

UTILITY
REPORTERDRUG TESTING
TIME BOMB, p10Union convenes lineman committee
on barehanding, rubber gloving

Local 1245 has called together 24 linemen from all over the PG&E system to advise the union on what course of action it should take on the controversial issues of barehanding and rubber gloving.

This advisory committee met for two days in January and came up with many suggestions for addressing the many concerns raised by linemen throughout the system about these controversial practices. These suggestions will be pursued by a PG&E line committee formed by Local 1245 to discuss the issues of rubber gloving and barehanding with PG&E.

Barehanding is the work method by which a person comes in direct contact with the voltage by placing his body at the same potential as that of the conductor. Rubber gloving is the work method

by which workers protect themselves from electrical shock by wearing electrically insulated rubber gloves.

The two work procedures have been a cause for serious concern among linemen and the union for six years. The union maintains that these practices are unsafe and a violation of Cal-OSHA law.

The following brief history of the barehanding/rubber gloving controversy should help members put this issue in perspective as the union continues its efforts to protect the health and safety of its members.

History

1985

PG&E filed a petition with Cal-OSHA to allow the barehand method on high voltage transmission lines and the use of rubber gloves on all distribution primary volt-

ages. The petition did not limit the voltages that an employee would be allowed to perform work on.

1986

Cal-OSHA set up an advisory committee which met to discuss PG&E's application. The Cal-OSHA advisory committee, composed of interested parties from both labor and management, presented arguments for and against the disputed practices and attempted to reach consensus on language changes in worker safety rules if appropriate.

1987

The committee met again but before anything could be accomplished Governor Deukmejian abolished Cal-OSHA's authority to regulate safety in the private sector, causing those functions to be transferred to the federal OSHA. PG&E continued

with its planning for barehanding and rubber gloving under federal OSHA standards by forming two task forces of management personnel whose purpose was to develop training procedures. They also proposed changes to the "Accident Prevention Rule Book" to allow for barehanding and rubber gloving. A coalition of labor organiza-

NEXT PAGE



Curt Peterson 1930-1990
(See story pages 6-8)

PGT wage offer accepted by Physical and Clerical Units

Members of Local 1245 employed by Pacific Gas Transmission Company voted by mailed ballot last month to accept a general wage increase of 3.5%.

The wage increase, which takes effect retroactively to Jan. 1, 1990, applies to all Physical and Clerical employees. In addition to the wage increase, Physical and Clerical employees will receive a one percent performance bonus, to be paid by Feb. 28, 1990.

The Negotiating Committee, consisting of Frank Locati, Sue De Foe, Mark Latta, George Stravos, Darrel Mitchell, and Sam Tamimi, first met on Nov. 15, 1989. They came to a tentative agreement on Nov. 28 after meeting with the company.

Anyone who is employed

by PGT in 1989 and actively on the payroll on Jan. 2, 1990, or who returns to the active payroll in 1990, will receive

the bonus payment. It will be based on the employee's gross income (as reported on the W-2 form) but will

not be applied to pension bands or 401k savings fund plan.

The union and company will also establish a non-binding committee to review and explore non-traditional pay concepts.

The Ratification Committee, comprised of Pamela McKean, judge of the election and Richard Poole, teller, reports the following ratification results:

■ Physical:

65 eligible to vote
56 ballots received
36 voting yes
20 voting no

■ Clerical:

23 eligible to vote
19 ballots received
19 voting yes
0 voting no ■



Photo: Bob Martin

Reporting the results of the vote on the Pacific Gas Transmission wage offer are (from left) Richard Poole, teller, Business Representative Sam Tamimi, and Pamela McKean, judge of the election. The physical and clerical units both voted in favor.



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CALENDAR

March

9 - Los Padres and Southern Coast Valleys Division Pin Dinner

10 - Los Padres and Southern Coast Valleys Division Shop Stewards' Conference

10 - Sacramento Valley Region Shop Stewards' Conference

16 - Humboldt Division Pin Dinner

17 - Humboldt Division Shop Stewards' Conference

17 - General Construction Shop Stewards' Conference

24 - Northern Coast Valleys Division and PLO Hollister Shop Stewards' Conference

April

6 - Redwood Region Pin Dinner

7 - Redwood Region Shop Stewards' Training Conference



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BAREHANDING, RUBBER GLOVING

from PAGE ONE

tions and the California Federation of Labor filed suit over the abolition of Cal-OSHA. Labor unions, including Local 1245, also mounted a massive ballot initiative campaign to restore Cal-OSHA's authority over the private sector (Proposition 97).

1988

PG&E completed its training program and came to Local 1245 requesting experiments and/or trials be set up to test rubber gloving and barehanding procedures. The union responded by pointing out that lawsuits were still in progress, with action expected from the Supreme Court. The union also noted its belief that Cal-OSHA would be restored after the November election through successful passage of Proposition 97. After many requests the union agreed to go to PG&E's training facilities to observe barehanding and rubber gloving procedures. In November, Proposition 97 passed, restoring Cal-OSHA.

1989

PG&E filed a variance petition with Cal-OSHA to proceed with the barehanding and rubber gloving hearings but the petition was denied. However, PG&E resubmitted a petition to change the high voltage Title 8 safety orders. Local 1245 requested the



Members of the Local 1245 lineman advisory committee meet to discuss what action the union should take on the controversial issues of barehanding and rubber gloving.

state legislature to enact a bill to limit working voltages (AB 167).

On Aug. 9, Letter Agreement 89-129 was signed. Local 1245 agreed to postpone legislative action on limiting working voltages and PG&E agreed to suspend its petition request on barehanding and

rubber gloving at the Cal-OSHA Standards Board. They both agreed to commence negotiations. Local 1245 and PG&E met several times but could not reach agreement. The union would agree to barehanding if it could have input into guidelines, training and the em-

ployees could be adequately trained and the jobs could be filled on a voluntarily basis. The union could not agree to any rubber gloving.

1990

Formation of the Local 1245 Lineman Advisory Committee. ■

Lineco update

The Lineco controversy continues.

When Lineco moved unilaterally to increase the premium on the Lineco Trust Agreement by 25 cents, Local 1245 took the position that Lineco did not have the authority to do so. The union wrote its contractors to not deduct the additional 25 cents from any Local 1245 member's check.

Lineco has responded by refusing to accept any checks that fail to include the additional 25 cents. The union is now studying its options and will keep members informed.

Compensation issues belong at table

from PAGE THREE

There are questions and problems with these schemes. Do we treat one group of employees in a way that is different from all the rest? Why should one department in a HQ have the opportunity and another department in the same HQ not? Or, why should a department in a HQ have a program and the same department in another HQ not? What happens to an employee who bids from a HQ which has such a plan to a HQ which does not? Ad nauseam.

If we get into this ball game, what do you think the company's attitude is going to be at the general bargaining table when we propose wage increases and other compensation? Probably something like this: "We are already providing additional increases at the department level so not much is available to offer at the bargaining table."

Our union's responsibility is to represent its members to the greatest extent possible and as fairly as possible. That is what we intend to do. We believe these shotgun departmentalized "incentive" schemes will, for the most part, simply not work.

What is this new approach to compensation intended to do? Reward some employees in some areas for meeting certain goals? Pay for performance? Or, possibly, divide the employees in order to weaken the union?

Many of these departmentalized forms of compensation may sound great at the time. You can have management in one area who is willing to shell out some rewards, while management in another area is not willing to share.

It does not take a genius to figure out where this will lead. ■

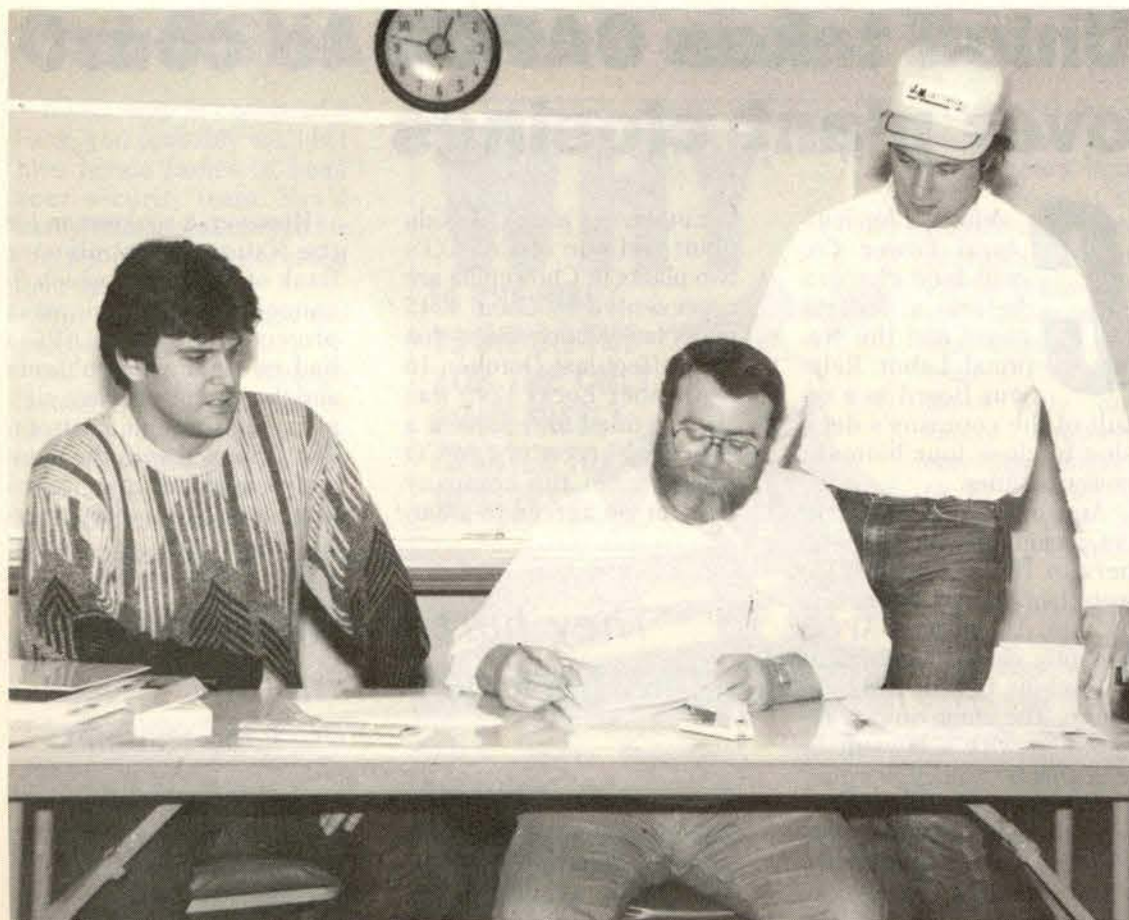


Photo: Austin Lea

Preparing for negotiations with Oxford Energy are, from left, Tom White, Business Representative Joe Valentino, and Kent Ross. Oxford operates a co-generation plant in Westley, Ca., where Local 1245 represents about three dozen workers. Next talks are scheduled for March.

APPOINTMENTS

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

LINEMAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tom Jacobson
Arlis Watson
Dave Furtado
Bill Balsley
Art Murray
Ryssell Rylee
Ken Richards
Steve Worden
Steve Moore
Ron Weeks
Dan Robertson
Cary McDermott
William Bouzek, II
Dan Capwell
Richard Surina
Tom Garcia
Daniel Mayo
Richard Detmers
Terry Dickey
Richard Jones
Loran Davis
Dave Sutton

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

LINE COMMITTEE

Arlis Watson
Ken Richards
Daniel Mayo
Loran Davis
William Bouzek, II
Daniel Robertson
Cary McDermott

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

REPROGRAPHICS AD HOC COMMITTEE

George Oryall

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

PIPELINE DRUG TESTING COMMITTEE

Bernard Smallwood
Richard Bidinost
Jeffrie Van Hook

Robyn Trost
George Naranjo
Ed Custer

PACIFIC GAS TRANSMISSION COMPANY

PIPELINE DRUG TESTING COMMITTEE

Frank Locati

OUTSIDE LINE CONSTRUCTION NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Bobby Cross, Jr.
Jim Behling
Harold E. Jones

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS

San Francisco
Kathy Maas
Alameda County
Dean Gurke
San Mateo County
Landis Marttila

POINT OF VIEW

Compensation issues belong at the bargaining table

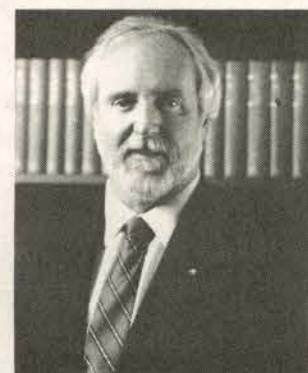
Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

PG&E hasn't just re-organized: they are also changing the way they manage.

The new approach to compensation is to provide incentives to reach certain objectives. Schemes are devised to encourage employees to work more safely, thereby having fewer industrial accidents, or to encourage employees not to use sick leave, or to complete a task or project within certain time limits.

Incentives in the form of clothing, (hats, T-shirts, jackets, belt buckles, etc.), gift certificates, dinners, awards, bonuses, and/or plain old cash money are the carrots that are dangled out there to reward employees for achieving the objectives.

Putting these types of schemes into effect without negotiating with the union is a violation of the National Labor Relations Act. And it is a genuine problem.



ployee does not use any sick leave or a low number of hours per year, awards in the form of money, clothing, wristwatches, lottery tickets, and even time off are provided. Imagine, time off for not taking time off!

I don't have to discuss here the issue of sick leave utilization over the years at PG&E and the letters and grievances involved. PG&E's basic concern has been the perceived abuse of sick leave. The union's concern is over the latest developments in attempts to curb

Putting these types of schemes into effect without negotiating with the union is a violation of the National Labor Relations Act. And it is a genuine problem.

For the record, the union certainly favors promoting safety and health in the work place. And the issue of providing jackets, belt buckles, etc. to groups of employees for outstanding safety records has not really been an issue with the union.

However, some of the new schemes are becoming an issue with the union.

Scattered throughout the company, in various departments, divisions, and headquarters, we find current or proposed incentive plans for non-use of sick leave. If an em-

sick leave usage.

For at least 20 years Local 1245 has proposed, in general bargaining with PG&E, various methods to encourage employees to save sick leave. With the exception of the agreement on the five-year bonus vacation for non-use of sick leave, the company has consistently rejected every proposal on the subject.

Now we have divisions, headquarters, or departments within headquarters instituting or proposing to institute sick leave incentives without regard for the rest of the system.

See PAGE TWO

Blair joins Local 1245 staff

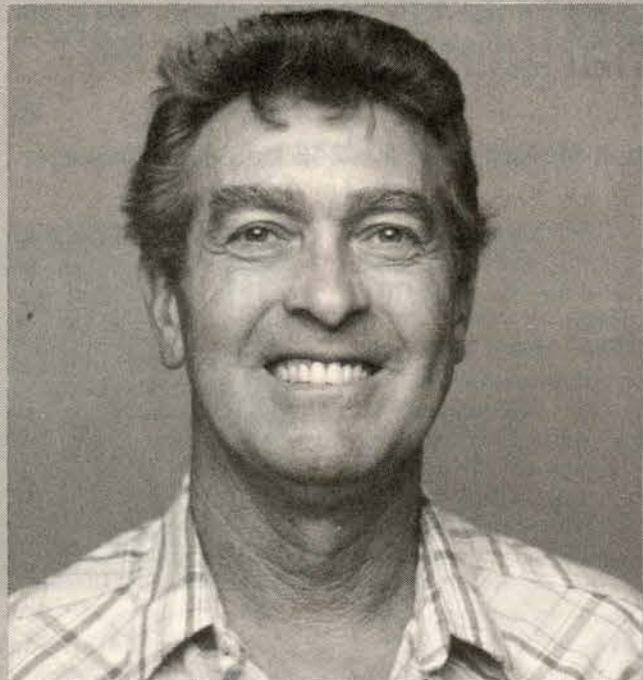


Photo: Kua Patten

Long-time IBEW member Bobby Blair assumed the position of business representative for the southern California jurisdiction of Local 1245 in January.

Blair, 52, has 30 years experience in the trade, traveling around the country as a journeyman lineman. He was initiated into the old Local 47 in 1965 and has served on numerous committees for Local 1245 over the years.

Blair lives in Victorville, Ca. with his wife Patricia and two daughters, Robin, 12, and Roblyn, 11. ■

New Communications Director

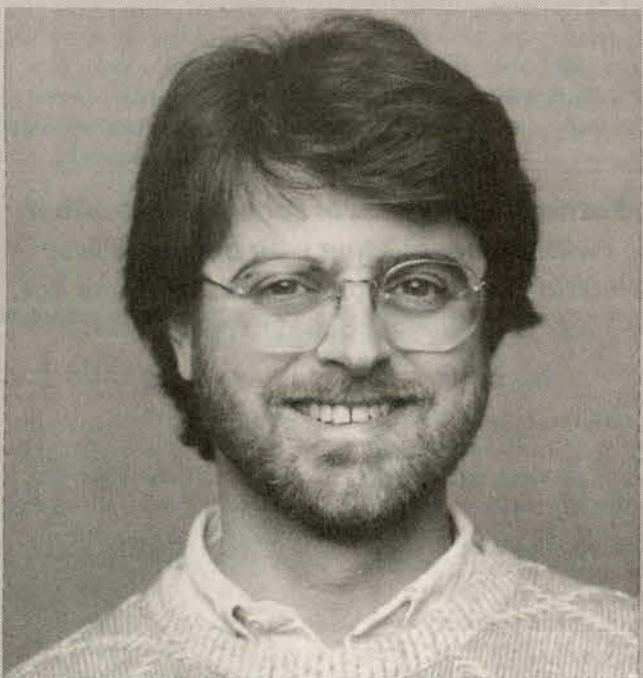


Photo: Kua Patten

Labor journalist Eric Wolfe joined the staff of Local 1245 in February as Communications Director.

Wolfe, 39, comes from Operating Engineers Local 3 in San Francisco where he served as assistant editor for Engineers News. Prior to that Wolfe was publisher and editor of The Plaindealer, a labor newspaper in Wichita, Kan. Under Wolfe's management in 1988 The Plaindealer won Second Place for General Excellence in national competition sponsored by the International Labor Communications Association.

Wolfe's primary responsibility at Local 1245 will be the publication of Utility Reporter. He lives in San Francisco with his wife, Susan Freinkel. ■

Union takes CAPCO to court over plant closings

California Agricultural Power Co. will face charges before a federal court and the National Labor Relations Board as a result of the company's decision to close four biomass power facilities.

Approximately 85 workers, including some 60 members of IBEW Local 1245, were laid off without notice on Jan. 16 when CAPCO abruptly closed facilities in Chowchilla, El Nido and Firebaugh. The union quickly responded with a lawsuit in U.S. District Court charging CAPCO with violation of the federal plant closure law, which requires employers with more than 100 employees to provide 60 days advance notice of plant closings.

The union also filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB over the company's failure to bargain over the effects of the layoff and for discriminating against workers engaged in union activity.

"There's no good reason to treat the people who work there that way," said Joe Valentino, a Local 1245 business representative. "They hurt the workers and they hurt the community."

Employees at the El Nido plant and one of CAPCO's two plants in Chowchilla are represented by Local 1245 under one-year contracts that took effect last October. In December Local 1245 was also certified to represent a "traveling" crew of CAPCO workers but the company had not yet agreed to a bar-

However, a spokesman for the National Westminster Bank of New York, which financed CAPCO's biomass projects, said that CAPCO had no financial problems and that the plants were simply going through a retrofit. That, coupled with the company's apparent discrimination against union employ-

"They hurt the workers and they hurt the community."

— Joe Valentino

gaining date when the plant closings were announced. The union alleges in its NLRB complaint that CAPCO was in fact discriminating against the traveling crew, presumably as punishment for unionizing.

CAPCO attributed the shutdowns to plant design deficiencies. CAPCO plants were designed to burn agricultural wastes, a technology less advanced than that used in burning more conventional fuels. Published reports have suggested that meeting air quality standards may also have posed problems for CAPCO.

ees, has led Local 1245 to worry that the company may use the shutdowns as an opportunity to reorganize as an entirely non-union enterprise.

Valentino noted that the unionized employees have recall rights under the union contract.

"If they open the doors again our people should be the ones doing the work," Valentino said.

Workers at the Firebaugh plant were not represented by the union.

A second CAPCO plant in Chowchilla never went into operation. ■

Staff changes at Local 1245

Several staff assignments have been changed in recent weeks. Members should note the following changes:

Mickey Harrington will assume the DeSabra Division assignment, while keeping Citizens Utility and Lassen MUD.

Gary Mai will service USBR, City of Lodi, Merced ID, Modesto ID, Tri-Dam Project, and South San Joaquin ID.

Sam Tamini will handle Fact Finding in East Bay Region.

Dean Gurke will assume the Mission Division assignment.

Perry Zimmerman will service SMUD and GEO.

Dave Smith resigned effective Dec. 15, 1989. ■

Unit meeting dates changed

UNIT 1122 - MERCED IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Ryan's Place
299 N. G Street
Merced, CA

First Tuesday of each month 7:30 p.m.

UNIT 2512 - ANGELS CAMP

Round Table Pizza
Hwys 4 & 49

4:30 p.m. on the following dates: 2/7, 3/7, 4/3, 5/2 and 6/6.

Unit 2517 - SONORA

Round Table Pizza
1979 "D" Mono Way
Sonora, CA

Second Tuesday of each month 4:00 p.m.

Unit 3611 - MARYSVILLE

Duke's
1526 N. Beale Road
Linda, CA

First Tuesday of each month 6:00 p.m.

Union files charges against Wells REC

A dispute over the dues checkoff provision in the union contract prompted Local 1245 to file NLRB charges against Wells REC, the electric company serving northeastern Nevada.

The charges, filed Feb. 2, allege that the company unilaterally stopped deducting dues from union members' checks. "In essence," said Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen, "they didn't comply with current provisions" of the union contract.

Wells REC and the union had been engaged in routine talks to amend the current contract when the dispute arose. Union and company negotiators had reached an agreement that retained the longstanding dues checkoff provision in the contract. The union's membership at Wells

REC then ratified the contract, but the company's board of directors rejected the contract despite the fact that it had already been agreed to by company management.

"They reneged on the bargaining table settlement. That's a breach of contract from our point of view," said Owen. The company's board apparently objected to the dues checkoff, even though the checkoff had been part of the contract for years.

The checkoff issue is particularly important in a right-to-work state like Nevada, where union security clauses are prohibited by law.

Local 1245 represents 18 workers in the electric department at Wells REC. Contract negotiations were slated to continue in mid-February. ■

Tree trimmers win settlement from Arbor

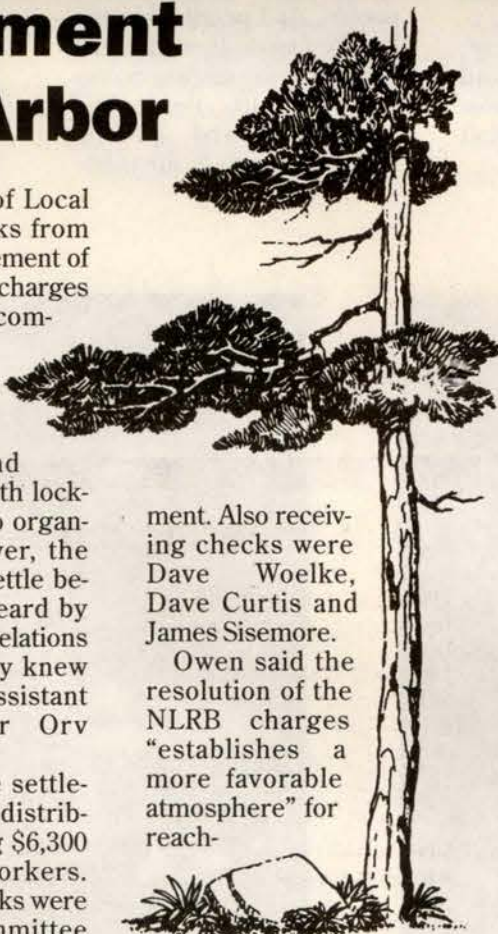
Seven members of Local 1245 received checks from Arbor Tree in a settlement of unfair labor practice charges lodged against the company last summer.

The union had charged the company with laying off some workers and threatening others with lock-out for attempting to organize a union. However, the company chose to settle before the case was heard by the National Labor Relations Board "because they knew they'd lose," said Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen.

As a result of the settlement, the company distributed checks totalling \$6,300 to the aggrieved workers. Those receiving checks were Negotiating Committee members Kerry Musco, Jeff Daniels and Neil Smith, and the family of committee member Ray Gosney, who was killed in an automobile accident prior to the settle-

ment. Also receiving checks were Dave Woelke, Dave Curtis and James Sisemore.

Owen said the resolution of the NLRB charges "establishes a more favorable atmosphere" for reaching agreement with the company at the bargaining table. Negotiations for a first contract with Arbor Tree began in December. ■



Bargaining continued between Local 1245 and Pacific Tree

Agreement seemed near as bargaining continued in February between Local 1245 and Pacific Tree.

Talks have been slowed by a number of factors, according to Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen. In December the company's main spokesman, David Comb passed away. A desire by Pacific Tree to limit the jurisdiction of the agreement has also

been a roadblock. Owen said the union was not willing to change the jurisdiction of the contract.

Despite the obstacles, Owen remained optimistic that an agreement was near. For now work is continuing at Pacific Tree under a day-to-day extension of the agreement in which five days notice is required before the agreement can be cancelled. ■



Contract language is examined by members of the Pacific Tree negotiating committee (from left): Jim Travis, Gary Colbert, Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen (seated), Scott Riddle, Shannon Short and Bill Colbert (seated).

Citizens Utility talks continue

Negotiators for Citizens Utility and Local 1245 are back at the table and making some progress.

Local 1245 represents approximately 300 employees of Citizens Utility, which is headquartered in Redding, Ca. Those union members showed enormous dissatis-

faction with the company's first contract offer in November when they rejected it by the overwhelming margin of 202-31, with 86 percent of the members voting.

The pension plan is a key issue for the union in the talks, according to Assistant

Business Manager Orv Owen. In its initial offer the company made only "token improvements" in the plan and refused to let union members participate in the company's 401K savings plan. The wage offer was also unsatisfactory, Owen noted. ■

Union members bi Curt Po



Some years ago Tube Dudley was minding his own business in the Horseshoe Bar in Palmdale, Ca. when a stranger walked up and announced:

"You're Tube Dudley. You worked for the Salt River Project out of Local 266."

Dudley had never laid eyes on the man before, but that would change in the years to come. The stranger was a man named Curt Peterson and they were about to become friends.

Dudley's first encounter with Peterson wasn't all that different from how a lot of other folks first became acquainted with the man. Peterson had a memory for jobs and the men who worked them. Working all over the country, he got a chance to know a lot of jobs and a lot of workers.

"He's been everywhere, worked everywhere and knew everybody," said Assistant Business Manager Ron Fitzsimmons.

Peterson remembered his co-workers' names, everybody agrees, but it didn't stop there.

"Curt knew the names of their kids and when they were born," recalled Richard Duncan, another of the many men who considered Peterson a friend.

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Local 1245 Business Rep Bobby Blair puts it this way: When members of Local 1245 went back east to work, the easterners wouldn't say, "You must be from Local 1245." They'd say, 'Oh, you're

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Peterson remembered people. And people remember Peterson. It wasn't just his knack for names. Something about Peterson's straight-forward no-nonsense approach to life made

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"As far as outside linemen go," Blair added, you could almost say that "Curt Peterson was this local."

You don't get a reputation like that just because you're good at remembering names. Peterson's reputation was built on his knowledge of the trade.



members bid fond farewell

Curt Peterson

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When asked if Peterson had any hobbies, Cross just smiled. "Linework. All his hobbies were linework."

Peterson was proud of his contribution to the industry.

Peterson wasn't just a line-man. He was a union man.

"He was just absolutely 100 percent union," said Duncan.

"That was just his way of living," agreed Blair.

Even if times got tough, Peterson "would never have thought of going non-union,"

ion throughout his career, both as a journeyman line-man in the field and as a business representative.

Good union man, yes. Saint, no. There was no disputing the fact that Peterson was outspoken. "He wasn't afraid of giving someone an ass-chewing" if the occasion demanded, Cross recalled.

Blair, who knew Peterson for 25 years, said his first impression of Peterson was the same as his last: "He never changed. He knew what the hell he was doing. He knew how to go about it." And he "didn't care what anybody thought about it."

Peterson, who died on Feb. 2, was buried in Lancaster, Ca., on Feb. 6, nearly 6 years and a lot of miles from Blaisdell, N.D. where he was born on March 9, 1930.

The thing that Blair will remember about Curt Peterson is the same thing that a lot of union folks will remember:

"First," Blair said, "he was my brother. Second of all, he was my friend." ■

Peterson remembered people. And people remember Peterson.

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He had a talent for sizing up particular jobs and helping contractors find the right people to do them. It wasn't just a matter of matching up the right skills with the job, Cross emphasized. Peterson could also find the "right personality" to fit the job.

Peterson's friends seem firmly agreed on one point:

said Cross. Peterson appreciated the fact that the union made it possible for him to support his sizeable family: his wife of 40 years, Rose; three surviving sons, Curt Jr., Rodney and Lonnie, all of whom belong to Local 1245; and three daughters, Ivy Jean, Charlene and Dennee.

And cross served the un-



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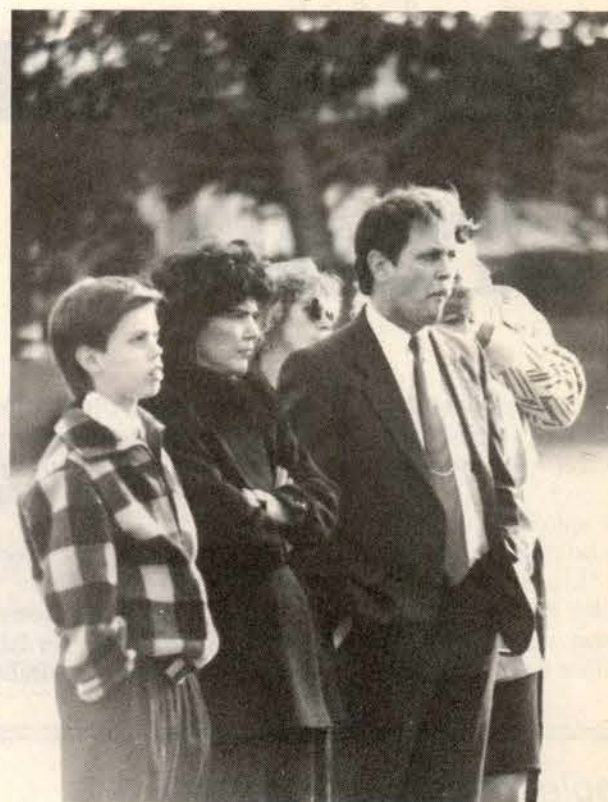
Photos: Bob Martin

FOND FAREWELL TO CURT PETERSON



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— Bobby Cross, Jr.



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*"He was
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— Richard Duncan



Photos: Bob Martin

Cal-OSHA comes under fire in legislative hearings

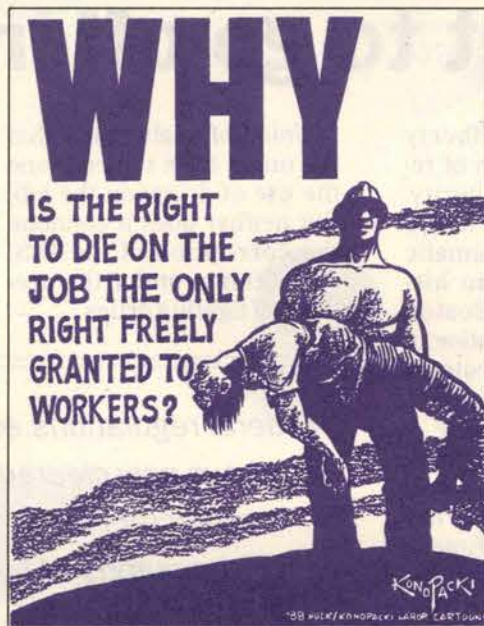
If you were in charge of a bank, you probably wouldn't hire Jessie James to head your security team. You'd have a little more concern for the people who entrusted their money to you.

But then, you're not the governor of California.

As governor, George Deukmejian is the man in charge of appointing people to head state agencies like Cal-OSHA. The head of Cal-OSHA, in turn, is responsible for insuring that California's workers are not unnecessarily exposed to death or injury on the job. He's the man California workers entrust their health to.

Meet Cal-OSHA Chief Robert Stranberg. Deukmejian's Jessie James.

In 1988, when labor organized Proposition 97 to resurrect Cal-OSHA, an agency that Deukmejian had killed in 1987, Stranberg was one of the people who signed the ballot argument that urged voters to reject Proposition 97, and thus reject Cal-



OSHA. Today Stranberg heads the very agency he sought to destroy.

In joint legislative public hearings last month, state lawmakers and labor leaders raised serious questions regarding Stranberg's job performance. Among the things they wanted to know:

Why is Cal-OSHA making

24 percent fewer inspections than three years ago? Why does Cal-OSHA allow self-certification of tower cranes by the companies that operate the cranes? Why is there only one safety engineer currently assigned to a vast three-county area in northern California?

Deukmejian's decision to appoint John Hay as the public representative to the Cal-OSHA Standards Board also came under fire. Hay, a past president of the California Chamber of Commerce, was one of those who, like Stranberg, signed the ballot arguments against Proposition 97.

The public member of the standards board has traditionally been a "neutral

party", according to Ron Fitzsimmons, assistant business manager for Local 1245. Prior to Deukmejian's decision to kill Cal-OSHA, the agency had functioned admirably, in Fitzsimmons' view. Cal-OSHA had taken the attitude that "the employer had a responsibility to insure a safe worksite," Fitzsimmons said.

But that all changed when the James Boys rode into town. The five people who died in the November crane collapse in San Francisco

serve as a sobering reminder of the service that a state safety agency like Cal-OSHA can perform, or fail to perform, in protecting workers.

Senator Bill Greene (D-L.A.), chair of the Senate Industrial Relations Committee, said he found it "pretty insulting" that administration officials came to the hearings with so little information on the problems being examined. Indicating that further hearings would be held, Greene said, "I intend to go deep into this." ■

Union, PG&E to study health costs

The Pacific Gas and Electric Co. and IBEW Local 1245 have launched a joint study of soaring health costs and how to keep them under control.

The formation of the task force is an indication of how seriously both parties take the problem of health costs. One recent survey found that the cost of medical insurance to employers went up by more than 20 percent nationwide last year, with utilities experiencing the largest increase of all employer groups.

Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally, who will serve on the study group, called the issue of rising health costs so critical that "it is in the best interests of both the IBEW and PG&E to work together" to seek solutions.

Calling the rising cost of health care "the single biggest problem faced by the American worker in the 1990s," McNally said it was important for union members not to leave it up to management to find a solution on its own. "More than 17,000 IBEW members, who make up the backbone of the company's electric and gas operations, have a deep personal

interest in keeping medical expenses in check," McNally said.

The joint study group plans to look into what other companies are doing to control the cost of providing health care benefits, as well as looking at agreements negotiated by other IBEW locals for employees they represent in other companies. Health care providers will also be contacted for their perspective.

The study is slated to be completed by July. But it will not be the last word on the issue: The final resolution of health benefits will, of

course, take place at the bargaining table during negotiations scheduled to begin this fall.

In addition to McNally, Local 1245 will be represented on the study group by Darrel Mitchell, senior assistant business manager, and Wendy Bothell, benefits representative.

PG&E will be represented by John Danielsen, vice president-computer and telecommunications services; Richard Bradford, manager of industrial relations, and Michael Reidenbach, manager of compensation and benefits. ■

Attention: telephone callers to Local 1245!

With the installation of a new telephone system in January Local 1245 hopes to better serve our telephone callers.

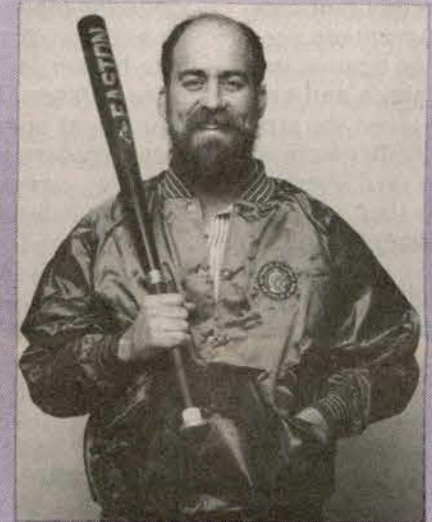
One of the attractions of the new system is "voice mail". This feature enables you, the caller, to leave a private message of any length in the personal voice mailbox of any Local 1245 staff or business representative. Messages can be left anytime,

night or day.

The "automated attendant" application is designed to assist in transferring your calls more efficiently. Be sure to follow the instructions given to you.

Changes always take getting used to, and after the adjustment period and newness wear off, we hope you will appreciate the improved service the new phone system will offer. ■

New jackets now available



The newest item available from the "Union Shopper" is the popular satin stadium jacket. Available with embroidered IBEW logo on the chest or large screen logo on the back.

Available in sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X and 4X.

Colors: Red, Navy, Silver, Black, with coordinating knit trim on neck and cuff. Shell, 100% nylon; lining, 100% polyester; machine washable.

\$35 - size S-2X

\$45 - size 3X & 4X

When ordering please specify color, size and choice of logo - front or back. (Please allow 4-6 weeks delivery on 3X and 4X sizes.)

Please Print

Quantity	Item	Color	Size	Price
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
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				Total

Ship to:

Name:

Address:

City/State:

Zip: Phone:

Mail this completed form with a check or money order payable to:

IBEW Local 1245
c/o Office Manager
P.O. Box 4790
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Bye-bye privacy, hello beakers

Drug testing timebomb set to go off in 1990

The clock is ticking on a drug-testing time bomb that threatens to demolish the civil liberties of American workers, including thousands of Local 1245 members.

For months, even years, union members have been warned about possible intrusions into their personal lives by employers and the government:

Warned about workers having to take a urine test before they can be hired, or after an accident. Warned about the shredding of constitutional guarantees protecting citizens against unreasonable search and seizure. Warned about the arrival of a Big Brother form of society where civil liberties count for less than government or company authority.

While most Americans have gone about their daily lives assuming they were innocent until proven guilty, government and business were busy setting the timer on the drug-testing time bomb. Federal regulations and recent court decisions have now cleared the way for meddling bureaucrats to pry into the private lives of thousands of Local 1245 members.

Prepare to pee, brothers and sisters, because the

brave new world of drug testing has arrived.

"This union has been trying to sound the alarm about drug testing for a long time," said Business Manager Jack McNally. "We knew it was a problem we were going to face sometime in the future. But now the future is here and I don't think the members are going to like it very much."

And it's not just a few select workers in "safety sensitive" positions who will be required to submit to drug tests. Under drug testing rules for pipeline workers, for example, those who must take beaker in hand include drivers, fitters, laborers and equipment operators. Even meter readers and customer service representatives could be subjected to the indignities of testing under proposals put forward by Sierra Pacific.

Clearly there is a broader agenda to the current drug testing mania than just insuring safety on the job. Safety isn't the issue when customer service reps and meter readers are swept up in the drug testing dragnet. The real issue is bureaucratic control.

It is in the nature of a bureaucracy to try to increase its power and authority over individuals. Those who be-

lieve in individual liberty have a proud tradition of resisting arbitrary authority. Such resistance has led to some of the most dramatic episodes in American history, including the Boston Tea Party and the creation of a constitution that protects individuals from unreasonable search and seizure.

Labor unions are now shouldering much of the responsibility for carrying forward that important American tradition. But it's proving to be a tough fight. Civil liberties that people take for granted at home have a way of disappearing at the company's door.

Consider this: Under the U.S. Constitution, police must have "probable cause" in order to search your house or car. But under the new government-mandated drug testing regulations, companies are gaining the right to search workers' most personal possession of all, their bodies, even if there is no cause at all to suspect the person has been using drugs.

"It's a real invasion of people's privacy," said Local 1245 staff attorney Jane Brunner, who, along with fellow union attorney Tom Dalzell, has carried the fight to protect members' rights into the judicial system.

Union officials stress that the union does not condone the use of drugs on the job. But neither does it condone the corruption of the U.S. Constitution under the pretense of fighting drugs.

the District of Columbia invalidated the entire regulation in January. No drug testing had begun on Local 1245 members because of lawsuits filed in Sacramento and Alameda County Superior

Federal regulations and recent court decisions have now cleared the way for meddling bureaucrats to pry into the private lives of thousands of Local 1245 members.

Under the new federal drug laws, companies are generally required to perform drug tests. However, in cases where the workforce is unionized, the company is required to negotiate with the union over drug testing policies. Thus, the union can at least put up a fight for policies that restrict random testing, that protect workers against faulty testing procedures, and that stress rehabilitation of the worker instead of termination in cases where a worker truly has a drug problem.

The federal drug testing regulations that most affect Local 1245 members are those established by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the Dept. of the Interior, and various agencies of the Dept. of Transportation (DOT). The union members who may be subject to drug testing under the rules, and the current status of union legal challenges to these rules, is given below.

■ Pipeline workers for PG&E, Sierra Pacific and PGT will be affected by DOT rules scheduled to go into effect April 21. The International union has filed a Petition for Review of the rules and a Request for Stay (i.e. for postponing implementation of the rules) in the Ninth Circuit court. Briefs in this case will be completed in late March.

■ Union members at Sacramento Regional Transit and Alameda-Contra Costa Regional Transit were briefly affected by DOT rules for testing "safety sensitive" employees. An appeals court in

Courts under the privacy clause of the California Constitution.

■ Interstate drivers of commercial vehicles, including an estimated 361 Sierra Pacific employees, may be tested randomly and after accidents under rules issued by DOT. A court injunction issued a year ago has prevented those tests from going ahead, although reasonable cause testing and pre-employment testing have been permitted.

■ Most Local 1245 members at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation would be tested under rules formulated by the Dept. of Interior, but a court injunction has forbidden random testing.

■ Employees with unescorted access to protected areas at Diablo Canyon and Rancho Seco nuclear plants are subject to testing under NRC rules. A union lawsuit against PG&E temporarily barred the testing, but the Ninth Circuit Court decided this month to let the testing go forward.

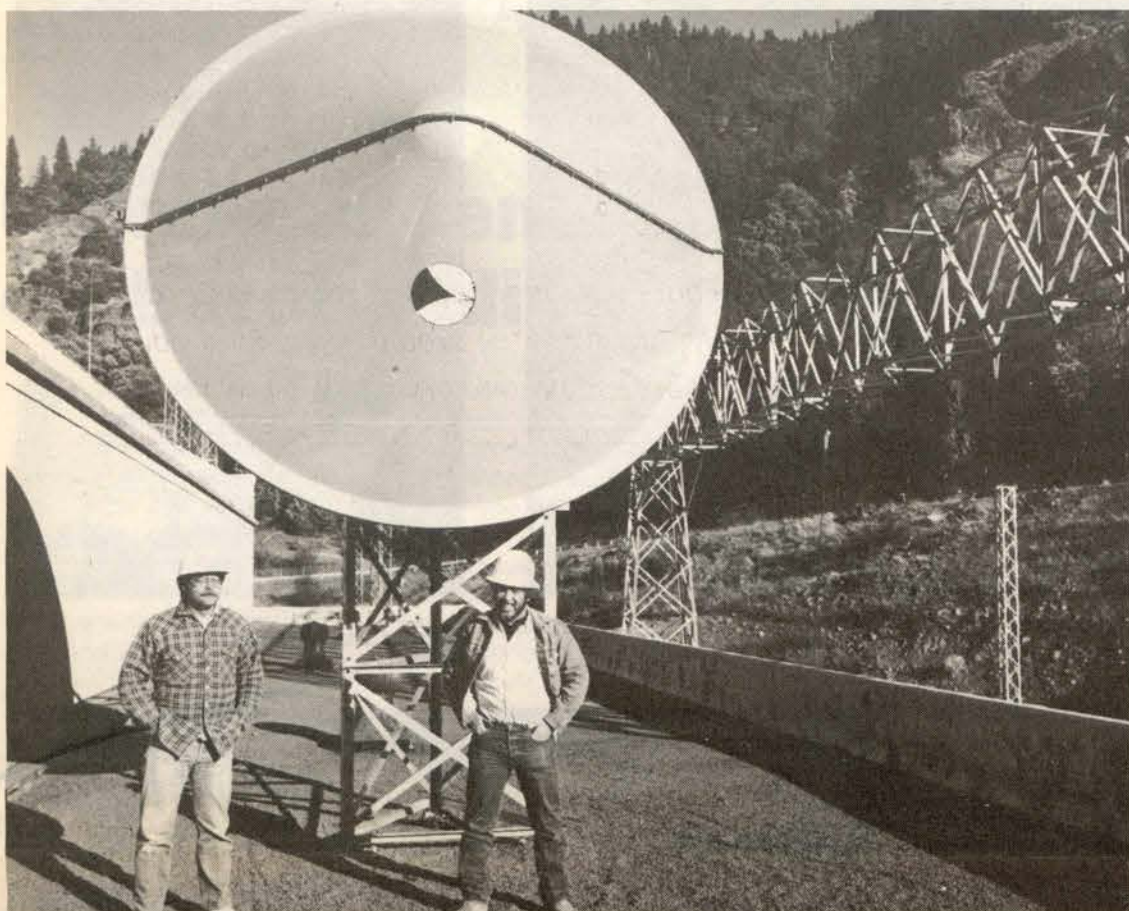
Local 1245 has attempted to be reasonable in keeping the work environment free of drug abuse.

But somewhere the line has to be drawn between legitimate safety concerns and unwarranted violation of individual rights.

"Drug and alcohol abuse are real problems that should be dealt with constructively and compassionately," said Business Manager Jack McNally. "They shouldn't be used just as a blanket excuse for prying into the private lives of our members. ■"



PG&E installs microwave spur at Pit 4 Powerhouse



Local 1245 technicians Steve Hostetter (left) and Art McHugh at the Pit 4 Powerhouse.

Pacific Gas and Electric has begun installation of the Pit 4 Powerhouse microwave spur.

General installation began in December 1989 when PG&E's General Construction Communica-

tion Technicians Steve Hostetter and Art McHugh mounted a 10-foot, 6-gig microwave dish at Pit 4 Powerhouse, located on the Pit River west of Burney, Ca. It will be the last powerhouse in the area to become part of the Pit River microwave system.

Built in 1955, Pit 4 Powerhouse has relied on approximately 12 miles of telephone cable to Pit 5 Powerhouse to bring voice and data capabilities into PG&E's telecommunications systems.

Hostetter and McHugh expect to have the new system in service early this year. ■

Steward's midnight run nabs culprit

Sometimes things that go bump in the night are more than just your imagination.

Just ask Local 1245 Business Rep. Kathy Maas about the evening of Feb. 7. Maas recalled that she and her husband had retired for the evening when, a bit after midnight, "We heard this horrible noise."

Another earthquake? A jet crash? While her husband went downstairs to investigate Maas looked out the window in time to see an automobile back out of their house and drive away.

Downstairs, Maas's husband made his way through a cloud of dust and found a 4-foot by 3-foot hole in their

laundry room. In an apparently related development the couple's drier had been abruptly relocated to the other side of the room. Maas called the police.

Neither Maas nor her husband caught the license number of the fleeing car. Their drier's assailant was getting away scot free.

Getting away, that is, until Cliff Smethurst happened upon the scene. The Lone Ranger could not have made a more timely entry. Smethurst, witnessing the wayward car pulling away from the house, immediately gave pursuit. In his PG&E truck.

A few blocks later

Smethurst watched the fleeing driver park the car and go into a house. After recording the license number, Smethurst returned to the accident scene and gave this information to the police officer who had just arrived.

About that time Maas learned that the man who had come to their aid was not only a PG&E troubleman, he was a shop steward for Local 1245, Maas's own union.

"Strange things go on in the middle of the night," Maas mused.

And sometimes, it would seem, the union works in mysterious ways. ■

Information from your Local's General Office

"A" members in Local 1245 have several Death Benefits which will pay their beneficiaries between \$2,000 and \$4,400. "BA" members in Local 1245 also have Death Benefits which will pay their beneficiaries \$1000. It is important that you keep your beneficiary cards up to date. Please contact the

union, your shop steward or business representative to obtain the Change of Beneficiary forms.

If you move please inform us of your change in address. Please note that the IBEW Journal is not informed by this local of your address change. You must notify them yourself. ■

Staff member creates neon sculptures

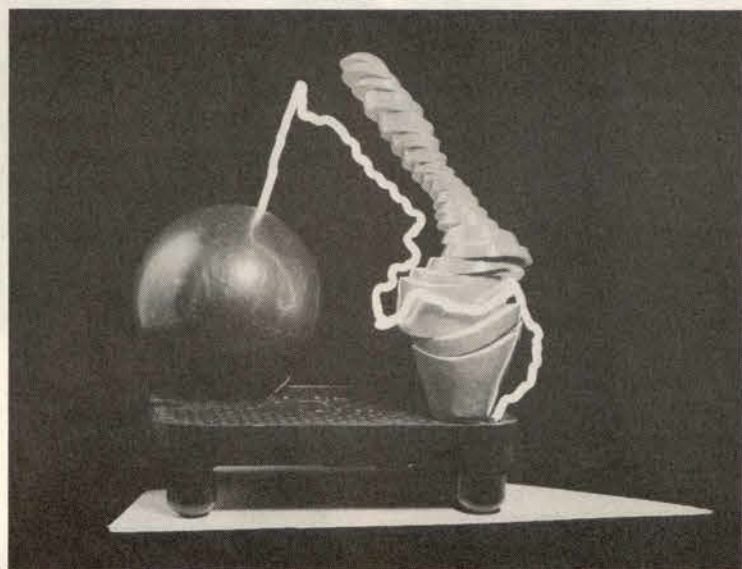
Local 1245's printer, Kua Patten, was one of five featured artists in "Light: An Exhibition of Neon Illuminated Sculpture & Photography" at the Sun Gallery in Hayward California. The exhibition ran from Oct. 4 to Nov. 18, 1989.

Local 1245 members have seen Kua's photographs across the pages of the Utility Reporter, but few have seen his sculptures that use neon elements in combination with a wide array of different materials. The most unusual of these materials are old bowling pins. "My co-worker, Austin Lea, gave me a box of bowling pins. They have a wonderful shape and I enjoy taking them and changing them into something else," Kua said. "It may seem to some that neon and

photography are very different. But they are very similar in many ways. When people see my neon work and I tell them that I work for IBEW Local 1245, they are never surprised," he added.

Also featured in the exhibition was Kua's piece entitled "Shield", a large stainless steel circle with neon and covered in fabric. This piece was entered in "Signs of The Times" magazine's Electric Sign Competition, where it won First Place in the Neon Sculpture Category.

Kua became involved with neon illuminated sculpture while attending the Academy of Art College in San Francisco. "I was studying photography, and I took the neon course to fill an elective requirement. After that, I was hooked," he said. ■



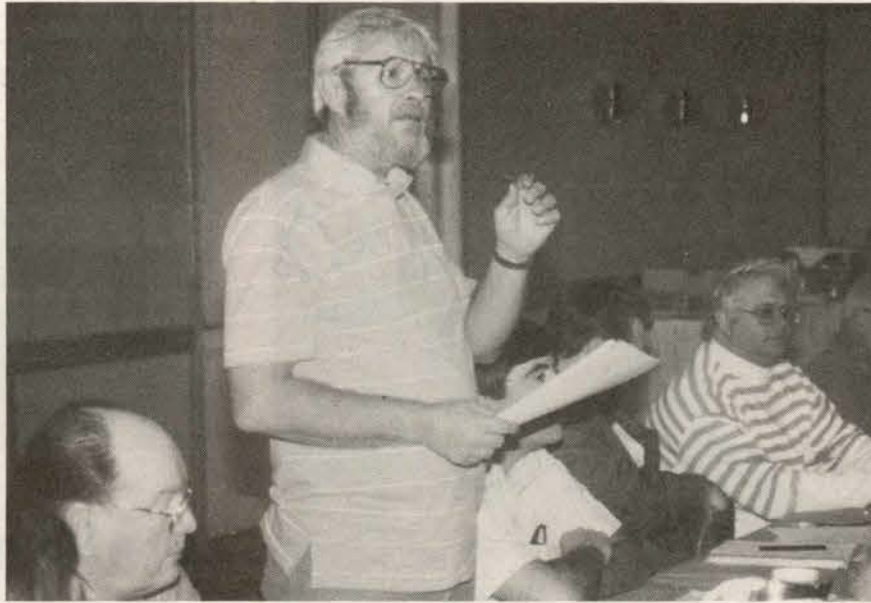
Neon sculpture by Ken Patten transforms light into art.

February 3 & 4:

Advisory Council tackles the issues



Business Manager Jack McNally



Al Knudsen, Colgate



Grover Day, Stockton



Jim Dorman, East Bay & Material Control



J. Manuel Guzman, Pipeline Operations



Shirley Roberts, San Francisco VP & Compt. Office (left) and Robert Vieira, Sierra Pacific



Skip Harris, DeSabra



(From left) Grover Day, Jim Travis, Olivia Mercado