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# Utility Reporter



Volume 62 No.1 • Jan-Mar 2013

UNITY IS STRENGTH

For up-to-the-minute news, see our website: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)



Helping hoist the flag to honor veteran Doug Harris are, from left: Lineman Mike Devlin, Electric Crew Foreman Dan Hernandez, Operating Clerk Lori Mobley, Supervisor Gino Rinaldi, and Lineman Travis Hyland.

**Placerville members raise flag for returning vet. See page 11.**



**Tom Dalzell**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

## Gaining traction

I don't have a crystal ball, but I think that we are headed for a good year in 2013, thanks to the hard work of our members on a number of fronts in recent years.

It will be a relatively light year in terms of collective bargaining. For the first time since 2007, we have no general negotiations with PG&E. This gives a chance now to work on a number of operational initiatives without the drama of general negotiations. We have a staffing agreement for Electric M&C and are close to a final agreement on staffing for Gas M&C – huge steps forward.

The public sector remains a challenge, but we are seeing a slight thaw in some quarters and hope to emerge from three years of finance-driven assaults. We go into bargaining with NV Energy in a few months, our largest negotiation for 2013. We recently resolved the retiree medical issue with NVE after three years of fighting. It remains to be seen whether the collaboration and pragmatism which characterized the retiree medical issue will carry over into the negotiations. We hope so.

In 2012 we learned the truth of the old adage that all politics is local. We were especially successful in Merced, helping elect two labor-friendly men to the Merced Irrigation District Board of Directors. Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts have elections this November, and they will be key battlegrounds for protecting our members

through local political action. We will also look for new opportunities to develop our membership's leadership abilities by assisting other unions in their battles. This approach has served us well. Many of our members gained valuable experience assisting crucial union fights in Wisconsin, Ohio and Florida, and in the 2010 California governor's race. That experience enabled them to play a leadership role in our successful battle against Proposition 32 last November.

Our members have stepped into leadership roles on safety. Through peer-to-peer safety committees they are working with members in electric, gas, and tree trimming. Our safety stewards are working at local headquarters every day, helping to make sure that safety remains everyone's first priority.

Our linemen members are participating in growing numbers in the American Public Power Association line rodeo and the International Lineman's Rodeo in Kansas City, celebrating their craft and competing for glory for their union. We plan to send teams to gas and tree trimmer rodeos this year as well.

Thanks to the recent action by our Executive Board, our units now have community funds to boost unit participation and to get our units active in local community events. The idea for these funds came from the units, and I am enthusiastic about the possibilities for this program.

Our local union sporting events continue to grow. They bring members together away from work, and involve members who may not otherwise be involved. In addition to the golf, softball, clay shooting, bowling, and soccer tournaments, we are looking for other opportunities. We hope to pilot a motorcycle run this year and create other ways for our members to have fun together.

We continue to pay special attention to our young members, knowing that our

future as a union is dependent upon their taking the torch from us. Many of the leaders we identified in the first wave of youth training several years ago have moved into positions of leadership within the bargaining unit, and a number have come on staff. We continue to expand our base and are proud that we were honored by the California AFL-CIO last summer for our young worker program.

Lastly, we are financially stable, which is not something that many unions can claim. I applaud the fore-

sight of the members who asked for and supported the dues increase in 2008, and I am thankful for the courage of the Executive Board in supporting the change in dues structure. When we needed resources to fight PG&E and NV Energy, and in the public sector, we had those resources.

In an era when many unions are simply retrenching, we are moving forward. Thanks to your hard work we are gaining real traction and proving that a strong union can make a real difference.



**Gary Maschio, left, takes the oath of office from President Mike Davis at the fall Advisory Council meeting. Maschio is the new Advisory Council representative for San Francisco.**

## CALENDAR

- Jan 26** Advisory Council, Vacaville
- Feb 1** PG&E Stewards Conference, Petaluma
- Feb 1** Service Awards, Petaluma
- Feb 8** PG&E Stewards Conference, Chico/Marysville
- Feb 8** Service Awards, Redding
- Feb 9** Service Awards, Chico/Marysville
- Feb 20** PG&E Stewards Conference, San Francisco
- Feb 22** Service Awards, Merced
- Mar 1** Service Awards, San Francisco
- Mar 8** PG&E Stewards Conference, Eureka
- Mar 8** Service Awards, Eureka
- Mar 9** Service Awards, Ukiah
- Mar 15** PG&E Stewards Conference, San Luis Obispo
- Mar 15** Service Awards, San Luis Obispo
- Mar 20** PG&E Stewards Conference, East Bay
- Mar 22** Service Awards, East Bay
- Apr 3** PG&E Stewards Conference, Sacramento
- Apr 5** Service Awards, Sacramento
- Apr 13** Soccer Tournament, Los Banos
- Apr 16** Steward Conference, Reno
- Apr 19** PG&E Stewards Conference, Bakersfield
- Apr 19** Service Awards, Bakersfield
- Apr 23** Steward Conference, Vacaville
- Apr 24** PG&E Stewards Conference, Stockton
- Apr 26** Service Awards, Stockton
- Apr 27** Advisory Council, Vacaville, CA
- May 4** Soccer Tournament, Fairfield
- May 11** IBEW Nor-Cal Clay Shoot, Dunnigan

## Utility Reporter

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## PG&E Shift Premiums

### 1. SHIFT PREMIUMS

(Average rate of all IBEW employees October 31, 2012 to the weighted general wage increase for January 1, 2013 is \$41.34)

Second Shift	\$1 .86 (41 .34 x4.5%)
Third Shift	\$3.72 (41 .34 X 9%)
Sunday Premium	\$3.72 (Equals to 3rd Shift Premium)
Sunday - Second Shift	(Sunday premium + 2nd Shift)
Sunday - Third Shift	\$7.44 (Sunday Premium + 3rd Shift)

### 2. RELIEF PREMIUM

(weekly)	\$34.76 (8 x Sunday Premium + \$5); or
(hourly)	\$0.87 (weekly rate/40)

### 3. NUCLEAR OPERATOR LICENSE PREMIUM

Reactor Operator	\$5.95 (1 .6 x 3rd Shift Premium)
Certified Fuel Handler	\$2.98 (1/2 of Reactor Operator Premium)
Sr. Reactor Operator	\$7.44 (2.0 x 3rd Shift Premium)
Sr. Reactor Operator- DCPD	\$9.67 (2.6 x 3rd Shift Premium)
DCPD License Class	\$1.49 (0.4 x 3rd Shift Premium)

### 4. FIRE FIGHTER

Fire Fighter	\$2.98 (Equals Certified Fuel Handler Premium)
Fire Fighter Advanced Skills	\$1.81 (Avg of Fire Fighter/Captain rates x 4%)

### REMOTE REPORTING

Less than 15 miles	\$24.50 (\$23.75 x Physical GWI- round to nearest 25¢)
15 or more miles	\$34.25 (\$33.25 x Physical GWI- round to nearest 25¢)
Mileage Reimbursement Rate	\$0.565 (56.5¢ per IRS and PG&E USP 12)

# By-Laws changes

Proposed changes to the IBEW Local 1245 By-Laws were read at unit meetings in December 2012 and are out for a vote at unit meetings in January 2013.

The major proposed changes are:

Page 6, Section 6: We are proposing increasing the Executive Board by two positions. The existing Outside Line/GC seat would be split into two seats. The existing Northern California/Nevada seat would be split into two seats. The idea here is that the two extra seats will improve members' representation on the Executive Board.

Page 14, Article VI: the stipends for rank and file members elected to union positions are increased for the first time

in more than 30 years. The salaries for fulltime staff remain unchanged. The total cost of this is just over \$50,000 a year. This is a small fraction of 1% of our budget.

Page 19, Article XIII: Advisory Council. We eliminated seats that are no longer relevant (CATV, Manufacturing) and changed one clerical to three clerical and one GC to three GC. This change in the By-Laws will allow the Executive Board to make adjustments to the seats in the future to reflect changes in the membership.

The full text of the proposed By-Law changes can be found on-line at [www.ibew1245.com/news-Local1245/Draft\\_By-Laws\\_Changes\\_12-5-12.pdf](http://www.ibew1245.com/news-Local1245/Draft_By-Laws_Changes_12-5-12.pdf).

## In Memoriam: Rene Curiel

Renee Curiel, an IBEW Local 1245 Line Clearance Tree Trimmer for Davey Tree Surgery, was fatally injured on Sept. 27.

Curiel, 26, was felling trees in the aftermath of the "Chips Fire" near Canyon Dam, CA when he was struck by a 67-foot tree top that was knocked out of an adjacent tree when it was struck by the tree he was felling.

The union offers its condolences to the friends, family and co-workers of Brother Renee Curiel.

## In Memoriam: Tom Flippo

Tom Flippo, a 38-year member of IBEW Local 1245, died in a single-vehicle accident the morning of Nov. 30 while working in West Sacramento.

Flippo was a PG&E troubleman from the Woodland yard. He was responding to trouble during storm conditions in West Sacramento. While driving to his next location he was fatally injured when his vehicle struck a steel signal light pole.

Local 1245 offers its condolences to the friends, family and co-workers of Brother Tom Flippo.

## Notice of Local Union Election for Officers and Advisory Council Members

The election process will begin in March of this year for officers and Advisory Council, with balloting in June for new three-year terms.

Complete information on nominations, elections, duties, and qualifications of officers are found in the Local Union Bylaws and the International Union Constitution. If you do not have copies of these documents, they may be obtained by writing to *IBEW Local Union No. 1245, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95687*.

### Offices

The following officers shall be elected in accordance with Article XVI of the IBEW Constitution and Article III of the Local 1245 Bylaws: President; Vice President; Recording Secretary; Treasurer; Business Manager-Financial Secretary; Southern Area Executive Board Member, Central Area Executive Board Member, Northern Area Executive Board Member, and At-Large Executive Board Member. The composition of the areas and at-large group represented on the Board are specified in Article III, Section 6 of the Local Union Bylaws. *Please note that Local 1245 members approved a Bylaws change that adds two more positions to the Executive Board: One position to represent members from the Northeastern Area and one position to represent members from the Outside Construction and Tree Trimming Companies. This change is pending approval by the International Office of the IBEW and will be announced at March unit meetings. Assuming these changes are approved by the IO, nominations will also be accepted for these newly created positions.*

The designated Advisory Council seats are listed in Article XIII of the Local Union Bylaws. *Please note that Local 1245 members approved a Bylaws change that adds five new positions to the Advisory Council while removing or changing the description for several other Advisory*

*Council positions. These changes are pending approval by the International Office of the IBEW and will be announced at March unit meetings. Assuming these changes are approved by the IO, nominations will also be accepted for these newly created positions.*

### Qualifications

Business Manager-Financial Secretary: The offices are combined per Article III, Section 5 of the Local Union Bylaws and must be filled by a member holding an "A" membership (EWBA) as required by the IBEW Constitution.

Members elected to office in the Local Union must be able and available to attend all regular and special meetings and to conduct the affairs of their office without compensation or other expenses other than provided for in Article X of the Local Union Bylaws (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 7).

Assistant Business Manager(s) and/or Business Representatives shall not be eligible to hold any elective Unit or Local Union office. They shall, however, be eligible to run as delegates to the International Convention (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 7).

To qualify as a candidate for Local Union office or Advisory Council Member, a member must have at least two years' continuous good standing in the Local Union immediately prior to March 1, 2013. (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 9).

### Nominations

Nomination of officers and Advisory Council members shall be made under "New Business" at the first meeting of the Units in March 2013 (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 8).

In order to be a candidate for any Local Union office, including Advisory Council Member, a member must be present at the Unit meeting where he or she is nominated, or notify the Local Union Recording Sec-

retary, Chris Habecker, in writing on or before March 2, 2013, that he or she will run for a specific Local Union office if nominated (IBEW Constitution Article XVI, Section 10).

A member shall not accept nomination for more than one office of the Local Union (unless combined under the Bylaws). If a member is nominated for more than one office, he or she must immediately declare for which office he or she will be a candidate and decline all other nominations for Local Union office (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 9).

### Voting

As provided in Local Union Bylaws Article III, Section 11, there shall be published in the May 2013 issue of *The Utility Reporter* and on Local 1245's website, a list of all candidates for Local Union office, together with a factual record of their activities within the Local Union, committee assignments performed, offices held, and experience gained for and in behalf of the Local Union.

Ballots will be mailed by May 29, 2013 and must be returned by 10 a.m. on June 25, 2013, at which time they will be counted. To be eligible to vote, you must have paid your dues for March 2013 on or before May 31, 2013, per L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 10.

### Further Information

In addition to the Local 1245 Bylaws and the IBEW Constitution, the conduct of labor union elections is also covered by Title IV of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA).

The U.S. Department of Labor publishes two relevant booklets: Rights and Responsibilities Under the LMRDA and CSRA and Electing Union Officers.

These booklets are available by writing the *U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Elections, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room No. North 5619, Washington, DC 20210*.

## Unit meeting changes

**Unit 2315, Livermore**, has changed its meeting date to the first Wednesday of the month. Time remains 4:00 pm. Location remains Round Table Pizza, 1024 Stanley Blvd., in Livermore.

**Unit 3312, Carson City**, is changing to an every-other-month schedule. Meetings in 2013 will be Feb. 21, April 18, June 20, Aug. 15, Oct. 17 and Dec. 19. Meetings will continue to be held on the third Thursday, 5:00 pm, at Round Table Pizza, 3325 Retail Drive.

For all the current unit meeting information, go to [http://www.ibew1245.com/unit\\_meetings.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/unit_meetings.html).

## APPOINTMENTS

### CONFERENCES

**Western LAMPAC Fall 2012 Conference**  
Mike Davis  
Art Freitas

**Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) National Conference**  
Anna Bayless  
Cecelia De La Torre  
Thelma Dixon  
Jennifer Gray

**IBEW Nuclear Conference**  
Brian Leader  
Mike Jacobson  
Jeff Roby  
Jeremy Winn

**IFEBP Benefits Conference**  
Doug Girouard  
Dominic Tanzi  
Rita Weisshaar

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# Retirees celebrate NVE settlement

By Rita Weisshaar

**I**BEW 1245 retirees in Nevada celebrated the favorable settlement of their dispute with NV Energy at the annual Christmas Party of the Reno/Sparks Chapter.

This settlement, led by Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell, created mechanisms to assure that retirees will pay no more in premiums in 2013 and 2014 than they would have before the company imposed a cap on company payments in 2010. Both sides agreed to continue a collaborative process to look for similar solutions for 2015 and beyond.

Ron Borst, president of the Reno/Sparks Chapter of the Retirees Club, presented Dalzell with a customized



Business Manager Tom Dalzell, left, receives a customized minted silver dollar celebrating "Solidarity Forever" from Ron Borst, president of the Reno/Sparks Chapter of the Retirees Club.

Photo by Eileen Purcell

minted silver dollar celebrating "Solidarity Forever" in appreciation of Dalzell's efforts in the three-year campaign to protect retirement benefits. Others were acknowledged for their solidarity as well, including Executive Board members for generously funding the retirees' campaign and staff members for providing guidance and logistical support.

Other honored guests attending the dinner or sending letters of congratulations were AFL-CIO State President Danny Thompson, Nevada Alliance of Retired American President Scott Watts, and UNITE HERE President Dee Taylor.

The party included a raffle with prizes donated by the Local 1245 Executive Board, Retiree Club members, and the Retiree Club Chapters in Reno/Sparks, Carson City, Yerington and Winnemucca.

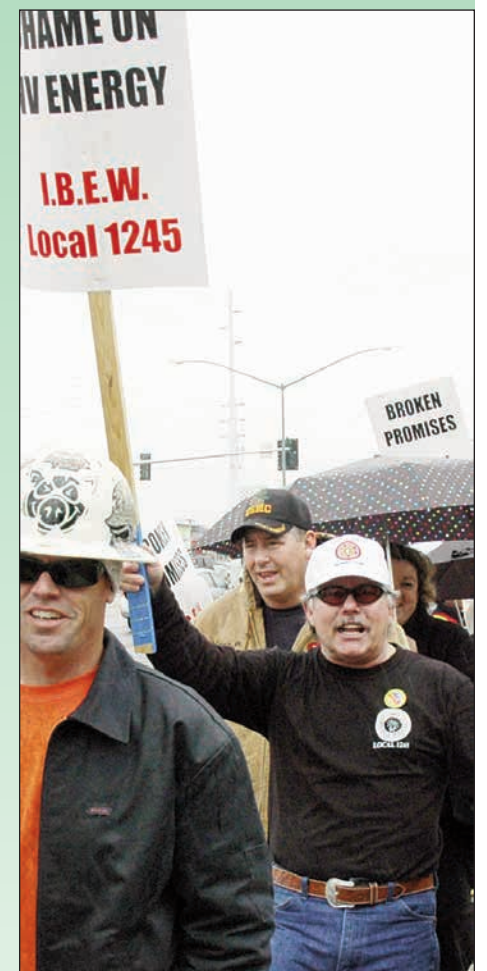
*Rita Weisshaar is a member of the Reno/Sparks Chapter of the Retirees Club who was active in the campaign to preserve retiree medical benefits.*



Rita Weisshaar and Ron Borst picket in New York City in 2010 for the retirees' cause.



Executive Board member Tom Cornell speaks at a rally in Las Vegas in 2010. In front of him are, from left, Business Rep. Randy Osborn, Advisory Council member Michelle Benuzzi, Dale Huntsman and Gary Bailey.



Retiree Tom Bird (with sign) pickets in Las Vegas in 2010.



Organizer Mike Grimm speaks at Reno rally in 2009.



Local 1245 members picket in Reno, 2009.

# Replacing pipe

A crew headed by Foreman Marty Krumle was transferring gas services to a new gas main when the Utility Reporter visited Sparks, NV last summer. The job is part of a 10-year program by NV Energy to replace "black wrap" pipe installed in the 1950s.

Safety is always a big concern on gas jobs, according to Krumle, a member of the union's "Control the Pressure" peer-to-peer gas safety initiative.

In addition to the explosive character of gas itself, other features of the job can introduce hazards, Krumle says.

"We have different contractors on site, we have road closures, we have heavy equipment, we have men on the ground and in and out of holes," as well as residents coming back and forth from work, "so we've got to keep our head on a swivel," he says.

He believes the union's model of peer-to-peer interaction is far more effective than a disciplinary approach in making employees more aware of safety issues. The entire gas department turned out in early 2012 for the presentation by the union's Control the Pressure committee.

Says Krumle: "There's a chance of something dangerous happening on any day. We take time for safety because those dangers exist."



NV Energy Gas crew, from left, Robert Belles, 31-year IBEW member; Cliff Pinkham, 12 years; Marty Krumle, 9 years; and Robert Fintland, 9 years.



Robert Belles, Operator III, at the controls.



Cliff Pinkham, Apprentice Fitter, removes spoil.



Beginning to dig is Robert Belles (in backhoe), assisted by Robert Fintland and Marty Krumle.



# Speed

New plant can be fired up quickly

Story by Eric Wolfe Photos by John Storey

John Quitter walking outside the Steam Turbine building during steam blows with temporary piping installed.

**I**BEW members are helping usher in a cleaner and more efficient energy future with the opening of the Lodi Energy Center.

Owned and operated by the Northern California Power Agency, the new energy center is a combined cycle plant that generates electricity with natural gas and utilizes the waste heat to generate additional power from steam.

Although the combined cycle concept isn't new, the Lodi plant includes a new

design feature that will help California maintain system reliability as the state transitions to renewable power. That feature is speed.

"It's very fast," says Ken Parker, a Lead Combustion Turbine Specialist at the plant and two-year member of IBEW Local 1245. Speed is important when intermittent sources of power like solar and wind are a growing part of the energy mix.

"It makes a great plant where there is

a lot of solar and wind generation. It can come up when they're down, and come down when they're up," Parker says.

The plant was formally dedicated with great fanfare in August and began commercial operation on Nov. 27. It has been averaging 18 hours a day of production, with a capacity of about 300 megawatts.

The NCPA is a consortium of community-owned utilities in northern and central California that banded together in 1968 in an effort to create lower rates

for their member utilities. Today NCPA manages seven power plant sites with a capacity of over 600 megawatts—including geothermal steam, hydroelectric and natural gas-fired plants.

IBEW Local 1245 represents employees at 11 of NCPA's 14 member utilities, including the City of Lodi. The union organized and began representing NCPA's own workforce about a dozen years ago and today has members at the Lodi Energy Center as well as NCPA's



Mark Dempsey, Combustion Turbine Specialist, monitoring a filter press operation.

Dennis Stimac  
(Combustion Turbine  
Specialist) locking a valve  
shut on a filter press  
forwarding pump.



geothermal facilities at the Geysers.

NCPA has recently added about 10 people to handle the new generating capacity.

The City of Lodi is benefitting doubly from the recent NCPA expansion. Not only will the City share in some of the power that is generated, it will also gain about a million dollars in new revenue by providing treated wastewater to help run the plan.

Another beneficiary of the new energy center will be Silicon Valley Power, which will use the electricity to power Santa Clara's high-tech industry. The Bay Area Rapid Transit system will use some of the power to move commuters around the Bay Area, which helps keep cars off the road and carbon out of the air.



Matt Cottrell at the controls in the operating room.



John Quitter on the phone.



From left: John Quitter, Matt Cottrell, Mark Dempsey, Jeff Gibbons, Ken Parker and Dennis Stimac.

## Members ratify NCPA pact

Local 1245 members at NCPA ratified a new agreement on Nov. 21, 2012. The vote was 32-2, with 6 spoiled ballots.

The new agreement raises wages 4% in 2013, 4% in 2014 and 2.5% in 2015.

The agreement also provides:

- Overtime compensation for employees who assist the Agency by telephone but who don't physically report for work.
- Nine-hour enhanced rest period discretion if employee's one-way commute is one hour or more.
- Enhanced meal language, to provide for Agency-provided snacks and 30 minute's pay plus \$15 for extended work day hours and for meals in lieu during emergency call-out hours.
- Employees who attend training classes, and are unable to return home each day, will receive \$45 per-day for incidental costs.
- Improved protection against medical inflation, with the Agency paying a percentage of the plan premium, rather than the past practice of paying a percentage of plan premium increase.
- Enhanced language allowing retirees to add dependents to their retiree medical plan coverage, not limited to spouse or domestic partner.

Employees will pay an increasing percentage of the member contribution to CalPERS, with employees paying the full 8% member contribution effective July 1, 2015. To offset these greater costs to the employees, the union negotiating committee was able to bargain higher wage increases than the District had been initially offering.

Representing the union in the negotiations were Clay Ames, Hershel Allen, Jerry Pangle, Jim Holton and John Quitter, along with Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas and Business Rep. J.V. Macor.

## Historic agreement: PG&E tree trimming

Business Manager Tom Dalzell has negotiated a historic Memorandum of Understanding with PG&E that unionizes all routine line clearance tree trimming on PG&E property.

As a result of this ground-breaking agreement, Local 1245 will gain several hundred new members. We've heard reports that many of these non-union workers are working for less than half

the wage rate of Local 1245 tree members, with no benefits.

Having low-wage workers doing similar work in our territory puts downward pressure on union wages, so this agreement is an important step in protecting the wages and standard of living of our current tree trimmers. The agreement can be viewed on-line at [ibew1245.com/news-TreeTrimmers/tree\\_report\\_12-6-12.html](http://ibew1245.com/news-TreeTrimmers/tree_report_12-6-12.html).

## Acuerdo histórico: Poda de árboles para PG&E

El Gerente de Negocios Tom Dalzell ha negociado un histórico Memorando de Entendimiento con PG&E, el cual sindicaliza todos los trabajos rutinarios de limpieza y despeje de líneas en la zonas propiedad de PG&E.

Como resultado de este innovador acuerdo, el Local 1245 incrementará su membresía en varios cientos de nuevos miembros. Hemos escuchado que muchos de los trabajadores que no pertenecen al sindicato ganan menos de la mitad de las tarifas salariales que

reciben los miembros del Local 1245, y sin ningún tipo de beneficio.

Cuando hay trabajadores con salarios bajos que ejecutan labores similares en nuestro territorio, los salarios del sindicato sufren presión a la baja, de manera que este acuerdo es un paso importante para proteger los salarios y los estándares de vida de nuestros actuales podadores de árboles. El acuerdo se puede leer en la siguiente página web: [ibew1245.com/news-TreeTrimmers/tree\\_report\\_12-6-12.html](http://ibew1245.com/news-TreeTrimmers/tree_report_12-6-12.html).

## Soccer Tournament: planning is well underway

The 2013 Soccer Tournament planning is well underway. We have a Planning Committee made up of members who have met at Weakley Hall to plan the logistics of the tournament and to review and revise the tournament rules. All 16 teams have captains and are filling out the sign-up sheets.

We are being asked many questions regarding the Tree Master Agreement that took effect Jan. 1 of this new year. The change at Davey Tree Surgery from paid-time-off to vacation and paid holidays is the subject getting the most interest.

Recent storms have caused a lot of emergency call out work, Humboldt County having the most. This call out work has generated questions and complaints concerning equal distribution, expenses and rest periods.

We were successful in returning a Utility Tree Service employee to work after he was terminated for wrecking a climbing truck. He had worked for Utility Tree Service for close to 15 years and had a very clean disciplinary file. The company reconsidered the termination and decided to reinstate the employee with a temporary demotion.

Falsification of tree work orders (pen-ciling) continues to be a problem and will continue to be a problem until a more reasonable approach to all the problems connected to work orders are dealt with by PG&E.

At this writing, the only Line

Clearance Tree Trimming company without a contract for 2013 is Family Tree. We are hopeful that Family Tree will sign the Master Agreement and continue the relationship between the company and IBEW Local Union 1245.

**Asplundh Tree Expert** – The GRC was held Nov. 29. The Committee is finalizing the minutes of the meeting. There has been plenty of emergency work activity throughout the system. Due to the forecast the company has been allowing employees to utilize vacation time off work.

**Trees Inc.** – Turlock Irrigation District takeover is to begin Jan. 2, 2013. The GRC was held Dec.17 in Vacaville. The Committee is working on the minutes of that meeting. In Fresno crews are still working out of state in Arizona. These crews were expected to return by the end of December 2012. At SMUD we are encountering issues regarding meal tickets. We expect to hold an all-hands meeting to get to the bottom of these issues.

**Davey Tree Surgery** – Lineco Medical is set to begin Jan. 1, 2013. All members currently have enrollment applications in hand. We want to encourage everyone to complete their applications and send them back to Lineco ASAP. Those who do not comply will not have dependent coverage. Due to the change in forecast on PG&E, Mission crews were shipped to work in Diablo Division to complete the year.

## Pole Test and Treat master agreement ratified

Local 1245 members voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new Master Agreement with pole test and treat contractors.

The vote was 43 yes and 19 no.

The agreement is similar in concept to the Master Agreement ratified by Line Clearance Tree Trimmers in the fall. In

addition to wage increases for all classifications, it will provide union members at all the contractors with a united front in future negotiations.

Serving on the ballot committee for the ratification vote were Chris Fialho and Anthony Martinez, tellers, and Peggy Proschold, judge.

## Acuerdo para pruebas y tratamiento de postes

Los miembros del Local 1245 votaron de forma abrumadora para ratificar un nuevo Acuerdo Maestro con los contratistas de pruebas y tratamiento de postes.

Los resultado de la votación fueron 43 por el "sí" y 19 votos por el "no".

El concepto del acuerdo es similar al Acuerdo Maestro que fue ratificado en el otoño por los Podadores Árboles para

el Despeje de Líneas. Además de un aumento en los salarios para todas las clasificaciones, el acuerdo ofrecerá a los miembros del sindicato un frente unido en las próximas negociaciones.

El comité de votación para la ratificación estuvo formado por los escrutadores Chris Fialho y Anthony Martinez, y Peggy Proschold ejerció la función de juez.



On hand for the ratification vote were ballot committee members Peggy Proschold, Chris Fialho and Anthony Martinez, and staff members Ralph Armstrong and Ron Cochran.

## Torneo de Fútbol: los preparativos están bien adelantados

La planificación del Torneo de Fútbol 2013 se encuentra bastante adelantada. El Comité de Planificación está conformado por miembros que han llevado a cabo reuniones en Weakley Hall para planificar la logística del torneo, y para evaluar y revisar los reglamentos del torneo. Los 16 equipos ya tienen sus capitanes y han estado completando los formularios de registro.

Hemos recibido muchas preguntas sobre el Acuerdo Maestro que entró en vigencia el 1o de enero de este nuevo año. La mayoría de las preguntas están relacionadas con el cambio en Davey Tree Surgery de tiempo libre con pago a vacaciones y días feriados con pago.

Las recientes tormentas han ocasionado muchos trabajos de emergencia, la mayoría de ellos en el Condado de Humboldt. Estos trabajos de emergencia han generado preguntas y reclamos en cuanto a distribución equitativa, gastos y periodos de descanso.

Logramos que uno de los empleados de Utility Tree Service fuera restituido en su trabajo después de haber sido despedido por destrozarse un camión para escalar. El empleado había trabajado para Utility Tree Service por casi 15 años y tenía un expediente disciplinario muy limpio. La compañía reconsideró

el despido y decidió restituir al empleado con un descenso temporal en su clasificación.

La falsificación de órdenes de trabajo (usando lápiz) sigue siendo un problema y lo seguirá siendo hasta que se logre un enfoque más razonable por parte de PG&E de todos los problemas relacionados con las órdenes de trabajo.

Al momento de escribir esta nota, la única compañía de limpieza y despeje de líneas sin contrato para 2013 es Family Tree. Esperamos que Family Tree firme el Acuerdo Maestro y continúe la relación entre la compañía y el sindicato IBEW Local 1245.

**Asplundh Tree Expert** – El Comité de Revisión de Quejas se reunió el 29 de noviembre. Se están finalizando las minutas de la reunión. Ha habido bastante actividad en cuanto a trabajos de emergencia a lo largo del sistema. La compañía está al día con su programa de trabajo lo cual ha permitido que un mayor número de empleados hayan podido tomar vacaciones durante las fiestas de fin de año.

**Trees Inc.** – El cambio de contratista en el Distrito de Irrigación de Turlock comienza el 2 de enero de 2013. El Comité de Revisión de Quejas se reunió el 17 de diciembre en Vacaville. Se están

*continued on page 11*



# Work picture: great for 2013

By Ron Cochran



Ron Cochran

The work picture continues to look very good going into 2013. We organized 28 contractors to master agreements in 2012 and numerous more one-time PLAs.

## Recent Grievances

We continue to have issues with the smart meter project in Nevada with terminations of our members happening on what seems to be a regular basis. We have three new grievances filed in November to go along with the other six. All are in various stages of the grievance process. What is making these grievances difficult to close is that the contractor is delaying or refusing to process them which is requiring us to take additional steps outside of the CBA to close them out.

## Pole Test & Treat

On Dec. 14, 2012 all our current Pole Test and Treat members working for five different companies ratified a new

agreement. The companies are Utility Pole Technologies, Inc., Osmose Utilities Service Inc., Davey Tree Surgery Co., Martinez Pole and Tree Maintenance, and Siemens/Republic ITS. The members voted to accept one master agreement with wage and benefit increases, much like the tree members did a few months ago. The vote was 43-19.

## GoodCents Solutions

On Dec. 19, 2012, 10 members working for GoodCents Solutions ratified a new 3-year agreement by a vote of 10-0.

Below are the specifics of the new agreement:

- Three-year term, from Jan. 1, 2013 through Dec. 31, 2015
- 2.75% wage increase for all classifications on Jan. 1, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

- Company will continue to pay the full premium for the Principal Medical Plan.
- All other terms of the contract remain the same.

## Helicopter Long Lining LOU

The original long lining Letter of Understanding, which set up training requirements and bonus pay of an additional ½ hour of overtime when performing this work, expired on June 1, 2012. While the training documents are in place and the standardized training program is being worked on, there was an oversight in carrying the ½ hour bonus pay over to the new CBA. On Dec. 17, 2012 a new LOU was signed and put into place to correct that error. Moving forward all Human External Load, long lining work requires the worker to be paid that additional ½ hour of overtime.

## Training Schedule 2013

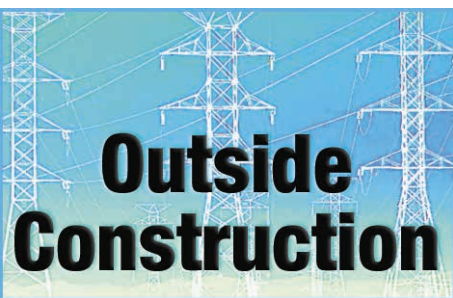
OHSA ETD Classes: Members can sign-up in our dispatch office for any up-coming classed offered through the Cal-Nev JATC. Members will be contacted directly by the JATC regarding dates and location of future trainings. Future classes will be held at the

Hedge Road facility.

First Aid & CPR is the 2nd Saturday of every month at our Riverside and Sacramento facilities.

## Special Events

- First Annual IBEW Hawaii Lineman Rodeo & Expo is scheduled for February 22-23, 2013. The Local will be sending four teams—one each from Liberty Energy, PG&E, SMUD and Outside Construction, and 6 apprentices.
- Soccer Tournament South – April 13, 2013, Los Banos.
- Soccer Tournament North – May 4, 2013, Fairfield.
- IBEW Nor-Cal Clay Shoot May 11, 2013 in Dunnigan. Registration information can be found on our website.



Members will be contacted directly by the JATC regarding dates and location of future trainings. Future classes will be held at the

## Apprentices

We currently have 330 outside line apprentices registered in our JATC program and 10 traveling apprentice working in our jurisdiction.

- 99 apprentices are working out of Local 1245.
- 206 are working out of Local 47.
- 4 are working out of Local 396.
- 31 are off of work (6 are on disability - 9 are on leave of absence).
- 39 apprentices have graduated this year to journeyman lineman.
- 73 apprentices have been indentured apprentices this year.

We have 3 traffic signal maintenance apprentices registered.

- 1 is working for Republic Electric in Local 1245's jurisdiction.
- 2 are working for Republic Electric in Local 47's jurisdiction.
- 17 traffic signal apprentices have graduated.

## Injured Workers Fund

The balance of the fund as of Nov. 30, 2012 was \$486,784.31. We did not pay any claims in the months of November or December.

## Dispatch

	As of 12/31/12	2012
Lineman	89	1693
Apprentice Lineman	10	281
Equipment Man	14	252
Groundman	46	795
Fabricator Tech	26	270
Cable Splicer	2	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>3341</b>

## Out of Work Books as of Dec. 28, 2012

BOOK #					
L-1	26	CS-1	5	F-1	2
L-2	32	CS-2	3	F-2	26
L-3	0	CS-3	1		
L-4	128				
		GM-1	14		
ES-1	5	GM-2	22		



## Taking your tax dollars—always

# Addicted to government

If you're looking for welfare cheats, a good place to start is Walmart. No, not Wal-Mart shoppers. Wal-Mart owners.

Wal-Mart is the largest employer of retail workers in the United States, and has the largest revenue. It is the number one Fortune 100 company.

The company is also hopelessly addicted to federal handouts.

The problem starts with low wages. Wal-Mart pays its associates the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. Working a standard 40-hour week yields an annual salary of just \$13,920, keeping Wal-Mart employees well under the poverty line. Most Wal-Mart employees earn even less because Wal-Mart hires few full-time workers.

According to a Congressional study, one 200-person Wal-Mart store costs taxpayers \$420,750 per year. Taxpayers

foot the bill for housing assistance, low-income tax credits and deductions, free or reduced lunches for children of employees, and low-income energy assistance, among other things.

This burden on taxpayers is not caused by people who are "lazy" or "addicted to government." It is caused by a company that forces its employees to exist below the poverty line. With annual revenues estimated at \$444.2 billion in 2011, Wal-Mart needs no government handouts.

And yet, the corporation is addicted to these handouts. Wal-Mart pursues a policy of keeping the union out so that wages remain low, ensuring that the company will continue to receive its \$1.5 billion annual subsidy from taxpayers. We foot the bill for basic services that the company is too cheap to provide.



Attending the contract ratification were Jason Saavedra, Brad Rangel, Marco Macias, Jerry Heisler, Ernejo Pena, Doug Dycus (Shop Steward), Alvaro Mata Jr., Keith Smith, Eric Camacho, Jesse Gonzaler and Brian Inglis, along with Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran and Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong.

*There's action brewing in Local 1245 units*

# Reinventing ourselves

Unions are under withering attack in much of the country, including California, and unit leaders are a key part of the union's strategy for surviving and prospering, Business Manager Tom Dalzell told unit leaders at conferences in November.

"We want to build up the union and we're looking for new ways to do it," Dalzell told unit leaders at a training conference in Vacaville. Unit leaders also met in San Luis Obispo, Fresno, Vacaville, Santa Rosa and Reno.

The Local 1245 Executive Board recently approved new funding for units to sponsor sports teams, local charities, and other social activities. The goal is to engage our members as well as to reach out to the larger community.

The union has led the way in piloting clay shoots and soccer tournaments. Individual units have assisted youth sports teams, scouting groups, and veterans, and organized bowling competitions for our own members.

"It's something that expands exponentially," said Dalzell. He noted the union's increased involvement in line-man rodeos, and our plan to participate in future competitions involving gas workers and tree trimmers.

A presentation on Local 1245's history and companies' efforts to prevent worker unity sparked a discussion about new attacks on unions today,



Vacaville Conference

including the battle over Prop 32 in California and the resurgence of "right to work" legislation in other parts of the country.

"We're reliving that history. The same issues keep coming up over and over

again," observed Ignacio Araquistain, the Hayward/Fremont unit chair.

Do you want to know how this story turns out? Go take a fresh look at your nearest unit meeting next month and help write the next chapter.



"We're reliving history," Ignacio Araquistain, Hayward/Fremont Unit Chair

"We want to build up the units."  
Tom Dalzell,  
Business Manager



Fresno training



A game of "Jeopardy" at the Fresno meeting tests knowledge about the local union.



Santa Rosa training



San Luis Obispo training



"This is your meeting. You own it."  
Mark Rolow, Business Representative



Reno training



## Tell us about your unit's good works!

If your unit has recently been of service to your community, let your business rep know so that we can publicize your good works! Or contact the Utility Reporter directly at eww6@ibew1245.com

## Susanville Unit steps up to help

This IBEW 1245 unit's good work is done mostly behind the scenes, but recently the unit got some well-deserved recognition.

In late October, members of Unit 4012/Susanville, received a letter of thanks from the Lassen Land and Trails Trust for making a donation to the Trust's program of protecting natural areas and enhancing a countywide system of public trails.

The unit also recently donated some of its funds to the local Boy Scouts, part of the unit's on-going effort at community engagement.

Inspired in part by actions like this, the Local 1245 Executive Board recently took steps to provide more funds to enable units to take a more active role in their local communities.

Unit 4012 includes members from Lassen Municipal Utility District and Frontier Communications. The unit chair is Adam Hull.

## Placerville Members raise flag for returning veteran

When a Placerville veterans group needed help hoisting a flag to honor returning veteran Doug Harris, employees at PG&E were quick to offer their services.

"This is something the Placerville yard did for a young 21-year-old veteran who lost both of his legs in May of this year in Afghanistan," said Lori Mobley, an operating clerk in Placerville and IBEW Local 1245 shop steward. "This was for Doug Harris's homecoming."

Mobley noted that Harris will return to rehab for at least another year. But he does so knowing that the folks at home have his back.



Veteran Doug Harris is greeted by a well-wisher at his homecoming party.

Employees also collected money throughout the yard and donated it to Harris, said Mobley. "We like doing it. We appreciate all the veterans and all who serve."



Lineman Travis Hyland, middle, shows the proper way to fold the flag. Hyland is a veteran and a 15-year IBEW member.



Ring the bells for the Salvation Army were, from left, Fred Payton, Karri Daves, and Rhonda Newman.

## Ring the bells

Unit 2518, Modesto Irrigation District, found three ways to give back to the community during the recent Christmas season. They collected 90 coats in the annual "Coats for Kids" drive, collected food for a local food bank, and collected \$1430.45 while ringing bells for the Salvation Army for many hours.

At right: Matt McCurdy, Michael Gomes and girls, David Quaresma.



From left: Volunteers David Ferreira, Jeremy Christensen, John Wigt, and Brandon Hopkins.

Utility Reporter

## Redding Unit boosts Youth Soccer

Youth soccer in Redding is getting a boost from IBEW Local 1245.

In response to a motion from a member, Unit 3217 (City of Redding), used money from its unit fund to sponsor the community's youth soccer field.

"Getting our members more involved in the community was one of the main topics discussed this past spring" at the Local 1245 unit officer conference in Vacaville, said Gary Moeckli, a long-time union activist at the City of Redding unit.

There were plenty of reasons to get behind the local youth soccer field.

Some union members have children who play soccer in the area, Moeckli said. The community takes pride in the soccer field complex because it was built by the community and is "completely non-profit."

Add the fact that a member of the Olympic gold medal soccer team, Megan Ripino, is from Redding and attended school there, supporting the soccer league just "seemed like the right thing to do," said Moeckli.

The Redding unit chair is Paul Snyder.

The Local 1245 Executive Board recently approved additional funds to help IBEW Local 1245 units become more involved in local projects, sports teams, charity events and other community activities.



## Fútbol, from page 8

finalizando las minutas de la reunión. En Fresno, las cuadrillas continúan trabajando fuera del estado, en Arizona. Se esperaba que estas cuadrillas regresaran a finales de diciembre de 2012. En SMUD se han presentado problemas relacionados con los vales para comidas. Esperamos tener una reunión general para llegar al fondo de estos asuntos.

**Davey Tree Surgery** – Está previsto que Lineco Medical comience el 1o de

enero de 2013. Actualmente todos los miembros tienen los formularios de inscripción en sus manos. Queremos motivarlos a todos para que completen su inscripción y la envíen a Lineco lo más pronto posible. Aquellas personas que no cumplan con esto no tendrán cobertura para sus dependientes. Debido al cambio en el pronóstico de PG&E, se despacharon cuadrillas de Mission para trabajar en la División Diablo para completar el año.

## A dose of apprentice reality

By Rich Lane

Every once in a while we all get a big wake up call. Those of us who have been in our jobs for a long time forget what it was like when we knew little or nothing about our chosen profession; when our antenna was up receiving any and all information, good and bad, to be stored and used when needed. Once a month, for a dose of apprentice reality, members of the Hold the Pull peer-to-peer committee go to the PG&E Livermore Training Center, where we talk about the line trade, the union and the quest for a safer workplace. PG&E Troublemaker John Kent knows the stark reality of a job gone tragically bad. John was one of the first responders to the Max Martinez electrocution in Benicia.

"Watching them put a toe tag on someone changes you," Kent tells the apprentices. "You lose something that you never get back. I hope you never have to go there."

PG&E Line Crew Foreman Dane Moore puts it another way:

"I used to think that guys who worked safe were punks, they slowed the job. Looking back on it, I was the

punk. I look at it different now. When someone working for me takes safety precautions I tell them 'thanks' for doing a good job."

TID lineman Mike Van Egmond and PG&E Troublemaker Tyler Davidson appeal to the young age of the apprentices and the challenges they face.

"You may think that you can't speak up when you see something unsafe but you can," Van Egmond says. "It gets easier the more you do it."

Davidson takes the same tack when he cautions the apprentices that "you see yourself as apprentices now but some day you will be journeymen and someone will be looking to you, so get

ready teach them to be safe."

"We don't gloss anything over for the apprentices," Hold the Pull Business Rep. Rich Lane says. "We enjoy the support of the PG&E training center and their instructors, so we want apprentices to go into the crew world realistic about what they may encounter. We owe that much to them."

The apprentice meetings have been enormously successful with open participation by apprentices who ask if their safety questions will be well received on crews or whether they will experience retribution or criticism. HTP members who conduct the discussions take the approach that every crew member from apprentice to crew leader is

responsible for each other's safety and no one knows who will be the person to recognize a life-threatening condition—so the apprentice is obligated to speak up.

Discussions can get quite lively. What starts out to be a low-level issue can get very pointed and challenging in a hurry, and that's where the learning begins for both sides.

*Discussions can get quite lively. What starts out to be a low-level issue can get very pointed and challenging in a hurry, and that's where the learning begins for both sides.*

The HTP committee will conduct presentations at the Livermore Training Center throughout 2013 and visit unit meetings monthly. If business representatives, safety stewards or Local 1245 members wish to have a presentation at their unit they can contact Rich Lane at 209-202-9492 or rvl5@ibew1245.com

## SMUD Hydro employees recognized for safety

Hydro employees at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District have earned the challenging Cal-OSHA "Golden Gate Safety Recognition Award." The award requires five straight years of exemplary injury rates, highly effective safety programs, and visible leadership – not to mention site inspection and surprise employee interviews by Cal-OSHA representatives.

Most hydro employees work every day around dangerous heavy machinery, moving and rotating equipment, and electrical hazards. They agree that the solutions to staying safe are to look out for one another and to take the time to study the safest way to do every job.

"Two or three others always have input on how we'll do a job," said

SMUD's Dan Currier, a plant mechanic hydro foreman and 11-year IBEW 1245 member. "We'll have a 15-minute tailgate before we even pick up a tool."

Hydro Plant Mechanic Alex Bivins, a four-year IBEW 1245 member, called the tailgate meetings "an open forum discussion for us. Someone will chime in with a warning, like, 'Don't forget the rattlesnakes today, guys, it's going to be

hot and we'll be around the powerhouse,' and it makes us all more aware."

"We're like a big family when it comes to safety," Currier said. "It doesn't matter who you are—if there's a thought of something not being safe, we speak up. And no one takes offense. We really take care of each other up here."

*(The Utility Reporter thanks SMUD for permission to reprint this article)*



SMUD's hydro employees with their Golden Gate award banner.

Photo by Jonathan Knox



## Peer to Peer: Building a Force for Safety

By Rich Lane

***"Workers join unions so that they can have some control over their working lives. There is no better or stronger example of workers taking control over their work than the peer-to-peer committees. They harken back to the founding of the IBEW. Nothing is more important than safety, and there is no better way to achieve safety than these committees."***

Tom Dalzell

Another year has passed and I am pleased to be able to report that the combined safety initiatives of Hold the Pull, Control the Pressure and Keep the Clearance are continuing to grow and fulfill their purpose; i.e. to promote personal responsibility for safety at the workplace and actively work to protect the safety of our fellow workers.

When Business Manager Tom Dalzell and the Local 1245 Executive Board mandated the establishment of a peer to peer safety program in 2010, it was to

address the alarming rate of workplace deaths and injuries among the represented line groups. As word of this effort spread, other groups asked to establish their own safety initiatives and dedicated individuals volunteered to lead the effort for their respective groups. Tom has continued to reiterate Local 1245's commitment to what he has termed a "continuously living safety initiative" and we must all stay dedicated to the task.

I want everyone to know that this report is a reflection of the work you have done. Thank you! You will find that much has happened in 2012 and more is planned in 2013. All of the peer to peer safety initiatives are in evolution and, as you read this, if you do not think you have had an opportunity to participate or have issues and needs that require attention, please contact me at rvl5@ibew1245.com, or contact your peer committee member.

It may not be apparent to everyone involved but peer committee members and safety stewards have been called upon to intercede when Local 1245 members have been unsafe or unsafe work conditions are reported. Due to our commitment to work for change at

the peer level these are not matters that are advertised openly, but safety stewards and peer committee members have responded to requests by the membership and management for their counsel and support. This is proof positive that the peer safety initiative has gained credibility and is working. For that reason it is important that you make it known that you are a safety steward. As a leader in your workplace you are a valuable asset.



## Near miss: electric flash

On December 29, 2012 an employee working for a subcontractor assigned to replace electric and gas meters to the new smart meters for NV Energy experienced an electric flash.

There were no injuries and the employee was wearing all of the proper personal protective equipment (PPE). The incident occurred when the employer loaded a 480v meter location in the employee's handheld. The employee was a meter technician, which is assigned to only replace residential signal phase meters. The

Finally, this message is for safety stewards. You are our frontline troops and what you do makes the initiative work. Without you we cannot have a safety initiative. Each peer committee member has been tasked to contact you and is assigned to monitor what is happening on your property. If you do not hear from them please contact me. It is my hope that 2013 will continue to see an increase in safety awareness through membership contact by our peer committee members.

*Rich Lane is a safety representative on the IBEW Local 1245 staff.*

employee inserted the wrong voltage meter into the 480v meter socket which created the arc flash, causing the meter to catch fire.

The Local 1245 Safety Committee encourages everyone to report all near misses to the committee through our IBEW1245 Safety Matters web page. Please leave out names and companies to protect confidentiality. The intent of reporting a near miss is to provide others with information about potential hazards in the field to help promote awareness of such hazards. *IBEW Local 1245 Safety Committee*



Foreman Kyle Martin keeps the job moving.

# CUT AND KICK

## SMUD pole replacement

Photos by John Storey

Story by Eric Wolfe



Taking dirt off the auger.

“Think positive!”

That’s what Foreman Kyle Martin calls to his SMUD crew as they use a line truck and a “backyarder” to replace a pole in a Citrus Heights backyard outside of Sacramento.

The augering is going a little slower than they’d like. There’s not a lot of room to maneuver. August has seldom been hotter. But one way or another, the old 45-foot pole is coming out and a new 50-foot pole is going in. You encounter an obstacle, you get around it. That’s the job.

“Sometimes you second guess yourself a little bit,” Martin acknowledges, “but you think positive and normally things come out right.”

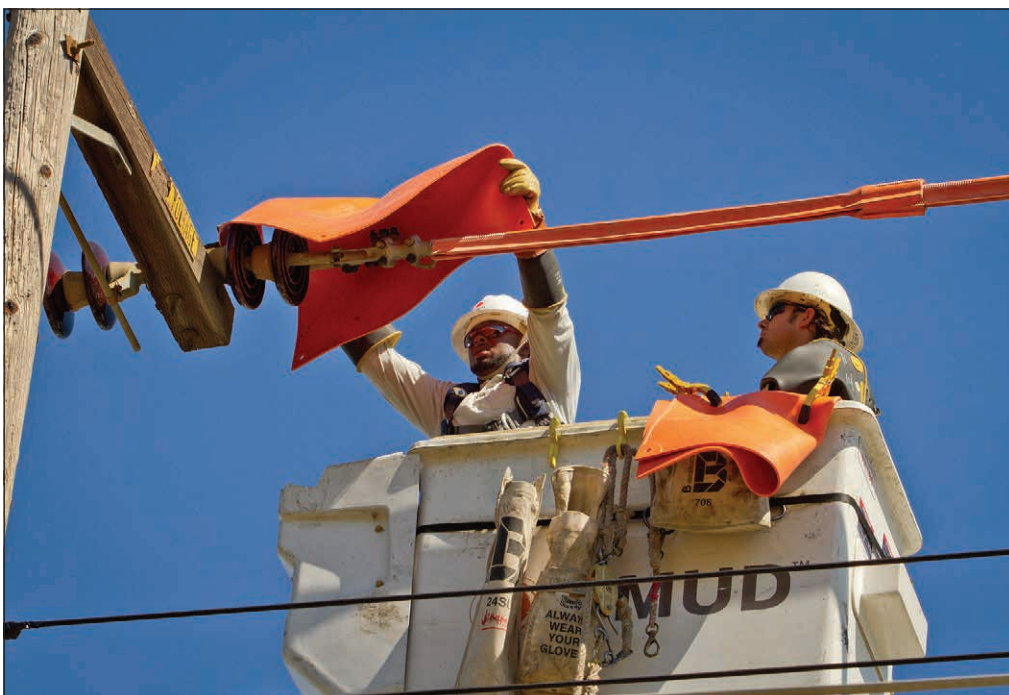
This is a “cut and kick” job. The crew cuts the old pole a few feet above the ground and then “kicks” it to the side where, wires still attached, it is supported by a peg leg. The butt of the old pole can then be removed, replaced with the new pole, and the service transferred over. Nobody’s power gets interrupted.

“It’s just basic line work,” Martin says. No big deal. As long as you stay positive.



*continued on next page*

Chris Miles installs the peg leg on the pole that is to be removed.



Wesley Simmons, left, and Louis Jimenez put blankets over the deadend insulation and hardware.



Jeremy Mashall cuts the pole after it has been attached to the peg leg.



Moving the top of the old pole to make room for removing the butt.

Wesley Simmons, left, and Louis Jimenez control the butt of the new pole as it is positioned.





The crew maneuvers the new pole into place alongside the old one.



Jeremy Marshall uses hand signals to guide a load of gravel.



The gravel is eased to the ground.



Louis Jimenez uses hydraulic tamp to tamp gravel around the new pole.



Working the pole replacement job were, from left, Wesley Simmons, Lineman, 6-year IBEW member; Louis Jimenez, "The" Hot Apprentice Lineman, 2-year IBEW member; Kyle Martin, Line Foreman, 11-year IBEW member; Chris Miles, Lead Lineman, 6-year IBEW member; and Jeremy Marshall, Lineman, 9-year IBEW member.

# Creating linemen

By Eric Wolfe

**W**hat makes a good lineman? How do you start with ordinary human beings and turn them into people who grab live power lines at great heights for a living?

George Lindsey, who started with PG&E in 1973, remembers how it used to be done.

"I hired on with 8 people. Within a month we all put on tools, we all climbed towers, we all climbed poles, not even having any formal training. Those of us who appeared to do the best we could do, didn't fall, didn't get splinters, didn't get hurt, we went on further." Everybody else, Lindsey says, "went down the road."

Line work has changed a lot since then: bucket trucks, rubber gloves, more safety gear, more rules. As the work changes, so must the training. When PG&E decided a couple of years ago to update its apprentice training, it turned to experienced IBEW linemen like Lindsey to help the company take a new look at the old question: what makes a good lineman?

## "A little bit cocky"

"You've got to be pretty attentive, and stay aware of where you're at all the time. And you've got to be a little bit cocky," says Ed Vanderhorst, a 33-year IBEW member and PG&E foreman assisting the company in the training overhaul.

Cocky, confident, whatever you call it, there's a certain attitude that linemen share: they're assertive. And no wonder. They handle a lethal force you can't see or hear or smell. Asserting control over the work environment is a survival skill.

"Sheepish guys, guys who are afraid to speak up, don't seem to be doing line work," Vanderhorst observes.

The PG&E Apprentice Line Worker Initiative—as the program is officially known—figured out early on that is was important to focus on the front end of the process: building a program for pre-apprentices, and identifying good candidates to plug into it.

If you're going to bet on someone being a future lineman, bet on the kid with a mechanical background, says Vanderhorst.

"Go out and look at their dad. If the dad works on his own car, changes his own oil, I want his kid. He's got some manual dexterity, some common sense."

Willie Bouzek, another longtime foreman participating in the training overhaul and a 37-year IBEW member, says you want to look for "the guys who grew up utilizing their hands with proj-

ects around the house." Find people who worked with bicycles, cars, motorcycles, built a tree house and generally learned to do a lot of things with their hands growing up. "They grasp line work pretty quick," Bouzek says.

A fourth IBEW member, Concord Lineman Brett McKinney, has also participated in the PG&E training initiative.

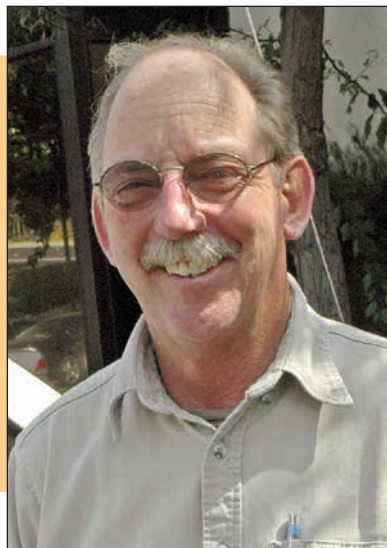
## Making a safe lineman

Self-confident people with good mechanical skills have been finding their way to electric utilities for over a century. They've built and maintained an electric grid that provides power to nearly all the people nearly all the time. But a large number of them have died

100% about being a lineman," Bouzek says.

A lineman is someone who knows how to get the job done. The training you get in various classes during your apprenticeship, though a necessary foundation, is just "rudimentary teaching."

"Out in the field, on the jobsite itself, is where the real application begins. When you come back from one of your schools, I'm going to check you out and see what you learned," Bouzek says. "When you demonstrate to me and the other crew members that you have learned the rudimentary tasks, that you have a desire to learn more, then we're going to teach you those skills."



"Out in the field, on the jobsite itself, is where the real application begins."

*Willie Bouzek, foreman*

in the process.

Line work is one of the most dangerous occupations in America. Between 30 and 50 line workers in every 100,000 are killed on the job every year, more than twice the fatality rate of police officers and firemen, according to a 2012 report in *Transmission and Distribution World*. Many more suffer non-fatal loss of limbs and other serious injuries.

The first step in making a good lineman is making a safe lineman. What's the secret? More rigorous work rules? Stiffer punishment for rule breakers?

Experienced foremen like Lindsey, Vanderhorst and Bouzek look in a different direction. Even though they are helping PG&E rethink and redesign work procedures, they say the key to safety resides mostly within the workers themselves.

When an apprentice comes onto Bouzek's crew, he learns that the job is more than just the work methods, more than the tools, more than the rules. It's a state of mind.

"It's all about being a lineman, it's

have taught you what we know, the next time we get to a spot where we need the skill set we taught you, you're responsible for knowing it."

Learning from your mistakes is an important part of apprenticeship. But when you're working with electricity, mistakes can get people killed. Linemen are not shy when it comes to chewing out apprentices for making mistakes, especially when safety is involved. Colorful language can help drive the lesson home.

It can also get you into trouble. Apprentices today are quicker to go upstairs with complaints about verbal harassment. Journeymen worry about losing a time-honored teaching tool—a good tongue-lashing.

"You have to talk nice to 'em," says Vanderhorst. "You can't cuss at 'em. You have to speak softly, don't yell at 'em."

Journeymen—and the union—have pushed back, arguing that higher-ups shouldn't micromanage how journeymen get their point across in the field. PG&E has listened.

Management is beginning to understand that sweet talk isn't always the

## Handing it down

You can learn the basics from classes, but you learn how to do the job from those who already do it. The craft resides with the linemen. And part of being a lineman is handing down what you know to the next generation.

According to Vanderhorst, passing on your knowledge is something "bred into" linemen. "The guys take you under their wing and teach you stuff. It's just part of the craft, sharing what you know."

"Here's what happens on a crew," says Bouzek. "We will take the time to teach you once, we will teach you twice, we will teach you three times. But once we have taught you the craft, once we

answer, says Vanderhorst, "so you can start being a little rough around the edges now."

Those rough edges serve a higher purpose.

"I've never really cared immediately whether someone liked me or not, but I cared if they went home alive," says Lindsey. "If you went home with all your fingers and toes and you still had the ability to see, talk, comb your hair, and you hated my guts, it was OK."

## The heart of the craft

There's a good reason that journeymen want to protect their authority to run the job as they see fit. There is no single set of rules that can foresee every

## Template for other crafts

**Safety concerns don't end with line work, and neither does PG&E's training initiative. The program's charter specifies that the program will be designed in such a way that it can serve "as the template for all other apprenticeships within PG&E."**





**“You can’t be afraid of offending somebody if there are lives at stake.”**

*Ed Vanderhorst, foreman*

possible hazard or describe the exact procedure that should be used on every job. The heart of the journeyman’s craft is knowing the reasons behind the rules and being able to incorporate that knowledge into everyday practice.

“If you follow rules to follow the rules, you’re an idiot,” says Lindsey. You follow rules because you understand what they’re providing. “I ground the 12 to provide a barrier in case something happens. It’s a must. It’s not about a rule. It’s a practice,” he says.

To these linemen, it sometimes has seemed that PG&E is trying to bottle up all the rules needed to do line work, to be a lineman, and then trying to squeeze all those rules into work procedures. One reason these union men have devoted so much time to PG&E’s Apprentice Line Worker Initiative is to help the company understand that rules can only take you so far. At some point, how you execute the job will come down to the journeyman’s experience and judgment.

Don’t get the idea these journeymen are against rules or the classroom instruction where rules are taught. PG&E’s program will include a full year of pre-apprenticeship and four years as an apprentice lineman, “with a dramatic increase in classroom instruction,” says Bouzek approvingly.

“We detoured away from classroom instruction because of the cost component in years past, and that had a major impact on our knowledge and skill sets in the field.” Adequate classroom training, Bouzek believes, ensures that apprentices can focus on acquiring cer-

tain skills without the distractions that invariably happen on the job.

But even as they assist the company in creating appropriate procedures and rules for getting the job done, these linemen believe that rules and procedures will never define what a lineman is, let alone be able to create one.

### The vehicle metaphor

In fact, too much emphasis on rules and procedures could be counter-productive.

Lindsey explains with a metaphor. Think of everything outside of the lineman as a vehicle—all the rules, procedures, tools, and safety gear. The company puts a great deal of energy into making that vehicle safe.

“We put a liner in that bucket truck, we test that liner, those are vehicles. We test the fiber glass integrity of the bucket—that’s a vehicle,” Lindsey says. In earlier times, he believes, there was more focus on the “driver,” the person who does the work, rather than focusing on all the external factors, the “vehicle.”

“We were drivers of any vehicle. We didn’t necessarily need the perfect brakes, the perfect steering wheel, the perfect transmission,” Lindsey says, extending his metaphor, “because we were drivers. We were taught how to do the work in a manner that was a safe manner. We were taught techniques, the way you go about what you do.”

In short, they were taught a craft, how to be a craftsman.

“Because of all the inherent dangers there, we were more exposed to risks,

yet because of that we became better drivers.” Today’s linemen, Lindsey speculates, can only be “as good a driver as the vehicle allows them to be. If you press the auto button and the vehicle drives itself you’re never really going to learn how to drive the vehicle.”

### Preservation of the craft

Every lineman, says Bouzek, reaches a point where “there’s not a set of rules that describe where you’re at,” and the lineman must utilize his experience from past jobs to get to the core of the matter, to assess the hazards and make a determination on how to proceed.

Most managers, he says, do not have the experience or the skills to make that determination. If anyone attempts to override a foreman’s assessment of the hazards, say Bouzek, “you stand your ground and say, ‘I’m not going to do that work, it’s not safe, I’m not going to do that. I’m not going to let my men do anything along those lines until it’s 100% safe.’”

“You can’t be afraid of offending somebody if there are lives at stake,” agrees Vanderhorst.

Vanderhorst believes the presence of union craftsmen in PG&E’s Apprentice Line Worker Initiative will ultimately lead to a better result, better linemen.

“The union had a lot of say-so in this. We’re representing the union,” he says.

Along with Bouzek and Lindsey, Vanderhorst hopes their efforts will lead to better linemen, safer linemen, and the preservation of a craft that has served the public for more than a century.

## Emphasis on safety

Local 1245 is putting new emphasis on line safety with its peer-to-peer program known as “Hold the Pull,” which seeks to reinforce safety awareness among linemen and apprentices.

The Hold the Pull committee has been visiting apprentice lineworker classes at PG&E’s Livermore training center since January 2012. The training school has set aside a 2-hour slot in which apprentices learn about the HTP initiative and participate in discussions ranging from how to identify good crew mentors, understanding the importance of speaking up for safety, and developing a strong safety attitude. The HTP committee members use life experiences as linemen and union brothers to explain the importance of safety and job excellence.



Local 1245 has created the post of Safety Steward to help the union monitor safety in the workplace and respond to safety concerns that arise. There are currently 31 Safety Stewards associated with the Hold the Pull program.

Due to an increase in committee activities the HTP committee is expanding to 10 members, up from six members in 2012. The two most recent additions are Casey Kelley, line foreman with Liberty Utilities West and Greg Dydo of NV Energy.

HTP will embark on a tour of unit meetings throughout the year that will take committee members from Redding to the Bay Area to Bakersfield. Among the units visited in 2012 were Placerville, Woodland and SMUD. The HTP committee requests that safety stewards attend unit meetings in support of the peer to peer effort when the committee is in your area.

For more information on Safety Stewards or the union’s peer-to-peer safety initiatives, please contact Business Rep. Rich Lane at RVL5@ibew1245.com.

**“I ground the 12 to provide a barrier in case something happens. It’s a must. It’s not about a rule. It’s a practice.”**

*George Lindsey, foreman*



# HURRICANE SANDY RESTORATION



PHOTO SOURCE: WEATHER.COM

*“One guy told me he had water four-feet high in his house. Some of these people have lost everything.”*



PG&E Troublemakers Hank Dickinson and Jim Zack, working to restore power on Long Island.



Terry Daniels led crew replacing transmission bells in New Castle. Linemen Eric Willis and Joe Bryant in man basket.

## Compassion trumps celebrity

**IBEW 1245 members bring back the lights in New York**

*The following story by Eric Wolfe is based on reporting from New York by IBEW Local 1245 Business Representative Bob Gerstle, who also took the photos.*

**R**inging the bell at the New York Stock Exchange is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But when you're a PG&E troublemaker trying to restore power on storm-ravaged Long Island, compassion sometimes trumps opportunity.

When PG&E Troublemaker Jim Zack came to New York on Nov. 3, his job was to restore power. So it came as quite a surprise on Nov. 5 when he was invited to ring the bell at the New York Stock Exchange. Ringing the Exchange's bell is a 110-year tradition, and the honor usually goes to a celebrity or corporate executive to honor a lifetime of achievement.

Zack, a 34-year IBEW 1245 member, was among a handful of PG&E employees chosen to represent all the utility workers who were working to restore power in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, the devastating storm that slammed into New York and New Jersey on Oct. 29.

“I was pretty excited about it. I called my son, who's a senior in college, and told him I got to ring the bell at the Stock Exchange,” Zack said. His son posted the news on Facebook “and the next thing I know I'm getting calls from everybody, asking ‘are you really ringing the bell?’ ”

The bell-ringing was scheduled for Nov. 8. In the meantime, Zack worked alongside fellow Concord Troublemaker Hank Dickinson, restoring power to dozens of customers on Long Island. And they were doing it without much direction from the local utility, which was

completely overwhelmed by the devastation to its system.

Although officials were still uncertain how many homes on Long Island had been simply washed away or damaged beyond repair, they knew one cold, hard fact with certainty: about 200,000 customers were still without power on Nov. 8, due in part to a vicious nor'easter that had blown across the island the day before, bringing snow, misery and more outages.

*“Some folks are feeling hopeless”*

Zack has worked plenty of storms in his long career, but he said he'd never seen storms that left people without power this long.

“I've seen 8 or 9 day outages, but here it's almost two weeks. Some folks are feeling hopeless,” he told IBEW at the time. “There are so many residents without power—the utility here is just stretched too thin.”

But there was no need to wait for someone to assign you a job, he said. The work was all around, always there. “People will come around the block and say, ‘Right around the next block my grandma's out of power.’ ”

People were thrilled to see the PG&E trucks pull up. In some cases, Zack and Dickinson and the other troublemakers in the field could fix the outages simply by resetting transformers.

“I would have \$500 bucks in my pocket if I'd been taking the money these people try to give you. You have to work hard to get them to put it back in their pockets,” Zack said. “I finally started telling them that the look on their faces was worth more than any money.”

Some jobs—a broken pole in the



GC foremen Chad Lavezzo from Davis



Mark Pollander, lineman GC, Chico, in Queens.

## NV Energy sends help, too



IBEW Local 1245 members were among the 18 crew members sent by NV Energy to assist in the restoration effort in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.



IBEW members worked long hours to help bring back the lights.



Apprentice lineman Brian Marino, Auburn

Utility Reporter

### A daughter's letter

## People depend on Dad to put their power back on

By Amber Turk

*Amber Turk, 13, describes herself as the "proud daughter of Richard Turk, GC line." She wrote this letter while her dad was on the east coast helping restore power after Hurricane Sandy.*

Hi my name is Amber Turk, I'm the daughter of Richard Turk (MEO), a PG&E GC Line worker.

On October 30, my dad and all of his co-workers—Anthony Vasconez (lineman), Ben Moore (lineman), and Chad Lavezzo (foreman)—got sent to New York to help people because of Storm Sandy. People ask me, "Don't you miss your dad all the way in New York?"

I say, "Yeah, I do miss my dad a lot but other people are depending on him too so he can put their power back on."

Before my dad left, as he was packing his suitcase, it was especially hard for me because my grandfather had just passed away two weeks ago. So I went to drastic measures to try to convince my dad to let me go with him to New York. So I got inside my dad's suitcase and told him "Dad I'm ready to go and I'm travel size." I pleaded with my dad to let me go with him and that I would bring all my homework and wouldn't get behind in school.

My plan B was that if I couldn't go with him I would have to send my reinforcements, a/k/a my frog and cheetah stuffed animal in the suitcase when my dad wasn't looking. I still couldn't believe my stuffed animals were going to New York and I wasn't.

My dad and I talk every night before we go to bed. I tell him what's going on at school, like how I just recently got into the Spelling Bee and how I made him pinky promise he was going to be at the next Spelling Bee competition.

My dad mailed me a postcard from the town where the Sleepy Hollow legend was created. It was so cool to be able to get something from my dad all the way in New York. This was my first Halloween without my dad there to take me trick-or-treating or eat all my candy.

Above all I'm so proud and thankful to have a dad like mine who goes to help restore power to the people in desperate need of help. Every day I think about my dad and look up to him as my hero and counting down the days till he can come home.

backyard, for example—were too big for the troublemen. They had to explain that a larger crew would be needed. The residents were disappointed, Zack said, "but once you explain what's going on they're great."

### Just part of the job

For all the praise he got from the local folks, Zack believes what he did was just part of the job.

"I'm nothing special. There are thou-

sands of guys out here just like me." He was putting in 16-hour days, sometimes more, but that was nothing to complain about when so many people had lost so much.

"One guy told me he had water four-feet high in his house. Some of these people have lost everything," Zack said. He also had heard about the utility worker who was killed a week earlier in southwestern Ontario while working on

*continued on next page*

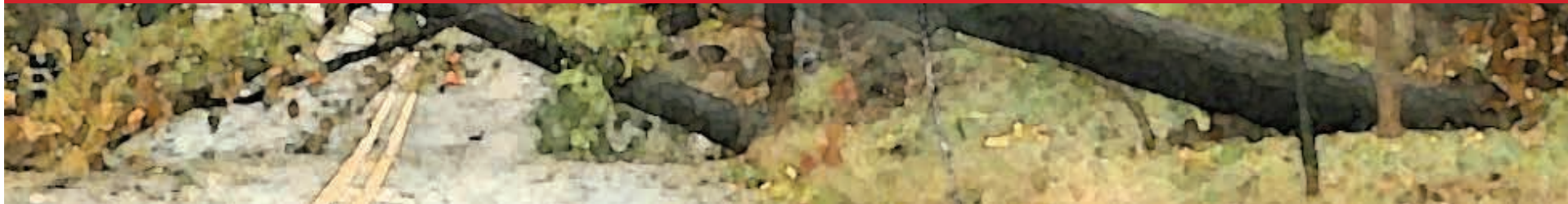


PHOTO SOURCE: WEATHER.COM



Jennifer Vargas and Wendy Johnson.

## Essential Support

By Bob Gerstle

*This story first appeared Nov. 6th as a blog at [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com), when IBEW members were working on the east coast to restore power in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.*

It's hard enough being 3000 miles away from home, working in temperatures in the 30s, not knowing exactly when you will be home. Try being a mom away from your toddlers.

Jennifer Vargas, first field clerk from Santa Rosa, is used to working out of town, having been in GC her whole career with PG&E. She has handled logistics for as many as 400 employees on storms in Grass Valley the last two winters. Being away from her children is by far the most difficult part of being in New York, according to Jennifer.

Wendy Johnson is an operating clerk from Rocklin. Wednesday she will celebrate her birthday in the command center trailer at Citi Field. Not what she would choose under normal circumstances, but she knows why she is here. "It's been a week and counting without power for these people."

Wendy and Jennifer spent the better part of the day on the phone looking for accommodations for most of the employees back here. The hotel being used has a large convention coming in and the rooms had been reserved. When linemen check into their rooms it may not even occur to them that someone spent seven hours on the phone trying to set up suitable accommodations.

Both women credit social media for making the time away from home a little more bearable. They both have been using Facebook and Tango. Wendy has read bedtime stories to her 3-year-old on Tango. Wendy and Jennifer are two of the four female IBEW members working from the Citi Field staging area. Also here are Natalia Jonas, cableman, San Francisco and Shelly Best, operating clerk, Selma.



Chris Stockton, GC lineman, Auburn



Lineman Jason Madigan ascending tower to begin job.

a power line brought down by Sandy.

These were some of the things going through Zack's mind when it came time to go to the Stock Exchange for the bell-ringing ceremony. He decided he just wanted to keep working instead.

IBEW 1245 Business Rep. Bob Gerstle, who'd traveled East with the PG&E contingent, was stunned when he came across Zack working an outage. Gerstle asked why he wasn't at the Stock Exchange.

"I couldn't leave with a clear conscience," Zack explained. Helping restore power to the people of Long Island, he said, was more important than a moment in the limelight on Wall Street. Compassion trumped celebrity. He chose to remain on the job, doing what IBEW members do best—bringing back the light.

So if you happen to see a Facebook posting about Jim Zack ringing the bell at the New York Stock Exchange—well, he never made it. Sometimes you just have to answer to a higher calling, which is exactly what Zack and his co-workers did. And plenty of New Yorkers were the happier for it.

As for those 200,000 people on Long Island without power on Nov. 8? By the next day that number had dropped to 130,000.



IBEW members from PG&E were part of a massive restoration effort in November in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.



Millions were without power, some for weeks.



Mike Tomasi, lineman GC, Auburn

## Local 1245 prevails in lawsuit

# Court rules public pensions must be paid

IBEW Local 1245 scored a huge victory for its members at the City of Redding when a state appeals court ruled in favor of the union in a lawsuit over retirement benefits.

The Third District Court of Appeals in Sacramento ruled in November that a local government can be bound by a past commitment to pay future retirement benefits to its employees even if it says it can no longer afford them.

For several years running, Local 1245 has actively resisted the City of Redding's attempt to back out of its contractual commitments. Negotiations deadlocked in 2010 when the city imposed its final offer, which included reduced funding for retirees' health care costs.

In its lawsuit, IBEW Local 1245 argued that public sector employees often give up higher wages during negotiations in order to gain improved benefits for their retirement.

"If an employer can't be counted on to honor its written commitments, the whole foundation of collective bargaining is undermined," said Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. "When we give our word, we have to keep it. We are extremely pleased that the court agreed with us that the employer has to keep their

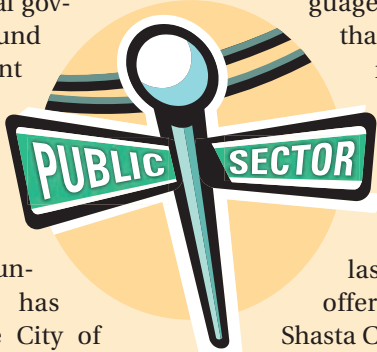
word, too."

The union's lawsuit cited language in its contracts that said the city would pay half of the health insurance costs "for each retiree in the future."

City officials argued that the language wasn't binding and that the city had an overriding duty to balance its budget. The officials cited the state labor law that allows a government agency to impose its last and best contract offer after an impasse. A Shasta County judge dismissed the union's suit.

But the county judge was overruled by the appeals court. Justice George Nicholson, in the 3-0 ruling, said that a labor agreement can provide "vested rights" that remain in effect after the agreement expires. He said the most reasonable interpretation of the original Redding contract was that "the benefit was promised to active employees when they retired" in future years.

"We have a lot of proud and very happy members in Redding right now," Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas said after the ruling was announced. He added that the court's decision "will help all public sector unions in California."



*Appeals Court Justice George Nicholson said that a labor agreement can provide "vested rights" that remain in effect after the agreement expires.*

## Members ratify new MOU with City of Gridley

Local 1245 members on a vote of 17-1 ratified a new Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Gridley in September.

The MOU provides a 9% wage increase over 2 years, offsetting members paying 100% of the PERS contribution, plus additional 1% wage increases in years 1 and 2.

Employee contributions to the monthly health premium are "capped" for the term of this contract, meaning

that in no event will the employee contribution exceed \$100/employee, \$150/employee +1, or \$200/employee + family.

Another union of city employees in 2011 agreed to less favorable terms, with new hires paying 20% of their medical premium and receiving no additional wages to offset their contribution to PERS.

The agreement increases the cell phone for employees required by the City to have a cell phone.



Serving on the union's negotiating committee at Gridley were, from left: Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas, Elisa Argteaga, Ross Pippitt, Scott Taylor, and Business Representative Arlene Edwards.



Wells REC members at the ratification vote on Oct. 31 were, from left: Shawn Kelly, Terry Madison, Mike Rodriguez, Chris Robinson, Jacob Manning, and Ryan Brodsho.

## Wage hikes at Wells REC

Local 1245 members at Wells REC ratified a new four-year agreement that raises wages 3% each year of the agreement, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2013.

The vote was conducted Oct. 31 at the Wells Senior Center.

Major provisions of the agreement include:

- All work on holidays paid at double-time.
- Work over 12 hours on a non-work day paid at double-time.
- Work over 16 hours on a work day paid at double-time.

- Dental/Vision 100% employer-paid.
- Post-retirement medical capped at \$3500 per month for pre-Medicare eligible. (Current premium \$1732.27)
- Post-retirement medical capped at \$2500 per month for Medicare eligible. (Current premium \$600)

Negotiating for the union were Ryan Brodsho and Jacob Manning, along with Business Rep. Randy Osborn.



## Willits pact

Members at the City of Willits unanimously ratified a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) in September.

The agreement preserves the current medical provisions and provides for a 2% wage increase in the first year. The agreement also gives members who want to transfer into a beginning level position the opportunity to do so before hiring off the street.

There will be a 5% wage increase for a new dual classification Operator in Training for sewer and water.

The agreement is effective July 1, 2012. The wage increases are retroactive to that date.

Negotiating for the union were Jerry Campbell, Business Rep. Sonny Hollesen and Senior Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer.

## Berkeley MOU ratified

Members unanimously ratified a new agreement with the City of Berkeley on Oct. 25.

The three-year deal maintains the City's 8% contribution to the EPMC, 100% medical for Kaiser and a Health Net plan, and increases in the retiree medical benefit.

The agreement also provides for improvements in overtime language, compensatory time accumulation, and the temporary upgrade provision.

New employees will participate in the second-tier pension formula as specified in AB340, but will not make the mandatory 50% contributions for the term of the contract.

There is no COLA for the 3-year term of the contract, and new employees will not have the sick leave cash out provisions that the current employees have.

Serving on the union bargaining committee were Jim Milstead, Greg Marwick, Bill Edwards (alternate), Business Rep. Al Fortier and Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas.

## WAPA pact

IBEW members at the Western Area Power Administration ratified a new agreement.

The agreement includes a first-year wage increase of 3.76%, with wage re-openers in each of the final four years of the five-year agreement.

Negotiating for the union were Jamie Freeze and Business Rep. Sam Glero.

## Yuba County Water Agency

### Wage and retirement medical improvements

Local 1245 members ratified a 30-month agreement with Yuba County Water Agency on Nov. 30.

The pact provides general wage increases on parity with PG&E. The agreement also provides additional money for retiree medical: \$1300 in

2013 and 2014 and \$1400 in 2015.

Sick leave advances to 80 hours, and meals are increased to \$15 and \$20.

Negotiating for the union were Phil Zoellin, Ron Knudson, Dave Reed, Business Rep. Phil Carter and Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas.

Massive union effort preserves workers' voice in politics, prevails in many local races

# Prop 32 bites the dust

The union's focus on local issues and candidates delivered important victories in November's general election.

Proposition 32, the anti-worker ballot measure funded by billionaires, was rejected by a decisive margin.

*"Prop 32 would have paved the way for new attacks on our wages, benefits and working conditions. It had to be stopped, and our members helped stop it."* Tom Dalzell, Business Manager

Local 1245 members walked precincts, worked the phones, and visited jobsites to alert fellow members about the threat that Prop. 32 posed to their rights on the job and their standard of living. The union reached out to its entire membership in California through mailings, e-mail messages and a "town hall" phone call hosted by Business Manager Tom Dalzell that reached about a thousand members, including many who called in with questions and comments.

"Political action is a very small part of what we do as a union, but it is an essential part," Dalzell said. "It was very clear that Prop 32 would have paved the way for new attacks on our wages, benefits and working conditions. It had to be stopped, and our members helped stop it," he said.

Local 1245 was active in many local races where our members had a significant stake in the outcome. Particularly satisfying were successful campaigns in

two of three contests for the Merced Irrigation District Board of Directors, which has taken a deeply anti-union turn in recent years.

In all, Local 1245-endorsed candidates won 30 out of 46 races, for a "winning percentage" of 65%. Among the key victories:

- Local 1245-endorsed candidates won two seats on the board of directors at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, as well as picking up a seat on the Sacramento City Council.
- Local 1245-endorsed candidates won two of three seats on the Selma City Council.
- In Nevada, candidates endorsed by Local 1245 won 9 of 13 contests for the state legislature, while in California four of five targeted state

legislative candidates won their races.

- Our endorsed candidates won elections to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the Cloverdale City Council, the Shasta Lake City Council, and the Placerville County Water District, where IBEW 1245 member Josh Alpine was the victorious candidate.
- Our endorsed candidates also won seats on the Healdsburg City Council and Oakland City Council District 1, as well as two seats on the Clara City Council Seat.

Eric Sunderland, a Local 1245 member at SMUD who has been active in several campaigns for the union, made a strong showing in his effort for a seat on the Sacramento School Board, coming in second.



Jennifer Gray, assisted by Rick Thompson, was the lead organizer for Local 1245's ground game in the battle to defeat Proposition 32.

Below: "No on 32" campaigners in the North Bay on Saturday, Oct. 6, were, from left: LeAnne Chant, John Mummert, Ken Rawles, and Dennis DelGrande. JV Macor is in back.



"No on 32" campaigners in San Francisco on Saturday, Oct. 6, were, standing from left: Hunter Stern, Chad Schwab, Chuck Smethurst, Robert Aranda, Landis Marttila, and Jose Artiga. Kneeling from left: Eric Wolfe and Eileen Purcell.



Local 1245's "No on 32" mobilization team met at Weakley Hall on Oct. 24 to finalize plans for the Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign for the Nov. 6 election. From left are: Corey Armstrong, Jennifer Gray, Kevin Krummes, Mike Patterson, Jammi Juarez, Fred Ross,

Tanny Hurtado, Chris Crossen, Tom Dalzell, Rick Thompson, Lorenzo Arciniega, Tony Rojas, Craig Tatum, Rey Mendoza, Eileen Purcell and Justin Casey.

# AL SANDOVAL MEMORIAL COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

The purpose of this contest is to provide a grant in aid for scholarships to colleges and junior colleges, thereby making financial assistance toward the attainment of a higher education.

1. The grant will be as follows:

Five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per year, up to four (4) years, as long as a C (2.0) average is maintained and the parent maintains their membership in good standing in Local Union 1245.

2. In order to be a candidate in this contest, you must be a son or daughter, natural, legally adopted or a legal ward of a member of Local Union 1245. You must also be a high school student who has graduated or is graduating in (the year of the contest). A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in 2013 must be attached to your scholarship application.

3. The Scholarship Grant will be made only to that candidate who intends to enroll full-time in any college certified by their State Department of Education and accredited by the Local Accrediting Association.

Responsibility of Scholarship Recipient: Scholarship winner must begin their studies in their next term or, at the very latest, in January of the following year.

4. Applications may be secured by addressing the Recording Secretary of Local Union 1245 or by calling the Union Office or by using the form printed in the Utility Reporter.

5. Checks will be paid directly to the college upon presentation of tuition bills to the Local Union.

6. All applications shall be accompanied with a written essay, not to exceed five hundred (500) words, on the subject designated by the Executive Board.

7. Essays should be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, on one side, preferably typed and doubled spaced with applicant's written signature at the conclusion of the essay.

8. Applications and essays must be mailed to I.B.E.W., Local Union 1245, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, California 95696, by **registered certified mail only, and be postmarked no later than the first Monday in March of each year.**

9. Each year the scholarship shall be presented at the Advisory Council meeting in May; the Judge and a guest and the recipient and parents shall be invited, at Local Union expense, to present and receive the Scholarship Award.

10. A suitable trophy or plaque shall be purchased by the Local Union to be presented to the scholarship recipient.

**NOTE: The topic for the 2013 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship essay is: "Thousands of union members worked in 2012 to oppose California Proposition 32, which was defeated. Please discuss ways in which this outcome will be good or bad for working families."**

## APPLICATION FOR THE AL SANDOVAL MEMORIAL COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Sponsored by  
LOCAL UNION 1245

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, AFLCIO  
P.O. Box 2547 • Vacaville, CA 95696 • Telephone: (707) 452-2700

I hereby make application to enter the Competitive Scholarship Contest sponsored by Local Union 1245, I.B.E.W., AFLCIO:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Initial)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Name of Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location \_\_\_\_\_

I graduated or will graduate from \_\_\_\_\_ High School

Which is located at \_\_\_\_\_

I expect to attend \_\_\_\_\_ College or School

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the above named candidate is currently enrolled as a student at \_\_\_\_\_ and has or will be graduating in \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.  
(School Name) (Month and year)

Official's signature and position \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that I am a member in good standing of Local Union 1245, I.B.E.W. and the Candidate, whose name is signed to this application is my \_\_\_\_\_ and graduated during the term ending \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

(Parent's Signature and Card No.) \_\_\_\_\_

# LOCAL 1245 TRADE AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRANT

The purpose of these grants is to provide aid to the children of members to attain a trade or technical education.

1. The grants will be as follows: Five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per year, for up to two years for two candidates, as long as a passing grade is maintained, and a parent maintains membership in good standing in Local Union 1245.

2. In order to be a candidate in this contest, you must be a daughter or son, natural, legally adopted or a legal ward of a member of Local Union 1245. You must be a high school student who has graduated or is graduating in the year of the contest. A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in the year of the contest must be attached to your application.

Additionally, a letter of recommendation from your vocational teacher, department head, or school principal must accompany the application.

3. Applications may be secured by addressing the Recording Secretary of Local Union 1245, by calling the Union Office, or by using the form printed in the Utility Reporter.

4. The grant will be made only to a candidate who intends to enroll in any indus-

trial, technical or trade school, other than correspondence schools, which are accredited by the **Accrediting Commission for Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCCT)**.

5. Applications must be mailed to IBEW, Local Union 1245, P. O. Box 2547, Vacaville, California 95696, by **registered mail or certified mail only, and be postmarked no later than the first Monday of April of each year.**

6. Two names will be drawn by the Judge of the Competitive Scholarship Contest from those submitting applications. These two will be recipients of the grants.

7. Checks will be paid directly to the school upon presentation of tuition bills to the Local Union.

8. Presentation of awards will be made to recipients at the unit meeting nearest his residence following the drawing.



## APPLICATION FOR THE LOCAL 1245 TRADE & VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRANT FOR MEMBERS' CHILDREN ENROLLING IN TECHNICAL, INDUSTRIAL, OR TRADE SCHOOLS

Sponsored by Local Union 1245 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFLCIO  
P.O. Box 2547 • Vacaville, CA 95696

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address of High School \_\_\_\_\_

What school do you expect to attend? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it located? \_\_\_\_\_

What Trade or Craft will you be studying? \_\_\_\_\_

Why this particular Skill? \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### STATEMENT OF MEMBER/PARENT

Name of Member/Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I am a member in good standing of I.B.E.W. Local Union 1245, that Candidate named above, \_\_\_\_\_ is my \_\_\_\_\_ and that the Candidate will graduate from high school during the term ending \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

Signature of Member/Parent Union Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the above named candidate is currently enrolled as a student at \_\_\_\_\_ and has or will be graduating in \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.  
(School Name) (Month and year)

Official's signature and position \_\_\_\_\_

# Celebrating the craft

Heavy rain fails to dampen competitive spirit at International Lineman's Rodeo



**B**rushing off wind, rain and generally terrible weather, Local 1245 members gave their all at the 29th Annual International Lineman's Rodeo, held Oct. 13 in Bonner Springs, KS.

"It's just like another day at work," said Alex Price, a lineman at NV Energy. "Sometimes it rains, sometimes it shines, sometimes it snows. It's just another day on the job."

Lightning struck as Price was heading up the pole in the "speed climb," an event in which competitors have to descend the pole with a raw egg in their mouth. Price was only halfway to the top when a judge called him back down. Like many others, Price resumed the competition after the lightning subsided.

Local 1245 members—including journeymen and apprentices—competed from Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Pacific Gas & Electric, NV Energy, Liberty Energy, Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District.

For Keno Grigsby, a SMUD lineman, things didn't go exactly as he had hoped—"I cracked the egg on the egg climb"—but that didn't stop him from enjoying himself. "Seeing all the different people, being with the guys I work with—it was a good time," he said.

Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell called the rodeo "a great celebration of the craft," giving linemen a chance to show their skills and to dem-

onstrate some of the challenges of the work.

"The weather's a challenge," he acknowledged after one of several cloud-bursts during the day. "But linemen are used to it. Remember, they restore service in wind, rain, snow and sleet."

Despite the weather, Local 1245 linemen enjoyed the opportunity to meet some of their peers from throughout the United States and a few other countries. Chris Fukui, a SMUD lineman, found a lot more similarities than differences between them. "It's like talking to a lineman, man. Brotherhood, everybody talking, hanging out, talking about work."

"It's fun—great meeting linemen from across the country. Can't beat it," said Dylan Rogers, a Local 1245 lineman at Liberty Energy. "Sharing stories, meeting a bunch of guys—I'd do it every year if I had the chance."

Steve Johnson, a lineman from Turlock Irrigation District, said the biggest challenge was "just trying to get your routines down before the guys go up the poles so that things go as smooth as possible." The TID team had some good

routines and some decent times, he said, but "we got a ding on one event" and that was enough to knock them out of the competition for trophies.

"We had some fun," Johnson said.

"Hope we can come back and try it again next year."

Safe work practices are a major factor in all events. Judges deduct points for any deviation from these practices. Any such "ding" effectively ends your hunt for a trophy no matter how fast you perform the

event. The teams scoring the maximum 100 points in an event are then ranked according to the fastest speed to establish the winner.

Local 1245 sent some of its most seasoned hands to serve as judges, including Dana Moler, a line trainer at NV Energy, and Journeyman Lineman Bubba Avery, a member of the Local 1245 Advisory Council.

"It's a competitive side of the men who do this type of work—they want to be competitive among themselves, they're a brotherhood," said Avery. "Every lineman thinks he's the best, as it well should be."

If linemen seem cocky by nature, there's a reason for it. A lineman will

only get into trouble if he starts to feel afraid—or that he's not capable, said Avery.

"You can't be afraid of electricity, you have to respect it. If you're afraid of it, it will hurt you," he said. "If you respect it and treat it with respect you can have a full career and a good livelihood."

## Local 1245 teams make a good showing

Although Local 1245 members didn't nab the top honor in any of the events, the SMUD team of Cayleb Bowman, Matthew Wilson and Gregory Baird placed third in the Journeyman Hurtman Rescue event and second in the Journeyman Pole Climb. The Turlock Irrigation District team of Josh Klikna, Dustin Krieger and Steve Johnson finished eighth out of 205 teams in the Journeyman Mystery Event #2.

In the apprentice competition, SMUD's Rorry Malia finished second in the Mystery Event #1 and third in the Hurtman Rescue. Matthew McCurdy, Modesto Irrigation District, finished fifth in the Hurtman Rescue. James Boere, also of MID, finished sixth in the Mystery Event #1 and 13th in the Hurtman Rescue. Louis Jimenz of SMUD finished ninth in the Mystery Event #1 and also in the Apprentice Pole Climb.

Congratulations to these members on their great performances, and to all the Local 1245 participants who helped make the rodeo a success.



Business Manager Tom Dalzell: "It's a great celebration of the craft."

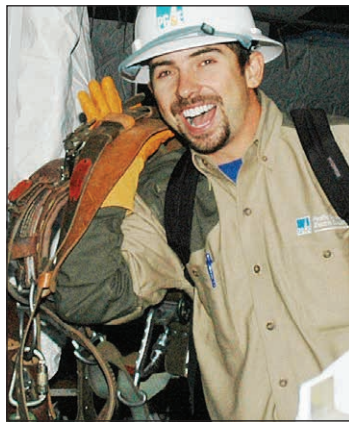


# 2012 ★ BONNER SPRINGS, KANSAS

See the teams in action at [ibew1245.com/video-files/videos](http://ibew1245.com/video-files/videos)



Sean Tallman, PG&E.



Tyler Jones, PG&E.



George McNeill, PG&E.



Keenan Curtis, PG&E.



Louis Jimenez, SMUD apprentice lineman.



Collecting their trophies are SMUD members, from left, Matt Wilson, Cayleb Bowman, and Greg Baird.



Rory Malia, right, is congratulated by SMUD's Scott Hylton.



The SMUD team of, from left: Garrett Gross, Steve Hintze and Nick Valdez.



Dustin Kreiger, Steve Johnson and Josh Klikna, Turlock Irrigation District.



Alex Price, Greg Dydo and Andy Pinochet, NV Energy .



Nick Rains, Dylan Rogers and Brian Reger, Liberty Energy.



Local 1245 members participated on rodeo teams from PG&E, NV Energy, Liberty Energy, Modesto Irrigation District, Turlock Irrigation District, and Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

# THE TOKEN BEARERS

By Mike Cottrell

*The next installment in the lineman's novel by Local 1245 Executive Board member Mike Cottrell.*

## Chapter 7

A DREAM OF FANCY. A LIFE LOST TO THE TRADE. 1954.

It rained all night Friday night and all day Saturday. Then Sunday morning the sun came out for two hours early and the gulls flew delighted over the docks and punished the blue sky with their presence. The pelicans timed each downward plunge into the ocean, then dove vigorously and often to make up for lost time under the watchful eye of the sun's reflective glow into the blue ocean's depths producing the bait fish with each penetration into the sea. The storm seemed to have paid all the cost and the ocean drenched the coastline with record waves, dragging decades of untouched sands back into her bosom. She spat vigorous eruptions upon the rocks and seawalls and made the green and red buoys in the channel leading to the harbor thrust and weave up and down in the swells like helpless lost souls waiting to drown in her arms.

The wind brought its fury into Eureka and took limbs out of trees and dropped them down everywhere. Trucks and travelers left the road and took refuge in any safe location lending protection from the wrath of the gods of torrential rain and wind.

But Sunday morning the big blow gave up like a meek kitten smothered in a timeless nap on a captive soft chair.

The Linemen had Saturday off due to the big storm and everyone had the cabin fever from being cooped up in the trailers watching the ravaging rains. The lineman hoped to get called by the power company to go on storm duty, but it never happened. It forced them to stay home and wait for good weather.

Buddy, Aileen and their two girls joined Kenny and Hazel and their son and daughter going to the café on the docks and ate a big breakfast then walked along the beach to enjoy the calm of Sunday morning.

Kenny stood in bare feet, his brogans in his hip pockets and his socks in his front ones. The boy stood between his legs and both looked out into the waves for shells. The three little girls ran wildly on smooth sand and turned back to watch the waves take their foot prints away. Hazel took black and white pictures with the Kodak box camera and Buddy and Aileen went hand in hand in front of them. Then the wind came up again and the sky turned gray and the rain started at first in sprinkles of small innocent droppings and they could all see the lightning in the distance and to the great protests of the children they went home to their trailers to play cards and build structures out of dominos and Sunday passed in claps of thunder and bolts of lightning with more hard rain.

When they left the job on Friday everyone was still in awe of the tale of Fancy and the mule Buddy had spun on the right of way. The crew had set the two poles for the structure and would hang the spar arm and insulators the next morning, but the storm prevailed and the Saturday overtime was lost so all hands were eager to get back out to the job Monday. They all knew the mud would be miserable in places but to stop working would mean small paychecks and that would send men to other parts of the country to find work. It didn't take much for linemen to move on but the one thing that would move him was lack of money.

It was Kenny's turn to drive and Buddy, Pete and Mickey showed up at his trailer and the trunk was open. They threw in the homemade lunches and boarded the port holed Buick. Kenny sped off spinning the tires on the wet pavement until they burned a little and then let off thinking about the cost of tires. Arriving at the show up personal cars were parked outside the gate and they headed for their respective man hauls. All equipment not to be used as man hauls to get the hands back to the yard at night, was left on the right of way, especially equipment that could be hard to road very far or too much trouble relocating every day. Sound economics was in full play at all times regarding the contractors. Not an extra gallon of fuel used, not an extra piece of equipment or man on a job unless was absolutely necessary. All a part of the way they looked at business.

By the same differing political approach, the union had struggled for higher wages, eight-hour workdays, and safety since its inception in St. Louis in 1891. Some men were company men all the way and some were union all the way and some were just out to get ahead and make a living whichever way it took. But the union men always looked out for their brothers of whatever persuasion and lifted the job conditions to a higher level, and that was the way the union looked at management. Bring up the job conditions; take care of the agreement that had

been negotiated in good faith over a bargaining table between contractual partners. Labor and management agreed at the table and then fought and bickered over the job conditions and production approaches and everything else under the sun until they sat down again at the bargaining table and renegotiated in good faith just to go back out with a new contract to fight and bicker and quit or get fired or laid off when it was done and the condition of the game stayed the same, but like a broke down carnival, just changed locations and players to re-stage the same bickering and fighting that will never end. These disputes carried over to the bar and to the trailer park and sometimes the job itself and the union hall especially. But the union was for more sharing of the wealth and the contractors was for less and many great men of both sides have confrontational mental and physical scars to prove it.

In the back of their old man haul on the way out that Monday morning the men tossed and turned, the power wagon stayed its course to get them to the job and it's funny how in the morning a power wagon can take so long to get to the job and at day's end find so much speed suddenly to get back to the yard. Ten or twelve man hauls left each morning carrying five or six men each. Ground men came in early and got the water jugs ready and did other tasks for the extra pay. Linemen were never allowed this time because of the extreme difference in the wages of a lineman to a ground man. All a part of management's grand scheme of saving valuable dollars on the job.

The men's climbing tools and lunch boxes had to have a covered place and every man had to be able to sit inside a man haul to be taken to work and brought in at night. No one had to ride in the back and be treated like cattle. Tools were not allowed in the part of the man haul that carried the men and men were not allowed in the part of the man haul that carried the tools. All part of the union agreement.

Before the start of the twentieth century—when the first inventions of electricity had bloomed into this trade that would carry its force across every sector of American life—had Edison and God known the type of creature that it would take to develop into linemen to see the task forward, God would have struck Edison dead and left mankind in the dark forever. Before domestic dogs came wolves, before domestic pigs there were wild boars and before the inception of framework and training now used to build linemen, there came the hogs and dogs of the trade. From this evolved the American power linemen.

Buddy slept and the others played poker and a couple of them had an eye opener from the jug hidden beneath one of the seats of the man haul. Buddy dreamed.

Fancy was under the bridge watching a huge freighter come up the waterway from the gulf into Houston. The lady gave him a meal, and fifteen cents and told him when he had a job to come back and she would give him a place to sleep. He wondered why she would offer him a bed after he had a job and not before, like some of the ladies, he had known in the past, but at least she was interested. He had called an old friend and begged a hog and gone by and shot and gutted the animal and his friend took half and Fancy the other. Fancy borrowed a horse and cart from him and on his way to the bridge he collected wood and found whatever he could to make the necessary arrangements for the cook out. A lady on the side of the road sold him a bag of potatoes and some ears of corn. He took the mule and the cart down off the shoulder of the road and eased the rig under the bridge along the canal. A boat bearing bales of cotton passed. Hundreds of bales wrapped in burlap for the trip. Another came from the gulf with bananas and caged monkeys. They swung in their cages for the freedom they would not have and Fancy thought of his freedom and what it was worth to him right now with work as bad as he had ever seen it.

He set to work on the spit for the half pig and took his skinning knife and hammer from his tramp bag. He looked solemnly at the climbing tools and black knee high boots and wondered when he would use them again. His stomach felt empty in the thought process concerning employment so he closed the bag of tools and returned to the business of the cook out. He found a good spot on the ground

under the bridge with a nice depression in it for the coals. Whittling the large sticks with his knife until the points were sharp and sound, he drove them in the soil and gauged the distance he would need to set the pig in place. He didn't know how many would come and hoped enough would be sucked into the bait and then enjoy the outing.

Fancy had purchased a lot of bootleg liquor since the start of prohibition and been to many illegal establishments to drink and dance, but this was nineteen thirty four and the long thirteen-year siege of the prohibitionists had finally ended. It had been all that time since Fancy had a good drink in the open. He'd been holding this back thirteen years and now was going to see it done, depression be damned. It could last forever. Lack of funds wasn't going to stop him either; he'd been broke before and had fun right through it all. If Sky would just show up with the beer, like he promised and the other stuff.

The man haul eased to a stop at the structure, the two eighty-five foot poles the crew had hurriedly sat on Friday before the big storm came and kept them from working Saturday. The rest of the crew got out and started working their way over to the other equipment and the mud was messy and the ground was saturated. Kenny noticed he had not woke up and went back to the man haul and opened the door.

"LET'S GO BUDDY," he screamed.

Buddy jumped and hit his head on the top of the truck.

"OUCH" and he rubbed his head. Kenny stood in the door laughing. His faced was bright red and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

Buddy was embarrassed and kept rubbing his head and came outside.

The wind blew hard and the sky was clogged with large white, rolling clouds setting sail for the unknown. The two got their climbing tools and Kenny still giggled while Buddy kept checking his head with his two middle fingers and looking for blood but finally rubbed the knot until it stopped throbbing and they each took a pole. Buddy got right up there and left the mud on his boots. Kenny took a little time hitting his feet against the pole trying to knock some of the mud off, then went on up.

The bull lines strung through the blocks and set with the poles and the grunts untied them and rigged one end of each rope to the spar arm. They ran them through the butt blocks and brought two mules over in harness and tied the ropes to each mules rigging.

"You ready," screamed Buddy to Kenny from one pole to the other.

"Ready," repeated Kenny, "bring it up."

The mules were down hill on the muddy slope and would lift the long arm up to the linemen at seventy-five feet in the air and they would install the bolts.

When the saturated ground gave way, the world seemed to stand still.

For a minute, no one saw it coming, it was just a shifting at first, and then the ground on the downhill side of Kenny's pole started sinking and shifting further downhill. His pole butt started moving with the soil and he could feel the pole shift below him and he reached in and put one shoulder against it and started to unlatch his safety and then decided to ride it down and hope it would hang up on something. He was hoping for a tree to stop the fall, but they were too far away to slow the pole and the fall would surely kill him. Buddy looked over and saw Kenny struggling to stay on it and he wanted to help but his pole was thirty feet away and he was not able to help his friend.

"Hang on Kenny, get on the high side, and ride it down!"

Kenny's life passed before his eyes and he felt a helpless feeling rush through his stomach and all over his body. He thought of his wife and kids. He looked hopeless as the men on the ground started trying to run around the shifting muddy avalanche to reach the bull line or the pole. But what could anyone really do? Then both men noticed the butt had gone further down the hill and the top was more uphill when it started to fall and it was falling toward the pole Buddy was on and they had a chance and they both knew it. If the pole could get close enough to the other one he would have a shot at relaying to the sound pole as the falling one passed it, it might even hit the other pole and break the fall some and

even fall more uphill and that would mean the distance to the ground would be reduced and he might live through it.

Now the thing was starting to fall fast. Buddy grabbed his hand line and split it. He made a few coils to throw to Kenny if need be, anything to have that one shot at him before he went crashing to his death on the rocks below.

They all sat there quietly. Buddy sat at a table with Barney and the others sat at the bar. The bottle was half-gone. It was the second one and all the beer and whiskey in the world would not stun them tonight. Right after it was over, they talked about it and went in to get a stiff one. It was a bad day, and bad days do happen on tough jobs where men risk their lives in the trade. When the pole hit the ground, the top broke out of it and shattered in several pieces. One of the mules had spooked and was rearing up and he was running up hill when the rigging hung and the pole fell into the mule and broke his front legs. The skinner would bring the teams out every day and stand by to see if his mules were needed. The mud being so bad that morning, the skinner was ordered by Barney to bring them down to set the arm. The mule lay there suffering and trying to get up and free from the rigging. One of the bones of the animal stuck through and it wasn't soon enough for the skinner to get back from his truck on the road with the thirty-thirty. The canyons echoed the report of the rifle as the skinner put him down on the side of the hill. The mule lay dead and the rigging was removed.

There wasn't a lot of anything in the bar but silence and deep thought. The bartender had never seen this many men in his bar being so reverent. The trucks sat outside and the rain fell again. Buddy thought about all the rain and the

damn ground being so saturated and couldn't believe the ground would ever have reacted that way. But it did and it would be something to always remember and be aware of on this kind of ground in this kind of weather. He took another drink and chased it with water and Barney took another one and thought about his son being up there and the pole going over with him and how scared he was when he saw his son struggling for that one chance to stay alive.

"Could have gone the other way Buddy and you would not have even had a chance to save him. Could have just gone on straight down the canyon and killed him bad."

"Yeah".

Buddy had coiled enough rope from the hand line and he was gauging Kenny's passing by, but the pole was too far away to reach out for him. Kenny had fought hard and got on the high side and Buddy watched him release the snap on his safety and that's when he threw the coiled rope and it surged out. Kenny went by and the rope hit him on the head and Buddy thought 'catch it Kenny' and he passed and tried a helpless jump and left the pole and he was able to get the rope with one hand just as his feet were leaving the falling pole and he grabbed and got the other hand on the rope and when the hand line came tight against the sheave Buddy had tied off to the top of his pole Kenny came swinging by and then back and hooked into the pole and he was safely aboard and save the mule no other being was taken by the trade that day.

Kenny came out of the shit house and walked back over and sat down with his Dad and his friend.

"Let's go home. I wanna' see Hazel and the kids. You saved my life with that hand line Buddy."

"Well I thought about not even throwin' it to ya' after that knot you put on my head this morning' when you woke me up like that."

And Buddy thought how it would have been if he had missed the throw and was glad Fancy had shown him so many good knots and good ways to use a rope.

They passed through the door of the bar and left the others to come when they pleased and the bond was made by the linemen not to let the story out until Kenny gave the word so he could decide if and when to burden the news to his wife. It was better they didn't know right now anyway. It was the nature of the work and shouldn't be brought home for them to have to sit and fret over every day.





Michele Pollard, Operating Clerk, 19 years IBEW



Operating Clerks Brenda Di Maggio, Jacquelyn White, Valerie Chan, Sam Pine, Anita Baladad and William Price (contractor).



Arthur McGee, Jr., Operating Clerk, 33 years IBEW



Jasminda Webb-Burnett, Operating Clerk, 6 years IBEW



Phyllis Robertson, Sr. Operating Clerk I-II, 34 years IBEW



Pamela Mays, Operating Clerk, 38 years IBEW



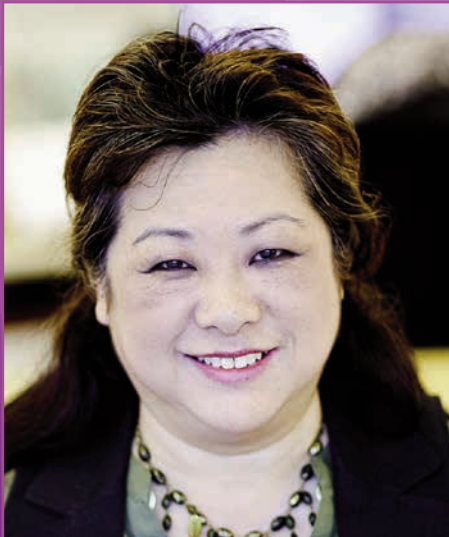
Ruben Villa, Senior Operating Clerk I-II, 38 years IBEW



Kathryn McCool, Operating Clerk, 12 years IBEW



Billie Brinkley, Operating Clerk, 24 years IBEW



Regina Kwan, Operating Clerk, 33 years IBEW



Sonia Morris, Operating Clerk, 17 years IBEW

# MEMBER PHOTO GALLERY