We asked the candidates for Congress where they stand on working family issues. Now you can see how they responded.

UtilityRepo



CANDIDATE SURVEY

U.S. CONGRESS

PAGES 9-20

Vol. 49 • No. 9

September 2000

Unity Is Strength

Deregulation takes a nosedive

News flash: Pigs can't fly

Electric generators jack up wholesale prices 5,000 percent. Customer rates more than double in San Diego. Attorney General investigates possible collusion by generators. On-going threat of rolling blackouts. CPUC imposes limited price cap in San Diego. Legislators push emergency legislation for rate freeze. President Clinton orders emergency aid for San Diego ratepayers. Federal regulators accelerate probe of possible price fixing.

The rest of California braces for the San Diego treatment...

(So, how do you like electric deregulation so far?)

By Eric Wolfe

Perhaps the most astonishing thing about California's electric deregulation fiasco is that so many people allowed themselves to be convinced that market forces always work wonders. Competitive markets, we were assured, would increase service quality, reduce prices, help the environment, reduce regulatory bureaucracy, and usher in a wondrous era of new products and services for California's electric consumers.

From the beginning all this bright shining talk was seriously at odds with the political and economic realities of electric service in California. Yes, Californians groused about rising electric rates in the 1980s and 1990s. But no one was volunteering to trade away adequate power supplies or reliable power delivery. We still want enough juice to keep our televisions on. And we still want power lines that don't fall down in the first stiff breeze.

But free market zealots exploited the grousing over rates. They proclaimed that regulatory bureaucracy was the villain of the story-and that electric deregulation would be our savior. Californians were promised a pig that could fly.

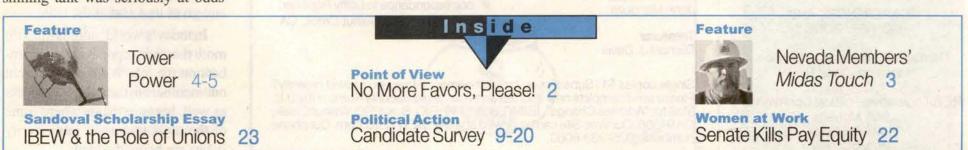
What we got was a pig in a poke. How will California slog its way out of this free market hog wallow? There is no road map. And renewed regulation is going to be part of the post-San Diego landscape.

Already the Independent System Operator has twice lowered the cap on wholesale electric rates, state legislators have proposed rate relief for San Diegans, and President Clinton has ordered emergency federal aid. Some are suggesting that regulated utilities be allowed back into the business of electric generation as a way to prevent independent producers from manipulating the market to create artificial shortages.

Longer-term there is a need to build more power plants, increase transmission capabilities, promote energy efficiency, and plan for an orderly transition to renewable energy sources.

Obviously there is a pressing need

Page 24



EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 9 Service Awards Ukiah, CA

SEPTEMBER 16

Service Awards Stockton, CA

Stewards Conference Oakland, CA

Stewards Conference Modesto, CA

SEPTEMBER 30

Service Awards Auburn, CA

OCTOBER 7

Stewards Conference Ukiah, CA Stewards Conference Bakersfield, CA

OCTOBER 10 LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR NOV. 7 ELECTION!

OCTOBER 14

Stewards Training San Francisco, CA

OCTOBER 21 Stewards Training Walnut Creek, CA

Stewards Training Redding, CA

APPOINTMENTS

MODESTO IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Modesto Irrigation District Negotiating Committee Mike Stout Forrest Mouw Peter R. Gartner Ed Cox Mike Quigley Charles Mount Karri Daves Kirt Call

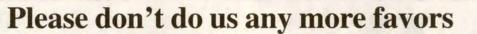
CITY OF SANTA CLARA

City of Santa Clara Ballott Committee Arun Maharaj Bill Wallace

CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

Democratic National Convention Nagaranja (Dada) Rao

IBEW Legislative/Political Conference Jack McNally Howard Stiefer Jim McCauley



POINT

0

By Jack McNally, Business Manager

Reality is finally catching up with the armchair generals of electric deregulation.

A new report has just been issued by staff members of the California Public Utilities Commission. This "Salmon Book" is a sequel to the now-famous "Blue Book," which launched us on the path to electric deregulation in 1994.

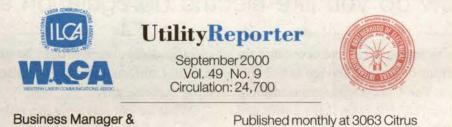
The new salmon-colored document addresses possible ways for California to further deregulate the electric industry. What timing! I can hear the people of San Diego saying: "Don't do us any more favors, please!"

But electric deregulation has gathered a lot of momentum over the past six years. It will take a while for the folks driving that train to realize they've been in a train wreck. The Blue Book effectively paved the way for "unbundling" electric generation-taking it away from the regulated utilities and throwing it open to the competitive market. The Salmon Book looks at ways to unbundle various other utility services, such as metering, billing, and customer service. It also examines the possible development of "distributive generation," where local users could build and maintain their own distribution systems.

VIEW

Such programs, if implemented, would have a devastating impact on many of our members. And they could have an equally negative impact on the quality of service for California's electric users.

I could be wrong, but I'm betting that Californians aren't ready to throw caution to the winds and leap into a



Executive Editor Jack McNally

Communications Director & Managing Editor Eric Wolfe

President Howard Stiefer

Executive Board Jim McCauley E. L. "Ed" Mallory Anna Bayless-Martinez Chris Habecker Kathy F. Tindall John Mendoza

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

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

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

Single copies \$1. Subscription by arrangement. Have you moved recently? Please send complete new address and your Social Security Number (by U.S. Mail) to: "Address Change", IBEW Local 1245, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Our Web Site can be viewed at **www.IBEW1245.com**. Our phone number is (925) 933-6060.



new round of electric deregulation. But is the Salmon Book going to push us there anyway?

Fortunately, no. And here's why.

Attached to the Salmon Book was a two-page letter written by CPUC President Loretta Lynch and Commissioner Carl Wood, the two commissioners appointed by Gov. Gray Davis with strong backing from Local 1245. Lynch and Wood basically said that the situation in San Diego points to serious flaws in the restructured electricity market, and they would not support more deregulation until they understand better the consequences for the state.

That's a rare breath of fresh air coming from the California Public Utilities Commission, which bears so much responsibility for the disaster in San Diego.

Unlike their predecessors, Lynch and Wood have shown they are going to take seriously the issue of service quality in the electric industry, and the issue of jobs for utility employees. They demonstrated this concern in the approach they took to PG&E's recent General Rate Case. And they are demonstrating this concern again by expressing doubts about the Salmon Book proposals.

They're reining in the armchair generals on the CPUC staff.

Wood and Lynch didn't come along by accident. They sit on the CPUC because our union helped elect a Democratic governor—a governor who seeks our union's advice and gives us a seat at the table.

In today's world, unions must do more than just represent their members on the job. We must represent our members in the political process as well, because that is where some of the most important job security issues are being decided.

Sierra Pacific Power crews provide 'Midas' touch

IERRA

PACIFIC

he accomplishments of Midas, the Phrygian king with the golden touch, belong to the world of myth. But Local 1245 members at Sierra Pacific are delivering the power that produces real gold from the Ken Snyder Mine in central Nevada.

Their 'Midas Touch' is no myth. Located 60 miles northeast of Winnemucca, the large underground Ken Snyder gold mine has outgrown the 24.9 distribution system that has served it until now. The mine's expanding electrical requirements-and projected growth in the area's numerous ranches and residences, including the town of Midas-have made it necessary to enhance transmission capacity in the area.

Enter the members of Local 1245, whose expert touch is essential to future gold extraction at the mine. They've been working under a project agreement that allows use of company vehicles to and from the job site, and permits the company to keep some crucial equipment in Winnemucca in case of emergency.

The crews have been working 10hour shifts, 12 days on, two days off, during one of the hottest and driest summers on record. Daily temperatures sometimes reach110 degrees.

The project calls for construction

of 15 miles of new single pole 120kv transmission line with a 24.9 wire distribution underbuild-220 structures in all, with pole sizes ranging from 70 to 90 feet. The project includes the relocation of an existing substation, which in turn has required installation of a portable sub to keep existing loads energized during the relocation.

Local 1245 Business Rep. Ray Thomas said the project is demonstrating that the unionized workforce at Sierra Pacific "not only can com-

At right: Linemen preparing to

Below: Job conductor and

Bottom: Line crews ready to

go.

frame poles.

materials.

pete, but they can outperform the non-union competition in line work."

Steve Urrutia, foreman and union steward, said the job was "running smooth" and praised the performance of the apprentices. Tommy Norlen, lineman and union steward out of Elko, said the linemen and substation journeymen were doing "one hell of a job."

Forget King Midas. It's the Sierra Pacific guys who are producing the gold.

Call it the 'Union Touch.'



Union steward Santiago Salazar, Substation Construction Control & Testing (SCCAT), working on substation relocation/construction.

Midas Project **Construction** Crews

Eastern District

Greg Daft, General Foreman Dave Wearin, Lineman Garrett Smith, Lineman Ryan Parks, Apprentice

Elko District

Jeff Kelly, Foreman Tom Norlen, Lineman Mike Salee, Mechanic Dave Broughton, Material Yard

Winnemucca District

Steve Urrutia, Foreman Dave Sharp, Lineman Dan Maddox, Apprentice Harold Uriguen, Mechanic

Substation Construction **Control & Testing**

Joel Lubke Ken Brown Bill McBeth Matt Wilson Santiago Salazar Chuck Lively Jim Lappin John Jackson **Randy Mickie** Mel Collins **Dennis Tittensor** Sean Bolton



September 2000 3

OUTSIDE CONSTRUCTION

Tower Power

t's an April morning, dark and cold. You can hear the waves lapping. The Bay's salt smell sticks to the air. An occasional car ventures onto the San Mateo Bridge, headlights piercing the dark. Behind the show-up, arcs flash as two linemen ground the de-energized 230kv line.

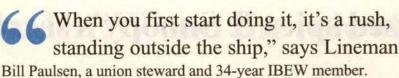
You hear it before you see it-the helicopter crossing over the Bay at first light. It descends through the morning haze toward the staging area, louder now and closer. Leaves, cups and bits of paper start blowing around in the backwash.

Before you know it, two linemen equipped with helicopter hardhats and harnesses are standing side-by-side on the helicopter skid, safetys attached. In a moment they're airborne, whisked away to the top of a transmission tower 300 feet above San Francisco Bay.



Ready for work in the pre-dawn hours of April are union members (fro left) Ed Carter, Ward Bedley, Jimmy Cliff, Steve Miller, John Stansberry, Harold Maddox, Gordon Vogt, and Dave Holbrook.

Story by Eric Wolfe



Bill Paulsen, a union steward and 34-year IBEW member. The pilot runs the copter at about 50 knots, trying to minimize the wind chill. When they approach the tower, the

linemen take off their safety lanyards. "The copter pilot will touch the tower and you step off the

skid right onto the tower," says Paulsen. "It's like leaving a boat, you try to make a nice smooth transition."

Radios connect pilot and passengers, but noise defeats any communications until the linemen are off-loaded and the chopper has moved away.

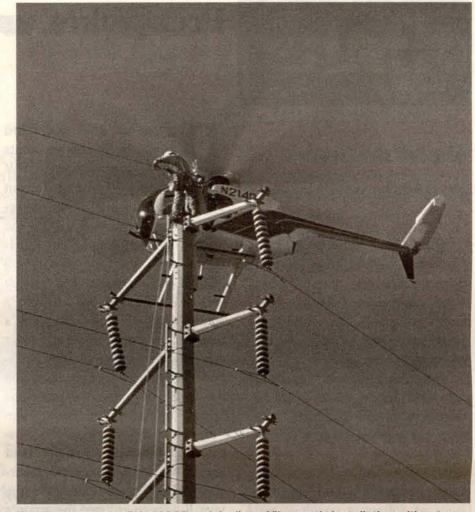
For the rest of the day, the linemen's only company will be jet aircraft sweeping overhead, making for San Francisco International.

And it will be a long day for these crews, dispatched to PAR by Local 1245 to install fiber optic cable for Alcoa. The 144-fiber cable will tie together PG&E substation communications throughout the Bay Area, providing enough capacity to transmit information for other parties as well.

"You go up in the morning and you won't hit the ground 'til night," says Paulsen. "You'd better take your lunch and dinner up with you if you plan to eat."

Spanning the Bay is just a piece of the job. Ultimately the fiber will run from Oregon down to San Luis Obispo. Local

Page 7



The crews accomplished 800 aerial miles of fiber optic installation without any lost-time accidents.

At work on the Walnut Creek spur of the fiber optic project are (from left) Justin Dwelle, Apprentice; Mark Edwards, a Journeyman Lineman from Oklahoma; James Judnick, Apprentice; Rob Smith, a Foreman from Texas; and Scott Huddleson, Journeyman Lineman.

Below: Bell Steele (left), Operator; and Argus Pate, Journeyman Lineman/Sagger.





Outside Construction



Possible break in Walnut strike

Striking Teamsters Union members see new reason for hope in their decade-long struggle with Diamond Walnut, thanks to a recent National Labor Relations Board ruling, the Associated Press reported.

The NLRB said a judge should hold hearings this fall into whether Diamond engaged in unfair labor practices by refusing to rehire striking workers.

If the judge rules in the strikers' favor, they predict it will bring millions of dollars in penalties and back pay. Most of the strikers have since found jobs elsewhere.

At issue is winning fair compensation for their help restoring the financial health of Diamond, a grower-owned cooperative with processing plants in Stockton, Ca. as well as Illinois and Alabama.

Union members took a 30% pay cut in 1985, when times were tough. When the 1991 contract came up, Diamond offered a ten-cent raise coupled with a bonus program.

Teamsters Local 601 called a walkout. Diamond responded by replacing the striking workers. The union launched a boycott.

Nine years later, Local 601 is still on strike.

One of the workers hardest hit by the strike, Cruz Zavala, 68, told Associated Press he has no regrets, even though the strike cost him up to \$300 a month in pension benefits. The walkout, he said, was about a lot more than just him.

"There were other people I believed in, other people I supported," he said. "It would have been wrong, it would have been an injustice, if I would have just worried about ourselves."

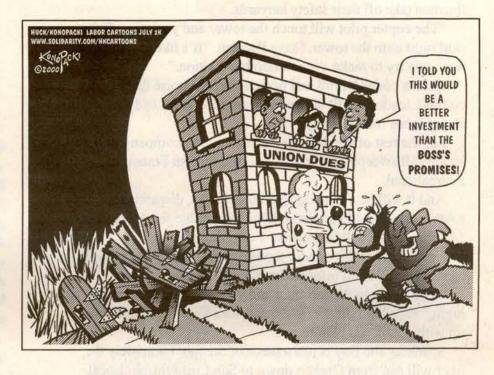
Prez picket, unionized spies & Snoopy's secret

SOLIDARITY

aytheon Co. canceled health-insurance payments for 2,700 members of IBEW Local 1505 who walked out Aug. 27 after voting to reject a four-year contract offer, the Boston Globe reported. The cancellation will affect nearly 10,000 people, said union president Stanley Lichwala, who called the company's action "mean-spirited." The union's members produce missile and radar components at manufacturing facilities throughout Massachusetts. The two sides disagree over pensions and health-care issues, but the main dispute is over long-term job security. Union members are angry about layoffs that have reduced membership by 1,500 people since 1995, the year Raytheon enlisted the union's help in securing a state tax break.

Verizon Strike Victory: After reaching agreement on overtime, job shifting and card-check organizing, 37,000 CWA members in the mid-Atlantic states on Aug. 23 ended their 18-day strike against Bell Atlantic/Verizon. Another 50,000 CWA and IBEW members reached a tentative agreement ending the walkout in New York and New England Aug. 21. The tentative three-year agreements substantially cut forced overtime. The agreements also sharply limit the transfer of work and will allow card-check organizing at Bell Atlantic/Verizons nonunion operations.

Presidential Picket: Martin Sheen, who plays the president of the United States on the popular television series "The West Wing," joined a Screen Actors Guild and Television and Radio Actors picket in Los Angeles Aug. 21. About 150 high-profile SAG/AFTRA members-including Gregory Peck, Kirk Douglas, Bob Hope, Charlton Heston, Kevin Bacon, Lily Tomlin, Blair Underwood, Ricardo



Montalban, Peter Fonda, Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine– have signed a letter urging AT&T to settle with the striking actors. SAG and AFTRA members struck the advertising industry in May over management demands to roll back actors' residuals for commercials.

Chavez Holiday: California Gov. Gray Davis signed into law Aug. 18 a state holiday honoring the late Farm Workers founder César Chávez. The holiday, on Chávez's March 31 birthday, "will be a living tribute" to his work, said his son, Paul Chávez.

▶ Unionized Spies: Spies in Britain may be granted trade union rights as part of sweeping reforms aimed at improving morale in the beleaguered security services, according to Britain's *The Sunday Telegraph*. Supporters claim that disgruntled intelligence officers would be less likely to sell secrets to the media if they had another channel through which to air their grievances.

Snoopy's Secret: Snoopy, Winnie the Pooh and Hello Kitty toys sold with McDonald's meals in Hong Kong are made at a mainland Chinese sweatshop that illegally employs child laborers to package the toys, Hong Kong's Sunday Morning Post reported. The children, as young as 14, work 16-hour days for about \$3-barely the cost of one McDonald's meal in Hong Kong. The newspaper said 16 workers sleep in a single room on wooden beds with no mattresses.

Electric Rate Strike: A general strike was called in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh to protest the deaths of five people during an opposition-led demonstration in the state capital, Hyderabad, on Aug. 28. The demonstration was over rising electricity prices. Shops, business establishments and educational institutions remained closed and public transport was badly hit by the strike.

Another Electric Rate Strike: An Alliance led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party paralysed the capital, Dhaka, and other big cities with a 12-hour strike to protest recent increases in the price of fuel and electricity. Schools and businesses were closed and only a few vehicles ventured out on to the streets, the BBC reported.

OUTSIDE CONSTRUCTION

Tower Power

From Page 5

1245 contractors working the job in the Bay Area are International Line Builders and PAR, laying wire for an outfit named Focus as well as Alcoa.

It's the Information Age come to town, courtesy of Local 1245 linemen lifting off at dawn on the skids of helicopters.

Linemen haven't always hitched rides on helicopters. In the old days, crews would have been ferried to the tower by boat. Then you'd climb the tower step-bystep, leaving plenty of time to think.

About the wind. About the cold. About the heights.

About the maternal cormorants, unhappy about you disturbing their enormous driftwood nests.

Helicopters make it a whole lot easier. As long as they stay aloft, of course.

The safety issue is a major reason that all helicopter work must be negotiated by the contractor and union. Local 1245 members in Outside Construction started utilizing helicopters about three years ago. Some remote areas can't even be accessed by a ground vehicle, making helicopters indispensible.

Use of helicopters on the PAR job went without a hitch. "We had 800 aerial miles of

fiber optic installed," says Paulsen. "It was a tremendous amount of helicopter work and we didn't have any lost-time accidents."

* *

After running the cable across the Bay, the PAR crews head inland. By July they've reached Walnut Creek, where the heights aren't so daunting—only 250 feet at the freeway crossing.

At 5:30 in the morning ten fourman crews fan out and begin placing protective cover on the 12 and 21kv distribution conductors underneath the transmission work areas above. By 6:30, 11 cruisers from the California Highway Patrol prepare to hold traffic. The



Lineman Darren Sheridan

huge freeway exchange where Interstate 680 meets Highway 24 is closed down while a helicopter installs huge metal guard arms on the de-energized transmission conductor above the roadway.

Today's job will run long–12 to14 hours for most of the crews. By now they're used to it. Throughout this job crews have worked 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

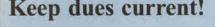
Talk about commitment.

"We had Christmas Day off and we had one day off in February because of a clearance problem, and that was it," says PAR foreman Bob Southern, a 27year IBEW member. "It was a killer."

With the approach of September, the job is nearing an end. Crew members got a few scattered days off in August, and are now looking forward to their first full weekend off in a very long time.

"Our members are taking America into the fiber optic age, and the road isn't always easy," says Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally. "Our Outside Line members have worked day in and day out for nine months with very little time off to bring this project in on time."

There is a lot more fiber optic cable in America's future. And Local 1245 members will be there to help make it happen.



Keeping your dues current is the responsibility of each union member in Outside Construction.

After 90 days in arrears on dues you may be required to pay your initiation dues again. After six to 12 months you may lose all benefits and be required to come in as a new member.

There is a difference between assessments and dues. Dues are everyone's responsibility to pay themselves. Five people had been removed from the job in recent months because they were in arrears on their dues. For details on dues policy, call Brenda Bartizal at (925) 933-6060 ext. 234.

Now hiring

...Journeyman linemen as instructors at IBEW Apprenticeship training facilities in southern and northern California. Call Armando Mendez, training co-ordinator, at (909) 685-8658.

Picnic Oct. 1st

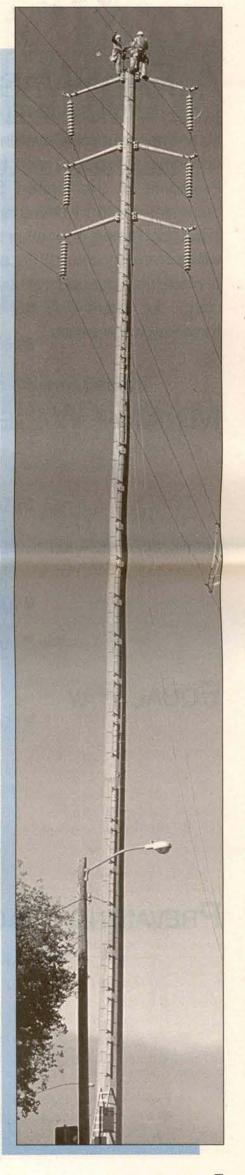
Join the fun at the 1st Annual Outside Con-struction Picnic, 6:30 pm, Glen Helen Park, 2555 Glen Helen Parkway, in Devore, CA. RSVP at (760) 949-3037 or at the Riverside union meeting on Sept. 16.



Jim Rowley has been hired to represent Outside Construction members in southern California.

An IBEW hand for two decades, Rowley served on the Local 1245 bargaining committee during the most recent contract negotiations with the National Electrical Contractors Association.

Nice to have you on board, Jim!



President of the United States

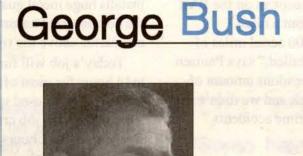
A FAIR WAGE

It's an important issue, even in a booming economy. Decisions made by the next President of the United States will determine whether working families share in the good times, or whether the benefits will flow mainly to the rich. For an indication of where the candidates will lead America, check out where they stand on these three key wage issues.

MINIMUM WAGE

EQUAL PAY

PREVAILING WAGE



George Bush, as Texas governor, opposed increasing and extending the minimum wage three times. At the federal level, George Bush supported an amendment allowing states to refuse coverage by the minimum wage in a bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives March 9, 2000. George Bush says Texas welfare recipients should be required to get jobs, but opposes paying the federal minimum wage. He says they should get only \$188/month in state welfare payments.

George Bush, so far, has been silent on the issue of equal pay, despite the fact that women earn only about 73 cents for every dollar men make. This pay inequality results in a loss of \$200 billion in income annually– an average loss of more than \$4,000 for each working woman's family every year because of unequal pay.

George Bush opposes the Davis-Bacon Act, despite evidence that prevailing wage standards mean a stronger tax base and a healthier economy for local communities, as well as better-trained workers, higherquality work, and increased productivity.

Al Gore



Al Gore, while serving in Congress, advocated increases in the minimum wage every time it came up: in 1977, 1988 and 1989. As Vice President, Al Gore pushed for the 1996 increase. He also called on Congress to pass minimum wage increases in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Al Gore, as part of the 2000 budget, supported \$14 million for efforts to promote pay equity for women. Al Gore supports the Paycheck Fairness Act to help working women close the pay gap.

Al Gore, in Congress and as Vice President, fought anti-worker attempts to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, the federal law that requires contractors to pay prevailing community wages and benefits on federal construction projects. Al Gore has promised to veto any legislation that undercuts community-wage standards. ★ ★

 $\star \star \star \star \star \star$

CANDIDATE SURVEY: U.S. CONGRESS



 $\star \star \star$

*

~

Dear Local 1245 Member,

During the past two years working Americans did not have enough friends in Congress. We witnessed attempts to block an ergonomics standard, to stall a hike in the minimum wage, to gut a Patients Bill of Rights, and to give tax breaks to the wealthy instead of shoring up Social Security and Medicare.

 $\star \star \star \star \star \star \star \star \star \star \star$

These are pocketbook issues affecting us and millions of other Americans. If we do not speak up for what we want, we will surely get what we don't want.

All of us learned in school that voting is a civic responsibility. But it's more than that. Voting is a way to defend what is rightfully ours-including workplace safety, retirement security, access to medical care, and fair trade policies.

The following pages provide an objective record of how your member of Congress voted on some of these key issues. They also show where the challengers say they stand on these same issues, based on a questionnaire sent to the candidates by Local 1245.

See where the candidates stand. Then take a stand yourself. Register to vote by October 10th and vote on November 7th.

In Unity,

Jack Melsen

Jack McNally Business Manager

CONTENTS The Issues 10-11 **Map of Districts** 12 The Candidates 13 - 20Volunteer to Help 21

Next month: the Utility Reporter profiles candidates for California Senate and Assembly.

ISSUES What's At Stake for Working Families?

Taking a stand for Social Security & Medicare

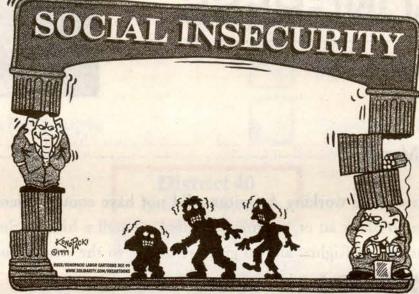
he sudden appearance last year of large budget surpluses gave members of Congress a chance to sort out their priorities and show what kind of vision they have for America's future.

The top priority of the Clinton Administration was to use the surplus to strengthen Social Security and Medicare. But when the leaders of Congress put forward their budget, it called for an \$800 billion tax cut—without a single penny of additional funding for Social Security or Medicare.

Social Security and Medicare are the pillars of economic security for senior citizens. Without additional funding, Medicare faces a serious financial crisis in coming years. Likewise, Social Security could fail to provide full benefits to the baby boomers who retire over the next three decades unless steps are taken

Key Vote: H.C.R 68

to assure adequate funding. The projected budget surpluses provide an undreamed of opportunity to make sure that ordinary working Americans are not deprived of the benefits they've worked for and



.....

are entitled to. Instead of simply bemoaning the crisis in Social Security and Medicare, Congress had a real chance last year to begin doing something about it.

But instead, Congressional leaders proposed huge tax cuts geared toward the wealthy, toward people who have already benefitted the most from the booming economy and who don't have to worry about their income or their medical costs when they reach retirement age.

If ever there was an issue that demanded fiscal responsibility on the part of our elected leaders, this was surely it. The key vote came on March 25, 1999, when members of Congress voted on H.C.R. 68, the budget resolution.

Where do the candidates in your Congressional district stand on this important issue? Find out on Pages 13-20.

Raising the minimum wage

Raising the minimum wage shouldn't be a controversial matter. Today a single mother with two children who works fulltime for the minimum wage falls \$3,000 below the poverty line. Americans apparently feel that is unfair, because more than 80% favor hiking the minimum wage, according to recent polls.

But when the minimum wage came before Congress this year, the Congressional leadership tried to thwart positive action. They tried to eliminate some federal overtime protections contained in the Fair Labor Standards Act. They tried to link the minimum wage hike to a \$122 billion tax cut targeted to the wealthiest 10% of taxpayers. And they tried to spread the minimum wage hike out over a three-year period.

AFL-CIO President John

Sweeney called the leadership's proposal "a fraudulent ploy." He noted that "while the tax breaks are permanent, the value of the proposed increase in the minimum wage will be eaten away by inflation by 2006."

The Traficant Amendment revised the bill to speed up the increase in the minimum wage so that it would take effect over a two-year period, rather than three years.

This battle over the minimum wage was not simply a battle over helping the nation's poorest workers. It was a battle over principle. On one side are those who say it is only simple justice to try to lift those at the bottom of the economic ladder. On the other side are those who use every chance they get to steer billions more to the nation's richest citizens.

Check out where the candidates stand.

Protection against job injuries

ore than 600,000 Americans suffer repetitive motion injuries on the job each year.

Besides the pain and suffering inflicted on the injured workers, these injuries also cost the nation's economy tens of billions of dollars in medical bills, workers compensation, and lost productivity.

The National Academy of Sciences found "compelling evidence" that ergonomic standards will reduce these injuries. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health made similar findings.

And so it seems like a no-brainer: America needs ergonomics standards to protect American workers.

And yet Congress has failed to act. Since 1994 Congress has thwarted all efforts by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to implement ergonomic standards to protect worker health.

The most recent example of this callous disregard for worker health and safety came last year, when US Rep. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) introduced a bill that would require yet another study before OSHA could act.

Never mind that scientists overwhelmingly agree that enough evidence exists to justify a standard. Never mind the suffering that will afflict millions of additional workers while more studies are performed.

These stall and delay tactics cast a bright light on the issue of worker health and safety. And the issue came to a head on October 3, 1999, when Congress voted on Blunt's bill, H.R. 987.

Where do the candidates in your district stand on worker safety? Find out on pages 13-20.

Key Vote: H.R. 3846/Trafficant Amendment

Key Vote: H.R. 987

ISSUES What's At Stake for Working Families?

Creating a 'Patients Bill of Rights'

n recent years, insurance companies have played a larger and larger role in deciding what treatments patients should get, a role that traditionally belonged to the doctor.

In many cases this has meant that patients do not receive the treatments they need.

The Patients' Bill of Rights, H.R. 2723, was an attempt by Congress to address this critical issue. H.R. 2723 sought to protect a person's right to have treatment decisions made by doctors, not by insurance company bureaucrats. It sought to protect a person's right to see specialists when needed and to get emergency room care when and where needed.

H.R. 2723 also sought to protect

Key Vote: H.R. 2723

a person's right to appeal health care decisions, and to hold managed care companies accountable when they wrongly deny care to patients.

H.R. 2723 also sought to require health plans to provide customers with options such as ob-gyn care for women, and pediatricians as primary care providers for children.

These issues are important to America's working families. They rightfully want to have their doctors make the decisions about their health care, not some paperpusher miles away. Americans want to be able to get to an emergency room when, in their own judgment, they believe they have a serious health problem.

They want to be able to discuss their health problems carefully with their doctor, to know all of the implications and available therapies.

There are serious problems with health care delivery in America today. H.R. 2723 was a balanced and sensible approach to addressing some of these problems. And yet, incredibly, many in Congress voted against H.R. 2723, apparently preferring to protect the insurance industry rather than the American public.

Did your candidate for Congress support or oppose H.R. 2723? Find out in the following pages.



Did Your Representative Vote

FOR

Working People or

AGAINST

Working People on These Key Issues?

Use the Map on Page 12 to Identify <u>Your</u> Congress Member. Find His/Her Voting Record on Pages 13-20 Then Check Out Where the Challenger Stands on these Same Issues.

(Note: Incumbents' positions are based on their voting records. Challengers' positions are based on their response to a questionnaire sent to them by Local 1245)

REGISTER TO VOTE! DO IT BY MAIL! Call: 1-800-345-8683

Registration Deadline: October 10

Supporting human rights over profits

his hotly contested initiative in the US House of Representatives sought to grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations status to China, and to end the policy of reviewing China's human rights practices.

Businesses generally see China as a vast new market and source of profits, and want to remove trade barriers. The American people support trade, but generally believe that trade agreements must protect workers' rights, human rights, and environmental standards.

China, unfortunately, has an abysmal record on these important issues. The Chinese government repeatedly and flagrantly violates international norms on fundamental human rights, including freedom of association, freedom of speech and religious freedom. Independent trade union activity is brutally repressed, and many labor activists even now are serving lengthy terms in hard-labor camps simply for speaking out.

Granting normal trade relations to China merely encourages more of this reprehensible behavior. Up to now, the US Congress has had the

Key Vote: H.R. 4444

ability each year to review China's trade status, and to influence the behavior of the Chinese government by threatening to withhold normal trade relations status. By granting China *permanent* normal trade status, the US government surrenders its influence. Chinese workers will pay the price in prison labor camps.

But American workers will also pay a price. The US International Trade Commission projected that granting normal trade status to China will result in the loss of 872,000 American jobs over the next decade.

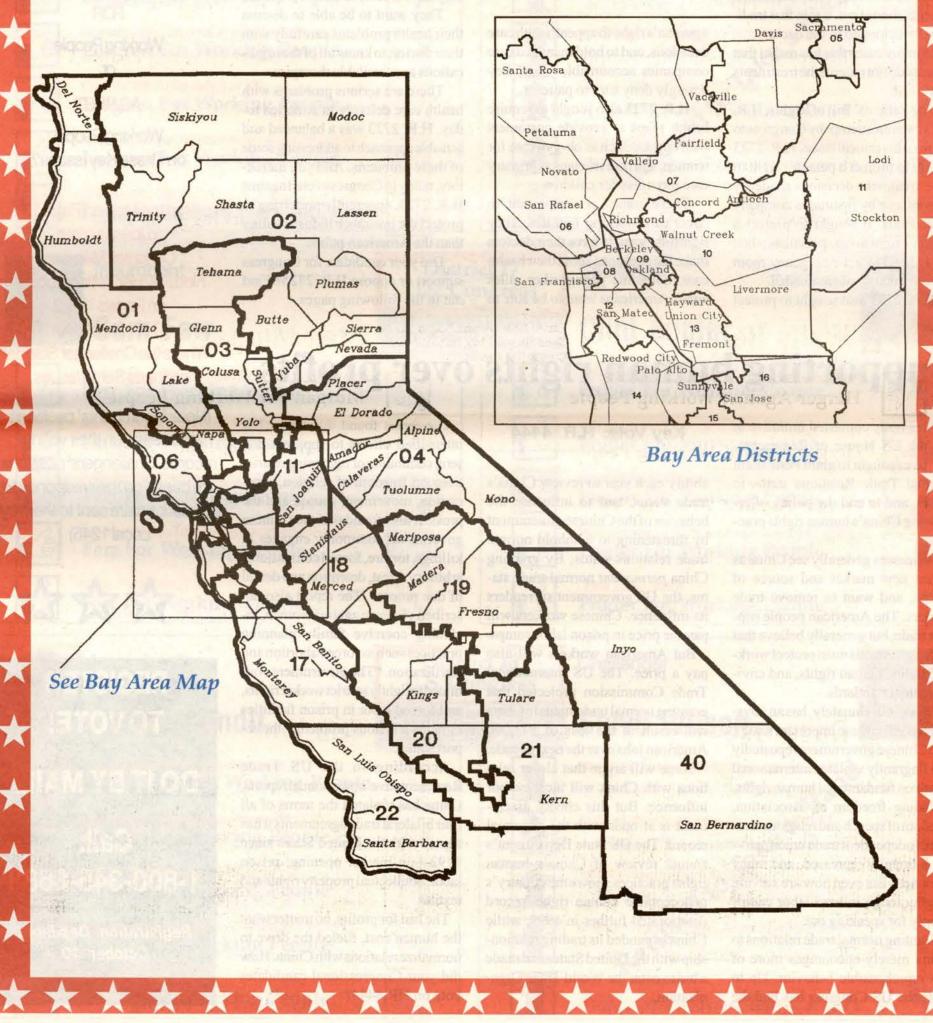
Some will argue that closer relations with China will increase our influence. But this cheery assessment is at odds with the historical record. The US State Department's annual review of China's human rights practices shows the country's unacceptable human rights record deteriorated further in 1999, while China expanded its trading relationship with the United States and made a bid to enter the World Trade Organization.

The report found that China has intensified efforts to suppress dissent, continuing or tightening restrictions on freedom of religion, association, movement, speech and the press. It also found that the Chinese government commonly engages in killings, torture, forced confessions, arbitrary arrest, detention and denial of due process. The report also described violence against women, including coercive family planning practices such as forced abortion and sterilization. "The government continued to tightly restrict worker rights, and forced labor in prison facilities remains a serious problem," the report stated.

According to the US Trade Representative's own annual reports, China has violated the terms of all four bilateral trade agreements it has signed with the United States since 1992—on market opening, prison labor, intellectual property rights and textiles.

The lust for profits, no matter what the human cost, fueled the drive to normalize relations with China. How did your Congressional candidates vote on HR 4444?

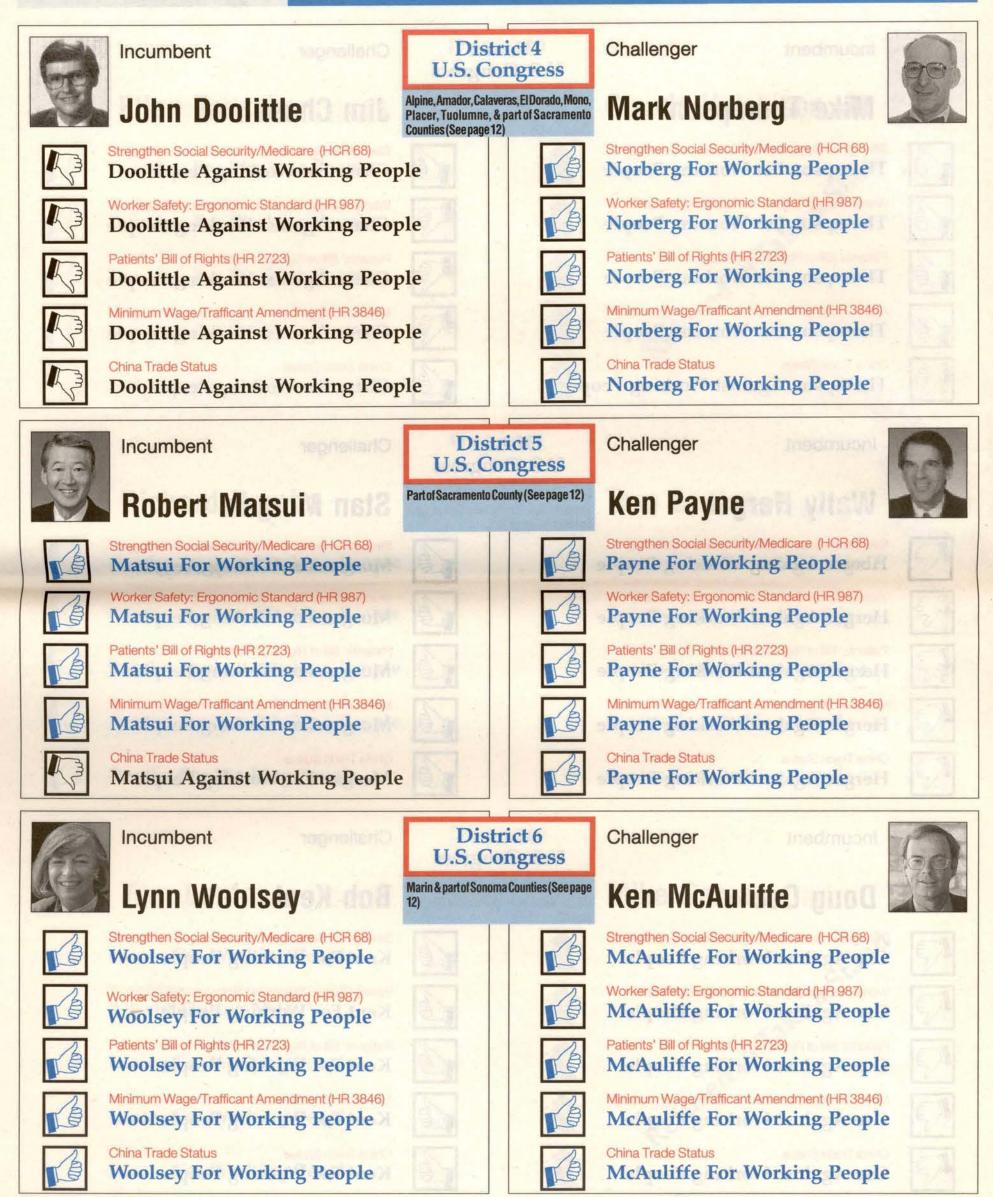
Locate Your Congressional District, Then Find Out Where the Candidates Stand



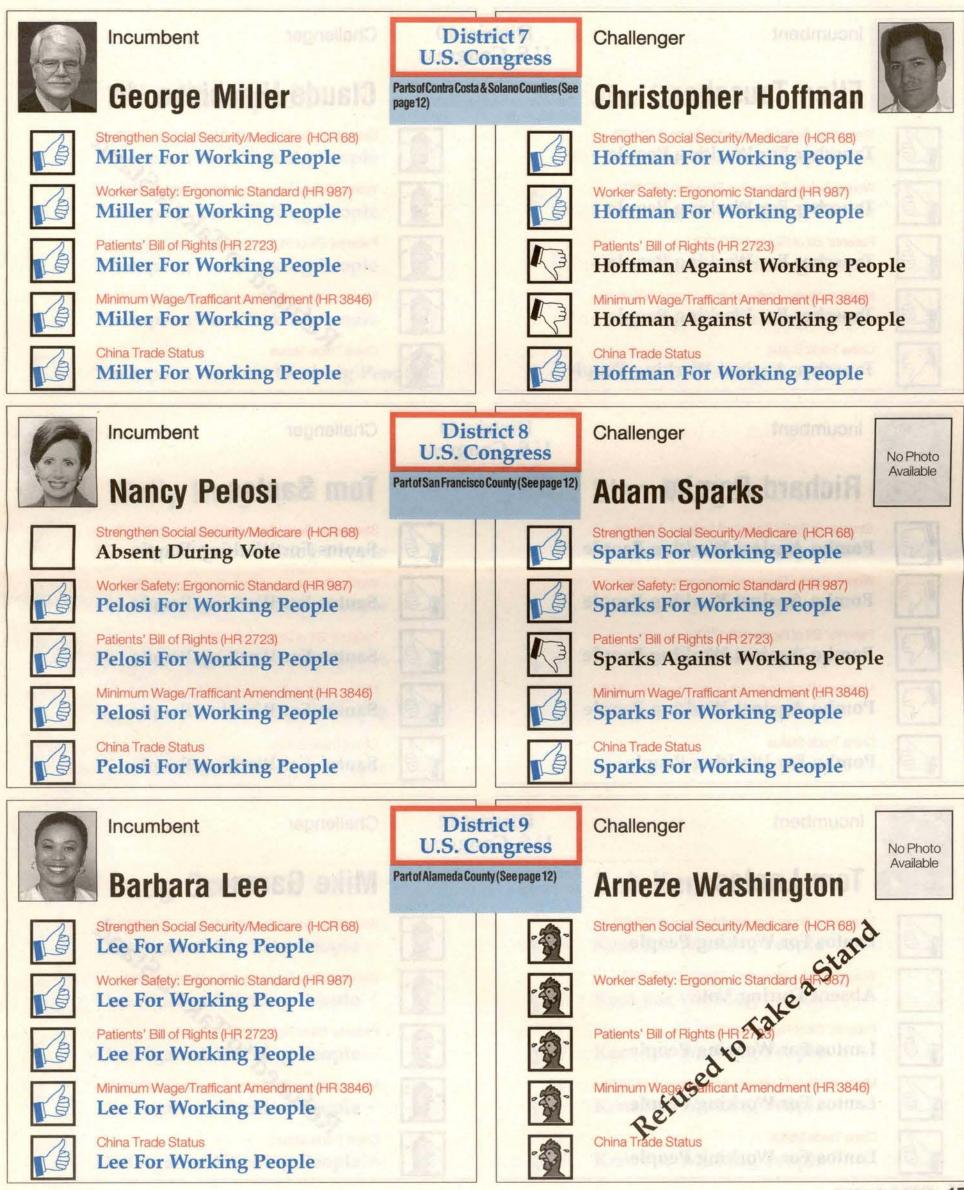
12 UtilityReporter



September 2000 13

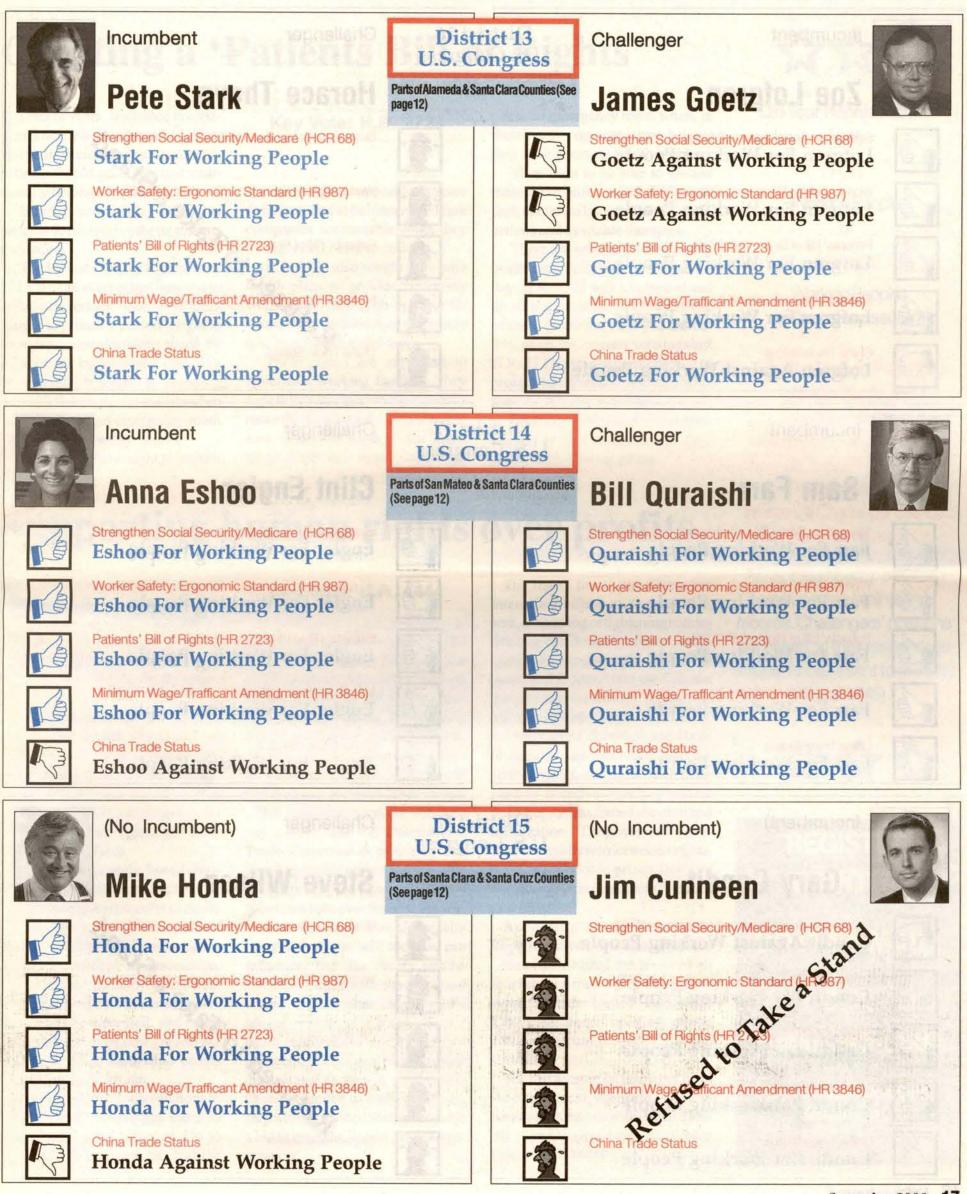


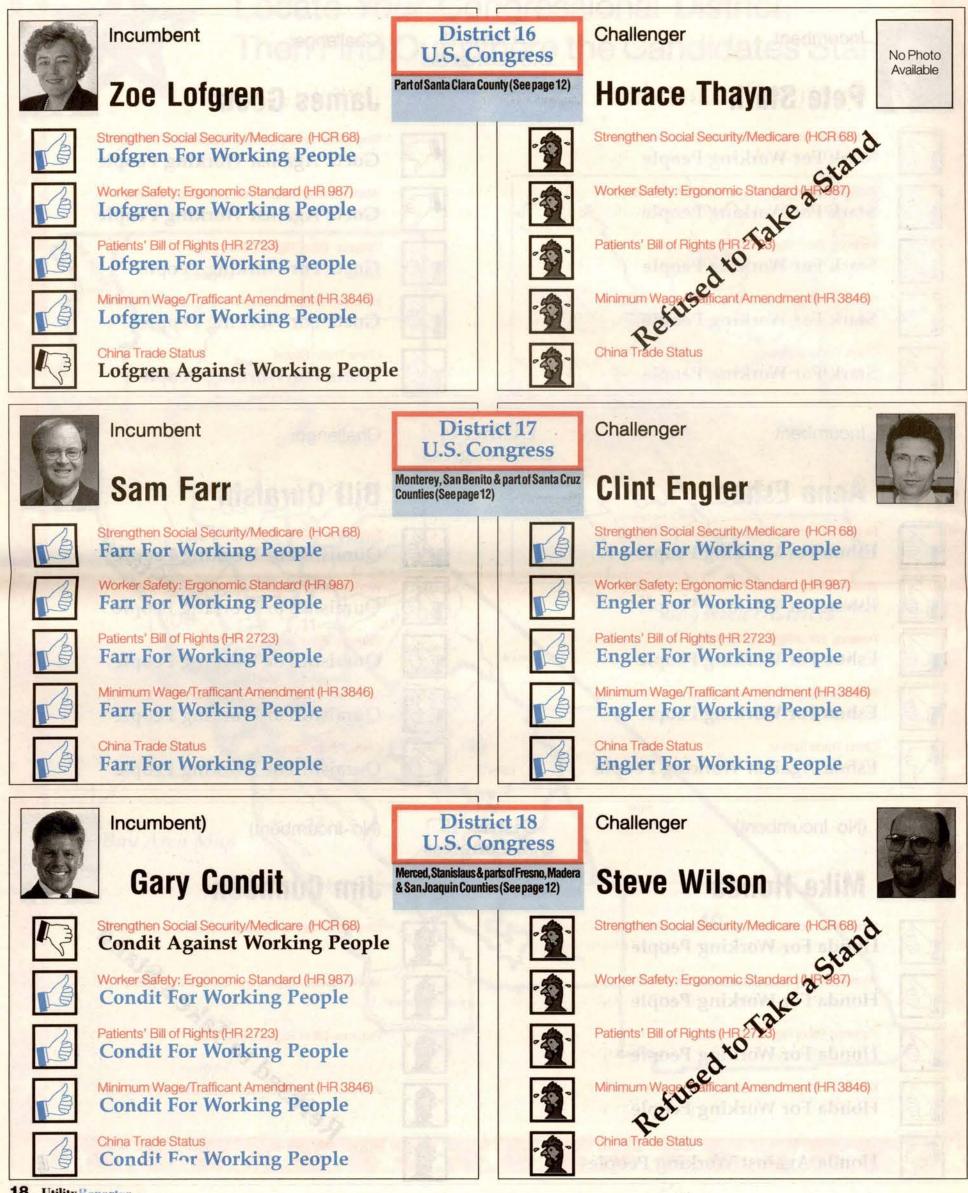
14 UtilityReporter



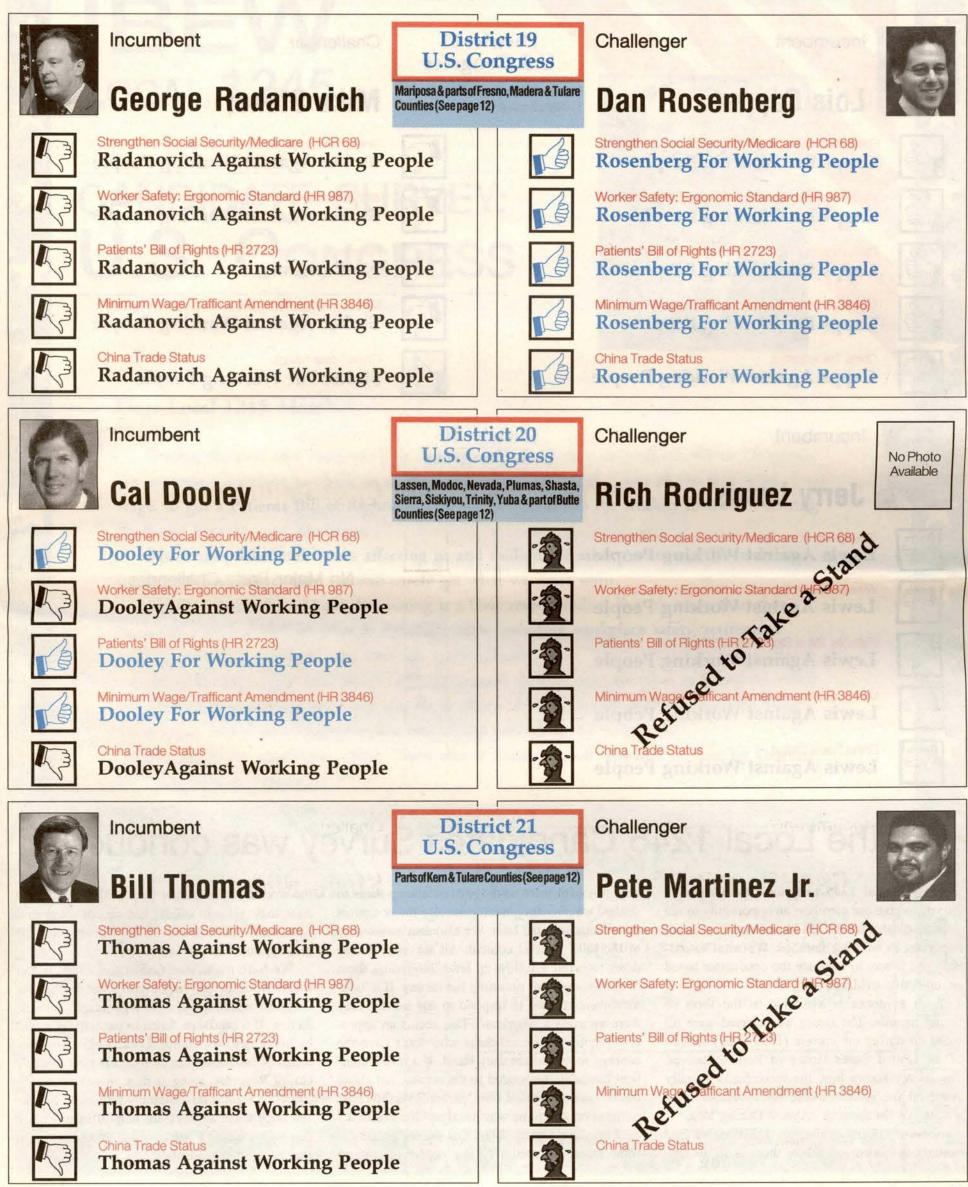


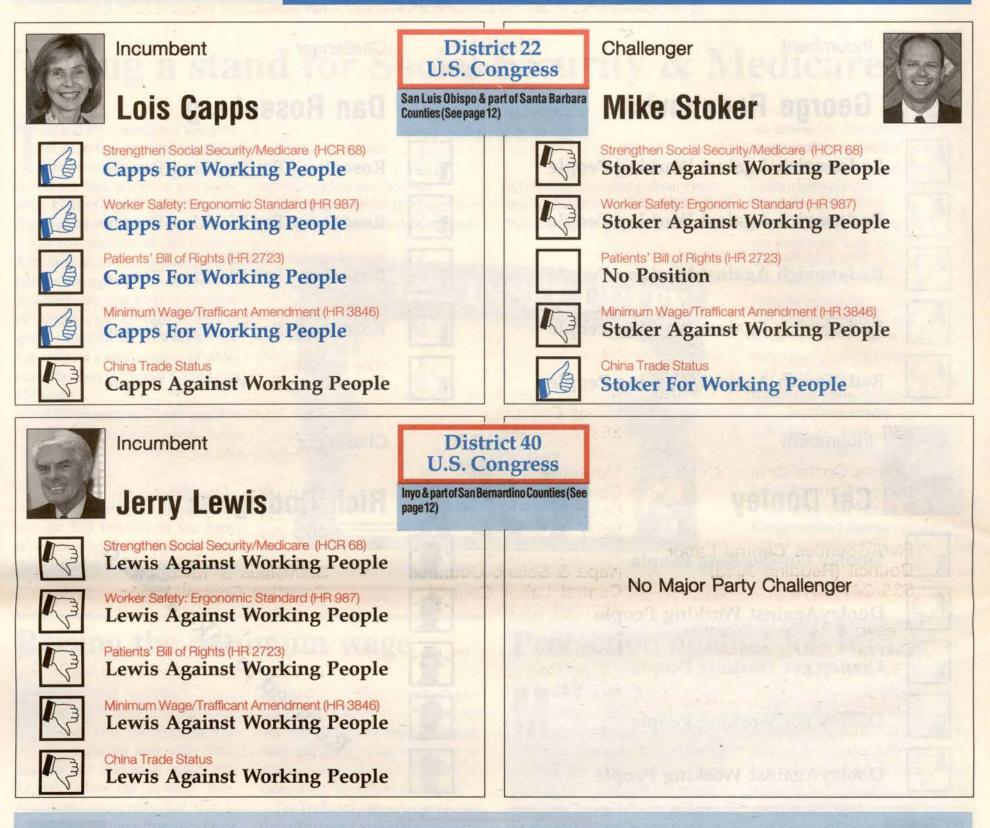
16 UtilityReporter





18 Utility Reporter





How the Local 1245 Candidates Survey was conducted

IBEW Local 1245 undertook the Candidate Survey to give our members an opportunity to see how candidates for the US House stand on issues important to working families. We want to provide you a way to evaluate the candidates based on objective evidence.

Such evidence is available in the form of voting records. The issues we selected were all voted on during the current (1999-2000) session of the United States House of Representatives. The survey shows how the incumbents actually voted on the issues. Where the incumbent was absent, we list them as "Absent During Vote."

Non-incumbent candidates (challengers and candidates in districts where there is no incumbent running) were sent a survey asking them to declare whether they were generally for or against these same selected bills. We also sent a summary of the bills' general content. All surveyed candidates received a follow-up letter reminding them of the deadline for returning the survey. If a nonincumbent refused to respond to our survey, they were awarded a "chicken." This seems an appropriate symbol for candidates who don't have the courage to say where they stand. If a non-incumbent candidate responded to the survey, but chose not to take a position on a particular issue, their position on that issue was listed as "No Position."

Two years ago we found that the challengers in some races indicated a greater degree of support for working people than they actually exhibited once they got into office. We cannot attest to a candidates' truthfulness in this survey; we can only report what they say.

We have made every effort to include in our Election Guide all major party candidates for Congress within Local 1245's geographical jurisdiction. If a candidate failed to participate, it was by his or her own choice. Local 1245's endorsements of candidates can be found in next month's Utility Reporter, along with a survey of candidates for California Assembly and state Senate. We hope these surveys are helpful in providing you with objective information to assist you in evaluating the candidates.

Action How You Can Make a Difference!

US Senate kills bid for pay en

Union members make the difference. The voice of working families was heard on March 7 because union members stepped forward and got involved. Your local Central Labor Council can show you how to phone bank or walk precincts for labor-endorsed candidates this fall. It's easy to do, you meet great people, and you can made a difference! Sign up now.

Central Labor Council of Alameda County 510-532-4242

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

Contra Costa County Central Labor Council 925-228-0161

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

Fresno & Madera Counties Central Labor Council 559-275-1151

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

Kern, Inyo & Mono Counties Central Labor Council 661-324-6451 Marysville Central Labor Council 530-743-7321

Merced-Mariposa Central Labor Council 559-271-1288

Monterey & Santa Cruz Counties Central Labor Council (831) 633-1869

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

North Bay Counties Central Labor Council 707-545-6970

Sacramento Central Labor Council 916-927-9772

San Francisco Labor Council 415-440-8502

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

San Mateo County Central Labor Council 650-572-8848

South Bay Central Labor Council 408-266-3790

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

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

Will you invest three hours of your time this fall to defend your livelihood against legislative attack? It will be one of the most important investments you make this year.

> Interested in looking further into volunteer opportunities? Visit the California Labor Federation's website at: www.labor2000.calaborfed.org



At the Dawn of the **Twentieth Century** As America moved toward the 20th Century, where did women work? CENTURY, WNEREAR BELIEVE ORNOT Most women worked in the home, although their labors extended beyond care of their family. In 1890 the US Bureau of Labor found that one in five working-class families took in boarders to supplement their meager incomes-which meant additional work as cook, maid and laundress. Other women worked in the home as laundresses, dressmakers, cigar makers; some made caps and artificial flowers.

By 1900, one out of every five women worked for wages. Half of the workers in textile factories and tobacco factories were women. In garment shops, women outnumbered the men. According to historian Barbara Wertheimer, "Women worked in the shoe industry, in food processing and canning, and in heavy industries such as foundries and tin-plate mills."

Women could be found in the new electrical manufacturing industry, winding coils and doing heavier work. Says Wertheimer: "They shaped bolts and screws, braided and twisted cable in the cablemaking companies (at a starting rate of 50 cents a day)."

US Senate kills bid for pay equity

he US Senate gave a resounding "NO" to fair pay for working women July 17 when it refused to consider the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 74), which would have strengthened current equal pay laws in an effort to close the huge pay gap between men and women.

The vote was strictly along party lines, with 45 Democrats voting in favor of considering the Paycheck Fairness Act and 53 Republicans voting against.

"It's time to stop giving America's women lip service for equal pay for equal work, but to actually do something to make it happen," said Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) when he introduced the legislation as an amendment to the so-called marriage penalty bill.

Women earn about 73 cents an hour for every dollar men earn and that wage gap costs working families some \$200 billion a year, according to research by the AFL-CIO.

"Some have suggested that the pay gap is insignificant, but working women know better," said Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D- "Some have suggested that the pay gap is insignificant, but working women know better. Even after accounting for differences in education and the amount of time in the workforce, a woman's pay still lags far behind the pay of a man doing the same work This persistent pay gap doesn't just shortchange women. It shortchanges families."

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle

SD). "Even after accounting for differences in education and the amount of time in the workforce, a woman's pay still lags far behind the pay of a man doing the same work. This persistent pay gap doesn't just shortchange women. It shortchanges families.

"The wage gap causes the average American working family to lose more than \$4,000 a year," Daschle said.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would allow compensatory and punitive damages for women denied equal pay for equal work, authorize class action pay lawsuits and protect workers from retaliation for sharing pay information.

The AFL-CIO's Ask a Working Woman Survey 2000 found that 87% of the respondents support stronger equal pay laws such as S. 74.

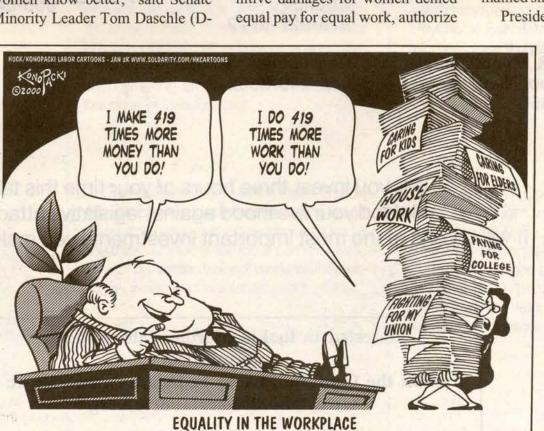
While refusing to address a problem that costs working families some \$200 billion a year, the Senate did pass a \$248 billion tax cut aimed at the "marriage penalty," which forces some two-income married couples to pay higher taxes than if they remained single.

President Clinton charged that

"more benefits will go to the top 1% of taxpayers than to the bottom 80% of all Americans" under the Republican bill.

In a letter to senators, the AFL-CIO argued that the \$248 billion the bill would eat up from projected surpluses would be better used by strengthening Social Security and adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer both voted in favor of considering the Paycheck Fairness Act.





The IBEW and the role of labor unions

SCHOLARSHIP ESSA

(Editor's note: The following essay by John Coats was the winning entry in the 2000 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship. Contestants were asked to address the question: "When and why was IBEW founded, and what benefits have been gained, and what benefits can be gained by unionization?" John Coats is the son of Willie Coats, a Local 1245 lineman currently working in another trade in Ohio.)

By John Coats

hat would the world be like without computers, fancy cars, bigjuicy steaks, indoor plumbing, or the fundamentally essential television? Is it possible for people to live without these luxuries and still survive? In today's society the standard of living has been lifted by those who have come before us. People continuously contribute to making our lives easier and more elegant. We cannot even imagine a world where we could not gain such vital necessities.

This poses another question because our lives are not filled with just relaxation and free time. Another staple part of life is work. Just like there are expected comforts at home, there are expected amenities in the workplace. However, these benefits have not always been there. They have been achieved through the persistent courage and hard work of unions.

What would the world be like without unions to fight for the rights of the working class man? This is an unbearable thought, and to prove the greatness of unionization one needs only to look at the example set by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers or IBEW.

The IBEW was first conceived in 1890 by electrical linemen and wiremen in St. Louis. They were there to help set up an exposition showing the wonders of electricity. At the end of each grueling day of work they would come together and converse about the terrible working conditions that they must suffer each day. With the help of the AFL, an electrical wireman and lineman union was set up. The president, Henry Miller, traveled across the United States organizing local unions and the benefits gained by the IBEW are all because of his tireless efforts in the early years creating a unification of those people in the electrical trade. Then on Nov. 21, 1891 ten delegates representing the 286 members, met in St. Louis to draft the constitution of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (NBEW). The delegates worked for seven days straight in a room above Stolley's Dance Hall in a poor part of the city. Thus the NBEW (officially changed to IBEW in1899 because of Canadian members) was born.

Before the union, linemen suffered horrendous work conditions. They worked 12 hours a day for seven days a week in all types of weather, earning only 15 or 20 cents

Before the union, linemen suffered horrendous work conditions. They worked 12 hours a day for seven days a week in all types of weather, earning only 15 or 20 cents an hour. Some linemen were paid even less, earning a meager \$9 a week to support their families. There was no apprenticeship program and no safety standards. One out of every two linemen died and the national death rate was twice that of any other industry at the time.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

John Coats displays the plaque he received in recognition of his winning essay in the Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship. He also receives a \$2,000 scholarship for college expenses. From left: John's parents, Willie and Lois Coats, John Coats, former Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen (who judged the essays), and Business Manager Jack McNally. an hour. Some linemen were paid even less, earning a meager \$9 a week to support their families. There was no apprenticeship program and no safety standards. One out of every two linemen died and the national death rate was twice that of any other industry at the time.

This all changed with the organization of the IBEW. An apprenticeship program was established, safety standards were put in place, and workers got paid more and had better hours. The terrible conditions placed on workers by corrupt bosses were soon eliminated as the union pushed for better conditions based on ethical, moral, and healthful standards. Hence the lives of workers were vastly improved.

One might ask that since working conditions are good and pay is high then what are unions needed for anymore? Can a union still be useful? The answer is yes. Unionization can still benefit workers. The goal of the IBEW should now be to continue the improvement of conditions of work technologically. Helping raise the standards of technology to advance the whole planet and raise the standard of life to a new innovative level. The IBEW can strive to globalize improved work conditions so that the world as a whole can improve as we head towards a new horizon filled with challenges that are more on a global scale than ever before. The human race is capable of great things and the tremendous work of the IBEW has allowed such wonders to be indulged. Now it is the responsibility of the IBEW to extend its influence past the borders of the Untied States and North America and help in the struggles of workers around the world for the betterment of all mankind.

Watch the January 2001 issue of the Utility Reporter for an entry form for the 2001 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship.

Deregulation takes a nosedive

From Page 1

for action. But our actions should be informed by some understanding of what went wrong in the first place.

The electric deregulation experiment began in earnest in1994 when the California Public Utilities Commission published its "Blue Book"– a blue print for competitive markets in electricity. The plan was flawed in two fundamental respects:

The commissioners failed to understand the basic mechanisms of competitive markets, even as they attempted to create such a market for electric generation. And they failed to consider the impact of competitive pressures on the utilities responsible for delivering that electric generation to the state's homes and businesses.

Delivery problems were the first to surface. Anticipating the arrival of a competitive market, PG&E got an early start on cutting costs by shrinking its maintenance program and downsizing its workforce. In 1993-94 alone, the company shed several thousand employees. The CPUC assured the public that "consumers can expect service, safety and reliability to remain at their historically high levels," even as its Blue Book proposed giving utilities financial incentives to continue slashing costs and cutting jobs.

DEREGULATION

Then, in early 1995, two large storms brought widespread blackouts. Local 1245 publicly linked these blackouts to the sorry state of PG&E's deteriorating electric infrastructure and inadequate tree trimming program. The union's accusations helped prompt investigations by the legislature and the CPUC.

PG&E quickly rescinded about a thousand layoffs, stepped up its maintenance activity, and expanded its tree trimming. The system withstood subsequent storms much better.

These improvements weren't the

The CPUC's deregulation plan was flawed in two fundamental respects:

The commissioners failed to understand the basic mechanisms of competitive markets, even as they attempted to create such a market for electric generation.

And they failed to consider the impact of competitive pressures on the utilities responsible for delivering that electric generation to the state's homes and businesses. Take home lesson number one: expecting market forces to produce electric reliability is like expecting aerodynamic forces to produce flight in a pig.

result of "market forces"-they were the result of regulatory action.

111

But money dreams die hard. Those who hoped to profit from a deregulated electric market–primarily large industrial electric consumers and independent power producers–pressed California lawmakers in 1996 to legislate deregulation. Incredibly, even after the blackouts of 1995, utility unions remained virtually alone in calling for service quality standards.

Serendipity came to the rescue. A massive disruption in the western states' electric transmission grid put reliability back in the headlines just as the final deregulation package was being crafted in the legislature. Policymakers decided they didn't want to entrust reliability to the market after all. The performance standards proposed by Local 1245 and its union allies were included in the law passed in August of 1996.

Take home lesson number one: expecting market forces to produce electric reliability is like expecting aerodynamic forces to produce flight in a pig.

The second major flaw in the CPUC's deregulation scheme was its loudly-trumpeted belief that market forces would bring down the price of electricity.

Attorney Tom Adams, representing Local 1245 and other utility unions in California, testified in May of 1994 that the CPUC Blue Book failed to understand the basic characteristics of competitive markets, where prices vary with supply and demand. Sure, plentiful supplies may bring lower prices, as the CPUC eagerly predicted. But the other side of the equation is that short supplies will bring higher prices. And you can't build power plants or transmission lines overnight to increase the supply. If California's electric supplies are left to the whim of the competitive market, Adams predicted, the state "will face high elecDEREGULATION

tricity prices and scarce supply and possibly brown outs."

As San Diego, to its misery, learned.

At present, investigations into the San Diego rate debacle are focusing on the possibility of market manipulation by the new independent power generators. And perhaps they'll find improper, even illegal, activity.

But sooner or later, Californians will have to face the ugly truth about electric markets: *They 're markets*. They can be ugly even when they're not being manipulated. When electric supplies are short, electric prices go up. And they could stay up a long time.

When the current rate freeze ends for PG&E and Southern California Edison customers next year, everyone in California may get a chance to feel San Diego's pain.

What the free market zealots refused to acknowledge is this: Electricity isn't some garden variety commodity. It's an essential service, one the public cannot and will not do without. Let electricity become unreliable, unavailable or unaffordable and you're going to hear about it.

Californians got sucked in by free market rhetoric because we don't know our own history. When electric deregulation had its coming-out party in the mid-1990s, policymakers didn't bother to ask themselves why electric utilities were regulated in the first place. A little research would have revealed that unbridled competition in the early 20th century led to enormous concentrations of corporate power. Self-dealing between subsidiaries of giant utility holding companies artificially inflated the cost of electric service, sucking money out of the pockets of ratepayers and funneling it directly into the pockets of dealmakers. Many rural areas were simply bypassed altogether by the "free market."

These abuses occurred on such a massive scale that President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared in 1935 that the unrestrained growth of utility holding companies had "given tyrannical power and exclusive opportunity to a favored few." That same year, Congress passed the Public Utilities Holding Company Act, which chopped the holding companies down to size and made it possible for public authorities to begin regulating investor-owned utilities at the state level.

Today the US Congress is looking at repealing the Public Utilities Holding Company Act in an effort to accelerate the pace of electric deregulation around the country.

But maybe there's time yet for the rest of the nation to learn from California's unfortunate fling with flying pigs.

de

* *

If nothing else, the California experience has exposed all the giddy free-market rhetoric as self-serving claptrap. No market can exist without some form of regulation. And universal, reliable electric service cannot exist without extensive regulation.

California's so-called free market in electricity required the creation of an Independent System Operator (ISO) to facilitate transmission. And a Power Exchange to facilitate sales. It required more extensive oversight by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Even the California Public Utilities Commission, which blasted "command and control regulation" in its Blue Book back in 1994, has shown no signs of gracefully surrendering its own authority to make way for markets. (When a blackout hit San Francisco in late 1998, the CPUC insisted on conducting an investigation that simply duplicated an investigation already performed by the ISO.)

It turns out that pasting wings on a pig to see if it can fly is a complex affair. We ended up with more, not less, regulatory bureaucracy.

California has gone through enormous contortions trying to create competitive electric markets. But there are signs that Californians are tired of watching pigs flapping their wings while power producers gorge themselves at the trough. There *will* be a return to regulation. We never What the free market zealots refused to acknowledge is this: Electricity isn't some garden variety commodity. It's an essential service, one the public cannot and will not do without. Let electricity become unreliable, unavailable or unaffordable and you're going to hear about it.

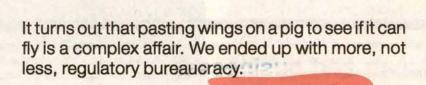
left the world of regulation.

The real question is this: What sort of regulation best serves the people of California and our enduring interest in safe, reliable, universal electric service?

That's the question that

policymakers ought to be asking themselves as they confront the wreckage of their failed experiment in electric deregulation.

In the meantime, the rest of California gets to see what it's like to live in San Diego.







By the Local 1245 Safety Committee

Beware brown (and green)

ou have just pulled the cover off a N 36 box. On the inside it's full of spider webs. Oh good, you don't see a Black Widow, just some small brown spider-nothing to worry about.

You are dead wrong. In some cases the bite of the Brown Recluse has killed. In many cases the body's reaction to the bite can take the form of localized dead tissue that must be surgically removed.

In extreme cases, only amputation can save the person.

The bite of the Recluse family can cause a reaction in the whole body known as "loxocelism" and in the area of the necrotic bite the flesh usually dies.

How could such a deadly spider be so little known? The answer lies in the fact that the bite is usually painless and the spider goes unnoticed. Also it comes in many sizes and colors and does not have to have the distinctive violin shape on the body.

International trade provides easy access to the world. Many spiders that can be venomous to humans may be arriving in this country. Make sure to wear your gloves and long sleeve shirts when working in holesa favorite hiding place for the brownand green-Recluse.

Blood donations save lives

ost of us don't want to admit it, but people dear to us-family members, friends, or even ourselves-will have an accident in their lifetime.

Hopefully nothing serious. But what if it is, and a blood transfusion

> without insurance coverage."

is needed?

The nation's blood banks always need donors. Their supply always needs replenishing.

Giving of your time now could mean life later for you or someone you know.

My two-cents' worth

By Mitchell Green May 27, 2000

sit here at a table looking through a sliding glass window. On the other side of that window is a patient who is lying in bed at a 45degree angle so as to keep the fluid and congestion draining to the bottom of his lungs so it may be sucked out easily. A life support machine does his breathing for him.

He needs all this to fight in the battle of life and death.

By no means do I intend to offend or hurt the feelings of others in this tragic state. I only say what is on my mind. That's one reason why I like to live in America, where we have freedom of speech. Another reason is to work at an occupation suited to our wants and needs.

That's why the patient lying opposite from the window where I sit is lying here today.

It takes years and years along with hours upon hours of training. Two to three years in a certified apprenticeship program along with paying attention at all times, or as we in this trade of work call it, staying "cut in" or focused on the job at hand. No matter how simple it may be or how many times you've done it, you learn something new everyday. That's why I, along with many other men, have earned the right to the job title of the fourth most dangerous job in the United States: journeyman lineman.

No matter what the conditions may be, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, rain, sleet, snow, cold, or heat, we do what three-quarters of the American public take for granted. A lineman made it possible to turn your light on at night.

The journeyman lineman is not only responsible for his own safety but the safety of co-workers, pedestrians, and customers, keeping in mind the craftmanship of the job. There is always the thought in the back of every lineman's mind that electricity is "unforgiving." If you make what we call an incidental contact you get no second chance.

Greek legend has it that gods were the only ones who could leave their homes in heaven and enter the devil's gate and battle with Satan, and exit the gate unharmed, to return to lead the mortal person on the right path.

The person lying on the hospital bed on the other side of the sliding glass window died twice in one day and once more a few days later. He is in my thoughts, and in other linemen's hopes and prayers. With the amputation of two arms plus internal damage there is not a fourth time in which he has to enter the gate of hell to do battle with the devil at the invitation of a devastating high voltage shock. Now he must climb that mountain to be at the top with the gods. Very few others can claim victory in the battle of life and to claim his ticket back to Earth.

I'm proud to call the patient my best friend, my little brother, and most of all a journeyman lineman who can say he's done it all: lived and died, and lived again to eventually tell about it. Like it or not, that's my two cents' worth in showing my respect and love, which he has always had. Probably more so after this reality check, he has earned the right and privilege to be called Terry Dale Green, journeyman lineman.

Bridgestone/Firestone tire recall

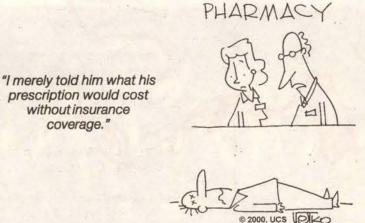
Bridgestone/Firestone Inc. has announced a voluntary recall of the following three types of light duty truck and sport utility vehicle tires:

1) P235/75R15 Firestone radial ATX 2) P235/75R15 Firestone radial ATX II 3) P235/75R15 Wildemess AT

The following PG&E vehicles

may be equipped with these tires: 1991-2000 Ford Rangers 1991-2000 Ford Explorers

PG&E employees who have vehicles equipped with the tires listed above should contact their local garage supervisor and schedule an inspection.



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 Rose, Davey Tree; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; Rod Wright, Modesto Irrigation District; and Assistant Business Manager Art Murray.



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.

Congratulations!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in–or start!–a Retirees Club chapter in your area.

> Leroy Gilliam Jr., 28 years Berkeley, CA

Elzen Wilson, 30 years Arlington, TX

Frank Brandi, 33 years Novato, CA

James Burris, 34 years Fremont, CA

Patricia Carroll, 20 years San Leandro, CA

Tamara Cranwell, 14 years Colfax, CA

Remegia Del Mundo, 24 years So. San Francisco, CA

> Joseph Fradin, 15 years San jose, CA

Paul Frasher, 32 years Napa, CA

Philipp Hansen, 35 years Fairfax, CA

Alliance to focus on legislation, education

RETIREE CORNER

By Orv Owen

his month we continue our look at the Alliance for Retired Americans, the new labor alliance created by the AFL-CIO to unite retired union members and others who share our concerns.

Last month we looked at the Alliance's structure and governance. This month we look at its program functions, including legislation, public affairs, and education.

Please give this worthy organization your consideration.

Keep the faith!

Alliance for Retired Americans

Legislative and Regulatory

The Alliance will monitor critical national legislation and regulations that affect retirees and will educate members of Congress and the Administration on these issues and seek the enactment of public policies that are responsive to the needs of older and retired workers. Working with state federations of labor, state Alliance chapters will address issues of concern to retired members at the state and local level.

Public Affairs

The Alliance will conduct an ongoing effective public information campaign on issues of importance to retired workers such as Social Security and Medicare, pensions and helathcre, long term care, prescriptiondrugs and other service for older Americans.

Communications

The Alliance will communicate on a regular basis with its members to inform them of important legislative and regulatory matters, and of other issues of importance to retired workers in general, such as financial matteres and pensions, healthcare and legal matters-and of the benefit programs of the Alliance. Members will receive a quarterly newsletter as well as special publications and communications on specific issues.

Education

Working with national unions and state organizations, the Alliance will conduct educational seminars and conferences for retired workers (and pre-retirement programs for older members), on issues such as pensions, retirement security, Social Security reform, nursing home reform, and prescription drug reform. In addition, basic ongoing resources will be organized on issues such as financial planning, estate planning, and healthcare.

Seniors will see drug costs rise

Prices that older Americans pay for prescription drugs will soar over the next decade, according to a report by the advocacy group Families USA.

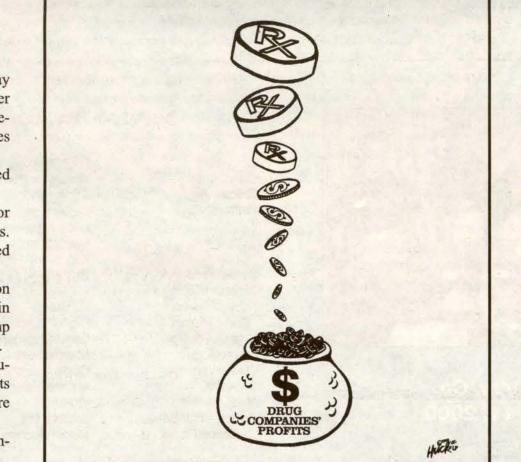
Drug prices have already doubled since 1992, the report says.

Prescription drugs account for about 10% of seniors' health costs. That figure will probably exceed 13% by 2010.

The average cost per prescription for seniors has risen from \$28.50 in 1992 to \$42.30 today, and will jump to \$72.94 in 2010, the report says.

Families USA believes the solution to soaring prescription drug costs for seniors is to expand the Medicare program to cover these costs.

Seniors buy 29 prescriptions annually, on average.



Santa Rosa, Ca. March 31, 2000





30 Years

Service Award Honorees

35 Years Bill McDonald M. A. Parrott John Sack

30 Years John Barrett Johnathan Bartlett James Brady Arthur Braga Lawrence Broggi Fred Bush John Cornelius Gary Costigan **Robert Fairbanks Donald Flores** Earl Foster **Ron Hensie James Horst** Severo Idica Thomas Irving Stanley Kinka **RD Kohl** Michael Lenhares James Meehan Anthony Montoya

Roy Price Michael Rains Danny Romero Greg Saffores John Shappell Jimmy Stenvers Roger Stephenson Gregory Treat T. Vadon John Varfolomeff Leroy(Earl) Wright Jerry Woodruff

25 Years Natalie Allan Chris Chapman Renaldo Duran Barbara Dyer Marie Edmunson Michael Jella Alvin Lee Gene McCandless Steve Semenero Jeff Carlstrom Patricia Waller 20 Years Kenneth Antonio **Richard Arthur** Coleen Browder **Michael Cisneros** Mary Coffin **Brenda** Darrah **Richard Filippo Eugene Frey** Joe Garatti **Ronald Glendon** Sandra Goetz Todd Gracyk Carl Hagena Leon Hanse Michael Hanssen **Richard Hernandez** David Levernier Normita Lorenzo Larry McDowell Hunter McKeever **Ronald Mick Charles Miner** Guy Molinari **Richard Morris** Edward Murer Thomas Nash



20 Years

Bobby Ojinaga Marvin Olsen David Pederson Eugene Robinson Randal Rochester James Rovetti H. Dean Sexton Kevin Smith Jeffry Sterck Karen Treat Terrence Vail Nicole Vallee Ronald Vessells Marilyn Wright





Monterey, Ca. March 11, 2000 35 years Gary Donat Bruce ingels Richard Manley

30 years Robert Ackerman Henry Arredondo Michael Masatani Russell Orebo William Riesen Ricardo Rivera Larry Rocha James Vermilyer 25 years Mikel Allums Robert Chiantelli Gulliermo Flores

Service Award Honorees

Ricky Garica James Gatewood Steve Hutchins Derek Kim Louie Machado Ray McDonnel Ken Nieto G Stone

20 years Clark Ackerman Lorrie Changaris Marshall Cook Curtis Cummings Michael Dillon Vicki Fort Edward Gill Martin Henderson Darrel Hicok Wayne Jung Armando Muro David Olea Philip Pajerski Paul Parslow Lawrence Ranson Ross Ronald John Spear John Sportsman Robert Steiger Linda Sterling Stephen Urquidi Philip Woody