

# UTILITY REPORTER

Steward Conferences  
See pages 6-7

## Job cuts jeopardize PG&E service

# Members keep media spotlight on downsizing

**U**nion members kept the public spotlight on PG&E downsizing last month with continuing public vigils, picketing and numerous contacts with news media.

A Feb. 22 picketline at PG&E offices in Fresno attracted about 80 union members—and generated a lengthy story in the Fresno Bee, along with a full-color photo of the picketline.

The Fresno pickets offered a blunt assessment of the recent Title 206 displacement notices issued by PG&E.

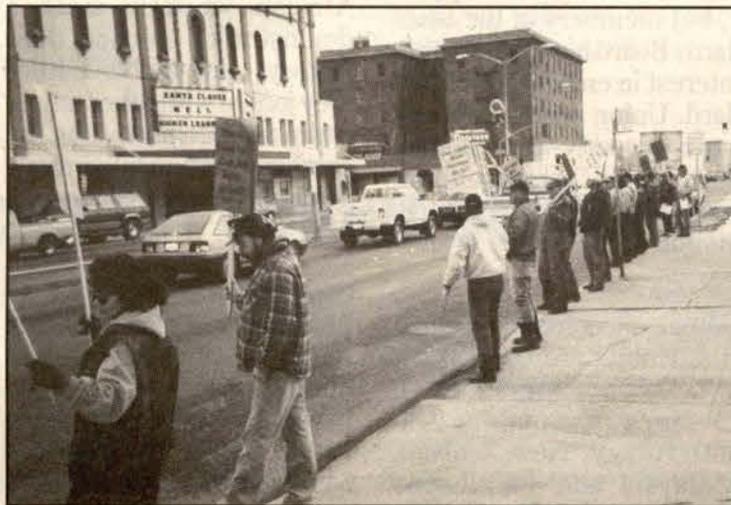
"I think it stinks," lineman Johnny Bigham was quoted as saying. "And when it takes days instead of a couple of hours to respond to a service call, the customer will think it stinks, too."

The Fresno demonstration also drew coverage from three television stations in the area. One report featured Clerical member Chris Habecker, who disputed the idea that laying off employees will produce a meaningful reduction in rates.

"It will make maybe a \$5 difference on your bill. And for that \$5 what you are giving up is safe, reliable, responsive service," said Habecker.

Another February newscast—on Oakland-based KTVU Channel 2—featured Local 1245 members Don Jackson, Paul Turner and Brian Southworth.

"We're behind in our routine maintenance and we can barely make ends meet now with the amount of employees we have. And how we are



### ALERTING CUSTOMERS

Local 1245 members in the Marysville area have alerted customers to the dangers of downsizing by maintaining an informational picketline at PG&E's Marysville Service Center during the past several weeks. The picketline has routinely drawn 30-40 participants. (Photo: Phil Carter)

going to do it with further reductions is beyond me," Southworth told KTVU busi-

ness reporter Brian Banmiller.

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### MEMBERS INTERVIEWED

Brian Banmiller, business reporter for Oakland-based KTVU (Channel 2) interviews Local 1245 members (from left) Don Jackson, Paul Turner and Brian Southworth in connection with a news story concerning PG&E downsizing and the possible effect on utility service. See page 5 for story on recent media coverage of downsizing and related issues. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)



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## CALENDAR

March 11  
Regional Transit  
Stewards Conference  
Sacramento, Ca.

March 11  
Sierra Pacific Power  
Stewards Conference  
and Pin Dinner  
Reno, Nv.

Month of March  
Nominations for Local  
Union Elections



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**WIPA**



### Workers here and abroad

## Rolling the union on...

**Obey the Law:** A Sacramento County Superior Court judge last month ordered the Cal-OSHA Standards Board to enact an ergonomics standard or show cause by April 21 why he should not order it to do so. The Legislature ordered the Standards Board to issue an ergonomics standard by Jan. 1, but members of the Standards Board have shown little interest in enacting the standard. Union representatives say a properly-worded standard could prevent thousands of workplace repetitive motion injuries each year.

**Global Union Busting:** Global oil companies Shell and Mobile are conducting anti-union campaigns in countries as far flung as Britain, Turkey, New Zealand, Malaysia and Fiji, Labor Notes reported. The International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions have sent letters to the two oil giants, warning that the federation's affiliated unions "will have to

contemplate worldwide action" to protect workers' interests.

**Unity:** Caterpillar workers in Isando, South Africa have held a number of solidarity actions since their American counterparts struck last June, Labor Notes reported. In July, the South African workers held a demonstration outside their factory, and in November they joined with other unionists in a march protesting the company's union-busting tactics in the United States.

**Rich and Richer:** Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America" will make the rich richer at the expense of middle Americans. A study by Families USA, reported in Labor Notes, charges that 54% of the tax cuts the Contract promises would go to taxpayers with incomes over \$100,000. These breaks, and the Contract's balanced budget amendment, will be financed by big cuts in Medicare, veterans' benefits, and

student loans, Families USA predicts.

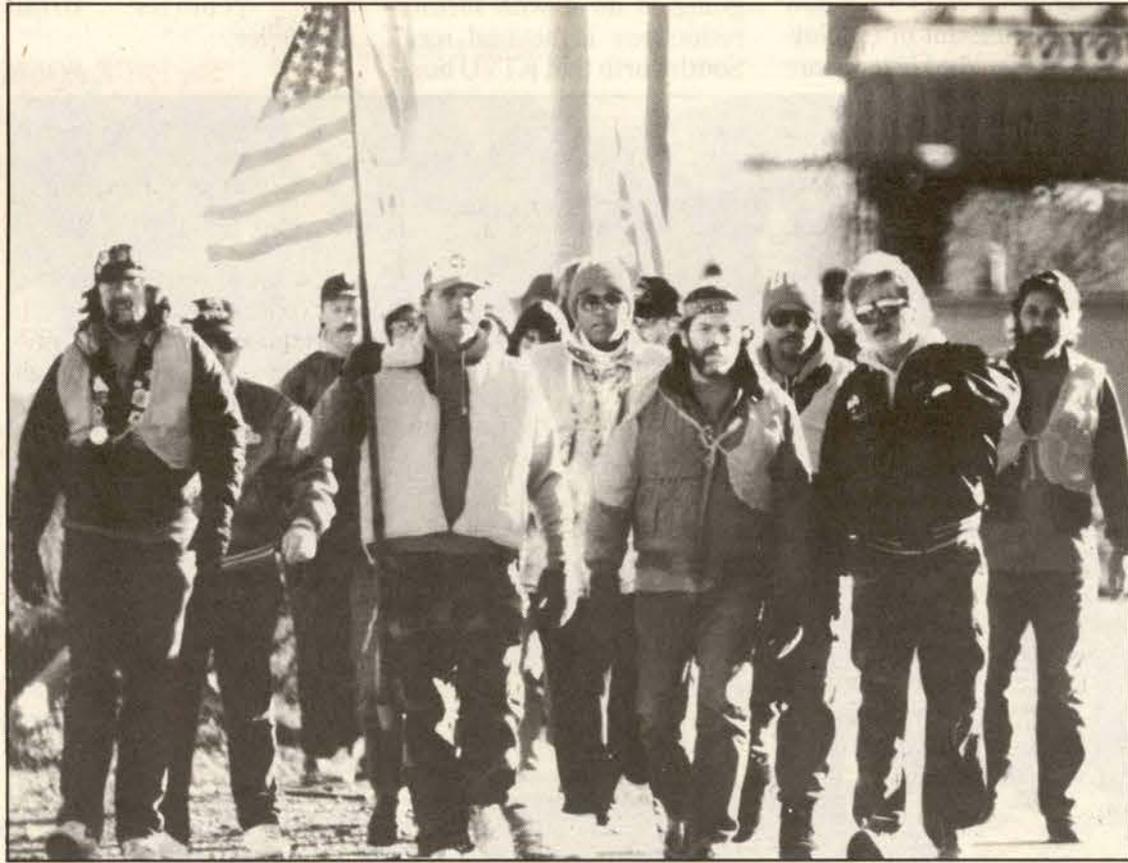
**Russian Wage Ripoff:** Thousands of Russian workers demonstrated in October to demand payment of several months of back wages, according to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. About 35,000 Russian factories have suspended payments and millions of workers have not been paid for months. The cash shortage arose because the bosses of the state-owned companies gambled on the money markets with funds intended for wages.

**Bagel Dispute:** The National Labor Relations Board has upheld nearly all 25 charges filed against Noah's Bagels by Teamsters Local 853 in the wake of a

union representation election involving the company's drivers, the California AFL-CIO News reported. The company hired the notorious San Francisco anti-union law firm of Littler, Mendelson, Fastiff, Tichy and Mathiason to keep the union out.

**Power Plant Deaths:** Twenty workers died in an October accident at a Bulgarian power plant when a tank containing 1,900 cubic meters of water at a temperature of 80° C. fell over and a two-meter-high wave swept across nearby workers, according to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Five were killed instantly, and 15 others died from burns. The trade unions have accused the station's management and the national electricity board of corruption.

**Remember Slavery?:** Author Bob Weinstein promises "practical advice...for the fiercely competitive '90s job market." His new book is called "I'll Work for Free."



**UNITED STRIKERS**

Striking workers from three companies in Decatur, Ill. marched on the state capitol in Springfield to demand government action. Local union presidents representing strikers at Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone and A.E. Staley met with Labor Secretary Robert Reich in January. On Jan. 27 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited A.E. Staley for 212 health and safety violations, including 173 that were "serious" or "willful," and fined the company \$706,000 for its "overall lax attitude toward safety issues." (Photo: AFL-CIO)

### Unit meetings make changes

• **Unit 1118, Crane Valley,** meetings will now begin at 6:30 p.m. rather than 7:30 p.m. This is a permanent change. Meeting dates and location remain the same.

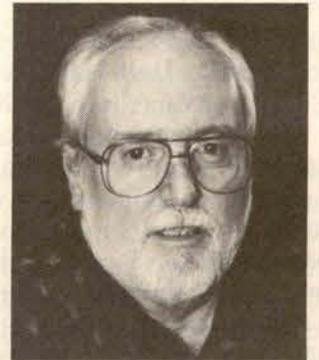
• **Unit 3417, Paradise,** will meet on Tuesday, June 6 rather than Thursday, June 8. This is a one-time change—other months are not affected. The meeting time and location remain unchanged.



## Deregulation puts at risk the 'culture' of service

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

This month I addressed a legislative seminar on energy, a seminar designed to inform policy makers about the critical energy issues facing California in this era of rapid change. What follows are some of the points I tried to convey in my remarks to seminar participants:



For the better part of this century we in California have had vertically integrated gas and electric utilities. Generation, transmission and distribution have all been under one umbrella in a given geographic territory.

These integrated utilities have been regulated by public commissions or boards for the benefit of all the citizens served by the utilities. The result has been a safe and reliable system of energy that the people of California have come to rely on.

Unfortunately, this simple and important fact has been largely overlooked in the current debate over utility "deregulation." People complain about the cost of service without considering the other part of the equation, which is the *quality* of service.

Safe and reliable gas and electric service is a product. It requires power plants, utility poles, gas mains and all the other physical infrastructure.

But just as important, it requires highly trained and skilled employees to build, maintain and operate that infrastructure. Through comprehensive training and education programs, the vertically integrated utilities have created this workforce, and created within that workforce a unique *culture*. A culture of service, where employees understand and truly believe in their duty to serve all customers, to respond to their needs.

Call it pride, call it sense of duty, call it what you will: this culture of service is a priceless resource in a soci-

ety so utterly dependent on gas and electric utilities.

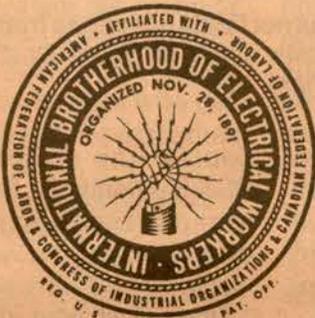
Today there are a number of parties actively engaged in the process of ripping apart the vertically integrated utility system, and exposing these essential services to the dog-eat-dog world of competition. A new system to one degree or another will soon be in place: a system of independent generators, grid operators, marketers, and a bare-bones local distribution company with little or no regulation and no obligation to serve anyone.

Traditional utilities will more than likely shed 15-30% of their employees. PG&E has already eliminated 25% of its employees, with more cuts probably to come.

And as the traditional utilities and their workforces are ripped apart and new players come to the table, the culture of the "obligation to serve" will go by the wayside. Well-trained and well-paid employees will be replaced by employees with less training, lower wages, and only marginal loyalty to the communities they are supposed to serve.

As the CPUC and the Legislature embark on the restructuring of utility service in California, they should think long and hard about the long-term impact it will have on the workforce that provides that service. There is much to be lost, and once it is gone it will not be easy to retrieve.

**ATTENTION SHOPPERS!**  
Gregg Burk (left) and Advisory Council member Don Lockwood (below) are among the Local 1245 members in the South Coast Valley area who have carried the union's message to the marketplace by staffing a booth on Thursday nights at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market. The booth warns shoppers that reliable electric service is at risk due to PG&E cutbacks.



### APPOINTMENTS

#### PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC CO.

**PG&E Call Center Overtime Committee**  
Ricardo Breadmont  
Leslie Davis  
Dorothy Fortier  
Jennifer Gonzales  
Dolly Gray  
Valerie Lopez  
Kristina Reed  
Karen Russell  
Pamela Jo Stevens

#### CONFERENCE & CONVENTIONS

**Electrical Workers Minority Caucus National Conference**  
Dorothy Fortier

**A. Philip Randolph Institute Western Regional Conference**  
Norma Ricker

**Joint Executive Conference of So. Calif. Electrical Workers**  
Richard Dunkin

**IBEW Telecommunications Conference**  
Jack McNally  
Jack Osburn  
Perry Zimmerman

### Last hurdle: regulation moratorium

## Final lap for Family Leave

**F**inal rules on the Family and Medical Leave Act, are scheduled to go into effect April 6, the AFL-CIO News reported.

The law provides for an employee to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year for the birth or adoption of a baby or the illness of the employee or a family member. Any company that employs at least 50 people is covered by the law.

The law, one of organized labor's major legislative victories during the Clinton presidency, still faces one final hurdle, however. A move in Congress to establish a moratorium on regulation retroactive to Nov. 9, 1994 could force a suspension of the final rules.

Under the terms of the law, the leave need not be taken consecutively; the chronic nature of illness or scheduling of such treatments as chemotherapy and physical therapy may dictate flexible schedules.

Also, a worker using FMLA is entitled to the same medical benefits that active employees receive, and does not suffer a loss in seniority rights. Upon return, employers must offer the old job or an equivalent one.

### Costs Lower

A Labor Policy Association study concluded the cost of compliance for 123 survey respondents was lower than expected. Eighty-five percent of the respondents already had family leave policies when the FMLA took effect, and the majority of companies spent less than \$500,000 to come into compliance. Respondents cited two aspects of FMLA that eased compliance: requirements for advance notice of foreseeable leave and written medical certification.

A similar survey by The Conference Board reported that most respondents had leave benefits already in compliance with the FMLA and that few employees were using the program.

## Pacific Gas & Electric Call Center stewards

**U**nion stewards at PG&E Call Centers attended steward conferences in Fresno and Walnut Creek to discuss a wide variety of issues concerning Call Center operations.

The Fresno conference, held last November, was attended by Melinda Phipps, Rick Parades, Keith Rasmussen, Debi Hall, Dave Paul, Rick Breadmont, Charles Garabedian, and Kathy Barber.

The Walnut Creek meeting, held in December for stewards from the San Francisco, San Jose and Sacramento Call Centers, was attended by Donna Ambeau, Anna Gomez, Bob Bush, Bob Ushman, Norma Ricker, Pam Stevens, Karen Russell, Jennifer Gonzales and Ed Abrams.

The conferences were conducted by Business Manager Jack McNally, Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, and Business Representatives Pat Collins and Enid Bidou.



Call Center stewards meet in Fresno.



Call Center stewards meet in Fresno.



Call Center stewards meet in Walnut Creek.

## Media spotlight on PG&E downsizing

From PAGE ONE

Jackson told Banmiller he had given "a large part" of his life to PG&E. "I feel like they've kind of stabbed me in the back—sent me down the road."

In a "guest commentary" appearing in the *New Times*, 22-year PG&E employee Len Ward wrote: "The bottom line has replaced moral responsibility to the public [at PG&E] and has seriously damaged work-force spirit within its ranks. They have forgotten that employees, not the bottom line, are the heart and soul of any company."

### Call-In Radio

A two-hour call-in program on KSCO radio in Santa Cruz in late January featured union member and PG&E System Operator Daryl Turner along with Local 1245 Business Rep. Gary Hughes. Turner used an analogy with fire fighters to explain to radio listeners the problems created by PG&E downsizing.

"If you had a fire department and most days you don't have a fire, you don't need many firemen. You only need the firemen when there's a fire, and when you need them you don't have time to train them, you don't have time to hire them, and you can't hire



Local 1245 member Daryl Turner fields questions from callers during a two-hour radio talk show in Santa Cruz in late January. (Photo: Gary Hughes)

somebody to go to that fire. You need to have them already on-site, and trained and knowing the area," said Turner. "PG&E I feel is something the same way."

Hughes informed listeners of the utility restructuring plan now under consideration by the California Public Utilities Commission, and warned that ordinary ratepayers are not likely to benefit—especially if it leads to deteriorating service.

"What the Public Utilities Commission is looking to do is destroy a system that took over a hundred years to build and it may never come back to what it was if they find out they made a mistake," Hughes said. "Deregulation, we contend, is going to give the most benefit to the large industrial consumers."

Callers, many of whom had just had their power restored in the wake of the January storm, expressed apprecia-

tion for the dedication of PG&E employees. But there were also expressions of concern about how downsizing would affect future service.

One caller, who identified himself as a PG&E lineman, suggested that PG&E was no longer aggressively maintaining the electric system.

"What we've got here is a corporation that's gone from being a preventative maintenance company to a reactive maintenance company," the caller said.

Articles and commentaries on PG&E downsizing and utility deregulation also appeared last month in the *Merced Sun Star*, the *Bakersfield Californian*, the *King City Rustler*, the *Monterey Herald*, and *The (Salinas) Californian*. The *Sacramento Bee* and the *Sacramento Business Journal* were also preparing to publish stories on PG&E downsizing and related issues.

**"They have forgotten that employees, not the bottom line, are the heart and soul of any company."**

*Len Ward*



**OUTSIDE LINE**  
Outside Line Safety Committee members (from left) Art Murray, Russ Cridland, Richard Dunkin and P.R. James share a lighter moment during a recent meeting of the committee.



**Dear Daniel Fessler...**

## A member writes the CPUC

*Thousands of Local 1245 members have sent postcards to California Public Utilities Commission President Daniel Fessler urging him to take all necessary steps to insure the safety and reliability of electric service in California.*

*Some members have gone a step farther. In the following letter, union member Paul Mackin offers Fessler a utility employee's personal perspective on downsizing.*

Mr. Fessler:

I am a very dedicated PG&E employee who must let some information be known!

PG&E says that laying off employees will not compromise safety or service.

This simply is untrue and here are some reasons why:

1) I believe PG&E is in the process of testing all the power poles in its system, due to a CPUC audit and mandate. It is unknown at this time how many of these poles are rotten--quite possibly thousands. When power poles fall they often create large power outages and the damage to life and property can be devastating. Many poles that fall are rotten and should have already been replaced.

2) I believe PG&E has known for several years now that due to a manufacturer's mistake, two types of underground high voltage connectors (elbows and pin and socket straight splices) are failing. When these connectors fail they often cause large power outages and the associated explosion often causes metal covers in the streets and sidewalks to "launch" several yards in the air followed by flames, a very dangerous situation for the public. PG&E has cut back on its program to change these dangerous connectors. They are still in the system waiting to blow up.

3) I believe PG&E has known for several years now that the connectors being used on overhead high voltage lines may fail, causing high voltage lines to fall to the ground, often causing power outages, fires, damage to life and property and possible electrocution. On January 11, 1995, PG&E issued a Bulletin stating, "Effective immediately, the use of bolted connectors on overhead distribution systems, for new or reconstructed lines, is to be discontinued." Please keep in mind that a mind boggling amount of these connectors have already been installed.

...  
I must admit I am not a lawyer or an accountant. I spent my first 7 years with PG&E working hands on with electricity and the last 4 years directly responsible for the electrical system that serves several East Bay cities and over 350,000 PG&E customers. From my view point it is very clear PG&E needs the employees it now has just to satisfy the existing problems it has with its system. And quite possibly may need to hire more!

PG&E says that laying off employees will not compromise safety or service, they say it will get better due to new technology! The truth is, responding to natural disasters, dangerous situations, replacing poles, connectors and repairing street lights still takes highly trained men and women, not computers! There is no "new technology" that will replace maintenance and emergency response.

PG&E customers already deserve and have been paying for safe and reliable "World Class Service." They have not been receiving it now and certainly won't get it with less employees taking care of an already overwhelmingly deteriorating system.

Please keep in mind when a building is on fire, we want available firefighters to respond quickly. When a crime is in progress we want available police officers to respond quickly. When we have a power outage or dangerous situation with electricity or gas we want available trained utility workers to respond quickly.

I think it's about time that state and local officials take a close look at what PG&E is up to.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Paul M. Mackin

## Bakersfield Pin Dinner honors long-time Local 1245 members

Local 1245 members in the Bakersfield area were recently honored for their years of service in the union. The dinner honored those achieving the 20, 25 and 30 year milestone in either 1993 or 1994.

**30 years:** Errol Montgomery, Charles Turner, G.D. Mizner, Ernest Watson

**25 years:** Howard Crawford, Dallas West, Stephen Beatty, Eddward Reynolds

**20 years:** John Erreca, Louie Hinojosa, Larry Moon, Fred Owen, Filemon Rodriguez, Ken White, Chiquita Alba, Juan Martinez



## PARTICIPANTS

### BAKERSFIELD

Richard Banbury  
John Bell  
L. T. Cordova  
Darlene Divine  
Chris Van Dyke  
Karl Feil  
Dee W. Fisher  
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Lee Haring  
Thomas Keys  
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Dennis W. Patrick  
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Michael Grill  
Chris Habecker  
Debra Hall  
John Jones  
Linda Jurado  
Kitty Mason  
Marshall Massey  
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Glenn McGuire  
Calvin Moss  
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Clifton B. Smith  
Katie Wagner  
Arthur Wert  
Robert Whitely

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Lee Covington  
Sharon Delgado  
Rodney Dyer  
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Patti Eide  
Dennis Goodman  
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Arnold Streetman  
Dennis F. Terrell

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Pam Caballero  
Mary Contaxis  
Richard Cowart  
Sal Culcasi  
Peggy L. Daniel  
Jerry DeBaca  
James Dorman  
D. Scott Fortner  
Anna Gomez  
Tim Hennesy  
Bert L. Jeffrey III  
James Jackson  
Steve Lopez  
Paul Mackin  
Greg McBee  
James E. McCauley  
Mark McLeod  
Michael W. Noard  
Norma Ricker  
Theodore Rios  
Brian Southworth  
Mike Sutton  
Thomas Thorne  
Daniel Tucker  
Elise Vasquez  
Esther Vera  
Ken Walsh  
Dan Ward

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John H. Bauer  
Angelina Barrientos  
Linda Bostic  
Will Bouzek  
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Al Calleros  
Larry Darby  
Robin David  
Leslie Davis  
Dan Flores  
Michael Franks  
Shirley A. Henry  
Tina Jones  
Craig Joseph  
Kevin MacDonnell  
Gary Magee  
Frank Marshall  
Doris Massey  
Rennie Moniz  
Peter O'Driscoll  
John Petrovitz

# Stewards' confer



Sacramento stewards conference.



Fresno stewards conference.



San Jose stewards conference.



Business Rep Frank Hutchin in Fresno.



Business Rep. Wayne Greer in Sacramento.



Business Rep. Frank Saxsenmeier discusses PG&E downsizing at the

**L**ocal gath through north 11 to on-g bat downsizing. The issuance ment notices lent a special ings. Stewards ness repres length the pro employees sh

# Stewards' conferences stress unity



Sacramento stewards conference.

**L**ocal 1245 shop stewards gathered at ten locations throughout central and northern California on Feb. 11 to discuss the union's on-going campaign to combat downsizing at PG&E.

The issuance of Title 206 displacement notices last month by PG&E lent a special urgency to the meetings. Stewards and Local 1245 business representatives discussed at length the procedures that displaced employees should follow to insure

that their rights under the labor agreement are fully honored.

They also reviewed the recent agreement that provides displaced employees in the Physical bargaining unit an opportunity to fill upcoming vacancies in the Clerical bargaining unit after Clerical members bid into current vacancies.

A theme throughout all of the conferences was the importance of a united membership as the union continues to fight layoffs in a number of

arenas, including grievances, public picketing and leafletting, and outreach to the news media.

Also discussed was the union's role in prompting the current CPUC investigation into PG&E's performance during the January storm, and how downsizing may have hindered the company's performance.

The conferences were held in Bakersfield, Concord, San Francisco (Pacifica), Fresno, Red Bluff, Sacramento, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Santa Rosa and Stockton.



Fresno stewards conference.



San Jose stewards conference.



Fresno stewards conference.



Business Rep Frank Hutchins in Fresno.



Business Rep. Ken Ball in Fresno.



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Ken  
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Jim  
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Ron  
War  
Patr  
Dan  
Jim  
Don  
Felic  
Dan  
Erne  
D. L.  
Nick  
Red  
Kit S  
Bill V  
Al W

SA  
Vida  
JoAn  
Bill B  
John  
Brian  
Robe  
Rona  
Joe F  
Art F  
Rich  
Gary  
Davi  
Phyll  
Cynt  
Rich  
Tim  
Sal L  
Robe  
Jame  
Mike  
Robe  
Norm  
Mark  
John  
Mich  
Ken  
Gera  
Kare  
Barb  
John  
Pam  
Patri  
Mark  
Darry  
John  
Vince

SA  
Kelly  
Billy  
Rich  
Greg  
Bill B  
Ralp

# Conferences stress unity

1245 shop stewards met at ten locations throughout central and northern California on Feb. 15 to discuss the union's ongoing campaign to combat PG&E's use of Title 206 displacement last month by PG&E. The urgency to the meeting and Local 1245 busi-

ness representatives discussed at the conferences that displaced employees could follow to insure

that their rights under the labor agreement are fully honored. They also reviewed the recent agreement that provides displaced employees in the Physical bargaining unit an opportunity to fill upcoming vacancies in the Clerical bargaining unit after Clerical members bid into current vacancies.

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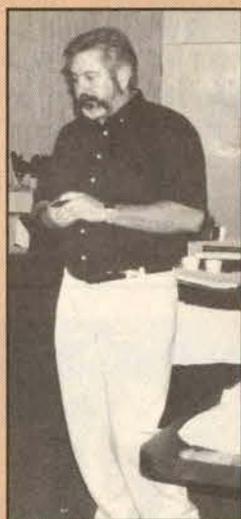
...nce.



Fresno stewards conference.



San Francisco stewards conference.



Business Rep. Ken Ball in Fresno.



## PARTICIPANTS

### SACRAMENTO

Steve Amaral  
Joe Barrera  
Doug Bell  
Ken Brown  
Steve Chapman  
Arlene Cook  
Ben Cox  
Jim Edwards  
Terri Ferguson  
Arlene Filter-Edwards  
Ronald L. Greenwood  
Wanda Herbster  
Patricia Hurley  
Danny L. Jackson  
Jim Jurkiewicz  
Donna M. Lindsey  
Felicia Mack  
Dan Musick  
Ernest Owens  
D. L. Parmenter  
Nick Salvatorelli  
Red Sammon  
Kit Stice  
Bill Wallace  
Al Wilhelm

James J. Grady III  
Allen Hamel  
Mike Jacobson  
Jeff W. Knisley  
Marc LaCross  
Dan Lockwood  
Ernie Magana  
Lance Million  
Dean Mooney  
Mark Taylor

### SANTA ROSA

Mike Bundy  
Larry Bunte  
Kevin Christensen  
Corrine Damer  
Sandy Damitz  
Bill Dawson  
Kyle Dickson  
H. V. Everett  
Russ Fairbanks  
Art Fahrner  
Russ Fairbanks  
Larry Finch  
Jim Findley  
Paul Frasher  
Ralph Freeland  
David Fritz  
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Cary McDermott  
Linda Norris  
Robert Olsen  
Oakley Olson  
William J. Peaslee  
Mel Pendleton  
Russ Petersen  
Carol Rasmussen  
Ken Rawles  
Jim Rovetti  
Robert E. Saunders  
David Silveira  
Kevin Smith  
Ione E. Snyder  
Cliff Spaletta  
Gary Stewart  
George Stokes  
Lloyd Stottsberry  
Norman Tkachenko  
Lisa Wambaugh

### SAN JOSE

Vida Anderson  
JoAnne Barnes  
Bill Brill  
John Coates  
Brian Cook  
Robert E. Dailey  
Ronald A. Fort  
Joe Fradin  
Art Freitas  
Richelle Gallegos  
Gary Goody  
David Harris  
Phyllis Hayes  
Cynthia Koops  
Rich Landucci  
Tim Lorenzen  
Sal Lozano  
Robert Martin  
James Mauzey  
Mike McGinley  
Robert M. McLean  
Norm Mercer  
Mark E. Newman  
John Nolan  
Michael A. Oleata  
Ken Richards  
Gerald M. Roza  
Karen Russell  
Barbara Saunders  
John Sportsman  
Pamela Stevens  
Patrick Stoffey  
Mark Thomas  
Darryl Turner  
John Vincent  
Vincent Whitmer

### STOCKTON

Leroy Adams  
Anna Bayless  
James Clemons  
Rick Davis  
Grover Day  
Wayne Fippin  
Randy Greer  
Robert M. Harty  
Mike Johnson  
Tom Jones  
Harvey LaShon  
John Mendoza  
Olivia Mercado  
Don Mitchell  
Gary Outlaw  
John T. Rasmussen  
Dan Robertson  
Michael Saner

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

Kelly Ackerson  
Billy J. Bell  
Richard S. Brown  
Gregg Burk  
Bill Butkovitch  
Ralph E. Chavez  
Steve Curran  
Bob Edie  
Debbie Encallado  
Everett L. Flowers  
Kim Fredrickson  
Richard Gomez

## Bill assaults worker rights

**A** Congressional bill designed to ease the rules on company-dominated employee committees is "the most one-sided and the most serious labor law assault on worker rights in 35 years," according to the AFL-CIO.

Labor described the bill as a blatant attempt to restore company unions, which were used by employers decades ago to deny workers the right to choose their own unions.

One such employer was Pacific Gas and Electric Co., which utilized a company union to thwart union organizing drives in the 1920s and 1930s. It took passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935 and a federal court order in the early 1940s to convince PG&E to deal with legitimate employee representatives, paving the way to the establishment of Local 1245 on PG&E property.

The AFL-CIO said the proposal would take away the right of workers to an independent representative in dealing with subjects where workers and employers have different interests. Nothing in the legislation would prevent employers from setting up labor committees, writing the by-laws, picking the employee representatives and dealing directly with groups of employees on wages and working conditions, he said.

Teamsters President Ron Carey called the legislation undemocratic and un-American. "All Americans should have the right to choose their own representatives. No one would call it democracy if people from another country chose America's leaders. In the same way, it is undemocratic to let management choose employee representatives, dictate what issues they can discuss and disband a committee if it takes the wrong positions," Carey said.

## New laws restrict vocational rehabilitation

By Sharon K. Brady

**I**n January 1994, a new set of workers' compensation laws went into effect. The new laws changed vocational rehabilitation, or job retraining, significantly.

Vocational rehabilitation is a service provided by a workers' compensation carrier if the injured worker is no longer able to return to the job as a result of a work injury. The injured worker must have medical proof that he or she cannot perform the job he or she was doing when injured. The type of services offered in vocational rehabilitation range from job placement services or modified work with the employer, to on-the-job training or retraining in a new career.

While the injured worker is in vocational rehabilitation, he or she receives payments (a "maintenance allowance") of up to \$246 per week. A vocational counselor is assigned to the injured workers' case to assist the worker in developing and following through with the vocational plan.

The new 1994 laws significantly limit vocational rehabilitation benefits. Injured workers may only receive maintenance allowance payments for up to 52 weeks, with certain very limited exceptions. An injured worker should start the vocational rehabilitation program as soon as possible, and actively

The new laws severely limit funds available for injured workers participating in a vocational rehabilitation program. Employees should act now in order to protect themselves in the event of an on-the-job injury. Ways to do so include enrolling in college programs, obtaining a private disability policy, and saving money now. While injured workers must still be trained if they cannot return to their job, the type and extent of benefits they receive is severely curtailed under the new laws.

participate to ensure completion of the program within 52 weeks. The entire plan must be completed within 18 months, so again, an injured worker should fully participate in his or her plan.

The entire amount of the plan must not exceed \$16,000, less \$4,500 for counseling fees. While this may seem like a large amount of money, an injured worker receiving the maximum benefit of \$246 per week may use over \$12,000 in maintenance allowance alone over 52 weeks. Other costs such as tuition fees, mileage, and special tools or supplies must also be taken into account.

### Modified Position

However, there are some provisions in the new laws which may assist injured workers. The law provides that an employer may offer an injured worker a modified or alternate position. If the employer does so, the position must be outlined and

agreed upon in writing, and it must last 12 months from instigation of the position. This also applies to jobs obtained through other vocational rehabilitation plans, or if the injured workers' disability prevents him or her from performing tasks in the new line of work.

Many employees want to know whether their current employer is required to take them back at modified work as part of the workers' compensation vocational rehabilitation process. The employer is required to consider modified work as part of the vocational rehabilitation plan, and the new laws make it advantageous for the employer to do so. However, the employer is under no obligation to do so, and cannot be ordered to take back an injured employee under the workers' compensation system. A remedy may exist under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, however, if the employee determines there is modified work, requests the modified work in writing, and is denied that position unreasonably. Employees who feel a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act has occurred should contact the state Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or a labor attorney.

In addition, the laws provide that if an injured worker is already enrolled in a community college or state university, vocational rehabilitation may be required to provide tuition expenses. The injured worker must have already completed 35% of the units required for his or her course of study. If this 35% requirement has been met,

the worker may be entitled to decline the services of a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and obtain the money for tuition. As this represents a savings of \$4,500, even uninjured employees may want to consider enrolling in college and working towards a degree, in the event that they are later injured.

In summary, the new laws severely limit funds available for injured workers participating in a vocational rehabilitation program. Employees should act now in order to protect themselves in the event of an on-the-job injury. Ways to do so include enrolling in college programs, obtaining a private disability policy, and saving money now. While injured workers must still be trained if they cannot return to their job, the type and extent of benefits they receive is severely curtailed under the new laws.

If you have questions about vocational rehabilitation benefits, or about workers' compensation benefits in general, contact the Workers' Compensation Information and Assistance Unit nearest you. Or, contact the Law Offices of Mastagni, Holstedt & Chiurazzi. We will be happy to answer your questions.

(Sharon K. Brady is an attorney with Mastagni, Holstedt & Chiurazzi.)



Who is that helping Local 1245 Advisory Council members Chris Habecker (left) and Mike Brocchini (right) celebrate the achievements of organized labor at the "Union Yes" Dinner in Merced, Ca. last month? It's none other than Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, champion of countless pro-labor bills during his tenure in the California Legislature.

**Any person who makes or causes to be made any knowingly false or fraudulent statement or material representation for the purpose of obtaining or denying workers' compensation benefits or payments is guilty of felony.**

## New study suggests EMF-cancer connection

**E**lectric utility workers who are highly exposed to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) have a greater chance of dying of brain cancer than less exposed workers, according to a major new study sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the utility trade association.

The study, conducted by Drs. David Savitz and Dana Loomis of the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina, did not find a link between EMFs and leukemia mortality, except among electricians who had been on the job for more than 20 years.

"This study simultaneously provides evidence against an association of magnetic fields with leukemia and for an association between magnetic fields and brain cancer," Savitz said in a prepared statement. "It does not, however, resolve the fundamental question of whether magnetic fields cause cancer."

The results of the study were reported on in detail in *Microwave News*.

The researchers noted that the risks from EMF exposure are likely to be small for most people. Loomis said that the study shows that, "There is not some huge risk out there that we have failed to discover."

Savitz and Loomis emphasized that the observed brain cancer link is stronger than that seen in previous studies of electric utility workers. They found that workers with the highest EMF exposures had more than a two-and-a-half times greater chance of

dying of brain cancer than the least exposed workers. In addition, they observed a significant exposure-response relationship for brain tumors.

Swedish researcher Dr. Anders Ahlbom of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, told *Microwave News*, "I am quite impressed with the brain tumor results. My feeling is that they are quite reliable."

Savitz and Loomis measured exposures with an AMEX meter, which provides time-weighted average magnetic field levels. They did not measure transients—or other kinds of fields—which have been the focus of recent attention.

William Feero of the Pennsylvania-based Electric Research and Management Inc. said that more needs to be learned about the different types of magnetic field exposures. "There are a hell of a lot of different field characteristics," he said.

### "Seeing Smoke"

Dr. Gilles Theriault of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, said he believes that there are a small number of people exposed to a specific, and so far unidentified, component of the field. He stressed that he is convinced that there is some connection between EMFs and cancer.

"We keep seeing smoke, but we have not identified the fire. And there is a fire out there. One day we will put our finger on it," said Theriault.

Savitz, in explaining the results of his study, said there is either a small risk to all

The Savitz-Loomis study included 138,905 men who had been employed full time for at least six months between Jan. 1, 1950, and Dec. 31, 1986, at one of five utilities, including Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

workers or a large risk to a very small group of workers who are exposed to a specific type of field. Loomis said that an effect might depend on specific exposure conditions or specific characteristics of a population that have not yet been identified.

The Savitz-Loomis study included 138,905 men who had been employed full time for at least six months between Jan. 1, 1950, and Dec. 31, 1986, at one of five utilities. The utilities were Pacific Gas and Electric Co., Carolina Power and Light Co., PECO Energy Co., the Tennessee Valley Authority and Virginia Electric Power Co. Exposures were assigned to 28 job categories on the basis of a sampling of recent measurements of nearly 3,000 workers wearing AMEX meters. Exposures for individual workers were based on these measurements and on the length of time they worked at a particular job.

The Savitz-Loomis study is the fourth large occupational study with detailed exposure assessments to appear in the last couple of years. In 1992, Dr. Birgitta Floderus at the National Institute of Occupational Health in Sweden found an increase of chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and brain tumors among exposed workers from numerous industries.

A study of utility workers at Southern California Edison Co. found no overall association between leukemia or brain cancer and EMFs.

A three-utility Canadian-French study headed by Theriault found an association between EMFs and some leukemia subtypes as well as a type of brain tumor.

A number of earlier occupational studies, including one on electrical workers by Loomis and Savitz published in 1989, have pointed to a brain cancer risk from EMFs. In one relatively small study, Dr. Susan Preston-Martin and colleagues at the University of Southern California School of Medicine in Los Angeles found a fourfold increased risk of astrocytomas, a type of brain tumor, among EMF-exposed workers.

One question arising from the Savitz-Loomis study is the absence of a significant EMF-leukemia association when other studies have found a more significant association. One possible explanation is that the Savitz-Loomis study relied on death certificates to determine the cause of death. In some cases, workers may have had leukemia, but died of other causes.

Standardized mortality ratios, which compare the workers' cancer rates with those of the general population, showed that the utility workers were at a lower risk for both leukemia and brain cancer. Savitz and Loomis attributed this to the "healthy worker effect"—that is, people who have jobs are among the healthier members of the population.

The Savitz-Loomis study points to the need for new hypotheses and more research on EMFs. "We've done about as well as we can do with the broad hypothesis that EMFs can affect health—now we need more refined ideas," said Savitz.

Theriault emphasized the need for more research:

"We should not quit halfway—before we have the answer. If we did, we would lose what we have learned so far. We are gaining ground."

## CPUC funds program on EMF exposure

**T**he California Department of Health Services (DHS) has launched a four-year, \$7 million research and education program on electric and magnetic fields (EMF).

The program is being funded by the California Public Utilities Commission, with support from the California Public Health Foundation, a nonprofit research group.

According to a report in *Microwave News*, the DHS will give top priority to EMF problems in schools. The agency plans to issue two requests for proposals: one to assess the relative contributions of internal sources and external power lines and substations to EMF levels in schools; and a second to develop general policies for dealing with such exposures.

According to Dr. Geraldine Lee, a DHS epidemiologist, the state's five electric utilities have already begun to compile a database on how close all schools are to power lines—information they will share with DHS.

In addition to exposure assessment and policy analysis, the DHS will also sponsor research on epidemiology and EMF mitigation.

Dr. Raymond Neutra, DHS's acting program chief, said that he personally favors an epidemiological study on childhood cancer in schools near power lines, reanalyses of existing studies, an investigation of how average residential exposure has changed in the US as electricity use has increased, an assessment of exposures in office buildings, and measurements of transients and other types of EMFs to provide a "real world" exposure assessment that lab researchers could use in their work.

**"This study simultaneously provides evidence against an association of magnetic fields with leukemia and for an association between magnetic fields and brain cancer. It does not, however, resolve the fundamental question of whether magnetic fields cause cancer."**

*Dr. David Savitz*

## South Coast Valleys Pin Dinner honors long-time members

Feb. 10, 1995



30-year members honored were: Chet Bartlett, Jesse Armas, Marvin Daniels, Guy Lamoureux, and Robert Guthrie.

30 years



25-year members honored were: Dempsey Goins, Donald Bona, Pat Dolan, Richard Sumabat, Ronald Kirby, Chris Lopez, Irwin Thomas, Dale Johnston, Chuck Stone, Max Bakke, Robert Fernandez, and Larry Perry.

25 years



20-year members honored were: Faye Gagaran, Tim Miller, Sylvia DeLeon, Dave Rodgers, Ralph Chavez, Howard Ketchum, Steve Ward, Dave Fosse, Dick Williams, Rich Brown, Bob Turney, and Dennis Flores.

20 years

## Roseville pact ratified

**M**embers have ratified a new agreement with the City of Roseville that improves wages and benefits.

The two-year agreement contains a 5% general wage increase in the first year.



Greer

Wages will rise by 3.5% plus a one-for-one match of the Consumer Price Index up to a 5% cap.

The agreement also provides special wage adjustments in a number of classifications. Electric Department employees will receive a 1.5% adjustment. Energy Analysts and Energy Specialists will receive 5% special adjustments.

Members will receive a \$15 increase in their boot allowance in the first year of the agreement, and a \$20 increase in the pants allowance.

T-shirts were approved for year-round wear.

The meal allowance was increased to \$12.

A building boom in Roseville provided a good climate for the recently-concluded negotiations. Thousands of new homes were built in the last year alone, according to Business Rep. Wayne Greer.

Serving on the union's bargaining team, in addition to Greer, were: Randy Wilkins, Larry Layton and Jeff Hoyland of the Electric Department, and Mitch Prather and Dave Williams of the Water Department.

## Santa Clara agreement

**E**lectric Department employees represented by Local 1245 at the City of Santa Clara approved a new three-year agreement retroactive to Jan. 1, 1994.

The agreement, ratified Jan. 5, contains a 3% wage increase in 1995 and an increase pegged to the Consumer Price Index in 1996, with a cap of 3%.

The agreement also increased the boot allowance, among other improvements.

Serving on the union's negotiating committee were Jim Maas, Hershman, Rich Hill, Doug Baldanzi, and Business Rep. Kathy Maas.



Maas

## New pact for Monterey Cable TV

Local 1245 members at Monterey Peninsula Cable TV ratified a new three-year contract that provides 2.5% wage increases each year, beginning Dec. 1, 1994.

The pact also contained improvements in the money purchase pension trust and the medical plan.

Stand-by pay was increased

by \$2.50 per week per year during the term of the agreement.

Serving on the union's bargaining team were Terry Linebarger, Roalnd Shorter, Mike Johnson, and George Margosin, along with Business Rep. Gary Hughes and Local 1245 staff attorney Tom Dalzell.

## Minority Caucus re-elects Fortier

Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus at the group's national meeting in Atlanta last month.

The conference was addressed by Sibusiso Ndebele, Minister of Transport, Province of Kwazulu-Natal, South

Africa, and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young.

## Tindall re-elected

Local 1245 Executive Board member Kathy Tindall was recently re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer of the Northern Nevada Central Labor Council.

# Seniors: our quality of life is under attack

By Orv Owen

If ever the retirees and senior citizens had reason to organize and unite their efforts to support the quality of life they have worked so hard for, it is now!

It is clear, unless our heads are buried in the sand, the benefits and quality of life of senior citizens, workers and the poor are under attack and in harm's way with those who are in control of the legislative process.

Ron Weakley's letter printed in last month's Utility Reporter reflecting on "then" and "now" is right on target



"It used to be quite an impressive monument."

in my view on why we must continue our fight in support of the principles and goals that caused us to band together years ago.

Local 1245 retirees invite all of our fellow retired and retiring members to consider participation in Local 1245 Retirees Club chapters throughout the union's jurisdiction. We must be alert and vigilant as to what is happening to our citizens and our country. If not us, who?

Keep the faith!

IBEW  
Local  
1245



Retirees Corner

## Communities offer resources

# Economic support services for senior citizens

The National Council of Senior Citizens offers the following advice to senior citizens on where to find economic support and community services.

### Programs Under the Older Americans Act

A variety of services funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA) are available in local communities through the Area Agency on Aging. These services include information and referral, homemaker-homehealth aides, transportation, home-delivered meals, chore and other supportive services. OAA services are provided without charge. The types of ser-

vices available vary in each community based upon the needs and resources of a given locality.

### Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) assures a minimum monthly income to needy persons with limited income and resources, who are 65, blind or disabled. Eligibility is based on income and assets. Local Social Security offices take applications, help file claims and provide information about the programs.

### Tax Benefits

A variety of federal, state

and local tax benefits are available to older persons, including property tax exemptions and/or deferrals in some communities. Contact the federal Internal Revenue Service or a local tax office.

### Medicaid

Medicaid is a health care program for low-income persons, cooperatively financed by federal and state governments. Administered by states, the program provides for medical services to eligible individuals. Benefits cover both institutional and outpatient services. However, the types of services covered may differ from state to state. Each state has a set

of criteria that establishes eligibility for services under this program.

Further information about the Medicaid program is available at local welfare, health or social service departments or the Area Agency on Aging.

### Other Programs

Veterans, their widows or widowers, or parents of veterans with limited incomes may be eligible for benefits. Contact the local Veterans Administration for information.

Other sources of public support include food stamps, veterans' benefits, housing and energy assistance.

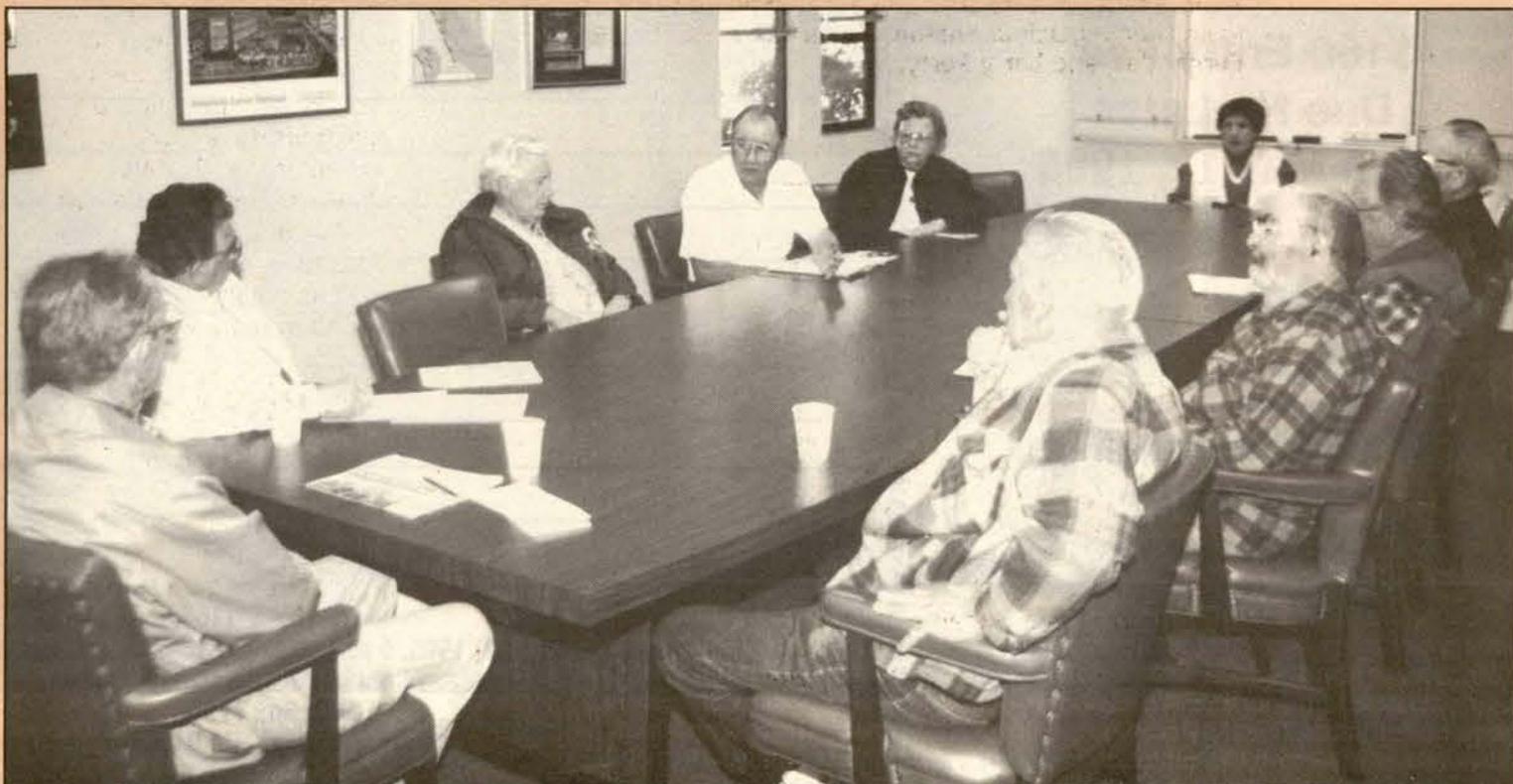
## Music helps

The use of music is growing for the alleviation of pain and anxiety, and as an adjunct to therapy for such illnesses as Alzheimer's, the UC Berkeley Wellness Letter reported.

Music can be useful in treating depression and dementia, particularly in the elderly. Some patients with Alzheimer's, for example, can participate in dancing and drumming. Not only do many surgeons already use music as an aid in operating rooms, but audio tapes are being produced for alleviating anxiety and pain in patients before, during, and after surgery.

Unlike new drugs or high-tech diagnostic techniques, music needs no FDA approval or clinical trials; it is relatively inexpensive, and can't hurt even if it fails to help. A cassette recorder and appropriate tapes can be a wonderful gift for hospitalized friends or relatives.

**FEBRUARY MEETING**  
Members of the East Bay Chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club discussed a variety of issues during their February meeting at the Walnut Creek union hall. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

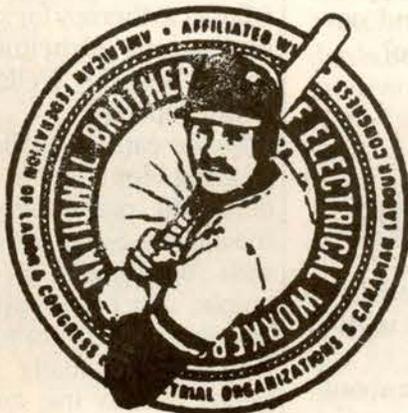


Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

# EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

**IBEW LOCAL UNION 1245**

*Saturday, June 10, 1995  
Willow Pass Park, Concord, California*



## Four Divisions

- Women's
- Coed (Minimum 3 women on field)
- Men's "D"
- 35 & Older (Minimum 5, 35 or older on field)

**Women  
Encouraged  
to Participate!**

*Family Members Eligible!*

Individual Bat Bags  
for the 1st Place Team

Team Trophies for 1st, 2nd,  
& 3rd in all Divisions

Winner of "D" Division  
to Advance to State  
Industrial Championship

**\$160 Entry Fee  
Due No Later  
Than May 12, 1995**

**For More Information,  
Contact:  
Ed Caruso  
(510) 933-6060**

*USSA Umpires Provided*

### Local Union 1245's 18th Annual Slow Pitch Softball Tournament June 10, 1995

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1993 Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print:

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| 1. _____  | 11. _____ |
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| 9. _____  |           |
| 10. _____ |           |

Men's D  
Coed  
Women's  
35 & Older  
(Circle One)

Entry Fee: \$160  
Final Deadline: May 12, 1995, 5 p.m. at Local 1245 Headquarters in Walnut Creek  
Make Checks Payable to: Ed Caruso  
P.O. Box 4790  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596