IBEW launches MEMO campaign
Organizing key to survival in changing industry

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has launched a major campaign to involve its members in re-organizing the utility industry. The general outline of the campaign—called Membership Education and Mobilization for Organizing (MEMO)—was presented to Local 1245 staff members on Nov. 2 by International Representatives Art Jones and Louis Cortopassi. Their message was clear:

We must preserve and strengthen our local unions—whether we want to preserve our standard of living, and current union members must become active in the organizing process in order for it to succeed.

Jones and Cortopassi identified several specific ways in which union volunteers can assist with organizing. These include:

- Identifying potential organizing targets;
- Providing initial leads on unorganized properties;
- Making housecalls on unorganized workers;
- Speaking at organizing meetings;
- Soliciting support for IBEW organizing from community-based organizations.

Currently the IBEW represents about 800,000 workers, primarily in utilities, construction, and manufacturing. However, many times that number remain unorganized in these fields.

“Life cannot go on in the same way anymore. The world is changing too fast for that,” said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally, who was appointed by International President J. J. Barry late last year to serve on the Strategic Organizing Plan Work Team.

“The entire utility industry is being deregulated and a competitive market for energy is being introduced,” said McNally. “Things can go one of two ways: either we organize the new players coming into that market, or we get pushed aside.”

Recent downsizing and restructuring at Pacific Gas & Electric is an important warning sign that deregulation poses a major threat to workers. But there are opportunities for organizing. The Company and union have agreed to a "card check" system for establishing Local 1245 as the bargaining representative for Arbor Line clearance tree trimmers. Local 1245 has attempted to reach an agreement with Arbor for several years. The union believes the bargaining strength of all tree trimmers will be greatly increased when all tree trimmers have gained the power of collective bargaining.

Arbor is currently the largest non-union line clearance tree contractor working for PG&E. Contractors working for PG&E are Davis Tree and Asplundh.

Phone consolidation update

Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric had still not finalized an agreement on Call Center staffing as the Utility Reporter went to press in early November. The company and union conducted extensive bargaining during October over the initial staffing of the four regional telephone centers, which will be located in San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento and Fresno. The Call Centers will replace customer telephone service at over 30 local service centers, directly affecting the jobs of approximately 600 bargaining unit members, and indirectly affecting many more.

The union’s primary goal in recent bargaining has been to achieve the maximum job security protections possible for its members—both Clerical and Physical—during PG&E’s restructuring.

Local 1245 and California Public Utility Commission and legislative representatives will continue to work on the issues, with the union’s electronic bulletin board for messages.
Workers here and abroad

Rolling the union on...

Mineworkers Walk: Almost 18,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America are on strike in seven states to win job security and job opportunities for union coal miners. The UMWA is calling on unionists nationwide to write letters to their US Representatives urging support for HR 2980, which would outlaw "double breasting" in the coal industry.

Solidarity Across Borders: About 750 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa staged a one-day strike at the Ever Ready battery plant in Port Elizabeth on Aug. 6 in solidarity with striking members of the United Mine Workers in the US, Labor Notes reported. The plant is owned by Hanson PLC, which also owns Pebahody—the largest coal producer in the US.

Privacy Protections: A bill by Sen. Paul Simon (D-III.) would force companies to alert staffers in advance if they regularly monitor electronic-mail messages or computer keystrokes, and to disclose after the fact if they enter a worker's computer hard drive. The bill would also place limits on how many times a worker could be monitored.

GOP Fights Gould: The Senate Labor Committee divided on party lines in approving the nomination of William Gould IV as chairman of the National Labor Relations Board; all Republicans were opposed. Republicans will probably attempt to block Gould's confirmation when the full Senate considers his nomination. Gould is a respected scholar with moderately pro-labor views.

Cut by Half: More than 2,000 workers fired from RJR Nabisco after its 1989 leveraged buy-out continue to suffer. Although 72% found new work, their pay averages 47% of earlier wages.

Left-Behind Blues: Employees who are spared layoffs suffer low morale, declining productivity, anxiety and distrust, according to Robert Lewis of DBM Training and Consulting. And there can be other drawbacks to downsizing: According to Northrop corporation, workers compensation costs and claims went up 10% because of injuries rose as fewer workers were forced to do more.

Migrant Workers: Dissatisfaction over poor working conditions for migrant workers in Kuwait came to a head in August when some 2,000 maintenance and cleaning workers at the Mina Abdallah refinery held a one-day strike.

Nationwide Strike: With the federal anti-scab bill (S.55) facing defeat by an expected Republican filibuster in the Senate, Marshall Hicks, president of the United Workers Union of America, has asked the AFL-CIO to organize a "nationwide work stoppage" that would continue as long as the Republicans filibustered, Labor Notes reported.

GAS LINE RELOCATION

Relocating an 8-inch gas line to make way for the widening of Highway 68 in the Monterey/Salinas area are PG&E Gas TS & D members Pasqual Samuels, apprentice fitter (left), and Mike Miller, gas mechanic. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)
Scholarships offered to IBEW members

The IBEW Founders’ Scholarship Program for 1994 is now accepting applications from IBEW members. The program offers scholarships worth up to $3,000 a year for up to 12,000 of under-graduate study. The scholarships are available only to IBEW members.

Recipients of the scholarships have up to eight years to complete their degree.

Eligibility requirements, rules, and other information regarding the scholarship program are available by calling (202) 728-6090 or by writing:
IBEW Scholarship Administrator
1125 Fifteenth Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

Roundtable boycott explained

Attention Local 1245 Unit Chairs:

If you want to hear the story behind the Round Table Pizza boycott, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union (HERE) would be happy to send a speaker to your unit meeting and offer a five-minute presentation. The Round Table Pizza boycott is endorsed by the California Labor Federation. To sched-ule a speaker, call Angie or Stephanie at 510-893-3181.

NAFTA showdown: call now!

Although the hour is late, there may still be time for members of Local 1245 to have a direct effect on the upcoming vote in Congress on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), scheduled for Nov. 17. Despite heavy lobbying by the Clinton Administration and by corporations hoping to get easier access to low-wage Mexican labor, NAFTA still lacks the votes to pass Congress. Key swing votes include South Bay Representative Anna Eschoo, a Democrat, and GOP Representative Bill Baker, whose district runs along the I-680 corridor in the East Bay.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, a San Francisco Democrat, angered her long-time supporters in labor early this month when she announced she would support NAFTA. However, a groundswell of protest could still cause her to reverse her position.

Decision time is here. Members of Congress are supposed to represent all Americans, so please give these three a call today—even if you do not live in their dis-tricts—and urge them to VOTE ‘NO’ ON NAFTA!

Rep. Anna Eschoo:
(408) 245-2339

Rep. Bill Baker:
(510) 938-1995

Rep. Nancy Pelosi:
(415) 556-4862

We need unity to meet the challenges ahead

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

PG&E’s decision to re-structure and downsize its workforce has confronted this union with one of the biggest challenges we’ve ever faced.

The challenge began in February when the company announced it would reduce its workforce by 3,000 jobs. We’ve seen layoffs before at PG&E, but nothing like this since the 1950s. The stable employment we all have counted on was suddenly no longer stable.

Clearly the union had to be aggressive in protecting the interests of the membership. But what would be the most effective course of ac-tion?

The union is limited in what it can do because the company has a right to de-termine the size and struc-ture of its workforce. But the company is required to bar-gain with the union over the impact of restructuring upon bargaining unit members.

The union’s priorities for bargaining were set by our bargaining committee. It was immediately clear that our top priority had to be job security for our members. We had to do everything in our power to prevent forced layoffs.

But we had another im-portant responsibility, too: fairness. It was up to us to make sure that the process was as fair as possible to all of our members.

This was not an easy task. For one thing, PG&E itself did not seem to have a clear idea how much it wanted to reduce and which jobs it wanted to eliminate.

Nevertheless, it was clear that voluntary retirement and voluntary severance pro-grams offered the best hope for avoiding forced layoffs. We negotiated the best pack-age we could get and over a thousand of our members took advantage of the VRI offer.
Some tips for retirement

Going out under the Voluntary Retirement Incentive at PG&E? Here are some tips compiled by Local 1245 Benefits Specialist Wendy Bothell to help you in your planning.

• Make sure all your legal documents are up-to-date: wills, beneficiary forms, etc.
• Consult a tax advisor regarding possible tax implications surrounding a distribution from PG&E's Savings Fund Plan.
• Contact Social Security at 800-772-1213 regarding questions about eligibility for Social Security benefits and Medicare coverage Parts A & B.
• PG&E's Dental and Vision benefits can be continued at retirement (for an extended period) by continuing your coverage through COBRA.

Contact IBEW Local 1245 at 510-933-6060 for information on continuing your union membership at retirement and also for information regarding Local 1245's life insurance benefit and retiree dental plans.

If you are interested in converting your life insurance coverage, contact PG&E Human Resources within 31 days of retirement for an application form.

Finally, to find out how you can continue to enjoy the benefits of collective strength in your retirement, contact Local 1245 Retirees Club.

Good luck in your retirement—and thanks for all you've contributed to building the union!
Experience as a mom helped prepare her for steward's role

You don't have to be a mom to be a shop steward—but Phyllis Hayes thinks it helps.

There's nothing like being the mother of two boys to give a person experience at conflict resolution. With sons aged eight and 15, Hayes has been resolving conflicts for years.

The key to keeping the domestic peace, she says, is trying to hear both sides of an argument and figure out a solution that will eliminate the tension.

Since becoming a steward two years ago, Hayes has discovered that the same general approach works at the office, too.

"Sometimes I do feel like I'm listening to boys bickering, or I'm trying to solve a problem like I just left a few hours ago at home," says Hayes, who works as an Operating Clerk Steno at PG&E's service center in Monterey. "I find that on occasion I have to be willing to listen."

Her approach seems to be working. So far, Hayes has managed to resolve workplace conflicts before they escalate into grievances.

But that doesn't mean she's been reluctant to take a stand on behalf of union members when the situation warranted. She recalls one instance where management was preparing to skip coaching and counseling and issue an oral reminder.

The supervisor "kind of wanted to jump over and go to a higher level and I was able to say, 'Oh, come on, let's get it down to here,' " Hayes recalls.

At the same time, Hayes doesn't hesitate to pull an employee aside to discuss behavior that may be causing a problem, or to head off the filing of a grievance if a grievance isn't warranted.

"You try to calm them down," says Hayes, "and try to help them see it from another viewpoint than their own."

Resolving conflict isn't the steward's only responsibility, however. Another important function is communications. The steward relays the concerns of the members to the union leadership, and keeps members informed when the union takes action.

Sometimes that's easier said than done. During PG&E's current restructuring, the union has had to quickly respond to far-reaching actions by the company. And each time the company has changed course, the union has had to adapt its response accordingly.

"What the employees want is more clarity and more information. And it's kind of hard to do that," says Hayes, noting that information sometimes changes on a daily basis.

In keeping with her style, Hayes discourages blaming either the company or the union for the fallout from restructuring: she thinks both workers and managers are to some extent the victims of larger economic forces.

"I guess I get a little disappointed when I hear people complain about the union, and I just want to tell them: 'The next time you take your kid to the doctor or see an increase on your pay, don't forget how you got it,' " says Hayes. "I strongly believe we wouldn't have gotten our wage increases and our benefits if we were on our own—there's just no way."
As bargaining approaches, union solidarity will become increasingly important. Many Local 1245 members, including Lead Representative Kellie Bowman, expect the company to go after medical benefits.

“That’s a concern for me,” says Bowman. “I’m a single mom.”

The company plans to start pairing each of the six customer service representatives with one of six meter readers, with each pair working a particular geographical area.

“It really gives you an opportunity to get to know the customers in that area,” says Cari Leider.

Angry Customers: an Occupational Hazard

One thing that helped boost employee morale, according to Leider, was the renovation of the office, the first such renovation in more than a decade.

And a pleasant work space can be especially important when you often come under fire from the public. “You deal with them, you get through it, and then you go onto the next one,” says Kathie Peterson.

Peterson is especially well-situated to understand the value of the union. Her husband belonged to the union. In addition to the wages and medical insurance benefits, Peterson says, “It’s not only the benefits; it’s the knowledge that their rights will be respected. The union is a voice. Your opinion is important for people to stick together.”

A Slightly Different Approach

In addition to phone work, the service representatives now perform side tasks such as handling credit card payments and sorting meter reads for turnoffs and additions.

According to Leider, the company plans to pair each customer service representative with a field worker. “It really gives you an opportunity to get to know the customers in that area,” notes Leider.

As a result of the company’s new approach to the work in the future by pairing each customer service representative with one of six meter readers, the field workers will perform the field work locally and the customer service representatives will perform the corresponding office work for those accounts.

People can’t truly appreciate the value of medical benefits until they’ve had a family member who takes medical leave and understands what it’s like for the money to run out. But as a customer service representative, Cuddy is very clear about the value of medical insurance.

“That’s a concern for me,” says Cuddy. “I don’t have health insurance. Her daughter was diagnosed with a serious health problem in high school. But as a customer service representative, she understands the value of health insurance. And Cuddy is very clear about the value of medical insurance.

“That’s a concern for me,” says Cuddy. “I’m a single mom.”

The union is what got us the medical insurance. Her daughter was diagnosed with a serious health problem in high school. But as a customer service representative, she understands the value of medical insurance. And Cuddy is very clear about the value of medical insurance.

“That’s a concern for me,” says Cuddy. “I’m a single mom.”
Janine Cuddy understands the value of good medical insurance. Her daughter requires daily medication for a serious health problem, and without good insurance Cuddy would be swamped by medical bills. But as a customer service representative for Sierra Pacific Power Co., Cuddy enjoys a union-negotiated benefits package that covers most of her daughter’s medical expenses.

"People can’t truly appreciate the value of insurance until they’ve had a family member who takes medication every day," says Cuddy, who works in Sierra Pacific Power’s service center in Carson City, Nev. And Cuddy is very clear about who she credits for that valuable benefit.

"The union is what got us the money we make and the benefits we have," she says.

That view is apparently shared by all six customer service representatives at the Carson City office. In this right-to-work state, where union membership cannot be compelled, all six representatives choose to belong to the union.

Union solidarity probably helps explain why things run relatively smoothly in the Carson City office. Employees are secure in the knowledge that their rights will be respected by management.

Other than a clash over a dress code a while back, there have been no serious labor-management problems in the front office, according to Carl Leider, a shop steward and 12-year union member. "And we won that one," he notes.

Angry Customers: an Occupational Hazard

One thing that helped boost employee morale was the recent renovation of the office, the first such change in 30 years. Customer service representatives now enjoy more space and more light.

And a pleasant work space can be important in a line of work where you often come under fire from the public. Angry customers are something of an occupational hazard, one that OSHA is powerless to correct. But customer service representatives learn how to cope:

"You deal with them, you get through it, and then it’s gone. You just go on to the next one," says Kathie Peterson, a five-year union member.

Peterson is especially well-situated to appreciate the value of the union. Her husband belonged to the United Auto Workers for 20 years. In addition to the wages and medical coverage, "You get other benefits from the union," Peterson says. "If you have problems you can go talk to them. I just think it’s a good thing."

In addition to the wages and medical coverage, "You get other benefits from the union," says Kathie Peterson. "If you have problems you can go talk to them. I just think it’s a good thing."
The union is a voice. Your opinion counts,” says Janine Cuddy. “I think it’s important for people to stick together.”

In addition to the wages and medical coverage, “You get other benefits from the union,” says Kathie Peterson. “If you have problems you can go talk to them. I just think it’s a good thing.”
Transmission job

Local 1245 members in Outside Line Construction working on the Elverta-Tracy 230KV #1 and #2 transmission lines for F. A. Tucker near Tracy, Ca.

Photos by Art Murray

Larry Thomson, foreman.

Harvey Stogsdill, lineman (left) and Everett Hayes, groundman.

John Shelton, lineman, shop steward.
Retiree club meetings mix education and fun

By Ory Owen

Local 1245 retirees are now building our Retiree Club chapters at several locations throughout the union's jurisdiction. Here's a report on what they're up to:

Reno

Recording Secretary Jay Killgore reported that 30 retirees attended the September meeting to hear Local 1245 staff attorney Tom Dalzell explain the union's group legal services plan and the retiree employee discount. That discount is in harm's way in current Nevada Public Service Commission hearings on Sierra Pacific Power's rate increase application.

Reno attorney Roy Stralla addressed the October meeting of the Reno chapter, explaining the workings of living wills, trusts and other legal documents. Retirees at the October meeting helped celebrate the 61st wedding anniversary of retired member Felix Jiminez and his wife Margaret. A delicious anniversary cake was enjoyed by all.

Among the regular attendees at the Reno meetings, in addition to President Maureen Adams, Vice President Ralph Walker (and wife Arlene) and Recording Secretary Jay Kilgore, are: Bob Lasen, George Graham, Barbara Hartke, John Sherman Perkins and Bobby Parrish.

FORUM covering affordable housing for seniors and the working poor and homeless. He also discussed his work in the FORUM's booth at the State Fair. He reported that retirees are available to attend retirees meetings covering housing, transportation, legal matters, Social Security and Medicare.

Regular attendees, in addition to Hill and Anthey, include Ervin Penny, George Graham, Barbara Hartke, John Sherman Perkins and Bobby Parrish.

Retirees meet monthly at the IBEW Local 332 hall in Reno, starting at 10 a.m. The November meeting will be Nov. 18 to avoid conflicting with Veterans Day Holiday.

Local 1245 retirees from Sierra Pacific Power Co. celebrated the 61st wedding anniversary of retired member Felix Jiminez and his wife Margaret (standing behind cake) at the October meeting of the Reno Retirees Club chapter. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

Successful marriage explained

Felix Jiminez, whose 61 years of marriage to Margaret was celebrated at the October meeting of the Reno chapter, seemed ready for the question: "What's the secret to your successful marriage?"

"I did everything she told me," Jiminez replied.

After a moment's reflection, he offered a more serious response: "We have a good understanding... always talk things over... you just have to keep working at it."

"Jiminez, a former water serviceman and union steward, recalls that he "used to sit across the table and negotiate...I had a good life with the power company."

"Of course," he added, "they always try to give you as little as possible."
If you had to strike because your employer was unfair, you wouldn’t want someone to cross your picketline. It’s the same with boycotts. These boycotts have been called because unfair employers have refused to honor the rights of working people. Think of it as a consumer picketline: don’t cross it!

Support locked-out members at A.E. Staley

"You’ve got to die sometime."

This is how a superintendent at A.E. Staley Manufacturing Co. responded when a worker complained about workers being asked to handle hazardous materials without proper safety equipment. That sort of attitude is typical of Staley, a manufacturer of corn products in Decatur, III., which locked out 750 production workers last June.

In 1991, OSHA stated that Staley "willfully failed to protect employees...exposed workers to potential explosions...and did not adequately protect workers." Safety isn’t the only point of conflict between Staley and its workers, represented by Allied Industrial Workers of America Local 837. Staley has tried to impose 12-hour rotating shifts and to shift health care costs onto workers. A labor studies professor at Indiana University says Staley management used employee involvement programs to "steal what is in workers’ heads" to create "striker replacement manuals."

Union members can protest this outrageous corporate lockout by writing to the head of Staley’s parent company and urging a fair settlement:

Stephen Brown
Chief Executive
Tate & Lyle PLLC
c/o Domino Sugar Corp.
1114 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
**IBEW LOCAL 1245 UNION SHOPPER**

**Jacket**  
Black with IBEW Logo  
S/M/L/XL/2X  
$26.00  
+$3.00 shipping

**Coffee Mug**  
IBEW/  
"Proud To Be Union"  
Black/Blue/White  
$5.00  
+$3.00 shipping

**Stadium Jacket**  
Silver, Navy, Red, Black  
(Specify front or back logo)  
S/M/L/XL/2XL: $35.00  
3X, 4X: $45.00  
+$3.00 shipping

**Sweat Shirt/Crew**  
Red, Blue, Gray, Black  
M/L/XL/2X  
$12.00  
+$3.00 shipping

**Club Shirt**  
(No pocket)  
Black, Mint, Blue, Peach, Jade  
Logo on chest  
M/L/XL/2X  
$19.50  
+$2.50 shipping

**Golf Shirt**  
(With Pocket)  
Navy, Red, Royal, White, Maize  
Logo on sleeve  
M/L/XL/2X  
$22.00  
+$2.50 shipping

**Bucket Bags**  
Lineman Logo in Center  
$5.00  
+$1.50 shipping

**T-Shirt**  
Ringer with IBEW Logo  
S/M/L/XL/2X/3X, 4X  
$8.00  
+$1.50 shipping

**Sweat Shirt/Hooded**  
Red, Blue, Gray, Black  
M/L/XL/2X  
$17.00  
+$3.00 shipping

**Club Shirt**  
(No pocket)  
Black, Mint, Blue, Peach, Jade  
Logo on chest  
M/L/XL/2X  
$19.50  
+$2.50 shipping

**Suspending**  
Red, Yellow  
Regular, Long, XL  
$10.00  
+$1.50 shipping

**Lineman Pin**  
Goldtone  
$5.00  
+$0.55 shipping

**Hats**  
IBEW Logo  
Lineman Logo  
Proud To Be Union Logo  
One size fits all  
$5.00  
+$0.75 shipping

**IBEWWomen Charm**  
14K Goldplated  
$8.00  
+$0.55

**Order Form**

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**GRAND TOTAL: $**
Organizing is the key to survival in a changing industry

From PAGE ONE

equally disturbing developments at other California utilities.

In September, members of IBEW Local 18 in Los Angeles struck the Department of Water and Power for a week to protest the employer's takeover demands. A compromise was eventually reached.

Also in Los Angeles, an extremely serious conflict has developed at Southern California Gas, which is demanding drastic takeaways from Local 132 of the Utility Workers Union of America.

The company has proposed that it be permitted to contract any work where the union is unwilling to drop its wages to match that of the contractor.

Concerns raised about safety of poles

By Landis Martilla

G&E line personnel out of the Templeton yard have raised concerns regarding the structural integrity of Western Red Cedar (WRC) and Western Penta Cedar (WPC) poles.

Due to management retirements, an investigation and evaluation of these poles was begun, then postponed. Investigation of these poles has now resumed in the Templeton area.

The continuing investigation, as well as an informational bulletin issued systemwide in August by PG&E, is a result of the determined effort of Local 1245 members in the Templeton area to resolve a perceived safety problem.

Appropriate Bit

There has been some confusion regarding the appropriate bit type to be employed in testing procedures. PG&E has designated the 9/16 ship auger bit as the appropriate testing device. The Local 1245 Stewards' News (Third Quarter, 1993) alluded to a standard 9/16 wood bit as a testing device, but PG&E insists the 9/16 ship auger is the appropriate bit.

Special emphasis should be placed on examining the composition of the sawdust extruded by the ship auger bit. The rotten WRC and WPC brand poles in the Templeton area were characterized by damp core rot deterioration.

Zenobia Foster: union sister earned respect of co-workers

Local 1245 lost a valuable union sister with the recent death of Zenobia Foster, an active member at Sierra Pacific Power Co. Despite having the responsibility of being a single mother, she found time to serve the union in many ways, including an active role on the general bargaining committee and on the grievance committee.

Foster's commitment to the union cause was an inspiration to others and helped keep the unit organized. Her dedication earned her wide respect among her co-workers.

Zenobia Foster will be missed very much. A fund has been set up for her daughter, Rachel Donahue. Contributions may be sent to:

Rachel Donahue Account
Sierra Pacific Employees Federal Credit Union
Box 10100
Reno, NV 89520

According to SoCal Gas, meter readers would have to agree to a wage cut of 50% to prevent that work from being contracted out.

Last month, SoCal Gas rejected a compromise proposed by the union and a strike appears imminent.

Local 1245 attorney Tom Dalzell said the SoCal Gas crisis is a direct result of increased competition in the natural gas market.

"It shouldn't come as a surprise. Competition forces companies to cut costs, and labor costs are going to be a prime target," said Dalzell.

There are two major ways to defend their livelihoods in the utility industry: by preserving the regulated status of the utility industry or by organizing all workers within the industry. With regulation on the way out, organizing takes on increased importance.

Lead Role for Volunteers

According to Jones, the IBEW organizer, rank and file volunteers will have to play the lead role in organizing for a simple reason: the International Union simply does not have the resources to deploy organizers everywhere they are needed.

But there's another reason why rank and file volunteers should be used: they know the territory. An unorganized worker at an energy-related firm is far more likely to listen to another worker than to listen to a professional union organizer coming in from the outside.

What the professional organizer can do is give rank and file members the tools he or she needs to convince unorganized workers that they can improve their lives by getting organized.

Aseries of charts prepared by the IBEW MEMO campaign illustrates how the failure to organize has hurt American workers.

For example, the charts reveal how German workers are only 79% as productive as US workers, which suggests that German workers would earn only 79% as much.

But in fact, German workers do much better than US workers. And it's not too hard to figure out why: 40% of German workers are in a union, while only 15% of US workers are unionized.

But statistics make a difference only if people know them. The challenge we face is to educate unorganized workers about the real improvements that unionism can make in their lives, and then assist them in the organizing process.

That is the challenge that the IBEW MEMO campaign begins to address.

Unity needed

From PAGE THREE

is misleading, contradictory, or just plain wrong. It's clear there are a lot of supervisors who don't understand the labor agreement. Before they open their mouths they ought to open the union contract and read it.

As I said, restructuring has been one of the biggest challenges this union has ever faced. And it's far from over. The economy is still very shaky. The entire utility industry is being restructured and becoming a competitive market. Not even the so-called experts can say for sure what's coming next.

Through all of this, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are one union. That means staying together rather than letting ourselves be divided. We cannot afford to tear each other down or to air our differences in front of management. We are brothers and sisters in this union and during the last several months we have shown we can accomplish a lot if we stand together.

The challenge we face is to maintain and strengthen that unity so that we are prepared for whatever the future brings.