

Inside:



# Utility Reporter

Volume 60 No.6 • Nov/Dec 2011 UNITY IS STRENGTH For up-to-the-minute news, see our website: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

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## News briefs

### Mexican electrical workers

were accompanied by the Canadian Labour Congress and the United Steelworkers on Oct. 27 in submitting a complaint under the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In 2009 the Mexican government used soldiers to invade and shut down the Mexico City electric plant, terminated 44,000 workers, and eliminated their union contract—in violation of NAFTA rules.

**A "General Strike"** drew thousands to downtown Oakland, CA on Nov. 2 to protest banks' role in the financial crisis and the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of the very rich.

**"All Power to the Sparks"** was the rallying cry of protesters who hung a banner from scaffolding at a London building site to protest construction bosses trying to slash pay by 35% in the electric industry. Workers in Newcastle, Manchester and Glasgow also took to the streets to demand that the contractors stop plans to renege on national agreement that set terms and conditions in the industry.

Get answers to your union questions at: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)



## Expert Touch: PG&E GC Gas

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## Control the Pressure: Gas Safety Program

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## Rodeo Linemen & Apprentices

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## Taking Down Twin Monsters

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## IBEW Convention: Empowering Youth

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Local 1245 members attending the IBEW Convention were, kneeling from left: Eric Wolfe, Al Fortier, Hunter Stern, Art Freitas, and Pete Sandoval; standing from left are Darryl Norris, Tom Dalzell, Gracie Nunez, Bob Choate, Chris Habecker, Jennifer Gray, Anna Bayless-Martinez, Cecelia De La Torre, Mike Davis, Dorothy Fortier, Elizabeth McInnis, and Lorenzo Arciniega.



Local 1245 delegate Elizabeth McInnis presses for adoption of an amendment to the resolution on "Engaging Young Workers."



Local 1245 member Graciela Nunez hands out leaflets on Local 1245's program of youth leadership development. Delegates snapped up hundreds in a matter of minutes.

IBEW International Convention

## Promoting youth leadership

*"There's a direct attack on middle class workers, so it's very imperative that the youth gets involved, spreads the word, and that we fight back and push back and we can take this organization to the next level."*

— Jennifer Gray

Developing young leadership was a major focus of the IBEW International Convention, held Sept. 19-23 in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Local 1245 was in the forefront of proposing ways to get the job done.

On the convention's second day, Graciela Nunez handed out hundreds of leaflets at the entrance to the convention, summarizing the efforts that Local 1245 has taken over the past year to train and empower young leaders. Joining Nunez in passing out the leaflets were the somewhat less-young Local 1245 staff members Al Fortier, Darryl Norris and Dorothy Fortier.

Jennifer Gray and Lorenzo Arciniega

worked behind the scenes to mobilize support for a Local 1245-sponsored resolution—"Engaging Young Workers"—that called on the IBEW to hold an international conference for young IBEW members in 2012.

When that resolution was merged with a similar resolution, the mandate to hold the conference in 2012 was lost—much to the dismay of the Local 1245 delegation, which believed action was needed sooner rather than later. Local 1245 delegate Elizabeth McInnis, 35, took the microphone to urge that a firm date of 2012 be specified for the youth conference.

"I rise in support of the resolution.

However with the following amendment to the final paragraph," McInnis said, her voice echoing across the cavernous convention center where more than 2,000 delegates were gathered. McInnis continued:

"Be it finally resolved that the IO will develop a conference specifically designed to encourage the growth of young workers within the IBEW and that that first conference will be held in 2012."

President Hill suggested that the more specific wording wasn't necessary, but another delegate joined McInnis's call to specify a 2012 date. When Hill put the matter to a vote, the amendment was accepted overwhelmingly.

"The IBEW is now realizing there's a real huge need for youth to get involved at all levels," said Arciniega, 32.

"Our current leaders are going to be leaving," said Gray, a 28-year-old PG&E Service Rep in Sacramento who was selected by the IBEW to represent all IBEW young members in California at the convention. "There's a direct attack on middle class workers, so it's very imperative that the youth gets involved, spreads the word, and that we fight back and push back and we can take this organization to the next level."

Nunez said it was important for the union to include young people in leadership positions as a way of encouraging other young workers to become involved.

"Usually you won't join any type of organization where you feel you don't belong," Nunez said. "The challenges I think are going to be really having youth in some type of leadership, showing that there is opportunity" and giving young workers a sense that they can make a difference.



IBEW Local 1245 joined hotel workers on the picket line at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, one of four cities where hotel workers conducted a seven-day strike in September. The strike was an effort to step up publicity for the on-going boycott of Hyatt Regency hotels until management does right by its workers. From left are Local 1245 Organizer Fred Ross Jr., Business Rep. Landis Marttila, Organizer Eileen Purcell, Business Manager Tom Dalzell, UniteHERE Local 2 President Mike Casey, and Business Rep. Hunter Stern. Also joining the picket line was Local 1245 Communications Director Eric Wolfe, who took the photo.

## Arcing and Sparking



**Tom Dalzell**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

# Political force must be our response

**W**ell, the fight that we have been fighting on distant shores is decidedly closer to home.

Our members have trekked to Florida and Wisconsin in the past months, fighting Tea Party-sponsored attacks on workers there, and this month we have a group of Local 1245 members in Ohio, working with other unionists to push back against the Tea Party legislative efforts there to cripple public sector unions.

And yes, I know that it sounds like I am singling out the Tea Party as the sole culprit behind these attacks. As I have written in the past, I acknowledge the legitimate concerns that led to the Tea Bag and then Tea Party protests several years ago, but I believe that Big Business interests have taken the Tea Party banner and turned it into a re-branded corporate attack on workers, which was not

its original mission.

Our members at the City of Redding, City of Roseville, Modesto Irrigation District, and Turlock Irrigation District are feeling the lash of the Tea Party whip now. Anti-worker hysteria has been the rage in Shasta County for several years. Anti-worker policies at the City of Roseville are now threatening to consume the very members of city management who pursued reductions in wages and benefits from our members, And at both Modesto and Turlock, right wing Republicans flying the Tea Party banner have launched attacks on the men and women who deliver low-cost electricity and water.

In the past four years, eleven of our members have died on the job. All who died were fiercely loyal to the principle of public service, aware that the public had entrusted them with providing the basic necessity of electricity. When I think of the sacrifices that they make, the calculated and unprincipled attacks on our members doing the same work puzzle, sadden, and enrage me.

As I have said before, we know that labor costs are a tiny fraction of overall costs in the industry in which we work. The work we do is difficult and hazardous. And yet they attack us. We can't reason with those leading these attacks. We can and will reason with the public, but the leaders of the attacks on our members will understand only one thing – direct and overwhelming political force. And that is what we will give them.



Lloyd Cargo IV, left, is sworn in to the Advisory Council by Local 1245 President Mike Davis on Oct. 29. He takes the Sacramento-area seat being vacated by Lou Mennel. A PG&E Gas Service Rep, Cargo has been active in the local's leadership development program and was one of eight young members who campaigned against anti-union legislation in Wisconsin earlier this year. He is 29.



IBEW women attending the Coalition of Labor Union Women conference in Orlando, FL in September were, from left: Donna Ambeau, Tai Jonas, Anna Bayless-Martinez, Cecelia De La Torre, Jennifer Gray, Diana Limon (Local 11, Los Angeles CA), Jane Templin (Local 11), Jennifer Thornburg (Local 11), Thelma Dixon. Front Right: Diane Tatu, Beverly Curphey (Local 728, West Palm Beach, FL), Karen O'Donnell (Local 103, Dorchester MA). All are Local 1245 members unless noted otherwise.

## CALENDAR

- Nov 9-10:** PG&E Stewards Training, Clovis
- Nov 12:** Weiss/Miles Benefit Golf, Paradise
- Nov 12:** IBEW Clays Shoot, Dunnigan
- Nov 15-16:** PG&E Stewards Training, Chico
- Nov 28-29:** PG&E Stewards Training, Petaluma
- Nov 30/ Dec. 1:** Unit Officer Training, Vacaville
- Dec 7-8:** PG&E Stewards Training, Bakersfield
- Dec 10:** Outside Stewards Training, Vacaville
- Dec 14-15:** PG&E Stewards Training, Stockton

## APPOINTMENTS

### FRONTIER

**2011 Ballot Committee**  
Michael Figueroa

### ALAMEDA MUNICIPAL POWER

**2011 Bargaining Committee**  
Fernando Morales, Mark Regan

### SOUTH FEATHER WATER AND POWER

**2011 Bargaining Committee**  
Henry Reeson

### PORT OF OAKLAND

**2011 Bargaining Committee**  
Anjulant "Dion" Bailey  
David Cuthbertson, Kenneth Taylor  
Curtis Wilkins

### CITY OF ROSEVILLE

**2011 Bargaining Committee**  
Jeff Beaubier  
Brian Boyd  
Cheril Fowler  
Jeff Holt  
Mitch Prather  
Rick Thompson

### MT. WHEELER POWER

**2011 Bargaining Committee**  
Mitch McVicars, Christina Sawyer  
Mike Venturino

### WELLS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**2011 Bargaining Committee**  
Jacob Manning, Aaron Ruesch

### IBEW LOCAL 1245

**Hold the Pull Advisory Committee**  
Thomas Burks, John Kent  
Richard Lane, Dane Moore  
Bob Springer

### CONFERENCES

**2011 Inter-Union Gas Conference**  
Bryan Carroll, Ron Fort, Keith Hopp  
Joe Joaquim, Darin Perna  
Brad Schuback, Mike Scafani  
Adam Weber

**AFL-CIO Next-Up Young Workers Summit**  
Jennifer Gray

## Unit Updates

Unit 3514, Plumas Sierra, is changing the night and the monthly rotation of its meetings to avoid recent scheduling problems with the Vinton Grange. Going forward, the meetings will be held at 6 p.m. on the second Thursdays as follows:

- November 10: Vinton Grange
- January 12, 2012: South Lassen Sr. Center (Doyle)
- March 8, 2012: Vinton Grange
- May 10, 2012: South Lassen Sr. Center (Doyle)

*Randy Osborn,  
Business Representative*

Unit 3415, Colusa Power Plant, has a new meeting location: Kim's Country Cafe, 375 Old Hwy 99 in Maxwell. The unit will still meet on the 2nd Tuesday.

*Kit Stice, Business Representative*



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# Is Stavropoulos the Solution?



Business Rep. Darryl Norris discusses gas issues at the meeting with Nick Stavropoulos.



Nick Stavropoulos, new PG&E Executive Vice President for gas.

PG&E has a problem. Could Nick Stavropoulos be the solution?

The problem is the company's beleaguered gas delivery system. Stavropoulos is the guy who has shouldered the responsibility for getting it fixed.

"I have been brought in here to head the change we need to make in the gas business," said Stavropoulos, a plain-talking 30-year industry veteran from the East Coast hired by PG&E in May. "I know it's got to get done and I'm here to see we get it done."

He didn't hide those words in a quick-to-be-forgotten corporate press release. He said it at union headquarters on Sept. 29 to people with very long memories—about two dozen IBEW gas

### Faulty pipe to be replaced

PG&E will replace all 1,231 miles of aging Aldyl-A distribution pipe manufactured before 1973, the type of natural gas pipe that failed in Cupertino in August, destroying a condo.

The massive project will begin in November in Cupertino and Roseville—the site of another recent incident involving the pipe—and in St. Helena.

PG&E has said that replacing all 1,231 miles of its pre-1973 Aldyl-A pipe will take more than three years. The company plans to ask the Public Utilities Commission for a rate increase to cover the cost.

employees, stewards, and bargaining committee members.

The more Stavropoulos talked, the closer they listened.

Stavropoulos had blunt words about the management culture that allowed PG&E's problems to fester. But he cautioned that the company didn't have the resources to fix all of its problems at once.

What PG&E needs, he said, is "a smart, effective integrity management system" that identifies the areas of highest risk to the gas system. That assessment has to be performed, no matter how many inspections it might take.

"If we have to do a thousand inspections, we're going to do a thousand inspections," he said.

Stavropoulos didn't bring a Power Point presentation or a packet of glossy color handouts to the union meeting. To illustrate what he meant by effective integrity management he stepped over to the white board and drew an iceberg, representing the gas work that needed to be done. One approach would be to shave off the work that doesn't fit into the budget and hope that those problems will somehow just drift away.

But problems don't drift away, he said. They sink down and attach to the part of the iceberg that is below the water line, out of sight. You haven't solved the problem, you've simply hidden it.

Effective integrity management, Stavropoulos said, means that problems must be identified and prioritized. If some problems have to be rolled over

into the next year, they must be tracked and dealt with—not forgotten.

"Do the people above you buy into this?" asked one union member, like he couldn't quite believe what he was hearing.

You can't blame union members for being skeptical. They have fresh memories of high-priced consultants who knew more about pinching pennies than fixing gas lines.

Stavropoulos didn't waste a lot of breath trying to convince the union members of his sincerity.

"My words are cheap," he said. "You've got to judge me by my actions."

*Will do*, a lot of faces around the table seemed to be saying.

### A Hands-On Gas Guy

Stavropoulos doesn't come from the world of high finance. His mother, he said, was an IBEW member for 41 years. He studied accounting in college and as a young man was involved in rate cases for the Colonial Gas Co. in Massachusetts. Early on he found that accounting was not a good match for his personality and he moved into operations.

At Boston Gas he was head of gas supply planning for all of New England, and eventually became chief operating officer for National Grid Gas, responsible for gas operations throughout the northeastern United States.

By his own account, he's always been a hands-on guy.

"I love this business," he told the IBEW members in

Vacaville. "I love visiting crews, seeing what's going on."

When he arrived at PG&E he climbed into a gas truck and started looking for the computer. There wasn't one.

"We are 15 years behind the times here" in terms of processes and technology, he said.

No one at the table in Vacaville argued the point. Nor did anyone seem to disagree when he said employees had to be included in the process if the company hoped to identify ways to do things smarter and more efficiently.

At this point, Local 1245 Business

Manager Tom Dalzell jumped into the conversation.

"What we're seeing here is the opposite of Accenture," said Dalzell, referring to the consulting firm that guided PG&E's disastrous experiment with Business Transformation some years back. Dalzell noted that Accenture spent a year designing new work processes without ever talking to the employees who actually perform the work.

"I don't hire consultants," Stavropoulos said. "I don't need to hire management consultants. They pay me to be the manager, why hire somebody else with less experience?"

That declaration was greeted with a burst of applause.

### "A Lot of Changes"

Stavropoulos said the company had committed \$2.2 billion over the next four years to tackle problems in its gas transmission system. He acknowledged there were serious challenges in gas distribution as well, but again cautioned that the problems wouldn't be solved overnight.

"We're going to have Aldyl-A pipe for a long time," he said, referring to a type of plastic pipe that is prone to cracking and was implicated in a recent gas explosion at a residence in Cupertino. "We have to understand the performance characteristics of Aldyl-A where we have it. Some Aldyl-A may be performing better than others—we have to prioritize."

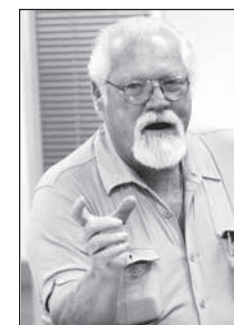
He said that employees were "going to see a lot of changes when it comes to inspection of pipe."

Even with an aggressive program of inspection and replacement, it is not possible to prevent all gas leaks. How effectively a utility responds is critical. Gas leaks frighten customers, and a slow response angers them.

Stavropoulos said his goal was to have 99% of all gas leaks responded to within an hour.

If Stavropoulos intended to engage the union members in a conversation,

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Jim Findley sounded an early warning about the dangers of Aldyl-A pipe at PG&E Shareholder meetings in recent years.

Around the table with Nick Stavropoulos.





Advisory Council member Peggy Daniel raises an issue with Stavropoulos.

he succeeded. Several business representatives and shop stewards jumped in with suggestions on how processes could be improved or issues that needed addressing. Stavropoulos listened carefully, occasionally scribbling a note to himself.

### Elephant in the Room

The elephant in the room when it comes to service safety and reliability is staffing. It takes boots on the ground to replace aging infrastructure and to respond to gas leaks in a timely fashion. Although there has been a recent uptick in hiring, PG&E's gas workforce is only about half the size it was 25 years ago.

Efficiency measures can only take you so far if you don't have the bodies to get the work done.

Stavropoulos didn't specify what size workforce would be needed to carry out

*"I don't need to hire management consultants. They pay me to be the manager, why hire somebody else with less experience?"*

his ambitious program to improve the safety and reliability of PG&E's gas service. But he acknowledged that 50% of PG&E's gas distribution workers will become eligible for retirement over the next five years. Of all the challenges PG&E faces in providing safe and reliable gas service, this demographic time bomb may be the biggest of all.

In a news release last May announcing that it was hiring Stavropoulos, PG&E said, "Nick is being given the authority and access to company resources to achieve our turnaround goals."

Will that "authority and access to company resources" include the authority to beef up PG&E's shrunken workforce?

The answer to that question will probably be the most important factor in determining whether Nick Stavropoulos can truly "head the change" that PG&E needs to make.

**Join the Local 1245 Solidarity Action Network:**  
[www.ibew1245.com/solidarity\\_action.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/solidarity_action.html)

## UNITY IS POWER

# CalPine workers launch organizing drive

Employees of CalPine working at the Geysers are working to organize a union and have asked IBEW Local 1245 for assistance. Learn the rea-

sons why many CalPine workers want a union, and why they think IBEW Local 1245 will give them a voice in the workplace.

Many Local 1245 units at upcoming meetings will be considering motions of support for the CalPine organizing effort.

[www.calpineworkerstogether.com](http://www.calpineworkerstogether.com)



Veronica Rivera, right, reports to the Local 1245 staff meeting on Oct. 3 about her recent participation in the AFL-CIO NextUp young workers conference in Minneapolis, MN. Rivera is a customer service representative at NV Energy. Clearly enjoying her report are Senior Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier and Business Manager Tom Dalzell.

# New PG&E chief visits IBEW

Anthony Earley showed up at IBEW Local 1245 headquarters in Vacaville on Sept. 15, two days after starting his new job as President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of the Board at Pacific Gas & Electric.

As far as anyone could remember, it was the first time that a PG&E chairman has visited union headquarters. Members of the Local 1245 bargaining committee, who've been in Vacaville regularly this month for contract negotiations with PG&E, were encouraged by what Earley had to say.

"I like the fact that he came here and was talking to us directly," said Ken Amaral, a member of the union's bargaining committee. Amaral said he told Earley that "I'm not wearing my PG&E garb proudly like I used to," and that it "had become impossible to defend management decisions" to the public.

According to those present, Earley said he believed PG&E needed to get "back to basics." This was welcome news to the union members, who in past years have watched the company pursue expensive reorganization efforts while failing to address problems of aging infrastructure and a shrinking workforce.

"That's what we've been screaming about the past 10 years," said Amaral, a Senior Hydro Clerk. "I told him over the last 10 years I've personally gone from being proud of being a PG&E employee to hiding it."

Donna Ambeau, a Senior Service Rep II and member of the Local 1245 benefits bargaining committee, was pleased that Earley had come to the union hall just two days after starting the job.

"He said you have to find out from the people doing the work what needs to be changed," Ambeau said. "He said the right things."

"He came across as fairly personable, didn't seem like a stuffed shirt," said Casey Barker, a GC Lineman and bargaining committee member.

"If any questions arose, he was happy to answer them," Barker said. "I just hope the walk is as good as the talk."

"Our group was really receptive to what he had to say," said Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell.

"Our members at PG&E are hungry for top leadership with operational experience – someone whose priority is to restore customer confidence by working for operational excellence. It's a big challenge, but listening to Tony



Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell, left, welcomes PG&E Chairman and CEO Anthony Earley to union headquarters in Vacaville.

Photo by Bob Dean

Earley gives me hope that PG&E may be ready to turn that corner," Dalzell said.

Earley was an executive at the Detroit-based utility DTE from 1994 to 2010, serving as its CEO since 1998.

"He said he didn't want to make big drastic changes. He felt that doing things from the ground up was the way to go" in his new job at PG&E, said Amaral.

"He firmly believes you don't shoot the messenger. He realizes he's going to have to get information from his directors all the way down to the GC helper, and it's not all going to be good. And he's going to have to fix it."

In an earlier press release Earley said it would be "a great privilege to help an iconic company recover from its recent challenges and reclaim its standing as the utility others admire and aspire to follow."

## Peer-to-peer gas safety campaign

# Why are we hurting ourselves?

By Eric Wolfe

“At our local, we’ve had 14 fatalities in the last seven years. Why are we hurting ourselves, why are we hurting each other?”

Jerry DeBaca, a PG&E Gas Crew Lead Welder, posed that question during a trial run of Local 1245’s new peer-to-peer gas safety program at Weakley Hall in Vacaville on Oct. 7. It’s a sobering question, not easily shrugged off or turned into a breakroom joke.

Five days after DeBaca spoke these words, two more Local 1245 members were dead, drowned when their PG&E vehicle went out of control and plunged into the Rock Creek Reservoir on the Feather River.

To many it seems that the rate of deaths and serious injuries among IBEW members has also gone out of control. How do we regain control? As



challenge our view of safety, and to place responsibility for safety where it belongs—with us and our co-workers,” said Earnest Pena, a PG&E Gas Service Rep in Livermore. “We will work together on how to get there..We need to identify and control the pressures that make us work unsafe.”

Control the Pressure is more than just a name for the campaign. It is an

*“The group of guys I work with, they’re like my family. I spend more time with them than I do with my family. I want to make sure they go home safe.” — Adam Weber*

DeBaca asks, how do we stop hurting ourselves, hurting each other?

Local 1245 gas workers have taken a first important step by organizing a peer-to-peer safety campaign they call “Control the Pressure.”

“ ‘Control the Pressure’ is a Local 1245 safety initiative that asks all of us to

### Gas Safety Advisory Committee

The Local 1245 members who worked on creating the “Control the Pressure” program have been appointed to a newly-formed Gas Safety Advisory Committee. The current members are: Joseph Rapozo, Pat Fryer, Aaron Leatherman, Ernest D. Pena, Jerry DeBaca, Keith Hopp, Jim Findley and David Stout, all from PG&E; and Adam Weber and Ryan Morris from NV Energy.

attitude that says there’s something more important than getting the job done—and that is getting the job done safely. It is also a warning that can be called out on the job when somebody sees something that isn’t right.

“ ‘Control the Pressure’ stops work until everybody is brought up to speed,” said Jim Findley, a PG&E Measurement and Control Mechanic.

### Rule-Breaking Kills

The question of rules and procedures is a big one. We all know the saying, rules are made to be broken. We know that rule-breaking has been often celebrated in Hollywood movies. And we know that rules are sometimes ignored at the job-site—due to an overly-macho attitude or from pressure to get the job done.

But what we’ve learned in recent years is that rule-breaking kills.

One important rule is the use of Personal Protective Equipment.



Joseph Rapozo, a PG&E Gas Service Rep from Chico, discusses the IBEW Code of Excellence at the Oct. 7 trial run of the “Control the Pressure” program. Behind him is another members of the newly-organized Gas Safety Advisory Committee, Jim Findley.

“Appropriate PPE is always necessary, never an option,” said Aaron Leatherman, a Gas Crew Lead Welder in Modesto. “The PPE is there for a reason, it does protect you. People have been injured in the past that haven’t been using it—and if they had been using it they wouldn’t have been hurt.”

“The company puts in procedures that work,” said Adam Weber, a Gas Heavy Crew Foreman at NV Energy. “It’s our responsibility to follow those procedures.”

But following procedures alone doesn’t guarantee safety.

“At any time, (even if) you’re following procedures, something can go wrong. That’s why we’re always there to watch out for one another,” said Weber. “The group of guys I work with, they’re like my family. I spend more time with them than I do with my family. I want to

make sure they go home safe.”

What can go wrong if you’re following all the required procedures? What can go wrong are all the thousands of things that make a human being so complicated. Pat Fryer, a PG&E Gas Service Rep in the North Bay, calls these “state of mind” issues.

“You can’t find any procedures or rules on how to deal with those. Yet it affects our safety and what we do.” (See “State of Mind” on this page)

### Tuning Back In

These Local 1245 gas professionals are blunt. There’s no way to sugar coat death and dismemberment, especially when it’s preventable death or dismemberment. They acknowledge that the current approach to safety is not adequate.

“A lot of times we go to these safety  
continued on page 7



Nevadans attending the trial run of the Control the Pressure safety program on Oct. 7 were welcomed by Business Manager Tom Dalzell. From the left: Dalzell, Business Rep Pat Waite, Adam Weber, John Owens, Ryan Morris, Teri Reseck, Steve Bianco and Nanette Quitt.

### State of Mind

Pat Fryer, a PG&E Gas Service Rep, put a personal spin on ways to “Control the Pressure” during the Oct. 7 trial run at Weakley Hall.

From my own experience, there might be something going on at home. I might come to work and not be totally focused because of my mindset. Hopefully I can overcome it, but there’s times you or your partner may be having difficulty with that.

For me at home I can control the pressure pretty easy. Grab the remote control to the 15-inch. If the Niners win, my blood pressure goes down.

You can marry a smiling supportive spouse, but I wouldn’t know. (Laughter)

At work it’s more difficult to control. I’m lucky I get to go to people’s houses and meet them. A lot of times they’re

near me when I’m working so I’m able to strike up a conversation while I’m accomplishing my job. It doesn’t distract me and I often learn something very interesting about the customers.

Sometimes I’m in a beautiful garden and I’m working on their meter. And I take the time to actually smell the rose.

There’s different ways guys deal with stuff. When you take a break some guys like to walk away from the truck and sit down and drink a Gatorade or something and just forget about work. Other guys like to turn the radio on.

But we all deal with pressure in different ways, and we want to be aware of those pressures and make sure we are always focused on safety and we’re not distracted.

## Safety, from page 6

meetings we have. We've heard them over and over again and we tune them out. It's not getting through to a lot of the people," said Pena, the Livermore Gas Service Rep.

The goal of the Control the Pressure initiative is to get IBEW members to tune back in.

"None of this is new to anybody," said Business Rep. Dean Gurke, who is coor-

### Safety stewards

Safety stewards are empowered to deal only with safety-related issues. Any issues concerning possible violations of the union contract should be taken up with a regular steward or your business representative.

inating the union's peer-to-peer safety programs. "The new concept here is really take a look within, and take a look at your brothers and take care of your brothers around you."

The union has begun to appoint safety stewards to help raise awareness in the field. What does that look like?

"First and foremost, it is your responsibility as union members, as crew members, or if you're in gas service working by yourself, if you see something out there, if you see somebody that's not working safe, talk to them," said Gurke.

"Try to solve that in the crew situation, or where you gather as gas servicemen, if you know things are going on speak up about it, speak to that individual. Talk to them about why they're working that way."

The union hopes that this peer-to-peer contact "will help control the pressures we've talked about," and that most problems can be resolved by the crews themselves, said Gurke. If someone is having difficulty understanding the message, safety stewards will be available as an additional resource. The goal is not to get on someone's case—the

goal is to educate about the importance of working safely. The newly-organized Gas Safety Advisory Committee will also be available to help.

"We don't have all the answers yet, we're just starting," Gurke acknowledged. "But we're trying to come up with procedures, methods of talking with people, methods to move forward, and

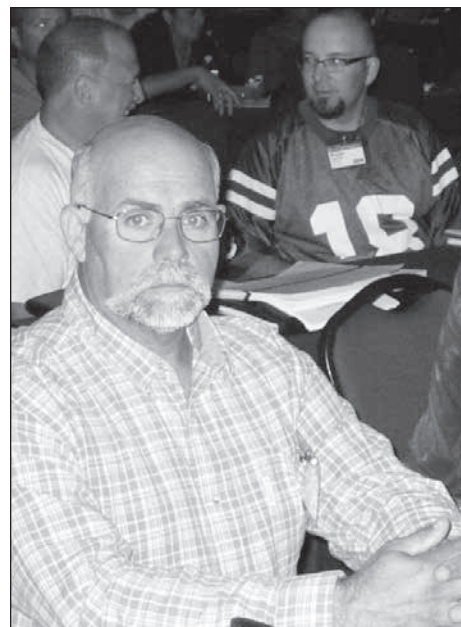
## Safe Pipelines, Safe Communities

Local 1245 had something unique to contribute to the 2011 Inter-Union Gas Conference, held Oct. 3-6 in Reno, NV.

Among the conference participants were Local 1245 members Brad Schuback, one of the PG&E employees recognized for heroic behavior in responding to the deadly San Bruno explosion of 2010, and Local 1245 Business Representative Debbie Mazzanti, who served on the National Transportation Safety Board panel that investigated that explosion. The conference theme was "Safe Pipelines, Safe Communities."

Schuback, a Measurement and Control Mechanic, and Mazzanti led the panel discussion on "Gas Explosions and Pipeline Safety, along with PG&E Gas Crew Foreman Mike Scafani, PG&E Work and Resource Coordinator Keith Hopp, and PG&E Gas Mechanic Joe Joaquim. Also participating was Mark

McDonald of the New England Gas Workers Alliance.



Keith Hopp, in front, at the Inter-Union Gas Conference. Behind him are Mike Scafani and Bryan Carroll. All are from PG&E.



IBEW Local 1245 members at Frontier were scheduled to vote on the company's Last, Best and Final offer on Nov. 3, just as the Utility Reporter was going to press. Check [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com) for the latest information. The union's bargaining committee consists of (from left) Tom Greer, Bryan Coleman, Business Rep. Sheila Lawton, Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas, Kelly Willis, Bill Bryan, and Eric Tanaka.

## In memoriam Carlos Amezcua

Carlos Amezcua, a line clearance tree trimmer foreman with Davey Tree, died in an on-the-job accident Sept. 28.

Amezcua was part of a two-man bucket crew working on Cortez Road in Pebble Beach, CA. The power lines were running alongside the property where the work was being done.

Brother Amezcua, 46, was flying the bucket approximately 35 feet in the air. He was performing work on the corner of the property, and reaching to make the cut when all of a sudden the bucket tilted and ejected him to the ground. He apparently was not wearing the safety harness, which was in the bucket.

"Carlos was a very hard worker, always had a good attitude, and was well liked," said Local 1245 Business Representative Junior Ornelas. "Carlos was a model union member. He will surely be missed."

Local 1245 extends its condolences to the family, friends and co-workers of Brother Carlos Amezcua.

## Falleció Carlos Amezcua, Podador De Árboles, a Consecuencia de un Accidente

Carlos Amezcua, capataz podador de árboles para el despeje de líneas con Davey Tree, falleció el 28 de septiembre como consecuencia de un accidente de trabajo.

Amezcua formaba parte de una cuadrilla de una cubeta de dos personas que realizaban trabajos en Cortez Road en Pebble Beach, California. Las líneas de electricidad se encuentran a un lado de los terrenos donde se ejecutaba el trabajo.

El Compañero Amezcua, de 46 años de edad, se encontraba operando la cubeta a una altura de aproximadamente 35 pies (10 metros). Estaba trabajando en la esquina de la propiedad, intentando alcanzar las ramas para realizar el corte cuando de repente la cubeta se inclinó y fue arrojado al suelo. Aparentemente no estaba utilizando el arnés de seguridad que se encontraba dentro de la cubeta.

"Carlos era un trabajador muy dedicado, siempre tenía una actitud positiva y era muy apreciado por sus compañeros," comentó el Representante de Negocios del Local 1245 Junior Ornelas. "Carlos era un miembro modelo del sindicato. Sin duda lo vamos a extrañar."

El Local 1245 extiende sus condolencias a la familia, amigos y compañeros de trabajo del Compañero Carlos Amezcua.

## In memoriam Ryan Miles, Aaron Weiss

Two Pacific Gas & Electric linemen were killed in a vehicle accident on Oct. 13, 2011 when the PG&E truck they were in went into the river in the Feather River canyon area.

Ryan Miles, 29, was a GC lineman and a seven-year IBEW member. Miles was married just four months ago.

Aaron Weiss, 31, was a five-year IBEW member. His wife Lisa is expecting a baby boy in three weeks.

A Letter Agreement between IBEW and PG&E permits employees to sell vacation and use the proceeds to benefit the families of Miles and Weiss.

There were four people in the vehicle at the time it went off the road. Miles and Weiss were in the front seat. The two survivors are 48-year-old Mike Diefenderfer, a 14-year IBEW member, and 25-year-old Loren Bird, a 5-year IBEW member. Both suffered minor injuries.

PG&E is investigating the accident. Local 1245 Business Rep. Brian Kapaun and Local 1245 members Casey Barker and Tyler Davidson are assisting. CalOSHA is expected to investigate as well.

Local 1245 extends its condolences to the family, friends and co-workers of these young IBEW brothers.

# Young workers pump new blood into labor movement

By Graciela Nunez

I walked through the airport up to a group of young people waiting by the Super Shuttle. As I got closer, I saw familiar faces and others, not so familiar, that seemed friendly and eager. Everyone was smiling. We stood in a circle and introduce ourselves...we all came from different places: PG&E Clerical, Physical, and DCP, Sacramento Regional Transit, Davey Tree, NV Energy, Modesto Irrigation District and Outside Line but there's one thing that bonded us together, we're all IBEW 1245.



U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, a staunch defender of workers' rights, was introduced at the NextUp conference by Local 1245 member Lorenzo Arciniega

From the moment we checked in to our hotel, it was "go" time. The entire delegation entered the plenary session. Local 1245 sat in the center, six rows back from the podium—a perfect view. After a few speakers came up, it was time for our very own Lorenzo Arciniega, a member of the Young Workers Advisory Council, to come up and present one of the keynote speakers. We stood in the audience, in unison, and cheered, so very proud to be IBEW 1245. Lorenzo spoke with such confidence and introduced a very influential Hispanic woman, Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis.

Secretary Solis spoke on many issues that affect young workers, including the American Jobs Act. At the conclusion of her speech, she asked Lorenzo to join her on stage and she raised his arm in a

victory salute like at the end of a boxing match.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Schuler, a former executive assistant to IBEW President Ed Hill, also addressed the delegation. After a few more speakers, we moved to the Welcome Reception, where we shook hands and gave hugs to our brothers and sisters from other unions that we'd met in the past and gained new brothers and sisters. As that concluded, we went out for a night in Minneapolis, a city that was new to many of us.

The next day, it was back to business. Plenary sessions, breakout sessions, working lunch, workshops...all of this from 9 AM to 3 PM. The one I enjoyed the most, was called Power Analysis: Know Your Targets. It took me back to our PG&E Clerical negotiations when Eileen brought up all these different groups that we needed to target to make an impact with PG&E when "two tier" and contracting were proposed. At that moment I realized there is so much that we as young workers have to learn. In the breakout session, we talked about the Koch brothers and all the organizations and businesses that they were tied to. What was their weakness and what was our strength?

Later that evening, we attended a function for Californians in the AFL-CIO. There we met many people from different local unions. It made me wonder why this hadn't happen before, long before, and why not in California. I later pulled up a map of just IBEW in California and found myself amazed and surprised at how many locals exist around us.

Saturday morning there was an IBEW caucus. Unfortunately, President Hill was unable to attend. In his absence, Executive Assistant Sherilyn Wright attended. We talked about the combined Resolutions 14 and 61 at the recent IBEW convention that showed support



Charley Souders, Local 1245's youngest business representative, participates in a workshop at the NextUp conference hosted by the AFL-CIO in Minneapolis.

for young workers. (See Page 2.) The adoption of this combined resolution reaffirmed the International's commitment to develop young workers in IBEW.

Executive Assistant Wright thanked Local 1245 for submitting Resolution 61. The resolution stated that IBEW would have a separate conference for IBEW young workers starting in 2012, either before or after the yearly NextUp! Young Workers Summit. After several long days, we arrived at the last day of the

summit. Several people spoke including AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. He spoke on the turmoil affecting the youth and the future. Our group slowly started to vanish as it was time to catch our flights and we all took with us the knowledge gained and a list of new people who share the same goal, to keep the labor movement going!

*Graciela Nunez currently serves on the IBEW Local 1245 PG&E Benefits Bargaining Committee.*

## Reflections on NextUp

By Estanislao Hurtado

I would like to thank my Local 1245 for giving me the opportunity of attending the Minneapolis 2011 "Next Up Youth Summit."

This is my first time attending a conference. I don't have much experience, but I always try to be involved and participate in all the things that my Local 1245 would like me to be in. Also, I like to help our brothers and sisters from other unions and our Local 1245, especially tree trimmers.

This meeting helped me, and taught me that I don't need to be afraid of anything, that I need to speak up and can fight for all of our

union and nonunion brothers and sisters. I believe the labor movement is a social change movement for good jobs, shared prosperity, equality and justice for all people. I also think that if we build connections between labor and community groups and mobilize to take direct action on issues like education, civil rights and worker justice, we can build a stronger and more diverse labor movement.

Thank you again for considering me. I'm excited to have been part of this conference, and I hope I can be part of the next event.

*Estanislao Hurtado is a Local 1245 member working for Davey Tree.*



Delegates to the NextUp Young Worker Summit meet with Local 1245 organizers and Business Manager Tom Dalzell in Vacaville following the conference. Kneeling, from left, are: Estanislao "Tanny" Hurtado, Donchele Soper, Gracie Nunez, Jennifer Gray, Benjamin Contreras. Standing, from left, are: Fred Ross (Organizer), Sarah Stevenson, Steve Gallow, Jeremy Winn, Aaron Baker, Lloyd Cargo IV, Erica Barron, Kirk Haugen, Veronica Rivera, Sam Hicks, Eileen Purcell (Organizer), Pat Patterson, and Business Manager Tom Dalzell. Business Rep. Charley Souders (not pictured) also attended.

See additional report on  
NextUp Youth Summit  
by Jennifer Gray at

[www.ibew1245.com/  
news-Local1245/  
NextUp\\_Gray\\_Report\\_10-7-11.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/news-Local1245/NextUp_Gray_Report_10-7-11.html)

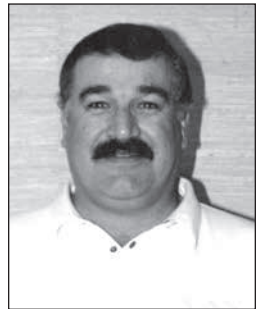


## Bob Choate retires

# “It was great work”

Sometimes it pays to give a guy a break.

Way back when 20-year-old Bob Choate was pumping gas and trying to figure out what to do with his life, a PG&E heavy line driver came in and asked for \$3 worth of gas, promising to pay next time.



Choate in 1992.

“The following week he’d come in and pay the \$3, and again get another \$3 worth of gas on credit,” Choate recalled. “One day he didn’t come in with his \$3 and my boss at the gas station said, ‘Don’t give him any more credit.’”

Days later the PG&E driver showed up again, saying he was broke but needed gas. When Choate hesitated the driver told him he’d bring him an application to work for PG&E if he’d just advance him another \$3 worth of gas.

“I put \$3 in for him and I thought, ‘That’s the last I’ll see of him.’ But he showed up the next day with an application to PG&E.”

Choate turned in the application, got a call to come in and be tested, “and the next thing I know I’m hired on in General Construction.”

It was the beginning of a long ride. Choate hired on as a groundman in Danville in 1965, became an IBEW business representative in 1984, and retired this year as Senior Assistant Business Manager.

“Choate is an expert when it comes to the PG&E line department,” said Sam Tamimi, a retired Senior Assistant Business Manager. “He and Howard Stiefer and Larry Pierce were the gurus—they took care of the linemen, all the technical part.”

It was a role Choate seemed born to.

“I love the work. It was great work. I also liked the guys. You didn’t want to take sick leave off because you thought you might miss something, something new,” Choate said.

He worked for nearly 3 years in General Construction, then came over to Division, working in Richmond, then Walnut Creek, and then Concord, where he was a foreman.

He served on two bargaining committees in the early 1980s—“back when he had black hair,” Tamimi said. Choate’s knowledge of the contract impressed Tamimi and another business rep, Joe Valentino. They became his mentors, and in 1984 he was hired by Business Manager Jack McNally.

“He had a strong work ethic. He had a strong desire to represent members,”

McNally recalled. “He was a very energetic guy and did a lot of work. You’d ask him to do something and he’d get with it.”

### “Out of the Tools”

It wasn’t just Choate’s energy that McNally valued. It was his knowledge.

“He knows the system, he knows the contract, he came out of the tools,” said McNally. “That is a big advantage in understanding our members. He’s been there, done that.”

Choate had another quality that came in handy: his size. Even if you’re six feet, you’re going to be looking up at Bob Choate.

“He was proficient as a baseball player,” said Tamimi. “When Choate came on staff the IBEW baseball team had a much better chance.

“Because the rest of them were the worst players,” Tamimi added. “But don’t print that.”

Size also helped when it came to keeping order at meetings. Disagreements over contract proposals could get heated, but the presence of Choate and “Big Ed” Caruso helped keep the discussion focused, according to Tamimi.

But Choate didn’t need to intimidate anybody to win their respect. He earned it with his knowledge of the job and his knowledge of the contract. He was the union’s resident expert on call-out procedures. In the late 1990s, McNally promoted Choate to assistant business manager, a position he continued to hold under Business Managers Perry Zimmerman and Tom Dalzell.

### Climbed on Lunch Time

Choate’s knowledge of the job came from the job. His first 2-1/2 years at PG&E were as a groundman in General Construction.

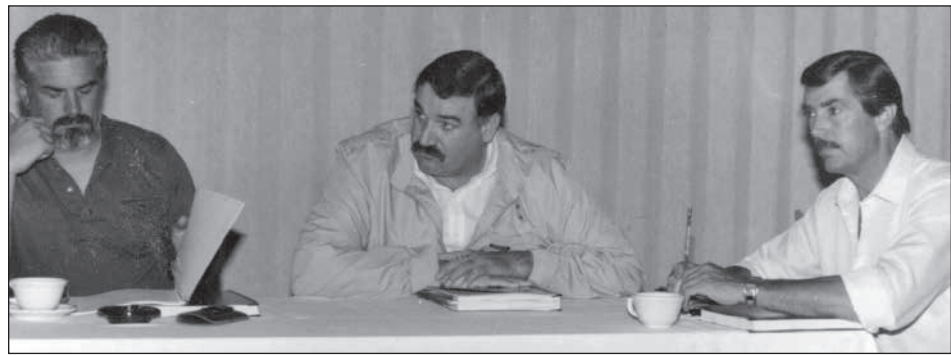
“I never went to apprentice school,” Choate said. “They had no test. I climbed on lunch time, practiced. The more I practiced, the more lunches I didn’t eat.”

He says he learned the trade from the crews he worked with.

“GC, when you hired on in those days, if you were accepted by the crew they took care of you. We had boomer linemen on the crew who did the teaching, then you had the other linemen who’d take care of you—if they liked you. Of course if you weren’t worth a s\*\*t they’d run you off.”

Choate wasn’t afraid of work so they took him under their wing. In particular he credits Jack Baker and Larry Beck with helping him make it as a lineman. And he credits Tamimi and Valentino as being his role models as a business representative.

Members responded to Choate’s style



Bob Choate, left, served on PG&E bargaining committees in the early 1980s. At right is Larry Pierce.

of leadership. “I had good stewards, had good members who supported me, believed in me,” Choate said.

Becoming an assistant business manager in the late 1990s posed a different set of challenges.

“There’s more responsibility—bargaining contracts, more authority to settle certain things.” He had responsibility for the Joint Apprenticeship Training Program, became involved in some arbitrations, handled negotiations at Diablo Canyon, served two stints as the union’s top official in the PG&E grievance procedure.

This year Choate knew it was time to move on. Though his official retirement date was June, at the request of Business Manager Dalzell he stayed on to assist with negotiating the PG&E Physical agreement.

Even as he heads out the door, he’s keeping an eye on new developments at the union.

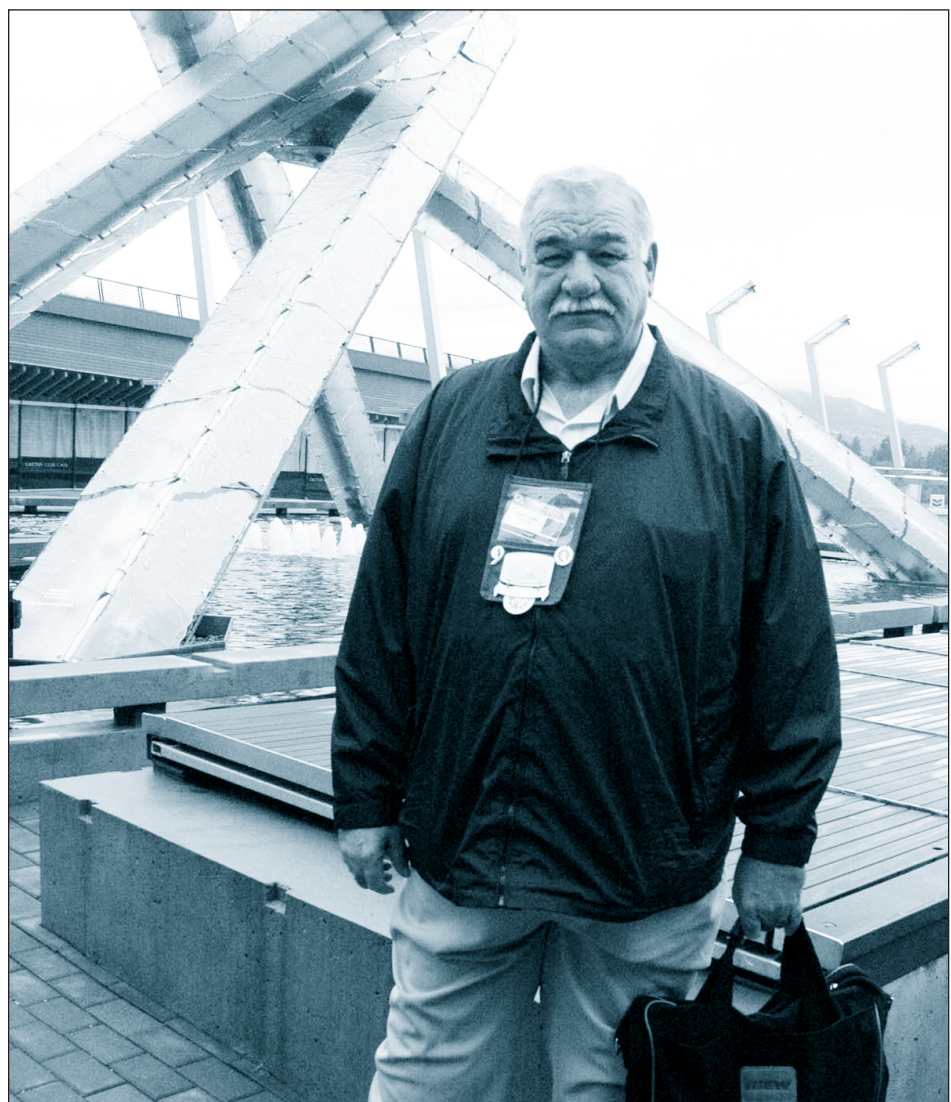
“I like the idea of the youth group. It’s

a good idea, a good thing to do, get ‘em energized,” he said. He hopes the younger members are “in it for the long haul” because it’s demanding work that sometimes crowds your personal life and your family.

He doesn’t speak of regrets, but he does get a little wistful when reflecting on the people who built the union, the old-timers he saw around the union hall when he first came on staff in the mid-1980s.

“I wish I’d had an opportunity to work (for the union) going back to the Weakley days, maybe 15 years earlier. That would have been fantastic to watch how all this unfolded. I think we’re the caretakers of what he produced, we need to take care of it.”

Choate said he never did get back that last \$3 he advanced to the PG&E heavy line driver for gas in 1965. But he’d be the first to say the job application the old line driver gave him has paid off that debt many times over.



Choate was a delegate to the 2011 IBEW International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

# Electric Unit ratifies package

Local 1245 members in the Electric Unit ratified a new agreement with the City of Redding on Sept. 7. The Redding City Council approved the agreement 4-1 at its Sept. 20 meeting.

The agreement comes after four months of negotiations that included state-mediated negotiations on Aug. 25, 2011.

Bargaining had become more contentious as the Laborers union recently negotiated a 4-year agreement that leaves all City of Redding Police (sworn officers) paying their full 9% member share of Cal-PERS (formerly EPMC) effective July 10, 2011. That pact provided one general wage increase of 2% during the term.

Local 1245 was able to reach a mediated table agreement on Aug. 25, which was discussed by Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas with the distribution crews and power plant employees on Aug. 29-30.

The term of the agreement is three years.

General wage increases for most classifications will be 6% on Sept. 18, 2011 and Sept. 18, 2012, and 3% of Sept. 18, 2013. A few classifications will have smaller increases. For a complete list, go to [www.ibew1245.com/news-PublicSector/Redding\\_Electric\\_Pact\\_9-26-11.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/news-PublicSector/Redding_Electric_Pact_9-26-11.html).



## Health and Welfare

Effective Jan. 1, 2013, there is a new base plan (higher deductible, OOPM, Out of Network costs). Current 90/10 premium split remains through term with employees paying the difference to a higher benefit plan.

A new opt-out provision allows employees with alternative coverage to not participate.

## Other Provisions

- Employees pay former 7% EPMC as follows: 3.5% as of first full pay-period following ratification, and full 7% beginning in 2012.
- Pension benefit will be 2%@60 CalPERS for employees hired following ratification.
- A boot allowance of \$300 applies every other year.
- Doubles annual accrual from 80 to 160 hours for Compensatory Time Off.
- Ad-Hoc Negotiations will deal with meal language, and also with classification specifications and wage rates for Power Plant Maintenance Mechanic, I.E. Tech. and Metering Electrician.
- Upon ratification the IBEW agrees to drop complaints with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).



The IBEW 1245 Liberty Energy Negotiating Committee consisted of, from left, Michele Piechocinski, Casey Kelley, Business Representative Pat Waite, Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas, Marty Radekin, and (not pictured) Business Representative Randy Osborn.

# Liberty Energy Agreement for Lake Tahoe properties

The negotiating committees for Local 1245 and Liberty Energy reached a tentative agreement on Sept. 24 for a successor collective bargaining agreement. This set of negotiations commenced Jan. 20, 2011 following Liberty Energy's successful purchase of the properties from NV Energy.

The properties were purchased in 2010 by CalPeco, which later changed its name to Liberty Energy.

After the negotiations were concluded, Local 1245 Business Representative Pat Waite met with the union members, explained the terms of the table agreement and held a vote. The members overwhelmingly ratified the new agreement.

The new multi-year agreement is effective Aug. 16, 2011 through Aug. 15, 2014. The agreement contains many improvements for the former employees of NV Energy. Most notable was the elimination of clerical two-tier wages, and major enhancement to the cash balance pension plan, including the elimination of the former NV Energy two-tier cash balance plan. Some of the highlights are:

- Enhanced working hours provisions.

- Improved overtime provisions.
- Improved overtime meal and out-of-town expense provisions.
- New journeyman rubber glove training and 7.32% incentive.
- Enhanced cash balance defined benefit retirement plan with contributions ranging from 6% to 10% based on employee age and years of service (eliminating the former NV Energy two-tier retirement plan that was based on date of hire).

Based upon comparisons with other local IBEW 1245 signatory employers, the parties negotiated general wage increases. Year one general wage increases were effective retroactive to Aug. 16, 2011. In order to eliminate two-tier clerical wages and create new wage rates based on local utility comparison, the Aug. 16, 2011 general wage increases varied from 2.5% to 13% depending on classification, and a \$1,000 lump sum payment to those classifications that did not receive an increase based on the comparisons. These calculations do not include the 7.32% Rubber Glove incentive for the Journeymen Linemen.

There will be a 1.5% general wage increase in both years two and three.



An IBEW Local 1245 water crew in the City of Redding Maintenance Unit, with the thermometer hitting 100 degrees, worked into the late afternoon on Aug. 19 to make sure that water service was completed to a new home on Deodar Way in Redding. From left: Leadworker Andy Diaz, Water Maintenance Worker Kyle Zanni, Working Foreman and 1245 Shop Steward Dave Guadagni, and Leadworker Mike Hartman. Photo: Ray Thomas.

# Members reject Paradise offer

Local 1245 members at Paradise Irrigation District on Nov. 2 rejected the District's contract offer.

In September, Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas told the District's board about the union's con-

cerns over inequities in wages and pensions, as well as concerns over the proposed cap on District contributions to the medical premium.

The union has asked that negotiations now resume.



Local 1245 members and supporters made their presence felt during a meeting of the Paradise District's Board of Directors on Sept. 21. The bright lime green shirts, a visible sign of solidarity, were hard to miss.

**CURRENT NEWS**

Get bargaining updates at [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

# Plenty of work to go around

Construction work remains strong with several calls remaining open daily. We have work scattered all over our jurisdiction and on multiple properties, from PG&E to NV Energy to WAPA. We have seen some decreases in the number of distribution crews and overtime hours have been decreased for many more. Many crews who were working at least 60 hours a week have had those hours reduced to around 50 hours by the customer. Still there is plenty of work to go around.

With the reduction in the number of distribution crews we are seeing an increase in substation work which should employ a lot of workers through the winter months. Currently we have dispatched on a regular basis into our out-of-class journeyman book and have put several journeyman wiremen to work on some of these substation projects. Three new solar projects near Fresno County are just starting to kick off as well, which will employ some wiremen as well as operators and groundmen. Compliance inspectors have also been an option for many with some overtime being authorized for those workers as well. The biggest issues for those jobs have been the in-lieu-of benefits language which adds the

dollar amount of the fringe benefits to the employees' wages instead of providing the fringe benefits such as health care and retirement. Many workers simply need the health care coverage.

This work outlook continues to look promising going into next year, not only in California but throughout the industry.

We continue to appoint shop stewards to help deal with minor issues on the jobs. We have made 32 new Outside Line Shop Stewards in the last few months to help with the large bubble of construction work we have going. Scott Hudelson is still on staff temporarily and has been visiting all the Outside Line construction crews on a monthly rotation. We have dispatched over 3100 IBEW workers this year—a fair amount of these workers are travelers. Having Scott on staff and in the field really helps acclimate the travelers to our contract, work methods and safety procedures.

We continue to ask people coming in to sign the books or to conduct other business through the dispatch office (including general information calls) to do so between the hours of 7-9 AM or 1-4 PM since our scheduled dispatch hours are from 9-noon. This will allow the dispatchers to get through the day's calls in the time allotted for that work. We have brought in additional temporary help again to assist in the increased traffic to the dispatch office.

## PG&E Solar Project

PG&E held a dedication ceremony on Sept. 29 at the Westside solar site in Fresno County. The ceremony represents the first 50 megawatts (MW) under their 500 MW program. In attendance were the contractors that built all three sites, Congressman Jim Costa, PG&E President Chris Johns, and many others.

The next 50 MW have been awarded to Cupertino Electric and Q-Cells. They are currently doing the pre-site work and will probably begin calling members off the books soon.

## Organizing

We've signed the following contractors in the month of October and organized dozens of new members:

- Patriot General Engineering, OSL agreement
- Global Tower Service, OSL agreement
- Siller Construction, OSL agreement
- Lentz Construction General Engineering Inc, OSL agreement
- Utility Inspections Unlimited, Gas Inspection agreement

## JATC

Mark Rolow spent two days of interviews at the JATC on Oct. 19-20. The JATC continues to try to gauge and control the number of new apprentices based on the amount of work and request of contractors. Thanks for the help, Mark. Anyone interested in getting into the apprenticeship program should monitor the California/Nevada JATC website for when the application process will open again ([www.calnev-jatc.org](http://www.calnev-jatc.org)).

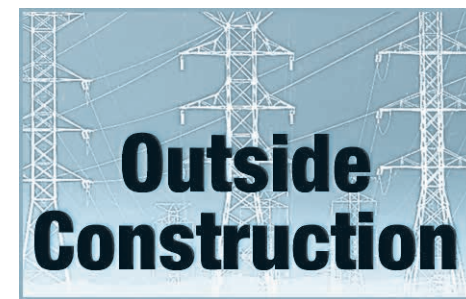
We currently have 289 outside line apprentices registered in our JATC program, with 22 traveling apprentices working in our jurisdiction.

- 103 apprentices working out of Local 1245
- 170 working out of Local 47
- 30 working out of Local 396
- 8 are off of work (2 are on disability - 5 are on leave of absence and 1 is off due to disciplinary reasons)
- 41 apprentices graduated this year to journeyman lineman.
- 102 outside line apprentices this year have been indentured

We have an outside line orientation/climbing class in progress. The class began Oct. 10, with 20 individuals invited to the class.

We have 8 traffic signal maintenance apprentices registered.

- 1 is working for Republic Electric in Local 1245's jurisdiction.
- 7 are working for Republic Electric in



Local 47's jurisdiction.

- 13 traffic signal apprentices have graduated this year.

We have an outside line orientation/climbing class in progress. We invited 25 individuals to the class, 18 actually showed up the first day and we are now down to 15 individuals in the class. Their last day was Oct. 29 and we anticipate all will be quickly sent out to work.

## 2011 Training Schedule

Shop Steward Grievance Training is scheduled for Dec. 10 at Weakley Hall in Vacaville. This training will be limited to 40 members.

First Aid & CPR is held the second Saturday of every month at our Riverside and Sacramento facility.

## Special Events

The International Lineman's Rodeo & Expo was held Oct. 13-15. We planned for 18 apprentices to attend this year's event; in the end 9 apprentices traveled out to Kansas City to participate in the three-day event. We were very fortunate to raise a total of \$20,000 in donations from various signatory employers. We thank them all very much. A video of some of our members competing in the rodeo can be viewed at [www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html).

The First Annual Clay Shoot is scheduled for Nov. 12 in Dunnigan, CA. Same-day walk-ups are welcome to participate.

We have a committee formed for next spring's Local 1245 Gold Cup Soccer Tournament. We should have the date and location soon.

Next year's 16th Annual 9th District Softball Tournament will be hosted by Local 595/Dublin at Big League Dreams Park in Manteca, CA. It will be held Aug. 11-12, 2012. We should be scouting for teams now.

## Injured Workers Fund

The balance as of September 30, 2011 was \$340,106.72. We paid out one claim this month.

## Dispatch

	October 2011	Year to Date
Lineman	240	1650
Apprentice Lineman	21	173
Equipment Man	40	23
Groundman	96	281
Fabricator Tech	34	757
Cable Splicer	0	272
Total	431	3156

Local 1245 members employed by Wellington are reaching the home stretch in the installation of SmartMeters for PG&E. These members were working in San Francisco in October.

Photo by Ron Cochran.

## Out of Work Books

(as of Oct. 26)

Lineman-1: .....	5
Lineman-2: .....	14
Lineman-3: .....	3
Lineman-4: .....	131
Equipment Specialist-1: .....	3
Equipment Specialist-2: .....	1
Equipment Specialist-3: .....	1
Cable Splicer-1: .....	1
Cable Splicer-2: .....	1
Cable Splicer-3: .....	4
Groundman-1: .....	4
Groundman-2: .....	4
Groundman-3: .....	137
Groundman-4: .....	334





A forest of poles in the early morning light.

# Displaying skills, creating bonds

28th International Lineman's Rodeo By Eric Wolfe

Photos by participants and IBEW Local 1245 staff



Local 1245 apprentices along with NV Energy journeymen at a joint dinner with members from Local 47.



During a break in the safety conference, held in conjunction with the rodeo, members of the Local 1245 delegation check their e-mail. From left: Bubba Avery, Elizabeth McInnis, Mike Saner and Ralph Armstrong.



Local 1245 Business Rep. Mike Saner takes his judging role seriously.



Apprentices wait to take the written test in the early hours before the sun comes up.



Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong serves as a judge.



Apprentice Justin Pasero

Local 1245 journeymen and apprentices put their skills on display at the 28th Annual Lineman's Rodeo held Oct. 15 in Bonner Springs, KS.

The Local 1245 delegation—put together by Business Rep. Elizabeth McInnis and Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran—consisted of nine apprentices from Outside Construction, NV Energy, Turlock Irrigation District and Pacific Gas & Electric. The union sponsored journeyman teams from NV Energy and Turlock Irrigation District.

Local 1245 also endorsed rodeo participants sponsored separately by Sacramento Municipal Utility District, which

fielded six journeymen as well as an apprentice.

"The rodeo is an opportunity for our members to show they can perform specific tasks safely and efficiently," said Cochran. "Beyond that, it strengthens our union

by giving young members from our different employers a chance to interact with each other and meet IBEW members from around the country."

SMUD Apprentice Justin Hirshi put in an outstanding performance, finish-

## VIDEO

Watch the video of Local 1245 members competing in the rodeo at:  
[www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html)

ing second out of 210 participants in the Apprentice Hurtman Rescue, fourth out of 210 in Apprentice Pole Climb, and fifth overall among Apprentices from municipal utilities.

Apprentice events, in addition to Hurtman Rescue and Pole Climb, were a written test, a CPR test, and a "mystery event."

Local 1245's journeyman team from Turlock Irrigation District finished 10th out of 172 teams in the journeyman

Hurtman Rescue. A SMUD journeyman team finished 6th out of 172 in the Mystery Event – Energize #2 Primary.

Other journeyman events were Journeyman Pole Climb and Journeyman Mystery Event #2 – Replace Dead End Bells.

SMUD and TID placed 6th and 7th respectively among 35 participating journeyman teams from municipalities.

Local 1245 members serving among the many judges for the competition were Reno Unit Chair Dana Moler, Outside Line Advisory Council member Bubba Avery, Business Rep. Mike Saner and Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong.

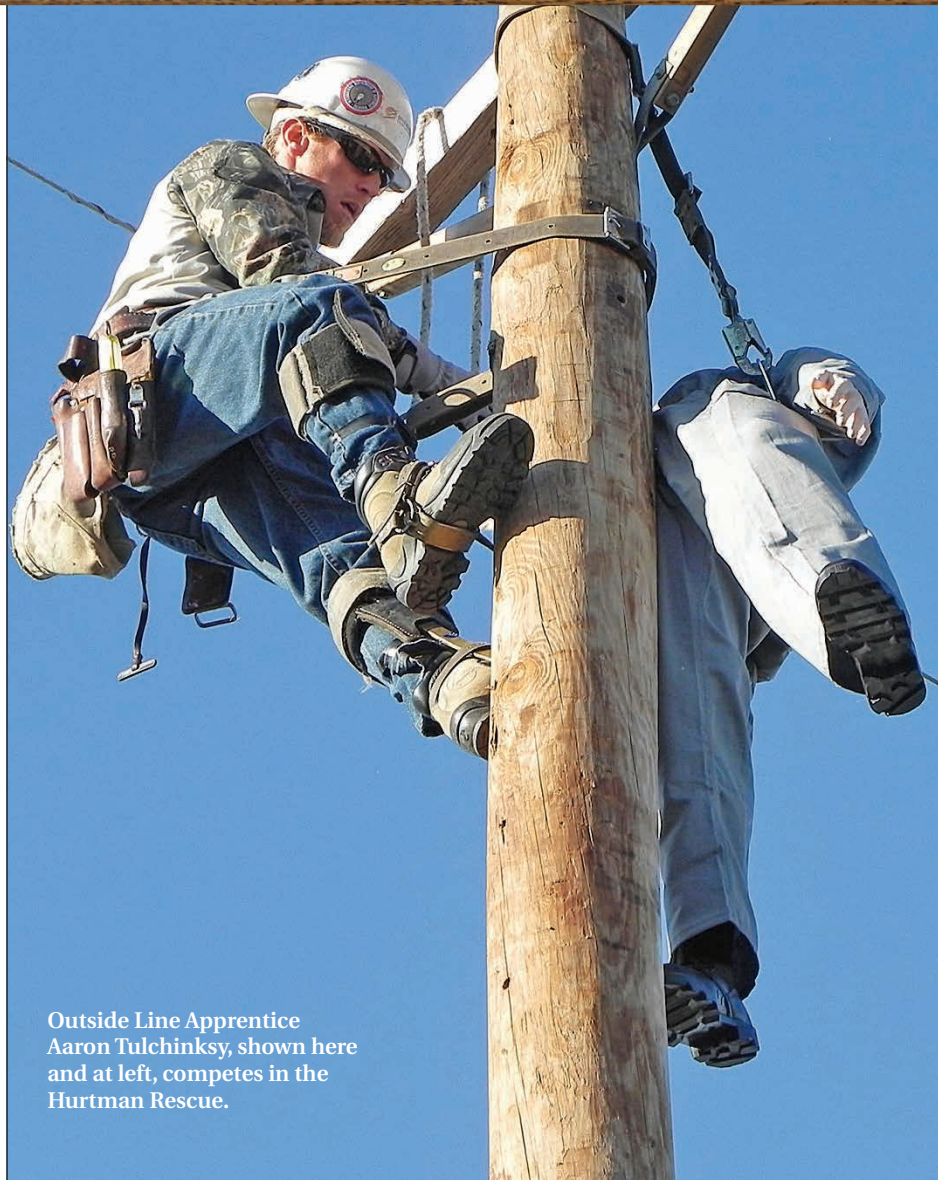
# 2011 ★ BONNER SPRINGS, KANSAS



Turlock Irrigation District team competes in the Insulator Changeout.



Outside Line Apprentice Aaron Tulchinsky, shown here and at left, competes in the Hurtman Rescue.



## Journeyman Participants

### NV Energy

Jason Borsini  
Samson Wilson  
Michael Beckett  
Paul Grunewald

### Turlock Irrigation Dist.

Mike Patterson  
Stephen Verschelden  
Dustin Krieger  
Josh Klikna  
Steve Johnson

### Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Lucas Raley  
Braden Carter  
John Moe  
Cayleb Bowman  
Matt Wilson  
Todd Prangley

## Apprentice Participants

### Outside Line

Steven Eaton  
Samuel Hicks  
Justin Jacobson  
Justin Pasero  
Aaron Tulchinsky

### NV Energy

Chad Laux  
Kyle Hermansen

### PG&E

Derek McNeill

### Turlock Irrigation Dist.

Chad Zumstein

### SMUD

Justin Hirshi

## Judges

Mike Saner  
Robert "Bubba" Avery  
Ralph Armstrong  
Dana Moler

## We thank our sponsors

Par Electrical Contractors  
Cupertino Electric  
Black & Veatch Construction  
CANUS Corporation  
TTR Substations  
Wellington Energy  
NV Energy  
W.A. Chester, LLC  
Henkels & McCoy, Inc.  
Pacheco Utility Line Builders  
Rosendin Electric Inc  
3 Phase Line Construction  
San Francisco Electrical Contractors Association



NV Energy team competes in the Mystery Event.  
From left: Mike Beckett, Jason Borsini and Samson Wilson.



Francisco Garcia works from the bucket to “limb” the lower halves of the trees. Higher branches can only be reached by climbing



Garcia will call out “Headache!” —the standard warning—before dropping a limb to the ground.



Elfego Pacheco has a lot of limbing to do before he can start working on the trunk of the tree.

Line Clearance Tree Trimmers bring down huge white firs

# TWIN MONSTERS

Story and photos by Eric Wolfe



Francisco Garcia limbs one tree from the bucket while Elfego Pacheco climbs the other tree.



afety is the top concern when you’re a line clearance tree trimmer.

It has to be.

You’re working with power saws. You’re working close to power lines. And you’re up in the air.

Sometimes *way* up in the air.

That was the case on Sept. 28 when IBEW tree trimmers employed by Trees, Inc. traveled nearly two hours east of Fresno into the Sierras to take down two white firs.

These twin monsters towered over PG&E power lines passing through a small church camp. Separated by only four feet at the base, the trees stretched over 100 feet into the sky.

“Height obviously is going to be a safety concern,” says General Foreman Brock Navarro, himself a former Local 1245 tree trimmer and union steward. “Company policy is a hundred percent tie-in in ascending or descending a tree.”

When they’re working, the policy is 200% tie-in, meaning there are two lines holding them to the tree: the flip line strapped to their belt as well as their climb line.

“If one was to fail, the other one would catch them,” says Navarro.

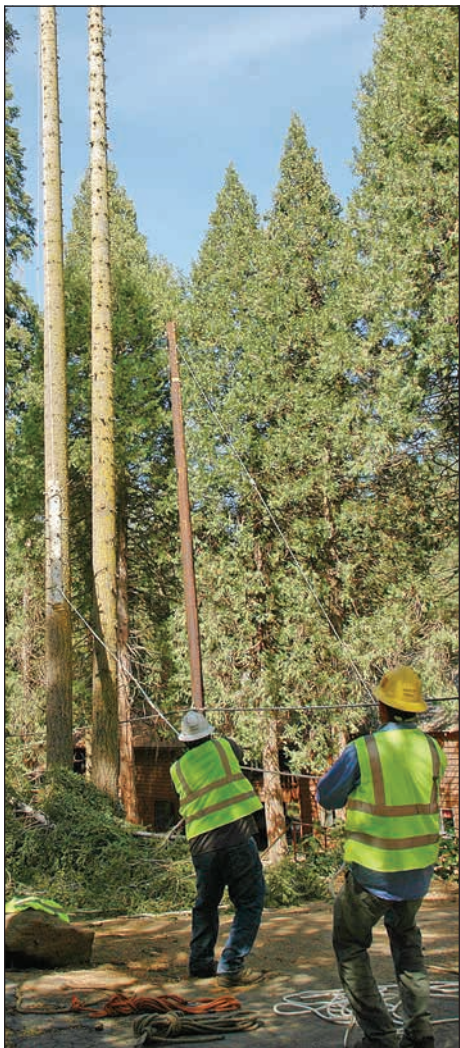
*continued on page 14*



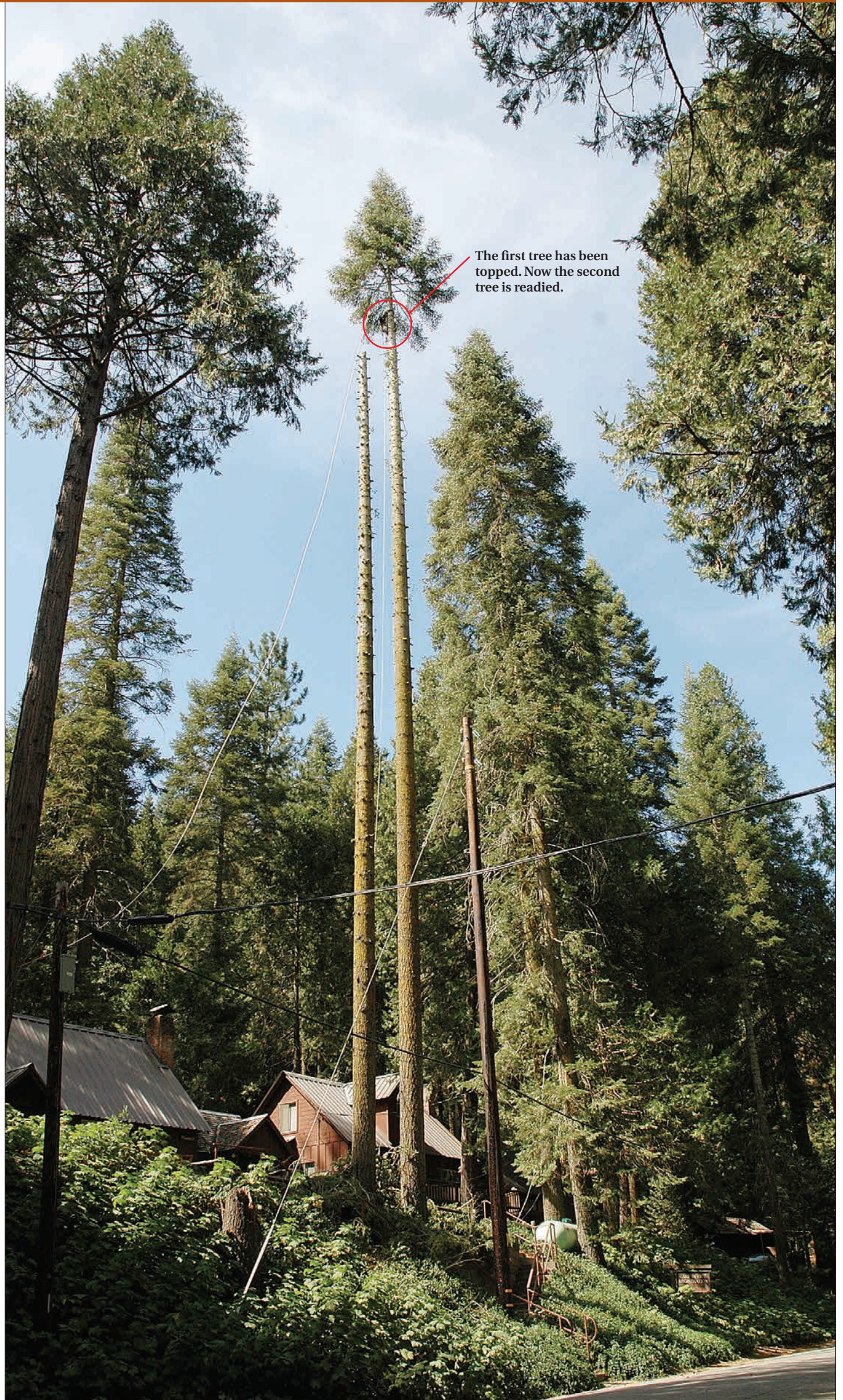
Crews on the ground keep a close eye on their brothers in the trees, sending up tools and securely lowering pieces of the tree. From left: Ruben Castaneda, Jose Macias.



Francisco Garcia. Working at these heights, line clearance tree trimmers must be “tied in” at all times.



Rodney Owens, left, and Ruben Castaneda control the descent of a major chunk of trunk.



The first tree has been topped. Now the second tree is readied.



Francisco Garcia takes off the top of the second tree.

**Twin Monsters** *continued from previous page*

The job begins with a tailboard. The crew discusses what needs to be done, how they're going to do it, and any aspects of the job that pose special challenges or safety concerns. One hazard they won't have to worry about on this particular job is electricity: a PG&E crew came out and de-energized the line just as the tree crews were arriving.

Under other circumstances the crews might just take the whole tree down at once. But not today, not with a road, a concrete wall, a stairway and some rustic buildings close by. Instead, Navarro said, the crews will start by taking the limbs off—"limbing" the tree—and then work their way down the trunk, "chunking out pieces of a manageable length."

Working from a bucket, Local 1245 member Francisco Garcia "limbs" the lower half of the trees. But the upper part is out of the bucket's reach. Elfego Pacheco gears up and starts climbing one tree. When he's done all he can from the bucket, Garcia gears up too and starts up the other tree.

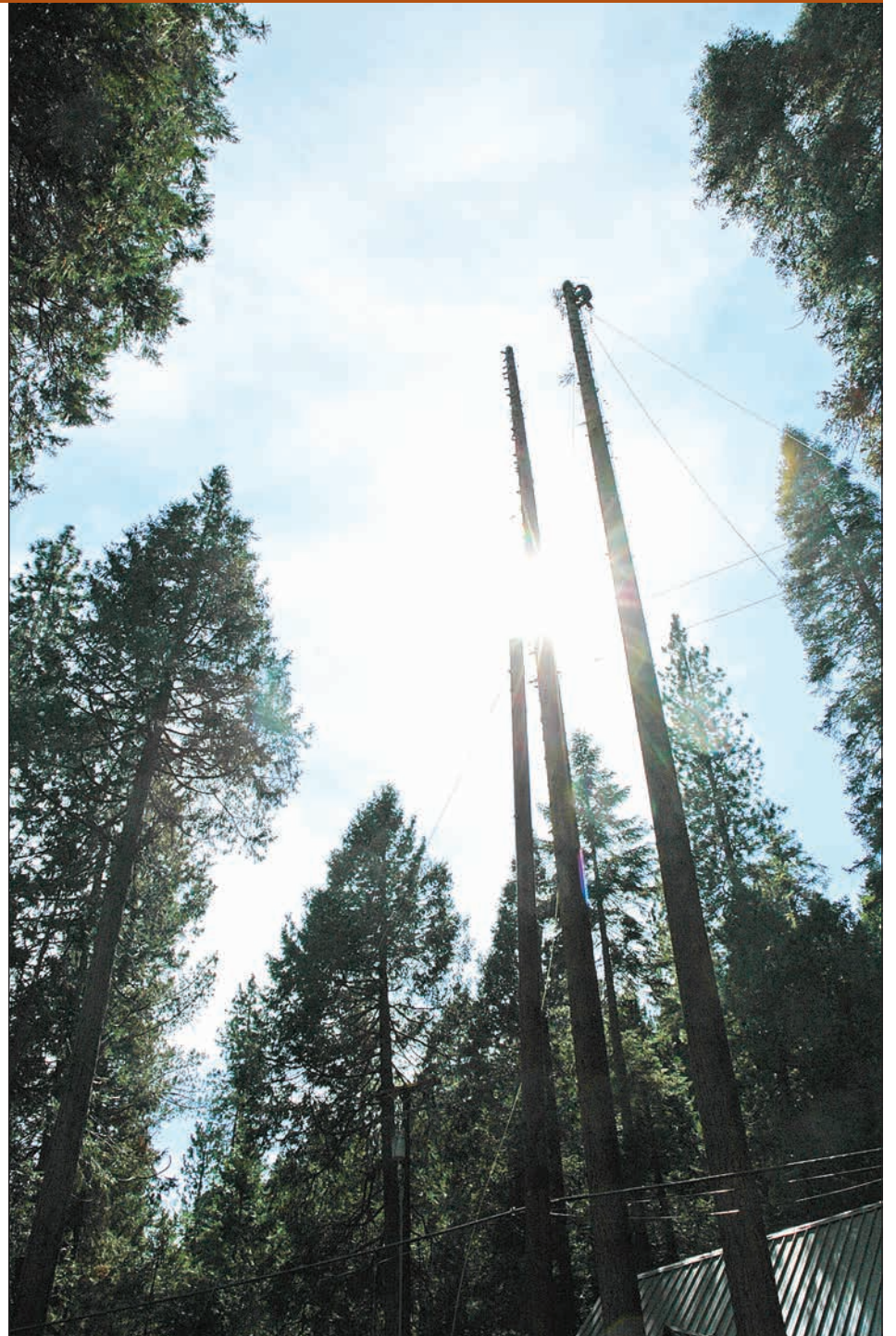
The other four crew members stay busy on the ground, piling up branches as they fall, sending tools up on the tool line, and using ropes to control the descent of sections of trunk. They also play the vital role of *observing*. If anything goes wrong or seems out of place, they



Working on the ground is Ruben Castaneda.

need to figure it out before it causes a problem for the men working overhead.

It's hard work—not for the faint-hearted—but absolutely vital to modern life. Local 1245 line clearance tree trimmers are the guys you can thank for taking out branches and trees—before the branches and trees take out your power.



Francisco Garcia is silhouetted against the sky after taking off the top of the second White Fir.



The Trees, Inc. crew consisted of, standing from left: Ruben Castaneda, Francisco Garcia, Mike Garner, and Rodney Owens, along with Local 1245 Business Rep. Junior Ornelas; kneeling from left: Jose Macias and Elfego Pacheco.



# Tree Trimmers negotiations

We began joint negotiations with all the Asplundh Companies (Asplundh Tree, Utility Tree, Tree Inc.) and Wright on Oct. 19 in Vacaville. We will resume those negotiations in December. There are several company proposals that have to be researched by the negotiating committee.

The Davey Tree Surgery master agreement has been re-negotiated for one year at a 2% general wage increase. There are two Davey stand-alone agreements for work on City of Santa Clara and Turlock Irrigation properties. Both agreements are in negotiations and terminate on Dec. 31, 2011.

We have renegotiated tentative agreements with Mountain Firewood and Family. Both are one-year agreements with a general wage increase of 2%, and both are now in the ratification process.

We are currently working to re-negotiate the agreements with Skyline Tree and Windy Tree services. Both agreements terminate Dec. 31, 2011.

## Grievances

Grievance activity has picked up at an alarming rate at some of the tree companies. The companies are claiming a policy change that affects both employees on the crew. We will be challenging this policy.

Terminations are constant issues with Davey Tree. We are now planning Labor Management Meetings for East Bay and North Bay for November. Due to several matters we had to extend our October meeting date. We will be holding separate Labor Management Meetings for Mission Division, Central Coast, and Los Padres. We are expecting the company will be implementing new safety rules for all Davey Tree activity on PG&E property. We currently have 11 unresolved written grievances and several ongoing issues with local tree company supervisors.

Our Communications Director, Eric Wolfe, came out to Fresno and got footage of our members performing work in the mountains east of Fresno. This was Facility Protect R-3 removals with a line kill. PG&E crews assisted in getting this job completed. The video is now finished. Look for it on the IBEW 1245 website ([www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)).

We will be holding a membership meeting for all members in Jackson.

In most areas there has been an unexpected increase in "Tree Forecast," trees that require trimming. The tree companies operate with the barest minimum of employees so when the forecast increases the companies cancel vacations, mandate overtime and offer Saturday and Sunday work in order to stay on schedule, which is imperative.

The canceling of vacations is hard for tree trimmers to understand. Many of them hunt and observe holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas which happen the same time of the year when the crunch is on regarding the forecasted trees. The tree companies have a range of responses from considering nonrefundable costs, deer tags, out of

## Información Actualizada sobre las Negociaciones

El 19 de octubre en Vacaville, comenzamos las negociaciones conjuntas con las Compañías Asplundh (Asplundh Tree, Utility Tree, Tree Inc.) y Wright. Las negociaciones se reanudarán en diciembre. El comité de negociación debe investigar varias propuestas hechas por la compañía.

El convenio maestro con Davey Tree Surgery ha sido renegociado por un año con un aumento general de salarios de 2%. Existen dos convenios independientes con Davey para los trabajos que se ejecutan en las áreas de la Ciudad de Santa Clara y de Turlock Irrigation.

Ambos convenios están en etapa de negociación y se vencen el 31 de diciembre de 2011.

Hemos renegociado convenios tentativos con Mountain Firewood y Family. Ambos son convenios de un año de duración con un aumento general de salarios de 2%, y ambos convenios están en proceso de ratificación.

Actualmente estamos trabajando para renegociar los convenios con Skyline Tree y Windy Tree Services. Ambos convenios se vencen el 31 de diciembre de 2011.

## Quejas

Las actividades relacionadas con quejas se han incrementado de manera alarmante en algunas de las compañías de poda de árboles. Las compañías alegan un cambio en las normativas que afectan a ambos empleados de la cuadrilla. Vamos a intentar impugnar esta nueva normativa.

Los despidos son temas constantes con Davey Tree. Estamos preparando Reuniones de Gerencia y Trabajadores para East Bay y North Bay en noviembre. Por varias razones tuvimos que aplazar la fecha de nuestra reunión de octubre. Tendremos reuniones separadas de Gerencia y Trabajadores para la División Mission, Central Coast, y Los Padres. Estamos a la expectativa de las nuevas normas de seguridad que la compañía implementará para todas las actividades Davey Tree en las instalaciones de PG&E. Actualmente tenemos 11 casos de quejas escritas sin resolver y varios problemas pendientes con supervisores de las com-

state hunting licenses, to little—if any—consideration.

Temporary Remote Yards have also caused considerable heartache with added cost of commuting and the time spent commuting. The more rural or mountainous, the more dislike for the temporary yards. This is made worse when a resident group is mandated to a remote yard and then people from another area come in and do the work in the home yard area. This practice is very

demoralizing.

On a sad note, the funeral for our Brother Carlos Amezcua, Davey Tree Surgery, took place in Salinas, CA on Oct. 4. This was the second funeral for a Davey employee held in the same church in the last five years.

We are developing a "Hold the Pull" peer-to-peer safety program geared for Line Clearance Tree Trimmers. Business Rep. Dean Gurke is facilitating this project.

caza y celebran festividades como el Día de Acción de Gracias y Navidad, que coinciden con la época de crisis del pronóstico de árboles. La respuesta de las compañías de poda de árboles varía desde tomar en consideración gastos no reembolsables, licencias para caza de venados, licencias de caza en otros estados, hasta muy pocas o ninguna consideración.

Los Patios Remotos Temporales también causan problemas debido al costo adicional de movilización y el tiempo que toma llegar hasta el lugar. Mientras más rural o montañoso es el lugar, mayor es el disgusto en cuanto a patios temporales. Esto es aún peor cuando se envía a un grupo local a un patio remoto y luego vienen personas de otra área a ejecutar el trabajo en el área del grupo local. Esto es totalmente desmoralizante.

Tomando un tema triste, el funeral de nuestro Hermano Carlos Amezcua, de Davey Tree Surgery, se llevó a cabo el 4 de octubre en Salinas, CA. Este fue el segundo funeral de un empleado de Davey en la misma iglesia en los últimos cinco años.

Estamos desarrollando un programa de seguridad entre trabajadores "Hold the Pull", (suspender la actividad), dirigido a Podadores de Árboles para el Despeje de Líneas. El Representante de Negocios Dean Gurke está facilitando este proyecto.

pañías locales de poda de árboles.

Nuestro Director de Comunicaciones, Eric Wolfe, se trasladó a Fresno y tomó videos de nuestros miembros ejecutando trabajos en las montañas al este de Fresno. Estos trabajos eran para la Protección de Instalaciones R-3 mediante la remoción con línea muerta. Las cuadrillas de PG&E ofrecieron su asistencia para completar este trabajo. El video está listo y está disponible en la página web de IBEW 1245 ([www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)).

Se llevará a cabo una reunión del sindicato para todos los miembros de Jackson.

En la mayoría de las áreas ha habido un inesperado incremento de "Pronóstico de Árboles", árboles que requieren ser podados. Las compañías de poda de árboles están operando con el mínimo número de empleados posible, de manera que cuando el pronóstico aumenta las compañías cancelan las vacaciones, exigen sobretiempos y ofrecen trabajar sábados y domingos para cumplir con el programa acordado, lo cual es indispensable. Es difícil para los trabajadores entender la cancelación de las vacaciones. Muchos de ellos se van de



See feature story on Trees, Inc, starting on page 14.

## Retirees' Corner

### Look beyond the mask

By William Wallace

As a retiree, I had the opportunity to represent IBEW 1245 at the Alliance for Retired Americans Conference in Washington D.C. It consisted of four days of high energy and new discoveries. I came away with a better understanding of the attacks against unions, working people and seniors. We are in a class war and the rich claim they are winning. American labor is at a decisive crossroads in which it must decide whether it will fight or slowly die.



William Wallace

The conference's objectives were to educate seniors for the continuing fight to preserve Social Security and to stop the erosion of union rights. Improving seniors' communication skills would allow them to get the truth to the media. Facebook, twitter and letters to the editor are effective and inexpensive means to tell personal stories about important senior issues.

Current legislators and candidates are telling us Social Security is a bankrupt ponzi scheme and "they" need to fix it. What's to fix? Social Security, in its 75-year history, has never defaulted on a benefit check, never added a penny to the deficit and at the present time is good to go for 27 years. It has been the single greatest program our government has ever administered and we should be proud of this accomplishment. We cannot allow the false rhetoric claiming Social Security is bankrupt and needs fixing. As voters we must look beyond the mask worn by politicians.

The "Super Committee" is vested to resolve the deficit problem and comments have indicated Social Security could be on the chopping block. Far from contributing to the deficit, Social Security has actually forestalled deficit

problems when legislators borrowed from the Trust Fund. Today, when legislators say Social Security is part of the deficit problem, they are saying they don't want to repay the loan.

Medicare is the world's largest healthcare system. Each year changes are made to the health plans. Information on plan changes were mailed to you Oct 1. To insure you obtain the plan that best meets your needs go to [www.mymedicarematters.org](http://www.mymedicarematters.org) and click on "guide to plan finder" to evaluate next year's plans. Evaluate the plans based on your drug needs and the overall costs.

Labor leaders speaking at the conference emphasized that an active labor movement over many decades brought to the worker: pensions, Social Security, healthcare, Medicare, sick leave, vacations, holidays and most importantly, protection from an arbitrary dismissal.

Over the past few decades the labor movement has been losing ground, but recently a reawakening has occurred. Seniors need to be a part of this renaissance, not spectators. We the "senior" people, have the vote to keep America normal, sane and a great place to work. To accomplish this, we have to vote for people that will help, not hinder the labor movement. To succeed in strengthening the labor movement, we must all run the race and never back off.

Public sector employees are being aggressively attacked across the country. Over 900 pieces of legislation and initiatives are directed at public employee pensions and collective bargaining. "Right to work" laws are being vigorously pursued. "Paycheck Protection" initiatives, tailored after the California version, are being voted on in other states. Wealthy conservative foundations are providing the funding for these union-busting efforts. The rich are using the money gained through tax breaks to destroy the workers' ability to negotiate, not to create jobs!

Seniors have a responsibility to teach union values to younger union members and insure that future generations have that which we were given. We need to emphasize that we are in a fight and soldiers are needed to preserve the union movement. We no longer have the luxury of sitting at home and "leaving the fight to the leaders." We need to state our convictions, stand up for what we believe in and pass on this passion to others.

If we don't fight for our convictions, we are deferring to our grand kids the fight to preserve union benefits. This would be similar to the actions of a former president that deferred his war debt to future generations and shackled our grandchildren with an oppressive debt. So don't defer the fight. It would be "a shame on us" if we were to empty the labor union account by doing nothing.

*William Wallace of San Jose is a member of the IBEW Local 1245 Retiree Club and a former member of the union's Advisory Council.*

## Mike Silva, retiree organizer

Mike Silva, the PG&E retiree who held the Local 1245 Retirees Club together almost single-handedly for many years, died Oct. 30.

Silva, who retired around 1994, stepped up to take leadership of the East Bay Chapter of the Retirees Club when some of the union's aging founders were still among its members, including Don Hardie and Tom Riley. At the time there was only one other chapter—in San Jose—and the club's long-term viability at times seemed in doubt.

But Silva wouldn't let the idea die. He believed that retirees had an important role to play in the life of the union, and he clearly felt that retirees had a responsibility to stand up for their rights in public life.

There were times when the chapter could barely muster a quorum, but Brother Silva soldiered ahead, serving not only as president of the East Bay Chapter but recorder as well. He e-mailed out the minutes of the meeting like clockwork every month, making sure Local 1245 remained aware that retirees were engaged in the life of the union.

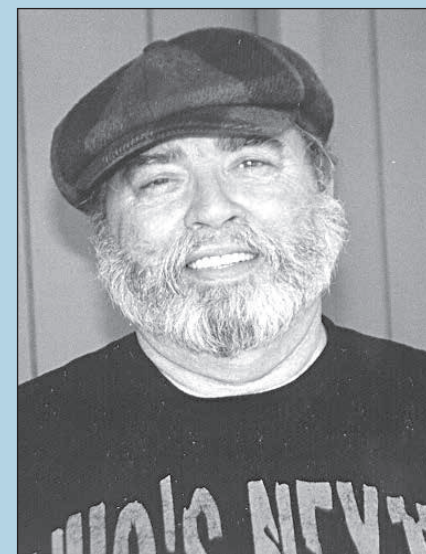
When retirees in other areas began to stir at the beginning of the new century, Silva brought his experience and passion to the task of helping other chapters get started.

"I remember meeting Mike years ago when he was serving as the president of the East Bay Chapter, which at that time was meeting at union headquarters when it was still located in Walnut Creek," said Ken Rawles.

When the union moved its headquarters to Vacaville, the East Bay Chapter of the Retirees Club relocated to Dublin. But Silva sensed an opportunity for the club to grow.

"Mike believed it was important for the club to have a chapter in Vacaville because it was the union's headquarters and because we needed to give retirees in the Vacaville and Sacramento area a chance to get involved," said Rawles. "He thought it should become the main chapter."

Even as he continued to lead the East Bay Chapter, Silva joined Rawles in going to Vacaville to encourage the new chapter during its infancy. Silva



Mike Silva in 1998, the feisty young retiree leader in the East Bay.

also joined Rawles for meetings in Santa Rose to start a North Bay Chapter, and both men also drove to Merced for the inaugural meeting of the chapter there, offering their experience and support.

When retirees from all the chapters held special meetings at union headquarters in response to an alarming rise in health care premiums, Silva was welcomed as something of an elder statesman. When he spoke, people listened.

In one of many articles he wrote for the Utility Reporter, Silva had this to say on the role of the union in the life of retirees:

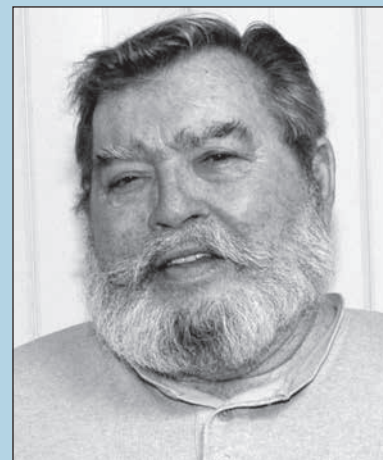
"The union is the only place you can have a say on how to improve the quality of life for PG&E retirees. The retiree clubs are the only voice you have to the negotiating committees. So if you

want your voice heard, if you'd like to help solve retirees problems, attend our established meetings or grab a few of the retirees that you know in your area or from PSEA functions and establish your own meeting and local chapter."

"Mike was always there when the retirees' voices needed to be heard," said Rawles.

Larry Darby, a former Local 1245 Advisory Council member and now a Retiree Club member, called Silva "one great person, a heck of a very good friend and a great chairperson for the East Bay Retirees Club."

Local 1245 salutes our brother, Mike Silva, for his steadfastness in the cause of giving retirees a voice.



Mike Silva in 2009, older, wiser, still just as feisty

Get the latest news at

[www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

# Congratulations newly-retired members

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retiree Club chapter in Dublin, San Jose, Vacaville, Santa Rosa, Merced, Reno or Yerington. If you don't have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Johnny Alarcon  
40 years  
Los Banos, CA

Dennis Allard  
29 years  
Brisbane, CA

Arementer Allen  
9 years  
lone, CA

Steven Allgood  
33 years  
Madera, CA

Don Cantrell  
33 years  
Sacramento, CA

Boster Chinn  
33 years  
Walnut Creek, CA

Michael Colgrove  
32 years  
Columbus, MT

Steven Cooper  
32 years  
Stockton, CA

Linda Fernandez  
36 years  
Stockton, CA

David Fisher  
34 years  
Clearlake, CA

Joe Flores  
29 years  
Watsonville, CA

Kathleen Franks  
30 years  
Oakley, CA

Luciano Galli  
39 years  
San Mateo, CA

Benito Garcia  
37 years  
San Francisco, CA

Norman Goodin  
35 years  
Port Angeles, WA

Nelvin Goree  
28 years  
Stockton, CA

Margaret Gregorich  
37 years  
Penn Valley, CA

Kevin Hall  
18 years  
Middletown, CA

Robert Hall  
22 years  
San Jose, CA

Daniel Harris  
32 years  
Fortuna, CA

Jeffrey Hickey  
41 years  
Mountain View, CA

Eloise Hillmon  
9 years  
Oakley, CA

James Hummel  
33 years  
Fremont, CA

William Jensen  
31 years  
Anderson, CA

continued on page 23



**Reno/Sparks IBEW 1245 retirees blog**  
<http://renosparksibew1245retireesclub.blogspot.com/>

**IBEW Ninth District Blog**  
<http://ibewninthdistrictretirees.blogspot.com/>

Dennis Anderson  
26 years  
Camano Island, WA

Gary Costigan  
41 years  
Alameda, CA

Gerard Baczkowski  
27 years  
Cottonwood, CA

Michael Dobrec  
8 years  
Stockton, CA

Louis Bartley  
34 years  
Placerville, CA

William Dykstra  
19 years  
Santa Cruz, CA

William Bazarro  
25 years  
Chico, CA

Darrell Edwards  
33 years  
Vallejo, CA

Richard Betit  
11 years  
Warminster, PA

Robert Ellis  
33 years  
Arroyo Grande, CA

Carl Bockhahn  
23 years  
Arroyo Grande, CA

Debra Estep  
20 years  
Woodstock, GA

John Burnett  
31 years  
Gainesville, FL

Donna Evenson  
26 years  
Arroyo Grande, CA



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International President

**SAM J. CHILIA**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

## Retiree Club Meeting Schedule

You can find the specific dates for each month at [www.ibew1245.com/unit\\_meetings.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/unit_meetings.html)

**East Bay Chapter:** 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA

**San Jose Chapter:** 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose, CA.

**Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter:** 2nd Wednesday every other month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA.

**Santa Rosa Chapter:** 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., at Coco's Restaurant, 1501 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa.

**Merced Chapter:** 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., Merced Senior Community, 755 W. 15th Street, Merced.

**Reno/Sparks Chapter:** 3rd Wednesday each month, 8:30 a.m., Denny's Restaurant, 205 E. Nugget Ave., Sparks, NV.

**Yerington Chapter:** 4th Tuesday each month, 11:30 a.m., Casino West, 11 Main Street. Yerington, NV.

October 5, 2011

**TO: ALL FINANCIAL SECRETARIES**

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The Delegates of the 38<sup>th</sup> IBEW International Convention, which was conducted in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, during the week of September 19 through 23, 2011, approved amendments to Article IX of the *IBEW Constitution*. Accordingly, effective January 1, 2012, there will be a per capita increase of two dollars (\$2.00) for all members, and the following rates will apply to the I.O. portion of all monthly dues payments covering January 2012 and thereafter:

	<u>"A" Members</u>	<u>"BA" Members</u>	<u>"FP" – fee payers</u>
Per Capita:	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00
Pension Fund:	<u>\$14.00</u>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Total:	\$29.00	\$15.00	\$15.00

In accordance with Article IX of the *IBEW Constitution*, \$15.00 per month from each member will be deposited in the General Fund, and the additional amount paid by "A" members (\$14.00 per month) will be deposited into the IBEW Pension Benefit Fund.

Please notify all of the members in your local union concerning this dues increase. In addition, you must also notify the employers to increase their payroll deductions. Local unions submitting electronic per capita reports must make arrangements to update their software to ensure that the most current version of the ICS-Windows or the Labor Power software package is installed. It will not be necessary to amend the local union bylaws with respect to this dues increase, because these changes were approved at the IBEW International Convention.

The payment of monthly per capita and Pension Benefit Fund (PBF) contributions to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is a duty that is required of each individual member. Moreover, each financial secretary is responsible for collecting and forwarding all per capita and PBF payments to the International Office in a timely manner.

With best wishes, we are

Fraternally yours,

Edwin D. Hill  
International President

Salvatore (Sam) J. Chilia  
International Secretary-Treasurer

EDH/SJC:smw

Copy to All International Vice Presidents

All International Executive Council Members

All International Executive Assistants and Directors

All International Representatives



# SERVICE AWARDS

## Redding, CA

May 7, 2011



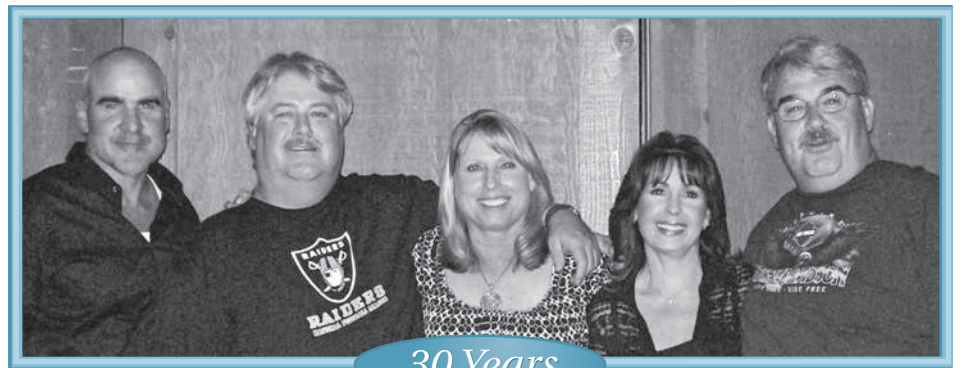
### 40 Years

Jack Jardine receives his 40-year award from former Business Rep. Mickey Harrington.



### 35 Years

Thomas Perez receives his 35-year award from former Business Rep. Mickey Harrington.



### 30 Years



### 25 Years

## THE HONOREES

### 45 Years

Raffety, William

### 40 Years

Hays, David R  
Jardine, Jack

### 35 Years

Devlyne, Connie R  
Fisher, Steven W  
Perez, Thomas  
Prigmore, Stephen M

### 30 Years

Anderson, Michael L  
Bailey, Mark J  
Clark, Matthew D  
Lynch, Gregory D  
McGie, Kristina  
Meeker, Darrel L  
Miller, Kevin R  
Netzloff, Matthew R  
Parker, Donald R  
Perales, Tim R  
Redenius, Roxanne M  
Schargus, Paul C  
Tuomala II, Edward V

### 25 Years

Burchard, Mitch  
Cummins, Rodney L  
Hansen, Richard W  
Ingram, Robert P  
McDonald, Tom P  
Moffett, Michael T  
Noetzel, Jeffrey D  
Thomas, Raymond  
Vandermeer, Dave J  
Wilkie, Steven J  
Woll, Pete A  
Sydow, Paul R

## Merced

May 28, 2011



### 35 Years

Doug Holden and Robert Weston receive 35-year awards from Business Rep. Mike Grill.



### 25 Years

Clifton Smith receives his 25-year award from Business Rep. Mike Grill.

## THE HONOREES

### 40 Years

Bushman, Carl  
Climer, Grady A  
Supernaw, Pat  
Thiercof, Patrick

### 35 Years

Broughton, Phillip D  
Foster, Kelly J

Holden, Douglas  
Knox, Gerald W  
Labuga, Rodrick G  
Maire, Mark R  
Weston, Robert

### 30 Years

Nordgreen, Michael D  
Pfeffer, George A

Sanderson, Percy

### 25 Years

Bassetti, Andrea A  
Johnson, Nathan P  
Lema, Greg J  
Smith, Clifton B  
Wichas, Patricia J

## Ukiah, CA

August 5, 2011



**40 Years** Gary Silver, left, receives 40-year award from Assistant Business Manager Ed Dwyer.

## THE HONOREES

### 40 Years

Gary Silver

### 30 Years

Stanley Fedornak

### 25 Years

Jeff Carter  
Steven Dreher  
James Lampert  
Donna Loop



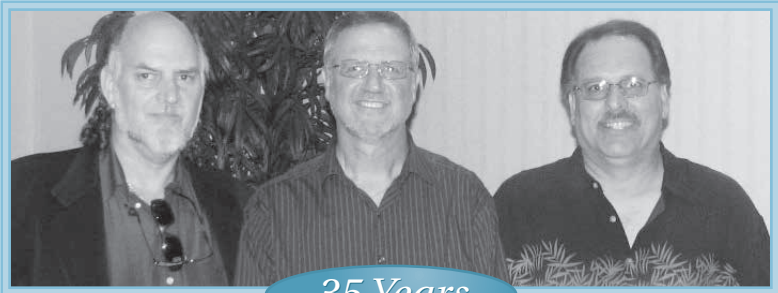
### 30 Years

Stanley Fedomak, left, receives 30-year award from Assistant Business Manager Ed Dwyer.

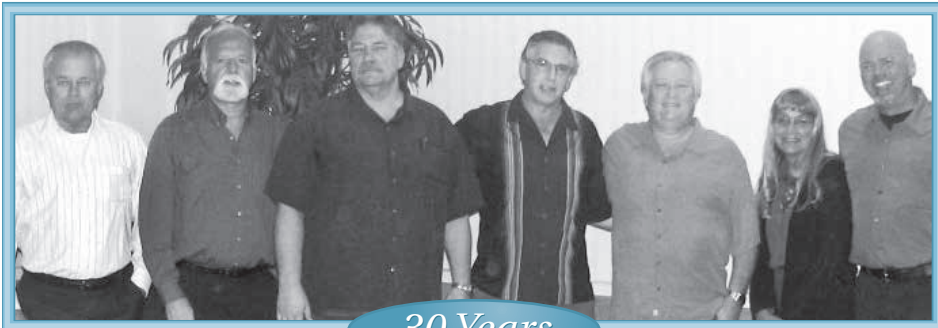


# SERVICE AWARDS

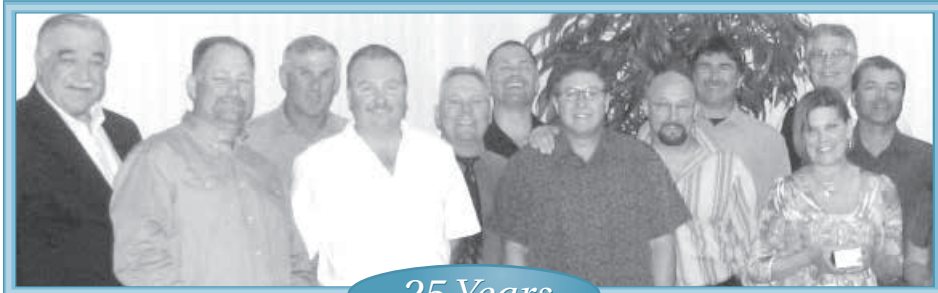
## San Luis Obispo March 19, 2010



35 Years



30 Years



25 Years



# SERVICE AWARDS

## Eureka, CA August 6, 2011



**40 Years**  
Don Davis, left, receives 40-year award from Assistant Business Manager Ed Dwyer.



**30 Years**  
Lloyd McClelland, left, receives 30-year award from Assistant Business Manager Ed Dwyer.

### THE HONOREES

#### 45 Years

Calvin, Curtis E

#### 40 Years

Thomas, Irwin J

#### 35 Years

Allums, Mikel  
Desantis, Silvio J  
Franklin, Ronald R  
Gagne, Shirley  
Gomez, Rick  
Grigsby, Calvin  
Mason, Karen

#### 30 Years

Ambrose, Peter C  
Arellano, Robert L  
Azevedo, John A  
Bedia Jr., Carlos B  
Buscher, Mark L  
Davis, Danny W  
Demateo, Rocky L  
Dodd, Lula M  
Gill, Edward K  
Gutierrez, Jesse  
Hackett, Gary J  
Jacobson, John M  
Kline Jr., Robert T  
Krovios, Patrick J  
Landeros, Mario M  
Leader, Brian F  
Martin, Tim  
Mitchell, Daniel R  
Olea, David P

Orlando, Anthony J  
Osburn, M Wade  
Ramirez, Kris K  
Robbins, Elane  
Rojas, Jim S  
Rotta, Donald J  
Scherer, Paul R  
Stanford, Randy  
Sternjacob, Max P  
Sturtevant, Brian P  
Weeks, Matthew P  
White, Roy W  
Worrell, Donald R

#### 25 Years

Anderson, Dennis V  
Ballard, David K  
Barwis Jr., James T  
Benson, Paul M  
Blackshear, Ricky A  
Bock, Bryan A  
Boyle, Patrick J  
Buzzelli, Bernard D  
Camacho, Jerry R  
Cappelluti, Anthony M  
Cash, Allen A  
Clardy, Henry L  
Coito, Scott T  
Darington, Howard J  
Duracher, Herbert A  
Gatchalian, Ramon O  
Gripp, Sharon L  
Jackson, Michael S  
Johnson, Elizabeth  
Jones, Daniel M  
Kern, Paul H

Lamp, James A  
Larson, Michael K  
Leih, Bryan D  
Lima-Calderone, Gloria A  
Lykes Iii, Joseph E  
Martinez, Oscar  
Mcdermott, Mark S  
Mcswain, Susan M  
Moyer, James M  
Muscio, Richard E  
Orlando, Robert P  
Osborne, Todd A  
Parks, Steve D  
Peddie, James R  
Peterson, Randy L  
Polewczak, John W  
Riley, Gregory L  
Silva, Robert F  
Silva, Stephen A  
Sisemore Iii, Marion P  
Smith, James H  
Teague, Susan D  
Thomas, Laurence  
Trygg, Jack K  
Turner, Mark A  
Turnipseed, Paul V  
Tyler, Robert J  
Valenti, Sal A  
Walker, Kathleen  
Webb, Kevin  
Wells, Roberta I  
Willis, Douglas T  
Wood, Charles M  
Layugan, Jim  
Myers, Jim S  
Kelling, Roger T

### THE HONOREES

#### 45 Years

Lewis, Roy

#### 40 Years

Davis, Donald  
Holst, Llewys

#### 30 Years

McClelland, Lloyd  
Seward, Robert  
Jones, Steven  
Gatan, A C

#### 25 Years

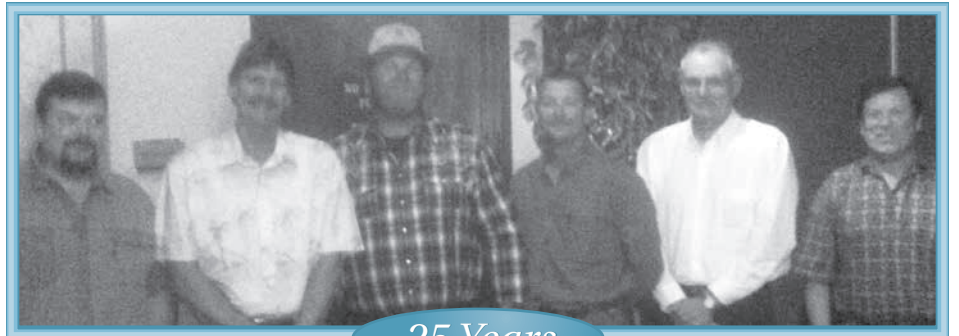
Maynard, William  
Dillion, Jeff  
Peaslee, William



# SERVICE AWARDS

## Reno, NV

April 16, 2011



25 Years



### 45 Years

Terry Nieman, left, receives his 45-year award from Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong.



### 40 Years

William McMillen, left, receives his 40-year award from Business Rep. Randy Osborn.

## THE HONOREES

### 45 Years

Nieman, Terry D  
Vieira, Robert P  
Walker, James D

### 40 Years

McMillen, William

### 35 Years

Cragg, Rodney L  
Orr, Gregory A

### 30 Years

Abraham, Arletta L  
Abraham, Darryl R  
Barrenechea, Martin D  
Belles, Robert M  
Burgess, James E  
Dohnansky, Milan W  
Draper, Alan L  
Espinoza, Joseph

### 25 Years

Ford, Robert E  
Irwin, Greg A  
Kerr, Kevin R  
Lively, Chuck T  
Mc Govern, Mike P  
McBeth, William S  
Morley, Carmen A  
Porter, Donald L  
Shipley, Paris A  
Vaillancourt, Brian W  
Weller, John G

### 25 Years

Blodgett, Gary O  
Bowles, Terry E  
Bingle, Lorri C  
Callahan, Robert J  
Chambers, Mark R  
Cray, Stephen F  
Dean, Michael J  
Dennis, Mark W

Djukanovich, Kelly W  
Dodge, Howard T  
Johnson, Ronald D  
Lieby, Steven C  
Lopez, Michele M  
Mickey, Randy R  
Morris, Eric C  
Nelson, Julie J  
Parker, Michael T  
Robbins, Penny  
Robertson, Harold M  
Shaffer, Joan L  
Shoemaker, Carl D  
Snyder, Stanley S  
Steelman, Kevin R  
Taylor, Steven R  
Tomburello, Dino A  
Ulch, Joseph E  
Uptain, Craig A  
Wilfon, Karlan J  
Zenz, Daniel C

## Petaluma, CA

May 6, 2011



### 40 Years

Receiving 40-year awards, from left, are Rich Roberto, Chuck Hadrich, Charles Fisher and Jim "Scotty" Gordon.



### 35 Years

Receiving his 35-year award, center, is Paul Catalano. At left is Business Rep. JV Macor. At right is Business Rep. Hunter Stern.

## THE HONOREES

### 45 Years

Baulwin, J L  
Noonan, Carol

### 40 Years

Gordon, Jim I  
Hadrich, Charles H  
Hensley, Lee A  
Hopper, Doug W A  
Packard, Larry D  
Roberto, Richard P  
Silver, Gary M  
Taha, Lee  
Fisher, Charles J

### 35 Years

Catalano, Paul A  
Fernandez, Gary H

Otte, Wanda J

### 30 Years

Baraty, Dennis P  
Cortez, Moise J  
Deconter, Betty L  
Fechter, Debra A  
Fedornak, Stanley R  
Fong, Garrick A  
Good, Jacquelin  
Mueller, Andrew N  
Peyrucain, Don  
Pigg, James E  
Rendon, Gustavo S  
Rillera, Edward T  
Thornton, Pamela J  
Tkachenko Jr., Norman

### 25 Years

Carter, Jeff L  
Clark, Lavera  
Donahue, John R  
Dreher, Steven H  
England, Keith A  
Fechter, Tim S  
Joaquim, Joe U  
Lampert, James D  
Loop, Donna  
Quintana, Christoph  
Redd, Kathleen  
Reid, Mary C  
Reilly, John P  
Taylor, Roger W  
Vucurovich, Matthew J  
Zinkl, Vincent M



30 Years



25 Years



# SERVICE AWARDS

## Fresno, CA

May 21, 2011



**40 Years** From left: Business Rep. Mark Rolow and Recording Secretary Chris Habecker present 40-year awards to Charles Garabedian, Ronnie Powell and Geary Weaver. Business Rep. Mike Grill is on right.



### 35 Years

From left: Recording Secretary Chris Habecker presents 35-year awards to Anthony Chavira, Keith Rasmussen, and Pedro Sandoval. Business Rep. Mike Grill is on right.



30 Years

## THE HONOREES

### 40 Years

Garabedian, Charles  
Griffin, Glenn  
Grigsby, William  
Hernandez, Danny  
Powell, Ronnie C  
Stillwell, Richard  
Weaver, Geary

### 35 Years

Chavira, Anthony A  
Cotton, Florence  
Foote, Darleen  
Habecker, Christine  
Monreal Jr., John M  
Moody, Ron  
O'Brien, Patrick S  
Parsons, Michael E  
Pavlovich, Mark S  
Ragsdale, Don H  
Rasmussen, Keith A  
Sandoval Jr., Pedro

### 30 Years

Aguerria, Joaquin  
Allustiarti, Robert J  
Baldwin, Thomas P  
Benabides, Sandy L  
Brechmann, Sandra L  
Cabezut, David  
Cal, Valerie L  
Coronel, Guillermo  
Gibson, Karen G  
Grill, Michael F  
Holden, Janey B  
Hunt, Flora R  
Isaac, Gary D  
Lara, Michael A  
Lathan, Stephen  
Lopez, Ruben M  
Mccoy Jr., Pride A  
Okamura, Dale C  
Richardson, Valencia  
Silva, Russ A  
Taylor, Armand A  
Vermilya, Edward J

Wiederhold, Richard S  
Work, Arnell E

### 25 Years

Bird, Darren  
Duenes, Julie K  
Grimes, Joey B  
Henslick, Charles E  
Kennedy, John A  
King, Brandon L  
Liscano, Arthur  
Mcguire, Helen L  
Mohammed, David H  
Mora, Susan  
Ramirez, Robert  
Robles, Steven R  
Runderson, Granville  
Secrease, Sherman E  
Smith, Clifton B  
Tewalt, Terese  
Wallis, Aaron G

### Newly retired, from page 19

Philip Kamp  
31 years  
Fairfield, CA

Mike Kelly  
21 years  
Grass Valley, CA

Thomas Keys  
38 years  
Fresno, CA

Justin Lemons  
33 years  
Bakersfield, CA

Lance Lott  
41 years  
Santa Rosa, CA

Kevin MacDonnell  
26 years  
San Francisco, CA

Mali Magdub  
19 years  
Superior, CO

Michael Manley  
32 years  
Murphys, CA

Renato Martini  
32 years  
Stockton, CA

Greg Matulich  
39 years  
San Jose, CA

David McClellan  
16 years  
Pittsburg, CA

David McDaniel  
27 years  
Coalinga, CA

Kim McFarland  
31 years  
Santa Rosa, CA

Brian McGuire  
12 years  
Manteca, CA

Pat Middlebrook  
41 years  
Hayward, CA

Daniel Morey  
40 years  
Bakersfield, CA

Reginald Murray  
20 years  
Oakland, CA

Jimmie Nelson  
41 years  
Pittsburg, CA

Peter Olson  
32 years  
Mantona, CA

Charles Pfennig  
32 years  
Oakley, CA

Gary Powers  
36 years  
Madera, CA

Premila Reddy  
33 years  
Burlingame, CA

Paul Rickson  
36 years  
Paradise, CA

Dolly Roehl  
11 years  
Benicia, CA

Robert Rohrmann  
37 years  
Fresno, CA

Dale Root  
14 years  
Modesto, CA

Michael Russell  
34 years  
Anderson, CA

Linda Salazar  
30 years  
Templeton, CA

Thomas Sartain  
10 years  
Boise, ID

Larry, Say  
45 years  
Hot Springs, AR

H. Sexton  
31 years  
Santa Rosa, CA

James Sheridan  
27 years  
Valley Springs, CA

James Sherrill  
26 years  
Huntersville, NC

Paul Shirley  
38 years  
Yuba City, CA

Jeffrey Silva  
31 years  
Castro Valley, CA

Randall Slawson  
38 years  
Bangor, CA

Margaret Smith  
20 years  
Tollhouse, CA

Daniel Steidle  
42 years  
Antioch, CA

William Steiger  
10 years  
Mountain View, HI

Laurence Thomas  
26 years  
Arroyo Grande, CA

Charles Thomason  
25 years  
Burney, CA

May-Ling Tse  
32 years  
San Francisco, CA

Edward Tuazon  
39 years  
San Ramon, CA

Kenneth Tucker  
9 years  
Shingle Springs, CA

Tim Vadon  
41 years  
Cloverdale, CA

Cheryl Van Meter  
23 years  
Vacaville, CA

Sandra Vargas  
31 years  
Los Banos, CA

Edward Vermilya  
30 years  
Moyie Springs, ID

Marybelen Vermilya  
20 years  
Moyie Springs, ID

Vincent Watson  
21 years  
Rancho Cordova, CA

John Weininger  
41 years  
Freedom, CA

Richard White  
27 years  
Vallejo, CA

H. Williams  
40 years  
Alamo, CA

**Congratulations Retirees!**  
**We want you to STAY**  
**CONNECTED**



**to IBEW 1245.**

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# THE TOKEN BEARERS

By Mike Cottrell

*In this issue of the Utility Reporter we bring you Chapter 2 of "The Token Bearers" by Mike Cottrell. Mike is a member of the IBEW Local 1245 Executive Board and a long-time lineman. Chapter 1 appeared in the September-October 2011 edition of the Utility Reporter.*

## Chapter 2

HEADSCRATCHER AND AILEEN HEAD WEST AGAIN. OCTOBER 1954.

On a cold, clear night on the high plains of Wyoming, the car sat on the side of the road. The woman and the two girls inside slept and turned to mutter words in the dark to each other about why daddy was out there and when he was coming back. But then the humming motor and the blaring heater were more compelling so she went back to sleep and her sister too after she had answered, "I don't know," and never seemed to care about it as much as the younger one anyway. Their mother was in a fetal position on the big front seat and hadn't missed him, but slept uneasy anyway in his absence. He was behind the car looking at the broken home-made easy lifting device he had concocted himself back before one had even been invented. It worked well until now. He scratched his head and wondered what he could replace the broken through bolt with. Everything a Lineman builds either on or off the jobs is made out of line material that comes from the job and this leveling device that was attached between the trailer and the car kept the weight distributed back through each and displaced it as not to put too much strain on the rear axle of the car. He scratched his head again with the ends of all four fingers. He was forced to scratch hard for he was a nail biter as well and with the absence of nails the fingers had much black hair to care too and pressure was needed to accommodate his needs.

The 'Kansas City cutover' was pretty much over and he and the family had been there over two years. The money was good and the injuries and fatalities devastating to the brotherhood. Now he was taking his family and moving on with all they owned in the world inside the LaSalle and the thirty-foot trailer.

"Odd damn it!" He muttered out in the darkness. "What the hell am I going to use to fix this son's a bitch with." Then it was kind of like the gods of line work shined down on him through the full moon and the bright stars. He saw it out there in the field twenty yards away and he opened the trunk of the car and got his belt and hooks, threw them on the ground and removed his buckskin moccasins and pulled out the big climbing boots, slipped them on and laced up. He rummaged around in the trunk for a few seconds and found a rope sling and his hammer, screwdriver, channel locks and twelve-inch crescent. He put the tools in their proper place in the tool belt and picked up his hooks, the rope sling and throwing the belt over his shoulder, he walked over, climbed the fence by the nearest post, and went out to the pole.

He dropped everything on the ground, put his left foot in the hook, and cinched the bottom strap around the top of his ankle and the top one around his upper calf. He repeated the procedure on the right leg and put the belt around his waist. He threw the rope sling around his neck, let the loose ends fall down between his legs, and started up the pole. After he free climbed up twenty feet or so he unclipped his safety, passed it around the pole, his left hand to his right, snapped it into the other D ring, and climbed to the top, effortlessly it seemed. When he reached the cross arm braces he unsnapped the safety and put it through the braces, climbed up a short step and clipped it back in to his body belt and leaned back. He took the sling off his shoulders and began to secure it tightly around the cross arm that held the wires of death to the pole. When he was certain the arm was secure and could not tilt or drop down too much, he took out his crescent wrench and channel locks and took the nut off the throw bolt that held the arm in place and placed the nut in the pouch on his body belt and put the channel locks and the crescent away. He removed his hammer, screw driver, and drove the bolt carefully out of the pole by using the hammer to hit the end of the screwdriver with its tip on the threaded end of the bolt. The rope sling held the cross arm in place and it only shifted down

about an inch and he had the bolt he needed to fix the home made hitch leveler.

"What in the Gods earth are you doing up there in the middle of the night banging on a pole? The girls and I are scared to death over there, while you are out here banging on that damn power pole. What in the name of hell are you doing? Do you know you woke us all up?"

"Oooodd damn it Aileen, I had to climb up here to get this bolt to fix that odd damn hitch. By then he had come off the pole in five or six long steps and she backed up to get out of the way thinking the silly shit might fall on her and then what would she do in the middle of the night and a car had not passed the whole time they had been broke down.

"Oh!" She understood perfectly now.

The girls were calling out the window asking what daddy was doing and wanting to get out and help and Aileen had to go back and calm them and try to explain why their crazy Father was climbing a power pole in the middle of the night. The head scratcher put his tools away and made do with the bolt and soon they were roaring down the road headed for somewhere on the coast of California up north near Eureka. There was a big money job there with lots of overtime and he needed to get there before the books loaded up and get his clearance from the hall and get the money while he could.

He would drive straight through from Wyoming now to the coast taking small naps usually not even leaving the wheel while Aileen made the sandwiches and the girls played in the trailer or alongside the road.

It was not apparent in those days as it is now that women were capable of doing anything else but hustling after the needs of the man of the house. After all, it was common to accept the role of housekeeper and child rearing, while the men made the money. She could have helped drive and pull the trailer to get them there sooner but it was just not part of Americana at the time to have a mere woman doing a manly duty. The responsibility was just too great. In other words, it was every man for himself and the women take care of the kids. It was unheard of in the blue-collar world for there to be more than one automobile per family and the men took those to work every day. The women would sit home drinking coffee in the morning, tending to the children, doing laundry and baking. Friday night was big for the wives, to go out on the town with the men, dance, and have drinks.

The trip was fairly uneventful with the exception of a couple of flat tires on the trailer, a frozen wheel bearing that had to be removed and the trailer left behind while the whole family went to Redding a hundred miles round trip to get a new one and get it back and installed. He scalded his hand on the hot water when he opened the radiator cap and the hot water got it. Then he had to hike out in the field to a water trough and fill up the water bag to restore the contents. A large red bull despised him for being too close to his heifers and the girls peered through the fence and cried in fear and Aileen crying out, "Run Buddy, run. He's gaining on you." He weaved and ran holding the canvas bag with the water he needed. The bull got close enough to make a good head surge at his feet and Buddy, when popped by the bulls horn on the bottom of his foot gasped and tripped a little, but kept his balance and threw the bag over and dove head long and rolled to a stop. The girls ran to him and put their arms around his neck at the same time.

"We love you Daddy!"

He sat there and enjoyed the moment. The bull breathed hard and snorted





snot as if to invite him back for another chance at the water and his harem but Buddy made do with what water he had from his effort.

On into the night, he drove and the next morning until he finally stopped and opened the trailer house and crashed on the bed. Aileen came in and offered a sandwich and he said no and she went out and closed the door quietly as she could with the trailer not being level and couldn't so she latched it to the side of the trailer and whispered a silent 'shit' as not to disturb her fatigued man.

The girls played jacks and Aileen made sandwiches on the side of the road from the ice chest in the trunk.

Buddy slept some, tossed, turned, enjoyed the breeze, and wanted to get a power nap of two hours so he could carry the family on to Eureka to hit those books before they loaded up and get on the money job.

He fell into a dream. It was Fancy in his suit going out to the mound. The girls were not yet born and Aileen was pregnant in Oceanside with the first. She and Jean sat in front of Buddy and Pep. Jean leaned against Pep's opened lap and he rubbed her arms and shoulders. Buddy scratched his head and watched the old lineman handing his suit coat to the manager. He untied his shoes, slipped them off, and tried on the cleats handed him and nodded his head signifying the fit.

"This otta' be something to see."

"You better know it."

"Well he told you guys and told you on the job he could pitch and they need one to play so let's see what he's got."

"I don't think he's got nine innings in him. And I can't believe the pacific coast league Seals can't find their pitcher today!"

"Probably got drunk last night and laid up with some ole gal this morning."

"Pep, there's kids around here!"

Pep laughed and went to get some hot dogs, beer and cokes for the wives while Fancy looked good warming up. Sleeves of the white shirt rolled up past his elbows and the wool slacks ruffling with every motion to the high leg kick and delivery to the plate. They gave him a ball cap and the wind was calm. The crowd roared their approval as the national anthem blared to a scratchy conclusion over the loud speaker and everyone sat back down having uncovered their heart and opened them up to roar again loud approval to the old lineman as he was introduced as the replacement for the missing regular.

Fancy looked down the signal from the catcher and shook it off and received another and now took aim and wound up and brought the left leg up high by his shoulder and hurled the first one in fast and the batter swung and missed and the crowd went wild.

"Strike one!"

"Ole Fancy aims to please," said the Pep and slid the first bite through the hole and a little mustard glazed the corner of his mouth, but he wiped it clean with the tip of his tongue and sent it down with a rush of Pabst Blue Ribbon.

"Strike him out Fancy!" Aileen hollered and Buddy turned a little red.

"Hope ole' Fancy saves enough energy to climb poles tomorrow."

"He ain't gonna' make it more'n a couple innings. Then what are they gonna' do fer' a pitcher?"

"He'll make it fine Pep."

"Okay sis, we'll see."

Fancy pitched on and held the other team to one run and the Seals won it by three. He signed autographs on popcorn and hotdog wrappers and the next day at work on the high line his arm was sore but he tooled up, climbed and worked right along with the rest of them and caught his share of poles.

Aileen had let him sleep until three and he was mad at her for not waking him sooner, but she knew he needed the extra three hours so he did not piss and moan too much and they all loaded up and went on.

She told him he was sleeping pretty hard and said Fancy a few times and looked like he was trying to applaud, but because he was asleep, he looked more like a moron in a straight jacket. She laughed.

He told her he was dreaming about the day in Oceanside when Fancy threw the best game he ever saw.

"Yeah baby, that Fancy is a good one. Isn't he babe?"

The kids fell asleep around Susanville and they would be on the coast in the morning providing everything held together. Their stomachs were full of Sambo's pancakes and eggs after stopping on Fourth Street in Reno, gassed, and eaten.

She talked and sat by him in the seat, he was quiet with the setting sun, and

finally she asked him if he was okay and he said sure. She sled over and laid her head in his lap and put her feet up against the door after covering the girls with a quilt her mother had made her when she left home to be on the road with a crazy lineman.

When Buddy first met Fancy, he was a young Journeymen aspiring toward the trade and Fancy had hobbled over his prime a few years back. Buddy learned great skills and Indian tricks from Fancy and saw no wrong in him. Fancy would always be one of his heroes. He worked around him long enough to wonder why he had not been a Foreman and saw all the potential he had, but was afraid to ask until one day after working around Fancy six months that he could no longer stand it.

"Were you ever a Foreman Fancy? Did you ever run work on these high lines?"

"Well, yeah and then I got butt straw and that's hard to get out."

"Butt straw? What's that?"

Fancy knew he had him then and looked up from the gain he was cutting into the top of the pole they had been framing. He swung around easy and put his back to Buddy so the kid wouldn't see him smile and caught a serious look then turned back and faced the young hand who was busy spinning an insulator on a wooden pin attached to the cross arm he squatted over.

"Well it works like this kid. You're out here minding your business, doing whatever they ask you to do and not creating any hardships for not a single soul and all a sudden somebody drives up and asks you do you want to be a foreman. So you get to thinkin' well there's lots a hands and lots a work and maybe since he asked me he must think I would be good at it. So I thinks about the money of it and the prestige of it and I make a quick decision. Next thing you know I'm drivin' around in one of the company trucks, in charge of linemen and grunts doing everything I want them to do. Suddenly they're doing it, everybody seems to like me, and things are fine. Pretty soon I notice I start kind of likin' the feel of that seat more than anything else and I am startin' to get a beer gut too. But everybody on the job still likes me and they're all doing what I ask em' to do and everything seems fine."

Fancy threw the hand saw on the ground and reached into his bag and produced his hammer and chisel and went back and leaned over the pole, to work out the perfect gain for the arm and grinned a little so the kid couldn't see his face and waited.

"Well, so then what Fancy? If everything was going fine and everybody seemed happy, how come you didn't stay a foreman?"

"Well, I'm comin' to that part kid."

The sun had warmed the old lineman so he stepped back from the work long enough to release the buttons on his bib and dropped the Carhartt's down and widened his stance as not to let them get all the way past his manly effects and stripped his shirt clean and re-bibbed his suspenders. The other crewmembers rolled up on the flatbed and started toward the nearby lone shade on the right of way to eat their lunches. They sensed the old lineman had the kid in his grasps and played along. The kid waited for Fancy's reply and they all caught shade to wait for the kill.

The old tree shed its limbs over the entire affair offering comfort, waving limbs in a calming breeze reaching out to Fancy's soothing tongue and seemed to be a part of the scheme too.

Fancy showed no sign of the other men even being there and he knew they knew the kid was in his sights. His gray hair shone bright in the sun reflecting his rosy complexion and the hair from his arm pits expelled and receded like the great waves of the ocean with every move of his muscular biceps as he continued to work the pole and the kid.

"Well sir, pretty soon that old truck got to feeling so good that I hardly ever wanted to get out of it cept' when the big boss came around. I noticed the crack I had wore in the leather had begun to let the straw out of the seat and soon enough it felt like it was a growin' in my ass. Then just about the time you get yourself that warm fuzzy feeling of that straw growing out of ya' some son of a gun comes along and pulls it right out of your ass and you're right back out here doing what you do best anyway. And it's hard kid, to keep gettin' rid of the beer gut and the butt straw and I discovered I'd rather not be a foreman anymore after all."

With that, Fancy went over and got in the shade with his lunch box and the whole crew looked the kid over and laughed while he felt like the lowest form of sucker God had ever created.

*continued in next issue*



T.C. Gotcher, left, and Eric Tague position the pipe clamp.

# Expert Touch

PG&E GC crews put in long hours to assure integrity of gas transmission system

Photos and Story by Eric Wolfe

The air is chilly. It's still pitch dark. More than a dozen PG&E General Construction gas employees are assembling for work at Irvington Station in Fremont, CA.

The work they do today on PG&E's gas transmission system won't generate big headlines or congressional hearings or national safety investigations. They will hardly be noticed at all. But as PG&E seeks to move beyond San Bruno and restore the public's trust in its gas delivery system, no one has a more important role to play than these members of IBEW Local 1245.

To substantiate that PG&E's gas transmission system is safe, about a thousand miles of pipe will be tested with high-pressure water, section by small section. Mobile PG&E GC crews are constantly on-the-go to restore the pipes to service after they've been tested.

"We're kind of a 'Johnny-on-the-spot.' When it's ready, we go," says Jake Trogdon, a burly soft-spoken GC welder who, at 30, is serving as foreman on this job.

"We've been traveling from the Bay Area south to the Arizona border and everywhere in between," he says. "We've got guys on the job today who were tying in lines day before yesterday in Bakersfield. It's a very aggressive schedule."

It's a painstaking process. First, the line is taken out of service, rendering it safe for the GC crews to work on. Crews isolate the sections and do any necessary work on lines that are still tied to an energy source.

Then the job is handed over to contractor ARB to run the actual high-pressure water test, which verifies that the pipe can hold a certain amount of pressure for a specified amount of time. ARB

then removes the water from the line and blows in super-dry air to eliminate any remaining moisture.

Gas is cleared out of adjacent sections of pipe and the GC crews get busy on both ends of the section of pipe that was tested. One crew is at Irvington Station, the other a few miles away near the intersection of McCarthy and Dixon Landing Roads.

"We'll cut off our caps and prep our ends up and get our ends looking back into each other," says Trogdon, who is leading the crew at the McCarthy end of the job.

Wearing protective face gear and heavy leather gloves, these Local 1245 members work amidst a shower of orange sparks as they bevel the ends of the pipe with a grinder, readying it to be welded.

They are dealing with a gap of about 12 feet in the pipe. The section of pipe they drop into this gap must line up almost perfectly with the two sections of pipe already in the ground, with just the right amount of room for the welds at either end.

Lowering the pipe into the vault is a tricky business. For one thing, there's little room to maneuver. For another, the pipe's heavy as sin. Trust me on this, you don't want to get caught between the pipe and the side of the vault.

Even with ventilation the vault gets smoky when they start the actual welding. The first pass of the weld—root bead—fuses the inside of the pipe. Then it is ground down to clean the joint in preparation for subsequent passes of weld material.

Next, the welds are x-rayed, followed by a soap test with 100 pounds-per-square-inch (PSI) of gas in the line. If no

leaks are detected, the line is restored to full pressure (which can vary from 350 to 400 PSI depending on the particular line) and tested again.

## HUNDRED HOURS A WEEK

This is precision work. The sort of work these men have been trained to perform to perfection day after day.

Trogdon says PG&E will test about 150 miles of pipe this year, and then about 200 miles a year for the next four years. The company will be demanding a lot from its crews to keep this work on schedule.

"We've worked over a hundred hours a week in some weeks. It's pretty standard right now to have a 75 to 80-hour week," says Trogdon.

Traveling long distances, working long hours, welding at hot temperatures, climbing in and out of deep holes, maneuvering massively heavy pipe in close quarters: this is not work for the meek or the careless. Any lapse in attention can have serious consequences.

"The safety of our crew and the public is our number one concern. It's a part of the work—it's not a process that you do

in the work, it is the work," says Trogdon.

The intense schedule says something about the urgency of the task. But it also suggests that PG&E has run short on welders.

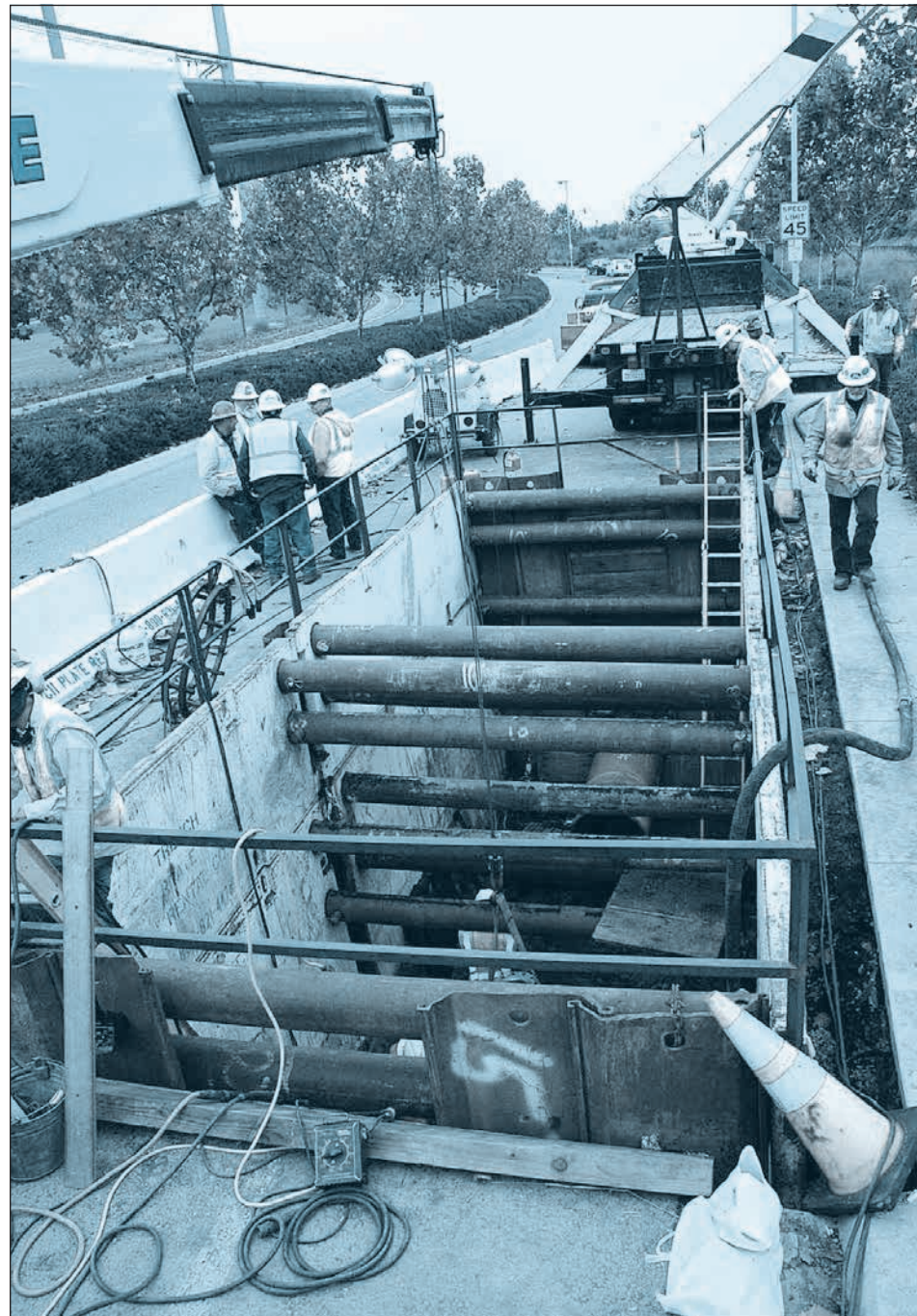
"We're down to 34 or 35 journeyman welders in GC," says Trogdon, who believes that number was around 200 a few decades ago. "We've lost tons of experience and knowledge with guys just moving on and moving into different departments."

The company is trying to do something about the shortage, he believes.

"They're trying to hire. They really are making a valid effort to bring these numbers back up."

In the meantime, the current GC crews will continue to travel around the state, bringing an expert touch to creating solid welds that will endure through the decades on lines whose integrity has been rigorously tested.

San Bruno will remain in the headlines for months, perhaps years to come. But the real news can be found in the trenches where Local 1245 members are quietly performing the hands-on work that will keep the public safe as PG&E delivers the gas that all of us need.



The job site at McCarthy and Dixon Landing Road in Fremont.

A temporary pipe used in the high-pressure water test rises out of the vault. The horizontal portion of the pipe will have to be replaced before the line can be put back in service.

The pipe that will be lowered into the vault must be just the right length.



Sparks fly as the pipe is beveled.



Prepping the pipe ends to weld.



The pipe is carefully maneuvered into the narrow space through which it will be lowered into the vault.



Making sure the ends of the pipe are aligned.

*continued on next page*

# Expert Touch

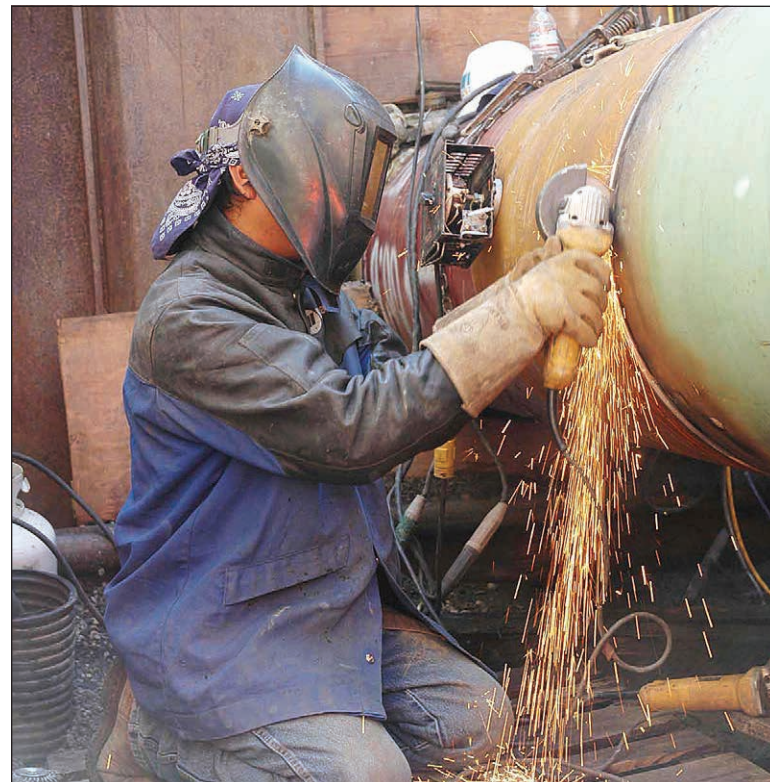
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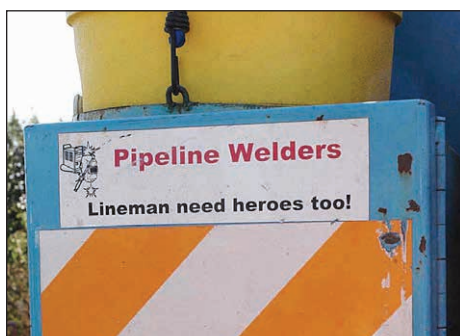
Expert touch, precision fit.



Making the weld on the inside of the pipe.



Smoothing out the inside weld in preparation for the outside weld.



Welder pride.



Standing guard overnight is Canus worker Gary Hughes, a Local 1245 member and former business representative for the union.



Ready to work at the McCarthy and Dixon Landing Road end of the job are, from left: T. C. Gotcher, Welder; Mitchell Bowles, Miscellaneous Equipment Operator; Michael Hernandez, Apprentice Welder; Cesar Cobos, Welder; Eric Tague, Apprentice Welder; Oscar Martinez, Gas Control Tech; Jake Trogdon, Foreman.