

# Utility Reporter

IBEW LOCAL 1245 • AFL - CIO



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June 2003

Unity Is Strength



## Fortier is 'Unionist of the Year'



Dorothy Fortier: Unionist of the Year

Five hundred trade unionists, elected officials and community leaders turned out on May 15 in Berkeley to honor Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier as "Unionist of the Year" in recognition of her outstanding service to working people.

In addition to her duties at Local 1245, Sister Fortier has made time to play a leadership role in the larger labor movement. She serves as Secretary/Treasurer of the IBEW Electrical Workers Minority Caucus, was elected to the Executive Board of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and is the President of the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

Fortier also belongs to the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance.

## Union requests new talks

# Split vote at PG&E

In a letter hand-delivered to Pacific Gas & Electric on June 2, Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman asked the company to return to the bargaining table immediately to resume negotiations for a new labor agreement.

Members of the Clerical bargaining unit ratified the PG&E offer 1068-860 in balloting completed on May 28. But members of the Physical bargaining unit rejected the PG&E offer 2939-4091.

The company indicated it would begin implementing the Clerical agreement effective June 1, including the \$900 lump sum payments that were bargained in lieu of wage retroactivity.



Steve Pettigrew (left) and Ken Amaral sort ballots in preparation for the vote count.

Three-quarters (75%) of all eligible voters returned their ballots, an even higher rate of participation than in the previous round of balloting last December, when 68% of eligible members cast ballots.

UPDATES ON-LINE:

At PG&E: [www.hr/ibew](http://www.hr/ibew)  
On the Web: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

# Union backs bill to repeal electric deregulation

Local 1245 is backing a bill in the California legislature to repeal electric deregulation in California. Senate Bill 888 attempts to restore order to a system torn apart by free-market enthusiasts whose experiment wreaked havoc on electric service, disrupted the lives of thousands of utility workers, and will ultimately cost Californian consumers \$50 billion or more. Free-market forces are working hard to undermine SB 888. In this Utility Reporter interview, Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman explains why SB 888 makes sense for workers and consumers.

**Q: Why is Local 1245 getting involved in the electric deregulation debate again?**

PZ: We know from experience that these policies affect our members. Just look at what's happened over the past dozen years or so. We've had power plant sell-offs, clerical consolidation, third parties doing metering and billing, local office closures, workforce reductions and job displacements. We've had a major energy crisis, market manipulation, black-outs, bankruptcy at PG&E, and economic strains on some of our other employers. All of this affects our members, and most of it has to do with electric deregulation, in one way or another.

**Q: We're supporting SB 888. What does that bill try to do?**

PZ: SB 888 tries to restore state regulated electricity service, with the utilities in charge of generation, transmission and

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## EVENTS

JUNE 20

Service Awards  
Stockton, CA

JUNE 30

Union Relocates Headquarters  
to Vacaville, CA

AUGUST 2-3

Advisory Council  
Reno, NV

## APPOINTMENTS

### PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC CO.

#### Ballot Committee

Jim Findley  
Ken Amaral  
Sam Burton  
Leroy Foster  
Larry Gibson  
Sal Lazano  
Joe Osterlund  
David Pyle  
Liz Rounds  
David Ryan  
Steve Pettigrew

### ISTS Labor Management Committee

James Grady  
Richard Storamski  
Mark Newman

### Fleet Labor Management Committee

Alan Parker  
Billy D. Wallace  
Robert L. Clary Jr.  
Joseph Osterlund  
John Sportsman

### PACIFIC GAS TRANSMISSION NW

### PGT Labor Management Committee

Tim Sedgewick

### CONFERENCES, COUNCILS & CONVENTIONS

#### National Safety Council Labor Division Spring Meeting

Art Torres  
R. Stoney Burke  
Keith Hopp  
David Vipond

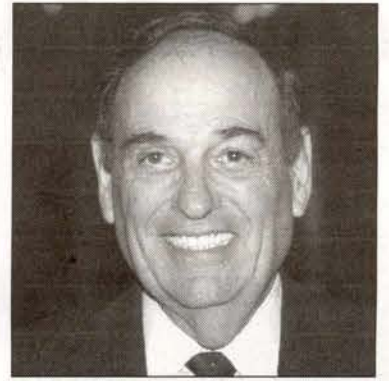
### IBEW 9th District Progress Meeting

Perry Zimmerman  
Landis Marttila  
Bob Choate  
Sam Tamimi  
John Mendoza  
Dennis Seyfer  
Mike Davis  
Chris Habecker  
Dave Scott

## YOUR UNION

# A fully-informed membership

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager



It's time for Monday-morning quarterbacking on the PG&E negotiations and ratification process.

What do the numbers mean? Why did the Clerical unit approve the package? Why did the Physical unit vote it down? What can be read into the margins of the two votes? Given the margin of defeat in the Physical bargaining unit, what will it take to get a contract ratified?

No thanks. In my opinion, this is neither the time nor the place for these questions to be answered. There is one number, and only one number, that I want to talk about, and it is by far the most important number that emerged during the vote count

on May 28.

Seventy-five percent of our membership voted. *Seventy-five percent.* This represents a level of participation that is virtually unheard of even in our great democracy.

Nationally, half the eligible voters register to vote, and half of the half vote. This means that just over one-eighth of the eligible electorate constitutes the majority (or in the case of President Bush, the minority) that chooses who will govern.

If anyone in PG&E management is looking at the election results and interprets the rather small margins as a mandate for little movement when we get back to the table, I have

a message for you. You're wrong.

Your employees are fully informed. Your employees are involved to a degree that they have never been involved. Changing even a few votes will not be as easy as you might think.

In 1993, it was a poorly informed and unengaged membership that approved a bargaining package that in one sentence instantly gave the company \$450 million by freezing company contributions to post-retirement medical insurance, a fact that is having calamitous effects on retirees today. There is no way that this would have happened with a membership as well informed and involved as our membership now is.

Clearly there are several issues that leap out as reasons for the "no" vote in the Physical unit, some of which can be addressed at the table and some of which cannot. As we move back into negotiations with PG&E, Local 1245 will be doing so armed with the strongest of all tools, a membership that is watching, listening, and thinking. A membership that understands what it is watching and listening to.

A membership that understands its power.



## UtilityReporter

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**Complete Unit Meeting Schedule for July-December is Located On Pages 14-15**



# Persistence pays off at Utility Tree

By Ray Thomas

**P**ersistence paid off this spring for Local 1245's effort to make sure that line clearance tree trimming work at the Trinity Public Utility District pays union scale.

In late 2002, the union learned that the District had erroneously put the Line Clearance work out to bid without listing the work as a "prevailing wage" job subject to California Labor Code. Subsequently, the issue was referred to the California Labor Department.

Even though Utility Tree was the current tree company on the property, the Trinity PUD put the bid back out so that all bidders were aware of the "prevailing wage" criteria.

On April 18, while Utility Tree Super-Crew Foreman Aaron Still (on left, in photo) and I were negotiating a new prevailing wage scale for the existing labor agreement with Utility Tree, we discovered that a private non-union company was awarded the job as the lowest bidder. We kept right on negotiating in order to have a contract in place if this non-union contractor didn't show.



Ray Thomas

### RATIFICATION ON RATTLESNAKE ROAD

Local 1245 members employed by Utility Tree at Trinity Public Utility District after their ratification vote this spring on Rattlesnake Road in Peanut, south of Hayfork, Ca.: Aaron Still, Chris Smith, Randy Fullerton, David Blalack and Dave Nugent.

The non-union contractor did show, but there was a problem. He did not have the equipment or qualified line clearance personnel needed to satisfy the contract he had bid just weeks earlier.

In fact, this non-union contractor attempted to get approval to bring in a mechanized tree trimming machine, where an employee could drive along

the PUD's power lines with a rotating blade at the end of an extended boom, hacking away at tree limbs in its path.

The Trinity PUD was not satisfied with the services proposed by this contractor, and promptly notified Utility Tree to offer the contract back to them. Utility Tree Regional Manager Pete Sparacio accepted.

# Members OK agency shop at City of Ukiah

Members of Local 1245 have approved an agency shop requirement for the Electric Department at the City of Ukiah.

The City had refused to agree to agency shop during negotiations, forcing the union to seek a vote under the auspices of the State Board of Mediation and Conciliation Services.

Serving as observers at the March 11 election were Melody Harris for the City, John Jaeger for Conciliation Services, and Local 1245 Business Rep. Richard Cowart.

The union's persistence in pursuing negotiations with Utility Tree proved to be the winning strategy. Trinity PUD, in the end, realized that Local 1245's members were the professionals they required to get the job done right.

Ray Thomas is Senior Business Representative for Local 1245.

## IBEW 1245 Unit update

Unit 3317, Winnemucca. Beginning June 11, 2003, meetings will be on the second Wednesday of every other month.

Randy Osborn  
Business Rep.



## Truckee Meadows Water pact

Local 1245 members at the Truckee Meadow Water Authority have ratified a new three-year agreement that provides general wage increases of 3.5% in each year.

The agreement, approved 53-12 by members, also provides inequity increases for Foreman-Working, Heavy, Water, and Foreman-Working, Light, Water.

The shift premium was increased for graveyard shift, reaching \$2.80 by the last year of the agreement.

The Nevada PERS contribution needed to fully fund the system will increase on July 1, as mandated by the state. The employer will continue to pay 100% of the employees' contribution to PERS.

Negotiating for the union were Chip Chadwick, Mark Patterson, Dennis Bergstrom, Tim Flanagan, Jeff Westwood and Business Rep. Sal Salazar.

Replacing a 2-inch meter on South Virginia in Reno are Local 1245 member Dana Ellis McKinney, Light Foreman (left), and George Avalos, a member of Laborers Local 169.



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

PG&E Intranet: [www.hr/ibew](http://www.hr/ibew)



# Union backs bill to repeal electric deregulation

## ► From Page 1

distribution. In other words, SB 888 wants vertically-integrated utilities. That's the system we've had ever since the 1930s—until deregulation came along in the 1990s.

### Q: How can California go back to the past? Hasn't deregulation changed the whole industry?

PZ: If anybody has tried to take us back to the past, it's been companies like Enron and the others pushing for deregulation. They tried to take us all the way back to the 1920s when there was hardly any regulation at all. Back then you had utility holding companies piled on top of each other in big pyramid schemes that robbed the stockholders. They didn't care about service reliability or maintaining a stable workforce. Enron led the charge to take us back to that era. Our union didn't want to go back to that era, and I don't

think the people of California wanted to go back either. So I don't think you can say that deregulation has changed the industry—Enron and the others tried to change the industry and they messed up very badly. Now we're just trying to pick up the pieces and put it back together. That's what SB 888 is about.

### Q How does SB 888 end deregulation?

PZ: The legislature can't end deregulation on its own. The CPUC has a voice, the federal government has a voice. But the legislature has a very large voice. One of the main things SB 888 would do is end direct access, also known as retail competition. That's where independent producers or marketers sell electricity directly to individual customers. This is what Enron wanted the most—to pick off the utilities' most profitable high-volume customers. They wanted to leave the utilities with the smaller customers, which would hurt the utilities' revenue base and

create pressure to cut costs. We know that that leads to workforce reductions. The other problem with direct access is that it tossed out the whole idea of planning. The market was supposed to magically come up with enough power based on supply and demand, so you supposedly didn't need planning. The trouble is, when supply gets short you get blackouts and price increases, and it may take a long time to get enough new power on-line to fix that. That kind of instability is bad for customers. It's bad for us, it's bad for the economy, it's bad for everybody.

### Q Haven't there been attempts to change SB 888 to allow direct access to continue?

PZ: Yes, there is an active lobbying campaign out there for electric deregulation. They want to amend SB 888 to preserve some form of direct access. We're going to watch these amendments very closely. Hopefully the basic principles of the bill will be preserved.

### Q: Does SB 888 make the utilities responsible for planning?

PZ: The bill talks about establishing an integrated resource planning process that deals with supply as well as with reducing the demand for power. That's what utilities have traditionally done, and this bill clearly wants to put utilities back in that role.

### Q: Does this mean PG&E will be back in the business of building power plants?

PZ: It can't guarantee that, but it makes it possible. Of course everyone knows that PG&E already sold many steam generation power plants, and wanted to spin off hydro plants, too. But in 2001, after the energy crisis hit, the legislature told the utilities not to sell off any more plants. The legislators wanted to keep some



HORSE SENSE

Among the hundreds of Local 1245 members who protested PG&E's downsizing in 1994-95 was the late Ken Garcia, who rode a mounted informational picket in the streets of San Luis Obispo. The union maintained that the rush toward electric deregulation was jeopardizing service as well as jobs. The issue is now coming full circle: one of the state policy goals of SB 888 now under consideration by the California Legislature is to end utility employee layoffs and provide reasonable wages and working conditions.



generation under state regulation because they didn't want to be completely dependent on that deregulated market. SB 888 would extend the ban on power plant divestiture from 2006 to 2010. Also, under SB 888, the CPUC could require PG&E to invest directly in power plants, or to contract with others to build those plants for PG&E.

**Q: Does SB 888 do anything to prevent utilities from engaging in the kind of cost-cutting and downsizing that our members had to go through in the 1990s?**

PZ: It tries to. The bill talks about how it is important to restore the utilities' "obligation to serve." The way I see it, if you've got an obligation to serve somebody, you've got to have the people to provide that service. And the bill gets pretty specific on this. One of the "policy goals" it talks about is cost-effective investments in transmission and distribution, with reasonable rates of return for the utilities. Under deregulation, everybody was looking for ways to get rich off of generation. Transmission and distribution upgrades didn't get the attention they should have. SB 888 says the CPUC needs to get the utilities focused on these issues again, and to make sure that the utilities get a reasonable rate of return for transmission and distribution work.

**Q: How about customer service work?**

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Under deregulation, everybody was looking for ways to get rich off of generation. Transmission and distribution upgrades didn't get the attention they should have. SB 888 says the CPUC needs to get the utilities focused on these issues again, and to make sure that the utilities get a reasonable rate of return for transmission and distribution work.

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#### NO LAYOFFS

Local 1245 members gathered 1,000 strong at the California Public Utilities Commission in December 1994 to protest deregulation-inspired layoffs at PG&E, warning "Who are you gonna call when the lights go out?"

PZ: Another one of Enron's dreams was to become the provider of billing and collections and customer service. Our union fought very hard to prevent that from happening because we believed it was important to keep this work with the regulated utility. When a utility customer in California has a problem, the last thing they need is to call up and find themselves talking with a poorly-trained, non-union, minimum-wage worker out in the midwest somewhere. The legislature seems to be coming around to our perspective. Another one of the bill's requirements is that metering, billing, collection, and customer service be provided by "CPUC-regulated utilities."

**Q: It sounds like the legislature is beginning to recognizing the value of the current utility workforce.**

PZ: We've been working for a long time trying to educate some of these legislators about the role we play. And I think SB 888 shows we've had some success. One of the policy goals in this bill is to end utility employee layoffs and provide reasonable wages and working conditions. If we can get that language passed into law, that will be a big step.

**Q: Is there anything Local 1245 members can do to help?**

PZ: This is one of those times where it really does make a difference to call your representative. Every one of our members in California has a representative in the Assembly and the state Senate. It's not hard to find their phone numbers. Call them up and tell them who you are and what you do for a living. Tell them it's important to pass SB 888 so that we can get the energy crisis behind us and get the focus back on providing quality service.

To find contact information for your state representatives, go to: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com). Select "Labor Links", then select "California Elected Officials" and follow the instructions for finding your legislators.





## Paying Iraq's power workers

Money talks. And in this case, it is saying that the American occupation forces in Iraq understand the importance of electricity workers in Iraq's economy.

About 6,000 electricity workers in Baghdad were the first state employees in Iraq to be paid since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, according to a BBC report last month.

Workers trying to restore Baghdad's power, which was badly damaged in the war, were given priority because they had threatened to go on strike.

The wages are being paid in 10,000 dinar notes, bearing the face of the former Iraqi dictator.

The salaries were gathered from the Rafidain state bank in central Baghdad, as a tank and military vehicles stood guard outside.

They were taken to a power station in the south of the city, where armed US soldiers had to control a crowd of workers jostling as they waited to receive their wages.

"We have all been working for some time and this is the first money we are getting from our salaries," Karim Hassan, the head of Iraq's electricity commission, told the BBC.

General Jay Garner, the occupation administration second-in-command, said the first payments were a "good start" and that all state employees will be paid by June 3.

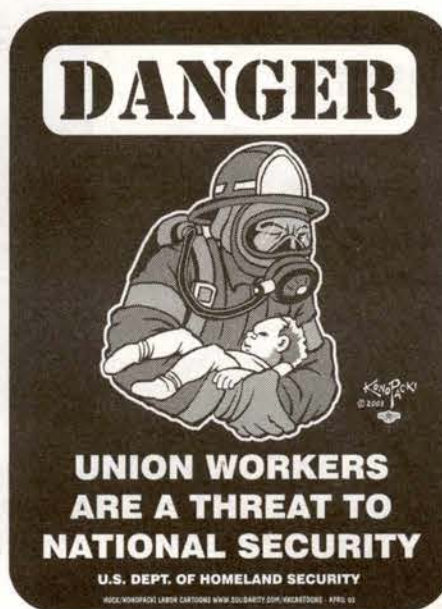
The wages are being paid out of Iraqi assets frozen in the United States since Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990.

## You've got mail: 'You're fired'

**T**housands of insurance staff at Manchester, England's The Accident Group were sacked by text messages on May 31, the Independent reported. The message advised employees to call a number at the head office, where the following answering machine message greeted them: "All staff who are being retained will be contacted today. If you have not been spoken to you are therefore being made redundant with immediate effect." The message went on to relay this cheery news: "Unfortunately there are effectively no funds available to pay the salaries for May." One former line manager observed: "They are treating their staff no better than something you would find on the bottom of your shoe."

► **DOD Targets Workers:** Civilian workers at the Department of Defense may soon be in the same boat as federal employees at the Department of Homeland Security, Labor Notes reported. Pentagon officials are pushing a bill, the Civil Service and National Security Personnel Improvement Act, that will take away collective bargaining rights, whistleblower protections, annual seniority-based pay raises, and rights to appeal disciplinary actions, from the 660,000 employees at the DOD. Other sections of the bill would create a "pay for performance" system and eliminate the current ban on nepotism in hiring practices.

► **Invitation to Anarchy:** The National Union of Electricity Employees in Nigeria blasted a recently



enacted electric deregulation law, describing the bill as a "time bomb" that would destroy the nation's electricity industry. The union warned that the bill, which seeks to privatize the state-run industry, is "at best an invitation to anarchy in the electricity sector."

► **'All-Out War':** Israel Electric Corp. employees last month declared an "all-out war" on government plans to privatize the electric system, and

announced that they have severed all contacts with government institutions and planned to work "by the book" to protest the Israeli Knesset's approval of a law aiding the company's privatization. The workers say they will not connect new customers to the grid, nor work on any development projects. There were also hints that they will not make repairs at power plants, which could mean brownouts or blackouts in parts of the country.

► **European Pension Protests:** French trade unions provided buses and special trains to bring as many as 600,000 demonstrators to Paris on May 25 to protest the government's plan to make people pay into the state pension system for longer. "Retirement before death!" read one banner. An estimated million workers participated in an earlier pension protest on May 13. In Austria, meanwhile, unions were gearing up on June 3 for their third major strike in less than a month to protest government plans to raise the retirement age and reduce pension pay-outs, Business Day reported.

## Frontier stewards confront threat

Local 1245 stewards at Frontier discussed members' contract proposals at a stewards conference in Sacramento on May 17.

Frontier, formerly Citizens Communications, hopes to use bargaining to eliminate either the company contribution to the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan or the company's 401(k) matching contribution, according to Local 1245 Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas. While Frontier says it wants to use "mutual gains" bargaining in upcoming talks, the union says the company's threat to cancel the labor agreement is incompatible with mutual gains bargaining.

Stewards in attendance were Sheila Lawton, Dave Morrison, John Ramos, Eric Tanaka, Toot Nelson, Larry Martin, John Shepphird, Joe Aquilio, David Vipond, Tom Greer, Rich Dickson, Bruce Gilbert, Mary Ann Philipenko, Karen Carter, Dennis Darlington and Denise Sanders.



Frontier stewards

## Correction

The May 2003 Utility Reporter on Page 10 told the harrowing tale of an electric switch box that exploded in Reno. We incorrectly referred to the switch box as a transformer.



# Bad Seed

**Non-union utility tree trimming contractors are a bad seed taking root in PG&E's service territory. They are angering customers, jeopardizing public safety, endangering the health of workers, subverting wage and benefit standards, and undermining PG&E's efforts to restore credibility to its tree trimming operations.**

Story by Eric Wolfe  
Photos by Carl Lamers

**A**n investigation by IBEW Local 1245 has uncovered shoddy and possibly fraudulent work practices by Family Tree, Mowbray Tree and Mountain Enterprises, three non-union firms recently contracted by PG&E to trim trees around power lines in northern California.

Examples of these practices include:

- Failure to report trees burning in power lines
- Failure to remove dead trees
- Dropping trees into active creeks and failing to remove them
- Leaving potentially lethal "hangers"—cut limbs—in the trees
- Failure to remove brush and debris from the worksite
- Creating and abandoning toxic oil spills at job sites
- Unprofessional practices that increase risk of tree disease
- Unnecessary destruction of customer property
- Inappropriate financial charges to PG&E customers

These unprofessional work practices have great significance in an industry where even small mistakes can have large consequences.

In 1994, an untrimmed tree rubbing against a 21,000-volt power line ignited the infamous Trauner Fire near Rough and Ready, Ca. That conflagration burned 500 acres, destroyed 12 homes, burned 22 other structures, produced 739 misdemeanor counts against PG&E for criminal negligence,

and ultimately resulted in PG&E paying some \$7 million in damage claims.

PG&E has invested millions since then to improve its tree trimming program and repair its public image. But the California public—and PG&E's reputation—will be put in further jeopardy if the utility continues to permit bad seed contractors to take root in its service territory.

## Burning Alder

Family Tree started making a hash of things almost immediately after winning the Coastal Ukiah contract last winter to trim trees for PG&E in Mendocino County. Work was delayed for several months because the company was unable to secure the required liability insurance. Finally the company managed to put some crews in the field, where they almost immediately set new standards of carelessness in performing this hazardous work.

On May 23, Carl Lamers—a professional tree trimmer currently working on special assignment for Local 1245—spotted an alder tree laying across an insulator and a live electric line on Little Lake Road outside of Albion, Ca. Family Tree crews passed the burning tree repeatedly over the course of several days while performing work just 350 feet away.

"When I went by and looked at this again (on May 26), it was still buzzing. You could hear the electricity going through it," says Lamers, a certified arborist.

The Family Tree crews did not correct this hazard; apparently they didn't even report it.





An enormous "spar"—a tree with the limbs removed—is left standing at a private residence in Fort Bragg. The removal form said the entire tree was to be removed, but Family Tree never finished the job. "Eventually that thing is going to fall down," says union tree trimmer Carl Lamers.

#### ► From Page 7

"We were always told we have a fiduciary responsibility to report things like this because they are clear violations of CDF (California Department of Forestry) regulations regarding clearances," says Lamers, who has spent nearly 20 years trimming trees for Davey Tree Surgery Co., a unionized contractor. Lamers worries about what can happen when a wire like that burns through "and ends up on the street."

"Somebody could run over it with a car. A kid could come along and pick it up," he notes.

#### 'Widowmakers'

The burning alder was not the only safety lapse uncovered by Local 1245.

On Airport Road in Fort Bragg, a customer authorized the removal of a bishop pine that was

creating a potential electrical hazard. Originally the work was assigned to Davey Tree, which has performed line clearance work for PG&E in this locale for many years. But Family Tree outbid Davey for the contract, and it was a Family Tree crew that eventually showed up to take out the tree.

Only they didn't do it. Instead, they just topped it off, removed the limbs, and then left about 30-35 feet of trunk—the "spar"—standing in the customer's front yard, along with piles of brush and debris.

The customer gave Lamers a copy of the removal form, which specified that the entire tree would be removed. But it wasn't. Instead, Family Tree simply abandoned the site without finishing the job, leaving a hazardous situation in its wake.

"They left hangers in the adjacent trees," says Lamers, who is only too happy to pull out a fistful of photos to document these and other transgressions.

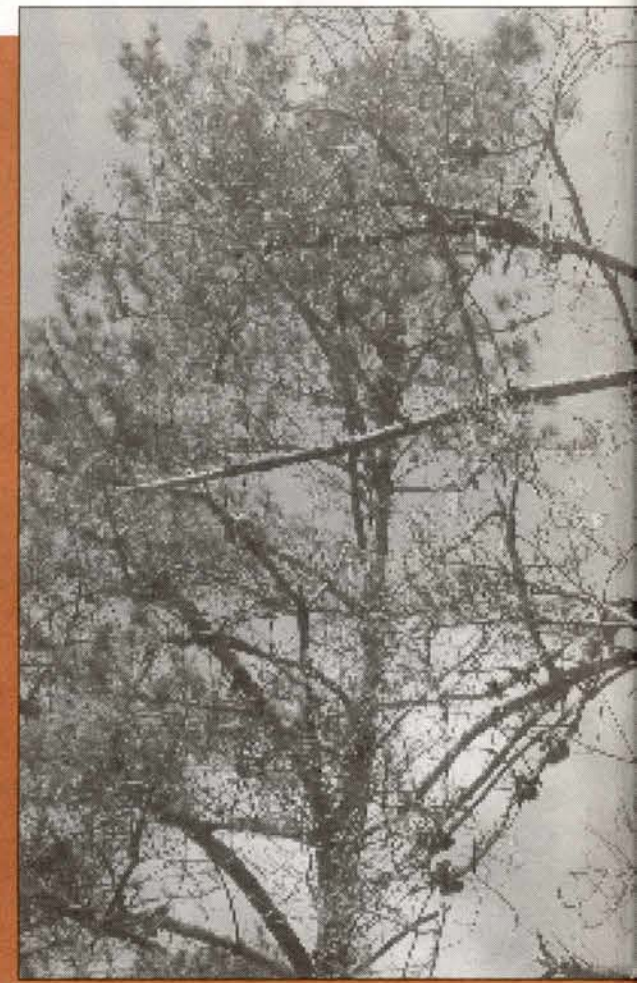
A hanger, he explains, is a cut limb that has become stuck and is left up in the tree. In the timber industry they're called "widowmakers" because of the potentially lethal effect when they become unstuck and fall on whoever might be passing by.

Leaving hangers is not simply dangerous; it's against the law. Title 8, Section 3427 (b)(3) of the California Code of Regulations requires of tree contractors that "cut branches (hangers) shall be removed from the tree prior to leaving the job site."

Family Tree is either unaware of the basic rules governing line clearance tree trimming in California, or chooses to ignore them.

#### Acid Taste

Family Tree isn't alone in its casual attitude toward the law. Mowbray Tree, a non-union contractor performing "special project" line clearance work for PG&E on the North Coast, suffers



Hangers left dangling over the property of Paul Thompson.

a similar nonchalance when it comes to following rules concerning the public safety.

Just ask Paul Thompson, a resident of Ft. Bragg who watched in dismay as Mowbray tree trimmers dropped 20 trees on his property in a single day, creating numerous hangers in adjacent trees, and then walking away. After Thompson complained, a Mowbray crew eventually returned to cut out a single hanger—just one—and then left again with the rest of the hangers still suspended in the trees.

"I have a son, he just turned 13," says Thompson. "I had to warn him not to go into that area, especially when it's windy."

PG&E Forester Micah Brosnan confirmed that the contractor was asked to return to the worksite after PG&E received the initial complaint from Thompson. "As far as I know, the problem was resolved, based on the fact I haven't heard anything back from the landowner," Brosnan said.

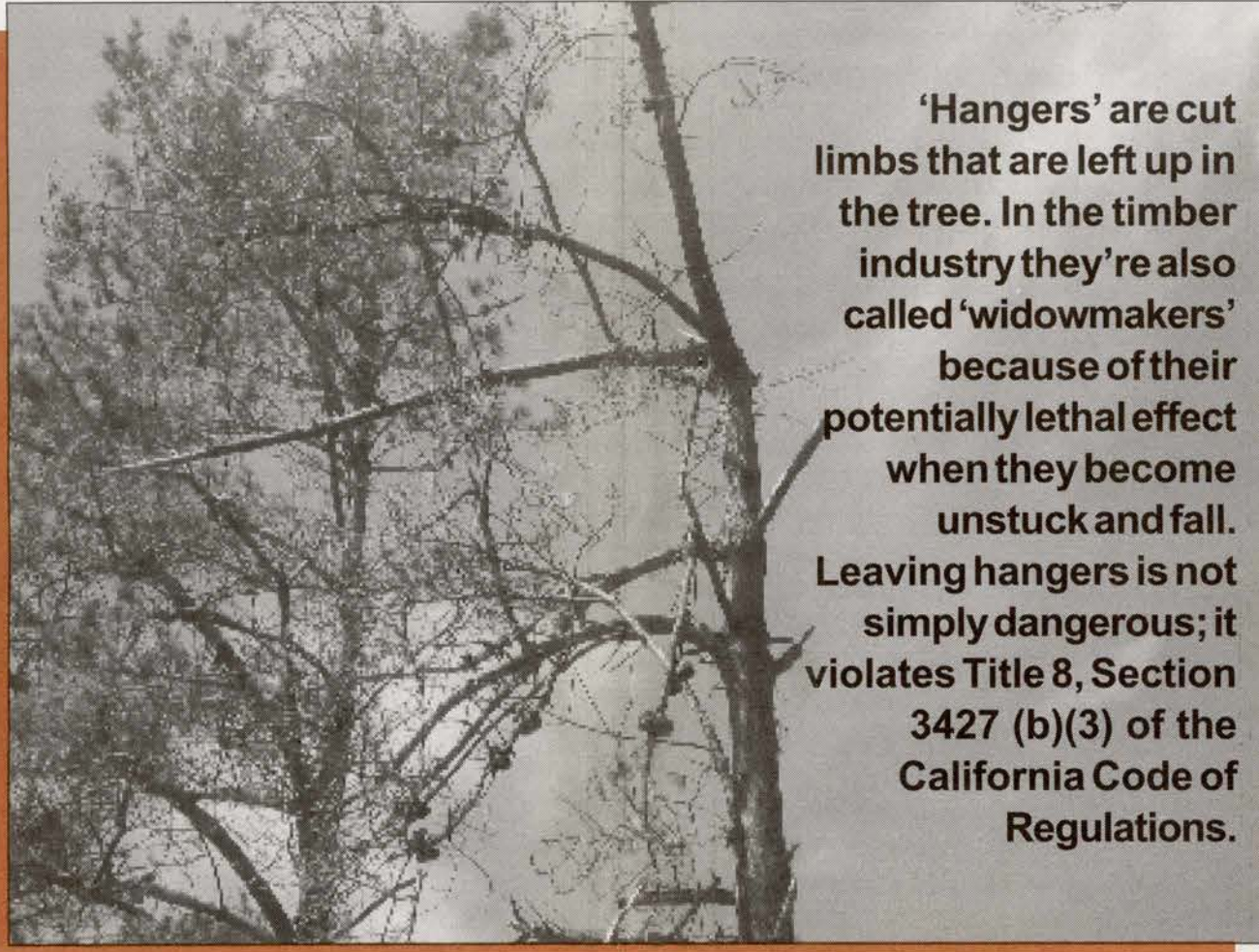
He acknowledged that if hangers remained in the trees following Mowbray's second visit, "that's a problem."

The Mowbray crews also managed to drop one of Thompson's trees into an active creek that serves as the primary drainage for the neighborhood. Thompson said he was initially told by Mowbray that the company had no intention of moving the tree out of the creek. After an investigation by California Fish & Game Warden Ken Hofer, however, Mowbray had a sudden change of heart. Mowbray employees dragged the tree out of the creek, then dumped it on the bank a few feet



**PIG WALLOW**  
Customer's front yard on Pudding Creek Rd. in Fort Bragg after a visit by Mowbray Tree. The Mowbray crew had seemed to agree to the customer's request that they work from the road, but proceeded to drive into the yard anyway.





**'Hangers' are cut limbs that are left up in the tree. In the timber industry they're also called 'widowmakers' because of their potentially lethal effect when they become unstuck and fall. Leaving hangers is not simply dangerous; it violates Title 8, Section 3427 (b)(3) of the California Code of Regulations.**

Hangers left dangling over the property of Paul Thompson even after two visits by crews from Mowbray Tree.

a similar nonchalance when it comes to following rules concerning the public safety.

Just ask Paul Thompson, a resident of Ft. Bragg who watched in dismay as Mowbray tree trimmers dropped 20 trees on his property in a single day, creating numerous hangers in adjacent trees, and then walking away. After Thompson complained, a Mowbray crew eventually returned to cut out a single hanger—just one—and then left again with the rest of the hangers still suspended in the trees.

"I have a son, he just turned 13," says Thompson. "I had to warn him not to go into that area, especially when it's windy."

PG&E Forester Micah Brosnan confirmed that the contractor was asked to return to the worksite after PG&E received the initial complaint from Thompson. "As far as I know, the problem was resolved, based on the fact I haven't heard anything back from the landowner," Brosnan said.

He acknowledged that if hangers remained in the trees following Mowbray's second visit, "that's a problem."

The Mowbray crews also managed to drop one of Thompson's trees into an active creek that serves as the primary drainage for the neighborhood. Thompson said he was initially told by Mowbray that the company had no intention of moving the tree out of the creek. After an investigation by California Fish & Game Warden Ken Hofer, however, Mowbray had a sudden change of heart. Mowbray employees dragged the tree out of the creek, then dumped it on the bank a few feet

away.

For Thompson, the entire experience left an acid taste.

"I wasn't happy at all. They left a hefty mess. It wasn't necessary, they had chippers. All they wanted to do was beat the record or something, see how fast they could drop them and take off."

### Creating Pig Wallows

Investigations by Local 1245 show that Thompson isn't the only customer mistreated by bad seed contractors.

On Fort Bragg's Pudding Creek Road, a Mowbray crew arrived to remove two large trees from a customer's front yard. After appearing to acknowledge the customer's request that they work from the road rather than from his yard, the crew proceeded to drive up into the yard, virtually destroying it in the process.

"There was a lawn there," remarks Lamers. "Now it looks like a pig wallow."

Such callous disregard for customer property would not have been tolerated by his supervisors at Davey, Lamers says.

"If we tore up a customer yard doing routine work, we'd have to come back there and rebuild his lawn, do whatever it took to resolve the problem."

### Customer Abuse

Abuse of customers was taken to new levels by a crew for Mountain Enterprise, another non-

union operation under contract with PG&E.

In the process of trimming trees at a residence in Magalia, Mountain Enterprise employees caused extensive damage to the customer's house siding, rain gutter, fence, and shrubbery. Adding insult to injury, they left an enormous load of debris on the property.

The customer had signed a tree removal contract that absolved him of any responsibility for the work. But agents for PG&E kept coming up with revised versions of the form, which the customer—an 84-year-old veteran—kept signing. The last form made the customer responsible for the clean-up.

Whether the customer should have been responsible for the clean-up costs is a matter of dispute. But there is no disputing how the matter was resolved. The Mountain Enterprise boss demanded to be paid personally for the work done.

"They were bullying him," says Davey, a private tree contractor and former member of the Magalia Water District, who witnessed the transaction. "He is an elderly man and I felt they were extorting money from him. He agreed to pay them, but he didn't have to."

The Mountain Enterprise crew then returned to haul away the debris and dumped it on the power lines on the public utility easement.

They piled the debris under the street where they had just been paid to clear, says Krieger. "It is just putting a bon fire, dead dry fuel under the lines you've just cleared."

The Mountain Enterprise crew boss demanded to be paid with two separate checks, one to the customer to leave the "payee" lines. When the checks cleared the customer's bank, the payee lines were filled in with an illegible name, not Mountain Enterprise.

### Employees At Risk

Customers are not the only ones who have been in the hands of bad seed contractors. Employees are underpaid and inadequately trained, posing a significant risk.

On April 24, Local 1245 photographed a Mowbray crew dragging and chipping trees at Ft. Bragg Botanical Gardens. None of the crew members wore ear or eye protection, a violation of California's Code of Regulations and a threat to the employees' health.

More troubling still was an incident involving a Mowbray crew on California state park lands in Butte County. Mowbray employees, who were witnessed by someone familiar with tree trimming operations, were topping a large growth redwood tree when the wind

The employees came down.

No harm in that. Except that they were cut dangerously deep face cuts—in effect, where the tree will eventually break



**'Hangers' are cut limbs that are left up in the tree. In the timber industry they're also called 'widowmakers' because of their potentially lethal effect when they become unstuck and fall. Leaving hangers is not simply dangerous; it violates Title 8, Section 3427 (b)(3) of the California Code of Regulations.**

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### Customer Abuse

Abuse of customers was taken to new levels by a crew for Mountain Enterprise, another non-

union operation under contract with PG&E.

In the process of trimming trees at a private residence in Magalia, Mountain Enterprise employees caused extensive damage to the customer's house siding, rain gutter, fence, patio and shrubbery. Adding insult to injury, the crew left an enormous load of debris on the property.

The customer had signed a tree removal form that absolved him of any responsibility for clean-up. But agents for PG&E kept coming up with revised versions of the form, which the customer—an 84-year-old veteran—kept signing. The last form made the customer responsible for clean-up.

Whether the customer should have been responsible for the clean-up costs is a matter of dispute. But there is no disputing how the issue was resolved. The Mountain Enterprise crew boss demanded to be paid personally for the work done.

"They were bullying him," says Dick Kraus, a private tree contractor and former board member of the Magalia Water District, who personally witnessed the transaction. "He is an elderly gentleman and I felt they were extorting money out of him. He agreed to pay them, but he didn't realize he didn't have to."

The Mountain Enterprise crew then proceeded to haul away the debris and dumped it under the power lines on the public utility easement.

They piled the debris under the same lines they had just been paid to clear, says Kraus. "This is just putting a bon fire, dead dry fuel, under the lines you've just cleared."

The Mountain Enterprise crew boss demanded to be paid with two separate checks, instructing the customer to leave the "payee" lines blank. When the checks cleared the customer's bank, the payee lines were filled in with an individual's name, not Mountain Enterprise.

### Employees At Risk

Customers are not the only ones who suffer at the hands of bad seed contractors. Employees, underpaid and inadequately trained, are also at risk.

On April 24, Local 1245 photographed a Mowbray crew dragging and chipping brush at Ft. Bragg Botanical Gardens. None of the three crew members wore ear or eye protection, a clear violation of California's Code of Regulations and a threat to the employees' health.

More troubling still was an incident this spring on California state park lands in Humboldt County. Mowbray employees, whose actions were witnessed by someone familiar with tree trimming operations, were topping a huge old-growth redwood tree when the wind came up.

The employees came down.

No harm in that. Except that they had made dangerously deep face cuts—in effect, the notch where the tree will eventually break and fall.

"Normally you go one-third of the way into the tree," says Ray Thomas, senior business representative with Local 1245. "These guys were 50 feet up in this 200-foot redwood, with this tree cut into damn near halfway."

Normal procedure would be to put a rope around the tree well above the face cut, both to stabilize the tree and to help it fall in the right direction when it goes down.

The Mowbray crew didn't bother.

"Without a rope in it, as deep as they cut that facecut, the tree could have failed and come over on top of the employees and the bucket truck. This tree scared me just looking at it," says Thomas, who worked 15 years as a line clearance tree trimmer before going to work for the union.

Late in the day the employees managed to bring the tree down, causing a substantial amount of collateral damage among adjacent trees.

The incident is now under investigation by the state, according to Jay Harris, senior resource ecologist for the California State Parks North Coast Redwoods District.

"It is not park policy to cut old growth redwoods, especially in the manner in which they did it," says Harris, who has confirmed that the tree was on State Park property. "We do not top trees. If we have to remove a tree because of a hazard, we take the whole tree, normally."

Harris says he had never heard of Mowbray until this incident came to his attention.

The disregard Mowbray shows for safe work practices is particularly ironic, given that none of these bad seed contractors provide significant medical benefits to their employees.

"Line clearance tree trimmers put their lives on the line for the public every day working around energized power lines," says Thomas, "but most of these non-union tree trimmers can't even afford medical care for their own wives and children because these companies are too cheap to provide them any insurance coverage. That's just plain wrong."

### Disregard for Public Safety

Customers and employees are not the only people in jeopardy when unqualified contractors perform work on the cheap. The general public is also at risk.

At two locations along Navarro Ridge Road in Albion, Family Tree crews abandoned the scene after causing two oil spills.

One of the spills dumped several gallons of oil in a local resident's driveway, "so there's probably a (water) well within 50 feet of where that happened," says Pete Loman, an environmental health technician with the Mendocino County Department of Public Health, who indicated that Family Tree would have to present evidence that it had disposed of the oil according to the requirements of



## Bad Seed

► From Page 9

the law. "Any spill of any consequence that you can clean up, that's what we require you to do."

Family Tree not only left the scene without cleaning the spill, the crew added insult to injury when they broke off a major limb from a cedar tree while driving into the driveway. To be fair, line clearance tree trimmers may occasionally break off branches that catch on their truck while they're driving in heavily wooded remote areas.

But in somebody's *driveway*?

### Endangered Trees

And then there are the trees themselves.

Spend some time with experienced line clearance tree trimmers and you'll find people who care about the health of the trees they trim. Some are certified arborists with a deep understanding of tree biology.

Fly-by-night operators with no roots in the community have little incentive to think about forest health. And their underpaid employees, with no union protection, are in no position to challenge company policies that endanger trees.



Stub trims lengthen the time for a wound to seal, making trees vulnerable to attacks from viruses, fungal spores, bacteria and insects. These stubs were left by Family Tree in Albion, Ca.—the same residence where Family Tree employees spilled several gallons of oil in the driveway (below) and drove their truck into the customer's cedar tree.



Local 1245 has documented repeated instances of "stubbing" on Family Tree jobs. By stubbing—leaving stubs of branches rather than cutting them back to the trunk, or "live leader"—Family Tree crews increase the risk of disease and death in the trees they work on.

"Stub trimming is not an accepted arboricultural practice," says Lamers, the certified arborist. "That limb stub will die down to where there's a live branchlet coming out. You'll have an open wound for a much longer period of time, where viruses, fungal spores, bacteria and insects can invade the tree and make it real sick or kill it."

At some locations Family Tree's clumsy methods have produced "splitters"—cuts that leave a split branch attached to the tree. They've also produced "peelers"—cuts that cause the bark to peel down the side of the tree.

Professional tree trimmers understand that the correct procedure is to make an initial cut higher up on the tree than where the final cut will be. Taking shortcuts may save a little time, but the tree itself ends up paying the price.

One "splitter" on a Family Tree project on Airport Road in Fort Bragg probably resulted from a botched attempt to cut the tree without climbing it, Lamer believes. The Family Tree employees apparently hooked the tree with a pruner and pulled it down at an extreme angle so that it could be sawed from the ground.

"A splitter is even harder for a tree to repair than a stub," observes Lamers.

### Unintended Consequences

Ironically, the decline in the quality of line clearance work in some areas of the PG&E system may be an unintended consequence of a state program with a progressive policy goal: increasing the number of women-owned and minority-owned contractors performing work for regulated utilities.

PG&E offers preferential bidding status to tree contractors who qualify as a Minority Business Enterprise or a Women Business Enterprise under a program promoted by the California Public Utilities Commission.

Local 1245 supports the goal of promoting the economic interests of groups who may have suffered from past discrimination, says Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. And the program may be workable when it comes to businesses that supply parts or certain services to PG&E.

"The problem we have," says Zimmerman, "is that you can get a contractor like Family Tree, where the husband runs the show but puts the business in the wife's name to qualify for preferential bidding."

In a perversion of the program's intent, Family Tree uses its special bidding status to obtain the work, then promptly lowers the wages, liv-

**Bad seed contractors use their preferential bidding status to take work from union contractors, and then increase profits by paying substandard wages and benefits. For the thousand-plus unionized tree trimmers working on PG&E power lines, it's an economic death spiral.**

ing standards, and quality of life for tree trimmers—including any women or minority employees. In California, where a substantial number of line clearance tree trimmers are of Hispanic heritage, this transformation of union jobs into non-union jobs has an immediate and profoundly negative effect on minority workers.

"There are legitimate minority-owned businesses in this industry, and we support them," says Zimmerman. He noted that Local 1245 has a long-standing labor agreement with Arbor Tree, owned by minority contractor Steven Alvarez, who actually runs the day-to-day operations of the company. "Unfortunately, these kinds of programs get discredited when they are manipulated to benefit people who don't really qualify, and it's not clear that the CPUC even knows it's happening," Zimmerman says.

### Economic Death Spiral

For PG&E's bad seed contractors, though, the CPUC rules are a potential bonanza. Companies can use their preferential bidding status to snatch work from union contractors, and then reap larger profits for the owners by imposing substandard wages and benefits on the employees it hires.

For the thousand-plus unionized tree trimmers performing line clearance work on PG&E power lines, the process threatens to initiate an economic death spiral. In order to compete with low-wage non-union contractors, the union contractors will come under increasing pressure to scrimp on employee compensation and to adopt practices that erode customer service and jeopardize public safety.

The bad seed strategy may open up new short-term opportunities for PG&E to maintain a façade of cost-effective line clearance tree trimming.

But weather is a harsh judge of character in California, where facades, like trees, burn down in summer fires and are torn apart by winter winds. Sooner or later, the search begins for the responsible party, and PG&E may find that bad seed yields a bitter harvest.



## Youngsters define safety

The Local 1245 Safety Committee recently asked students in the sophomore class at Sutter Union High School in Sutter, Ca., to briefly state what the word "safety" means to them. Here are some of the responses:

"I think safety is trying to stay out of danger."

"Safety—taking care of yourself while you are doing something that involves risk. Also watching out for others."

"Safety. Something that is safe is where you don't break anything on your body."

"Safety is thinking before acting."

"Safety—Being in an area you are familiar with and comfortable with as well. Knowing people you are surrounded by. Not being in a position where you are at risk of harm or danger."

"I think that safety is when you don't have to worry about being killed or worry about anything bad happening to you."

"Safety: Being extra cautious of your environment, and having back-up plans in case of an emergency."

"Safety—It's pretty self explanatory: be safe! Think about what you're doing before you do it."

"I think safety means being careful and cautious around things that might be dangerous."

"Safety is being cautious and being prepared."

### Safety Tailboard

The following question was submitted by Local 1245 Retire Club member Tom D. S. Young:

**Question:** In inclement weather, which is more dangerous—installing protective grounds or removing them?

**Answer:** When grounding make sure the line is dead prior to grounding. When removing grounds be just as focused in case the line comes hot.

Receive an IBEW cup and cap for submitting a safety question selected for publication in the Utility Reporter's Safety Tailboard. Safety Tailboard is an open forum for discussion and learning about safety issues. Submit your question, along with your name and phone number, to:

Safety Tailboard,  
c/o Jim McCauley, IBEW 1245, PO Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

By the Local 1245  
Safety Committee



## Safety doesn't 'begin' anywhere

**M**ost people think that safety begins the moment you step foot on a job site. To this I say, "Wrong!"

Safety doesn't "begin" anywhere; it is something we must constantly consider in our daily lives.

In order for a company to maintain a safe working environment they must first hire "safety conscious" employees. Are you that type of individual?

By taking care of ourselves personally we can contribute to a safe

working environment. Being health conscious helps us to achieve this goal. Plenty of rest and proper diet keeps us in shape and helps us avoid injuries.

Monitoring our alcohol consumption as well as staying away from drugs are key factors in being alert and productive employees.

Encourage your co-workers to work as a team. Looking out for each other is another way we can put safety first.

*Gil Suarez*

## Slow down for cone zones

**Y**ou see construction on the roads you travel on. We all do. The obvious bears repeating: when you come to a cone zone you need to slow down and be extra alert.

In 2001 there were 1,079 fatalities in work zones. The people driving were the majority of those killed, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Between 1996 and 2001, work

zone-related fatalities increased by 65%.

Many Local 1245 members work in or near traffic and we know the importance of remaining alert while working in cone zones. Let's preserve that same level of awareness when we're driving.

When you see cones, slow down. They're there for a reason.

*David Vipond*

**"Didn't Humpty Dumpty  
have a union job safety  
committee?"**



Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee: Stoney Burk, Alameda Power & Telecom.; Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; David Vipond, Citizens Communications; Rich Lane, Turlock Irrigation District; Art Torres, Sacramento Municipal Utility District; Gil Suarez, Davey Tree; Bob Burkle, City of Santa Clara; and Assistant Business Manager Jim McCauley.





## Bill targets overtime pay ... & working women

### WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

#### Looking Southward

The Wall Street investors shifting capital from the Northeast textile industry to Southern mills in the 1920s convinced themselves that Southern workers were incapable of organizing, but didn't convince the workers. "We are not happy and by no means contented," said one working mother.

No wonder. The little mill towns were completely dominated by the companies. The companies owned the shacks where workers lived and the stores where they shopped. The mills built the schools and churches, paid the teachers and ministers. "Law and order" was company, too.



Workers at the Glanzstoff rayon plant in Elizabethton, Tenn. rebelled in March 1929 when Margaret Bowen was disciplined for asking for a raise. Within days, 5,000 workers (mostly women) were on strike. A United Textile Workers local came into being, with Bowen as secretary-treasurer.

The US Labor Dept. produced a skimpy settlement in May. The UTW urged strikers to accept it. Again the company reneged. Hundreds of workers were fired and blacklisted.

The company's use of the National Guard and injunctions did not sway the young women's resolve for higher wages. On March 22 a strike settlement committed the company to increase wages and rehire all workers.

But the company reneged. Active union members were fired. AFL officials were kidnapped and threatened with death. Inspired by a militant strike in Gastonia, N.C., the rayon workers walked out in April. The company flexed its muscle: National Guardsmen, special police and deputies. As machine guns protected scabs, more than 1,000 strikers (including girls as young as 15) were thrown into jail.

Next: Gastonia!

Working women would be the big losers if Republicans in Congress succeed in passing HR 1119, a measure that would weaken overtime pay protections contained in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The misnamed "Family Time Flexibility Act" would give *carte blanche* permission to employers to work their employees almost unlimited hours.

HR 1119—and the Senate's companion measure S. 317—would have profound impacts on millions of workers and would be especially harmful for working women. The bill would:

- Exclude previously protected workers who were entitled to overtime by reclassifying them as managers, thereby making them ineligible for overtime pay;
- Eliminate certain moderate-income workers from overtime protections by drastically lowering the maximum salary level at which workers are guaranteed overtime pay for work beyond 40 hours;
- Remove overtime protection from large numbers of workers in aerospace, defense, health care, high tech and other industries; and
- Allow employers to give even protected workers "comp time" in lieu of overtime pay.

Currently, employers are faced with a substantial disincentive to requiring more than 40 hours of work



per week from their employees—time-and-a-half pay. HR 1119, however, would remove this disincentive, thereby providing a strong financial incentive for employers to lengthen the workweek.

The average employee in the US already works 350 hours more per year than does the typical European worker.

#### Employer's Discretion

Under these bills, employees working overtime would forfeit their overtime pay for a promise of time off sometime within the next 13 months at their employer's discretion.

Those workers using overtime pay to help meet their families' needs are likely to find that opportunities for overtime pay have dried up as employers prefer to give overtime

assignments to those who are willing to do it in return for a time-off IOU rather than extra cash in their paycheck.

For businesses doing poorly in the current weak economy, this bill is a windfall.

A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) shows how employers would essentially take out an interest-free loan from their employees by not paying for overtime hours worked now in exchange for time off later, possibly much later.

A company with 200,000 FLSA-covered employees, for example, might get 160 free hours at \$7 an hour from each employee. That's the equivalent of \$224 million that the company wouldn't have to pay its workers for up to a year after the worker has earned it.

Under normal circumstances, the employer might have to pay 6% interest for a commercial loan of this size. That means the company could save \$13 million by relying on comp time to "borrow" from its employees rather than a commercial lender.

And if, during that 13 month waiting period, an employee's company happens to be one of the hundreds of thousands of companies that close their doors each year (200,000 in 2000) then the employee forfeits both the overtime pay and the time off—up to a 160 hours.

Those workers using overtime pay to help meet their families' needs are likely to find that opportunities for overtime pay have dried up as employers prefer to give overtime assignments to those who are willing to do it in return for a time-off IOU rather than extra cash in their paycheck.



## Big flaw in Bush's Medicare privatization plan

When President Bush unveiled his plan to "modernize and improve Medicare" in March, the basic strategy was clearly spelled out. Bush said he wanted to "keep costs reasonable" by introducing private-sector innovation and competition to the Medicare system.

There's only one problem: when you leave the rhetoric aside and consider the evidence, it turns out that private health plans are unlikely to save any money—and could in fact substantially increase Medicare costs.

Republicans in Congress are supporting President Bush's proposal to encourage the development of private health plans, known as preferred provider organizations. They claim that competition among private plans can reduce Medicare costs.

But a study commissioned by the Medicare Payment Advisory Com-

mission and reported in the New York Times revealed that private health plan fees are about 15% higher than Medicare fees.

The study was performed by economist Zachary Dyckman, who collected data from 33 health plans of 31 million people.

Private plans also proved more expensive in research performed by the Center for Studying Health System Change, a private group that monitors trends in health care markets around the country. The Center found that payment rates for hospitals and physicians negotiated by private plans were higher in most areas of the country than those paid by the Medicare fee-for-service program.

A preferred provider organization typically has a network of doctors. Patients can visit any doctors in

the network, usually without seeing a primary care doctor, or gatekeeper, and for an extra charge they may see doctors outside the network. Dyckman, the economist, said that such private plans usually had to pay doctors more than Medicare to get enough physicians to participate in their networks.

The federal government sets the level of Medicare payments to doctors and hospitals by statutes and regulations. By contrast, private plans set rates through negotiations with health care providers.

House Republican leaders have a plan to help keep costs down for private plans, however. At the expense of injured Americans. They plan to combine their Medicare bill with a separate bill limiting the damages that could be awarded in medical malpractice lawsuits.



## 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.

## 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.

Laurence Bettencourt, 25 years  
Clovis, CA

Michael Conrad, 2 years  
Valley Springs, CA

David Cunningham, 30 years  
Sacramento, CA

Daniel Tinaza Jr., 30 years  
Petaluma, CA

Mark Toney, 33 years  
San Ramon, CA

David Velie, 30 years  
Elk Mound, WI

David Wachtler, 31 years  
Fresno, CA

Dennis Williams, 32 years  
Camptonville, CA

James Williams, 31 years  
Richmond, CA

Raymond Williamson, 35 years  
Colfax, CA

## More seniors work ... some by choice, some not

The number of Americans past retirement age but still in the job market has risen by half in the last two decades, according to new data released by the the US Census Bureau.

The number of people 65 and older who are working or looking for work numbers almost 4.5 million, according to the Census Bureau report, released May 20. That represents an increase of almost 50% between 1980 and 2002. It amounts to 13.2% of the 65-and-older population of 33.8 million in March 2002.

Some older Americans may return to work by choice, like starting that small business they had always dreamed of. But others are working out of fear that their retirement income will not be enough to cover prescription drug costs and other expenses.

The latest Census Bureau data comes from a nationwide survey of 70,000 homes in March 2002. Among other findings:

- About one-third of those 65 and older live alone. That's virtually

unchanged since 1980.

- Roughly 1 in 10 live in poverty.

- More than 8 of 10 homes headed by an older person are owned, a high since 1982 but in line with the overall growth of home ownership in the United States.

- About 18% of men 65 and over were in the labor force, almost twice

the rate for women.

More than 15% of 65-and-over employees worked in sales in 2002, the largest share of any occupation. It was followed by professional fields, like architecture or medicine, and clerical jobs.

Congress voted in 1983 to raise the retirement age from 65 to 67 by 2027.





# IBEW 1245 Unit Meeting Schedule: July - December 2003

CITY	UNIT #	LOCATION	UNIT CHAIR	DAY	TIME	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alturas (Frontier)*	4013	The Brass Rail, Hwy 395	M. Nelson	Wednesday	5:30pm	9	13	10	15	12	10
Angels Camp	2512	Mike's Pizza, Hwy 49/Murphy Grade Rd.	G. Day	Thursday	4:00pm	17	21	18	16	20	18
Antioch	2317	Aladino's Pizza, 1324 Sunset Dr.	D. Tucker	Wednesday	5:00pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Auberry	1129	Daddy Joe's Java, Auberry Road	D. Cannon	Tuesday	5:45pm	8	12	9	14	12	9
Auburn	3511	Round Table Pizza @ Auburn-Folsom Road*	T. Andreucci	Tuesday	5:00pm	8	12	9	14	11	9
Bakersfield	1112	Labor Hall, 200 W. Jeffery St.	D. Scott	Wednesday	6:00pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Buellton	1221	Antonio's Pizza 280 E. Highway 246	T. Mathews	Monday	4:00pm	7	4	8	6	10	1
Burlingame/Penninsula	1512	TWU Local 505, 1521 Rollins Rd., Burlingame	B. Quinn	Wednesday	5:30pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Burney	3213	Sam's Pizza, Hwy 299, Johnson Park	W. Rodriguez	Tuesday	6:00pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Burney (Frontier)*	4015	Sam's Pizza, 38077 Hwy 299 East	D. Trowbridge	Tuesday	6:00pm	8	12	9	14	11	9
Carson City, NV	3312	Carson City Fire Department Station 5	S. Cherry	Tuesday	5:30pm	8	X	9	X	11	X
Chico/Davey Tree-PROVCO	4710	Round Table Pizza, Pillsbury Road	J. Lococo	Thursday	5:00pm	31	28	25	30	20	18
Chilcoot	3514	Wooden Rose Café, Hwy 70	H. Myers	Wednesday	6:00pm	9	X	10	X	12	X
Coalinga	1121	PG&E Service Center, Merced Avenue, Coalinga	D. Baldwin	Wednesday	4:00pm	16	20	17	15	19	17
Concord/Walnut Creek	2316	Round Table Pizza, 2960 Treat Boulevard	R. Lassus	Thursday	5:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Elk Grove (Frontier)	4014	Holiday Inn Express Hotel, 9175 W. Stockton Blvd.	S. Lawton	Thursday*	6:00pm*	10	14	11	9	13	11
Elko, NV	3318	Stockman's Casino, Elko	T. Norlen	Wednesday*	5:30pm	16	X	17	X	19	X
Ely, NV/Mt. Wheeler	3315	Ely Fire Dept, Meeting Hall	M. Venturino	Monday*	4:30pm	7	X	8	X	*18	X
Eureka	3111	Labor Temple, 9th & "E" Street	C. Wood	Tuesday	6:00pm	15	12	9	14	11	9
Fallon, Nevada	3316	Fallon Country Club, 2655 Country Club Dr.	R. Helton	Tuesday	5:30pm	X	12	X	14	X	9
Fort Bragg/Pt. Arena	3717	Fort Bragg Service Center, Fort Bragg	G. Fernandez	Thursday	5:00pm	24	21	18	23	20	18
Fresno	1111	Cedar Lanes, Cedar & Shields	C. Habecker	Tuesday	5:45 pm*	1	5	2	7	4	2
Fresno/Asplundh Tree	4712	Bobby Salazar's Mexican, Blackstone Avenue	S. Castaneda	Thursday	4:00pm	3	7	4	2	6	4
Grass Valley	3513	Swiss House, 535 Mill St. (Hwy 49 and Hwy 20)	J. Maslov	Wednesday	6:00pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Hayward/Fremont*	2314	Bronco Billy's Pizza, 3940 Smith St., Union City	I. Araquistain	Wednesday	5:30pm	16	20	17	15	19	17
Hinkley	1311	PSEA Rec. Room, Hinkley Station	P. Earl	Wednesday	5:30pm	X	6	X	1	X	3
Hollister	1219	Straw Hat Pizza, 191 A San Felipe, Hollister	J. Vermilyer	Wednesday	5:00pm	2	6	3	8	5	3
Jackson	2513	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 525 S. Hwy 49	B. Boitano	Tuesday	4:00pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Kettleman	1314	Kettleman Compressor Station	M. Guzman	Tuesday	5:30pm	8	X	9	X	11	X
King City	1213	Round Table Pizza, 500 B Canal St.	F. Padilla	Thursday*	3:45pm	3	7	4	9	6	4
Lakeport	3715	Senior Center, 527 Konocti Ave.	B. Dawson	Tuesday	5:00pm*	8	5	2	7	4	2
Lemoore	1128	Fleet Reserve, 788 "D" Street.	M. Ormonde	Thursday	5:30pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Livermore*	2315	Round Table Pizza, 1024 Stanley Blvd.	K. McCoy, Jr.	Wednesday	5:30pm	23	27	24	22	26	24
Lodi, City of	2516	Round Table Pizza, Kettelman Lane	R. Willett	Thursday	5:00pm*	10	14	11	9	13	11
Los Banos	1115	Stockmans, 615 "I" Street	J. Walpole	Tuesday	4:00pm	15	19	16	21	18	17
Manteca	2510	Moose Lodge, 1185 North Main Street	J. Mendoza	Wednesday	6:30pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
Marysville	3611	Stassi's, Fourth Street	M. Anderson	Wednesday	5:00pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
Merced	1123	Branding Iron, 640 W. 16th St.	P. Galen	Wednesday	5:30pm	2	6	3	8	5	3
Merced ID	1122	Branding Iron, 640 W. 16th St.	J. Ellett	Thursday	5:00pm	3	7	4	9	6	4
Modesto	2515	Days Inn, 1312 McHenry Blvd.	F. Malcria	Wednesday	5:30pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Modesto/Modesto Irr. Dist.	2518	Pizza Pub, Kansas Avenue @ Emerald	R. Wright	Wednesday	4:30pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
Morro Bay	1222	Round Table Pizza, 1050 Los Osos Valley Rd.	R. Tapia	Thursday	4:00pm	17	14	11	9	*13	11
Napa	3716	Round Table Pizza, 3331 Solano Ave.	J. Kent	Thursday	6:00pm	10	7	4	9	6	4
No. Lake Tahoe/Kings Beach	3320	Carpenter's Hall, (Deer Street), Kings Beach	B. Wermuth	Wednesday	5:30pm	16	20	17	15	19	17
Novato/Marin County	3711	Round Table Pizza, S. Novato Blvd.	I. Snyder	Wednesday	5:30pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Oakland Physical	2311	Francesco's, Hegenberger & Pardee	B. Simmons	Tuesday	4:30pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Oakland/City of	2211	Francesco's, Hegenberger & Pardee	L. Rodriguez	Thursday	4:00pm	17	21	18	16	20	18
Paradise	3417	Round Table Pizza, 6038 (B) Clark Road*	R. Bentler	Wednesday	5:30pm	9	13	10	15	12	10
Placerville	3813	Spanky's Pizza, 197 Placerville Dr.	H. Garcia	Tuesday	4:00pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Placerville/Asplundh Tree	4714	Round Table Pizza, 512 Main Street, Placerville	J. Atkinson	Monday	4:00pm	7	4	8	6	3	1
Pollock Pines/Fresh Pond	3912	50 Grand Club	G. Stoffer	Wednesday	6:00pm	2	6	3	1	5	3



# IBEW 1245 Unit Meeting Schedule: July - December 2003

CITY	UNIT #	LOCATION	UNIT CHAIR	DAY	TIME	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Portland, OR/PG&E GTNW	3026	PGT Headquarters - Portland	S. Corey	Wednesday	12:00pm	16	20	17	15	19	17
Red Bluff	3214	Crystal Restaurant, 343 S. Main Street	S. Burton	Thursday	5:30pm	3	7	4	9	6	4
Redding/Anderson	3212	Round Table Pizza, 2808 McMurry Dr., Anderson	Russ Rylee*	Wednesday	5:15pm	2	6	3	8	5	3
Redding, City of	3217	Round Table Pizza, 900 Dana Drive*	D. Norman	Tuesday*	4:30pm*	1	5	2	7	4	2
Redding/Davey & Utility Tree	4419	Round Table Pizza, 900 Dana Drive	G. Suarez	Wednesday	5:00pm	30	27	24	29	19	17
Redmond, OR	3024	PGT Headquarters - Redmond	J. Kisse	Thursday	5:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Redwood City/Asplundh Tree	4711	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 120 El Camino Real	C. Cardenas	Tuesday	4:00pm	16	19	16	14	18	16
Reno, NV	3311	IBEW LU 401, 2713 E. 4th St.	W. Patterson	Wednesday	7:00pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
Richmond	2318	La Strada Rest., 2215 Church Lane, San Pablo	C. Jackson	Wednesday	4:45pm*	2	6	3	1	5	3
Richmond/E. Bay Clerical	2301	La Strada Rest., 2215 Church Lane, San Pablo	D. Ambeau	Wednesday	6:00pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
Riverside/Outside Line So.	4912	1074 La Cadena Drive #5	J. Johnstone	Saturday	10:00am	19	16	20	18	15	20
Roseville, City of	3512	Round Tbl. Pizza, 4010 Foothill Blvd, W. Rseville*	T. Bakkie	Tuesday	4:15pm	8	12	9	*14	18	9
Sacramento	3811	Florin Rebecca Hall, 8360 Florin Rd.	L. Mennel	Wednesday	5:15pm*	2	6	3	1	5	3
Sacramento Clerical	3801	Sacto Central Labor Council, 2840 El Centro	S. Smith	Thursday	5:30pm	17	21	18	16	20	18
Sacto. Muni Utility District	3911	Sacto Central Labor Council, El Centro & I-80	G. Dremmel*	Wednesday	5:00pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Sacto. Regional Transit	3011	The Old Tavern, 1510 20th St.	C. Bibbs	Wednesday	5:00pm	16	20	17	15	19	17
Sacto./Outside Line No.	4911	IBEW LU 340 Hall, 2840 El Centro	L. Thomson	Saturday	10:00am	12	9	13	11	8	13
Salinas	1211	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 315 E. Alisal St., Salinas	S. Lazano	Tuesday	5:15pm*	1	5	2	7	4	2
San Francisco	2412	Ship Clerks Union Local 34 Hall, 4 Berry St.	J. Petrovich	Wednesday	4:30pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
San Jose	1511	Straw Hat Pizza, 1535 Meridian Ave., San Jose	F. DeAguinaga	Wednesday	5:15pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
San Jose/Asplundh Tree	4713	Desperado Restaurant, 1593 Monterey Road	E. Arellano	Thursday	4:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
San Luis Obis./Pismo Beach	1215	The Apple Farm, 2015 Monterey St., S. L. Obispo	T. Castanon	Thursday	4:00pm	10	7	4	2	6	4
San Luis Obispo/DCPP	1220	Margie's Diner, 1575 Calle Joaquin	L. Moon	Wednesday	5:30pm	2	6	3	1	5	3
Sandpoint, ID	3021	Blue Moon Café	T. Anderson	Thursday	5:00pm	17	21	18	16	20	18
Santa Clara, City of	1411	Vesuvios Resturant, 3044 El Camino	R. Muraca	Thursday	4:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Santa Cruz	1513	VFW Post #7263, 2259 7th Ave., Santa Cruz	A. Freitas	Tuesday	6:00pm	8	12	9	14	11	9
Santa Maria	1216	Rnd. Tbl. Pizza, 2508 S. Broadway, Santa Maria*	M. Landeros	Tuesday	4:00pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Santa Rosa	3712	Round Table, Steele & Cleaveland	L. Stubblefield	Tuesday	6:00pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Selma	1120	Sal's Mexican Restaurant, 2163 Park St.	P. Sandoval	Thursday	4:30pm	10	14	11	16	13	11
Shasta - USBR	3218	Keswick Dam Rd., Keswick	G. Huber	Wednesday	5:15pm	1	5	2	7	4	2
Sonora	2517	The Peppery, 13494 Mono Way	B. Owens	Tuesday	4:00pm	8	12	9	7	4	9
Sonora/Asplundh Tree	4715	Round Table Pizza, 13769-B Mono Way	N. Schader	Monday	4:00pm	7	4	8	6	3	1
South Lake Tahoe	3314	Round Table Pizza, 1062 Emerald Bay Road	P. Stahl	Thursday	5:00pm*	3	7	4	2	6	4
Spankel, WA/Rosalia	3027	Harvester Restaurant, Spankel, WA	P. Brown	Thursday	5:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Spokane, WA	3025	PGT Headquarters - Spokane	vacant	Thursday	12:00 noon	3	7	4	2	6	4
Stockton	2511	American Legion Post #803, 3110 N. West Ln.	C. De La Torre	Thursday	6:30pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Susanville (Frontier)*	4012	The Pizza Factory	J. Lovercheck	Thursday	5:30pm	10	14	11	16	13	11
Templeton	1217	The Pizza Place 105 Main St.	G. Burk	Tuesday	4:00pm	8	12	9	14	18	9
Tiger Creek/Pine Grove	2519	Pine Grove Pizza, 19724 St. Hwy 88, Pine Grove	R. Davis	Tuesday	6:00pm	15	19	16	21	18	16
Topock	1313	PSEA Mobil Hm., Topock/Moabi	G. Shettko	Thursday	4:45pm	X	7	X	2	X	4
Turlock	1126	Chamber of Comm., 115 S. Golden State Blvd	R. Lane	Thursday	4:00/5:00 pm	3	7	4	2	6	4
Ukiah	3714	The Wright Stuff Pizzadome	M. Perez	Wednesday	5:00pm	9	6	3	8	5	3
USBR/CVO*	3012	Rnd. Tbl. Pizza, 7943 Greenback Ln., Citrus Hts.	M. McKay	Tuesday	5:00pm	8	12	9	14	11	9
Vacaville	3812	Pietro's #2 679 Merchant St., Vacaville	E. Owens	Wednesday	5:00pm	9	13	10	8	12	10
Walla Walla/PG&E GTNW	3023	PGT Headquarters - Wallula	M. Prior	Thursday	5:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Wells R.E.C.	3319	Silver Sage Senior Citizens Ctr., 1st St., Wells NV	T. Leach	Thursday*	5:00pm*	17	X	18	X	20	X
Winnemucca	3317	47 E. Winnemucca Boulevard	S. Morris	Wednesday	7:00pm	X	13	X	8	X	10
Woodland	3814	American Legion Hall, 523 Bush Street	B. Wallace	Thursday	5:00pm	10	14	11	9	13	11
Yerrington	3313	Pacific Avenue Firehouse	L. Soukup	Monday*	5:00pm	14	X	22	X	10	X



All Local 1245 unit meetings are open to all Local 1245 members, regardless of employer.

\*Indicates change since schedule was last published in December 2002.



# Homeland Obscurity

**Editor's Note:** The following essay by Johanna McCarthy was the winning entry in the 2003 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship contest sponsored by Local 1245. Johanna is the daughter of Susan McCarthy and SMUD Troubleshooter Sean McCarthy. Johanna plans to attend Sonoma State.

By Johanna McCarthy

"Today America's families declare, "We will not be afraid! We will be ready" (dhs.gov). What about America's workers under the new Homeland Security Department? It seems as though they have the right to be fearful of Bush's new policy; after all, the Security Act isn't much to feel safe about. With a plan that basically steals all union workers' rights away from them, a suitable slogan for America's workers to declare is, "We will be afraid! We have no rights!"

By a vote of 90-9 on Nov. 19, 2002, the Senate approved legislation that created a new Homeland Security Department. On Nov. 25, Bush signed the bill. And on Jan. 24, 2003, Tom Ridge was sworn in as Secretary of Homeland Security.

In favor of the HSD, President Bush speaks of brave intentions: strengthening national security, reorganizing the federal government, and overcoming the threat of terrorism. In Ridge's swearing-in, Bush expressed the government's responsibility to confront the threat of terror, wherever it may be. Bush added that, "under the leadership of Tom

Ridge, more than 170,000 dedicated Americans, dedicated professionals, will have the overriding mission of protecting their fellow Americans" (whitehouse.gov).

Now, wait, is he talking about the same 170,000 workers who are being stripped of their rights? Bush's administration has the power to waive collective bargaining agreements, equal pay for equal work provisions, and whistle-blower protections (democracynow.com). Bobby Harnage, President of the American Federation of Government Employees, stated that Homeland Security will "undermine civil service's pay, health insurance, and retirement systems, merit-based hiring, firing appeal rights ... and rights to organize and bargain collectively" (LaborNotes.com).

So Bush really is speaking of the same 170,000 federal union workers who have no say, no rights, no liberties? It seems as though these "dedicated professionals" are, in fact, powerless victims to one more of our President's underhanded and selfish schemes.

To quote IBEW's International Secretary-Treasurer, Jeremiah J. O'Connor, "you don't have to be a diehard Democrat to see that George W. Bush ... push[es] policies that run directly against the ... interests of hardworking folks, union or not."

The irony is that the workers being denied their basic union rights are the very same ones whom the public will be relying on for national safety: members employed in run-

The irony is that the workers being denied their basic union rights are the very same ones whom the public will be relying on for national safety: members employed in running public transportation (subways, airplanes), hospitals, as well as those policing cities and protecting waterways.

ning public transportation (subways, airplanes), hospitals, as well as those policing cities and protecting waterways.

It also affects those under the National Treasury Employee's Union, which represents thousands of federal workers, including those in the United States Customs Service, the Department of Health and Human Services, FDIC and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Internal Revenue Service (democracynow.com).

In a recent letter, Senate Majority leader Tom Delay called the demands for unionization rights "despicable", "wrong", and "shameful" (IBEW). However, he has no qualms about enforcing Bush's shameful legislation, nor does he have any reservations about stealing union worker rights. But, in closing, the true question must be asked, "which is really worse: citizens fighting for their inherent rights, or our government's leaders stealing them?"



## ESSAY WINNER

Johanna McCarthy, with plaque, is the winner of this year's Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship for her essay on the topic "How will union members be affected by the Homeland Security Act?" McCarthy will receive scholarship assistance totaling \$2,000. From left: Local 1245 member Sean McCarthy, Susan McCarthy, Johanna McCarthy, Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, Local 1245 Retiree Club member Jack Hill (who judged the essays) and President Ed Mallory.

## Works Cited

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