Vigilance

Trees could take out the electric system. IBEW Line Clearance Tree Trimmers make sure that doesn’t happen. Story on pages 10 and 11.

26,000
Chicago teachers struck the nation’s third-largest public school district Sept. 10 over compensation, evaluation procedures, and conditions within the classroom.

At least 289 workers lost their lives in a garment factory fire in Karachi, Pakistan. Hundreds were trapped inside a building that had metal grilles on the windows and no fire exits. The fire began just hours after another fire killed 25 people at a Lahore, Pakistan shoe factory.

34 miners were killed by police during a strike for higher wages at a platinum mine in South Africa, sparking a wave of protests and strikes at other South African mines in September.

Leaders from two labor unions climbed 70 meters to the top of silos at an Alcoa aluminum plant that has been targeted for closure in Italy. “They reneged on everything,” said Franco Bardi, one of the union leaders.

Miguel Alcazar cuts a large tree down to size. Working above him are Gabino Chavez, Leo Mendoza and Luis Perez.
recently. After 12 weeks of very tough negotiations, our members negotiated and ratified a solid agreement at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, an agency we’ve had an agreement with for 65 years. I recognize that very tough battles continue at Modesto Irrigation District, Turlock Irrigation District and many public sector employers. But the tenacity shown by our members at SMUD inspires me to believe that we will see better days at MID and TID as well because I know for a fact those members are as tough as any in our union.

One of the most exciting developments of the past decade, to me, is happening in our units. We challenged our unit leaders last spring to come up with ways to re-engage and re-energize our members. Already we are seeing the units’ potential to become a springboard for sports events, charitable activities, and community engagement. We will take further steps along this road in November with four regional meetings of unit leaders, which will also include some basic instruction in running a meeting for our newer unit leaders.

Finally, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the untimely death of Business Rep. Jim Lynn. Jim understood contracts, he had great rapport with members, and he built productive relationships with management. I miss him and I know that his pipeline members in the northwest and Fresno and his fellow workers in Stockton miss him as well.

**Labor journalism awards**

Local 1245 won several journalism awards in the International Labor Communications Association competition for work published in 2011. The Utility Reporter won third place in the General Excellence category for local union publications, and took second place for Best Design.

The photo feature “Twin Monsters”—featuring Line Clearance Tree Trimmers at Trees, Inc.—won third place for Best Photo Essay or Photo Gallery. See the feature on-line at ibew1245.com/Group_Profiles/Trees_Inc.pdf.

Communications Director Eric Wolfe took first place Saul Miller award for Best Political Action Story, “Door to Door Democracy,” which showcased the efforts of eight Local 1245 members who traveled to Wisconsin to assist the recall campaign against Gov. Scott Walker. Read the story at ibew1245.com/news-1245/Door-to-Door-Democracy.pdf.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell is Executive Editor of the Utility Reporter; Wolfe is Managing Editor.

## Fund for critically-injured lineman

A fund has been set up at Bank of America to help the family of David Hanson. Anyone wanting to make a donation may visit a local branch of Bank of America. Indicate you want to make a donation to Rachel Hanson, account # 000006507867.

David Hanson, a construction line man working for Contra Costa Electric, suffered critical injuries in a fall from height. The incident occurred at the Shell Refinery in Martinez on Aug. 7. Hanson, 29, is a member of IBEW Local Union 953 and had been working in California for a little over a year. He was part of a 5-man crew working to install a ground-operated switch, which was located in the primary circuit an estimated 50 feet above ground.

Investigations by Cal/OSHA, Shell Refinery and the employer are all underway.

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**Unit meeting changes**

**Unit 2311, Oakland,** has changed its unit meeting location back to Francesco’s on Hegenberger Road. Meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m.

Lou Mennel, Business Rep

**Unit #3415, Colusa Power Plant,** will now hold its unit meeting every other month. The new date is the 2nd Wednesday of the month and the new start time for the meetings is 4:30 pm. Next regular meeting is Wednesday, November 14. Location is Kim’s Diner in Maxwell. The unit has elected new officers: Karl Parker, chair, and Michelle Benjamin, recorder.

Arlene Edwards, Business Rep

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**Utility Reporter**

October – December 2012

Volume 61 No. 4

Circulation: 22,200

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

Periodical postage paid at Vacaville and at additional mailing offices. USPS No. 654640, ISSN No. 0190-4965.

**POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579, Change of Address, and all correspondence to Utility Reporter, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696.

Single copies $1. Subscription by arrangement. Have you moved recently? Please send complete new address and your Social Security Number (by U.S. Mail) to “Address Change,” IBEW Local 1245, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696.

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Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IBEWLocal1245.

Our phone number is (707) 452-2700.
Hello, I'm Helen Gan, a member of IBEW Local 1245. I want to persuade you to vote NO on Proposition 32. Prop 32 is a measure that will prohibit unions from contributing to political campaigns. It is part of an attempt, going on all across the country, for businesses to roll back the benefits unionization has given to workers.

I am 76 years old, and have worked for 57 years, 52 of them at PG&E. I am part of the generation who, because of the union, was able to live a good life, buy a house, travel, and have a secure old age.

I'm afraid most people have little knowledge of history, and short memories, not knowing how unions lobbied long and hard for us to get the benefits we have today.

In 1912, my mother was seven years old when she went to work in a cannery, here in San Francisco, cleaning shrimp until midnight or two in the morning. When she was twelve, she started working in a sewing factory. These jobs were piece work, with no benefits and no limit on the hours worked.

In 1920, the government declared that advocating an eight-hour day was treason, and thousands of people were arrested, thrown into jail, and held, perhaps for months, without trial.

In 1929, the Supreme Court declared that trying to limit the number of hours a child worked was unconstitutional.

Since then, the benefits we have today, Social Security, unemployment insurance, and all the rest, came into law because unions fought for them.

In 1960, PG&E was an all-white company, mostly Irish, many related, with perhaps three generations of the same family working there. I was one of the first non-whites they hired.

I, and a few other Chinese, were only hired because the union had worked for affirmative action. Still PG&E hired no blacks. They did hire a couple of Hawaiians, and tried to pass them off as black. Only when the union threatened lawsuits did PG&E start hiring all minorities.

My first day at PG&E, the supervisor told me “now your name is O’Gan, go join the rest of the Irish!” Then he snapped my bra strap. Today, he would be sued for harassment, but that is how things were back then.

There was a dress code, dresses only, no pants. If you came to work not wearing stockings, you were sent home. For men, white shirt, dark suit, tie, and no beard.

When affirmative action came in, Chinese women were the first hired. The company figured that Chinese girls would be quiet. And not create problems. Boy, were they in for a surprise!

Chinese women are strong, not the china dolls seen in movies; as soon as we had an issue, we hollered for the shop steward. On my first job evaluation, the supervisor noted, "She is a fast and accurate keypunch operator, but she is defiant."

I don't understand those people who do not pay union dues, but are pleased to take the benefits the unions bring them. Don't they see that companies give nothing unless the union fought for it?

Companies are constantly trying to cut back on benefits, eliminating union workers and hiring non-union “analysts,” cutting job classifications and reducing all office workers to “utility clerks,” increasing the amount workers contribute to health plans, reducing pension benefits.

Meanwhile, at PG&E, stocks have never been higher, profits greater, and CEO’s paid so much. The workers have never “lost their way,” it was the many company officers, who left, after a short time on the job, with multi-million dollar golden handshakes, who “lost the way.”

The only way unions can influence laws is through lobbying legislators. Without contributing to political campaigns, you would have no Social security, minimum wage laws, pension plans, eight-hour days, forty-hour week, unemployment insurance, workers’ compensation, health and safety rules, equal pay for equal work, job seniority, paid vacations, sick leave, no discrimination because of race, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Now there is no dress code. You can wear whatever you like, or have a beard – regardless of your sex.

I can’t understand why people vote against their own interest. If Proposition 32 passes, it will be followed by many other laws reducing union activities and eroding your benefits.

For your own sake, for the sake of your children or grandchildren entering the work force, for workers everywhere, Vote NO on Prop 32.

Volunteer to fight Prop 32. Contact Jennifer Gray at 916-796-3309 or by email at j2g8@ibew1245.com
SMUD pact ratified

Members overwhelmingly ratified a new agreement with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District on Aug. 29, ending 12 consecutive weeks of negotiations. Turnout for the vote was 83%, with 94% voting in favor. The agreement provides wage hikes, when compounded over the five-year term, of 17.33%. Other provisions include additional employer monthly contributions to employee 401(k) funds, and an employer contribution of $600 per year into a Flexible Spending Account for vision, dental and medical. The agreement also provides a new orthodontia benefit, a new boot allowance, and an increased reimbursement for tuition.

Employee contributions to the PERS benefit will be phased in over the five-year term, reaching 7% in the fifth year. The employee share of HMO health care premiums will rise from 6% in 2013, to 8% in 2014 and 2015, and to 9% in 2016 and 2017.

PG&E Physical, Benefits packages ratified

Members ratified new Physical and Benefits agreements with PG&E in a mail ballot counted July 25.

The Physical agreement provides wage increases of 2.75% at the beginning of 2012, 2013 and 2014. The current year wage increase was retroactive to the beginning of the year.

The Physical agreement suspended itemized receipt requirements and menu restrictions for meals $30 or less, and established a joint Meals Committee to develop joint recommendations to modify the meal provisions.

In other provisions, the Physical agreement improved funeral leave language, improved Title 30 travel allowances, provided wage adjustments for various classifications with additional job duties, and converted the Commercial Drivers’ License premium to an hourly rate and extended this rate to additional classifications.

A fuller summary of the agreement can be viewed at www.ibew1245.com/news-PGE/Union_Summary_FiveYear.pdf.

The Benefits agreement maintained the monthly medical premium copay at 7.5% for 2013 and 2014, while drafting a new approach to medical benefits that emphasizes free preventative health care and the establishment of health care reimbursement accounts. The agreement also creates a cash balance pension plan for future employees, with current employees being able to convert to the cash balance plan on a strictly optional basis.


The Physical agreement passed on a vote of 2411-1563, with 22 void ballots. The Benefits agreement passed 2408-2346, with 31 void ballots.

Bargaining for the union were Scott Barker, Mike Gallagher, John Moe, Jim Notman, Cory Smith, Dan White, and Business Rep. Sam Glero.

Serving on the union ballot committee were Art Torres (judge), Dan Currier, Julie Shipman, Darin Huartson, Dave Palmer, Owen Yven, Mark Flanders, John Basil and Robert Winney.

Local 1245 members at City of Shasta Lake, from left: Adam Osborn, Dennis Larsen, Ben Fisher, Cory Harper, Dave Vandermeer, and Will Gatteau, along with Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas and Business Rep. Sheila Lawton.

Members ratify Shasta Lake pact

Local 1245 members at the City of Shasta Lake on Aug. 8 unanimously ratified a new four-year Memorandum of Understanding. The new agreement includes the following terms:

- Upon certification, all IBEW 1245 Journeymen will receive 6% rubber glove incentive, which will be in addition to the Journeymen’s base rate of pay. The City is to pay for all certification.
- Retroactive to July 1, 2012, employees will pay their 8% Cal-PERS member contribution (benefit formula 3%@60) in exchange for a Jan. 1, 2012 retroactive 6.56% general wage increase to all IBEW 1245-represented employees.
- With GIS training (to be completed within 45 days of ratification) the current Administrative Services Assistant shall be reclassified to the new classification Electric Line Staking Technician, which includes a 5% increase in pay to 80% of the non-rubber glove Journeymen Lineman rate.
- Effective July 1, 2014, all Journeymen Lineman classifications will receive a general wage increase equal to the average July 1, 2014 non-rubber glove wage rates for Journeymen Linemen at the following properties: Trinity PUD; Lassen MUD; Plumas Sierra REC.

Other provisions dealt with life insurance, vesting in retiree medical benefits, dental insurance, and using sick leave for spousal pregnancy-related leave. More detailed information on these provisions can be seen at www.ibew1245.com/news-PublicSector/Shasta_Lake_Pact_8-16-12.html.

The agreement is effective July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2016. Serving on the union’s negotiating team were Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas, Business Representative Sheila Lawton and Local 1245 Shop Steward Dave Vandermeer.

Never volunteered before? This is your chance to make a real difference! Help us defeat Prop 32.
Visit www.ibew1245.com/news-Local1245/Vote_pledge
Or contact Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Gray at 916-796-3309 or by email at j2g8@ibew1245.com

October – December 2012
Members ratify Master Agreement

Line Clearance Tree Trimmers have ratified an historic Master Agreement that puts all IBEW Local 1245 members at the major tree contractors under the same agreement. The vote was 447-98 to accept the agreement.

Achieving the groundbreaking Master Agreement has been a long-time goal of the union because it gives Line Clearance Tree Trimmers a unified front and greater power in future contract negotiations. Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran led the negotiations that culminated in the mail-ballot ratification, counted on Sept. 14.

The agreement—which applies to members at Davey Tree, Asplundh Tree, Utility Tree, Wright Tree, and Trees Inc.—assures gains for all Line Clearance Tree members during the 5-year term of the agreement.

In general, the Master Agreement:

- Secures wages for five years, with 10% to 14% wage increases over the term, including adjustments tied to the Consumer Price Index in years four and five.

- Provides a high-quality Lineco/Blue Cross medical plan at all major IBEW-represented Line Clearance companies—with no monthly contribution by employees—and protects family medical coverage even when a different tree contractor wins the bid to do the work.

- Secures the IBEW 1245 Money Purchase Pension Plan, with company contributions equaling 3% of employee's annual wage.

- Provides annual Safety Bonus Award equal to 1% of employee's salary, paid quarterly.

The union made a major effort to make sure that all 1,005 of its tree trimmers had an opportunity to learn details of the historic agreement before voting on it.

Business Representatives Carl Lamers and Junior Ornelas—utilizing bi-lingual materials—informed members about the merits of the Master Agreement through unit meetings, special meetings, and extensive yard visits. They were assisted by temporary Business Representatives Justin Casey and John Simms. Three special events were held in Vacaville, Fresno, and Santa Rosa to give members and their families an additional opportunity to learn more about the agreement.

IBEW 1245 staff members Fred Ross, Eileen Purcell, Liz McNinis and Ralph Armstrong worked with tree trimmer leaders to recruit and train a 42-member “Yes Committee” to encourage member participation in the ratification vote. The “Yes Committee” met twice at Weakley Hall, where they discussed the historic significance of the agreement with Cochran and Business Manager Tom Dalzell. “This is an historic agreement, which makes it possible for us to negotiate better working conditions, wages and benefits for our members in the trees, who do some of the most hazardous and difficult work in our union,” Dalzell said after the ratification vote was counted. “It was also an unprecedented, broad-based outreach effort led by staff and the Vote Yes committee.”

Dalzell called the ratification of the Master Agreement “a great day for IBEW 1245.”

Los miembros ratifican el Acuerdo Maestro

Los Podadores de Árboles para el Despeje de Líneas ratificaron el histórico Acuerdo Maestro que aplicará a los miembros del IBEW Local 1245 de las principales compañías contratistas de árboles.

Los resultados de la votación fueron 447-98 a favor del acuerdo. Desde hace mucho tiempo, el sindicato había tenido como objetivo lograr un Acuerdo Maestro ya que de esta manera los Podadores de Árboles para el Despeje de Líneas presentan un frente unido y tienen mayor poder a la hora de negociar contratos futuros. El Gerente Asistente de Negocios Senior Ron Cochran dirigía las negociaciones que culminaron con la ratificación por votación, los cuales se totalizaron el 14 de septiembre.

El acuerdo—el cual aplica a los miembros de Davey Tree, Asplundh Tree, Utility Tree, Wright Tree, y Trees Inc.—garantiza ganancias para todos los Podadores de Árboles para el Despeje de Líneas durante los 5 años de duración del acuerdo.

En general, el Acuerdo Maestro:

- Garantiza los salarios durante 5 años, con aumentos salariales entre 10% y 14% durante el periodo, incluyendo ajustes atados al Índice de Precios al Consumidor en los años 4 y 5.

- Ofrece un plan médico de alta calidad con Lineco/Blue Cross para las principales compañías de Despeje de Líneas que tienen representantes del IBEW—sin contribución mensual por parte de los empleados—y protege la cobertura médica familiar aún si un contratista diferente gana la licitación para ejecutar el trabajo.

- Garantiza el Plan de Jubilación de Aportación Definida del IBEW 1245, con contribuciones de la compañía iguales al 3% del salario anual del empleado.

- Bono de Seguridad Anual igual al 1% del salario del empleado, pagado trimestralmente.

El sindicato realizó un gran esfuerzo para asegurar que los 1,005 podadores de árboles tuvieran la oportunidad de conocer los detalles del acuerdo histórico antes de la votación.

Los Representantes de Negocios Carlos Lamers y Junior Ornelas—utilizando material bilingüe—informaron a los miembros sobre las ventajas del Acuerdo Maestro mediante reuniones de las unidades, reuniones especiales y visitas a los patios. Los Representantes de Negocios temporales Justin Casey y John Simms también colaboraron en este esfuerzo. Los tres eventos especiales se llevaron a cabo en Vacaville, Fresno y Santa Rosa para ofrecer a los miembros y a sus familiares una oportunidad adicional de obtener mayor información sobre el acuerdo.

Fred Ross, Eileen Purcell, Liz McNinis y Ralph Armstrong, miembros del personal del IBEW 1245, trabajaron junto con los líderes de los podadores de árboles para reclutar y capacitar a 42 miembros del Comité para el “Sí”, para motivar a los miembros a participar en la votación para la ratificación del acuerdo. El Comité para el “Sí” se reunió dos veces en Weakley Hall, donde hablaron sobre el significado histórico del acuerdo con Cochran y con el Gerente de Negocios Tom Dalzell.

“Éste es un acuerdo histórico que nos permite negociar mejores condiciones laborales, salarios y beneficios para nuestros miembros en los árboles, quienes ejecutan uno de los trabajos más peligrosos y difíciles en nuestro sindicato,” comentó Dalzell después de finalizar el conteo de la votación para la ratificación. “Fue también un esfuerzo sin precedentes y de amplio alcance dirigido por el personal y por el comité para el “Sí.”

Dalzell calificó la ratificación del Acuerdo Maestro como “un gran día para el IBEW 1245.”
There is a spectacular view and plenty of blue sky when a Local 1245 telecom crew arrives on the roof of PG&E headquarters at 77 Beale in downtown San Francisco.

But these telecom specialists didn't come up for the view. They came to install a new antenna for Cornerstone—the PG&E program launched in 2010 to increase grid flexibility, mitigate outages and improve system reliability.

“This is one of the sites where we're going to put a radio. It collects all this data and it's all used for control and monitoring of the electric grid,” says Eric Burk, a Telecom Foreman and 22-year IBEW member. In short, it’s part of the communications technology that helps PG&E understand what’s happening in its system at any given time.

But that radio, located downstairs, won't be listening or talking to anybody without an antenna. Working with Burk on the rooftop installation are Comm Techs Mike Valerio, a 15-year IBEW member; Issac Taylor, 9 years; and Anthony Jones, 3 years.

The installation, performed on March 2, is relatively straight-forward, taking only a few hours. The job is made easier by the fact that there is already some existing coax cable coming up to the tower.

In this line of work you can't take any task for granted, especially when there's climbing involved. The crew starts the job with a tailboard where they review the tasks to be performed, and also the emergency procedures that would be followed in the event something goes wrong.

Besides antennae and other telecommunications equipment, the Cornerstone project will bring improvements to power transformers, overhead and underground conductors and switches, line reclosers, line cutouts and fuses, and circuit breakers—part of the PG&E's overall effort to protect system reliability into the future.
Atop 77 Beale Street in San Francisco, with the Bay Bridge in the background are, from left: Mike Valerio, Anthony Jones, Eric Burk and Issac Taylor.

Anthony Jones works on the antenna installation.

Anthony Jones and Mike Valerio.

Communications equipment on top of 77 Beale permits PG&E to gather information from around its system.

Atop 77 Beale Street in San Francisco, with the Bay Bridge in the background are, from left: Mike Valerio, Anthony Jones, Eric Burk and Issac Taylor.

Photos by Michelle Frankfurter
IBEW Local 1245 celebrated some of its local heroes and laid plans to tackle future challenges during the union’s Advisory Council meeting in Reno on July 28.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell warned that Proposition 32, on the California ballot in November, would silence the voice of workers in state politics, making us vulnerable to attacks on our benefits and even our right to engage in collective bargaining.

Dalzell noted the recent passage of the PG&E Physical and Benefits agreements, and told delegates of a new Master Agreement for line clearance tree trimmers that will strengthen the union’s hand in future bargaining with tree trimmer contractors. (See page 5)

Michelle Benuzzi reports on latest developments at NV Energy. At left is Charles Forbes, representing Local 1245 members at Western Area Power Administration.


Scenes from Advisory Council

Anthony Brown, who was sworn in as an Advisory Council member in April, speaks up. From left: Mike Jessen, PG&E DeSabla Division; Peggy Daniel, PG&E Pipeline Operations; Robert Harty, PG&E Stockton Division and City of Lodi; Jim Findley, PG&E North Bay Division and City of Healdsburg; and Anthony Brown, PG&E East Bay Division and Foster-Wheeler.

Receiving praise for their efforts on behalf of the Local 1245 Retirees Club and their involvement in the Alliance for Retired Americans are, from left: Tom Bird (Nevada), and Ken Rawles and Bill Wallace (California).

Three new members of the Advisory Council were sworn in. From left: President Mike Davis administers the oath to Jeff Campodonico, representing PG&E Sacramento; Keith Jacques, representing Citizens Communications (Frontier); and Avery Clifton, representing PG&E’s old Drum Division.

Nevada retiree activists honored at the meeting were, from left, Ron Borst, Tom Bird (in red shirt, behind Borst), Vickie Borst, Tom Young (PG&E retiree), Bud Gray, Frank Isturis, Mike Armstrong, and Rita Weisshaar. Business Manager Tom Dalzell praised their “hard work and dedication and courage” in defending retiree benefits at NV Energy: “This group here has showed us all what it is to be union. They’ve got the union gene, every one of them. They’ve got the stand up and fight back gene, too.”

Building a Stronger Union

By Lauren Bartlett

Remember: There is a “U” in Union!
What can U do?
U can get involved
U can attend your local meetings
U can read your collective bargaining agreement
U can read the IBEW Bylaws and IBEW Constitution
U can read your Union Boards. Get knowledge and stay informed!
U can vote in elections of officers
U can vote during contract negotiations. Voting is your Voice!
U can write proposals during negotiations. Your ideas are important!
U can volunteer, and dedicate your time
U can become a shop steward or officer
U can get to know the people who represent you
SHOW THE UNION WHO U ARE AND REMEMBER: THERE IS A U IN UNION!
Work remains very steady

By Ron Cochran

Work remains very steady. There is a little of everything going on right now, from pole replacement work to thermostat replacement work with a lot in between.

Local 1245 has created a level playing field for all the contractors to work from with PG&E’s help through LA09-41. We are starting to see some contractors using Inside rates for Outside work in the substations. It seems someone is always trying to game the system to gain a competitive advantage. This issue has escalated to the National NECA level and we are wasting man-hours dealing with this. We find it very intriguing that the contractor in question had no PG&E work until LA09-41 was executed and now has just a small amount of work. It all boils down to greed.

The 50MW phase of the PG&E Solar Projects is just starting to ramp up. Cupertino Electric was awarded two of the sites with the third to be determined. Cupertino has sub-contracted some of the work out to Machado & Sons, KVA, TTR and Underground Construction. We expect when all 3 solar projects are going that they will employ upwards of 300-400 members.

We signed the following contractors in the month of August:
- Integrity Data & Fiber Inc – Communication & Installer Agreement
- Peter’s Drilling & Pump Service, Inc – One-time PLA to the OSL agreement

Recent Grievances

There is a lot of activity, with around a dozen grievances at Step I and Step II. A couple of Grievances have advanced to Step III. For the most part the NVE AMI project has not gone very well; it borders on a hostile work place. We’re getting several phone calls a day from that project. We recently fought two different OSL termination cases that involved apprentice linemen. Both cases were overturned.

We have a wrongful termination grievance headed into Step 4 of the process against OSMOSE Utility Services, which centers around an employee not meeting the company-imposed daily quotas. Paycheck issues are also occurring on a routine basis and we continue to work through those issues as they arise and we are made aware of them.

Other News

- The International Lineman’s Rodeo will be held Oct. 10-14, 2012, in Overland Park, KS. Local 1245 members will be participating.
- The Local 1245 Golf Tournament will be held Oct. 20, 2012, in Vacaville, CA.
- The balance in the Injured Workers Fund as of July 31, 2012 was $474, 166.13. We had no claims submitted in the month of August.

Apprentices

We currently have 285 outside line apprentices registered in our IATC program.
- 3 traveling apprentice working in our jurisdiction.
- 99 apprentices are working out of Local 1245
- 149 are working out of Local 47
- 16 are working out of Local 396
- 24 are off of work (3 are on disability - 10 are on leave of absence)
- 27 apprentices have graduated this year to journeyman lineman.
- 14 outside line apprentices have been indentured this year.

We have 3 traffic signal maintenance apprentices registered.

Associate membership available to employees 50 or older

Not retired yet? You can still join the Retirees Club—and should!

The IBEW Local 1245 Retiree Clubs have a deal for you.

If you’re 50 years old or older, you can sign up as an “associate member” and begin to enjoy what the Retiree Clubs have to offer. That includes a package of “Union-Plus” benefits designed by the IBEW especially for retired union members, and access to a wealth of information about the federal benefits you’re entitled to.

“When you become an associate member of one of our chapters, you automatically become a member of the Alliance for Retired Americans,” explains Tom Bird, president of the Yerington Chapter of the IBEW 1245 Retiree Club.

“The Alliance has all the latest information about the benefits we’re all looking forward to—our Medicare and our Social Security. Some people may not be aware of the current threat to these benefits and the things we’re doing to try to preserve them,” Bird said.

By joining the Retiree Club now, you lend your support to the growing movement to defend these benefits from politicians who want to take them away.

The Union-Plus program makes a variety of services available to IBEW members at steep discounts—from legal counseling, to low-interest credit cards, to gifts and flowers and much more. Your membership in the Retirees Club assures your continuing access to these money-saving deals.

“We want to encourage workers who still have a few years left on the job to start thinking now about some of the challenges that await retirees, and to understand that we can meet these challenges better if we are united, just like we were stronger in the workplace by being united,” said Bird.

“Some people feel so defeated that they’re going to lose Social Security and Medicare and don’t know what the future holds,” Bird said. “The good news is that retirees are getting organized to protect our benefits, and there’s no need to wait until retirement to make your voice heard on these issues.”

Local 1245 members who are still working can become an Associate Member of the Retirees Club for just $36 a year, the same low price as regular retired members.

“Benjamin Franklin said we have to hang together or we will all surely hang separately,” said Bird. “The Retirees Club is how we hang together as retired IBEW members and continue to make our collective voice heard. We encourage anyone who has retirement in their sights to go ahead and make the leap now—join the Retirees Club.”

Retired Local 1245 members, and active Local 1245 members who are 50 years or older, can join the Retirees Club by e-mailing Tonya Alston at TFA3@ibew1245.com, calling her at 707-452-2718, or writing to her at IBEW Retirees Club, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95686.
Vigilance

Trees could take out the electric system. IBEW Line Clearance Tree Trimmers make sure that doesn’t happen.

In May, an IBEW crew from Davey Tree Surgery worked for several days in Castro Valley, near Crow Canyon Road, removing trees underneath 230 KV transmission lines. Any tree with the potential of approaching within 10 feet of the lines had to go.

“These lines are nationally connected to the power grid,” said Sid Sanchez, a transmission supervisor for Davey and a former IBEW 1245 tree trimmer. A single contact between a tree and one of the lines “could knock out the whole grid system in the country,” he said.

Sanchez isn’t exaggerating. In 2003, a high-voltage power line in northern Ohio brushed against some overgrown trees and shut down, leading to a cascade of failures throughout southeastern Canada and eight northeastern states. It was the biggest blackout in North American history, costing an estimated $6 billion and contributing to at least 11 deaths. Fifty million people lost power for up to two days.

Skilled line clearance tree trimmers are the nation’s chief defense in preventing a repeat of this man-made disaster. Under the guidance of Foreman Miguel Alcazar, the Davey crew removed “incompatible” species—meaning those with the potential to reach the power lines. These included oak, acacia and bottle brush.

Working with Alcazar were Foreman Gabino Chavez and Climbers Luis Perez and Leonel Mendoza. Because the trees needed to be removed completely, the crew worked from the ground—felling the trees with saws and dragging them to the chipper.

This particular land owner wanted the chips left on his property. That was welcome news—it saved the crew the trouble of having to haul them away.

Fire is a big concern on a job like this. The crew is required to keep fire gear within 25 feet of the work zone, according to Sanchez. “Cutting with the chains, it can spark a fire. Every crew has two fire extinguishers, a spade shovel and a water backpack,” he said.

Trees, of course, have an important place in our lives. But one place we don’t want them is in our electric lines, threatening the reliability of the power grid. The vigilance of IBEW line clearance tree trimmers keeps that threat contained.

Photos by John Storey

The crew, from left: Luis Perez, Miguel Alcazar, Leo Mendoza and Gabino Chavez.

Above and right: Miguel Alcazar works on some of the larger growth. IBEW 1245 Communications Director captures the work on video. View it at www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html.

Gabino Chavez cuts his way through a thicket of young growth.

Passing branches up the hill, fire brigade style, are (from right) Miguel Alcazar, Gabino Chavez, Leo Mendoza, and (feeding the chipper) Luis Perez.

Davey Tree Surgery

Para conseguir una version de este articulo en español, vaya a este sitio: www.ibew1245.com/news-TreeTrimmers/Vigilance-SP.pdf.
Trees and power lines don't mix. Well, they sometimes mix, but the results can be disastrous. That's why IBEW Local 1245 line clearance tree trimmers try to keep the two apart.

In May, an IBEW crew from Davey Tree Surgery worked for several days in Castro Valley, near Crow Canyon Road, removing trees underneath 230 KV transmission lines. Any tree with the potential of approaching within 10 feet of the lines had to go.

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Working safely is a serious responsibility for line clearance tree trimmers. Power saws, the threat of falls, snakes, dehydration and heat stroke are all potential threats. IBEW Local 1245’s “Keep the Clearance” committee is a new union initiative that encourages members to look out for one another’s safety on the job. If a threat to safety is spotted, members are urged to stop work until the threat can be discussed and dealt with. Members can also discuss any safety concern with specially-designated “safety stewards” or with members of the Keep the Clearance committee.

Working safe

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The competition was strictly friendly when about 130 union members got together in Dunnigan, CA for the First Annual IBEW Local 1245 Sporting Clays Shoot.

For one thing, the only money on the line was going to charity. For another, a lot of these guys had never fired at a sporting clay in their life.

“I’ve done some handgun shooting. This is the first clay shoot,” said Jose Leal, a PG&E Gas Service Rep in Cupertino and an 8-year IBEW member.

“I prefer fly fishing,” said Duane Dickerson, a Light Rail Technician at Sacramento Regional Transit and first-time clay shooter.

“I’m a target shooter,” confessed Aser Tolentino, also a Light Rail Technician at SRT. When the target is moving, he said, “it’s quite challenging.”

So why come all the way out on a wind-blown Saturday to Dunnigan where the predicted high was 106 degrees?

“I’m here to have some fun with my co-workers and union brothers,” said Leal.

Fun and fraternity, that is exactly what the union had in mind in organizing the event.

“We’re not shooting for money,” said IBEW 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran. “Local 1245’s major goal is that money is going back into the community.”

The Clays Shoot also provided a chance for Local 1245 members to spend time with IBEW members from Locals 6, 302, 332, and 340, as well as union members from the Operating Engineers, Laborers and Plumbers and Pipefitters.

“There’s no pressure, just a lot of good fun for everybody,” said IBEW Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Bob Dean.

Participating alongside the union members were six pre-apprentices from the Cypress Mandela Training Center. Donna Miller, an administrator with the program, said the Clays Shoot was a great way for these students to spend time with people from the trades they hoped to someday join.

By noon everyone was ready to get out of the sun, sit down to a delicious barbecue lunch, and wait for the dozens of raffle prizes to be awarded. Among the prizes were gun safes, trap throwers, cigars, wine, and a wide assortment of guns. One of the winners was Heidi Swenson, a recent graduate of Cypress Mandela.

“I won a shotgun today and I feel really good about it. I’m going to go shoot it somewhere and get better and come back next year and do better,” she said.

After expenses, the union was able to donate over $8,600 to six local chapters of the Boys and Girls Clubs, from Napa Valley to Sacramento to Silicon Valley.

The event was part of Business Manager Tom Dalzell’s on-going effort to get Local 1245 involved in activities that benefit the communities where our members work.

Raising money for a good cause was important to Denise Miller, a Senior Customer Service Rep at Modesto Irrigation District. “That makes me feel really good. That’s the reason we’re out here, for the charities,” she said.

“But it’s also a lot of fun!” she added.
Giving back to the community

After paying the bills for the event, Local 1245 was able to contribute $1441.39 to each of the following six groups:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Sacramento
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley
- Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley
- Vacaville Neighborhood Boys & Girls Club
- West Contra Costa Building Trades Boys & Girls Club

Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran and IBEW Local 180 Business Manager Dan Broadwater.

The Kenyons were well represented.

Heidi Swensen and her new shotgun

Sponsors

IBEW Local 1245 thanks the following organizations for co-sponsoring the Clay Shoot:

- IBEW Local 180
- IBEW Local 340
- IBEW Local 595
- IBEW Local 332
- IBEW Local 6
- Napa/Solano LMCC
- Electrical Industry Advancement Program Local 302
- NECA-IBEW LMCC Local 340
- VDV LMCC NECA
- Blue Shield
- Wellington Energy
- BenSys
- Mid Valley Building Trades
- Marysville Central Labor Council
- Henkels & McCoy

Proposition 32: Not what it pretends to be

By Bill Wallace

Proposition 32, the so-called, “Stop Special Interest Money Now Act,” was written to look like a fair and even-handed solution to the problems in Sacramento. But in truth, it is not a balanced approach because it only restricts unions. Corporations and commercial interest groups spend far more money on political issues than what unions spend, but they are not restricted. Proposition 32 is a good example of the wealthy using their profits to sell a lie to the voters of California.

They are counting on the voters’ general distrust of politics to get this initiative passed and consequently provide the wealthy with even more power.

Wealthy special interests are investing some of the billions they make in profits to fund this initiative to break the power of the only organizations that stand in their way of an unchallenged monopoly. Corporations are using their financial power to usurp the election process.

Proposition 32 exempts secretive Super PACs, allowing them to raise unlimited amounts of money from corporate special interests and billionaire businessmen. It does nothing to prevent anonymous donors from spending unlimited amounts to influence elections.

If Proposition 32 passes it will cut off the ability of organized labor to participate significantly in the electoral arena. Unions will not even be able to spend money to communicate with their own members on electoral issues and candidates. Then, in the next election cycle the super rich can move onto their real agenda: passing a Right to Work Law and undo all of the gains that California labor has made in the last century. The next target after that will be Social Security.

If we allow Proposition 32 to pass, backroom brokering by the wealthy will become the law of the land in California. The result will be Super PACs, billionaire businessmen and corporate special interests running our state. Don’t allow this to happen—vote NO on Proposition 32.

Bill Wallace is a retired member of IBEW 1245 and the local’s representative to the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Retirees’ Corner

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Bill Wallace is a retired member of IBEW 1245 and the local’s representative to the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Retiree Club Meeting Schedule

You can find the specific dates for each month at www.ibew1245.com/unit_meetings.html

East Bay Chapter: 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 595, 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.

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

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

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

Yerington Chapter: 4th Tuesday each month, 11:00 a.m. lunch, 11:30 a.m. meeting, Dini’s Lucky Club, 45 N. Main St., Yerington, NV.

Carson City Chapter: 4th Thursday each month, 9:00 a.m., Grandma Hattie’s Restaurant, 2811 S. Carson St., Carson City, NV.

Winnemucca Chapter: 4th Wednesday each month, 11 a.m., Round Table Pizza, 1043 W. Fourth St., Winnemucca.

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, Merced, Reno, Yerington, Carson City and Winnemucca. If you don’t have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Dennis Ardizzone 45 years
Santa Clara, CA
Shea Au 31 years
San Francisco, CA
Marc Barbee 7 years
Fremont, OR
Charles Barber 41 years
Sunnyvale, CA
Shirley Battles 33 years
Roseville, CA
Morris Baumgartner 31 years
Rough & Ready, CA
Richard Bustamante 30 years
Casa Grande, AZ
Michael Bustillos 37 years
Pacifica, CA
Alfred Cadinha 16 years
Polo Kok Pines, CA
Jon Corbin 25 years
Turlock, CA
Ernest Crawford 5 years
San Francisco, CA
Peter Drinkward 32 years
San Leandro, CA
Dale Ecker 27 years
Pittsburg, CA
Daryl Haakonson 41 years
Red Bluff, CA
Darrell Harsharty 2 years
Bakersfield, CA
Thomas Harrer 38 years
Bakersfield, CA
Cynthia Haver 32 years
Citrus Heights, CA
Rudolfo Herras 40 years
Alameda, CA
Janel Holder 31 years
Fresno, CA
Donald Howard 17 years
Lakeport, CA
Rachel Huerta 18 years
Clovis, CA
Brian Hubsch 27 years
Kingman, AZ
Katleen Figueroa 34 years
Clayton, CA
Glenn Finkenkeiler 23 years
Oroville, CA
Charlie Franco 15 years
Mariposa, CA
Patrick Gallegos 34 years
Del Rey Oaks, CA
Hector Gonzalez 27 years
Pittsburg, CA
Daryl Haakonson 41 years
Red Bluff, CA
Darrell Harsharty 2 years
Bakersfield, CA
Thomas Harrer 38 years
Bakersfield, CA
Cynthia Haver 32 years
Citrus Heights, CA
Rudolfo Herras 40 years
Alameda, CA
Janel Holder 31 years
Fresno, CA
Donald Howard 17 years
Lakeport, CA
Rachel Huerta 18 years
Clovis, CA
Brian Hubsch 27 years
Kingman, AZ
Larry Jameson 44 years
Fresno, CA
Jack Joyce 18 years
Elk Grove, CA
Thaddeus James 15 years
Kalem, CA
Patrick Lacy 38 years
Oakland, CA
David Lehman 40 years
Clovis, CA
Benjamin Lewis 32 years
Eureka, CA
John Lopes 35 years
Oakland, CA
Luciano Manansala 26 years
Vallejo, CA
Janice Mar 10 years
Oakland, CA
Oliverhust, CA
Ventura Martinez 41 years
Lathrop, CA
Merle McGregor 31 years
Rohnert Park, CA
Chang McKoon 40 years
Santa Rosa, CA
Beverly Mendel 2 years
San Jose, CA
Jeffrey Miller 32 years
Redmond, OR
Larry Jameson 44 years
Fresno, CA
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Chang McKoon 40 years
Santa Rosa, CA
Beverly Mendel 2 years
San Jose, CA
Jeffrey Miller 32 years
Redmond, OR

Congratulations!

We want you to STAY CONNECTED to IBEW 1245.

Robert Schroeder 39 years
Battleground, WA
Nadine Scigliano 35 years
Foster City, CA
Mark Shoulte 28 years
Santa Cruz, CA
Bert Slusher 28 years
Fairfield, CA
Charles Shuler 10 years
San Mateo, CA
Mark Thomas 40 years
Greenfield, CA
Nona Thompson 38 years
Lincoln, CA
Manuel Rivas 27 years
Oakland, CA
Richard Roberto 41 years
Petaluma, CA
Agnes Robinson Tate 18 years
Oakland, CA
Dewey Rogge 34 years
San Jose, CA
Dave Romero 40 years
San Jose, CA
Dewey Rogge 34 years
San Jose, CA
Dave Romero 40 years
San Jose, CA
Gregor Peterburs 18 years
Wheatland, CA
Craig Pierce 33 years
Petaluma, CA
Dale Queend 27 years
Paradise, CA
William Rafferty 46 years
Hayfork, CA
Sandra Rankins 24 years
Oakland, CA
Norma Ricker 38 years
Lucido, CA
Manuel Rivas 27 years
Oakland, CA
Richard Roberto 41 years
Petaluma, CA
Agnes Robinson Tate 18 years
Oakland, CA
Dewey Rogge 34 years
San Jose, CA
Dave Romero 40 years
San Jose, CA
Dewey Rogge 34 years
San Jose, CA
Dave Romero 40 years
San Jose, CA

George Murillo 34 years
Chico, CA
Joseph Osterlund 33 years
Brentwood, CA
Gregory Peterburs 18 years
Wheatland, CA
Craig Pierce 33 years
Petaluma, CA
Dale Queend 27 years
Paradise, CA
William Rafferty 46 years
Hayfork, CA
Sandra Rankins 24 years
Oakland, CA
Norma Ricker 38 years
Lincoln, CA
Manuel Rivas 27 years
Oakland, CA
Richard Roberto 41 years
Petaluma, CA
Agnes Robinson Tate 18 years
Oakland, CA
Dewey Rogge 34 years
San Jose, CA
Dave Romero 40 years
San Jose, CA

Bill Wallace is a retired member of IBEW 1245 and the local’s representative to the Alliance for Retired Americans.
“My view is that people don’t necessarily care what you know—until they at least know that you care. I may not be the most knowledgeable person or best business rep, but the one thing people do know is that I care.”

When people know you care, he said, they give you the benefit of the doubt. Once they have seen that you follow through on your commitments, “they will trust that you will get back to them.”

Business Manager Tom Dalzell said that Smallwood’s devotion to the job reminded him of the scene in “Field of Dreams,” where Shoeless Joe Jackson says that he would have played baseball for free, that’s how much he loved the game.

“So it is with Bernard. He has loved the work. He believes in the work. He believes in the members, and nothing gave him more pride than the chance to serve his fellow members. I’m sure he will take his passion for social justice into retirement, but he gave it his all while with us,” Dalzell said.

The most memorable moment in Smallwood’s union career came in late 1994. PG&E was planning to lay off a thousand workers. The union responded by holding a rally at the California Public Utilities Commission in San Francisco, where protest signs asked, “Who are you going to call when the lights go out?”

“It was pouring down rain,” Smallwood recalls. “After the rally we marched from the CPUC to PG&E headquarters,” where then-CEO Stan Skinner came out and met with the marchers.

“That was my defining moment. It showed the unity of our members—there were people who came from as far away as Bakersfield—a thousand people standing in the rain,” he said. “It showed what the union was all about—togetherness, divided we fall, united we stand.”

After several more months of union protests, PG&E rescinded the layoffs and began meeting with the union to discuss manpower requirements.

It’s exhilarating to win, but no victory is permanent. The biggest challenge facing union members today, Smallwood pointed out, is Proposition 32, which would gag workers and give corporations near total control over the political process in California.

“It’s really important we do everything in our power to defeat that, and the only way to do that is to educate and mobilize our members,” said Smallwood.

But this is one fight we’ll have to finish without Brother Smallwood’s help. At the end of September, he will pack up and head back to Oklahoma after 44 years of fighting the good fight in California.

Our best wishes go with him.
OK, there is no way around this. It was HOT.

In fact, it may have been the hottest day of the year when players took the field for the 16th Annual IBEW Ninth District Softball Tournament on Aug. 11. The two-day event, held this year at Manteca’s Big League Dreams Park, drew IBEW Local 1245 teams from PG&E General Construction, Modesto Irrigation District, Turlock Irrigation District, and a combined team from PG&E and Wellington Energy, which advanced to the finals on the second day.

Fifty-three members of Local 1245 registered for the tournament, a sizeable increase over last year, according to Business Rep. Elizabeth McInnis, who helped organize our union’s participation in the tournament.

“The members put their own teams together. This gave everyone an opportunity to bring their families, so there was a lot of children out there, and wives and girlfriends.”

Besides the tournament itself, union members found time on the side to play Cornhole, a horse-shoe type game played with bean bags. And on Saturday night, everyone came together for drinks and dinner at a banquet set up at Big League Dreams Park.

“This is a great way of bringing union members together from the various locals to talk and exchange ideas,” noted Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran.

McInnis said Local 1245 looked forward to fielding teams for that event as well.

“Each year we can only get better. This being only our second year we did pretty good,” she said.

See more photos at: www.ibew1245.com/news-Local1245/softball_8-14-12
Utility emergency response workers are taking the first steps in making repairs, responsible to make the scene safe and to our traditional safety initiatives. The entirely different animal in comparison deal with electrical emergencies until responders, includ- 

By Rich Lane

The IBEW Local 1245 First Responder program is up and running.

This new initiative by Local 1245 seeks to train first responders, including police and fire- 

ers, on how to deal with electrical emergencies until experienced utility personnel arrive on the scene.

Our First Responder program is an entirely different animal in comparison to our traditional safety initiatives. The First Responder program seeks to train people who work outside of our usual sphere of operations in the utility sector. And there's a good reason for this. Firefighters and law enforcement personnel are often the first on the scene in car-versus-pole accidents, storm dam- 

age, structure fires and blowing gas. Utility emergency response workers are responsible to make the scene safe and take the first steps in making repairs, but what should police and firefighters do while waiting for utility personnel to arrive?

In a perfect world, all responders coordinate well together and services are restored in a timely manner. Well, we all know we don't live in a perfect world. But the Local 1245 First Responder program aims to improve coordination by helping first responders understand what they should—and shouldn't—do when confronted with an electrical or gas emergency.

There is a varying degree of knowledge in the first responder community about how the utility system works, what the inherent dangers are, and how to prevent a failure in the system from getting even worse. Talk to any electric troubleshooter or gas service representa- 

tive and he or she will have their share of scary first responder stories. I can share one incident that happened to me personally.

As a troubleshooter, I came across a sheriff's deputy who had wrapped his car around a primary pole. There were wires down over his car. Four firefighters were busy at work trying to extricate the deputy—with a burning 7200 volt primary wire in the bushes nearby. I called the power control center to drop the feeder and luckily they were able to comply in a timely manner. After the whole event was over I shook with fear at the thought of those four firefighters possibly getting electrocuted while per- 

forming their job. Were these men stupid, or possibly unconcerned about the potential danger? No, their only fault was that they were untrained and unaware of the risk.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell and the union's Executive Board recognize that IBEW Local 1245 members are an essential part of a much larger first responder community. Being part of that community carries an important responsibility. We can share essential knowledge that will not only improve the safety of other first responders, but the safety of Local 1245 members as well. After all, when police and firefight- 

ers make the right decisions before IBEW members arrive on the scene, it reduces the risks for all.

New Local 1245 training program assists First Responders

By Rich Lane

Curtis Zahourek, 47

Outside Line Construction member Curtis Zahourek, 47, was fatally injured on July 27 in a job- 

related accident working for 3 Phase Line Construction.

Curtis, a 24-year IBEW Local 1245 member, was in the process of relocating vibration dampers on a fiber-optic line in the area of Bridgeville, CA. While attached to the fiber-optic line that was dou- 

ble-dead-ended to two separate legs on the lattice steel transmission tower approximately 70 feet in the air, the steel link that was used to dead-end the fiber to the tower leg broke. When the first link broke it apparently shook loaded the other steel link on the other leg of the tower, resulting in the fiber optic line falling to the ground with Curtis attached.

CalOSHA is investigating the accident.

IBEW Local 1245 extends our condolences to the friends, family and co-workers of Brother Curtis Zahourek.

Peer to Peer Safety Initiative

Hold the Pull

The Hold the Pull peer-to-peer group continues to meet with pre-apprentices at the PG&E Training Center in Livermore.

At these meetings, many apprentices have expressed their view that apprentices have little voice on safety matters. They believe they are vulnerable to others in superi- 

or positions if they speak up.

Hold the Pull and the other peer-to-peer safety groups stress that everyone has ownership of safety and is responsible to themselves and others to have a safe workplace.

The purpose of the Hold the Pull sessions with the pre-apprentices is to try to dispel misconceptions and speak frankly about line crew dynamics. In most sessions apprentices are very vocal once they know they are among brothers who have their best interests at heart.

Control the Pressure

The Control the Pressure peer-to-peer group met Sept. 6 to plan activities for the fall and 2013. The group will meet every other month on the second Wednesday.

The group is discussing traveling to the two gas training centers at PG&E and meeting with apprentices about gas safety and the peer-to-peer program.

Members of the group split up the safety stewards list among themselves and will make contact with their respective stewards on an ongoing basis to moni- 

tor safety issues on thejob.

This group also has been very active on the recently started Local 1245 safety steward secure website. Safety stewards and peer-to-peer committee members converse in a "chat room" style forum that is dedicated exclusively to their safety issues and topics.

All three peer safety initiatives have access to this site.

Keep the Clearance

The Keep the Clearance peer-to-peer group for Tree Trimmers is planning a safety steward training to take place on Sept. 27 at Weakley Hall in Vacaville.

The Keep the Clearance group has picked up 36 safety stewards, largely through visits to unit meetings In June and July.

The training will cover the peer-to-peer concept, roles and responsibilities, and member support skills. The training will be conducted by the peer-to-peer group itself and will be conducted in English and Spanish.

There will also be training on how to use the new peer-to-peer secure web- 

site.
They took turns driving to work every day and the girls had a car to run around in and take the kids places. It was summer and the kids did not have to worry about school. The men worked six days a week, twelve hours a day and sometimes Sundays. It made for a good time job and everybody was getting dough heavy. Kenny and Buddy became as good of friends as linemen can get and the couples took in movies and went to the dances on Saturday night.

The terrain on the right of way was tough, winding through the canyons and going over the rough mountains along the northern California coast. The high line was a wood pole H structure. The wire was 4/0 copper. The trucks were old army surplus power wagons with A frames and winches for setting. Mules were used in places where the trucks couldn’t go to skid the material and rigging to the locations. Lots of ground men were on the job to hand dig the holes and dynamite was used for gaining depth to have nice holes for the poles to be placed in.

The grunts went through and spotted the poles and material with whatever means the terrain dictated and worked at the same sites digging the two permanent holes and one hole not as deep in the places that required a temporary gin pole to raise the ‘H’ structures.

These were the framers accompanied by linemen. This was daily routine and painstaking work. They cussed the rocks and moved the mules and trucks along the right of way and kept vigilant to their duty as to stay ahead of the setting crew. These men of the assembly and framing crew gnawed and backbit each other all day and forged ahead with verbal attacks launched relentlessly at steep hills, flat tires, stubborn animals and each other without cease. They rallied at the bar at night to further agitate and deprive themselves of needed rest and sobriety as not to miss the opportunity to brawl and drink themselves to sleep. Rebounding by morning light to eat greasy breakfasts and do it over and over, day in and day out. Charmed by it and proud to be in the grasp of the craft that held them jailed to the slavery of their love.

The setting crew or erection crew would then come through the right of way and see that all had been done properly ahead of them with their equipment and man and mule power.

Buddy and Kenny were part of the erection crew and did most of the climbing.

“Fancy told me once about a mule they had on a job,” and Buddy drew the pack pole to raise the ‘H’ structures.

“You keep the car and when your back to work you catch them payments up when you can.”

“I’m gonna’ have to travel to Reno or Northern California to get work. You won’t send the law after me, will ya’ neighbor?”

“I said, when you’re back in shape, you can bring up the payments son.”

The old man who owned the lot shocked John.

“So that’s one good old man, he thought, and bit a lucky and went back in the house.

He sat down in the chair by the phone and opened the book with his left hand and started going through it to see about work. The other arm was suspended in the air on a brace in a full cast and the base of the brace was attached to his rib cage to prevent unneeded movement of the broken collarbone. The little girl and boy played in the sand pit in the backyard and John giggled when the older girl poured a bucket of sand on her little brother. Ruth was in the bathroom and came running out to answer the door.

“Oh, hi, well just a minute. She walked back over to John who was dialing a number.

“It’s the landlord at the door John,” she whispered, “and he looks mad.”

The landlord had not known about the accident and was mad about the rent being behind. John gathered himself and walked up to the screen door. The landlord could only vaguely see John through the mesh and John’s broken arm perched on the brace was offset out of the frame of the door and out of view anyway.

“We need to have a talk!”

John did not reply before his landlord’s next comment.

“You’re behind on the rent!”

“Yes sir I know but—"

“NO buts about it. If you don’t come up with some rent money, I’ll drag you out here on the porch and take it out of your hide.”

John didn’t say anything and awkwardly opened the door with his left hand and started through.
The landlord backed up and put up his fists and set his body into what John thought was a rather good-looking fighting position.

When he saw him come out where he could get a good look at him, the landlord was stunned to see the condition John was in and although his facial expression changed by a sagging bottom lip he remained in his combative posture and took a step back to give John room on the porch.

John stood there proud. In his boxer shorts and undershirt, barefoot, erect, and undaunted by his opposition, he proudly stuck his chin out and proclaimed, “Well have at it partner. I wish I could pay all my bills this way. Take all you can get out my hide and I’ll pay the rest of it as soon as I can.”

The landlord and John had a pretty good laugh and John promised payment and signed a note that a few months later he stood good for and to assure payment the landlord helped cut the cast off so John could get started packing to move on and find work. The old landlord stayed and helped him pack the car and listen to Ruth nagging and scolding him all the while about how much of a big dumb jack lope he was for turning against the doctor and taking her and the children away from Boise.

When they got to Reno, he went to Local 401 to plead his case to the business manager, who was a hair lip and an old friend of his. Ruth and the kids were in the car in the parking lot of the Coney Island Bar on West Fourth Street. John entered the building and the business manager noticed him immediately and ran over and slapped him on the right shoulder and John screamed in pain and took a swing at him but missed and then got his composure back and started begging a job.

“How many on the books, old man, I need a job.”

“Ders’ tertri one, four ob um’ is nert and four ob um is flat nazy.”

“Good that only leaves twenty-three. When do I start?”

“Na way knees’ books nar’ movin’, proddy naboot tree weets.”

“Three weeks! They were both giggling now. “I can’t wait three weeks. Hell, when we left Boise the kids were sittin’ in the middle of the floor cryin’ for the door knob thinkin’ it was a biscuit.”

“Neah, neah, I’m sure Rut nain’t gon net um tarve’.”

“Hell she didn’t care what they were doin’ she was busy eatin’ the putty outta’ the window frames tryin’ to keep her energy up!”

Now they were both giggling good and turning red in the face.

“Look at her out there, Sonny, leaning against the car smokin’ our last cigarette and worried to death about our next meal. That’s the woman I promised when we wed that if she would stick with me, I’d have her fartin’ thru’ silk and right now she’s had on the same cotton panties for two days.”

They stopped laughing soon enough. John looked at him seriously.

“I fell off a pole up in Idaho there and I been broke up awhile Sonny. Send me off on a merry chase somewhere man. I need a job to keep me from turnin’ to continual crime as a last resort.”

Sonny pulled the two dollars out of his wallet and rubbed his lip with the back of his hand.

“Dat noddam nisennower. Take dem nids and Rut’ ober nar’ to na noney niland and get um’ somitin’ neat. I’ll make a phone nall!”

He gave the phone a strong look and dialed the number. When the secretary answered, she had trouble understanding his voice due to the speech impediment. But she had talked with him before and put him on hold.

“Jesse, it’s that union guy from Reno, the hair lip wanting to talk with you.”

Jesse quickly answered.

“Hello Sonny, how’s your hammer hangin’?”

“Oh, pre good. I dot a ninemen ober near culd nelp yo wit’ some dat nurk you tryin’ get done ober dar’ in nortur’ califor’ na his been broke nup fer while, but nake a nam good norman fer ya til’ he get good nough ta’ nurk again.”

Jesse liked Sonny and respected his input on how to run the business he had started in Reno a few years back, but now most of the work he was acquiring was coming from government contracts in northern California. He was in the process of closing the Reno office and moving everything over the Sierra’s to concentrate on the lucrative expansion of the cold war. The government was throwing millions into national defense and Jesse had ambitions to be on the ground floor in this part of the country. God bless his heart, thought Jesse. I wish I could understand him better. He had to ask because he just couldn’t get the full gist of his remarks. So he meekly made the request.

“Sonny can you round your words off a little more. I’m truly sorry but I can’t understand everything your saying.”

“Asshole, asshole, is dat’ roun’ nough far nei!”

It was Sonny’s standard reply to those who weren’t trying hard enough.

Then he would chuckle and slow down to get the dialog in better shape and proceed, all the while wishing he had never been born a hair lip and realizing communicating with linemen was no easy task under any condition, physical or mental.

After careful ponderous ear strain to the receiver the meaning of the call was finally understood.

Jesse had been overburdened lately and had been considering a good man to come in and take his field operation on as he could see he was reaching a point of exhaustion more than not in recent months and the strain on his own worth was starting to show. But he was a businessman now and wanted to do the most he could sometimes without adding overhead to an extravagant degree. In other word, he was a stingy. Even the snort rags he had taken out of the company box to blow his nose on in Oceanside came to mind occasionally as he would ponder the last days he worked for wages and caught the pole with the head scratcher.

Reason finally won out and with the insurance of Sonny that this would be a good move for his infant company he agreed to hire John to come over and ramrod the field operations, freeing him to concentrate on bidding work, attending meetings and finding the resource to keep the business afloat through good and bad times.

“Tides nesse, nif ya’ non’t nike Thon’ new can always fi’ re nis nass and send him nackin!”

“That’s right Sonny... And the deal was struck.

John would be called out by name as Foreman from the local in Sacramento, be given a truck to drive and the wages as set forth in the local agreement. He would be responsible for the performance of the jobs that Jesse would assign him and be in charge of the Linemen who would try his authority. His hands would be full and he was just the man for the job.

continued in next issue

Notice regarding agency fee payers objection plan

Any employee who is not a member of the IBEW and who pays agency fees to IBEW Local 1245 pursuant to a union security provision in Local 1245’s collective bargaining agreement has the right to object to expenditures of fees for activities which are not reasonably related to collective bargaining or undertaken to advance the employment-related interests of employees represented by the Local. The agency fees paid by a fee payer who perfects an objection will be reduced by an amount reflecting the portion of the overall expenditures of the Local Union that are used for non-chargeable activities. Objections must be made annually and will be effective for a single calendar year. Each fee payer who wishes to file an objection with Local 1245 must do so in writing, addressed to the Business Manager, Local 1245, Post Office Box 2547, Vacaville, California 95696, by certified mail. In registering their objections, objectors must state their name and address and that they pay fees to this Local, and provide their nonmember identification number, if known, and their social security number. Objections must be postmarked during the month of November preceding the calendar year for which the objection will be in effect, or during the first thirty days after the objector commences paying fees to the Local Union as required by a collective bargaining agreement. Objections must be renewed annually, during the month of November.
BEW Local 1245 linemen and apprentices showed how it’s done at the 12th Annual Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo in Cleveland, OH.

The Modesto Irrigation District team of Brian Szuggar, Sean Coulson, Victor Madrigal, and Doug Cameron took third place in the overall competition among journeymen, including first place finishes in the Transformer Change Out and second place in the Cross Arm Change Out.

SMUD dominated the apprentice competition. Joseph Cowley took first place overall among 60 apprentices. SMUD Apprentice Justin Hirschi took first in Hurtman Rescue, first in Streetlight Change Out, and third in the 3-Phase Fuse Replacement. SMUD Apprentice Louis Jimenez finished second in Hurtman Rescue, third in the Obstacle Course, fourth in the 3-Phase Fuse Replacement, and fifth in Streetlight Change Out.

In a field of 45 journeyman teams, SMUD’s three teams took second as well as fifth place in Transformer Change Out, third in 12kv Arrestor Change Out, and an amazing first, second and seventh in Hurtman Rescue.

Scoring of rodeo events is heavily weighted toward safe and workmanlike performance. We congratulate the MID and SMUD participants for showing the world how it’s done.