PUC announces discount probe

Two weeks before granting a multi-million dollar rate increase to PG&E, the California Public Utilities Commission set into motion an official investigation into utility employee discounts.

IBEW Local 1245 got the word just as 25 utilities and all other unions which represent utility workers throughout the state simultaneously were notified of the PUC order instituting an investigation.

All the utilities have been ordered to submit detailed reports to the PUC on all phases of information surrounding employee discounts by February 15. A date for a public hearing on the matter is expected to be determined in mid-March.

"Upon notification we immediately called the members of the California Coalition of Utility Workers to set a meeting to develop tactics to keep the PUC out of collective bargaining issues," Business Manager Jack McNally stated.

"We'd hoped that the Commissioners had gotten our message last year when the Coalition members met with Governor Jerry Brown asking for the PUC to stay out of the employee benefits arena," he added. "One thing is for sure — if the PUC taxes, would be used as a base dollar amount equal to the discount which represent utility workers of equal value," McNally said.

Ironically assuring an employee a discount by consumming more than than discounts.

SMUD members ok 3-year pact; 9.6% hike

Local 1245 members employed by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District recently ratified a three-year agreement with the District providing for a first-year general wage increase of 9.6 percent, which brings the journeyman lineman rate at SMUD to $14.02 per hour.

The IBEW Bargaining Committee, led by Business Representative Hank Lucas and including Ruben Ware, Ken Meyer, Gary Hanson, Bob Harper, John Callahan, Jim Loy, and Mack Wilson, was extremely pleased with the settlement and recommended its acceptance at the three ratifications meetings held during the first week in January. Features of the agreement with Local 1245's largest public sector employer include the following:

- A general wage increase of 9.6 percent for 1982
- COLA increases in both 1983 and 1984
- 1 1/2 percent equity adjustment for approximately 100 employees before the 1982 wage increase
- Agreement by the district to pay an additional 1 percent of the employees' retirement contribution to PERS, bringing the employee total down to 4 percent
- Increased shift differentials each year of the Agreement
- Increased nuclear operator's license bonuses
- Improved vacation schedule
- Improved meal allowances each year of the Agreement
- Improved medical benefits, including drug care plans (effective September 1, 1982)
- A nuclear premium for Rancho Seco employees assigned to work in

Accidents claim 3 lives

Tragically three workers in Local 1245 jurisdiction died in separate accidents all involving vehicles in less than one week in early December.

The victims were Dan Johansen, 39, General Construction Electrical Technician, PG&E; Dennis Jackson, 37, a Lineman for Sierra Pacific; and Bill Fish, 46, Electrical Machinist, PG&E.

Johansen, who worked at the Geysers, died December 9 when his truck went off the road approximately eight miles out of Cloverdale. The accident site was not discovered until the following day.

On December 11 Jackson was in an aerial lift truck in South Lake Tahoe installing a service when the truck rolled 500 feet downhill and over an embankment. Jackson was ejected from the bucket. A co-worker summoned medical assistance and Jackson was rushed to a local hospital. However, he died later that evening.

The truck was subsequently impounded for investigation.

Jackson had been a member of Local 1245 for five years having been initiated in December 1976. He is survived by his wife Brenda and three sons, Brody 9; Austin 5; John Paul 1, and his parents who reside...
North Bay Area

Flood clean-up goes on

The North Bay area was hard hit during the recent devastating storm.

At the height of the storm it looked dangerously close that power would be cut off to all of Marin County and some East Bay areas which receive power from the Ignacio Substation situated north of Sausalito on landfill near San Pablo Bay.

The Substation was in peril as waters crested covering most of the 230 kv control boxes which continued to transmit power, but were hazardous to operate.

"If water had risen another 6 inches there would've been extensive outages," Shop Steward Dave Delk reported.

The usual crew of four was expanded to 20, and members worked around the clock in the midst of the crises. Delk said that he logged in 100 hours in a matter of days.

Pumps were set up inside the station when water started coming in from manholes throughout the yard.

When the water subsided work got underway to examine the wiring and breaker boxes for necessary repairs.

Gas crews were also kept busy throughout the deluge with some crews working around-the-clock in the hardest hit, storm-struck areas.

Handling some repair work at Ignacio Substation are members Tony Miller, Apprentice Electrician, Substation Maintenance, I, and Gary Houck, Electrician, Substation Maintenance, I.

Northeast of Marin County's Ignacio Substation, Sonoma gas crew members are pictured repairing flood damaged lines. Mike Radloff, left, has been with Local 1245 for 12 years, and Glen Poulter, right, is a 22-year Local 1245 member.
Jackhammer hazard? Report it!

A problem with jackhammers has recently been brought to the attention of the Local 1245 Safety Committee by members in PG&E’s Coast Valley’s Division.

The locking handle tip has broken off several of the jackhammers, with enough force to shatter a pair of safety glasses.

Local 1245 members are asked to report any similar instances of jackhammer problems to Local 1245 Safety Committee, IBEW Local 1245, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA, 94566. Please supply the Safety Committee with the manufacturer’s name and the model number of the jackhammer, along with a brief note explaining how it was being used when it failed.

Another equipment failure was brought to the attention of the Safety Committee by IBEW Local 68 in Alaska.

A safety line snap released causing a member to fall 32 feet, creating permanent injuries.

The snap is Miller 2990 Snap, 5,000 pound test Round Nose Snap with 5/8 inch throat opening. When there is slack in the line or belt, the snap turns upside down and releases when force is exerted on it.

Local 68 is looking for any member who has had problems with this type of snap. Please contact Dick Wyland, No. 40 St. Moritz Terrace, Summit Park, Utah, 84060.

It is a concern of the Safety Committee that if this is in service by employers the use of this snap should be discontinued.

Scholarship deadline extended

Deadline for receiving applications for the Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship Contest sponsored by IBEW Local 1245 for graduating high school seniors has been extended to April 2. Material must be postmarked and mailed registered or certified by April 2 to Local Union headquarters.
Local 1245 calls for new OSHA head to stop takeaways, reversals

Business Manager Jack McNally recently wrote Thorne Auchter, Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA, to express the Union's views on the new OSHA policies which are jeopardizing worker health and safety, and called for Auchter "to remedy the damage done so far.

Dear Mr. Auchter:

As a labor union representing more than 20,000 employees in California, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, we wish to express to you our opinions and concerns regarding recent changes and proposals by OSHA in standards, setting, enforcement, and worker health and safety education.

First of all, we would like to make clear the positive impact OSHA has had for our members since its inception in 1970. The guidelines provided by OSHA standards and regulations have greatly aided Local 1245 in establishing safer practices with employees, while the possibility of enforcement by Federal and State inspectors has served to emphasize workplace health and safety as a major priority for supervisors.

Rather than retracting these standards and delaying further standards setting, the current standards and regulations must be retained and expanded to help promote health and safety in the workplace. Specific criteria for what constitutes achievement and maintenance of health and safety conditions, rather than vague performance-standards, must be included in standards as guidelines for employers, employees, and inspectors.

Without specific OSHA standards to use as guidelines and without threats of enforcement by OSHA inspectors to provide incentive for compliance, your plans to sponsor cooperative labor-management health and safety committees will not work.

Your retraction of walkthrough pay, the OSHA requirement that employers accompany compliance officers on inspections be paid on company time, has greatly weakened the effectiveness of enforcement. We feel this regulation should be re-instated to encourage more effective enforcement.

A reduction in Federal monitoring of state occupational safety and health programs would also greatly weaken the effectiveness of enforcement. We urge you to maintain the Federal monitoring system that we have been relying on for effective enforcement by various state programs.

In the area of standards setting, we particularly disapprove of the delays by your administration in issuing a labeling standard and urge you to move as quickly as possible on this much needed standard.

Also, proposals by your administration to allow employers to use respirators and other personal protective clothing and equipment, rather than engineering controls, would fall far short of assuring protection to the greatest extent possible, which was required of OSHA by the U.S. Supreme Court in its June 17, 1981, decision on the cotton dust standard.

Finally, your instructions earlier this year to recall and destroy certain OSHA films and booklets, because you considered them to be too pro-worker, strongly suggest an anti-worker attitude that is entirely inappropriate for the agency charged with safeguarding the health and safety of American workers.

We recommend that you remedy the damage done so far by sponsoring new worker education materials and programs to at least the level of the previous OSHA administration.

Thank you for taking the time to receive our comments. We look forward to hearing from you on our recommendations and would gladly provide additional information supporting our positions.

Sincerely,

Jack McNally
Business Manager, IBEW Local 1245
Miller responds

Dear Mr. McNally:

Congressman Pashayan has sent me your letter to him of November 16, 1981 concerning the implementation and enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and a copy of your letter to Assistant Secretary of Labor Thorne G. Auchter.

First of all, I certainly agree with you about the importance of a strong effort to enforce the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and I share your concerns about the current Administration’s reduced commitment to enforcement of OSHA. I have raised those concerns generally with Secretary of Labor Donovan and Assistant Secretary Auchter at hearings before this Committee.

In addition, I have specifically questioned the current Administration’s policy of reducing funding for the New Directions grants, and when I receive a response to my inquiry from Assistant Secretary Auchter, I will inform you of what his intentions are.

Finally, while OSHA is not within the jurisdiction of this Subcommittee, I have had hearings on the effect of workers’ compensation costs of inadequately regulating workplace health standards. I believe that costs of compensation, which are largely borne by the taxpayers, are not adequately reflected in OSHA’s decisions with respect to health and safety standards. I’m enclosing a copy of these hearings for your information.

I intend to keep the pressure on to the extent that I can do so. I believe that the Administration’s reduced workplace standards and reduced enforcement of those standards are not only inhumane, but are shortsight ed in terms of the economic impact. I am pleased that I have your support in this matter.

Your letter to Mr. Auchter certainly raises these concerns which we share most forcefully. I would appreciate knowing how he responds to your inquiry. I am pleased that workers and their unions are starting to make clear to the Reagan Administration, their views about the importance of a strong workplace safety and health program. I strongly believe that workers and the public generally recognize the importance of strong workplace and environmental regulations.

Sincerely,

George Miller
Chairman,
Committee on Education and Labor
Member of Congress
District 7

FROM THE FIELD — 1981 WRAP UP

GC crew works fast to save trapped horse

A PG&E General Construction Line crew, along with a Davey Tree crew were heroes for a day when they recently rescued a horse from possible destruction in Morgan Hill.

The crews were working in the area, where the PG&E crew was installing a new line on a ranch. While eating lunch, they spotted a young woman attempting to lead her horse across a foot bridge. The horse suddenly slipped, fell through a guard rail and tumbled 15 feet into a narrow gulley, and landed belly up, lodged against a tree.

The crews worked together, using a fibre sling and the line truck to pull the horse up to safety. A quick response by PG&E crew members: Don McKinley, Lineman, Dave Bower, Line Truck Driver; and Bob Dickson, Lineman; and Davey Tree members Rick Ramelow, Foreman, and Gervin Bonilla, Climber, brought the frightened uninjured animal to safety, much to the relief of the horse’s owner.

The owner of the horse contacted PG&E and Davey Tree supervisors, commending the crews on their effort to save the animal.

BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Good old days of summer remembered

Last August Pleasant Hill Park’s four softball fields echoed with cheers and groans as the 12 teams participating in Jim McCauley’s Outlaws Softball Tournament met in intense but friendly competition.

As the thermometer passed the 90 degree mark, the free beer flowed quenching thirsts, softening defeats, and washing down the free hot dogs and the potato chips.

The tournament, which was put on by members of Local Union 1245 featured paid umpires. ‘A’ and ‘B’ division players, and five sets of individual trophies.

At the tournament’s end 75 trophies were awarded. Participants concluded that the spirit of sportsmanship and the principles of Union brotherhood were given new meaning by all who had participated in this event.

The winning teams were: ‘A’ Division, 1st Place — Milo’s Heros (Oakland); 2nd Place — Garcia Backhoe (San Jose). ‘B’ Division, 1st Place — the Outlaws (Oakland); 2nd Place — Belmont Cubs (Belmont), and Consolation Winner — the Ado Stars (Richmond).

Other participating teams included: ‘A’ Division — Ballena Liquors and the Gas Rats; ‘B’ Division — S. F. Substation. 12 Pak, the Wreckers, Navato and the Artisans.
Crew jumps as brakes fail; two injured, truck totalled

Health and safety survey at Geysers

AFTER: Brad Fransen with remains of cab following accident

Howard Steiner
New 1245 president sworn in

Health and safety survey at Geysers

AFTER: Brad Fransen with remains of cab following accident

Howard Steiner
New 1245 president sworn in

Accident claims one life; survivor severely burned

Union safety group gets results at Lynch

Local participates in PCB protection policies for members

Local participates in PCB protection policies for members

Big turnouts for Solidarity Day as workers protest Reagan's policies

PATCO's supporters protest at airport

Boycott 'rat line'
Stewards call for PSEA to honor Union's boycott

'Reagan's cutbacks hit women hardest'
Advisory Council members attend quarterly meeting in Concord

Members OK package in ratification vote

Members testify at hearing

Local 1245 heads up Coalition to tackle P.U.C. interference

Board votes to back Disabled Vets

IBEW Local 1245 at work

Senior members honored at award dinner

Health threat uncovered

Board awaits word on PCB standard

High voltage effects still open to question

Giving, sensitive, dedicated; Al Sandoval will be missed

Members testify at hearing
On the Job — Moss Landing Power Plant

Olga Estrella, Certified Welder

Trailblazing member Olga Estrella has become the first woman to pass certification requirements for Certified Welder in Local 1245’s PG&E jurisdiction while completing a rigorous welding apprenticeship at Moss Landing Power Plant.

The Apprenticeship Program is a 36-month program. She passed her certification requirements in a little over two years, and recently after completing 30 months as an Apprentice Welder submitted a bid for Certified Welder.

Prior to entering the apprenticeship program she worked four years as a Mechanical Maintenance Helper before her bid for Apprentice Welder was approved.

Salinas born and reared, Estrella recalls, “I first went to PG&E because I was sick of making lousy pay — and I told them I wasn’t afraid to work hard.”

“After my interview and general testing I was called back in, and offered a job in mechanical maintenance at Moss Landing, and was informed that it would be heavy, hard work. And it was. I’m athletic,” she added, “but it was hard work with a lot of walking and lifting, and it was a new experience learning to work with tools.”

Estrella was one of two women to first work at the plant in a non-clerical position.

Reactions to a woman first working at the power plant were varied.

Seven years later, after some rough moments wondering why she’d chosen such a path, her perseverance has paid off. She’s proud of her skills and her job, and proud that she earns a substantial salary to support herself and her five-year-old daughter, Danielle.

Estrella, 28, was aided in her apprenticeship training by Harold Walker, Sr., a Certified Welder, who’s also a Shop Steward. The time allotted for training was made possible by Maintenance Supervisor at Moss Landing.

The road to certification was rocky in some spots and it was during those times that Estrella says she began learning about the benefits of Union involvement. She has subsequently become a Shop Steward and is an active member of the Union Health and Safety Committee.

First job of the day is getting daughter Danielle ready for school.

Olga, an Apprentice Welder with Certified Welder Harold Walker, Sr., who plays a significant part in working with apprentice welders at Moss Landing.

Olga, who’s also a Shop Steward at Moss Landing, meets with Business Representative Ken Ball.
Olga setting up welding equipment.

Photos by Carol Bedsole

Here Olga cuts a bracket.

Moss Landing Power Plant, some 10 miles northwest of Salinas.

Crew members with Olga, left to right are: Nate Coulter, Lew Holst, Kim Miner, Ralph Dominguez, Brad Jones, Harold Walker, Sr., and Chris Hall.
Unit Meeting

Taking care of business

Throughout IBEW Local 1245 more than 80 unit meetings are held each month. Members gather to learn more about Union activities, and to vote on Union business.

At Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant members participate in the only Unit which has a single headquarters. They meet monthly right after work at the San Luis Bay Inn which is situated only a couple minutes from the Power Plant gate.

"We had 31 members at our last meeting," Unit Recorder Dan Mitchell reported, adding, "and for the past two years we've only failed to have a quorum three times."

Chairman Dave Cannon says that interest is high among the 150-plus Bargaining Unit members at the plant and that a portion of each meeting is devoted to explaining Union procedures for the benefit of new members.

Meeting activity increased last year with the threat of possible work stoppage when the Abalone Alliance nuclear protestors set out to blockade the plant. As it turned out work went on as usual with our members being bussed through the blockade attempt, and inside word indicated that there may have been more media people on site than blockaders.

Steve Benson, far right, discusses job-related concerns with Unit members and officers.

Group shot of members voting on current business at recent monthly Unit meeting included, front row, l-r, Mayo McCracken, Bob Hurless, Reggie Bazerra, and Mike Ginn; second row, l-r, Bud Murphy, Mike Armstrong, Dennis Jaehnig; third row, l-r, Art Moore, Curt Rohne, Michael Johns, and Greg Smith; fourth row, l-r, Rich Chadband, Larry McKinnon, Bill Goodes, and Howard Ferguson. Pictured below are Unit members obscured in the group photo.

Other participants included Wes Hardisty, and Ernie Salazar.
United States Bureau of Reclamation

The pinch of "Reaganomics" has recently been felt by Local 1245 members employed by the United States Bureau of Reclamation, who have been handed a 4.8 percent wage increase for 1982. Business Representative Pete Dutton, aided by Bargaining Committee members Al Wright, Bill Chambers, Don Day, Rick Knehans, Dan Wayand, and Marshal Duarte in late December completed bargaining with the Bureau for 1982, severely hampered by President Reagan's restrictions on federal employees. In addition to the 4.8 percent wage increase, the Bargaining Committee made certain gains in contract language and working conditions, including an increased shift premium. IBEW attorneys are currently reviewing the legislation which limited our members’ 1982 wage increase to 4.8 percent and analyzing possible legal attacks.

Nevada Irrigation District

Local 1245 members employed by the Nevada Irrigation District recently ratified a new one-year Memorandum of Agreement with the District. According to Business Representative Gary Hall, the Bargaining Committee, consisting of NID employees Bill Baum, Paul Blocker, Tom Santos, and Terry Mayfield, won a 9.5 percent general wage increase; wage parity with PG&E for employees at the District’s generating facility (Yuba-Bear Project); language improvements in the area of promotions, improved retirement benefits, and medical insurance for employees’ first dependents.

City of Alameda

Business Representative Voeidis Stamps reports having reached agreement with the City of Alameda for a new one-year Memorandum of Agreement for the City’s Electric Department employees. Highlights of the agreement include a 9.7 percent general wage increase, which brings the journeyman lineman rate to $14.40 per hour, and doubletime for call-outs.

Thermalito Irrigation District

Local 1245 members at the Thermalito Irrigation District received an 8.5 percent general wage increase effective January 1, 1982, as the result of a new Memorandum of Agreement negotiated by Business Representative Ed Fortier and Bargaining Committee member Dale Loomis. Fortier further reports that Local 1245 won Vistion Care as part of the new one-year agreement.

Yuba County Water Agency

Business Representative Ed Fortier also has just completed 1982 negotiations with the Yuba County Water Agency. As a result of these negotiations, Agency employees will receive wages in parity with PG&E, as well as improvements in the retirement plans. The equipment mechanic has also been upgraded as a result of the recent bargaining.

Oroville-Wyandote Irrigation District

Negotiations on a wage-reopener have recently concluded at Oroville-Wyandote Irrigation District. Under the terms of the new agreement, negotiated by Business Representative Ed Fortier, Electric Department employees will continue with PG&E parity for wages, Water Department employees will receive a 7 percent general wage increase with the District picking up the increased FICA contributions, and life insurance benefits for all employees have been tripled.

Other Ongoing Negotiations

Business Representative Darrel Mitchell is still in bargaining with the Truckee-Donner Public Utility District, where Local 1245 members recently rejected the District’s offer of an 8 percent general wage increase.

Representative Pete Dutton is presently in bargaining with both the Merced Irrigation District (wage-reopener only) and the Tri-Dam Project, and expects to have settlements at both properties before the end of February.

The State Mediation and Conciliation Service had been called in to mediate negotiations between IBEW and the Shasta Dam Area Public Utility District, with the first mediated meeting between Business Representative Rich Hafner and the District expected as this issue of the Utility Reporter went to press.

Pre-negotiated Wage Increases Implemented January 1, 1982

Pursuant to existing agreements, wage increases for IBEW members at several public sector properties were implemented on January 1, 1982, including the following:

City of Santa Clara Electric Department: Using a pre-negotiated formula, Local 1245 members received increases of between 11.08 and 12.46 percent.

Orange-Cove Irrigation District: A pre-negotiated COLA clause gave IBEW members an across-the-board increase of 9.5 percent on the first of the year.

Richvale Irrigation District: A negotiated increase of $34 per week for all employees (ranging from 9.1 to 10.7 percent) was received by all IBEW Local 1245 members.

City of Roseville Electric Department: Under the terms of a COLA clause, employees received a 7.8 percent wage increase.
Vietnam Memorial funds sought

More than $460,000 has been contributed by AFL-CIO affiliates to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, spokespersons for the Fund recently announced.

IBEW Local 1245 contributed $500 to the Fund which was established to design and develop a memorial in Washington, D.C. to honor and recognize all Americans who served in Vietnam, and those who died in the war. The organizers have set a goal of $7 million, all of which will come in the form of donations.

The memorial will make no political statement on the war — and is proposed as a means for all Americans, regardless of differing opinions on the war, to unite in acknowledging the sacrifice of those who served.

Fund raising is still underway for the project. Congress in July 1980 authorized a two-acre site in Constitution Garden near the Lincoln Memorial for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. A design was chosen in a national contest sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and it is proposed as a means for all Americans, regardless of differing opinions on the war, to unite in acknowledging the sacrifice of those who served.

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