

Weakley Hall opens in Vacaville



IBEW Local 1245 on June 30 opened its new headquarters at 30 Orange Tree Circle in Vacaville. Weakley Hall, named after the union's principal founder, is just a stone's throw from Interstate 80 in Vacaville. The new mailing address is P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696. The new main phone number is 707-452-2700. A directory of business representative phone numbers can be found on-line at www.ibew1245.com or (on PG&E computers) at www.hr/ibew.

Want to come see the new digs for yourself?

I-80 Eastbound: Take the I-505/Orange Drive Exit and exit onto Orange Drive. Turn left at the light. Turn right on Orange Tree Circle.

I-80 Westbound: Take I-80 to Leisuretown Exit. Go left and up over the freeway. Go right on Orange Drive. Go left on Orange Tree Circle.

Rate case proposal could mean more PG&E jobs

Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric have agreed to submit a joint proposal on improving system reliability to the California Public Utilities Commission as part of the utility's General Rate Case.

The proposal would create economic incentives for PG&E to reduce the duration of electric outages and reduce the frequency of outages. PG&E would be subject to a system of rewards and penalties, depending on how well it performed compared to benchmarks for duration and frequency of outages.

"We know from experience that you have to have good system maintenance and you have to have good emergency response if you want good reliability," said Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. "The surest way of improving service reliability is having enough people to do that work."

Although the proposal does not mandate specific workforce numbers for PG&E, it provides strong financial incentives for the utility to put additional people in the field. It does so in two ways.

First, it creates a system of incentives similar to those already in place for Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric, according to attorney Marc Joseph, who represents Local 1245 in CPUC proceedings.

Second, in recognition that PG&E's reliability statistics are significantly worse than those other two utilities, PG&E would be offered an additional incentive to improve its performance.

"PG&E would be authorized to spend an additional \$27 million each year from 2004 through 2009, and

Page 10 ▶

PG&E, union still can't agree

Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric remained apart on key bargaining issues after two days of negotiations on July 15-16.

PG&E presented additional data requested by the union at the June 25 bargaining session. The union re-submitted a package of proposals it first submitted to PG&E on June 25.

"We do not believe that our proposals pose any hardship for the company, nor do we believe that our proposals, if agreed to and

ratified, would be viewed as unreasonable by regulatory authorities," the Bargaining Committee said in a written statement.

"The company and union have a mutual interest in putting this matter behind us as quickly as possible so that together we can concentrate our energies on completing the company's return to financial health," the Committee said.

PG&E negotiators presented an October 2000 document pre-

Page 11 ▶

Members protest non-union trees at PG&E



See Page 3

Feature



US Troops Have Friends in Roseville 6

Sacramento Municipal Utility District SMUD Warehouse 5

Inside

Your Union Sustaining Member Involvement 2

City of Lodi Rodeo Winners 6

Retiree Corner Maybe You're The One 15

Safety Matters Bush Abandons Safety Data 11

Sierra Pacific Power Getting It Straight 13

EVENTS

AUGUST 2-3
Advisory Council
Reno, NV

SEPTEMBER 1
Labor Day

SEPTEMBER 13
IBEW Local 1245
Golf Tournament
Vacaville, CA

APPOINTMENTS

CONFERENCES, COUNCILS & CONVENTIONS

Summer School for Union Women
Lynn Moon-Brown
Natalie Christensen
Cheryle Bradley
Mary Wise
Katharine Reeves

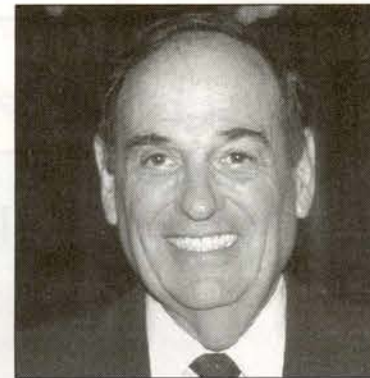
A. Philip Randolph Institute 34th
Annual Education Conference
Dorothy Fortier

AFL-CIO Human & Women's Rights
Conference
Dorothy Fortier

YOUR UNION

Sustaining member involvement

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager



I am often asked what I consider my greatest challenge as Business Manager of your local union. For me, it is a question that is easily answered.

Contrary to what you might think, I do not see the successful conclusion of negotiations with PG&E as my greatest challenge. Nor do I see any of the other "usual suspects" as my primary goal—rolling back electric industry deregulation in the state legislature, organizing new employers, or the like.

My primary goal is to sustain the high level of membership involvement in Local 1245 that we have enjoyed recently. When I took office two years ago, I believe that large parts of our membership were disen-

gaged from their union. I know that that is not the case now.

I look at the unprecedented steps that we have taken in the last two years to reach out and draw in members. I point with pride to the unparalleled series of meetings that we have held with our members to debate contract proposals, to the proactive effort to identify potential representatives of the future and bring them to union headquarters for our "The Future is Now" training, and to the general tone that we have set of open communication that values members' opinions. You can and do call me. You can and do e-mail me. You can and do see me in your headquarters and at your unit meetings.

The results cannot be denied. The turnouts in recent ratification votes have been higher than at any time in Local 1245's history. Many of the strongest voices in the debate over our contract negotiations have been from employees who either had never been very involved in the union or who once were but have not been for 20 years.

I am proud of the increased level of involvement, but my greatest challenge is to sustain this involvement after the sound and fury of PG&E negotiations subsides. The challenge is particularly difficult because of the demographics of our membership. Within the next few years, a large percentage of our current members will retire, taking with them their experience of 30 or 35 years. If we are to succeed as an organization in the coming years, we must pass the torch of involvement to the next generation of union members.

That task falls to the union, but it also falls to you, our members who

are approaching retirement. As unionists, you understand both the importance of involvement and the importance of incremental change.

You understand that if our membership had been more engaged in the negotiations process in 1993, it is unlikely that we would today find ourselves facing the great problem in post-retirement medical insurance that we face.

You also understand that if our membership had been more engaged in the negotiations process over the last 20 years, it is likely that we would have negotiated more than a single pension increase in 20 years, and that we would not be faced with the expensive catch-up situation that faces us today.

Obviously, I cannot and the union cannot sustain membership involvement by ourselves. I will continue to set a tone that values the involvement of the membership, and I will continue and expand the programs and approaches that have worked so far. But we can only do so much ourselves. We need you, and we need you badly.

Through union representation, you are given control over your work life to an extent that few workers enjoy. I urge you—take advantage of what you have. I especially urge our members who are near retirement to do all that they can to pass on what they have learned over the years.

If we succeed in sustaining member involvement, the other goals will be accomplished more easily, more quickly, and with greater success. It will not be easy to maintain the high level of participation, but it is critically important that we try. I think we can.



WICA
WESTERN LABOR COUNCIL AFFILIATION ASSOCIATION

UtilityReporter

August 2003
Vol. 52 No. 8
Circulation: 23,400



Business Manager &
Executive Editor
Perry Zimmerman

Communications Director &
Managing Editor
Eric Wolfe

President
E. L. "Ed" Mallory

Executive Board
Michael J. Davis
Chris Habecker
Dave Scott
Anna Bayless-Martinez
Kathy F. Tindall
John Mendoza

Treasurer
Ron Moon

Published monthly at 30 Orange
Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA 95687.
Official publication of Local Union
1245, International Brotherhood of
Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO, P.O.
Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696.

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 2547, Vacaville, CA
95696.

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 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696. Our Web Site can be viewed at www.IBEW1245.com. Our phone number is (707) 452-2700.

Pickets protest non-union tree contractors at PG&E

Local 1245 members working for Pacific Gas & Electric in the Bay Area used personal vacation time to travel upstate on July 1 to picket in support of union tree trimmers.

The picket in front of the PG&E Service Center in Fort Bragg was part of a continuing union protest against PG&E's decision to bring non-union tree trimming contractors into the area. The company's action displaced over two dozen Local 1245 tree trimmers, including some who have performed line clearance in the area for twenty years.

Apprentice Lineman Ian Amo, Cable Splicer Frank Villa and Equipment Operator Mike Emerson left San Francisco before seven o'clock in the morning to make the drive to the small Mendocino community where Local 1245 has chosen to make a stand against non-union tree contractors. At ten o'clock they joined displaced Davey Tree Trimmer Carl Lamers and Local 1245 staff members on the picketline.

Emerson said he made the trip to show PG&E what he thought about the decision to use non-union contractors.

"I don't know what's going through their minds to hire scabs," said Emerson.

Motorists Give Thumbs-Up

The picketline has become something of an attraction in Ft. Bragg, where Lamers and his picket signs have been a fixture at PG&E headquarters for several months. The addition of Emerson, Amo and Villa caught the attention of the locals, who gave thumbs-up signs and laid on their horns to express support.

"In the afternoon it was every car that was beeping," said Emerson.

Joining in the protest were Local 1245 Business Reps. Junior Orenelas, Landis Marttila, and Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas.

Considering that the picket caravan didn't return to the Bay Area until after nine o'clock at night, you might wonder why Emerson and the other PG&E employees bothered to make the trip.

Emerson has a ready answer.

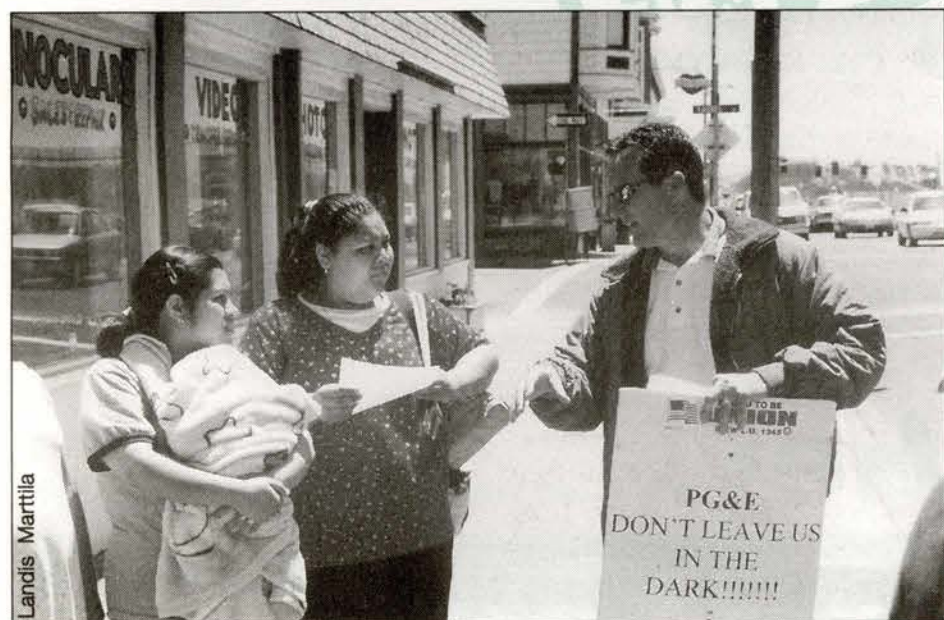
"We're all brothers. We're all union brothers. It was worth," he said. "And I'd do it again."



PUBLIC DISCUSSION
Local 1245 members generate some public discussion of PG&E's use of non-union line clearance tree trimmers. In the background, Local 1245 Business Rep. Junior Orenelas speaks with a customer outside PG&E Service Center in Ft. Bragg. In foreground, from left, are: PG&E Cable Splicer Frank Villa, Davey Tree Trimmer Carl Lamers, and PG&E Apprentice Lineman Ian Amo.



THUMBS UP



OUTREACH TO CUSTOMERS

Local 1245 Senior Business Representative Ray Thomas, right, discusses some of the problems posed by non-union line clearance tree contractors working on PG&E lines, including reliability issues and threats to the public safety.



SOLID

Using personal vacation time to stand in solidarity with union tree trimmers are IBEW members Ian Amo (left), Apprentice Lineman at PG&E, and Mike Emerson (right), Equipment Operator at PG&E.



Strip club now worker-owned

When they're not dancing naked they're working on the books. They're the exotic dancers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady Theater.

The women made history in 1995 when they became the first stripper workforce to vote for union representation.

They liked having a voice at work so much, they've decided to go another step and buy the joint, becoming the nation's first employee-owned strip club.

According to a report in the San Francisco Chronicle, the dancers come from many different walks of life. Some reportedly have doctoral degrees; some are in graduate school.

One dancer gave up practicing law, according to one of her co-workers, because it "made her feel like a whore." She apparently felt better dancing naked for a living. (You can make up your own lawyer jokes right about now.)

The dancers' adventure in worker-ownership wasn't totally voluntary. Last February the old management announced the club would close, just one month after reaching agreement on a new union contract. With help from a cooperative food store—Rainbow Grocery—the dancers figured out how to put their business together.

One dancer, Miss Muffy, logged onto the Internet and figured out how to write a legal contract. And then did it.

The club will remain union.

"Everyone kept bugging us to disband (the union)," Miss Muffy told the Chronicle. "But I think keeping the union makes good sense."

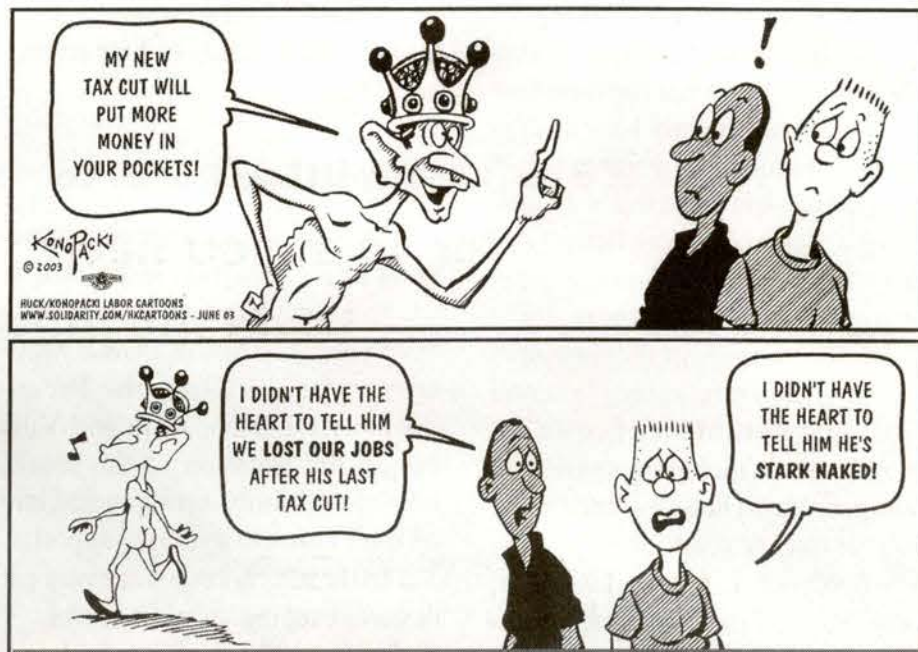
Goodbye overtime, goodbye Coke, hello Wal-Mart

The 400 wealthiest taxpayers took in more than 1% of all the income in the United States in the year 2000, more than double their share just eight years earlier, according to new data from the Internal Revenue Service. In 2000, the top 400 on average paid 22.3% of their income in federal income tax, down from 26.4% in 1992 and a peak of 29.9% in 1995. Two factors explain most of this decline, according to the I.R.S.: reduced tax rates on long-term capital gains and bigger gifts to charity. Had President Bush's latest tax cuts been in effect in 2000, the top 400 taxpayers would have saved another \$8.3 million each, on average.

► **Jobless Rate Jumps:** The nation's unemployment rate shot up to 6.4% in June, the highest level in more than nine years, in an economic slump that has added nearly a million people to jobless rolls in the past three months. Businesses slashed 30,000 jobs in June for the fifth straight month, with cuts heavily concentrated in the nation's factories, the Labor Department reported July 3.

► **Million Indians Strike:** More than a million state government employees and teachers went on an indefinite strike in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the BBC reported. Unions representing the public employees called for the strike in protest at a cut in their pensions. Striking unions called for the action after talks with the state's chief minister on June 27.

► **Goodbye Overtime Pay:** More than 8 million white-collar workers could become ineligible for overtime pay after working more than 40 hours a week under changes proposed by the administration of President Bush, according to a study released recently by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). The report finds the Bush administration's pro-



posed changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act could eliminate overtime pay for 7.4 million more workers than the U.S. Department of Labor's estimate of 644,000 workers. Employees who make as little as \$22,100 annually could be reclassified as professional, administrative or executive employees exempt from federal overtime rules. Emergency medical technicians, cooks, social workers and police officers are among the 8 million workers who could be reclassified and lose overtime pay.

► **Coke Kicked Out:** Unions in New Zealand will remove Coca-Cola vending machines from their premises and encourage employers to do the same in retribution for the assassination of eight union leaders at the company's plants in Columbia, according to a report published on

the New Zealand on-line newservice news.com.au. Union action will coincide with an international day of action and boycott of Coca-Cola products beginning July 22, as a US court tries cases of human rights abuses against the soft drink giant's Colombian bottlers.

► **Court Rebuffs Wal-Mart:** The Arkansas Supreme Court in July overturned a decision that barred labor unions from soliciting in Wal-Mart stores, the United Food and Commercial Workers union said on July 3. Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the nation's largest private sector employer and world's biggest company by revenue, obtained a nationwide injunction against the union in 2001 that said soliciting for new members in Wal-Mart stores constituted trespassing. The union hailed the court's decision as a clear victory.

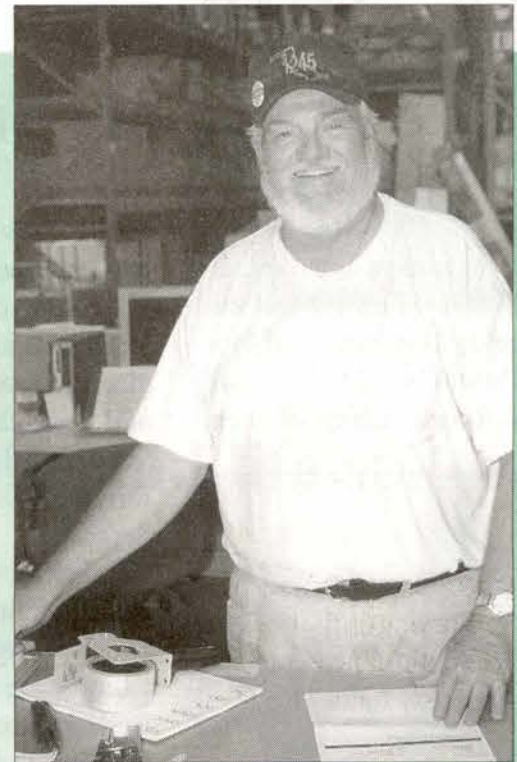
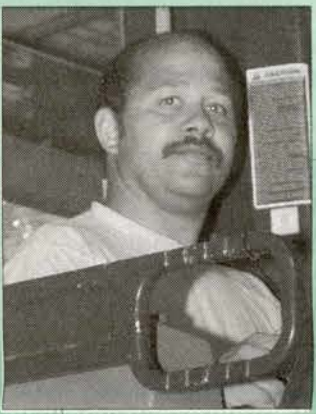
Hey! Get Your Union News On-Line!

Internet: www.ibew1245.com

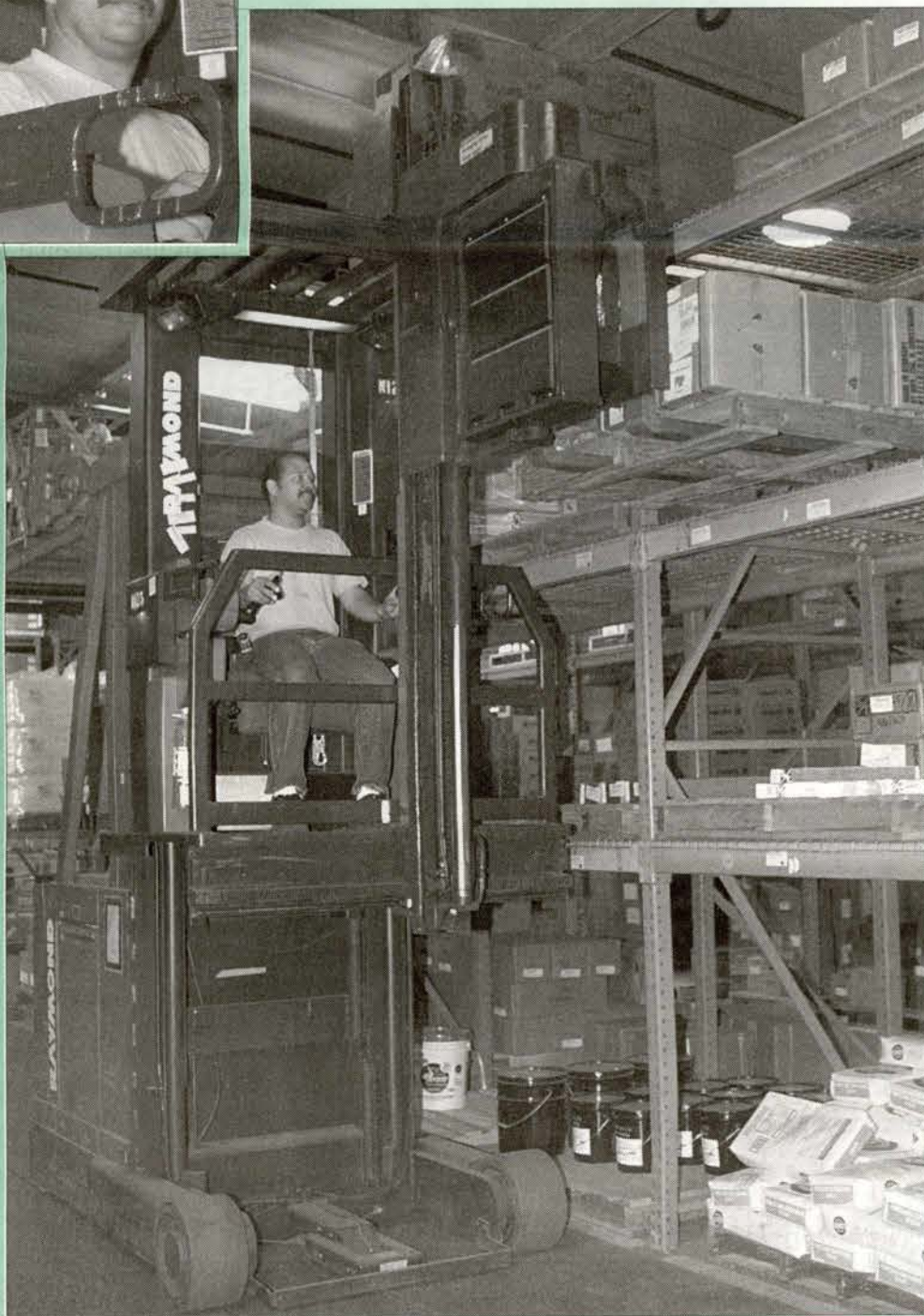
At PG&E: www.hr/ibew

Warehouse

It's where you go
for what you need
to do the job



Materials Specialist II Gary Stoffer offers a grin after checking in a temperature probe for Dave Brown. "We do all the shipping and receiving for downtown SMUD," says Stoffer. "Anything you might need in the field is going to come through the warehouse." The warehouse employs about 15 people, but on this particular day most of them were in the field, on vacation, or at lunch.



SACRAMENTO MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT

The unique design of the Raymond Lift allows Materials Specialist II James Bufford (left) to operate a fork at a 90 degree angle. "The Raymond is able to maneuver in narrow aisles to pick up pallets," says Bufford, who demonstrates the technique as he moves a pallet of fault indicators.

Lodi wins big at line rodeo

By Eric Wolfe

When 60 teams of electric linemen showed up for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's 12th Annual Lineman's Rodeo, many of them



Ken Enzi, left, and Wayne Holley show their stuff.

didn't know where the City of Lodi was. But they sure know now.

IBEW Local 1245 linemen at the small municipal utility captured first place in three events and scored second in another in competition with teams from LADWP, Southern California Edison and Arizona Public Service.

Wayne Holley, Ken Enzi and Chris Daniell took second in the Switch Change Out, first in the Speed Climb, and set a new LADWP Rodeo record in the Arm Change Out. Bill Dolstra, Roy Dodgion and Dan Ferguson took first place in the Hurt Man Rescue.

Not bad for a pint-sized utility that has exactly one dozen linemen on the payroll.

Holley says participating in rodeos is a confidence builder, and helps build camaraderie within the department.

Rodeo participation is also putting the City of Lodi on the map. Last



City of Lodi linemen show off their multiple prizes captured recently at the Lineman's Rodeo sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

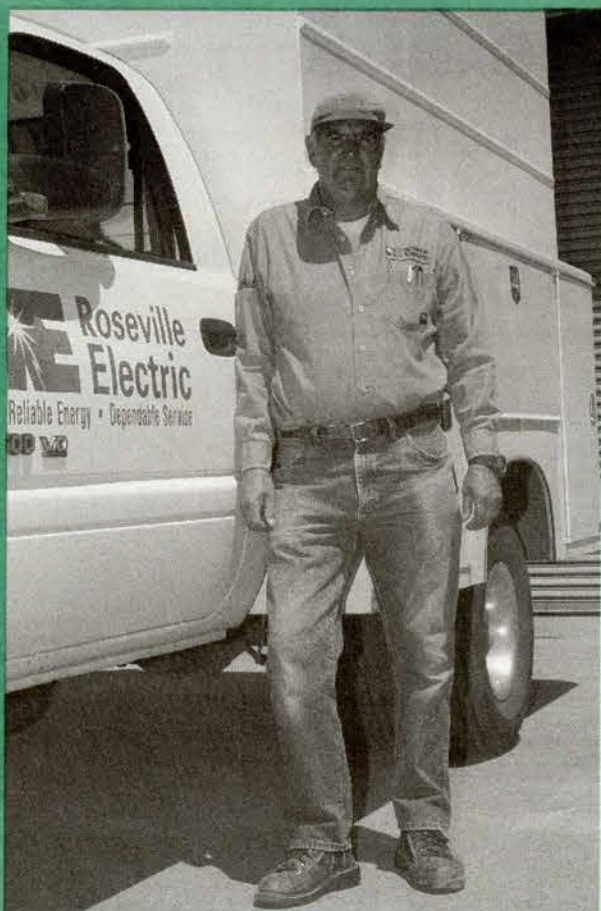
fall Dolstra, Ferguson and Holley went to Kansas City to represent the City at the national Lineman's Rodeo, where the competition included some 300 teams from all across America as well as Ireland, Canada, and Jamaica.

Even against that competition

Lodi linemen proved themselves winners, taking second place in—we don't think we're giving away any secrets here—the "45 and Over" division.

Lodi will be competing at the national event again this year on Oct. 18 in Bonner Springs, Kansas.

American troops in Iraq have friends in Roseville



Local 1245 member Geoff Hoyland

Five City of Roseville employees currently serving in the Armed Forces in Iraq receive a little something from home each month to remind them they aren't forgotten: care packages from the City's Electric Department.

The Human Resources department hatched the idea for the care packages, and the project picked up steam when Jeff Holt, an Electronics Tech II and IBEW member, suggested the Electric Department ought to shoulder responsibility for a care package.

But when Geoff Hoyland, a fellow Electronics Tech II, got wind of the project, he wasn't interested in a one-time show of support. As a veteran of both the Australian Army and the US Air Force, Hoyland well remembers the feelings that care packages inspire in servicemen and women.

"You get a care package and that's nice, but you get just one and then you feel forgotten," says Hoyland.

So Hoyland proposed that the Electric

Department assume responsibility for sending one care package to each City employee serving in Iraq—every month.

At \$60 per package, that can add up fast. But the Electric Department has responded with enthusiasm. To date, Hoyland says, the Department has raised \$1200, enough to keep the five employees in care packages for four months.

Collecting money for the care packages has become a part of the routine at the Department. "People will say, 'Hey, isn't it time you came around and collected for the troops?'" Hoyland notes.

The care packages, which include things like jerky, M&Ms, Q-tips, and babywipes, have already prompted thank you letters from the employees in Iraq to the employees back in Roseville.

"If other IBEW units have people over there, I challenge them to do the same thing for their people as we're doing for ours," says Hoyland.

Two cars and a pole

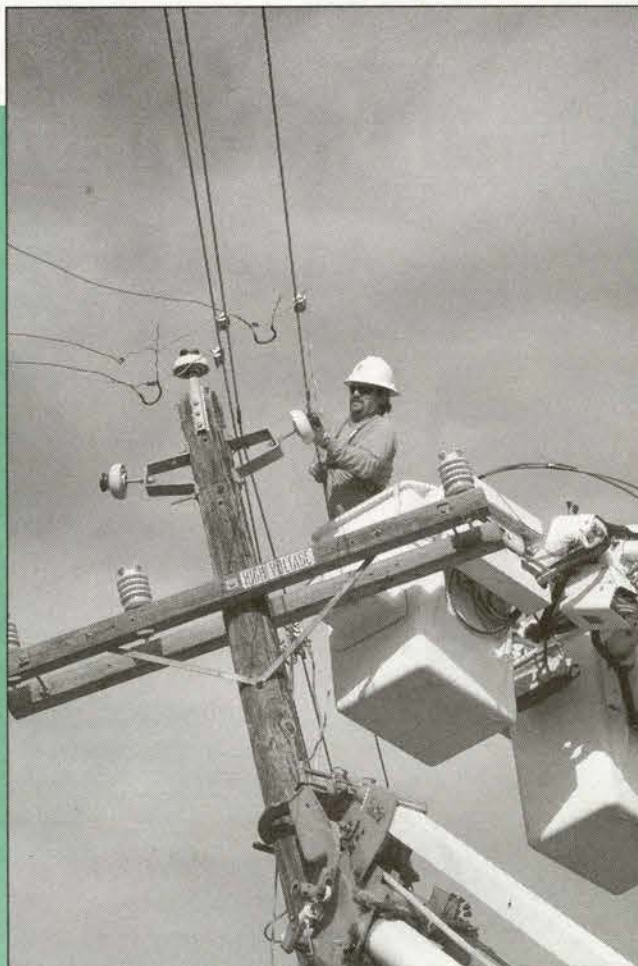
A sunny afternoon last May took a nasty turn when a car ran a truck off the road on a quiet stretch of Highway 32 west of Chico – an apparent hit-and-run accident.

Highway Patrol cars blocked off the highway, creating some elbow room for a Pacific Gas & Electric crew headed by Foreman Lucky Carter.

Working with Carter to replace the pole were Linemen Dave Kelly and Randy Walton, and Apprentice Lineman Jeff Gomes.



Lucky Carter



Lineman Dave Kelly

Photos by Eric Wolfe



Foreman Lucky Carter (left), Lineman Dave Kelly (in bucket, on left) and Apprentice Lineman Jeff Gomes.

**Pacific
Gas
&
Electric**



35 Years



30 Years



30 Years



30 Years

San Francisco, CA
May 30, 2003



25 Years



25 Years



25 Years

The Honorees

45 YEARS

Dixon, Howard

40 YEARS

Krol, J W

35 YEARS

Allen, Karen
 Arjona, L
 Bullock, Ronald F
 Callen, Shirley A
 Demeo, Nick M
 Eaton, Phillip A
 Horton, James H
 Hunt, E
 Meyer, James R
 Vella, Fred

30 YEARS

Aranda, Gloria E
 Au, Sheu
 Baldridge, Willis
 Banaga, Robert Y
 Campbell, John
 Chan, Clarence
 Chan, Nancy H
 Chan, Po Ling
 Charbonneau, Joseph A
 Chin, Edward
 Choy, Winnie GS
 Contreras, Victor S
 Cook, John H
 De La Torre, Victor H
 Dumaguít, R G
 Fowler, Licia M

Gee, Sandra Y
 Gee, Tinchor G
 Hoganas, Clarita P
 Irwin, Bonnie L
 Jew, Edwin
 Jones, Vincent
 Kaefer, Randall C
 Kapadia, Hansa R
 Kung, Sherry
 Kwan, Bing Bing
 Lai, Leland
 Lopes, Vern D
 Low, Kenneth R
 Ma, Joseph
 Mateo Jr., Anthony
 Mitchell, Marcellus
 Morris, Jeffery
 Myers, Leo
 Quon, Priscilla
 Ramirez, Luis J
 Salazar, Raymond J
 Santos, Anthony
 Sarmiento, Agueda C
 Selva, Rosaliflor
 Soto, Jenny
 Turner, Erlinda
 Vasquez, Carlos A
 Vicario, Magdalena

Viray, Leticia
 Walker, Delano S
 Winders, Donald R
 Wong, Sandra
 Woodford, Rudolph G
 Yu, Chung A

25 YEARS

Abfalter, Thomas L
 Abriam, Edward
 Barairo, Sandra
 Brown Jr., Tommie
 Canada, David J
 Cavanaugh, David L
 Chan, Carmelito
 Cortez, John D
 Cortez, Steven M
 Cotter, Jerry J
 Cresci, Michael A
 Dea, Robert S
 Faga, Robert
 Fong, Janice E
 Gin, Jack
 Halvorson, Alton J
 Hill, Fenwick Y
 Huddleston, Gerald E
 Huey, Nancy (Shum)

Kamp, Philip
 Lewis, Patrick A
 Lim, Estrellita P.
 Lopez, Criselda
 Manick, Pamela
 Marley, Gary V
 McQuinn, Gregory P
 Nobello, Felicitas
 Ormando, Joseph
 Otten, Edward F
 Pagan, Richard
 Palter, Elizabeth
 Porter, Robert S
 Primus, Annette
 Pring, Rosevilla
 Ramos, Emma
 Reddy, Premila D
 Regan, Evelyn L
 Rountree, David
 Schenone, Robert J
 Shanahan, Edward T
 Silverfoote, Jim M
 Siordia, Richard
 Stevens, Lawrence
 Vella, Norma A
 Wong, Paul J
 Wu, Alice
 Yordamlis, Steven W

Rate case proposal could mean more PG&E jobs

► From Page 1

that money could be spent only on improving reliability," said Joseph, noting that these funds are above and beyond PG&E's own original request for revenue. However, because PG&E would have additional funds, the benchmarks for rewards and penalties would gradually become more stringent.

"In order to just break even, PG&E has to do better each year in its reliability performance," said Joseph.

In effect, if PG&E's reliability performance does not improve, the penalties will cancel out the increased revenue. If PG&E does better than the improvement targets, the company would get rewards.

CPUC Focus on Reliability

The current focus on reliability performance stems in part from widespread outages last December in PG&E's service territory. In response to those outages, the CPUC specifically asked that reliability issues be addressed in PG&E's General Rate Case this year.

As a participant in the rate case, Local 1245 set to work on the issue. Through Joseph and the coalition of California Utility Employees (CUE), Local 1245 researched PG&E's reliability performance over the past decade or so—and found some interesting correlations.

"We correlated the average restoration time to the number of customers per field service employee, and we found that there is a strong correlation between fewer employees and longer outages," said Joseph.

For most people this correlation is intuitively obvious. But you can't march into the CPUC with proposals based solely on intuition.

CUE's research, conducted with assistance from David Marcus, established that PG&E's reliability performance improved when the utility temporarily increased its workforce in the mid-1990s—after the storms of 1995 had revealed substantial weaknesses in system main-

tenance. But as workforce numbers began to fall again at the end of the 1990s, reliability performance de-

clined as well.

On July 2, representatives from the union and PG&E met with CPUC

officials to establish a timeline for the General Rate Case. A decision could come as early as this fall.

PG&E, union still apart on bargaining

► From Page 1

pared by its consultant—Towers & Perrin—that purported to show that Clerical and Physical compensation at PG&E is above market rates. The union, in turn, disputed the document's relevance to conditions in 2003.

Business Manager Perry Zimmerman strongly reiterated that the membership will make the final decision on any agreement.

The company and union agreed to meet again on July 24.

Mirant goes into Chapter 11

Power producer and trader Mirant Corp. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy late on July 14 after failing to reach agreements with bondholders and banks to restructure its debt, Reuters reported.

Mirant had been struggling with huge debts incurred after the collapse of the energy market.

Mirant's California subsidiary had already informed IBEW Local 1245 that the company did not anticipate laying off any Local 1245 members in the event of a bankruptcy filing.

Local 1245 represents workers at Mirant's Contra Costa and Pittsburg power plants in the East Bay, and at the Potrero power plant in San Francisco.

Some workforce downsizing is expected from an unrelated develop-

ment at Mirant's Pittsburg power plant—the closure of four of seven generation units at the plant, according to Local 1245 Business Rep. Hunter Stern.

"We have already negotiated a procedure, focusing on voluntary severance options, for handling the closure of those units," said Stern.

Stern said the union would probably seek to have the IBEW labor agreement with Mirant recognized by the court so that the company could continue to meet its obligations to employees, but the union first needed an opportunity to examine the bankruptcy filing.

Mirant's bankruptcy filing was the 10th largest bankruptcy by assets in US history, according to BankruptcyData.com.

MODESTO IRRIGATION DISTRICT



Attending the June unit meeting of the Modesto Irrigation District were Karri Davis, Peter Gartner, Frances Solorio, Rod Wright, Michael Gomes, Mike Stout, Dean Verner, Gary Hubers, Forrest Mouw, Diane Ermis, Carl Harris, Ed Cox and Kurt Celli.

Bush abandons safety data

If you're one of the 27,900 workers who lost worktime in 1999 due to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, you understand the physical pain and financial hardship this workplace malady inflicts.

Actually, 27,900 is an incomplete figure, because it does not include government employees. Nor does it include the many thousands of workers, government and private sector, who stay on the job despite the pain. Nor does it include the approximately two million workers who lose worktime each year from musculoskeletal disorders other than Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

In other words, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and other musculoskeletal disorders are a huge problem in the American workplace—a problem that needs urgent attention.

How do we know this? Because the federal government's Bureau of Labor Statistics compiles this data.

Until now.

No More Record Keeping

On June 30, the Bush administration's Occupational Safety and Health Administration revoked a 2001 requirement that employers track workplace musculoskeletal injuries, which are sometimes referred to as ergonomic injuries because they are caused or exacerbated by poorly designed work processes.

The record-keeping rule, issued in 2001, required employers to check a box on standard workplace injury and illness logs if an injury was a musculoskeletal injury. The rule was designed to help employers, workers and OSHA identify and keep track of ergonomic injuries.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics tracked some 1.7 million lost-time workplace accidents in 1999 in the

private sector. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health estimates that about 60% of all workplace injuries are musculoskeletal injuries. Some studies suggest that a total of 2 million workers a year suffer from crippling musculoskeletal injuries. By any definition, the problem is huge.

President Bush understood that it was a huge problem from the moment he got into his office. His many corporate contributors told him they thought it would be a huge problem if they were required to spend any money to try to fix the problem.

Standard Repealed

In 2001, Bush signed the repeal of the first nationwide ergonomics standard, which require employers to control ergonomic hazards and gave OSHA the power to enforce the standard. Bush said voluntary guidelines would work better.

Unfortunately, from the corporate point of view, if you keep good records you can see just how effective—or ineffective—those voluntary guidelines are in combatting the epidemic of ergonomic injuries.

President Bush solved this problem for his employer-contributors. He told them they no longer have to keep track of the injuries.

Specifically, OSHA is telling employers they no longer have to identify musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) on their workplace injury and illness logs. OSHA also revoked the definition of what kinds of injuries should be counted as MSDs.

And there you have the Bush approach to workplace safety:

We don't want to know how many of you are injured. We don't even want to know what your injuries are called.

By the Local 1245
Safety Committee



Work habits and life styles

New habits and a fresh attitude can help you feel better and more comfortable with your job. Here are seven steps concerning work habits and the effect they can have on our lives.

1. Greet your co-workers with a smile. Smiling can do wonders for your own morale and others, too, and helps you feel more relaxed with yourself.

2. Start promptly. Don't be late for work. Get off on the right foot.

3. Make your work area conducive to work. Keep your work area clean, neat and as free of distractions as possible.

4. Set high standards for yourself and for others. Give praise for work well done, encourage effort, and look for ways to improve your work habits.

5. Develop a positive outlook. Think positive about your work—don't gripe. Use your energy to look for solutions that can make your job better and more comfortable for yourself and others.

6. Listen and lead. Keep learning and stay informed about the type of work you perform. Offer positive suggestions and help at meetings. Sometimes a few words in the right spot can change the whole atmosphere of a workplace.

7. Decompress after work. Take a walk. Relax with music. Visit with friends. Don't take your work home—let tomorrow take care of itself. Make time to relax and rid yourself of unnecessary stress.

I hope these steps will be of help to you.

Stoney Burk



"Our health plan is, we believe in reincarnation."

Safety Tailboard

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 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee: Stoney Burk, Alameda Power & Telecomm.; 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.



Swiss dust-up over paid maternity leave

Paid maternity leave for working mothers has moved a step closer to reality in Switzerland, the only country in western Europe without such benefits, according to the news service NZZ on-line.

However, the rightwing People's Party is threatening to derail plans to grant mothers 14 weeks paid leave by putting the issue to a national vote.

The Swiss Senate in June followed the House of Representatives in approving the law, which would give mothers access to 80% of their former salary.

It has taken four years for parliament to come up with a new legal framework for maternity benefits. In 1999, a federal law was rejected in a nationwide vote, the third time in 15

years that the Swiss turned down paid maternity leave.

Although the concept of maternity benefits was enshrined in the constitution 60 years ago, it has until now been up to individual employers to choose whether to pay them.

The so-called People's Party, which has been opposed to maternity leave in the past and fought the latest proposals in parliament, said it was considering launching a campaign for a referendum on the new law this summer.

Under the proposals, workers and employers would both contribute to a special fund, which already covers the loss of salary incurred by people serving in the army.

One of Switzerland's biggest unions, Travail.Suisse, has wel-

comed the government's move toward paid maternity leave, but says it represents the bare minimum.

"We would have preferred 16 weeks leave on full pay," union spokeswoman Anna Christen told swissinfo. "But we're happy with anything we get."

Christen points out that even under the new law, due to be introduced in 2004 at the earliest, Switzerland will still be lagging behind other European countries.

Norwegian mothers, who are the best off, receive 100% of their salary for 18 weeks, according to the International Labour Organization.

The United States, in its failure to provide any paid maternity leave, stands increasingly isolated among the industrialized democracies.

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Songwriter's Murder

The 1,700 women and men on strike in Gastonia, N.C. in the spring of 1929 already faced National Guardsmen, court injunctions and vigilante terror. Then in May, the company forcibly evicted the strikers from their homes in company owned housing.

Workers' International Relief set up tents for the strikers. Fearing further attacks, union members kept guard. On the night of June 7, the drunken police chief and a carload of his drunken deputies pulled up to the tent colony. A deputy opened fire. Union guards fired back. In the ensuing gun battle, Chief O.F. Aderholt was killed.

Sixteen strikers were indicted for murder, three of them women: Vera Buch Weissbord, a NTWU organizer; Sophie Melvin, who worked with the tent colony's children; and Amy Schecter of the Workers' International Relief. A mistrial was declared on Sept. 7; in response, anti-union thugs kidnapped and beat three union supporters. With the strike at a critical point, the NTWU called a rally for Sept. 14.



Ella May Wiggins was among those going to the meeting. A skilled weaver and mother of five, the 29-year-old striker was a rank-and-file leader who wrote songs about the strike set to old mountain tunes. Her songs, said a reporter, told "better than speeches or leaflets of the people's faith in the union to give them a better life."

Ella May never made it to the rally. The labor singer was killed when vigilantes opened fire on the truck carrying her and other strikers to the meeting. No one was ever convicted, despite the evidence of more than 50 witnesses. Ella May's murder marked the end of the strike. Terror—legal and illegal—forced the union underground.

What to do if you are being sexually harassed

Workers should never be silent in the face of sexual harassment. Instead, confront the issue as promptly and firmly as possible.

For violent harassment:

1. Contact law enforcement
2. Contact the employer
3. Inform your union rep

For other forms of harassment:

1. Object!
2. Document the harassment
3. Talk to co-workers for support and your union rep for help
4. Learn about your rights and research your options
5. Exercise your rights; complain to the employer
6. Ask the union to file a grievance under your collective bargaining agreement
7. File EEOC charges



Getting It Straight on Fort Churchill Road

A Sierra Pacific Power crew under Foreman Andy Pinochi was just finishing up setting a pole on Fort Churchill Road in Dayton, Nev. when the Utility Reporter arrived on the scene to document the job. Oh well. Take home lesson: you gotta be fast to keep up with skilled Local 1245 linemen. Shown here getting the pole straight are Pinochi's crew of Lineman Howard Landis and Apprentice Lineman Brad Shell and Marc Christensen.

Photos by Eric Wolfe

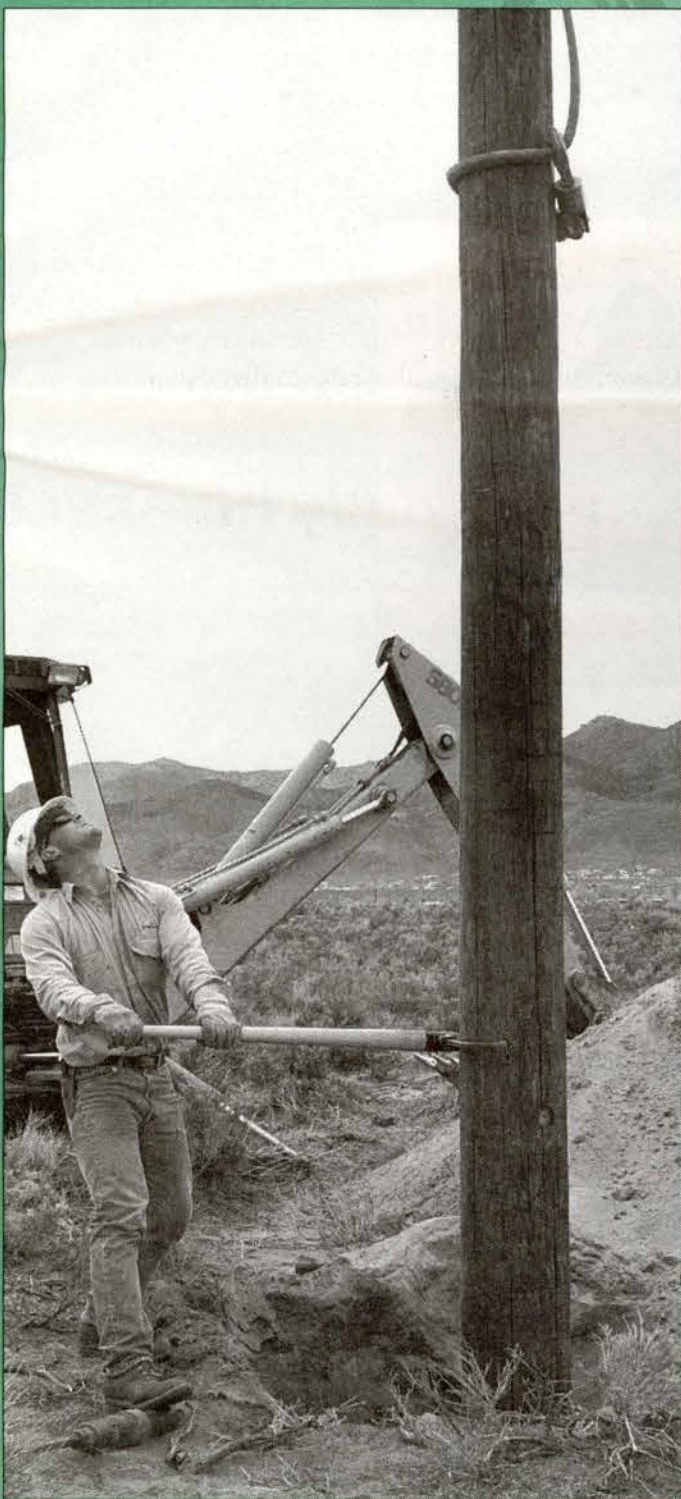


Lineman Howard Landis checks to see if the pole is true.

**SIERRA
PACIFIC
POWER**



Apprentice Linemen Brad Shell (left) packs dirt around the pole.



Apprentice Linemen Marc Christensen gives the pole a small turn.



From left: Andy Pinochi, Foreman; Howard Landis, Lineman; Marc Christensen, Apprentice Lineman; Brad Shell, Apprentice Lineman



Eureka, CA
April 25, 2003

The Honorees

55 Years

55 YEARS

Doggett, Merle A.
 Ufford, Glen V.

35 YEARS

Liles, William

30 YEARS

Arias, Pedro D.
 Bollan, Randy
 Costa, Dennis M.
 Cunningham, Kenneth
 Echeveria, Robert J.
 Flannigan, Daniel J.
 Girdis, John T.
 Hubbard, Dale D. Jr.
 Koppenberg, Aileen C.
 Lund, Guy
 Voight, Eugene J.

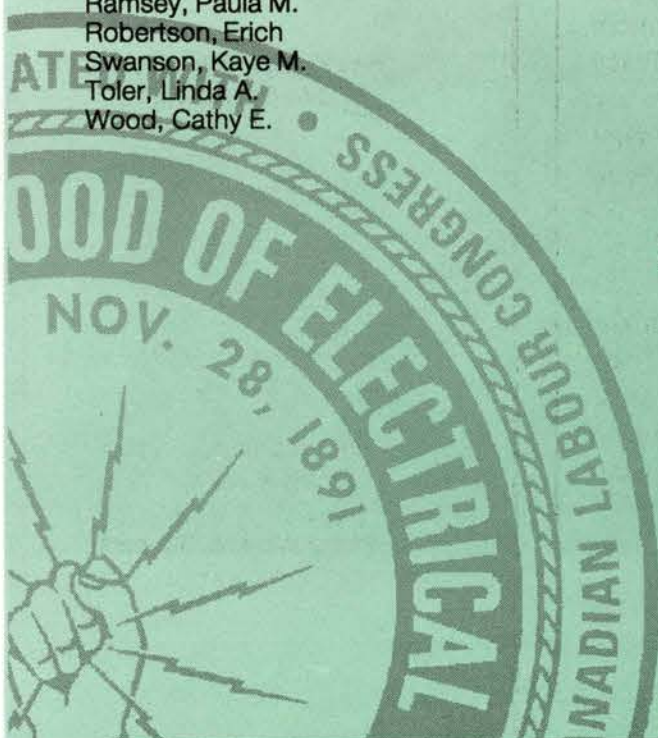
25 YEARS

Elvey, Dennis N.
 Hardwick, Lee C.
 Headrick, Mitchel R.
 Jackson, Shirley
 Johnson, Bernard D. Jr.
 Jones, Kevin C.
 Lagge, Eugene R.
 Lamb, Karen L.
 McKee, Fred W.
 Morris, William
 Olivieri, David J.
 Pinske, Michael J.
 Quier, Edwin L.
 Ramsey, Paula M.
 Robertson, Erich
 Swanson, Kaye M.
 Toler, Linda A.
 Wood, Cathy E.



30 Years

25 Years



Maybe you are the one to get it rolling

By Mike Silva

For the past several years we've been asking IBEW Local 1245 retirees to attend one of our active Retiree's Club meetings—in San Jose or Walnut Creek. We've also invited retirees to start chapters in their own areas. Local 1245 Business Representatives are available to help get it done. But retirees have to express their interest!

Redding could and should have its own chapter. Also Red Bluff, Sacramento, Manteca, Modesto, Fresno, Bakersfield, San Francisco and all towns in between.

Where is everybody?

The Union is the only voice we, as retirees, have with PG&E concerning our negotiated benefits.

PG&E doesn't bargain with PSEA on retiree issues, nor does it bargain with PGE Alumni Advocates.

The union is the only place we can have a say on improving the quality of life for PG&E retirees. The Retiree Clubs are the only channel we have to the negotiating committees.

So I'm talking to all of you who don't yet participate in the Retiree Clubs. If you want your voice heard, if you'd like to help solve retirees' problems, get yourself to the meetings of an established chapter of the Retirees Club. Or grab a few of the retirees that you know in your area and establish your own local chapter.

There's nothing to it. To qualify

for membership, you must have been in the union at some time. Even if you eventually retired in a management position you still qualify to belong. In fact, the East Bay chapter was started by an employee that retired in a management position.

Look in the mirror. Maybe you can be the person to get the ball rolling in your area for a Local 1245 retirees club chapter!

Mike Silva is president of the East Bay Chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club. If you are interested in setting up a chapter of the Retirees Club, please contact a Local 1245 business representative in your area. A directory of business reps and their assignment areas can be found on-line at www.ibew1245.com.



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 (NEW LOCATION):

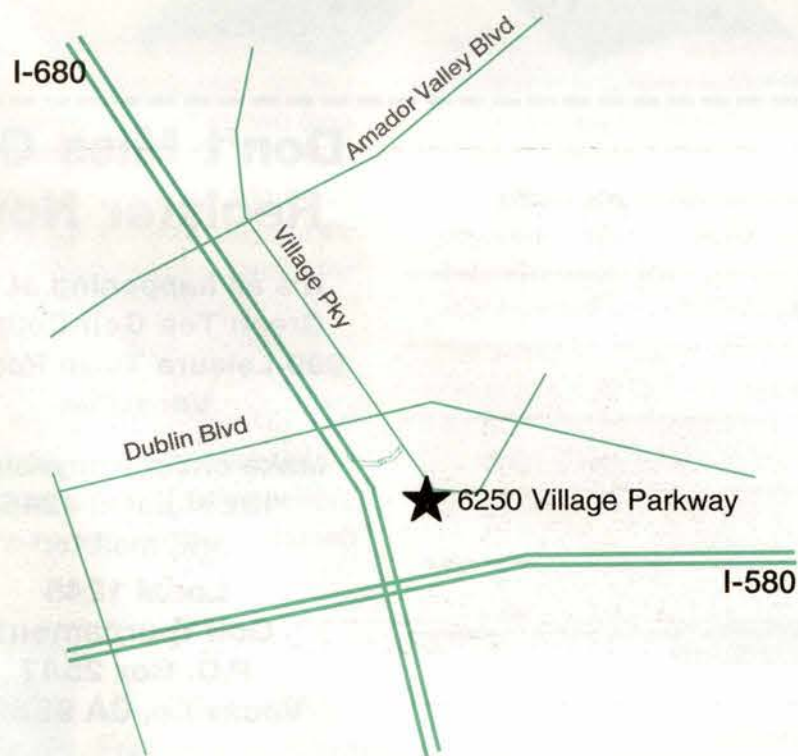
meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA.

San Jose Chapter:

meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose.

East Bay Chapter now meets in Dublin

The East Bay chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club has moved its meeting from Walnut Creek to Dublin, Ca. All retired members of Local 1245 are invited to join us at our new location. Meetings will be held at the headquarters of IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA, on the second Thursday of the month beginning at 10 a.m.



Our meetings are now easily accessible from I-680 and I-580. We hope this will encourage attendance by our retired members in Fremont, Newark, Livermore, Tracy, Hayward, San Leandro and other neighboring communities. Spouses and friends are welcome to attend. Meetings are from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., and there are lots of good spots for lunch afterwards.

A member of the Local 1245 staff usually attends to provide timely updates on political concerns and the state of the union.

Drop on by!

Mike Silva, President
East Bay Chapter

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.

Jerry Kerstulovich, 38 years
Morgan Hill, CA

Ken Little, 32 years
Santa Rosa, CA

Bobby Lyles, 6 years
Bakersfield, CA

Richard Perez, 33 years
Hood, CA

Robin Williams, 25 years
Hayward, CA

Walter Williams, 32 years
Springfield, CA



17th Annual



Perry Zimmerman's IBEW LOCAL 1245 GOLF TOURNAMENT



WINEHOLE CONTEST!

CLOSEST TO THE HOLE CONTEST!



\$80 Entry Fee!



Includes Cart, Green Fee & B.B.Q.

LONG DRIVE CONTEST!

BEAT THE BUSINESS MANAGER CONTEST!



**Guests
Are Welcome!**

**Limited Tee Spaces
Entry Deadline: AUG. 25TH!**

**TEXAS B.B.Q
AND AWARDS
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING**

IBEW Local 1245 Golf Tournament Registration Form

1. Name _____
 Address _____

2. Name _____
 Address _____

3. Name _____
 Address _____

4. Name _____
 Address _____

Note: If you don't have a 4-some, we will assign you or your group to a 4-some.

**Don't Miss Out!
Register Now!**

It's all happening at the
Green Tee Golf Course,
999 Leisure Town Road in
Vacaville.

Make checks payable to
"IBEW Local 1245"
and mail to:
Local 1245
Golf Tournament
P.O. Box 2547
Vacaville, CA 95696

For further information, call Jim McCauley (707) 452-2710 or John Mendoza (510) 331-6729