

Preliminary victory in battle to save jobs

Rescind the layoffs, law judge rules

Members in the media



San Francisco KPIX television reporter Tony Russomanno asks Local 1245 lineman John Kent about layoffs and service.

Responding to an emergency motion filed by Local 1245 and its union allies, a CPUC Administrative Law Judge has ruled that Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison should be ordered to rescind recent workforce reductions and halt any layoffs planned for the future.

The ALJ's recommendation, triggered by an emergency motion filed by Local 1245 and the Coalition of California Utility Employees (CUE) on Jan. 8, now goes to the California Public Utilities Commission for possible adoption.

"Based on the record in this proceeding, the layoff of these workers has adversely affected the [transmission and distribution] operations, the call centers, meter reading, and the number of personnel who could respond to large scale outages," said law judge John Wong in a decision announced February

"CUE's motion to prevent the layoffs of non-management employees as presently contemplated or already implemented by SCE and PG&E should be granted, and the layoffs that have already been implemented should be rescinded..."

Law Judge John Wong

23. "As more layoffs occur, these kinds of impacts can be expected to continue."

CUE, a coalition of California utility unions chaired by Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally, argued that workforce reductions would harm service reliability while doing nothing to improve the utilities' financial situation. CUE filed the motion shortly after Edison announced it would reduce its workforce by about 1850 workers.

PG&E announced reductions totaling 1,000 workers shortly after the CUE motion was filed.

By the end of February PG&E had let go about 325 hiring hall and contractor employees represented by Local 1245, and was planning to terminate another 675. Downsizing at Southern California Edison cost about 400 Local 1245 contract linemen their jobs in recent weeks.

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McNally urges alternative to state takeover of transmission

Local 1245 last month urged Gov. Gray Davis to consider alternatives to a state takeover of PG&E's transmission system.

In a public letter to the Governor delivered Feb. 22, Business Manager Jack McNally warned that a "hasty decision to acquire the transmission system risks unintended consequences," much as the divestiture of the utility's power plants

led to consequences very different from what was envisioned by the authors of California's 1996 deregulation law.

(As the Utility Reporter went to press, newspapers were reporting that PG&E was prepared to sell its power lines if the price was right.)

In his letter to Davis, McNally

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Business Manager Jack McNally, left, discusses utility workers' concerns with Bob Giroux, aide to Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, and Kip Lipper, right, aide to Senator Byron Sher, at a meeting in Sacramento.

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MARCH 9

Service Awards
San Jose, CA

MARCH 10

Service Awards
Chico, CA

Stewards Conference
Chico, CA

Service Awards
Monterey/Salinas, CA

Stewards Conference
Monterey/Salinas, CA

MARCH 17

Service Awards
Bakersfield, CA

Stewards Conference
Bakersfield, CA

MARCH 23

Service Awards
Ukiah, CA

MARCH 24

Service Awards
Santa Rosa, CA

Stewards Conference
Santa Rosa, CA

APRIL 6

Service Awards
Merced, CA

Service Awards
Redding, CA

APRIL 7

Stewards Conference
Fresno, CA

APRIL 20

Service Awards
Auburn, CA

APRIL 21

Service Awards
Sacramento, CA

Stewards Conference
Sacramento, CA

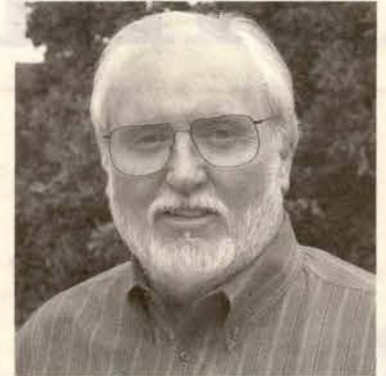
APRIL 28

Service Awards
Riverside, CA

Stewards Conference
Riverside, CA

We will not be excluded

By Jack McNally, Business Manager



Members sometimes ask me how we're going to defend members' jobs as California's energy crisis drags on. The answer is simple: It's going to take a seat at the table.

There was a time when the only table we had to worry about was the bargaining table. That's where most of the major decisions that affected our members were made.

Bargaining is still a key part of job security, of course. But now there are a lot of other tables to worry about as well. If we don't have a seat at them, we won't have a voice as others continue carving up and restructuring our industry.

Our voice was heard loud and clear last month at the California Public Utilities Commission, where an administrative law judge on Feb. 23 declared that PG&E and South-

ern California Edison should rescind recent workforce reductions. Law Judge John Wong was responding to an emergency petition filed by Local 1245 and our union allies. His lengthy opinion echoed many of the arguments we made in that petition.

The fate of PG&E's transmission assets is another area where our union has insisted on being heard. Our legislative advocates and I personally have met with key legislators and their aides to express our opposition to a transmission buy-out. On Feb. 22 I raised our concerns in an open letter to Gov. Davis, with copies to all major TV, radio and newspaper outlets. At the same time we are preparing job protection language to insert into any transmission bill that may eventually find its way to the Governor's desk.

In Nevada, Local 1245 legislative advocates testified before the Nevada Senate Commerce and Labor Committee on Feb. 21, warning that Nevada's plan for power plant divestiture could seriously jeopardize service reliability. We've been hammering home this message in Nevada for some time now, and those efforts are beginning to show results.

Making the link between service reliability and the work that our members perform is a key part of our job security strategy. When the public understands that layoffs harm service quality, they support us. We've stressed the connection between jobs and service reliability in interviews with more than three dozen TV, radio and newspaper reporters during the past seven weeks. We've made additional contacts with the media through a Sacramento public relations firm retained by our CUE coalition in January.

We've had some important victories. We strongly opposed the auctioning of PG&E's hydro assets—a ridiculous idea that was seriously considered just a year ago, but is now off the agenda. And just last month a vigorous lobbying effort by rank-and-file members helped pass AB IX, crucial to keeping the electricity on in California and a first step in averting utility bankruptcy.

At the same time we're preparing for the possibility that PG&E could still go bankrupt. A firm specializing in bankruptcy law is currently reviewing all of our collective bargaining agreements, including benefit agreements, to help us plan our strategy in the event of bankruptcy.

We probably won't win every battle as the deregulation disaster continues to play itself out. But we will not tolerate being excluded from the table—any table—where the decisions are being made.



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Business Manager & Executive Editor
Jack McNally

Communications Director & Managing Editor
Eric Wolfe

President
Howard Stiefer

Executive Board
Jim McCauley
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Barry retires, Ed Hill is new IBEW President; McNally to chair IBEW Executive Council

Edwin Hill was appointed International President of the IBEW on Jan. 29 and Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally was named as the new chairman of the International Executive Council.

Hill, formerly the International Secretary-Treasurer, succeeds John J. Barry, who retired after serving as IBEW President since 1986.

Hill, who was initiated into Local 712 in Beaver, Pa. in 1956, became business manager of that local in 1970. As International Secretary-Treasurer since 1997, Hill was credited with modernizing the union's accounting and record-keeping systems.

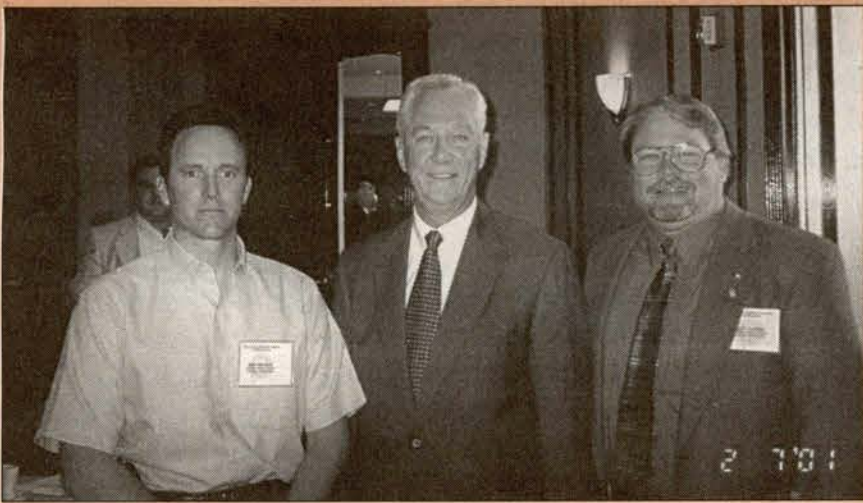
"I know that any power we wield comes from our strength in numbers and our solidarity as working people,"

says Hill. "We must protect our voice and our ability to fight for what is right, whether it be through collective bargaining or political action."

McNally replaces Clyde Bowden as chair of the International Executive Council, the body responsible for acting on applications for pension, disability and retirement benefits, determining Constitutional Amendments to be brought to a vote, and employing an accountant to audit the books and accounts of the International Officers.

The Council is usually chaired by a local union business manager, but McNally is the first officer of Local 1245 to serve in this role. The Council meets four times a year, transacting much of its business by telephone.

Local 1245 reps greet Ed Hill



Local 1245 Business Reps. Ray Thomas (left) and Jack Osburn (right) met the newly-appointed International President of the IBEW, Edwin Hill, at the IBEW Telecommunication Conference on Feb. 8.

Bargaining with Verizon produces wage gains

Verizon employees represented by Local 1245 in California and Nevada won improvements in national bargaining in Orlando, Fla.

The bargaining produced an equity increase of 15.5% for female Material Handler in Elko, Nev. effective March 11. By the fourth year of the agreement, top Material Handlers' wages will be 17.6% higher

than those same wages in the fourth year of the former contract.

Employees and dependents gained dental coverage in the bargaining.

Recent volatility in the industry has created numerous changes for these workers, according to Business Rep. Ray Thomas.

GTE, which subsequently became Verizon, acquired warehouse work-

Barry believed in organizing



J. J. Barry leads a "March for Justice" for Las Vegas building trades workers.

John J. "Jack" Barry, now International President Emeritus of the IBEW, was elected President in 1986 and re-elected twice, in 1991 and 1996.

Barry made organizing a top priority for the IBEW, which has seen strong growth in its construction branch over the past decade.

Barry was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve on the Competitiveness Policy Council and the President's Export Council.

Barry was initiated into Local 43 in Syracuse in January 1943.

ers from Citizens Telecommunications.

"Through all the volatility of these changes of ownership, these Verizon employees fared very well in this bargaining because the various locals worked in solidarity," said Thomas. Participating in the negotiations were Locals 1245, 363, 723, 1087, 2035, 89, and 824.

Unit updates

Unit 2314, Hayward/Livermore/Fremont, now meets at Bronco Billy's Pizza, 3940 Smith St. in Union City. The meeting time remains 5:30 p.m.

Unit 3813, Placerville, has a new unit chair: Henry Garcia.

Unit 3025, Spokane Wa., has a new unit chair: Gary Withrow.

Unit 3713, E. Geysers, has a new unit chair: N. Tkachenko.

Correction

Last month's Utility Reporter highlighted a remark by PG&E Misc. Equipment Operator John Mendoza on the front page, but mistakenly attributed it to Electric Crew Foreman Rich Cowart. Our apologies.

Calendar for Union Election

March

Nominations of candidates at Unit meetings.

May

Election Issue of Utility Reporter published; ballots mailed to all eligible voters before June 1.

June 1-22

Mail ballot election held.

June 22

Ballots retrieved from Post Office box by election committee, then verified and counted. Results reported to all Unit Recorders immediately after certification.



Hamburgers, nightmares and war

Bush issues anti-worker edicts

President George W. Bush issued four new anti-worker, anti-union executive orders repealing Clinton administration rules protecting workers and labor-management relations.

The orders:

- Effectively bar project labor agreements on federally funded construction projects.

- Require government contractors to post notices telling employees they may object to paying the portion of agency fees not related to collective bargaining.

- End job retention protections that now cover employees of service contractors in federal buildings.

- Abolish labor-management relations systems that serve the government and hundreds of thousands of federal workers.

"I am appalled and outraged at President Bush's decision to issue four mean-spirited, anti-worker executive orders sought by his corporate contributors...." said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "These orders undermine worker rights and dismantle thoughtfully constructed and effective working relationships between labor and management."

The AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department has called Bush's plan to ban project labor agreements "nothing short of a declaration of war on construction workers."

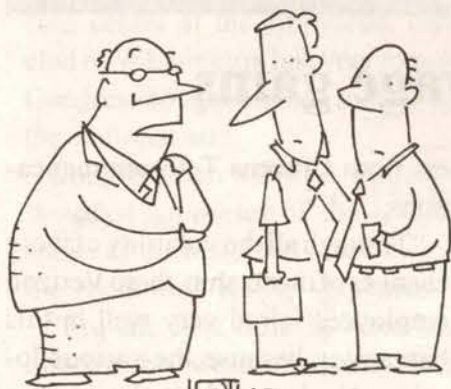
Word that Bush would issue the orders came just 48 hours after Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao appeared at an AFL-CIO meeting promising to work with union leadership.

Despite protests from the labor movement, the school board in Madison, Wis. decided to use a non-union contractor to build a new elementary school, Labor Notes reported. Then the board voted to name the school after United Farm Workers founder Cesar Chavez.

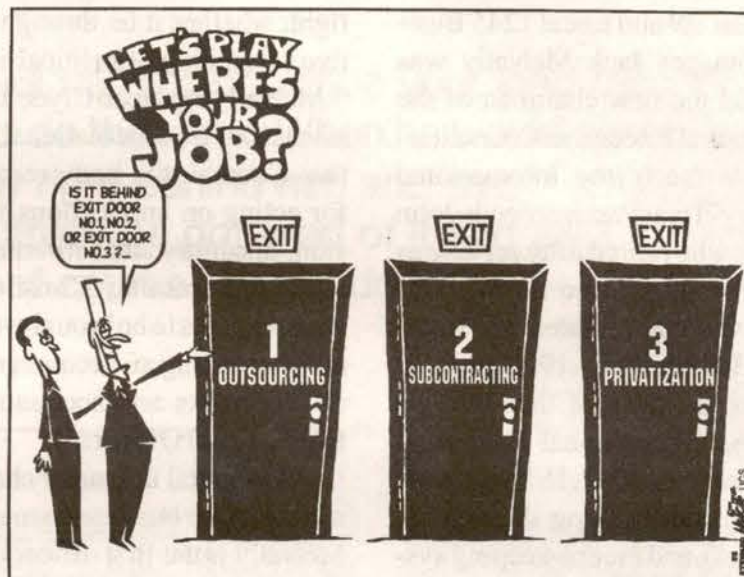
► **Jobs Go to Prison:** Canada's first prison-based call center is up and running outside Kingston, Ont., where about 20 inmates conduct market research and opinion surveys for \$1.25 to \$1.75 an hour, according to Caroline Alphonso in PRNewswire. "What will restrict them from doing other things when this gets going? Where does it end?" asks Rod Hiebert, president of the Telecommunications Workers Union.

► **I'm No Hamburger:** Workers at a McDonald's in the center of Paris won a promise of job security and better conditions after staging a 15-day occupation of the restaurant, Labor Notes reported. The strikers, mostly young people, said they were tired of being treated like hamburgers. They spent Christmas in the store and won a settlement on Dec. 28.

► **Show Us the Gain:** Labor and social-advocacy groups in Kentucky promoted legislation last month to



"I pay taxes, too, fellows. I think it was back in 1980, or was it '81?"



shed light on companies seeking state tax incentives and to monitor whether they keep their promises, according to the corporate watchdog group Good Jobs First. The bill would require companies to disclose how many jobs would be created, wages and health benefits, and their environmental and worker-safety records as part of their applications for state tax breaks.

► **Remember the Porters:** The A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum in collaboration with Amtrak unveiled the Historic National Registry for African-American railroad employees on Feb. 23 at Chicago's Union Station. The registry is intended to document all African Americans who worked for the railroad from 1863 to 1963, many of whom belonged to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), the first African American labor union chartered in the United States.

► **Card-Check Victory:** Nearly 700 wireless workers at Cingular operations in Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin won representation by the Communications Workers of America in a card check conducted by the American Arbitration Asso-

ciation. CWA now represents more than 10,000 wireless workers at Cingular, which was formed by the merger of SBC and Bell South wireless companies. Under the card check process, when a majority of workers in a unit indicates support for union representation, management recognizes the union.

► **And You Thought It Was Just a Job:** The Executive Enterprise Institute is calling its anti-union seminars, "Union Avoidance 'War Games,'" Labor Notes reported. EEI's brochure for the \$1,295 two-day program pictures a falling bomb and the warning: "Don't be lulled into a false sense of security—this is war."

► **Teachers Want More Pay:** Russian schoolteachers last month staged a nationwide protest calling for salary increases for themselves and free education for their students, according to Gazeta.Ru, a Russian on-line news outlet.

► **Worst Nightmare:** "Your worst nightmare, the Postmaster from Hell." That's from the business card of the postmaster in Weirton, West Virginia, where labor relations apparently aren't very good.

'Don't divest generation,' Local 1245 tells Nevada

Local 1245 warned Nevada legislators last month to not give up control of their state's electric generating assets to unregulated out-of-state producers.

In testimony to the Nevada Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, Local 1245 argued that stripping these assets from the regulated utilities—Sierra Pacific Power Co. of Reno and Nevada Power Co. of Las Vegas—could threaten service reliability in Nevada.

Nevada has followed the national trend toward electric deregulation in recent years, but California's disastrous experience—including sky-high wholesale prices and rolling blackouts—is causing a reassessment among some Nevadans.

Danny Thompson, head of the Nevada AFL-CIO, invited legislators to imagine the effect of rolling blackouts "on the Las Vegas Strip in the middle of July."

"The potential of what could happen to Nevada is a very, very very scary thing," Thompson said.

Local 1245 Business Rep. Ray Thomas also urged the legislators to rethink their plan to put electric

supply in the hands of a competitive market. He noted that competitive pressures in California in the mid-1990s had led to layoffs and deferred maintenance at Pacific Gas & Electric, resulting in blackouts during the storms of 1995.

Rate Relief Sought

Thomas said that Sierra Pacific Resources would need rate relief to survive, given current conditions in the electric wholesale market. He noted that the company had not entered into long-term fuel contracts because plant divestiture appeared to be imminent.

Also making the case for a rate increase was former Nevada state senator Ernie Adler, now a legislative advocate for Local 1245.

Adler compared the situation to the slogan in commercials for auto oil filters:

"Either you buy the oil filter now or have your engine blow up later," Adler said.

Sierra Pacific needs rate relief to recoup increased energy costs not covered by a "global settlement" on



Addressing the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee in Nevada were Local 1245 Business Reps. Ray Thomas (left), Randy Osborn (right), and Nevada AFL-CIO chief Danny Thompson.

rates last year, Thomas told the legislators.

An economist for the Southern Nevada Water Authority estimated that electric rates might be \$1.7 billion to \$3.5 billion lower over five years if the plants are not sold.

The Water Authority and the attorney general's Bureau of Consumer Protection have already called for an indefinite postponement of the plant sales.

Local 1245 has endorsed a Comprehensive Energy Plan submitted by Sierra Pacific Resources to address the problem of fuel costs.

Senator Maggie Carleton, Las Vegas, expressed her appreciation to Local 1245 and the AFL-CIO for explaining some of the possible consequences of divestiture. She noted that they were the only voice for employees to appear before the committee.

City of Lodi

A RECORD TO BE PROUD OF

The City of Lodi Electric Utility Department gathered on a sunny day for this group photo, including IBEW, clerical and management personnel. Notes Local 1245 member Gary Mai (top of the boom, fourth from left): "We have always had 100% union membership in an open-shop situation." That's a record to be proud of.

Rate increase approved for Sierra Pacific

Two days after Local 1245 representatives spoke in favor of a rate increase for Sierra Pacific Resources at a Nevada Senate committee, the utility won interim approval for a 17% increase.

The increase, approved Feb. 23 and effective March 1, is subject to hearings in the Nevada Assembly.

"This company lost \$18.2 million in the fourth quarter of 2000," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Ray Thomas. "That was basically due to energy purchase costs."

When the rate increase is taken up by the Assembly, "we're going to be there supporting equitable rates," Thomas said.

Rescind layoffs law judge rules

► From Page 1

“CUE’s motion to prevent the layoffs of non-management employees as presently contemplated or already implemented by SCE and PG&E should be granted, and the layoffs that have already been implemented should be rescinded, and the utilities should be ordered to restore and staff the positions to the extent that the terminated positions affect the utilities’ ability to fully staff their customer call centers, read meters on a monthly basis, and to timely respond to service calls and outages and to connect new customers,” Wong ruled.

The law judge took a dim view of recent reductions in overtime at the utilities.

“PG&E and SCE should be ordered to reinstate the use of overtime as necessary to enable customer call centers to handle the volume of incoming calls, and to permit field personnel to continue to connect new customers and respond to and remedy outages and other service-related problems in the same amount of time that existed prior to the utilities’ financial problems,” said Wong.

Wong’s decision, if adopted, would provide Local 1245 members with significant job security protection as California struggles to reassert control over a deranged energy market created by the state’s 1996 electric deregulation law.

“All future layoffs which affect the aforementioned services and practices shall be barred unless the utilities can substantiate that the layoffs will not prevent the utilities from furnishing and maintaining adequate, efficient, just and reasonable service,” Wong said.

The CPUC is expected to review Wong’s decision March 7.

Op-Ed piece in Sacramento Bee examines impact of job cuts on customer service

An independent audit released on Jan. 30 recommends layoffs at PG&E as a partial solution to its current financial crisis. But PG&E’s utility work force is at minimum staffing now. Any cut-backs would mean that “customer services will necessarily degrade.” Those are the words that Gordon Smith, president and CEO of PG&E, wrote in a memo to all PG&E employees last month.

In the same memo, he announced plans to lay off 1,000 employees in an across-the-board cut affecting all PG&E departments, including the front-line workers responsible for keeping California’s lights on and the gas flowing.

Even PG&E admits the layoffs fail a cost-benefit test. And ask consumers who’ve lived through the last few weeks of California’s energy fiasco where they’d make the cuts. Would they lay off the service representatives who answer calls about everything from downed power lines to payment arrangements for astronomical bills? Or the troublemen, the 24/7 workers during any emergency? Or the engineers who scrutinize the system constantly to identify trouble spots before they flare up?

That same memo is brutally frank about what PG&E customers can look forward to if the layoffs go through: reduced response rates to customer complaints; up to 24-week response times for new business connections; delayed restoration of service after outages; deferred gas pipeline replacements; and meter reading every other month, using estimated usage for nonread months.

Customers who have received their January power bill know the consequences of cutting back on meter readers. On average, natural gas rates are up 60% from December and 250 percent from a year ago. Odd, since many customers who heard a huge rate increase was com-

sacbee NEWS

Meter-reader layoffs would affect gas bills

By Jack McNally
Special to The Bee

Editor’s Note: The Sacramento Bee published an Op-Ed piece by Business Manager Jack McNally on February 8. Although the Bee edited out some of McNally’s remarks for space reasons, we still got our point across that workforce reductions harm service. The Bee’s edited version of the Op-Ed piece appears here.

ing turned down the heat, put on a sweater and piled blankets on the bed. But those conservation efforts weren’t reflected in the January bill.

Why? Because as The Bee reported, PG&E estimated January gas usage for 84,000 customers

based on their December bill plus the average increase of similar homes in those customers’ area. That’s less than 1 percent of the 8.5 million gas and electric meters read by the utility. But if PG&E proceeds with planned layoffs of meter readers, more than five times that amount, or 450,000 customers in Sacramento and elsewhere in Northern California, would receive estimated bills every other month.

Customers who have shivered through most of the New Year were understandably upset when their conservation efforts weren’t reflected in their bills.

I’ve talked to hundreds of front-line utility workers who are concerned about possible layoffs. Their job is to keep California running. It is a responsibility they take seriously. When tree limbs take down power lines, or when an earthquake interrupts gas service, what will California do if there’s no one on the other end to answer the call?

Jack McNally is chair of the Coalition of California Utility Employees, representing 35,000 workers throughout the state at investor- and municipal-owned utilities, and is business manager for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1245, which represents 13,000 PG&E employees.

That same [PG&E] memo is brutally frank about what PG&E customers can look forward to if the layoffs go through: reduced response rates to customer complaints; up to 24-week response times for new business connections; delayed restoration of service after outages; deferred gas pipeline replacements; and meter reading every other month, using estimated usage for nonread months.



Advisory Council members Rich Cowart (PG&E East Bay, Materials and Foster Wheeler), left, and David Scott (PG&E San Joaquin), right, consider an issue raised by Steve Jameson (PLO).

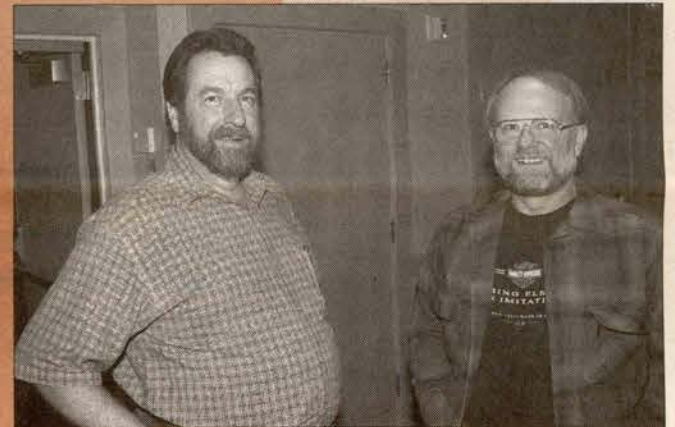
Local 1245 Advisory Council



Mark Rose, Advisory Council member representing line clearance tree trimming companies.



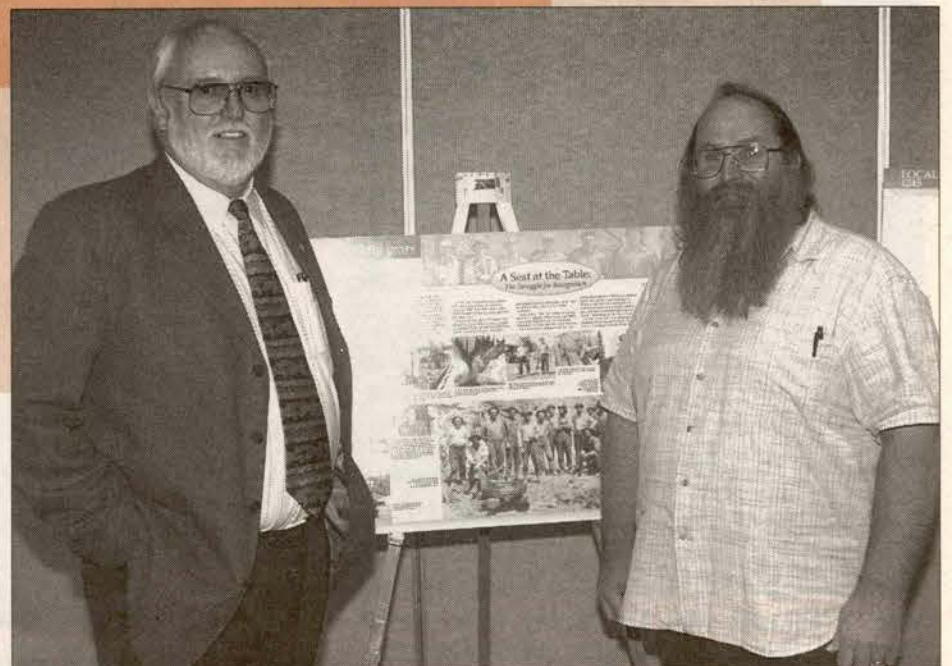
More photos:
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Business Rep. Wayne Greer and Local 1245 steward David Reishus, a guest at the February Advisory Council meeting.

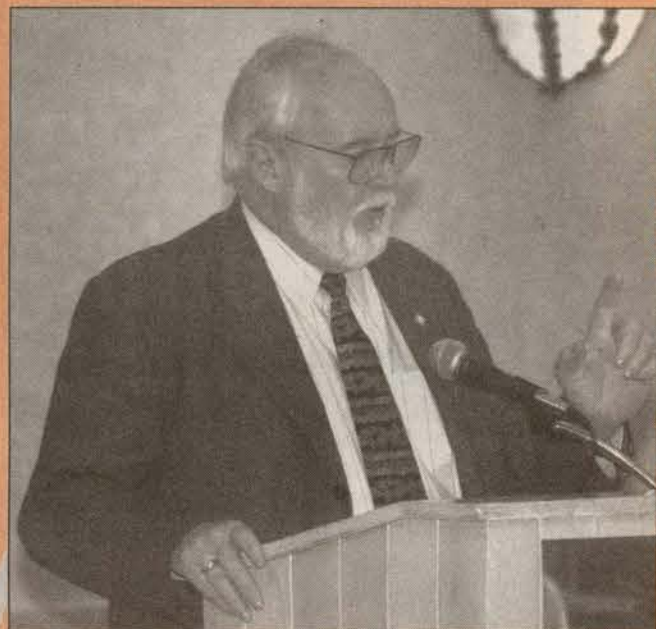
February 3 Concord, Ca.

Business Manager Jack McNally and President Howard Stiefer admire one of six panels depicting Local 1245's history of representing energy workers. The panels were designed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Local 1245, which was originally chartered by the IBEW in 1941.





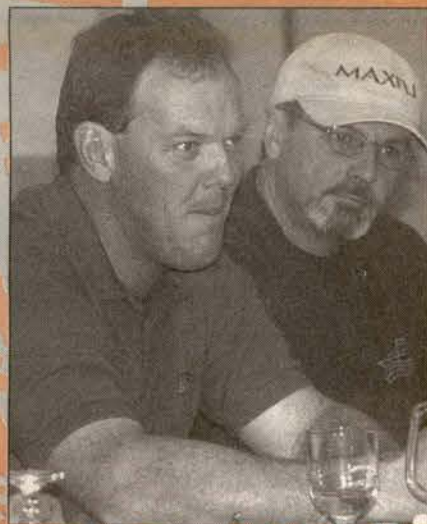
Assistant Business Manager Bob Choate.



Business Manager Jack McNally reports on latest developments in the Energy Crisis, including the union's efforts to promote legislative efforts to prevent utility bankruptcy.



Advisory Council members, from left, Dave Morrison (Citizens Communications), Bob Lovett (PG&E DeSabra) and Larry Rodriguez (AC Transit, East Bay Municipalities).



Tom Rowley (Outside Construction), left, and Mark Taylor (Coast Valleys).



Vice President Jim McCauley and Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell.

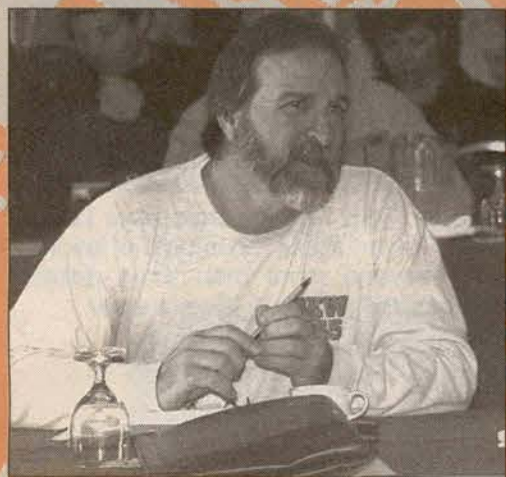


Grover Day, representing PG&E Stockton and City of Lodi.

Local 1245 Advisory Council



Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier.



Mike Stout, representing Irrigation Districts.



Assistant Business Manager Art Murray.

February 3
Concord, Ca.

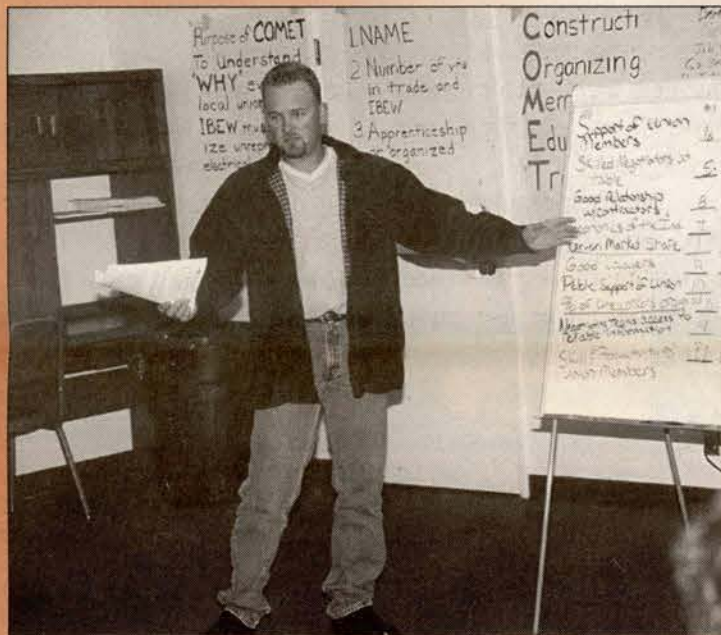


Local 1245 staff members and guests packed the meeting room at the Concord Sheraton for the February Advisory Council meeting.

In the Local 1245 Spotlight



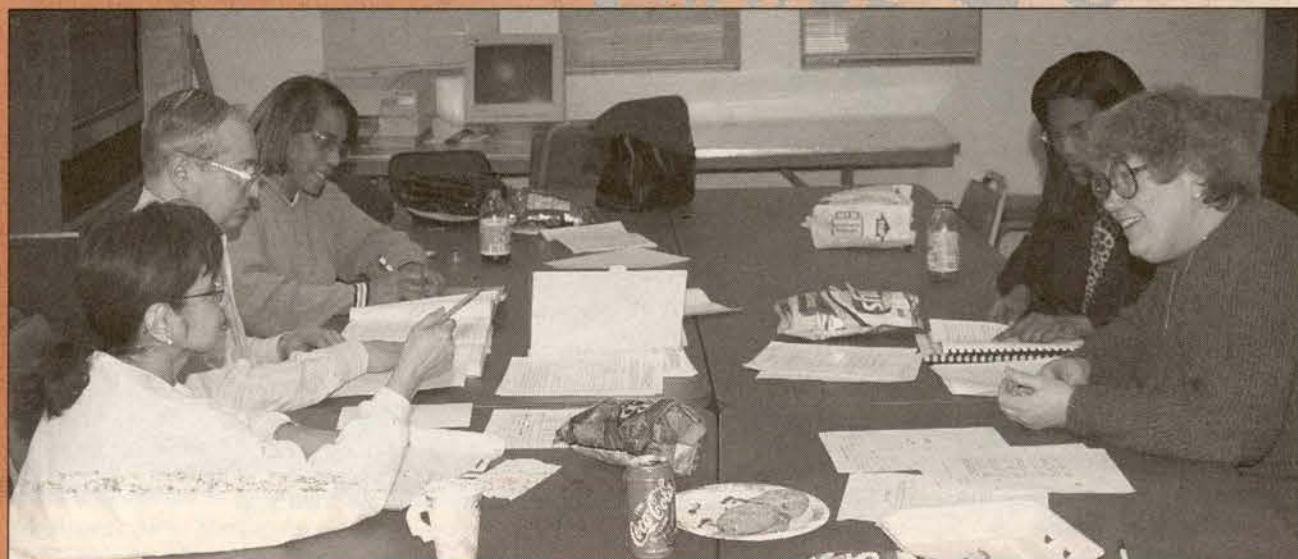
San Francisco KPIX television reporter Tony Russomanno asks Local 1245 Advisory Council member Rich Cowart about the impact of layoffs on service. During January and February, more than three dozen broadcast and print news reports featured Local 1245 members.



Outside Construction Lineman Mike Kautz leads a discussion during an IBEW COMET workshop at Walnut Creek headquarters designed to train rank and file members in the techniques and strategies of organizing.



French labor journalists Christian Vallery and Laurence Fleury met recently with Business Manager Jack McNally at Walnut Creek headquarters. Their publication provides information for employees in France's state-run gas and electric services.



Meeting at union headquarters recently were members of the PG&E Clerical Position Evaluation Committee (clockwise from left): Louisa Donat, John Sunseri, Mary Wise, Donna Ambeau and Arlene Cook.

Photos: Eric Wolfe



REPUBLICAN ERGONOMICS

Ergonomic rules under attack

Toting five-foot high, gnarled papier-mâché hands to represent the crippling injuries workers can suffer in ergonomically unsound jobs, some 200 union members and injured workers on Feb. 28 marched and chanted in front of a downtown Washington, D.C., hotel where Vice President Cheney addressed some 1,700 members of the National Association of Manufacturers.

NAM is one of several major business groups leading the fight to kill the workplace safety measure that could prevent some 600,000 repetitive stress injuries a year.

Janie Jones told the crowd the carpal tunnel syndrome she developed in both her hands came from working in an Arkadelphia, Ark., poultry plant where she and other workers on the deboning line were expected to process 28 chickens a minute—some 1,680 an hour—with just a 15-minute break in the morning and one in the afternoon plus a 30-minute lunch break.

'It hurts'

Jones, the president of UNITE Local 2645, said even after having surgery to try to relieve the pain, "It makes it difficult for me to do my housework and cooking... It hurts."

She said if OSHA's ergonomics standard had been in effect while she was on the deboning line, her

hands wouldn't be riddled with crippling pain today.

Workers health will be at stake this month as Congress, with the heavy support of NAM and other Big Business groups, takes up legislation that would kill the ergonomics standard and prevent OSHA from issuing similar workplace safety standards.

Under the terms of the maneuver they intend to use—the Congressional Review Act—if both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives pass what is known as a resolution of disapproval of the ergonomics standard and President George W. Bush signs it, the ergonomics standard would disappear.

Because the CRA requires just a simple majority and precludes a filibuster against it, the vote will be extremely close. The AFL-CIO, its unions, workplace safety groups and community allies are mobilizing to save the ergonomics standard through e-mails and phone calls to Congress, community actions and lobbying visits.

The ergonomics rule was adopted on Jan. 16 after a 10-year battle. The next day, the National Academy of Sciences issued one more report, in a long line of scientific reports, that confirms musculoskeletal workplace injuries are caused by exposure to ergonomic hazards and that such injuries can be prevented.

By the Local 1245
Safety Committee



Safe driving basics

For most of us the commute is the most dangerous part of our work day. Think about the habits you practice when driving and note those that might need improvement.

1. Observe speed limits and signal when changing lanes.
2. Approach each intersection with caution, watch out for drivers that run red lights.
3. Check blind spots and scan ahead for possible danger.
4. Keep both hands on the wheel, and don't drink, eat or use phone while driving.

5. Keep a keen eye out for children, pets, bikes and pedestrians on the road.

6. Pull over and rest if feeling drowsy.

7. Don't drive if you've been drinking alcohol.

8. Avoid seating children under age 12 in the front seat.

9. Drive slower at night and during rainy conditions.

10. Use the "three second rule"—allow enough distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Allow even more space in hazardous conditions.

Dings and damage

The main gate was out of service for over two months because a bin door came loose and destroyed the gate and the opening mechanism.

A quick drive through the yard revealed much damage to vehicles. Scuff marks on bumpers indicate close calls with objects. In one case a close encounter even peeled off a front bumper.

A missing bin box door testifies that moving a truck without completely closing all doors caused damage to private property, as well as company property.

Be wary of parking too close to

immovable objects, when they can't be seen from the driver's seat. When you return from working, you may forget it and run over it.

Gouges along the sides of trucks could mean miss-adjusted mirrors or just trying to fit between things that are too narrow. In the name of safety take the time to adjust the mirrors. Walk around the truck before moving it. Double check the bin box doors. Don't cut corners or try to fit between spaces too close—go around instead.

Protect yourself and others, company and private property, and your driving record!

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.

McNally urges alternative to transmission buyout

► From Page 1

proposed that the state negotiate to acquire electric generation capacity from PG&E Corp., the parent company of PG&E. McNally noted that PG&E Corp. owns or has a major interest in two new power plants that will soon be coming on-line in California.

"We believe that acquiring transmission assets makes far less sense than acquiring generating assets from PG&E's holding company. Lack of generation is the problem; acquiring generation is the logical solution," wrote McNally.

"Unlike the aging transmission system, these plants will not require hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades," he noted.

Local 1245 has been voicing its concerns about a transmission takeover in private discussions with various public officials in recent weeks. But as the takeover proposal gathered political momentum in mid-February, the union decided to go public with its concerns.

Job Protections

McNally's letter to Gov. Davis was reported in the Feb. 23 edition of the San Francisco Chronicle. The Chronicle story also reported a response to McNally's concerns by Steve Maviglio, a spokesman for Gov. Davis.

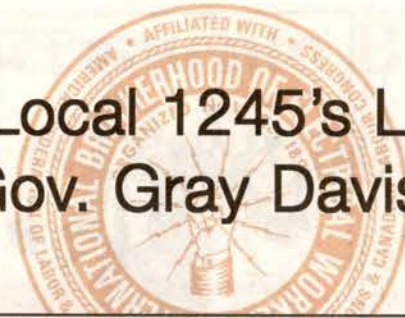
Maviglio said that state acquisition of transmission lines "would not affect one union job," as the state would simply lease the grid back to the utilities.

Local 1245's legislative advocates have been drafting language to protect transmission jobs in the event the state actually does take over the system.

"We have to fight this battle on two fronts," said Business Manager McNally.

"We'd like to convince the governor and legislators to leave transmission alone. But we have to prepare for the possibility that they're going to go ahead and take it. If they do, we want to provide as much protection as possible for our members who do that work."

Text of Local 1245's Letter to Gov. Gray Davis



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL 1245
P. O. BOX 4790
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596
(925) 933-6060

February 22, 2001

Governor Gray Davis
Sacramento, California

Dear Governor Davis:

As you know, our union represents employees at Pacific Gas & Electric. Our union has supported your efforts to address California's electricity crisis. We supported the state's decision to purchase power for the utilities through the Department of Water Resources, our members lobbied for ABIX, and we support current efforts to create a state power authority to build and/or acquire electric generating plants. We also believe that it is appropriate to help relieve the utilities' debt burden by purchasing utility assets.

However, we believe that acquisition of the utilities' transmission system is not the best approach.

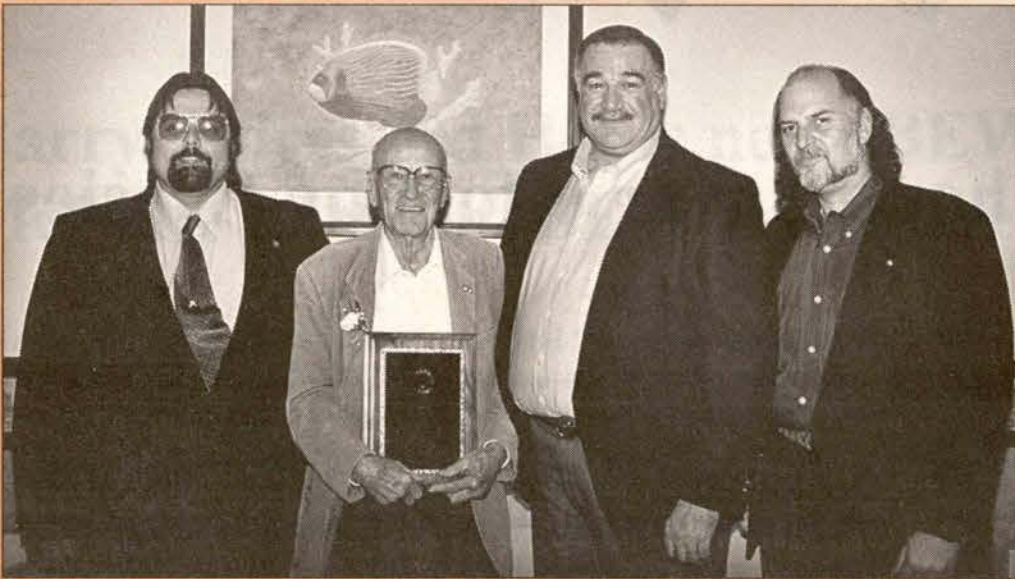
We are concerned that a hasty decision to acquire the transmission system risks unintended consequences, much as AB 1890 led to consequences very different from what was originally envisioned. In our opinion, the current closed-door bargaining is not the best approach to fully-informed decision making.

We believe that acquiring transmission assets makes far less sense than acquiring generating assets from PG&E's holding companies. Lack of generation is the problem; acquiring generation is the logical solution. Right now, PG&E's parent company owns or has a major interest in two new power plants that will soon be coming on-line. Unlike the aging transmission system, these plants will not require hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades.

There is a widespread public perception that PG&E Corp. took ratepayer money and used it to buy power plants outside the state. Acquiring PG&E Corp.'s power plants in California is a way for the public to get something back. We believe the public would be well-served if current negotiations with PG&E focused on power plant acquisition rather than transmission acquisition.

Sincerely,

Jack McNally
Business Manager
IBEW Local 1245



Photos: Howard Lockwood

**San Luis Obispo, Ca.
January 20, 2001**

55 Years

John Zeagler (holding plaque), joined by union staff members Dan Lockwood, Bob Choate and Mike Haentjens



55 Years

James Sverchek
John Zeagler

45 Years

Robert Leman

35 Years

J.T. Horst
Terrence Tweedie

30 Years

James Blake
Joseph Brown
Gregg Burk
Richard Cudigan
Joseph Johnson
Clayton King
John Ramos
Frank Scholl
Charles Sharps
Frank Teague

25 Years

Robert Chow
Carol Dol
Robert Garica
Walter Howard
Howard Krinsky
Danny Lambert
Dean Mooney
John Pulson
Robert Rowley
David Selstad
Nicholas Smith
Stan Weaver

20 Years

Aulton Allison
Darrel Andrews
Richard Awalt
Reiko Bolon
Karen Briscoe
William Bumen
Max Carreras
Stephen Coy
Michael Creath
Jack Dennington
William Dolengewicz
Fanelle Felix
Daniel Ferrini
Frank Geisler
Buford Glenn
Dennis Jaenig
John Jansen
Jimmy Johnson
Frank Kucera
Maureen Lannan
Ron Layugan
Dan Lockwood
Paul Lyon
Lloyd Madansky
Molly Magdub
Timothy Matthews
Mark May
M.D. McCracken
Gerald McMullen
Gary Medigovich
Robert Miller
William Murray
C.J. Oles
Kathleen Oles
Rosemary Paz

Laura Plemons
Shelby Puckett
Michele Pugh
Mary Reneua
Rolando Rodriguez
Linda Salazar
Gregory Smith
Kenneth Steffen
John Stone
Andy Valdez Jr.
Anthony Valine
Daniel Ward
Stuart Weaver
Maria Wilkerson
Fred Woltman III

35 Years

Terrence Tweedie, Joe Horst



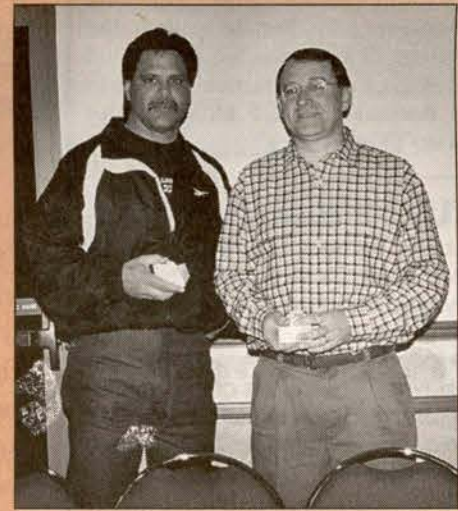
20 Years

Front: Dan Ferrini, Dennis Jaehnig, Janelle Felix, Reiko Bolon; Back: Gary Madigovich, Lloyd Madansky, Mark May, Paul Lyon, Frank Kuceria



20 Years

Front: Laura Plemons, Rosemary Paz, Kathy Oles, Rob Miller; Back: Stu Weaver, Dan Lockwood, Dan Ward, Rolando Rodriguez, Greg Smith



25 Years

Stan Weaver, David Selstad



30 Years

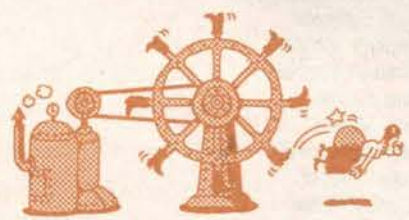
Front: Frank Teague, Chuck Sharps, John Ramos
Back: Frank Scholl, Joe Johnson, Gregg Burk



WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

'We'll Not Be Slaves'

Mechanization in the shoe and boot industry brought dramatic changes to Lynn, Mass. But despite dazzling productivity and spiraling living costs, wage cuts followed wage cuts. Many women earned as little as a dollar a week, despite work days of up to 16 hours. Men earned \$3 a week.



The male shoemakers struck for higher pay on Washington's Birthday, 1860—but knew that success depended on the female binders and stitchers. "If the ladies refused to bind and stitch, the bosses must accede to our demands," said strike leader Alonzo Draper.

On March 7, 1860 the 1,000 women binders joined the 5,000 male shoemakers. Despite a fierce blizzard, they marched through the streets of Lynn, carrying a banner that proclaimed, "American ladies will not be slaves!" The wages of the women workers, declared strike leader Ellen Darlin, are "reduced far below a just compensation."



Newspapers warned of "rebellion in the north," and compared the female strikers to the women of the French Revolution. The authorities called out the militia. The bosses tried to split the Germans and Irish from the Yankees, but failed. Eventually the strikers, female and male, returned to work with the promise of higher wages—but without union representation.

Memorial honors war effort by 'Rosies'

It's taken over a half a century, but women workers on the home front during World War II are finally receiving national recognition. The Rosie the Riveter Memorial Dedication held last fall in Richmond, Ca. gave recognition and thanks to the women who worked in the Richmond Kaiser Shipyards. Some 150 "Rosies," all now in their 70s, 80s, 90s and 100s were present for the long overdue memorial.

Tears filled the eyes of Elsie Flores-Smith as she recalled standing on the dockyard watching the launching of a "Victory" ship she had just helped weld together. "All of us gals would stand there so proud at what we had done. We helped bring the victory."

Although she couldn't recognize, 58 years later, any co-workers from Plant 2, Flores-Smith could still vividly recall the smell of the welding torch and the nod of her head as she brought the helmet down to protect her eyes from the flash.

For Ludie Mitchell, also a welder, her work was not only crucial to "Bringing the boys home," but was also a thing of beauty. "You'd have these crags and you'd have to chip them off with a hammer and then brush them down until they were smooth. You tried to make your beads look so nice. People tend to not think of it that way, but welding can be a very pretty art."

Mitchell, along with Rosie Powers who helped run a 24-hour child care center at the shipyards, traveled to Washington last year to urge Congress to appropriate money for the national site.

Congressman George Miller, a steadfast supporter of the project, spoke of the historical resonance of the Richmond Kaiser shipyards.

"For the first time in American history the workforce was integrated, women and men, blacks and whites," he said. "Whether you liked it or not you worked alongside someone you'd never worked with be-

"It was hard to convince your lead man that you could do the work. When he would assign jobs I'd follow right behind him and say, 'I could do that.' And finally he got tired of it and said, 'OK, do it.' And of course I could do it."

Phyllis Gould

fore, maybe someone you'd never seen before, or maybe someone you had an attitude about. It was about the dignity of women, about the dignity of minorities. If you can have that dignity when the country is at war, you can have that dignity when this country is at peace."

The idea for the memorial came from Richmond city councilwoman Donna Powers, whose mother-in-law worked in the childcare center. The memorial is a 441-foot longway—the actual length of a Liberty ship—featuring a sculpture and quotes from Rosies. It was designed by artist Susan Schwartzenberg and landscape architect Cheryl Barton.

While the memorial was overwhelmingly positive and patriotic, some like Jean May, a welder on the graveyard shift in Yard Two, remembered the prejudice encountered by women. She said that the Boilermaker's Union, to which they all had to belong, gave women only half a vote in union matters. "They said it was because we weren't bona fide union members, but I think it was really because we were women. We walked into a man's world and frankly they weren't ready for it. Especially when they got around women who had something to say."

And despite their official welcome into the labor force, being one of the first women in the shipyards was a challenge. Phyllis Gould, a welder, reports that at first when there were only a few women, chap-

erons were hired to escort them to the bathrooms and to lunch. But once the number of women increased, it wasn't feasible to have escorts.

"It was hard to convince your lead man that you could do the work," she said. "When he would assign jobs I'd follow right behind him and say, 'I could do that.' And finally he got tired of it and said, 'OK, do it.' And of course I could do it."

Turning Point

Historians point to the Rosies' experience as a turning point in feminist history. For the first time ever, women brought home paychecks. And though almost all of them were let go after the war, their new-found independence was not so easily removed.

Molly Martin, spokeswoman for Tradeswomen, a national advocacy organization for women in the trades, thanked and saluted "our foremothers in the trades." She went on to call on the government to show a similar willingness these days to help women overcome barriers to gainful labor such as lack of training, transportation, and child care. "Rosie the Riveter proved that women can do it. Let's remember her legacy," said Martin.

This story by Helen Vozenilek first appeared in Labor Notes. Reprinted with permission. For subscription information, contact: Labor Notes, 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210.

Retired women face greater challenge

By Orv Owen

Retirement income is often thought of as a three-legged stool. One leg is Social Security. Another leg is employer/union provided pensions. And the third is savings and investment income. Together, the three legs are supposed to provide an adequate income during retirement years.

However, millions of women find they enter retirement with just one leg of the stool intact—Social Security. This means they face a greater challenge to survive than do men.

Older women living alone are five times more likely than men to be poor. How does this happen? Mainly it is due to the inequities over a lifetime that continue into retirement. Compared to men, women have historically earned lower wages. Even today they earn only 74 cents for every dollar that men earn, and they are less likely to have savings or a pension.

Women are less likely to have pension benefits because the types of jobs they hold often do not provide pension plans. Part-time and temporary work, plus time spent out of the labor force for caregiving to children, parents and others, has led to only one-fifth of retired



Members of the San Jose chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club at a recent meeting were, from left, standing: Wendell Peterson, Alice Marie Peterson, Watie Anthney, Jack Hill, Bob Richards, John Petries; Seated: Orv Owen, President; Richard Murphy, Recording Secretary; Percy Rome.

women receiving pensions compared to nearly half of men.

Widowhood and divorce also contribute to poverty in retirement for women. Eighty percent of all widows living in poverty become poor only after their husbands die. Many older divorced women lose out of receiving benefits from their former spouse's pension because the pension was not included as a marital asset at the time of divorce. Divorced women over age 62 have a poverty rate that is higher than widows of the same age.

As previously noted, Social Security remains the principal source of retirement income for the mil-

lions of women who are already retired without pensions.

It is imperative that working women, divorced women and retired women learn their legal rights regarding pension benefits and keep informed on the plans and policies of the Congress and the newly-appointed administration regarding Social Security and Medicare.

Congress should strengthen Social Security for women by raising the survivor's benefit for widows, who make up 45% of all elderly women.

Keep alert! Keep the faith!

Orv Owen is retired Assistant Business Manager for Local 1245.

Retirees call Bush plan 'wolf in sheep's clothing'

The Alliance for Retired Americans criticized the budget announced last month by President George W. Bush as "a wolf in sheep's clothing."

"The speech made passionate references to programs we care about . . . but the meager dollars he plans to devote to them are an insult to the very principles he says he upholds," said Alliance President George J. Kourpias. "His message last night was clearly that of a wolf in sheep's clothing. It provides more for the rich and less for aver-

age workers and retirees."

Far from offering prescription drug assistance to all seniors, Bush proposed using state-administered Medicaid welfare programs to provide prescriptions only to lower-income persons.

"Under the plan, all other seniors—roughly 25 million—will be forced to purchase private market plans in order to get prescription drugs, and the HMOs and private insurers will still get to make decisions as to which medications are covered and how much

they will pay on behalf of seniors," Kourpias said.

According to Kourpias, Bush is "attempting to gain support to spend money needed for a real prescription drug program on tax cuts for the wealthy."

When the surplus is gone, Kourpias said, "any discussion of a meaningful drug program would be meaningless."

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a nationwide organization of more than 2 million union retirees.



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.

Gladys Ellis, 28 years
Oakland, CA

Lester Felkins, 36 years
Red Bluff, CA

Albert Fisher, 30 years
Volcano, CA

Timothy Gathers, 37 years
San Jose, CA

Richard Genereux, 37 years
Lodi, CA

Gary Glover, 36 years
Taft, CA

Allan Jessop Jr., 32 years
Benecia, CA

Frank Johnson, 34 years
Cobb, CA

Lance Karber, 35 years
Bakersfield, CA



"Our health clinic says your blood pressure and nerves are fine. Don't you take your job seriously?"



Everyone at the meeting had their own ideas on how to run the company... Elmer had his own, too.



"I admire the way you people can get by on so much less than I can!"



"Now that we've automated the plant we're doing the wrong things a lot faster!"

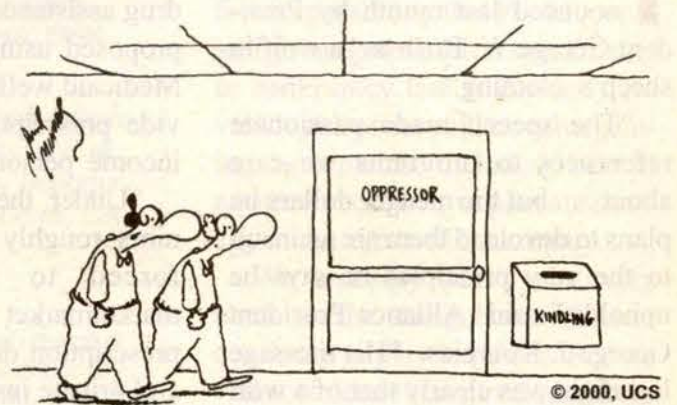
Life at Work



"I didn't have a doctor's note, so I threw up on the boss's desk."



"I'm afraid the employees didn't react well to the employee morale survey."



"At least this new honesty policy is a step in the right direction."