Lee said.

"Say there's a hole in the front door. We'd replace the front door for them. But it came to a point where every job I'd go to (the contract employee) wanted to replace the front door," Lee said. "There were a lot of little things like that."

But there's more at stake to the

inspection process than preventing unnecessary work.

To be an inspector with PG&E, Lee had to take two weeks of classes and pass a test. Inspectors were trained to make sure there was no carbon monoxide in the house and to inspect attic insulation for possible fire hazards.

The contractors' training, in Lee's view, "didn't seem as vigorous as ours."

"We would have to explain it to them a lot of the time. I found myself having to explain a lot of times why I had to fail a job because of safety concerns," Lee said.

The CIP employees who survived the outsourcing of their work voted 17-5 last June for union representation.

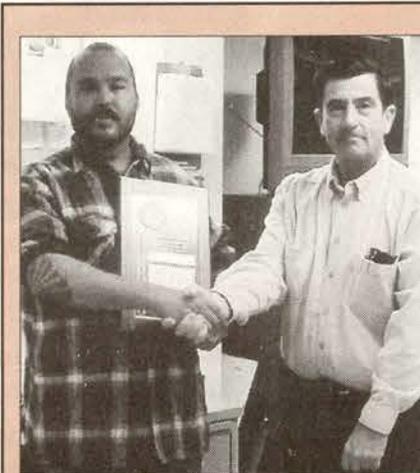
After two meetings, PG&E and Local 1245 came to agreement on all issues except pay.

The tentative agreement was turned down 21-2 in December of 2004. The members identified the low wage rate with no progression to higher wages as their reason for rejecting the tentative agreement.

Marttila said PG&E appeared determined to block CIP employees from gaining the protections of a Local 1245 labor agreement.

"The company would face pressure to bring back 32 individuals to perform this work, and they've made it clear they don't want to do that," he said.

Meanwhile, PG&E appears content to let contractors—the ones who don't bother to carry manuals in their cars—to inspect their own work.



LIFE-SAVING AWARD

Local 1245 member Steve Pledger, left, is presented with the IBEW Life Saving Award by Business Rep. Darryl Norris for keeping heart attack victim Gary Miller alive by applying CPR while at the same time calling 911 to summon assistance. Pledger is a Vacaville-based Gas T&D Fitter for Pacific Gas & Electric. "Gary Miller is alive today thanks to the life saving efforts of Steve Pledger," said Norris. The full story can be read at www.ibew1245.com. Go to the News Archive and look for "Pledger."

Hank Lucas, Business Representative

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façade. When he was dealing with management he was strong and very forceful," said Mai, who also remembers walking the picketline with Lucas during a strike at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

"Hank was a devoted unionist. I remember going to several meetings with him with SMUD members and how strong he was and how he was in control of the situ-

ation and kept everybody's spirits up," said Mai.

"He had a real outgoing personality. He always had a joke, always some witty thing to say. He was kind of my ideal of what a 1245 union rep was," said Mai.

Lucas represented members at Utility Tree Service, the US Bureau of Reclamation, Citizen Utilities/Ferndale, Pacific Tree, SMUD, the City of Lodi, and PG&E's Yosemite, Stockton, San Joaquin and Humboldt Divisions.

Unit Changes

Several unit meetings served by Mike Grill had incorrect dates listed in the December Utility Reporter and on the Local 1245 website. The correct dates are as follows:

Unit 1111, Fresno, will meet on April 5, not April 4.

Unit 1122, Merced Irrigation District, will meet on April 7, not April 6.

Unit 1123, Merced, will meet on April 6, not April 5.

Mike Grill
Business Rep.

Unit 4015, Burney (Frontier) will now meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Dates for upcoming meetings are: Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 17, June 21.

Ray Thomas
Business Rep.

www.ibew1245.com

B

usiness Manager Perry Zimmerman offered a wide-ranging account of the state of the union to the Local 1245 Advisory Council on Feb. 5 at union headquarters in Vacaville.

Zimmerman reported that the recently-signed Letter Agreement 04-52 was designed to capture more of PG&E's new business work for IBEW members.

Currently, PG&E performs about 60% of new business installations, with the other 40% going to primarily non-union contractors. The new Letter Agreement eases the way for PG&E to use union contractors for new business installations, a first step toward returning this work to the bargaining unit at PG&E.

"The purpose of the new business letter agreement is to get that work back. The debate ought to be whether it is done by General Construction or Division. But right now it is done by non-union scabs," Zimmerman said. "I'm grateful we have Outside Construction to do that work or we would never get it back."

Zimmerman hailed the progress the union had made over the past three years in representing line clearance tree trimmers, and credited Business Representatives Ray Thomas and Junior Ornelas for the forward movement.

In the last six months, 26 issues, including many affecting tree trimmers, have been referred to outside legal counsel.

"It's been a seachange," said Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell. He acknowledged it could take a few more years and some additional favorable rulings in arbitrations, "but tree contractors are going to realize

they have to change the way they do business."

Zimmerman said it was important for the union to keep up its efforts on behalf of tree trimmers, noting that their working conditions still needed significant improvements.

"It's my fundamental belief that what unions are about is helping those who need the help the most. If we don't build up the bottom, then pretty soon you're going to be on the bottom yourself," Zimmerman said.

Another pressing issue is retiree medical coverage.

"In two years, we'll need to start focusing on post-retirement medical coverage or you won't have to worry about it when you retire because it just won't be there," Zimmerman said.

Other developments reported on by Zimmerman and his staff included:

- **TransCanada negotiations** are now in progress, with the company suggesting that layoffs are likely. TransCanada is the new owner of Pacific Gas Transmission.

- **Exhibit 16 arbitration** meeting early this month turned into mediated negotiations over a possible settlement of many grievances concerning PG&E's failure to optimize use of overtime.

- **Automated Meter Reading** appears to be a high priority for PG&E Corp.'s new CEO, Peter Darbee, as it is for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, but Local 1245 has serious doubts that automated meter reading can deliver the promised benefits.

- PG&E's "transformation" study is still in progress, but no decisions are expected to be announced before the end of the first quarter.

- PG&E's "Peer Volunteer" program will not be provided funds under the current budget to expand the program to areas beyond its current boundaries.



Mike Stout



Bob Quinn



Gil Suarez



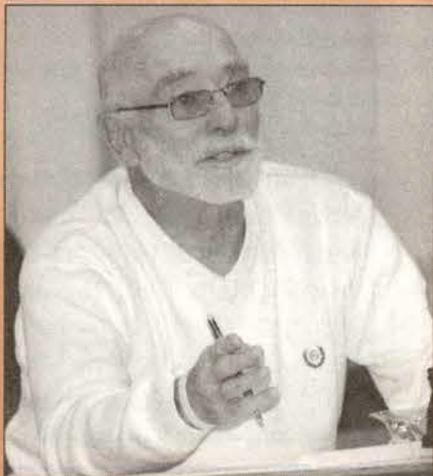
Peggy Daniel



Grover Day



Dave Morrison



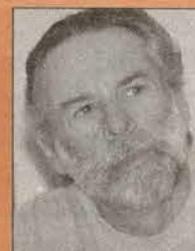
Leroy Foster



Dan Gracia



Mike Jessen



Terry Andreucci



John Felts



John Harper

Photos: Eric Wolfe & Landis Marttila

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Advisory Council

Vacaville, Ca. ♦ February 5, 2005



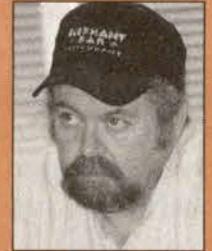
Tom Datzell

"It's my fundamental belief that what we are about is helping those who need the help the most. If we don't build from the bottom, then pretty soon you're going to be on the bottom yourself."

Perry Zimmerman



President Mike Davis, left, presents a plaque and the union's gratitude to out-going President Ed Mallory for his service to the union.



Art Torres



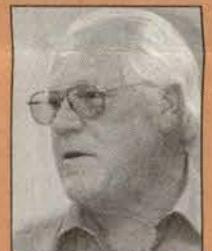
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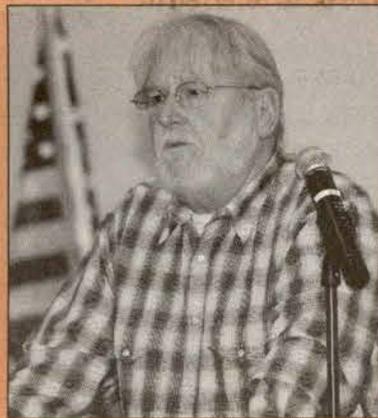
Chris Seyfer



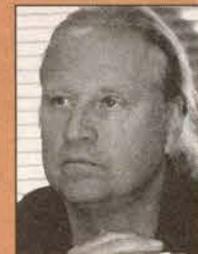
Howard Stiefer



Jim Findley



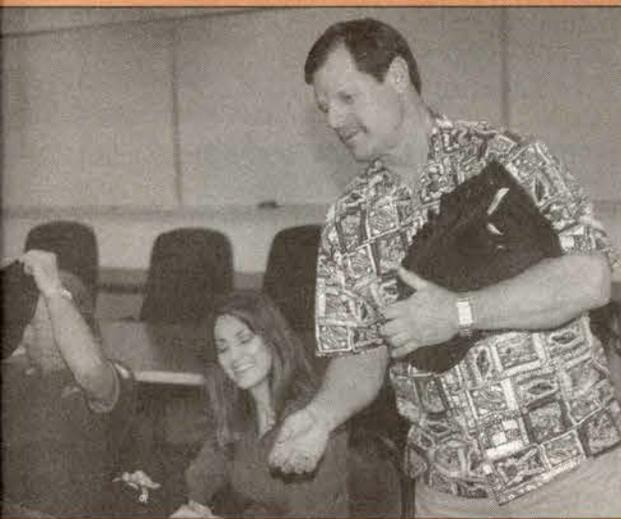
Frank Saxsenmeyer



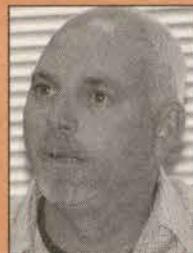
Dennis Thompson



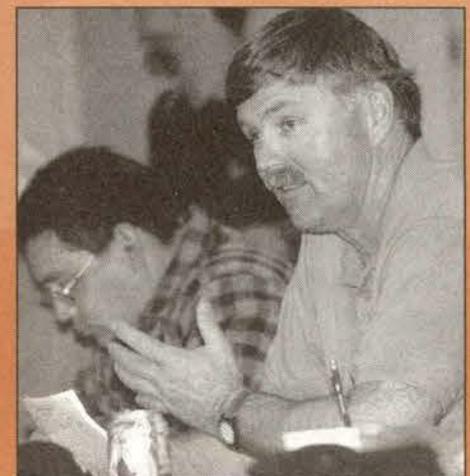
Mark Taylor



Nevada Advisory Council member Bob Vieira kept up a long monologue about life, the universe and everything presented Advisory Council and Executive Board members wearing Pacific Power hats.



Lou Mennel



Lee Thomas



Larry Rodriguez



Tom Cornell



Mike Saner



Richard Perry



Gloria Flores

Aging Membership

► From Page 2

medical costs absorbed by PG&E.

By 2002, retirement had become the first priority of most of our members, and so improvements in the pension and post-retirement medical benefits became the centerpieces of our bargaining and contract.

As a new, young, workforce becomes the membership of Local 1245, we have two challenges. We must first lead them to understand how we got where we are today, that the impressive fringe benefits and wages and working conditions enjoyed by our members are not the gift of benevolent employers but the result of hard work and sacrifice by our membership over the last 55 years. Just as importantly, we must come to understand their values and their priorities. If we continue to assume that the priorities of 2002 will be the priorities of 2012, we will surely fail.

Our task can be defined in simple terms: organize our younger members. Develop leadership among our younger members. Advance and protect their values and priorities.

We were faced with a similar challenge in the early 1990s when voluntary retirement incentives at PG&E and several other large employers took away a whole generation of union activists. We survived that exodus, and I am confident that we can survive the passage that began several years ago and will continue for about the next five years.

If you have any thoughts on how to meet this challenge, please write. Whether you are a younger member yourself or a long-time Local 1245 member going to work every day with a slowly increasing number of new young employees, let me know if you have any ideas. You showed with the cost of living issue an ability to think outside the box, and I hope for the same involvement on this issue.



Mary Unterreiner



Kathryn Stephens

Frontier Communications

Clerks with Frontier Communications in the far north of California perform the behind-the-scenes work that is indispensable to the company's success. From their offices in Susanville, Burney and Palo Cedro, clerks are responsible for employee payroll entry, accounts receivable and payable, employee attendance and procurement card records, among other duties. They also back each other up when one of them is off of work. Clerks featured here are: Kathryn Stephens, Susanville, a 32-year union member; Marianne Phillipenko, Susanville, a 36-year union member and a union steward; Mary Unterreiner, Burney, a 34-year union member and Unit Record for Unit 4015; and Karen Carter, a 40-year union member and a union steward.



Marianne Phillipenko



Karen Carter

Lassen Municipal Utility District

The Lassen Municipal Utility District, a publicly-owned utility in northern California, could not function without the able service of its clerks. These dedicated employees, represented by IBEW Local 1245, handle all aspects of customer service, from payroll entry to accounts payable and receivable. They are a key component in a municipal operation that provides electric service to approximately 10,500 customers within Lassen County. The District acquired electrical facilities from CP National Corp. in 1988, after voters created the District in a 1986 referendum. Clerks for the District are: JoAnn Villalovos, Senior Clerk, a 30-year union member as well as a steward and Unit Recorder for Unit 4012; Marcia Gilmer, a 27-year union member; Sonya Hubbard, a 3-year union member; and Patsy Padilla (not pictured), a 17-year union member.



JoAnn Villalovos



Sonya Hubbard (left) and Marcia Gilmer

Photos by Ray Thomas

New group for injured workers

A new organization sued the state of California on Jan. 19 in an effort to overturn recent state regulations that would cut benefit payments to permanently disabled workers.

The organization, named after its website, WorkersInjuredatWork.org, hopes to organize protests that bring together many of the 1 million Californians injured on the job each year.

"I don't intend this to be an organization that simply has a lunch and a protest and is gone for a year," Director Peggy Sugarman, a former top regulator for the state Division of Workers' Compensation, told the Los Angeles Times. "It's time injured workers had their own voice."

The organization's lawsuit contends that the regulations reduce permanent-disability benefits by a much greater amount than lawmakers intended when they approved a sweeping overhaul of the state's workers' compensation system last spring.

The complaint asks a Sacramento Superior Court judge to issue an injunction, restraining the state from enforcing the new regulations.

"These are devastating reduc-

tions, and we do not believe they are permitted by the California Constitution," Steve Hopcraft, a spokesman for the applicants' attorneys, told the Times.

The attorneys' and injured workers' groups claim that benefits could be slashed by more than 50% under the new rules, which were drafted by Andrea Hoch, the administrative director of the state Division of Workers' Compensation. Hoch and her agency are the defendants in the lawsuit.

The regulations, which took effect Jan. 1, are a key part of the complex revision of the legal and medical criteria used to prescribe treatment for on-the-job injuries and to award permanent disability benefits to compensate employees for lost wages.

About 400 people associated with the new group rallied for about an hour in front of an office at a courthouse in downtown Los Angeles where administrative law judges hear workers' compensation appeals cases. It was one of 18 rallies held at workers compensation offices around the state on Jan. 19.

By the Local 1245
Safety Committee



Safe driving practices

Last year about 43,000 Americans died in automobile accidents. Of these, about one-third are caused by aggressive driving.

When you're feeling stressed, don't take it out on others by driving aggressively. It just spreads the stress to other drivers.

Learn to be patient. Avoid practices that other drivers might view as aggressive.

About one-half of collisions are at intersections. Some of these are caused by running red lights, not stopping for right hand turns, or failing to yield the right of way.

It's OK to give the other driver a break and a brake.

Feeling drowsy? Avoid an accident by taking a break from the drive. It may be time well spent.

Distractions cause about 25% of all traffic collisions. What am I trying to say here? Don't use your cell phone while driving!

When traveling with children, be sure they are secure before you start driving. Adjust your seat, mirrors, radio, etc. before you pull into the street.

It's hard to believe we still need to say this, but: never drink and drive!

Keep your driving record clear by avoiding accidents and using common sense driving practices.

Stoney Burk

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee: Stoney Burk, Alameda Power & Telecomm.; Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; David Vipond, Citizens Communications; Rich Lane, Turlock Irrigation District; Art Torres, Sacramento Municipal Utility District; Gil Suarez, Davey Tree; Bob Burkle, City of Santa Clara; and Assistant Business Manager Jim McCauley.

Outside Construction Report for February

We have been running about 60 calls a month for Journeyman Lineman, Equipment Specialist, Groundman, Cable Splicers and Underground Techs. The books are starting to fill up due to the work slowing down.

The books, as of Feb. 5:

Journey Lineman, Book 1: 26
Journey Lineman, Book 2: 5
Lineman, Book 3: 2
Lineman, Book 4: 9
Equipment Specialist, Book 1: 6
Equipment Specialist, Book 2: 3
Equipment Specialist, Book 3: 1
Groundman, Book 1: 11
Groundman, Book 2: 9
Groundman, Book 3: 27
Groundman, Book 4: 54
Cable Splicer, Book 1: 1
Cable Splicer, Book 2: 0
Cable Splicer, Book 3: 0

Outside Agreement: 47 crews working. **Underground Agreement:** 20 crews working. The Jefferson-Martin 230KV underground project just started and we have 10 crews going. **Pole and Test Agreement:** total is 33 crews. **Teledata Agreement:** total is 8 crews. A total of 118 crews are working.

Sierra Pacific: We have agreed to a project agreement with NECA for the "Fort Churchill to Buckeye" 120 KV transmission line, which runs from Yerington to Minden, Nev.—approximately 36 miles of steel and wood pole H structures.

Davey Tree Pole and Test agreement was ratified—a 3-year agreement with health and wel-

fare paid, with 2.5% wage increases in the second and third years.

San Francisco NECA Light Rail Agreement negotiations have begun.

Organizing: We have been talking to Grace Construction and we will be making contact with some of the non-union contractors building windmills on SMUD property.

Other:

We are trying to rename the Equipment Specialist to Line Equipment Specialist in hopes we can get it listed with DIR Prevailing Rate.

I have been in contact with NEBF about a Pre-Retirement Seminar and they said that they

put them on. I'm trying to schedule some for us and jointly with IBEW Local 47.

IBEW and NECA are now asking for an extension of the June deadline on crane certification. It looks like CAL-OSHA is going to do a 3-month extension.

The Cal.-Nev. JATC is offering a crane certifying course and written test. The NCCCO process is made up into two parts: a written test and a practical test (practical test will be scheduled at a later date.) Class Date is March 28-31, 2005 starting at 7:00 am. Test date is April 1, 2005. Location: IBEW Local 1245 office in Vacaville. **Deadline to register: March 18, 2005.**

Dave Crawford

Congratulations Newly-Retired Members from PG&E

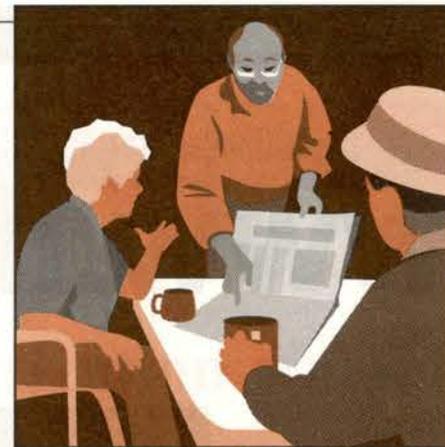
The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in — or start! — a Retirees Club chapter in your area.

Ronald Dixon, 14 years Stockton, CA	William Marty, 14 years Ukiah, CA	Robert Ewert, 32 years San Leandro, CA	Thomas Nash, 24 years Rohnert Park, CA
James Kelley, 34 years Corning, CA	Doris Massey, 29 years Olive Branch, MS	Larry Farmer, 31 years Sonoma, CA	Stanley Nunn, 26 years Crescent City, CA
Frank Mendez, 9 years Fresno, CA	Thomas Mohler, 26 years Coarsegold, CA	Norman Feyling, 34 years Saratoga, CA	Mary Padgett, 24 years Concord, CA
Helen Stacy, 9 years San Jose, CA	Martial Molinari, 11 years Seaside, CA	Larry Fleming, 34 years Auberry, CA	Melvin Pendleton, 35 years Petaluma, CA
Daniel Murphy, 2 years Santa Rosa CA	Herman Reams, 27 years Oakland, CA	Leroy Foster, 39 years Antioch, CA	Jose Perez, 38 years Reedley, CA
Jimmie Padgett, 34 years Mt. Vernon, AZ	Dick Sutter, 33 years Brooking, OR	Gary Foy, 33 years Merced, CA	Norberto Ram, 32 years Clovis, CA
Ronald Wilbanks, 38 years Paradise, CA	Donald Taylor, 35 years Newcastle, CA	Steven Gable, 33 years Eureka, CA	Margaret Redmond, 31 years San Jose, CA
Carvel Williams Jr, 32 years Merced, CA	Claire Yeater, 26 years San Jose, CA	Robert Garcia, 32 years Fresno, CA	Johnnie Rodriguez, 33 years Burney, CA
Steven Wong, 32 years Sacramento, CA	Janet Yoshida, 17 years San Jose, CA	Douglas Gasper, 39 years San Ramon, CA	Laurence Rodriguez, 37 years Sonora, CA
Charles Acosta, 7 years Apple Valley, CA	Larry Day, 11 years San Jose, CA	Sandra Germolus, 26 years Penngrove, CA	Michael Russell, 32 years Oakdale, CA
Gary De Witt, 32 years Santa Cruz, CA	Elvera Arroyo, 17, years San Jose, CA	Charles Green, 34 years Sacramento, CA	Luise Sigle, 20 years Las Vegas, NV
John Edwards, 36 years San Jose, CA	George Bizon, 34 years Union City, CA	Zelma Holmes, 27 years Riverdale, GA	Lynn Simon, 24 years Mcarthur, CA
Kenneth Files, 29 years Aptos, CA	Anthony Borba, 38 years Los Banos, CA	Ellen Huddleston, 19 years Tracy, CA	Alexander Spahn, 31 years Oakdale, CA
John Girdis, 31 years Bayside, CA	Jeanne Brand, 13 years Ripon, CA	Roy Jones, 35 years Willits, CA	Dennis Swensen, 40 years Eureka, CA
Lawrence Hitchcock, 38 years San Jose, CA	Donald Brannan, 36 years Burney, CA	Thomas Jones, 30 years Stockton, CA	Robert Tomey, 30 years Gilroy, CA
Gary Johnston, 31 years Ione, CA	Samuel Brewer, 20 years Santa Rosa, CA	Harland Kenyon, 37 years Woodland, CA	Robert Torres, 31 years Merced, CA
Stephen Kerr, 27 years Woodland, CA	Robert Brown, 34 years Oakland, CA	Robert Lees, 37 years Livermore, CA	Albert Vargas, 29 years Los Banos, CA
Patricia Lunn, 24 years San Jose, CA	Barbara Canterbury, 19 years Needles, CA	Kay Lewis, 28 years Napa, CA	John Vernatter, 24 years San Francisco, CA
Steven Lunn, 25 years Arroyo Grande, CA	Alexander Castillo, 34 years Santa Maria, CA	Michael Longo, 34 years Oakley, CA	Jesse Villasana, 29 years Clovis, CA
Alfred Martinez, 33 years Jackson, CA	Carmelito Chan, 26 years San Francisco, CA	Gary Loos, 39 years Fairfield, CA	Larry Waggerman, 32 years Merced, CA
	James Dempsey, 32 years Santa Rosa, CA	William Mc Cabe Jr, 17 years Vina, CA	Gwendolyn Wynn, 30 years Pacifica, CA
	Robert Dorer, 25 years Auburn, CA	Alfred Mc Coy, 32 years Fresno, CA	George Yamashita, 37 years Los Gatos, CA
	Patricia L Eide, 24 years Redding, CA	Earl Mueller, 32 years Jackson, CA	Larry Yates, 37 years Burney, CA
			Thomas Yunk, 33 years Auburn, CA

Note: "Years" indicate length of union membership, which may differ from years of company service.

An Open Letter from Mike Silva

Protect your benefits — join the Retirees Club



Dear Fellow Retirees,

I started going to retiree meetings back in 1993. I have always been moderately active in the union. I know that the many unpleasant things that are happening to my pension, are also happening to yours.

To some of you it is more devastating than it is to me. But the way things are going it won't be long before it will be absolutely devastating to me and many more of you than you can imagine.

Did you notice that the confirmation letter you got from the company concerning your medical plan gave you notice that if your pension didn't cover the premium you were to send them a check monthly or not have a medical plan? I'm sure that there are some of you out there who are close to having to do this.

Are you aware that your surviving spouse will have to pay the full premium, when you pass away? For my wife that will be \$500+. She'll not even be entitled to the \$174 the company is paying now toward our premium. She will be entitled to whatever is left of the "premium offset account," but I don't expect

there will be very much left in that account in the next couple of years.

Little by little, inflation is eating away at your pension.

There is only one way these issues can be addressed and that is through the union!

The IBEW can bring these issues to the bargaining table with the help of the "rank and file" membership. What does that mean to you? It means that if you wish to protect or improve your pension, it must be done through the union. The only way you can have a voice is through the union. The main way the union is going to hear you is if you participate in the Retiree's Club units. You can attend one of two retiree club meetings that take place each month. The schedule is posted on this page.

Alternatively you can attend your local unit meeting each month and speak to your issues at the "good of the union" time on the agenda.

With so many recent retirees from PG&E, there seems to be growing interest in starting new units. Gather some of your friends. Get a commitment from the Local 1245 Business Rep in your area to back you and

provide you with a meeting place. If you don't know who the Business Rep in your area is, the union hall can tell you. Set a regular date for your meetings. Gather some ideas as to what you want done about the situation of retirees and submit them to union headquarters. Contact the other clubs to get a copy of their minutes and send yours to them. Union headquarters can help you make these contacts.

At least two people in the Stockton-Modesto area told me they're interested in starting a retirees' unit in their area. Two fellows said they were interested in starting a retirees' unit at the new union headquarters in Vacaville. One person said they wanted to start one in the Redding-Red Bluff area. Even a couple of people at a PSEA meeting in South San Francisco expressed interest in starting a unit.

What do you get for your \$36 in annual retirees' dues? You get the right to speak up—and have a chance of being heard!

Mike Silva is president of the East Bay chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club.

Join Us!

The Local 1245 Retiree Club invites you to join us for companionship, discussion and projects. Current meeting locations are:

East Bay Chapter:

Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA.

San Jose Chapter:

Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose.

New unit proposed

Editor's Note: This e-mail was sent to Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. It is reprinted with the author's permission.

Hi Perry,

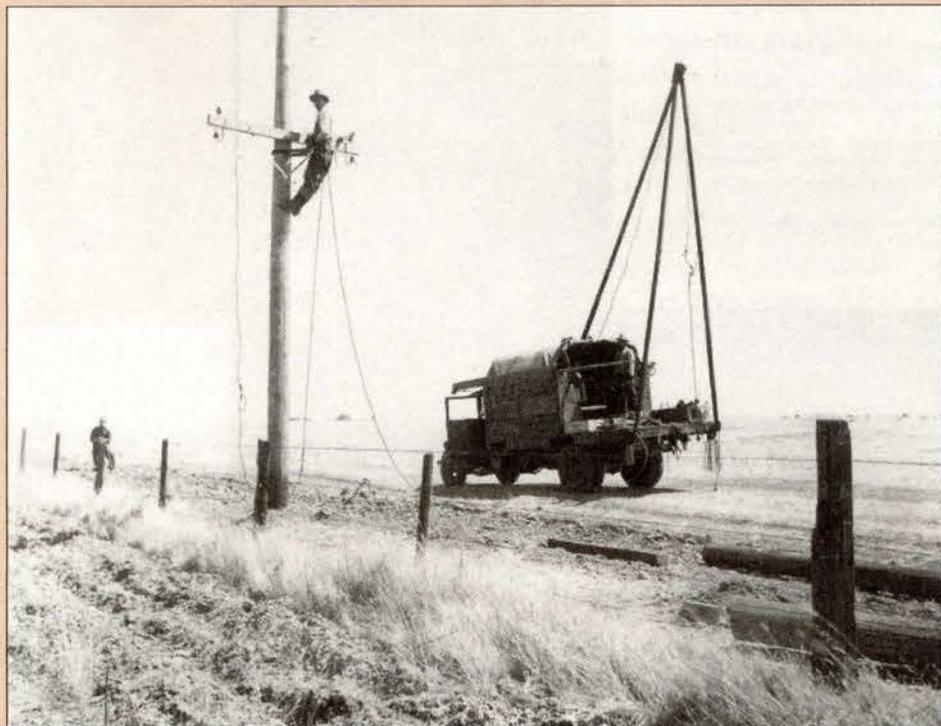
I just attended the San Jose Retirees Chapter unit meeting and need to let you know that it was again mentioned as to the need to start another retirees unit at your main headquarters (in Vacaville).

I would be willing to attend there as soon as you got it going. I remember you telling me that there are retirees meeting for lunch near you now? Maybe the Business Rep assigned to that area could meet with the group and possibly spark an interest in starting our third group? Just a note to say I feel it would be very helpful to the cause.

Thanks in advance Perry for considering this request

Ken Rawles, retired steward

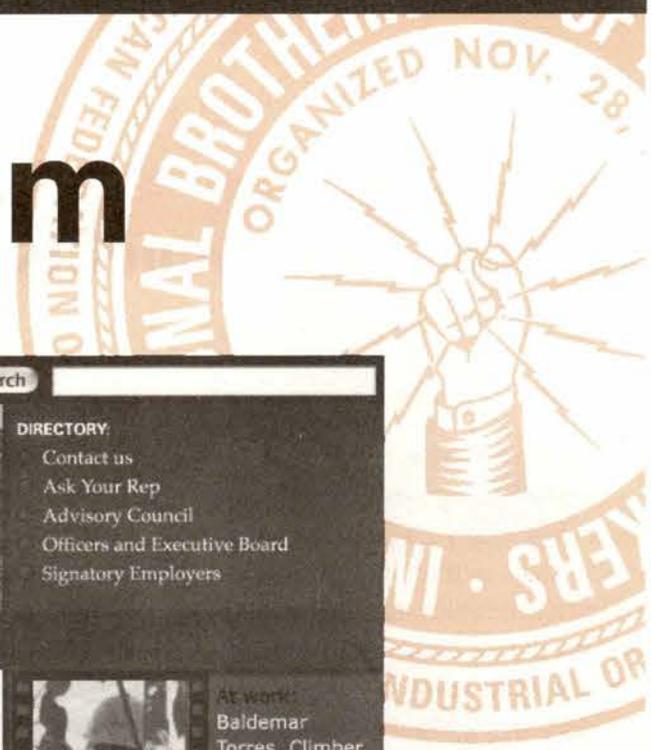
Perry Zimmerman replies: Ken, I think you've got a great idea. I think that the more we involve and motivate retirees the better off we will be.



A San Joaquin Light and Power line truck and crew at work a long time ago—probably in the 1920s—in what is now PG&E territory.

On the Internet:

www.ibew1245.com



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The people behind the power



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- Officers and Executive Board
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Current News:

Still More Members Speak Out on cost-of-living issue (Posted 1-25-05)
[System Op. Letter](#) [Control Tech Letter](#)

Report from the PG&E/Local 1245 Quarterly Benefits Meeting (Posted 1-25-05)

Report from the PG&E/Local 1245 United Healthcare Quarterly Meeting (Posted 1-25-05)

Schwarzenegger Budget preserves tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy (Posted 1-25-05)

More Members Speak Out on cost-of-living issue (Posted 1-21-05)
[Curtis Letter](#) [Stinson Letter](#)

Single-Payer Health System could save California \$8 billion in one year, new study says (Posted 1-21-05)

Injured Workers sue to block cuts in Workers Comp (Posted 1-21-05)

Social Security 'Investment Accounts' would cost a bundle (Posted 1-21-05)

Consumer Price Index figures for December 2004 (Posted 1-21-05)

Members Speak Out on cost-of-living issue (Posted 1-19-05) [Camacho Letter](#) [Bradford Letter](#)

PG&E Clerical Position Evaluation committee agrees to changes (Posted 1-19-05)

Outside Construction Report surveys work picture (Posted 1-18-05)

Switchman Agreement facilitates training. [Text of agreement](#) (Posted 1-12-05)

High Cost of Living problem continues to fester (Posted 1-3-05) [Union Proposal](#)

Life Saving Award goes to PG&E Gas T&D Fitter (Posted 12-27-04)



Steve Pledger (left) receives award from **Darryl Norris**

Electric Deregulation may make a comeback in 2005 if Gov. Schwarzenegger has his way. Check back for opportunities to take action (Posted 11-22-04)

Local 1245 Sandoval Scholarship and Trade School Grant applications are now available (Posted 1-10-05)

IBEW ACTION ALERT

Be part of the IBEW Local 1245 Action Faction! Check back later for opportunities to e-mail your state legislators on important issues.
[Future Link to Action Page](#)



Perry Zimmerman
Business Manager

**YOUR UNION
High Cost of Living**

Miss something?
Check the **NEWS ARCHIVE**

CALENDAR

January 29: Retirement Planning Seminars in San Jose & Stockton

February 2: Retirement Planning Seminar in Oakland

February 5: Retirement Planning Seminar in Santa Rosa

February 5-6: Advisory Council, Vacaville

February 10: Retirement Planning Seminar in Bakersfield

February 11: Service Awards, Sacramento

February 12: Stewards Conference, Sacramento

February 12: Retirement Planning Seminar in Fresno

February 12: Retirement Planning Seminar in Concord

At work:
Baldemar Torres, Climber, Asplundh Tree

More Photos

INFORMATION PIPELINES:

- For New Members
- Working Women
- For Stewards
- Retiree's Club
- Unionizing your Workplace
- Dispatch/Outside Construction

LIBRARY:

- Unit Meetings
- Safety Matters
- IBEW 1245 History
- Workers Compensation
- Agreements
- PG&E Contract Index
- Local 1245 By-Laws
- Benefits

Union Shopper



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Labor LINKS

Take Action: CURRENT ISSUES

AUDIO NEWS  Workers Independent News Service

"Power is not in what the establishment has but in what you think it has."
Saul Alinsky, Community Organizer

The all-new Local 1245 Website!

On the PG&E Intranet:

Under 'My Stuff,' Select 'IBEW'