Union Mourns
Loss of Activist,
Brother, Officer
and Good Friend

Goodbye 8-hour day

Gov. Wilson’s board abolishes overtime

A fter years of effort, California Gov. Pete Wilson has succeeded in abolishing the 8-hour day. On April 11, the state Industrial Welfare Commission, at Wilson's urging, voted to eliminate California's rules requiring overtime pay after eight hours of work.

Approximately eight million workers in California will lose the right to overtime pay when the IWC rules take effect later this year.

Union workers are not immediately affected by the IWC ruling, which does not apply to employees covered by labor agreements. But labor leaders warned that many unionized employers may demand concessions when union contracts are renegotiated.

"We already have one major aerospace contractor at the bargaining table, who has said that in order to stay competitive they need to get rid of the eight-hour day," said Art Pulaski, executive secretary of the California Labor Federation. "The domino effect has already hit."

Labor officials said they will file suit in an effort to overturn the IWC action.

Union members showed up in force to protest the See PAGE FIVE

Good news for utility workers and the customers they serve: The maintenance of electric distribution is now governed by law.

After hearing recommendations from an advisory committee that included representatives from utilities, citizens groups, and Local 1245, the California Public Utilities Commission has finalized the rules governing the maintenance of electric distribution systems in the state. These rules, which became effective March 31, will help assure that high standards of electric service are maintained as California lurches into an era of deregulation, restructuring, and uncertainty in the electric industry.

"We wanted to make sure there was a level playing field for all the players in the new competitive environment, and that no one could receive short term advantage by deferring maintenance expenses," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally. "Without some standard, customer service would be in real jeopardy."

Traditionally utilities have been able to defer maintenance at will. Under the new CPUC rules (General Order 165) all five investor-owned utilities in California will be required to perform an annual patrol of equipment, poles and lines in urban areas.

CALENDAR

April 18
Pin Dinner
Redding, Ca.

April 25
Pin Dinner
Concord, Ca.

May 3-4
Advisory Council
Concord, Ca.

May 9
Pin Dinner
Santa Rosa, Ca.

May 16
Pin Dinner
Bakersfield, Ca.

May 17
Pin Dinner
Fresno, Ca.

Ron Fitzsimmons
1943-1997

Fitz: tenacious defender of workers

A long-time voice for Local 1245 and its members was silenced last month with the death of former Assistant Business Manager Ron Fitzsimmons. From his days as a cable-splicer and union steward at PG&E in the 1970s, to his service on the union staff in the 1980s and early 1990s, Fitzsimmons earned a reputation for tenacity. Not your normal tenacity, but the kind that never lets go. The kind that union people respect and long remember.

"He was a leader," recalled L.L. Mitchell, who was Local 1245 business manager when Fitzsimmons was a steward in the Underground Department at PG&E. "He didn't back up from anything. He was very aggressive in seeing things were followed according to the book."

See PAGE NINE
**Workers here and abroad**

**Rolling the union on...**

**Get a Minute?:** Five New York city police officers discussed their own union's contract problems while stranded for 45 minutes in January in an elevator at the Rockefeller Foundation with ten striking Detroit newspaper workers and their supporters, Labor Notes reported. When the elevator finally reached the ground floor, the officers handcuffed the strikers and let them off to jail. The strikers had gone to the foundation to confront its president, Peter Goldmark J., a member of the Knight-Ridder board of directors.

**Union Wheel of Fortune:** Labor Day weekend will be union-made and union-members' week on the popular Wheel of Fortune TV quiz show this year. All prizes on the shows broadcast that week will be union-made, and all the shows will feature contestant teams made up of two union-family members, Letter Letter reported.

**Jumping Ship:** Guess, Inc., the company that sells its jeans as "Made in USA, an American Tradition," is moving most of its manufacturing to Mexico, Peru and Chile. "This is about profit, pure and simple," said Steve Nutter of UNITE, a garment workers union. "Guess wants to be free to run its sweatshops." The company was cited for sweatshop and labor violations in Los Angeles, Nutter said. Instead of cleaning up their act, said Nutter, Guess is "jumping ship to bypass fair labor laws."

**Pope on Respect:** "An effective economy is one which respects employment and is not motivated purely by profit," Pope John Paul II told trade union leaders in a recent meeting, Free Labour World reported. He encouraged the trade unions to continue their work of "building a fair and democratic world."

**Severance:** Hundreds of ABC technicians represented by NABET-CWA held a lunchtime rally recently to protest the $140 million severance package paid to former Disney executive Michael Ovitz. Labor Notes reported. Disney is ABC's parent company. Ovitz got the lucrative package after only 14 months on the job, even though most outside observers call his performance a failure.

**Code of Ethics:** The National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice has released a Code of Ethics for Poultry Companies that calls for safe line speeds, living wages and fair benefits, better health and safety conditions, assistance for immigrant workers, and fair contracts for farmers who grow poultry for the processors, Labor Notes reported.

**Cambodians Organize:** State employees have formed a free trade union in Cambodia, the first in two decades, Free Labour World reported. The ceremony to mark the founding of the trade union ended with a demonstration outside the government headquarters in support of pay demands.

**Pepsi Leaves Burma:** PepsiCo, Inc., the giant US-based soft drink firm, is pulling all its brands and business out of Burma in response to a campaign by labor activists and others who oppose Burma's extremely repressive dictatorship, Letter Letter reported. A boycott of Pepsi on US college campuses, sparked by a Burmese-born graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, had spread to at least 100 schools. Legislation prohibiting governmental purchases from companies that do business in Burma has been passed by eight US cities and the state of Massachusetts.

**Border Protest:** For over a year, the Ontario, Canada unions have been holding a series of one-day general strikes against social service cutbacks and anti-union legislation. On June 13-14, the Ontario unionists intended to shut down the busiest border crossing between the United States and Canada in Windsor, Letter Notes reported.

**Free, Sort of:** A Chinese court rejected the appeal introduced by Liu Nianchun, a human rights activist sentenced to three months in a labor camp for writing petitions to the Chinese government to release political prisoners. "Freedom of expression must not jeopardize the security of the State," the tribunal ruled.

**Fighting Forced Labor:** The Chinese Slave Labor Act, recently introduced in the US House of Representatives, would ban the import of "items produced, grown or manufactured... with the use of forced labor" in China, Letter Letter reported. The bill would require the US to seek permission from China's government for such groups as the International Labor Organization and the International Red Cross to inspect "all camps, prisons and other facilities holding detainees" in China for forced labor.

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**DIVESTITURE AGREEMENT**

Local 1245 last month reached agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric regarding conditions for the company's proposed divestiture of power generating facilities. The agreement applies to Title 200 employees in the IBEW bargaining unit at all PG&E generating facilities except Diablo Canyon Power Plant. For more information on the agreement, contact the union hall. Representing the union on the bargaining committee were: Bill Bukovich, Robin David, Wayne Popin, Dan Lockwood, A. Maclean, Larry Magnoli, Jim Martinez, Mike McIBroom, Wayne Pacheco, Business Rep; Ken Ball, Assistant Business Manager Sam Tamimi, and Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell. Business Manager Jack McNally (not pictured) also served on the committee. (Photo: Austin Lea II)
Cross our picketline, nurses say

In a curious twist on the usual picketline protocol, California nurses are asking people to cross their picketlines if their negotiations with Kaiser Permanente result in a strike.

The nurses are mobilizing for action because Kaiser, California's largest Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), has proposed draconian concessions. Kaiser is insisting on 2.5% wage cuts each year for six years for Sacramento Valley and Santa Rosa hospitals and all northern California clinics (except for "hospital-like RNs"). A wage freeze would apply to all Bay Area and South Bay hospitals.

Kaiser also wants to institute "merit" pay, where any increases would be based on patient satisfaction perception surveys. A Paid Time Off scheme would force RNs to use vacation and holidays for illnesses of less than eight days, effectively eliminating a significant portion of RN time off.

Other concessionary demands include prorated medical benefits, severely restricted seniority rights, and deep cuts in post-retirement medical benefits.

Nurses want you to cross their picket lines because increased use of Kaiser facilities costs Kaiser money and puts pressure on the health care giant to negotiate an end to the dispute with the California Nurses Association.

In memoriam: Sam Galindo

PG&E Lineman Sam Galindo was fatally injured during a pole removal job in an unincorporated area southwest of Livermore. The accident occurred Jan. 17, and Brother Galindo died on Feb. 27.

At the time of the accident the crew was in the process of cutting a 40-foot pole off approximately three feet above ground. The pole was in muddy ground and not accessible to a line truck. The crew had attached a fall line to the pole and was attempting to guide the pole away from a structure nearby. Brother Galindo was operating a chain saw at the base of the pole. As the pole fell, crew members yelled a warning because the pole was not falling precisely in the expected direction. He was struck by the falling pole and suffered extensive injuries, which proved fatal.

Local 1245 extends its condolences to friends and family of Sam Galindo.

In memoriam: Terry Roenfeldt

General Construction Lineman Terry Roenfeldt was fatally injured by electrical contact on March 10 in Rocklin, Ca.

The crew was attempting to free up a secondary neutral wire snagged in a tree when the accident occurred. The conductor contacted a 12kv primary line during this process. Brother Roenfeldt received entrance wounds on both hands and exit wounds to his shoulder. The accident is being investigated by the company, the union, and Cal-OSHA.

Local 1245 extends its condolences to friends and family of Terry Roenfeldt.
Electric system maintenance: it's the law

From PAGE ONE

Electric system maintenance: it's the law

"The public will benefit because service will be protected even as the regulated utility is disappearing. The public is a winner, and the working folk are winners."

Steve Ward, lineman & Advisory Committee member

Restructuring: rhetoric & reality

From PAGE THREE

Restructuring: rhetoric & reality

The utilities must submit annual reports, under penalty of perjury, which identify the number of facilities of each type inspected, whether any scheduled inspections were not conducted, and a date certain when those inspections will occur. The annual report also must present the total and percentage of equipment rated at each condition rating level, the total and percentage of equipment which was and was not corrected, among other information.

Union members at PG&E and the other affected utilities clearly had a lot to gain from the creation of General Order 165. The maintenance requirements will help ensure that utilities recruit and retain enough qualified workers to get the job done.

"This major achievement would not have been possible without the help of Steve Ward and Landis Martilla," said Joseph. "They provided the technical expertise and perspective which allowed us to evaluate statements by the utilities and respond appropriately. They also provided us with tremendous credibility before the commission."

General Order 165 does not yet apply to municipal or publicly-owned utilities. The CPUC has asked for comments on whether the General Order should apply to these utilities.
Wilson kills 8-hour day

From PAGE ONE
IWC’s attack on overtime. About 300 union members held a “funeral for the eight-hour day” outside the room where the IWC met, and many union members shouted angry protests at the commissioners during the course of the meeting. Three people were removed from the meeting room and received misdemeanor citations from the California Highway Patrol for disrupting a public meeting. The three were later released.

Los Angeles Assemblyman Wally Knox, author of bills that would reinstate the eight-hour day, predicted an enormous backlash when workers around the state moved from the meeting to save the eight-hour day. Knox said, “It won’t work. There will be a movement to vote for extensions to the 8-hour day. This will be legal to pay straight time to a worker put in 40 hours in a week. Thus it would be legal to pay more flexible work schedules such as four 10-hour days. Once the IWC rules take effect, employers will not be required to pay any overtime until the employee has put in 40 hours in a week. But those arguments were hotly contested by union officials, who pointed out that schedule flexibility could be achieved without abolishing overtime pay. Current law already permits employees in a given workgroup to vote for more flexible work schedules such as four 10-hour days. Emotions to the 8-hour day. In this manner, many workgroups around the state have voted to create “alternative” schedules such as four 10-hour days.

Issues Facing workers Profiled On Public Television

We Do the Work: The Documentary Series

For the last six years, the public television series, We Do the Work, has served as the only national public television series dedicated to examining the lives, issues and history of working people in America. Starting in May, public television stations around the nation will present encore presentations of eight We Do The Work documentaries that have won awards and generated the greatest viewer response. (Contact your public television affiliate or check local listings for airdates.) Shows in the documentary series include:

Ties That Bind
Examine workers’ efforts to gain union representation in the workplace. The stories of two organizing drives are told, at a shipyard in New Orleans, La. and at a textile factory in Martinsville, Va. where workers and management express their points of view, with surprising results. (Includes update).

Navajo Medicine
This special follows Native American health care workers struggling to meet the health care needs of isolated rural communities on the Navajo Nation. Explores the cultural influences affecting delivery of health care and highlights this unique hybrid of traditional and western medicines.

State of the Unions
The first contested election in the history of the AFL-CIO resulted in big changes for organized labor. In profiles of the new leadership, we’ll hear their views on the challenges facing labor unions. The program also examines public attitudes about unions and the obstacles facing young organizers in the field.

Taking Off
Global competition in the airline industry has resulted in more and more US carriers going offshore for aircraft maintenance and how it affects jobs, wages and the safety of the flying public. Includes exclusive footage of a Costa Rican aircraft maintenance facility. This program examines the Federal Aviation Administration’s oversight of foreign repair stations and the increasing number of cases of bogus parts found on aircraft. (Updated to report on the ValuJet tragedy).

Workplace Beat: Covering the Bottom Line
In July of 1995, 2,500 Detroit Free Press and Detroit News workers went on strike. Newspaper executives say that in order to stay competitive in an era when newspaper circulation is declining, they need a smaller workforce and more flexibility. This documentary goes behind the scenes to talk to strikers, management and workers who crossed the picket line. (Includes update.)

Prison Labor, Prison Blues
This award winning investigative report goes behind penitentiary walls to look at the growing controversy over the increasing use of prison labor in the US. We hear from prison officials, inmates, and business and labor leaders. Does prison labor provide rehabilitation and a way to finance prisons, or is it just a cheap source of labor for private companies? What is the impact on people competing for the same jobs outside the prison system? Silver Hugo Award, Chicago International Video Festival.
IN MEMORIAM: MICHAEL BROCCCHINI

Proud to Call Him 'Bro'

Michael Brocchini didn't do things halfway. His devotion to his two children, Nicholas and Brienne, was evident to all. His ability to light up any gathering with wit and good will was legendary.

There was nothing halfway about Brocchini's unionism, either. When Pacific Gas & Electric was recklessly downsizing, Brocchini was an adamant and vocal adversary. When the company changed course and opened the door to cooperation with the union, Brocchini was an energetic and talented ally.

No, there was nothing halfway about Mike Brocchini. And there was nothing halfway about the shock and sorrow experienced by his friends and co-workers when they learned that Brocchini, 38, had died suddenly and unexpectedly on April 1 after a brief bout with flu-like symptoms. Brocchini's connection with his community was evident on April 8 when several hundred people filled St. Patricks Church in Merced to pay their final respects to a man affectionately known as "Bro."

Mike had a keen interest and desire to improve the working conditions for his fellow workers," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally in a eulogy given at the church. "He was very serious about his responsibilities and did an exceptional job in representing Local 1245 members. He also was very serious about his responsibilities for his children and they always came first."

Brocchini, who hired on at PG&E in 1979 in Madera and subsequently became a lineman in Merced, was appointed shop steward in 1987 on the recommendation of Local 1245 Business Representative Frank Hutchins, who remembered Brocchini as "the most active steward in the world."

His knowledge of workplace issues and his skills in dealing with people won Brocchini an appointment to the General Bargaining Committee for negotiations with PG&E in 1990 and again in 1994. He was elected as the San Joaquin delegate to the Local 1245 Advisory Council in 1989, winning reelection in 1992 and 1995. In 1996 he was appointed Treasurer for Local 1245. He also represented Local 1245 on the area's Central Labor Council.

But perhaps more important than his official positions with the union and with the company, Brocchini was a force to be reckoned with at PG&E by virtue of his personal integrity, his fierce pride in his work, his genuine affection for people, and his willingness to speak the truth as he saw it. PG&E learned this aspect of Brocchini's character well when, in early 1995, he and fellow Merced lineman Danny Mayo appeared before the local city council to protest PG&E downsizing.

Polite and respectful to a fault, Brocchini and Mayo nonetheless delivered a devastating critique of PG&E job cuts and the potential affect on customer service. They did so despite the fact that their boss, the PG&E Division Manager, was in the audience listening to their every word.

"Mike covered the overall consequences for the entire PG&E system and I covered more of the local issues," said Mayo in recalling the now-famous episode. "I know I couldn't have gone it alone without Mike being there."

Mayo, also a steward and lineman in Merced, called Brocchini a "natural leader" who possessed a great sense of humor, an ability to listen, and a willingness to fight for something he truly believed in."

"His leadership abilities helped me to do the things that I needed to do," said Mayo. "I always felt kind of like his 'sidekick', but I was happy in that role. I was proud to be associated with him."

When PG&E and Local 1245 mended their fences in April 1995, Brocchini became an active player in helping forge a new, cooperative relationship between company and union.

In addition to serving on the local labor-management committee for Yosemite Division, Brocchini was a union representative on the system-wide Gas and Electric T&D labor-management committee. One of Bro's strengths in representing the union, according to Senior Assistant Business Rep. Darrel Mitchell, was his willingness to consider the big picture.

"He really analyzed a situation, considered both sides of issues," said Mitchell. He was proud of being a Division
IN MEMORIAM: MICHAEL BROCCINI

lineman, but he tried to understand the viewpoints of other departments and of General Construction. "He was very compassionate, very unselfish," said Mitchell, adding that Brocchini's sense of humor helped defuse stressful situations.

"He was a very influential person," said Ron van Dyke, who was Brocchini's union business representative following the retirement of Frank Hutchins. "He was always looking to do something for somebody else—not for himself, for somebody else."

In a message to all Yosemite Division employees, Division Manager Steve Rath called Brocchini's death "truly a great loss personally, and to the entire Yosemite Division team."

"Mike was a true leader in every sense of the word and his presence will be greatly missed," said Rath, who also spoke at the funeral.

In Bro's honor, the flag at PG&E's "M" Street office in Merced was flown at half-staff.

Left: Mike (far right) and other union and management members of the Gas and Electric T&D labor-management committee are recognized during a December 1995 "summit" meeting at PG&E's Learning Center in San Ramon.

Below left: Mike participates in the general bargaining that led to the 1994 Labor Agreement with PG&E. Also shown are fellow negotiators Jeff Knisley (left) and Robert Olsen (right).

Top left: Mike and PG&E's Wayne Peterson roleplay a bargaining situation during a "Mutual Gains" training session in San Ramon, Ca. in 1995.

Top right: Mike and Local 1245 Executive Board member Chris Habecker share a light-hearted moment with Willie Brown, then Speaker of the California Assembly, now Mayor of San Francisco.
IN MEMORIAM: MICHAEL BROCCCHINI

My Remembrances of Michael Brocchini: A Son, A Father, A Lineman, A Man, And My Friend

A Son

...of George and Vy Brocchini. Youngest of three boys of Pacific Bell parents. As I remember Mike, he must have been around six or seven years old, rough housing around the lawns with his older brothers at the Pacific Bell and CWA union picnics and parties, and racing for the food tables. Mike loved to eat. When Mike talked about his mom’s cooking, his eyes twinkled. His heart told the stories of her fantastic baking. He could make chump slobber talking about her sweet rolls and pies.

Mike always said, “Around supper time I played pretty close to the back door, I didn’t want to be last to the table.”

Mike, in true Italian culture, loved and revered his mother, father, and brothers.

A Father

Nicholas and Brea, Mike loved you more with every beat of his heart. He was as proud of each of you as a father could be. Brea, as his beautiful, graceful china doll, in dance classes as well as in sports. Nick, as Mike told us many times, “Nick took after his old man. The kid can eat.” If ever either of you need a reminder of just how much your father loved you, you need only ask me, Stu, Wayne, or Petey, we listened each morning to his talk of you kids. Remember this always, Brea and Nick, your father loved you with all his heart and was devoted to you forever.

A Lineman

An old subforeman who had a definition for just about every position at PG&E and an anecdote for every situation told me 31 years ago when I was a groundman, when asked what it took to be a lineman, Ray Moore said: “You have to be six feet tall, a size 12 boot, size 5 hat, and a set of eyes a fence staple could poke out both eyes. I surmised without stating out loud a lineman must be pretty thick.

Mike only fit one of those criteria. He was over six feet tall.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mike for PG&E on earthquakes, windstorms, snowstorms, floods and just damn hard, tough jobs. Never, and I repeat, never did Mike take a step backwards. First to grab his books or a shovel, Mike, when we pulled up to a job that made us all shudder, always had a little quip to add: “Hey, We’ll probably get a rest, or at least a meal or two.”

Mike never weakened as a lineman. He got tired like us all, he bent a little on occasion, like us all. But if I ever needed to press the lineman a little, I relied on old Ray Moore’s book on “Line Work Made Simple.” I’d just tell Mike, if it’s too tough for the lineman it’s just right for the subbie. Mike would have whipped me before giving in then.

I guess then I can sum up with this. I have in 31 years had the pleasure to have worked with some of the best linemen in the system. We worked hard, played hard, and made PG&E money. Thanks Mike for your safe, hard work. Mike was a damn good lineman.

Mike the Man and Friend

This for me is both the easiest and the hardest to put to words. I am at this moment, late Tuesday night into the first drink of the second bottle, remembering, remembering, and reliving our past friendship, my observations, and listenings of work, of friendship, and family. Tears are starting with an occasional start of a smile when I think of the fun we had.

Each morning Mike usually got to work around 6:45. We all used to get there earlier, but recent times with PG&E, attitudes changed, and so have we, so most come in a little later. But true to form, Mike got there a little earlier—being a shop steward maybe someone wanted to discuss a problem. Not a problem to Mike. He had the solution or had the gift to get it resolved. If he couldn’t he called in his sidekick: dot-every-i, comma-when-necessary, don’t-forget-the-apostrophe, send-me-7-slings Danny Mayo. What a combination for Yosemite District.

Mike was a happy person. He greeted everyone as we sombered in to work in the morning. Some hung over, some grumbling, some muttering, some mad at the world.

Mike’s last morning, he and I stood outside with a cup as people wandered in. He greeted me each and every morning. “Hey old man, how’s it going?” It seems I inherited Kirk Jones’ moniker when he retired. Mike greeted everyone, I don’t recall who, and I said, “What do you talk to that S.O.B. for?”

The big grin came on his face and he once again stated, “Norman, I don’t think it’s all Lois.”

Michael personified all the quirks of the young PG&E lineman, with some of the habits of the old ones. As a friend and fellow lineman, I knew Mike to have:

*That quick tongue—sharp and to the point.
*The heart of a saint—giving, caring, and loving
*The business sense of both caring for the customer and caring for the welfare of the company
*And the ability to take the most awful six spans of two solid wire down in the fog, on a double dead-end line and buck pole with an oil spill and four irate dairymen, look at me and say, “Norm, I’ll talk to them, you don’t handle irate customers well, and 10 minutes later have them walk away thanking us for being there.

Mike was better than good in all walks of life. Michael, we’re all better people having known you.

You’re wrong Mike. I don’t always have to be right. I know you didn’t stick the truck on purpose.

Your Friend Always,
Norm Covert
Ron Fitzsimmons mourned by union

From PAGE ONE
"Fitz was very tenacious, a bull dog in pursuing the interests of the membership," said Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell. "Whether it was Golden Gloves boxing or scuba diving, whatever he did, he did it to the full extent. And he brought that same energy to the union."

"He was tenacious. He was zealous, an aggressive negotiator," said Business Rep. Frank Saxsenmeier. "He was just a ball of energy, a genuine person."

"Fitzsimmons "didn't take manure from anybody." He had a real firm sense of what was right," Mitchell added. Fitzsimmons "didn't take manure from anybody." Mitchell added, "Fitzsimmons "didn't take manure from anybody." N e v e r t h e l e s s, Fitzsimmons was able to build constructive relations with management. "They knew him for what he was and they respect him very much. And they listened to him when he talked, so he was very effective," said L.L. Mitchell. "He was a nice guy. He was a true friend."

Donations in Ron Fitzsimmon's memory can be made to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 6181, Concord, CA 94524.

Mitchell added, "Fitzsimmons "didn't take manure from anybody."" L.L. Mitchell

Strains and sprains

D oes this sound familiar? You bend over to lift an object and suddenly you feel a sharp pain in your back.

Strains and sprains were the most common injuries reported to the Safety Committee in 1996. There are things you can do to avoid getting strains and sprains. Take the time to stretch out before taking on any physical demands. Never lift anything that is too heavy by yourself. Get help.

Always lift with your knees and not your back.

Safe driving

B efore you operate any vehicle, familiarize yourself with all state vehicle codes and local traffic rules. Always wear your seat belt. Being thrown from a moving vehicle is the number one cause of death in a vehicle accident.

Never operate a vehicle with faulty brakes or mechanical defects. Stay focused on your surroundings. Take extra care around schools and playgrounds. Remember that the risk of an accident goes up after the sun goes down. Two-thirds of all traffic accidents occur at night, even though there are only half as many vehicles on the road.

Free book on EMFs

The US Department of Energy's Research and Public Information Dissemination Program (RAPID) has produced a booklet called "EMF in the Workplace." You can get a free copy of this booklet by calling 1-800-363-2383. The Local 1245/PG&E Joint EMF Committee highly recommends the booklet.

RAPID is a national program which combines government and private resources to study and provide answers to questions about electric and magnetic fields.
Twelfth Annual
IBEW Local 1245
Golf Tournament

Saturday, June 7, 1997
Indian Valley Golf Club
Novato, California
First Tee Time: 10:00 a.m.*

$5000
Hole-in-One Prize!

Don’t Miss Out—Register Now! Deadline is May 15!

1. Name ____________________________________  □ Chicken □ Steak
   Address __________________________________

2. Name ____________________________________  □ Chicken □ Steak
   Address __________________________________

3. Name ____________________________________  □ Chicken □ Steak
   Address __________________________________

4. Name ____________________________________  □ Chicken □ Steak
   Address __________________________________

Guests Are Welcome!
4-Man Best Ball Scramble
Limited Tee Spaces
Entry Deadline: May 15

$80 Entry Fee
(Includes Cart & Dinner)
$70 Entry Fee
(Cart & Green Fee Only, No Dinner)

Barbecue Chicken
or New York Steak
Drawing Prizes!
Long Drive Prizes!

Mail
Check Payable to:
“Local 1245
Golf Tournament”
to:
PO Box 4790
Walnut Creek,
CA 94596

$5000
Hole-in-One
Prize!

For Further
Information Call:
Frank Saxsenmeier
510-933-6060 Ext. 338
or 415-898-1141

Dinner and Awards
Immediately Following:

Indian Valley Golf Club
3035 Novato Blvd.
Novato, California 94948
(415) 897-1118

*First T-Time is 10:00 a.m. If there are fewer than 75 players, first
tee time is 11:00 a.m.

Foursomes are not necessary
Meddling with CPI would harm seniors

Now that the immediate threat of the balanced budget amendment is abated, senior activists are now turning their attention to efforts to tamper with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told the House Budget Committee that he supports the creation of a commission to study the issue, despite the fact that he is "100%" sure that the index overstates inflation by at least 1%. A cut of 1% would mean lawmakers would have easy access to billions of dollars with which to balance the budget. Such a move, however, would mean drastically lower cost-of-living increases for low-middle-income seniors—those who can least afford the cut. A lower CPI would also raise taxes for many Americans because of its impact on tax brackets.

Some Republicans oppose a CPI reduction for this reason. As the issue heated up, it was widely reported that President Clinton was close to considering the creation of a commission—an idea also supported by Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss. House Minority Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss. House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., wrote a letter to the president opposing the establishment of a commission to study the issue. Any adjustments to the CPI should be determined scientifically and accurately by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), not by a politically motivated commission interested only in finding ways to painlessly reduce the deficit, he says.

Mr. Greenspan claims a commission is needed because it takes the BLS too long to gather the information needed to make CPI changes. However, quicker is not better when it comes to calculating an accurate CPI, claim senior advocates. President Clinton had not agreed to a commission as of this update went to press. Supporters of a commission are merely using it as political cover, say opponents. The Local 1245 Retirees Club extends its congratulations to renewed calls for pensions. This month we look at the Consumer Price Index, which is currently under review in Congress.

What issues should California seniors care about?

By Orv Owen

Over the next few months, fellow Local 1245 member Don Hardie and I would like to share with you some of the extremely important information we received at the 20th Annual Convention of the Congress of California Seniors in San Diego on March 25-27.

Since this tremendous amount of information cannot be reported in one single article and because of its importance to retirees and seniors, our brothers and sisters in the workplace and their families, we will focus on a different subject each month. Among the topics we hope to cover are: Medicare, Medicaid, Long Term Care, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Older Americans Act, Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment, Scams and Frauds that Target Seniors, California Seniors Legislative Agenda, Communicating with and Organizing Seniors and Activists at all Levels to Return Our Country to its Citizens.

This month we look at the Consumer Price Index, which is currently under review in Congress. A lower CPI would mean drastically lower cost-of-living increases for low-middle-income seniors—those who can least afford the cut. A lower CPI would also raise taxes for many Americans because of its impact on tax brackets.

What is the CPI?

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. Two CPIs are published: 1) the CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers about 80% of the total population and 2) the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 32% of the total population.

The CPI based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical care, and other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. In calculating the index, price changes for the goods and services purchased are combined together with weights which represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Indexes for different months are usually compared in relative terms. Thus, an index of 133.5 in 2002 is 1.053 times higher than an index of 125.5 (133.5/125.5=1.053); in other words, prices increased 5.3%.

The CPI is used as an indicator of inflation, a deflator of other economic series, and as an escalator for income payments.

Retiree Club meeting dates: Come join us!

East Bay Chapter: Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at Local 1245 headquarters, 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, Ca.

San Jose Chapter: Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at Local 332, 1870 Stone Ave., San Jose.

Congratulation to the newly-retired!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club extends its congratulations to these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retirees Club chapter in your area, or to start one in your area if there is none! Call Julie Rodriguez at 510-933-6060 Ext. 208.

Name: Residency: Yrs/Srvc.
Paul Domenici: S. San Francisco, Ca. 34
Myrick Gafford Jr.: Suisun City, Ca. 32
Vernon Gard: Bakersfield, Ca. 40
Bobby Hagerman: Suisun City, Ca. 41
Don Mydland: Bakersfield, Ca. 41
Douglas Spreng: Lake Havasu City, Az. 12

April 1997 Utility Reporter
New journeyman certificate acknowledges credentials

Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric have agreed to establish a journeyman certificate for a variety of classifications to officially recognize the journeyman status of employees not eligible for state certification.

Many of PG&E's apprenticeships are certified by the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards. But some PG&E training programs are not state certified, such as Water System Repairman in Hydro Generation and Building Mechanic in General Office. Workers in these classifications have journey-level skills, but their journeyman status is not recognized in any official way.

The Local 1245/PG&E certificate will accord these employees the recognition they deserve. Also benefiting from the new certificate are two other groups of PG&E employees: those who achieved journeyman status on an accelerated basis and those who completed an apprenticeship program before it was certified by the state. Most of PG&E's programs were not state certified until 1973.

Under the authority of the Local 1245/PG&E Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, provisionally appointed employees have been placed in journeyman positions and received accelerated training and wage increases. The state will not certify such individuals, regardless of their proven skills.

"Historically the company has needed certain individuals, such as Division Operators, and have needed those folks trained and able to achieve journeyman status as quickly as possible," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally. "In the union's view, these people are journeymen even though they got there faster than the state apprenticeship standards allow."

Union and company members of the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee decided it was important to acknowledge the journeyman status of these individuals with an official certificate. If these employees ever leave PG&E, the certificate would enable them to prove their qualifications to a future employer.

"I routinely receive calls from employers on the West Coast to verify the work history of individuals who were formerly PG&E journeymen," said Business Rep Landis Marttila, who represents Local 1245 on the Apprenticeship Committee. "My impression is that, particularly in states adjoining California, PG&E journeymen in all classifications are highly regarded."

To acquire a certificate, PG&E employees should contact their school representative or training coordinator and request the journeyman certificate. Requests will be reviewed and processed by the JATC.

Representing Local 1245 on the JATC, along with Marttila, are Business Representatives Frank Saxsenmeier, Joel Ellioff, and Ed Caruso.