

UTILITY REPORTER

Celebrate
Labor Day!

International Brotherhood
Of Electrical Workers
Local 1245, AFL-CIO
September 1995
Vol. XLIV No. 9

Union hall dispatches 520 to PG&E

Local 1245 dispatched 520 temporary additional workers to PG&E between July 17 and Aug. 21 through the union's hiring hall.

Workers have been dispatched to locations throughout the PG&E system, in classifications ranging from lineman to fieldman to utility worker.

The upturn in jobs reflects PG&E's decision last spring to step up maintenance. Providing skilled temporary additional employees through the union hall reduces the likelihood that PG&E will utilize outside contractors for additional work.



THANKS!

Local 1245 office staff display a heart-shaped bouquet they received as an expression of thanks from member Dan Conway after he was dispatched to PG&E from the union hiring hall. Staff members are (from left) Pat Hove, Gail Varner, Linda Knight, Peggy Proschold, Brenda Bartizal, Virginia Browne, Sheryl Dillon and (seated) Office Manager Julie Rodriguez.

New deregulation scheme threatens jobs, ratepayers

By Eric Wolfe

Residential rates would go up and union jobs would go out the door under a new version of electric utility deregulation put forward last month.

The proposal—sponsored by Gov. Pete Wilson and unveiled on Aug. 9 by Southern

California Edison, the California Manufacturers Association (CMA), the California Large Energy Consumers Association (CLECA) and the Independent Energy Producers—seeks to modify the restructuring plan announced by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in May.

The CPUC plan would es-

tablish a wholesale market in electric supply. This approach, sometimes called Poolco, would create a central authority to buy power from the cheapest available sources and then dispatch the power to all customers. Retail sales of electricity (between individual customers and generators) would not be permitted until the whole-

sale market is fully operational.

But Edison and the business interests that make up CMA and CLECA are not content with this plan for wholesale competition. They want a retail market in electricity so that large consumers can purchase power directly from the cheapest generators. The proposal they put forward on Aug. 9 would permit retail sales to begin immediately, rather than waiting for PoolCo to become operational.

Local 1245 has vigorously opposed retail competition without a pool, in the belief that it will harm residential ratepayers and could undermine the ability of regulated utilities like PG&E to deliver safe, reliable service. The union has generally supported the concept of wholesale competition, and in May—on a 3 to 1 vote—the CPUC

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Republican bill undermines worker safety

Tnew Republican-majority in the House of Representatives passed a bill Aug. 3 that would slash funding for programs designed to assist working families.

The Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill, approved on a 219-208 vote, would cut by one-third the funds for enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act

(OSHA). One-half of all federal OSHA inspectors would lose their jobs.

In a further swipe at working people, the bill cuts by one-third the funding for the National Labor Relations Board, the agency that enforces labor standards and punishes unfair labor practices. Such cutbacks threaten to create massive backlogs of worker complaints.

The House also cut nearly

\$4 billion from education and training programs designed to assist workers in a changing economy.

The vote laid bare the loyalties of the major political parties. The assault on labor was supported by 24 of California's 25 Republican House members. All California Democrats present voted to preserve the funding for workers and their

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CALENDAR

September 4
CELEBRATE
LABOR DAY!

CLINTON IS COMING
President Bill Clinton will attend the Alameda Central Labor Council Labor Day Picnic on Sept. 4 at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, Ca.

This historic event is open to the public.
For more information call the Labor Council at 510-632-4242.

October 14
Public Sector
Stewards Conference
Sacramento, Ca.



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Business Manager & Executive Editor

Jack McNally

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E. L. "Ed" Mallory

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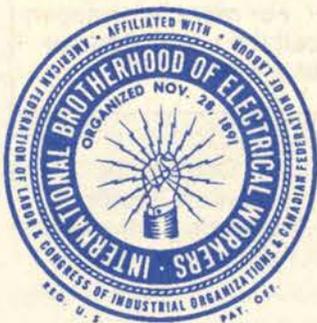
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Workers here and abroad

Rolling the union on . . .

Slavery: Seventy workers from Thailand were held in virtual slavery by an illegal garment contractor operation located in an El Monte, Ca. apartment complex. The California Department of Industrial Relations filed suit last month against the employers to force payment of nearly \$5 million in unpaid back wages, another \$5 million in damages, and \$1.6 million in penalties.

Rights Activist Jailed: Harry Wu, a Chinese human rights activist who immigrated to the US in 1985, was arrested by Chinese authorities when he returned to China in June to investigate conditions in Chinese labor camps. Wu himself spent 19 years in Chinese labor camps for criticizing the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary.

Warning on Deregulation: A fully-deregulated electricity market would mean higher prices, confusing bills and service disconnections for the poor, according to a report issued by the staff of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission. The report said that "electricity prices would fall in the short term and increase in the long term relative to what would be expected under current reulation."

Merger: The United Auto Workers, the International Association of Machinists, and the United Steelworkers have decided to merge in order to increase their resources for strikes and organizing. The unions have invited other unions to join them in the merger, which will take several years to complete.

Sworn In: AFL-CIO Sec.-Treas. Tom Donahue was sworn in to complete the term of President Lane Kirkland, who retired. To win a full term in office, Donahue must beat SEIU President John Sweeney at the AFL-CIO's October convention in New York.

Packed and Gone: Zenith has moved its last US television manufacturing plant to Mexico. The move came after years of wage freezes and contract concessions at the Springfield, Mo. plant, which once employed 4,000 IBEW members.

Dreadlocks Cool: New York federal Judge John Koeltl ruled that two guards at New York's Sing Sing prison can wear their hair in dreadlocks, despite the claim by prison officials that the hair style violated prison grooming standards. The

judge ruled that there's no proof dreadlocks are unprofessional or represent a safety threat.

Want a Job?

Go to Jail: Lockhart Technologies of Texas closed its Austin branch, fired 150 workers, and moved its operations to a prison run by a private security firm, Dollars and Sense reported. Lockhart pays the prison the minimum wage for each worker, but the workers keep only 20% of their wages and receive neither Workers Compensation nor benefits. Since 1980, the number of working prisoners nationwide has increased 360%.

No Standard: In the face of escalating pressure from Republicans and business interests, the Clinton administration has abandoned plans to issue OSHA's already-watered down ergonomics standard, Labor Notes reported. Unions say a strong standard is needed to prevent the 700,000 repetitive strain injuries that occur each year.

Grim Toll: The Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights shows that the number of murders and

physical attacks on trade unionists worldwide increased during 1994. The survey, compiled by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, found that trade unionists had been killed in Algeria, Colombia, Sudan, Gabon, Swaziland, Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia, Brazil, Haiti, El Salvador, Peru, Guatemala, Paraguay and Serbia.

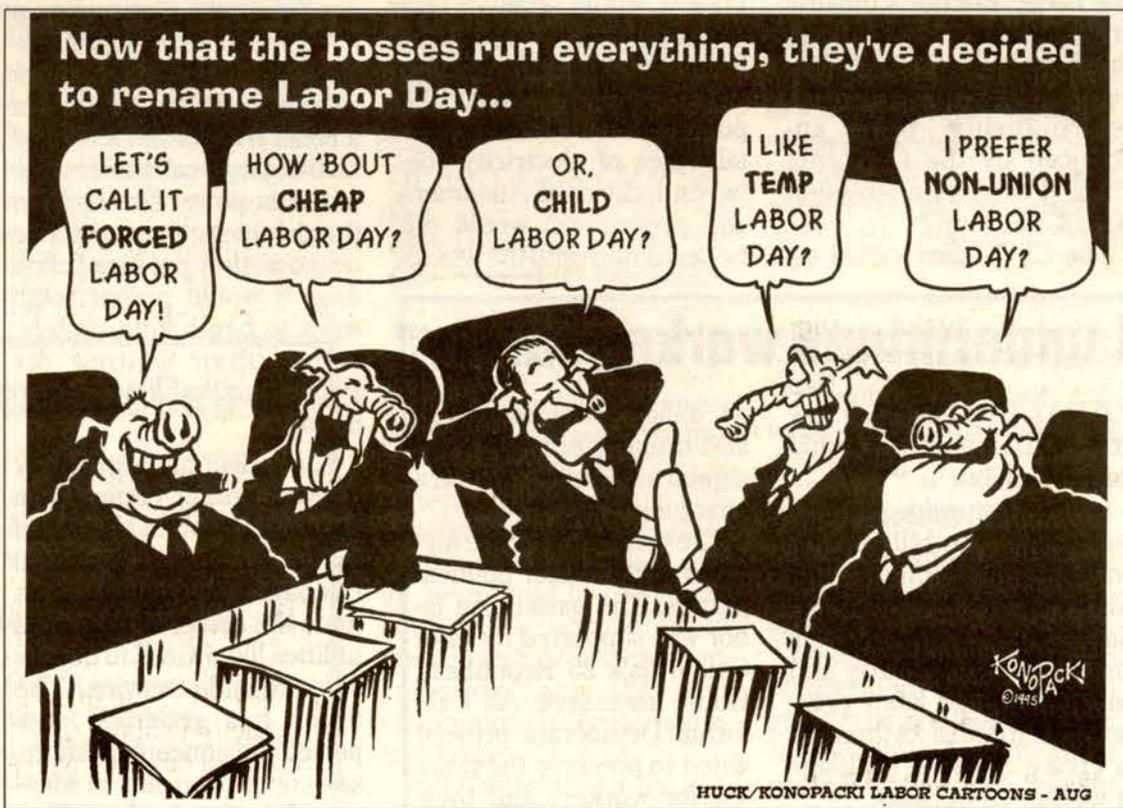
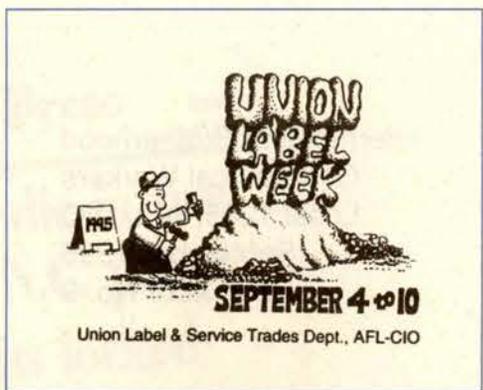
For example: In Colombia, 178 union members were murdered last year. In Algeria, 300 were killed.

Attacks: In 1994 there were 2,000 cases worldwide of physical attacks by the police, the army, or employers' henchmen during strikes and demonstrations, or of attacks on trade union premises.

Dismissals: The number of dismissals aimed at breaking trade unions or retaliating against leaders and activists has fluctuated between 65,000 and 75,000 worldwide over the last three years.

Interference: Systematic interference in trade union affairs by governments has increased 65% over the last three years. Such interference includes attempted kidnapping and death threats, the dissolution of trade unions, refusal to recognize unions, violent repression of strikes and demonstrations, the seizure of trade union headquarters, the intimidation of trade unionists, and the abolition of the checkoff system for the collection of union dues.

Closer to Home: Speaking of checkoffs for dues, Southern California Edison in June eliminated the check-off system—part of its on-going campaign against IBEW Local 47.



The issue is job security

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

The most critical issue facing American workers in the 1990s—and probably into the next century—is job security.

Obviously there are other problems. Wages for the average worker have been stagnant for years. Benefits are under constant attack. Workplace health and safety protections are the target of a bill now being considered by the US House of Representatives.

But wages, benefits, and safety protections mean nothing to the person who has no job. Job security is the foundation for it all.

Management has a fundamental advantage in this matter because management has the right to determine the size of the workforce. Throughout America, corporate managers have been dumping workers in order to cut short-term costs.

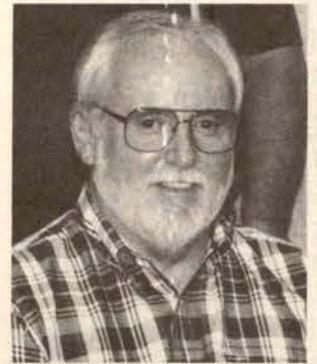
This process has been a personal disaster for hundreds of thousands of American workers. People who have lost their jobs are lucky to find new ones at a fraction of their previous wage. And good benefits packages are fast becoming an endangered species.

We've seen this job hemorrhaging firsthand at PG&E, where two years of downsizing reduced the workforce by over 5,000.

Like unions everywhere, we've fought hard to protect our members' jobs. We prevented over 3,000 layoffs of union members by negotiating voluntary retirement and severance packages. We saved hundreds more by massive protests last spring.

But protests can only carry you so far. The important thing is to identify wherever possible the causes of job insecurity, and to try to do something about it.

So we set out to convince



PG&E and the California Public Utilities Commission that California needs a sizeable utility workforce to respond to disasters. We argued that PG&E could sustain—and even expand—its workforce by expanding its maintenance efforts, and by aggressively pursuing new construction work.

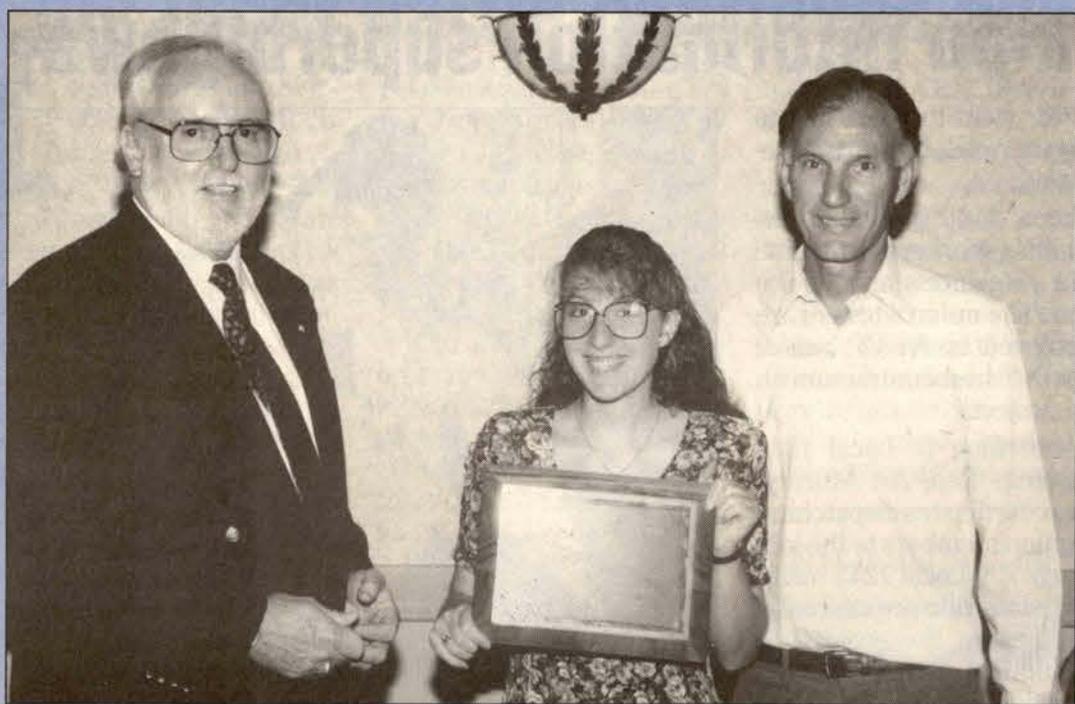
Eventually, they listened. In our landmark agreement last spring with PG&E's Customer Energy Services (CES), the company committed itself to accelerate maintenance work and to aggressively pursue new construction work.

PG&E could accomplish this by adding a bunch of new employees. Under the labor agreement the company can hire whenever they want. Or the company could have contracted the work out.

The challenge to our union was this: how can we maintain some leverage in terms of job security for our current members, while at the same time helping PG&E get the additional workers it needs to get the job done?

The solution we agreed to was to set up a hiring hall at the union for temporary additional workers for PG&E. We stipulated that these workers must receive a union wage. And unlike most temporary workers in this country, who get no benefits, we said these PG&E temporary additional workers must get an ad-

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ESSAY WINNER

Adrienne Chappelle, daughter of Local 1245 member David Chappelle (right), accepts a plaque from Business Manager Jack McNally for her winning essay in the Al Sandoval competitive scholarship contest. She will receive \$500 per year for four years toward her college expenses. Her essay was published in the August issue of Utility Reporter.

'Ties That Bind'

Labor Day TV looks at current struggles

After deaths, injuries and cutbacks, Avondale Shipyards workers in New Orleans called for a union election. But Pipefitter Betty Dumas is disturbed.

"We had an election at Avondale two years ago. The people voted the union in. Why is it taking so long for the union to come in? This is America. Something is wrong," she says.

The Avondale workers' story is featured in Ties That Bind, a Labor Day television special presented by We Do the Work. The program examines workers' efforts to gain representation in the American workplace and how some employers are responding in an increasingly anti-union environment.

Check out labor TV!



Pipefitter Betty Dumas (right) is an American worker whose struggle to be represented by a union is the subject of the Labor Day TV special "Ties That Bind." (Photo: Jackson Hill)

California Airtimes for "Ties That Bind"

Eureka: KEET/13
Sept. 4, 7 p.m.

Rohnert Park: KRCB/22
Sept. 4, 7 p.m.

Sacramento Cable 7
Sept. 4, 7 p.m.

Fresno: KVPT/18
Check Local Listings

San Bernardino: KVCR/24
Sept. 4, 9 p.m.

San Jose: KTEH/54
Sept. 4, 11:30 a.m.
Sept. 9, 4 p.m.

Los Angeles: KCET/28
Sept. 2, 3 p.m.
Sept. 3, 5:30 p.m.

San Francisco: KQED/9
Sept. 4, 9 p.m.
and WDTW
Sept. 4, 9:30 a.m.- 3 p.m.

San Mateo: KCSM/60
Sept. 4, 10 p.m.

Union members out of work

San Jose puts roadblock on information superhighway

When Lemarious Danzy began work in February helping to build Pacific Bell's "information superhighway" in San Jose, he had high hopes for the job.

He was drawing a union wage and benefits negotiated by Local 1245. He was doing work that he enjoyed. And he was picking up new skills—always a plus in today's changing job market.

But those hopes got tripped up by red tape this summer when the city's public works and planning departments got into a jurisdictional dispute over permitting. Just before the July 4th weekend, Danzy and about 200 other workers were told to stop reporting to work.

"I felt bad. I have a family," said Danzy, who is provider for five children aged 3 to 12. He believes city officials in

San Jose "didn't use good judgement" in shutting the job down and should have given more consideration to "all the people they were affecting by revoking the work permit."

Danzy said he had to cancel the family's annual trip to Disneyland—the kids reward for good grades in school—because the job shutdown has seriously crimped the family's finances.

This roadblock on the information superhighway is highly ironic in a city that prides itself on being a leader in advanced technology. Apparently city officials were concerned to make sure that equipment being used in the project met aesthetic and noise guidelines.

A Pac Bell spokeswoman told The San Francisco Chronicle that company and city officials were "pressing forward" to resolve the dispute. But as the Utility Re-

porter went to press in late August, work had not yet resumed.

Local 1245 has been dispatching workers to the Pac Bell job since early in the year. The union workers are employed by AT&T, one of Pac Bell's subcontractors on the project.

According to Local 1245 Business Rep. Art Murray, who coordinates dispatching of union members to the job, nearly 700 Local 1245 members statewide are currently working on the project. In addition to San Jose, construction is underway in San Diego and in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

Classifications being utilized are ground persons, equipment operators, miscellaneous equipment operators, truck drivers and concrete finishers. Danzy, a union steward, started off on a rock saw crew and said he was "learning quite a bit on the job."

Danzy said it was a job that made him genuinely enjoy getting up and going to work. And clearly he's anxious to get back to it, as are a couple hundred other union members.

This roadblock on the information superhighway is highly ironic in a city that prides itself on being a leader in advanced technology.



Lemarious Danzy and his four year old son, Dominique.



DISPATCH

Dispatching Local 1245 members to AT&T for work on the information superhighway (as well as dispatching members to the newly-created temporary additional jobs at PG&E) are, from left: Business Rep. Art Murray, and dispatchers Sheryl Dillon and Peggy Proschold. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

Wage gain at City of Willits

Members of Local 1245 secured a 5% general wage increase for the 1995-1996 fiscal year during recent bargaining with the City of Willits.

The wage hike came during a wage re-opener. The agreement terms out on June 30 of 1996.

Bargaining for the union were J. C. England, Leah

Oberdorf and Business Rep. Bob Choate.

Choate said a newly-established labor-management committee at the City of Willits had already resulted in the acquisition of three new vehicles for the maintenance department, and that employees regard the new committee as a "positive approach" to problem solving.

Member needs marrow donors

Union brother Everett Flowers could use your help.

Flowers, a materials-handler at PG&E's Diablo Canyon Power Plant, is one of thousands of patients with leukemia, aplastic anemia and other fatal diseases who can only be cured through bone marrow transplant from a generous stranger.

Heart of American Bone

Marrow Donor Registry is recruiting donors to join the National Marrow Donor Program. These volunteers will be available as potential donors for Everett Flowers and other patients across the United States.

For information on how you can help, call tollfree:

1-800-366-6711

W

hen President Howard Stiefer swore in the newly-elected members of the Local 1245 Advisory Council on August 5, 1995, the local union carried forward a unique tradition within the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The Advisory Council, originally called the Policy Committee, was established in the early 1950s, shortly after employees at PG&E voted to be represented by IBEW. The creation of the Council reflected the democratic ideals of the employees who organized PG&E workers into a union.

On one hand, these employees wanted the union to have a strong leader—one with enough authority to deal effectively with the employers. So, following the tradition of the IBEW, they created an organizational structure that vested considerable authority in a Business Manager.

On the other hand, these employees were also committed to democratic industrial unionism, in the tradition of the Congress of Industrial

Organizations (CIO). In fact, many of Local 1245's founders had organized workers at PG&E under the CIO banner before switching over to the IBEW in the late 1940s.

With any large organization, these founders knew, there is a danger of the leadership losing touch with the members. Creating the Advisory Council was their way of insuring that the rank and file would have significant on-going influence over the union's affairs.

The Advisory Council is a unique institution within the IBEW. No other IBEW local has a democratically-elected rank and file advisory group responsible for meeting with the leadership on an on-going basis.

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You

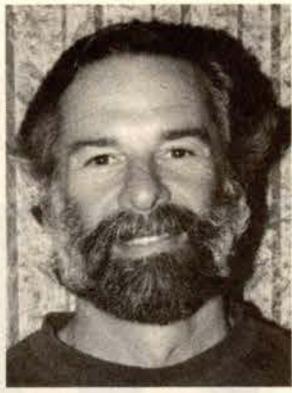
and
the
IBEW
Local
1245



Advisory Council



TAKING THE OATH
Members of the recently-elected Local 1245 Advisory Council are sworn in by President Howard Stiefer at the August meeting.



Terry Andreucci
Drum



Mike Brocchini
San Joaquin

Advisory



Keith Burkhardt
Sacramento



Rich Cowart
East Bay & Material Control



Grover Day
Stockton & City of Lodi

IBEW Local

1995



Jim "Ed" Edwards
Colgate



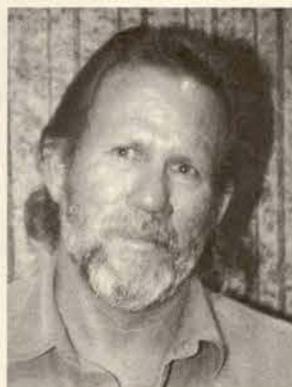
Jim Findley
North Bay



Bob Irwin
Tree Trimmer Companies



Michael Johnson
CATV- Operating Companies



Jeff Johnstone
Outside Construction



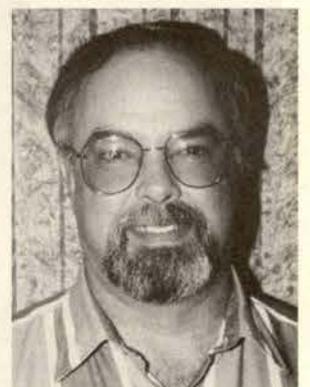
Linda Jurado
Clerical at Large



Dan Lockwood
Coast Valleys



Bob Lovett
DeSabra

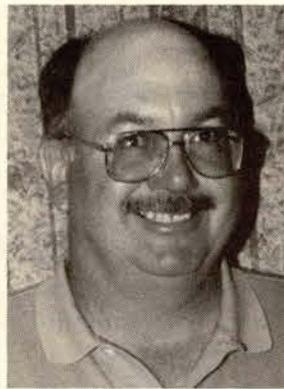


Jim Lynn
Pipeline Operations

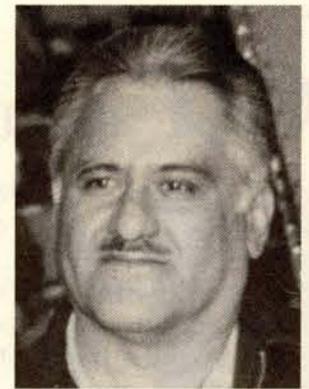
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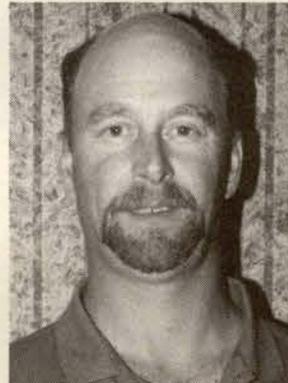
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Monte Nelson
Citizens Utilities Co.
of California



Will Nunez
Sacramento Regional Transit



Joseph Osterlund
General Construction



Dave Pittman
Irrigation Districts



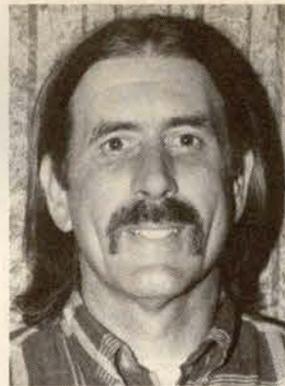
Shirley Roberts
San Francisco Clerical (VP &
Comptroller's Office)



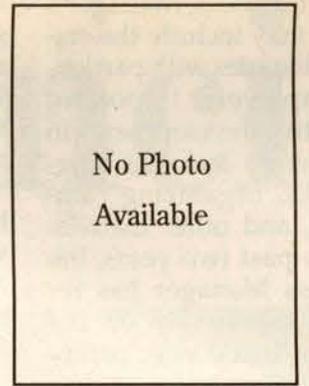
Larry Rodriguez
Alameda/Contra Costa
Transit & East Bay Municipal



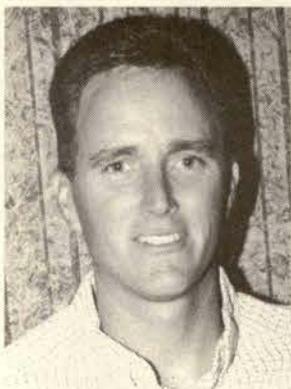
Bernard Smallwood
San Francisco &
General Office



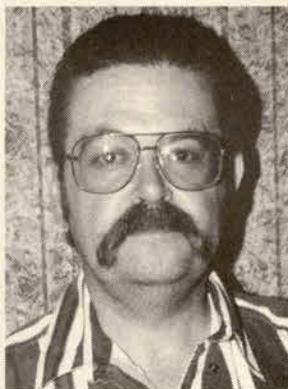
Ken Sorenson
Pacific Gas Transmission



Lee Thomas, Jr.
Humboldt



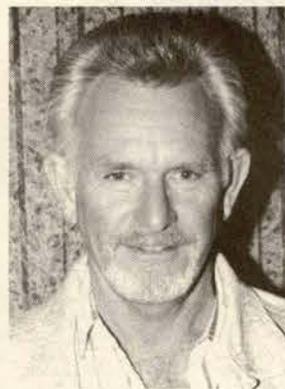
Raymond Thomas
Shasta



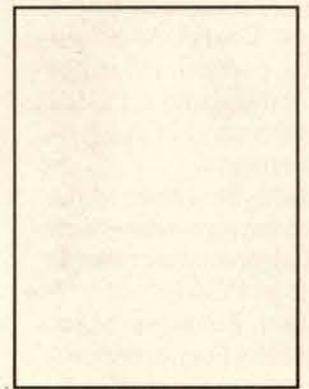
Arthur Torres
Sacramento Municipal
Utility District



Bob Vieira
Sierra Pacific Power Co.



Bill Wallace
San Jose/City of Santa Clara



Vacant
US Bureau of Reclamation

You and the IBEW Local 1245 Advisory Council

From PAGE FIVE

Under the by-laws, the Advisory Council is responsible for meeting with the Executive Board four times a year to discuss the business of the union, and to inform the Executive Board and Business Manager of the business being carried on by the units. The Council may make recommendations to the Executive Board on policy or other matters related to the functions of the local union.

Advisory Council meetings, which are held on the first weekend in February, May, August and November, typically begin with the introduction of all members and guests present. Following this, President Howard Stiefer calls upon Business Manager Jack McNally to report on current union activities.

Business Mgr. Report

The Business Manager's report may include the status of disputes with particular employers, important legislative developments in Sacramento and Washington D.C., organizing campaigns, and other matters. For the past two years, the Business Manager has reported extensively on the political battle over utility deregulation and the union's efforts to influence that debate.

The Business Manager also calls on staff members to report on specific issues.

Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell provides current information on staff changes, PG&E negotiations, and PG&E Letter Agreements.

Assistant Business Manager Sam Tamimi reports on Title 8 (labor-management) activities at PG&E.

Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier reports on Clerical issues at PG&E.

Assistant Business Manager Perry Zimmerman reports on status of bargaining with employers other than PG&E.

Assistant Business Man-

ager Roger Stalcup reports on the status of arbitrations.

Staff attorney Tom Dalzell reports on current legal issues, such as government-mandated drug testing.

Business Rep. Landis Marttila reports on health and safety concerns, apprenticeship matters, and current developments at the tree trimming companies represented by Local 1245.

During these reports, Advisory Council members sometimes ask questions or offer additional information of their own.

Council Reports

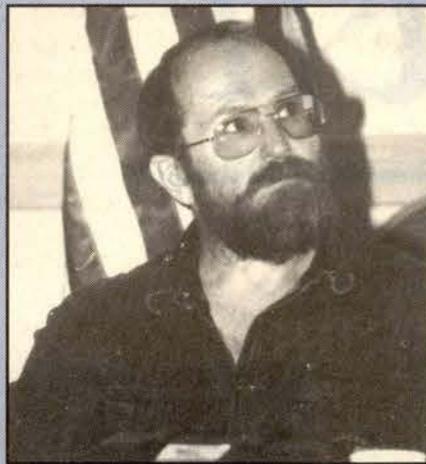
Following these reports, the Advisory Council members each report on activities in their jurisdiction. Typically these reports begin Saturday afternoon and carry over to the Sunday morning session.

Advisory Council members can bring another union member from their area as a guest to the meeting. In the event that an Advisory Council member cannot attend the meeting, he or she can send an alternate.

Advisory Council members are not paid for their work on behalf of the union. Although they are reimbursed for certain expenses, their service is voluntary--performed for the good of the union and the membership.



Business Rep.
Landis
Marttila



President Howard Stiefer



Senior Assistant Business Manager
Darrel Mitchell



Assistant Business Manager
Dorothy Fortier



Assistant Business Manager Roger
Stalcup



Business Manager Jack McNally

Advisory Council photos:
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Staff Attorney Tom Dalzell



Assistant Business Manager Perry
Zimmerman



Assistant Business Manager Sam Tamimi

Photos by Eric Wolfe

Epic labor battle continues against Staley

Locked-out union members continued their epic battle against A. E. Staley Manufacturing Co. in Decatur, Ill. in July when they rejected a company contract offer that was as bad as a proposal first offered three years ago.

Last month the AFL-CIO Executive Council voted unanimously to endorse a campaign by the UPIU to challenge PepsiCo to sever its ties to Staley. PepsiCo buys up to 30% of Staley's corn sweetener for the beverage giant's soft drinks.

Despite the hardships they have endured during the two-

year lockout, including being pepper-gassed by Decatur police during a peaceful demonstration, Staley workers chose to reject the contract offer and press ahead with their campaign for fair treatment.

"Our members have demonstrated that they are committed to this fight, and that we will not allow Staley to starve us into submission,"

said Local 7837 President Dave Watts.

The rejected contract contained company demands for unlimited rights to subcontract workers' jobs as well as 12-hour rotating shifts.

"We hold Pepsi accountable for its role in this shameful attack on American workers," Watts declared.

The union's campaign against Pepsi so far has gen-

erated thousands of consumer protests. A similar union campaign targeting Miller Beer Co. led to the brewer's announcement last October it no longer would buy sweetener from Staley.



HELP HAS ARRIVED! Responding to a residential customer outage in San Francisco this summer were PG&E Division linemen Greg Finley (top) and Craig Botti.

POINT OF VIEW

The issue is job security

From PAGE THREE

ditional wage premium to help them finance their own benefits.

The point of this arrangement was simply this: create good union jobs for hundreds of additional workers. And at the same time keep the regular workforce at a stable size so that these employees aren't hit by another big downsizing a year or so down the road.

There is never complete job security. But within the legal powers that we have as a union, this is about as close as you can get to it.

Some regular employees—forgetting that the company can hire employees whenever it wants no matter what the union says—feel upset because they think they might have received an upgrade or more overtime if there were no temporary additional workers. This type of thinking is shortsighted and shows a lack of consideration for other members whose jobs may be at risk in future downsizings.

The purpose of this union is to look out for the longterm interests of the membership as a whole. In the long run, the hiring hall arrangement increases job security for regular employees at PG&E.

I don't think anybody wants to go through all the uncertainties of demotion and layoff everytime PG&E's workload goes down. To date, the union has been successful in its goal of preventing forced layoffs. What we are trying to do now is protect the job security of those who are left.

Anybody who doesn't think that's important needs to take a look around and see what's happening to workers elsewhere in this country.

Pepsi is aiding the attack on locked-out workers by purchasing products from Staley Mfg.

TELL PEPSI...

DUMP STALEY

CALL: 1-800-433-2652

Photo exhibit

Labor photographer David Bacon, whose work has appeared in the Utility Reporter, will exhibit documentary photos at 2116 Shattuck in Berkeley Sept. 3-30. An artist's reception will be Sept. 8 from 5-7 p.m.



LABOR STUDIES GRADS Sherrick Slattery (second from left), a member of the Local 1245 Review Committee, received a Labor Studies Certificate of Completion from Laney College in recognition of his studies. Pictured with Slattery are (from left) fellow graduate Connie Taylor-Archibald; Labor Studies Coordinator Albert Lannon; Central Labor Council of Alameda County President Judy Goff, and fellow graduate Venus Wright-Taylor. (Photo: Mary Efferen)

TITLE 8 COMMITTEE FOR ELECTRIC MAINTENANCE

Union members serving on the PG&E Electric Maintenance Title 8 Committee are (clockwise, from left) Al Graves, electrician; Business Rep. Landis Marttila; Pat Barre, system operator; Grant Estrada, equipment operator (alternate); Joe Perry, electrician; Gary Outlaw, system operator; Rex Shoulet, electrician; and Scott Lombardi, transmission troubleman.



Unionists protest NAFTA's expansion

NAFTA wrecks US jobs, but the worst is yet to come

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is wreaking havoc on US jobs, just as organized labor warned when the agreement was being debated in Congress two years ago.

But "free trade" politicians are turning a blind eye to the facts and are pressing ahead with a new agreement that threatens to further erode the living standards of workers throughout North and South America.

First, the facts. US trade statistics for the first five months of 1995 show the US running a trade deficit with Mexico of \$6.9 billion, the largest in the history of commercial relations between the two countries.

"We're losing jobs; we're running a deficit," said Bill Hawkins, legislative aide for NAFTA opponent US Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Ca.).

Hawkins, quoted in the New York Times, observed that the US is still sending money to Mexico to bail that country out of its currency crisis and "I don't see where we're getting anything back."

NAFTA was supposed to break down trade barriers between the US, Mexico and Canada. The increased trade was supposed to stimulate US production and thus create jobs.

But the stimulus never came. Instead, the peso plummeted last December. As a result, Mexicans aren't buying many American products.

But the American market is now swamped with inexpensive Mexican products. As US consumers snap up these products, the trade deficit with Mexico worsens.

And so do job prospects for US workers.

More than 60,000 US workers in 46 states have filed for special NAFTA unemployment assistance.

Meanwhile, US taxpayers—including many of these same laid off workers—are paying \$20 billion in tax dollars to bail Mexico out of its currency crisis.

Theory vs. Reality

"NAFTA proponents used phony economic models to promise fantastic job gains, but these real life job losses are NAFTA's reality," said Lori Wallach, an attorney with Public Citizen who specializes in trade issues.

Workers certified for this NAFTA unemployment program represent only a small fraction of the total US jobs lost as a result of NAFTA, Wallach said. Only workers who know about and apply for the program are considered, and only certain types of workers qualify.

According to a Regional Financial Associates report cited in the March 20, 1995, Fortune magazine, the Mexican peso devaluation will cost more than 500,000 US jobs over the next two years.

Meanwhile, the peso devaluation has cut the cost of Mexican labor by 50%.

"You have bargain-base-



DEMANDING WORKERS' RIGHTS

Trade unionists from throughout North and South America rallied June 30 in Denver, Co. to demand that any new trade agreement address worker rights—not just corporate rights. Economic officials from various American nations were meeting in Denver to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas—which would expand the NAFTA concept to cover all of the Western Hemisphere.

ment labor, and the net result is, jobs are going south," said labor analyst Harley Shaiken of the University of California at Berkeley.

Coming Next: NAFTA--Part II

Cheap labor helps explain why US businesses—and their friends in government—are pushing to expand the NAFTA concept to include all of Central and South America.

In late June, trade ministers from North and South America met in Denver, Co. to begin creating a hemispheric free trade zone.

But while the ministers were figuring out ways to promote the interests of business, trade unionists from 23 countries gathered nearby to protest any agreement that ignores the interests of workers.

By avoiding the issue of workers' rights, "the trade ministers essentially are ensuring that the new Free Trade Agreement of the Americas doesn't put any restrictions on how businesses

treat their employees," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Donahue (who has since been elected President of the AFL-CIO).

"As the mad scramble to make a buck intensifies, big corporations will be under increasing pressure to cut costs in any way they can," he said. "Without basic rules for protecting workers' lives, some companies will go to any lengths to boost the bottom line—even putting their employees' lives and safety at risk."

Wrecking Lives

NAFTA hasn't exactly been a walk in the park for Mexican workers, either. They face frozen wages, a 40% decline in purchasing power, and spiraling unemployment.

NAFTA is forcing more Mexican peasants to leave the land and crowd into the cities. Many Mexican workers end up in the *maquiladora* factories along the US-Mexico border, where wages are low, unions are suppressed, and environmental contamination poses serious

health threats.

These conditions, in turn, increase the pressure on Mexican workers to cross over to the US—whether legally or illegally.

Trade unionists who are concerned about the effect of future trade agreements on American jobs should contact their representatives at the addresses below. Encourage these officials to oppose further expansion of free trade agreements and to seriously consider repealing NAFTA.

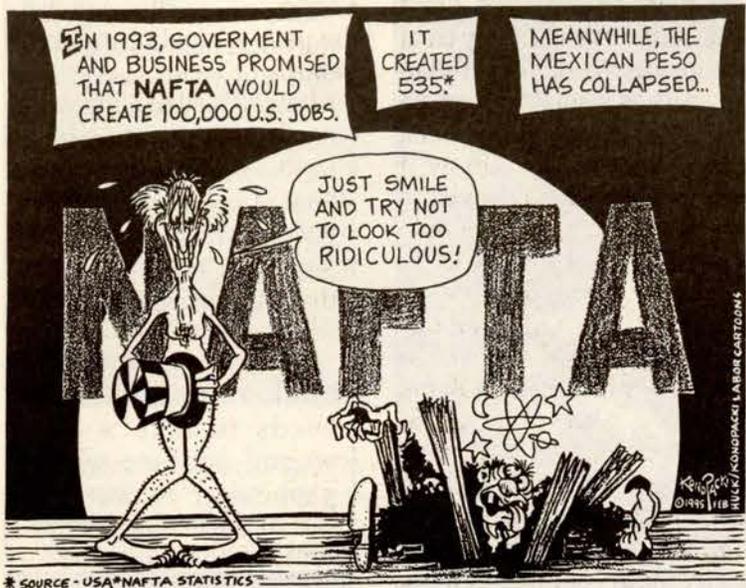
Express Yourself!

Write Today!

Senator Barbara Boxer
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Dianne Feinstein
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. _____
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



Past gains now threatened by Congress

By Orv Owen

On Sept. 4 we will again celebrate a Labor Day holiday with our friends, neighbors and fellow citizens.

I, along with other retirees, look back on past Labor Day Holidays and how important they were during our working years.

Past Labor Days we not only enjoyed a day off from our labors, we also attended picnics, dances and political rallies in support of those politicians who were our friends in the various political bodies legislating laws and rules that had a direct affect on our lives and our family's lives.

The issues we faced then were basically those dealing with improving the standards of life for working people and all of our fellow American citizens.

This Labor Day we find ourselves having to defend many of the gains we made in the past. It appears to this retiree that all the social programs



beneficial to our citizens over the past 50 years are in jeopardy and in harm's way.

In my view, the current majority in congress are charting a course of elimina-

tion of all the social programs that have benefited all of our citizens over the past 60 years.

So as we enjoy another Labor Day Holiday, the chal-

lenge and struggle still goes on. The necessity of organizing working people is fundamental and participation by the electorate is paramount. Keep the faith!

IBEW
Local
1245

Retirees Corner

Pension problem

House Republicans are trying to halt the use of pension funds to benefit both retirees and the nation's low income citizens. H.R. 1594 would ban the Labor Department's efforts to promote economically targeted investments.

The attack comes despite the fact that such investments are designed to provide a sound financial return as well as collateral benefits such as job creation, low-income housing and infrastructure improvements.

Ironically, the House Republicans are ignoring pension investments in foreign securities, which provide no benefit to the US and are very risky.

Gingrich turns tail and flees from constituents

House Speaker Newt Gingrich last month fled from a meeting organized for him to discuss changes in Medicare rather than face 100 trade unionists who showed up to accuse him of attempting to cut the program to finance tax cuts for the rich.

According to a report in the New York Times, the demonstrators were the angriest group Gingrich has confronted this summer over Medicare, the health care program for the elderly.

Republicans plan to trim the growth in Medicare spending by \$270 billion over seven years. Democrats say much of the money would be used to finance the Republican's planned \$240 billion tax cut.

As Gingrich was preparing to begin his speech on Medicare, he became aware that the demonstrators were standing quietly in the back

of the hotel ballroom. Apparently fearing a confrontation, Gingrich slipped out by way of a back elevator. Soon after, members of the group, led

by Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.), took over the stage and chanted "Where is Newt?" and "Newt is scared." Gingrich later said he ex-

pected to encounter more demonstrations because his opponents "have every right as Americans to do weird things," the Times reported.

Workers blow cash intended for retirement

While many commentators worry that Americans aren't putting enough money into retirement plans, few have focused on the billions of dollars they are taking out-long before they retire, the Wall Street Journal reported.

It is the retirement crisis that no one talks about. Too many workers are blowing the money, experts believe.

Workers today have many chances to come into a lump sum: When they change jobs, retire early or work for a company that is sold. And in more and more cases, they are seizing that chance. Financial planners often encourage them to take lump sums, contending that all they have to

do is to pick a sound investment strategy and tend to the money prudently over the years so that eventually they can live on it until they die.

But many workers don't follow this advice. They treat lump-sum retirement-plan payouts as a source of emergency cash, a grubstake for a new business, or simply a windfall. Financial advisers say they have seen people use retirement money to fix roofs, pay for children's weddings and go to Las Vegas.

The likelihood that these workers will face problems down the road is rising. No longer are lump-sum payouts to departing workers confined to the nation's \$1.2 trillion of employee-managed retirement pools such as

401(k)s and profit-sharing plans. The lump-sum treatment is spreading into a once-untouchable realm: an estimated \$2.5 trillion of ordinary pension plans, which in the past paid retirees a fixed monthly check.

About a third of big companies that offer the familiar monthly-check-for-life pensions now give departing employees the option of taking their pension accumulations in a lump sum when they retire, change jobs or are laid off. By the end of the decade, about half of old-style pensions will be distributed this way, according to the Wall Street Journal report.

It's cheaper for the employer—but riskier for the beneficiary.

UNION LABEL WEEK

1995

SEPTEMBER 4 to 10

Republican bill cuts worker protections

From PAGE ONE families.

To become law, the bill must also pass the US Senate.

The bill cuts by 12% the funds used to stop illegal sweatshops, stop child labor violations, and make employers pay the wages that are due.

Pension Protections Cut

Programs to ensure that workers' pensions are protected from unscrupulous corporations were cut by almost 8%, which could result in an estimated loss of \$100 million in pensions benefits.

AFL-CIO Legislative Director Peggy Taylor called the legislation "a blunt weapon to assault workers, their families and vulnerable members of the community" and said its passage made clear "the choices the Republican leadership is making to side with corporate interests over the middle class working family."

Hamstrings NLRB

Another provision of the bill would hamstring the NLRB in its ability to go to court to persuade a judge that an employer should stop an unfair labor practice.

This provision is of special significance to union members at PG&E.

In 1939, the NLRB went to federal court to seek enforcement of unfair labor practice charges against PG&E, which was resisting a union organizing drive. PG&E had ignored the NLRB, which had no enforcement power, but eventually had to submit to

the order of the federal court.

Once the court had ordered PG&E to cease and desist its illegal union-busting activity, union activists went on to mount a successful organizing drive, resulting in the union contract—with its wages, benefits, and working conditions—PG&E employees enjoy today.

If the bill now being pushed by House Republicans had been in effect in 1939, it is possible that the union drive at PG&E would have never succeeded.

Other Safety Cutbacks

The bill contains other provisions favored by big business.

- OSHA is prevented from developing or implementing protection against repetitive stress injuries.

- The Department of Labor is prevented from enforcing a Hazardous Occupation Order that prevents children from working with paper balers, which have the capacity to maim or kill them.

- Even though falls cause two-thirds of construction site deaths, OSHA is prohibited from enforcing a recent standard to protect against falls at a range of heights.

"There is no sensible answer to why these changes are being made," said Taylor of the AFL-CIO. "They certainly hold no benefit for worker and their families. There is only a dollars and cents answer—businesses do not want to have to spend time and money on workers' safety, pensions, wages and well being."

Brother Richard McGee

Richard McGee, a temporary additional lineman with PG&E's General Construction, suffered fatal head injuries when he fell off a wood pole while descending during a routine work procedure at 7th and Cedar in Oakland.

He was rushed to Summit Hospital in Oakland and declared dead on arrival.

PG&E, Local 1245 and Cal-OSHA are investigating the circumstances surrounding the accident.

Brother McGee, 55, resided in the San Bernardino area. The union offers its condolences.

Has Congress Forgotten?

- Republicans in Congress have launched an all-out assault on worker safety. Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) is leading the way with legislation to gut the nation's job safety laws. H.R. 1834 would:
 - Make compliance with job safety laws voluntary. OSHA could only issue warnings for violations instead of citations and penalties. A worker would have to be killed or seriously injured before OSHA could enforce the law.
 - Weaken worker protections and strip away worker rights. Workers would have to inform their employers before filing job hazard complaints with OSHA. A union's right to file complaints on behalf of its members is eliminated.
- Repeal the Mine Safety and Health Act, eliminate the mine safety agency and put mine safety under the weakened OSHA law.
- Stop federal government research on workplace injuries and illnesses.

Each year, more than 55,000 workers die from job hazards and another 7 million are injured. If H.R. 1834 becomes law, the toll of death and injury will increase.

Call your congressional Representatives and Senators (1-800-97-AFL-CIO). Tell them that destroying health and safety protections puts American workers in danger. Tell them to oppose H.R. 1834.

Don't Let Congress Turn Back The Clock On Job Safety Protections

Stand UP
For Health and Safety

It's the Fight of Our Lives
THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AFL-CIO LEADING THE FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES

New deregulation scheme threatens jobs

From PAGE ONE threw its support to this concept as well.

Job Losses

If the Edison/CMA proposal gains acceptance, it would spell big trouble for most residential ratepayers and many utility employees.

The proposal is carefully worded to create powerful financial incentives for regulated utilities to get rid of fossil, hydro and geothermal generating plants. If the proposal is adopted, these plants would almost certainly end up being sold to non-union companies, according to Marc Joseph, an attorney representing Local 1245 and other unions in the deregulation battle.

In its current form, the proposal extends these incen-

tives only to Southern California Edison. But presumably PG&E and other utilities would get the same incentives to sell off generating plants if the proposal were enacted into law by the legislature or adopted by the CPUC.

And that would translate into large-scale job losses for Local 1245 members—on top of the job losses already suffered through two years of downsizing.

Huge Tax Liability

Residential and small business ratepayers would also suffer.

First, any plan for retail competition would tend to give the largest users an edge in securing the cheapest sources of electricity. Smaller users, with less market

power, would likely end up with the highest-priced power.

Second, the plan presented last month contains fine print that would stick ratepayers with full liability for capital gains taxes resulting from the sale of generating plants.

"It's a new tax on ratepayers," said Joseph. "If the Wilson/Edison/CMA proposal caused just half the plants in California to change hands, you could have a billion dollars in new tax bills for California ratepayers. This kind of tax on ratepayers totally outweighs any conceivable benefit the ratepayers might get from this restructuring scheme."

On the other hand, Joseph added, ratepayers would face no such charges if utilities continue to own the plants.