Cooperative effort
Local 1245, PG&E kick off ‘Healthwise’ campaign

Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric embarked on a new approach to health care with the recent kickoff of the Healthwise program. Traditionally, health care has focused on restoring health to people who have fallen ill. Through Healthwise, the company and the union are seeking to prevent people from getting sick in the first place.

The potential pay-off of this preventative approach to healthcare is two-fold: people will enjoy better health and will also be able to play an active role in holding down health care costs.

The recent kickoff to the Healthwise campaign, conducted at the Santa Rosa headquarters of PG&E’s Russian River Division, offered employees something of a blueprint for achieving better health, according to Local 1245 benefits specialist Wendy Bothell. Employees completed a written survey that evaluated them on a variety of health-related personal habits, including the extent of their smoking and drinking, whether or not they wear seatbelts, and the amount of exercise they get.

Participants also obtained readings for their height, weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol level.

All of these factors were then tallied to provide each employee with an overall assessment of his or health, as well as an indication of what steps the employee could take to become more “healthwise.”

PG&E encouraged employees to take part in the health screening by allowing them to do it on company time. In all, 234 employees participated.

Letter agreement
Healthwise grew out of general negotiations between PG&E and Local 1245 last year.

Although the program was not incorporated into the union contract, a letter agreement signed by both parties provides that half of PG&E’s divisions will have the chance to participate in Healthwise in 1991, with the other half being given the opportunity to do so in 1992.
Workers here and abroad
Rolling the union on...

Ugly protest: A member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union got the dress code at the Windsor, Ontario regional tax office changed by wearing his collection of ugly ties to work. The supervisor didn’t protest ties with flowers, poodles, and palm trees, but did hand out one-day suspensions to four workers who wore no ties at all. An arbitrator said that was unreasonable.

Bad boss: 9065, National Association of Working Women reports this item in its “worst boss” contest: One boss took a blind man and his seeing-eye dog around the office to meet personnel. The man was introduced to management; the dog was introduced to the secretaries.

This is insurance: The US economy entered the current recession with a weaker unemployment insurance system than at any time since World War II, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In 1980, only 37 percent of the jobless workers nationwide received unemployment benefits in an average month.

Holes in the net: The number of children and families on welfare has soared to a new level, and the decision to cut back on tax audits of wealthy Americans and corporations and concentrate on lower-income taxpayers instead. According to the House Ways and Means Committee’s oversight subcommittee, the White House budget office put pressure on the IRS, which the agency reportedly resisted. The Bush Administration then slashed the IRS budget allocation for high-income taxpayer audits by $70 million.

Voice wanted: An “overwhelming majority” of secretaries said they wanted some say in decisions to buy office furniture they use, according to a poll of 100 secretarial workers by furniture-maker Haworth Inc.

Successful candidates for IBEW convention

Thirteen members of Local 1245 were elected from a field of 123 candidates to attend the International Convention of the IBEW in St. Louis this fall. The winners are:

Perry Zimmerman, Dorothy Fortier, Jim McCauley, Barbara Symons, Kathy Tindall, Debbie Mazzanti, Sam Tamini, Mickey Harrington, Ron Blakemore, Leon Land Thomas, Jr., Lisa Morrison, Anna Gomez, and Bob Chote.

Business Manager Jack McNally and President Howard Stiefer automatically serve as delegates as mandated by the union By Laws.

The list of delegate candidates and the final tally of votes (winners in red) are certified by Patrick C. Gates, chair of the election, as follows:

**The Look of Recovery?**

President Bush has declared the recession over, but that will come as something of a surprise to the 28,000 job-seekers who filed into this Kansas City state employment office for application forms to fill just 100 openings at a Ford Motor Co. assembly plant.

Donna Pels of LIN Broadcasting pulled in a nifty $186 million last year.

Spare the rich: The Bush Administration has attempted to force the IRS to cut back on tax audits of wealthy Americans and corporations and concentrate on lower-income taxpayers instead.

According to the House Ways and Means Committee’s oversight subcommittee, the White House budget office put pressure on the IRS, which the agency reportedly resisted. The Bush Administration then slashed the IRS budget allocation for high-income taxpayer audits by $70 million.

Mike Haantjens 253
Gary Mai 238
Richard Diaz 229
Larry Pierce 228
Richard Dunkin 226
Terry Jones 225
Don Ramos 223
Grace Couye 221
Ed Mallory 213
Dennis Mitchell 208
Frank Lottl 197
Robin Morrison 196
Millie Phillips 194
Fred H. Pedersen 192
Arts Watson 192
Glover Day 191
Ron Chan 184
Jay Killigore 163
Russ Rylee 180
Jim Findley 179
Ronald R. Field 170
Frank Anderson 169
Tom Heyl 166
Jeff Sturgis 165
Al Wade 163
Steve Ward 162
Bob Abney 156
Litha Saunders 152
Richard Bidinost 150
Jim Russel 144
Gene LeMasters 140
Jack Lehman 138
Ron Jenkins 137
Robert Martin 137
Leslie J. Davis 136
Mike Jensen 136
Dore Carone 126
Sylvie O’Connor 125
Dora Valdez 125
Pat Collins 125

Howard Johnson 120
Larry Layton 119
Jeff Johnstone 117
Brian Carpenter 116
Bob Morante 111
Cliff Jacobson 110
Frank Teague 104
Ron Freels 102
Calvin Moss 102
James Cassidy 96
John Kennex 95
Ben South 93
Craig Banyaaz 94
Gene Voight 94
Rick S. Jones 93
Bernard Smallwood 92
Norman Stout 92
Ed Custer 91
Wayne Fippen 90
Sidney Le May 88
Al Maclean 85
Mike Richards 85
John Goodson 83
Gregg King 82
Denny Perry 82
John D. Kent 81
Malde Landrum 81
Bob Abney 80
Roy Runnings 79
Ivan Lynch 78
Frank Marshall 76
Robert Weisman 75
Lou Hogan 70
Keith Neal 69
Jeff Schlokker 65
Al James 47
Dwayne Norman 47
Bill Biddle 47
Computer provides personalized "Healthwise" evaluation for Fred Bush, light crew foreman in the Gas Department.

"Healthwise" aims at prevention

From PAGE ONE


In addition to the screening, the program provides reimbursements up to $100 annually for any employee who participates in nutrition, weight loss, pre-natal or smoking cessation programs.

Health clubs excluded

The union had wanted health club memberships to qualify for reimbursement as well, but the company refused, according to Bothell. Nonetheless, the union believes the reimbursement plan is a valuable incentive for promoting health-oriented activities among PG&E employees.

"At least it was a foot in the door," Bothell said.

Jeanne Osteen, helper, has her cholesterol checked. (Photos: Kathy Maas)
Suppose a battalion of three-headed aliens descended from outer space spewing Giant Paralysis-Inducing Laserbeams (GPIIs) that struck down hundreds of thousands of Americans with crippling injuries. How would America respond?

Obviously there would be an outburst of public rage and a huge American military counter-assault.

Now suppose the aliens give up the “three-headed look” for the more stylish “three-piece suit look” and take up jobs leading the nation’s major corporations. They trade in their GPIIs for Video Display Terminals (VDTs). Before long, hundreds of thousands of VDT operators are struck down by crippling cumulative trauma disorders.

Now what is America’s response? What counter-assaults do our political leaders, public health officials, and business executives launch against this menace?

Unlike the alien attack, the crippling effects of cumulative trauma disorders are real. Many unions and a growing number of public officials demand strong legislative and regulatory action to combat the epidemic, which according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics accounts for half of the nation’s occupational illnesses.

But American business has crafted a different strategy: slow down, delay, stall, and impede.

Among those put at risk by this strategy of inaction are the growing legions of workers who spend a significant part of their day punching keys at VDTs, including over a thousand members of Local 1245. (See Utility Reporter, May 1991).

In Part 2 of this series on cumulative trauma disorders, we look at what California politicians and regulators have done—or have failed to do—to defend workers against this occupational health menace...
By Eric Wolfe

When Cal-OSHA convened an ad hoc advisory committee this spring to help draft an ergonomics safety standard, it must have given union participants a keen sense of deja vu. They had, indeed, been here before.

Four years ago, responding to a petition from three unions, Cal-OSHA convened an ad hoc committee to study the need for an ergonomics standard for VDT workers. After meeting from September of 1987 to May of 1989, a majority on that committee recommended that a standard be adopted to protect workers from VDT hazards, including cumulative trauma disorders.

Cal-OSHA advised the Standards Board, which holds the final say in such matters, to reject the proposed standard. The standard was rejected.

In an effort to gloss over its betrayal of workers, Cal-OSHA made some high-sounding noise about the need to adopt a general ergonomics standard that would protect all California workers, not just VDT operators.

Waiting for Cal-OSHA to produce such a standard, however, was like putting a tooth under your pillow expecting to find money for your mortgage payment there in the morning. The tooth fairy just doesn’t deliver like she used to. And neither does Cal-OSHA.

Cal-OSHA took care to polish up its image by ordering employers in a few isolated cases to redesign their VDT stations. But the promised general ergonomics standard, which could have required protections for all VDT operators and for other employees at risk for cumulative trauma disorders, was instead buried in Cal-OSHA bureaucracy.

As a result, during the next two years untold thousands of California workers fell victim to the painful and crippling effects of cumulative trauma disorders.

Unions, meanwhile, continued the fight for VDT standards on other fronts. In 1990, after many years of trying, labor activists persuaded the California Legislature to enact a bill to regulate the operation of VDTs.

The bill was vetoed then-Gov. George Deukmejian, a Republican, who justified the veto on the grounds that a law mandating standards would “eliminate employers’ flexibility.” Hearing of the governor’s concern for employer “flexibility” surely left a bitter taste in the mouths of those workers who must literally pry open stiff fingers each morning because a cumulative trauma disorder has robbed them of their flexibility.

Faced with such unyielding hostility toward workers at the state level, unions brought the battle to the local level. In December of 1990, workers achieved a landmark victory when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance strictly regulating the use of VDTs.

Other cities, including Los Angeles, began to consider VDT legislation of their own. It was in this atmosphere of growing public agitation for safety standards that Cal-OSHA this year suddenly convened a new ad hoc committee to help write a general ergonomics standard. In fact, Cal-OSHA’s deputy chief for health and standards development, Frank Ciofalo, said he was putting this project on a “fast track” in order to develop a standard as soon as possible.

Spectre of preemption

So what changed? Did Cal-OSHA develop a sudden interest in the health of workers at risk for cumulative trauma disorders? Labor representatives doubt it. Instead, they suspect that the San Francisco ordinance alarmed California business leaders into pressuring Cal-OSHA to draft a state-wide standard in order to preempt local VDT ordinances.

Whether or not a state standard would indeed preempt local ordinances is unclear. Business representatives on the new ad hoc committee reportedly want a clause written into the standard expressly preempting local ordinances. Labor representatives want the standard to contain language that would permit localities to adopt stricter standards.

But no matter what any standard may say about preemption, the issue ultimately would have to be decided by the courts, according to Lynn Welsh, staff counsel to Cal-OSHA’s parent body, the California Department of Industrial Relations.

Welsh said the courts could find that local ordinances merely “add on” to state law. If there is no direct conflict between the two, the courts could let the laws coexist.

On the other hand, the courts could rule that state regulations necessarily preempt local law because the California Labor Code vests the power of regulating health and safety onto the Standards Board. Using this reasoning it is conceivable that the courts could even overturn state laws regulating ergonomics on the grounds that the Standards Board is the only body authorized to regulate health and safety matters.

Welsh, who will have a hand in actually drafting the proposed ergonomics standard, said Cal-OSHA is committed to sending a draft standard to the Standards Board for approval in 1992.

The delaying game is apparently over. A standard of some sort is on the way.

Formidable opposition

Whether that standard has any teeth depends to a great extent on how much pressure unions can bring to bear on the process. Labor faces formidable opposition.

Among those opposed to effective regulation of VDTs in California are giant corporations that manufacture them, like IBM, and corporations that employ large numbers of VDT operators, like Bank of America and AT&T. Because a general ergonomics standard could regulate all occupational exposures, not just VDTs, other employers and employees’ associations have also joined the battle, like the
CUMULATIVE TRAUMA DISORDERS

Up against the giants
From PAGE FIVE
Associated General Contractors and Gallo Salami

These forces clearly gained the upper hand in the early stages of the ad hoc committee's work. When the Cal-OSHA staff presented its first draft of the proposed standard in April, union representatives on the ad hoc committee realized it was not nearly strong enough. They stated firm opposition to any standard that could-through precaution-weaken the protections that had already been won in the San Francisco ordinance.

Corporate hue and cry
But labor's concerns were drowned out by the hue and cry raised by corporate interests. Although labor representatives can only speculate about what channels these corporate protests were sent through, they apparently hit the mark. When a second draft standard was presented to the ad hoc committee in June, it was even weaker than the first draft.

According to Barbara Kellogg of Service Employees Local 790, the first draft established a hierarchy of workplace controls, a feature strongly backed by labor. In this hierarchy, engineering controls, such as redesigning equipment, are used first. Second in priority are administrative controls, such as implementing frequent rest breaks.

The last priority, to be used only when the other options have been exhausted, is personal protective equipment. The principle behind this hierarchy, said Kellogg, is to "make the workplace safe rather than trying to create a situation where you have to make the individual workers safe in an essentially unsafe environment."

Out the window
But that hierarchy went out the window in the second draft, which, according to Kellogg, "had language that personal protective equipment shall be an integral part of the program and shall be used as a substitute for administrative or engineering controls where the protection provided is equally effective."

A section on medical monitoring also underwent a mysterious transformation between the first draft and the second. Unions were deeply concerned about language in the first draft that provided for medical monitoring only by company doctors. According to Kellogg, labor representatives told Cal-OSHA they believed that employees "should have a right to get a second opinion from a physician of their own choosing."

Monitoring eliminated
In the second draft, Cal-OSHA responded to these concerns by simply eliminating the entire section on medical monitoring.

Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, who represented Local 1245 at the June meeting of the ad hoc advisory committee, called the second draft a "toothless tiger."

"Working people need and deserve a standard with some teeth in it," said For-
From PAGE SIX

go along with the medical people on the committee in defining what the risk factors are, and go along with their recommendation, then we're perfectly happy with that," said Kellogg.

Kellogg suggested that business and labor let the medical experts have the final say on risk factors.

"I don't think we're arguing there are no ways of coming up with measurable risk factors," Cammidge told the Utility Reporter, "but the ones that are listed in the Cal-OSHA draft are not only ambiguous but I think can be misleading.

Cammidge cited "non-neutral posture" as an example of ambiguous language.

Kellogg of the Service Employees agrees that the "non-neutral posture" language needs reworking, but she said that there is nothing ambiguous about most of the risk factors listed in the proposed standard, risk factors like repetitive movement and use of vibrating tools.

Risk factors are real

"The risk factors defined in the standard are risk factors. There's no question that people who do that work are at higher levels of risk" for cumulative trauma disorders, said Kellogg. "Those risk factors are not ambiguous or misleading."

Kellogg suggested that business and labor let the medical experts have the final say on risk factors.
Stewards give their full attention during training session in San Jose.

PG&E shop stewards brush up

Local 1245 shop stewards trained out the Pacific out the Pacific coast. They attended four regional conferences this year, sponsored by the IBEW. The conferences covered the full gamut of steward activities, including legal rights and responsibilities, procedures, and the use of legal resources. International Rep. Robbins conducted the training, which was attended by participating stewards from throughout the region.

Sacramento

Regional stewards training in Sacramento had its lighter moments.

Stewart Anderson
Ken Brown
Luckey Carter
Steve Chapman
Thomas Conwell
Barney Curtice
Howard Danielsen
Grover Day
Sharon Delgado
Domenick DiCe
Patti Eide
Frank Elliott
Clarence Felkins

Jerome Fernandez
Timothy Foley
Dennis Goodman
Marie Graham
Constance Haase
Eric Helme
Harvey Iness
Danny Jackson
Mike Johnson
Christine Lay
Jerry Lee
Olivia Mercado
Forrest Merrel

Bob Morante
Michael Oelrichs
Gary Outlaw
Fred Pedersen
Jimmy Ramirez
Terry Rist
Russ Rylee
Luis Sabala
Myron Stetler
Arnold Streetman
 Stanley Teausant
William Tomlinson
Mike Vrooman

Problem solving during regional stewards training in San Jose.

San Jose

Stewards give their full attention during training session in San Jose.

John W. Coates
Brian Cook
Robert Dailey
Mary Davis
Michael Davis
Fred deAguiar
David Dow

Art Garza
Manny Hernandez
Ron Hill
Mike Jensen
Nancy Landeros
Richard Landucci
David Mackley
Richard Manley
James Mauzy
Shea Moore

Robin Morrison
Magdalena Munoz
George Naranjo
Gerald Roza
Barbara Saunders
Paul Shirley
Pat Stoffey
Robert Storment
Ron Weeks
Sandra Weeks

Robin Morrison
Magdalena Munoz
George Naranjo
Gerald Roza
Barbara Saunders
Paul Shirley
Pat Stoffey
Robert Storment
Ron Weeks
Sandra Weeks

PG&E stewards at training session in San Jose.
Local 1245 shop stewards from throughout the Pacific Gas and Electric system attended four regional steward training conferences this spring. The conferences, sponsored by the IBEW International, covered the full gamut of steward responsibilities, including legal rights and obligations, grievance procedures, and the standards used by arbitrators. International Representative Dick Robins conducted the training sessions. Each participating steward will receive a letter from International President J. J. Barry and a certificate of completion.

PG&E stewards at Fresno training session.

PG&E stewards at Fresno training session.

PG&E stewards at training session in San Jose.

Business Rep Frank Saxenmeier and Cliff Jackson.

Good turnout for regional steward training in San Jose.
skills in regional training programs

stewards from through- his and Electric system's regional steward training programs. The conferences, sponsored by the International, covered a wide range of subjects, including responsibilities, union obligations, grievance procedures, and standards used by arbitrators. Participants included representatives Dick Robison and Business Manager Jack McNally. Each steward received a letter from J. H. Barry and a certificate of participation.

Fresno

Pete Altamirano
Fidela Barrios
Tess Bock
Wayne D. Cook
L. T. Cordova
Marvin Daniels
Darlene Devine
Karl Feil
Dee Green
Chris Habecker
Diana L. Herr
J. M. Jacobson
Terry Jones
Linda Jurado
Daniel Lockwood
Ernie Magana
Edward Mallory
Robert McCormack
Emet Miranda
Dean Mooney
Christopher More
Lisa Morrison
Joy O'Hagan
Sal Perales

PG&E stewards at Fresno training session.

Concord

Bradford Applin
Wilma Arjona
William Attinger
Linda Bostic
Martha Bowman
Pamela Caballero
Robert Castillo
Kevin Christensen
William Coulls
Michael Crater
Leslie Davis
Jerry De Baca
James Dorman
Barbra Fain
Alfonso Faustino Jr.
David Fritz
Guy George
Shirley Henry
Harry Hom
James Horton
William Hunt
Clifton Jackson
Richard Jaster
John Kent
Felicia Mack
Carl Makarczyk
Michael Malloy
Rebecca Marquez
David Meier
Michael Noard

Robert Oлагue
Millie Phillips
Doris Pierce
Robert Quinn
Rao Nagaraja
Theodore Rios
Frank Robertson
Alfredo Salinas
William Smith

William Stage
Melissa Steward
Barbara Symons
Norman Tkachenko
Della Underwood
Corazon Valdez
John Vernatter
Donna Whetstone
R. G. Woodford

PG&E stewards at Fresno training.

PG&E stewards at Fresno training session.

Business Representatives Frank Hutchins, Ron Van Dyke and Mike Hentjens at stewards training session in Fresno.

Good turnout for regional stewards training in Concord.

July 1991 Utility Reporter 9
Delta Poker Run: fun on the water

By Jim Dorman

Local 1245’s Day on the Delta Poker Run started from Brannan Island State Recreation Area on a warm Saturday morning at 7:30 on the first day of June. After stops at Tower Park, Herman and Helens, Moore’s Riverboat, Spindrift and Lighthouse Restaurant, contestants returned to Brannan Island for hot dogs, hot links, chili beans, pork ’n beans and a raffle of many gifts that started at 4:30.

The drawing of poker hands ended at 6 p.m. Only two boats did not make it to the picnic area by 6 p.m.

Ramp raffle gifts included a $85 gift certificate to Stuart Spindrift and Lighthouse Restaurant, contestants returned to Brannan Island for hot dogs, hot links, chili beans, pork ’n beans and a raffle of many gifts that started at 4:30.

The drawing of poker hands ended at 6 p.m. Only two boats did not make it to the picnic area by 6 p.m.

Ramp raffle gifts included a $85 gift certificate to Stuart Spindrift and Lighthouse Restaurant, contestants returned to Brannan Island for hot dogs, hot links, chili beans, pork ’n beans and a raffle of many gifts that started at 4:30.

The drawing of poker hands ended at 6 p.m. Only two boats did not make it to the picnic area by 6 p.m.

Ramp raffle gifts included a $85 gift certificate to Stuart Spindrift and Lighthouse Restaurant, contestants returned to Brannan Island for hot dogs, hot links, chili beans, pork ’n beans and a raffle of many gifts that started at 4:30.

The drawing of poker hands ended at 6 p.m. Only two boats did not make it to the picnic area by 6 p.m.

Ramp raffle gifts included a $85 gift certificate to Stuart Spindrift and Lighthouse Restaurant, contestants returned to Brannan Island for hot dogs, hot links, chili beans, pork ’n beans and a raffle of many gifts that started at 4:30.
Sierra Pacific orders workers to shave beards

From PAGE ONE

require a respirator I have to shave," said Earl Jones, a Local 1245 shop steward who works in the plant's warehouse.

Even as Jones speaks, up pulls a truck driven by troubleman Kelly Riggs, an 18-year union member still sporting a full beard. Riggs said he was told to shave before reporting for an assignment at the plant. When he refused, Riggs said he was told to go ahead and report anyway.

Incidents like this fuel the employees' belief that enforcement of the policy is arbitrary.

"They're just infringing on our rights," said Riggs. "Where it is a health hazard, they should shave it off. But these guys working in the warehouse, they never have to wear a respirator. Why should they have to shave it off?"

The company refers to OSHA regulations in outlining the new policy. But Jones maintains that the company misconstrues the OSHA regulations.

OSHA does in fact address conditions that could prevent a proper seal when wearing a respirator. According to an OSHA regulation cited in a company document, "such conditions may be a growth of beard" or sandblasting, among others.

However, the OSHA document clearly addresses itself to conditions that may be a problem. It does not suggest that facial hair is necessarily a problem in obtaining a seal, nor does it expressly prohibit facial hair.

"I think it's harrassment," said Jones.

Skeeter Morris, another Local 1245 steward forced to undergo the razor, believes the policy makes no sense.

"People have grown facial hair here for 20 years," said Morris. "So what's the big deal?"

Mark Kearns, a mechanic welder at Valmy and a union member since 1984, thinks the company is just plain fuzzy thinking.

The new policy was spelled out in a Sierra Pacific memo on May 10. While the company seeks to get rid of the fuzz on workers' faces, the memo itself displays a bit of fuzzy thinking.

"Several of us bought these," said the newly-shaven Kearns, holding up his PAPR. "Now the company says they're not adequate."

"If you can pass the company's fit test with this thing, which I did with my beard and glasses on, that ought to be enough," Kearns declared. "I don't know why they have a fit test if it's not good for anything."

Mark Kearns, mechanic welder

"If you can pass the company's fit test with this thing on [a PAPR respirator], which I did with my beard and glasses on, that ought to be enough. I don't know why they have a fit test if it's not good for anything."

Local 1245 member wins CLUW post

A Local 1245 shop steward has been elected as president of the San Francisco chapter of Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Millie Phillips, a control operator at PG&E's Hunters Point power station, served as San Francisco CLUW's interim president from September of 1990 until March, when she was elected to a full two-year term.

According to Phillips, CLUW has four objectives: to help women gain leadership positions in labor; to help women organize, to promote affirmative action in the workplace and in unions, and to promote the education of women in general.

Phillips said she placed a high priority on linking other issue areas up with the labor movement.

"In my view, there aren't any single issues anymore," said Phillips. "Workers' health and safety issues are tied into environmental issues, for example."

"Other CLUW officers serving with Phillips are Vice President Suzanne Forsythe of OPEIU Local 29, Secretary Linda Ray of SEIU Local 790, and Treasurer Marjorie Stearne, retired member of UE of San Francisco.

Local 1245 Business Rep. John Stralla shares the employees' skepticism that safety was really the issue in the new policy.

"They make people cut their beards off. Why don't they make them stop smoking?" Stralla asked. "That's about the most dangerous thing they do."

Stralla said a grievance was filed in the works.

Unionists lend hand to Tribune

Union members are coming to the rescue of the Oakland Tribune.

In an effort to help out the financially-ailing newspaper—which employs 400 workers from eight different local unions—half-price subscriptions are being offered to union members who sign up for six months or one year.

"We must do all we can to save our member's jobs in the way to do that is to keep the Tribune running," said Owen Marron, executive secretary-treasurer of the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

"If the Tribune were to close, the void would be filled by arch-conservative voices from outside Oakland."

The Tribune's editor and publisher, Robert C. Maynard, said it "makes sense that organized labor and the ownership of the Tribune would work together for the survival and prosperity of the only Eastbay newspaper that works in a daily and constructive manner with its colleagues in organized labor."

The idea of urging union members to subscribe originated when Tribune workers represented by Local 595 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers urged others in the building and construction trades to sign up.

The six-month rate to union members is $24.76 rather than the regular $49.51.

For 12 months it is $49.51 rather than the regular $99.01.

For details, call the Tribune at (415) 645-2667.
Fourteenth Annual Slow Pitch Softball Tournament
May 18-19, 1991

Winning Teams

Winning Managers
Local 1245

Play ball!

Photos by Ed Caruso
We in this country are in a very huge fight, the likes of which we haven't faced in many years, a fight for the very soul of our democracy. A fight against the greedheads who are stealing from you and me, who are stealing from our children, from our environment, stealing from our destiny as a people.

Our challenge is the same one Franklin Roosevelt took up 60 years ago when he accepted the Democratic Party's nomination in 1932—he said, "Join me in this crusade not to win votes alone, but to restore America to its own people."

There's no justice in America today for working people, no justice for dirt farmers, very little justice for small business people, minority enterprises, entrepreneurs, inventors and wild catters. No justice for old folks, precious little justice for children in our society. We don't respect workers. We have a work ethic we respect. But we're not honoring workers, we're not rewarding workers.

The very top dogs in our society, from the White House to Wall Street, may salute the American work ethic, but they disrespect the American worker. General Motors just a year ago laid off several thousand workers in Detroit on the basis those workers were excess and could be done away with. That very same year they put bonuses in the pockets of 3300 white collar executives, including the chief executive, Roger B. Smith, [who went] from $700,000 a year retirement payout annually to $1.25 million annually.

Their rationale was that this was necessary to make General Motors more competitive with other US corporations. They had just laid off 1 believe something on the order of 13, 14 thousand workers on the basis that in order to be more competitive they had to lay off the workers. Now they're saying in order to be more competitive we have to increase bonuses to our executives. Here are people who think they're the top dogs and the rest of us are fire hydrants.

**Philosophy of greed**

The government of the people, instead of standing with the working folks of this country, are implementing a pernicious philosophy of greed. A philosophy that says, "I got mine, you get yours. Never give a sucker an even break. I'm rich and you're not. Adios chump." That's really what they're saying.

During the 1980s, 80 percent of American people lost income. The richest 10 percent of Americans had a 16 percent increase in their income. The richest 5 percent, they had a 24 percent increase. The richest one percent, had a 74 percent increase in their's. They started with $314,000 average income in 1980. They ended the decade with $540,000 in average income.

None of us is more than one or two paychecks removed from poverty, and why is that? Because we don't own anything. You subtract what you owe from what you have, you're in trouble. And if you lose your paycheck for one, two, three months, you're in serious trouble. They're coming to knock on your door and take away from you what you think you have, like your car, and like your house. The few have the most and they got more under Reagan. Reagan and the Congress.

In 1973, for example, the wealthiest one percent of American families owned 19 percent of everything. That's all the cash, stocks and bonds, the houses, the vacation homes, the yachts, the tupperware, everything. By 1988, one-half of one percent owned 33 percent of all of that. That's 400,000 families. One-half of one percent owned more than the bottom 90 percent.

**Redistribution of wealth?**

People say to me, "Hightower, you're talking about the redistribution of wealth, aren't you?"

Well, yes sir, I am. We have had the most massive redistribution of wealth in our history during the 1980s, taken from the many and siphoning that wealth off up to the top. Using the taxing power, using the spending power, using the monetary power, using the regulatory power of the government. Those wealthy few got their's the old-fashioned way: they got the government to give it to them.

George Bush when he was running for president in 1988, he was scooting around the country saying "We got a boom" in this country. But most people are looking at their pocketbook, looking at that bank account at the end of the month and they're saying, "A boom for whom?" Not for them. That boom is like so much distant thunder, rumbling off the horizon there. You hear it, you see the occasional flashes of lightning, the Donny Trumpe, people like that. You see that. But like they say out in West Texas, thunder ain't rain.

In 1986, Michael Milken made $550 million, personal income. What is $550 million? Think of it like this. Consider the typical American, somebody who made $30,000 a year. [Say] Michael Milken was 10 times more industrious, more smart, better looking, than that typical American. Then he might have taken home $300,000. If he was 100 times better, then he would have taken home $3 million. If he was a thousand times better, he would have taken home $30 million. If he was 10,000 times better he would have taken $300 million. If he was 15,000 times better he would have taken $450 million. He took $550 million. He was nearly 20,000 times better than the typical American.

That's the distortion that results from this philosophy of greed.

[Recently] George Bush was absolutely giddy because the Dow Jones Average had gone above 3,000. Wall Street's whizzing, it's above 3,000. Do you know what the Dow Jones Average is? I don't. Does it move you that it's above 3,000, does it make a lot of difference? I want to know what the Bill Jones Average is. What's the price of spam today? That's the indicator I'm interested in. Sure Wall Street's whizzing, but it's whizzing on you and me.
SAVINGS & LOAN SWINDLE

Sure Wall Street's whizzing but it's whizzing on you and me.

This has been a meaner and rougher administration. Right out of the chute they veto the plant closing notification bill, they veto the family leave bill, they veto the civil rights bill. Right out of the chute George Bush proposed a capital gains tax break for the wealthiest families in America.

Highflying hucksters

But nowhere have we seen the economic voodoo as outlandishly applied as we have in this Savings and Loan bailout ripoff, in which our government is letting a bunch of highflying hucksters and Wall Street speculators steal billions of dollars out of our pockets. The S & L debacle under Ronald Reagan, that was bad enough. In which they said, "We're going to lift the limit on FDIC guaranteed deposit from $40,000 to $100,000." Then we're going to have to pay 10, 11, 12 percent interest on those deposits so we can attract the super wealthy to come in here. And they did. Then because these folks are such geniuses we're going to turn them loose to build highrise buildings in Houston Strip shopping centers in Miami, condos in Aspen and that kind of thing. Inevitably leading to the kind of demise we have.

If ignorance was bliss these guys were ecstatic to start with, 'cause this didn't happen to poor working from the get-go.

That was bad enough. Now comes Brother Bush and the Congress saying, "We want you, middle income people, low income people, to pick up the tab for this. You and your children, to clean up the mess that you profited not a dime for and now have to pay for." Structural thievery

Whose mistakes are we bailing out here? We did have an almost total bailout down in Texas, no question about that. But the issue is not the few thieves. You can add up everything they took and it's just a minor few billions of dollars. The issue is the structural thievery that took place, that allowed the rich investors and speculators to move in and cause the decade and now come in and pick the carcass of the S & Ls and get paid by us taxpayers to do that.

One of those is the poster- boy of S & L syndrome, Neil Bush himself. You want to get one of those Neil Bush loans, don't you? Has no interest, no principle, never matures.

Neil Bush got punished of course for his indiscretions by the Federal government. They said if he was going to have to do anything unethical as an S & L or banking person in the future he would actually have to consult a lawyer and he didn't. The S & L bailout of the Savings and Loan (S & L that he was a director of) cost the taxpayers roughly a billion dollars.

The government agency set up in order to handle this crisis in a moment of exuberance, tried to file suit and recover from Neil Bush and 10 other directors of that Savings and Loan. So the $200 million of that cost 20 percent of the bailout. Then they negotiated a settlement in which they said OK we'll take 30 million, 5 percent of the bailout. Then it turns out the part of the settlement that is going to be paid by the directors is only $27 million, less than 3 percent of the actual bailout.

Neil Bush pays 'zippo'

And then you learn that Neil Bush is broke and apparently he doesn't have any money. They figure the amount he will pay will be zippo, none at all, not a bit.

So he escapes, as the son of the president of the United States. If you did to a 7-11 what Neil Bush and this administration did to the Savings and Loan industry you'd be doing 10 to 20 in the state penitentiary.

But Neil Bush is taking a walk. We the taxpayers are assessed the tab for this. Pretty good tab, too, 1989, the first bailout: $50 billion. Brother Bush said, "Never again will taxpayers have to bail out the S & Ls."

His never again lasted about 18 months. They were back in March this year, got another $78 billion, maybe more. They're going to come back in August looking for $80 to $100 billion. Stanford University says we're talking about $1.4 trillion going into the S & L bailout.

We come along and say we've got this toxic pollution problem here, we ought to be cleaning this mess up. They say, "Yes, yes you're sure right about that, but we don't have any money." We go in and say we need affordable day care, health care, affordable housing. They say, "Well yes, those are big problems and we sure care a lot about that, but we've got a federal deficit and it just can't be done." We need fair farm prices, we need a jobs program, we need to repair the infrastructure. They say, "Yes, all that's true, but we won't be able to fit those things in.

But here come the banksters [asking for a bailout]: $1.4 trillion right on the table.

Now agreed, that's off-budget. As Dave Berry wrote, that means they write it down on an entirely separate piece of paper.

Somebody's got to pay

It is of course on budget. Somebody's got to pay for it. It's going to be you and me and our children and our grandchildren over 40 years time that are going to pay for this bailout if we let them get away with it. I believe we're going to be risking [some percentage] of our tax money should be spent on this bailout.

You say, "Hightower, that's cute, but where you going to get the money to pay for that bailout?" Well, like Jesse Jackson says, "We're going to get it from where it went." The people who had the party in the 80s and made mistakes, they should be the ones to pay for the cleanup. It's possible to do that. Let us ask them to do that.

Sad day, we've had strong Democratic participation in this robbery of the people going on in Washington DC. It's kind of like being bit by your pet dog. That bite'll heal but you'll never feel the same about that dog again.

Go see some of the Democratic wobblers on the S & L and say "We notice in March you voted five different times to give $78 billion to the S & L hucksters. You're going to have another opportunity in August and I'm just almost sure you're going to straighten up before then."

Kickin' the hogs out

My old Aunt Eula, used to farm down in Texas, she told me some years ago, "The water won't ever clear up until you get the hogs out of the creek." That is exactly the problem: the hogs are in the creek. They are fouling our environmental waters. You do not get the hog out of the creek by saying, "Here hog, here hog." You get the hog out of the creek by putting your shoulders to it and shoveling it out of the creek.

My old Aunt Eula, used to farm down in Texas, she told me some years ago, "The water won't ever clear up until you get the hogs out of the creek." That is exactly the problem: the hogs are in the creek. They are fouling our environmental waters. You do not get the hog out of the creek by saying, "Here hog, here hog." You get the hog out of the creek by putting your shoulders to it and shoveling it out of the creek.

Savings and Loan industry got this toxic pollution crisis. We go in and say we want a cleanup. But here come the banksters and the government agency, on a voice vote. More of a grunt, actually.

Some people think we need a third party. I think we could use a second party. And I want it to be my party, the Democratic Party. But it's not going to be that until Democrats get out of the living rooms and corporate suites of the rich where they go to raise money, and begin to get into the communities and neighborhoods of folks like you, all across the country, raising issues, raising hope, and raising a little bit of hell. That's what politics is supposed to be about.

The true political perspective in America is not right to left, it's top to bottom. That's where people are, they're out here [in the community]. You've got to be talking to them.

People say, "Well, Hightower, all that's cute, but after all what is it you're really talking about? What are you seeking in life?"

Well, this will do: "We want more schools and less jails, more books and less arsons, more learning and less rice, more constant work and less crime, more leisure and less greed, more justice and less revenge. In fact, more of the opportunities to cultivate our better nature."

That's from Samuel Gompers, founder of the American Federation of Labor in 1893, That'll do.

For more information, contact Jim Hightower's Financial Democracy Campaign, 804 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27702.

In California, call Plant Closures Project at (415) 763-6584.
Our Democracy Is A Joke

That was the theme of Solidarity Day ten years ago, when hundreds of thousands of working women and men gathered in Washington to show that they were unified and ready to meet the attack on the labor movement launched by the Reagan Administration. They promised to keep on fighting for economic and social justice, regardless of the political fashion of the moment. It has not always been easy, but that promise was kept.

Now, the time has come for the labor movement to gather in Washington once again to show its solidarity—to demonstrate its continuing commitment to achieving a better life for the working people of this country.

Solidarity Day 1991 will have three goals:
* A ban on the permanent replacement of strikers. From the New York Daily News to Phelps Dodge in Arizona, corporate bosses have been hiring non-union workers as permanent replacements. Permitting permanent replacement disrupts the American system of collective bargaining and threatens the ability of the trade union movement to negotiate fair and effective labor contracts. On Solidarity Day 1991, the trade union movement will call on Congress to put a stop to this ugly practice.
* National health care reform. While the United States spends more on health care than any other nation in the world, soaring costs have put even the most basic health care beyond the reach of too many working people. On Solidarity Day 1991, the trade union movement will demonstrate its support of a program of national health care that will provide access for all, cost containment, and quality care.
* Full freedom of association at home and abroad. In this country, the law places a maze of obstacles in the path of workers seeking to organize into unions. Many public employees at the state and federal levels are denied essential collective bargaining rights. Abroad, workers in countries governed by regimes of the right and left continue their struggle for free and independent unions. On Solidarity Day 1991, the trade union movement will reaffirm its commitment to the freedom of association that is fundamental to a democratic society. We will insist that our rights as free women and men be respected.

The AFL-CIO declares Aug. 31, the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, to be Solidarity Day 1991. We call on all union members to come to Washington on that day to demonstrate for our rights and show America that we are one, we are strong, and we are determined.


And It Ain’t Funny Anymore!

DEMAND
The Right To Organize
DEMAND
The Right To Strike

Solidarity Day
Saturday, August 31, 1991
Washington, D.C.

Huck/Konopacki Labor Cartoons - June, 1991