Happy Birthday, Ronald Weakley!

Although it's been almost 35 years since Ron Weakley retired as Local 1245 Business Manager, and nearly 65 years since he led the effort to organize a union PG&E, his accomplishments are still relevant to every Local 1245 member who draws a paycheck today. Last month Weakley celebrated his 90th birthday in Hawaii, where he now lives. He's shown here as a young man of 88 being honored at the 2003 IBEW Ninth District Progress Meeting in Hawaii. Honoring Weakley are Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, background, International President Edwin Hill, left, and International Sec.-Treas. Jeremiah O'Connor, right.

PG&E's weatherization work raises public safety concerns

The contractors who perform weatherization work for Pacific Gas & Electric got an unexpected gift from the company last year: After PG&E laid off more than 70% of its Central Inspection Program (CIP) employees, inspections of the contractors' work was left largely to the contractors themselves. Interviews with former CIP employees suggest that the quality of inspections could suffer, with possible consequences for public safety.

"If you have a guy who's doing the work inspecting his own work, it seems like he wouldn't do it as good," said Doli Lee, a former employee with the Central Inspection Program. "I thought the whole purpose of having us inspect the [contractors'] work was we had no biases for passing or failing a job. We would pass it or fail it purely on the work itself."

The PG&E program had 45 employees inspecting the work of contractors who perform weatherization and install energy efficiency devices, primarily in low-income households. The work is mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission and is monitored by the Low Income Oversight Board, which


Lucas, initiated into the union in 1952, worked as a lineman at Pacific Gas & Electric in Cupertino and Eureka before hiring on to Local 1245 in 1964. Gary Mai, who served on a union negotiating committee headed by Lucas at the City of Lodi, said Lucas wore the persona of a rough-talking Boston unionist.

"He put on this hard line Page 5 ▶

Layoffs are backdrop to TransCanada bargaining

By Darryl Norris

TransCanada bought Gas Transmission Northwest, a subsidiary of PG&E's National Energy Group who filed for bankruptcy protection for $1.7 billion. Gas Transmission Northwest's worth was thought to be around $1 billion at the time of the sale. The contract was extended for three months to allow for negotiations between IBEW Local 1245 and the new owner.

Currently Local 1245 represents 84 members at TransCanada. There were 120 members 10 years ago. TransCanada has said that there will be layoffs during the term of the new agreement, but said it did not know how many, nor where these layoffs would occur. TransCanada has proposed a new classification, a Multiskilled Technician, which would replace existing Physical classifications.

TransCanada has also proposed to eliminate a section of the agreement which prohibits contractors while dispensing with employees performing maintenance or operating work.

We have met five times so far. The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 17 and 18 in Portland, Ore.

Darryl Norris is a Local 1245 Business Representative.

Serving on the union Bargaining Committee at TransCanada are, top row: Jeff O'Donnell and Sue Corey; bottom row: John Felts and Neil Isley. Also serving on the committee are Business Rep. Darryl Norris and Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell.

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The Union's Aging Membership

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager

As you know if you read this column regularly, I usually write about a specific issue that is particularly relevant at the time. This month my topic is no more relevant this month than it was last month or than it will be next month, but it is critically important to the survival of Local 1245 as a trade union advancing the collective bargaining interests of its membership and, as I did with the high cost of housing/living issue, I am asking for your ideas.

In the simplest of terms, our membership is aging. In not too many years, a large number of young workers will take the places of the large number of retiring workers. If we do not reach that new, young membership, we will not survive. We estimate that 25% of our membership is now eligible for retirement, with about the same percentage (28%) now under the age of 40, of whom 11% are under the age of 30. In five years, 42% of our membership will be eligible to retire, and we could see a majority of the workforce under the age of 40.

Why does this matter?

First, we face a challenge of human resources. While our full-time staff is the most visible face of Local 1245, we rely on the energy, dedication, and knowledge of thousands of our active members to an extent that may not be fully realized. From the members of the Executive Board who give us several days a month, to the 30-plus members of the Advisory Council who give up a weekend four times a year, to the hundreds of unit officers, to the thousand shop stewards who are on the job protecting their contract every day, we depend on these leaders to keep Local 1245 in touch with the needs of the members and to protect and advance their interests. If half of our current shop stewards have retired five years from now, we will have to recruit and train more than 500 new shop stewards to take their place.

Second, we face a challenge of institutional memory. One advantage of a seasoned staff and active membership is the institutional memory that comes with those years. As new supervisors and managers come onto the scene, it is only natural that they attempt to interpret contact language in a pro-management light. Time and time again, our experienced staff and members have been able to instantly point to past settlements and past practice that settles the question on the spot. Time on the job is intuitive and subjective. A collective bargaining agreement is shaped by the values and priorities of the employer and union, with the union values and priorities shaped by the membership. The priorities of our 2002-2003 negotiations with PG&E are an excellent example. Just ten years earlier, the focus of our membership had been on job security, not retirement, and our members were willing to place a cap on post-retirement...
Members offer views on cost-of-living issue

Editor's Note: The following letters were e-mailed to Business Manager Perry Zimmerman and are reprinted with the authors' permission. Due to the strong feelings members have on this issue, we have withheld some authors' names at their request.

Pay Premiums Would Retain Good Employees

To Perry Zimmerman:

My name is Jerry Stinson, Sub-foreman overhead electric, San Francisco GC.

[Regarding the high cost-of-living issue] I can see both views. I don't want to be paid any less than my brothers in other areas for the same work. But I also see hard working employees leaving the Bay Area so their families and themselves can have a better life.

I live outside Fairfield and on a good day I can get to work in 30 minutes; getting home is a minimum of an 1 1/2 hours. I pay gas for 100 miles round trip, plus two bridges. I hear they want to raise the tolls even higher.

A pay premium would offset some cost, but not all of it and it would keep good employees in the area and may bring in some new ones. No pay increase will ever change my mind about living in San Francisco, but then again that is my choice. Like many in the city I have my bids out. Same pay and closer to home is better than same pay and away from my family.

Jerry Stinson
San Francisco

Utilities Will Lose Talented People

To Perry Zimmerman:

I read with interest your article about the cost-of-living issue. This is an issue that not only affects the utility industry but all residents in areas similar to California. One cost-of-living index shows 366.8 in California as compared to 87.6 in Seattle and 100 being the national average. In fact, the overall [index] in San Francisco is more than double the national average at 209.5.

The utility workers that are hit the hardest probably are the ones that are entering the labor market with no previous home equity to apply to a current home.

In the long run the utilities probably will lose some very talented people as they leave to work in areas that have affordable housing. The end result being that the utility became a training opportunity for the employee that didn't want his or her kids growing up in a rental house or apartment. A home is usually one of the investments we make for the benefit of our family and our retirement.

Perhaps the utilities could subsidize the regular full time people, giving them enough of an advantage to get into that first home. This is a method that has been used in this country in areas where a workforce was needed and for various reasons was the logical solution to the housing problem.

Raymond Curtis
Pollock Pines/Fresh Pond

Use Median Price

To Perry Zimmerman:

In regards to the high cost-of-housing problem, rather than set areas with boundaries, why don't we go by the median price of a house in all areas and make the adjustment whatever percentage is appropriate for the area? I don't care for the "Bay Area is the only place that is expensive" theory because there are pockets throughout California that are equally expensive. I live in San Luis Obispo County where the median price is now $460,000.

Jerry Camacho
Templeton

Housing Cost Shouldn't Be Top Priority

Dear Mr. Zimmerman,

Recently I noticed and read the various articles regarding the high cost of living to our members in various areas of PG&E's service area. I agree that this issue needs to be addressed in a manner beneficial to our members. What concerns me is that the emphasis is being placed on the cost of housing and this in my opinion, although not to be ignored, should not be at the top of our priority list. For these reasons:

1. Other costs are rising at a faster pace than housing.
2. Although entry costs and mortgage payment are hard to meet, you do build equity once you're in.
3. I feel confident that a survey of our members would show that the majority of members already own their home.

I could go on and on with addi-
From Page 3
tional reasons why housing costs should not be at the top of our bar-gaining agenda but no need. The company has neither the money nor the desire to meet each and every one of our bargaining requests. They will meet at negotiations with a maximum dollar amount willing to outlay (or less if lucky) and could care less how it gets spent. Our negotiations should center around getting the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

I think that due to the obvious demographics of our members (i.e. we’re about to retire) the emphasis should be placed on our total retire-ment compensation. The company has stood tough appearing to ignore our request for needed compensation for the rising cost of housing. They will continue to do this until we are ready to forgive other reasonable items of negotiation and finally [the company will] throw us a carrot in the cost-of-housing arena and we’ll dive for it like a monkey for a peanut in a petting zoo and you’ll congratulatethe members for being so hard nosed in negotiations. Five years later, after having given up most of any increase in compensation, we will retire unable to afford the basics like medical coverage etc. so that a smaller population of others can still not be able to afford a house.

Please don’t be overwhelmed with the crowd at the cost of housing and forget that this is but one area of concern.

Name withheld by request. The author is a Traveling Control Technician at Diablo Canyon Power Plant

Commuting Allowance

To Perry Zimmerman:

I agree that both sides of the issue present a very valid platform for debate. We must all understand as you have stated the problem is here and needs to be addressed and recti-fied.

A lineman is a lineman anywhere just as an operator is an operator anywhere. The objective is to under-stand that the company needs people to conduct business in the Bay Area and retain vital experience in which to provide safe, reliable service to our much populated, much taxed, much timely commute area.

Management has provided pay level increases to Bay Area people to compensate for some of the issues at hand. Everything from the 3 dollar bridge tolls to Bart taxes to parking incentives. We, too, should be equally addressed.

We need to create a pocket level of additional compensation to tar-geted union employees that will fall under commute taxable federal tax guidelines. This will assist the company while providing to the members.

Starting at a commute allowance as a positive measure of assistance will open the door toward future housing, and other add-on incentives to members. Just as any profes-sion, additional measures of compi-lation need to be compensated. And that includes just what we have to do to commute, live, and retain our highly trained professional union members within an area of financial geographic complexity.

To all people, union and manage-ment the Bay Area no matter how you cut it deserves experienced com-mitted professionals being compensated and meeting today’s geo-graphic, economic and commuting concerns which has provided an unequal burden to some and a desire to change venue to many.

D. Stevens
Oakland

We Need Help

To Perry Zimmerman:

Something has to be done. I cannot keep working around the clock just to make it. I never spend a lot of time with my kids to see their sports or spend time with my wife. We need some type of help!

Rodney Simon
San Carlos

Target Incentives

Mr. Zimmerman,

I live in Dixon and I’m a system operator at Vaca-Dixon substation. My commute is only about 12 min-utes. This probably affects my opinion but I try to be fair in my views.

I agree with the principle of “same work/same pay” but I also agree that the company needs to do something to maintain a qualified workforce in the Bay Area. Quite a dilemma.

I see some problems with the union proposal of a 20% premium for those who work in certain head-quarters. The issues seem to be mostly based on the higher cost of housing in those areas, but there’s no require-ment that the employees live in those areas. If I have a neighbor in Dixon who commutes to San Francisco to do the same job that I do, should he make $16,000/year more than I do? I can see a commute allowance, but an extra $1300/month will buy a pretty nice house in Solano county. What’s to say that these employees won’t “take the money and run.” Granted, that’s their choice, but is it fair?

Also, what about employees who live in the higher housing cost areas but have owned their own homes for many years. They now have hun-dreds of thousands of dollars in eq-uiity. Should they now be paid $16,000 extra? Why?

As stated in the Utility Reporter, I have a concern that increasing compen-sation for those in the high cost areas will create downward pres-sures on the compensation of those of us in the “affordable” areas. (I believe the median house price in Dixon is now about $370,000. Is that considered “affordable”?)

The company wants to target the incentives to certain classifications and the union wants across the board incentive. As a veteran meter reader the union position has a cer-tain appeal. But I can see the company position as well. Many people live and work in the Bay Area and make less money than a PG&E meter reader. If the company is not having a problem filling those positions, why would they want to increase their pay. I’m not saying that I agree, just that I see their point. When I read meters in Vacaville, I couldn’t afford a house in Vacaville. That was just a fact of life. I would have loved a 20% raise. Home prices in Vacaville have tripled since I left meter reading. If I

was still a meter reader in Vacaville, I would be very offended at the thought that my co-workers in the Bay Area were getting 20% more than I was.

These are just my rambling, ran-dom thoughts on the subject. As you’ve said, it’s a very complex is-ue and no proposed solution is go-ing to make everybody happy.

I guess my opinion leans toward this: Any incentive should be formu-lated in such a way that it’s targeted at those who it’s intended for. People who want to live close to work but cannot afford to. People who will not work in the higher cost-of-living areas unless they get these in-cenitives. Maybe some sort of "retention bonus" at the end of each year, like upper management gave themselves for going into bankruptcy.

Name withheld by request. As stated, the author is a System Operator at Vaca-Dixon.

Company Could Assist in Home Purchases

Perry,

It is agreed that in large areas of PG&E’s service territory it is impos-sible to own a home or rent one on wages paid by them. One solution is to have the company provide assistance in purchasing a home. Another would be to increase pay for those folks that work in that area. A third is a sizeable one-time wage increase to all members to catch us up with buying power lost over the years and a cost of living clause to keep us current. Had the cost of living clause that was in place during the 1970s stayed, this would be a moot point.

Of the three, the last is the best for all members. If the board can receive retention bonuses to stay, I submit the rank and file should also.

As far as transferring from one area to another more affordable area, the same boundaries are in place now as they were when I bailed out of the Bay Area 20-some years ago. I had to go from a journeyman back to an entry level position to accom-plish my move back then. I expect it’s the same today.

Rodney Simon
San Carlos

D. Stevens
Oakland

Utility Reporter
Contracted work raises safety concerns

"I found myself having to explain a lot of times (to the contractor) why I had to fail a job because of safety concerns."

Doli Lee, former CPI inspector

Hank Lucas, Business Representative

façade. When he was dealing with management he was strong and very forceful," said Mai, who also remembers walking the picket line with Lucas during a strike at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

"Hank was a devoted unionist. I remember going to several meetings with him with SMUD members and how strong he was and how he was in control of the situation and kept everybody's spirits up," said Mai.

"He had a real outgoing personality. He always had a joke, always some witty thing to say. He was kind of my ideal of what a 1245 union rep was," said Mai.

Lucas represented members at Utility Tree Service, the US Bureau of Reclamation, Citizen Utilities/Ferndale, Pacific Tree, SMUD, the City of Lodi, and PG&E's Yosemite, Stockton, San Joaquin and Humboldt Divisions.

LIFE-SAVING AWARD
Local 1245 member Steve Pledger, left, is presented with the IBEW Life Saving Award by Business Rep. Darryl Norris for keeping heart attack victim Gary Miller alive by applying CPR while at the same time calling 911 to summon assistance. Pledger is a Vacaville-based Gas T&D Fitter for Pacific Gas & Electric. "Gary Miller is alive today thanks to the life saving efforts of Steve Pledger," said Norris. The full story can be read at www.ibew1245.com. Go to the News Archive and look for "Pledger."

Unit Changes

Several unit meetings served by Mike Grill had incorrect dates listed in the December Utility Reporter and on the Local 1245 website. The correct dates are as follows:

Unit 1111, Fresno, will meet on April 5, not April 4.
Unit 1122, Merced Irrigation District, will meet on April 7, not April 6.
Unit 1123, Merced, will meet on April 6, not April 5.

Mike Grill
Business Rep.

Unit 4015, Burney (Frontier) will now meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Dates for upcoming meetings are: Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 19, May 17, June 21.

Ray Thomas
Business Rep.
Business Manager Perry Zimmerman offered a wide-ranging account of the state of the union to the Local 1245 Advisory Council on Feb. 5 at union headquarters in Vacaville.

Zimmerman reported that the recently-signed Letter Agreement 04-52 was designed to capture more of PG&E’s new business work for IBEW members.

Currently, PG&E performs about 60% of new business installations, with the other 40% going to primarily non-union contractors. The new Letter Agreement eases the way for PG&E to use union contractors for new business installations, a first step toward returning this work to the bargaining unit at PG&E.

"The purpose of the new business letter agreement is to get that work back. The debate ought to be whether it is done by General Construction or Division. But right now it is done by non-union scabs,” Zimmerman said. “I’m grateful we have Outside Construction to do that work or we would never get it back.”

Zimmerman hailed the progress the union had made over the past three years in representing line clearance tree trimmers, and credited Business Representatives Ray Thomas and Junior Ornelas for the forward movement.

In the last six months, 26 issues, including many affecting tree trimmers, have been referred to outside legal counsel.

“It’s been a seachange,” said Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell. He acknowledged it could take a few more years and some additional favorable rulings in arbitrations, “but tree contractors are going to realize they have to change the way they do business.”

Zimmerman said it was important for the union to keep up its efforts on behalf of tree trimmers, noting that their working conditions still needed significant improvements.

“It’s my fundamental belief that what unions are about is helping those who need the help the most. If we don’t build up the bottom, then pretty soon you’re going to be on the bottom yourself,” Zimmerman said.

Another pressing issue is retiree medical coverage.

"In two years, we’ll need to start focusing on post-retirement medical coverage or you won’t have to worry about it when you retire because it just won’t be there,” Zimmerman said.

Other developments reported on by Zimmerman and his staff included:

• TransCanada negotiations are now in progress, with the company suggesting that layoffs are likely. TransCanada is the new owner of Pacific Gas Transmission.

• Exhibit 16 arbitration meeting early this month turned into mediated negotiations over a possible settlement of many grievances concerning PG&E’s failure to optimize use of overtime.

• Automated Meter Reading appears to be a high priority for PG&E Corp.’s new CEO, Peter Darbee, as it is for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, but Local 1245 has serious doubts that automated meter reading can deliver the promised benefits.

• PG&E’s “transformation” study is still in progress, but no decisions are expected to be announced before the end of the first quarter.

• PG&E’s “Peer Volunteer” program will not be provided funds under the current budget to expand the program to areas beyond its current boundaries.

Photos: Eric Wolfe & Landis Martilla
It's my fundamental belief that what we're about is helping those who need help the most. If we don't build a bottom, then pretty soon you're going to be on the bottom yourself."

Perry Zimmerman

President Mike Davis, left, presents a plaque and the union's gratitude to outgoing President Ed Mallory for his service to the union.

Nevada Advisory Council member Bob Vleira kept up a running monologue about life, the universe and everything related to the Advisory Council and Executive Board members of the Pacific Power hats.

Larry Rodriguez  Tom Cornell  Mike Saner  Richard Perry  Gloria Flores  Lee Thomas

Art Torres  Bill Gillam  Jim Findley  Dennis Thompson  Mark Taylor  Lou Mennel

Frank Saxsenmeler

February 2005
Aging Membership

From Page 2

By 2002, retirement had become the first priority of most of our members, and so improvements in the pension and post-retirement medical benefits became the centerpieces of our bargaining and contract.

As a new, young, workforce becomes the membership of Local 1245, we have two challenges. We must first lead them to understand how we got where we are today, that the impressive fringe benefits and wages and working conditions enjoyed by our members are not the gift of benevolent employers but the result of hard work and sacrifice by our membership over the last 55 years. Just as importantly, we must come to understand their values and their priorities. If we continue to assume that the priorities of 2002 will be the priorities of 2012, we will surely fail.

Our task can be defined in simple terms: organize our younger members. Develop leadership among our younger members. Advance and protect their values and priorities.

We were faced with a similar challenge in the early 1990s when voluntary retirement incentives at PG&E and several other large employers took away a whole generation of union activists. We survived that exodus, and I am confident that we can survive the passage that began several years ago and will continue for about the next five years.

If you have any thoughts on how to meet this challenge, please write. Whether you are a younger member yourself or a long-time Local 1245 member going to work every day with a slowly increasing number of new young employees, let me know if you have any ideas. You showed with the cost of living issue an ability to think outside the box, and I hope for the same involvement on this issue.
New group for injured workers

A new organization sued the state of California on Jan. 19 in an effort to overturn recent state regulations that would cut benefit payments to permanently disabled workers.

The organization, named after its website, WorkersInjuredatWork.org hopes to organize protests that bring together many of the 1 million Californians injured on the job each year.

"I don't intend this to be an organization that simply has a lunch and a protest and is gone for a year," Director Peggy Sugarman, a former top regulator for the state Division of Workers' Compensation, told the Los Angeles Times. "It's time in­jured workers had their own voice."

The organization's lawsuit contends that the regulations reduce permanent-disability benefits by a much greater amount than lawmakers inten­ted when they approved a sweeping overhaul of the state's workers' compensation system last year.

The complaint asks a Sacramento Superior Court judge to issue an injunction, restraining the state from enforcing the new regulations.

"These are devastating reduc­tions, and we do not believe they are permitted by the California Constitution," Steve Hopcraft, a spokes­man for the applicants' attorneys, told the Times.

The attorneys' and injured workers' groups claim that benefits could be slashed by more than 50% under the new rules, which were drafted by Andrea Hoch, the administrative di­rector of the state Division of Work­ers' Compensation. Hoch and her agency are the defendants in the lawsuit.

The regulations, which took ef­fect Jan. 1, are a key part of the complex revision of the legal and medical criteria used to prescribe treatment for on-the-job injuries and to award permanent disability ben­efits to compensate employees for lost wages.

About 400 people associated with the new group rallied for about an hour in front of an office at a court­house in downtown Los Angeles where administrative law judges hear workers' compensation appeals cases. It was one of 18 rallies held at workers compensation offices around the state on Jan. 19.

Safe driving practices

Last year about 43,000 Amer­i­cans died in automobile acci­dents. Of these, about one-third are caused by aggressive driving.

When you're feeling stressed, don't take it out on others by driving aggressively. It just spreads the stress to other drivers.

Learn to be patient. Avoid prac­tices that other drivers might view as aggressive.

About one-half of collisions are at intersections. Some of these are caused by running red lights, not stopping for right hand turns, or fail­ing to yield the right of way.

It's OK to give the other driver a break and a brake.

Feeling drowsy? Avoid an acci­dent by taking a break from the drive. It may be time well spent.

Distractions cause about 25% of all traffic collisions. What am I trying to say here? Don't use your cell phone while driving!

When traveling with children, be sure they are secure before you start driving. Adjust your seat, mirrors, radio, etc. before you pull into the street.

It's hard to believe we still need to say this, but: never drink and drive! Keep your driving record clear by avoiding accidents and using common sense driving practices.

Stoney Burk

Outside Construction Report for February

We have been running about 60 calls a month for Journeyman Lineman, Equipment Specialist, Groundman, Cable Splicers and Underground Techs. The books are starting to fill up due to the work slowing down.

The books, as of Feb. 5:
- Journey Lineman, Book 1: 26
- Journey Lineman, Book 2: 5
- Lineman, Book 3: 2
- Lineman, Book 4: 9
- Equipment Specialist, Book 1: 6
- Equipment Specialist, Book 2: 3
- Equipment Specialist, Book 3: 1
- Groundman, Book 1: 11
- Groundman, Book 2: 9
- Groundman, Book 3: 27
- Groundman, Book 4: 54
- Cable Splicer, Book 1: 1
- Cable Splicer, Book 2: 0
- Cable Splicer, Book 3: 0

Outside Agreement: 47 crews working.
- Underground Agreement: 20 crews working. The Jefferson-Martin 230KV underground project just started and we have 10 crews going. Pole and Test Agreement: total is 33 crews. Teledata Agreement: total is 8 crews. A total of 118 crews are working.
- Sierra Pacific: We have agreed to a project agreement with NECA for the "Fort Churchill to Buckeye" 120 KV transmission line, which runs from Yerington to Minden, Nev.—approximately 36 miles of steel and wood pole H structures.
- Davey Tree Pole and Test agreement was ratified—a 3-year agreement with health and welfare paid, with 2.5% wage increases in the second and third years.
- San Francisco NECA Light Rail Agreement negotiations have begun.
- Organizing: We have been talking to Grace Construction and we will be making contact with some of the non-union contractors building windmills on SMUD property.
- Other: We are trying to rename the Equipment Specialist to Line Equipment Specialist in hopes we can get it listed with DIR Prevailing Rate.

I have been in contact with NEBF about a Pre-Retirement Seminar and they said that they put them on. I'm trying to schedule some for us and jointly with IBEW Local 47.

IBEW and NECA are now asking for an extension of the June deadline on crane certification. It looks like CAL-Osha is going to do a 3-month extension. The Cal.-Nev. JATC is offering a crane certifying course and written test. The NCCCO process is made up into two parts: a written test and a practical test (practical test will be scheduled at a later date.) Class Date is March 28-31, 2005 starting at 7:00 am. Test date is April 1, 2005. Location: IBEW Local 1245 office in Vacaville. Deadline to register: March 18, 2005.

Dave Crawford

February 2005 9
Congratulations Newly-Retired Members from PG&E

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.

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<td>Jimmie Padgett</td>
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Note: "Years" indicate length of union membership, which may differ from years of company service.
Dear Fellow Retirees,

I started going to retiree meetings back in 1993. I have always been moderately active in the union. I know that the many unpleasant things that are happening to my pension, are also happening to yours.

To some of you it is more devastating than it is to me. But the way things are going it won t' be long before it will be absolutely devastating to me and many more of you than you can imagine.

Did you notice that the confirmation letter you got from the company concerning your medical plan gave you notice that if your pension didn't cover the premium you were to send them a check monthly or not have a medical plan? I'm sure that there are some of you out there who are close to having to do this.

Are you aware that your surviving spouse will have to pay the full premium, when you pass away? For my wife that will be $500+. She'll not even be entitled to the $174 the union hall can tell you. Set a regular date for your meetings. Gather some ideas as to what you want done about the situation of retirees and submit them to union headquarters. Contact the other clubs to get a copy of their minutes and send yours to them. Union headquarters can help you make these contacts.

At least two people in the Stockton-Modesto area told me they're interested in starting a retirees' unit in their area. Two fellows said they were interested in starting a retirees' unit at the new union headquarters in Vacaville. One person said they wanted to start one in the Redding-Red Bluff area. Even a couple of people at a PSEA meeting in South San Francisco expressed interest in starting a unit.

What do you get for your $36 in annual retirees' dues? You get the right to speak up—and have a chance of being heard!

Mike Silva is president of the East Bay chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club.

Join Us!

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 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.

New unit proposed

Editor's Note: This e-mail was sent to Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. It is reprinted with the author's permission.

Hi Perry,

I just attended the San Jose Retirees Chapter unit meeting and need to let you know that it was again mentioned as to the need to start another retirees unit at your main headquarters (in Vacaville).

I would be willing to attend there as soon as you got it going. I remember you telling me that there are retirees meeting for lunch near you now? Maybe the Business Rep assigned to that area could meet with the group and possibly spark an interest in starting our third group? Just a note to say I feel it would be very helpful to the cause.

Thanks in advance Perry for considering this request

Ken Rawles, retired steward

Perry Zimmerman replies: Ken, I think you've got a great idea. I think that the more we involve and motivate retirees the better off we will be.
On the Internet:
www.ibew1245.com

On the PG&E Intranet:
Under 'My Stuff,' Select 'IBEW'