

# UTILITY REPORTER

Joe Valentino  
Pages 8-9

## PG&E layoffs prompt early start to bargaining

In the wake of a major organizational shakeup at Pacific Gas & Electric, Local 1245 and the company have tentatively agreed to open up general bargaining as early as next month.

The early bargaining will enable the union to address critical job security issues brought on by PG&E's recent maneuvers, which include large layoffs announced Feb. 22 and telephone consolidation initiated last fall. Along with wages, these job security issues will be the union's primary focus during negotiations.

In the restructuring plan announced last month, 1500 employees will be out of a job by the end of 1993, with another 1500 to get the axe by 1995. According to company officials this year's cuts will include about 500 bargaining unit workers.

PG&E said the layoffs, announced by CEO Richard A. Clarke in a company-wide video broadcast, were part of a corporate effort to improve customer service, cut costs and reduce rates.

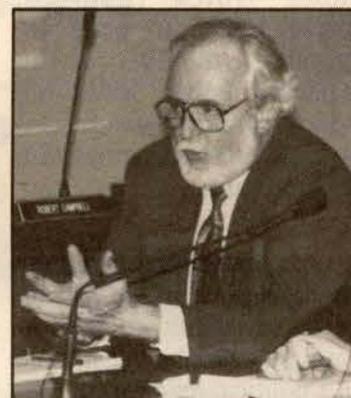
But in testimony before a

In testimony before a California Assembly committee, Business Manager Jack McNally challenged the assertion that PG&E was headed in the direction of improved service and lower rates.

committee of the California Assembly, Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally challenged the assertion that PG&E was headed in the direction of improved service and lower rates. In reality,

McNally said, PG&E is positioning itself to take advantage of the federal deregulation of the utility industry.

The end result of that process, he warned, could be deteriorating service and in-



McNally at Assembly hearing

creased costs for residential ratepayers.

"At some point you're going to be looking at a system that may not be maintained to the same degree and built

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## Joint study group proposes measures to cope with PG&E phone consolidation

The Telephone Service Study Committee last month concluded its investigation of PG&E's proposed phone service consolidation with a recommendation that company and union negotiate several measures to help employees

adjust to the impending changes.

The joint IBEW/PG&E Study Committee was established last fall after PG&E announced plans to consolidate over 30 customer service centers into just four large regional centers. The Study Committee's mission

was to investigate the impact on employees and suggest ways to ease the transition.

Study Committee members conducted more than 75 site visits to discuss the consolidation with employees.

In its report to Business

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### Recording Secretary since 1979

## Symons resigns Board post

Recording Secretary Barbara Symons resigned her position in February, ending 14 years of distinguished service on the Local 1245 Executive Board.

"She's really been an asset," said President Howard Stiefer, calling Symons a "real role model" for women involved in the labor movement.

The Board appointed Treasurer Ed Mallory to complete the remaining portion of Symons' term. Advisory Council member Chuck

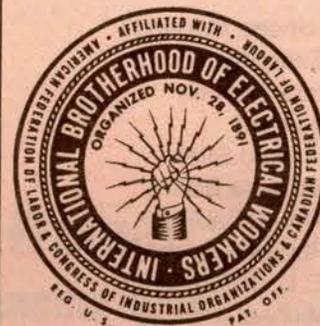
Davis will replace Mallory as treasurer.

An extremely articulate woman, Symons seemed ideally suited for the position of recording secretary, whose responsibilities included keeping track of all official business conducted by the Executive Board and Advisory Council.

Symons sees her years of service as a way of giving back something to the union.

"We have an obligation to pay back to those who came

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### CALENDAR

- March 13  
PG&E Regional Stewards Training Santa Rosa, Ca.
- March 18  
Drum/Colgate Pin Dinner Weimar, Ca.
- March 20  
Stewards Conference Chico, Ca.
- March 20  
General Construction Stewards Conference Walnut Creek, Ca.
- March 27  
PG&E Regional Stewards Training Concord, Ca.
- April 3  
PG&E Regional Stewards Training Fresno, Ca.



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### Workers here and abroad

## Rolling the union on. . .

**National Anti-Labor Relations Board:** John Raudabaugh recently settled unfair labor practice charges by agreeing to post a notice pledging not to threaten his employees, question them about their union activities, or seek to bypass the union, Labor Notes reported. Raudabaugh is a Republican-appointed member of the National Labor Relations Board; the charges were filed by NLRB staff attorneys who work for him.

**Don't Blame the Injured:** California AFL-CIO chief Jack Henning told an Economic Summit of California business, labor, academic and political leaders that injured workers' needs should not be ignored in considering Workers Compensation reform. Henning blamed soaring Workers Comp costs on "shameful conflict of interest" in the medical profession. Henning said that physicians who refer patients to clinics in which the doctors

have a financial interest cause \$230 million a year in additional costs.

**Dylan Honors Picket:** When folk and rock legend Bob Dylan encountered a stagehands' union picket line outside the New Haven, Conn. theater where he was scheduled to perform last October, Dylan canceled the show.

**No to Discrimination:** The Coalition of Labor Union Women pulled its 1993 convention from Denver because of Colorado's vote allowing discrimination against gay persons.

**Greed OK:** Labor Notes' featured this "Quote of the Month" in its January 1993 issue: The National Labor Relations Act "does not require employers to be equitable in their dealings with their employees. An employer can be as greedy as it pleases." So said Federal Judge Richard Posner, in throwing out a case brought by the Graphic Communications International Union.



"If I gave you a raise, you'd just spend it."

### SF State offers one-day classes in labor studies

The San Francisco State University Labor Studies program is offering three special one-day, non-credit classes in March.

**The Organizing Model** will look at a variety of approaches to organizing. March 13, 9:30 am-4 pm.

**Managing Workplace Harassment and Stress** will help you recognize, track and develop strategies to deal with these problems. March 24, 7 pm-9:30 pm.

**Conflict, Problem Solving and the Grievance Process** identifies sources of conflict and discusses strategies to develop better problem solving in the workplace. March 25, 7 pm-9:30 pm.

For further information, call (415) 338-2885.

### Local 1245 joins B of A boycott

Local 1245 withdrew its funds from Bank of America last month to protest the company's decision to sabotage bank employees' health benefits.

The bank said it was reducing many full-time workers to part-time status in

order to avoid paying the health benefits.

The California Labor Federation called on all California unions and their members to withdraw funds from Bank of America to protest the bank's treatment of its workers.

**Labor Law Extended:** In a triumph for the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the white-minority government of South Africa has agreed to set a timetable for extending the labor law to cover South Africa's agricultural and domestic workers. COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo called the negotiated agreement the most important in the federation's history.

**Justice Delayed:** A federal judge said that Du Pont discriminated against African American employees at its Louisville plant by confining them to lower-paying jobs. According to Labor Notes, Judge Carl Rubin dismissed the company's contention that whites held 98% of the better jobs because African Americans did not want them. The case was originally filed 20 years ago by the EEOC. Two-thirds of the 150 affected workers are now retired; the rest are dead.

**Building Trust:** Menards Building Supply in Minneapolis fired Eldon Helget when he attempted to add a ramp to his home to make it easier for his daughter Heather, who has spina bifida, to maneuver her wheelchair in and out of the

house. The UAW Solidarity magazine reported that the company prohibits managers from building or adding on to their own homes because they might be tempted to steal supplies from their employer.

**No Nuts:** The Archibald Candy Corp., the largest candy chain in the US, says it will stop buying from Diamond Walnut until the Teamsters' strike against that company is resolved.

**Dental Boycott:** The AFL-CIO has added Star Dental Products to its official boycott list, charging that the manufacturer of dental hand tools has drawn out contract negotiations with its workers for nearly four years.

**You Need Not Apply:** Industrialist Henry M. Rowan got New Jersey's Glassboro State College to change its name to Rowan College by giving the institution \$100 million. Part of that money, Rowan specified, should go for scholarships for his employees' children. But members of IUE Local 134 are excluded because they "have won their contract through threats and strikes against the company."

### SNUFF DIPPER RADIO

Jim Hightower, former Texas agriculture commissioner, is on the air. The quick-witted champion of the "little guy" launched a daily nationwide radio commentary on Feb. 15 with support from the AFL-CIO. Hightower says his program will reach out beyond the "luxury car owners and beansprout eaters" and bring his program to "the pickup drivers and snuff dippers."



# Enlightened regulation of utilities is still best policy

(The following remarks were delivered last month by Business Manager Jack McNally at the Energy Industry Briefing Seminar in Napa Valley, a gathering primarily of energy industry representatives.)

By Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

In California, modern history shows Labor Unions organized in the Utilities during the 1930s and '40s.

The utilities, as monopolies, were heavily regulated as the country was struggling to come out of the great depression. In addition, World War II put further restraints on the utilities and their workers.

As a result, we saw a utility workforce committed to serve the public and labor agreements which recognized the duty to serve the public.

As an example, a couple of statements from our contract with PG&E read:

"Union and Company recognize that there is an obligation on each party for the continuous rendition and availability of such services.

"The duties performed by employees ... are essential to the operation of a public utility and the welfare of the public.

"Employees shall use their influence and best efforts to protect the properties of Company and its service to the public, and shall cooperate in promoting and advancing the welfare of the Company and in preserving the continuity of its service to the public at all times."

There was another state-

ment that caught my eye when looking through the agreement:

"The parties support the principle of private ownership of public utilities under **enlightened regulation** by public authority."

Based on what is going on in the industry these days, this clause would appear to be ripe for debate.

These clauses and statements were put in the contracts from the very beginning to establish the mindset to provide the best possible service to the public. Addressing, if you will, the "Public Trust" and the "Obligation to Serve".

From this beginning, collective bargaining in the gas and electric utility industry has been distinguished by four basic characteristics: high skills, well paid employees, high stability and bargaining along industrial, not craft jurisdiction lines.

The result of this combination has been, in my opinion, a highly integrated workforce with skills, productivity and dedication second to none in the United States.

Wage gains have traditionally been a central focus of union negotiations in the utility industry. Our wage bargaining strategy serves several purposes. Utility customers expect continuous, reliable service, and the public interest imposes a heavy responsibility on utility employees not to strike. To avoid strikes, utilities must assure their employees wage levels

that are as good as or better than those available for comparable work.

Secondly, high wages are inherently linked with high employee stability and high skills. By offering high wages in the collective bargaining process, utilities can "buy" the high skills and stable work force which are so essential for the effective rendition of the highest level service.

To get high skills, a company, or industry, cannot pay low wages.

Thirdly, many utility employees work in dangerous jobs; their work brings them in contact with high voltages of electricity, heights, steam, nuclear radiation, and natural gas exposures, often during adverse weather conditions, or emergency disaster situations.

High wages are one way to recognize the element of danger.

The second characteristic of collective bargaining in the utility industry is the high-skill part of the equation. At PG&E, we have over 25 formal tri-partite apprenticeship programs and over 10 classifications with formal agreed-upon training programs for the bargaining units. In addition, there is continuous learning, constant upgrading of skills, and re-training where needed.

These training and apprenticeship programs have produced for PG&E a highly skilled work force.

Thirdly, our collective

bargaining is aimed at producing—and has produced—a stable work force. Until now, utilities have been able to provide, with few exceptions, high continuity of employment. Work in the utility industry has been more steady than in most other businesses because a fixed basic work-force is required, regardless of the ups and downs of the economy.

Through high wages, innovative and challenging job skill training programs, and progressive labor-management relations, the utility industry has been able to build a remarkably stable work force.

The *annual* employee turn-over rate at PG&E, for example, is roughly equivalent to the *monthly* turn-over rate in manufacturing.

Stability is also guaranteed by the absence of strikes, which are virtually unknown in the utility industry.

By having a stable work force, the utility is assured that its investment in training and apprenticeship programs is not wasted, and it is assured of an increasingly experienced work force.

Lastly, collective bargaining in the utility industry is generally along industrial lines, not craft lines. In the late 1930's the CIO, or Congress of Industrial Organizations, conducted massive organizing campaigns seeking predominantly plant or industrial bargaining units. At the same time, the AFL, or American Federation of Labor, or-

ganized along craft lines.

The CIO approach to organizing prevailed in the utility industry, although an AFL union, the IBEW, generally emerged as the recognized union.

For the most part, bargaining in the utility industry is on a company-wide basis, not along craft lines. The fact that we bargain for all of a utility's physical employees, and in some cases the clerical employees as well, has a leveling effect on wages, decreasing the disparity between the lowest paid and the highest paid.

All aspects of collective bargaining in utilities are intertwined. We typically bargain on a package basis, treating the negotiating process as an integrated whole. Even though we only discuss one topic at a time and debate the merits of that topic independently, when it comes to making the final deal, the over-all package of improvements and concessions is what is important. High wages achieved in company-wide bargaining buy high skills and high stability, which in turn produces a motivated, productive, and service-oriented work force.

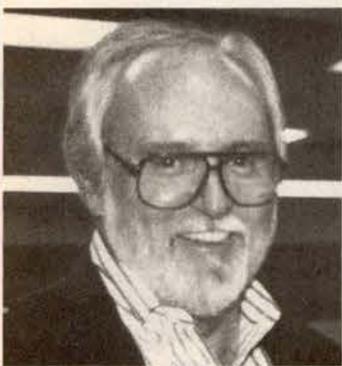
Until recently, the utility industry has been seen as a natural monopoly, as a business that is inherently monopolistic. Because of the investment required, giving a high ratio of investment to revenue, and the fact that the supply of gas and electric service is essential to the public welfare, direct competition has been considered wasteful and uneconomical.

Utilities have been given certain advantages under regulation, such as protection from direct competition, the right to use streets and highways, and the right to condemn property.

In return, certain obligations have been imposed through regulation, such as limitation of earnings, the obligation to serve all who

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**Further de-regulation of the utility industry could quite easily destroy the entire foundation for labor relations. Instead of high wages, we would see utilities, intent on retaining their market share, take increasingly tough positions on compensation in negotiations. Instead of high skills, we would see utilities motivated by this quarter's profit, not service.**



## Larry Foss: man of integrity with a passion for the facts

**F**ormer Senior Assistant Business Manager Larry Foss, who died Feb. 25, was remembered by co-workers as a man of unimpeachable integrity.

Foss's devotion to uncovering the facts in grievance cases earned him the admiration of co-workers and company officials alike.

Foss, in fact, helped create the system of joint fact finding at PG&E. Prior to the current system, the union and company wasted an enormous amount of time quibbling over the facts

of a case, which in turn created huge backlogs of grievances. Although labor and management still argue about the facts of a case, the system of developing the facts jointly greatly streamlined the process.

"He was real methodical, a mechanic in the way he did his job," Business Manager Jack McNally once said of Foss. "You could always count on him being prepared. He was a great guy."

Foss, 68, served the union as shop steward, unit recorder, business representative, assistant business manager,

and finally as senior assistant business manager.

Business Rep. Sam Tamimi called Foss "the most decent, straight-forward person I ever met in my life."

Tamimi said that Foss once told him: "Whenever you are meeting with somebody, remember that you have 50% of the facts. The other guy has the other 50%."

"He did things the right way," said Tamimi. "He did not do things to be popular—he did things because he believed they were right."

Foss hired in at PG&E in 1952 in the operations department of steam generation. He immediately joined the union, which had just won certification as the bargaining representative for the entire PG&E system. After a brief layoff, Foss returned in 1957 and became a shop steward.

Foss was hired by Business Manager Ron Weakley

in September of 1960 as a business representative serving in the East Bay.

Foss is survived by his wife, Marian, three children, Mike, Marcie and Doug, and a grandchild. His ashes will be scattered in the ocean in a private ceremony on March 20.



Larry Foss in 1992 celebrating 40 years of union membership.

## Committee issues recommendations on consolidation

From PAGE ONE

Manager Jack McNally and PG&E's Ronald Bailey and Virgil Rose, the Study Committee proposed six areas where negotiations could be useful: staffing, relocation, commuting, workstations at the new facilities, employee involvement issues, and work schedules.

"This was a very difficult process because PG&E's telephone consolidation plan will affect so many of our members," said Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier.

"Some members will no longer be able to work in the communities where they live, which creates all kinds of problems in their personal lives. The purpose of the joint Study Committee was to sit down with the company and try to see what kind of problems our members were facing and then see what could be done to help," said Fortier.

Regarding staffing, the Study Committee proposed creating a joint labor-management committee to review administration of Title 19, the detailed portion of the contract dealing with job security and seniority issues.

The Study Committee recommended several measures to assist with employee relocation issues, such as allowing for a re-enrollment period for medical benefits, providing benefit and community resource information, and enhancing current relocation provisions.

The existing agreement on Video Display Terminals should provide a minimum requirement for workstations at the new centers, the Study Committee said.

**"The purpose of the joint Study Committee was to sit down with the company and try to see what kind of problems our members were facing and then see what could be done to help."**

*Dorothy Fortier*

A variety of alternatives for easing employee commuting should be explored, the Study Committee said, including the use of van pools, the development of a commute allowance, and development of special arrangements with existing providers of public transportation.

The Study Committee suggested a new letter of agreement be negotiated covering employee participation on committees addressing issues affecting bargaining unit employees at the new centers.

The Study Committee called for the creation of a joint IBEW/PG&E labor management committee to negotiate a procedure for filling the various work schedules prior to the center opening and on an on-going basis thereafter.

The last opportunity for union members to submit proposals for any aspect of general negotiations is at the March unit meetings, now underway.

For further information on phone consolidation issues, members can contact a Study Committee member, a shop steward, or a Local 1245 business representative.

Union members serving on the Telephone Service Study Committee were Donna Ambeau, Cathy Barber, Business Rep. Enid Bidou, Val Casimir, Barbra Fain, Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, Art Garza, Chris Habecker, Business Manager Jack McNally, Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell, Norma Ricker, and Local 1245 President Howard Stiefer.



CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

Union members at work on telephone consolidation issues during a recent meeting at Local 1245 headquarters in Walnut Creek are (clockwise, from left): Business Rep. Enid Bidou, Donna Ambeau, Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, Chris Habecker, Norma Ricker, Barbra Fain, and Cathy Barber.

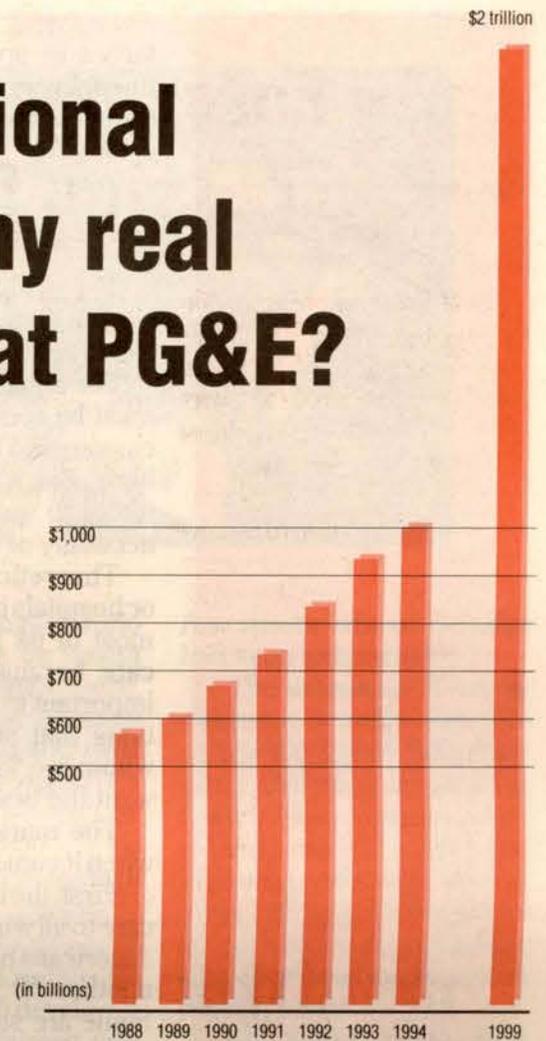
# Does the debate over national health insurance make any real difference to employees at PG&E?

(Hint: Do you care about money?)

By Eric Wolfe

## NEW HOPES, NEW HURDLES UNIONS IN THE CLINTON ERA

Second in a Series



Annual U.S. Health Care Expenditures  
(With current growth rates projected to the year 2,000)

**I**t may not show up as a deduction on your pay stub, but the nation's rising tab for health care costs you plenty.

The reason is simple: When unionized companies like PG&E are burdened by enormous insurance premiums for their employees, they have less money to bring to the table at bargaining time. Aggressive unions can still negotiate decent health care benefits, but often have to give ground in other areas to do so.

According to a recent study commissioned by the Service Employees union, insured workers lost an average of \$893 in pay last year because their employers spent money on rising health insurance costs rather than wages.

All across the nation, health care is the stinking pile in the middle of the bargaining table: as long as it's there, it's hard to concentrate on anything else.

What's worse, that pile is still growing. Health care costs, already \$542 billion in 1988, soared to an estimated \$838 billion in 1992. In 1999, unless action is taken, health care costs will reach \$2 trillion.

President Clinton says he will present a solution to the health care crisis by

May 1. Extremely powerful medical, pharmaceutical and insurance lobbies are mobilizing to preserve their enormous stake in the status quo.

Organized labor and various citizens groups, on the other hand, are pressing Clinton to propose fundamental changes in the way America delivers health care.

The AFL-CIO insists that health care reform must embrace several basic principles: universal access to health care, enforceable caps on overall health care spending, protection for retirees, and fair financing that distributes costs equitably.

Will organized labor's proposal work? Can *any* proposal work?

To answer that question, we first have to ask how we got into the jam we're in. Why have costs gone up so much?

### Why Costs Go Up

One reason health costs keep rising is that we as a people are aging, and old people generally have greater health care needs.

But let's not lay all the blame on the old folks. Poor performance is also driving up costs. Between 20 and 30% of the services provided by physicians are inappropriate, ineffective or unnecessary, according to a former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The introduction of expensive new

technologies—often not efficiently utilized—burdens our health care system with still more costs.

Administrative waste is perhaps the greatest burden of all. In Canada, administration accounts for 8 to 11% of health care spending, according to the National Leadership Coalition for Health Care Reform. By most estimates, administration accounts for about 25% of all health care spending in the US.

### Lack of Design

Lurking behind these various problems, however, is a more fundamental problem with our health care system: lack of a rational design.

Under the current system, there are no national practice guidelines for determining what medical procedures are most effective under which circumstances. Doctors get paid regardless of whether their treatments are necessary, appropriate or effective.

Under the current system, hospitals often acquire new technology not because it is needed, but because they compete with rival institutions for business and prestige. The hospitals in Minneapolis-St. Paul, for example, have 23 magnetic resonance imaging centers—one more than exists in *all* of Canada.

We normally think of competitive

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*From PAGE FIVE*

forces as promoting efficiency. But in the delivery of health care, competition seems to be driving costs through the ceiling.

Why?

**Necessity of Life**

The problem is that the market for health care isn't like other markets. Health care is a unique product.

For a market system to work, there must be some ability on the part of the customer to walk away if the price is too high. But it's not so easy for the customer to walk away if the product is a necessity of life.

Theoretically we can change doctors or hospitals if they charge too much. But most of us resist shopping for health care because other factors are more important to us: we want to go to institutions that are nearby, and to doctors whom we know. When we are ill, we want the best, not the cheapest.

The market fails in two basic ways when it comes to delivering health care:

First, the market fails to deliver health care to all who need it. At least 30 million Americans have no health insurance and another 30 million are underinsured. Some are simply denied the care they need. Others may postpone treatment until the problem has grown much worse and far more expensive to treat.

Second, the market fails to distribute costs fairly. "Good" employers—those who provide health insurance—subsidize employers who don't provide insurance. Every time a hospital or doctor treats someone who lacks insurance, the wallets of PG&E employees grow a little lighter.

**Monstrous Bureaucracy**

The medical establishment, of course, vigorously resists government "intrusion" into the market. We've all heard the warnings about huge government bureaucracies wasting the taxpayers' money.

But there is overwhelming evidence that just the reverse is true: the market-based system of health care in the US has created the most monstrous medi-

cal bureaucracy in the world.

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1991 found that doctors in the US employ about 500,000 clerical workers, largely to handle billing. One of the study's authors, Dr. Steffie Woolhandler of Harvard University, reported that it takes six minutes of a doctor's time and an hour of secretarial work in the doctor's office to process a *single* insurance claim.

In Canada, where a government program guarantees medical services for all citizens, the time needed to process a claim can be measured in seconds, according to Woolhandler.

How can this difference in efficiency be explained? How can Canada spend \$1683 per capita in 1989 and manage to provide health care for all its citizens, while the US spent \$2354 per capita that same year providing health care to only some of its citizens?

The difference can be traced in part to America's system of private health insurance.

**Black Hole**

America's health insurance industry is the black hole of our health care system.

In our market system, America's 1500 health insurers compete to turn a profit. The best way to maximize profits is to provide coverage to the healthiest citizens and to exclude everyone else.

This need to exclude people from coverage breeds bureaucracy—within the insurance industry and in the medical institutions they service.

Our insurance system requires that every procedure be assigned a cost. Hospitals and physicians employ armies of secretaries and administrators to process a bewildering array of insurance forms and systems for determining who pays that cost.

Multiple insurance companies may be involved. Pre-approval may be needed before certain services can be performed. One of many different systems of patient co-payments may be required. Certain services may be excluded from coverage. Billing disputes arise. Paperwork proliferates.

In 1991 at least \$226 billion of the money we spent on health care went to administration, marketing, profits, excessive doctors' fees and "defensive medicine," according to Woolhandler, the Harvard researcher, and her colleague, Dr. David U. Himmelstein.

The good news is that there are ways to cut much of this waste. The bad news is that President Clinton doesn't seem to be considering the most effective ones.

**Managed Competition**

During last fall's election campaign, Clinton expressed interest in "managed competition."

Although managed competition comes in many versions, the basic idea is that the government would organize "purchasing pools" of insurance consumers to give individuals and small employers the same economic clout—at least in theory—as large employers. These pools would then shop among private insurance companies—each with its own network of doctors and hospitals—for the best deal.

Managed competition is based on the assumption that competition is always the best way to allocate resources: Give people an opportunity to choose between various insurers and insurance prices will drop.

Many individual employers have already attempted to utilize this basic idea by setting up "managed care" plans for their employees. PG&E and Local 1245 jointly agreed upon such a plan during 1990 general bargaining in an effort to cut costs. Bids were taken from various insurance companies, and the one whose network best suited the needs of PG&E employees at the most reasonable cost was selected.

Under the current system, managed care has been the best option—in fact just about the only option—for employers and unions trying to fight rising insurance costs.

But if you're trying to restructure the nation's entire health care system, expanding managed care into a system of managed competition is not the way to achieve savings.

In fact, managed care takes the cost-control toolbox and throws it away.

Managed competition doesn't favor caps on fees nor caps on overall health care spending. It would leave the market in charge of cost control. But the medical marketplace would in fact sabotage cost controls as health plans race to acquire new technologies in the competition to recruit more plan participants.

Managed competition would also fail to achieve administrative savings because it doesn't disturb the current system of multiple insurance companies—the Black Hole. Rather than replace the bureaucracy, managed competition would actually add a whole new layer to it: the administrative apparatus of the purchasing pools.

**The *only* way managed competition could expand insurance coverage to all citizens would be to increase overall spending on health care.**

**That would greatly increase the pressure to tax the benefits of employees who are already privately insured. Employees at companies like PG&E.**

**In other words, a tax on *you*.**



Thus, the *only* way managed competition could expand insurance coverage to all citizens would be to increase overall spending on health care. That would greatly increase the pressure to tax the benefits of employees who are already privately insured. Employees at companies like PG&E.

In other words, a tax on *you*.

In the end, managed competition would probably fail to provide truly universal coverage. The purchasing pools, faced with immense cost pressures, would be required by government to purchase only a minimum package of benefits. That would leave many people underinsured and would perpetuate a "two-tier" system of health care—winners and losers.

### Single Payer

An alternative approach—one favored by many labor unions—is modeled on the Canadian health care system, where medical providers bill the government for services rendered.

That "single payer" system is favored by 69% of American voters, according to a 1991 Wall Street Journal/NBC poll. Just 20% were opposed.

The single payer approach would guarantee universal and equal access to medical care for all Americans. There is also solid evidence that it would reduce overall costs.

How is that possible?

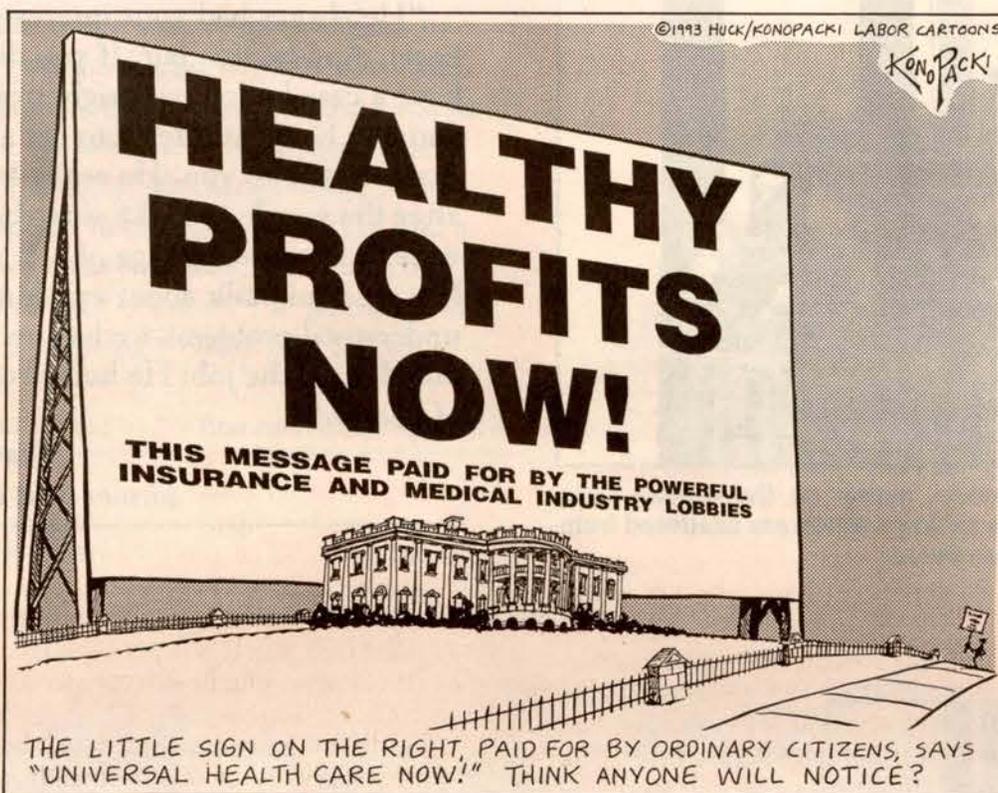
First, a single payer system would make it relatively easy to cap fees and to establish caps for overall health care spending.

But most importantly, a single payer system would eliminate the need for the entire private health insurance industry and the bureaucracies it spawns.

No more Black Hole. *Hasta la vista*, baby.

Woolhandler and Himmelstein calculate that adopting a Canadian-style system in the US would produce administrative savings of \$115 billion annually.

The Conyers-McDermott-Wellstone bill recently introduced in the US Congress would create a single payer system. But Congress is unlikely to take any action on it until President Clinton officially announces his health care plan



in May.

And Clinton has expressed zero interest in the single payer model. So labor unions and other advocates of major reform are now scrambling to get as many reform elements as they can into the package that Clinton will propose by May 1.

"Seventy-five percent of this fight is what Clinton says on May 1," SEIU's Gerald Shea told an AFL-CIO conference in Los Angeles last month.

Once Clinton's proposal is made public, said Shea, unions will have no choice but to defend it against attacks by medical and insurance lobbyists, who will seek to weaken whatever reforms Clinton proposes.

### Labor's Agenda

Some of the reforms proposed by the AFL-CIO—universal coverage, caps on overall health care spending, retiree coverage, and fair financing—have already been developed in considerable detail by the National Leadership Coalition for Health Care Reform, a coalition of businesses, health care professionals, consumers, and unions, including the IBEW.

While its reforms are not as sweeping as the single payer approach, the Coalition's model would guarantee universal coverage through a "Pay or Play" system. Employers who failed to provide a standard benefits package to their workers would be required to enroll them in a government-run program and would have to pay a payroll tax to help finance the program.

The Coalition's model would begin to introduce some rational planning into our health care system through the creation of a National Health Review Board.

The Board would set a cap on overall health care expenditures and establish payment rates for the providers of health

care. These payment rates would be designed to keep overall spending from exceeding the cap.

The Board would also develop "national practice guidelines" to help define what is appropriate treatment for various conditions. By tying payment to the observance of these guidelines, this system would discourage the inappropriate and/or unnecessary procedures that burden our current system.

### Mine Field

The path to reform is a mine field.

We could easily end up with a program that doesn't guarantee universal coverage in a timely manner, that fails to cap fees, and imposes new costs on consumers without reforming wasteful bureaucracies.

There are incredibly powerful interest groups dedicated to making sure that Clinton doesn't propose significant reforms, or to defeating any reform proposals in Congress.

Indeed, the insurance and medical lobbies are among the most powerful political forces in the country. Between 1980 and 1991, more than 200 political action committees representing the medical-pharmaceutical and insurance industries contributed more than \$60 million to congressional candidates.

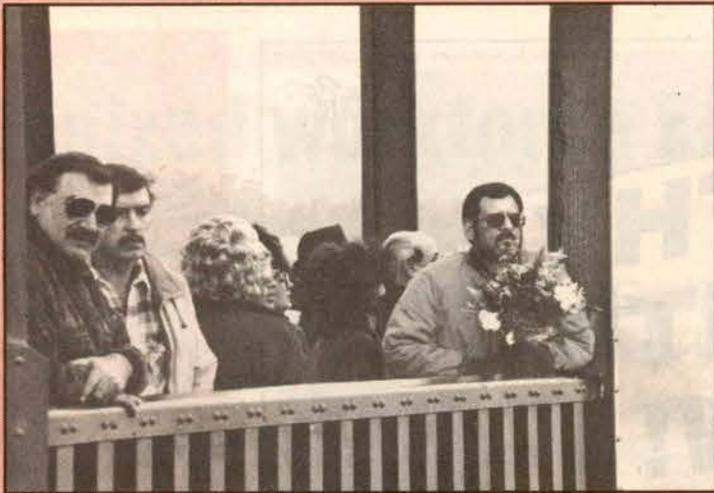
They didn't spend that money to finance a revolution in health care. Quite the opposite.

As Tom Goodwin, public affairs director of one medical lobbying group put it: "We spend our money on those members...most interested in maintaining the current system."

If these lobbies succeed in thwarting reform, our nation's health care crisis will continue unabated. And Local 1245 members will pay an ever-higher price for our government's inaction.

THE UNINSURED...

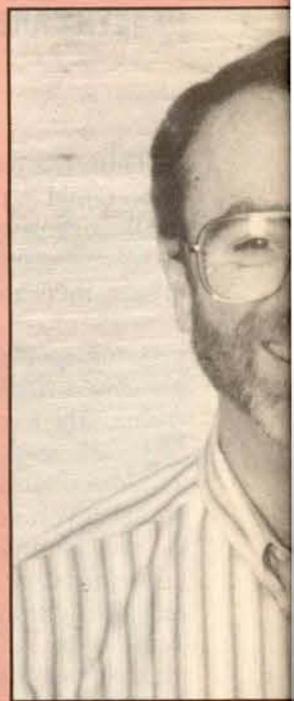




Local 1245 staff members gather on the Golden Gate Bridge to pay respects as Joe's ashes are scattered from Joe's boat on the ocean below.

"He always had your interests at heart. And he was fair. If you didn't have a case he told you right now. But if you did, he went after it to get a result that was fair to you. He really looked after the people to make sure they weren't taken advantage of... It seemed like we could talk about anything. He understood problems we had on the job but also off the job. He helped out a lot of people."

*Dave Sutton,  
former unit chairman*



Over 500 people lined up to attend memorial service for Joe in Concord.

"There are many words to describe Joe. Determined, persistent, diligent, crafty, unrelenting--he was dedicated to the work he was doing. A Business Representative's job is not an easy job to do. It is a people business, and there is a degree of stress and pressure as you constantly deal with the trials and tribulations of people. Joe was a person who could deal with that. He did it well, and he did it his way. He earned the respect of both the members, and of management. Joe was an intense person and he was tenacious--to be sure each member was represented to the fullest. We will miss him very much."

*Jack McNally, business manager*

## Joe Va union

1946

Over 500 people turned out to pay their respects to union brother Joe on Jan. 28

As a union business representative and manager, Joe provided a fair and principled defense of the interests of union members. He will be remembered as a man of integrity and a man with a big heart.

Joe was hired on at PG&E as a business representative in California. He later transferred to the San Francisco Office where he became a member of various committees.

Hired as a business representative, Joe was assigned at various times to the San Francisco Bay Division, including power plants and cities in the area. At one time he was assigned to San Francisco.

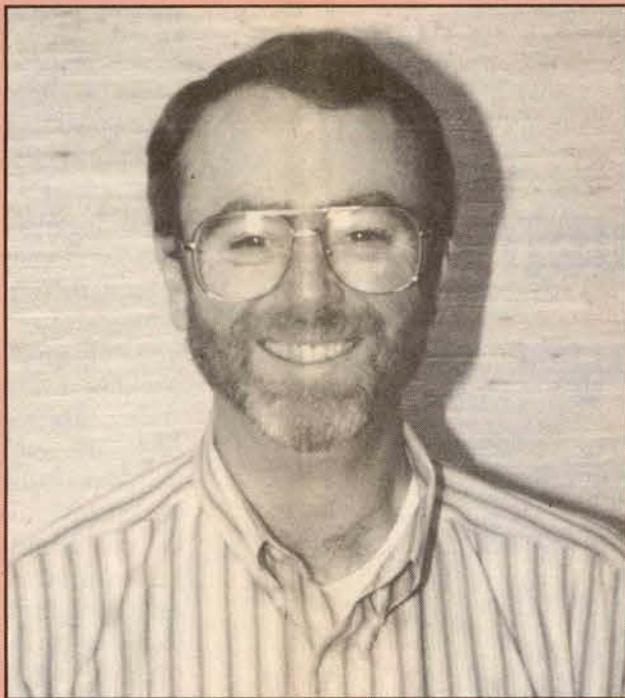
Joe, who was 46, is survived by his wife, Rose Valentino, his brothers Charles and Gregory, and his children, Genice, Gregory, and Anthony. He was buried in the San Francisco and former wife Fro Valentino. Services will be made to St. Anthony's Diocese, 1020 Divisadero Avenue, San Francisco 94102.



Union staff members gathered ne

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*Dave Sutton,  
former unit chairman*



"He was a well-respected man by every steward who worked with him. It's unbelievable what he could accomplish. He had the human skills: he could accomplish things other people would get turned down for. He had a gift for conversation. It's sad for me even to talk about it. I'm going to miss him. I'm going to miss him a great deal."

*Loren Davis, steward*

## Joe Valentino, union brother

1946-1993

Over 500 people turned out in Concord, Ca. on Feb. 3 to pay their respects to union brother Joe Valentino, who died Jan. 28

As a union business representative, Joe earned the respect of union members and management alike through his aggressive and principled defense of the employees he represented. He will be remembered as a man not only with great talents but with a big heart.

Joe hired on at PG&E as a groundman in 1965 in Belmont, Ca. He later transferred to computer operations in General Office where he became a union shop steward and served on various committees.

Hired as a business representative by Jack McNally in 1980, Joe was assigned at various times to most all parts of PG&E's East Bay Division, including power plants. He also represented members at AC transit and cities in Alameda County. For a period of time he was assigned to San Francisco Division as well.

Joe, who was 46, is survived by his mother Catherine Valentino, his brothers Charles and Mike Valentino, three children, Genice, Gregory, and Monica, his grandson Jeffrey, and former wife Fro Valentino. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Anthony's Dining Room, 121 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco 94102 (415-241-2601).

"They'll never replace him. I even think the union knows what he was. He was so involved in every problem--nothing got past him. I was always in the way about him. He would earn your respect just by his knowledge. He did the same thing with management. When it came time to settle, he was so knowledgeable and so knowledgeable that he just persuaded management it was the right way to go."

*Bryan Bolan, unit steward*

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"You could not begin to count the good deeds of Joe Valentino. Joe was a unique human being. He had strong beliefs about right and wrong and he never hesitated to put those beliefs into action. Joe was a man of action."

*Sam Tamimi,  
business representative*



Union staff members gathered near the Golden Gate Bridge.



# Valentino, brother

1993

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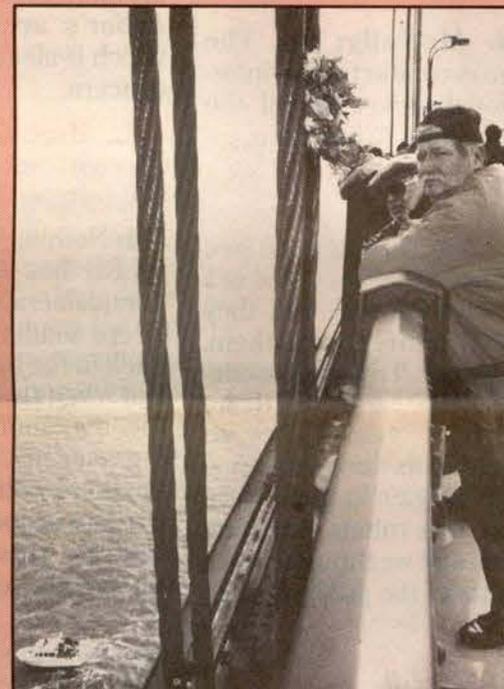
*Loren Davis, steward*



Union staff members say goodbye.

“They’ll never replace him. I don’t even think the union knows what a force he was. He was so involved in evrybody’s problems--nothing got past him. He had a way about him. He would earn your respect just by his knowledge. He’d do the same thing with management. When it came time to settle, he was so forceful and so knowledgeable that he just persuaded management it was the right way to go.”

*Bryan Bolan, unit chairman*



Flowers and farewells.

“You could not begin to count the good deeds of Joe Valentino. Joe was a unique human being. He had strong beliefs about right and wrong and he never hesitated to put those beliefs into action. Joe was a man of action.”

*Sam Tamimi,  
business representative*



Joe's boat carries Joe to his final resting place.

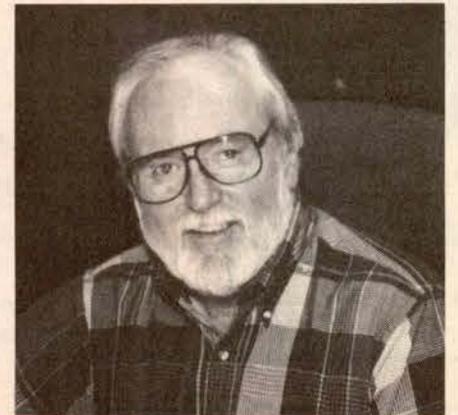
Interview with Jack McNally

# Unionized workforce key to stability in tree industry

Last November, Local 1245 began picketing the Auburn, Ca. headquarters of Arbor Tree Surgery Co., which holds the contract to trim trees around powerlines in PG&E's Sierra Division. In this interview, Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally tells why the union took action--and what the union hopes to accomplish.

**"We think PG&E ought to be looking more at the long-term. When they award contracts to these non-union tree trimmers, they think they're saving a few bucks. But it's just creating chaos in the industry."**

Jack McNally



**Utility Reporter: Is the union striking Arbor Tree?**

**Jack McNally:** No. The union is conducting an informational picket to tell the public about Arbor Tree.

**UR: What has Arbor Tree done?**

**JM:** Four years ago the tree trimmers at Arbor voted in a free election and said they wanted us to represent them. But Arbor Tree has stonewalled at the bargaining table. For four years they've dragged this thing on, refusing to bargain in good faith. Arbor is a rotten corporate citizen and we thought it was time to let the public know.

**UR: What would the union like to achieve at the bargaining table?**

**JM:** We're asking for a little basic justice for the Arbor tree trimmers. It's amazing what they have to put up with. Their wages are below union scale. The guys have to buy and maintain their own climbing gear and pay deposits on chain saws. And they have a 15-year wage step program from groundman to foreman, which is just absurd. Very few people are going to hang around that long waiting for a

promotion. And then there's Arbor's accident record, which is also a real cause for concern.

**UR: Has the picketing brought any response at the bargaining table?**

**JM:** Nothing significant. The NLRB has issued several complaints against Arbor and keeps sending management back to the bargaining table. But when they come back to the bargaining table, nothing happens. I don't know if anything could make them bargain in good faith. And of course this has consequences beyond Arbor Tree.

**UR: In what way?**

**JM:** Local 1245 represents several hundred tree trimmers outside of Arbor. It's awfully hard for a unionized tree contractor to compete for work when you've got rat outfits like Arbor submitting bids based on lousy wages, lousy benefits and no real safety program. You have to have a level playing field. In the construction industry, unions have had much more success in creating that level playing field, and that's what we need for the trees.

**UR: Is there a way to level out the playing field?**

**JM:** Well, it would help if there was better enforcement of occupational safety laws. Better enforcement of this country's labor laws would also help. Federal law says people have a right to organize, but there seems to be plenty of ways for employers to get around the law. Maybe Clinton can do something about that, but meanwhile we're focusing our strategy in another direction. We think PG&E needs to reconsider its whole approach to tree work.

**UR: What kind of approach should PG&E take?**

**JM:** We think PG&E ought to be looking more at the long-term. When they award contracts to these non-union tree trimmers, they think they're saving a few bucks. But it's just creating chaos in the industry. When you keep driving wages down you drive your best people out of the industry. In the long run that makes you less productive. And that can have serious consequences. When lines aren't properly maintained,

you have greater risk of fire. And when tree trimmers aren't properly trained, you're going to get more accidents. At some point, those costs have to be factored into the equation. In the long run, stability is going to be more cost-effective than chaos.

**UR: How do you achieve more stability in the industry?**

**JM:** Having a workforce that is trained and safe: that's the key. And being unionized is the way you get that. PG&E needs a predictable, reliable and cost-effective labor force for tree work just like it needs those qualities in its regular employees. The union can help PG&E achieve that on their time and equipment contracts and on lump sum grid bidding.

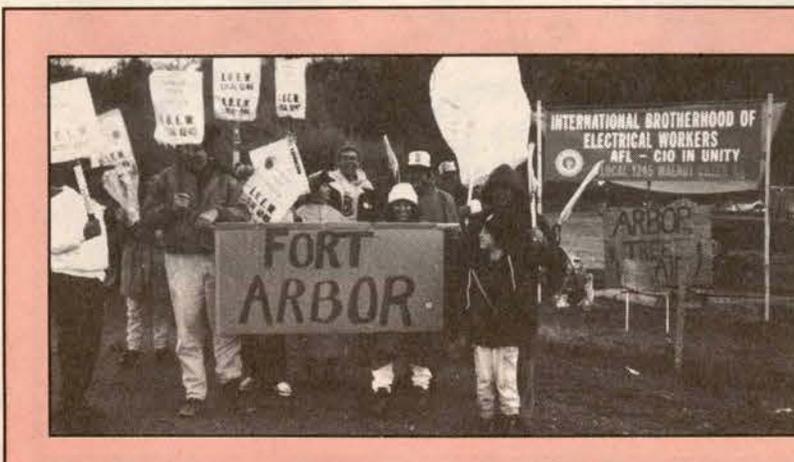
**UR: What's the difference between those types of contracts?**

**JM:** Time and equipment contracts are long term agreements that allow the tree contractor to bill PG&E for the hours worked. Union wages can be built into these bids, which is what PG&E should require in order to build a stable, productive workforce for the long haul. In lump sum grid bidding, which tends to involve shortterm jobs, PG&E identifies a certain geographic area that needs clearing and puts it out to the lowest bidder. PG&E thinks grid bidding encourages work to be done more efficiently in some cases, and maybe it does. But the way grid bidding is set up now, it puts enormous pressure on tree contractors to cut wages and reduce expen-

ditures on safety just to get the work. So you get these non-union contractors with their low wages and high accident rates getting more of the work. A more responsible approach to grid bidding would be to require contractors to get their labor from a union hiring hall, which is the way it works in some other states. Employees are better off because they are protected by wage and safety standards bargained by the union, and PG&E is better off because they will have a workforce they know they can depend on.

**UR: Doesn't that undercut the whole principle of competition?**

**JM:** No! There'd still be competition: contractors would have to bid the work intelligently. They'd need to make the most efficient use of their equipment, and they'd have to be good at motivating and managing their labor force. But the one thing they would *not* compete on is how low they can drive down wages. That's a deadend street. You know, there's a lot of talk in Washington now about how important it is to have a skilled labor force if America is going to compete for the jobs of the future. I believe that's true. But it's never going to happen if companies don't get over this idea that they have to squeeze every last penny they can out of the labor force. Workers need to be treated with respect, they need to be well-trained, and they need to get a fair return for their labor. That's what unions have been trying to achieve all along.



**FORT ARBOR**  
Local 1245 pickets formed an encampment during the winter at Arbor Tree headquarters in Auburn, Ca. to protest the company's refusal to bargain a union contract.

# Time for change arrives: Clinton begins to deliver

**D**uring his first weeks in office, President Bill Clinton announced a sweeping plan to restructure the US economy and took immediate action to improve the lives of working people in several areas.

After only a few days in office, Clinton signed into law the Family Leave Act, an earlier version of which had been vetoed by former President Bush. The Act, which applies to employers with over 50 employees, provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid but job-protected leave to workers following the birth or adoption of a child or to deal with family medical emergencies.

Clinton also took prompt action to revoke Executive Order 12800, which had required federal contractors to post a notice that workers are not required to join unions and may challenge that portion of agency fees not used for collective bargaining. Clinton also revoked Executive Order No. 12818, which

prohibited project agreements on federal construction contracts.

Both orders had been issued by President Bush during last year's election campaign in an effort to curry favor with anti-union forces.

The Clinton administration will also undertake a review of the nation's labor laws, according to Labor Secretary Robert Reich. "It is my intention and the president's intention to restore a level playing field to labor-management relations," Reich said. (See related story, below.)

## Economic stimulus

Clinton's broad program of economic stimulus, tax increases and spending cuts is aimed at fulfilling his campaign promise to cut the deficit and revive the US economy.

"Our immediate priority must be to create jobs—create jobs now," said Clinton in the nationally televised address. He declared that no recovery is "worth its salt" if

it fails to put the American people back to work.

Clinton called on Congress to enact a package that would invest over \$30 billion immediately to create a half million new jobs, as well as creating 700,000 new summer jobs for young people.

Decrying two decades of low productivity growth, stagnant wages and "persistent unemployment", Clinton said his economic plan was designed to "improve the health of American business through lower interest rates, more incentives to invest and better-trained workers."

"The world is changing so fast that we must have aggressive targeted attempts to create the high-wage jobs of the future," said Clinton. He called for "special assistance" to workers displaced by defense cuts and other "unavoidable economic dislocations."

Clinton pledged to reform the nation's health care system, whose runaway costs have sapped the strength of American business and de-



pressed the earnings of workers. A task force on health care headed by Clinton's wife, Hillary, will unveil a reform plan by May, Clinton said. (See related story, Page 5.)

## Worker Training

Repeating his oft-stated belief that an educated workforce is the key to a prosperous America, Clinton said the nation must develop a unified worker-training program so that workers "receive the training they need regardless of why they lost their jobs or whether they simply need to learn something new to keep them."

The \$30 billion stimulus package proposed by Clinton would include an extension of benefits for unemployed

Americans whose benefits had been exhausted.

The extension of unemployment benefits was promoted by Labor Secretary Reich during testimony on Capitol Hill the day after Clinton's speech. Reich rejected the notion of a "jobless recovery" and said he would not proclaim an economic recovery "until the jobs start coming back."

Although Clinton called on all Americans to make some economic sacrifice in order to promote longterm growth, he said he was "asking the most of those who benefited the most in the past." Clinton proposed increasing the federal income tax rate from 31% to 36% for Americans earning more than \$180,000 per year. He also called for a 10% surtax on incomes over \$250,000 a year.

Only the wealthiest 1.2% of Americans would see their income tax rates go up, Clinton said, while "98.8% of America's families will have no increase in their income tax rates."

Middle-income Americans would pay somewhat more in energy taxes under Clinton's plan. Nonetheless, opinion polls show solid support for the broad outlines of Clinton's program.

Clinton appealed to Americans to support his program for the sake of the country's future:

"Unless we change, unless we increase investment and reduce the debt to raise productivity so that we can generate both jobs and incomes, we will be condemning our children and our children's children to a lesser life that we enjoy," Clinton said.

## Commission to study possible reform of labor law

**L**abor Secretary Robert Reich signaled a new day for labor by announcing formation of a commission to study reforming the National Labor Relations Act.

The commission will make recommendations on "ways to strengthen collective bargaining and restore a level playing field" between labor and management, Reich said.

"Undoubtedly we need to restore a level playing field in this country. Over the past 10 years working men and women have been penalized for even trying to create unions," Reich noted.

Reich emphasized his hope that a greater role for labor will lead to higher productivity for the US economy.

"Countless studies show that productivity is improved by providing workers with a greater degree of participation and voice," Reich told a news conference following his appearance at the AFL-CIO Executive Council's February meeting.

Reich affirmed his belief that organized labor has a crucial role to play in empowering workers.

"Organized labor ... is the most articulate, indeed it is

the only voice of the front-line worker in America. The front-line worker in America needs a voice," Reich said.

Reich renewed his commitment to improving the quality of jobs for Americans.

As the nation recovers from recession and jobs begin returning, he noted, "these jobs for most Americans are going to be low paying jobs. That is not good enough."

Reich said Clinton's economic program would "invest in the future of this country in terms of education, training, research and development and transportation and communication systems so we can have a future work force that gets good paying jobs."



The National Labor Relations Act was turned into an instrument for suppressing labor in the Reagan-Bush years.

POINT OF VIEW

## Enlightened regulation is still best utility policy

From PAGE THREE

apply for service, and the prohibition against withdrawal of service without regulatory approval.

However the tide seems to be a'changing—many seem to be embracing the view that direct competition would be economical.

As was the case with the airline industry, the surface freight industry, common carrier, telecommunications, and the banking industry, the utility industry is the latest target of a new generation of policy-makers who reject the notion of regulated monopolies and favor competition, pitting the regulated monopoly, who is obligated to provide universal service, against unregulated enterprises with profit, not public service, as a central principle.

It is my personal opinion that further de-regulation of the utility industry could quite easily destroy or, at best, severely damage the entire foundation for labor relations.

Instead of high wages, we would see utilities, intent on retaining their market share, take increasingly tough positions on compensation in negotiations.

Instead of high skills, we would see utilities motivated by this quarter's profit, not service.

Instead of stability, we

would see instability, with employee turn-over and lost-time due to labor disputes.

Instead of a productive, stable, motivated, dedicated work force, we would see an unsure, poorly trained, decreasingly productive, decreasingly inspired work force, with increasing turn-over.

In addition, we would see the utilities' operation and maintenance employees with high wages and high skills replaced by the new competitors' lower wage and lower skilled employees.

I believe the result will be a calamity for the public. I would expect to see a plunge in service quality and reliability, a deterioration of labor-management relations, increased safety problems, and in the long term, higher rates.

I believe the regulators and legislators had better take a close look at whose interest is being served here—who will really benefit from the introduction of competition. Choice demanded by the residential ratepayer? I doubt it.

The statement that we agreed to with PG&E back in 1950 is in my opinion still appropriate for today:

"The parties support the principle of private ownership of public utilities under **enlightened regulation by public authority.**"



SIERRA PACIFIC POWER/CARSON CITY

Attending a recent Sierra Pacific Power unit meeting in Carson City, Nev. were (standing, from left): Wayne Draper, Jim Purcel, Business Rep. John Stralla, Howard Landis, Ron Hayes, Brad Byington, Scott Downs; (seated, from left): Marlene Peterson, Janea Peterson, Janine Clinger, Pat Lantis, Bob Ford, and Lindsay Ford.

### Citizens Utilities

## Brother Kristensen celebrated life

(Editor's Note: Local 1245 members at Citizens Utilities in Alturas offered the following remembrance of union brother Bob "RK" Kristensen, the former unit chair who died last year. Kristensen, a plant craftsman, was initiated into the IBEW in 1966.)



Bob "RK" Kristensen

No more Side Hill Gouger stories, no more Lady and Bag of Groceries stories, Revive your Hair stories or B-U-U-D Time at 5:00 o'clock. Yes, if you have been around for any length of time (about a week or so), and had the profound experience to meet RK, he more likely than not caught you in a trick with one of the many tall tales he liked to share.

RK, as he liked to be called, was so unique in his walk, his talk and his way of life, some of us here at the phone company referred to him as "Duke Jr." Bob cel-

ebrated life. Even the night he passed on, he was doing one of the things he enjoyed most: working his ground, getting it ready for a winter crop.

Bob supported everything from the Union to Company retirement parties. He was involved with local political groups. He and his wife, Janice, supported events such as the Groundhog Dinner in Davis Creek to area fire department steak feeds.

If spirits were down

around the office, RK would come in and catch one of us in a trick or just tell a new joke. He would make everyone think that life wasn't so bad after all.

We know that everyone who knew you, RK, has a story to tell and we're speaking for everyone when we say, "RK, we're going to miss you."

Love from all of us.  
(Signed by Cindy Velasco and other members at Alturas)

### Coalition urges energy jobs

A coalition of energy and environmental groups has urged President Clinton to adopt a policy of creating one million new jobs by the year 2000 through investments in sustainable energy technologies and policies.

The "Sustainable Energy Blueprint" calls for the creation of a new White House Commission on Competitiveness and Energy Productivity that would be charged with identifying and promoting ways for the US to simultaneously improve its economic competitiveness, create new jobs, and reduce environmental degradation through energy-efficiency improvements and adoption of renewable energy technologies.

**YUBA COUNTY WATER AGENCY**  
Local 1245 members at the Yuba County Water Agency include (from left): Gary Shaw, system operator; Bill Zoellin, equipment mechanic; James Van Artsdalen, utilityman; David Reed, electric tech and shop steward; Charles Hall, system operator; Don Brown, system operator; and Larry Newell, utilityman. Not pictured: Doug McMaster, utilityman; Kelly Gregg, helper; and Mike O'Hara, maintenance foreman.



# They like it in Garberville

**A**t the PG&E service center in Garberville, Local 1245 members don't have the urban hustle and bustle to contend with. And they like it that way.

"I love it out here. Everything is real kicked-back," said Shirley Jackson, a utility foreman's clerk and 18-year union member. Jackson, an Oakland transplant, doesn't miss citylife a bit.



Lisa McKellar, senior service rep.

But living a safe distance from the rat race doesn't mean that worklife is problem-free in Garberville. Besides the usual routine service work, there is the occasional drunk who finds his way off the road and into a utility pole. And there is Mother Nature to contend with as well.

When a series of earthquakes struck the north state last year, significant aftershocks shook the Garberville area for three days, according to line-man Carlos Mier.

"We had a lot of outtages. Each aftershock would slap things together and stuff would go out."

Several houses fell off their foundations, pulling out the power.

"We had to put up a lot of temporary poles for all the emergency guys," said Mier. "We helped them set up their antenna and communications."

In addition to the sudden jolt of an earthquake, there's the problem of the slow, steady growth of trees. Because so much of the area is parkland, only minimal tree trimming is permitted. Uncontrolled tree growth can cause a lot of mischief in powerlines.

"If we didn't have trees, we'd be home free. Limbs and wind, that's 90% of our problem, said troubleman and 27-year union member Tom Hensley.



Tom Hensley, troubleman



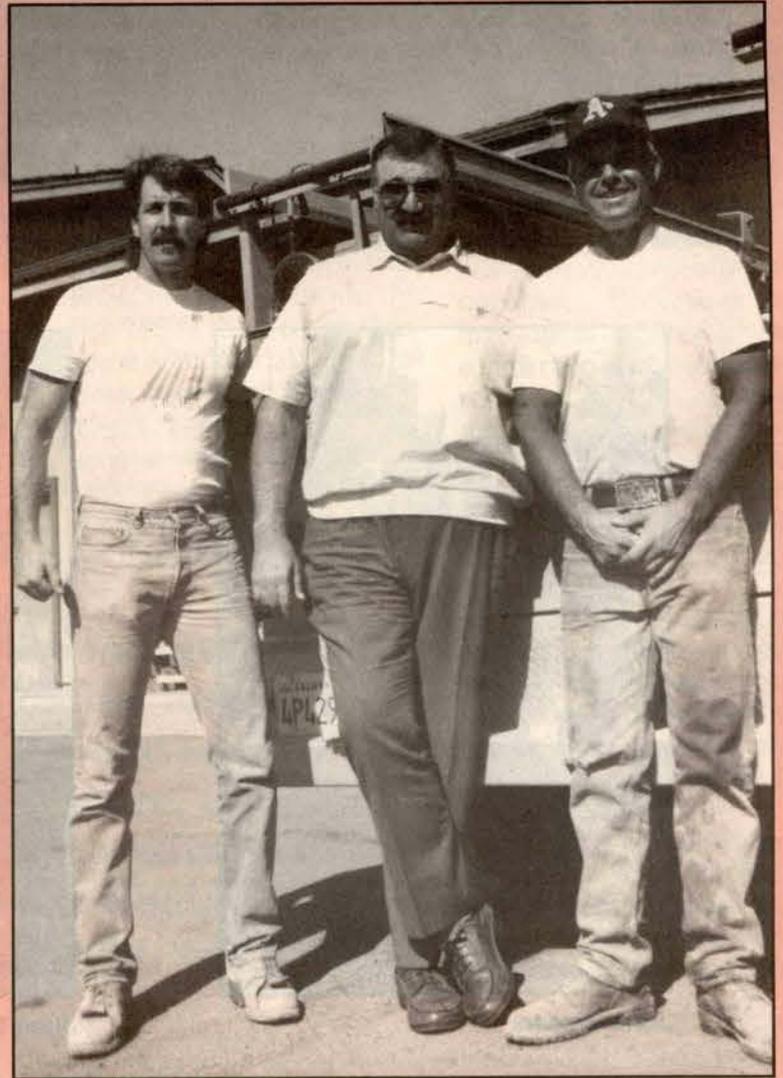
Shirley Jackson, utility foreman's clerk



At left, from left: Carlos Mier, Bob Harmeyer, Allen Weber.



At right, from left: Don Freeman, Local 1245 Business Rep. Bob Choate, and Tim Cruise.



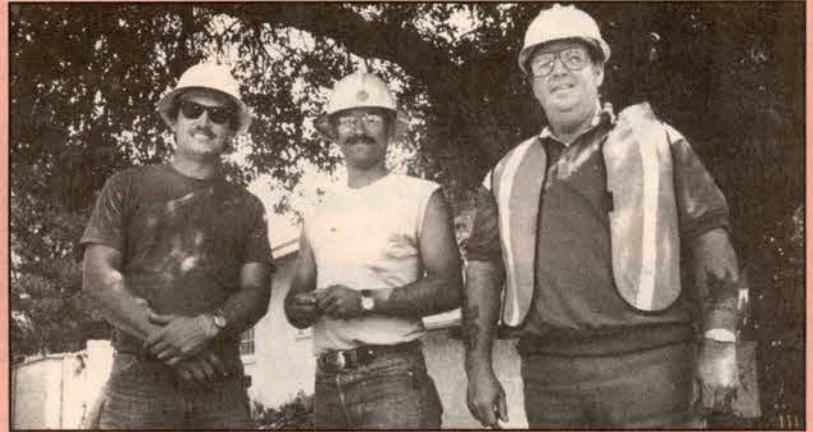
# Making time for safety



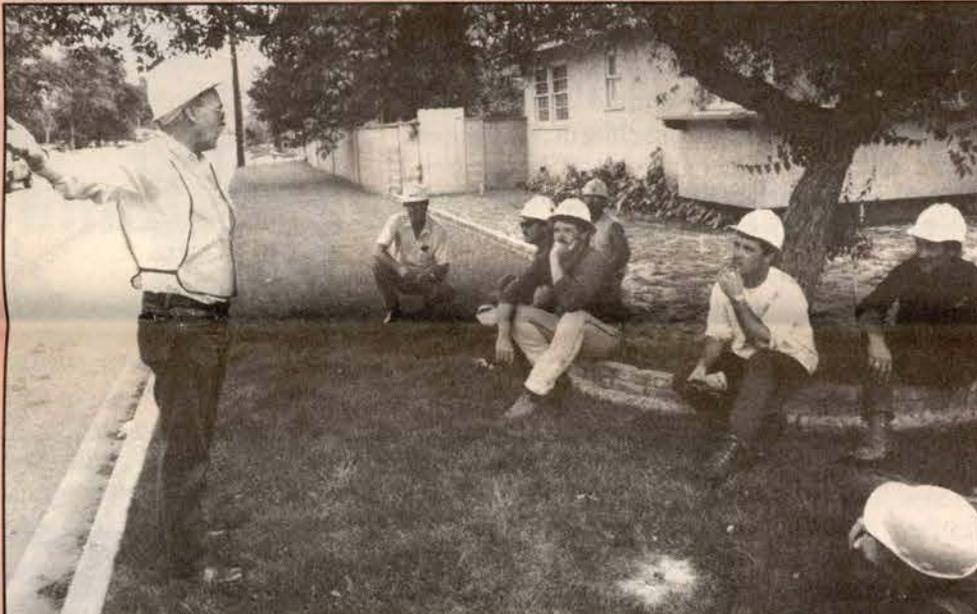
**M**embers of Local 1245 in Outside Line Construction took time out for a safety meeting with a Sturgeon Electric safety representative while working a job on Rayen Street in Los Angeles last year.

An on-going commitment to safety is a key factor in the high productivity of union contractors as compared to non-union contractors, according to Local 1245 Business Rep Bobby Blair. For the crew members who work around live lines, a commitment to safety can literally mean the difference between life and death.

Working the job were Jeff Meuir, (IBEW Local 357); John Weaver, a 25-year union member; Juan DeLoera, a second step apprentice; Brent Felts, an 11-year union member; Dallas Felts, nine years; Steve Howe, 33 years; and John Edmonson, a 23-year IBEW member working out of Local 266 in Phoenix.



Above, from left: Brent Felts, Dallas Felts, John Edmonson. Top (in bucket) from left: Brent Felts, Dallas Felts.



Union members (seated, from left): Business Rep Bobby Blair, Brent Felts, Lonnie Peterson, Dallas Felts, Jeff Meuir, Steve Howe, and John Weaver.



## Outside Line Construction



John Weaver



Juan DeLoera



Jeff Meuir

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

# SIXTEENTH ANNUAL SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

IBEW LOCAL UNION 1245

Saturday, May 22 & Sunday, May 23, 1993  
Willow Pass Park, Concord, California



## Four Divisions

- Women's
- Coed (Minimum 3 women on field)
- Men's "D"
- 35 & Older (Minimum 5, 35 or older on field)

**Women Encouraged to Participate!**

*Family Members Eligible!*

Individual Trophies for the 1st Place Teams

Team Trophies for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd in all Divisions

Winner of "D" Division to Advance to State Industrial Championship

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**Ed Caruso**  
**(510) 933-6060**

*USSA Umpires Provided*

### Local Union 1245's 16th Annual Slow Pitch Softball Tournament May 22 and May 23, 1993

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1992 Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print:

1. _____	11. _____
2. _____	12. _____
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Men's D  
Coed  
Women's  
35 & Older  
(Circle One)

Entry Fee: \$155  
Final Deadline: May 14, 1993, 10 a.m. at Local 1245 Headquarters in Walnut Creek  
Make Checks Payable to: Ed Caruso  
P.O. Box 4790  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

## PG&E restructuring

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to the same degree as it has in the past," McNally told the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Commerce on March 1.

### Retirement Incentives

While the union continues to monitor legislative activity that could lead to further deregulation of utilities, the immediate problem is to deal with the restructuring set in motion by PG&E last month.

The union hopes to negotiate voluntary retirement incentives (VRI) and voluntary severance incentives for bargaining unit employees targeted for termination. The union would seek similar incentives for employees whose jobs are threatened by the telephone service consolidation.

"We've tentatively agreed to the early bargaining be-

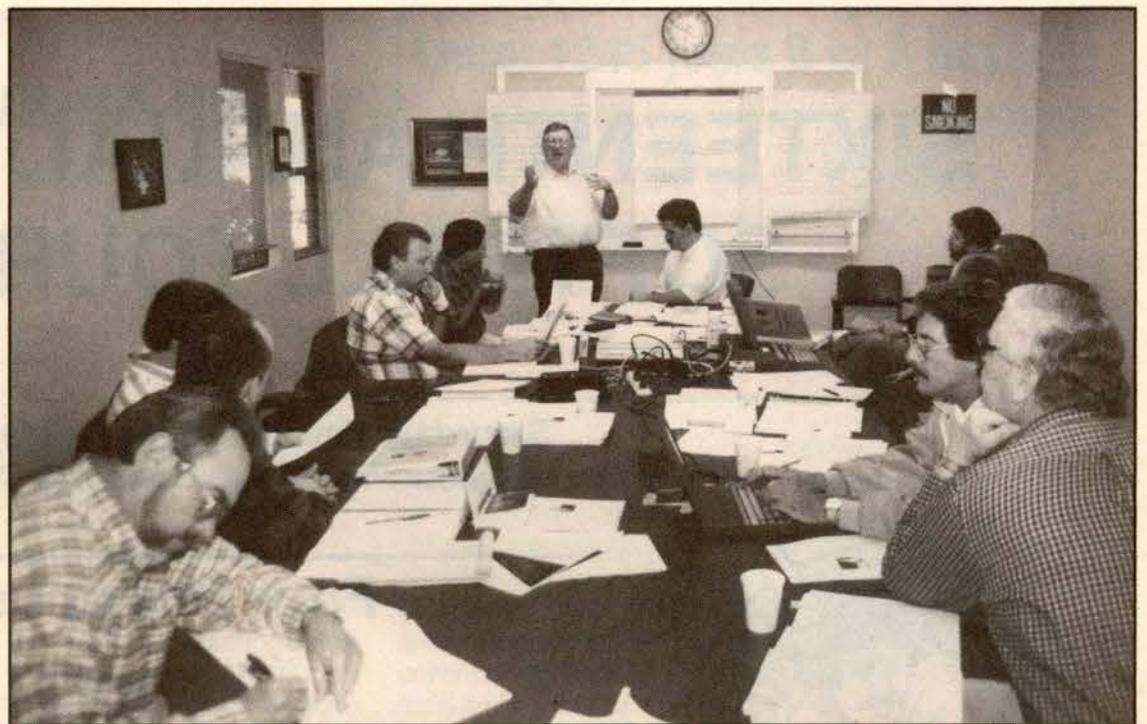
cause of these threats to job security," said Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell. "It's possible that bargaining could be wrapped up as early as July 1."

The shortened time frame, Mitchell said, means the union will probably have to narrow the focus of bargaining in order to get quick action on the job security issues.

"We'll probably try to move up the effective date of some provisions so that we don't come in with 'too little, too late' for those folks who are facing the possibility of being laid off," Mitchell said.

The union is now in the process of establishing its bargaining committee and talks could begin as early as April.

The last opportunity for members to have direct in-



Members of the IBEW/PG&E Technology Committee meet in the Local 1245 hall in Walnut Creek to examine the effects of technological change on the PG&E workforce.

put into the bargaining is at the March unit meetings, now underway. Bargaining proposals approved by any unit meeting will automatically be forwarded to the bargaining committee for consideration.

### Goodbye ENCON

In its restructuring plan, PG&E immediately chopped six officers and targeted about 50 manager and department head positions for elimination. In all, PG&E will get rid of about 11% of its current 26,600 employees.

The company is also eliminating its Engineering and Construction business unit and transferring some of its functions to other business units.

Chairman Clarke asserted that PG&E does not require a centralized engineering and construction capability because PG&E is no longer designing and building power plants and other projects. However, this aspect of PG&E's restructuring came under sharp questioning by the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Commerce.

Committee chairwoman Gwen Moore challenged the notion that PG&E is getting out of the construction business. She noted that PG&E has established a joint venture with Bechtel Corp.—called US Generating Co.—to build power plants in other parts of the country, projects

that state agencies have no authority to regulate.

"It sounds to me like plain old privatizing," said Moore.

Privatization, of course, was the watchword of the Reagan and Bush administrations, which sought to turn over a host of public resources to be developed—some say exploited—for private profit.

Although investor-owned utilities like PG&E have always been in business to generate profits for their stockholders, they have traditionally been regulated by state agencies in order to insure the public's access to an essential resource: affordable power. In exchange for submitting to regulation—including regulation of profits—utilities were given monopoly control of particular geographical markets.

Federal deregulation seeks to change the system by permitting independent power producers (IPPs) to compete in the utilities' traditional markets. Because their profits are not regulated by the states, IPPs hold a powerful fascination for utilities.

### Piece of the Action

Utilities, in fact, want a piece of that action for themselves.

That's why companies like PG&E are establishing unregulated subsidiaries to build new power plants, even as PG&E is supposedly giving up the construction business.

However, members of the Assembly utilities committee worry that a restructuring plan that's good for PG&E's shareholders may not be so good for California workers.

"The rhetoric [about efficiency] sounds real nice," said committee Vice-chairwoman Diane Martinez, "but when you get down to reality you end up with a lot of people in the unemployment line."

### Beware Retail Wheeling

Business Manager McNally warned the Assembly members that federal law now permits states to carry deregulation even further.

Large corporate customers hope California will authorize "retail wheeling", which would permit large consumers of energy to cut deals directly with power producers for discounted prices. If this is allowed to happen, more of the rate burden will be shifted onto residential ratepayers.

What the Assembly needs to think about, McNally said, is "how we're going to provide energy to all consumers, not just large users."

When the approaching round of bargaining is concluded, the battle over utility deregulation will continue. The outcome of that fight will determine whether California remains a state with a stable utility industry, or whether we face a future of higher rates, more layoffs, and reduced service.

## Symons leaves E-Board

From PAGE ONE

before us," said Symons. "There were many people in this union who made personal sacrifices so we can have what we have now."

Symons was first appointed as recording secretary in 1979 and was easily re-elected to the post in subsequent elections. Prior to that she served on the Advisory Council, as clerical member at large.

She was first approached to join the union in 1964, shortly after hiring on at PG&E. She declined, thinking she could take care of herself.

Four years later, though, she watched the company deny a job bid to a woman co-worker. It offended her sense of fair play and she complained to management. The complaint fell on deaf ears.

That's when she asked shop steward Ken Lohre for help. When he said he would, Symons told him: "Send me a card."

About a year later, this time as a union member, she confronted management about a disciplinary

action she thought was unfair.

"They said, 'You're not a shop steward so you can't do anything,'" Symons remembered. "So I called [then-Business Rep.] Orville Owen and said I wanted to be a shop steward and it just kind of snowballed."

Her career with PG&E has taken her from customer services in San Jose to operating clerical in Cupertino to operating clerical in Santa Rosa to foreman's clerk in Geyserville. But through all these changes, one thing has remained constant—her commitment to the union.

That commitment continues. Symons plans to stay on as chair of Unit 3712 in Santa Rosa, where she wants to help get younger members more involved.

And she'll also apply her talents to a new project. Symons was recently appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve on the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women.

Local 1245 can assure the Sonoma Supervisors that they've made an excellent choice.