Unions smash 226

Gray Davis: nominated for governor

Unions smash 226

In one of the greatest labor battles of the past 40 years, California unions smashed a ballot proposition that would have severely limited labor's participation in the political process. Labor unions pulled out all the stops in opposing Proposition 226, which would have plundered employees' paychecks by stripping unions of the political power needed to protect jobs, wages, and working conditions. Unions mobilized thousands of volunteer campaign workers and poured over $17 million into advertising and publicity.

Local 1245 played an important role in the fight. In addition to contributing $100,000 to the campaign, Local 1245 mobilized hundreds of members to staff phone banks and walk precincts throughout northern and central California. Polls in the last days of the campaign indicated that nearly 70% of union members were against the measure.

Labor volunteers also played an important part in the nomination of Gray Davis for governor. Davis, a long-time supporter of organized labor, easily defeated Rep. Jane Harman and businessman Al Checchi, both of whom relied on vast personal fortunes to operate their campaigns.

Davis will face Republican Dan Lungren in November's general election.

Unions Jubilant

Union members were jubilant as "No" votes piled up and swept Proposition 226 into the dustbin of history. In the end, the "No" campaign garnered 53% of the vote.

"The defeat of 226 will derail efforts elsewhere in the country to silence the voices of working people," said Art Pulaski, leader of the California Labor Federation.

Labor-endorsed candidates scored victories in other state-wide primary races.

Barbara Boxer easily won the Democratic nomination in her quest for re-election as US Senator. Bill Lockyer, a staunch defender of working people during his years in the California Senate, captured the Democratic nomination for Attorney General. Other labor-backed victors included Assembly Speaker Cruz Bustamante, nominated for Lieutenant Governor, Kathleen Connell, nominated for re-election as state Controller, Michela Alioto, nominated for Secretary of State, Phil Angelides, nominated for Treasurer, and Delaine Eastin, nominated for re-election as Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Pacific Gas & Electric Co. has eliminated the daily overtime premium for its non-union Administrative and Technical employees.

In a move that took effect on May 25, PG&E unilaterally wiped out overtime pay for working more than eight hours in a day. The premium will continue to be paid to bargaining unit employees as required by the Clerical and Physical union contracts.

PG&E has portrayed the elimination of overtime pay as a way to give more flexibility to employees who need time off for personal affairs, noting that an employee who is required to stay late on one day to finish an important project can be allowed to leave early on another day.

What this scenario glosses over is the fact that the employee has no say in this supposedly "flexible" schedule. The company could require an employee to consistently work long overtime hours at straight-time pay for three or four days, and then simply order the employee to leave early or not come in on other days, whether it was convenient for the employee or not.

Utility employees' schedules are already full of uncertainties. Ending the overtime premium merely provides an incentive to the company to increase those uncertainties--while depleting the employee's wallet.

PG&E's Attack on Overtime
Page 3
Tribute to L.L. Mitchell
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Unit Meeting Schedule
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CALENDAR

June 12
Service Award Dinner
Riverside, C.

June 22
Ballot Deadline in
Local Union Election

June 26
Town Hall Meeting
on Medicare
San Francisco

July 11
Local 1245
Golf Tournament
Novato, C.

August 1-2
Advisory Council
Reno, Nev.
Rolling the union on...

E3 Power Out: Restructuring the electric industry in New Zealand has had some unfortunate consequences: the power has gone out in downtown Auckland. Mercury Energy, which took over the system when electricity was privatized, apparently failed to perform needed maintenance on power cables and had laid off repair crews, Labor Notes reported. It could be months before full service is restored.

E3 Slavery Punished, Sort Of: Four Mexicans convicted for their involvement in a ring that brought dept Mexicans into the US illegally and used them as slave labor were sentenced to jail terms ranging from one and a half to three years. That’s three years. For slavery.

E3 Russians Walk: Workers conducted massive strikes in Russia on May 19 to demand that they be paid. Strikers included coal miners who are owed $1.45 billion in back wages, teachers who have received only three monthly paychecks in the past eight months, and scientists who are paid as little as $50 a month. Striking miners blocked the trans-Siberian railroad and the North Caucasian railway.

E3 Organizing Big Mac: The McDonald’s employees who walked out in a dispute over management behavior in Macedonia, Ohio (see last month’s Utility Reporter) now plan to become Teamsters. “We felt we had to get everyone together and take action because things aren’t getting any better,” said 20-year-old Jamal Nickens, one of the strikers.

WISCONSIN ENACTS STANDARDS

Wisconsin recently enacted a law to insure the reliability of electric service in the coming era of utility deregulation. The Wisconsin Reliability Act requires the Wisconsin Public Service Commission to establish standards for inspecting, maintaining and repowering generation, transmission and distribution facilities. Similar standards were championed by Local 1245 during the restructuring debate in California, and were incorporated into California’s 1996 Electric Restructuring law.

“...What we hope we have done is borrowed from the successes of our Brothers and Sisters in California, expanded them so that these maintenance and service standards become a model for other states or national legislation,” said Dave Poklinskiowski, business manager of IBEW Local 2904 in Madison.

“...We can take the high road in the deregulation debate by fighting for reliable industry service for customers and, in the process, protect the jobs of our members,” he said.
A member's tribute to L. L. Mitchell

I was very saddened to learn of the death of L. L. Mitchell. He was a man I respected and loved. He gave so much of himself throughout his life so we could have a better life today.

I remember well when I joined PG&E in 1956. After not being allowed to take my coat off at work I decided it was time to join IBEW as a member. Shortly after I decided that I wanted to make sure that PG&E was not taking advantage of me so I asked the union if I could become a shop steward.

So in 1956 I was appointed by Local 1245 to represent the clerical people at 447 Sutter St. in San Francisco. Those years were rough ones. The PG&E supervisors were constantly violating the contract, trying to take advantage of everybody’s rights. After several months of filing grievances against PG&E I was asked if I wanted to be a member of the Joint Grievance Committee. So I accepted the position and that is when I had the privilege of meeting LL Mitchell and Ron Weakley.

Mitch was an expert researcher and probably one of the top negotiators in the country. Local 1245 was so lucky to have Mitch and Ron running the union.

Never in my life have I seen such two dedicated people give much of themselves unselfishly to our members. I remember when it was too cutting Mitchell at the negotiating table talking for hours defending our members, to improve our working conditions.

PG&E was actually afraid of Mitch’s brilliance. He could out-talk anyone at any time and PG&E knew that he was smarter than any negotiator that they had. Not only was Mitch a good friend but I respected him as a great leader of union people. He really cared more about the people than himself. He even neglected his family because of his strong belief in helping his fellow man.

Could they ever replace a man like Mitch? The answer is no. He was like another John Kennedy or Martin Luther King. I would like to see a statue of Mitch somewhere on the property of Local 1245. The labor movement has lost one of the most skilled and talented leaders in a century. Mitch gave so much and asked for so little in return.

I remember the people working for the union made a lot less money than PG&E employees did. Their retirement system was very poor, but their health package was fair. In those days the union really could not afford to take care of it own employees. I always told Mitch, how can you negotiate a good benefit package for us and yet you can’t give our employees at least the same package we get? He said the money collected from dues was just not enough to pay for the plans.

Today we enjoy our benefits and our retirement pay because of people like Mitchell who laid the foundation for all of us.

After being retired for ten years I think about all the hours Mitch and the other union reps spent trying to make our working conditions better. A normal workweek for a union rep was about 70 hours, with no overtime.

The members of Local 1245 owe everything to people like L. L. Mitchell, Ron Weakley, Ory Owen, Jack McNally, Larry Foss, Bruce洛克, Joe Valenti, Norm Amundson, Dan McPeak, Mert Walters, Dorothy Fortier and many others who have given us the best years of their lives so we could raise our families and enjoy our retirement.

My love and respect goes out to all these people who neglected their own personal needs so we as union members could have a better life today.

Mike Escobosa

Contract protects members as PG&E attacks overtime

The June primary election in California helped focus attention on something that employees too often take for granted: the role of the union in protecting their rights.

To understand that role you don’t have to look any farther than California’s new overtime regulations, and PG&E’s response to them.

Last month PG&E revoked daily overtime pay for its Administrative and Technical (A&T) employees. No longer will these employees receive time-and-a-half when they work for more than eight hours in a day. Nor will they be entitled to any double time.

How can this be? The answer is simple. The A&T employees are not covered by a union contract. Prior to 1998, most hourly workers in California enjoyed time-and-a-half pay for work in excess of eight hours in a day. But on January 1st, new regulations instituted by the Industrial Welfare Commission wiped out California’s eight-hour day. The IWC commissioners were faithfully doing the bidding of Gov. Pete Wilson, who has been on a crusade to weaken our political voice.

Mike Escobosa

"Bill was a union man. It was his nature to challenge the powers that be."
What do unions do?

Unions make the economy work for America’s working families

Sometimes people get so used to having the union around they lose sight of how their world is different because there’s a union in it. Consider the following facts about how unions make the economy work for working families:

- Unions lessen the inequalities of income and wealth that separate the rich from the rest of us. Union workers earn more than nonunion workers—with median wages of $615 a week vs. $462 for nonunion workers. For women and minority workers, the difference is even greater: Union women earn $549 a week and nonunion women earn $398; unionized African Americans earn $507, compared with $356 for nonunion workers; and unionized Latino workers earn $484, compared with $319 for their nonunion counterparts, according to the US Department of Labor, 1997 Employment and Earnings.

- Union members have more and better health coverage than nonunion workers. Eight-four percent of full-time union workers were covered in 1993, compared with 74% of nonunion workers.

- Union members are more likely to be covered by pensions and to enjoy defined-benefit plans. Pension plans and the Social Security system are under attack. Unions are leading the fight to save Social Security and to oppose pension plan proposals that seek to shift market risks from employers to workers.

- Unions are at the forefront of battles to improve educational opportunities for all children. By working for public school funding and policy reforms that improve classrooms for all students, unions help counter the income and wealth inequality that reduces access to quality education for the children of middle- and low-income workers, particularly African American and Latino children.

- Unions enable workers to choose where and how to spend their personal time. Through lobbying and collective bargaining, unions fight to bring members more vacations, holidays, scheduling limits and other family-friendly workplace policies—an effective response to the economic challenges that are forcing parents to spend 40% less time with their children than they did a generation ago, and reducing their involvement in civic responsibilities. According to the 1994 PBS documentary “Running Out of Time,” one-third of those who don’t vote cite lack of time as the reason.
Thirteenth Annual IBEW Local 1245 Golf Tournament

Saturday, July 11, 1998
Indian Valley Golf Club
Novato, California
First Tee Time: 11:00 a.m.*

Don't Miss Out--Register Now! Deadline is June 29!

1. Name ____________________________  □ Chicken  □ Steak
   Address ____________________________

2. Name ____________________________  □ Chicken  □ Steak
   Address ____________________________

3. Name ____________________________  □ Chicken  □ Steak
   Address ____________________________

4. Name ____________________________  □ Chicken  □ Steak
   Address ____________________________

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

For Further Information Call:
Frank Saxsenmeier
510-933-6060 Ext. 338 or 707-939-7611

Foursomes are not necessary

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)

Dinner and Awards Immediately Following:

Indian Valley Golf Club
3035 Novato Blvd.
Novato, California 94948
(415) 897-1118
Local 1245 stewards prepared for a season of change in the utility industry during a series of steward training conferences in central and northern California.

Conferences for PG&E stewards—held in Santa Rosa, Oakland, Fresno, Sacramento and Salinas—focused on PG&E’s General Rate Case, the opening of the competitive market for electricity in California, and various legislative issues affecting utility employees.

A conference for public sector stewards also dealt with market and legislative issues.

Oakland, February 21

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A conference for public sector stewards also dealt with market and legislative issues.

Oakland, February 21


Fresno, March 14


Monterey, April 4

Joe Abinanti, JoAnne Barnes, Fidela Barron, Bill Bell, Gregory Brewer, Richard Brown, Warren Brown, Bill Butkovich, Jerry Camacho, Alex Castillo, John Coates, Michael Davis, Victor DePreter, Bob Edie, Joe Fradin, Art Freitas, Ken Garcia, James Grady, Kevin Herd, G. Hernandez, Laura Ice, John Jacobson, Wayne Kinkbride, Mike LaLuz, Dan Lockwood, Richard Marley, Robert Martin, Vincent Martinez, James Mauzy, Mike McGinley, Daniel Melanchy, Jim Merdan, Robin Charles Morrison, Magdalena Munoz, Mark Newman, Frank O’Cassens, Barbara Parysev, Ken Richards, Alex Robinson, Gerald Roza, Barbara Saunders, John Sportsman, Pat Stoffey, Mark Taylor, Mark Thomas, Dannis Thompson, Jeffery Turner, Gary Uratsu, Susan Wells, Joe Johnson, Kris Salberg, Jim Vermilyer
of constant change

Sacramento, March 21


Sacramento (Public Sector), January 24

Time to think about fire

With fire season here or approaching, depending on where you live, here are some helpful facts from the California Division of Forestry.

Outside, clear all vegetation 30 feet from all structures. On steep slopes remove vegetation up to 100 feet. Prune lower branches six feet from the ground on trees taller than 18 feet. Remove all dead limbs.

Woodpiles should be stacked 30 feet from structures. Vegetation should be cleared 10 feet from woodpiles.

Propane (LPG) tanks should be treated the same as woodpiles in terms of clearing distances.

Pine needles and leaves should be removed from ground on trees taller than 18 feet. Remove all dead branches six feet from the tree.

Keep all water supply outlets clear and, if possible, maintain a minimum 2,500 gallon water supply on your property. If it comes from a well, consider installing an emergency generator to operate the water pump during power failures or fires.

Check all smoke detector batteries and test twice a year. Check fire extinguishers for full charge.

A fire or disaster plan should be prepared and reviewed by all family members, including the designation of an emergency meeting place outside your home where all family members meet in case of fire or emergency.

Have a safe summer and fire season!

Protect your hands!

The National Safety Council reported that hand and finger injuries top the list of disabling work injuries.

Choosing the correct glove for the task at hand can keep you from adding to this statistic. There are gloves to lessen the effects of vibrating tools, to protect from heat, cold, chemicals, abrasion and cuts.

The average cost of an attended hand injury is $1,000, without surgery. This is only the monetary cost. No price can be placed on the suffering to worker and his or her family.

Use the right hand protection for the job.

"You complain too much about safety, Flanagan. I've hired someone to replace you."
Town hall meeting on Medicare: be there!

By Ory Owen

The Congress of California Seniors invites you to attend a very important Town Hall Meeting on the Future of Medicare on June 26 (See notice).

Medicare is the nation's health insurance program for the elderly, disabled, and those who suffer from end-stage renal disease. Medicare covers approximately 38.1 million Americans.

Medicare is the most important health care program in the history of our country. Medicare has succeeded in improving the health and life expectancy of millions of senior citizens, disabled persons, and renal patients. It has also reduced poverty among the nation's elderly from 30% to less than 12% since its inception some 30 years ago.

Medicare is a program that works!

America is the wealthiest country in the world and has a moral duty to care for its sick and to prevent illness among its healthy. The Medicare insurance program can do the job. The current workforce will be largely retired by 2025, dependent on Medicare system savings and a shrinking pool of workers for support.

Medicare is a program that all generations can look forward to and depend on. Medicare must and should be for everyone.

Medicare Under Attack

Unfortunately, Medicare is under attack as never before in its history. The proponents of the current Medicare program are trying to divide the American people by driving a wedge between the young and old, the rich and poor. The health insurance companies would like to privatize Medicare and are lobbying Congress to do just that.

The supporters of the current Medicare system feel that it should be expanded to cover and be affordable for everyone. It would make good economic and political sense to extend coverage to the large working-age population of Americans.

In response to some short-term fiscal problems in the Medicare system, a Medicare Commission has been appointed to make recommendations within a year. Seventeen people have been appointed to this Commission.

Unfortunately, few of them represent the interests of current and future Medicare consumers. Further, there have not been any hearings scheduled to receive the views from seniors, whose health care depends on Medicare benefits, and would be the most affected by any reductions in current benefits. Remember: Medicare cannot be saved by destroying it.

In order to give seniors a chance to express their views, the Congress of California Seniors is participating in a Town Hall Meeting on the Future of Medicare, with Rep. Nancy Pelosi and other members of Congress.

Come show your support for a system that has served us so well. And keep the faith!

Congratulations to the newly-retired!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club extends its congratulations to these recently-retired members of the union.

We invited you to participate in a Retirees Club chapter in your area, or to start one in your area if there is none! Call Austin Lee at 510-933-6579 Ext. 208.

Name: George Bowden  
Residence: Clearlake, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 28

Name: Ray Cartwright  
Residence: Stockton, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 35

Name: Nestor Cirino  
Residence: Newark, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 30

Name: Derro Rosalina  
Residence: San Jose, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 15

Name: Patrick Fahey  
Residence: Belton, TX  
Yrs/Srvc: 36

Name: James Mayse  
Residence: Portland, IN  
Yrs/Srvc: 42

Name: Hal Ploeghoft  
Residence: Placerville, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 32

Name: Jack Siemore  
Residence: Diamond Springs, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 30

Name: Bill Turner  
Residence: Salinas, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 41

Name: Lloyd Williams  
Residence: Yuba City, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 38

Name: Mario Arbis  
Residence: Vallejo, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 17

Name: Edgar Blundell  
Residence: Tracy, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 28

Name: James Bryant  
Residence: Pacifica, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 37

Name: Joe Carminati  
Residence: Paso Robles, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 41

Name: Jerry Culwell  
Residence: Stagecoach, NV  
Yrs/Srvc: 35

Name: Rodeny Darby  
Residence: Vallejo, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 37

Name: Manuel Donato  
Residence: Chester, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 36

Name: Wilbur Lohrengel  
Residence: Fremont, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 38

Name: Terry Marino  
Residence: Petaluma, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 35

Name: Robert Morrow  
Residence: Paradise, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 29

Name: Constance Smyth  
Residence: Paradise, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 15

Name: Patrick Timmons  
Residence: Vacaville, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 20

Name: Guy Wheelor  
Residence: Bakersfield, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 31

Name: Frances Wycoff  
Residence: San Francisco, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 39

Name: Thomas Frank  
Residence: Viola, AR  
Yrs/Srvc: 24

Name: Teddie Blake  
Residence: Cassel, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 27

Name: James Cortin  
Residence: Merced, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 31

Name: Gerald Hennis  
Residence: Chico, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 35

Name: Patricia Latta  
Residence: Grover Beach, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 27

Name: Rodney Lindemann  
Residence: Red Bluff, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 38

Name: Arona Lualemana  
Residence: Daly City, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 31

Name: Grady Palmer  
Residence: San Leandro, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 27

Name: Judith Shamitz  
Residence: Cameron Park, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 7

Name: Ronald Simonsen  
Residence: Benson, AZ  
Yrs/Srvc: 9

Name: Benjamin Suttles  
Residence: Oakland, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 25

Name: Thomas Tillery  
Residence: Coarsegold, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 35

Name: Alexander Rouche  
Residence: Monterey, CA  
Yrs/Srvc: 36
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**SUMMER SCHEDULE 1998**

**Be In The Know--**

**Attend Your Unit Meetings!**

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**June 1998**

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**Nevada**

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<td>1234 Main St</td>
<td>P. Johnson</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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**CITY OF CARSON CITY**

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**Mt. Wheeler/Ely**

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**Paradise**

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**Roseville**

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**Wells R.E.C.**

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**Fort Bragg/PTARENA**

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**Napa Valley**

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**Sacramento**

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**Citizens Telecom**

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**Tree Trimmers**

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**Outside Line/Sacramento**

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**Indicates recent change**

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**Be In The Know--**

**Attend Your Unit Meetings!**

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**June 1998**

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**Utility Reporter**

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11
Union honors members for long-time service

Santa Rosa
Jan. 31, 1998

35 Years
Art Fahrner (middle) receives award from Business Rep. Larry Pierce (left) and Business Manager Jack McNally.

30 Years
Bobby Blakeley, Mark Clark, James Conroy, Dennis diebold, Robert Emerick, J.W. Hester, Fred Hubbard, John Jorgensen, Hubert Landingham, Ken Little, Douglas Neathery, Richard Peter, Dennis Porter, Barbara Symons, Mauri Torri, Antonius Zwetsloot

25 Years

20 Years