Legislators nix PUC-Nevada’s dereg proposal

In a move welcomed by Local 1245, the Nevada Legislative Commission last month rejected the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada’s approach to electric deregulation in the state.

The Legislative Commission, which takes action on behalf of the Legislature between legislative sessions, said the PUCN did not follow the intent of the original deregulation legislation with respect to allowing utilities to recover “stranded costs.” The Commission also said the PUCN failed to provide the estimated economic effect of its proposed actions.

Key testimony at the Legislative Commission’s April 3 hearing was provided by AFL-CIO Executive Director Danny Thompson, who has worked with Local 1245 to protect the interests of union members in Nevada’s utility industry.

As in California, stranded costs have been one of the most controversial aspects of utility deregulation in Nevada. Utilities in both states have argued that they should be compensated for investments they were required to make to serve customers—investments which may not be recoverable in the new competitive environment.

Local 1245 maintains that the “stranded assets” concept should also apply to employees whose jobs are jeopardized by deregulation, and that funds should be made available to assist such employees.

PG&E announces Clerical consolidation

The long suspense over Clerical consolidation at Pacific Gas & Electric Co. finally came to an end last month when the company announced it would consolidate Records functions and close the San Francisco Call Center.

In a Letter Agreement negotiated with Local 1245, the company agreed to several measures to mitigate the impacts on employees. These include enhancing the moving allowance, expanding the time period for employees to exercise "a" rights to vacant positions, increasing training assistance, and expanding the definition of who can volunteer for severance.

Affected employees will also benefit from wage protection and severance provisions which the union negotiated last year during General Bargaining.

"I think it’s an open question whether industry restructuring is worth the disruption it’s bringing to utility employees and their families, but it’s the reality we’re faced with," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally. "As a union, our job is to make sure that displacements are carried out fairly and that all the protections we’ve negotiated are enforced.”

Wage progression improved at Arbor Tree

Local 1245 made substantial headway on wage progression issues for line clearance tree trimmers during recent talks with Arbor Tree at union headquarters in Walnut Creek.

The parties agreed to a number of adjustments to individual tree trimmers' classifications based on their climbing or foreman experience.

The agreement demonstrated the type of progress that can be made when labor-management cooperation is pursued in good faith by both sides, according to Local 1245 Senior Business Rep. Landis Marttila.

"We came to mutual agreement on issues that benefit our members without having to resort to the grievance procedure," said Marttila.

Following this meeting the union met with members in San Luis Obispo to gather more information on wage issues. Subsequent discussions between Local 1245 and Arbor resulted in further classification adjustments.

"These talks will put money in our members' pockets, and they also show how direct and open discussion between labor and management can produce positive results for union tree trimmers,” said Marttila.

Serving with Marttila on the union committee were Alan Danver, Enrique Hernandez, Eric Hall, and Miguel Valesquez.
Employment for utility workers and reliable electric service for consumers are two sides of the same coin.

Unfortunately, this basic fact of life still seems to escape the attention of many policy makers. Except of course when there's a major outage, at which time they pull their heads out of the sand, express a deep and abiding concern for reliability, and look around for someone to blame. This is not the way to make policy. But it's more or less the way that policy has been made in the electric service industry for the past decade or so.

A recent example is the final report of the Power Outage Study Team, a group of "experts" assembled by the federal Department of Energy to investigate a series of electric outages last year in Chicago, New York and elsewhere.

These “experts” understand that the newly created competitive markets in electricity pose reliability problems. But their search for solutions is dominated by a fascination with technological fixes. Their final report makes no mention of the dramatic workforce reductions over the past decade among the employees who operate and maintain these electric systems.

The problem actually goes back to the late 1980s, when state regulators around the country encouraged the construction of new generation and neglected transmission issues. Utilities responded by scaling back on the construction of generating plants and transmission facilities, and began downsizing their workforces. Quick fixes replaced sensible planning.

Today the chickens are coming home to roost. In many parts of the country there is beginning to be a serious lack of available generation. There is major congestion on transmission grids. There are transmission and distribution systems badly in need of repair and maintenance.

Couple this situation with a shortage of qualified lineworkers and you begin to get a pretty clear idea of why there is an increase in outages and why the country needed a Power Outage Study Team. Unfortunately, these “experts” fail to grasp the essential point that you need qualified people to do the work that needs to be done to provide the reliability they all want.

The IBEW will continue to express these concerns to the Department of Energy, and is working with members of Congress on language for any future electric restructuring bill to insure that worker quality is taken into consideration.

But our country is not going to be able to resolve these important reliability issues until policy makers at every level take off their blinders and see that the human infrastructure is every bit as important as the technological infrastructure.

Through the collective bargaining process, the IBEW has provided America with the most highly-skilled electrical workers in the world. Our members are fully capable of supplying the power America needs. Policy makers can study outages forever, but they will never find a solution if they cannot recognize the essential role played by utility workers, and remain blind to the problem of workforce reductions.
Local 1245 members working for Henkel & McCoy shortened span lengths on a job in Fontana, Ca. in late March. The work was being done to accommodate bigger wire and the area's high winds. New developments are increasing electric demand in the area.

The Local 1245 crew consisted of Jim Kelly, foreman; Phil Aguirre and Al "Hoot" Gibson, linemen; John Radler, 4th-step apprentice; and Brian Waldron, 2nd-step apprentice.

John Radler, Brian Waldron, and Phil Aguirre help Hoot Gibson, maneuver the new pole into position.

A gopher unearthed by the construction is rescued by John Radler (right), who relocates the little guy to a quieter patch of ground.
May Day demos in Chicago, NY

Hundreds of May Day demonstrators took to the streets in U.S. financial centers on May 1, protesting political and economic exploitation and demanding amnesty for illegal immigrants, Reuters reported.

In New York, 600 people massed at Union Square. Police arrested 19. In Chicago, where the May Day holiday was born 114 years ago in pursuit of the eight-hour work day, about 900 people rallied in Daley Plaza after marching through the city center.

Flyers handed out at the New York rally protested “corporate tyranny” and the WTO, International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Many of the demonstrators were chanting “Amnesty now!” in Spanish to demand immigration amnesty for illegal aliens so they can receive benefits such as Social Security, passports and health care.

In Chicago, more than 200 people carrying banners and chanting “People before profit” rallied first outside the Chicago Board of Trade. Protesters said they were paying tribute to the first May Day march, held in Chicago in 1886. That historic march was followed by a police attack on a labor rally. An ensuing demonstration at Haymarket Square was hit by a bomb blast that killed several policemen.

Historians have said the four labor activists executed were prosecuted for their political ideas rather than for any proven connection to the bombing.

Electrical workers murdered in Columbia

On April 8 two members of the Columbian electricity workers’ union, Sintraelecol, were murdered and two others seriously injured as they returned from a job repairing an electrical installation in the municipio de Trinidad. Over the last 15 years, nearly 3,000 trade unionists have been assassinated by Colombian government agents, paramilitary groups and rebel forces. The Colombian government has refused to take steps to protect freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Miners Won’t Come Up: Nearly a thousand co-workers staged a massive sit-in at Mostecka Uhelna, a Czech mining company, on April 12 in support of 50 coal miners who refused to come out of the 365-meter-deep Kohinoor mine. The miners want a quick sale of the troubled Kohinoor mine so they can resume production. A recent deal to sell the mine fell through. The miners’ trade union chief Cyril Zapletal said the miners would stay underground until the mine had a new owner.

Chinese Miners Riot: Up to 20,000 miners rioted in a north-eastern Chinese town in February after their mine was closed, prompting the authorities to send in troops to restore order, BBC News reported. The mine, which produced molybdenum for the electronics and aerospace industries, was the area’s only major employer. At least five million workers are due to lose their jobs nationwide this year as China continues radical reforms of its state enterprises.

Police Thwart Korean Rally: South Korean police on April 11 detained hundreds of striking auto workers after thwarting their planned rally near the president’s office to protest the sale of Daewoo Motor Co. to a foreign buyer. Yonhap news agency said 932 protesters were detained in operations involving 8,000 riot police. Many South Koreans view the auto industry, the world’s fifth largest, as a symbol of national economic pride; unions insist that Daewoo Motor should be nationalized or run by a domestic firm. Ford and GM are the apparent frontrunners in the race to acquire the company.
Fire retardant clothing tested at SMUD

Local 1245 members at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District don’t mind wearing fire retardant clothing—they just want it to fit right.

Dissatisfaction with the current brand of fire retardant clothing at SMUD has led to the creation of a pilot program to locate and test alternative brands.

Cal-OSHA requires that people who work on energized conductors must not wear clothing that could contribute to an injury. But there’s nothing in the rules that requires fire protective clothing to be comfortable.

“We had some problems with the clothes,” said Local 1245 member Scott Hylton, who is participating in the pilot program.

“The stuff was too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. The guys’ belts were slipping because the pants were too slippery.”

SMUD agreed to establish a committee to find out what alternatives were available. Representing the union on the committee, in addition to Hylton, were Grant Ritchie and Jim Waites.

The committee members started sifting through brochures from various manufacturers to come up with some new options.

“There are fire retardant jeans out there that look a lot like regular jeans,” as well as fire retardant polo-style shirts, noted Hylton.

The pilot program currently has about 20 employees wearing three different styles of pants and three different styles of shirts. After two weeks, the employees report back on their experience with the clothing.

The pilot will run for six months or so to give employees a chance to test the clothes in different seasons.

The District’s contract with its current manufacturer runs through July 2001. The pilot program aims to have a recommendation on alternatives around the end of this year.

“The District has worked real well with us on this,” said Hylton. “They recognized we had some problems and they basically let us go out and find what we need.”

SMUD has agreed to pay for the clothing as well as laundry costs. Each employee is provided with eight sets of clothes.

“We came out with a pretty good deal here,” said Hylton.

PG&E General Construction Drilling Department

The PG&E General Construction Drilling Department, founded in 1979, strives to provide customers with the most cost effective alternative in meeting distribution and geological needs. Services include:

**Directional Boring**
- 2 to 18 inch bores continually guided to lengths over 900 feet

**Vertical Drilling**
- Up to 16-inch diameter
- Coring capabilities of 2,000 feet

**Horizontal Boring**
- 4- to 24-inch casing

For scheduling and/or inquiries, contact:
(209) 942-1680
or PG&E 842-1680

Unit updates

Turlock Irrigation District, which does not yet have a unit number assigned to it, will meet the first Thursday of the month at 5:00 pm at the VFT Hall, 1405 E. Linwood St., in Turlock.

Dennis Seyfer
Business Rep.

Unit 1122, Merced Irrigation District, now meets at 5:00 pm. Meetings are still on the first Tuesday of the month at the Branding Iron, 640 W. 16th St. in Merced.

Dennis Seyfer
Business Rep.

Unit 1215, Pismo Beach/San Luis Obispo, now meets at Round Table Pizza, 1065 Olive St. in San Luis Obispo. Meetings now begin at 4:00 pm. Meeting dates remain unchanged.

Dan Lockwood
Business Rep.

Unit 1220, Diablo Canyon, has a new unit chair; Lynn Moon.

Dan Lockwood
Business Rep.

Unit 2314, Hayward/Livermore/Fremont, still meets, at 28251 Patio Dr., Castro Valley, but the name of the establishment has been changed to BBQ & Pizza.

Debbie Mazzanti
Business Rep.

Unit 2516, City of Lodi, meets on the second Thursday of the month. Meetings still start at 4:30 pm. Location remains Round Table, Kettleman Lane, in Lodi.

Dennis Seyfer
Business Rep.

Unit 3716, Napa-Vallejo, now meets at 6:00 pm at Molly’s Seafood & Grill in Napa.

Ed Caruso
Business Rep.

Unit 3911, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, now meets Club 65, 2005 65th St. in Sacramento. Dates and times unchanged.

Wayne Greer
Business Rep.

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Local 1245 stewards meeting in Sacramento discussed the grievance procedure. Other topics included the impact on the workforce of utility deregulation, PG&E divestiture activity, the PG&E General Rate Case, the impending closure of the San Francisco Call Center, and Records consolidation. Leading the discussion were Assistant Business Manager Roger Stalcup and Business Reps. Bernard Smallwood and Phil Carter.
A RECENT N.I.O.S.H. REPORT SAYS THAT 26 PER CENT OF U.S. WORKERS SAY THEY ARE OFTEN BURNED OUT OR STRESSED BY THEIR WORK.

PG&E announces Clerical consolidation

From Page 3

Annette Oftedal, Kim Reed, and Karen Russell.

The company distributed notices of the consolidations and displacements to employees in impacted headquarters during the second week of April. At that time the directly-impacted employees were given their preferential bidding/transfer rights to other positions within the company.

Employees in the Customer Services line of progression in impacted headquarters were given the opportunity to update their Title 19 election forms, and to prioritize severance as their first choice if they so wished. This opportunity to elect severance, a product of the last General Bargaining, is designed to give employees wishing to leave a chance to do so when employees in their classification at their headquarters are targeted for displacement, which in turn can reduce the need for involuntary severance activity. Last month’s Letter Agreement (LA No. R2-00-14-PGE) expanded this mechanism by allowing employees in impacted headquarters to elect severance regardless of their classification.

The Letter Agreement also outlines the sequence for filling Meter Reader positions.

The union proposed provisions for extended rehire rights and an early retirement program, but the company did not agree. However, the company did agree to:

Expand the time period in which employees can exercise “a” rights to vacant positions which the company intends to fill now;

Offer a moving allowance of up to $5,000, more than doubling the $2400 provided for in the existing labor agreement;

Increase training assistance by refunding 100% of the direct cost of completing an approved course up to a cap of $5,000 per year for the year immediately following separation from the company for employees who are laid off as a result of the current displacements.

Concerning meter readers, last month’s Letter Agreement specifies:

“Directly impacted employees who were previously Meter Readers will be given preferential “a” transfer rights to Meter Reader vacancies until the company begins the involuntary displacement process. The company will also fill Meter Reader vacancies with employees who have previously been given preferential transfer rights to Meter Reader positions.”

Under the terms of the labor agreement negotiated during General Bargaining last fall, any employee who is displaced to a lower-paying classification due to lack of work will continue to receive their former wage for a period of three years. The labor agreement also increased the severance payment to two weeks pay for each year of service, plus four weeks pay, plus a lump sum of $5,000.

Heather Allison

Heather Allison has been hired as an Administrative Associate in Local 1245’s Walnut Creek headquarters. Allison, a native of Washington state, previously worked in an administrative capacity for a Bay Area paving company.

Allison was hired as a regular employee in April after serving a brief stint as a temporary worker. Her current assignment is Dispatching.

We welcome Heather to Local 1245.
Unions call on California legislature to organize, and requiring corporate development corps, protecting the right of workers to enact the remaining bills in labor’s “Building Prosperity” legislative program.

Key priorities this term include raising Unemployment Insurance benefits, establishing the Childcare Development Corps, protecting the right to organize, and requiring corporate recipients of tax breaks to account for how the money is spent.

The conference and lobbying follow up last year’s successful passage of several bills important to working families, including the restoration of annual monetary stipends.

Unionists were addressed by numerous public officials, including Gov. Gray Davis, Industrial Relations head Steve Smith, Assembly Labor Committee chair Darrell Steinberg, Senate Industrial Relations chair Hilda Solis, and Commissioner of Labor Art Lujan.

Representing Local 1245 at the conference were Jack McNally, Howard Stiefer, Jim McCauley, Ed Mailory, Mike Davis, Eric Wolfe and Jim Findley.

Assembly Bill 212: Childcare Services & Quality

70% of all moms of pre-school children work outside the home, many of them in low-to-moderate pay jobs. At the same time that welfare reform has increased the demand for childcare services, many experienced teachers have left the childcare field to teach school. California taxpayers currently invest millions of dollars a year on training entry level childcare teachers and providers; however, due to extremely high turnover in the field, much of this investment is lost.

Childcare workers are generally underpaid. The median weekly earnings of full-time, salaried childcare workers are $260, with the bottom 10% of these workers earning less than $130. Low pay leads to a shortage of trained workers and jeopardizes the quality of childcare.

California cannot provide high quality childcare without investing adequate resources. However, the investment of monies needs to be coupled with a long-term goal.

Providing stipends to childcare providers as an incentive to training and retention will help create a stable, skilled childcare workforce. Providing stipends to childcare workers will also bridge the barrier between what parents can afford for childcare and what teachers and providers are paid.

Senate Bill 546: Unemployment Insurance

SB 546 would increase the maximum weekly benefit amount to $300/week, raise the taxable wage base and provide interest for workers whose benefits have been wrongfully withheld by the state. The bill would implement a "movable base period." It would also ensure that striking workers, workers who are locked out following a strike, and/or workers who are awarded WARN damages are entitled to UI benefits.

Background

Just over one in three jobless Californians qualify for unemployment benefits and benefit levels are lower than in most states. Federal law provides guidelines for benefits; each state designs its own financing, coverage and eligibility provisions. Unfortunately, because of its program design, California's UI program fails to meet workers' needs.

The current maximum benefit level is only $230 per week. The maximum weekly UI benefit for California workers has not been increased since 1989. Forty-one states and the District of Columbia pay higher maximum weekly benefits.

The average weekly UI benefit in California, taken as a percentage of the average weekly wage, is now the worst in the nation, replacing only 24% of the average weekly wage.

High earnings requirements and delays in counting earnings toward eligibility hinder workers' ability to receive benefits. California's method of determining the base period excludes many deserving workers.

Current exemptions to eligibility also preclude many classes of persons from receiving benefits. Under current law, if an employer imposes a substantial wage cut an employee can quit his job and still receive UI benefits, but if the same wage cut is imposed as a bargaining tactic and the union calls for a strike following the cut, the worker receives no benefits. Workers who strike and then are locked out are also ineligible for UI benefits.

The UI Appeals Board has recently created a new restraint on eligibility by ruling that workers awarded civil damages for their employer's failure to provide them advance notice of a plant closure, as required by the federal Worker Adjustment Retraining and Notification Act (WARN), may be denied UI benefits, or their benefits may be reduced.

SB 546 would go a long way toward correcting these shortcomings in California's Unemployment Insurance program.

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SB 546 would go a long way toward correcting these shortcomings in California's Unemployment Insurance program.
AB 1220 would require the Franchise Tax Board to disclose certain information on any corporation claiming manufacturing tax credits, enterprise zone credits or wage credits, including the number of full-time equivalent employees and the share of medical insurance contributions for non-supervisory employees paid by the corporation.

**Background**

The State Department of Finance releases a yearly report on California's tax expenditures. Tax expenditures include exclusions, exemptions, deductions, credits, preferential tax rates and other special tax provisions.

Unfortunately, the Finance Department's report does not evaluate the effectiveness of these expenditures, which cost California $27 billion in 1997-98. There is no way to determine whether companies which receive tax breaks provide their workforce with adequate wages and benefits, or whether tax expenditures have any beneficial impact on the state's economy.

According to Time Magazine, it costs every working person the equivalent of two weeks pay every year to fund federal corporate welfare. It is irrational to give away billions of dollars in tax expenditures without effective disclosure and oversight.

Last year, the State of Maine required accountability from corporations receiving over $10,000 in public subsidies and tax breaks annually. The bill provides, among other things, disclosure of corporate welfare costs and the average rates of pay for each job classification.
Assembly Bill 1889: Right to Organize

Assembly Bill 1889 would ensure that taxpayer dollars are not misused to silence the voice of workers. Specifically, the bill would prohibit those recipients of state funds which choose to engage in anti-worker activities from using state funds to do so. The bill, vetoed in 1999, will be re-introduced to protect workers' freedom to choose a union and ensure proper use of taxpayer funds.

Background

California has never prohibited the use of state funds to interfere with workers' freedom to choose a union. Currently, recipients of state funds, including those who receive contract payments, reimbursements, grants and/or direct payments, may use taxpayer funds to engage in anti-worker organizing drives. Workers in many industries face sophisticated, expensive campaigns to deny their freedom to choose a union.

The bill would level the playing field by ensuring that the power and resources of the state will not be used to deprive employees of their voice in the workplace.

The state would benefit by the bill in two principal ways. First, the bill would ensure that state funds are not wasted on expensive anti-worker campaigns and that employers who wish to wage such campaigns use their own money to do so. Second, it would prevent productivity losses in state-funded projects resulting from work interruption and labor conflicts that often accompany contested worker representation elections.

Bill 1220 Tax Credit Disclosure

The Finance Department's report does not evaluate the effectiveness of these expenditures, which cost California $27 billion in 1997-98. There is no way to determine whether companies which receive tax breaks, preferential tax rates and other special tax provisions.

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Local 1245: reports from the field

"You only get as much justice as you have the power to compel." This statement by Plumbers Local 393 member Fred Kirsch dramatically summarized the overall political objective of a recent three-day political workshop put on by the South Bay Labor Council. Labor derives its power to compel through the participation of its members. The goal of the training was to develop the capacity of union members to take on leadership roles in labor political programs and election activity.

The group learned methods for increasing the quantity and quality of union members' participation in political activity, such as phone banking and precinct walking.

IBEW Local 1245 members have always played an important role in politics. When you are called upon to volunteer for phone banking or precinct walking this election cycle, please respond positively and do your part to increase working families' power to compel justice.

The workshop grade will be determined in November 2000.

William Wallace, Advisory Council
San Jose & City of Santa Clara

I would like to thank the following Local 1245 members for their support of the Butte-Glenn Central Labor Council phone bank: Tom Conwell, Bill Evans, Mike Hamm and Janice Sciarrotta. They spent many hours on the phone bank to help get out the vote for local, state and national candidates. The defeat of Prop. 25 in Butte County was 2% higher than the state-wide average. Their efforts and the efforts of the other union members who worked on the phone bank makes me very proud of union members in this area.

Micky Harrington
President, Butte-Glenn Central Labor Council

Assembly Labor Committee chair Darrell Steinberg (3rd from left) is greeted at the Legislative Conference by Local 1245 delegates (from left) Ed Mallory, Jim McCauley, and Jim Findley.

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Unionists swell ranks of World Bank protest

Union members joined green-haired students dressed as sea turtles, seniors wearing “It’s Time to Mother Earth” stickers, Korean drummers in native costume and more than 30,000 others who traveled to Washington, D.C., for a massive Mobilization for Global Justice march and rally April 16.

As thousands marched and took part in street theater downtown, almost 10,000 activists rallied near the White House, where they heard from union leaders and international workers’ rights representatives and danced to Latin American and Reggae music in a program emceed by author and director Michael Moore.

“Our message is that citizens of rich nations as well as poor nations are united in our demand that the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank stop encouraging corporate greed and start addressing human need,” said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, speaking to the crowd as it embarked on a mass march to the World Bank building.

A daylong series of events, held as finance ministers and World Bank and International Monetary Fund representatives met, shut down city streets and disrupted the meetings. Building on the 40,000-strong rally and march last November in Seattle to protest World Trade Organization policies, activists say they came to Washington, D.C., to highlight how impoverished developing nations with crushing debt payments.

Despite occasional clashes between demonstrators and police, the protests remained mostly non-violent and often festive. Giant papier mache figures, representing various failed or destructive World Bank projects around the world, swayed in the early morning drizzle, according to a report for Corporate Watch by Kenny Bruno. Dancing puppets portrayed the World Bank as a loan shark. A Trojan Horse occupied one intersection while a huge pink “capitalist pig” wove through the crowd with a globe in its mouth and the words “World Bank” emblazoned on one side and “IMF” on the other.

“We started something big in Seattle,” said Jeff Engels, an organizer with the Inland Boatmen’s Union/Longshore and Warehouse Union, who has been building student-union coalitions in Seattle since the November mobilization there.

“Young people are good for the unions,” he said. “We’re looking to move it from a coalition to a movement.”

Many of the demonstrators were from Third World countries that have suffered directly from World Bank and IMF policies.

“We have not come to negotiate with the Bank and the Fund. We have come to Washington to shut down these two institutions,” said Walden Bello, a professor of public administration and sociology at the University of the Philippines and a leading critic of the IMF and World Bank.

“I am very pleased, very inspired, quite amazed at all the people who have come out to speak truth to power,” said Njoke Njeho, a Kenyan with the Coalition for Mobilization for Global Justice.

Oscar Olivera, a Bolivian machinist who helped lead a successful mass uprising over attempts to privatize the nation’s water supply—forcing Bechtel and other corporate giants to abandon plans to charge residents excessive fees for water—hid for four days in Bolivia to escape arrest for his mobilization efforts before coming to Washington.

“The people have recaptured their dignity, their capacity to organize themselves—and most important of all, the people are no longer scared,” Olivera said to thunderous applause.

Analysts Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman cited widespread media coverage of the event and organized labor’s participation as two of the most significant aspects of the World Bank/IMF protests.

The media coverage, they said, has made the US public “newly aware of what the IMF and World Bank are” and taught millions of people in the United States how the institutions’ policies hurt people in poor countries. “There was probably more U.S. mainstream media coverage of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment issues in the past two weeks than in the previous 20 years combined,” they noted.

They credited the AFL-CIO with beginning to develop a “penetrating critique” of so-called export-led development. Instead of joining in a race to the bottom to produce goods using sweatshop labor or lax environmental standards, the AFL-CIO is suggesting that countries should instead concentrate on developing productive capacity to meet local needs, Mokhiber and Weissman said.

Corporate Watch and the AFL-CIO contributed to this report.
China pact: another case of world trade gone wrong

15,000 union members bring message to Congress: ‘No Blank Check for China’

Sporting red-and-black UNITE caps, blue UAW jackets, black-and-gold Teamsters banners, green AFSCME T-shirts, red Steelworkers ball caps and the colors of dozens more unions, 15,000 union members filled the West steps of the U.S. Capitol and spilled onto the lawn in an April 12 rally to tell Congress: “No Blank Check for China!”

“Until there is freedom of speech and freedom of association in China, until there is freedom of religion and freedom to join unions in China, there can be no permanent free trade agreement with China,” AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the cheering crowd.

The noon event—during which nearly a dozen semi-trucks driven by IBT members honked and circled the Capitol—was part of a day long rally and lobby action during which union members from across the country visited their lawmakers and stood together in solidarity against efforts by Congress to grant permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) to China.

Congress is expected to vote in late May on a proposal to grant the permanent free trade status to China, which would scrap annual congressional review of that nation’s human rights and trade practices and give China permanent access to U.S. markets. Backers of permanent Normal Trade Relations claim opening China to more trade will force that nation to improve its human and workers’ rights practices. But a recent U.S. State Department report shows China’s rights record continues to deteriorate, despite growing trade with the United States.

Addressing the crowd from the West steps stage, Wei Jingsheng offered a stark reminder of how China treats its workers. For speaking out about how the government abused workers, he spent 18 years in prison, many in solitary confinement, and endured torture and regular beatings.

“When workers in China don’t have the right to express themselves and to organize into free trade unions, and are locked into their factories earning $100 a month, workers all over the world, including U.S. workers, are threatened,” he said through an interpreter.

If Chinese workers were permitted free speech, Wei said, they would speak out against permanent NTR and China’s entry into the World Trade Organization. “They share your will” to fight, he said.

The United States has negotiated several trade agreements with China during the past decade, all of which it has violated.

“They proved we couldn’t trust them then, why should we trust them now?” asked James Conigliaro, who traveled to the rally from Machinists District Lodge 15, which represents workers in New York and New Jersey.

Union members at the rally said their two biggest concerns with scrapping annual review of China’s behavior are human rights abuses and potential job loss here at home.

“You’ve got to stand up for what’s right. Things we take for granted—the right to organize, not go to jail for speaking your mind—Chinese workers don’t have that,” said Dave Lucas, secretary treasurer of IBT Local 671 in Hartford, Conn.

UAW member Debra Williams from Fremont, Calif., was among the thousands of union members visiting members of Congress to urge them to vote against legislation to grant permanent China permanent NTR.

“We know the world is a global marketplace now,” said Williams during a meeting with Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.) and five other union members. “But we want it to be a fair marketplace, too, and we have deep concerns about China’s human rights abuses, the terrible environmental problems their industry creates and American job loss,” she said.
Facing tremendous demands on their time from family and work it is no wonder that family leave ranks high among working women’s legislative priorities.

According to the AFL-CIO’s Working Women survey, an overwhelming 83% of working women say expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act and providing paid leave is important to them—and 51% say it is very important.

Similarly, laws to make quality health care more affordable remain an urgent priority. As the number of working families without health insurance continues to rise, it’s not surprising that an overwhelming majority of working women (84%) say improving health care is an important legislative priority—and 57% say it is very important.

And women of all ages say legislation to improve retirement security is also a top priority. Overall, 81% of working women say it’s important (and 55% say it’s very important) to pass laws to strengthen pensions and Social Security. While the importance of such laws increases with age, even younger women identify them as a priority. Three-quarters of working women under the age of 30 say they are important.

Equal pay is still the No. 1 policy issue for working women. When it comes to their legislative priorities, working women cite stronger equal pay laws more than any other issue: 87% say it is important, and 51% say it is very important.

Working women—whether they have young children at home or not—say we need laws to improve the quality and affordability of child care and after-school care. Improving child care is important to 70% of all working women, 76% of women with children under age 18 and 65 percent of working women without young children at home.

On the job, working women are looking for higher pay, better benefits and most of all, respect. When asked what they personally most want to improve on their jobs, more than three-quarters (78%) of working women say they want respect and recognition on the job, and this sentiment is most strongly felt by women earning less than $25,000 a year (84%).

Other top personal priorities include a safe work environment (77%), higher pay and promotions (77%), retirement security (75%) and health insurance (75%).

This working women’s agenda—equal pay, paid family leave, health care and retirement security—cuts across all race, ethnic and income groups. Time, pay and benefit issues are the top priorities for all working women—regardless of age, salary, ethnic background, education level or any other factor.
Workers Comp benefit hikes wouldn’t harm state economy

A report by the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers’ Compensation unveiled last month finds that an increase in Workers Compensation benefits to injured workers would not harm California’s economy, despite frequent claims to the contrary by the business community.

The report follows passage of a bill by the legislature last year to hike Workers Compensation benefits. That bill, SB 320, was ultimately vetoed by Gov. Davis.

The report found that “current resources would provide adequate compensation to workers who lose their ability to compete in the labor market following on-the-job injury.”

The report concluded that the California economy is “robust” and is projected to remain that way, with state economic growth continuing to exceed that of the nation as a whole due to faster population growth and the state’s “favorable mix” of high-tech industries.

The report notes that industrial injury and illness rates have declined significantly in all industries between 1988 and 1998, even as the California economy was growing. Costs of Workers’ Compensation also declined during the past decade and the ratio of these costs to total payroll dropped significantly during the 1990s, the report found.

The report noted that Workers’ Compensation benefits have not kept up with inflation. For example, the value of the permanent disability benefit after adjustment for inflation has declined to about 80% of its 1984 value. The Commission said that consideration should be given to indexing benefits to inflation.

Help reduce dog bites

One-third of all home insurance liability claims are related to dog attacks, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

The cost is astonishingly high: approximately $1 billion in claims from 4.5 million dog bites.

Workplace safety programs offer tips to employees on how to deal with confrontations. But there are also things we can do as dog owners to reduce the risk to workers and other visitors to our homes.

- Have your dog spayed or neutered. Studies show that unneutered dogs are three times more likely to bite than neutered dogs.
- “Socialize” your dog so that it learns how to act around people and other animals.
- Play non-aggressive games with your dog. “Go fetch” is generally harmless and many dogs find it endlessly fascinating. Avoid aggressive games like “tug of war” – it sends the wrong message to your dog about what kind of behavior you expect.

Think of others before venting

The boss is on your case, the kids are giving you a hard time, you’re late for work and every street light is red and the guy in front of you thinks going half the posted speed limit is just fine.

And like the country song says, the dog ran off after your wife left you because the dog liked her better. OK, it’s been rough! Now you have to deal with other people. Before you vent your rage you might ask yourself, “What kind of day did they have?”

Every interaction can be a confrontation, or it can be a productive experience. When you’re stressed out, take a moment to look at how you come across to others. Ugly moods can create ugly realities.

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we cannot sustain ourselves as a free proper self-governance if our people building is a stately —if somewhat racy? that hold up our temple of democracy. We must understand the must be able to visualize a healthy architecture of a good civic life, and democracy. We must focus our repair work strategically.

In order to pick the best fights, we must be able to visualize a healthy democracy. We must be free to think for ourselves, we must personally have leisure time and a modest financial surplus. Democracy thrives best in nations where there is a healthy condition of wealth spread throughout the people. Wealth is not defined by high consumption; it is a condition of surplus, of plenty. From plenty comes security, confidence, brave outspokenness, and the ability to participate generously in a family and in a community. In my trek I have seen many people who are too abused by long working hours and long commutes and short paychecks and credit-based living to be able to properly take care of their own families, much less take care of their communities. We may fight our campaign reform battles and think that labor unions and social justice activists will hold up their end of the building, but if all reformers do not stand together to fight for improvements in the working lives of Americans—to fight for a grand new expansion of the middle class through a reemergence of small businesses, fair labor practices, lifetime education, better urban planning, and corporate employment policies that enable people to have lives outside their offices—this democracy we love cannot stand.

At another corner, there is a double-pillar called Equality and Fairness. As we fight for a broad new middle class, we must continue the hard and sometimes frustrating work of bringing all Americans along together. Yes, we are individuals and we have the right to individual fairness and equality. But, yes, we are also groups, and we must be prepared to bring groups into equal status for the good of our best dreams for our democracy.

And a final corner. Democracy is a marketplace where ideas and the powers of the people come together. If a democracy is a free market of ideas, the ideas must all be seen and heard and understood by all. When I was a little girl, there were great political speeches in the parks come election season. Just as our towns provided the stages for those debates and speeches, we must now provide modern ways for candidates to have free and equal access to our ears and eyes. Since we can no longer all fit in the park, we must provide a public financing system for candidates who wish to take advantage of it. Otherwise, only those candidates and ideas will be heard who have already sold themselves to power, and they are not honestly offering themselves to us—they are already sold.

Plenty of ways for retirees to stay involved

By Ory Owen

On April 8, Local 1245 Retiree Club members attended the Sixth Annual Senior Concerns Rally and Barbecue at Machinists District Lodge 725. This annual rally and barbecue, sponsored by the Santa Clara County Federation of Retired Union Members (FORUM), is grassroots politics in action, an old fashioned political rally where legislators can speak, enjoy a barbecue lunch and answer questions.

Legislators answered questions from open-floor microphones on preserving Social Security, extending Medicare, restoring the California state infrastructure, raising the minimum wage, affordable housing, and the World Trade Organization. Local 1245 retirees were also slated to attend the Congress of California Seniors 23rd Annual State Convention on April 18-20 in Sacramento. The theme of this convention is “2000—Waves of Change.” It is designed to teach attendees how to adapt to the many changes we are and will be experiencing. The convention offers opportunities to interact with panel experts on a variety of topics, hear and meet policymakers, attend workshops on keeping pace with our changing world, visit exhibits of new technologies and exchange views in an open forum with attendees from across the state.

Local 1245 retirees will also attend the 22nd Constitutional Convention of the National Council of Senior Citizens on June 13-15 in Las Vegas, where the theme is “Protect the Legacy—Fulfill the Dream.” The major focus will be on ways to develop a successful strategy for winning a universal, comprehensive prescription drug benefit under Medicare while preserving the current fee-for-service program intact for future generations.

If you have an opportunity to attend functions like these, I highly recommend that you get involved and be involved.

Keep the faith!

Ory Owen is a retired Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager

‘Granny D’, on epic trek, offers reflections on democracy

Doris "Granny D" Haddock is an 89-year-old Grandmother who walked across the country in 1999-2000 to publicize the need for campaign finance reform. The following remarks are from a speech in Nashville, Tenn.

I know the work seems never-ending, but “democracy” in fact is a better verb than a noun—it is a work in progress; it is what free people do. We are fortunate, then, that the forces of greed and deception are always busy, giving us the gift of a good fight, which is exactly what we are on this earth for.

In order to pick the best fights, we must be able to visualize a healthy democracy. We must be free to think for ourselves, we must personally have leisure time and a modest financial surplus. Democracy thrives best in nations where there is a healthy condition of wealth spread throughout the people. Wealth is not defined by high consumption; it is a condition of surplus, of plenty. From plenty comes security, confidence, brave outspokenness, and the ability to participate generously in a family and in a community.

In my trek I have seen many people who are too abused by long working hours and long commutes and short paychecks and credit-based living to be able to properly take care of their own families, much less take care of their communities.

We may fight our campaign reform battles and think that labor unions and social justice activists will hold up their end of the building, but if all reformers do not stand together to fight for improvements in the working lives of Americans—to fight for a grand new expansion of the middle class through a reemergence of small businesses, fair labor practices, lifetime education, better urban planning, and corporate employment policies that enable people to have lives outside their offices—this democracy we love cannot stand.

At another corner, there is a double-pillar called Equality and Fairness. As we fight for a broad new middle class, we must continue the hard and sometimes frustrating work of bringing all Americans along together. Yes, we are individuals and we have the right to individual fairness and equality. But, yes, we are also groups, and we must be prepared to bring groups into equal status for the good of our best dreams for our democracy.

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Make a Date...

The Local 1245 Retiree Club invites you to join us for companionship, discussion and projects. Current meeting locations are:

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.

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Dean Moresco accepts the 35-year award from Business Rep. Kathy Maas.

35 Years
D. L. Moresco
L. L. Rodriguez
Joe Bacchetta
Robert Donofrio
Sharon Jeong
Jesus Garcia
Victor Cipparrone
Yu Lap Kyou
Thomas Dudley
Percy Greer
Jeffery Smethurst
Courtney Wheaton
Chris Beckman
Jerald Olguin
Norman Maroer
Maria Valle
Thomas Teeters
William Miller
Romy Gotera
Raymond Villa
Dave Sarmento
Frank Cook
Delbert Hulse
James Bernard
Carlos Mercia
Charles Moyer
David Chan
Martin Gilson
Robert Fletcher, II
Dale Baptiste
Jose Paz
Helen Barlas
Jerry Hahn
Enrique Perez

25 Years
Eleanor Alafriz
Jose Viray
Editha Cabanban
Aaron Makiewi
Dennis Goulding
Patricia Soto
Enrique McAllister
Ulrich Boeschow
Robert Bell
Laura Gaylord
Michael Bustillos
Mary Nieve
Richard Mau
Ronald Popp
Bart Post
Robert Stanton
John Vannmeter
Ervin Hill, Jr.
John Petrovitz
Lydia Pulido

Pacifica, Ca.
March 18, 2000

20 Years

40 Years
Guillermia Fonseca

35 Years
David Rehn
Delores Powell
Laurie Daniels
Evil Arosa
Albert Garrello
Peepee MacDonald
Estrella Valentin
William Traver
Helyn Hayes
Michael Poon
Myron Tong
Shirley Henry
Robert Ham
Gloria Scherpe
Linda Pickens
Clato Flores

20 YEARS
John Moura
James Mott
Reginald Phyr
Victor Rodrigo, Jr.
John Gambucci
Paul Aruabarrena
Delena Roan
Angelina Barrientos
Generoso dela Cruz
Teresa dela Cruz
Barry Claybaugh
Helen Lau
Noelerto Agcaoili
David Carlier
Al Ming Pan
Raymond Lue
James Canna
Anita Ng
Dennis Lee
Daniel Millker
Joseph Yee
Monica Huey
Steven Wong
Vivian Price
Daniel Pena
John Vannmeter
Paul Jaber
Catherine Zugar
Livaway Ramil
Bobby Adams
Ana Fong
Michael Carr

Ignacio Tablizo
Terry Radov
Gino Rinaldi
L. Kim Saunders
David Schappert
David Wilbrand
Grace Castillo
Denise Guaraglia
John Baladad
Dominador Marout
Alan Lee
Ron Stuhler
Antonio Garcia
Cella Chen
Danny Durant
Phil Dea Calzada
Teresa Hernandez
Stephen Barnes
Norman Mac Kenzie
Russell Chin
Rafael Fontairilla
Anaceto Silva
Donald Clark
James Little
Richard Beretti
Robert Hagberg
Gary Maschiro
Lee Rice
Robert Carver
Paul Santo
Clifford Smethurst
Joseph Torrigano
William Ekberg
Robert Olague
Melvin Washington
Juliet Aparicio
Marvin Araquistain
Antonio Buendia
Jerry Totes
Rich Arago
Bob Gertle
Edward Fifer
Minerva Madrona
John Mahoney
Javier Avalos
Jose Del Real
Donna Hersom
Mark Stefani
Scott nebky
James Trapani

May 2000 15
Fifteenth Annual
IBEW Local 1245
Golf Tournament

Saturday, Sept. 23
Diablo Creek Golf Course
First Tee Time: 10:00 a.m.

- **Team Awards (Cash)**
- **Closest to the Hole Contest**
- **Long Drive Contest**
- **Beat McNally**

Guests Are Welcome!
4-Man Best Ball Scramble
Limited Tee Spaces
Entry Deadline: Sept. 6

$75 Entry Fee
(Includes Cart, Green Fees and Buffet Breakfast)

Don’t Miss Out--Register Now! Deadline is Sept. 6!

1. Name
   Address
2. Name
   Address
3. Name
   Address
4. Name
   Address

Checks
Payable to
“Local 1245
Golf Tournament”

Mail to:
PO Box 4790
Walnut Creek,
CA 94596

Hors D’oeuvres and Awards
Immediately Following

Diablo Creek Golf Course
4050 Port Chicago Highway
Concord, California
(925) 686-6266

For Further Information Call:
Frank Sassenmeier
925-933-6060 Ext. 338
or 707-939-7611
Hunter Stern
925-933-6060 Ext. 246
or 415-289-9042

Foursomes are not necessary