Women in the Trades

PG&E women organize for mutual support

Women in job classifications traditionally held by men face a twin challenge: mastering skills and changing attitudes.

Mastering the skills is the easy part. Women at PG&E have proved they can perform the work of gas fitter, gas crew foreman, electric lineman and other "physical" classifications.

But gaining acceptance from their co-workers in the field—and getting support from management—has been another story.

A group of Local 1245 women in the East Bay has responded to the problem in a time-honored way: they're getting organized.

Although their structure

See BACK PAGE

Union plans to escalate Arbor Tree campaign

Pickets will go up in Placerville this month as Local 1245 intensifies its campaign to win a contract with Arbor Tree Surgery Co.

With an on-going picketline firmly established at Arbor Tree headquarters in Auburn, the union's decision to expand the picketing provides fresh evidence of the union's determination to prevail in its four-year fight with the non-union contractor.

At a meeting with union negotiators in Auburn on Nov. 16, Arbor officials provided no substantial new proposals, according to Local 1245 Business Representative Jack Osburn.

"We believe that Arbor management plans to carry on with negotiations in order

See BACK PAGE

The Local 1245 picket line at the Bell Road exit off of Interstate-80 in Auburn, Ca. has drawn support from members at PG&E, SMUD, City of Redding, and Outside Line, as well as union tree workers.

(Photograph: Lantis Marttila)
Workers here and abroad
Rolling the union on...

Feature: Native Solidarity: Recent box office hit "Last of the Mohicans" became a union picture halfway through production when workers organized a strike in the middle of a location shoot. The producers had refused to bargain with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), but changed their minds when 100 Native American extras led by cast member Russell Means joined the picket line.

Feature: Murder in El Salvador: Despite a peace accord signed in January, right-wing attacks on trade unionists in El Salvador continue. According to Free Labour World, trade union leaders Miguel Angel Alvarez and Salvador Ivan Ramirez were murdered in July after receiving death threats from the FAS Anti-Communist Front.

Feature: Make Them Pay: States could reduce the unemployment rate by one percentage point at the bottom of recessions if they required employers to pay the full cost of jobless benefits for temporarily laid-off workers, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Feature: Activist on Trial: Trade union activist Chakufwa Chihana of the African nation of Malawi has been awarded the 1992 winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. The Malawi government is currently trying Chihana for "sedition" because of his efforts to win democratic rights for the people of Malawi.

Feature: Respect Workers' Rights: Chinese labor activist Han Dongfang, recently released from prison in China, called on the Chinese government to respect its own laws and treaties guaranteeing basic human and labor rights. He warned that recent moves in China toward a market economy could leave workers vulnerable to exploitation unless they are permitted to organize unions.

Feature: Pay Equity: Pay equity legislation mandating equal pay for jobs requiring similar skills and responsibilities would be supported by 77% of registered voters, according to a nationwide poll. The National Committee on Pay Equity says that white women currently earn only 69 cents for every dollar a white man makes, while African-American and Hispanic women earn 62 cents and 54 cents respectively of the white man's dollar. The figure is 73 cents for African-American men and 66 cents for Hispanic men.

Worthy Wages for Child Care

This year, nearly half of America's one million child care providers will leave the field for better-paying jobs. They say they can earn more grooming pets or parking cars. As a result, the quality and consistency of care for nearly six million young children is declining. Most of the female college-educated workers earn just $5.35 an hour.

This month "We Do the Work" -- the independent public television series about working in America -- features Worthy Wages for Child Care in a magazine show hosted by Joe Spano. Also featured will be champion cowgirl Beverly Wyerts who runs her own cattle on the harsh plains of southwest Texas.

Joint committee continues study of PG&E phone consolidation

Union representatives to the PG&E Telephone Consolidation joint study committee reviewed the results of a Nov. 23 meeting with the company. At left are (clockwise from left) Cathy Barber-Haring, Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, Art Garza, Donna Ambeau, and Business Rep. Enid Bidou. Above are Chris Habecker (left) and Norma Ricker. Not pictured are committee members Val Casimir.
Keeping a close eye on EMF-cancer connection

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

Evidence continues to accumulate linking exposure to electric and magnetic fields with cancer. This fall Sweden's National Board for Industrial and Technical Development announced that from now on it "will act on the assumption that there is a connection between exposure to power frequency magnetic fields and cancer, in particular childhood cancer." This action was prompted by two major studies undertaken by the Swedish government— one of residential exposure and the other of occupational exposure.

Some recent studies have failed to find a significant connection between EMF exposure and cancer, so we cannot yet say what the precise connection is or what the consequences are for workers who are exposed.

But the Swedish studies make it clear that we must proceed with caution.

The Swedish residential study found that children exposed to average fields of 3 milligauss or more in their homes had close to four times the expected rate of leukemia.

The occupational study showed that men exposed to similar levels of magnetic fields at work had three times the expected incidence of chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

As a result of these studies, the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development will soon begin work on EMF exposure regulations for new homes near power lines and for all new electrical facilities.

There are ongoing efforts in our own country to inform the public about EMF.

The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) commissioned a consensus group last year to come up with policy recommendations concerning EMF exposure. Local 1245 was among the groups participating in this commission, which met between November 1991 and March 1992.

This month we will join with these groups in offering testimony to an administrative law judge of the Public Utilities Commission. Each group will have its own particular focus. Our union's focus will be on workers.

We will urge that every effort should be made to educate workers about the known facts concerning EMF exposure.

We will also testify that unions like ours should have meaningful opportunities to provide input into policies that govern work around EMF fields.

The reason our members should have input is pretty simple: they are the ones at risk. Moreover, our members will be a valuable source of knowledge and experience when it comes to figuring out ways to reduce EMF exposure.

Local 1245 has worked jointly with PG&E to inform employees about the latest research concerning EMF. We will continue our efforts to make sure that our members are among the first to know when new information about EMF becomes available.
Reno pin dinner honors
Local 1245 members

40 years
Dawan Johnson

20 years
Bill Moody
Louis Johnson

25 years
Bob Vieira
Leroy Tiensvold
Otis Armand
David Herman
Bruce Grow
Ron Borst

Dave Herman, 25-year member

Don Moler, unit chairman

Otis Armand, 25-year member, Outside Line Construction.

Bruce Grow, 25-year member, Truckee Donner PUD, with his wife.


May 9, 1992
Sacramento dinner honors union members at SMUD, PG&E General Construction, Regional Transit, and Outside Line Construction

March 7, 1992

35 years
Tom Biles, Frank Vasquez
Wayne Snow, William Perini, William Branson, Carl Adams

25 years
Niko Tzanakakis, Dwight Thomason, Earl Sliger, Hal Ploghoft, George Park, William Lowery, Donald Krois, Mary Johnson, Gerald Greenamyer, Ralph Gerolamy, Ron Fowble, Lee Boggs, Thomas Billings

20 years
Michael Warner, John Shelton, Kurt Runge, Ramon Perez, Philip Mosle, Dolores Lothhus, Louie Kiser, Danny Jackson, Perry Hansen, Ronal Garcia, Norman Davis, James Carrasco, Jeff Braden

30 years
Wayne Snow, William Perini, William Branson, Carl Adams

December 1992 Utility Reporter
Happy Chanukah
Season’s Greetings
from the Local 1245
Advisory Council

Chuck Davis
San Joaquin

Terry Jones
Coast Valleys

Bernard Smallwood
San Francisco &
General Office

No Photo
Available

Lee Thomas Jr.
Humboldt

Frank Locati
Pacific Gas Transmission

Skip Harris
De Sabla

Frank Mana
General Construction

Pat Collins
Clerical at Large

Al "Knute" Knudsen
Colgate

Shirley Roberts
San Francisco - VP and
Comptroller’s Office

Duane Bartlow
Irrigation Districts

Art Torres
Sacramento Municipal
Utility District

Rodney Peterson
Outside Line Construction

William Tomlinson
Sacramento

Richard Perry
US Bureau of
Reclamation-Region 2

Terry Linebarger
CATV - Operating
Companies

James Findley
North Bay

Wilfred Nunez
Sacramento Regional
Transit

Bob Veiera
Sierra Pacific Power

Jim Lynn
Pipe Line Operations

Robert Storment
San Jose/City of Santa
Clara

James Dorman
East Bay & Material Control

Larry Rodriguez
Alameda/Contra Costa
Transit & E. Bay Municipal

Bernard Smallwood
San Francisco &
General Office

No Photo
Available

Grover Day
Stockton & City of Lodi

Harvey Iness
Shasta

Lee Thomas Jr.
Humboldt

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Sacramento Regional
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Bob Veiera
Sierra Pacific Power

8 Utility Reporter December 1992
North Bay members honored for service to Local Union

March 21, 1992

40 years
Virgil Burgess
Bernard Tanksley

30 years
Virgil Teague
Tom Sloan
Ron Shipley

25 years
William Swain
Henry Spaletta Jr.
Lee Schunk
Dave Santori
Charles Palmer
Forrest Moon
David Lemley
Heriberto Guitron
Julian Evans
J.R. Brickey
Peter Badaglia
James Abeel

20 years
John Sobelman
Priscilla Sharp
Tom O'Brien Jr.
Robert LaPant
Gary Griffin
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Donnie Crosson
Robert Castillo
Richard Bradhurst

30 years

20 years

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<td>PSEA Club</td>
<td>Kettleman Station</td>
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**San Francisco**

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**City of Oakland**

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<td>Oakland General</td>
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December 1992

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* Indicates change
** To be determined at a later date
**LOCAL AT LARGE**

**PG&E ‘Women in the Trades’ organize for mutual support**

"Previously [PG&E] never took any steps that really mattered—such as hiring more women and keeping them here. Now, finally, officially, the company is going to acknowledge there are women in the company and they’re going to recognize them."

Karen Wasiolek

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**Arbor Tree campaign**

From PAGE ONE

to appear that they are bargaining in good faith," said Osburn. "But the fact is they've had four years to show some good faith at the table and we sure haven't seen much of it."

Arbor, which holds a contract with Pacific Gas & Electric to trim trees around powerlines in PG&E's Sierra Division, has notoriously poor working conditions.

Local 1245 is seeking to bring Arbor's wages and working conditions into line with union tree contractors so that Arbor will not have a competitive advantage in bidding on PG&E line clearance contracts.

The prevailing standard for union tree trimmers can hardly be considered extravagant. The wage scale runs from $6.55 for groundman to $12.84 for foreman. Employees enjoy a small pension plan with the employer contribution running at 2% of the gross wage.

Employees pick up 40% of costs for the medical plan.

"As a union we cannot in good faith negotiate contracts that undermine this very modest prevailing agreement," said union negotiator Landis Marttila.

The union continues to enjoy good support from members at other employers, including PG&E, SMUD, union tree workers, the City of Redding, and Outside Line Construction.

An on-going picketline is being maintained at the Bell Road exit off Interstate-80 in Auburn. "This is really a fight to protect wage standards for all of our members," said Osburn. "We welcome everyone to come walk with us on the picketline."