

# 1245

International Brotherhood  
Of Electrical Workers  
Local 1245, AFL-CIO  
September 1993  
Vol. XLII No. 9

# UTILITY REPORTER

Honor Labor  
Sept. 6, 1993

## To leave or not to leave: that is the question

**Anxiety mounts at PG&E as deadline for  
Voluntary Retirement draws near**

By Eric Wolfe

**D**uring the next few weeks, nearly 2,000 PG&E employees represented by Local 1245 must decide whether to accept a package of Voluntary Retirement Incentives (VRI) and leave the company for good.

To leave or not to leave: that is the question.

It is a deeply personal question, requiring long-time employees to think about what they would do if PG&E was no longer a part of their weekly routine. And how they would get by if a union-scale wage was no longer a part of their weekly income.

At the same time, leaving is more than just a personal question. An individual's decision to stay or leave ultimately will affect the lives of fellow union members. If enough employees elect to go out voluntarily, others

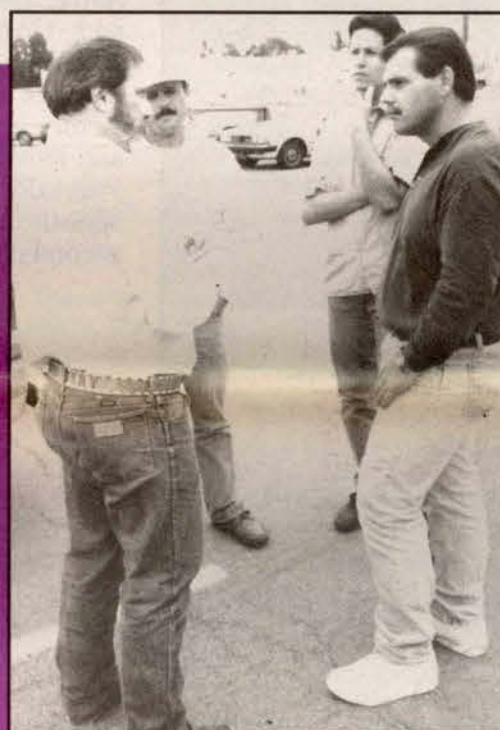
will be spared the trauma of being laid off.

This unprecedented upheaval in the lives of PG&E employees was set in motion last February when the company announced plans to shed jobs and restructure its operations. During General Bargaining in April and May, Local 1245 negotiated VRI and Voluntary Severance provisions in an effort to avert forced layoffs.

Company documents suggest that PG&E will attempt to eliminate about 1500 bargaining unit jobs, perhaps as early as this autumn. If that figure proves to be correct, a large majority of those eligible for VRI would need to leave in order to prevent others from being laid off.

"I think they should all go," said Bruce Sampson, a 55-year-old T&D driver currently working as a field

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**DISCUSSING DOWNSIZING**  
Business Rep. Gary Hughes (left) discusses downsizing with Mike Echeveria (steward) and Tony Walker, both meter readers, and Apprentice Lineman Louie Changaris, at the PG&E yard in Salinas.

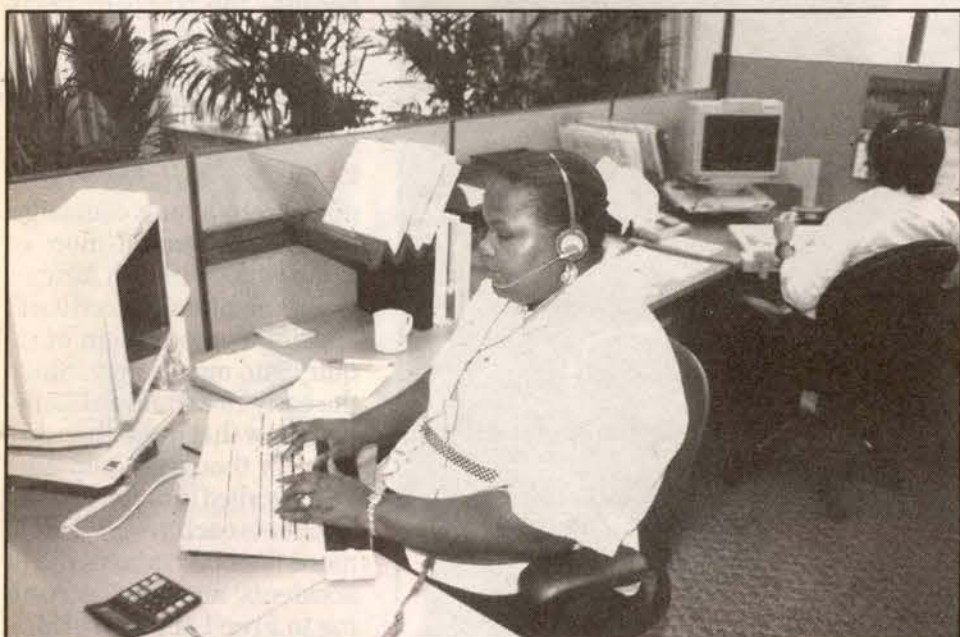
## Service reps test new workstations

**C**ustomer service representatives last month began testing equipment to be used in PG&E's new regional telephone centers.

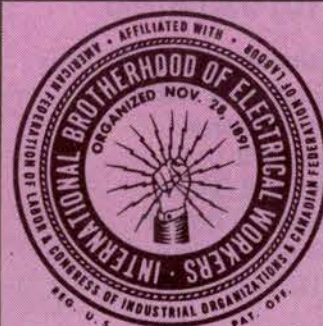
Under the terms of a Letter Agreement between Local 1245 and PG&E, the test period is designed to give employees a chance to try out new equipment at mock workstations located at the PG&E San Jose service center at 111 Almaden.

"We are hopeful that the company will want to do all it can to maximize employee comfort and safety at the new telephone centers," said Local 1245 Assistant Busi-

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PG&E Customer Service Rep. Carolyn Dorsey tries out a mock workstation.



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## CALENDAR

September 9  
VRI Enrollment Deadline  
for Oct. 1 Retire Date

September 11  
Sierra Pacific Power  
Stewards Conference  
Reno, Nev.

September 11  
Central Coast/Moss  
Landing  
Stewards Conference  
Monterey, Ca.

September 17  
VRI Enrollment Deadline  
for Nov. 1 Retire Date

September 24  
Chico-Area  
Pin Dinner

September 25  
Chico-Area  
Stewards Conference

Financial Planning  
Seminars for September:  
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WIPA

**Workers here and abroad****Rolling the union on...**

**Unpaid Work:** The Belgian retailer Delhaize is heavily unionized in Europe, but refuses to bargain with employees at Food Lion, a Delhaize subsidiary in the U.S. The UFCW says Food Lion forces employees to do

massive amounts of unpaid work. An international union federation says Delhaize's unionized employees in Europe should get ready to take action in support of the Food Lion workers.

**Protest in India:** Tens of thousands of workers in India were arrested in a single day in India last month during nationwide protests called by the leftist Center of Indian Trade Unions against the government's free-market economic policies.

**Boots Boycotted:** Acme Boot Co. has been added to the AFL-CIO's boycott list after the Farley Industries' subsidiary closed its factory in Clarksville, Tenn. and moved its operations to Puerto Rico. Acme moved despite the fact that 1992 was its second-most profitable year.

**APPOINTMENTS****PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY****San Jose Mock Work Station Committee (LA 93-56-PGE)**

Sheryl Guerriero  
Leslie Davis  
Chris Habecker

**HENKELS & McCOY****Henkels & McCoy General Bargaining Committee**

Teage Cadez

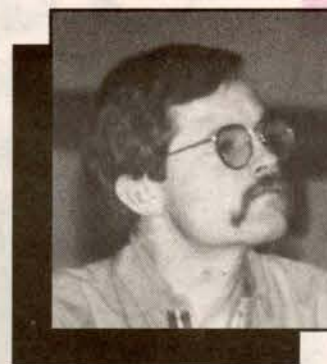
**NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT****Nevada Irrigation District Negotiating Committee**

William Gainer  
Jeff Huey  
Tom Thurn  
Tom Santos

**LASSEN MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT****Lassen MUD Bargaining Committee**

Richard Carr  
John Deal  
Lorie Hamilton  
Kent (Kelly) Holmes

**BARTLOW HONORED** Advisory Council member Duane Bartlow, an employee of Merced Irrigation District, was honored at the Advisory Council's August meeting for his many years of service to the union, which included over two decades as the Advisory Council representative for Irrigation Districts. Business Manager Jack McNally presented Bartlow with a plaque lauding his commitment to the union.

**Death claims Terry Jones**

Local 1245 mourns the death of Terry Jones, Advisory Council member representing Coast Valleys.

Jones, a mechanic at Diablo Canyon Power Plant, was described by Business Rep. Mike Haentjens as "well-liked and very dedicated to the union."

Jones had been a steward since 1988 and was serving his second term on the Advisory Council. He served on the Fitness for Duty Committee and the Plant Advisory Committee at Diablo Canyon.

Jones' background was in the nuclear Navy.

The company's boots include "Acme," "Dan Post" and "Dingo."

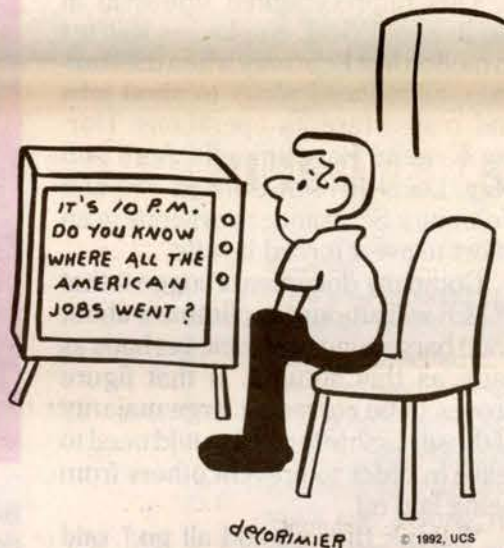
**IBEW Sues:** The IBEW filed a class action suit against the Central Illinois Public

Service Co., which locked out 1,500 IBEW Local 702 members, among other unionists, in May. The lockout occurred after the utility reneged on a health care package that both parties had agreed to, Union Advocate reported. The IBEW suit alleges the utility has violated federal racketeering statutes and ERISA.

**Incentive Pay:** Employees may not give much thought to why some companies offer "incentive pay", but management has given the matter plenty of thought. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Robert Gore of Towers Perrin believes incentive plans enable companies to offer lower salary increases and avoid permanent costs.

**BMW Blasted:** The Sheet Metal Workers and other unions are calling for a boycott of automaker BMW because the company plans to pay workers at its new South Carolina plant about half what it pays its German workforce.

**Safety Inquiry:** Finally giving into a long campaign by the National Union of Mineworkers, South Africa's government announced it will appoint a commission of inquiry into mine safety. Since the early 1940s, official statistics show that more than one in every thousand gold miners have died in underground accidents each year. Overall, more than 600 miners die in accidents annually, according to Free Labour World.





## Management's rumors serve no good purpose

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

Now that the contract with PG&E has been ratified, the wheels have been set in motion to implement the Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI) program. Unfortunately, some local management at PG&E seems hell-bent on instigating as much anxiety about displacement and layoffs as possible.

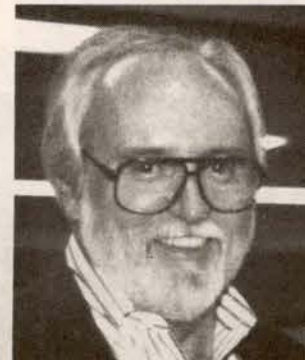
Apparently these local managers think that the bargaining unit employees should suffer the severance agony to the same degree that they have. Remember, managers did not have the protection of a union contract when downsizing hit management ranks earlier this year.

How has local management attempted to spread anxiety? For one thing, they have held meetings with bargaining unit employees where they stated that crews will be eliminated. Or that a certain number of positions will be eliminated. Or that a particular headquarters may be shut down.

It appears they will say anything to raise the anxiety level. At a time when people are already worried enough, this is uncalled-for behavior. It is not only cruel, it creates an atmosphere in which the company may find it more difficult to achieve the kind of productivity it desires.

I find it interesting that some local management is able to precisely state the number of crews or the number of positions that have to be eliminated even though no one at this point knows what the VRI or Voluntary Severance enrollment will be. These managers apparently believe they shouldn't let facts get in the way of their ill-informed opinions.

Obviously these managers have not taken the time and trouble to find out what the new labor agreement



provides with respect to Voluntary Retirement and Severance. Nor have they had the courtesy to remain quiet regarding things they know nothing about.

Let's talk about the facts that are known. The recently-ratified labor agreement provides mechanisms for bargaining unit members to voluntarily leave the company—VRI and Voluntary Severance.

These provisions were settled upon after extensive negotiations. They were a compromise on the union Negotiating Committee's original proposal, which was to apply the VRI across-the-board to all bargaining unit employees.

The company flat would not agree to across-the-board application. They stated that they would agree to apply VRI to those business units, departments or groups where, as a result of re-organization, they intended to downsize and lay-off, but not to areas where they did not intend to downsize and lay-off.

The Negotiating Committee was disappointed they could not get the company to agree to a system-wide application of VRI. But the union negotiators felt that protecting the 1900-plus employees in the targeted groups would go a long way toward reducing the number of employees who would be thrown out in the street by the company.

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YOU'RE FROM A LARGE CORPORATION SUPPORTING THE FREE TRADE DEAL.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO SUGGESTIONS THAT WE'LL JUST BE EXPORTING OUR JOBS AND POLLUTION TO MEXICO IN EXCHANGE FOR BIGGER PROFITS?

GOOD!

AHEM. I MEAN, NONSENSE!

I THOUGHT FOR A MINUTE YOU WERE MY BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Tom Toles  
The Buffalo News  
Universal Press Syndicate

## Unit Meetings post schedule changes

Please note the following Unit Meeting changes:

**Unit 1117, Wasco**--Meetings for the remainder of 1993 will be on the following dates (all Thursdays): Sept. 16, Oct. 14, Nov. 18, Dec. 16. Time and location remain the same.

**Unit 1127, Taft**--Meetings for the remainder of 1993 will be on the following dates (all Tuesdays): Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 16, Dec. 14. Time and location remain the same.

**Unit 1128, Lemoore**--Meetings for the remainder of 1993 will be on the following dates (all Mondays): Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 15, Dec. 13. Time and location remain the same.

**Unit 1311, Barstow**--The November meeting will be on Nov. 3. Time and location remain the same.

**Unit 1512, Belmont**--The new location for meetings is the Local 505 hall, 1521 Rawlings Rd., in Belmont. Time and dates remain the same.

**Unit 2512, Angels Camp**--The new location for meetings is Angels Utica Parks, Highway 49. Time and dates remain the same.

**Unit 2517, Sonora**--The new location for meetings is Stuff Pizza, 14721 Mono Way. Time and dates remain the same.

**Unit 3011, Sacramento Regional Transit**--The new location for

meetings is the Local 340 hall, 2840 El Centro Rd., Sacramento (see map). Time and dates remain unchanged.

**Unit 3911, Sacramento Municipal Utility District**--The new location for meetings is the Local 340 hall, 2840 El Centro Rd., Sacramento (see map). Time and dates remain unchanged.

**Unit 4421, Davey Tree, Belmont**--The new location for meetings is 1153 Chess Dr., Foster City. Time and dates remain the same.

**Unit 4911, Outside Line/Sacramento**--The new location for meetings is the Local 340 hall, 2840 El Centro Rd., Sacramento (see map). Time and dates remain unchanged.

Also please note that several Local 1245 unit meetings are still seeking new meet-

ing places to replace their former meeting places at Roundtable Pizza, which is now on the California AFL-CIO boycott list. If your unit is among those listed below, call your union business representative to find out the new location.

**Unit 1411, City of Santa Clara**--call Jane Brunner, 510-653-0651.

**Unit 2317, Antioch**--call Ed Caruso, 510-432-6578.

**Unit 2516, Lodi**--call Bob Gibbs, 209-223-2207.

**Unit 3711, Marin County**--call Larry Pierce, 707-578-7274.

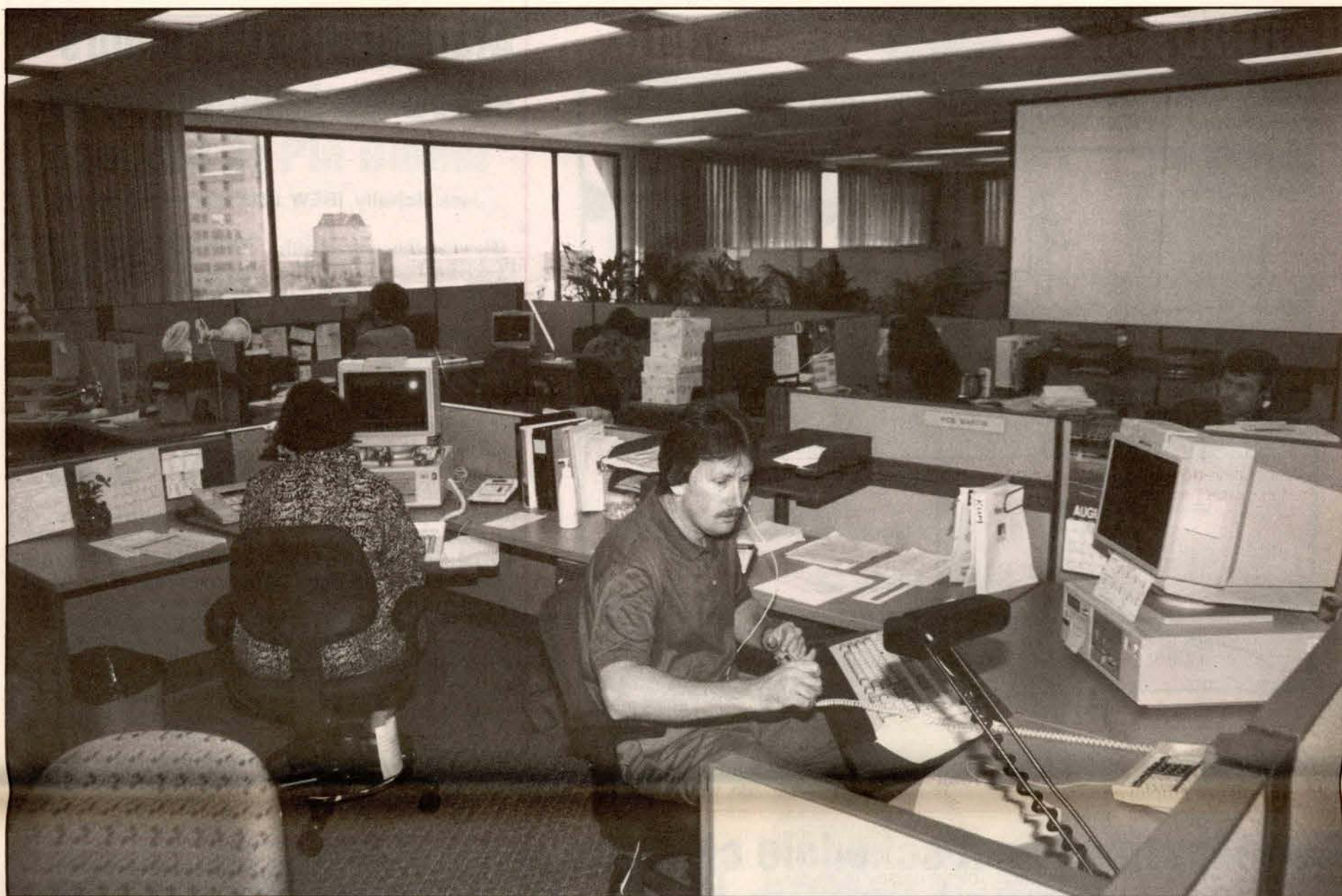
**Unit 3712, Santa Rosa**--call Larry Pierce, 707-578-7274.

**Unit 3812, Vacaville**--call Wayne Greer, 916-921-6664, or Ed Fortier, 916-878-0991.



Map to  
Local 340 hall  
in Sacramento





The floor plan for the new call centers puts service representatives together in a common area. The extra space and natural lighting is generally appreciated, but some service representatives worry that noise levels will pose a problem. (Photos: Eric Wolfe)

## Customer service representatives try out new workstations

From PAGE ONE

ness Manager Dorothy Fortier. "We expect that our members will provide useful feedback regarding the mock workstations and that the company will not attempt to pinch pennies at the expense of the employees' health."

A survey conducted by the union three years ago revealed a disturbingly high incidence of confirmed and suspected cumulative trauma disorders among VDT operators at PG&E. The union has negotiated protections for those employees and continues to monitor health-related problems associated with VDT use.

Only a few days into the test period, which began Aug. 2, the reps were already forming opinions about the workstations PG&E is considering for its telephone centers.

"The equipment is going

to be better," said Tom Vance, part of the first group of service reps selected to try out the workstations. To demonstrate his point, Vance utilized the swivel arm on his monitor to move the screen into a new position.

Vance, who is prone to back problems, prefers his screen to be positioned relatively high. With a moveable screen and a chair that is easily adjustable, he thinks the new workstation will mean less stress on his back.

While the service reps generally had words of praise for adjustable chairs and screens, there were differences of opinion on many aspects of the workstations.

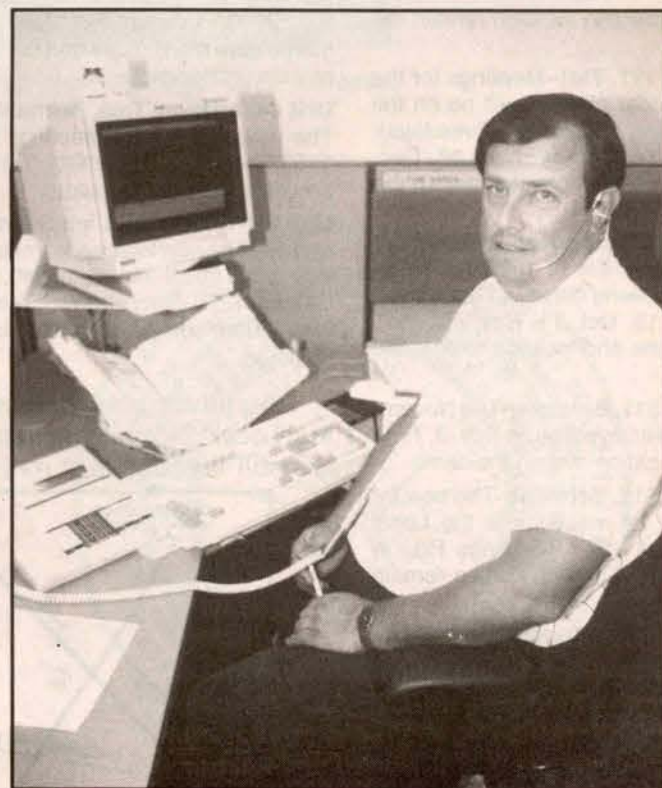
And understandably so. Even though the work areas are designed to meet the VDT requirements previously established in a union-negoti-

ated Letter Agreement, no general standard will exactly meet the needs of each individual. To maximize efficiency and comfort—the science of ergonomics—workstations must be tailored to each individual to the greatest extent possible.

Take the extended table for the keyboard, for example, which allows a service rep to store the keyboard under the desk when not in use. Carolyn Dorsey, a 21-year union member, likes the extended table concept just fine because it places the keyboard in a position that is comfortable for her.

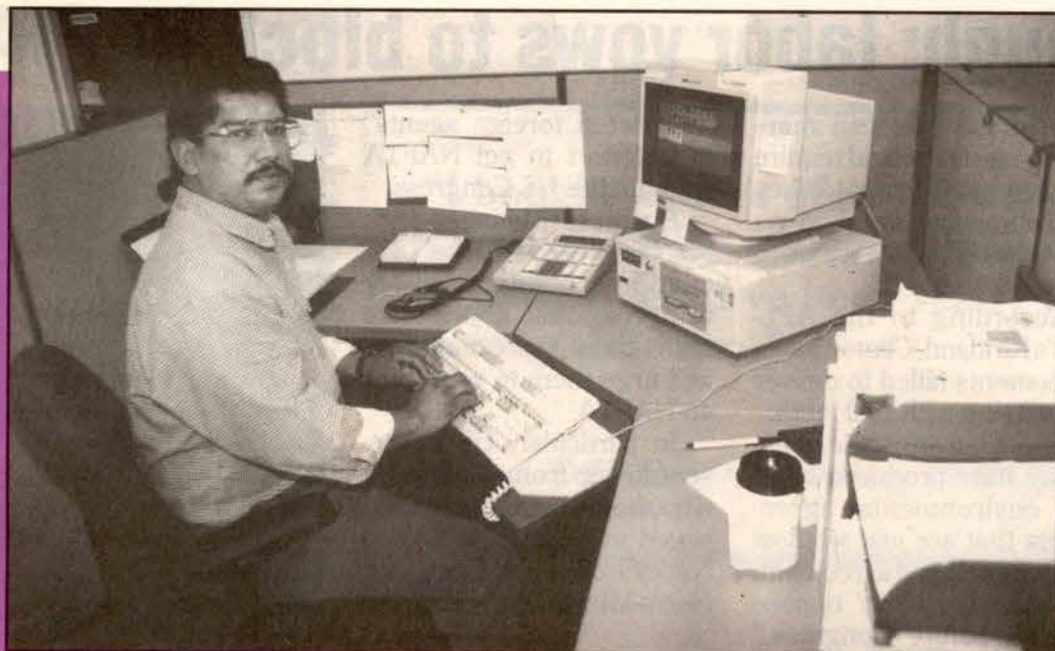
But Delbert Azevedo, a nine-year union member, found that the extended table forces him to sit too far from his desk. He could get closer by moving the keyboard up onto the surface of the main

See NEXT PAGE



Service Representative Tom Vance thinks the workstations will be well-accepted.





Delbert Azevedo found that the extended table forces him to sit farther back from his desk than he wants to be.

**From PAGE FOUR**

desk, but that puts the keyboard above the recommended height.

Likewise, some members preferred workstations where the computer was stored underneath, out of the way, while others liked the computer on the table, within easy reach.

PG&E will use employee feedback in deciding which equipment to include in the standard workstation design. It is not known to what extent the company will be able or willing to alter the standard design to accommodate the different needs of each individual worker.

This points to a fundamental problem with the company's plan to operate at least one center around-the-clock: each workstation will be used by more than one employee, making it more difficult to customize a station to meet any one individual's particular physical needs.

Employees testing the equipment also had varied opinions about the configuration

of the workstations—their placement with respect to one another. At the old service centers, each service rep works in a small cubicle, partitioned off from other reps. At the new center, a cluster of three service reps share a common space without partitions.

**Noise a Problem**

While this creates a more spacious feeling, which is agreeable to some, it also poses a problem: noise.

"The noise level will be more of a problem," said Dorsey. Without partitions, she said, "It's like you're closer together."

While noise levels might be considered simply an annoyance in some jobs, for a service rep who spends hours listening to customers, high levels of background noise could impair efficiency.

The workstation configuration also creates another problem, in the opinion of Azevedo: the availability of lead clerks to answer questions.

Currently, Azevedo said, lead clerks are located at the end of rows, where service reps can easily consult with them when technical problems arise. In the new configuration, lead clerks will be in remote locations, so all contact will be over the phone.

"It's going to be harder to get hold of them," said Azevedo, who worries about a scenario in which reps with problems only get busy signals when they call for assistance.

"I don't think there's going to be enough lead clerks," said Azevedo. "You can't have too many of those people."

The test period is scheduled to run to Sept. 10. The joint company-union committee is scheduled to issue its evaluation/recommendation by Oct. 15.

Representing the union on the joint committee are Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier and Service Reps Leslie Davis (Belmont), Sheryl Guerriero (San Jose), and Chris Habecker (Fresno).



Currently Service Reps work in individual cubicles.

**"We expect that our members will provide useful feedback regarding the mock workstations and that the company will not attempt to pinch pennies at the expense of the employees' health."**

*Dorothy Fortier  
Assistant Business Manager*



PG&E plans to consolidate all customer phone services into four regional centers in San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento and Fresno, ultimately affecting the jobs of virtually all service representatives at local service centers, such as Shop Steward Mike Cummings (left) and Kelly Sepulveda, who currently work out of Salinas.





# Side agreements not enough: labor vows to block NAFTA

**L**abor organizations stepped up their opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement last month after seeing the "side agreements" negotiated by the Clinton Administration.

The long-promised side agreements, which were supposed to protect labor and environmental standards, were denounced by AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland as "just window dressing"—designed to win support for the agreement rather than to correct the agreement's many shortcomings.

The side agreements "have no teeth," declared Kirkland. "They do nothing to make NAFTA acceptable to working people."

Kirkland said Clinton failed to correct the problems in NAFTA, which was originally negotiated by the Bush Administration with the leaders of Mexico and Canada.

Under the side agreements, the three countries would set up environmental and labor commissions that would monitor whether countries were complying with their own environmental and labor laws. Complaints could be lodged with the commissions.

Ultimately a panel of experts from the three countries would evaluate any complaint. Theoretically, the panel would have the authority to levy fines of up to \$20 million.

Critics of the proposal believe that corporations operating in Mexico would continue violating labor and environmental laws and would view the fines as just another cost of doing business.

"The deal Clinton got contains no practical means of safeguarding worker rights and the environment," said Kirkland. "Once again, our trade negotiations have resulted in protections for money and investment interests but not for working people."

The director of the California Fair Trade Campaign, Craig Merilees, warned members of the Local 1245 Advisory Council last month

that the problem with NAFTA is not the Mexican people—it is the Mexican government.

Mexico, he said, has no free press, no free judiciary, and no independent unions. That helps explain why 4% of the Mexican population controls 90% of the wealth.

Because Mexican wage earners are so poorly paid, they attract US businesses seeking to lower production costs.

"Our strategy has to be to see Mexican wages go up, because otherwise ours are going to go down with them," said Merilees.

A constructive trade agreement would require a

hike in the Mexican minimum wage and would require employers in Mexico to obey environmental laws and respect the rights of workers to organize unions.

According to the AFL-CIO's Kirkland, Clinton's side agreements failed to deliver protections with real teeth.

"Because our trade negotiators have produced labor and environmental agreements that are just window dressing on a bad agreement, we will vigorously oppose NAFTA before Congress," said Kirkland.

Merilees said the Mexican government had already spent \$46 million through

"registered foreign agents" in an effort to get NAFTA through the US Congress.

Business Manager Jack McNally urged all Local 1245 members residing in key Congressional districts to write their representatives and urge them to vote "No" on NAFTA.

In particular, US Representatives from California who should be contacted and urged to reject NAFTA are Nancy Pelosi, Vic Fazio, and Norm Mineta. Write them at:

Rep. \_\_\_\_\_  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515



Craig Merilees tells Advisory Council: now is the time to contact your US Representative about NAFTA.

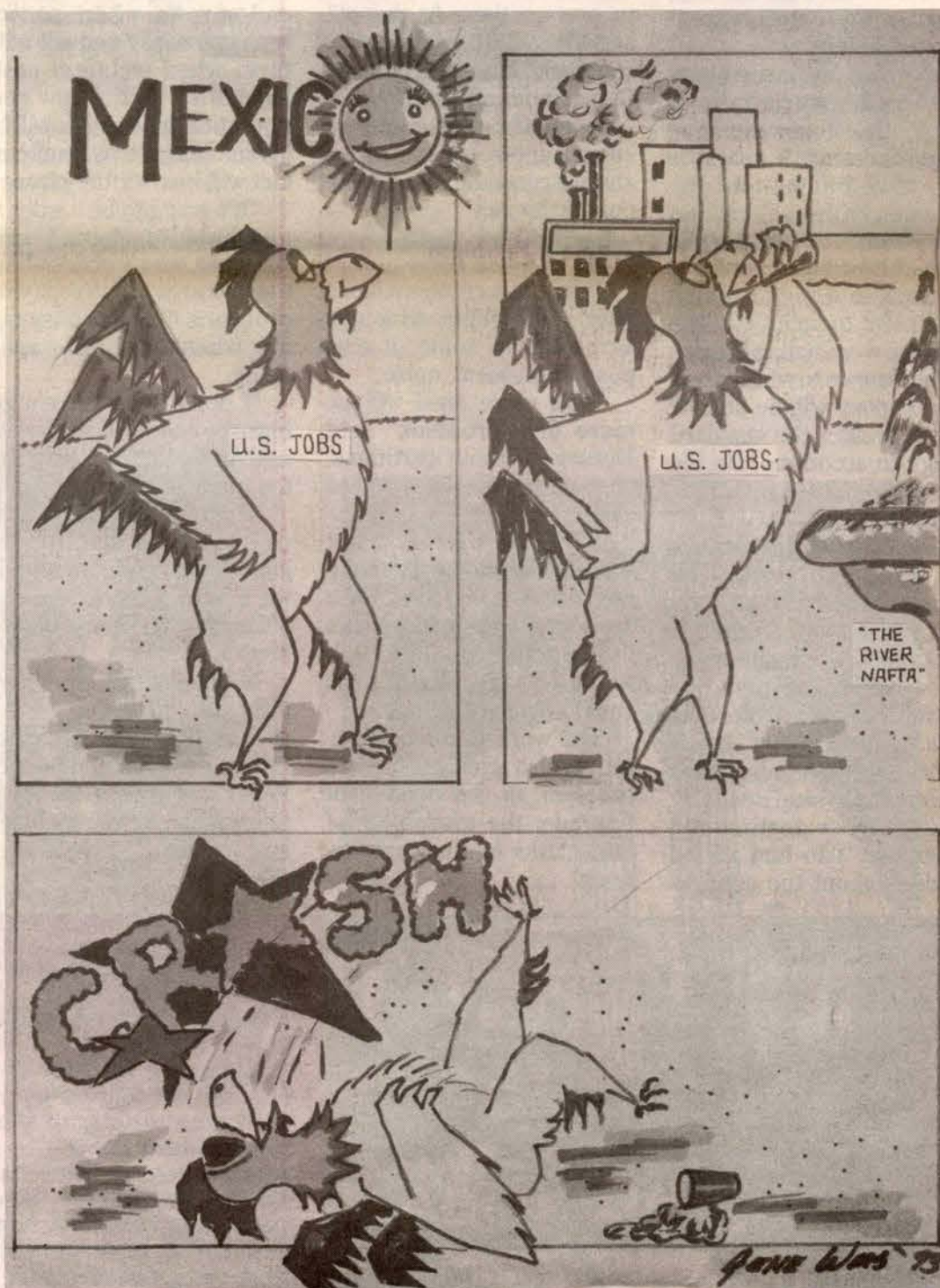
## NAFTA: toxic for workers... and for chickens

**A** chicken that drank from a contaminated canal at a *maquiladora* industrial park quickly found out just how bad the pollution problem is along the US-Mexico border.

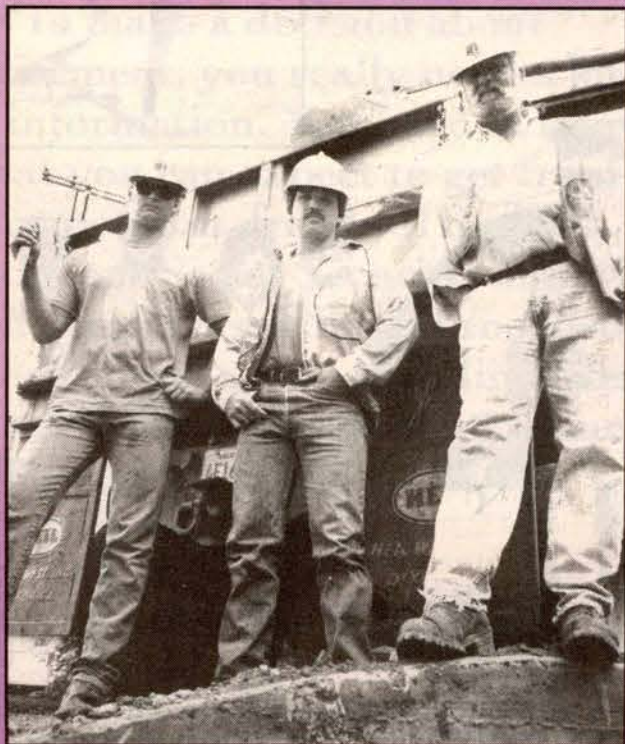
While a US Congressional delegation was taking samples from the polluted stream in Matamoros, Mexico, a chicken walked up to take a drink.

To the astonishment of the Congressional observers, the chicken gagged, coughed up blood, then keeled over dead at the feet of Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio).

Analysis of samples collected by the delegation revealed the presence of mercury, benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, xylenes, sulfur dioxide and methyl mercaptan, among other pollutants.



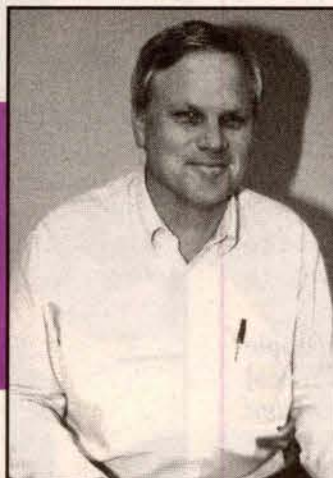
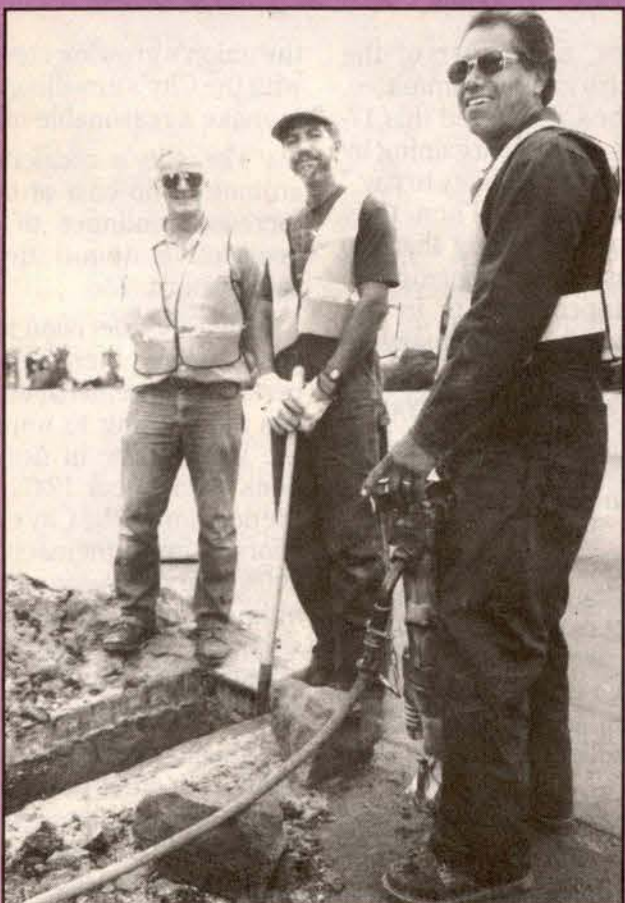




PG&E General Construction gas crew working on Spruce Street in Gridley, Ca. replacing six blocks of gas line recently consists of (above, from left) Gil Thatcher, crew foreman and 23-year union member; Joe Hughes, backhoe operator, 9 years; and Scott Lithgow, truck driver, one year.

**PG&E Gas**

Moving gas mains to make room for an underground electric line along East Alisal St. in Salinas is a crew from the Salinas yard. From left: Russell Orebo, 25-year union member; Richard Rivera, 24 years; and Phil Pajerski, 14 years.



## Steward's Story

**Marty Brutlag**  
Pacific Gas & Electric  
Rogers Flat

## Steward wears many hats

**W**hat's it like to be a union steward for Local 1245?

"There's a bunch of hats you've got to wear," says Marty Brutlag, a Telecommunications Technician for PG&E at Rogers Flat, halfway between Oroville and Quincy.

"Basically, it's trying to represent the brothers and sisters when they have problems with management."

Sometimes during investigations, Brutlag says, management will "bring people in and ask them a bunch of questions." The steward needs to be there "to make sure the person isn't asked something they shouldn't be asked" and to serve as a witness for the employee's statements.

Even though stewards must represent all members with legitimate grievances, Brutlag admits he has little patience for anyone who isn't willing to be productive. In his view, there's a fairly simple equation that defines the respective roles of management and labor:

"They provide us a job and they expect us to work," says Brutlag. "Union and company, it's not always us against them."

When conflicts do arise, Brutlag is the sort of person who would like to see them worked out cooperatively. Last spring, when Brutlag spoke with the Utility Reporter, he described one of the problems currently facing members where he works.

"We are a remote location. We're about an hour from Chico, an hour from Quincy, and an hour from Almenar, and there's no place to go to eat."

It's less of a problem for people working on crews, Brutlag says, because management may go out and suggest a meal break, or offer to bring sandwiches to the crew.

But people who work by themselves may face the prospect of driving up to three hours roundtrip just to get a meal.

"They're pretty conscientious, they want to get the job done and go home," Brutlag maintains, and they don't want to spend their time driving an hour and a half to get a meal and an hour and a half back.

Brutlag has proposed a solution: frozen vacuum-packed microwaveable meals so you "can get something in your gut and continue on working." So far, his proposal hasn't caught on. But he hasn't stopped pushing the idea.

That's another thing you learn when you're a steward: change doesn't always come overnight. It's not enough just to have a good idea. You have to have the patience and the persistence to see things through.

Patience and persistence must be qualities Brutlag has in abundance: he's been a steward for over 15 years and he's still down there in the trenches, trying to make a difference.

While it may sometimes seem like a thankless task, occasionally there are very special rewards for those willing to undertake the role.

"There's always that one person who got fired unjustly because there's a management person out to get them," says Brutlag. "And you really feel good when you can defend somebody like that and get their job back because they were unjustly terminated. That's the rewarding part of being a steward."



## Santa Clara showdown

**W**hen Assembly Bill 702 required the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) to refund excess monies it had collected, union-represented workers employed by the City of Santa Clara figured part of that money belonged to them.

City Council members saw it another way. They wanted to treat the money as public funds.

So how do you get city officials to part with \$7.5 million in cash in an era where money is tight? According to Local 1245 unit chair Jim Hershman, a City of Santa Clara lineman, there was only one way: united action.

That's why Hershman and other Local 1245 members joined forces with eight other bargaining units at the City of Santa Clara to demand that the money be given to the employees.

The unions' claim to the money rested on the fact that the city does not offer a separate retirement benefit to its employees. Instead, employees bargain for a lump-sum "Total Compensation" package that does not distinguish between wages and benefits.

After bargaining for a bottom-line figure, the employees themselves decide what portion goes to wages and what portion to benefits.

So any adjustments by PERS, the unions reasoned, should be applied to the Total Compensation package, not squirreled away by the City for some other use.

Steve Suess, recording secretary for the Local 1245 unit in Santa Clara and a city electrician for over 20 years, helped build the unions' case by researching how the PERS money was handled at other municipalities who bargain "Total Compensation" packages. He discovered

that Monterey and Cupertino returned the PERS money to employees.

But Monterey is Monterey and Santa Clara is Santa Clara, and the Santa Clara City Council seemed determined to keep the money, according to Hershman.

"Knowledgeable people told us that if [employees] didn't have a united front we'd be pissing in the wind," Hershman said.

On June 9 representatives of the nine bargaining units sent a letter to the Director of Personnel Services for the City of Santa Clara declaring that the PERS money "should not be considered public funds" and that the City should "begin disbursement of the PERS refunds immediately according to the terms of the existing MOUs."

MOU, or Memorandum of Understanding, is the term for union contracts in the public sector.

On June 29, the City Council voted 4-3 to return the money to employees. Last month about \$7.2 million was refunded through regular paychecks to the 900 employees in the nine bargaining units. Over \$300,000—representing the interest accumulated during the time the money was in dispute—was refunded by separate checks.

That's several thousand bucks per employee.

Hershman credited Local 1245 Business Rep. Jane Brunner with providing crucial support to the employees' effort. "Jane was my sounding board," said

Hershman. "I'd call and ask what would probably be considered dumb questions, and she'd come back with answers that made me think maybe I'm not so dumb after all."



Jim Hershman



CLEAR CREEK COMMUNITY SERVICE DISTRICT

Local 1245 members extended their agreement with the Clear Creek Community Service District by one year after the District agreed to pick up large increases in medical premiums. The bargaining unit was organized in 1989. "We literally came out of the dark ages when we got a union," said Shop Steward Dick Ordway. Bargaining unit members are (from left): George Hoyt, office technician; Jack McCall, maintenance worker; Skip Born, maintenance worker; Calvin Ciapponi, field maintenance supervisor; Roxanna Sanford, clerk; Roger Schreiber, water treatment plant operator; and Dick Ordway, maintenance worker. Inset: Valene Day, secretary. (Photos: Eric Wolfe)

## City of Redding

### City Councilors won't hike workers' pay, but raise their own salaries by 300%

**C**ity Council members for the City of Redding pleaded poverty in refusing to offer pay raises to Electric Department employees represented by Local 1245. But those budgetary constraints didn't prevent the City Councilors from recently awarding a 300% salary increase to themselves.

A sense of fair play has been missing from contract negotiations between Local 1245 and the City since bargaining began 17 months ago. The justification for a wage increase is simple: it has been over two years since workers in the Electric Department have seen a cost-of-living increase.

"Members are determined to be heard and treated with economic fairness," declared Business Rep. Jack

Osburn, a member of the union bargaining committee.

"The City started this 17-month saga of bargaining by stating their inability to pay," said Osburn. "Then they switched to saying that the City just doesn't want to make any improvements in the agreement, while demanding major take-aways."

Among the takeaways proposed by the City are a two-tier system of wages and benefits and forced furloughs.

To date, the union has conducted 21 meetings in which bargaining committee members have fought off the City's demands. Serving on the committee, along with Osburn, are Ray Thomas, Joe Kropholler, and John Roberts.

Recently, Assistant Business Manager Perry Zimmerman attended a negotiating session, reflecting

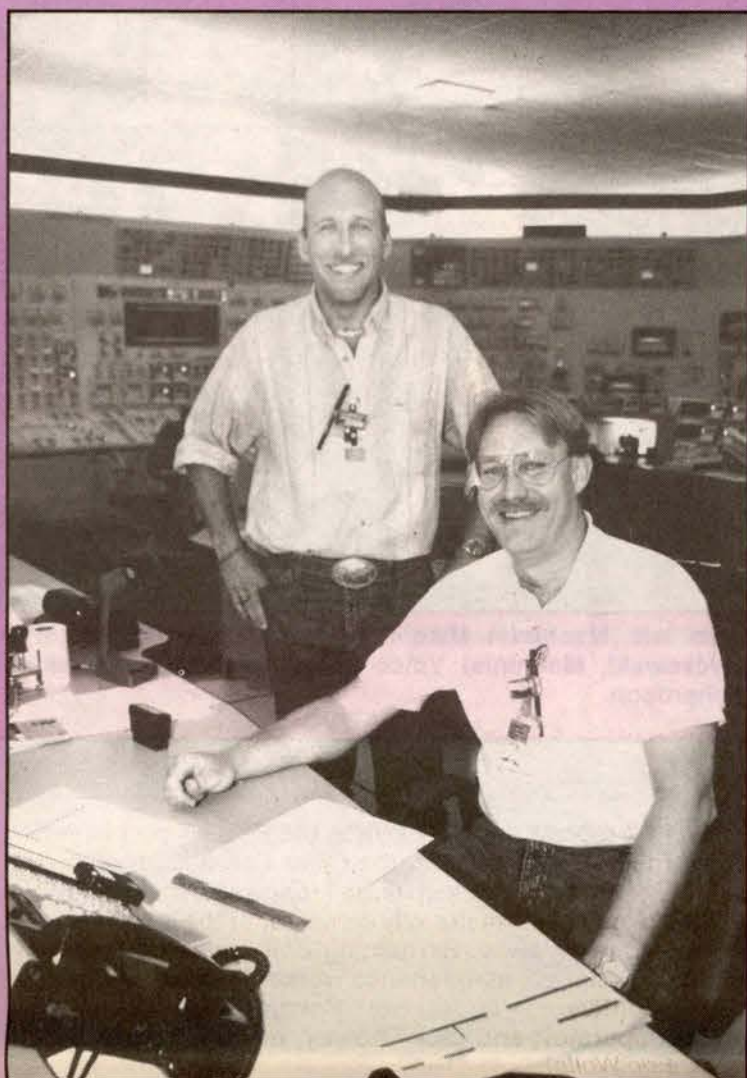
the union's growing concern with the City's unwillingness to make a reasonable offer.

"The City's recalcitrant attitude of no cost of living increase continues to stall productive negotiations," said Osburn.

The City's decision to approve salary increases for certain management employees did nothing to improve the atmosphere in negotiations with Local 1245. But the decision by the City Councilors to grant themselves a 300% salary increase was the ultimate insult to the hard-working employees who maintain the City's electric system, according to Osburn.

"Quality employee recruitment from other utility companies and employee retention in the future are going to be dimmed by the lack of economic fairness."





Craig Harvey, control operator (left) and K.R. Thompson, senior control operator.

## Diablo Canyon: a top performer

In July the Nuclear Regulatory Commission placed PG&E's Diablo Canyon Power Plant on its list of top performing plants—the fourth consecutive time that Diablo Canyon has enjoyed this distinction.

Highly-skilled employees represented by Local 1245 were a key factor in Diablo Canyon's outstanding performance. Among other criteria, the NRC evaluates plants for operational safety and problem resolution.

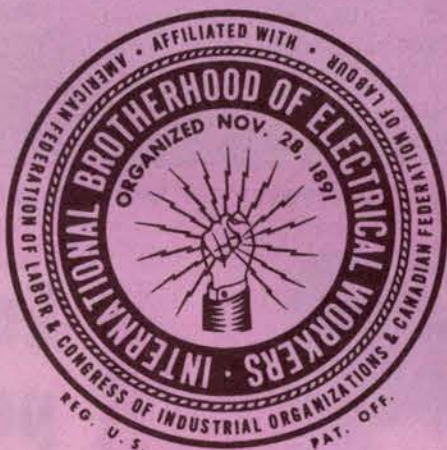
Life has returned to normal for regular employees at the plant following a refueling outage of Unit 2 last spring. The refueling, completed in record time, attracted approximately 3,000 temporary workers to the plant.

Permanent and temporary workers alike turned their attention during the outage to the complex process of shutting down the reactor, disassembling it, refueling it, and putting it back together again.

In addition to the refueling, the outage provided an opportunity to conduct inspections and perform a variety of maintenance tasks.

This year's refueling of Unit 2 brought with it a significant reduction in radiation exposure to workers.

Local 1245 represents approximately 650 workers at Diablo Canyon. Additional photos appear on pages 10-11.



Lynn Alison Moon, routine plant clerk and shop steward.





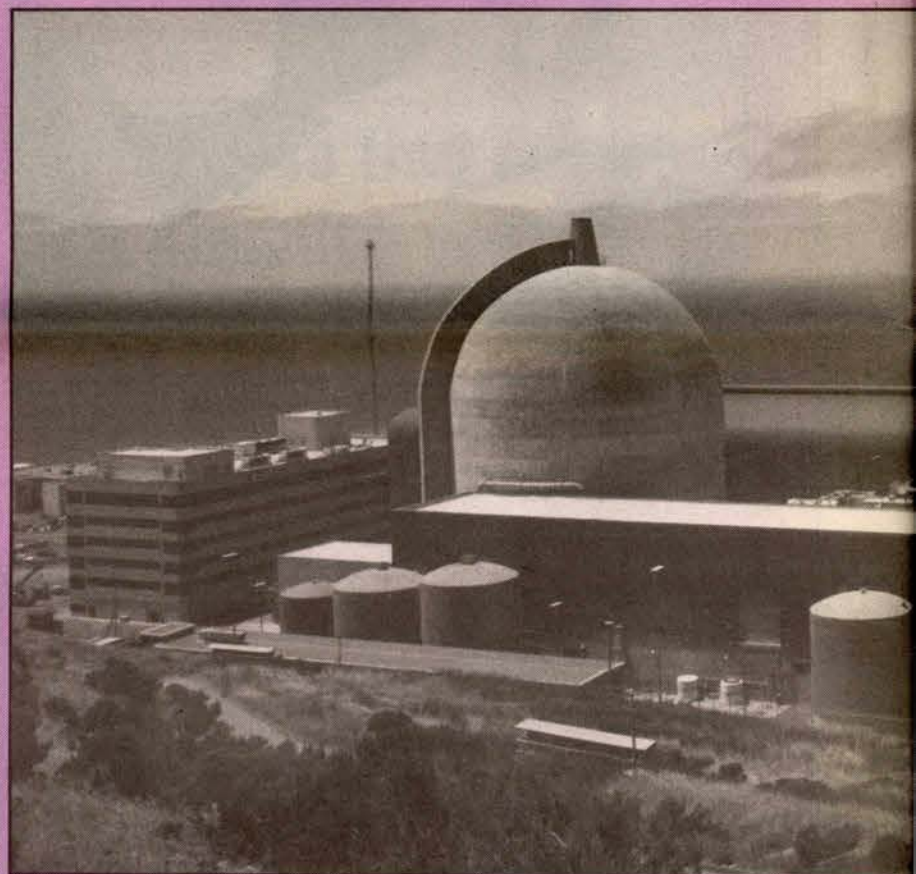
Control Operator John Whetsler (left) and Shift Foreman Steve Hiett. To assure continuous monitoring of the reactors' operation, an operator must keep these monitors under continuous surveillance.



From left: Machinist Mike Gutierrez, Mechanic Rigger Allan Gryczewski, Machinist Vince Lipari, and Utility Worker Ray Richardson.



At left, from left: Machinist Chuck Rumpola, Mechanic Bert Caffey, and Machinist Sandy Blakely.



PG&E's Diablo Canyon Power Plant: overlooking the Pacific Ocean



Chemistry and Radiation Protection Tech Ken Winkler on a routine survey.



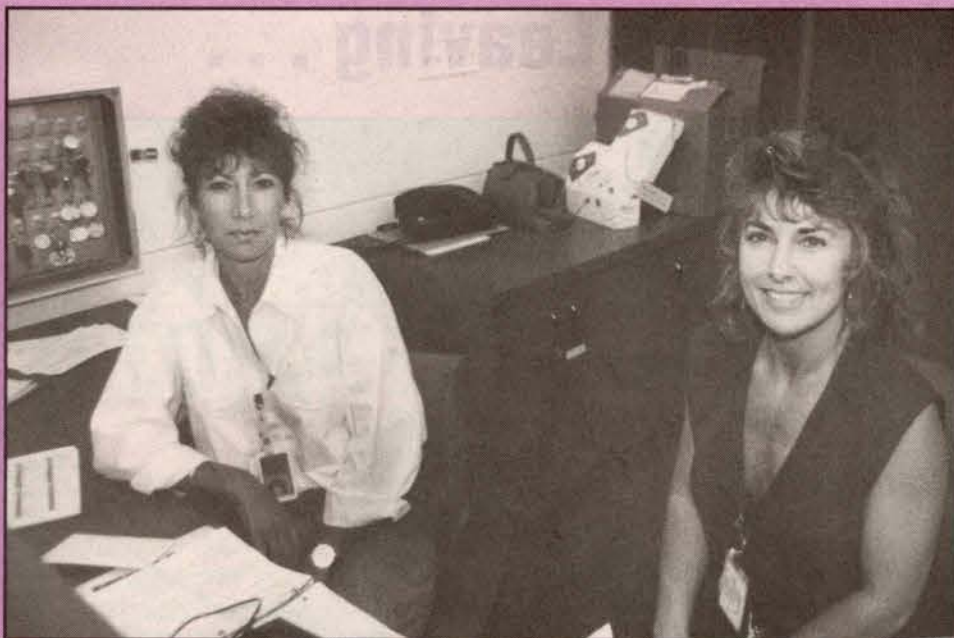
Routine Plant Clerk Karen Magee.

Local 1249  
people who  
make Diab  
a 'top perf

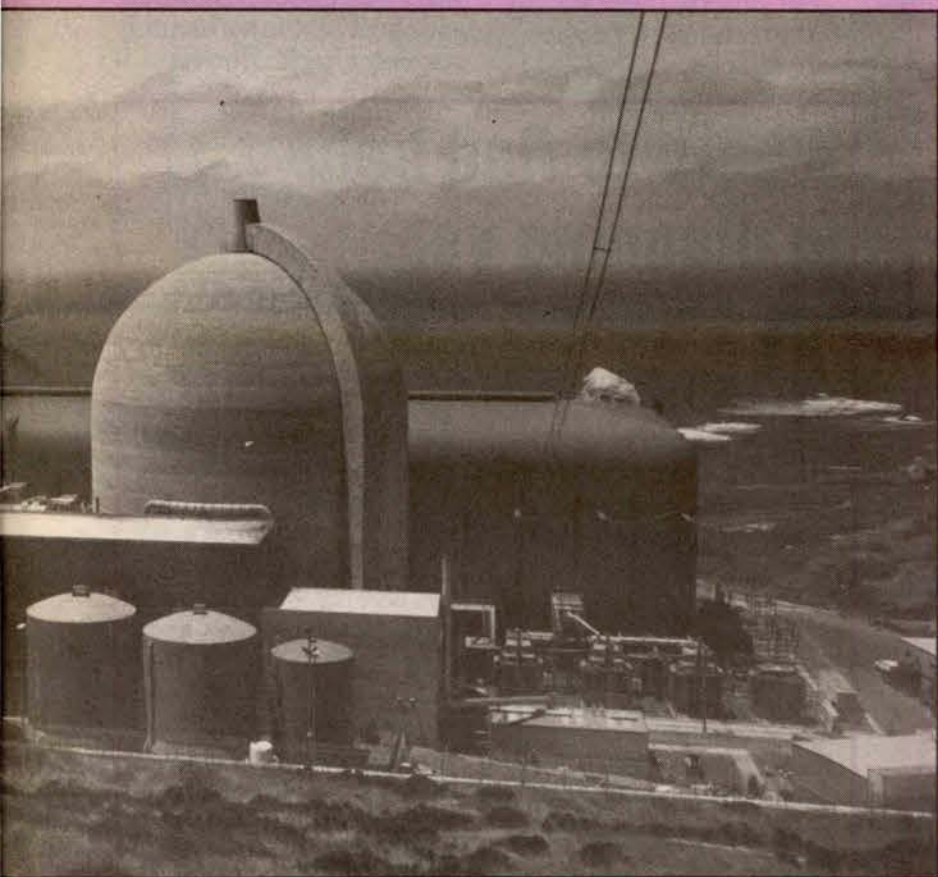




Utility Clerk Janice Palmer (left) and Chemistry and Radiation Protection Utility Clerk Sharon Gripp.

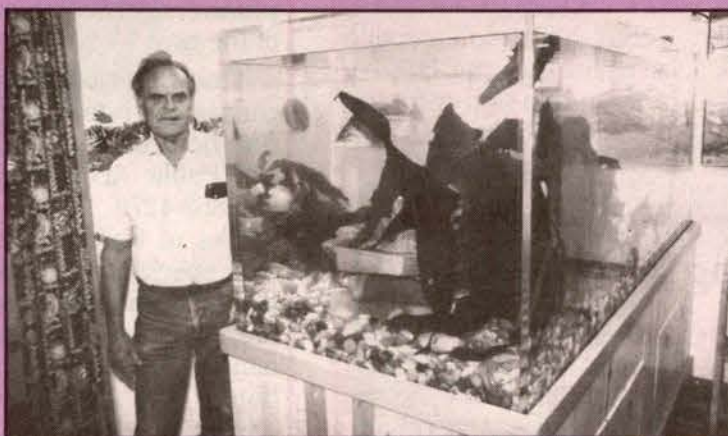


Routine Clerk Sylvia Lunsford (left) and Utility Clerk Ida Roam.

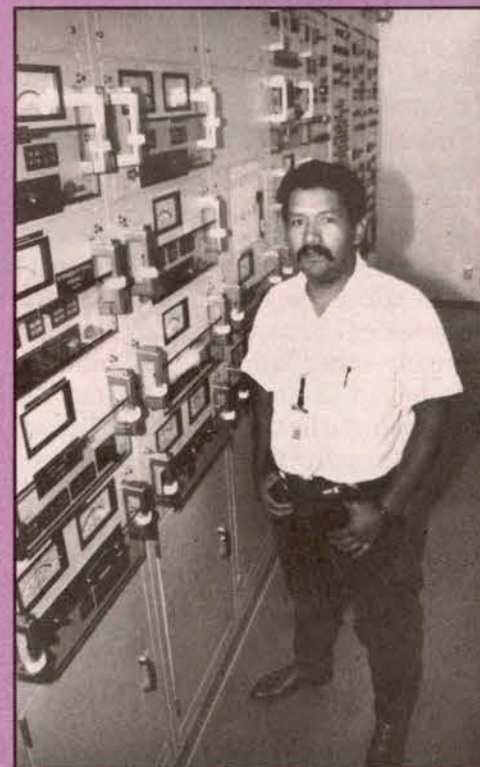


Routine Plant Clerk Kathy Chapman.

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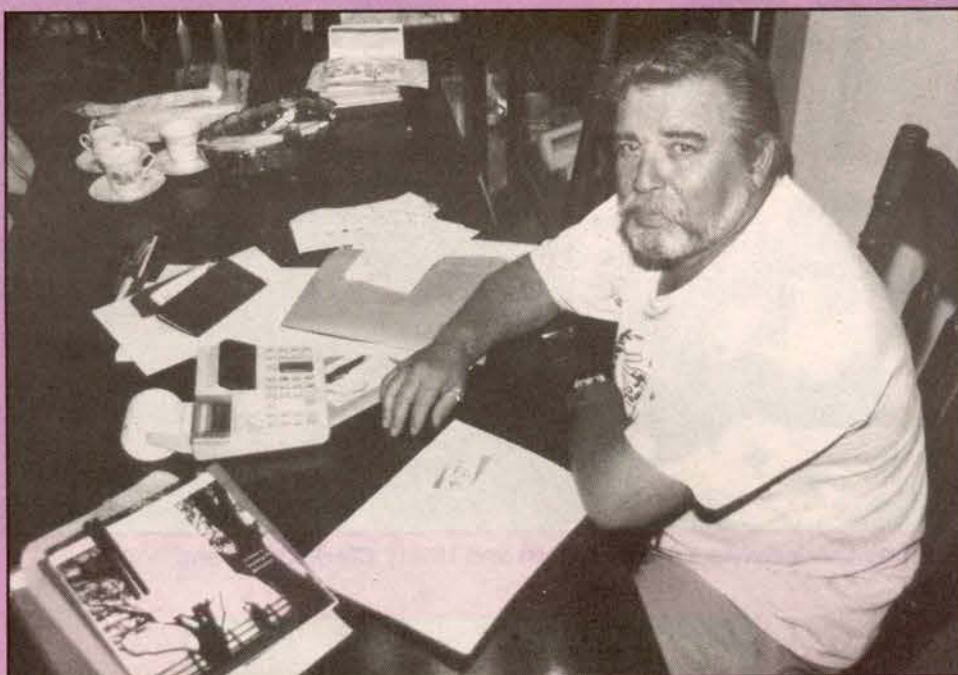
Building Tech Larry Gomes runs the biology lab exhibit, where many species of local aquatic life are on display to DCPD visitors, including students.



Senior Reactor Operator Abel "Chico" Mosqueda at the Nuclear Instrument System Racks, which show how much power the reactor is producing by tracking neutron leakage.



## One Who's Leaving . . .



Mike Silva figures he comes out ahead by taking VRI. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

**U**ntil recently, Mike Silva assumed he'd be working at PG&E for another five to eight years. A 33-year employee, he recently became an underground crew foreman, a job he liked a lot.

"I wanted to work. I was very happy with this new classification. I finally got my wages up there where I wanted them and I had a real nice guy to work with," says Silva.

But then along came restructuring at PG&E. Silva says his job was going to be eliminated.

"I would have to move out of the area or take a job as a light crew foreman with a \$125 a week cut in pay."

Like many other workers, Silva began to do the math. He says that if he takes VRI, and picks up the three additional years of service credit, he will get about \$500 more per month than if he were to take early retirement next year when he turns 55.

He decided VRI might be for him.

Like many PG&E employees, Silva will derive his retirement income almost entirely from his PG&E pension and his PG&E Savings Fund. He says he wishes

now that he had paid into his Savings Fund at a higher rate.

"The only thing I can tell young people today is to put the top dollar that they can into that 401K, because it becomes very important," says Silva. "I had been planning for the last two years to increase my 401K savings and I thought I had plenty of time to do that. Here I didn't increase it and now the time has come."

Now that he has decided to retire, Silva is trying to figure out who he should pick to manage his money.

"I'm very scared and I have a very important decision to make. You have one agent tell you one thing and another agent telling you another because he has another plan," says Silva. "I haven't had much interest in the stock market, but since July 26 I've been trying to learn as much as I can about the stock market in order to be able to make a correct decision."

Now that he's made the decision to enroll in VRI, Silva says he's making plans to rescue his yard from a long period of neglect during the draught. He's also decided to give his working wife a hand with the household chores.

"The most important task for me right now is to make my wife happy about the inside of the house, so she can come home [from work] and relax and not have to cook dinner and do the wifely things she's been doing all her life—besides working," says Silva.

During his 33 years in Local 1245, Silva has served on ballot committees, on a committee "to negotiate the two-man crew concept," and served seven years as a steward.

But his union service isn't quite at an end. He says he intends to sign up for the Local 1245 Retirees Club at the first opportunity.

**"The only thing I can tell young people today is to put the top dollar that they can into that 401K, because it becomes very important."**

## To leave or not to leave: that is the question

### From PAGE ONE

clerk at the Monterey Service Center. "It allows people with less seniority to stay. It allows some people to save their homes and the things they've worked for."

For Sampson, who was planning to take early retirement anyway, the choice was easy.

"I bought a piece of property in Arizona and I have a motorhome. I'm ready to go," he said. "I've been ready to go a long time ago."

### Complex Tradeoffs

For others, the tradeoffs are more complex, the choice more difficult.

On the one hand, there is some financial incentive to leave. Those who leave under VRI will be credited with three additional years of service for purposes of calculating their retirement benefit, and the penalty normally assessed for early retirement will be waived.

But as ex-employees, they will no longer be able to accumulate employer contributions to their Savings Fund.

Rich Bidinost, a 51-year-old gas serviceman out of the Edenvale Service Center, calculates that three additional years of service credit would add about \$150 to his monthly pension check. However, if

## Where to find help in planning your future

**A** financial planner can help you set goals, formulate an investment plan, and review your insurance, retirement and estate-planning needs.

There are three basic types of financial planners:

- **Fee-only planners** sell no products. They charge a fee for their advice: either an hourly rate, a flat fee for a plan, an annual retainer, or a percentage of assets if the planner manages money.

- **Commissioned planners** earn their living from products they sell.

- **Fee and commission planners** get a combination of the two.

One way to locate a financial planner is to contact the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants at 800-862-4272. It will give names of California CPAs who specialize in financial planning and have earned the institute's Personal Financial Specialist designation.

You may want to do a background check on any financial planner you are considering.

Planners who sell prod-

ucts and earn commissions must be registered with the National Association of Securities Dealers (800-289-9999) and the California Department of Corporations (213-736-2741).

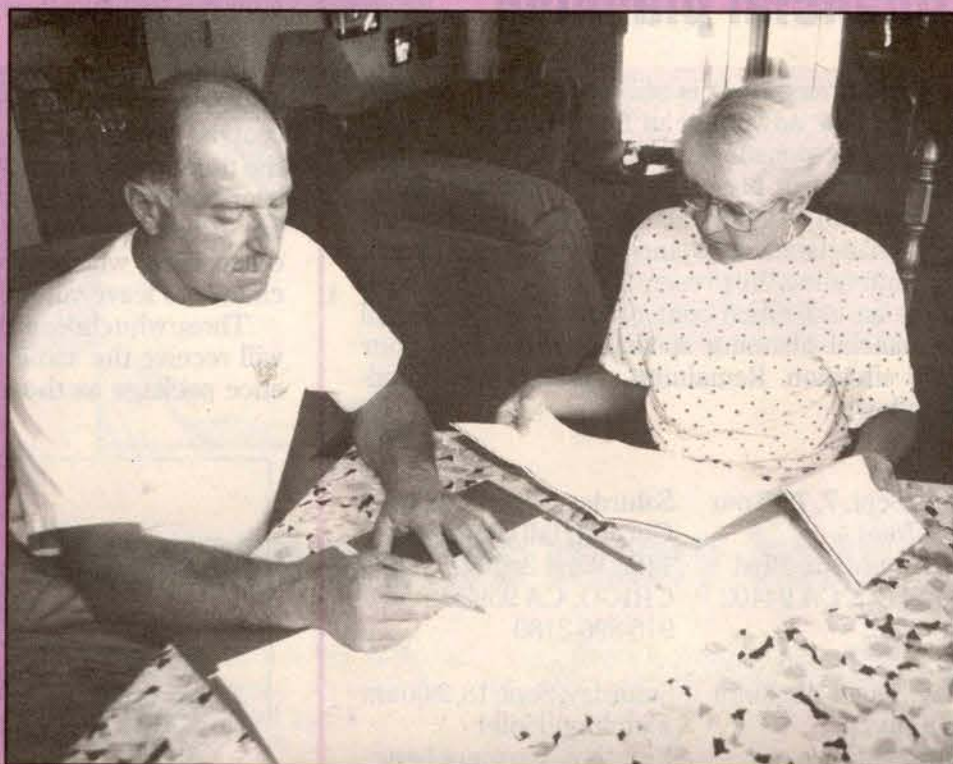
Even if they don't sell products, financial planners who give investment advice must register as investment advisers with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the state Department of Corporations. Advisers must file a form known as an ADV with the SEC, and make Part II of the form available to clients. Check the adviser's standing with the state Department of Corporations (415-557-1556).

Financial planners who are Certified Public Accountants are registered with the State Board of Accountancy (916-574-2155). Planners who sell insurance should be licensed with the California Department of Insurance (800-927-4357).

There still may be time for you to attend a union-sponsored financial planning seminar in your area. Consult the schedule of remaining seminars on page 14.



## One Who's Not . . .



Rich and Karen Bidinost gathered as much information as they could in making their decision on VRI. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

"To make a decision about retirement, you really need a lot of information. You have to know what you can expect to get from your pension, from 401K plans, and from Social Security, and when you can start getting it. You also need to look at the spending side--your lifestyle expectations, your level of debt, and your family obligations."

*Wendy Bothell  
Local 1245 Benefits Specialist*

he works until he's 55, Bidinost figures he will receive an additional \$800-1,000 per month in dividends from the PG&E stock in his Savings Fund.

"I could live on what I'd be getting (under VRI), but I'd be shortchanging myself down the road," said Bidinost. (See story, "One Who's Not", at right.)

Mike Silva, an underground construction foreman in Hayward, found that his circumstances produced a different calculation.

Under VRI, with the three years of additional service credit, Silva figures he will get approximately \$500 more per month than if he waits until next year, when he turns 55 and becomes eligible for early retirement.

"The finances show me that it's not worth hanging around," said Silva. (See story, "One Who's Leaving", page 12.)

### You Have to Plan

To assist union members in making an informed decision about retirement, Local 1245 has sponsored a series of financial planning seminars throughout northern and central California.

"To make a decision about retirement, you really need a lot of information," said Local 1245 Benefits Specialist Wendy Bothell.

"You have to know what you can expect to get from your pension, from 401K plans, and from Social Security, and when you can start getting it. You also need to look at the spending side--your lifestyle expectations, your level of debt, and your family obligations," said Bothell.

"Also remember that retired members no longer qualify for the PG&E vision and dental benefits. However, you can continue to receive these benefits for up to 18 months after you retire if you are willing to pay 102% of the cost," Bothell said.

Those contemplating retirement will also have to make informed guesses about economic trends, such as the rate of inflation, stock market performance, real estate values, and future changes in tax policy, Bothell noted. (See story, "Where to Find Help in Planning Your Future," page 12.)

Members who intend to look for another job after taking VRI face some additional questions. Do they have marketable skills? What sort of wages can they expect? Will a new job offer paid vacations and other benefits?

**Voluntary Severance**

The question of future employability will also be a big concern for employees who become eligible to go out under the Voluntary Severance plan.

The Voluntary Severance plan will go into effect if PG&E determines that additional downsizing is needed

*See NEXT PAGE*

**R**ich Bidinost thought he was a prime candidate for VRI.

"When the original package came up I was really hot on the idea," says Bidinost, a 51-year-old gas serviceman and one of nearly 2,000 bargaining unit members eligible for VRI.

"I thought I'd get my pension and take dividends from the stock. And I still can," says Bidinost. "But there's not going to be any growth in my fund. I'm going to outlive my savings."

Like many other VRI-eligible employees, Bidinost has been doing some hard-nosed calculations about his financial future in recent weeks. He attended a financial planning seminar sponsored by the union and one sponsored by the company. He talked to Bob Gallo of Merrill-Lynch. He talked to Prudential.

What he discovered is that much of the financial security for his retirement is tied up in the PG&E stock he is acquiring through the company's Savings Fund.

"Now is when my money is really going to start compounding," says Bidinost. "I'll only make an additional

\$100 or so [in monthly pension] if I stay four years, but I'll make a lot more in the stock I'll be accumulating, which could amount to \$800 to \$1000 a month in additional dividends."

Bidinost's wife, Karen, sees it this way:

"You have to plan ahead so you can live the way you've been used to living until you die."

One thing the Bidinosts discovered is that society has created disincentives for early retirement. After you reach the age of 55, for example, you get a \$125,000 exemption from capital gains taxes if you sell your home. If you sell before reaching 55, you pay the tax.

You are also discouraged from tapping IRA accounts prematurely. You pay penalties if you withdraw funds before reaching the age of 59-and-a-half.

Bidinost has considered the possibility of taking another job to supplement his retirement income, but worries about age discrimination in the job market.

His wife doesn't see the point of her husband retiring from PG&E if he just has to go out and find another job. She says you have to ask yourself: "Why should I go some-

place and work for less with no vacation when I have a decent wage, and benefits, and vacation here [at PG&E]?"

"Working at PG&E has been a great job," says Bidinost, who's been there for 30 years and served as a union steward since 1975. "It has afforded me financial security for a number of years--and the union has always come up with a good package."

Bidinost worries about the younger members who may face layoffs when PG&E downsizes. "I don't like to see that. But you've got to take care of your own business: surviving, your family," he says.

As presstime approached, the Utility Reporter called the Bidinosts back to see if Rich was still planning on staying.

"Well, he's thinking about it," said Karen Bidinost. "Actually, he's still going back and forth."

"That makes it kind of hard to feature him as 'One Who's Not' leaving PG&E if he keeps changing his mind," the Utility Reporter noted.

"Imagine what it's like being his wife right now," said Karen Bidinost.



## Union-sponsored seminars on financial planning

In some areas there is still time for Local 1245 members to take advantage of free Retirement Planning Seminars sponsored by Local 1245. Seminars cover all aspects of pre-retirement preparations, including financial and tax planning, which will be explained by financial advisors employed by Merrill Lynch.

After attending the presentation, you may choose to arrange an individual conference with the Merrill Lynch financial planning specialist to analyze your particular situation. Remaining seminars are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, Sept. 7, 7:00 pm  
Dunfey Hotel  
1770 S. Amphlette Blvd.  
SAN MATEO, CA 94402  
415-573-7661

Saturday, Sept. 11, 2:00 pm  
Gordon Hall Conf. Center  
1400 West 3rd St.  
CHICO, CA 95926  
916-896-2180

Saturday, Sept. 11, 9:00 am  
Red Lion Inn  
1830 Hilltop Drive  
REDDING, CA 96001  
916-221-8700

Saturday, Sept. 18, 9:00 am  
Flamingo Hotel  
Fourth & Farmers Lane  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95405  
(707-545-8530)



## To leave or not to leave: that is the question

From PAGE THIRTEEN  
after the VRI enrollment period is concluded.

Under the Voluntary Severance provision, which will remain in effect throughout the duration of the new four-year contract, employees in an area targeted for downsizing will be given a chance to leave voluntarily.

Those who choose to leave will receive the same severance package as those who

are laid off. The only difference is, there's no sure way of knowing if you're going to be laid off. With Voluntary Severance, you have the power to decide.

Eligible employees choosing to go with the Voluntary Severance plan will receive four weeks pay plus one week of pay for each year of service, plus a lump sum payment of \$4,500.

While that's hardly a

golden parachute, it may be enough to tempt employees who were looking to make a career move anyway. It also cushions the fall for clerical members who don't want to be uprooted by the upcoming consolidation of the telephone centers.

In some cases, employees taking Voluntary Severance will be eligible for rehire. Employees who are laid off will retain full seniority if they are rehired within 30 months.

### Ripple Effects

But no one knows with certainty how many employees—if any—will face involuntary layoff.

"It has been very difficult getting straight answers from the company with respect to downsizing numbers," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally. "However, we do have a collective bargaining agreement with very clear provisions concerning demotion and layoff procedures, and we intend to see that these provisions are fully complied with."



These meter readers attending a safety meeting at PG&E's Salinas headquarters had plenty of questions for Local 1245 Business Rep. Gary Hughes concerning downsizing at PG&E and how it could affect their jobs.



Employees with the most seniority—those who have given the most years of service to the company—will tend to be more secure during downsizing than those with fewer years of service. But even those with a great deal of seniority could be bruised by the ripple effects of downsizing.

Employees may have to move to another location in order to hang onto their classification, or accept a demotion in order to remain in their present location. "Bumping" provisions in the union contract could set off a chain reaction of job changes as employees exercise their seniority rights.

Throughout the PG&E system, union business representatives have been flooded with questions from members trying to figure out how their jobs will be affected by the changes ahead.

At a First Aid Safety Meeting for meter readers in Salinas, for example, Business Representative Gary Hughes was peppered with questions by members concerned about what the future holds. They asked about the ap-

**"I bought a piece of property in Arizona and I have a motorhome. I'm ready to go. I've been ready to go a long time ago."**

*Bruce Sampson  
Te3D Driver/Temporary Field Clerk*

plication of the severance package, about bumping rights, about testing requirements for those moving to new positions.

"If I take voluntary severance and get on the waiting list, will I be considered first for any jobs that open up?" one member wanted to know.

"No, jobs are filled first with current employees who are qualified bidders, and then by people on the waiting list," Hughes explained.

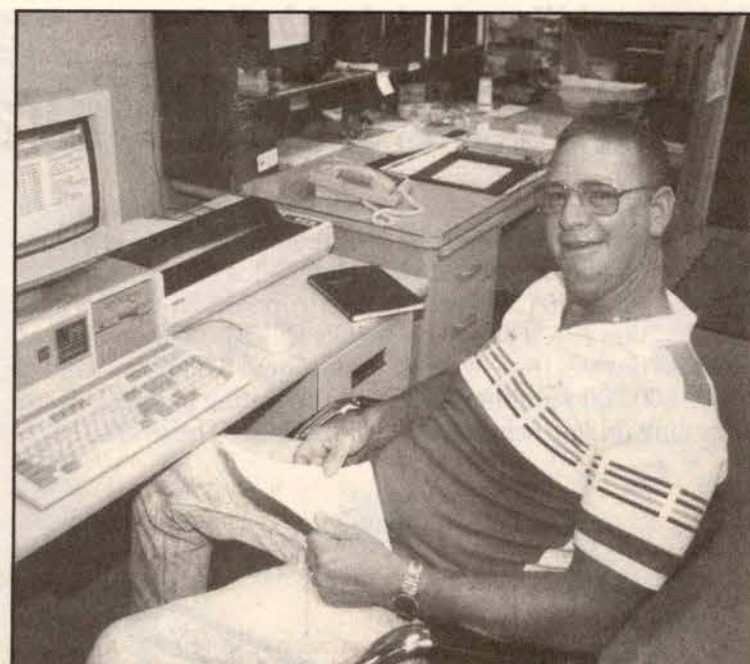
"People appreciate hon-

esty," said Hughes after the meeting, during which he fielded dozens of questions. "There's no sense sugar-coating the answers. These changes are coming and they need to know their rights. That's part of our job."

#### Decision Time

But the time for asking questions is drawing to a close. The time for making decisions is at hand.

The employer has the right to determine the size of



the workforce: that's the reality. And the workforce at PG&E is going to shrink. People are on their way out.

The union has done what it can to cushion members from the worst effects of the downsizing by bargaining a Voluntary Retirement Incentive.

But the final decision is in the hands of each individual member who is eligible for VRI.

To leave or not to leave. That is the question.

#### POINT OF VIEW

### Management's rumors serve no good purpose

*From PAGE THREE*

Losing your job, especially in an economy like we have today, is one of the worst things that can happen to a working person. The union did everything possible to prevent involuntary layoffs.

It will not be known until late this month the exact number of employees who will opt to take VRI. Then the company will have to determine how to fill the holes created by VRI, and how to achieve the size of workforce it deems necessary.

Ultimately, the size of the workforce is a management prerogative. But with any reductions, there will first have to be consideration and application of Titles 205, 206, and 305 in the physical agreement and Titles 18 and 19 in the clerical agreement, as well as application of the Voluntary Severance provision.

In short, the labor agreement establishes a process for this situation and union-represented employees have the right to that process.

No matter what any local manager says.

## Say 'Yes' to VRI, then take an extra week to decide

**A**dvisory Council member Jim Dorman has this advice for members who are eligible for VRI but still haven't made up their mind: Go ahead and enroll in the program and take another seven days to think about it.

"Say 'Yes' now—that gives you seven days to back out. It doesn't work the other way around," Dorman said while attending the August Advisory Council meeting.

"I'm afraid somebody's just going to listen to what their buddy says and make an uneducated decision," said Dorman. "People really should go to one of the financial planning seminars and find out what their options are, or go see a private consultant."

Time is definitely running out.

PG&E is permitting eli-

gible employees to choose to retire on Oct. 1 or Nov. 1. If you choose to retire Oct. 1, you must submit an election form to your local PG&E human resources representative by Sept. 9. If you change your mind, you must submit a revocation form by Sept. 17.

If you choose to retire Nov. 1, you must submit an election form by Sept. 17. If you change your mind, you must submit a revocation form by Sept. 24.

To be eligible for VRI, you must be in a targeted work group. You must also be at least 50 years old, with a minimum of 15 years service, as of Dec. 31, 1992.

If you retire through VRI, you will receive three years of additional credited service. The usual penalty for early retirement will be waived.

Targeted workgroups, as specified in the July 26 issue of PG&E Week are as follows:

#### PHYSICAL AGREEMENT

**Materials Distribution**  
Central Distribution Center  
Decoto Pipe Yard and Plant

#### Customer Services

**Electric**  
Office Transmission & Distribution  
Maintenance (Telecommunications only)

**Gas**  
Transmission & Distribution  
Steam Heat Service  
Plant Maintenance  
Measurement & Control (Region Gas Control Ops. only)

**General Services**  
Garage Warehouse  
Building Services  
Miscellaneous

**Pipe Line Operations**  
Plant Operating  
Transmission Operations  
General

**General Construction**  
Line Construction (Paint only)  
Station, Substation and Hydro

#### CLERICAL AGREEMENT

**Customer Services**  
Marketing  
Region and Division Managers' offices  
Electric Operating  
Gas Operating  
General Services  
Pipe Line Operations  
Materials Distribution  
Design Drafting  
Computer Operations  
Reprographics  
Mail Services Section  
Building Maintenance and Operations

**Controller\***  
Accounts Payable  
Budget  
Payroll  
Capital Accounting  
General Accounting

\*Based on business needs, participation by employees in the controller's department cannot exceed 40 VRI retirees. In the event a greater number of employees elects to participate in the program, eligibility will be based on seniority with the most senior employees selected first.



## Labor mobilizes to defeat ballot measure

## Prop. 174 would devastate public schools

**L**abor unions in California are mounting an all-out campaign to defeat Proposition 174, a ballot initiative that would make 500,000 students now attending private schools eli-

gible for government grants of about \$2,600 per year each—about \$1.3 billion in all.

Proposition 174 would take this \$1.3 billion, plus an additional \$1.3 billion, out of the operating budgets of public schools. The overall effect

of Proposition 174 would be to reduce funding for neighborhood public schools by 10%.

Last month the California Labor Federation sponsored two state-wide workshops to inform California union leaders about the serious threat that Proposition 174 poses to public education.

California AFL-CIO Executive Secretary-Treasurer Jack Henning reminded labor leaders that free, universal education is a cornerstone of a democratic society. He noted that organized labor has a historic commitment to insuring that a quality education is available to all citizens—not just a privileged elite.

## Eroding Right to Learn

Eroding the right to a free education is exactly what Proposition 174 would accomplish. California's most vulnerable children would be hardest hit because budget reductions will translate into larger classes, fewer teachers, and less money for al-

ready-scarce instructional materials.

Proposition 174 permits "voucher schools" to pick and choose among pupils, which means that children who need the most help are the most likely to be excluded.

Anyone who could recruit 25 children would be permitted to open a voucher school and receive tax funding of \$2,600 per child. Teachers at such schools would not have to be accredited—they would not even have to be trained.

Voucher schools would not have to establish course requirements, nor would they have to show how the voucher money was spent. The state would be effectively barred from imposing any new regulations on them.

California Federation of Teachers President Mary Bergen said the initiative is a bad deal for taxpayers because it cuts \$2.6 billion from neighborhood schools, creating pressure to find replacement revenues through tax increases.

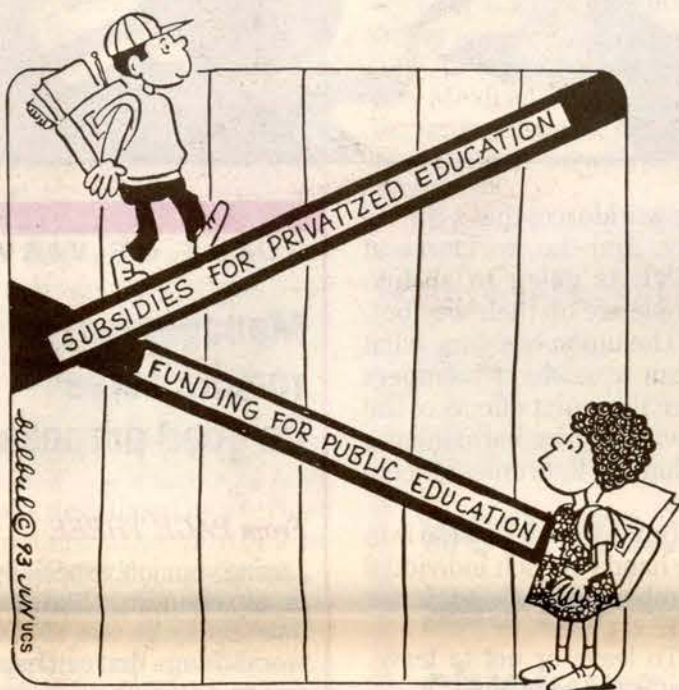
## Utility Reporter nabs first prize for strike story

**T**he Utility Reporter took First Place for Best Feature Story in national labor journalism competition sponsored by the International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO.

A Utility Reporter story detailing the outbreak of the strike against Asplundh Tree Co. in early 1992 garnered the top prize among local union publications nationwide. The story appeared in the March 1992 issue.

The Utility Reporter also received First Place in the Unique Performance category for its ongoing coverage of a labor event. This award was in recognition of stories and photos about the Asplundh strike appearing in the March and April 1992 issues.

There were 1,323 entries in this year's contest, submitted by 186 member publications.



## Bid Express: ease in bidding

Pacific Gas & Electric's new phone-in job bidding system, Bid Express, has consistently surpassed 2400 calls per month since Bid Express was instituted.

Simply by phoning in, employees can verify where they stand on the list and their bid's expiration date. Bid Express operates seven days a week.

To access Bid Express, use the following numbers:

- From a company phone, call Ext. 223-4243.
- From the (415) area code call (415) 973-4243.
- Outside the (415) area code call (800) 238-4243.



## SANDOVAL ESSAY WINNER

Chris Ketchum (center) was awarded the 1993 Al Sandoval Scholarship for his essay on the "new Democratic Party." Ketchum, son of Local 1245 member Howard Ketchum, read his essay at the August Advisory Council meeting and received a plaque from Business Manager Jack McNally (left) and Alameda County Central Labor Council Exec. Secretary Owen Marron, who judged the essays. Ketchum will get \$2,000 in scholarship assistance.

It was we who plowed the prairies,  
built the cities where they trade...



UNION PROUD  
LABOR DAY 1993



# Organizing: the indispensable ingredient

By Orville Owen

**T**he success or failure of any union in continuing to meet its goal of providing services and benefits to its membership requires that the union continue with that indispensable ingredient: ORGANIZING!

In my view, the success or failure of establishing Retirees Club Chapters within Local 1245 will also depend on that indispensable ingredient: ORGANIZING! Organizing must be a commitment from the officers, business

staff, active members and retirees of this great union of women and men.

It was said long ago that, just as we cannot build a union in a day, we cannot build a union overnight. Unions are made of human men and women. Such material cannot be shaped like sticks and stones. It must adapt itself to a great ideal, the ideal of cooperation; the ideal that the whole is greater than the

sum of its parts.

It was also said long ago that the presence of workers in an organization—names entered on records, payment of dues, etc.—is but the beginning of an organization. What is more essential is psychological mobilization. Something must happen to women's and men's minds. Union men and union women must come into harmony with



a great tradition, feel a part of it, and learn to go along with it. Union men and women must "belong."

Just as the foregoing was important in the formation of Local 1245, it is also important in the formation of our Retirees Club.

Although we will not be able to build our Retirees Chapters in a day or overnight, we have the advantage over those who came before us, as we know the benefits of belonging and the experience of brotherhood.

Remember, we need each other! Keep the faith!

## Steelworkers tap power of retired members

By Ray Pasnick

**R**etirement today is not a boulevard of dreams...it's more of a nightmare alley. As more and more unionized companies slash retiree benefits, especially health care and pensions, our once-happy members are forced to tighten their belts again and again.

We all today acknowledge that the cost of quality health care, medical attention, hospitalization, nursing home stays, etc. is totally out of control. But this hits the elderly hardest, often putting at risk everything they own that isn't nailed down.

Hard-won contract benefits, the gifts retirees helped negotiate and passed on for those that followed, were supposed to grace one's golden years. Instead, such benefits are becoming a dartboard for corporations. Union efforts

to safeguard or improve retiree benefits are more difficult than ever. Nor have we heard of meaningful ways to enable state governments to ease up on property taxes for retirees fortunate enough to own a home bought with life savings. Is it any wonder most of our union retirees feel they've hit a brick wall?

### New Policies

It's encouraging to note that all this may soon change. The AFL-CIO recently revised its policies and structure to encourage union retiree participation. Under the new arrangement, the problems and concerns of retired members, their voices and their votes, will now be welcome at meetings of central labor bodies and state federations.

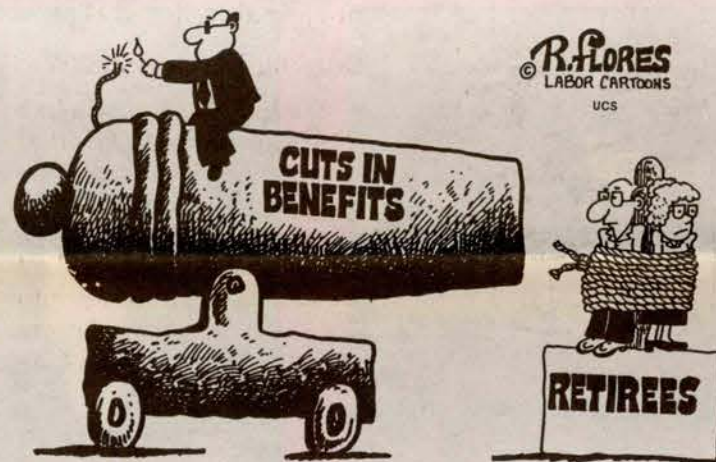
Some international and national unions for years have nurtured members in retirement and have found them to be valuable allies in their ongoing fight against common enemies. Others have relied on the National Council of Senior Citizens to help their ex-members deal with their special needs, encouraging them to join and become active in this effective, people-oriented organization.

But there is

much more that could be done to integrate our pensioners and their spouses within our unions. Looking at it selfishly, a helping hand to retirees could be a major plus for organized labor.

The United Steel Workers of America in 1985 established the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) to bring back into the union and reactivate its older members and their spouses. With nearly 90,000 dues paying members throughout the United States and Canada and more than 200 affiliated chapters, SOAR has proved to be the perfect vehicle for retirees to share and re-experience the solidarity that once inspired them to give birth to the union.

Those who followed the union pioneers at the workplace are at last gaining fresh appreciation and respect for those who gave life to the



"You'll be happy to know that I've decided to raise your wages up to the 1932 level."

IBEW  
Local  
1245



Retirees Corner

## Seniors bolster Tribune boycott

**T**he Congress of California Seniors has endorsed the boycott against the Oakland Tribune and four other dailies in the Alameda Newspaper Group, the California AFL-CIO News reported.

The boycott was launched by the San Francisco Bay Area Conference of Newspaper Unions and the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

The seniors are also backing SB 193, authored by Senator Milton Marks (D-SF), and sponsored by the California Labor Federation at the request of the Newspaper Guild, which would prevent the illegal dissemination of fabricated OSHA notices to employees.

In joining the boycott of the Tribune, the Alameda Times Star, the Fremont Argus, the Hayward Daily Review and the Tri-Valley Herald in Pleasanton, members of the Congress's 35 affiliated seniors groups in Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano and Napa counties are being urged not to subscribe and to cancel existing subscriptions.

They're also mounting a letter-writing campaign to their Assembly members in support of SB 193, inspired by the outrageous actions of J. Allan Meath, president of the Alameda Newspaper Group (ANG), which publishes the Oakland Tribune and the four dailies.

Last fall Meath posted on employee bulletin boards a fake "Employee Notice of OSHA Inspection" on State of California letterhead. The notice was in fact a hoax, written by the publisher.



## Outside Line members honored at Pin Dinner

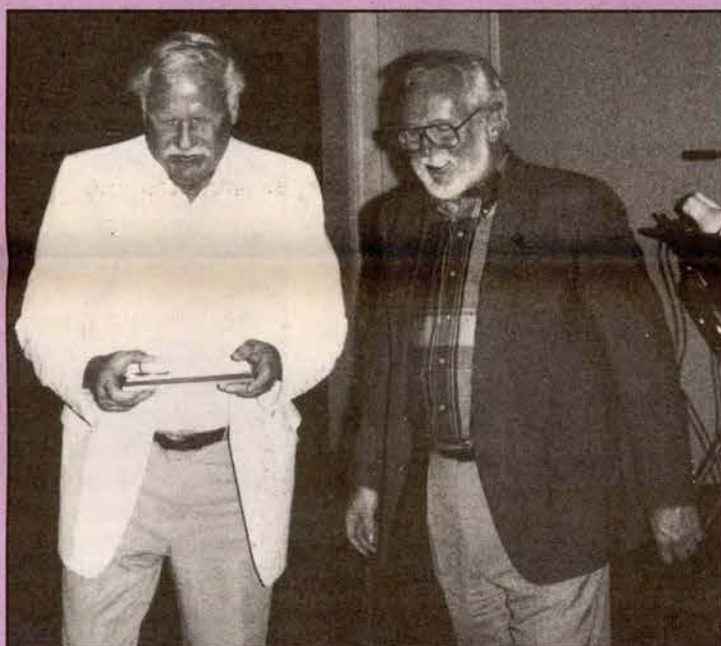
Palm Springs, Ca.  
June 5, 1993

25 years



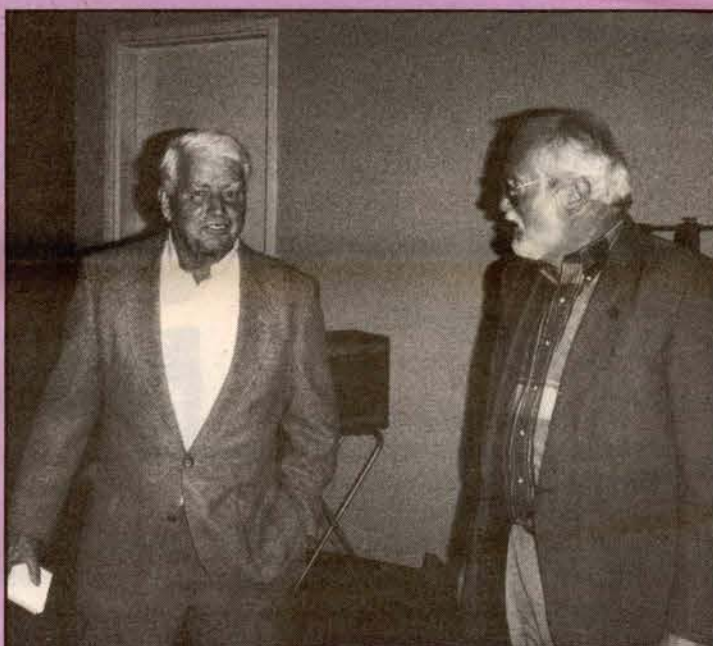
From left: Jeff Johnstone, Leon Pangburn, Ken Krampeter, Robert Bary, Dean Gainor, and Business Manager Jack McNally.

40 years



Roy Carlson (left) with Business Manager Jack McNally.

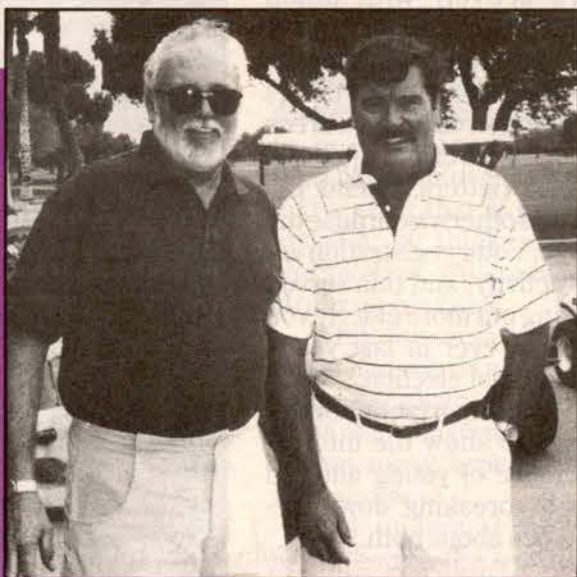
35 years



Robert Grant (left) with Business Manager Jack McNally.

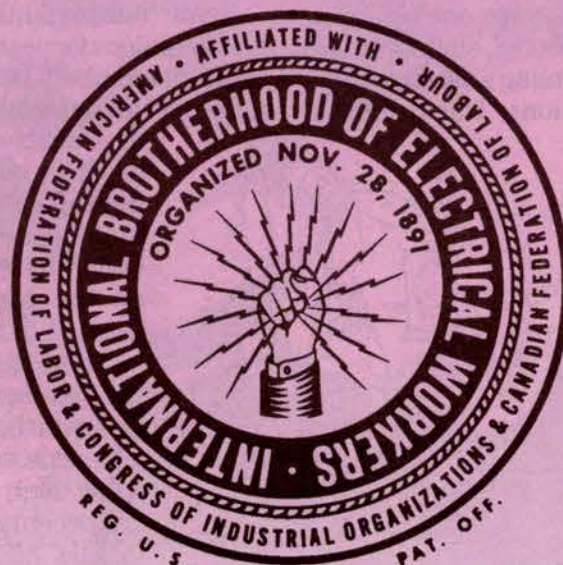
20-year members  
(not pictured):

Claude Michon  
John Wiltse  
Clifford Wimberly



## Outside Line Golf Tournament

Golf Tournament winner Bob Edie (pictured left, on the right) is congratulated by Business Manager Jack McNally.







**55 years**

## Ceremony honors members in San Jose/Coast Division

**San Jose, Ca.  
June 19, 1993**

55 Years: John Brown (55 years in IBEW)

30 Years: Pierre Lavoie, D.L. Mackley, Erhard Rabe, Ralph Riplinger

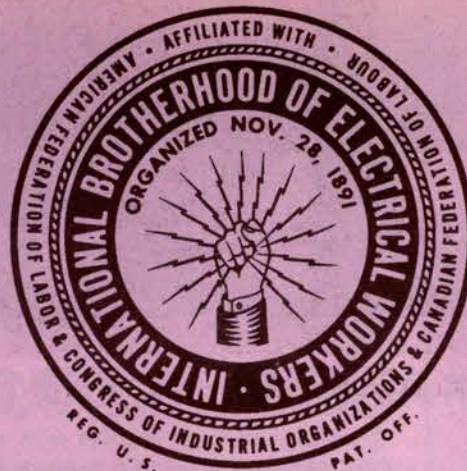
25 Years: Robert Thorp Jr., James Pendry, Larry Packer, Tim Lorenzen, Gary Hughes, John Edwards, Beatrice Christopher, Gary Anderson, T. J. Altman, Ronald Airey

20 Years: Gaylon Woods, Rodney Ulibarri, Gregory Stokes, Paul Shirley, Martin Savage, Gerald Roza, Richard Rossi, Deloris Osborn, Kenneth Nicholls, Patrick McCullough, Jess Martinez, John Johnson, Jim Drapchaty, Isabel Farahani, Steven Camarena, Sharyn Alvarez

(Note: These lists are compiled from advance registrations for the Pin Dinners. Photos may not be inclusive.)



**30 years**



**25 years**



**20 years**



## Labor heroes...on TV!

**L**abor heroes will be featured in the September edition of *We Do the Work*, the independently-produced television program featuring stories about working people.

"Heroes: Profiles from the American Workplace" will feature a segment on Wayne Cryts, the Missouri farmer who led 2,000 other family farmers on what became known as "The Great Soybean Raid," defying governmental red tape and federal marshalls to seize their own soybean crops and head off foreclosure.

Other segments will feature:

- Willa Ives, an Oakland

social worker striving to keep families together and protect children from abuse;

- Gino Cimoli, the former Brooklyn Dodger player who now is a driver for United Parcel Service; and

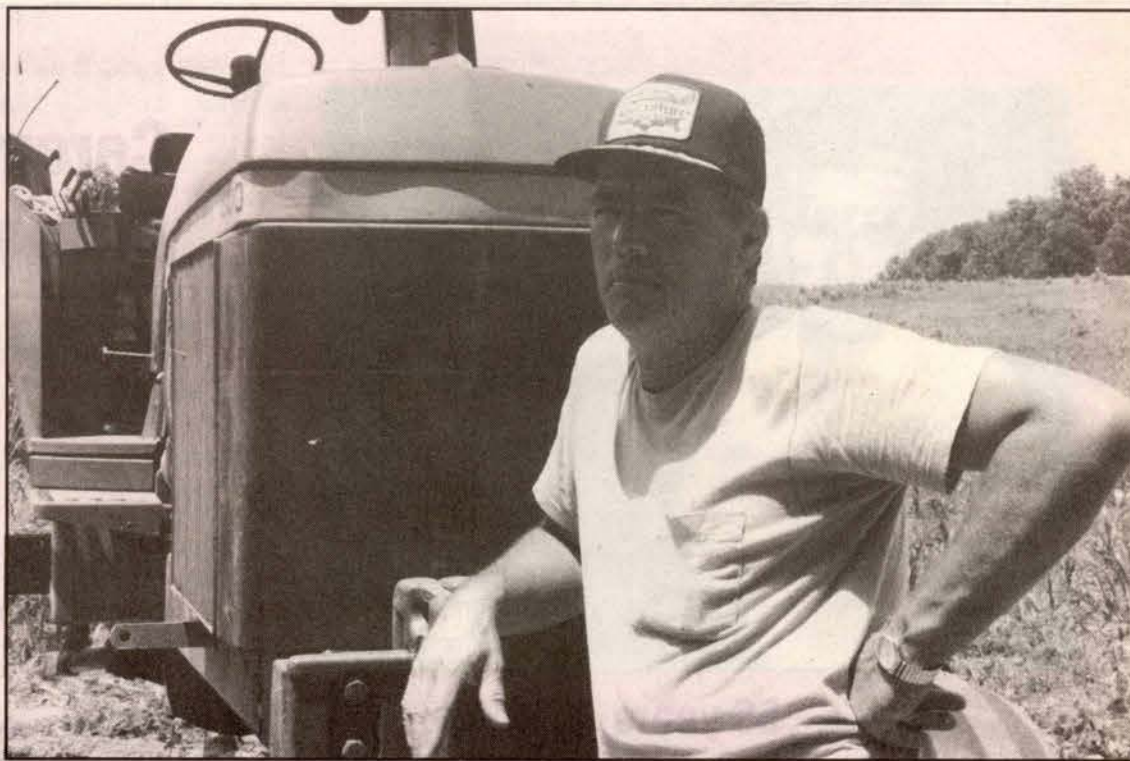
- Rudy Salazar, a blind mechanic able to diagnose engine problems his co-workers can't detect.

Also featured will be humorists Will Durst and Jim Hightower. Showtimes for some area PBS affiliates are:

**KQED, San Francisco:**  
Sept. 6 at 9 pm.

**KCET, Los Angeles:**  
Sept. 4 at 3 pm.

**KCSM, San Mateo:**  
Sept. 4 at 6 pm.



Wayne Cryts achieved near-legendary status in the Midwest when he staged a raid on a grain elevator to retrieve his own crop.

## Coming this Fall... for America's Workers

### WORKING IN THE '90s

An AMERICA WORKS Special

**WORKING IN THE '90s** is a new one-hour television special designed for the working men and women who produce the goods and services that make this country great.

**WORKING IN THE '90s** highlights workers' concerns about job loss, pension cutbacks, job safety, discrimination and shows what unions are doing to protect workers' rights.

**WORKING IN THE '90s** looks at the changing economy and the constantly evolving world of work and shows how workers are developing the skills needed to remain competitive now and in the future.

**WORKING IN THE '90s** illustrates on-going union training programs, labor-management partnerships that work and examines career choices for the new workforce of the '90s.

**WORKING IN THE '90s** is hosted by veteran journalist Fred Thomas and former network correspondent Karen Stone.

**Check your Public Television  
Station for air-date and time.**

Working in the '90s is produced by the Labor Institute of Public Affairs, AFL-CIO.

## 'Shoptalk'

### Unions in northwest launch TV talk show about workers

**T**elevison talk shows usually seem to deal with stories about the latest eating disorder, sexual fantasy or criminal impulse.

If you're tired of this predictable menu, you'd probably be interested in "Shoptalk," a new weekly series with a rank-and-file flavor.

"Shoptalk" features a studio audience of people who work and belong to unions. The show is not afraid of a good argument, either. Topics scheduled for the next season include the debate over how many hours teenagers should be allowed to work during the school year, whether public employees are pampered, and other con-

troversial topics such as trade policies, tax reform and health care.

The shows are broadcast live on Tuesdays in Western Washington over the local Public Broadcasting System station. Other PBS stations around the country can put the program in their schedule—but they'll do it only if they think there's a demand for the program.

If you would like to see "Shoptalk" on your local PBS station, give "Shoptalk" organizers a call and they'll send you the name of the PBS programming director in your area, along with other suggestions for how you can help. Call 206-281-8901.



"Frankly, I think it's time we got a union here."