

UTILITY REPORTER

Union Voter's Guide
Pages 7-14

PG&E chops more jobs; union bargains VRI

P G&E's latest downsizing, announced just before Labor Day, will reduce the workforce by approximately 2500 people and increase anxiety levels for those who remain.

In negotiations with Local 1245, PG&E has agreed to a Voluntary Retirement Incen-

tive. Patterned on last year's VRI, the new program applies to employees who are 50 years old, and who have 15 years of service, as of Sept. 30, 1994.

In addition, PG&E has indicated it could announce this month a Voluntary Severance plan that would provide additional financial incentives for employees to leave the com-

pany voluntarily.

PG&E's decision to slash its workforce raises serious questions about the company's ability to continue providing safe, reliable electric service, according to Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally.

"They're losing some of the most highly-skilled workers in the world," said

McNally. "PG&E says it has to cut employees to compete, but the public is going to come out the big loser." (See story below).

The reductions will come primarily in Customer Energy Services and Electric Supply, according to PG&E. However, the VRI offer applies to bargaining unit mem-

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Voting is crucial

Election Day and utility restructuring

J ob security and political action are linked more closely than most workers realize. For utility employees, the outcome of the Nov. 8 election will probably be a bigger factor in their future job security than any other event during the next four years.

The reason is simple: if workers fail to elect Kathleen Brown as

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Workers testify at public hearings

CPUC proposal threatens reliability

C ompetitive markets in electricity will jeopardize the future reliability and safety of electric service, Local 1245 members warned the Cali-

fornia Public Utilities Commission during a series of public hearings around the state.

The public testimony by union electrical workers

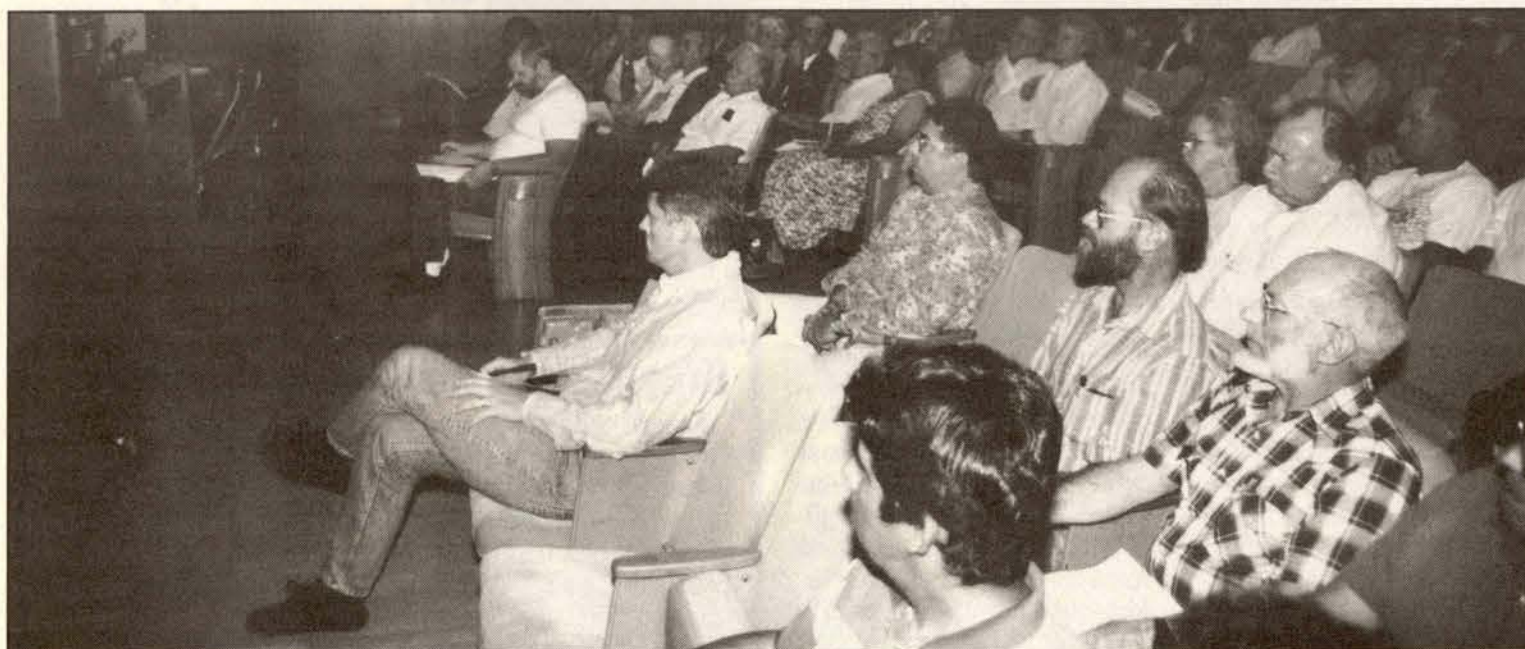
opened a new dimension in the current debate over a CPUC proposal to restructure the state's electric industry. Prior to the public hearings, the CPUC had managed to focus the discussion almost entirely on the issue of electric rates. But the testimony of the union workers made clear that a discussion of rates is meaningless without a discussion of the corresponding level of service.

"Safety and reliability cost a lot of money. We either pay for it up front or we'll pay for it later," said Local 1245 mem-

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"Safety and reliability cost a lot of money. We either pay for it up front or we'll pay for it later."

John Kent
Napa Unit Chair



Local 1245 members helped swell the turnout for the public hearing in San Jose on the CPUC restructuring proposal.



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CALENDAR

October 8
Pin Dinner
Bakersfield, Ca.

October 11
Last Day to Register for
November Elections
in California

October 12
Informational Meeting on
Retiree Medical Benefits
Bakersfield, Ca.

October 13
Informational Meeting on
Retiree Medical Benefits
Walnut Creek, Ca.

October 14
Pin Dinner
Merced, Ca.

October 15
Public Sector
Stewards Conference
Sacramento, Ca.

November 3
Pin Dinner
Weimar, Ca.

November 8
ELECTION DAY
BE SURE TO VOTE!

November 18
Pin Dinner
Fresno, Ca.



UTILITY
REPORTER

October 1994
Volume XLIII
Number 10
Circulation: 26,100

(510) 933-6060

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Published monthly at 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, California 94598. Official publication of Local Union 1245, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Second Class postage paid at Walnut Creek and at additional mailing offices. USPS No. 654640, ISSN No. 0190-4965.

POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579, Change of Address, and all correspondence to Utility Reporter, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Single copies 10 cents, subscription \$1.20 annually.

Have you moved lately? If so, please send your complete new address and your social security number to the Utility Reporter, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.



WIPA



Workers here and abroad

Rolling the union on...

Willie's Solidarity:

Country singer Willie Nelson canceled a concert at the Chateau Ste. Michelle winery near Seattle after learning about a seven-year boycott of the company by the United Farm Workers of Washington State, Labor Notes reported. "Willie has a passion for farmers and farm workers and their families and doesn't cross picket lines," said Nelson's publicist.

Trouble to the North:

Ballot measures target organized workers in Oregon in this fall's election. One measure seeks to repeal the

state's prevailing wage law. Another would erode public employee pensions.

Deaths in China:

At least 38 people were killed and 160 injured when a textile factory in China's Quianshan industrial zone collapsed on June 17. Press reports said that it took several days to free people trapped in the rubble. Those trapped in the rubble had been ordered to go into the building to rescue cotton and equipment after the building had been gutted in a fire.

NAFTA Shafta Continues:

Remember the labor "side agreement" that was supposed to protect workers from the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)? Well, under the terms of the side agreement, the Labor Department has agreed to hear com-

Attention
members!

Have you witnessed any instances of PG&E sacrificing quality of service or compromising safety in order to reduce costs?

If so, you may be able to help in the battle against utility "deregulation."

**Please contact
Hunter Stern at the
Local 1245 Walnut
Creek office:**

(510) 933-6060



Arbitrator issues finding

On Oct. 3 Arbitrator Walter Kintz issued a preliminary decision in Arbitration Case No. 201.

In this case, Local 1245 challenged on several grounds PG&E's displacement of approximately 395 Physical Division employees in early 1994.

In his preliminary decision, Kintz informed the parties that he has found a violation of the labor agreement. Specifically, Kintz found that PG&E improperly gave Section 206.6 options to employees with options under Section 206.3.

Kintz remanded the case to PG&E and Local 1245 for a

30-day period, during which the parties are instructed to attempt to agree upon an appropriate remedy. Local 1245 and PG&E will jointly contact Kintz for clarification of his finding, and then will meet as directed.

If the parties cannot agree on an appropriate remedy, the case goes back to Kintz for his decision on a remedy.

As more information becomes available about Kintz's decision, the union will post it on the electronic bulletin board. Updates, when available, can also be obtained from the union's toll-free information number: 1-800-227-5607

**YES ON PROPOSITION 186!**

Members of SEIU Local 250 demonstrated recently in favor of Proposition 186, California's Health Security Act.

plaints that workers were fired for trying to organize at Honeywell and General Electric plants in Mexico, Labor Notes reported. But the Labor Department hearings will be in Washington, practically guaranteeing that the fired workers will not be able to attend. The rules limit testimony to 10 minutes and do not allow the complaining unions to ask questions.

Fantasy Land: At the same time, the Labor Department is spending taxpayers' money on a US-Mexico-Canada academic conference on labor-management cooperation. Says Teamsters President Ron Carey: "They're bringing professors to Washington to discuss some fantasy land where management cooperates with workers, but they won't listen to testimony from real live workers who are being fired by US corporations in Mexico for organizing for a living wage."

Law Ignored: A survey by the University of California has found that 40% of 300 employers covered by the

Family and Medical Leave Act are ignoring the law. The law requires companies with 15 or more employees to give workers 12 weeks unpaid leave for childbirth, adoption, or illness in the family.

Attitude: The American Management Association offers a one-day, "100% guaranteed" seminar on "How to Legally Fire Employees With Attitude Problems," Labor Notes reported. Upon completion of the \$139 session, students get a "certificate of completion—a perfect reminder of your valuable training achievement that's suitable for framing."

Drivers Strike: Pony Express drivers in numerous cities are on strike in their continuing fight for union recognition. The company is facing more than 120 NLRB charges for violating federal labor law. One driver was assigned to a 340-mile delivery after he had already worked 24 hours straight. When he fell asleep and drove over a 40-foot embankment, Pony Express suspended him for five days.

Gregg Jacobson dies in accident

Local 1245 member Gregg Jacobson was fatally injured by electrical contact while performing line clearance tree trimming in proximity to a 230kv transmission line near Ander-

son, Ca. on Aug. 22.

Fellow crew members performed CPR at the site until emergency personnel arrived.

Brother Jacobson was 45 years old.



AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland displays new stamp.

Commemorative stamp honors George Meany

The late AFL-CIO President George Meany has been honored by the US Post Office with a commemorative stamp.

Meany was the first president of the merged American Federal of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). He retired in 1979. The stamp, issued Aug. 16, marks the centennial of Meany's birth.

"It is an honor for the Postal Service, one of the

largest civilian employers in the United States, to recognize George Meany," said Joe Mahon of the Postal Service. "No individual has done more to advance the solidarity and the commitment of American labor."

Current AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland said that Meany provided living proof "of how much difference one person, armed with his qualities, can really make in the course of human events."

PG&E chops more jobs

From PAGE ONE

bers throughout the company, so it is not clear how well the remaining employees will match up with the positions the company wishes to retain.

As with last year's downsizing, it will be many months before the impacts of this downsizing are fully known—creating widespread uncertainties for employees. Disputes may arise concerning specific applications of the labor agreement, which would require additional talks between the parties.

Nov. 21 VRI Deadline

To participate in the VRI, eligible employees must complete and sign the VRI enrollment and waiver and release forms provided by the company. The completed forms must be returned to a designated company repre-

sentative no later than Nov. 21, 1994.

An eligible employee who elects VRI may revoke his or her decision by properly notifying the company on or before Nov. 28, 1994.

As with last year's program, the early retirement penalty will be waived for those who take the new VRI. In addition, VRI participants will receive an additional three years of credited service for purposes of calculating their pension benefit.

The union conducted numerous retirement planning seminars in late September and early October to assist members in gathering the information they need to make a decision regarding VRI. The union encourages members to be fully informed before making a decision to accept VRI or Voluntary Severance.

IBEW unions taking active role in debate over utility restructuring

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

Since the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) announced its restructuring proposal in April the California Coalition of Utility Employees (CUE) has been extremely busy filing comments, testifying at full panel hearings and filing reply comments.

CUE is a coalition of local unions who represent utility employees in California. It includes IBEW Locals 18, 47, 465, 659, 1245, UWUA Local 246, ESC-MEBA, and the Engineers and Architects located in Southern California.

There are five investor-owned electric utilities in California directly regulated by the CPUC who would be affected by the CPUC's restructuring proposal: Pacific Power and Lighting, Sierra Pacific Power, Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas and Electric.

Two major schools of thought have emerged in the debate over restructuring: retail wheeling (sometimes called direct access or bilateral contracts) and transmission grid pooling.

The approach that is ultimately adopted will have a large impact on all electric utilities—regardless of whether they are public or investor-owned and regardless of whether they are regulated by the CPUC. Obviously this means that most Local 1245 members will feel the effects of restructuring—regardless of whether you are employed by a public or investor-owned utility.

Our coalition, CUE, has been recognized as a major player in the proceedings before the CPUC. We have been invited as a panelist in all full panel hearings to

date. Some of the other parties have not. We played a significant role in the recent passage of a resolution in the California Legislature (ACR 143) that identified several key issues that must be resolved before adoption of either retail wheeling or performance-based ratemaking.

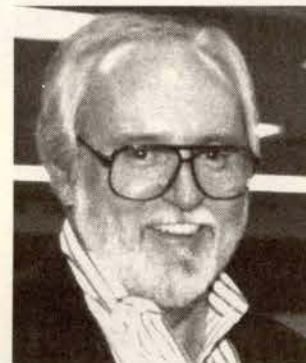
CUE, with others, has advocated a policy alternative to retail wheeling: the creation of an independent dispatching pool for electric power. We believe this pool approach would have the least harmful impact on utility employees. The pool concept is gaining credibility and support among several parties involved in this issue.

CUE has taken other steps designed to steer this issue in the most constructive direction. Our coalition has presented testimony that an environmental impact report must be prepared before retail wheeling can be adopted. CUE has also worked with other parties to insure that testimony on this issue is presented by a diverse array of interests.

And CUE has protected its option to pursue litigation with respect to retail wheeling, should that become necessary.

In addition, CUE is currently addressing the proposal for performance-based ratemaking to make sure that our safe and reliable transmission and distribution system is not compromised.

Individual members of this union have also played an important role in the restructuring debate. As the CPUC conducts public hearings in various cities, our members have been attending in large numbers. Many of our members have presented thoughtful testi-



mony pointing out shortcomings in the proposed restructuring of electric service.

In addition to the public hearings, which run through November, the CPUC has scheduled another "full panel" hearing for Oct. 24 in San Diego. It is expected that the CPUC will make a decision sometime between the general election (Nov. 8) and the end of January.

No matter what the CPUC decides, the California Legislature will become the next arena for this important debate. I believe most of the 1995 legislative year will be taken up with utility regulation issues. Through CUE, Local 1245 will continue to play an influential role as our state legislators try to figure out what to do with this political hot potato.

Whatever the final outcome of this restructuring, we can be sure it will affect our members and significantly influence the debate in other states as well.

Local 1245, as part of CUE, will do everything possible to protect the interests of all of our members. We are the people who for almost a century have provided excellent service to the public. If intelligent heads prevail we can continue to do so in the century to come.

Local 1245 newspaper takes first

The Utility Reporter received a first place award from the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) for news coverage of the 1993 downsizing at Pacific Gas and Electric.

"To Leave or Not to Leave: That is the Question" won first place in the "Unique Performance" category, which is designed to recognize "unusual journalistic effort." The article appeared in the September 1993 issue of the Utility Reporter.

The Utility Reporter also captured the prestigious Saul Miller Journalism Award—in a contest jointly sponsored by the AFL-CIO and the ILCA—for its overall reporting last year on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The ILCA competition featured 1,483 entries in various categories by 166 member publications throughout the nation.

Commenting on the downsizing story, the judges wrote:

"The Utility Reporter tackles a vital question for many senior workers today...to take early retirement or not..."

"The union assembled as much information as it could...interviewed members who were taking VRI and those who were not. It held seminars on financial planning. It warned not to listen to management's layoff rumors. It told where to go for help in planning the future."

"Other unions facing similar management actions," the judges wrote, "would do well to see what Local 1245 has provided for its readers."

Business Manager Jack McNally is executive editor of the Utility Reporter. Communications Director Eric Wolfe serves as managing editor.

Union to help build information superhighway

Local 1245 will provide workers for construction of an information superhighway in California under the terms of an agreement reached with

AT&T NETCON, Inc. last month.

Under the terms of the agreement, Local 1245 will dispatch workers to put in duct work and substructures for a state-of-the-art commu-

nications network being constructed in several areas of California over the next five to seven years by Pacific Bell.

AT&T NETCON, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of AT&T, is under contract with

Pacific Bell to perform the construction. The project is expected to employ at least 3,000 union members over the course of the project.

Jobs will range from entry-level positions to heavy equipment operators operating backhoes, trenchers and boring machines. Workers will be dispatched through the union's Walnut Creek headquarters in northern California, and through the southern dispatch office in Riverside.

The agreement, concluded Sept. 12, capped months of bargaining between Local 1245 and AT&T NETCON. Work is expected to begin this month in the San Diego and Los Angeles areas.

In addition to union wages, the agreement provides medical, vision, and dental benefits, with the employer picking up the entire premium. The agreement also provides pension benefits.



INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY AGREEMENT

Representing IBEW in negotiating the new labor agreement for the California information superhighway are (counter-clockwise, from right) International Rep. Bill Davis, Business Rep. Art Murray, Business Manager Jack McNally, Business Rep. Richard Dunkin, and International Rep. Charlie Silvernale. Representing AT&T NETCON are Valerie Koalkowski, Ed Furlong, Bob Webber, Joe Kaspick, Tim Lawrence and Mike Lundy. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

Bargaining roundup: new pacts deliver wage gains

Local 1245 members applied their collective strength to achieve wage and benefit improvements at various employers over the last several months.

An agreement with **Washington Water and Power** covering gas workers in South Lake Tahoe provided a wage hike of 5% effective July 1, 1994 and an additional 5% in the following year.

The pact creates a new classification: utilityman/locator.

Bargaining for the union, which represents six employees, were Dave Rust and Business Rep. John Stralla.

A one-year agreement with the **City of Fallon** provided a 3.2% wage increase for employees in the electric and water departments effective July 1, 1994.

Bargaining for the union were Allen Dodson, Sherry Burns, Edwin McBroom and Business Rep. John Stralla.

A new two-year agreement with **Lindmore Irrigation District** provided a 2.5% general wage increase on Sept. 1, with an additional 2.5% increase on Sept. 1, 1995. Bargaining for the union were

Roger Unruh and Business Rep. Ron Van Dyke.

A new three-year agreement with the **Tri-Dam Project** provides 3% general wage increases on March 1 of 1994, 1995, and 1996.

The agreement made improvements in sick leave and included a requirement for Class A Driver's License in the job descriptions of equip-

ment operator, machinist/mechanic and utilityman.

A three-year agreement with **CP National Corporation, Needles District**, provides 3.5% wage increases on May 1, 1994 and 1995, and a 3% wage increase on May 1, 1996. The agreement also increases severance pay from 20 weeks to 25 weeks after 25 years and increases per diem

payments.

Bargaining for the union were Tony Frazier and Business Rep. Ron Van Dyke.

The same provisions were bargained in a new three-year agreement with **Alltel Nevada** in Elko. Representing the union in the bargaining were Mary Peterson, Sondra Reynolds, Chuck Stout and Business Rep. John Stralla.

Are you moving? Let your union know!

Are you moving? Let us know your new address!

Restructuring at PG&E has produced many relocations. If you are one of

the Local 1245 members who has recently moved, the post office will eventually tell us. But you can speed the process—and get your Utility Re-

porter faster—by notifying the union directly of your new address.

If you've moved recently, please return this form:

Name _____

Social Security Number _____

OLD Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

NEW Address _____

City State, Zip _____

*Wilson appointees are the problem***Ergonomics standard in jeopardy**

A proposed Cal-OSHA ergonomics standard intended to protect workers from repetitive motion injuries has been watered down to the point where it is virtually useless.

Union representatives, including representatives of Local 1245, have worked for years to get the Cal-OSHA Standards Board to adopt an ergonomics standard. The process has moved at a snail's pace because Gov. Pete Wilson has stacked the Standards Board with appointees who are hostile to imposing any costs on business—even when the health and safety of California workers are directly threatened.

The standard to be considered by the Standards Board on Nov. 17 in San Diego bears the unmistakable imprint of big business. It includes a provision that allows employers to ignore the standard if they can demonstrate undue financial hardship.

"This is the first time that cost issues have entered the safety arena in such a destructive manner," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Landis Marttila.

The language as proposed would allow different employ-

It now appears that the Standards Board will be adopting a standard designed to minimize any inconvenience to the employer rather than minimizing injury to workers.

ers in the same industry to follow or disregard repetitive motion injuries based on their claimed profit margin. If an employer claimed that imposing corrective measures would cause undue hardship, including economic hardship, the employer could just choose to ignore the standard.

"Triggers" Weakened

The proposed standard also weakens the "triggers" that would force the employer to adopt corrective measures. In earlier versions of the proposed standard, a report by a worker of a perceived risk required an examination of the worksite. The latest version of the standard, however, requires a worker to be injured in some form to trigger a worksite analysis.

The current activity to establish an ergonomics standard is mandated by Assembly Bill 100. That bill states that the Standards Board must take appropriate action "to minimize the instance of injury from repetitive motion."

However, it now appears that the Standards Board will be adopting a standard designed to minimize any inconvenience to the employer rather than minimizing injury to workers.

"This is the kind of rulemaking we can continue to expect if Wilson is re-elected," said Business Manager Jack McNally.

"If he gains another term, working people will continue to have an enemy occupying the highest state office."

ATTENTION**INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS OR ASBESTOS-CONTAINING PRODUCTS****AND****INDIVIDUALS OR ENTITIES WHICH MAY BE SUED BY THOSE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS-CONTAINING PRODUCTS**

A class action lawsuit, *Ahearn v. Fibreboard Corp.*, C.A. No. 6:93cv526 (E.D. Tex.) and a Global Settlement Agreement, have been filed in U.S. District Court in Tyler, Texas. If approved, this class action and settlement will resolve all future asbestos-related personal injury claims against Fibreboard and its predecessors, including PABCO, as well as third-party claims arising out of such claims.

A class action, *Continental Casualty Co. v. Rudd*, C.A. No. 6:94cv458 (E.D. Tex.) was also filed against two defendant classes seeking approval of a settlement entered into between Fibreboard and certain of its insurers to settle all liabilities and obligations of the insurers under insurance policies they issued to Fibreboard.

- If you, a member of your family, or someone for whom you have legal responsibility was exposed, directly or indirectly, to asbestos or asbestos-containing products; or
- If you are a person or entity which may be sued by individuals exposed to asbestos or asbestos-containing products;

Call: 1-800-792-2000 for more information about these class actions and your rights...even if you are not suffering from any symptoms of injury.

Local 1245 members may contact the union hall at 1-510-933-6060. Ask for Landis Marttila or Tom Dalzell.

Local 1245, Asplundh Tree resolve 'portability' issue

Asplundh Tree Expert Co. and Local 1245 have tentatively agreed to the resolution of the issue of "portability" of seniority.

"Portability" is an issue whenever one union contractor replaces another union contractor on a PG&E tree trimming contract. Typically the new contractor will hire the union tree trimmers formerly employed by the previous contractor.

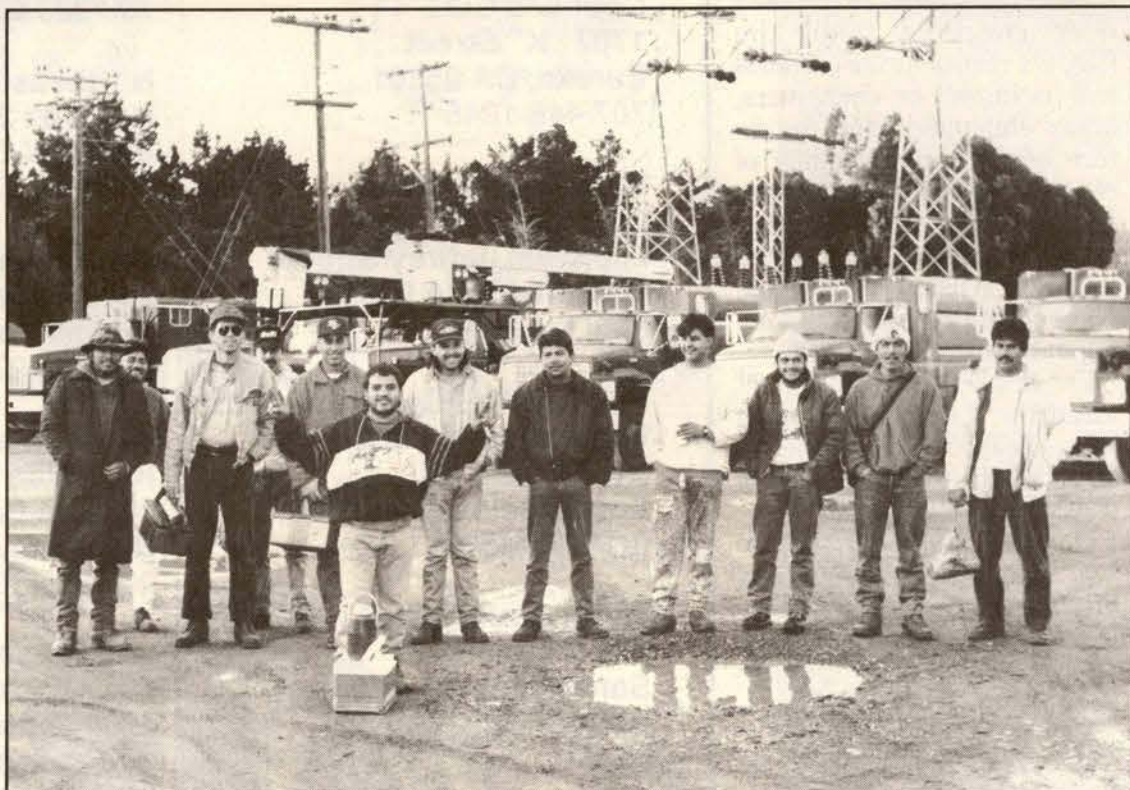
However, in going to work for the new contractor, the union tree trimmers are stripped of their seniority. Local 1245 has made correcting this situation a high pri-

ority in bargaining with union tree contractors.

On Aug. 30 Business Manager Jack McNally and Brent Asplundh, president of Asplundh Tree Expert Co., came to a tentative agreement in San Francisco on portability of seniority for purposes of determining vacation. Asplundh is the first of the union tree contractors to take this step.

Bargaining with Asplundh on other issues is still in progress, according to Business Rep. Landis Marttila.

Local 1245 has about 250 members working for Asplundh in various counties in northern California



Local 1245 tree trimmers in the San Mateo yard of Asplundh Tree Co. (Photo: Landis Marttila).

Election Day and utility restructuring

From PAGE ONE

California's next governor, we will have four more years of Pete Wilson's anti-labor policies and appointments.

What does this mean for utility employees?

Think about the recent downsizings at PG&E. These downsizings didn't happen by accident. They are a direct response to recent efforts by the California Public Utilities Commission to create "competitive markets" in electricity.

The CPUC is doing everything in its power to cut electric rates for big business. Even if this means higher rates for residential consumers, layoffs for utility employees, and the deterioration of electric service.

It's no big secret why the CPUC is taking this course of action: all the current members of the CPUC were appointed by Gov. Pete Wilson and his predecessor, George Deukmejian. They intentionally picked people who would side with big business—no matter what the consequences for the rest of us.

The terms of some of these CPUC commissioners will expire during the next four years. If Pete Wilson is re-elected as governor, these commissioners will be replaced by others just as bad—or worse.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Democratic candidate Kathleen Brown has expressed deep concerns about the CPUC's restructuring proposal and its impact on consumers, utility employees, and the future quality and reliability of electric service. Kathleen Brown would make very different appointments to the CPUC than Pete Wilson, which would result in different policies coming out of the CPUC.

For utility employees, it could mean the difference between job security and layoffs, the difference between wage stability and wage degradation.

Don't be fooled by the TV ads. Pete Wilson has nothing but contempt for working people. In 1992 alone he vetoed 35 bills sponsored by the California AFL-CIO.

It's time we made a change in Sacramento. Vote for Kathleen Brown to be our next governor.

Mission Possible: Get Out the Vote on Nov. 8

Many people understand that working people get the short end of the stick from elected officials. But many of these same people don't bother to vote. They think their vote doesn't make a difference.

But it does make a difference.

Sometimes changing just one vote per precinct can change the result of an election.

Central Labor Councils in California and Nevada are conducting get-out-the-vote campaigns and they need volunteers to sign up right

now! Your efforts today can alter the shape of legislation enacted in 1995 and 1996.

Contact your AFL-CIO Central Labor Council (CLC) and offer to help with phone canvassing and get-out-the-vote efforts. Call up and volunteer today.

Alameda County CLC
7992 Capwell Drive
Oakland, CA 94621
510/632-4242

Butte-Glenn Counties CLC
210 W. 6th St.
Chico, CA 95926
916/343-9474

Contra Costa County CLC
525 Green Street
Martinez, CA 94553
510/228-0161

Five Counties CLC
900 Locust Street, Rm. 7
Redding, CA 96001
916/241-0319

Fresno & Madera Counties CLC
1645 "E" Street #102
Fresno, CA 93706
209/228-8597

Humboldt & Del Norte Counties CLC
1707 "K" Street
Eureka, CA 95501
707/445-1245

Kern, Inyo & Mono Counties CLC
200 West Jeffrey Street
Bakersfield, CA 93305
805/324-6451

Los Angeles County Federation of Labor
2130 W. 9th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90006
(213) 381-5611

Marin County CLC
819 A street, #27
San Rafael, CA 94901
415/454-2593

Marysville CLC
1010 "I" Street
Marysville, CA 95901
916/743-7321

Merced-Mariposa Counties CLC
557 West Main St. #206
Merced, CA 95340
209/722-3636

Monterey County CLC
1145 North Main Street
Salinas, CA 93906
778 Hawthorne Street
Monterey, CA 93940
408/757-3094

Napa & Solano Counties CLC
404 Nebraska St.
Vallejo, CA 94590
707/557-5036

Northern Nevada CLC
1150 Terminal Way
Reno, NV 89502
702/323-0390

Northeastern Nevada CLC
P.O. Box 2936
Elko, NV 89801
702/738-5743

Sacramento CLC
2840 El Centro Road #111
Sacramento, CA 95833
916/927-9772

San Bernardino & Riverside Counties CLC
1074 La Cadena Dr., Suite 1
Riverside, CA 92501
909/825-7871

San Diego-Imperial Counties CLC
4265 Fairmount Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
619/283-5411

San Francisco CLC
660 Howard St., 3rd floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
415/543-2699

San Joaquin & Calaveras Counties CLC
121 East Vine Street
Stockton, CA 95202
209/948-5526

San Mateo County CLC
1153 Chess Drive #200
Foster City, CA 94404
415/572-8848

Santa Cruz County CLC
517 Mission St. #B
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
408/459-0415

South Bay CLC
2101 Almaden Road #101
San Jose, CA 95125
408/266-3790

Sonoma, Mendocino, & Lake Counties CLC
1700 Corby Ave., Suite C
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
707/576-1677

Stanislaus & Tuolumne Counties CLC
1340 Lone Palm Avenue
Modesto, CA 95351
209/523-8079

Tri Counties CLC
21 South Des Caminos Ave.
Ventura, CA 93003
805/641-3712

Tulare-King Counties CLC
319 North Church
Visalia, CA 93279
209/732-8963

IBEW Local 1245
Union Voters' Guide
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Dear Local 1245 Member,

Change is all around us: downsizings, competition, restructuring...and the list goes on.

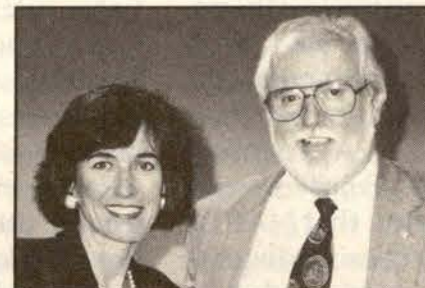
We face very real threats. These problems will affect Local 1245 members at all of our employers. The outcome of the Nov. 8 elections will determine how many allies we have in the state legislature as we try to protect our livelihoods.

More than anything else, we need a new governor. The current governor is in the hip pocket of big business. His appointments to state agencies and courts, including the California Public Utilities Commission, have hurt us badly. We need someone whose loyalty is to the average citizen. That is why your vote really means something this year.

Our union by-laws require the Local 1245 Executive Board to evaluate candidates for elected office and to recommend the ones who

are most likely to be our allies on important workplace issues. Please give these endorsements your careful consideration when casting your vote on Nov. 8.

Also please volunteer to help your county's Central Labor Council get out the vote. Your council's phone number is listed on page 6.



Kathleen Brown, Democratic candidate for governor, and Jack McNally

In Unity,



Jack McNally
Jack McNally,
Business Manager

United States Senator
Dianne Feinstein (D)

Lieutenant Governor
Gray Davis (D)

Secretary of State
Tony Miller (D)

State Insurance Commissioner
Art Torres (D)

State Controller
Kathleen Connell (D)

Governor
Kathleen Brown (D)

State Attorney General
Tom Umberg (D)

Superintendent of Public Instruction
(non-partisan office)
Delaine Eastin

State Treasurer
Phil Angelides (D)

You Can Make the Difference.

Vote Nov. 8th!

4. Tom Bates (D)
5. Open
6. Barbara Lee (D)
7. Michael Machado (D)
8. Michael Sweeney (D)
9. Jackie Speier (D)
0. Liz Figueroa (D)
1. Byron D. Sher (D)
2. John Vasconcellos (D)
3. Dominic L. Cortese (D)
4. Ed Foglia (D)
5. Margaret E. Snyder (D)
6. Sal Cannella (D)
7. Bill Monning (D)
8. Lily Cervantes (D)
9. Michael E. O'Hare (D)
0. Bryn Allison Batrich (D)
1. Cruz M. Bustamante (D)
2. Jack Keally (D)
3. John B. Ashbaugh (D)
4. Timothy G. Hauk (D)
5. Mindy Lorenz (D)
6. James L. Hutchins (D)
7. Dorothy S. Maron (D)
8. Josh A. Arce (D)
9. Richard Katz (D)
0. Barbara Friedman (D)
1. Sheila James Kuehl (D)
2. Wally Knox (D)
3. Adam Schiff (D)
4. Bruce Philpott (D)
5. Antonio Villaraigosa (D)
6. Louis Caldera (D)
7. Kevin Murray (D)
8. Marguerite Archie-Hudson (D)
9. Diane Martinez (D)
0. Martha M. Escutia (D)
1. Curtis R. Tucker, Jr. (D)
2. Willard H. Murray, Jr. (D)
3. Debra Bowen (D)
4. Betty Karnette (D)
5. Juanita M. McDonald (D)
6. Bob Epple (D)
7. Martin Gallegos (D)
8. Grace F. Napolitano (D)
9. Margalo Ashley-Farrand (D)
0. Open
1. No Endorsement
2. Joe Baca (D)

63. Richard Edwards (D)
64. Roberta (Bobbi) Meyer (D)
65. Richard Sondoval (D)
66. David Hendrick (D)
67. Jonathan Woolf-Willis (D)
68. Irv Pickler (D)
69. Mike Metzler (D)
70. Jim Toledano (D)
71. Jeanne Costales (D)

72. Allan L. Dollison (D)
73. Lee Walker (D)
74. Poppy DeMarco Dennis (D)
75. Katherine Wodehouse (D)
76. Susan A. Davis (D)
77. Tom Connolly (D)
78. Deirdre (Dede) Alpert (D)
79. Denise Moreno Ducheny (D)
80. Julie Bornstein (D)

D: Democrat
R: Republican
NP: Non-partisan office

Open: The Calif. AFL-CIO and Local 1245 take no position for or against the candidates, but other local unions may endorse or oppose.

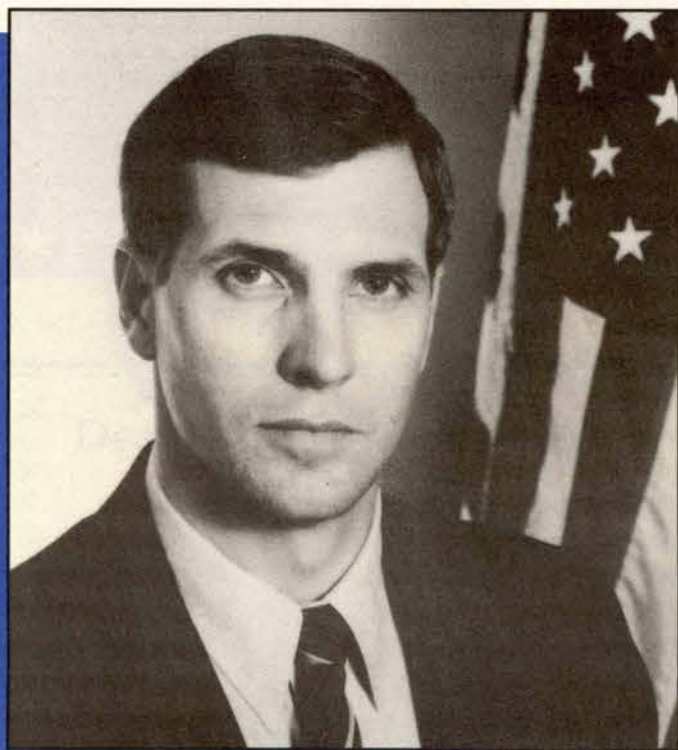
No Endorsement: No union support for these candidates.

Proposition 181: the \$1 billion Passenger and Clean Air Bond Act of 1994	YES
Proposition 182: the California Housing and Jobs Bond Investment Act	YES
Proposition 183: combines some recall elections with regular elections	YES
Proposition 184: the so-called "three strikes" initiative	NO
Proposition 185: imposes an additional 4% sales tax on gasoline for transit and highway construction	(No Recommendation)
Proposition 186: the single-payer health plan initiative	YES
Proposition 187: the so-called "save our state" initiative	NO
Proposition 188: the initiative sponsored by the tobacco industry to pre-empt existing regulations against smoking	NO

MAKE
DEMOCRACY
WORK!



**VOTE
ON
Nov. 8**



Tom Umberg



✓ **Endorsed**
By Your Union!

Tom Umberg for Attny. General

When the Utility Reporter requested information from Tom Umberg's campaign office, the candidate himself responded with a personal letter to the union.

Umberg, an Assembly member who seeks the office of attorney general, has previously served as an Assistant US Attorney. Assigned to the newly-created Federal Court in Orange County, he maintained a 100% conviction rate prosecuting large-scale drug dealers, gang members, white collar criminals, and civil rights cases.

In his letter to Local 1245, Umberg wrote:

"As indicated by the enclosed personal biography, the focus of my professional life has been within our criminal jus-

tice system. My decision to seek the office of Attorney General is a reflection of my experience and interest in improving this system, as well as my deep and abiding commitment to reducing violence on our streets, in our homes, and at our schools.

"Having worked with labor representatives over the last few years, I am familiar with the issues and objectives of the IBEW," Umberg wrote. "As labor's strongest supporter from Orange County in the State Legislature, I have consistently worked hard during my tenure in the Assembly to represent you and your membership. I have not hesitated to tackle the tough issues and attempt to improve the lives of working men and women in California.

"I am sure it is no sur-

prise to you," Umberg continued, "that my Republican opponent, Dan Lungren, has used his position as Attorney General to advocate for his private sector supporters, leading the State Department of Justice to turn its back on California's workers. Prior to serving as Attorney General, Lungren consistently voted in the US Congress to weaken prevailing wage laws, weaken health and safety laws, cut federal funding for OSHA, and oppose job creation and job retention legislation."

Umberg has vowed to focus on juvenile crime to help keep first-time offenders from becoming revolving-door felons.

As Attorney General, Tom Umberg will make a valuable contribution to the citizens of California.

Phil Angelides for Treasurer

Phil Angelides warns that there are no "political quick fixes" for the California economy.

"Our turnaround will come through investing in the energy and talent of California entrepreneurs and workers," says Angelides, Democratic candidate for Treasurer. "As the state's chief investment officer, I believe in California and will invest to get a good return on our money and to put people back to work."

Angelides cites his skills and experience in the private and public sectors as making him "uniquely suited to create jobs and to restore faith in the ability of government to produce good results."

Angelides said it is time

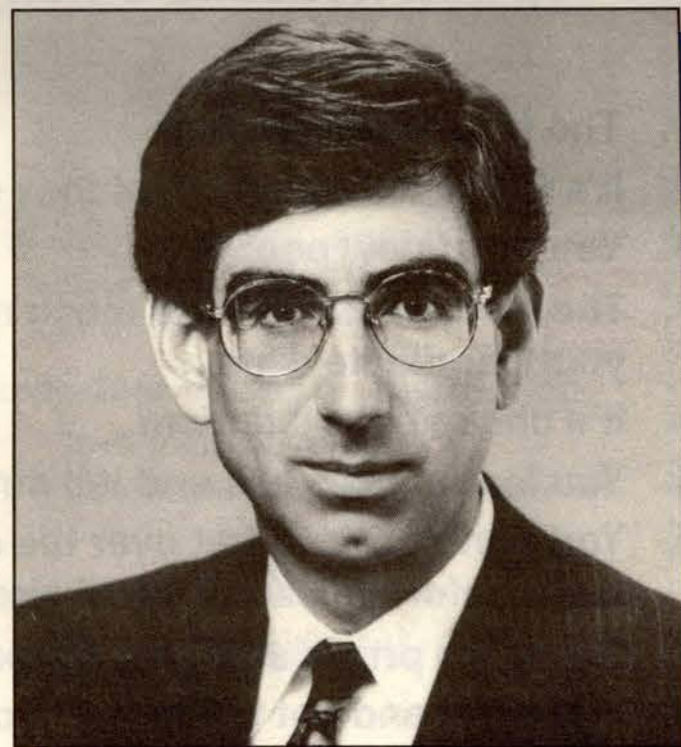
"for those of us who have been successful in the business world and in our communities and who care for our families to step into the public arena to make a difference."

Angelides has set a goal of creating 100,000 new jobs in California and expresses confidence in California's long-term future. Despite the loss of over 600,000 jobs since 1990, Angelides notes that there is new growth and dynamism in many sectors of the California economy, such as entertainment, biotech, high technology, foreign trade, financial services and environmental technology.

Angelides has won national recognition for planning and building Laguna West. His communities have changed

the standard of development in the Sacramento region, with the planting of more than 40,000 trees, the dedication of more than 700 acres of parklands and open space, the provision of a range of housing from low-income to custom homes, the adoption of strict architectural guidelines, the building and showcasing of energy-efficient homes with PG&E and SMUD, the design of state-of-the-art natural treatment of drainage waters, and the creation of jobs within walking distance of homes.

Angelides has demonstrated that California can grow while being respectful of the environment. It's an attitude that will serve us well when Angelides is elected Treasurer.



Phil Angelides



✓ **Endorsed**
By Your Union!

When workers are united, anything is possible

By Orv Owen

It is not in numbers but in unity that our greatest strength lies.

The whole, when united, is able to do anything. The need for unity is basic to the continued success and growth of our union, and it is just as necessary now as it was in our beginning.

As I see it, your support of our union does not stop upon retirement, just as the benefits we receive from our

union do not stop upon retirement. Active members and retired members must maintain the unity of strength that protects the gains and benefits won by our union across the bargaining table.

Local 1245 retirees believe that the need for unity is so basic that it remains the same for both active and retired members. And we still believe that unity, which is our truest need, is the key to protecting all the many other things that we need—whether

it be food, shelter, health care or the other necessities of life. Protecting our access to these things has been the historic function and goal of our union.

Persistence Pays

I believe that one of the most effective techniques in organizing is persistence. The tree trimming employers can attest to Local 1245's persistence in organizing tree trimmers. Although we have been successful in organiz-

ing these employees, that struggle still goes on.

Organizing our retiree clubs is a struggle that also still goes on. We retirees will continue to be persistent in our goal of organizing all of our retirees. We, like our not-yet-retired brothers and sisters, also believe in a union shop.

Please remember, a local union should never consider itself an island unto itself. Keep the faith!

Law provides no penalty for 'Medigap' profiteers

Medigap insurance companies—those that insure medical costs not covered by Medicare—are earning unwarranted profits because the laws designed to regulate them have no teeth.

In the mid-1980s, in response to evidence of widespread profiteering by Medigap insurers, the federal government issued national minimum "loss ratio" standards for Medigap policies. The loss ratio is defined as the percentage of premiums returned to policyholders as benefits.

The standard loss ratio on policies sold to individuals was initially set at 60%, and

later raised to 65%. That is, out of every \$100 collected as premiums, the companies should pay out at least \$65. (For group policies, the minimum loss ratio is 75%.)

In 1990, Congress required the federal General Accounting Office (GAO) to audit compliance with these ratios.

Last February the GAO reported that more than 70 companies were involved in profiteering practices in 1991 (the year studied), collecting about \$320 million in premiums, with excess profits of about \$40 million that they would not have made had they complied with the minimum loss ratio standards.

But the federal loss ratio standards are a bark without a bite. There are no penalties for not meeting them.

Not surprisingly, these are companies that have spent millions of dollars spreading propaganda against premium controls in health care reform legislation.

In light of the collapse of health care reform in Congress this fall, it remains to be seen whether any corrective measures will be taken with regard to this Medigap insurance profiteering. Such profiteering adds to health care costs in the US, which already account for about a trillion dollars a year, about one-seventh of the entire US

gross domestic product.

If this is what happens where there are standards, surely profiteering on the health of the American public is no less where standards are completely absent.

One solution would be to adopt a single payer plan for the American health care system. Supporters of a single payer plan could not muster enough strength in Congress to pass such legislation this year. But Californians have a chance to enact a single payer plan on Nov. 8 when they vote on Proposition 186.

Until voters take action, they should expect profiteering by insurance companies to continue.

IBEW
Local
1245



Retirees Corner

Dangerous prescriptions

Nearly a quarter of senior citizens are prescribed at least one inappropriate and dangerous drug each year.

In a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, experts in geriatrics and pharmacology compiled a list of 20 drugs that should virtually never be used by seniors because safer alternatives are available, or because the drug is useless and may have side effects. Yet nearly a quarter of all senior citizens received prescriptions for at least one of these drugs.

The brand names of the most commonly-prescribed of these potentially dangerous drugs are:

- Persantine, a blood thinner.
 - Darvon and Darvocet, an addictive narcotic that can cause respiratory failure, seizures and heart problems.
 - Elavil, Limbitrol, Triavil, Etrafon and Endep (brand names for amitriptyline), an antidepressant that can cause drowsiness and confusion.
 - Diabinese, a pill to lower blood sugar in diabetics that can cause dangerous fluid retention.
 - Valium and Librium, sedatives which keep many seniors prone to confusion, falls and hip fractures.
 - Indocin, a pain reliever and anti-inflammatory medication that can cause confusion, headaches, and bleeding from the stomach.
- Dr. Steffie Woolhandler, an author of the study, said it was crucial that seniors and their doctors review their medicines, eliminate non-essential drugs, and use the safest alternative when drugs are necessary.

Retiree benefits to be discussed

Local 1245 will host two meetings to explain an upcoming change in medical benefits affecting some Local 1245 retirees and surviving dependents.

The meetings will be held at 3 p.m., Oct. 12, at 200 W. Jeffrey St. in Bakersfield, Ca., and at 10 a.m. on Oct. 13 at the union's Walnut Creek headquarters, 3063 Citrus Circle.

The change results from an agreement between Kaiser and the US Health Care Financing Administration, which takes effect on Jan. 1, 1995.

The meetings are free.



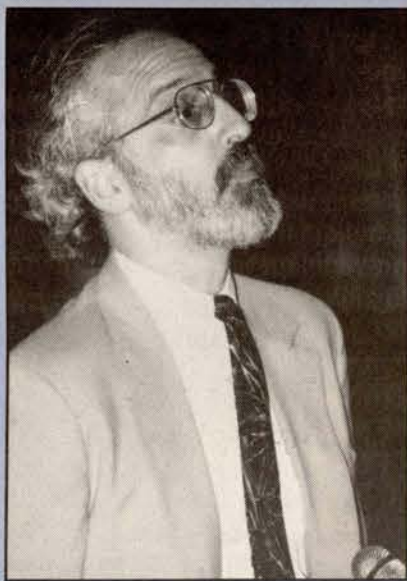


"You don't go to the unemployment office to hire someone to take care of a ruptured gas main or arcing wires in the street."

Jim Findley, Local 1245

"The maintenance of the system has been decreased to reduce costs."

Rich Cowart, Local 1245



"Will utility companies, as they come under competitive pressure to cut costs, focus on short-term considerations, and cut operations and maintenance, to the detriment of reliability?"

*Gil Friend
Business for Social Responsibility*

From PAGE ONE

ber John Kent, testifying at the Sept. 12 public hearing in Martinez.

Kent, the union's Napa unit chairman, cautioned the CPUC against focusing on cost issues to the exclusion of quality issues.

"When I buy tools," said Kent. "I consider what it's going to cost and what I'm going to get. I need the tools that're going to help me get the job done."

Local 1245 member Bryant Bolan, a PG&E troubleman in Concord, said PG&E "is already showing signs of not giving the service they've given for years."

"With this deregulation they seem to have panicked—they're laying off people...Pretty soon you won't see reliable power," Bolan predicted.

Former Local 1245 Advisory Council member Jim Findley, testifying in Martinez, told the CPUC that gas and electric workers "are as vital to public safety as police and fire" employees.

The threat of deregulation has caused utilities to cut these employees—"the people needed most in the event of natural disasters or other emergencies involving gas or electric facilities," Findley said.

"The handling of these types of emergencies requires trained professionals. You don't go to the unemployment office to hire someone to take care of a ruptured gas main or arcing wires in the street," he said.

Aileen Koppenberg, a PG&E service representative testifying in Eureka on Aug. 25, agreed that layoffs will mean a deterioration in service.

"I see less people available to answer customer inquiries, to make service calls, and perform emergency and routine maintenance calls," Koppenberg said.

PG&E Tech Subforeman Mark Newman, testifying in San Jose on Sept. 20, said the pressure to reduce rates has produced "more careless and more ambitious managers" and has resulted in "less consideration for safety programs."

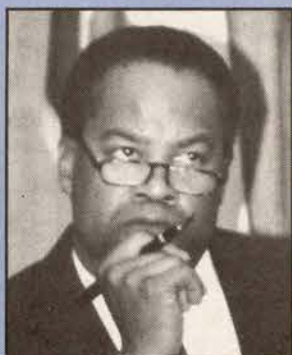
"By cutting corners," Newman warned, "PG&E is sacrificing the long-term integrity of the system. We will live with the legacy of that."

"Call Someone Else"

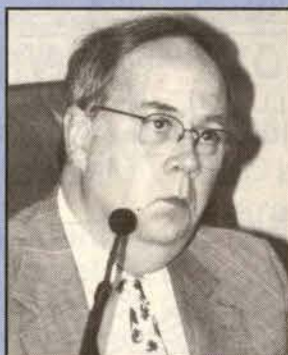
Local 1245 members weren't the only citizens concerned about the impact of the CPUC proposal—sometimes called deregulation—on service reliability.

Harold Fink, a small business owner testifying at the Sept. 26 public hearing in Fresno, said telephone deregulation had increased his bill but harmed the service he received.

Service will suffer if electricity is deregulated, Fink predicted. It will



CPUC Commissioner
Jessie Knight



CPUC President
Daniel Fessler



CPUC Commissioner
Gregory Conlon

CPUC PUBLIC HEARINGS

be "just like when you call the phone company and say, 'My line is out' and they say, 'Call somebody else.'"

Service quality was also on the mind of Tom Ferrito, former mayor of Los Gatos.

"I saw first-hand how PG&E responded to the needs of my community during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake," Ferrito testified at the San Jose public hearing. He said he didn't believe that kind of response would be possible if electric service is deregulated.

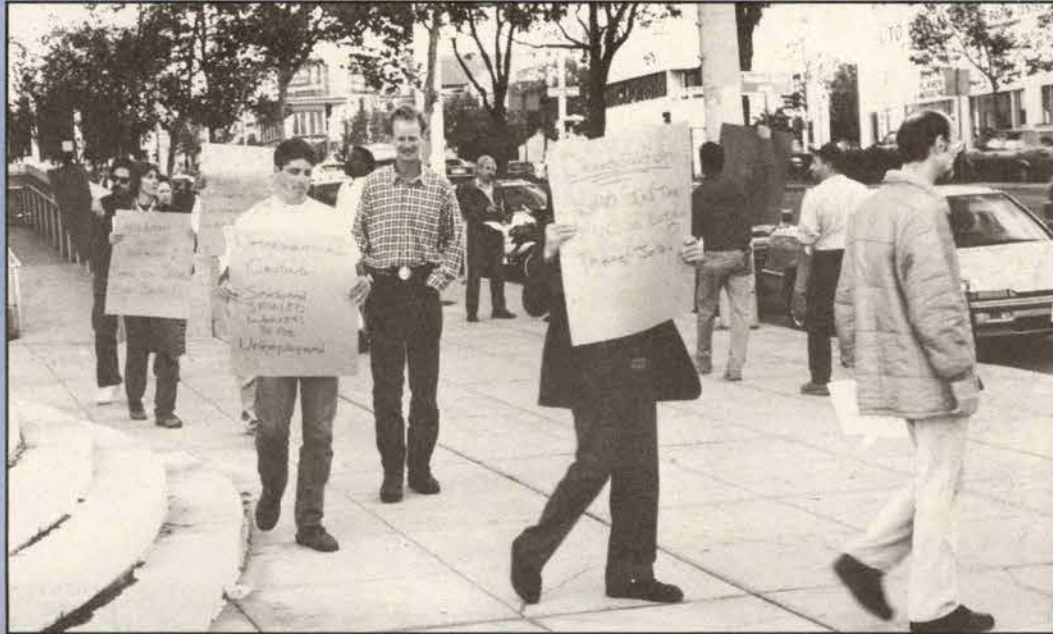
Competition is supposed to bring lower prices but "often brings substandard services or products," Ferrito told CPUC Commissioner Gregory Conlon, who presided at the San Jose hearing. "Are you going to require so-called competitors to provide...back-up service?" Ferrito asked.

Los Banos City Councilman Gerald O'Brien, testifying at the Fresno hearing, stated the concern over service this way: "When my light goes out," said O'Brien, "I want to make sure there's somebody to come out and fix it that night."

Service providers will be easy to find when everything is running smoothly, predicted Hipolito Tavarez, testifying in Fresno. But maybe not so easy to find when things go wrong.

If the CPUC plan is implemented, he asked, "Where do you have any guarantees the lights will be on dur-

See PAGE EIGHTEEN



Members of Local 1245 picket outside CPUC headquarters in San Francisco prior to the Sept. 7 public hearing. (Photo: Landis Marttila)

"As PG&E employees, we are skilled workers...I take pride in my work. Contractors come in and do a job and then they're gone."

Gerald Pittore, Local 1245



Greenpeace trumpeted a "Power for the People" theme at a rally preceding the Sept. 12 public hearing in Martinez.

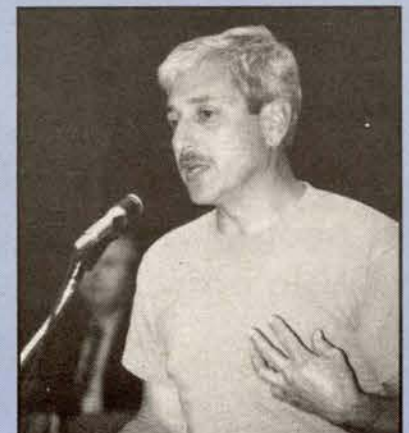


"By cutting corners, PG&E is sacrificing the long-term integrity of the system. We will live with the legacy of that."

Mark Newman, Local 1245

"PG&E is changing the way it does business--not to raise its standards but to lower itself to [competitors] with lower standards."

Robin David, Local 1245





"I have the responsibility and the duty of providing safe, reliable electricity to the public...I have lived up to my obligation for over 30 years, through snow storms, landslides, floods, forest fires and earthquakes."

Tom Hutchinson, Local 1245

"Who's going to be responsible for the safety of the people?"

Clifton Jackson, Local 1245



"I saw first-hand how PG&E responded to the needs of my community during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake...Are you going to require so-called competitors to provide...back-up service?"

*Tom Ferrito,
Former mayor, Los Gatos*

"With this deregulation [PG&E] seems to have panicked. They're laying off people...Pretty soon you won't see reliable power."

Bryant Bolan, Local 1245



From PAGE SEVENTEEN

ing emergencies as well as during the good times?"

Concern About Reliability

A few people, mostly business representatives, spoke in favor of the CPUC proposal at the public hearings. For the most part they echoed the CPUC argument that lower electric rates would help retain and expand California businesses.

"A decision to expand manufacturing is easy right now—we go out of state," said Mark Beck, representing a semi-conductor manufacturer.

But other business representatives expressed deep concern about the possible effects that deregulation would have on reliability.

"Many companies in Silicon Valley—especially manufacturers of electronic equipment—are very sensitive to the reliability and quality of electric power," said Gil Friend, an environmental management consultant and spokesman for Business for Social Responsibility.

Testifying in San Jose, Friend asked the CPUC:

"Will utility companies, as they come under competitive pressure to cut costs, focus on short-term considerations, and cut operations and maintenance, to the detriment of reliability? How concerned will non-utility power providers be about reliability? Who will be responsible for reliability in the new system?"

Ronald McPherson, representing the Santa Clara County Black Chamber of Commerce, praised the quality of service historically provided by PG&E.

"Many speak of lowering costs. That must be coupled with quality service and quality programs," said McPherson.

Gerald Cook, representing Sun Microsystems Computer Corp. at the San Jose hearing, tempered his support for the CPUC proposal by cautioning that reliability and quality of service is important.

"I would certainly not encourage anything that would make the system any less safe," Cook testified.

Ducking the Issue

At the Fresno hearing, CPUC President Daniel Fessler attempted to divert attention from the issue of service reliability.

In introductory remarks at the start of the hearing, Fessler said no evidence existed that reliability is a problem.

"Reliability is not the issue," he declared.

But Fessler was ducking the real issue: will reliability *become* a problem if the CPUC proposal is implemented? Utility workers—the people

CPUC PUBLIC HEARINGS

in the best position to know—believe that it will.

"Reliable electric service is made possible by skilled workers who know how the system works and know how to maintain it," said Susan Stipp, a customer service representative testifying in Eureka. Competition, she said, "will erode service, compromise safety, degrade labor standards and lower public service values in the electric utility industry."

Local 1245 member Robin David, testifying in Martinez, said the corrosive effects of competition are already being felt. "PG&E is changing the way it does business—not to raise its standards but to lower itself to [competitors] with lower standards," David said.

Local 1245 member Rich Cowart, a PG&E lineman also testifying in Martinez, told the CPUC: "The maintenance of the system has been decreased to reduce costs."

Local 1245 member Gerald Pittore, an electric crew foreman, warned that competition would lead to increased use of out-of-state contractors who would be less accountable to the public. Testifying in Martinez, Pittore said:

"As PG&E employees, we are skilled workers...I take pride in my work. Contractors come in and do a job and then they're gone."

No One in Charge

Feeding these concerns about service reliability is the growing suspicion that, in a deregulated environment, no one will be in charge.

Under current law, utilities like PG&E hold a monopoly for a particular service territory. As the monopoly provider, the utility is legally obligated to serve the public with reliable, high quality power. The CPUC is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the utility's obligation to serve.

But in a competitive market, where energy generators can strike up separate deals with individual consumers, the task of monitoring service becomes enormously complex. The CPUC insists that safety, quality and reliability of service will be unaffected by its proposal. But the CPUC proposal offers nothing—not a single word—about *how* the safety, quality and reliability of service will be assured.

Joe Fradin, a PG&E utility worker and union member, reminded the CPUC of the impact of deregulation on the trucking industry. That industry, Fradin noted, had been regulated many decades ago "to help insure safety on our highways."

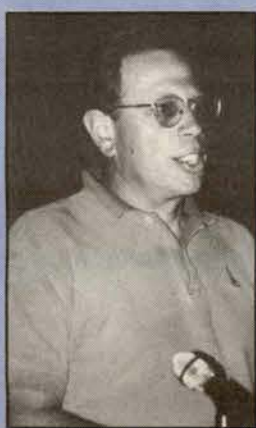
But deregulation changed that situ-

See PAGE TWENTY



"Why haven't we learned from all of these deregulation fiascos and put back in place those regulations that have protected the public so ably in the past? Is the answer stupidity? Or is it greed and power wielded by special interests?"

Joe Fradin, Local 1245



"What programs for safety and skill training are you requiring for new companies to protect the public interest and safety?"

Bill Brill, Local 1245



"Many speak of lowering costs. That must be coupled with quality service and quality programs."

*Ronald McPherson
Black Chamber
of Commerce*

"The residential ratepayers are not going to save a dime."

Anthony Araya, Local 1245



"I want to know how you're going to provide training to people who will provide service in the future--because the experienced people are leaving."

Barbara Saunders Local 1245

CPUC PUBLIC HEARINGS

From PAGE NINETEEN

ation dramatically, said Fradin, testifying in San Jose.

"Now it's simply who can get the goods there the fastest and the cheapest. The result: drivers with little or no sleep driving poorly-maintained unsafe rigs, putting all of us who use the highways in grave and constant danger," he said.

Also testifying in San Jose, Local 1245 member Bill Brill asked CPUC Commissioner Conlon: "What programs for safety and skill training are you requiring for new companies to protect the public interest and safety?"

Barbara Saunders, speaking shortly after Brill, also addressed the issue of skill training.

"I'm the lady you see off the road with a shovel," said Saunders, a PG&E fieldman in Hollister, near the epicenter of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. "I'm the lady who didn't come home for days and days during the earthquake...I want to know how you're going to provide training to people who will provide service in the future, because the experienced people are leaving."

Following her testimony, Saunders told the Utility Reporter that downsizing, in her opinion, has reduced staffing in her area to the point where PG&E could not respond effectively to another major earthquake in the area.

"Who's going to be responsible for the safety of the people?" asked Local 1245 member Clifton Jackson, testifying in Martinez.

"Preferential Treatment"

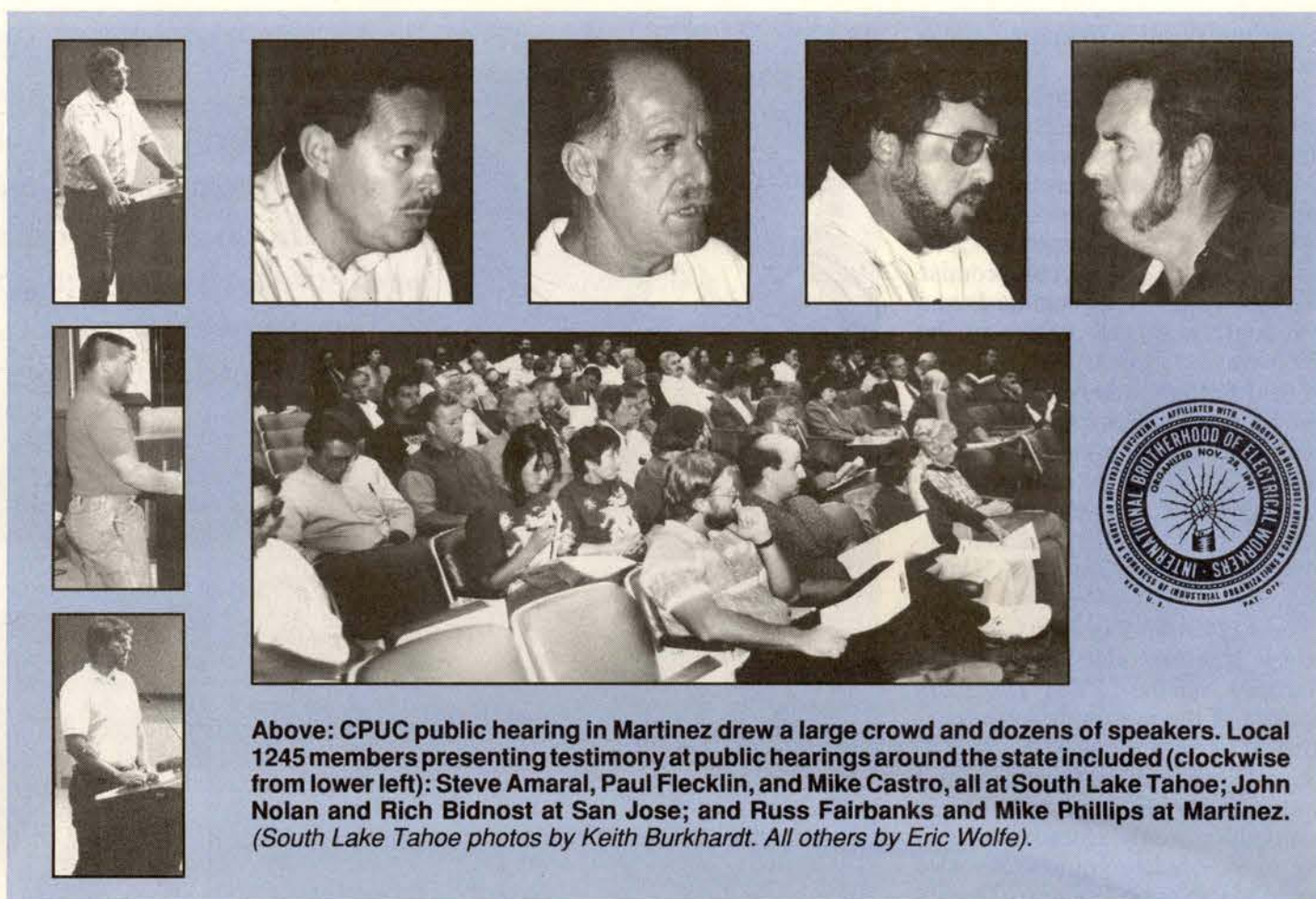
People also used the public hearings to voice their skepticism about the CPUC's claim that all consumers, big and small, would benefit from competitive markets.

Under the CPUC proposal, large industrial users would be free to negotiate contracts with independent generators as early as 1996. Residential customers would not be given this right until the year 2002.

"The proposal gives corporations preferential treatment," declared Helen Lie of the Greenlining Coalition, testifying at the Fresno hearing on behalf of low-income residential consumers. "Our communities are not blind to what's going on."

Local 1245 member Jerry Meyers observed that the CPUC timetable gives large industrial users an opportunity to lock up the cheapest sources of power.

"Do you really think by the year 2000, after the big users have picked off the cream of the crop, that [independent producers] are going to respond to the little old lady in Pasadena?" Meyers asked during testimony in Martinez.



Above: CPUC public hearing in Martinez drew a large crowd and dozens of speakers. Local 1245 members presenting testimony at public hearings around the state included (clockwise from lower left): Steve Amaral, Paul Flecklin, and Mike Castro, all at South Lake Tahoe; John Nolan and Rich Bidnost at San Jose; and Russ Fairbanks and Mike Phillips at Martinez. (South Lake Tahoe photos by Keith Burkhardt. All others by Eric Wolfe).

A woman testifying in Martinez provoked an appreciative round of laughter when she told Commissioner Jessie Knight: "I'm 80 years old, so the year 2002 for rate relief is not very attractive to me."

Immediately following her testimony, others used harsher language to describe the underlying economics of the CPUC proposal.

"How on earth does anybody think you can deregulate and not turn the rich loose on the poor?" asked Charlie Walker of the Bayview-Hunters Point Builders Exchange. "The commissioners are employed to protect us, like the 80-year old woman [who just testified]... Instead of that you say 'Let her scramble for herself.'"

"The residential ratepayers are not going to save a dime," Local 1245 member Anthony Araya, a PG&E fieldman, predicted at the Martinez hearing.

Setback for Renewables

Environmentalists and representatives from the renewable energy industry expressed deep concern about the potential impact of the CPUC proposal.

The biomass industry showed up in force at the Fresno public hearing to decry a recent decision by PG&E to buy out and then shut down two biomass facilities. Biomass industry representatives said scaling back this industry would exacerbate landfill problems and deprive the state of a clean and renewable fuel source.

Renewable energy advocate Ty Cashman remarked at the Martinez

hearing that the CPUC had helped make California a world leader in renewable energy.

"There is a trillion dollar industry out there for repowering the world," said Cashman. The CPUC proposal, he warned, would "pull the rug out" from under this industry in California and give competitors a chance to catch up.

Picketline

In addition to Eureka, Martinez, San Jose, and Fresno, testimony critical of the CPUC proposal was presented at public hearings last month in South Lake Tahoe and San Francisco.

Union members conducted an informational picketline outside CPUC headquarters prior to the San Francisco hearing. Over 100 people signed up to testify at that hearing, including many members of Local 1245.

Speakers at several locations pointed out that the CPUC, in fashioning a proposal designed to benefit large corporations, appeared to be abandoning its constitutional responsibility to protect the general public.

"You, the PUC, are charged with the responsibility of governing the utilities for the public, while I have the responsibility and the duty of providing safe, reliable electricity to the public," said Local 1245 member Tom Hutchinson.

"I have lived up to my obligation for over 30 years, through snow storms, landslides, floods, forest fires and earthquakes," said Hutchinson, providing one of the more dramatic mo-

ments during the public hearing in San Jose.

"Twenty two hours after the Loma Prieta earthquake I was restoring power using my own vehicle, even though my own home was six miles from the epicenter and suffered over \$75,000 in damage. I felt I had a duty to serve the public in a time of disaster," said Hutchinson.

"What the PUC is proposing is a disaster," Hutchinson declared.

Bruce Fisher, a member of the consumer group Toward Utility Rate Normalization (TURN), took advantage of the Fresno hearing to remind CPUC President Fessler of the CPUC's origins.

"It seems to me that protection of the consumer was one of the original purposes for setting up the CPUC, and I think the commission should not forget that," Fisher said.

In San Jose, Local 1245 member Joe Fradin made a similar point to Commissioner Conlon:

"Why haven't we learned from all of these deregulation fiascos and put back in place those regulations that have protected the public so ably in the past?" Fradin asked. "Is the answer stupidity? Or is it greed and power wielded by special interests?"

"You, commissioners, have a duty to all ratepayers to help insure a system for safe and reliable electricity," Fradin said.

The CPUC will continue to conduct public hearings through November. All the remaining hearings will be in southern California.