East Bay crew honored for rescue

By Eric Wolfe

Two screams caught the attention of Local 1245 member Walt Colvin as he prepared to start a trenching job on San Pablo Dam Road in Richmond last fall. He decided he’d better check it out.

What he found was a sight that no one wants to see—and few people are prepared for. A contract worker on the job had cut off his foot with a rock saw.

“I ran over and I could see him bleeding profusely,” said Colvin. “He was scared to death.”

Colvin, an Equipment Operator, quickly alerted the other members of his crew: Underground Construction Foreman Jim McCauley and Underground Construction Journeyman Jim Reeves. Their decisive action during the next few minutes saved a life, and earned them the union’s highest honor—the IBEW Life Saving Award.

McCauley, who is vice president of Local 1245, recalled the first seconds of the crisis:

“The guy had blood squirting out of his leg. Jim (Reeves) and I just looked at each other. And by the look in our eyes, we knew we didn’t want to be in that situation. But you knew unless you did something at that time the guy would be dead.”

So they did what they were trained to do. They took action.

Local 1245 Business Rep. Lula Washington (left) presents IBEW Life Saving Awards to (from left): Walt Colvin, Jim McCauley, and Jim Reeves.

The California Public Utilities Commission on Feb. 17 issued a decision in Pacific Gas & Electric’s General Rate Case that provides an increase of approximately $200 million more than was initially recommended by a CPUC administrative law judge.

The decision, authored by Commissioner Carl Wood, was the most generous funding level of the three options being considered by the commission. It provides an increase for electric operations of $136 million and for gas operations of $93 million.

“This decision will provide PG&E with the funding to return to better service quality, and will provide mechanisms for financial and regulatory accountability to assure the public that PG&E is spending authorized funds appropriately,” Wood said.

Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally praised the decision as being in the best interests of customers who use PG&E service and the union members who provide it.

The CPUC ordered PG&E to implement a Quality Assurance Program that requires the company to compensate customers if it fails to meet certain standards of performance.
Local 1245 members shaped GRC decision

By Jack McNally, Business Manager

“You can’t fight city hall.”
How many times have you heard that one? In these cynical times, it’s easy for people to feel powerless.

But members of this union refused to play the part of the victim in the two-year battle over PG&E’s General Rate Case. Instead, we chose to fight. And on Feb. 17 the California Public Utilities Commission voted to substantially increase revenues for PG&E.

The stakes were very real for our members. PG&E had threatened to lay off up to 3,500 employees if adequate revenues were not approved. Here’s how, you the members of Local 1245, directly shaped the GRC decision.

1. Local 1245 members helped influence the make-up of the current Commission.

It’s no accident that a utility worker is now a CPUC commissioner. Local 1245 campaigned vigorously for the election of Gray Davis as governor. We endorsed Davis early, we gave him money, and we provided volunteers for the labor phone banks that helped turn out the vote.

When it came time for Gov. Davis to make appointments, I personally shared with him my belief that the CPUC needed people who understand energy utilities, including concerns of utility workers. Specifically, I urged him to appoint Carl Wood, which eventually he did.

Gov. Davis also appointed Joel Hyatt, again after consulting with our union. When Hyatt abruptly resigned, Davis appointed Loretta Lynch, an extremely knowledgeable person with experience in utility issues. Again, I was consulted before the appointment. This level of influence would have been unthinkable under the two previous governors.

2. Local 1245 members helped frame the debate.

In the spring of 1998, at public hearings throughout California, our members offered expert testimony about the direct connection between workforce levels and service reliability. Utility opponents hoped the GRC debate would be focused on squeezing money out of PG&E. We kept the issue of service reliability in the public eye.

3. A rally at the CPUC by 300 members of Local 1245 last November put a human face on an abstract issue.

Commissioner Josiah Neeper came outside to observe the rally, and later in the day said he hated to see people lose their jobs. He referred to the jobs issue again on the day the commission announced its decision.

The day of decision was Feb. 17. Three commissioners stood with us: Commissioner Wood, who authored the decision, Commissioner Lynch, and Commissioner Neeper. Wood’s decision explicitly referred to the issue of jobs and service reliability.

That’s the issue our members put on the table, the issue we kept in the public eye, and ultimately it was the issue that carried the day.

The big winners in this case are the public, who will continue to enjoy reliable service; our members, who will continue to provide it; and the democratic process itself.

There will be new battles over jobs in the future. But for now, Local 1245 members should feel deep satisfaction in knowing that you “fought city hall”—and won.
Nevada electric deregulation encounters speed bumps

Electric utility deregulation may or may not be moving ahead in Nevada—depending on which day you pick up the newspaper.

As February drew to a close, Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn announced he would not permit electric deregulation to proceed on March 1. The legislation that established that date also gave the governor the power to move it.

Guinn apparently wants to convene a summit meeting of sorts to iron out rough spots in the state's plan to open the electric service market to providers other than the state's established utilities—Sierra Pacific and Nevada Power, which are in the process of merging.

The summit is expected to include representatives from the utilities, the Bureau of Consumer Protection, the gaming and mining industries, along with staff members of the Public Utilities Commission—Nevada (PUCN). Local 1245 Business Rep. Ray Thomas said the union is seeking to gain a voice in these deliberations.

The proposed summit comes on the heels of a Feb. 4 decision in which the PUCN said it would not allow the utility to recover costs previously incurred to serve electric customers. If allowed to stand, this decision would lead to a pre-tax charge of $20 to $60 million against Sierra Pacific Resources' 1999 earnings. It could also lead to a reduction in future revenues of $30 million annually, according to the company.

In addition, the PUCN said that Sierra Pacific could no longer perform customer service, metering or billing after March 1, 2000 for any company seeking to enter the Nevada market as a Provider of Last Resort. This position is in sharp contrast to the position held by Sierra Pacific and by Local 1245, which is that customer service, metering and billing should be performed by the Electric Distribution Utility, namely Sierra Pacific.

Who Will Be Responsible?

However, faced with the restrictions put forward by the PUCN, Sierra Pacific announced in filings with the PUCN on Feb. 25 that the company will no longer offer Provider of Last Resort (PLR) services after July 1, 2001. The company is under a legislative mandate to provide these services until that date.

If Sierra Pacific were permitted by the PUCN to abandon its Provider of Last Resort status, it is not clear who would be responsible for customer service, metering and billing in Nevada.

All of this political maneuvering came to a climax at the end of February when Gov. Guinn decided to put deregulation on hold and convene a meeting of interested parties. Although Local 1245, as representative of Sierra Pacific employees, has a real stake in these discussions, at Utility Reporter press time it was not clear in what capacity the union would participate in the summit meeting.

However, Local 1245 members at Sierra Pacific have shown they don't intend to be passive observers as the deregulation drama continues to unfold. Sierra Pacific union stewards joined Business Reps. Ray Thomas and Lynn Allen in distributing to employees the contact numbers for their legislators. Union members are encouraging legislators to adopt a cautious approach to deregulation and to avoid jeopardizing reliable service.
Secret files, Web censors & prison label switch

Since 1977, the richest one percent of the American population has doubled its share of the nation's wealth; it now has more wealth than the bottom 95% combined, according to a new report called Divided Decade: Economic Disparity at Century's Turn. The report says that after a quarter-century of diminishing inequality following World War II, the nation has gone back to the extremes of the 1920s.

State Prison Label Scam: Two California state prison inmates have filed a civil rights suit against the state for punishing them after they blew the whistle on a scam in which they were ordered to replace "Made in Honduras" labels with "Made in USA" labels on clothing. The Union of Needletrades, Industrial & Textile Employees (UNITE) reported that the whistleblowers were sent to solitary confinement after the story was reported in the media. UNITE has joined the prisoners in their suit.

More Full-Time Jobs, Now: An arbitrator has ruled that United Parcel Service must create 2,000 new full-time jobs within 90 days, according to the AFL-CIO's Work in Progress. The Teamsters' 1997 master agreement with UPS calls for 10,000 new full-time jobs over five years. The ruling also requires the company to pay back wages with benefits, a total of more than $80 million.

First Contract: The 74,000 home health care workers in Los Angeles who voted to join the SEIU last year have ratified their first contract. It provides a 50-cent pay raise and some health benefits, and establishes a job registry to match workers with appropriate jobs.

Yahoo! Censors Unionists: Yahoo!, the Web portal, cancelled a Web advertising campaign by passenger service workers attempting to form a union at Los Angeles International Airport. The workers were driven by company threats and intimidation into seeking the alternative communications strategy—placing banner advertisements on Yahoo! to publicize the labor dispute. Yahoo! cancelled the ads in early February, just days after an administrative law judge found the employer, Argenbright Security, guilty of committing dozens of violations of federal labor laws against the employees, including threats and intimidation designed to silence them.

Dialing Up the Union: Telemarketers at Telespectrum Worldwide Inc. in Cheektowaga, NY gained a voice on the job when they voted for IBEW Local 2213. This is the union's first win at Telespectrum, which handles sales calls for Bell Atlantic Corp.

Pinochet Release Decried: The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions condemned Britain's decision to free Augusto Pinochet, the former Chilean dictator accused of massive human rights violations during his brutal rule in the 1970s and 1980s. The ICFTU called the move "a distortion of international law with short term political and commercial interests taking precedence over justice".

Overtime under attack ... again

Working people restored daily overtime pay for California workers by electing a new governor and helping pass an overtime law that puts $1 billion back in the pockets of California workers. But anti-worker interests won't give up. On March 31 the state's Industrial Welfare Commission will consider a proposal to gut daily overtime pay and shortchange millions of California workers.

This insidious proposal would be a pay cut for millions of California workers. Under this proposal, workers who receive a Thanksgiving turkey or $25 supermarket gift certificate would be denied overtime pay all year long.

The proposal affects broader categories and larger numbers of workers than Pete Wilson's 1997 takeaway. It threatens IWC wage orders for all industries and overtime negotiated under union contracts, just as Wilson's overtime takeover forced unions around the state to defend overtime pay at the bargaining table.

Join fellow unionists on March 31 to:

Defend Overtime Pay!
Industrial Welfare Commission Hearing
Friday, March 31
10 a.m.
State Capitol
Sacramento

Secret Files at Microsoft: WashTech, the Newspaper Guild/CWA organizing campaign at Microsoft, says that the software giant has been keeping secret files on its thousands of supposedly-temporary employees, Labor Notes reported. The company claims that these "permatemps" are independent contractors rather than employees, but WashTech says the existence of personnel files indicates an employer-employee relationship.

Boeing Named in Complaint: The union representing striking engineers and technical employees at Boeing Co. in early March announced plans to file an unfair labor practice complaint against the company, arguing it prematurely declared negotiations were at an impasse. Boeing notified the Society for Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace on March 1 that it considered talks at an impasse after Boeing's Feb. 26 offer was rejected. Among other things, that offer required SPEEA-covered employees to start paying premiums on their medical insurance.

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THE GAP BETWEEN RICH & POOR WIDENS...
Linda Lawrence
Business Manager Jack McNally
suggested at the outset of the conference that the union does more than merely try to predict the future. The future is something we try to shape. "Politics are a fact of life," said McNally, and he reviewed the ways in which Local 1245 has successfully used the political process to advance the job security of our members. Notable milestones along this road have included passage of AB 1890, which created a funding mechanism to assist employees displaced by utility restructuring, and AB 1421, which protects jobs and service in the natural gas sector. The union continues to press for comparable protections for the electric sector, McNally said.

McNally said the election of Gray Davis as governor, and the subse-

What now for PG&E Clerical?
Stewards mull over the challenges ahead as the utility industry continues to sort itself out

With restructuring knocking at the door, Local 1245 stewards in the PG&E Clerical bargaining unit met in Sacramento on Feb. 26 to discuss union strategies for job security as well as personal strategies for coping with change.

Records consolidation. The long-rumored closing of the San Francisco Call Center. New procedures for Title 19 Demotion and Displacement. The status of industry restructuring.

These and other concerns were aired during the day-long conference attended by over 60 Clerical stewards from throughout the PG&E system.

More than anything, they wanted to know what the future looked like. And for good reason. Utility restructuring is fast erasing the old order of things for Clerical employees, just as it has for power plant employees before them. Restructuring is a political reality with specific consequences, a force to be reckoned with.

Business Manager Jack McNally suggested at the outset of the conference that the union does more than merely try to predict the future. The future is something we try to shape. "Politics are a fact of life," he said.

Business Manager Jack McNally
Mary Wise
Linda Lawrence
Bill Evana

What now for PG&E Clerical?
Stewards mull over the challenges ahead as the utility industry continues to sort itself out

Page 6
quent appointment of CPUC commissioners who sympathize with our concerns, were important achievements that show what we can accomplish through strategic political involvement. (See Point of View, page 2).

Challenges ahead include an ongoing battle over PG&E’s hydro resources, which could be broken into pieces and sold off to out-of-state interests, and efforts to promote “distributive generation” systems which could permit large numbers of customers to leave the utilities’ existing distribution systems.

McNally said the bottom line was clear:

“If we change, if we organize, we can continue our standards. If we don’t, we lose.”

Impact on Clerical

Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, a principal organizer of the conference, reviewed several ways in which utility restructuring could have an impact on Clerical members at PG&E. These include:

- **Call Center consolidation.** Although the company has said it intends to keep the San Jose Call Center open, it has made no such reassurances for the San Francisco Call Center, whose lease is up on Sept. 30. Closure of the San Francisco facility would trigger Title 19 activity. However, the company has indicated it does not wish to reduce the overall Call Center workforce, and has suggested it needs a minimum of 600 bargaining unit employees at its Call Centers. Currently there are 580.

  The company continues to explore the possibility of offering new products and services through its Call Centers. These could include consulting services, call answering services, and selling other products.

- **Records consolidation.** The company is still unable to determine if and when Records will be consolidated, Fortier reported. Currently about 300 employees work at the Credit Center in Stockton. Approximately half of those are working in records. Systemwide there are roughly 600 customer service employees working at local offices.

- **Meter reading.** As provided for in the new labor agreement, the company is preparing to increase the number of regular meter reader positions, while scaling back Hiring Hall meter reader positions to no more than 15% of the total meter reader workforce. These new regular positions will be filled by employees exercising (a) preferential bidding rights, then other employees who submit transfers, and finally by unrestricted appointments by the company, including consideration of Hiring Hall meter reader employees.

  Under the new labor agreement, meter reader and senior meter reader classifications have been moved from the Clerical into the Physical agreement. But Clerical employees maintain their current Title 19 rights into these classifications for the entire term of the new agreement.

  Fortier reported on two other factors that could affect Clerical members in coming years: the company could choose to close additional offices, which would affect the Customer Services line of pro-
progression, and new developments in technology could have an impact on the Accounting, Customer Services, and Operating lines of progression.

**Title 19**

All of these job security issues increase the importance of Title 19 rights. Senior Business Rep. Ken Ball reviewed the Title 19 procedures put in place by the new labor agreement.

Ball said PG&E would soon distribute the new “Employee Election” forms that let all bargaining unit employees prioritize their displacement/demotion preferences. If and when employees are subjected to Title 19, their displacement would be guided by that prioritized list in combination with their seniority.

Ball urged stewards to advise members to “use your rights and customize the form to fit your situation.”

Among the questions members should ask themselves in filling out the forms are:

- Are you the primary income for your household?
- Can you move to maintain your classification?
- Is retirement an option?
- Is severance an option and at what point?

Ball said the company intended to hold meetings in coming weeks in conjunction with distributing the Employee Election forms. He said union members should pay close attention to any Title 19 or 206 announcements, even if they are not directly affected.

“You may want to check your form and update it for your current situation,” he said.

Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell reviewed some of the job security provisions contained in the new labor agreement, including the newly-enhanced severance benefit, pay protection when demoted for lack of work, rehire rights, and the successor clause.

He also outlined some of the factors members must take into account when contemplating severance or retirement. These include retirement pay, medical coverage, company life insurance, COBRA eligibility, 401K plan, and accumulated vacation.

**Choose Carefully**

“There are many ramifications to the choices people are going to be making,” said Mitchell. “Members should choose with as much care and as much information as possible.” He encouraged members to take their questions to PG&E Benefits, which has responsibility for administering benefit plans. (Call company line 8-223-3663.)

Vanita Kunert, a supervisor with the Employee Assistance Program, reviewed the program’s mission and asked stewards to help increase employees’ awareness that resources are available to help those with substance abuse or family problems, or other personal difficulties. EAP counselor Judith Boyd discussed stress management.

Attorney Will Flynn discussed the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Throughout the conference, stewards voiced their concerns about the future. Some asked about the status of the partnership at PG&E. Others expressed frustration with lack of progress at local labor-management meetings. Still others wondered if the company appreciated the efforts members made in support of PG&E’s general rate case.

As with any conference, not all questions could be fully answered. But the many discussions made clear that more information is better than less, and that Local 1245 Clerical members must approach the future with their eyes wide open.
In his two decades of service to the members of Local 1245, Perry Zimmerman handled his share of grievances. But one grievance stands out.

After Zimmerman grieved a termination, the grievant suddenly died. The employer took the position that death rendered the grievance moot. But Zimmerman didn’t see it that way. He knew that if he could get the termination reduced to a suspension, the grievant’s widow would be eligible to receive the grievant’s insurance and accumulated sick leave.

It was vintage Zimmerman: devoted to representing members on the job ... and beyond the grave.

Zimmerman’s career, which began when he hired on at Pacific Gas & Electric in 1961, ended 39 years later on Feb. 11 when he retired as Assistant Business Manager for Local 1245.

Zimmerman, a gas serviceman, was introduced to the union by fellow gas serviceman Tex Smith. It wasn’t a real formal ceremony.

“He said, ‘Here’s a card, sign up,’” Zimmerman recalled.

Formal or not, it was the first step on a long road of unionism.

Zimmerman became a steward in 1977, became vice chair of Unit 3811, Sacramento, in 1978, moved up to unit chair in 1979, and went on the Advisory Council in 1980. In 1981, recently-elected Business Manager Jack McNally tapped Zimmerman as a temporary replacement for Business Representative Al Sandoval, who was ill.

When Sandoval unexpectedly passed away, Zimmerman’s status as a business representative was made permanent.

As a new rep, Zimmerman said, “I finally recognized that I did not know anything. I learned through trial and error.” However, he began in an area where he was well-liked, Sacramento, and he said people were forgiving of his mistakes.

In 1984 Zimmerman spent a brief period representing members at Citizens Utilities (now Citizens Communications) and other properties, but by the end of the year found himself as rep for PG&E members in the North Bay. In 1987 he was assigned to PG&E San Francisco, in 1988 he served as a relief rep, and in 1989 was given responsibility for PG&E members in the East Bay.

You might say Zimmerman got around. Fortunately his wife, Dolores, was on hand to assist him in his migratory ways. In 1990 they returned to Sacramento when Zimmerman was assigned to the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

All that moving around gave plenty of members a chance to get to know Zimmerman. And the members rendered their judgement in a
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All that moving around gave plenty of members a chance to get to know Zimmerman. And the members rendered their judgement in a very visible way in 1991 when they gave Zimmerman more votes than any other candidate in the election for delegates to the centennial convention of the IBEW in 1991.

At Zimmerman’s retirement party on Feb. 12, McNally described Zimmerman as a “people person.”

“A person who knows how to listen. A person who can establish a dialog, a rapport. A person who can be patient, show interest, and have concern for the issue or problem. A person who operates on the basis of principle ... This is how Perry Zimmerman conducted himself through his career at Local 1245,” McNally said.

In 1992, following the retirement of Orv Owen, McNally called upon Zimmerman to be an Assistant Business Manager. Zimmerman’s assignment was overall responsibility for public sector employers, and for non-PG&E private sector employers, except tree trimming companies and construction.

In his last year at the union Zimmerman was given responsibility for handling PG&E grievances at the Review Committee level.

Zimmerman carved out his own unique niche on the union staff, but he named a few staff members who influenced him.

“I looked up to Larry Foss and Joe Valentino. And Tom Dalzell.” Smiling, Zimmerman added, “But don’t let Tom know I said that.”

Smiling even more, he said, “And you might add Jack McNally—just in case I ever want to come back to work.”

“Seriously, I have a lot of respect for Jack. He was the greatest person I ever worked for. I didn’t feel like he was my boss, I just did things because I wanted to do things for him.”

As might be expected for someone whose watchword has been service, Zimmerman doesn’t plan on becoming a recluse in retirement. In addition to his not-very-secret attraction to the game of golf, Zimmerman plans to perform volunteer service. In particular, he’s thinking about trying to find some way to help out homeless teenagers.

At his retirement party, after receiving allocades from employer representatives and union staff members he’s worked with, Zimmerman pulled a card from his pocket.

“I’ve been carrying a card with me that my wife gave me 18 years ago,” he said. “I’ve had this card every day. The card says: The measure of a man is not the number of his servants, but the number of people that he serves.”

“I tried to live by that. I really felt my role was to serve the members. When things got tough, I’d remind myself—that was what I was there for.”
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Zimmerman out service
An injury to one is an injury to all

By Orv Owen

It is my view, with history as my guide and the measurement of truth, the captains of industry and the other anti-worker extremists of the world are continuing their relentless efforts to limit and control the political participation of the working class of the world through the legislative process.

They seek to do through the political process what they could never accomplish across the collective bargaining table in a free society.

Past legislation at both the state and federal level has sought to limit the workers' political power. These efforts include the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which allows states to establish "right to work" laws (or as many workers call them, "right to starve" laws), and the Landrum-Griffin law of 1959.

In the 1998 election, anti-worker extremists were able to qualify Proposition 226 for the ballot. That initiative, if it had passed, would have made it virtually impossible for working Californians to participate in the political process by severely limiting the right of unions and employee organizations to contribute to candidates or ballot initiatives. Fortunately, union members, seniors and other citizens were able to get the vote out to defeat Proposition 226.

Now here again in this month's primary, we Californians have been forced to defend our right to participate in the democratic process—a process that is supposed to be for "we the people." Wealthy extremists backed this new initiative—Proposition 25—to limit the rights of working families to exercise their rights as citizens.

These wealthy individuals claim that the Constitution allows them to contribute as much money as they want to political candidates, but through Proposition 25 they want to deprive them of this same right. (Editor's note: this edition of Utility Reporter went to press before the March 7 Primary Election.)

It’s ironic that after all the years of confrontation between working people and their employers, the capitalists have never been able to grasp that the wealth on which their political power is based actually springs from the productive powers of the working class. The wealthy class seems intent on destroying the working class that produces their wealth.

It doesn’t make any sense to me.

With the establishment of the World Trade Organization, all workers should remember that an injury to one member of the working class is an injury to every member of the working class. Remember the old labor song:

They have taken untold millions
That they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle
Not a single wheel could turn,
We can break their haughty power,
Gain our freedom when we learn,
That the union makes us strong!

Keep the faith!

Orv Owen is a retired Assistant Business Manager of Local 1245.
SMUD stewards: there for you!

When Local 1245 members at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District have a problem with a supervisor where do they turn? Their first stop is generally a Local 1245 SMUD steward.

And when Wayne Greer began his new assignment this year as union business representative for SMUD, his new assignment this year as union stewards, there for you!

SMUD Stewards, by Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve Ahern</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
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<td>Rick Allred</td>
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<td>David Brown</td>
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<td>Frank Weathers</td>
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<td>Ike Williams</td>
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Kaiser plan changes

On May 1, the Kaiser Medical plan copayments are changing for Local 1245 members at PG&E. Copayments for office visits increase to $5 (except for mental health, which remains at no charge) and to $25 per emergency room visit. Employees and retirees currently enrolled in a medical plan will be given a chance to leave or join Kaiser if they live in the Kaiser service territory.

Retirees will be able to change plans from March 20-24 and employees from March 27-31. The company will distribute more information prior to these dates.

Life Saving Award

The men laid the worker down. Colvin grabbed the pressure point on the man's thigh in an effort to stop the bleeding. Reeves got some rags to put around the injured worker's damaged leg. McCauley called 911.

As they waited for the sound of sirens, the men concentrated on stopping the bleeding. "We had to take turns holding the pressure point because you had to hold it so tight," said Reeves.

"It seemed like it took six weeks" for help to arrive, said McCauley. In reality, a fire truck arrived in about five minutes.

"I was so glad to see them arrive," said Reeves. "But they said, 'Just keep doing what you're doing,' so the crew continued to render assistance until medics arrived a few minutes later.

Someone thought to retrieve the man's foot. After several surgeries, the injured man is still not walking. But he expects eventually to make a full recovery. Against doctor's orders, he recently sneaked out of his house and drove with one leg to the Richmond yard so he could find his rescuers and thank them.

"He said he knew if we hadn't been there he would have died," said Reeves.

On Feb. 24, with several dozen of their fellow workers looking on, Local 1245 Business Rep. Lula Washington presented McCauley, Colvin and Reeves with the IBEW Life Saving Award, along with a letter from International President J. J. Barry and Secretary-Treasurer Edwin Hill.

"The officers of your Brotherhood and all our members join us in extending congratulations and best wishes to you on receiving the IBEW Life Saving Award, the highest award the IBEW has to offer," the IBEW leaders wrote. "You have now joined a small and honored group of our members—those who have saved a human life."

They joined that small group partly through circumstance—they happened to be nearby. But they weren't just nearby. They were trained.

Said Reeves: "First aid works."
Helping women succeed in the trades

A conference of Northern California women in the trades last fall has produced a wealth of ideas for getting women into the trades and helping them succeed once they get there.

The conference, held at Laney College in Oakland, produced many recommendations, which the Utility Reporter reprints here to help stimulate discussion on this important topic:

Recruitment—Getting more women into the trades.

Women entering the construction trades encounter more difficulties than men. Chief among these are childcare and transportation, especially for women entering the trades through the welfare to work program. Other difficulties include lack of access to information, such as how to locate open apprenticeships programs. Forced overtime and discrimination on the job are also factors. Training and recruitment should begin at the grade school level by helping girls as well as boys at all grade levels understand that women can do "non-traditional" work.

Thriving on the Job—Working with each other as tradeswomen.

Too often women are pitted against each other on the job site instead of helping each other out. Measures to prevent this could include:

- Tradeswomen support groups, whether for women of color, lesbians, or women in general;
- Developing written material for women apprentices;
- Providing women mentors; and
- Unions helping tradeswomen connect with one another through email or other forms of networking.

Balancing life and work—with help from unions and the state.

Women need:

- Stronger lobbies at the state level for better health and safety standards, and stronger OSHA enforcement.
- Improvements in paid sick leave and vacation.
- More support for handling family problems. Unions can help by bargaining for paid time off for caring for sick kids.

(1 local 1245 made recent progress on this front by incorporating into its new labor agreement with PG&E the new law that requires certain employers to allow their employees to use half their annual sick leave to care for family members who are ill.)

Leadership—Organizing and advancing in our unions and on the job.

Although some women have been in construction for over 20 years, too few have reached the levels of superintendent, union business agent, or even foreperson. Recommendations for helping women reach these levels of leadership include:

- Change the times of union meetings when doing so would increase participation.
- Provide child care at union meetings.
- Fund women's caucuses within local unions and at the state level.
- Fund mentoring programs and reinstate affirmative action.
Tracking injuries on the job

The Local 1245 Safety Committee logged 158 incident reports during 1999. Of these, 101 resulted in lost time away from work, and there was one reported fatality. "Strains and sprains were once again at the top of the list, but there were numerous falls from poles and trees as well as electrical contacts," reported Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Art Murray. He noted that many of these injuries had the potential to be more severe.

The Safety Committee is trying to track trends and look for causes that can be corrected. As a result of the committee's work, work methods on some properties have changed, and Local 1245 members are enjoying a much safer workplace.

The committee wants to do more in identifying trends and causes, Murray said, "but with the limited number of employer groups reporting, it is very hard to track data that is useful and really shows a pattern."

The Safety Committee requests the assistance of all members, whether through your unit, shop steward or Business Representative, in reporting all safety-related incidents. "Talk safety, on the job and off. Safety must be a concern, even at home," Murray said.

Service on Safety Committee

The Local 1245 Safety Committee is currently fully-staffed. However, in June of each year, two members rotate off, and are replaced by interested members of Local 1245.

On back pain

Many of us have a tendency to gain excess body fat around the mid-section. This tends to put more strain on the spine.

In time, we get backaches and pains due to poor posture, curvature of the back bone, and generally being out of balance.

Most back problems are caused by overuse, abuse, and/or poor sitting and standing posture.

The little black spot

It started by looking like a pimple on my forehead right at the line of my hard hat. I ignored it, thinking it would go away. It didn't. In fact, it got bigger and took on a character of its own. It grew into a white lump with a little black spot in the middle, remaining a much safer workplace.

The Safety Committee requests the assistance of all members, whether through your unit, shop steward or Business Representative, in reporting all safety-related incidents. "Talk safety, on the job and off. Safety must be a concern, even at home," Murray said.

We keep a well-rounded makeup of various classifications. If you are interested in being considered for an appointment to this committee at a future date, please contact your Local 1245 business representative.

Our bodies are always ready to get stronger and fitter, no matter what shape we are in. To avoid excess body fat, we need to watch our diet, try to do some type of aerobic exercise three to four times a week, and include exercises that keep our muscles toned.

Be sure to get medical help if any back pains last more than a few days, or if weakness or numbness in the legs accompanies the back pain.

Skin cancer comes in many forms. Because many of us work in the sun it is important to protect ourselves from its effects.

Skin cancer may look gray or black, look like a patch or a mole, may be big or small, and can appear anywhere on the body.

Watch out for changes in size. Remember to protect yourself from the rays of the sun by wearing a wide-brim hat and using sun screen.

And stay in touch with the features of your body. See a doctor at the first sign of something that doesn't belong there.

Machine Shop Services

Emeryville Central Repair Facility

The PG&E Emeryville Central Repair Facility wants all of PG&E to know that we can provide a wide range of quality services to the wider PG&E community. Services include:

- Support service to substation & field repair.
- Rush & emergency repair. (Minimize downtime at no additional cost. Call-out available.)
- Repair to critical equipment.
- Specialize in PG&E's older equipment (large inventory and hard-to-find parts).
- General machine shop service.

We specialize in:

- Load break tools
- Bushings repair & fabrication (nylon)
- Flex connectors
- Gears
- Tap changer repair
- Braided strap (various sizes & configurations)
- Bus bars/adapter plates (aluminum, copper, brass)
- Wash nozzles

Emeryville Machine Shop
4525 Hollis Street
Emeryville, CA 94608-2999
Outside: (510) 450-5793
PG&E: 8-455-5793

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee are: Stoney Burke, Alameda Power & Telecommunications; Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Ralph Muraca, City of Santa Clara; Mark Ross, Davey Tree; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; Rod Wright, Modesto Irrigation District; and Assistant Business Manager Art Murray.
Your Union, Your Voice—
Attend Your Unit Meetings!
### CITY OF REDDING

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CITY OF REDDING</td>
<td>500 Lassen Street</td>
<td>J. Kroplewski</td>
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<tr>
<td>CITY OF REDDING</td>
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###nevada

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<td>SOUTH LAKE TANGENT</td>
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<td>P. Staff</td>
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<td>MT. WHEELER/ELY</td>
<td>R. Miller</td>
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###Sacramento

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###Citizens Communications

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###Meetings!

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<td>The Brass Rail</td>
<td>3920 Renwick</td>
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<td>Valqua Town Hall</td>
<td>570 Mill Street</td>
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<td>3020 Renwick</td>
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<td>Lagua Town Hall</td>
<td>535 Mill Street</td>
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<td>4:45 p.m.</td>
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###Make Your Voice Heard--Attend Your Unit Meetings!

March 2000 15
It’s not just fishing ... it’s a cause

By Eric Wolfe

When you retire, you can go a lot of different directions. You can go fishing. You can volunteer to help others.

Or, like Compy, you can try doing both—at the same time.

Retired Local 1245 member Url “Compy” Compomizzo brought his love of fishing and his concern for kids together in 1986 with “Hooked on Fishing, Not Drugs,” an innovative program designed to steer young people away from dissipating temptation and toward the authentic pleasures of the outdoors.

The program has won praise and spawned imitators state-wide. But Compomizzo isn’t resting on his laurels. He’s now in the midst of a vigorous campaign to clean up the junk-filled waters beneath the Antioch fishing pier.

A recent diving expedition under the pier found cables, a bathtub, even a kitchen sink—the kind of objects that snag fishing lines and forced Compy to move his fishing derbies to the Contra Loma Reservoir.

So far he’s raised more than $108,000 of the estimated $250,000 the clean-up will require, and picked up enthusiastic support from local politicians along the way. Contra Costa County Assemblyman Tom Tortlakson, who has called Compy “the best fisherman on Earth,” lobbied Gov. Davis last year to approve state money for the clean-up effort. Antioch City Manager Mike Ramsey called Compy “one of Antioch’s true warriors.”

Compomizzo’s activism is rooted in his longstanding love of the outdoors. But it also reflects a compassion for people and sense of fair play that goes back to his days as a union gas line mechanic for Standard Pacific Gas Lines.

Jointly owned by PG&E and Standard Oil, Standard Pacific provided Compy a job at $25 a week, plus free company housing, including utilities.

“It was more like a family than a company,” Compy remembers. “I had the best bunch of guys to work with. They all looked out for one another.”

Compy drove a tank trunk, picking up condensate from the “drip pots” situated along low spots in the gas lines. He also performed maintenance work on company houses in Concord, Antioch, Tracy, and Kettleman, and wound up as a gas line repairman.

Although he still speaks with near reverence for his superintendent, William Johnson, not all was well on the job. Particularly annoying to the men was the requirement they remain on “stand-by” during their days off.

“There were a lot of things we couldn’t do because we had to stand by,” Compy recalls. “Some of the guys just got disgusted with that.”

Disgust led to unionization.

Compy recalls that union meetings in those days were well attended and the union reps with keeping the members “very well informed.”

Fishing Conditions

But it wasn’t working conditions that most engaged Compy’s activist nature. It was fishing conditions.

His first real plunge into activism came during the era of Gov. Pat Brown. Compy got word of a state plan to eliminate camping at Russian Gulch State Park near Ft. Bragg. He contacted his congressman, Jerome Waldie, who arranged a meeting with state officials in Sacramento.

“I said my family’s camped there for years and we love it. I made it clear how we felt. Two weeks later I received word the park wouldn’t be closed, and they would enlarge it somewhat. I was pretty proud of that.”

For Compy there was no turning back. He has since made a name for himself writing a weekly camping and fishing column for Bay Area newspapers, leading walking tours through historic sites, organizing father-son boat trips along a 268-mile stretch of river between Red Bluff and Antioch, and earning the coveted John Britton award from PG&E for rescuing a drowning teenager at Donner Memorial State Park.

Not to mention the fishing derbies, and steering kids toward pleasures more enduring that drug use.

Compy says he is motivated by a desire to “give back.”

Growing up he was one of eight children. When his father died young, Compy was taken in by the owner of the local bait and tackle store, Guy Chattell.

“He trapped beaver and otters; he taught me that,” Compy fondly recalls.

Even after he was grown up and married, Compy and his wife, Anna, remained close to Chattell. Compy says Chattell “showed us what life was really like. He treated us like a son and daughter.”

Compy retired from Standard Pacific Gas Lines in 1979, but has remained a union member to this day.

“I always said I was a union man. Because the union looked after us. We knew you were there when we needed you.”

Recently the Antioch City Council recognized Compy’s contribution to the community by renaming the local fishing pier in his honor. A dedication ceremony is slated for July 4.

It’s a pretty good bet that Compy will reach his goal of restoring good fishing conditions in Antioch. After that, what? He can’t retire—he’s already done that. One prediction seems fairly safe. You’re going to find Compy where the fishing’s good and the cause is right.

Tax deductible contributions, earmarked for the River Bottom Clean Up Project, can be sent to: Antioch Rivertown Business Association, PO Box 117, Antioch, CA 94509.