On the Bus

By Eric Wolfe

Local 1245 retirees and hundreds of supporters picket NV Energy corporate headquarters in Las Vegas on Feb. 9, demanding that the company respect its promise to provide retirement medical benefits. Photo by Dolores Fino

Retirees put campaign for benefits into high gear

Early in the morning of Feb. 8, IBEW Local 1245 retirees in northern Nevada piled onto a bus bound for Las Vegas.

But they weren't going there to gamble, party, or see a show. They were headed to the corporate headquarters of NV Energy, a company that profited from their dedicated service for many decades but wants to weasel out of its commitment to pay for their retirees' medical insurance now that they are old.

Even after the grueling all-day bus trip and an evening strategy session with Local 1245 organizers, the retirees motored down to NV Energy the next morning charged up and ready for action. And there was plenty of it, as some 400 union members showed up to call on the utility to honor its commitment to its retirees.

As energetic as it was (see story, page 16), the Vegas action was only one skirmish in a much larger campaign. The company’s callous disregard for its retirees has sparked a firestorm of protest that has spread from Reno to Yerington to Vegas, popped up on Google, called out from the radio, friended its way across Facebook, and enlivened the pages of the state’s major newspapers and primetime TV newscasts. The campaign even has its own website, www.ShameOnNVEnergy.com.

This is not how collective bargaining is supposed to work between a company and a union that have maintained labor peace while providing excellent service to customers in northern Nevada since 1947. But the sense of betrayal is acute among current and former employees, who believe they have been given no alternative but to redress their grievances in public.

The union contract, from which the company wants to delete all references to retiree medical benefits, expired at the beginning of the year and is being temporarily extended by mutual agreement—continued on page 18

Redding Reconsiders

Union campaign eases threat to jobs

The City of Redding stepped back from its plan to use ballot initiatives to shift pension costs onto employees and to eliminate retiree health care benefits for future hires. The advisory ballot initiatives, planned for June, would have asked

continued on page 6

What’s a good clerk worth?

What's a good Clerical employee worth? You might as well ask what's a soldier on the front line worth.

When a panicked customer calls in to report the smell of gas, a Clerical employee is the first responder, taking the call and assessing the threat. When the power goes off, it is the Clerical employee who handles the mad-as-hell customer on the other end of the phone and provides the information and assurance they need.

What’s a good Clerical employee worth? Clerical employees are the face PG&E presents to the public, the experts who process material orders, take deliveries, order permits, handle temporary power orders, close jobs out.

“A good clerk,” says Operating Clerk Karen Russell, “is worth their weight in gold. There are thousands and thousands of tasks that they perform—continued on page 8

Remembering Howard Stiefer — Page 16

By Dolores Fino

Dalzell: Surge of involvement

PG&E Stewards

Tree Trimmer: 40-year award

PG&E: Deep in white

Diversified: New transmission circuit

PG&E Clerical Bargaining

Stewards pump it up during a Clerical caucus at the Sacramento PG&E Stewards Conference in January.

By Eric Wolfe

Rallies, walkouts, and teach-ins swept California schools on March 4 in a day of protests against cuts in education funding. The California Federation of Teachers on March 5 kicked off a March for California’s Future with these three goals: Restore the promise of public education, a government and economy that work for all Californians, and fair tax and budget policies to fund California’s future.

Tell somebody who cares. That wouldn’t be Republican Senator Jim Bunning, who in February used the filibuster to block aid to the unemployed. When a fellow Senator begged Bunning to stop his filibuster, pointing out that more than a million unemployed Americans were about to lose benefits, Bunning replied: “Tough shit.”

“Have you no shame?” That’s what California Assemblymen Dave Jones asked Assembly Speaker Leslie Margolin at a special hearing on Anthem Blue Cross President Karen Russell, “is worth their weight in gold. There are thousands and thousands of tasks that they perform—continued on page 8
The Power is Ours: In 1952 PG&E Clerical workers won the right to bargain collectively through IBEW Local 1245. Since then, the union has fought for and won the best contract in the industry, including:

- Top wages & overtime premium pay
- Protections against arbitrary demotion or layoff
- Employer-paid family health benefits & pension benefits
- Sick leave & vacation pay
- Training opportunities & bidding rights

These gains were not handed to us by PG&E. We won them by standing together and bargaining together.

What’s Up? The Clerical Contract expires at the end of 2010. The bargaining process is underway. Management has already signaled it is targeting Clerical wages. We are mobilizing to protect what we’ve won over the past 58 years and to strengthen our contract.

Unity Is the Key! It starts with you. Clerical members can offer ideas and submit proposals at unit meetings or specially-scheduled Drop-In sessions in February and March. You can also submit proposals on-line at www.ibew1245.com. Click on the “Clerical Bargaining” graphic to find bargaining news and ways to participate.

A bargaining committee made up of Clerical members is already at work. But they cannot succeed without you.

Stand Up. Speak Out. Take Part.

www.ibew1245.com
Unprecedented surge in member involvement

The loss of Howard Stiefer several weeks ago is a loss without measure. As all who knew him know, Howard was an extraordinary man – a journeyman’s journeyman, a unionist’s unionist, a leader’s leader. As a Local 1245 member, a Local 1245 officer, an Assistant Business Manager, and lastly a wise man in retirement, Howard made contributions to Local 1245 that will outlast any of us who remember him. We miss him and will miss him, thank him and will continue thanking him. May he rest in peace. (See page 16.)

Cecelia De La Torre

Our Web Site can be viewed www.IBEW1245.com.

Attendance

In the last half year that has changed. We are a fairly predictable organization outlasting any of us who remember him. For the clerical contract.

Our union’s mission is to defend the best interests of our members. And that is what we will do.

Pacific Gas & Electric

Vaca-GCC Ad Hoc Committee

Joshua Alpine, Rich Jaster

Zenaida Salas, Larry Young

CONFERENCEs AND CONVENTIONS

Dellums African American Union Leadership Schools

Pete McKissack

Alliance of Retired Americans 2010 National Convention

National Safety Council Spring Labor Division Meeting

Michael Gomes, Art Torres, Al White

IBEW Broadcasting, Manufacturing & Telecommunications Conference

Todd Bagwell, Denise Sanders

IBEW Construction & Maintenance Conference

Robert Fambrough, Jesse Frieling

CALENDAR

Month of March: Local Union Election Nominations

Mar 17: PG&E Clerical Drop-In, Antioch

Mar 18: PG&E Clerical Drop-In, Oakport

Mar 18: Retirees Club, Reno/Sparks

Mar 18: Stewards Train., San Luis Obispo

Mar 19: Service Awards, San Luis Obispo

Mar 24: PG&E Cler. Drop-In, E. Oakland

Mar 26: Service Awards, Stockton

Mar 30: Transit Stew. Training, Vacaville

Mar 31: Irr. District Stew. Train., Vaca

Apr 9: Tree Trimmer Stew. Train., Vaca

Apr 10: Service Awards, Merced

Apr 16: Service Awards, Monterey

Apr 22: Stewards Training, Fresno

Apr 24: Advisory Council, Vacaville

Apr 29: Stewards Training, Stockton

May 1: Service Awards, Fresno

May 6: Steward Training, Bakersfield

May 7: Service Awards, Bakersfield

May 15: Service Awards, East Bay

May 20: Stew. Training, San Francisco

May 22: Service Awards, San Francisco

June 5: Service Awards, Reno

June 29: Stew. Train. (Frontier), Vaca

Utility Reporter

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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.

Arcing and Sparking

Tom Dalzell BUSINESS MANAGER
Staffing, safety, escalating discipline and upcoming Clerical negotiations are major topics under discussion at PG&E stewards conferences being held in the opening months of 2010.

Staffing levels of PG&E are inadequate for the workload in both gas and electric. Business Manager Tom Dalzell documented the problem with sobering statistics at the steward conference in Sacramento on Jan. 22, and subsequent meetings in San Jose, Redding and Emeryville in February and March.

In the Gas Department, PG&E carried forward more than 26,000 repairs that were discovered in leak surveys in 2009 that need to be performed in 2010, Dalzell said. The company estimates it will discover in 2010 as many as 30,000 additional repairs that need to be made.

At the same time, “Staffing in gas is the lowest it’s ever been in the history of the company,” Dalzell told stewards at the Sacramento conference on Jan. 22, noting that staffing had fallen from 1572 people in the department in 2004, to 1324 people today.

“Gas T&D has saved the day for PG&E many times, they’ve really performed heroically,” said Dalzell, including two crews working in Sacramento on Christmas Day. But the workload is simply too great for PG&E’s current staffing levels.

The situation is equally dire on the electric side of the utility. PG&E has about 2.3 million poles, which last 50 to 70 years. Even if they all last 70 years, Dalzell said, “they need to change 33,000 poles a year.” But the last time they changed even 10,000 was in 2004. In 2009 it was just a few short of 3,000.

“Going at that rate, it will take them 767 years to replace all the poles,” said Dalzell. “As long as the poles last 767 years they’re in good shape.”

Staffing on the electric side is on the same sorry trajectory as the gas side. In 2006, the company had 456 apprentices working. Today that figure has slipped to 282. “They have fewer linemen than they’ve ever had in the history of the company,” Dalzell noted.

Safety

Safety has absorbed a great deal of the union’s attention over the past year, not only because of many serious incidents, including two fatalities, but also because of the severity of discipline that is being administered in response to perceived safety violations.

The discipline poses problems, Dalzell said, not only because it is sometimes being administered out of proportion to the offense, but also because heavy-handed administration of discipline can have a negative impact on safety.

“Obviously we are not arguing that people have a right to be unsafe,” Dalzell told stewards at the conference in San Jose on Feb. 17. “But there is a tipping point on this. Where you start firing too many people for safety, nobody’s going to admit anything. Nobody’s going to come forward, you’re not going to learn from anything.”

Dalzell said that tipping point probably has been reached already at some locations within PG&E.

The union is expecting a fight over Clerical negotiations this year and Dalzell reviewed some of the steps the union is taking to make sure members are engaged in the bargaining process, including special meetings and greater use of the union’s website. (See story, page 1.)
Near-Miss reporting works
By Ralph Armstrong

We keep saying that reporting near-misses can help us avoid similar hazards in the future. And now we have evidence that near-miss reporting works!

A four man line crew was removing jumpers on the upper circuit on a 3-wire double dead-end pole. The pole also had a buck line feeding one way to a set of cutouts which were closed. The downstream side of the feed had all transformer fuses open to remove any load potential. The upper circuit was #6 solid copper and the lower buck wire was #4 ACSR. Two journeymen were in a double bucket using 8-foot shotguns to open and transfer the wire into “the clear.”

As the aluminum drop-on was being removed from the upper circuit the wire broke pulling the jumper wire into the lower circuit causing a ball of fire and blowing two upstream 80 amp fuses at the feed pole. Both linemen were uninjured and there was no other damage to company or customer property.

It was determined at a crew tailboard meeting shortly after the incident that there was one main cause for the accident. The drop-on clamp being removed was made of aluminum and although the #6 copper was line guarded a high resistance connection had developed causing the wire to degrade at the tap location. The lineman reported that the drop-on clamp was practically frozen onto the copper wire, but after some pressure it started to turn and then the wire broke. He also reported that there was no indication of any corrosion as the drop-on was covering the “bad spot.” Our company policy long ago has prohibited the use of copper/aluminum combination drop-on connections, but in this case the construction was about 50 years old.

Approximately two weeks after this incident was reported in a department-wide near-miss discussion, a crew working storm damage encountered a similar incident in which a “frozen” drop was caused by another corroded connection. In this case the crew cut out the tap with hot cutters and made repairs. The foreman of the crew said that he was glad the first near miss was reported. It increased awareness and helped avert another potential accident. Here it is: evidence that near-miss reports works!

The IBEW Local 1245 Safety Committee encourages everyone to report all near-misses to the committee through our IBEW1245 Safety Matters web page.

Anyone with a near-miss should “sanitize” the report to omit names and companies as the intent of reporting a near-miss is to provide others with information that can help prevent a repetition of a hazardous situation.

More info on-line
More detailed information can be found in the Safety Report on the IBEW Local 1245 website. Check out the Safety Matters tab on the home page at www.ibew1245.com.

Coming up: Lineman Summit II
Odie spreads the word
Jeff “Odie” Espenship, a consultant who spoke to Local 1245’s Lineman Safety Summit on Dec. 1, 2009, returned in the month of February for nine presentations at eight locations. Espenship, a retired Air Force fighter pilot, delivered his “Target Leadership” message to approximately 4,000 members at PG&E and SMUD. The message: Operational excellence, safety, and productivity will all come as a byproduct of individual responsibility and leadership.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell and the IBEW partnered with both PG&E and SMUD on this to focus on the common goal to make safety the number one priority. It was stated over and over that although we may not agree on everything, we do agree on the importance of having employees go home every night in the same condition as when they showed up that morning.

Comments and feedback from those who attended those sessions are encouraged.

We are in the planning stages to bring Odie’s program to four more locations within our jurisdiction during March.

There is a real opportunity to learn from other’s near-misses and accidents; however, a lot of things may be going unreported for fear of discipline. This fear is preventing the flow of information that could prevent serious accidents. Even when companies ensure the reports can be made anonymously, this tool is not being used.

On April 1 the union plans to reconvene the participants from the Lineman Safety Summit for a one-day meeting to assess where we are and where we are headed regarding safety. We are also looking at bringing in the employers at a later date to continue to build on this.

Line Clearance Tree Trimmers

Mountain Enterprise pact ratified
Local 1245 members ratified an agreement with Mountain Firewood Enterprise, Inc. in a mail-ballot ratification vote.

The two-year agreement calls for general wage increases ranging from a low of 3% to a high of 7% for each year of the agreement.

Ballots were counted Dec. 30, 2009 at Weakley Hall in Vacaville. The vote was 11-3 in favor of ratification.

Austin Lea served as teller and judge.

40-year milestone
Local 1245 member James Roberts, a former one at Asplundh Tree Expert Company, recently reached a milestone in his long career. Brother Roberts was awarded a 40-year plaque to commemorate his long service to the union since his initiation in 1968. Roberts works out of Sonora in the North Yosemite Division.

Local 1245 Business Representative Junior Ornelas recently presented Brother Roberts the award during his lunch period while Roberts was working in Groveland, CA.

Congratulations, Brother Roberts, and thank you for “sticking with the union.”
Sacramento Regional Transit management sent out WARN notices on Feb. 12, indicating that layoffs are coming. WARN, short for the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, is a federal law enacted 21 years ago that requires employers to provide notice 60 days in advance of plant closings or mass layoffs.

This latest development comes on the heels of a meeting between the union and Regional Transit General Manager Mike Wiley on Jan. 29, during which Wiley explained the District’s current financial problems. At that time he indicated that layoffs would affect all bargaining units, according to Local 1245 Business Representative Sheila Lawton.

Representatives of Local 1245 and the District are still in discussions over the layoff language.

The District expects the first round of layoffs to affect the Parts and Facilities group, Lawton reported.

California has drastically cut support for transit in the wake of declining tax revenues. A recent infusion of federal stimulus money is of little help in the current crisis because those funds are restricted to capital expenditures, not operations.

RT’s current annual budget of $140 million appears to be $16 million in the red. This gap must be dealt with by June 30. The next year threatens to leave the District facing another $20 million shortfall.

Sixty layoff notices have gone out already, according to the Sacramento Bee. The WARN notices have been delivered to an additional 240 people. Many employees, including planners, clerical workers, managers, budget officers, and customer service representatives could be without jobs by April.

The next phase of layoffs, which will affect drivers, mechanics and maintenance personnel, could fall heavily on IBEW members. Those cuts could come in June.

The RT Board took public testimony on March 8 concerning service cuts. A vote by the Board is scheduled for March 20.

The two-year agreement includes:
• Weingarten rights and Skelly rights
• State and Federal leave laws
• What is a grievance?

The stewards also got a quick course as Appreciative Intelligence. Loosely defined, Appreciative Intelligence is the ability to reframe a given situation to recognize the positive possibilities that are embedded in it but may not be apparent to the untrained eye.

Public sector stewards participating in the conference were from the City of Gridley, South Feather Water and Power, City of Redding, City of Shasta Lake, Lassen Municipal Utility District, and Bella Vista Water District.

ATTENDEES:

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Alameda pact ratified

Local 1245 members ratified a new agreement with Alameda Municipal Power (City of Alameda) on Dec. 18.

The two-year agreement includes 2009. It was reached after long negotiations that were complicated by the budget squeeze faced by many municipalities around the state during the current economic downturn.

Under the terms of the agreement, the City will continue to pay the full cost for medical for another year. The pact also changes the current vacation system to an accrual method and provides for further talks to hash out an alternate work schedule.

Representing the union during negotiations were Larry Rodriguez and Al Fortier, along with Business Rep. Elizabeth McInnis.

S

Public sector stewards conference

Local 1245 shop stewards working in the public sector gathered at Weakley Hall in Vacaville on Feb. 9 to sharpen their skills in representing members.

Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer reported on the “state of the union,” including current private and public sector contract negotiations. Ongoing problems in the general economy and shortfalls in the state budget have left some municipalities scrambling to fund needed services, which has made collective bargaining in the public sector more challenging than ever.

Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas, assisted by Seyfer and Business Rep. Sheila Lawton, led presentations on core training topics for stewards, including:
• What is a grievance?
• State and Federal leave laws
• Weingarten rights and Skelly rights

The stewards also got a quick course in a conflict resolution technique known as Appreciative Intelligence.
voters to weigh in on the controversial proposals to address budget problems by gutting benefits for IBEW members in the city’s Electric and Maintenance departments.

“The ballot initiatives were a bad idea from the get-go,” said IBEW Local 1245 Senior Business Representative Ray Thomas. “They tried to undermine what we achieved through years of bargaining, and in the end they wouldn’t have achieved the savings the city was seeking.”

The proposed ballot initiatives were dealt a serious blow in February when a study by UC Davis’ Center for Regional Change found that the measures would likely have “little impact” on the city’s short-term budget crisis and could “potentially undermine future government essential services.”

Among other findings, the study determined that the proposed ballot initiative to create a two-tier retiree health system in which new hires receive no city contribution to their retiree health benefits would not affect the current budget crisis since its immediate impact is only on estimates of future costs, not current spending. In fact, the initiative would risk increasing the city’s existing retiree health obligations through “adverse selection,” the study found.

The study, released on Feb. 10, also challenged the proposed shifting of CalPERS retirement contributions to employees, saying it does not address the real problem of how the City manages the employer contribution rate.

“Retirement benefit cost containment is a complex issues best addressed through collaborative and careful examination of available options, not through ballot initiatives,” said study author Nari Rhee.

The day following the release of the study, the City Manager copied all employees, labor unions and associations a letter in which he requested the Council to put a 60-day hold on any negotiations to be at impasse. On Feb. 23, the City presented its “Last, Best and Final” offer to the IBEW Local 1245 bargaining committee.

If the City unilaterally implements the “Last, Best and Final” offer, there could be serious consequences, according to Thomas. The City could face a strike by members of the Electric bargaining unit, as well as litigation over the unilateral change of future retiree benefits for incumbent employees—future retiree benefits which the City has specifically guaranteed to these employees.

The Redding City Council has requested that Thomas appear in open session on March 15 to address these matters.

The other IBEW bargaining unit at the City—workers in the Maintenance Department—are working under an agreement that expires May 1. Local 1245 recently received a request to meet and confer with the City for a new agreement covering maintenance.

Members should check the union’s website at www.ibew1245.com to stay current on developments in bargaining.

Modesto Irrigation District

When is a deal not a deal?

A deal is a deal. Well, maybe not in Modesto. Just before Christmas, perhaps under the influence of too much eggnog, the Modesto Irrigation District Board of Directors voted to reject an agreement that had been negotiated by its own management team and ratified by IBEW Local 1245 members.

The Board of Directors had authorized management to offer a 3.5% increase to cover 2008-2010, with 1% retroactive to Dec. 1, 2008. The offer came after 12 months of often frustrating negotiations, and Local 1245 members ratified the proposal by an overwhelming margin.

But after ratification, one member of the Board of Directors changed his position on the raise and the Board has failed to adopt the package that it had authorized management to propose.

On Christmas Eve Local 1245 packaged up a little present for the Board: an Unfair Labor Practice charge alleging numerous violations by the District, including improprieties in the vote, regressive bargaining, and failure to take bargaining seriously.

The union is now waiting to see what action, if any, will be taken by the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB).
Eileen Purcell passes some material to Anna Bayless-Martinez during an education meeting with PG&E in the run-up to bargaining.

Dena Marchini, a member of the PSEA group recently organized at PG&E, participates in the stewards meeting in Emeryville on March 4.

Tim Ramirez listens to a company presentation.

Arlene Edwards has her binder ready for the flood of materials that are part of the education process.

Clerks continued from page 1

that nobody particularly pays attention to until they’re not done.”

Or, as Debra Montanez, a 13-year IBEW member working in Safety Health and Claims puts it, “We’re the worker bees.”

The negotiations now getting underway between PG&E and IBEW have many Clerical members wondering if their hard work will be recognized—and what they can do to make sure that it is.

“I know the largest topic right now is wages,” says Graciela Nunez, a Customer Service Representative at the Fresno Contact Center and a member of the union’s bargaining committee. “We feel we work very hard for our money.”

Clerical Voices

The bargaining committee is going the extra mile to make sure that Clerical voices are heard. Starting in late February, the union began a series of “Drop In” sessions where Clerical members can meet with bargaining committee members during breaks, at lunch, or after work.

“The turn-out has been amazing,” says Eileen Purcell, an IBEW Local 1245 organizer who has attended several of the sessions so far. “People know there’s a lot on the line and they are asking how they can get involved.”

Traditionally, the chief way members at PG&E could influence negotiations was to submit a proposal at their unit meeting in March. And many members are using that process this year as well.

But the union is also accepting proposals at the Drop In sessions, and is expanding the unit meeting schedule to include “special” meetings to give Clerical members more opportunities to participate.

And, for the first time, proposals are being accepted on-line via the union’s website at www.ibew1245.com (click the computer monitor icon on the home page).

“We’re stronger as a whole versus as an individual,” says Lorenzo Arciniega, a Customer Service Representative at the San Jose Contact Center and a member of the bargaining committee, “so I think it’s important to be involved with it.”

Members can be involved at many levels, he says—from going on-line for the most recent information, to speaking with bargaining committee members at
Drop-In sessions, to meeting with their local shop stewards, to speaking with their IBEW business representative at the monthly unit meetings.

“The purpose of collective bargaining is for employees to have a voice,” says Jennifer Gray, a customer Service Representative at the Sacramento Contact Center and a member of the bargaining committee. “I think it’s important that we’re all united and the employer doesn’t take advantage of us.”

To Joe Estrada Jr., a timekeeper at the San Jose Contact Center, the union is an investment in “job protection.”

“The wages that I make, vacation, sick time—it’s all negotiated by the union,” says Estrada, who has been an IBEW shop steward for nearly his entire eight years at PG&E.

**A Lot at Stake**

“We have a lot at stake here,” says Tim Ramirez, a Utility Machine Operator in West Sacramento and a member of the bargaining committee. “So I’m really hoping we get the support we need from the members, and to not back down.”

“It’s definitely going to be a challenge for us,” says Gray, the bargaining committee member from Sacramento. “This is the first time we’ll be bargaining without our Physical members.”

But members of the Physical bargaining unit will be closely watching the Clerical negotiations, and helping where they can, says Business Manager Tom Dalzell, who will lead the Clerical negotiations for the union.

“The Physical Agreement comes up right after the Clerical. We have to be vigilant in the Clerical negotiations because anything the company tries here could show up the following year in Physical bargaining,” Dalzell said.

This is the year, then, that Clerical must hold the line and defend what the union has achieved in the nearly 60 years of bargaining that fashioned the current Clerical agreement.

“I feel like we really will get a lot of involvement from our members because there’s a lot going on,” says Ramirez. “We have the San Jose Contact Center closing down so you have people who never went to unit meetings who are all of a sudden starting to show up to unit meetings. They want their voices to be heard.”


**Bargaining timeline**

**January:** Union and company negotiators begin meeting together in four education committees. The committees share information and try to jointly establish facts that both sides can agree on before bargaining begins. The four committees are: Wages, Training, Workforce Issues, and Non-Productive Time.

**February-March:** Union hosts “drop-in” sessions for Clerical members to meet with bargaining committee members before work, at lunch, during breaks, or after work.

**March:** Proposals accepted at regular unit meetings. Special unit meetings are also scheduled to provide additional opportunities for Clerical members to participate. Proposals are also accepted on-line at www.ibew1245.com.

**April-May:** Local 1245 Clerical Bargaining Committee assembles and studies all proposals, and uses them as a basis for crafting the union’s opening contract proposal.

**June:** Local 1245 and PG&E negotiators exchange opening proposals.

**July-August:** Local 1245 Clerical Bargaining Committee analyzes company proposal, conducts further research.

**September:** Local 1245 and PG&E begin formal negotiations right after the Labor Day weekend.

**October:** The union and company reach a table agreement (hopefully).

**November-December:** The union explains the table agreement to members at unit meetings, on the union website, etc. Ballots are mailed out. Members return ballots to union by a designated date, and the ballots are counted.

**January 1, 2011:** New agreement takes effect.

Debra Montanez, left, and Jennifer Bates participated in the stewards meeting in San Jose on Feb. 17.

Renee Cederquist, left, and Traci Nawahine participate in the stewards meeting in Emeryville on March 4.

[ABOVE] Lorenzo Arciniega reviews a company hand-out.

Anna Bayless-Martinez pores over some data.

Advisory Council member Thelma Dixon at the stewards meeting in Sacramento in January.
Team effort produces results
By Ron Cochran

There was a lot of activity in February: ongoing organizing, jurisdictional disputes, termination cases, class action grievances and one duty of fair representation charge filed with the National Labor Relations Board.

Organizing has been a real team effort. Ralph Armstrong and Elizabeth McInnis have been putting in long hours. We have signed several contractors including Smith Electric, ABN Commodities, Ltd, Greg Shandel Construction, Terra Firma Excavation, LLC, and White Construction. We are still working to finish new member orientations from contractors we signed in January. We are also working with the Building Trades to help organize companies that will fall under their scope of work. We helped the Laborers Union sign three new flagging contractors. We have many new working members as a result of these efforts.

The jurisdictional disputes are just a drag in every way. Win, lose, or draw nobody really wins. There are a couple of issues that have been developing for years, but with the weak economy they are spiking.

The first issue is the infighting between the Inside and Outside branches of our work. When an Inside contractor bids substation work and refuses to follow the 9th District Jurisdictional Guide using Outside Line, it creates a ripple effect. The Inside contractors don’t generally move dirt, dig trenches or footers, set forms, pour concrete foundations, perform oil containment, erect steel structures or set breakers, transformers, and regulators. They really become “labor brokers” and subcontract all that work out. That leaves installing conduit, pulling cable and terminating control cable and bus connections as their main functions.

The net result is only a very few IBEW members get on the job; the rest are Building Trades workers or non-union workers. In the Outside Construction model, all the workers are IBEW. The Outside members perform all work except pulling of control cable, terminating control cable, control conduit, and lighting, which is performed by our Inside brothers and sisters. Again, all the work is IBEW.

I bring this up as we’re currently in the middle of a jurisdictional dispute for a substation project in the Berkeley, CA, area. We met with the Inside contractor who won the bid in late February, and they have sub-contracted nearly all the work away already. They used the term “labor broker” and now I’m re-using the term. It’s a growing trend to use second and third-tier sub-contractors and this is bad for our members. We train to construct substations from the ground up, not piece-meal them together.

No real news in the traffic signal sector, AC load control work and the Hiring Hall. All are running very smooth.

Pole test and treat is ramping up with ongoing problems with one contractor not advancing workers as agreed to by the contract. There has been a grievance filed and settled, but it seems the remedy hasn’t been implemented as agreed to. More work to do in that area.

AMI Success Story

The AMI work is a success story on all fronts. UPA is moving forward on the SMUD project—everyone seems to be happy. Some of their field managers would like us to bargain their health insurance as the union package is better than the management package, we’re told. City of Lodi is bidding an AMI package for meter exchanges right now. Our members at Wellington Energy are now exchanging over 17,000 meters daily. They are keeping up with PG&E’s ever-changing requests to modify meter replacement schedules.

We had a few members terminated from Wellington in the month of February. Two cases directly involved safety; not wearing PPE while exchanging energized electric meters. This is a very serious matter as we have had two different meter accidents in the last three years. One accident resulted in a journeyman being hospitalized with severe burns because he was not wearing PPE. We always stand up for safety and our members, but when members choose not to wear their PPE it puts the union in very poor position to represent them in a termination case.

Outside Line is slower than it’s been in some time. The major utilities have not been contracting very much work out recently. We do have some work and are barely keeping the local members busy. We just started a very small job in Monterey and will be starting jobs in Santa Clara and Oakland within weeks.

We also have been trying to set up OSHA ET&D 10-hour classes one Saturday a month but have had little participation from the membership. This is unfortunate as it becomes a special skills call as of January 1, 2011. This means you could be last on the out of work list and if no one before you has the training, and you do, you will bypass the entire list. That’s going to make everyone unhappy.

THE BOOKS

Lineman
Book I: 55 members
Book II: 74
Book III: 4
Book IV: 57
Groundman
Book I: 23
Book II: 13
Book III: 94
Book IV: 111
Line Equipment Man
Book I: 17
Book II: 7
Book III: 13
Apprentice stats are not posted; we have roughly 240 apprentices with 80-90 unemployed at this time. We dispatched 17 members in the month of February and 41 in the month of January.

Ron Cochran is Assistant Business Manager, IBEW Local 1245

Rolow hired for PG&E GC, Outside Line

Mark Rolow, a 32-year IBEW member, has been hired by Local 1245 to represent members in PG&E General Construction and Outside Line. His service territory will be centered in the San Joaquin Valley.

Brother Rolow was initiated into the IBEW in 1977 and moved his ticket to Local 1245 in the mid-1980s. He began work for PG&E in 1996, where he has been working as a lineman in the Bakersfield area. He’s been active in the union, serving as chair of the Bakersfield unit until his appointment to the staff. He was also chosen to participate in the two lineman safety summits held in 2009 to address recent injuries and fatalities among line workers.

Rolow comes from a union family; his father was a 50-year IBEW member and his grandfather worked as a lineman in Iowa.

Welcome aboard, Brother Rolow!
The Antarctic? The North Pole? The moons of Jupiter? The conditions looked other-worldly when Local 1245 members tackled the Butte Meadows outage on the Oro Fino Circuit in January in PG&E’s North Valley Division. Working deep in white at an elevation of 4300 feet, they demonstrated that PG&E line crews will do what it takes to keep the power on—no matter what kind of weather Mother Nature dishes out. Members shown here are Temporary Electric Crew foreman Jason Bischel and Linemen Dustin Helmick, Ryan Woodson and Mike Plummer.
New Transmission Circuit

IBEW Local 1245 members working for Diversified Utility Services installed new 115 kv transmission lines last autumn, creating a new circuit to improve load capacity and reliability to an area historically fed only by PG&E. The new circuit, from Trinity Dam to Weaverville, CA, runs from United States Bureau of Reclamation through WAPA, connecting to Trinity County PUD. These spectacular photos of work around Lewiston, CA—courtesy of Local 1245 member Charles Appleton—show union line crews doing what they do best: delivering power no matter what the terrain.
IBEW members Tim Riddle and Jim Deptuch high in the sky.

Back-to-back three pole dead-ends on mountain side.

IBEW members Greg Young, Jim Deptuch and Charlie Appleton prepare to adjust 3-way 69 kv switches.

(Below) Really rough terrain, mostly ATVs for the clipping crew.

(Top right) IBEW member Jim Deptuch on dead-end pole.
Don Porter photo takes prize

Don Porter’s stunning photograph of the switchyard at the Churchill power plant in Mason City, Nev., was awarded third place in the IBEW’s national photo competition. Porter, a member of Local 1245 employed at NV Energy, captured this shot one evening at sunset. The image is a composite of five separate shots, but Porter emphasizes the authenticity of the sky’s coloring. “The red wasn’t exaggerated,” he said. “That’s what you see out here for a few minutes. I wanted to capture the feeling of being on something of an alien world.”

Two other Local 1245 placed as finalists in the photo competition: NV Energy’s Sergio Sandoval and PG&E’s Eugene McCandless.
50 Years
Darrell Johnson, right, with guest, accepts 50-year award from Executive Board member Anna Bayless-Martinez.

45 Years
Steve Granlees accepts 45-year award from Treasurer Cecelia De La Torre, left, and Anna Bayless-Martinez.

40 Years
Douglas Moore receives 40-year award.

35 Years
Andona, Gary L
Apley, Grant S
Hickman, Douglas R
Jensen, David P
Jones, Ronald G
Lang, Douglas G
Lawrence, Edwin
Malone, Kevin
Mccoy, Scott
Menor, Richard
More, Douglas
Munoz Jr., Andrew M
Naranjo, Angelita
Olmos, Steve S
Pacheco, Jim D
Quijalvo, Ted C
Rasmussen, John
Rea, Daniel
Rodriguez, Ronald A
Santillanes, George
Se, Marla K
Southard, Allene
Wade, Annie L
Wanner, Howard H
Wilkinson, Felix
Woford, Michael O

50 Years
Volpi, Nicholas

30 Years
Amaral, Dave A
Apodaca, Gary
Attaway, Deborah L
Auldridge, Steve W
Bates, Bradley A
Beezon, Robert
Benning, Philip M
Biedinger, Gerald C
Borger, Eric D
Burney, Timothy M
Byers, Chris W
Changaris, Louis G
Clipper, Dan R
Coates Jr., Bill D
Coble, Ricky L
Cookson, David O
Cooper, Steve M
Cox, Edward F
Craig lli, Charles C
Crump, Wayne A
Cummings, Michael E
Davis, Charles B
Ding, Jeffrey L
Donham, Calvin T
Dover, Douglas M
Dunnam, James S
Durston, David W
Fisher, Barry
Foster, William F
Fromm, Gary G
Gambel, Michael
Gonzalez, Robert A
Gouveia, Dennis F
Gutierrez, Tim
Hellman, David P
Honeycutt, Daniel R
Hood, Lawrence
Imperial, Albert
Johnson, Henry W
Kane, Jim L
Kisner, Roy A
La Chapelle, Dale L
Lara, Gary A
Larritas, Mark A
Laws, Zachary J
Leatherman, Aaron D
Ledderle, Joe M
Lloyd, G Scott
Lopes, John R
Lyons, Patricia
Mangante, Christine
Manning, Monica
Marley, Gary V
Martini, Renato R
McLaughlin, Rodney K
Mello, Andy J
Meyn, Dan M
Morales, Ray M
Moreno, Michael J
Mullins, Ronald
Munoz, Graciela
Murch, Dennis
Namekata, Andrew I
Norwood, J.E.
Nunes, Gaelynn

25 Years
Alonzo-Gonzalez, Amelia J
Araquistain, Ignacio
Armstrong, Dennis M
Avalos, Deena D
Becker, Ron E
Belaski, William W
Bell, David M
Brown, Roderick
Buck, Ricky D
Clough, Mary
Cordova, Alfonso L
Cosmero, Robert V
Cragg, Joseph E
Danielsion, Brett D
Decosta, Dave G
Detrick, Allan B
Dobler, Louie R
Doshas, Matt W
Estes, Thomas B
Fisher, Stuart G
Fitzpatrick, Edward W
Fort, Ronald A
Fung, Kenneth M
Garcia, Marc D
Geer, Robert N
Gonzales, Erlinda A
Graddy, Shawn C
Griffin, Terry A
Grunloh, Brian T
Harmon, Kate
Hayes, James D
Heitzer, Richard L
Hood, Alicia S
Jacinto, Josemaria
Johnson, Vicki L
Kinard, Johnnie L
Ledoux, David A
Lee Jr., James L
Lynch, Valerie L

continued on page 21
Long-Term President was ‘Force of Nature’

That Was Howard

Howard Stiefer: 1947-2010

By Eric Wolfe

Howard Stiefer, one of the great rank and file leaders in our union’s history, died in Missouri on Feb. 3 after a long illness.

Steward, negotiator, unit chair, Advisory Council member, Stiefer served the union in any capacity he thought would be useful. In 1981 he began an unprecedented stint as union president, serving nearly 21 years—more than three times longer than anyone else has ever served in that position. In 2001 he was hired as Assistant Business Manager and spent the remainder of his union career trouble-shooting problems in the union’s relationship with Pacific Gas and Electric—a good fit for a seasoned electric troubleman.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell described Stiefer as “a force of nature.”

“He was a fierce advocate for working men and women,” said Dalzell. “He was effective not only because of his devotion to union principles, but also because he was able to see areas of possible compromise with management before others even fully understood the competing positions.”

Former Business Manager Jack McNally, who served alongside Stiefer during Stiefer’s 21 years as president, described Stiefer as a hard worker, someone who was “down-to-earth” and would “think things through and make intelligent decisions.”

Stiefer showed those qualities in whatever he did, whether he was “working as a lineman, part of a crew, as a Troubleman, or as president,” said McNally. “He didn’t shoot from the hip.”

Stiefer was initiated into Local 1245 in November of 1967 while working in the line department of PG&E. In 1974, Stiefer received the IBEW Life Saving Award, the highest honor given by the union. About the same time he became unit chair for Santa Rosa and in 1975 he was appointed shop steward in PG&E’s North Bay Division.

Believed in the Union

But Stiefer wasn’t content just to collect awards and titles. He believed in the union and understood the importance of recruiting others to the cause.

Larry Pierce, a retired assistant business manager who worked with Stiefer in Santa Rosa in the mid-1970s, remembers how Stiefer recruited him.

“We were at a meeting at Howard’s house. Corb Wheeler was our business representative at the time,” Pierce recalled. “I must have stepped out of the room for a while or something, and Howard comes up to me and says, ‘Thanks.’

“I said, ‘What?’ and Howard says, ‘Corb wanted to know if you wanted to be a shop steward and you said yeah!’”

Pierce got to know Stiefer a lot better in the late 1970s, when they worked as a two-man unit installing subsurface transformers and primary wires.

Despite his size—Stiefer was not a small man—he was nevertheless “one of the most efficient linemen I ever worked with—his speed, his skill, his climbing ability,” Pierce said. More than that, Pierce was impressed by Stiefer’s knowledge of the work—despite his relative youth at the time.

“He was a quick study on anything you had to work with. Whether it was mechanics or line work or putting engines in cars, he could do anything mechanical. He was a smart man,” said Pierce.

By the late 1970s, Stiefer’s involvement with the union was intensifying. He served a short stint on the Executive Board, where he made a favorable impression on other Board members.

When Jack McNally, then 42 years old, won election as business manager in 1980, it represented a changing of the guard at Local 1245.

“Ron Fitzsimmons was president at the time,” McNally recalled. “He wanted a rep’s job and I had an opening.”

McNally told Fitz he could have a job on one condition: he needed to find someone “acceptable” to replace himself as president.

“He came back and said, ‘How about Howard Stiefer?’ I said, ‘Good, I’ll buy that.’”

A meeting was arranged, and McNally still laughs when he recalls Stiefer showing up to close the deal.

“That was the first and last time Howard probably ever wore a tie. He showed up in a suit and tie. I could hardly believe it.”

Stiefer took the oath and became president in February of 1981.

It Was Real

Formal clothes may have been a mismatch

Howard, occupying his customary position at the head table in the middle, is seen here administering the oath to Advisory Council members as Executive Board members look on—sometimes in the 1990s.
for a man who enjoyed getting his hands dirty, but the position of president fit him well.

“I think the number of terms Howard got reelected and the margins he won by was reflective of his popularity,” said Pierce.

“He had close friends in every town where there was any little part of PG&E. He impressed people with his knowledge, with the genuineness of his caring, and his commitment to organized collective action,” Pierce said. “You just didn't doubt the sincerity of Howard's caring—it was real.”

He rose to the presidency in an era when women were a growing presence in the union, both on the job and on the union's executive board. It wasn't always easy for women to integrate into the rough-and-tumble culture that linemen had created, but Stiefer's presence on the board helped pave the way, according to Senior Assistant Business Manager Sam Tamimi.

“He was always very respectful. They all liked him. He was a gentleman,” Tamimi said. “That was Howard.”

During his two decades as the union's top rank-and-file leader, Brother Stiefer's fingerprints were all over the union's extensive activities. He appointed all local union committees, all delegates to Central Labor Councils throughout the local union's jurisdiction, and all delegates to conferences and conventions. He chaired Executive Board and Advisory Council meetings throughout those years, a steady hand during a time of often-wrenching changes in the utility industry.

Stiefer also became a well-known and trusted voice for Local 1245 at all of IBEW's major gatherings—from Ninth District Progress Meetings to International Conventions.

**“Howard Meant It”**

But when you talk to those who knew him well, you don't hear a lot about the titles, the conventions, the honors that routinely came Howard's way. What you hear about is the man.

“The way he did his job, everyone was his friend,” said Tamimi. “It didn't matter whether it was the gas department or the electric department, if he was a union member, he was a brother. Howard meant it.”

Tamimi recalled a time when Stiefer intervened on behalf of a member who'd quit the company on impulse. “His wife contacted Howard and said it was a mistake.” Tamimi, who was a business rep at the time, remembers Stiefer calling him about it. “He said, ‘We'd better take care of this guy.’ And we stayed with the case until the guy got back to work.”

But this wasn't exceptional behavior, Tamimi said, not for Stiefer. “He did this with every case he had. He stayed with the case until they resolved it. That was Howard.”

Like Pierce, Tamimi has a recruitment story involving Stiefer.

“When I first found out about PG&E, I had been in this country for two months. If you think my accent is bad now, think about back then,” said Tamimi, who is Palestinian.

Nevertheless, Tamimi managed to land a PG&E job within a few weeks. The year was 1970, and at that time there was no requirement to be in the union.

“Howard came to the gas meter shop where I work—he said, in this soft voice: ‘You don't speak good English, you're not a good worker and I never heard the name Tamimi in my life—you really need a union, so sign up.’”

Thirty years later, the two men were serving together as Local 1245 Assistant Business Managers.

**That Was Howard**

Tamimi said Stiefer was the go-to guy on all matters electric.

“As an assistant business manager he had all the electric, all the committees—barehanding, rubbergloving, switching committee, troubleman committee, service crews,” said Tamimi. “He traveled through the system and met with the linemen on their job. He met with them at unit meetings in Fresno and Bakersfield and Petaluma. He knew most of the people—he'd been around for 40 years.”

Tamimi said Stiefer made himself available to assist business reps who didn't have an electric background, explaining “What the troubleman can do, what the lineman can do, what the electrician can do.”

But Stiefer's enduring legacy, in all likelihood, will be the nearly 21 years he spent in the role of president, where the knowledge he gained and his steadfastness of purpose enabled him to resolve internal issues within the union as well as represent the union to management and to the outside world.

“He was good at settling tensions,” said McNally. “He had the ability to calm people down and reason with them.”

“When he talked to people, he made his point but without raising his voice or using bad language. He didn't need to,” said Tamimi. “That was Howard.”

“He was somebody you could count on, whatever you were doing,” said Pierce. “You never had to worry about Howard's end of the job.”

“He was a proud man—proud of his work, his craft, his union,” said Dalzell. “There will not be another like him.”

On the Bus continued from page 1

ment while bargaining continues. (As the Utility Reporter went to press in early March, there were some faint signs of movement at the bargaining table. Members can check for the latest updates at www.ibew1245.com.)

The union’s campaign—which drew 600 to a massive rally on Nov. 7 and another 400 to the union’s first-ever picket of the company, on Nov. 19 in Reno—closed out 2009 with many of the state’s religious leaders calling on management to "honor its promises" to workers. The religious leaders’ appeal appeared as a full-page ad in the state’s major newspapers, followed up in some cases by private appeals from religious leaders to company executives.

But rather than listening to polite appeals to show some respect, the company has refused to budge on the issue of retiree medical benefits. In fact, the company has responded in ways that suggest it is oblivious to public opinion—a curious trait in a company whose mission is supposed to be public service.

COMPLETELY TONE DEAF

On top of more than 100 layoffs already announced, in January the company said it was closing its customer service office in Yerington effective Feb. 1 and redeploying the area’s one line crew to Carson City. The move leaves NV Energy without a single crew between Fallon and Goldfield—a distance of more than 200 miles. To a public that expects its electric utility to take emergency response seriously, the company’s decision must seem completely tone deaf.

Local 1245 responded with local newspaper ads accusing NV Energy executives of pushing service cuts “while fattening their pockets with record pay hikes.” The ads noted that NV Energy reported profits of $180 million during the previous quarter, collected $134 million in federal bailout cash, and was able to pay its top executive $4 million in compensation.

In Yerington itself, NV Energy retirees walked door-to-door, where they found the public in 100% agreement with their cause and plenty unhappy about the loss of their electric crew.

About the same time the union took to the airwaves with a radio ad featuring Retiree Club President Ron Borst. The company wouldn’t let Borst tell his story to Michael Yackira (see “Return to Sender,” page 20), so the union decided it was a story the whole state should hear.

"First they close customer service offices so you get less service," Borst says in the ad. "Now they’re cutting the people who work night and day to make sure the power stays on." Borst goes on to point out that NV Energy is charging the highest rates of any mountain state, even as the company cuts service. (You can listen to the radio ad in the NV Energy section of the union’s website at www.ibew1245.com.)

The signs seemed to stretch out to the horizon.

“You get old. Things break. I’d like to have that option to go to the doctor instead of sitting at home being sick. These benefits are things that I feel that I’ve worked for, and I deserve, and they were in the contract. For the company to just go back on its word and take these things away, it’s just not right.” – Jim Hill, 41-year NV Energy employee
But no one voiced what was at stake for the retirees better than the retirees themselves, who were happy to share their views with the Utility Reporter.

“Seems that we’re having our health insurance taken away from us,” said retiree Mike Armstrong, who recently retired after giving 38 years to the utility.

“We earned them,” said Don Bagley, referring to the medical benefits for retirees that the company wants to walk away from. Bagley, who retired as a line working foreman after 36 years with the company, isn’t keen on the idea of seeing his benefits taken away. “I spent 36 years standing in the snow—I was dark when I got there and the lights were on when I left.”

Hill says it was a good job. But now he’s worried about his medical benefits. “You get old. Things break. I’d like to have that option to go to the doctor instead of sitting at home being sick. These benefits are things that I feel that I’ve worked for, and I deserve, and they were in the contract,” said Hill. “For the company to just go back on its word and take these things away, it’s just not right.”

Following the short rally, Armstrong, Bagley and Hill grabbed signs and joined about 400 others in a picket line energized by the sound of Tom Petty singing “I won’t back down” and Quiet Riot’s “We’re not going to take it.”

If the retirees were tired from their long bus journey the day before, they didn’t show it. Even as rain began to fall with a growing intensity, they stayed on the line, waving their signs and eliciting a steady stream of supportive horn-honking from passing motorists—who seemed quite ready to believe that NV Energy had done something that deserved picketing. And the Culinary workers remained on the line with them, shrugging off the rain and chanting “Corporate greed has got to go.”

When the time came to load the signs back into the Borstmobile, Local 1245 Bargaining Committee member Tom Cornell couldn’t hide his elation. “It felt great! The enthusiasm is wonderful. This is a union town down here and our brothers and sisters were out here to support us and I love them all.”

Speaking at the rally, in addition to Cornell, Local 226’s Barajas and PG&E’s Ramirez, were Danny Thompson, head of the Nevada AFL-CIO; Sara Stevenson, a member of the Clerical bargaining unit at NV Energy; Local 1245 organizer Fred Ross; and Local 1245 Retiree Club President (Reno Chapter) Tom Bird. Also addressing the rally was Peter Ediger of Peace in the USA, one of many religious leaders who signed a full-page newspaper ad that appeared in the state’s major newspapers over the Christmas holiday calling on NV Energy to honor its commitment to workers.

Among the many who provided key logistical support were NV Energy Troubleman and temporary IBEW Business Rep. Mike Grimm, who also served as master of ceremonies for the rally; Local 1245 organizers Fred Ross and Eileen Purcell, who recruited support from the Las Vegas labor and religious communities; Retiree Club Recorder Mickie Baryol, who publicized the rally and other campaign activities on her energetic IBEW Retiree Club blog; retired Local 1245 shop steward Rita Weisshaar; Local 1245 Advisory Council member Michelle Ramsey; and Ron and Vickie Borst.
On the Bus, continued from page 18

Meeting with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid are IBEW Local 1245 Business Rep. and union's campaign.

Borst then invites the public to visit the campaign's website at ShameOnNVEnergy.com. That website features photos of retirees holding Shame on NV Energy signs, accompanied by a brief explanation of the issues. Photos of NV Energy's top executives and board members are featured in the website's “Hall of Shame.” Visitors are given an opportunity to sign up in support of the campaign.

SHINING A BRIGHT LIGHT

Although NV Energy geared up last fall for a possible strike—they even contacted a Minnesota contractor for strikebreaker services—the union chose a form of resistance that the company had no way to answer: mobilizing its members in public protest and shining a very bright light on what the company is trying to do to its retirees.

Going into February, the union escalated its campaign on every front.

An “interfaith rally” in Reno in late January served as a springboard for the demonstration and picket in Las Vegas on Feb. 9. The union also saddled up its campaign and galloped into cyberspace. The union’s ShameOnNVEnergy Facebook page quickly attracted over 6,000 friends, mostly NV Energy customers voicing their displeasure with the company. About the same time, company CEO Michael Yackira took down his own Facebook page, apparently no longer enjoying the feedback he was getting from his “friends.”

The union penetrated even deeper into the cyberspace with a Google ad campaign that brought up the Shame-OnNVEnergy message in response to certain search terms involving NV Energy. Something in the ads must have struck a nerve: Google users “clicked through” the ad to access the ShameOnNVEnergy message in response to the union’s newspaper ad.

Further information For more news about the fight for justice at NV Energy, visit:

- ShameOnNVEnergy at: www.shameonnenergy.com to see the Wall of Shame.
- Reno/Sparks Chapter, IBEW Local 1245 Retiree Club blog at http://renosparksibew1245retireesclub.blogspot.com/
- IBEW Local 1245 at www.ibew1245.com

Return to Sender

In a calculated show of disrespect for the people who built the company he heads, NV Energy CEO Michael Yackira in late February refused to accept delivery of a registered letter from a retiree. What had the retiree done to merit such an insult?

“I wanted to talk to him about my medical benefits,” said Ron Borst, a retired lineman who is now president of the Reno Chapter of the IBEW Local 1245 Retirees Club.

Borst first tried to raise the issue at a company-sponsored public forum held last October at John Ascuaga’s Nugget casino. He had responded to a company invitation to come “discuss” retiree medical benefits, but when Borst and others attempted to speak the microphone was shut off. When Borst followed up with a letter to Yackira asking to have the promised discussion, a reply from one of Yackira’s underlings scolded Borst for his bad manners.

Now the company won’t even accept delivery of Borst’s letters.

“It doesn’t hurt my feelings,” said Borst, who spent 20 years climbing poles for Sierra Pacific Power. “But where I come from, if you’re going to stick it to someone you ought to be willing to look him in the eye while you’re doing it.”
Retirees’ Corner

Blogging Nevada

It’s the place to go to find the latest news of interest to NV Energy retirees. The Reno/Sparks Chapter of the IBEW W Local 1245 Retirees Club hosts a blog with news you can use. See it at: can be found at: http://renosparksibew1245retirees.blogspot.com/.

IBEW 9th District blog

The IBEW Ninth District blog is a place where IBEW retirees can share their thoughts and opinions. Your participation is welcome. Check it out at http://ibewninthdistrictretirees.blogspot.com/.

Sonoma candidate seeks support

Sonoma County supervisorial candidate Mike McGuire appealed for support at the Santa Rosa Chapter meeting of the Local 1245 Retirees Club on March 2.

“He is pro-labor,” reported Chapter Recorder Ken Rawles, who said McGuire has the support of IBEW Local 551 and the North Bay Labor Council. The meeting was visited by a show of hands to ask the Local 1245 Executive Board to endorse McGuire.

Chairman Art Fahrner and Rawles were designated to take a head-count to see how many Santa Rosa retirees would be attending a memorial barbecue at Weakley Hall on April 24 to honor the memory of former President Howard Stiefel, the long-time Local 1245 president who died Feb. 3.

Vacaville goes bi-monthly

The Vacaville Chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club now meets bi-monthly. Meetings for the remainder of 2010 will be in March, May, July, September, and November. Meeting location remains Weakley Hall in Vacaville. Meeting time remains 10 a.m.

Darryl Norris, Business Representative

Retiree Club Meeting Schedule

East Bay Chapter: 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 555, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA.

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

Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter: 2nd Wednesday, every other month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree circle, Vacaville, CA. (May, July, etc.)

Santa Rosa Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., at Coco’s Restaurant, 1501 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa.

Merced Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., Merced Senior Community, 755 W. 15th Street., Merced.

Reno/Sparks Chapter: 3rd Wednesday each month, 8:30 a.m., Denny’s Restaurant, 205 E. Nugget Ave., Sparks, NV.

Get the latest news at www.ibew1245.com

Congratulations newly-retired members

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retiree Club Chapter in Dublin, San Jose, Vacaville, Santa Rosa, or Merced. If you don’t have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Georgina Alfaro
22 years
Arroyo Grande, CA

James Coulter
30 years
Copperopolis, CA

Floyd Cox
36 years
Grass Valley, CA

James Dorman
14 years
Oakley, CA

Ronald Galati
36 years
Newcastle, CA

Kirk Givan
10 years
Fresno, CA

Morrell Harge
37 years
Oakland, CA

Robert Hatwijk
36 years
Red Bluff, CA

Feliks Hejniewicz
19 years
Kelseyville, CA

Melvin Helm
34 years
Caruthers, CA

Gordon Hendrix
39 years
Orland, CA

Lisa Kottas
17 years
Powel, NV

Martie Mahry
13 years
San Francisco, CA

Teodulo Magsanay
17 years
Concord, CA

Richard Martin
16 years
Martinez, CA

Daniel Morrill
30 years
Fresno, CA

Joseph Pierce
39 years
West Sacramento, CA

Rick Smithers
39 years
Shingletown, CA

Salvatore Spinnato
32 years
Hayward, CA

Dennis Alloir
34 years
Burlington, VT

James Allmon
18 years
Oakland, CA

Robert Bevers
28 years
McMinnville, OR

Ray Buffington
32 years
McNeil, AR

Pearl Cuizon
13 years
Stockton, CA

James Endicott
41 years
Honolulu, HI

Everett Flowers
15 years
Pleasant Hill, CA

Ronald Geringer
8 years
Fresno, CA

John Ingram
19 years
Washoe Valley, NV

Edward Lopez
37 years
Coalinga, CA

Marilyn Miles
36 years
Oakland, CA

Michael Page
36 years
Pleasanton, CA

David Parmenter
37 years
Wilton, CA

John Pedroia
29 years
Pt. Arena, CA

Frederick Post
15 years
Vancouver, WA

Kenneth Schedin
5 years
Boise, ID

Sharon Shepherd
30 years
Brentwood, CA

Jimmie Soto
32 years
Rio Rancho, NM

Anibal Costa
36 years
Castro Valley, CA

Steven Habeck
12 years
Quincy, CA

Randall Hoskins
35 years
Nerdom, NE

Robert Leonard
24 years
Rigby, ID

Bobby Martin
37 years
Bakersfield, CA

Anthony Mateo
36 years
So, San Francisco, CA

Gary Presley
29 years
Livermore, CA

Arthur Solorio
25 years
Fresno, CA

Anna Soto
36 years
San Bruno, CA

Roy Stevenson
30 years
Yuca, City, CA

Thomas Torgersen
28 years
Eureka, CA

Richard Torres
30 years
Modesto, CA

Priscilla Tse
36 years
So, San Francisco, CA

Randy VanderKamp
22 years
Walnut Creek, CA

Andrew Vega
43 years
Marysville, CA

Congratulations Retirees! We want you to stay connected to IBEW 1245.

Keeper of the Signs

Fired-up Local 1245 retirees from NV Energy provided key logistical support for the February demonstration in Las Vegas—including the distribution of 400 picket signs.

Photo By Dolores Fino

Stockton Honorees, from page 15

Martin, Brett A
Martin, William A
Mchee, Victor
Mcginnis, John T
Mickie, Galen F
Mckinmon, Sean G
Mcneill, George C
Medina, Melanie I
Meier, Ralph E
Mize, Robert S
Newsome, Michael P
Niehenke, David W
Peirano, Maria C
Pence, Lewis J
Perez, Victor D
Phillips, Gary E
Pierce, David J
Puou, Thomas A
Quattro, Jim D
Ratfield, Cris T
Ravera, Darlene L
Richter, Judith A
Rieb, Garrett K
Rigg, Ralph B
Roberts, Laura J
Rosas, Manuel D
Salaiz, Dennis M
Sargent, Lisa M
Schmidt, Curtis
Sheridan, James A
Sierras, Jessie
Silva, Joe G
Soto Jr., Benjamin
Spoonhour, Theresa M
Thien, John
Thorman, William F
Thornberry, Donald R
Trujillo, Manuel E
Urbin, Fredric K
Vela, Mark A
Warren, Robert E
Willett, Richard
Worley, Daniel R

Utility Reporter 21

2010 Retiree Honorees from page 15

McNeil, AR
McMinniville, OR
Mckinnon, Sean G
Mcginnes, John T
Mcneill, George C
Medina, Melanie I
Meier, Ralph E
Mize, Robert S
Newsome, Michael P
Niehenke, David W
Peirano, Maria C
Pence, Lewis J
Perez, Victor D
Phillips, Gary E
Pierce, David J
Puou, Thomas A
Quattro, Jim D
Ratfield, Cris T
Ravera, Darlene L
Richter, Judith A
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Rigg, Ralph B
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Rosas, Manuel D
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Sargent, Lisa M
Schmidt, Curtis
Sheridan, James A
Sierras, Jessie
Silva, Joe G
Soto Jr., Benjamin
Spoonhour, Theresa M
Thien, John
Thorman, William F
Thornberry, Donald R
Trujillo, Manuel E
Urbin, Fredric K
Vela, Mark A
Warren, Robert E
Willett, Richard
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# Service Awards

Petaluma, CA  
October 9, 2009

### 45 Years
- Donlan, Patrick
- Fahrner, Art

#### Receiving 45-year awards are

- Art Fahrner, left, Patrick Donlan.

### 40 Years
- Belieu, Mark J
- Cox Jr., Herman E
- Hinke Jr., Charles M
- Landingham, Hubert
- Peter, Richard G
- Pierce, Larry L
- Williams, Mike

### 35 Years
- Avilla, Barney
- Baslee, Donna J
- Boydston, Donald P
- Carmichael, David L
- Cincera, Steve
- Coit, Charles J
- Cole, Robert
- Edwards, Darrell
- Endicott, Mark R
- Fechter, Richard
- Findley, James E
- Galvez, Ruben
- Garcia, Jacqueyn I
- Garrison, Carol Ann A
- Gibson, Larry
- Jenner, Jerry
- Joerger, Mark P
- Knust, Patricia
- Macaluso, Richard T
- Mazzotti, Paul M
- Murphy, Leon
- Quesada, Joe M
- Saunders, Robert E
- Schallil, Steven
- Silva, Michael
- Sooksberg, William J
- Turner, Brent
- Virgo, Lonnie

### 30 Years
- Asay, Donald D
- Bell, Paul
- Berries, Thomas A
- Bricker Jr., James R
- Brower, Robert A
- Carpignano, Jane A
- Castelli, David A

### 25 Years
- Asche, Frederick
- Bird, Maureen D

### Unit Meeting schedule changes

Unit 4016, South Feather Water and Power, has changed its meeting dates. The new meeting dates, through June, are:

- March 17, 2010 (Wednesday)
- April 22, 2010 (Thursday)
- May 20, 2010 (Thursday)
- June 17, 2010 (Thursday)

**Ray Thomas, Senior Business Rep.**

Unit 3801, Sacramento Clerical, meets on the first Tuesday of the month. The dates published on-line and in the November-December 2009 issue of Utility Reporter were incorrect. Dates for upcoming meetings are:

- April 6, May 4, and June 1. Meeting time is 4:30 p.m. Meeting location is Round Table Pizza, 4680 Nathanas Blvd, Ste #170, in Sacramento.

**Mike Grill, Business Representative**

Unit 2509, Stockton Clerical, meets on the second Thursday of the month. The dates published on-line and in the November-December 2009 issue of Utility Reporter were incorrect. Dates for upcoming meetings are:

- April 8, May 6, and June 3. Meeting time is 4:00 p.m. Meeting location is 8110 Holman Road, Ste. #1, in Stockton.

**Arlene Edwards, Business Rep.**

Unit 1129, Auberry, has a new location effective immediately: The Pizza Factory, 29424 Auberry Road, Prather, CA. The meeting dates and time remain unchanged.

**Bob Dean, Business Rep.**

Unit 1128, Lemoore, has a new meeting location effective immediately. The new location is Vida’s Steakhouse, 129 W. 7th, Hanford, CA. All dates and times remain the same.

**Bob Dean, Business Rep.**

**Unit 1112, Bakersfield**, meeting location was recently listed incorrectly in the Unit Meeting Schedule. The correct location for the Bakersfield unit is 200 West Jeffrey Street in Bakersfield. The meeting dates and time remain unchanged.

**Bob Dean, Business Rep.**

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**THE HONOREES**

- Christensen, Lex P
- Crowhurst, Peter A
- Davini, Dave
- Deignan, Patrick H
- Dooley, Eugene S
- Everett, Richard D
- Fryer, Patrick J
- Gekas Jr., James S
- Glaze, Terry
- Gonzalez, Francisco
- Grigsby, Korri A
- Grosman, Lee H
- Hamner, Dennis
- Hegerhorst, Dennis A
- Hill, James F
- Jensen, James N
- Jones, Gerald
- Jovovich, Robert J
- Joyce, James J
- Kent, John D
- Levey, Rodney
- Mathews, Jack R
- Mcdonald, Barry R
- Miller, Tony E
- Murgatroyd, James R
- Myers III, Sidney G
- Nardini Jr., Jack R
- Naughton, Neil A
- Norton, James D
- Osteen, J L
- Pereira, Elder M
- Rachel, Jeffrey G
- Roybal, Mardo J
- Santos, J
- Scafani, Michael A
- Siebert, Ken D
- Silva, Marc
- Singh, Avinash J
- Snyder, Jone E
- Sprout, Ron W
- Steele, Robert M
- Thomas, Peter S
- Tognozzi, Ronald R
- Trout, Harry A
- Vitorelo, Joseph
- Whitcomb, B M
- Wood Jr., Harold S
- Zapanta, Luis K
- Zita, Ed L

**45 Years**

**40 Years**

**35 Years**

**30 Years**

**25 Years**
Weather Doesn’t Matter

IBEW Local 1245 members working for the Western Area Power Administration braved some of the fiercest winter weather in years to perform trouble work recently on the Captain Jack 500-kv line in the rugged mountains near Grizzly Peak.

The Captain Jack line is part of the California Oregon Intertie—transmission lines that knit together power grids in California and the Pacific Northwest. The line reaches its highest point of about 6,000 feet near Grizzly Peak, an area subject to copious amounts of snowfall in the winter. Accumulation of ice and snow on insulators and wires pose a significant risk of outages.

As these photos show, weather doesn’t matter when there’s a threat to power: IBEW Local 1245 members are on the job.

Photos by Dave Horton

A land of snow and ice.

[RIGHT] Ryan Yeager: Can do!

[BELOW] From left: Ryan Wheeler, Ryan Yeager, Dave Floyd and Brian Adams.

Too windy for hard hats.

Just getting there was half the challenge.

Ryan Yeager, Ryan Wheeler, and Daren New.