When Pacific Gas and Electric decided it could "do more with less" the idea probably looked great on paper, thrilling management with the prospect of lower labor costs, more productivity and higher profits.

But in the real world, where real workers deal with real customers, the thrill is gone.

Donna Dito, and other customer service reps, are pushed to 'do more with less.'

PG&E wants to 'Do More With Less'

Management dreams, workers sweat

By Eric Wolfe

Rather than the hoped-for improvements in efficiency, "doing more with less" has impaired company performance. For customers, "doing more with less" can mean more delays and less reliable service. For customer service representatives, it has meant more stress and less job satisfaction as the company piles on added responsibilities.

Unionists back in the 1930s had a word for this sort of management program. They called it speed-up and responded with sit-down strikes that brought the country to the brink of industrial revolution.

Today at PG&E, speed-up has a new name, but it's still the same old story: managers dream dreams while workers pay the price in sweat.

Donna Ambeau, an Energy Cost Inquiry specialist at the Oakland Service Center, remembers when six ECI specialists worked the busy winter season. Last winter, Dona Ambeau, an Energy Cost Inquiry specialist at the Oakland Service Center, remembers when six ECI specialists worked the busy winter season. Last winter.

See PAGE 10
Sturgeon, unionists launch safety effort

Ensuring worker safety has seldom been a high priority in corporate America's pursuit of profits. Corporate indifference—coupled with inadequate and poorly-enforced government standards—help perpetuate a system in which thousands of American workers are injured on the job each day.

But not every company views safety measures as a burden. Sturgeon Electric Co., which regularly employs members of Local 1245's Outside Line crew, adopts the opposite view: investing in safety is like money in the bank. Sturgeon has put this concept to work by forming a volunteer safety committee in which workers are given a direct voice in forming safety policy.

Providing a safe worksite, in the words of Sturgeon Division Manager Ernie Brown, "is a tremendous dollar asset for any company."

A reputation for safety is a point in a contractor's favor when it seeks contracts from utility companies. A good safety record can also mean savings in vehicle insurance. And perhaps most importantly, safe work practices help keep Workers Compensation insurance premiums down.

Brown states the matter bluntly: "We can't afford to have people burnt."

Sturgeon safety director Claude Chapman said the committee's mission is to investigate accidents, review safety rules, conduct periodic job site visits, and to research and distribute information.

"It's not a police committee," he noted. "It's not here to condemn. It's here to establish information that anybody can benefit from."

One of the committee's first tasks has been to compile a safety check list for foremen. The point, according to Brown, is to make safety a habit, to make it part of routine procedure.

Members of the safety committee, meeting last month in Rosemead, Ca., seemed to agree that the committee is having an impact. Supervision, according to one member, is already following the rules more closely as a result of safety committee suggestions.

A reputation for safety and delivering quality work can ultimately give union outfits a needed edge in competing against non-union outfits for work. Said committee member Mel Rolow, "If all these [union] contractors start thinking safety that's what's going to keep us in this industry."

Local 1245 Outside Line members and Sturgeon Electric officials discuss safety issues during a meeting of the company's safety committee. Serving on the committee are Steve Schepple, chairman, Dick Edwards, vice chairman, H.E. Jones, Bud Davis, Larry Butter and Mike White. Alternate members are Joe Melin, Mel Rolow, James Groth and Murphy Seat.
General Construction begins bargaining


An update on the negotiations was mailed to shop stewards during the second week of June. For details, members should stay in touch with their shop stewards and attend unit meetings.

The General Construction negotiations will feed into General Negotiations with Pacific Gas and Electric, and that things are right. The committee reports that progress is being made. The Joint Committees on Construction and Conventions are up and running.

Preparing the General Construction subcommittee’s positions for Local 1245 in bargaining with Pacific Gas and Electric Co. are (seated, from left): George Naranjo, Asst. Business Manager Roger Stalcup and Joe Osterlund; (standing, from left) Barry Humphreys and Fred Pederson.

Committees study new practices

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

As a result of the tentative agreement on barehand and rubber gloving procedures, three joint committees are up and running.

The barehand committee of union members and company supervisors has been meeting full time to develop procedures, safety rules, and training provisions. They have visited other utilities who use the barehand method to observe and learn what they can to help in the development of a program at PG&E. They are jointly drafting procedures and safety rules for working on the 500KV and the 230KV. They have been testing these procedures at Los Banos Substation, located just off Interstate 5 in the Los Banos area. The committee reports that progress is being made and that things are right on schedule.

The rubber gloving committee of union members and company supervisors has also been meeting full time to develop gloving procedures, safety rules and training. They, too, visited other utilities to help in the development of methods for PG&E. Gloving procedures for up to 5KV will be re-visited along with the apprenticeship training for gloving procedures in total.

Both the barehand and gloving procedures will entail the use of insulated man lift trucks, which play a key role in the safety and protection of the worker. The committees are learning all they can about this equipment so that safety can be maximized.

The third committee, the Electromagnetic Field (or EMF) Committee, is reviewing what has been or is being done in the study of the effects of electromagnetic fields on humans. This issue has generated more interest as our environment becomes more electrified.

On June 7, a presentation by representatives of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) was given to all three of the Joint Committees on two EMF studies they are currently involved in. The Endex study measures levels of EMF and is being conducted on people who work and live around power lines and other electrical equipment. The other is an epidemiology study which correlates the causes of death to the electrical environment during a lifetime. Results of these studies are at least 18 months away.

These committees are working hard and progress is being made. The barehand and gloving committees are shooting for the middle of July to be completed.

See PAGE TWO
Bob Wilson is a big man with an easy smile. It’s a smile that came even easier last month after he received a check for back wages amounting to nearly $8,000 from Sierra Pacific.

Wilson’s not the sort of person you’d normally expect to stir up a fuss. As a foreman in property maintenance services for Sierra Pacific in Reno, Nev., he takes his responsibilities seriously. So when the company asked him to start coming in an hour early each day to make out work schedules for the crew, Wilson shouldered the extra work.

The only problem was, he didn’t get paid for it.

Each work day for the next nine years Wilson’s crew came in at seven o’clock in the morning. Wilson came in at six. And he might still be coming in at six today except that Wilson happened to mention the arrangement to Local 1245 Business Rep. John Stralla.

Stralla smelled a rat. In the union’s view of the world, if you do the work, you collect the pay. However, an appeal to Sierra Pacific’s Human Resources Dept. got no results. Working with Stralla, Wilson brought his complaint to the state’s wage and hour office. The company took the position that Wilson was performing the extra work on a voluntary basis, apparently mistaking him for one of the “thousand points of light” George Bush is always going on about.

“As far as the company was concerned, we didn’t have a case,” Wilson recalls with a characteristic smile.

However, after Wilson provided evidence and witnesses to back up his claim, Sierra Pacific began to reconsider the situation. Probably seeing the handwriting on the wall, the company finally offered a settlement in which it would pay for two years of the lost wages.

Although he might have been able to collect more by pressing the case, Wilson opted to settle. Last month he received a check for $7,987.

Now Sierra Pacific is handling scheduling a bit differently: employees come in from the field a little early to line out the crews for the next day.

Wilson is handling his schedule a bit differently, too.

“I don’t get here until seven,” he notes. Then, a mischievous smile spreading across his face, he adds: “At their insistence.”

Although the backpay award was a personal victory for Wilson, he believes it affected all Sierra Pacific employees in one very important way. Expecting workers to put in extra time without pay “won’t happen anywhere in the company again,” he said.

When the company asked him to start coming in an hour early each day to make out work schedules for the crew, Wilson shouldered the extra work.

The only problem was, he didn’t get paid for it.

Sierra Pacific foreman wins $8,000 in back pay

The agreement, approved by a 184-65 vote by mailed ballot, provides an additional 3 percent wage increase in the second year and a 50-cent per hour hike in the third year.

According to Local 1245 Business Rep. Mickey Harrington, the pact includes the addition of a 401K plan and makes improvements in the pension plan by picking up some previously uncounted seniority.

The agreement covers Citizens Utility workers in Susanville, Elk Grove, Alturas, Burney, Palo Cedro, Redding and Ferndale, all in California.

The contract also improves sick leave policy. Prior to ratification of the new contract, employees qualified for sick leave only after three years with the company. Now employees will pick up sick leave after just one year.

The agreement covers Citizens Utility workers in Susanville, Elk Grove, Alturas, Burney, Palo Cedro, Redding and Ferndale, all in California.

Members approve pact with City of Redding

Local 1245 members approved a new agreement with the City of Redding that provides a 4 percent wage hike, boosting the line rate to $21.08 per hour.

The pact contains a new provision for compensatory time off. It also provides for double-time for all call-out overtime, according to Business Rep. Jack Osburn.

The new agreement, approved on a 29-3 vote on May 31, has an effective date of May 27.

The agreement establishes a provision for payment for court time that results from a subpoena on a non-work day. The term of the new pact is 13 months.
Local 1245's apprenticeship program for Outside Line workers has entered the computer age.

Unlike Local 1245 members who are permanently employed by a single company, Outside Line workers are employed by a variety of contractors. In the absence of "in-house" training, Local 1245 and its signatory contractors operate the Joint Apprenticeship Training Center to prepare apprentices for their future careers as journeyman linemen.

Training, of course, is an ancient practice, beginning back around the time our distant ancestors showed one another how to build a fire or fashion a spear. Training electrical workers is a bit more involved than that, and has traditionally combined classroom instruction with exercises in the field.

But even the most time-honored traditions have been touched by the computer revolution. Last year the JATC acquired video-imaging computer equipment which now enables apprentices at the Garden Grove-based training center to gain hands-on experience in electrical concepts while seated at a video display terminal.

Consider the transformer. The best way to understand its inner workings, according to Instructor Fred Barker, is to take it apart. Prior to video imaging that just wasn’t feasible. Now, however, apprentices can bring up a photo of a transformer on the video screen and then superimpose over that photo an animated representation of the transformer’s internal parts, which the student can then examine and manipulate.

Video is also proving to be a useful tool in teaching more abstract subjects. “Ten Minutes to Trig” is a video program that discusses fundamental elements of trigonometry. Giving this topic a snappy title and putting it in a visual format “makes it easier to absorb,” claims Barker, who has been a full-time apprentice instructor for a year-and-a-half.

As training moves outdoors, the video moves along with it. By watching videos of themselves performing various tasks, apprentices can evaluate their own performance and that of their peers. It’s a form of instant feedback almost guaranteed to appeal to anyone who has ever enjoyed analyzing an instant video replay of a Joe Montana touchdown pass.

“The biggest request we get from new students,” says Barker, “is ‘Can’t you show us more videos?’” To meet the demand, the apprenticeship program is beginning to compile video programs covering everything from tools to techniques to concepts.

“Eventually we’ll have a full videotape library they can watch at home,” Barker predicts.

In addition to making the material more accessible to apprentices, video teaching can also be used to provide refresher courses for journeymen, Barker notes.

However, video is only a tool—not a substitute—for on the job training. Apprentices are placed on jobs with journeymen throughout the states of California and Nevada, where they learn by doing. The four-year program, which has an office in Sacramento as well as Garden Grove, currently has over 100 apprentices enrolled, with about 15-20 expected to “top out” this year.

Frank Lazar is Barker’s counterpart at the Sacramento center, assisted by John Wilshire. Russ Cridland is coordinator of the overall program, which is governed by a labor-management board consisting of Tom Steinle of Poul & Steinle, Jerry Boudin of Boudin Electric, Ron Fitzsimmons of Local 1245, and Bill Sheehan of IBEW Local 357 in Los Vegas.

June 1990 Utility Reporter 5
Trial run at Los Banos

Union tests barehanding methods

Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric evaluated barehanding work procedures in June under a temporary experimental variance from Cal-OSHA. Members of the union's barehanding committee were joined by management representatives at the Los Banos substation in early June to try out barehanding techniques. The experimental work is being conducted to determine if procedures can be developed to insure worker safety in the event that Cal-OSHA ultimately approves the barehanding method.

Barehanding differs from the traditional approach to linework in California in that line workers grasp charged wires with their bare hands rather than manipulating them from a distance with "hot sticks." By staying off the ground the workers are generally safe from electrocution because they are at the same potential as the wire they are working on. They would be at risk only if they completed an electrical circuit by touching the ground or another wire.

PG&E's procedures drew praise from Russ Rylee, a member of the union's barehanding committee.

"Basically their program is pretty first-class," said Rylee. "They did their homework."

Since February, when the union and PG&E reached a tentative agreement to explore the feasibility of utilizing barehanding and rubber gloving techniques, the barehanding committee has conducted an intensive investigation of the issue. According to Rylee the union has closely studied the PG&E manual on barehanding and has spent a great deal of time evaluating PG&E's proposed work procedures, conducted at the Los Banos substation south of Stockton.

Last month the committee spent a week in Florida observing the training program of Florida Power and Light, which utilizes barehanding. And in June the committee will attend a utility conference in Toronto to try to find out what sort of experience other utilities have had with barehanding.

The committee is also slated to spend time at Diablo Canyon and has slated a trip to Redding in early July to study HVDC mountain towers.

Rylee said relations between union and management representatives on the committee had been smooth. "We've been working real good together," he observed.

Meanwhile, the rubber gloving committee is also seeking a temporary experimental variance from Cal-OSHA to try out rubber gloving procedures on an experimental basis. A third committee is investigating whether barehanding and rubber gloving techniques pose any danger in terms of heightened health risks stemming from exposure to electro-magnetic fields.

All three committees are scheduled to report their findings to a joint union-management overview committee this summer. The union has taken the position it will not approve any final agreement unless all of its concerns over health and safety issues have been met.

Boycott Eastern & Continental Airlines!

Honor the strike!

Union and PG&E negotiators meet at the union hall to discuss the union contract covering Local 1245 members at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plants.
Picnic, poker, plenty of play

Unionists soak up sun during ‘Day on Delta’

By Jim Dorman

It was a nice warm day Saturday, June 2, for the IBEW 1245 Day on the Delta Poker Run. Boats launched at 7:30 from Brannan Island State Recreation Area and proceeded to Tower Park, Herman and Helens, Moore’s Riverboat, Spindrift and Franks Fishing Resort before returning to Brannan Island for hot dogs and beans.

Many gifts were raffled and poker hands were drawn. Everyone seemed to have a great time and only one boat did not make it to the picnic area by 6 p.m.

Raffle gifts included:
* a $35 gift certificate to Stuart Anderson’s donated by Clayton Bowers
* a $30 discount coupon towards a condominium rental at Lake Tahoe donated by Sea & Ski Travel Agency

The event successful: Ed Medina, Gary Surfus, Doris Pate, Dave McClelland, Judi McClelland, Gary Daugherty, Dianne Daugherty, Ida Lee, Anita Hakansson, Dave Cheek and Ed Caruso.

Claiming prizes for winning poker hands were, in the men’s category:
* Richard Tonetti, $50, flush
* Jim Dorman, $45, 3 Queens
* Ery Joseph, $40, 3 Jacks
* Scottie Southerland, $35, 3 Tens
* Ery Gaerlan, $30, 3 Eights
* John Elizondo, $25, 3 Sevens
* Leroy Mohr, $20, two pair, Aces and Threes
* Sonny Cordes, $15, two pair, Aces and Twos
* Alan Johnson, $10, two pair, Kings and Tens
* Alvin Richter, $5, two pair, Kings and Eights

Claiming prizes for winning poker hands were, in the women’s category:
* Dale Dorman, $50, flush
* Dianne Daugherty, $45, straight, K-9
* Cindy Southerland, $40, straight, 8-4
* Susie Patterson, $35, 3 Kings, 8, 5
* Kerry Taylor, $30, 3 Kings, 4, 2
* Anita Hakansson, $25, 3 Queens
* Anita Hakansson, $20, 3 Sevens
* Ida Lee, $15, two pair, Aces and Twos
* Jane Brunner, $10, two pair, Queens and Twos
* Linda Britt, $5, two pair, Tens and Nines

Non-adult winners were:
* Greg Fletcher, $30, pair of Kings, A, J
* Scott Fletcher, $25, pair of Kings, Q, 9
* Joli Gaerlan, $20, pair of Kings, Q, 7
* Nicole Morgan, $15, pair of Kings, 6, 3
* Nicole Morgan, $10, pair of Kings, 4, 3
* Lee Notaro, pair of Queens

We had 151 hands played in the Men Category, 107 hands played in the Women Category, and 26 hands played in the non-adult Category.

We collected $810 and after paying out $162 in expenses we were left with $648 to pay out in prizes, and we paid $655 out in prizes, giving a final tally of $7 short that was picked up by the Antioch Unit 2317.
## SAN JOAQUIN

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<td>1112</td>
<td>BAKERSFIELD</td>
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<td>427 S. Gareaway</td>
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<td>1113</td>
<td>MADERA</td>
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<td>1117</td>
<td>WASCO</td>
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<td>Chairman: D. Scott</td>
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<td>1118</td>
<td>CRANE VALLEY</td>
<td>Hwy 46</td>
<td>Chairman: R. Newton</td>
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<td>1119</td>
<td>BALCH</td>
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<td>1120</td>
<td>SELMA</td>
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<td>Chairman: P. Santisal</td>
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<td>1122</td>
<td>MERCED IRRIG. DIST.</td>
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<td>MERCED</td>
<td>Sutela</td>
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<td>1124</td>
<td>LOS BANDOS</td>
<td>Wool Growers Inn</td>
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<td>1127</td>
<td>TAYFT</td>
<td>Bit of Country</td>
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<td>1128</td>
<td>LEMOORE</td>
<td>Fleet Reserve</td>
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## COAST VALLEYS

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<td>1211</td>
<td>SAURAS</td>
<td>Am. Legion Hall</td>
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<td>1212</td>
<td>MONTREY</td>
<td>Sutler's</td>
<td>2000 Fremont St.</td>
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<td>1216</td>
<td>SANTA MARIA</td>
<td>Great Scott's Pizza</td>
<td>Chairman: G. Bark</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>1217</td>
<td>TEMPLETON</td>
<td>Good Neighbor Deli</td>
<td>Chairman: G. King</td>
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<td>1218</td>
<td>MIPY CABLE</td>
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<td>2000 Fremont St.</td>
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<td>HOLLISTER</td>
<td>Palais's Rest.</td>
<td>Chairman: D. Lockwood</td>
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<td>1220</td>
<td>DIABLO CANYON</td>
<td>Mulligans</td>
<td>Chairman: R. Chavez</td>
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<td>1221</td>
<td>SUELLETON</td>
<td>Andersons</td>
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## PIPE LINE

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<td>SANDSTOWN</td>
<td>PSA Rec. Rm.</td>
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<td>1312</td>
<td>NEEDLES</td>
<td>Elks Club</td>
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<td>TOPICK</td>
<td>Elks Rm.</td>
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<td>Elks Club</td>
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## SANTA CLARA

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<tr>
<td>1411</td>
<td>CITY OF SANTA CLARA</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>Chairman: J. Parker</td>
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## SAN JOSE

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<tr>
<td>1501</td>
<td>SAN JOSE PHYSICAL</td>
<td>3000 El Camino</td>
<td>Chairman: B. Brili, Jr.</td>
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## CITY OF OAKLAND

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<td>2211</td>
<td>OAKLAND GENERAL</td>
<td>3655 Ninth St.</td>
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## EAST BAY

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<td>EAST BAY CLERICAL</td>
<td>1800 Powell St.</td>
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## SAN FRANCISCO

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<td>2401</td>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO CLERICAL</td>
<td>5 Embarcadero Ctr</td>
<td>Chairman: B. Fishier</td>
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## STOCKTON

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<td>STOCKTON</td>
<td>Ed Stewart Post</td>
<td>Chairman: R. Newton</td>
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## PACIFIC GAS TRANSMISSION

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<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>WALLA WALLA</td>
<td>413 W. Glacier</td>
<td>Chairman: J. Schaad</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>3111 9th &amp; E. St.</td>
<td>Humboldt</td>
<td>S. Anderson</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3112 Loquat St.</td>
<td>Garberville</td>
<td>B. Harmeyer</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3113 Willow Inn</td>
<td>Shasta</td>
<td>C. Fleming</td>
<td>5:15 p.m.</td>
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**SACRAMENTO**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3011 4081 Bardsnest</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>L. Gill</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3811 Florin Rd.</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>D. Norris</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3812 Brigation Lodge</td>
<td>Vaca</td>
<td>J. Runswick</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3813 The Hootsgow</td>
<td>Coloma</td>
<td>G. Parks</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3814 523 Bush Street</td>
<td>American Legion</td>
<td>M. Davis</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3911 IBEU L.U. 1245</td>
<td>SMU</td>
<td>J. Whitehead</td>
<td>4:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3912 Hwy 50 Frontage Rd</td>
<td>Fresh Pond (SMUD)</td>
<td>D. Newton</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3914 Hatchett Press</td>
<td>Hidden Valley</td>
<td>D. Ahvent</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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**CITIZENS UTILITIES COMPANY**

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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4012 3555 Main</td>
<td>Susanville</td>
<td>V. Simmons</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4013 1200 W. 4th St.</td>
<td>Alturas</td>
<td>J. Belf</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4014 8610 Elk Grove</td>
<td>Elk Grove</td>
<td>J. Rupel</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4015 Uncle Bob's Pizza</td>
<td>Benney's</td>
<td>C. Hutchinson</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4016 1644 Lathun</td>
<td>Palo Cedro</td>
<td>D. Ahvent</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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**DAVEY TREE**

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<tr>
<td>4412 525 Water St.</td>
<td>Adolph's</td>
<td>K. Neal</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4413 El Conquistador</td>
<td>Selma</td>
<td>A. Sanchez</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4414 421 Stoney Point</td>
<td>Santee</td>
<td>F. Gratz, III</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4416 El Conquistador</td>
<td>Selma</td>
<td>A. Sanchez</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4417 1774 Calf St.</td>
<td>Redding</td>
<td>P. Mitchell</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4418 999 Tencolos</td>
<td>Petrol's</td>
<td>M. Linley</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4419 340 El Camino</td>
<td>San Carlos</td>
<td>V. Del Real</td>
<td>4:30 p.m.</td>
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**OUTSIDE LINE**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4511 3453 Ramona, #5</td>
<td>Outside Line</td>
<td>W. Branson</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4512 7074 La Cadena Dr.</td>
<td>Outside Line</td>
<td>B. Catalfo</td>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
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‘Doing More with Less’: a fancy new name

From PAGE ONE after the inauguration of “doing more with less,” four specialists had to carry the entire load. Making matters worse, they were moved to the first floor to work backup on the customer counter, separating them from the third floor records they needed to process their ECI paperwork. To top it all off, they were also required to serve as backup in answering customer telephone calls.

“The effect it had on the customer was, yes, we answered their call in 60 seconds. But we weren’t able to do anything else for them,” said Ambeau, a union steward who has been with the company 21 years.

“You want to do your job well, but it’s hard to do. It’s hard to give your full attention to the customer when you’re worrying about your ECI backlog.”

“It’s made it very very stressful because you cannot start something and pursue it until it’s finished,” said Pat Wilson, a union steward who has been with the company for 19 years. “I never get to finish one project. I’m pushed from one station to another... We keep hearing: ‘You can do more with less. You can do more, you can do more.’”

In order to cover the workload, the company has imposed extended periods of overtime. During one six-month period in 1988-89, employees were required to perform overtime for six straight months, and more overtime was required in the fall of 1989. Although weekday overtime was voluntary, Saturday overtime was mandatory.

“When it’s mandatory every week it really takes a toll on your life,” noted Barbara Cook, a meter reader and union steward. “People are real testy with each other. You get there on Saturday for the eighth Saturday in a row and you’re not real happy.”

But even with the overtime, enormous backlogs develop in processing ECIs, they start getting sloppy in their work,” Cook said. “People are not as friendly to customers. You get snippy with people.”

But like the crank who believes he can get something for nothing, management still trumpets its dream of “doing more with less.” Distressed employees believe that supervisors don’t want honest feedback about how the program is affecting job performance. “We went to them and told them the problems we were having,” said Ambeau. “They made it seem like we were goofing off.”

Wilson dismissed meetings with management as little more than “pep rallies,” where employees are made to feel like there’s something wrong with them if they don’t perform more.

Donna Dito, a 17-year veteran with the company and a union steward, noted that the company has created “focus groups” and “task forces,” supposedly to give employees a communications channel with management. But their real purpose is “just to make you think you’re part of the program,” Ditto said. “It’s lip service. Basically they’re going to do what they want.”

While management could ignore the fallout from its “doing more with less” initiative, employees could not. Some workers began taking their job stresses home with them.

Wilson couldn’t sleep at night. She had trouble dealing with the needs of her three children, aged 15, eight and four.

"I was past overload," Wilson observed. "I was so saturated I didn’t want to be approached by anything.”

“After a while you can only get so much out,” said Ambeau. “Maybe in the beginning we could’ve done more with less, but you can’t do more with nothing.”

Driven to a point of exhaustion, Wilson had to take

‘You want to do your job well, but it’s hard to do. It’s hard to give your full attention to the customer when you’re worrying about your ECI backlog.’

-Donna Ambeau
We keep hearing: "You can do more with less. You can do more, you can do more." You're speeding up but you're burning yourself out.

-Pat Wilson

four months of industrial leave last year. Ambeau was forced to seek treatment from the company nurse when she began experiencing muscle spasms in her shoulder.

Ditto estimates that as many as one-quarter of the Oakland customer service reps experience arm problems. While pushing the employees to do more with less, the company has "made no concessions to the computer age" in terms of properly designed work stations, according to Ditto.

Most employees would probably be willing to endure the pressure and the accompanying physical and emotional stresses if they believed the company truly appreciated their efforts. But as the time approaches to negotiate a new union contract, the company appears to be engaged in a campaign to undermine the workers' confidence.

"The company supervisors have been told we're overpaid," said Ambeau. She warns that if supervisors and workers are told often enough that the bargaining unit members are overpaid, "eventually they'll start feeling that way."

In the long run, the company risks cutting its own throat by ignoring the legitimate concerns and genuine insights of its workers.

Employees see the higher turnover rates in personnel that result from job dissatisfaction and they see the corresponding loss of efficiency as more time is devoted to training new employees. They see the work that is backing up or falling through the cracks. They see the steady erosion of morale.

And they see that "Doing more with less"-a thinly disguised attempt to impose speed-up on the workforce-is actually contributing to inefficiency.

Cook believes the plan is not working because the company chose to deal only with abstract plans rather than dealing with people. "Everything was taken out of the personal level and put down on paper. It's all completely impersonal."

A more sensible approach, in Cook's view, would be to ask workers how their time could be used more productively. Workers, he notes, have ideas about their work. They are, after all, the ones who have been doing it all along.

By taking such an approach management might learn a thing or two about efficiency. And they would probably wind up with a more motivated workforce.

"If you get someone's input and get their feelings about it," Cook observes, "then they're not going to buck when something more needs to be done. They'll have a share in it."
Employee Involvement: what's in it for workers?

Are such programs a step forward in the evolution of labor-management cooperation programs? Are they designed to extract important ideas from workers while denying them any of the benefits that come from applying those ideas? Workers don't give their labor without compensation, Banks and Metzger argue, and neither should they give away their ideas.

Labor management cooperation programs first began to appear after business school academics blasted the traditional "scientific management" theories which are undermining the potential for whoever controls the process model. Rather than giving management their insights, the authors write, "was to get the productivity increases without losing any control."

Soon a new breed of consultants arose with a vision of how management could hang on to its advantages. Banks and Metzger call this vision "the ideology of cooperationism." In this vision of the world, increased productivity doesn't come from worker participation in management, it comes from worker cooperation.

The ideology of cooperationism, Banks and Metzger argue, makes sure that increased productivity is attributed to "cooperation," "trust," and "working together," rather than to the knowledge, insight or participation of the workers.

Cooperation, according to the authors, is not good in and of itself. Whether or not to cooperate "is always a tactical question." What unions ought to insist on is not mere cooperation--where workers offer up something for nothing--but genuine worker participation in fundamental business decisions.

To achieve this leverage, unions must insist that employee involvement programs be structured on the bargaining process model. Rather than by-passing the union structure, employee involvement programs should function to advance the union's pursuit of its traditional interests, such as enhanced job security, better wages and benefits, and a stronger union.

In place of shopfloor "teams" run by management, such teams need to be accountable to all the workers through the union structure. In this way, the authors write, "unions can systematically address the wide variety of irrational management practices which are undermining so many American workplaces, while at the same time expanding and revitalizing themselves as institutions of representative democracy."

See PAGE THIRTEEN
Employee Involvement

From PAGE TWELVE

Are American unions up to such a grand strategy?

Without question, it will require an extraordinary degree of unity among the workers. But that unity can be achieved, Banks and Metzger write, if unions replace today's service model of unionism with an organizing model. Instead of simply solving problems for the membership, unions must try to "involve the membership in solving problems through group processes and collective action."

Most unions were originally founded on the organizing model. Banks and Metzger argue that unions adopting this model have more leverage with employers and find it easier to turn out large groups of people on picket lines, at rallies and at city council meetings.

If so, remember to fill out a Local 1245 Change of Address card. That's the best way to insure that you continue receiving the Utility Reporter and other union mailings. Pick up a Change of Address card from your shop steward or business representative.

Letters

'Hold the pull'

To the Editor:

It's time somebody should stand up and say "Hold the Pull" to American companies.

A recent news broadcast stated that American foreign trade was not at an even keel. I can understand why, when people buy foreign made products and American companies give out foreign-made awards.

I happen to work for an American company: Pacific Gas and Electric.

The company says we are supposed to be professionals at our jobs and give our customers quality work. From time to time the company shows its appreciation by giving awards. Recently I received a token of appreciation and a safety award. They were foreign made! Hold the pull!

There's no law against anyone or any company buying foreign-made products. However, there is no law against buying American-made products. If the awards and tokens of appreciation were American-made, that would be great, especially if they were union-made.

So, Pacific Gas and Electric, at this time I'm returning my foreign-made safety award. I hope someday your American-made profits in American dollars and cents, will go toward American-made products.

-John A. Savage, Journeyman Lineman

'Moving backward?'

To the Editor:

[Regarding the Utility Reporter story about the union preparing a Spanish-language contract] Majority-minority? We are moving backward. These workers are trying to improve their skills.

Go ahead, put it in Spanish. Kill their incentive to learn.

-Oren Richardson

Organizing Contra Costa

To the Editor:

Organizing new work places is the key to the future of the labor movement. Now union members can play a critical role in a new countywide organizing effort in Contra Costa County. Over 30 unions have come together to launch a Labor Council Organizing Committee. Our goal is to increase the number of unionized workers in Contra Costa County.

We need union members to speak to their spouses, friends and relatives who work in unorganized offices, health care facilities, industrial plants, construction sites, or anyone who works for a living. Let the Labor Council know who works in an unorganized workplace-call anytime at (415) 228-0161.

Less than 20 percent of the Contra Costa workforce is in unions. The size and strength of the labor movement dramatically affects our ability to negotiate the best possible contracts for our members as well as to pass legislation important to us all. The bigger we are, the stronger we are; it's that simple.

Contra Costa Central Labor Council Organizing Committee
Thrills, chills & (unfortunately) spills mark

There was no shortage of excitement when union members gathered for Local 1245's Annual Slow Pitch Softball Tournament in Concord's Willow Pass Park on May 19. Unfortunately, this year's tournament—the 13th in the annual series, as it happens—was witness to the first serious injury in the tournament's history, a broken ankle suffered by Steve Lace of the Bakersfield Pirates.

“Maybe we should have skipped Number 13 and gone straight to 14,” observed Ed Caruso, an organizer of the event.

Thirteen, as a matter of fact, was also the number of teams participating in this year's tournament. But despite the one injury, the players managed to have a good time. Cheered on by teammates, friends and family, ace pitchers delivered up wicked slow-pitch specialties to would-be Jose Cansecos.

Cool and almost-rainy weather didn't deter the softball enthusiasts, although a few blankets and jackets appeared in bleachers as the games proceeded.

The final game of the tournament was played under the lights.

Trophies to the winning teams were presented by Business Manager Jack McNally.

Caruso extended special thanks to Danny Brown for his assistance in organizing the event, and expressed appreciation to Business Reqs. Bob Martin and Mike Del Rio for making sure that Lace returned home safely following his injury.

Photos by Ed Caruso
13th Annual Slow Pitch Softball Tournament
The theft of our constitutional rights is a far greater threat to us as American citizens than the use of drugs in the workplace. Defend your American heritage, defend your rights, defend the liberties that our ancestors sacrificed so much to secure. Help circulate the petition and return it to a shop steward or mail it to:

IBEW Local 1245
P.O. Box 4790
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

To: U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Subject: Drug Testing

We, the undersigned employees of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, are strongly opposed to the planned drug testing of gas pipeline workers. We have an excellent safety record in our industry and our company, and do not believe that testing is warranted. We believe that testing without probable cause violates our constitutional rights to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. We demand that the Department rescind its drug testing program immediately.

Name ____________________________ Classification ____________________________

Signature __________________________

Name ____________________________ Classification ____________________________

Signature __________________________

Name ____________________________ Classification ____________________________

Signature __________________________

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