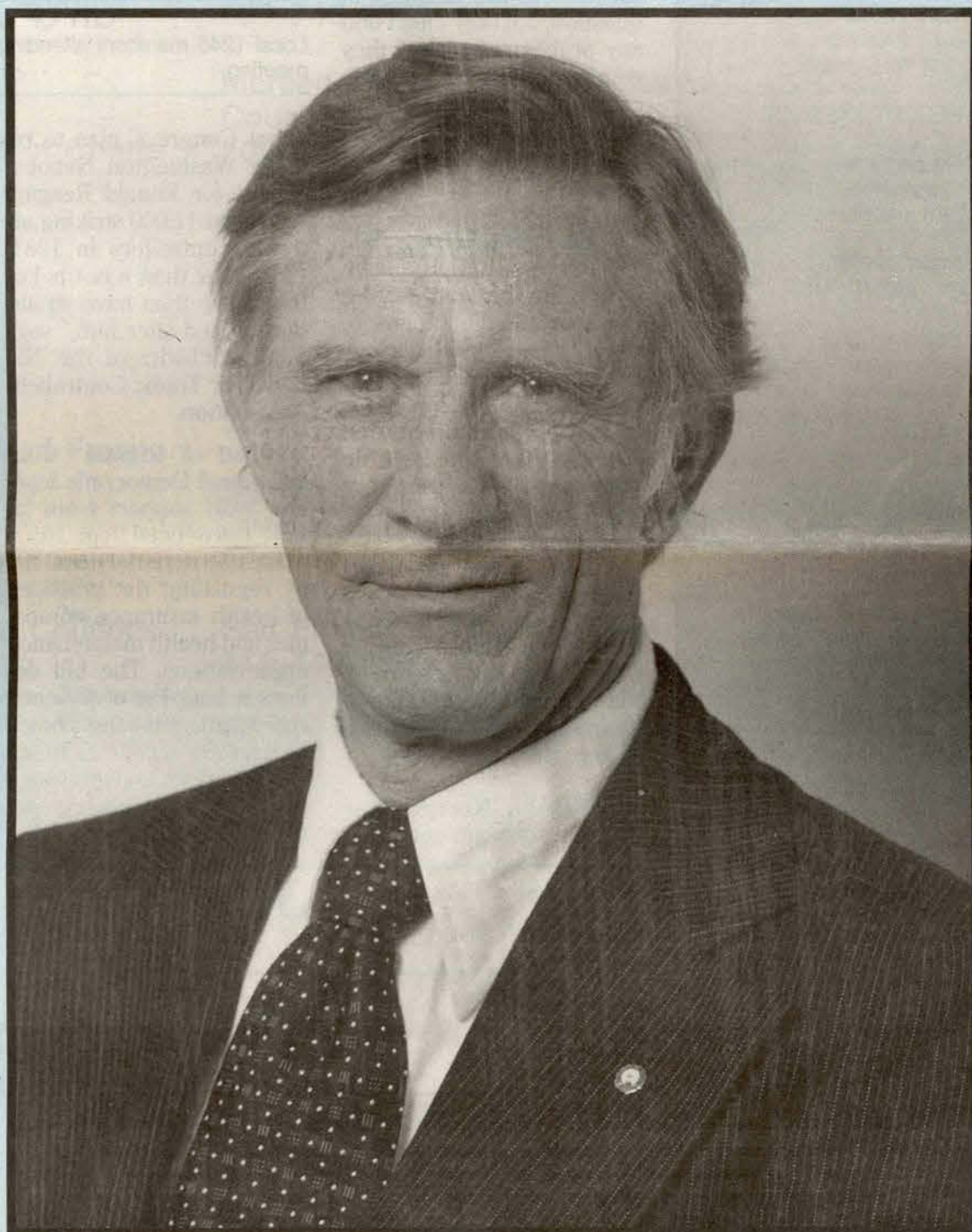


1245

International Brotherhood
Of Electrical Workers
Local 1245, AFL-CIO
April 1998
Vol. XLVII No. 4

UTILITY REPORTER

Remembering Mitch
Pages 5-9



L. L. "Mitch" Mitchell

Union Founder, Union Leader, Union Man
1916 - 1998



UTILITY REPORTER

April 1998
Volume XLVII
Number 4
Circulation: 26,800

(510) 933-6060

**Business Manager
& Executive Editor**

Jack McNally

President

Howard Stiefer

Executive Board

Jim McCauley

E. L. "Ed" Mallory

Anna Bayless

Chris Habecker

Kathy F. Tindall

John Mendoza

Treasurer

Michael J. Davis

Communications Director

Eric Wolfe

Published monthly at 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, California 94598. Official publication of Local Union 1245, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Periodical postage paid at Walnut Creek and at additional mailing offices. USPS No. 654640, ISSN No. 0190-4965.

POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579, Change of Address, and all correspondence to Utility Reporter, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Single copies 10 cents, subscription \$1.20 annually.

Have you moved lately? If so, please send your complete new address and your Social Security Number to the Utility Reporter, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.



Workers here and abroad

Rolling the union on...

Duh: Kathie Lee Gifford, who was "surprised" a couple of years ago to find out that her line

of clothing was made in sweatshops, says she's learned another lesson. According to Labor Notes, she is facing new charges about sweatshop conditions in Chinese factories that make some of her clothing. Gifford says she sent her own inspectors to the factories in question, but they didn't find any problems because they weren't able to communicate with the workers. "We have learned a lesson," said a spokesperson. "We must go in with translators."

Slur Backfires: The 140 workers at the Hamilton Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Norwich, Conn., turned back a vicious anti-union campaign that included one administrator telling pro-union workers, "we can have monkeys do your work." The workers voted for a union.

But Officer...: Labor Notes reported that a bus driver carrying scabs through a picket line at Coca-Cola in Braintree, Mass., made the mistake of hitting two cops as well as a picket. He was arrested.

Thanks, No: Air Traffic Controllers are not happy



CITY OF SANTA CLARA
Local 1245 members attending a recent City of Santa Clara unit meeting.

about Congress' plan to rename Washington National airport for Ronald Reagan, who fired 11,000 striking air traffic controllers in 1981. "I'd rather than a hot poker in my eye than have an airport named after him," says Randy Schwitz of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.

Bill of Rights: Congressional Democratic leaders, with support from labor, introduced legislation March 31 to protect patients by regulating the practices of health insurance companies and health maintenance organizations. The bill defines a long list of patients' rights, guaranteeing choice of doctors, access to medical specialists, and grievance procedures allowing patients to appeal the denial of

care to independent bodies certified by Federal or state officials.

Women in Construction: Interviews with 30 tradeswomen are featured in *We'll Call You If We Need You: Experiences of Women Working Construction*. Written by electrician Susan Elsenberg, the book includes stories and photographs of women carpenters, ironworkers, electricians, painters, and plumbers. Chapters like "Carrying Weight," "Bucket or Bathroom?" and "Exceptional Men" highlight the positive and negative experiences of women going to work in "men's jobs." Cost is \$25 plus \$3.75 shipping. Contact Cornell University Press, Order Dept., PO Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14850.

APPOINTMENTS

CITY OF WILLITS

City of Willits Bargaining Committee
J. C. England
Den Vel Caine Jr.

RESORT DISTRICT

Resort District Bargaining Committee
D. J. Millette

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

California Labor Federation Legislative Conference
Jim McCauley
Mike Davis
Ed Mallory
Dada Rao
Jack Osburn
Wayne Greer
Don Hardie

Congress of California Seniors 1998 Annual Convention
Orv Owen
Watie Anthney
Bob Sherborne

Joint Executive Conference of Southern California Electrical Workers
Jack McNally
Art Murray
Rich Dunkin

IBEW Construction and Maintenance Conference
Jack McNally
Darrel Mitchell
Art Murray
Rich Dunkin

California State Association of Electrical Workers Meeting
Jack McNally
Bob Choate
Art Murray
Rich Dunkin

IBEW Pre-Primary Election Convention
Jack McNally
Howard Stiefer
Jim McCauley
Ed Mallory
Mike Davis
Dada Rao
Mickey Harrington

July

Saturday

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7	8	9	10

11

Save this date!

for the

Local 1245 Golf Tournament

Details coming soon

Early birds call Frank Saxsenmeier

510-933-6060 ext. 338 or 707-939-7611

Register to vote!

Not sure if you're registered to vote?

You can register or re-register by mail. Contact the union hall today to find out how.

Call 510-933-6060. Ask for the "Business Rep of the Day."

Stewards explain PG&E rate case

Is that a union steward you heard speak about PG&E's General Rate Case during a recent shop floor meeting?

Quite likely. Local 1245 stewards have been fanning out across the PG&E system to inform union members about the importance of the GRC to future job stability at PG&E.

PG&E is seeking base revenue increases starting in January 1999. Funds from the increase will pay for capital improvement programs that will maintain and improve safety, reliability and service.

Maintaining high standards for service has been a chief concern of Local 1245 historically, and especially since electric deregulation became an issue in 1993. Reliability was the central issue when Local 1245 protested PG&E's plan to cut the workforce in 1994-95.

PG&E responded by re-

taining 800 employees it had planned to lay off, and has utilized up to 3000 additional temporary employees through the hiring hall in the intervening years. But these additional employees were not foreseen when PG&E's current rates were established, so these expenses were not included in those rates. In 1996, PG&E spent \$228 million more on providing service than was authorized by the CPUC.

Without an increase, PG&E says it cannot carry through all of its planned maintenance activity.

It is in the interests of all PG&E employees—and the customers they serve—that PG&E be allowed to recover the cost of providing safe, reliable service. That's the message that union stewards are spreading throughout the PG&E system, and that union members should spread in their local communities.



CORRECTION

Due to an error at the printer's last month, the wrong photo was printed in connection with 20-year service award presentations at last year's San Bernardino pin dinner. The 20-year members, including those shown above with Business Manager Jack McNally, were: Larry Courmoyer, Jim D'Avanzo, Ray Obregon, and Gregory Krogh.

Make no mistake about this: Prop. 226 threatens job security

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

This union's foremost concern in recent years has been to protect the job security of our members as the utility industry undergoes wrenching changes.

Proposition 226 is a very real threat to this union's ability to protect your job. Let me explain why.

Your job doesn't exist in a vacuum. Utility companies must play by rules established by state (and federal) government. Because of industry "deregulation" imposed by government, utilities are experimenting with radical downsizing, huge mergers, "re-engineering," and other types of restructuring.

All of these developments in the industry can have a profound impact on the job security and economic well-being of our members. The threatened layoff of nearly 1,000 members at PG&E in 1994-95 taught us that lesson well.

But the real lesson was that this union can make a difference through our influence in the political arena. The passage of AB 1890—the electric restructuring bill—could have been an unparalleled disaster for our members and for the consumers we serve. But through the efforts of our lobbyist, and *through the influence of legislators friendly to our union*, we were able to insert strong job security provisions in that bill.

As a result, we got a bill mandating that utilities could use "competition transition charges" to provide assistance to displaced employees, includ-

ing severance pay, retraining, early retirement packages, and "outplacement" services.

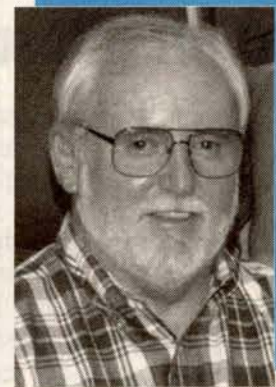
Perhaps even more importantly, through our efforts, the bill required the creation of inspection standards and line clearance standards for transmission and distribution systems. These provisions not only assure system reliability for California's electric customers, they dramatically enhance the job security of the employees whose job it is to keep the system reliable.

Make no mistake about this: if we did not have in place an on-going political action committee making strategic contributions to key legislators, our role in shaping AB 1890 would have been greatly diminished. In politics, if you don't come to the table, *you don't eat*.

Proposition 226 is specifically designed to get unions out of the political arena, leaving the field entirely to large corporations and their lobbyists and their political action committees. Prop 226 would prohibit unions from using any dues money or using any payroll deduction for donations to state candidates or ballot initiatives unless the unions get signed authorizations annually from each member.

In effect, Prop 226 would create a bureaucratic roadblock of such huge proportions that most unions would find it impractical or impossible to fund political action committees.

Some people ask: "What's wrong with letting members decide whether they want to support the



union's political efforts?" There's nothing wrong with it. Our members already have the right to object to political contributions and to officially request a refund of that portion of their dues. It amounts to a grand total of \$1 per member per year.

In reality, few members object because they understand that \$1 per year toward political action is a tiny expense considering the enormous stakes involved in utility restructuring, job safety laws, overtime protections, and other legislation crucial to working people.

Proposition 226 is the brainchild of right-wing extremists who want to destroy the political clout of working people by hog-tying their unions. Proposition 226 contains absolutely no restrictions on contributions to political candidates by businesses and corporations.

Don't be fooled by Prop 226's misleading rhetoric about banning foreign contributions to state candidates. Foreign contributions to candidates are already illegal.

Prop 226 is about silencing workers, pure and simple. Don't be silent on June 2. Vote "NO" on Prop 226.

Safety Matters

By Local 1245
Safety Committee

Be on guard for ticks!

It's that time of year when hungry ticks are out and about looking for a meal.

Dress appropriately. Chances of tick bite can be lessened by tucking in shirts and pants. Also, light-colored clothing enables you to spot ticks more easily.

Use repellents. Repellents containing DEET may be used on exposed skin. Permethrin may be used on your clothing but should not be applied to your skin.

Examine yourself. Remember, you are your best defense.

When you find unwelcome hitchhikers, don't panic. Even in areas where Lyme borreliosis (Lyme disease) is endemic, only a small proportion of ticks

carry the disease. It takes up to 24 hours after attachment before the disease is transmitted.

Remove the tick with fine tipped tweezers as close to the skin as possible and slowly pull it straight out. The mouth parts of adult ticks may sometimes remain in your skin, but this will not cause Lyme disease. After removal apply an antiseptic, such as alcohol, or an antibiotic ointment.

Remember, do not panic. Do not attempt to crush the tick's body, try to burn the tick off, or apply petroleum jelly, nail polish or any other chemical.

If you think you might have Lyme disease, contact your physician immediately.

Cal-OSHA goes on-line

The Cal-OSHA Reporter has been an important source of information on workplace safety since 1974. Now you can search

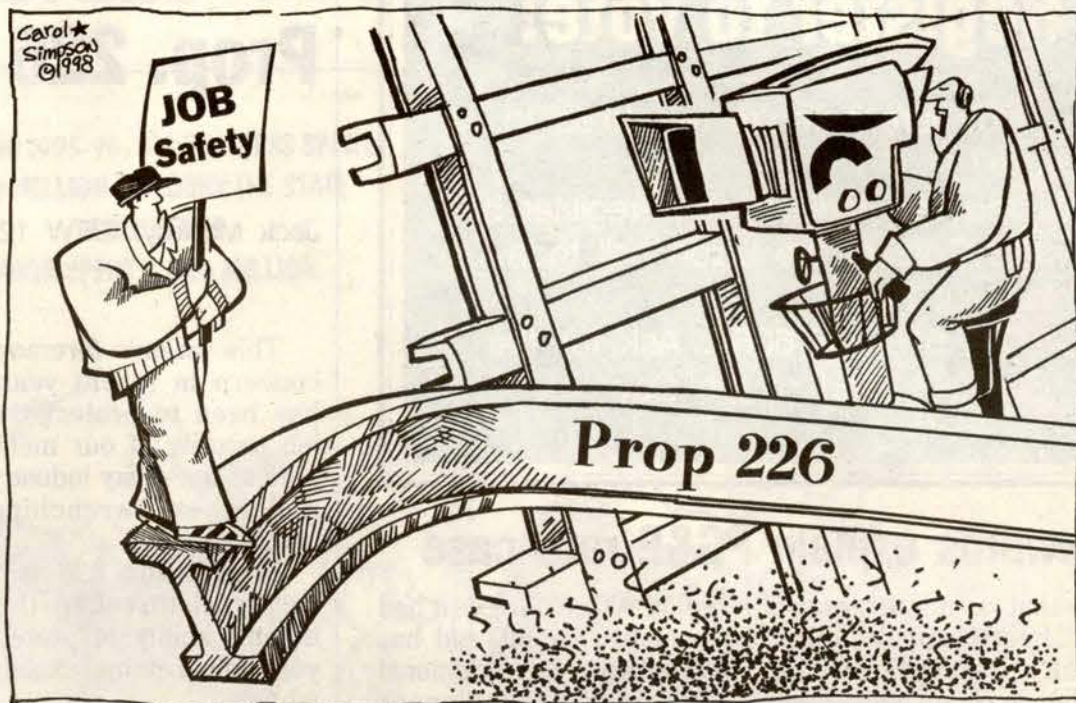
Cal-OSHA's archives on-line.

Cal-OSHA's e-mail address is:
<http://www.cal-osha.com>



"What do you mean you're from OSHA? I thought you were one of our temps!"

Prop. 226 endangers job safety



"Okay, just step back a little further... and we'll have a perfect picture."

In California, health-and-safety standards protecting workers are fought and won in the political arena. But if right-wing, out-of-state interests are successful in passing Prop. 226, the anti-worker initiative, unions would be sent into battle without ammunition.

Regulations safeguarding workers, such as the recently enacted ergonomic standards to prevent repetitive strain injuries, are set by the California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board. But pro-worker health-and-safety regulations always face an uphill battle because board members, appointed by Gov. Pete Wilson, routinely side with business.

"Safety shouldn't be a political issue, but unfortunately it is," said Business Rep. Art Murray, who handles safety matters affecting Local 1245 members at municipal utilities, outside line contractors, and Sierra Pacific Power. "If we're serious about protecting our members' health and safety, we have to play the political game just as seriously as our opponents do."

Prop. 226 is a dead serious effort by Gov. Wilson and his friends in big business to take unions out of the political process. Prop.

226 would make it illegal for unions to spend money on politics without gaining authorization from its members using a complicated and costly procedure every 12 months.

"This proposition, if it passes, would let employers dismantle the gains that unions have made in workplace safety," said Murray.

Scientific Analysis?

"The average citizen might think that health-and-safety standards are adopted based on scientific analysis of what causes and prevents injuries," said Business Rep. Landis Marttila, who represents Local 1245 members on safety issues at Pacific Gas & Electric and at tree trimming companies.

"But once you get involved in the process, you realize that the standards board doesn't decide things based on objective data. Politics affects every decision," Marttila said.

If Prop. 226 passes, it is almost certain that anti-worker forces would attempt to abolish the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA). Just ten years ago, Cal-OSHA was abolished by then-Gov. George Deukmejian, but the labor movement was able to revive the agency by passing Prop. 97—a campaign which Local 1245 vigorously supported.

"Our union can exert influence over health and safety matters at the state level in two basic ways: we can help elect pro-worker legislators, and we can participate in the Cal-OSHA rule-making process," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally.

"Proposition 226 would directly undermine our influence by hampering our ability to support legislators who support us. And if Cal-OSHA got axed, we would lose our seat at the rule-making table," said McNally.

"Safety shouldn't be a political issue, but unfortunately it is. If we're serious about protecting our members' health and safety, we have to play the political game just as seriously as our opponents do."

L. L. Mitchell: the man who built a union

L L. "Mitch" Mitchell, an original founder of IBEW Local 1245 and a principal architect of the union's contract with Pacific Gas and Electric, died March 15 at his home in Sacramento at the age of 82.

Mitchell, initiated into Local 1245 in 1942, served an extraordinary 25 years in the union's leadership, first as right-hand man to Business Manager Ron Weakley from 1951 to 1971, and then as

business manager in his own right from 1971 to 1977.

"He was a tactician and a researcher," said Weakley. "He could really write contract language." (See Page 8)

And write contract language he did. In concert with Weakley, Mitchell laid the foundation for virtually all of the contract provisions that remain in force today at PG&E, including medical, dental LTD, and retirement benefits; vaca-



Mitchell, a superb negotiator, was a principal architect of the labor agreement with PG&E. Wages and benefits enjoyed by members today are based on the foundation he laid during negotiations in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. (Photo: Local 1245 archives)

tion, sick leave, and holiday pay; meal allowances, shift premiums, overtime provisions; apprenticeship and safety programs, the grievance procedure, and—of course—regular wage increases.

Mitchell's accomplishments at the bargaining table were not the product of table-pounding theatrics but of sound logic, according to former Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen.

See **PAGE SIX**



PG&E line crew ready for work in Modesto, California in the 1930s. L. L. Mitchell is 3rd from the left. Other crew members are: Bruce Hoque, Norbert Scharanbeck, Harcourt "Haircut" Smith, Bob Turk, Ed Elhardt and George Rawls. (Photo: Local 1245 archives)

In the early '40s, Mitchell transferred to Humboldt to become a lineman. The first time it rained, he was surprised to find his fellow workers jumping out of the truck and preparing to walk with all their gear through a mile or so of rugged countryside to get to the worksite.

"I just refused to get out from under the canvas," Mitchell recalled. "So the foreman told me if I didn't get out he was going to can me."

When the rest of the crew saw that Mitchell wasn't going to budge, they were emboldened to rejoin him in the truck.

In those days, crews sometimes worked seven days a week straight through the summer, with no weekends, no holidays, and no overtime pay. But through the bravery and willpower of union men like Mitchell, employees were gaining a newfound sense of their own power.

From PAGE FIVE

"Mitch was very soft spoken and very methodical at the bargaining table. He just lead you down the path," said Owen, who watched Mitchell apply those skills with great success during bargaining with Sierra Pacific Power Co. in the 1950s. "After a couple of negotiations they had to hire a professional labor relations man to keep up with Mitch," recalled Owen, who served as a rank and file member of the Sierra Pacific Power bargaining committee from 1955 to 1962.

"Mitch was a master negotiator," said Business Manager Jack McNally, who served on Mitchell's staff in the 1970s. "I watched him lead the company on a path that would make them think the union's proposal was *their* proposal. Much of my success as business manager over the last 18 years is a direct result of how Mitch raised me, taught me, drilled me."

Learning Solidarity

Mitchell was initiated into the labor movement in 1931 when, at age 15, he went to

work for the Sugar Pine Lumber Company in the woods above Fresno at Shaver Lake. There he was signed up by the Industrial Workers of the World, the militant labor union that preached "an injury to one is an injury to all."

Although Mitchell did not fully embrace their militant tactics, he was impressed by their solidarity.

"Their own strength was the thing," Mitchell said in a 1991 Utility Reporter interview. "You can one guy, the whole job walked off. They were united...They all had names like 'three-fingered Jack' and Broken-toed John.' There was a camaraderie that you don't have now."

After leaving the woods, Mitchell went to work as a grunt for PG&E in Modesto, Ca. in 1935. Even as a grunt he was expected to climb, and he earned 50 cents an hour for his efforts.

However, it wasn't his ability to climb that landed Mitchell a job at PG&E. It was his ability to handle a bat and ball. Mitchell's skills as an infielder were needed by the company baseball team.



IBEW International President J. Scott Milne (middle) recognized that Ron Weakley (right) had the talent and dedication needed to unify the organizing drive at PG&E.

Weakley remembers Mitch. See Page 7

From PAGE FIVE

"Mitch was very soft spoken and very methodical at the bargaining table. He just lead you down the path," said Owen, who watched Mitchell apply those skills with great success during bargaining with Sierra Pacific Power Co. in the 1950s. "After a couple of negotiations they had to hire a professional labor relations man to keep up with Mitch," recalled Owen, who served as a rank and file member of the Sierra Pacific Power bargaining committee from 1955 to 1962.

"Mitch was a master negotiator," said Business Manager Jack McNally, who served on Mitchell's staff in the 1970s. "I watched him lead the company on a path that would make them think the union's proposal was *their* proposal. Much of my success as business manager over the last 18 years is a direct result of how Mitch raised me, taught me, drilled me."

Learning Solidarity

Mitchell was initiated into the labor movement in 1931 when, at age 15, he went to

work for the Sugar Pine Lumber Company in the woods above Fresno at Shaver Lake. There he was signed up by the Industrial Workers of the World, the militant labor union that preached "an injury to one is an injury to all."

Although Mitchell did not fully embrace their militant tactics, he was impressed by their solidarity.

"Their own strength was the thing," Mitchell said in a 1991 Utility Reporter interview. "You can one guy, the whole job walked off. They were united...They all had names like 'three-fingered Jack' and 'Broken-toed John.' There was a camaraderie that you don't have now."

After leaving the woods, Mitchell went to work as a grunt for PG&E in Modesto, Ca. in 1935. Even as a grunt he was expected to climb, and he earned 50 cents an hour for his efforts.

However, it wasn't his ability to climb that landed Mitchell a job at PG&E. It was his ability to handle a bat and ball. Mitchell's skills as an infielder were needed by the company baseball team.

In the late 1930s Mitchell was transferred from Modesto to Stockton, where the IBEW and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) were engaged in a bitter struggle over who would represent workers at PG&E.

"You'd have fistfights on the docks over it," Mitchell recalled.

That competition increased in 1941 when both the IBEW and the CIO chartered new union locals for the enormously difficult task of trying to organize all PG&E workers into one union. IBEW Local 1245 was chartered April 18, 1941, and Mitchell was initiated in 1942, about the same time that he got an opportunity to become a lineman by transferring to Humboldt.

The first time it rained, Mitchell was surprised to find his fellow workers jumping out of the truck and preparing to walk with all their gear through a mile or so of rugged countryside to get to the worksite.

"I just refused to get out from under the canvas. So the foreman told me if I didn't get out he was going to can me."

When the rest of the crew saw that Mitchell



IBEW International President J. Scott Milne (middle) recognized that Ron Weakley (left) and Mitch Mitchell (right) had the talent and dedication needed to unify the organizing drive at PG&E. (Photo: Local 1245 archives)

Weakley remembers Mitch. See Page 8.

wasn't emboldened Mitchell to force Mitchell I'm a li want th In tho seven c summer and no c ery and Mitche newfou

Creati

But th IBEW an Worker labor me fective. defecio which c accomm

While 1245 re new "b them as Mitchell nity in with EL Humbo Weakley

Over t cement in 1950 tion to r soundly more th

In 195 gamateo Several the ama often fir was bec Weakley

Mitch made h manage tant.

In 195 attempt to the s contract include tions, jo

For th Mitchell efforts living s Sierra F pal Util

In the late 1930s Mitchell was transferred from Modesto to Stockton, where the IBEW and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) were engaged in a bitter struggle over who would represent workers at PG&E.

"You'd have fistfights on the docks over it," Mitchell recalled.

That competition increased in 1941 when both the IBEW and the CIO chartered new union locals for the enormously difficult task of trying to organize all PG&E workers into one union. IBEW Local 1245 was chartered April 18, 1941, and Mitchell was initiated in 1942, about the same time that he got an opportunity to become a lineman by transferring to Humboldt.

The first time it rained, Mitchell was surprised to find his fellow workers jumping out of the truck and preparing to walk with all their gear through a mile or so of rugged countryside to get to the worksite.

"I just refused to get out from under the canvas. So the foreman told me if I didn't get out he was going to can me."

When the rest of the crew saw that Mitchell

wasn't going to budge, they were emboldened to rejoin him in the truck. Mitchell wasn't fired, but the company tried to force him to clean toilets as punishment. Mitchell refused, saying, "I'm not a janitor. I'm a lineman. I just don't do that. If you want that done you hire a janitor."

In those days, crews sometimes worked seven days a week straight through the summer, with no weekends, no holidays, and no overtime pay. But through the bravery and willpower of union men like Mitchell, employees were gaining a newfound sense of their own power.

Creating a Union

But the bitter competition between the IBEW and the CIO (operating as the Utility Workers Organizing Committee) kept the labor movement at PG&E divided and ineffective. In 1948, Ron Weakley led a massive defection of CIO members into the IBEW, which chartered a new local, Local 1324, to accommodate them.

While much of the leadership of Local 1245 remained highly suspicious of their new "brothers" in Local 1324—regarding them as a bunch of Bay Area radicals—Mitchell could sense the historic opportunity in the events now unfolding. Along with Elmer Busby he drove down from Humboldt to meet with Don Hardie, one of Weakley's cohorts in Local 1324.

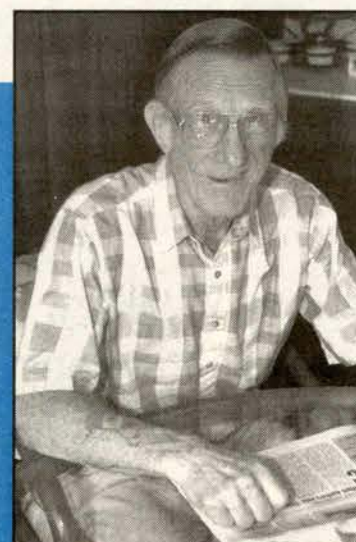
Over the next year or so, Mitchell helped cement relations with Weakley's local, and in 1950 the IBEW won a systemwide election to represent physical workers at PG&E, soundly defeating the CIO by a margin of more than two-to-one.

In 1951, Locals 1245 and 1324 were amalgamated (retaining the name Local 1245). Several men aspired to the leadership of the amalgamated union. But movements often find their own leaders, and by 1951 it was becoming clear that those leaders were Weakley and Mitchell.

Mitchell said Weakley's political skills made him the logical choice for business manager. Mitchell became his top assistant.

In 1952, the IBEW defeated a comeback attempt by the CIO, and then settled down to the serious business of negotiating a contract with PG&E. The union's priorities included wage security, working conditions, job security, and pension security.

For the next quarter century, Mitch Mitchell was at the forefront of the union's efforts to win basic rights and improve living standards for employees at PG&E, Sierra Pacific Power, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Citizens Utilities Co.



Mitch at home in 1991. He remained active in civic affairs throughout his life.

and other properties represented by Local 1245.

When Weakley retired in 1971, Mitchell became business manager and won reelection in 1974.

During his tenure at Local 1245, Mitchell was named as a Vice President to the California Labor Federation and served on the executive board of the California Council on Economic and Environmental Balance.

His talents were recognized early on by his peers. In 1954 he was elected president of the class at the 15th Harvard University Trade Union Program and delivered the valedictorian address at graduation. He served as guest lecturer at various times at Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Chicago.

In 1978, Mitchell was appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to the California State Water Resources Control Board, where he served as vice chairman for eight years.

For the last 12 years of his life Mitchell remained active in public causes, volunteering with the Utility User Rebate program and the Tax Preparation Program of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), as well as serving as a docent at the Sacramento Zoo and at the California State Indian Museum.

He is survived by his wife, Avis, nine children, nine grandchildren, and two sisters.

For his keen intelligence, his gifted leadership, and his steadfastness in the cause of unionism, L. L. Mitchell will be long remembered.



Weakley (left) and Mitch Mitchell &E. (Photo: Local 1245 archives)

A Tribute to L. L. Mitchell

By Ron Weakley,
Business Manager, 1951-1971
IBEW Local 1245

Like many others, I was very saddened to learn of the death of L. L. Mitchell.

I first met Mitch at the 1950 IBEW International Convention in Miami, Florida. He was a delegate from old Local 1245 and I was a delegate from new Local 1324. We got together to discuss how we might arrange a merger between the locals in the interests of all of the members then represented by the two locals.

As time went by, Mitch and I became close friends and when the two locals were merged into new Local 1245 I became Business Manager/Financial Secretary and was able to secure Mitch as my top staff assistant.

He and I worked together as a close team toward building an effective force for progress among our thousands of members and their families. We shared each other's views as we became a sort of dual leadership and built ideas and expectations into positive action, supported by our fellow officers, representatives, assistants, office personnel and the general membership.

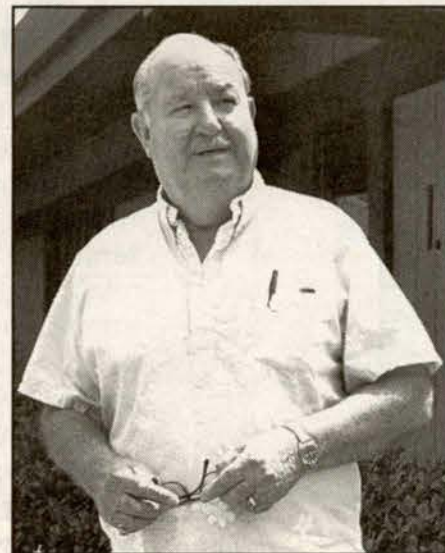
Mitch was an expert researcher, program planner and negotiator and he worked hard and long hours to do what was needed to be done.

When I left as Business Manager of Local 1245 to go to Washington DC to work in the US Department of Labor in early 1971, I recommended that Mitch be appointed to fill my unexpired term and our Executive Board concurred in my recommendation. His experience and knowledge gained in two decades of leadership service put him in good stead as my successor.

While we were separated by our different jobs and a long distance, we kept our personal friendship intact. The past few years during our retirements, we remained close up to the day of his passing.

I write these words to pay some respect to Mitch as a leader of union people and as a fine friend.

He was a major factor in the building of our union as well as a major element in its success. We who knew him as a friend will remember him not only as a friend but as an important leader in our union's history.



Ron Weakley in 1991

L. L. 'Mitch' Mitchell: a man of principle

By Orv Owen

Along with many thousands of Local 1245 retirees, I am saddened by the passing of union Brother L. L. Mitchell.

My wife and I joined friends and family in Sacramento on March 21 in a memorial service to honor and celebrate the life of Brother Mitchell.

During the service, friends and family shared with each other our many fond memories of Mitch and how he touched each of our lives.

Local 1245 and its members lost one of the original founders and architects of our union. Current members and retired members now enjoy and receive the benefits originally established in our labor agreements negotiated by Brother Mitchell.

The labor movement has lost one of its most skilled and talented leaders of principle and integrity.

Working people have lost one of its champions and most ardent supporters for dignity and justice and safety at the workplace.

My wife, Lois, and I have lost a dear friend and will be forever grateful for his friendship, wisdom and guidance that has touched our

lives.

I, along with the thousands he served so well, love him and will miss him.

I will keep the faith, Mitch!



L.L. Mitchell shares a few laughs with other former Local 1245 staff members at the local's 50th anniversary celebration in 1991. Clockwise, from left, are: Larry Foss, Spike Ensley, Orv Owen, L. L. Mitchell, Dan McPeak and Mert Walters. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

IBEW
Local
1245



Retirees Corner

Retiree Club dates

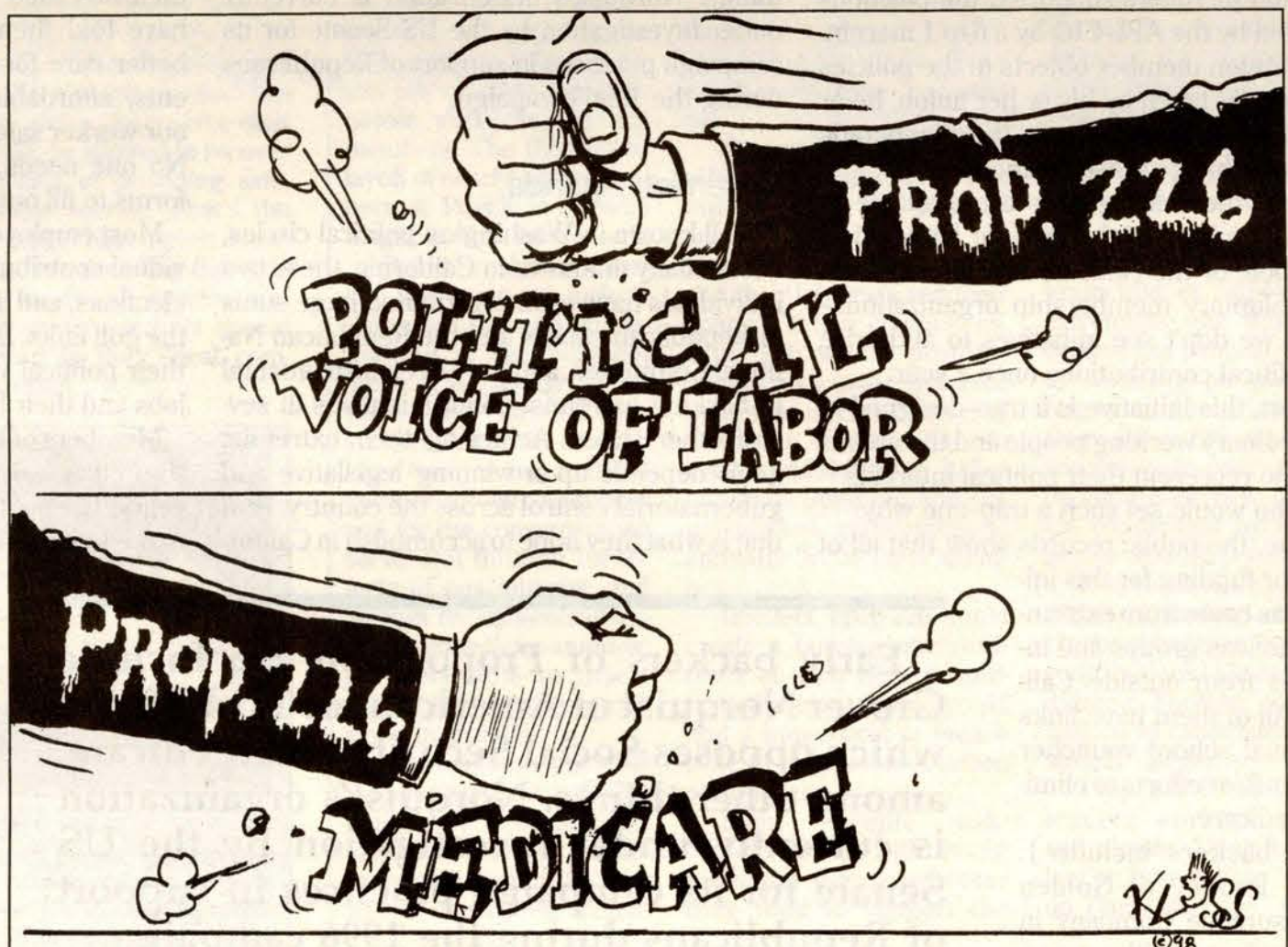
East Bay Chapter:
Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at Local 1245 headquarters, 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, Ca.

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



"Everybody should be concerned about Prop. 226. If this proposition passes and unions are forced out of politics, watch for its backers to target environmentalists and then seniors and then civil rights activists."

--Bill Craven,
state director
Sierra Club



Proposition 226: dangerous . . . and unnecessary

The proponents of Proposition 226 claim that restrictions on union political action are needed to protect

the rights of individual union members. Is there any validity to this claim?

Current law already allows individuals who do not support their organizations' positions or who do not want any of their dues spent on political activities to opt out of paying for legislative and political action. And the funders of this initiative know this to be a fact.

Unions already have internal democratic avenues available for members who want to change the procedures used for approving or spending dues money. In fact, employees in unions already enjoy more protections under current law than members of any other organization. Unions are voluntary, democratic organizations in which leaders are chosen through secret ballot elections.

All decisions affecting the collection and allocation of dues money and the endorsement of political candidates are made in a democratic fashion. Members support their organizations' positions by wide margins; for example, in 1996, independent polling showed that union members supported the positions advocated by the AFL-CIO by a 6 to 1 margin.

If any union member objects to the policies and positions taken by his or her union, he or she is free to participate in the democratic process to change those positions.

None of these safeguards are available to protect members of the American Medical Association, or the National Rifle Association—other voluntary membership organizations—and yet we don't see initiatives to authorize their political contributions once a year.

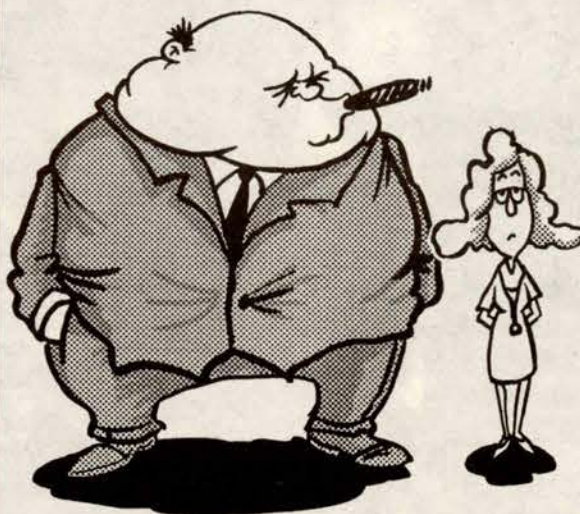
In short, this initiative is a trap—designed to snare ordinary working people and the unions that try to represent their political interests.

But who would set such a trap—and why?

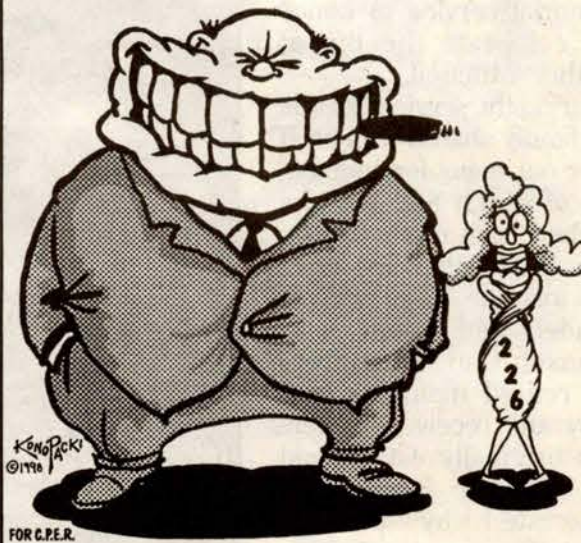
To date, the public records show that all of the major funding for this initiative has come from extremist Republican groups and individuals from outside California. All of them have links to national school voucher efforts and/or efforts to eliminate Medicare.

Early backers include J. Patrick Rooney of Golden Rule Insurance Company in Indianapolis, a wealthy executive who has spent millions of

DURING 1995-96, BIG BUSINESS SPENT
\$74 MILLION TO LOBBY THE STATE
LEGISLATURE.
LABOR SPENT \$12.6 MILLION.



GUESS WHO GOV. WILSON
WANTS TO GAG WITH HIS
PROPOSITION 226?



dollars supporting school voucher plans across the country, and Grover Norquist of American for Tax Reform, which opposes Social Security and Medicare, among other things. Norquist's organization is currently under investigation by the US Senate for its campaign practices in support of Republicans during the 1996 campaign.

Extremist Agenda

Well known in Washington political circles, but virtually unknown in California, these two individuals have each contributed huge sums to Republican causes and the Republican National Committee, and have been instrumental in backing extremist ballot initiatives in several other states. Achieving their extremist goals depends upon winning legislative and gubernatorial control across the country. And that is what they hope to accomplish in California

by passing Proposition 226 in the June primary.

The proponents of this initiative never asked organized employees if they wanted or needed their so-called "help." The employees could have told them what is really needed, like better care for our children and elderly parents, affordable healthcare, enforcement of our worker safety laws and improved schools. No one needs, or wants, more government forms to fill out or more red tape.

Most employees can't afford to make big individual contributions toward next November's elections, and don't meet a lot of politicians on the golf links. If this initiative passes, they lose their political voice on issues critical to their jobs and their livelihoods.

Members of Local 1245 have a huge stake in the outcome of political races over the next few years. The politicians who come out on top will make key decisions on the implementation of

utility deregulation, the fate of health and safety regulations, and other issues that have a direct impact on the living standards of Local 1245 members and their families.

The out-of-state masterminds of Proposition 226 want to muzzle California's unions by creating bureaucratic hoops for us to jump through.

Don't let them succeed. Vote "No" on Proposition 226.

Early backers of Proposition 226 include Grover Norquist of American for Tax Reform, which opposes Social Security and Medicare, among other things. Norquist's organization is currently under investigation by the US Senate for its campaign practices in support of Republicans during the 1996 campaign.

We Need You

...to help defeat Prop. 226. Please call the Central Labor Council closest to you and volunteer a few hours of your time for phone banking or door-to-door canvassing.

Central Labor Council of
Alameda County
510-569-1426

Butte-Glenn Counties Central
Labor Council
530-343-9474

Central Labor Council of Contra
Costa County
510-228-0161

Five Counties Central Labor
Council (Redding Area)
530-241-0319

Central Labor Council of Fresno
& Madera Counties
209-275-1151

Central Labor Council of
Humboldt & Del Norte Counties
707-443-7371

Kern, Inyo & Mono Counties
Central Labor Council
805-324-6451

Marysville Central Labor Council
530-743-7321

Merced-Mariposa Central Labor
Council
209-722-3636

Central Labor Council of Napa &
Solano Counties
707-557-5036

North Bay Counties Central Labor
Council
707-545-6970

Sacramento Central Labor
Council
916-927-9772

San Francisco Labor Council
415-440-4809

San Joaquin & Calaveras
Counties Central Labor Council
209-948-5526

San Mateo County Central Labor
Council
(Ask for Joe Brenner or Keno Carr)
650-572-8848

Santa Cruz & Monterey County
Labor Council
408-633-1869

South Bay Central Labor Council
(Ask for Cristina or Fred)
408-266-3790

Stanislaus & Tuolumne Counties
Central Labor Council
209-523-8079

Tri-Counties Central Labor
Council
(San Luis Obispo/Ventura areas)
805-641-3712

Pact with AC Transit ratified

Members of Local 1245 ratified a new agreement with AC Transit.

The three-year agreement provides a bonus of \$2500 per year in each of the first two years, with a general wage increase of 11% in the third year.

The agreement, which covers 24 members at AC Transit, also made significant improvements to the retirement plan, providing for 2% at 55 and 2.5% at 65. Vesting in the pension plan, which had been set at 10 years, was lowered to five years.

A contribution of \$1000 will be made each year for



Conducting negotiations between Local 1245 and AC Transit were (counter-clockwise from right): Steve Montoya, Central Maintenance Superintendent; Joe DeProspero, Maintenance Superintendent/Lead; Dennis Hert, Local 1245 Steward; Sharon D. Banks, General Manager; Lula Washington, Local 1245 Business Representative; Lynne Morel, Local 1245 Steward; Michael Chapman, Negotiation Facilitator; Guy Greenwood, Local 1245 Steward; Sharon Benatar, Treasury Manager; and Marcia Hoyt, Chief Labor Attorney. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

the next three years into the 457 plan (deferred compensation). Employees will receive an additional day of Paid Time Off per year, and

an additional week of vacation after 15 years.

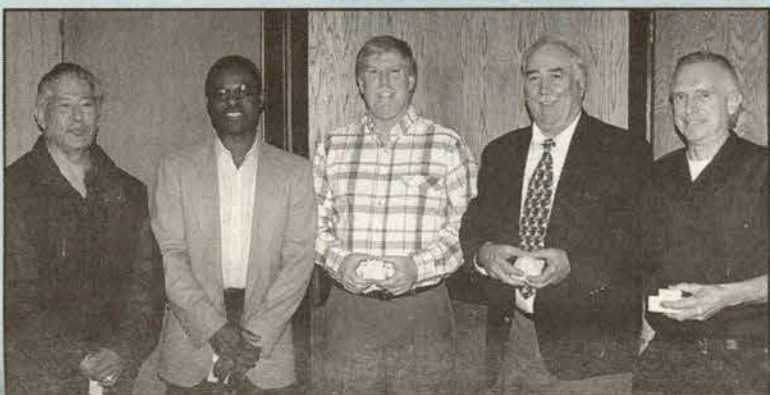
The parties, which utilized "mutual gains" techniques during bargaining, agreed to

create new committees for training, safety, and outreach to high schools regarding job opportunities.

Bargaining for the union

were stewards Dennis Hert, Guy Greenwood, Lynne Morel, Ernie Orozco and Business Rep. Lula Washington.

San Francisco-area pin dinner honors long-time members



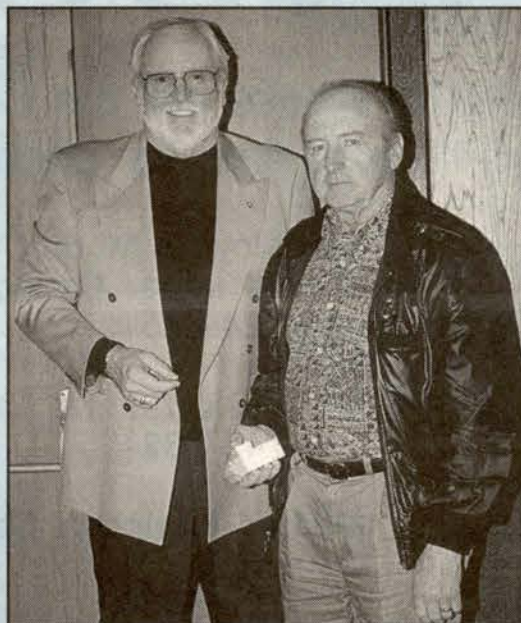
30 years



25 years



20 years



35 years Thirty-five year member John Krol, above right, is presented with service award by Business Manager Jack McNally.

**Pacifica, Ca.
February 20, 1998**

40 Years

Jack Sisemore

35 Years

John Krol
Terry Fleming
Edward Smith Jr.

30 Years

Karen Allen, Lorenzo Arjona, Patricia Baulwin, Ronald Bullock, Nick Demeo, Philip Eaton, Harold George, Kenneth Golla, Shirley Henderson, James Horton, E. Hunt, Benjamin Lanzarin, Joseph Lopez, Graig Massie, Carrie Matthews, James Meyer, Michael Noard, Susan Osberg, James Taylor, Fred Vella

25 Years

Ana Anderson, Gloria Aranda, Sheu Au, Estrella Awayan, David Baker, Alfredo Baldosano, Willis Baldrige, Bradless Ballinger, Robert Banaga, John Campbell, Loreta Capablanca, Elizabeth Cayas, Clarence Chan, Nancy Chan, Joseph Charbonneau, Edward Chin, Winnie Choy, Victor Contreras, John Cook, Leberta Corbin, Mary Ann Cousin, Helen Cruz, Victor De La Torre, Lorraine Donovan, R. G. Dumaguit, Charles Edmonson, Brenda Fisher, Licia Fowler, Jacqui Garcia, Jesus Garcia, Sandra Gee, Tinchor Gee, Gary Hamill, Pamela henderson, Clarita Hoganas, Bonnie Irwin, Edwin Jew, John Johnson, Vincent Jones, Adelaida Jose, Randall Kaefer, Hansa Kapadia, Sherry Kung, Bing Bing Kwan, Leland Lai, Roger Lambert, Gary Leopold, Jose Leyva, Danny Lolmaugh, Vern Lopez, Frank Lopez, Kenneth Low, Jerry Lyles, Joseph Ma, Catherine Manuchehri, Linda Martinez, Anthony Mateo Jr., Teodoro Mendoza, Marcellus Mitchell, Jeffrey Morris, Leo Myers, Michael Oneill, Jonathan Pinten, Nenita Flacido, Priscilla Quon, Luis Ramires, Nagaraja Rao, Jose Ricabal, Vilma Rovillas, Rodney Sala, Raymond Salazar, Anthony Santos, Agueda Sarmiento, Wilberta Skinner, Leonie Solomon, Jenny Soto, Nona Thompson, Erlinda Turner, Michael Turner, Carlos Vazquez, Magdalena Vicario, Carmelina Viernes, Leticia Viray, Delano Walker, Ivory Webb, Nicholas Wegner, Steve Wells, Donald Winders, Sandra Wong, Rudy Woodford, Chung Yu

20 Years

Thomas Abfalter, Edward Abriam, Daniel Bailey, Sandra Barairo, Robert Beeson, Janet Bertoloni, Myrna Boutte, Jane Chiang, John Cortez, Steven Cortez, James Costa, Jerry Cotter, Michael Cresci, Robert Dailey, Ella Dalagan, Leslie Davis, Robert Dea, Leonard Dearman, Avelino Dulay, Robert Faga, Neil Fain, Peter Field, John Flynn, Kent Foster, Freeman Fuller, David Fyfe, Anita Gainer, Jack Gin, Jose Gomez, James Graham, Dean Gurke, Alton Halvorson, Elisabeth Hearne, Maylee Ho, Gerald Huddleston, Kenneth Johnston, Robert Jordan, Philip Kamp, James Kuehnau, George Lapane, Delano Lee, E.P. Lim, Criselda Lopez, Carol Lord, Janice Lunardi, F.C. Mamuyac, Pamela Manick, Gary Marley, Gregory McQuinn, Felicitas Nobello, William Nowlin, Joseph Orlando, Edward Otten, Richard Pagan, Elizabeth Palter, Robert Porter, Annette Primus, Rosevilla Pring, Emma Ramos, Premila Reddy, Evelyn Regan, David Rountree, Janice Rutledge, Corazou Sabiniano, Joe Sanchez, Robert Schenone, Paul Schepis, Alice Scott, Edward Shanahan, Benjamin Shapiro, Nancy Shum, Jim Silverfoote, Richard Siordia, Thomas Smith, Salvatore Spinnato, Lawrence Stevens, Henry Symkowick, Jerry Takeuchi, Sheila Toussaint, Tim Trujillo, Norma Vella, Manuel Veneracion, Angeline West, Linda Wong, Paul Wong, Alice Wu, Steven Yordamlis