PG&E members vote yes on general wage increase

The wage settlement offer presented to IBEW 1245 PG&E members has been accepted by both the Physical and Clerical bargaining units. The voting was a result of the negotiations that occurred in 1987 when the settlement package included a wage reopener to occur in the third year of a three-year contract.

The bargaining committee started to work on Tuesday, September 26, 1989, where they read and considered all the proposal submitted by members at Unit meetings. After many hours of work they were ready to meet with PG&E. That first meeting occurred on October 10, and negotiations progressed rapidly until the conclusion on November 21, 1989.

Members receive a General Wage increase of 3.5%. It goes into effect on January 1, 1990 and applies to all Physical and Clerical employees. They also receive a one percent performance bonus. It will be paid to all Physical and Clerical employees on February 28, 1990. Everyone who is employed by PG&E in 1989 and actively on the payroll on January 2, 1990 or who return to the active payroll in 1990 will receive the payment. It will be based on the employees gross income (as reported on the W-2 form) but will not be applied to pension bands or 401k savings fund plan.

The ratification results for Physical members were 12001 eligible to vote, 6967 votes received, 3703 voting yes and 3243 voting no. The ratification results for Clerical members were 3516 eligible to vote, 2081 votes received, 1544 voting yes and 531 voting no.

1990 PG&E premium pay announced

Local Union 1245 and Pacific Gas and Electric Company have announced new hourly premiums for shift and relief employees in the Physical and Clerical bargaining units. The premiums are based on the 1990 weighted average straight-time hourly rate of $18.16. The shift premiums are: Second Shift $8.82, Third Shift and Sunday $1.63, Sunday Second Shift $9.45, Sunday Third Shift $3.26 and Relief Premium $18.04.

The Nuclear Premiums are: Nuclear Auxiliary Operator $1.79, Certified Fuel Handler $2.18, Reactor Operator License $2.61, Senior Reactor Operator License Premium $3.26 and Senior Reactor Operator License Premium for Senior Control Operator at DCPP $4.24.

The 1990 daily remote reporting expense allowance for the employee reporting to an assembly site less than 15 miles from the regular headquarters will be $10.75. The employee who report to an assembly site 15 miles or more from the regular headquarters will receive daily a remote reporting expense allowance of $15.50.

Union denounces Lineco increase

December 28, 1989
Matt Frazer, Chapter Manager
Western Line Constructors Chapter of National Electrical Contractors Association
8184 South Highland Drive, Suite C-2
Sandy, Utah 84093

Dear Mr. Frazer:

After conferring with legal council we have been advised that the Lineco Trust Agreement does not allow for an interim increase in the Health and Welfare plan. Therefore, we are requesting that the contractors not deduct the $.25 from any IBEW Local Union 1245 employee’s check.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,
/s/Ron Fitzsimmons
Assistant Business Manager

Darrel Mitchell, Senior Assistant Business Manager; Tom Daizell, Staff Attorney and Jack McNally, Business Manager, discuss random drug testing. See PAGE 6 & 7 for an update in “Random drug testing put on hold at Diablo Canyon”

Modesto Irrigation District employees praised

The employees of the Modesto Irrigation District were commended for their exemplary performance during and after the October 17, 1989 earthquake. The Board of Directors of the Modesto Irrigation District, on October 24, 1989, passed Resolution 89-157 which noted the efforts of those who worked hard, voluntarily joined together, came to work early and stayed late and helped restore service to the Modesto Irrigation District and the customers it serves.
IBEW Founders’ Scholarship

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has announced that it is now accepting applications for its 1990 Founders’ Scholarship. Each scholarship is worth $3,000 yearly for up to four years of undergraduate study. The IBEW offers to its members a maximum of 12 scholarships annually for university studies leading to a degree in the fields which contribute to the improvement of the electrical industry. They will be granted to qualified candidates from all branches of the IBEW on a competitive basis.

The scholarships are open to IBEW members who have been in good standing for at least four years by the time they begin college study. Dues must have been paid to a local union with no withdrawal period during this period of time. These scholarships are available to members who have not received a bachelor’s degree. It is also required that apprentices shall have completed a full formal apprenticeship as established in their trade and area.

Applications must be submitted to the IBEW Founders’ Scholarship Selection Committee at 1125-15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005 on official application forms. The forms must be received by the Scholarship Selection Committee by February 23, 1990. Additional information and application forms are available from Fran Zamora, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 or Phone (415) 933-6060.

The IBEW Founders’ Scholarship honors a small group of skilled and dedicated wiremen and linemen who, in November 1891, organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

UMW and Pittston reach tentative accord

The United Mine Workers Union and Pittston Co. reached a tentative agreement that could end a bitter nine-month strike. The new contract, agreed to by negotiators must be ratified by 1,906 striking miners in Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky.

Both Pittston and the UMW have agreed to secrecy until strikers at Pittston’s can vote on the pact. The Union expects the vote to take place by the middle of January and feel confident that the membership will be happy with the settlement. Wages were never an issue in the strike, which began in April. Instead, Pittston sought to cut cost through work-rule changes and by reducing health insurance coverage by dropping out of the multipayer health and pension funds that cover miners.

The strike has been a rallying point for organized labor, whose leaders say that other coal companies would also refuse to pay into a benefit plan if Pittston’s attempt to stay out holds up in contract talks.

Seventy-five years ago

IBEW Locals in the far-western United States are hardly Johnny-come-lately's when it comes to opposing alcohol abuse. Recently, public attention has focused on drinking and drug use on the job, but in the early days of the IBEW, union locals expressed equal concern about the effect of drinking on union business.

In 1914, for example, IBEW Local Union 6 in San Francisco included three separate warnings about drinking in its Working Rules: "Any person entering a meeting of this Union while under the influence of liquor," the Rules declared, "shall be immediately ejected and, if he be a member of this Union, shall be fined not less than $1.00, and this fine cannot be remitted." Foremen and inspectors, meanwhile, were sternly warned that they risked similar fines if they permitted intoxicated members to enter meetings.

These were steep fines — since wages for Local 6 members in this period varied from $2.50 to $5.50. It’s clear that drinking was far from a laughing matter for the union. This, of course, remains as true now as ever.

Dora Carone, Unit 3318 Elko, Nevada; Carolyn Pullman, Truckee, California; Janice Anderson Unit 3311 Reno, Nevada; Kathy Tindall, Unit 3311 Reno, Nevada and Betty Newberry Unit 3311 Reno, Nevada attended the Northern Nevada Central Labor Council and Building and Construction Trades Council of Northern Nevada Christmas Party on December 9, 1989.
Governor Deukmejian attacks labor

Previous articles in this paper have shown how present Republican Governor, George Deukmejian, has seen away at the rights and benefits of the workers in this state. The letter below is from John F. Henning, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. It explains how the Governor wants to attack you again with prison labor. Consider his action and write your representatives.

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

As you know, the Deukmejian Administration is obsessed with the idea of destroying a 110 year state constitutional worker protection that prevents California employers from hiring prison labor for company profit.

The Governor this year sought to activate his anti-labor concept by means of Assembly Constitutional Amendment 11, authored by Assemblyman William Baker, a Republican from Contra Costa County whose labor record is the blacker period of six years in the Assembly.

Fortunately, ACA 11 was blocked by Democrats refusing to join with Deukmejian's Republicans.

However, on December 4 of this year, the Governor changed tactics and submitted an initiative on convict labor to Attorney General Van De Kamp requesting that title and summary of the measure be prepared for placement on the November ballot.

Among other anti-worker provisions, the Governor's initiative would:
1. Legalize the hiring of inmates of state prisons by private employers. It would thus overturn the convict labor provision of the state constitution adopted in 1879.
2. Extend the hiring of prisoners by private companies to county jail inmates.
3. Allow county jail prisoners to work for various kinds of private enterprises beyond the confines of the jails.
4. Provide that employers could use convicts as strikebreakers.
5. Legalize wages below prevailing rates in the community by stipulating that the employer hiring the convicts need only pay the wages given to his or her workers in the private sector. This means that non-union, minimum wage employers would simply pay the minimum wage despite the prevailing community wage for machinists, carpenters, white collar workers or whatever occupation might be involved.
6. Provide that employers using convict labor would benefit from a tax write-off and enjoy minimal rental costs for their shop operations, whether for prefabricated construction or metal work or computer work for airlines, banks or insurance companies.
7. Remove obligations of employers of convict labor to pay for workers' compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, vacation pay, social security, health and welfare benefits or retirement pensions.

The prisoners, themselves, would be a captive labor force working under armed guards. They would have no right of grievance protection and would be at the mercy of the companies using their labor.

While the Governor has on one hand introduced his initiative, representatives of his Department of Corrections are saying that the initiative filing is a mere political device and that the Governor will withdraw his violently anti-worker initiative if labor will swallow the only slightly less destructive provisions of Assembly Constitutional Amendment 11. This would allow the Governor to have the initiative measure approved by the Assembly and Senate with the blessing of both Republicans and Democrats.

The Governor would thus be free of the need to put the measure on the ballot as a Republican vehicle requiring 595,485 signatures for placement.

It makes little difference to free workers whether their rights are violated by ACA 11 or the new constitutional device of the Governor. In either case, it is rotten.

Since the Governor may very well decide to revive ACA 11 during the first or second week of January, it is imperative that you write at once to your Democratic Assembly Members and Senators, strongly urging that they vote against the Deukmejian proposal.

There is no point in writing to the Republicans in either house. The Governor has them in his pocket.

Fraternally,
/s/ John F. Henning Executive Secretary-Treasurer

In Unity,

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

In our last general negotiations, over two years ago, Local Union 1245 proposed increases for these groups and the Company proposed to bargain the issue at the same time as the wage opener. Now they suggest to deal with the issue in 1990 negotiations.

In our modern history, when the parties agreed to negotiate or discuss issues on an interim basis the process was fruitful, to a degree, so, it was surprising and startling when the new corporate culture and market driven approach is considered. Apparently the retirees and LTDers have no place in the efficient, productive, value added, corporate culture excellence world of PG&E. The apparent attitude is that retirees and LTDers do not produce anything for the Company, therefore no reward.

In the past the Company has been decent and responsive to the needs of the retired and disabled. We would hope for the same consideration in the future. Right now, however, it's NO! to the retired and disabled.
How your votes...

The Local Union holds many elections throughout the year using a mail-in ballot procedure. When you receive a ballot you are to clearly mark the voter card as instructed. Then, place the marked card in the unmarked envelope, seal the envelope and place it in the self-addressed, postage paid, return envelope. Seal the return envelope and write your return address on the upper left front of the envelope. Mail promptly.

The accompanying photos illustrate what happens to the ballot after it is deposited in the Walnut Creek Post Office Box by postal workers. After counting, the inner envelopes, outer envelopes and ballots are sealed in separate boxes and stored in a secure place for 5 years.

You can see that this process is very involved and can take a long time but your vote does get counted unless...

- You have an invalid outer envelope which includes:
  1. Voting twice
  2. Coded label removed
  3. Non-member voting
  4. Membership eligibility cannot be verified

- You have an invalid ballot which includes:
  1. Two ballots in one envelope
  2. Voting in both Yes and No boxes
  3. Not marking either Yes or No box
  4. Marking ballot in a such a manner that it is impossible to determine how you voted
  5. Voting on a non-official ballot
  6. Voting on an incorrect ballot (ie. a ballot from an earlier election)

The process may seem complicated but it insures that your vote is counted and how your vote is kept a secret. If you would like to serve on a Ballot Committee contact your Business Representative.
are counted

Dan Fuller (front) and Jerry Giordano of Stockton (back) open the verified outer envelope.

Tess Bock takes the opened envelope and separates the unmarked inner envelope which contains the ballot from the outer envelope. The inner envelope is placed in one stack and the outer envelope in another.

Rob McCormack and Norma Ricker of Vallejo also remove the inner envelope from the outer envelope.

Frank Kenney removes inner envelope from outer envelope.

Rod Trunnell removes inner envelope from outer envelope.

Gary Surfus (front) and Pat Gates of Marysville (back) open the inner envelope that have been separated from the outer envelope.

Frank Kenney removes marked ballot from unmarked inner envelope. After removing the marked ballot the Yes and No votes are counted and recorded.

Norma Ricker shows the back of two envelopes. The top envelope has the coded label correctly attached to the back of the envelope. The lower envelope has the label incorrectly removed.

Norma Ricker shows the front of two envelopes. The top envelope has the coded label incorrectly removed from the back of the envelope and placed on the front. The lower envelope shows the return address correctly printed in on the front of the envelope.
In my six years at Diablo Canyon I have never been accused of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Although I don't use drugs and drink rarely if ever, and although I do not condone any employee coming to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, I am opposed to random testing for several reasons. The main reason is the chance of a false positive. I'm not afraid of a true positive, but because no drug testing procedure is 100% accurate, I am afraid that my job and future could be in jeopardy because of an error in the laboratory.

Also, if there is no just cause to test an employee, I don't think that the mere fact that the employee works in a nuclear power plant should mean that that employee loses his constitutional rights.

Joseph Lykes

I'm 35 years old and I've worked at Diablo Canyon as a Chemistry and Radiation Protection Technician since I signed on with PG&E on January 14, 1985. I held a similar position with a nuclear power plant in Washington from 1981 to 1985 and, prior to that, from 1978 to 1981, I worked as a Health Physics Technician for Westinghouse. For six years before that I was in the United States Navy and was involved in the Navy's nuclear power program.

Critical aspects of the work of Chemistry and Radiation Protection Technicians are subject to second-check and sometimes third-check. Our chemistry work is highly monitored and our radiological work is subject to mandatory review by our foremen, so that any employee who reported to work impaired by drugs or alcohol would certainly be detected — either by plant security, by supervisory personnel, or through the second-check and quality control procedures which govern all our work.

I do not use drugs or drink and I do not condone any employee reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but I still oppose random, suspicionless testing. I believe that as an American citizen I have certain inalienable rights which thousands of my countrymen have died to preserve over the years. One of these rights is the right to be free from this kind of illegal search. Also, I feel that we as nuclear power workers are unfairly ostracized and that somehow our constitutional rights are being treated as less important than those of most citizens; but the safeguards that are built into a nuclear power plant are so extensive that this kind of illegal search is not warranted.

Terence Wesley

I'm 45 years old and I've worked at Diablo Canyon as a Control Technician for the past year. Before that I spent seven years in the same capacity at the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant in Shoreham, New York. I have an A.S. degree in electronics.

In my eight years in com-
Workers speak out

Domestic testing

I'm 37 years old and I've worked for PG&E since July, 1985. I've been employed as a Materialsman at Diablo Canyon since January, 1987, when I was forced to transfer here to remain employed by PG&E. I was given a pre-employment drug test when I was first hired, but I was not told that I'd be subject to random urine sampling as a condition of continued employment.

The work of Materialsmen is highly supervised and scrutinized by the plant. The largest shift is the day shift, which employs about 20 of us. These 20 Materialsmen are directly supervised by five management supervisors, and there are also three or four lead employees whose job is to monitor the work of the other Materialsmen. In addition, we currently do 12 minutes of stretching exercises every morning before work. I believe that a Materialsman who was even slightly intoxicated or impaired would show that impairment after only a few minutes of stretching.

In my three years at Diablo Canyon, I have never seen any employee use drugs or alcohol on the job, and have never seen any employee whose work was impaired. I oppose random testing for several reasons:

First, I'm concerned about the possibility of a false positive.

Second, I feel that the negative effect on plant morale would exceed any possible gains.

And third, I see random drug and alcohol testing as an unwarranted invasion of my privacy.

Kevin Moore

I'm 37 years old and I've worked for PG&E since July, 1985. I've been employed as a Materialsman at Diablo Canyon since January, 1987, when I was forced to transfer here to remain employed by PG&E. I was given a pre-employment drug test when I was first hired, but I was not told that I'd be subject to random urine sampling as a condition of continued employment.

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Kevin Moore
Progress in tree trimmer negotiations

A breakthrough in the Pacific Tree negotiations was registered at a meeting on January 5. "We've signed a written agreement with Pac Tree management extending the current contract on a day-by-day basis," Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen reports. "This is a good development, since management had planned to cancel the contract. Now it remains in effect" and allows the parties to continue negotiations without the threat of strike or lockout and provides our members the benefits of their collective bargaining agreement.

"Extending the contract on a day-by-day basis means that five days notice must be given if either the company or the union wants to cancel it in the future."

The next negotiating session will be held January 30. At Arbor Tree, meanwhile, the progress of the continuing negotiations has been slowed by the death of the company's main spokesman, David Comb, who died of cancer at the age of 67 last month. When bargaining resumes on January 18 the major item of discussion will be a full contract package submitted by the Local Union.

"We're not that far apart from Arbor at this point," Orv Owen comments. "Wages will be an issue, in other respects we've made progress."

Around and about

Citizens Utilities, soundly rebuffed last month when it submitted a weak contract proposal to the IBEW Local 1245 bargaining unit, will return to the bargaining table in Redding on January 24 and 25... GEO negotiations resume on January 16 in Santa Rosa. "We won the election," Orv Owen says, "and now we're bargaining the contract from A to Z—and we're making progress"... The Multivision Negotiating Committee will draft a complete counter to the company's proposal on January 12 at the IBEW headquarters in Walnut Creek... Sierra Pacific has entered into discussions with Local 1245 attorney Jane Brunner and Business Rep John Stralla over the vexed issue of drug testing. Sierra Pacific, like many other utilities, is attempting to comply with the Department of Transportation's new random drug testing regulations.

SMUD rethinks its plan to realign construction

"We just had a meeting yesterday with Business Manager Ron Fitzsimmons reported on January 4, "and it appears that we're on the verge of settling the problem SMUD had posed for us in the construction department. We've now convinced them to reconsider their plan to redefine the jobs in the construction department, and we're entering a 'meet and confer' phase on this issue."

SMUD had unveiled a plan to significantly redefine the jobs in the construction department in such a way that all 37 IBEW members on the property would have been compelled to pass entry-level qualification exams to remain on the payroll. "They planned to have the same number of people do the same total volume of work," Fitzsimmons says, "but they wanted people to do different packages of tasks than they do now. The idea, they said, was to diversify employee responsibilities, so that SMUD construction workers would no longer be so 'narrowly specialized'. We see the whole matter differently, of course, and they're now meeting and confering with us in an effort to resolve our differences."

The next meeting with SMUD management will be held on January 10.

Kathy Maas joins IBEW staff

Kathleen Maas, a former State of California Department of Industrial Relations, California State Mediation/Conciliation Services Mediator, joined the Local Union as a business representative. Kathy will take PG&E's San Francisco General Office as her assignment area. She will represent both Clerical and Physical employees and will replace Gwen Wynn who has decided to return to PG&E after her leave of absence.

Kathy, who lives in San Francisco has been a mediator since 1985. She worked in Southern California since September 1989 mediating labor disputes in the Public Sector and the California Public Schools. Grievance handling was also included in her routine.

New Business Rep, Landis Marttila

Landis Marttila, a Local Union 1245 activist, has joined the IBEW 1245 field staff as a Business Representative. Landis will take the area presently serviced by Dean Gurke as his assignment. He will work with Pacific Gas and Electric Co. Clerical and Physical employees and Davey Tree.

Landis, a California native, has worked for PG&E as a Gas Helper, Lineman and Electric Crew Foreman. He also spent two years as a Tree Trimmer for Davey Tree. Landis, as a Shop steward and Advisor, has been active in the Local Union and has always been ready to take on Union Issues and has earned the respect of his peers. He has served as a member of the Division Joint Grievance Committee, Rubber Goving Committee and PG&E 1988 Wage Negotiating Committee as Local Union 1245's representative.

"I think the Union serves an important function in protecting our job security, safety and dignity. I want to assist in advancing the goals and ideals of the Union. I feel that it is possible that I can serve the Union," Landis told the Utility Reporter.

Landis believes that Perry Zimmerman originally got him thinking about joining the IBEW when Perry was Business Representative in San Francisco. That feeling was solidified when he co-ordinated the IBEW Child Care Survey in San Francisco where he saw the assistance that this Union can give its members.

Landis is 38 years old and has a B.A. degree in Psychology from San Francisco State University. He has a wife Barb and a son Maximilian. His hobbies include purchasing expensive clothing, dining at fine restaurants and jogging. You can always pick him out in a crowd. He looks like a mafia member and always pick him out in a crowd. His hobbies are purchasing expensive clothing, dining at fine restaurants and jogging. You can always pick him out in a crowd. He looks like a mafia member and always pick him out in a crowd.
Another round of restructuring

The axe fell on Sierra Pacific management on November 28 when the Sierra Pacific Board announced that the total number of company officers will fall from 17 to 11. "There are now four fewer Vice-Presidents," Business Rep John Stralla reports. Max Jones, formerly Senior Vice-President, is now "Assistant to the President" — and no longer an officer of the company. "We're a little concerned," Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen says, "because over the years we had established a certain relationship with the company, which this could throw out of whack. We'd reviewed all the grievances with Max Jones, for example, and had developed a certain rapport. Now we'll just have to see what happens."

Thomas Robertson, who was formerly Vice-President for Human Resources, has been retitled "Human Resources Director." Two other former V-Ps have also been retitled "directors."

An ongoing process

The current round of restructuring is just the latest in a series of steps that Sierra Pacific says will give the company a new look by June, 1990.

In the next phase, according to a press release dated November 28, "Sierra will further study the number of management levels in the organization and review staffing in all departments to determine appropriateness."

"[Sierra Pacific President Austin W. Stedham] said that while the company plans no across-the-board layoffs as a result of the reorganization, individual positions will be reviewed to ensure that they are necessary and provide the maximum service to customers." Local 1245 will continue to keep a close watch on this unfolding story and will take whatever steps are appropriate to protect its members, if necessary.

Contradictions Below

Is Sierra Pacific's present course reasonable? A glance at the main argument advanced in favor of the current restructuring casts doubt on this assumption.

A company News Release issued on October 17 contains several patent contradictions. On the one hand, management says that the company is following the example of other utility companies in its continuing effort to implement cutbacks at every level. They place great stress on the fact that an outside consulting firm was retained to compare Sierra Pacific to other utilities, saying that their ongoing structural changes are intended "to reflect the national evolution in the utility industry."

Yet at the same time Sierra's managers concede "the difficulty the management consulting firm had in finding companies comparable to the Nevada-based utility."

The doubtful wisdom of comparing apples and oranges seems lost on management. They seem to see no problem in imitating companies from which they differ markedly.

Strategies devised in one context are being applied by Sierra Pacific in a radically different context.

Muddy Logic

The questionable logic of this approach is clearly revealed in remarks by Sierra Pacific President Stedham, as reported in the October 17 release. Summarizing his consultant's study, Stedham notes that employee salaries are no higher at Sierra Pacific than in other western utilities and that "the cost of employee benefits is below average compared to other utilities."

So employee pay is not the source of Sierra Pacific's fiscal worries.

Meanwhile, while Stedham "stressed that the company does not foresee any immediate mass reductions in the workforce," he added that the company will nevertheless "continue efforts to control staffing through attrition."

"Despite the fact the utility serves the fastest growing state in the nation, the company has had stringent controls on adding any new employee positions for the past two years."

The wisdom of this policy is at least open to question. With an expanding consumer base and average employee pay, Sierra Pacific is cutting back. Stedham's rationale for this is that "the company's staffing level is above average" and that new economic conditions are forcing the entire industry to retrench. But Stedham's own report puts this explanation in doubt.

Meeting Real Needs

The level of staff appropriate for one situation may not be appropriate elsewhere. Sierra Pacific is unique in many ways, and has a clear need for a relatively high level of staff.

To begin with, as Stedham reports, "Sierra Pacific serves more than 50,000 square miles of Nevada and California — an area larger than six states. Most of the [24] other utilities in the comparison serve much smaller areas..."

Meanwhile, all of the other utilities examined serve more densely populated areas. "Sierra Pacific has only six customers per square mile of service area, while the other companies range as high as 4,700 customers per square mile..." As Stedham notes elsewhere, "Low density has a tendency to increase the number of employees required to provide service to the same number of customers."

And Sierra Pacific provides three major services (gas, water, and electric), while most other utilities offer just one or two.

Management's policy of general staff reductions seems ill-served by its own data. A reconsideration of this policy seems to be clearly warranted.
### 1990 changes in workers' benefits

**Workers' Compensation**

The California State Legislature last year made far-reaching changes in the way injured employees will be cared for in California. Benefit increases are the largest in the history of the Workers' Compensation system. Here is a summary of the major benefit changes.

- **Maximum weekly temporary disability benefits will increase from the present $224 to $266.** They will rise to $336 on January 1, 1991.
- **Minimum weekly temporary disability benefits will increase from the present $112 to $126 over a two year period.**
- **Maximum weekly permanent disability benefits will increase from $224 to $266.** They will rise to $336 on January 1, 1991.
- **Maximum weekly permanently partial disability benefits will increase from $140 to $148 for those injured workers with disability ratings over 25%.**
- **Vocational rehabilitation maintenance benefits will increase from a maximum of $224 a week to $246.** In addition, a timed procedure is set up to quickly identify qualified injured workers and get them into vocational rehabilitation programs and to complete the program.
- **Death benefits will increase from $95,000 to $115,000 in cases of two or more total dependents and from $70,000 to $85,000 in cases of one total dependent.**
- **The burial allowance will increase from $2,000 to $5,000.**
- **The number of weeks of permanent partial disability payments will increase from 66 2/3 to 80 weeks.**
- **The minimum weekly benefit will increase from the present $30 to $40.**
- **The spouse of a deceased employee will be considered to receive benefits.**
- **Minor children's death benefit payments continue until the youngest child reaches the age of 18.**
- **The spouse of a deceased employee will be considered to be totally dependent if the surviving spouse earned $20,000 or less in the year preceding the death.**
- **Mileage allowance will increase from $0.21 to $0.24 per mile.**
- **The number of weeks of permanent partial disability benefits is increased by about 7.5% in 1990 and by about 5% in 1991.**
- **Employees seeking benefits are required to immediately serve notice to the employer of all on-the-job injuries.**
- **Claimants for mental or psychiatric injury must show a greater connection between the injury and work in order to receive benefits.**
- **An employee's entitlement to benefits will be determined by a medical evaluator (AME) or a Qualified Medical Examiner (QME) and the employer is responsible for the evaluation.**

**Unemployment Insurance**

Unemployment Insurance benefits last increased in California was in 1983. This past year, Senate Bill 600 increased those benefits and tightened eligibility requirements.

- **Maximum weekly benefits will increase from the present $169 to $180.** They will rise to $210 in 1991 and to $230 in 1992.
- **The minimum weekly benefit will increase from the present $30 to $40.**
- **To be eligible a person is required to earn $1200 in a three month period or earn $600 in a three month period and $1,125 in a 12 month period.**

**Disability Insurance**

- **The maximum weekly benefit for non-work related injuries and illnesses will increase from the present $224 to $266.**
- **In 1991, the maximum benefit will increase to $336 a week.**

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### Union conducts VDT survey

Ron Fitzsimmons announced that Local Union 1245 is distributing a 4 page survey concerning Video Display Terminals (VDTs) and Ergonomics. Distribution will be in January.

The survey will be evaluated by the Local Union Safety Committee. It will be handed out to all members in PG&E's General Office who use VDTs on a full time basis. The distribution will be conducted by Business Representatives and Shop stewards. In addition, there will be a random sampling of one percent of the rest of the membership who will receive the survey.

Ron said, "We need the survey so that we can better draft Legislation and Cal/OSHA guidelines which will make the workplace a safer and healthier place."

He asks that you answer the questions as they relate to you at work and at home. He also requests that the surveys be returned to the Local Union by not later than March 1, 1990.

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### De-Ox damages blanket

A Class II electric blanket from the PG&E Templeton Service Center was discovered damaged after it was removed from an energized 21 kV line. The blanket had been in use for about one hour when blisters were noticed where the blanket had been exposed to Utilco Company, De-Ox inhibitor used on overhead connectors. De-Ox is an oxidation or corrosion inhibitor which is applied to aluminum and/or copper terminals. The personnel on site noticed that blisters had formed on the blanket.

Ron Fitzsimmons, Assistant Business Manager, recommends that if there is an alternative to De-Ox inhibitor available then use that material until full evaluation of the problems with De-Ox is complete. He also requests that if you receive any adverse effects or rashes resulting from the use of De-Ox, notify your employer immediately.

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### Catastrophic benefits

**Benefits comparison**

Here is a comparison of benefits and financing in the current Medicare catastrophic health insurance law and in a substitute approved by the Senate last year. The House has voted to abolish the program, and the two chambers will have to agree in the end on what to do.

**HOSPITAL**

- **Present:** Full coverage after patient pays $560 a year.
- **Proposed:** Same.

**DOCTORS' FEES**

- **Present:** Starting 1990, full coverage after patient pays $1,370 a year.
- **Proposed:** Pays 80 percent of charges after patient pays first $75 each year.

**PRESCRIPTIONS**

- **Present:** Starting 1991, 50 percent coverage after patient pays $50 a year; 80 percent coverage starting 1993.
- **Proposed:** None.

**NURSING HOME**

- **Present:** Coverage for 150 days a year after patient pays daily rate of $25.30 for eight days.
- **Proposed:** After patient spends three days in hospital, covers 100 days per illness episode. Patient pays $67.60 per day for 21 through 100.

**HOME CARE**

- **Present:** Starting in 1990, coverage for 38 consecutive days.
- **Proposed:** Same.

**MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS**

The new plan would retain several miscellaneous benefits of current law, including

- **SURTAX**
  - **Present:** Retirees who pay at least $150 income tax pay 15 percent surtax, up to a maximum of $800. The rate and the maximum rise in the future.
  - **Proposed:** None.

**FLAT PREMIUM**

- **Present:** Most eligible for Medicare pay $4 a month for new coverage, rising to $10.20 by 1993.
- **Proposed:** Same.
COMMERCIAL LICENSE

No agreement with PG&E on class "A" license

On December 18th discussions with PG&E regarding a possible expansion of classifications requiring a commercial driver's license concluded without any agreement being reached.

The California Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Program recently changed the standards and definitions of commercial vehicles. Many vehicles used by PG&E that previously had not required the operator to have a commercial license now carry such a requirement under the new law. Vehicles having a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more and/or a trailer with a GVWR of 10,001 pounds or are now considered as commercial vehicles. Electric T&D line trucks and Gas T&D gas crew trucks, as examples, fall within the new definition.

Many new provisions exist that have direct impact on employees. Employers must now obtain the complete driving records of employees in jobs requiring a commercial license, extensive knowledge and physical examinations are mandatory, detailed inspections of vehicles prior to each trip, recording various information in a driver's log, and strict regulations and penalties regarding fitness for driving.

A large number of PG&E classifications have been assigned to operate the vehicles that have been upgraded to commercial status are not jobs required to possess a commercial license according to the terms of the union contract. As a result, PG&E has relied on employees to volunteer to apply for the required license. Additionally, there have been instances of employees being misled to believe they are required to have the involved license and situations where employees have been enticed and/or threatened by various inappropriate incentives.

On December 11th, Local 1245 and PG&E commenced discussions on the possibility of adding classifications to the list of those necessary to hold the Class "A" license. Union expressed interest in the possible expansion if agreement could also be reached on appropriate compensation for the additional skill and responsibility and also the application of a "safety net" for those employees who could not obtain or maintain the commercial license.

On December 18th, the negotiations came to a close as Local 1245 and PG&E was unable to reach agreement on the "safety net" and affected classifications, but the Union was unwilling to agree to the Company's final offer of a wage adjustment. No further discussions are scheduled; however, it is expected that PG&E will raise the matter during the 1990 contract negotiations.

PG&E says no to disabled and retired

PG&E representatives have informed Local 1245 that PG&E is not willing to grant any increase to these individuals currently receiving pension or long-term disability payments.

In accordance with the 1987 negotiations leading to amendments to the Benefit Agreement, Local 1245 met with PG&E to discuss adjustments to the payments currently being received by employees on long-term disability and retired participants of the Retirement Plan. However, in spite of the agreement to discuss adjustments affecting retired and/or disabled individuals, PG&E adamantly maintained the position no adjustments would be made at this time. Company suggested Local 1245 could again pursue the subject in the 1990 negotiations, but the Company was unwilling to make any commitments. Union's committee was reviewing this situation as this issue of the Utility Reporter went to press.

Need help with drugs or alcohol?

Do you think that you, a friend, or a family member may need help for a problem with drugs or alcohol? The following questions will help determine whether a friend or family member may need help.

YES NO

1. Have you tried switching drinks or drugs or followed other plans for controlling your use of alcohol or drugs?
2. Have you failed to keep the promises you have made to yourself or others about controlling or cutting down on your drinking or drug use?
3. Do you try to avoid family or close friends while you use or drink?
4. Are you trying to save money on your alcohol or drug use?
5. Do you sometimes have trouble getting started in the morning and find it helps to have a small drink or use just a little?
6. Do you occasionally drink more than you intended to?
7. Do you sometimes feel guilty about your use of drugs or alcohol?
8. Are you secretly irritated when your family or friends discuss your drinking or drug use?
9. Do you often find that you wish to continue drinking or using after your friends say they have had enough?
10. Do you find yourself regretting the things you have done or said while under the influence of drugs or alcohol?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions, you have some of the symptoms that may indicate chemical dependency and should get further information and evaluation. If you answered "yes" to three or more, you definitely are chemically dependent and should seek help immediately. Ask your Shop Steward for suggestions.

January 1990  UTILITY REPORTER 11
### 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:
   - $500 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 1990. A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in 1990 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 full time in any industrial, technical or trade school, other than correspondence schools, which are accredited by the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools or the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools.

5. Applications must be mailed to IBEW, Local Union 1245, P. O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, by registered or certified mail only, and be postmarked no later than the first Monday of April 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/her residence following the drawing.

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### 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, AFL-CIO
P. O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(415) 933-6060

#### Candidate Information

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<th>CANDIDATE'S NAME</th>
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<td>WHAT TRADE OR CRAFT WILL YOU BE STUDYING?</td>
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<td>WHY THIS PARTICULAR SKILL?</td>
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**Statement of Member/Parent**

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I certify that I am a member in good standing of IBEW Local Union 1245, that the Candidate named above, , is my , and that the Candidate will graduate from high school during the term ending , 1990.

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Official’s Signature and Position

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### Local 1245

#### Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship

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:
   - $500 per year, up to four (4) years, as long as a "C" (2.0) average 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 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 1990. A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in 1990 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. 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.

4. 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.

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

6. All applications shall be accompanied by 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 double spaced, with applicant's written signature at the conclusion of the essay.

8. Applications and essays must be mailed to IBEW, Local Union 1245, P. O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, by registered or 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, at a cost not to exceed $75, to be presented to the scholarship recipient.

**Note:** The topic for the 1990 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship essay is: "Health care a national crisis is there an answer?"

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### Application for the Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship

Sponsored by Local Union 1245
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO
P. O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(415) 933-6060

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<td>WHAT COLLEGE OR SCHOOL DO YOU EXPECT TO ATTEND?</td>
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