

## Outside Construction

### Working from the skids



Pages 8-9

## Union, PG&E move toward full-scale contract bargaining

**R**eversing earlier expectations, Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric Co. are likely to conduct full-scale contract negotiations this year.

Local 1245 will accept bargaining proposals from members on the full range of contractual issues at unit meetings in March and April. The union expects to convene its bargaining committee sometime in April and to exchange proposals with PG&E around the first of July.

"Until recently it appeared we would need to focus most of our energy on the impacts of PG&E's reorganization plan," said Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. "In order to do that we

were prepared to limit general bargaining to a few key economic issues."

PG&E's reorganization plan calls for the creation of new companies for generation, electric transmission and gas transmission. If approved by the bankruptcy court, that plan will affect the status of many current PG&E employees and require extensive "impact bargaining" between the company and Local 1245.

Last month, however, the judge in PG&E's bankruptcy case said he will permit the California Public Utilities Commission to introduce an alternative plan. In addition, PG&E and the CPUC have agreed to mediation of their dispute over how to bring PG&E out of bankruptcy. These developments appear to have stretched out the timetable for winning approval of PG&E's plan, Zimmerman said, and that frees up the union to concentrate on general bargaining.

"If the PG&E plan gets back on the fast track later this year, we would still have the option to scale back general bargaining so that we could concentrate more energy on protecting members impacted by the reorganization," he said.

### Pre-emption Sought

PG&E had hoped that Federal Bankruptcy Judge Dennis Montali would clear the way for quick adoption of its reorganization plan by using his authority to pre-empt numerous state laws. For example, a

## SMUD talks turn to money

Local 1245 and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District have begun to tackle economic issues in general bargaining.

On the table are wages, retirement benefits, classification studies and medical benefits, according to Business Rep. Wayne Greer.

The two sides have reached some table agreements on non-monetary issues, although numerous proposals remain on the table.

The union's bargaining committee has now been meeting for nearly half a year.

## Sierra Pacific's survival could hinge on rate case

**R**eno-based Sierra Pacific Power could follow PG&E into bankruptcy if Nevada regulators reject the utility's request to be reimbursed for energy costs incurred during last year's electric market fiasco.

In a Deferred Energy Rate Case filed on Feb. 1, Sierra Pacific is seeking to recover \$205 million for wholesale power and fuel purchases made last year on behalf of its customers. This is an enormous sum of money for a regulated utility with annual revenues of about \$100 million, and its failure to recover these costs could imperil the company's

ability to survive, threatening the jobs of the Local 1245 members who have kept the lights on in northern Nevada.

Like PG&E, Sierra Pacific finds itself a victim of deregulation run amok. Under the terms of deregulation legislation in Nevada, Sierra had planned to sell its generating plants by June 1, 2001. Accordingly, the company made no provision for future fuel purchases.

But the situation changed dramatically when wholesale prices in

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### Feature



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## EVENTS

### MARCH 9

Service Awards  
Chico, CA

Service Awards  
San Luis Obispo, CA

Stewards Conference  
Chico, CA

Stewards Conference  
San Luis Obispo, CA

### MARCH 15

Service Awards  
North Bay (CA)

### MARCH 16

Stewards Conference  
North Bay (CA)

Stewards Conference (Mirant)  
Walnut Creek, CA

### MARCH 22

Service Awards  
Eureka, CA

Service Awards  
Stockton, CA

### MARCH 23

Service Awards  
San Jose, CA

Stewards Conference  
San Jose, CA

Stewards Conference  
Eureka, CA

### APRIL 6

Service Awards  
Oakland, CA

Service Awards  
Reno, NV

Stewards Conference  
Reno, NV

### APRIL 12

Service Awards  
Redding, CA

Service Awards  
Fresno, CA

### APRIL 13

Stewards Conference  
Fresno, CA

## APPOINTMENTS

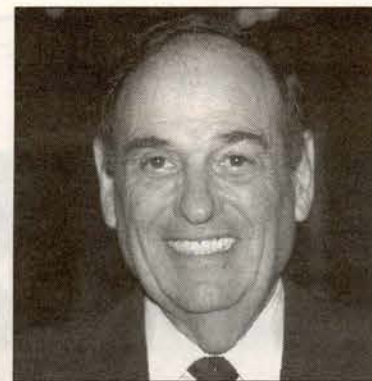
### CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

Heli-Expo  
(Helicopter Association International)  
Manning J. (Joe) Ferreira

## YOUR UNION

# Another month with members

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager



In case you haven't guessed, spending time with our members is the part of this job I like the best.

That made February a very good month indeed.

The week of Feb. 11 I spent four days on the road—from Merced to Sacramento. From five o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night, Sam Glero, Dennis Seyfer and I stopped at every work location we could find. Tiny headquarters, big yards, offices, substations, whatever we came across. We met with workers from the public sector, from PG&E, and from Frontier.

On Saturday, Feb. 23, it was a great privilege to spend time with some of the most dedicated members in our organization—the unit chairs

and recorders who give this union fresh life at unit meetings every month. More than a hundred unit officers gave up a day of free time to attend a training conference in Concord. They came from as far away as Ely, Nevada, Portland, Oregon and Riverside, California—and everywhere in between—to improve their skills as local leaders of the union, and I admire their commitment.

Then came a marathon three-day conference at the union hall in Walnut Creek, something we called "The Future is Now" conference. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an intensive orientation for members with the potential to be future business representatives for the union. No task is more important to me as

Business Manager than preparing a new generation of leadership for the union to replace those of us who have been on watch for the last 20 years or so. Obviously we need both youth and experience on the union staff, but it was really heartening to see so many young faces in the group, curious to learn more about the union and its mission and its operations. (There will be more on this conference in next month's Utility Reporter.)

But even as we look to the future, there is plenty to keep us busy in the present: contract negotiations ongoing or about to begin at SMUD, Sierra Pacific, PG&E, PG&E Gas Transmission Northwest, and tree trimmer companies. PG&E is trying to emerge from bankruptcy, Sierra is trying to avoid it. Municipalization issues confront us in San Francisco, the East Bay and elsewhere.

Our plate is full. But I can tell you this. We will only do as well with these "big issues" as we do listening to and communicating with our members. No one person has a monopoly on wisdom, but I'm convinced there's plenty of wisdom to be found among the members of this union. A big part of my job is to seek you out and find out what you know and what you think, so that together we can figure out what we should do about the "big issues."

It's a time-consuming process and it can make for a demanding schedule. But I can't think of any activity that is more important for the advancement of this union.



## UtilityReporter

March 2002  
Vol. 51 No. 3  
Circulation: 23,400



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Perry Zimmerman

**Communications Director & Managing Editor**  
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Ed Dwyer

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](http://www.IBEW1245.com). Our phone number is (925) 933-6060.

### Members at PG&E . . .

Find out the latest. On PG&E's Page One go to:

[www.hr/ibew](http://www.hr/ibew)



## Members speak out on pensions, employee discount



### Pension proposals

To the Editor:

After reading Brother Murphey's letter in last month's issue of the Utility Reporter on retirement, and Peter Mandon's article, coupled with the cover story on medical costs for retirees, I felt the need to write and inform the union membership at PG&E what some of us in the Santa Rosa area have been working on for proposals to the upcoming contract negotiations.

Like Brother Murphey, many of us already understand the need to have a built-in cost of living adjustment to the pension plan, because no matter how big of an initial payment in retirement you might begin receiving (whether from an increased pay band system, or a conversion to a percentage system) if there are no regular cost of living adjustments made to your retirement income, somewhere down the line you are going to be falling behind. And like all the retirees have been experiencing, the rising medical costs have become the single biggest threat to retirement income, because at the rate they've been increasing, just a few years down the road retirees will be paying out over half their retirement money just on medical costs.

On top of that, everyone seems to realize how much money has been accumulating in the pension fund, despite the losses taken in the economic markets the last two years, and that most of those billions are not actually protected by the pension plan for the retirees to benefit from. The only way more of those billions becomes protected is when PG&E agrees to expand the pension plan and commits more of that money to it.

Therefore, we see the need for the PG&E pension plan to be improved in three ways:

1. Create a built-in cost of living adjustment to the retirement plan for

all current and future retirees that will be adjusted at least annually based on the cost of living index for California.

2. Require PG&E to commit to working with the union (or even with other corporations, and the state and federal governments) to find, or even establish, at least one quality medical plan for all current and future retirees so that the retirees will not have to ever pay more than 10% of their retirement income on out-of-pocket costs for medical care, be it premiums, user fees or medications, and that PG&E will commit pension plan funds, or money directly from PG&E, to aid in funding such a plan, or plans.

3. That beginning Jan. 1, 2003, the current pay band system of the PG&E retirement plan for calculating retirement income for (employees retiring on or after that date) will be changed over to a percentage of income system, and that this new percentage system will be established at a minimum of 2% of income times the years of service with PG&E. Thus an employee with 35 years of service with the company would receive 70% of their annual pay divided into 12 monthly payments as their income from the retirement plan. There would also be a cap placed on the retirement plan so that no one receives more than 100% of their employment salary as their income from the PG&E Retirement Plan.

In addition, we want it to be understood by both PG&E and the union that Social Security and the Savings Fund Plan are to be recognized only as being separate supplements to income for PG&E retirees, because these two different plans are not actually part of the PG&E Retirement Plan. There is just such a huge amount of money in the PG&E Retirement Plan Fund that it must be viewed as being separate and standing alone, especially with all the talk there has been over the years

about Social Security someday going broke, as well as seeing what can happen to 401K investments when there's a major downturn in the economy.

We, the union members who are still working at PG&E, and who have the power to vote on our contract, have an obligation to use our voices and our votes to help [retired members survive] the attacks by inflation and skyrocketing medical costs. And in this age of corporate greed through deregulation, as the Enron debacle has shown, we as workers need to become proactive through our union to make sure retirement income doesn't get reduced by corporate greed, misjudgments or miscalculations. I hope other members throughout the PG&E system will join us in submitting similar proposals at their local unit meetings for contract negotiations.

Mike Gragg  
PG&E Santa Rosa

### Discounts justified

(Editor's Note: The following letter was written in response to a newscast on KCRA-TV criticizing the PG&E employee discount. The author has given permission for us to reprint it here.)

Shame on KCRA 3. This story was biased. Its sole intent was to cause harm to PG&E. Its sole outcome might be a reduction of a valuable employee benefit, [hurting] people that are committed to keeping your homes warm.

I am a proud PG&E employee of seven years. I am a union worker and make a good wage. There's a very, very small percentage of high-level executives that make the large salary Loretta Lynch described on your newscast. Taking away their 25% discount may or may not hurt a high-level executive, but it will surely impact the family budget of my fellow union employees.

Got something to say? Send your letter (with your name, Social Security Number and phone number) to:

Utility Reporter Letters  
IBEW 1245  
PO Box 4790  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Your story mentioned PG&E's multi-billion dollar debt and the current higher rates. What you neglected to re-iterate is: the multi-billion dollar debt accrued because of outrageous price gouging by energy suppliers and traders, like Enron. You neglected to re-iterate that the current high electric prices are mainly from the California State Electric Surcharge. California is using PG&E as a bill collector; PG&E doesn't get that money!

PG&E is not running from its debts. Through its plan of re-organization it wants to make good on its debts. The company just needs time and an appropriate plan. It needs well-trained, experienced employees to keep the lights on and the gas flowing. PG&E needs to retain its veteran employee base.

Let's do the math, shall we?

Per your newscast: the annual cost of the 25% discount [is] \$21,111,200 per year ... Let's say the employee discount was eliminated and the money was given to the customers: \$2.57 would be the yearly bill reduction for each account.

Why would KCRA 3 News waste valuable news coverage on something that will save individual consumers such a paltry amount?

The employee discount is a real benefit to the hard working employees that serve a sometimes-thankless public. I don't appreciate the poor and biased reporting that may now jeopardize this benefit.

Bryan Hipley  
PG&E Sacramento





## Lapel flags, pyramid strikers, fruit of free trade

### Belated pension for farmworkers

Three decades after the United Farm Workers union fought its bloodiest battles to organize field hands, farmworkers are discovering the benefits of belonging to a union, CNN.com reported.

The UFW is trying to reach thousands of aging migrant farmworkers who are owed millions in pension funds thanks to a program established in the mid-1970s by the union's founder, Cesar Chavez.

One recipient is 87-year-old Modesto Montero, a retired farmworker who spent years watering lettuce in California's Salinas Valley. Montero didn't remember any pension.

But a check for \$73,357 made a believer out of Montero.

Finding the eligible farmworkers is no easy task. Some of the workers apparently used multiple Social Security numbers to dodge immigration laws.

Growers paid between a nickel and quarter an hour into the pension plan. The fund has grown to \$100 million, with 10,000 members. More than 2,200 retirees are receiving benefits.

Few farmers offer retirement benefits to people who work the fields. The UFW boasts that its Juan De La Cruz Pension, named for a UFW activist fatally shot on a picket line in 1973, is the only union pension fund specifically for farmworkers.

Anyone who worked under UFW contract for five years may be eligible. The pension once required 10 years of service before being eligible, but that requirement has been reduced.

**W**al-Mart management ordered its workers in Las Vegas to remove American flag stickers from their badges because they were handed out by the UFCW. Also, management confiscated union pens—which had become popular after management began charging workers for the pens they use at work.

#### ► Power Workers Strike:

Unionized power workers in South Korea struck Korea Electric Power Corp. last month, forcing the state-run company to extend working hours and even muster retirees, Reuters reported. Thousands of union workers on the railways and at power firms began the first coordinated public-sector strike Feb. 25, demanding shorter working hours and that the government scrap plans to privatize public utilities and services.

#### ► Death Benefit Boost:

PACE is pushing for a \$1 million death benefit for oil and gas workers killed on the job, up from the \$250,000 currently set in the National Oil Bargaining Agreement, Labor Notes reported.

#### ► Rights' Award Rejected:

Prominent women's labor rights activist Dita Indah Sari has rejected a \$50,000 human rights award from sporting apparel giant Reebok in protest against the meager salaries the company pays its Indonesian factory workers. "The factories do not pay a living wage. The pay packet cannot cover basic needs," she told the Associated Press last month, saying it would have been hypocritical to accept the money.

#### ► Shift Work Health Risk:

According to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, women's risk of developing breast cancer is 60% higher if they work at night for more than three years. Constant exposure

### 1245 shows solidarity with nurses



Members of Local 1245 manned the picketline in solidarity with members of California Nurses Association, on strike against Sierra Vista/Tenet in San Luis Obispo. From right, Local 1245 members are: San Luis Obispo Unit Chair Troy Castañon, Business Rep. Dan Lockwood and Jess Aguerre.

to light at night causes melanin production to fall and estrogen production to increase, leading to the higher cancer risk.

#### ► Electric Safety in Australia:

The Electrical Trades Union in the state of Queensland, Australia welcomed their government's plan to institute an Electrical Safety Act, which will ban work on any live electrical work in homes and businesses. Company directors could face fines or jail terms for breaches of the laws.

#### ► Free Trade = Sweat Shops:

A half-million workers in Central America are employed in sweatshops, according to representatives of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions speaking at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil last month. "Unregulated free trade is leading to increased exploitation of workers around the world," said ICFTU official Luis Anderson.

#### ► Hydro Protest:

The British Columbia Federation of Labour (Canada) was joined by large businesses in calling on the government to abandon plans to privatize and

deregulate the state energy firm BC Hydro. Businesses warned that "mines will close, pulp and sawmills will go out of business and thousands of jobs will be lost" if the government goes ahead with privatization.

#### ► Pyramid Builders Strike:

The earliest recorded strikes took place during the construction of the Egyptian pyramids in 230 BC, according to historian W. W. Tarn, who says there were frequent strikes "among the miners, the quarrymen, the tradesmen, even among the police," Labor Notes reported.

#### ► Fighters Hit Palestinian Unions:

International labor leaders expressed outrage at the Feb. 17 attacks by Israeli F-16 fighter aircraft that destroyed nearly 40% of the headquarters of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) in Nablus City. A letter from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions stated that such attacks do not "reduce tensions in the occupied territories nor lead to any improvement in Israel's internal security."



## Bargaining continues with tree companies

Members of Local 1245 at Arbor Tree approved a 6.05% wage increase on a "wage only" ratification vote, bringing Arbor Tree Trimmers to parity with the Asplundh Tree wage rates at Golden Gate/Mission Trails.

Members approved the pact in voting in Santa Margarita, Watsonville, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Fulton and Buellton.

General negotiations are still underway for Local 1245 tree trimmers at Arbor, as well as Davey Tree, Asplundh Tree and EPA Provco. An arbitrator has been brought in to help resolve differences with Davey, Arbor and EPA Provco.

"Relations between the tree companies and Local 1245 are strained, as they normally are at contract time," said Assistant Business Manager Bob Choate. "Local 1245 will use every avenue available to represent all of our members at the bargaining table to achieve a contract worthy of their



Local 1245 Business Rep. Junior Ornelas explains the wage increase to Spanish-speaking members in Buellton.

consideration."

Choate commended Asplundh, EPA Provco, and Arbor Tree for

trying to reach agreement with the union, and said a lot of common ground had been achieved.

## Appointment for Hutchins

Frank Hutchins has been appointed by Gov. Gray Davis as a member of the board of directors, 35th District Agricultural Association, Merced County Fair.



Hutchins Frank Hutchins served as a Business Rep. for IBEW Local 1245 from 1980 to 1996.

## SIERRA PACIFIC POWER



Photos: Eric Wolfe

## Tahoe City change-out

Sierra Pacific line crew prepares to change out a pole on Olympic Drive in Tahoe City, Ca. on a cold but sunny day in January. At left, from left, are: Dean Goslin, Lineman; Don Lough, Lineman; and Bruce Warmuth, Foreman.

Save the Date!

16th Annual  
IBEW 1245



Golf  
Tournament

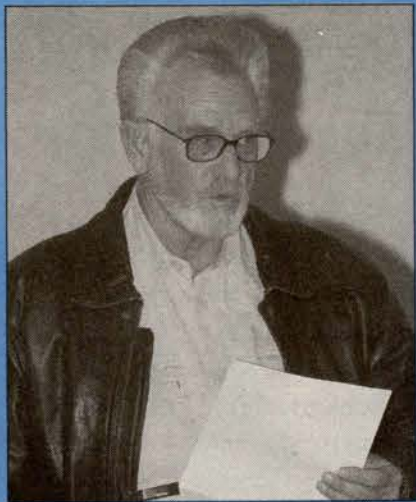
San Ramon

2002  
Sept. 7



# Advisory Council

**A voice for members  
in a time of change**



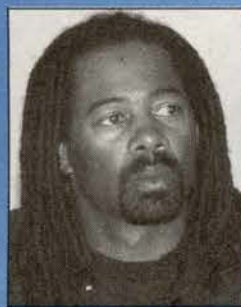
Bill Wallace  
PG&E San Jose, City of Santa Clara



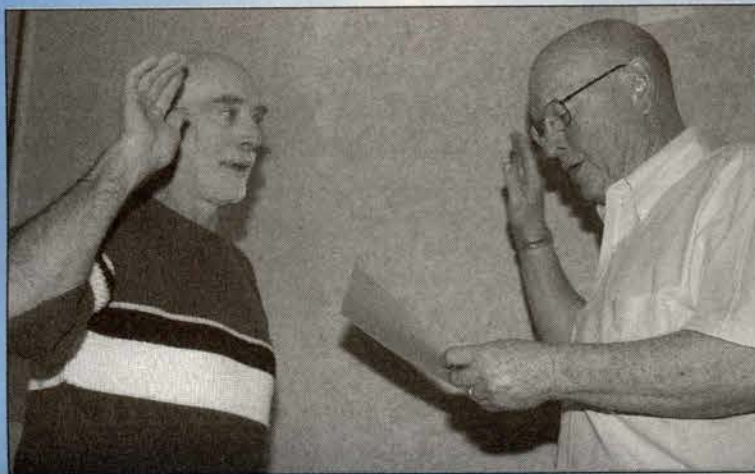
William Gilliam  
Sacramento RT



Grover Day  
PG&E Stockton, City of Lodi



Al Fortier (alternate)  
East Bay Municipalities



Leroy Foster, left, is sworn in by President Ed Mallory to represent PG&E East Bay & Materials, and Foster-Wheeler.



Recording Secretary Chris  
Habecker calls the roll.



John Mendoza  
Executive Board  
Member-at-Large



Grant Ritchie (alternate)  
Sacramento Municipal Utility District



Business Manager Perry Zimmerman



**CORRECTION**  
In December and January, we misreported Peggy Daniel's position on the Advisory Council. Daniel, at left, represents PLO. And there is no "s" at the end of her last name. Sorry, Peggy!



Dave Morrison  
Frontier (Citizens Communications)



Ron Moon (left), PG&E San Joaquin, and Stuart Neblett, PG&E Shasta, City of Redding, Lassen MUD et al.



Lee Thomas Jr. (left), PG&E Humboldt, and Jim Edwards, PG&E Colgate and City of Gridley



**U**pcoming bargaining with PG&E. Financial crisis at Sierra Pacific Power. Protracted bargaining at SMUD. Rising medical costs for retirees. Mediation for tree trimming negotiations. Concerns in Outside Construction over a recent settlement.

These and many other issues made for a lively meeting of the Advisory Council on February 2-3 in Concord, Ca.



Assistant Business Manager Art Murray gives his final Advisory Council report. Brother Murray has accepted a position as an International Representative for the IBEW Ninth District.

Leroy Foster, East Bay, expressed concern about the cap on company contributions to medical premiums for retired PG&E members.

Mark Taylor, Coast Valleys, sought more information about Local 1245's endorsement of PG&E's Plan of Reorganization.

Bill Wallace, PG&E San Jose and City of Santa Clara, addressed the issue of new member orientation.

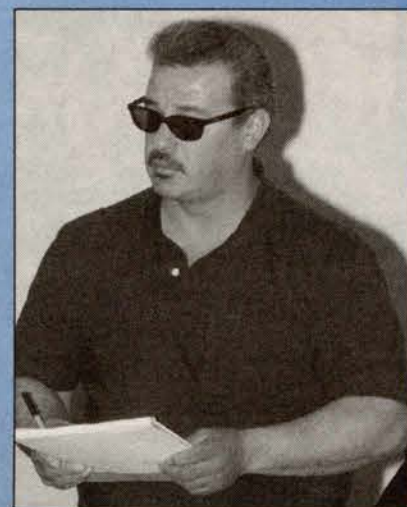
Bob Quinn, PG&E San Francisco, discussed the funding level of PG&E's pension plan.

And on it went—the elected representatives of rank and file members giving up their personal weekend time to discuss the concerns of members throughout Local 1245's jurisdiction.

Remember: the Advisory Council is there for *you*. Have a concern about union policy? Have an opinion you want the union's leadership to hear? Let your Advisory Council member know.

A complete listing of Advisory Council members and their area of representation can be found on the Internet at:

[www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)



Hector Arellano, Tree Trimmers



Richard Bentler  
PG&E DeSabra



Mike Stout  
Irrigation Districts



Bob Quinn  
PG&E San Francisco



Jeff Pedersen explains a unit motion by Outside Construction members concerning a recent bargaining agreement. Listening are (from left) Leroy Foster, Peggy Daniel, Mark Taylor, and (on the right) Ron Moon.

## Advisory Council Concord, California February 2-3, 2002



Kathy Tindall, Northern Area  
Executive Board Member



Vice President Mike Davis, Southern Area Executive Board member Dave Scott, and Treasurer Ed Dwyer.



Mary Wise  
San Francisco Gen'l Office Clerical

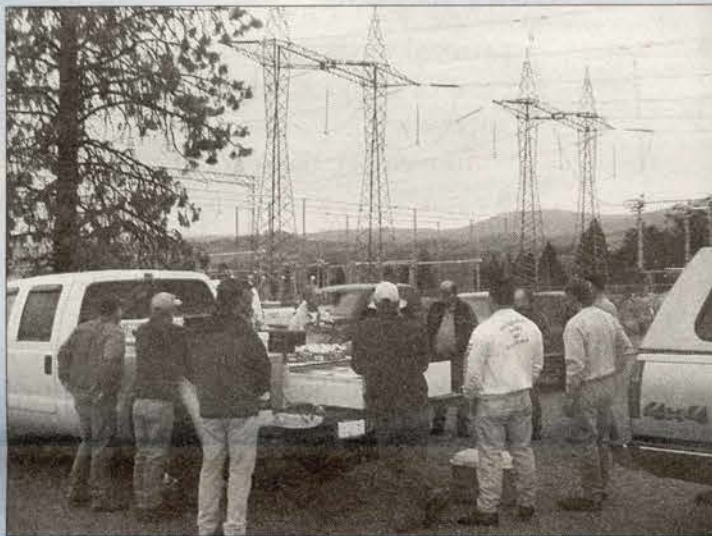


# From the



Thomas Gervais is about to get air-borne.

Photos by Vern Brown



Morning tailboard is the time to discuss the potential hazards of the job, what materials they will need, and where the truck with the materials is going to meet them.



Performing insulator change-out from



The talent. From left: Thomas Gervais, Gordon Winfree (pilot), Terry Rainey, Michael Duren, Leo Lenoir, and Joseph Pullella

Local 1245 members took to the Winco, working from helicopter insulators and perform ins carrying fiber optic cable. The project Mountain substation east of Redding border, and union members got the speed. "In one day they did over 1 1245 Business Rep. Vern Brown. "T



# From the skids



...the potential hazards  
...d, and where the truck  
...m.



...ren, Leo



Performing insulator change-out from the skids.



For tasks inaccessible by

**Ou**  
**Co**

**L**ocal 1245 members took to the air last fall on a job for Winco, working from helicopter skids to change insulators and perform inspection work on towers carrying fiber optic cable. The project stretched from Round Mountain substation east of Redding up to the Oregon border, and union members got the job done with lightning speed. "In one day they did over 100 towers," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Vern Brown. "That's amazing."



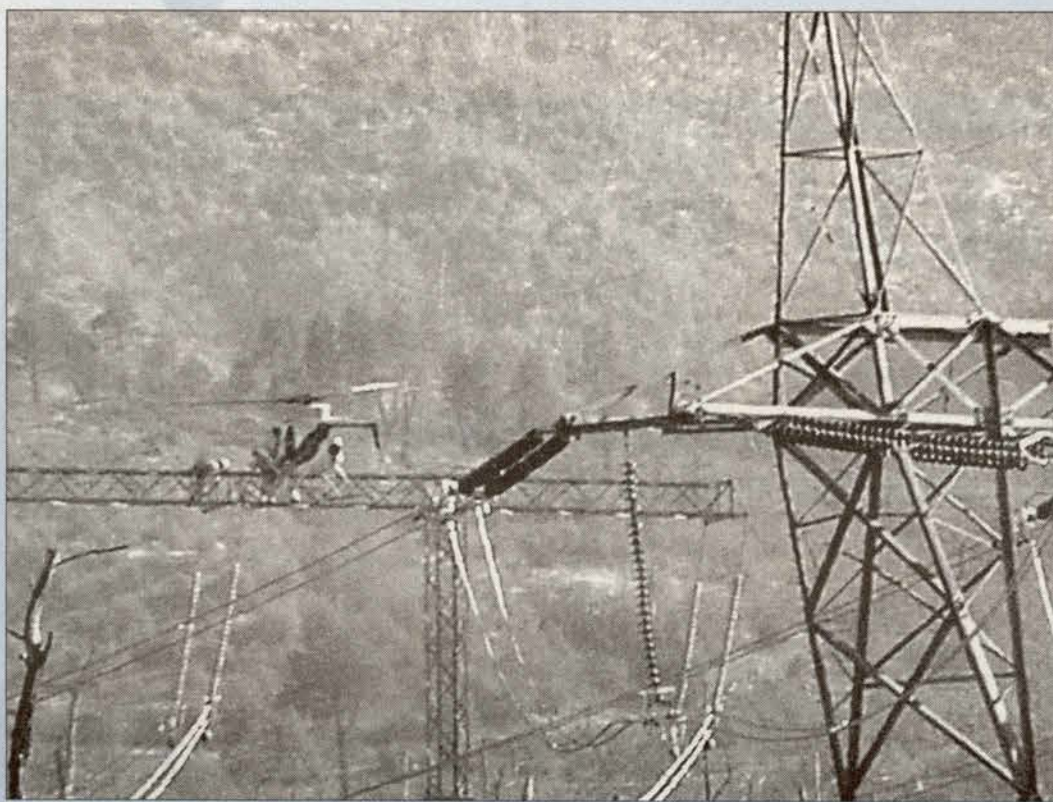
On the bridge.



# skids



the skids.



For tasks inaccessible by helicopter, the men are let out to work from the bridge.

## Outside Construction

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skids to change  
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up to the Oregon  
job done with lightning  
0 towers," said Local  
hat's amazing."



On the bridge.



# Act of courage

## Life-Saving Award goes to Greg Porte for dramatic rescue at race track

**W**hen a sprint car flipped and erupted in flames at Santa Maria Raceway last July, many people braved the heat trying to rescue the driver.

But in the end it was off-duty Diablo Canyon firefighter Greg Porte who had the courage—and the training—to pull Gene Manhire of Fresno to safety.

For his act of heroism, Brother Porte last month was given the IBEW Life Saving Award, the highest honor bestowed by the International union.

Porte, a sprint car enthusiast who has been racing for four years, was on the infield when Manhire's car struck a wall, flipped and erupted in flames. The impact of the crash pushed the rear bumper into the fuel tank and punctured it, allowing 27 gallons of highly combustible methanol to feed the fire.

"He's a friend," Porte explained to *Current Times*, a newsletter for Diablo Canyon employees. "I've raced with him for four years and I wanted to go down and make sure everything was OK."

When he ran toward the flaming car, Porte could see that everything was definitely not OK. The track's safety crew wasn't making headway in fighting the fire. They were trying to put down the flames using dry chemical fire extinguishers, which are much less effective than other methods at controlling this kind of fire.

"It just made the fire that much bigger," recalled Porte. "They weren't prepared for that type of fire and they didn't have the proper protective clothing either."

By this time the fire had grown to a circle approximately 20 feet in diameter with a crowd of 15 to 20 people encircling the flaming car.

Manhire, whose helmet had cracked, was unconscious. A videotape of the race, made available by Speedway, shows members of the Safety Crew arriving within 10 seconds of the crash. But their fire protective clothing was rated to withstand 500-degree heat for just nine seconds. This fire was too hot and they were powerless to help. The video shows them dashing in and then being forced by the heat to jump back out of the flames almost immediately.

As Manhire began to regain consciousness, he struggled to remove himself from behind the steering wheel inside the sprint car, which had an open top similar to a dune buggy. At least two other drivers, wearing

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As Manhire began to regain consciousness, he struggled to remove himself from behind the steering wheel inside the sprint car, which had an open top similar to a dune buggy. At least two other drivers, wearing Nomex heat and flame resistant suits, had stopped to help. One of them attempted to remove Manhire from the car, but couldn't get the steering wheel free.

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IBEW LIFE SAVING AWARD FOR PORTE

Greg Porte displays the IBEW Life Saving Award he received for his rescue of a fellow race car driver. Presenting the award were, from left, Local 1245 Diablo Canyon Unit Chair Lynn Moon, Business Rep. Dan Lockwood, and, on the right, Assistant Business Manager Bob Choate.

Nomex heat and flame resistant suits, had stopped to help. One of them attempted to remove Manhire from the car, but couldn't get the steering wheel free.

Porte, who wears Nomex hood and underwear and Nomex-lined leather shoes—in addition to a full Nomex racing suit—made a dash toward the driver. Just as fire and smoke completely engulfed the car, Porte jumped into the flames, climbed onto a tire and pulled Manhire free.

"I realized they needed help or they weren't going to get him out," said Porte. "That's when all the training I received helped a lot."

Although it had been just one minute and 17 seconds from the time the flames broke out to when he was pulled free, Manhire did not have a Nomex hood to protect his neck and face, or Nomex underwear beneath his racing suit. He suffered second and third-degree burns over his face, neck and the backs of his thighs, but is expected to make a full recovery.

In a letter to Porte, Manhire's mother, who was at the track the night of the crash, expressed a mother's thanks:

"Thank you so much again, you darling young man, for saving my son's life. We will never forget you as long as we live... There are no words to adequately express our deepest appreciation."

Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman praised Porte's act of courage:

"Brother Porte had the skills and the bravery that were needed to save the life of a fellow human being. Local 1245 was proud to nominate him for this life saving award. He certainly deserved it," Zimmerman said.

(Editor's Note: Some of the material for this story came from the *Current Times*, August 20, 2001, a newsletter published for Diablo Canyon employees. We appreciate their assistance in preparing this story.)



By the Local 1245  
Safety Committee



## Don't spread it around

**E**xperts explain there is no real cure for a cold. It has to run its course—a person's body has to rid itself of the cold virus on its own.

There are many cold remedies on the market, but the best remedy is to avoid catching a cold in the first place.

Most colds are passed from one person to another through hand contact. Shaking hands, passing papers, being around people who are sneezing—these are the most common ways of catching a cold.

To minimize your chance of catching a cold:

- ◆ Wash hands with soap and water and allow the soap and water to remain on the hands for about 20 seconds, then rinse thoroughly.

- ◆ Get the proper amount of sleep in order to stay well-rested.

- ◆ Dress appropriately for cold weather.

- ◆ Maintain a healthy diet and exercise program.

- ◆ Remember to drink plenty of fluids.

- ◆ When you get a cold, respect others by trying to avoid spreading it around.

## Now hear this!

**F**ew of us would argue the point that it's a noisy world out there, and it's getting more noisy.

Yet it is a common problem in the workplace and in everyday life that we are all slowly losing a valuable gift—the ability to hear.

Some hearing loss is inevitable due to age, but more importantly most significant hearing loss is environmental.

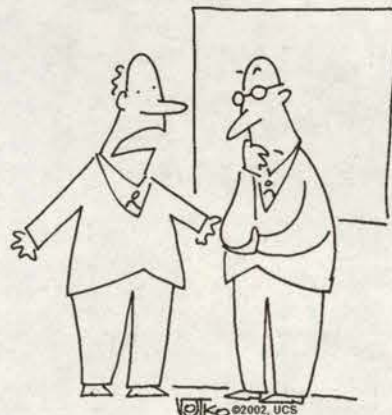
According to the OSHA requirements, noise levels at or above 90

decibels is a permissible exposure level for a period of eight hours only if there is no other significant exposure for the rest of the day.

Also, Federal Code of Regulations, Sec. 1910.95 requires that each employer shall have an effective hearing conservation program.

If your employer does not have such a program in place, ask your supervisor about getting one started.

Remember, your hearing is a gift—one worth protecting!



*"But if we fix the safety hazards, too many people will be able to collect their pensions."*

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee: Stoney Burk, Alameda Power & Telecommunications; Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Ralph Muraca, City of Santa Clara; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; David Vipond, Citizens Communications; Rich Lane, Turlock Irrigation Dist.; and Asst. Business Manager Jim McCauley.



### SAFETY MEASURE

Frank Agtang, a Local 1245 steward and Call Center Safety Committee member, measures the distance to the video screen for Service Rep. Ricky Arnold, who will be working at shared workstation.

## Shared workstations

It's not a development that cheers the heart, but the reality is that Local 1245 Service Reps working at PG&E's Sacramento Call Center have found themselves sharing workstations as the company attempts to fit employees into the available space.

Sharing a workstation is more than an inconvenience for Service Reps—it is a potential safety hazard. To minimize the risk of repetitive stress injuries, a work station must be tailored to the physical requirements of each employee. Seating, keyboard position, and lighting are among the factors that must be considered.

A decade-old agreement negotiated between Local 1245 and PG&E provides that Video Display Terminals must meet certain criteria, including adjustable keyboards and chairs. Such features make it possible—if not exactly desirable—for a Service Rep to safely share his or her work station with someone working a different shift.

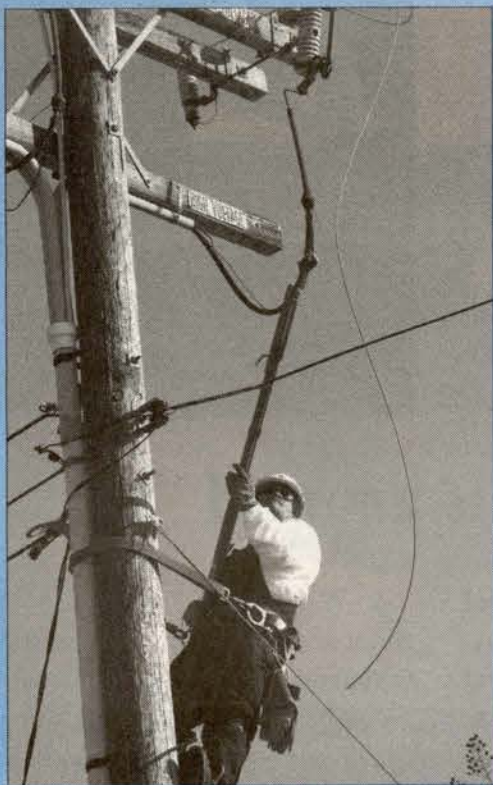
With shared work spaces, concerns over personal privacy mount. Drawers that lock afford employees a place to keep their personal effects safely stored while others are using their workspace.



Local 1245 steward Steve Smith checks the lock number to have keys made for Dennis Carbullido's drawer.

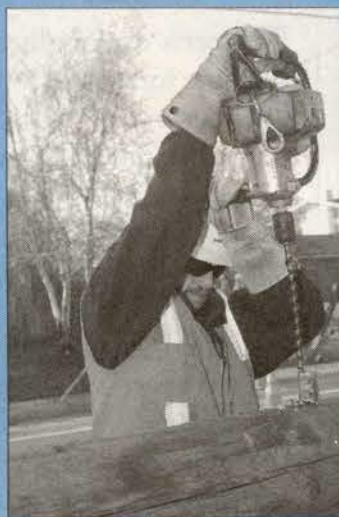


# Car-pole



Lineman Jerry Natad testing conductor prior to applying grounds.

Photos by Eric Wolfe



Drilling holes for pole steps is apprentice Ed Hall.

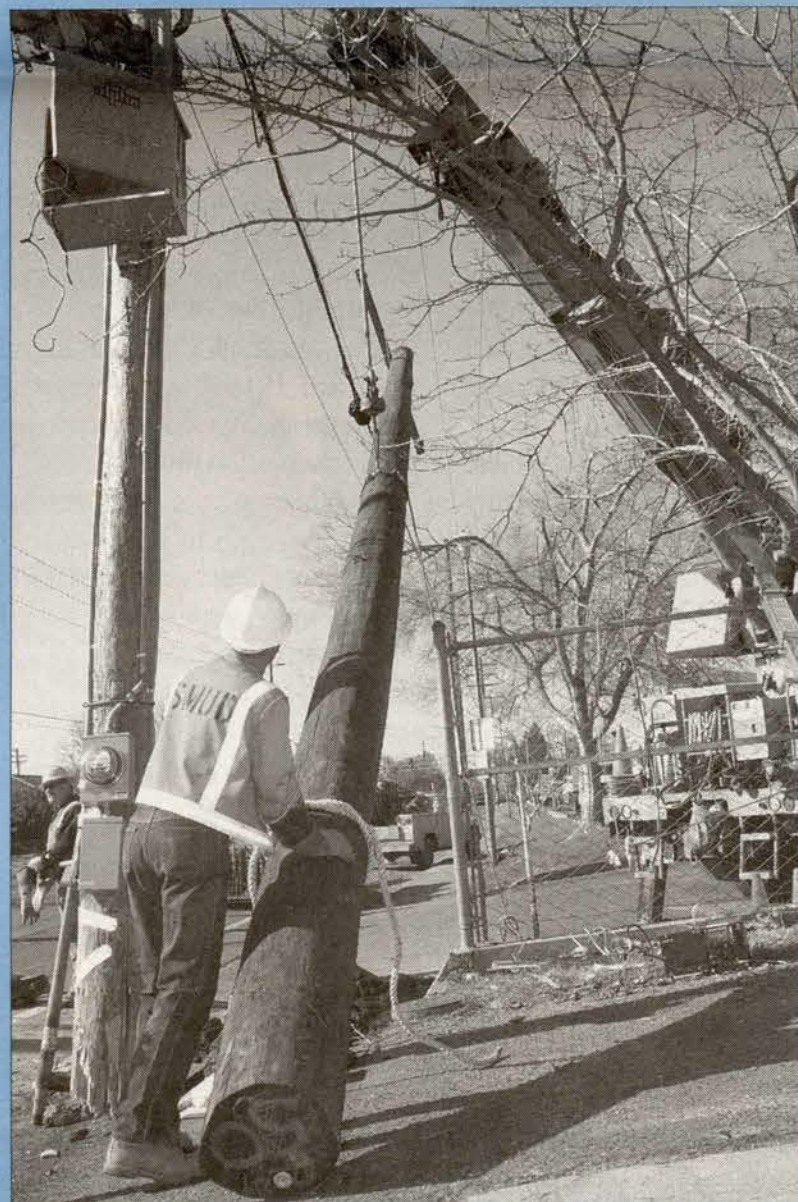
It happened again January 16, early in the morning on Hurley Street in Sacramento. Motorist meets power pole. Sometimes there's a brief debate: Did the motorist hit the pole or did the pole hit the motorist?

Resolving that question is the easy part. The hard part is replacing the pole. That job belongs to Local 1245 members at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

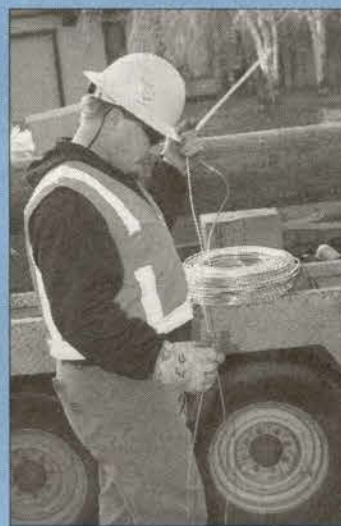
On this particular job, the crew must carefully maneuver the new pole through a thicket of existing electric, telephone and cable wires, and tree limbs.

Passing motorists hardly seem to notice the crew is there. They just expect their power to be on when they get home. And thanks to the skilled, efficient work of Local 1245 members at SMUD, chances are excellent that it will be.

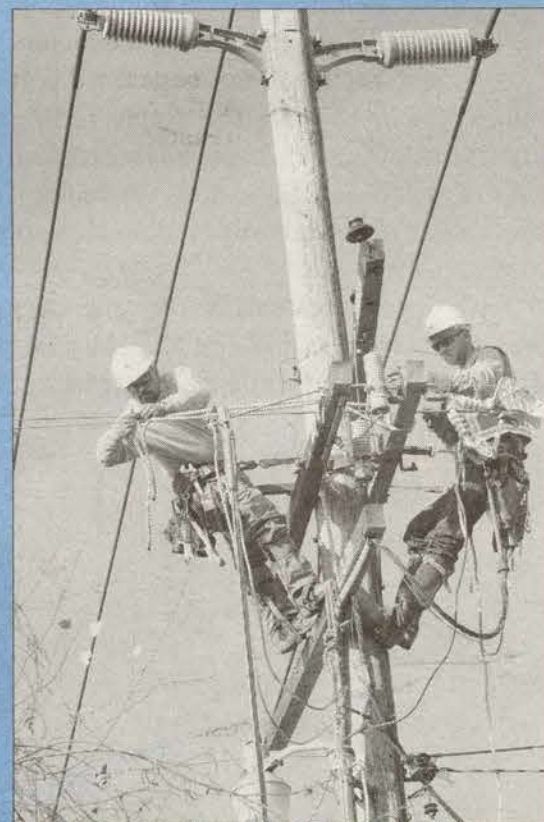
If the cars will just watch where they're going.



Setting pole in hot 12kv. At base of pole is Lineman Gerald Mankins.

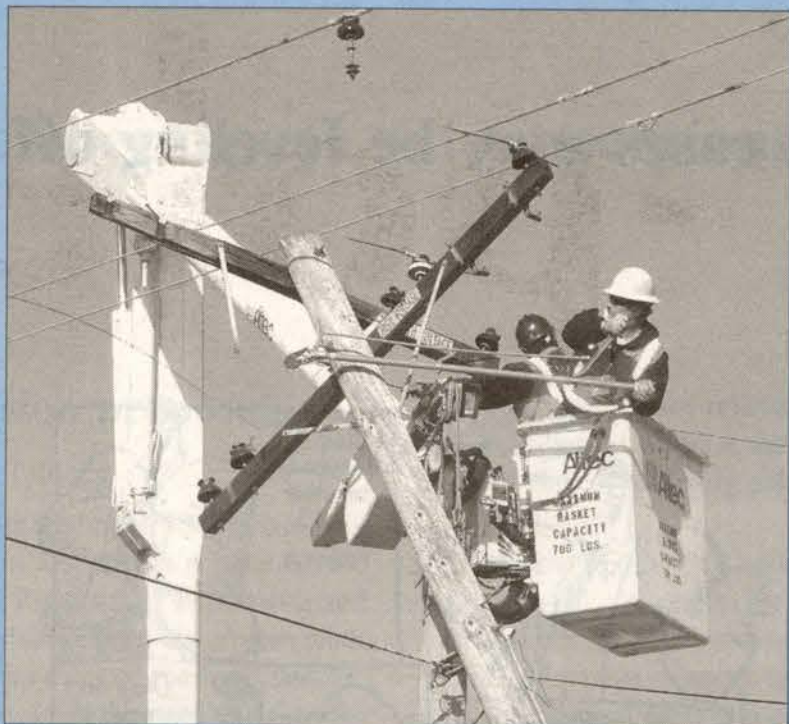


Apprentice Elton Lamborn makes up tie wires.

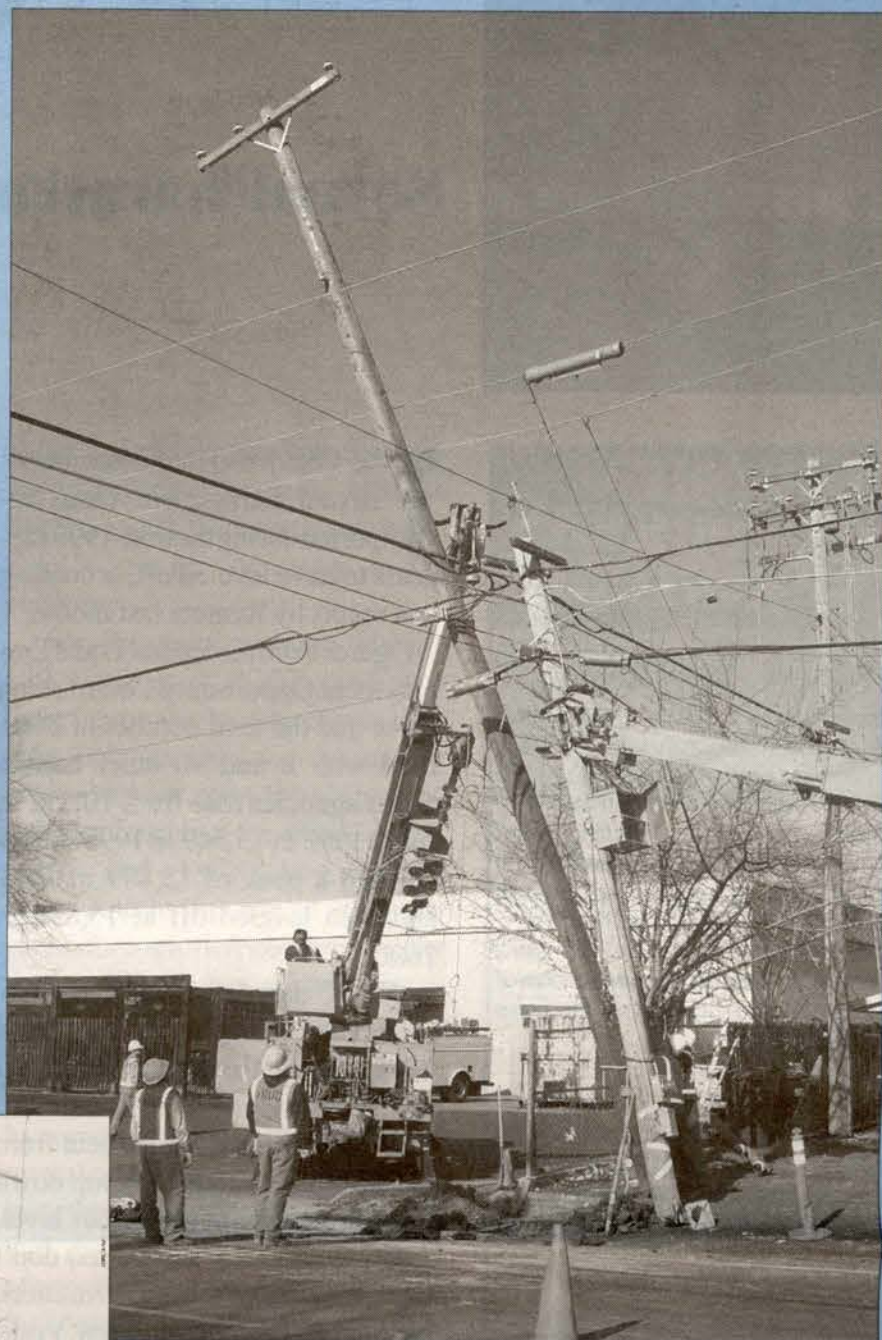


Snubbing (securing) 4AAAC wire, left, is Lineman Michael Garcia. At right is Lineman Gerald Mankins.





Clearing the 4AAAC from the pole hit by the car is Elton Lamborn, apprentice. Also in the bucket is Line Foreman Don Hurdle.



Moving the pole into place. Line Foreman Don Hurdle, left, at the controls.



Securing the poles is Elton Lamborn, apprentice. At the controls is Line Foreman Don Hurdle.

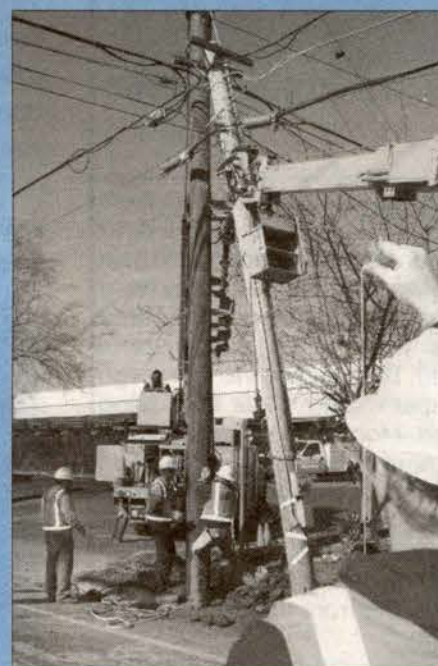


Rotating the pole into position.

*Special thanks to Line Foreman Don Kreuter for assistance in preparing this photo feature.*



Filling in the hole are Mike Garcia, left, and Elton Lamborn.



Elton Lamborn plumbs the pole.





## Sexual harassment cases may be leveling off

### WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

#### Electric Valley

Strikes for the eight-hour day took place in the Pittsburgh area in 1916. After two days in April, 13,000 of the 18,000 workers employed by Westinghouse Electric, Westinghouse Air Brake and Union Switch and Signal were on strike for eight hours of work at the same nine-and-a-half hours pay. Three thousand of the strikers were women employed in the production of shrapnel shells and airplane engines for the war in Europe.

Several women quickly emerged as strike leaders, among them 21-year-old Anna Katherine Bell. Turned out of her home for taking part in the strike, Bell was arrested for speaking at an open-air meeting. Another women's leader, Anna Goldenberg, was also arrested.



On May 1 several thousand strikers marched to U.S. Steel's Edgar Thompson Works in Braddock, to gain the steelworkers' support. They were met by armed company guards. Three strikers were killed and dozens wounded. The headline in a Pittsburgh newspaper roared: "Four Girls Lead Frenzied Mob of Strikers in Fatal Charge Against the Company." Blaming the violence on foreign-born workers, the newspaper also stressed: "Their women folk backed them up. When the men began to fall, the women rushed to the front and dragged the men away."

With the National Guard quartered in its East Pittsburgh plant, Westinghouse refused all further negotiations. The strike was finished. Twenty-three strike leaders were arrested and charged with inciting to riot, among them four women. All the women were acquitted except for Anna Goldenberg, who spent a year in the county workhouse.

**T**he steady rise in the number of sexual harassment cases reported during the mid-1990s appears to have leveled off, according to a report by Reuters last month.

Figures from the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission show that the total number of cases filed with it and 90 other human rights agencies rose from 10,532 in fiscal 1992 to 15,549 in 1995. Cases reached a peak of 15,889 in 1997 and then leveled off at 15,836 in 2000.

EEOC data reveal a rise in cases brought by men over the time period 1992 to 2000—from 9.1% of the total to 13.6%.

Purging sexual harassment from the workplace requires "a top down commitment from the senior level, and if they (senior managers) don't do it, nothing will work," Kathleen Neville, an Eastchester, New York-based workplace consultant, told Reuters.

Companies need to disseminate a written policy forbidding sexual harassment and operate a grievance system in whose fairness and confidentiality the complainant can have faith, she concludes.

The high cost of legal proceedings and the harmful toll that negative publicity can take may also be



having an impact on employers.

It costs an employer an average of \$100,000 to be on the losing-end of a sexual harassment case. Plaintiffs win 58% of the time, according to Jury Verdict Research, of Horsham, Pa.

Other costs of sexual harassment can include office disruption, damaged morale, loss of experienced employees, and the cost of finding qualified replacements.

Legal penalties can be stiff. Mitsubishi Motors Manufacturing of America in 1997 paid \$9.5 million to settle a private harassment suit brought by 29 women employees. A year later, it settled a lawsuit brought

by the EEOC in that matter for \$34 million more. It also shelled out several million for experts to help it get its act together.

Wal-Mart paid \$5 million in 1995 and Astra USA paid \$10 million in 1997 to resolve sex-related suits, according to Neville. For each suit that comes to light, she said an "astounding" 20 more are settled behind corporate closed doors.

## Union rebuked in job-related assault

A union representing City Hall workers in the Canadian city of London got a sharp rebuke in a sexual harassment case involving a woman who was tied up and severely assaulted by a fellow union member.

The labor board ruled that the union, which represents workers at London city hall, broke the law when it fought for a leave of absence for the harasser while he served jail time for the assault.

When the city fired the harasser the union filed a grievance to get financial compensation for him. The victim complained to the labor board.

The board ruled that the victim's right to a safe workplace superseded the harasser's right to a job.

## Nursing mother awarded \$52,000

An Australian worker who was "mooed" by colleagues after she had breastfed and expressed milk at work was awarded \$52,000 in compensation.

The woman alleged that her co-workers had tipped out the milk she had expressed and kept for her infant and left notes on the milk saying it was "good in coffee".

She said a supervisor had made comments such as "you ought to be home with your baby." She eventually took stress leave and claimed she had been denied a promotion because she was a mother.

Despite agreeing to the payout, the department, which was not identified, denied the woman had been harassed.



## Retirees' needs discussed with Business Manager

By Peter Mandon

**A** voice can become a hundred and then a thousand. That is what we need.

Some members of the San Jose and East Bay Chapter of the Retirees Club met recently with Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. We discussed several issues concerning current and future retirees. We were very encouraged with his response. Not only was he concerned about present retirees, he was just as concerned about future retirees. Both groups need to be addressed in any negotiations that might be forthcoming. If we don't address the cost of add-on insurance premiums, then what have we gained?

In order for PG&E to be willing to

negotiate for present retirees they will perhaps need a little encouragement. We would like to think it would be because they feel obligated. Maybe they feel the PG&E family has not been taken care of the way they intended. Then again it might be that we need to stand up and make them aware that they have failed to keep the older part of the family in a healthy condition.

These are the faithful who kept all of their PG&E stock. They thought the company would never let them down. Do you feel inclined to let them know someone failed in caring for retirees?

After we retire we don't want to feel like outcasts. We want to feel like we are still a part of something

we worked to create.

If we stand for freedom and dignity of life then we must be in a position to afford to care for ourselves and be financially stable enough to maintain our dignity.

### Spreading the Word

On Feb 7 we had a good turn out at our monthly retirees meeting that included our faithful union rep Bill Brill. He keeps us informed on all the latest. We are beginning to get some very positive feedback about the support we can expect for upcoming negotiations.

In San Jose we have retirees attending regular unit meetings to inform our working members what retirement is all about. We have been to San Jose, Salinas and Santa Cruz. We also had a member attend a retirees luncheon in Fresno to inform them on the effort to make improvements to our retirement system.

Please join in and go to your area unit meeting and inform members what is happening to those of us who have retired.

After working for 30-plus years you retire. You leave with this big smile on your face. Then you start to realize that you deserve a lot more. Some people are too proud to say we were not treated fairly. But it is time to speak up and tell our union and PG&E we deserve a better quality of life. Why shouldn't we have dental and optical coverage?

With the union behind us, now is the time for all retirees to get the fire lit. Then if we need to change our tactics we can start a bon fire.

Let us keep in mind that it was not just PG&E employees that built this union to what it is. We have a lot of other Local 1245 brothers and sisters who are losing ground to inflation.

On a more personal note....

I hope when the Giants' season begins that damn Enron sign is gone from the score board at Pac Bell Park. I hate that thing.

Keep the faith!

Peter Mandon is a member of the San Jose chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club.



## 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.

Bradlee Ballinger, 29 years  
San Francisco, CA

Sandy Blakely, 17 years  
Crescent City, CA

Don Castle, 33 years  
Auburn, CA

Eileen Cousins, 33 years  
Novato, CA

Lucila Delos Reyes, 34 years  
Daly City, CA

Larry Dennis, 20 years  
Twin Peaks, CA

Robert Gonzales, 31 years  
Sunnyvale, CA

Hank Waelty, 35 years  
Eureka, CA

Dennis Ledbetter, 33 years  
Santa Rosa, CA

Richard Gyde, 21 years  
Pacifica, CA

Carrie Matthews, 32 years  
Richmond, CA

James Middlemist, 18 years  
Grover Beach, CA

Conley Ramsey, 30 years  
Oakland, CA

Jose Ricabal, 29 years  
Alameda, CA

Dennis Shockey, 30 years  
Rohnert Park, CA

Wayne Van Dyke, 33 years  
Canyon Dam, CA

Gregory Gruenzner, 31 years  
Merced, CA

Dennis Ledbetter, 33 years  
Santa Rosa, CA

## Bush drug plan leaves many out

President Bush's proposal to provide prescription drugs for America's poorest Medicare recipients would provide \$77 billion to subsidize prescription drugs for 3 million Medicare recipients over the next decade.

But his proposal neglects 37 million other Medicare patients who wouldn't qualify for help but who

also face very expensive drugs.

Bush's plan, which must be approved by Congress, would give states a 90% match for drug coverage for poor Medicare recipients. Medicare recipients with incomes of 100% to 150% of the poverty level—\$11,610 to \$17,415 for a couple—could qualify for free prescriptions.

## Tax cuts versus Social Security

An overwhelming majority of Americans would rather cancel later stages of President Bush's tax cut than tap Social Security revenue to pay for other government programs, a Los Angeles Times Poll found.

The White House budget released last month projects Washington will need to divert \$1.73 trillion in Social Security money to fund other programs through 2012. But in the Times survey, fully four-fifths of Americans—including more than two-thirds of Republicans—say they would rather defer tax cuts than use Social Security money that way.

## 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 IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose.



## PG&E Gas

Finishing up a day of work at "W" and 13th Street in Sacramento in mid-January was the PG&E gas crew of Dennis Pratt, Working Foreman 'B'; Troy Tipton, Fieldman; Ken Power, Miscellaneous Equipment Operator; and Shawndra Silva, Backhoe Operator.



## Rate case is critical for Sierra Pacific

► From Page 1

the Western states went through the roof in late 2000, arousing suspicions that independent generators and marketers were manipulating prices. The Nevada legislature, at Local 1245's urging, put the brakes on deregulation and required the utility to hang on to its plants.

Sierra Pacific chose to minimize the public's exposure to the volatile spot market by entering into long-term contracts. But now that it has come time to fund those contracts, some members of the public are unhappy.

Company officials say their job is to secure reliable sources of supply at the best price available at the time. They hope to convince the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada that the utility acted prudently in last year's power and fuel purchases.

The PUCN is scheduled to begin formal hearings on the Deferred Energy Rate Case on April 8. The PUCN will hear the company's General Rate Case, filed last Nov. 30, at the same time.

In its General Rate Case, Sierra Pacific is asking for a \$16 million increase to cover its normal operating and maintenance costs, including labor costs. Although this would result in an overall rate increase, it is structured in a way to produce a rate decrease for residential customers. When combined with the rate increases proposed in the Deferred Energy Rate Case, the average residential customer would see a monthly increase of about \$2.80, according to published reports.

A decision on the rate requests is expected by June 1.

## Union, PG&E plan on full-scale bargaining

► From Page 1

state law adopted during last year's energy crisis prohibits the sale of utility generating assets. Sale of those assets is a key element in PG&E's reorganization plan.

On Feb. 7 Judge Montali rebuffed PG&E's argument that federal bankruptcy law automatically supercedes state law, and suggested that state law might prevail in matters involving public health and safety. But Montali left the door open for PG&E to modify its plan, saying it could be confirmed if the company establishes that specific laws need to be preempted for the plan to succeed.

PG&E has assured its employees and Local 1245 that the company remains committed to pursuing its

own reorganization plan, and on Feb. 21 announced its intention to appeal Montali's ruling. The creditors committee, which must ultimately approve any reorganization plan, has shown no interest in the CPUC's alternative plan.

The judge on Feb. 27 gave permission to the CPUC to formally submit its own plan for reorganizing PG&E, saying he wanted to see it by April 15.

The CPUC plan, whose main features are already known, keeps PG&E's hydroelectric facilities under state regulation, promises to pay creditors in full, suspends dividends to shareholders, and claims to restore the utility to financial health.

Local 1245, which has endorsed PG&E's plan, believes that the

CPUC plan would have the effect of removing \$1.5 billion from PG&E's capital budget for distribution. Similar budget cuts in the early 1990s led to infrastructure deterioration, workforce reductions and reliability problems.

Judge Montali has approved the selection of San Francisco mediators Anthony Piazza and Marc Feder to try to resolve all matters of dispute among the state, PG&E and the official creditors committee.

Local 1245 members with access to computers at PG&E can keep up with current developments in the bankruptcy case by logging onto the Local 1245 web page on PG&E's Page One. The union's address is:

[www.hr/ibew](http://www.hr/ibew)