

# 1245

International Brotherhood  
Of Electrical Workers  
Local 1245, AFL-CIO  
February 1996  
Vol. XLV No. 2

# UTILITY REPORTER

Election Notice  
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## HONORING JOE

Assistant Business Managers Perry Zimmerman and Sam Tamimi show off the plaque memorializing Business Rep. Joe Valentino, who died in January of 1993. The plaque and memorial wall were erected by volunteers wishing to honor Valentino, who was known both for his compassion and for his fierce commitment to defending the rights of members. The plaque reads: "In Memory of Joe Valentino: A Union Business Representative of Great Talent, Courage, and Heart, 1980-1993."

## Senate examines PG&E's performance in December storm

**L**ocal 1245 members were praised last month at a legislative hearing into PG&E's performance during December's ferocious storm, but legislators harshly rebuked company officials and state regulators for the prolonged outages.

In testimony to the Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee, Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally defended the performance of PG&E employees during the storm, which knocked out power to over 1.7 million PG&E customers and left many without power for up to a week.

"It is the culture and the nature of the utility employee to respond to emergencies and do their best to restore service. That includes dealing with customers on the phone and out in the field. Our members are the main contact with PG&E customers and they desire

to do all that is possible to assist the customers," McNally testified.

"In doing so, they at times have to take verbal abuse and work in very hazardous conditions over long hours. However, they realize it is part of the job and they do the best they can with what they are given to work with. All too often, they are taken for granted," he said.

PG&E President Robert Glynn told the committee that the company deployed 3700 workers in the field during the December storm, compared to 3200 during the January and March storms of 1995. In addition, the company had "1,060 service representatives answering the phones during the storm...compared to 712" during the January and March storms, Glynn said. "Yet our call centers were no match for this storm's staggering call volumes."

Glynn noted that on Dec. *See PAGE SEVEN*



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## CALENDAR

February 23  
Pin Dinner  
Pacific, Ca.

February 24-25  
Local 1245  
Unit Officers Conference  
Concord, Ca.

February 26  
LAST DAY TO REGISTER  
FOR MARCH 26  
PRIMARY ELECTION

March 26  
California Primary  
Election



## State may require PG&E to sell off plants

## CPUC issues revised deregulation proposal

**T**he California Public Utilities Commission on Dec. 20 issued its revised proposal for restructuring the state's electric industry.

The CPUC proposal, if approved by the state legislature, would establish an independently-operated wholesale power pool, or "power exchange." The state's investor-owned utilities, including PG&E, would be required to sell their power to the power ex-

change. They would also be required to purchase power for their customers from the exchange.

The power exchange would set prices based on generation from the utilities' fossil plants, from municipal generators, out-of-state utilities, and independent power producers. All customers—whether business, commercial or residential—would have access to the cheapest power available through the exchange.

The CPUC's decision to

endorse the creation of a power exchange represents a significant victory for consumer groups and labor unions. The CPUC's initial proposal, announced in May of 1994, had called for a quick move to a competitive retail market in electricity—generally referred to as "retail wheeling" or "direct access." Local 1245 and other unions in the Coalition of Utility Employees (CUE) maintained that direct access would permit the largest and most powerful con-

sumers to "pick off" the cheapest sources of power, sticking residential and small business customers with the most expensive sources. The unions advised the CPUC that wholesale markets should be perfected before any retail wheeling scheme is introduced.

The CPUC ultimately agreed. In the revised proposal announced in December, the CPUC called for the creation of the wholesale *See PAGE SIX*



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

**No Pay:** Teachers who have often gone months without a paycheck, announced in late January that they will stage a nationwide strike on Jan. 30. Miners' union leaders also called for a nationwide strike, set to begin Feb. 1, to protest overdue wages. Last October, 230 workers and engineers at the Ekibastouz electricity company in northern Kazakhstan (formerly part of the Soviet Union) started a hunger strike over unpaid back wages. The workers had been without pay since March. "We're completely desperate," one striker said.

**True Friend:** When North Dakota State Senator Kit Scherber found out that she was terminally ill with cancer, she contacted the business representative for the Carpenters union in Fargo to find out where she could find a casket made

with union labor, Label Letter reported. Scherber, a long-time advocate for workers and their unions, showed she intends to stay true to her beliefs to the end.

**NLRB Backs Workers:** The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled in December that International Paper Co. must pay up to \$50 million in back pay to 1200 union workers at the company's papermill in Mobile, Ala. The United Paperworkers International Union had argued that the company illegally attempted to contract-out union members' jobs during a lockout.

**Raise the Minimum:** Secretary of Labor Robert Reich has endorsed a proposed ballot initiative that would raise the state's minimum wage. Reich made the endorsement during a speech to the Commonwealth Club of California in December.

**Whoopi Walks:** Teamsters and members of the Theatrical & Stage Employees union were joined on the picket line by actress Whoopi Goldberg during a recent strike against producers of a show in Hollywood, Label Letter reported. The unions had struck to protest the firing of members who were trying to organize the

show's employees. "I come from working people and every day I'm with working people," Goldberg said.

**Rights Denied:** A federal appeals court in Atlanta ruled that the state of Georgia violated the rights of Robin Joy Shahar by withdrawing a job offer in the state attorney general's office after learning that Shahar was about to marry her lesbian partner. According to the Wall Street Journal, the court ruled that the state violated Shahar's First Amendment rights to freedom of association, religion and expression.

**Labor Curricula:** The California Federation of Teachers has prepared an updated Resource Guide for Teachers called "Bringing Labor into the K-12 Curriculum." The guide lists curricula, resource references, audiovisual resources, labor archives and libraries, and organizations promoting worker safety, cultural exchanges and workplace diversity. To obtain a copy, write Tom Edminster, One Kaiser Plaza, Suite 1440, Oakland, CA 94612.

**Documenting Lives:** "Mexican Workers" is an exhibit of photographs by labor photographer David Bacon on display at Berke-

**TRICK OR TREAT**

Last Halloween there were lots of power rangers and ninja turtles on the prowl, but two-and-a-half-year-old Dalton Varvell, son of Local 1245 member Brad Varvell, had a costume that was one-of-a-kind: PG&E lineman.

ley Store Gallery through Feb. 28 to benefit the Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services. The photos portray the lives of workers on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

**Bad Day:** How did electrical contractor Harry Glass win the grand prize in a worst-workday contest? In a speech on outdoor safety, the Wall Street Journal reported, Glass was warning co-workers to always wear their hard hats—when a bird dumped on his head. Glass was holding his hard hat.

**China Activist:** Wei Jingsheng, China's leading worker activist and symbol of the democracy movement, was sentenced to 14 years in prison after a five-hour trial in mid-December from which international observers were excluded. A group of Chinese democracy activists issued a daring open letter denouncing the charges against Wei and demanding his release.

**GAS SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Union and company members of the Gas Service Communications Committee met at union headquarters in Walnut Creek last month. Leading the discussion is Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Darrel Mitchell (standing).

**Unit changes**

**Unit 3011,** Sacramento Regional Transit has elected Larnell Gill as unit chairman.

**Unit 3411,** Desabla, has elected Mike Hamm as chairman and Rod Trunnell as recorder.



# Storm lesson: PG&E system needs further work

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

Last month a committee of the state legislature asked me for the union's view of PG&E's performance during the December storms. This is what I told them:

The members of Local 1245 are the people who maintain PG&E's electrical system, work around the clock repairing the system after major storms, and answer phone calls from understandably irate customers who want to know when their power will be restored.

I first want to publicly thank the many customers of PG&E who, despite their frustration at being without power, have been so supportive of the people putting in long hours under difficult conditions to restore power. When you haven't been home in three days and have spent most of that time working in the rain and hurricane winds, it's important to feel appreciated.

The Committee asked us to address several issues, including: improving communications with customers, minimizing outages, and service restoration. I'll address each of these three areas.

## Communication with Customers

Regarding communication with customers, I think

that there is no question that during the December storm, PG&E did not provide adequate information to customers. However, customers cannot realistically expect that when over one million people lose power in a 24-hour period that they will be able to pick up the phone and speak to PG&E on the first try.

On the other hand, when a customer does speak to PG&E, they should be able to find out when to reasonably expect to have power restored. This did not happen.

Customer service representatives, the people who answer the phones, were simply not provided this information and so could not provide the information to customers. PG&E needs to re-examine how it manages information during a major storm.

## Minimizing Outages

The next question is: What can be done to minimize outages from storms? The extent of outages from a storm is a result of two factors: the intensity of the storm and how well the transmission and distribution systems have been maintained.

It is important to acknowledge that the December storm was severe, with very high winds. In fact, we may

be starting a period where severe storms are not so unusual. But that doesn't change the fact that this storm had hurricane-force winds over wide areas. A storm like that will cause outages on any system, regardless of the condition it is in.

On the other hand, a well-maintained system will not suffer as many incidents of failure. For a number of years, up until last April, PG&E, in our view, was not doing enough preventive maintenance on its distribution system.

IBEW Local 1245 complained loudly to PG&E, to the CPUC, and to members of this Committee about inadequate maintenance. We held a rally on the steps of this building (the CPUC office on Van Ness in San Francisco) to protest PG&E's policies. We thought PG&E was on the wrong course, and we said so to anyone who would listen.

To its credit, PG&E finally listened and responded. PG&E cancelled 800 pending layoffs. It joined in partnership with IBEW to assess its maintenance practices and workforce levels.

Stan Skinner, Bob Glynn, Bob Haywood and others showed responsible leadership in fundamentally changing PG&E's course. For the past nine months in main-

taining its system, PG&E has been working very hard to correct the problems and catch up on deferred maintenance.

PG&E and IBEW Local 1245 are working cooperatively in a major effort to improve the condition of PG&E's system. A system of identifying and grading hazards has been put in place. An additional 400 employees have been hired to aggressively get the system in shape, and we are working through a process to determine what the size of the workforce should be and how it should be located. Unfortunately, we are not quite there yet.

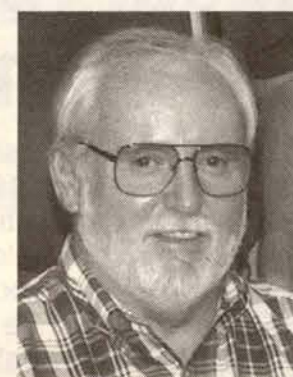
## Service Restoration

Regarding service restoration after a storm, the IBEW would of course prefer that PG&E had more employees available to respond to a storm.

However, we are also realistic. Right now, PG&E is already employing 800 more people than provided for in the rates set two weeks ago by the PUC.

In my early days, I worked as a lineman and as a crew foreman for PG&E and had the opportunity to work on many storm outages. I can tell you that the wind does the most damage. Trees are uprooted, large limbs rip off the tree trunks and are driven through power lines. They can cause a major tangled-up mess of wire, broken poles, cross arms and equipment. The wind can be extremely destructive. It takes time to clear the mess and rebuild the facilities.

It's very difficult to judge what the right size of the workforce should be in this industry. Employees are about 10% of the cost of electricity, and I suppose the issue is whether or not to employ more employees to be available for storm restoration. And then the question is: are the ratepayers willing



to pay the cost for more employees?

I would like to conclude by first stating that it is the culture and the nature of the utility employee to respond to emergencies and do their best to restore service. That includes dealing with customers on the phone and out in the field. Our members are the main contact with PG&E customers and they desire to do all that is possible to assist the customers.

In doing so, they at times have to take verbal abuse and work in very hazardous conditions over long hours. However, they realize it is part of the job and they do the best they can with what they are given to work with.

All too often they are taken for granted.

Secondly, I think it is extremely important that the legislature, the commission, and all the customer classes understand the possible side effects of introducing competition in this industry. Real or perceived, utilities feel threatened. Utilities in California as well as the rest of the nation are reacting, and reorganizing their companies in an attempt to be competitive in order to retain their business.

It will be increasingly important to stay focused on the issues that most customers care most about—safe, reliable, responsive, essential electricity service.

**It is extremely important that the legislature, the commission, and all the customer classes understand the possible side effects of introducing competition in this industry. Real or perceived, utilities feel threatened. Utilities in California as well as the rest of the nation are reacting, and reorganizing their companies in an attempt to be competitive in order to retain their business. It will be increasingly important to stay focused on the issues that most customers care most about—safe, reliable, responsive, essential electricity service.**



## International Convention

## Local 1245 Election Notice

The election process will begin in March of this year for Local 1245 Delegates to the International Convention of the IBEW. The convention will be held Sept. 16 in Philadelphia. Balloting for Local 1245 Delegates to the convention will be in June.

Complete information on nominations, elections, and qualifications are found in the Local Union Bylaws and the International Union Constitution. If you do not have copies of these documents, they may be obtained by writing to IBEW Local 1245, PO Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

To qualify as a candidate for Delegate to the International Convention, a member must have at least two years' continuous good standing in the Local Union immediately prior to March 1, 1996, and must have tendered his or her dues for January 1996.

### Nominations

Nomination of Delegates to the International Convention shall be made under "New Business" at the first meeting of the Units in March 1996. (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 6c).

In order to be a candidate for Delegate to the International Convention, a member must be present at the Unit meeting where he or she is nominated, or notify the Local Union Recording Secretary, Ed Mallory, in writing on or before March 1, 1996, that he or she will run for Delegate if nominated. (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 12).

### Further information

In addition to the Local 1245 Bylaws and the IBEW Constitution, the conduct of labor union elections is also covered by Title IV of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA). The US Department of Labor publishes two relevant booklets: "Rights and Responsibilities Under the LMRDA and CSRA" and "Electing Union Officers." These booklets are available by writing the US Department of Labor, Office of Elections, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room No. North 5619, Washington, DC 20210.



1921-1996

## Mert Walters helped establish union

**T**he union lost a true friend with the passing on Jan. 28 of Mert Walters, a former senior assistant business manager who was one of the early union organizers at PG&E.

"He was as tenacious and as thorough a negotiator as I've run across," said Local 1245 Vice President Jim McCauley. "He was as union as could be. Everybody knew Mert and everybody respected him."

Walters' efforts on behalf of the union began immediately after hiring on at PG&E

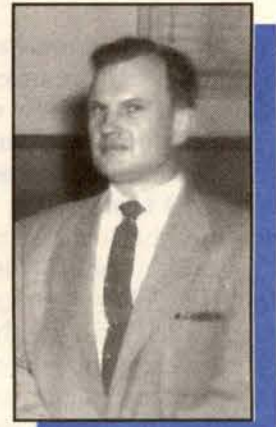
**"He was as union as could be. Everybody knew Mert and everybody respected him."**

*Jim McCauley*

in 1944, when he signed up with Local 137 of the Utility Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC), which was competing with the IBEW to organize PG&E employees. In 1948, the year Walters made lineman, the local leadership of the UWOC crossed over to the IBEW and Walters became a key organizer in their effort to convince PG&E employees to unite under the IBEW banner.

When Local 1245 finally won the right to represent PG&E employees in the early 1950s, Walters became a business representative, then assistant business manager, and finally senior assistant business manager. In that position, which he held until his retirement in 1981, Walters supervised the staff and led negotiations with PG&E.

According to McCauley, Walters employed a "water on the rock method" of negotiating: he simply wore the other side down.



Mert Walters—1950s

In addition to his negotiating skills, Walters was known as an effective legislative lobbyist.

According to Ron Weakley, Local 1245's first business manager, Walters played an important role in the establishment of Cal-OSHA and in the creation of the boiler and electrical safety orders covering the utility industry.

Cards may be sent to Walters' wife, Fay, at P.O. Box 365, Orange Lake, FL 32681.

## Meter readers feel winds of change

**M**eter reading at PG&E is feeling the winds of change as regulatory and technological developments continue to drive PG&E towards automated meter reading (AMR).

The California Public Utilities Commission, as part of its recent deregulation decision, ordered utilities, including PG&E, to offer "real-time" rate options to some customers by Jan. 1, 1998, and to all customers by 2003. While many questions still need to be answered regarding the decision, it appears that the CPUC has ordered PG&E to begin implementing some form of AMR within two years.

Meanwhile, the technology which would make AMR possible continues to be developed. Six vendors have recently made presentations to PG&E on how they would help PG&E implement AMR if PG&E decided to do so.

For the last two years, PG&E and Local 1245 have anticipated this development, working through a joint labor-management committee in an effort to be proactive.

In late 1995, PG&E and Local 1245 signed a Letter Agreement under the terms of which all future meter readers hired will come from Local 1245's hiring hall. They will work until they are either directly or indirectly displaced by AMR, enjoying most but not all of the protections of the collective bargaining agreement. Instead of fringe benefits they are to receive an in-lieu cash payment, and when they are displaced they will not enjoy demotion and displacement rights under Title 19.

Through the use of hiring hall meter readers, the parties hope to minimize the disruptive effect of massive Title 19 displacements

when AMR is introduced. Not only would wholesale displacements disrupt company operations, they would have a negative impact on the entire bargaining unit.

To implement the hiring hall agreement, all meter readers hired after June 2, 1995, will be converted during the month of February to become hiring hall employees. All other meter readers may, at their own option, become hiring hall employees if they are interested in the increased cash benefits of the job and are willing to forego fringe benefits, paid time off, and Title 18 and 19 rights.

Any current meter reader who is considering converting to a hiring hall meter reader should contact his or her Local 1245 business representative to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of converting to hiring hall status.



*Signatures needed now***Labor puts 'Living Wage' campaign into high gear**

**T**he effort to put a minimum wage proposition on the November ballot went into high gear last month as hundreds of trade unionists convened in San Francisco for the California Labor Federation Pre-Primary convention.

Convention delegates also turned their attention to the upcoming March 26 Califor-

nia primary election, where voters will nominate candidates for state legislative and US Congressional races, as well as determining the

fate of numerous ballot propositions. But the prospect of boost-

ing the minimum wage in the November general election clearly generated the most enthusiasm among the

delegates, representing some 2 million California trade unionists.

State Senator Hilda Solis, chair of the Senate Industrial Relations Committee and co-chair of the campaign to raise the

minimum wage, urged the delegates to mobilize their unions in support of the minimum wage measure, called the "Living Wage Act." The ballot measure, if approved by voters, would raise the current minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour to \$5 an hour on March 1, 1997 and to \$5.75 an hour on March 1, 1998.

**Hike that wage!**

Local 1245 members can help put "The Living Wage Act" on the November 1996 ballot by circulating petitions at their worksites.

Signatures are counted only if they are on official petitions. Photocopied petitions do not count. Signers must be registered voters in California.

To get copies of the official petition and instructions for how they should be filled out, contact your Local 1245 business representative as soon as possible.

**See next month's Utility Reporter for a full list of endorsements for the March 1996 California Primary Election.**

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, survival at a poverty level today requires an income of \$12,590 a year for a family of three. A full-time worker at the current minimum wage earns just \$8840. The minimum wage is so low that many workers qualify for food stamps and welfare to supplement their pay.

Executive Sec.-Treas. Jack Henning told the delegates that unions have raised millions of Americans to middle class status, but he warned that middle class status for workers was a "transient phenomenon" in danger of being undermined by the forces of capitalism.

"If you think workers are middle class, tell it to the 40,000 workers laid off by AT&T," Henning thundered.

"Let us not be afraid to say that capitalism is morally rotten...We must mobilize to destroy their power," he said.

"We should make it impossible for companies to put 40,000, 10,000, 5,000 people out on the streets. That's a social crime."

Henning, who retires this year after more than a quarter century as head of California's labor movement, drew repeated ovations for his blistering attack on corporate wrongdoers, and finished his remarks by proclaiming:

**"Let us not be afraid to say that capitalism is morally rotten...We must mobilize to destroy their power..."**

**"We should make it impossible for companies to put 40,000, 10,000, 5,000 people out on the streets. That's a social crime."**

*Jack Henning*



State Senator Hilda Solis

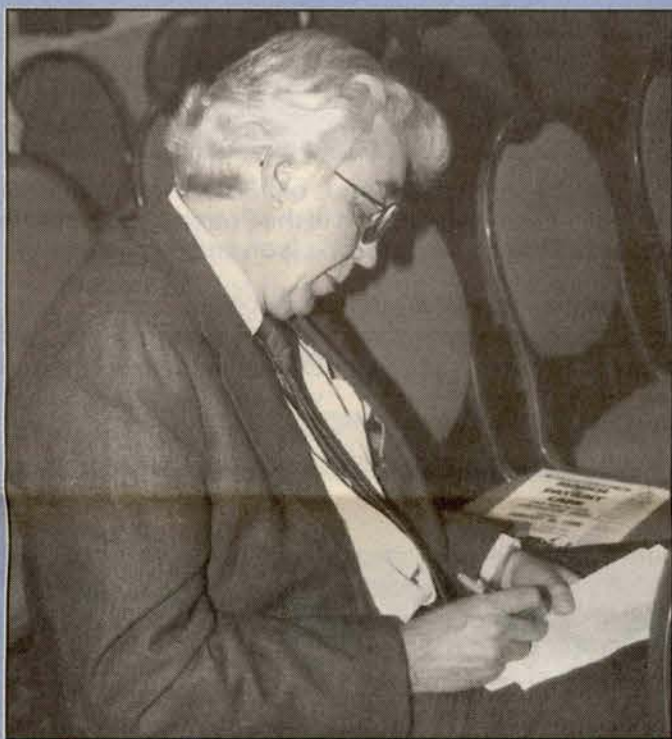
"We were not born to subservience...We were not born to capitalism. We were born to a free America...a labor America."

Delegates approved candidates for state and federal office with little controversy. However, US Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-SF) came under fire for voting in favor of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was bitterly opposed by labor unions. Some delegates charged that Pelosi has failed to modify her position on NAFTA, despite growing evidence that the trade agreement has accelerated the deterioration of the Mexican economy and has prompted the loss of US jobs.

Supporters of the endorsement responded that Pelosi's overall voting record was 94% favorable to labor—one of the best voting records in Congress. After lengthy debate, a majority supported the endorsement of Pelosi.



Jack Henning, Executive Sec.-Treas. of the California Labor Federation.

**REPRESENTING LOCAL 1245**

Among those representing Local 1245 at the California Labor Federation Pre-Primary COPE Convention were Treasurer Mike Davis (above) and Business Rep. Mickey Harrington.





## CPUC dereg proposal

From PAGE ONE

power exchange first, with direct access to be phased in over a five-year period.

A major point of controversy in the utility restructuring debate has been whether utilities should be compensated for past investments in power plants. Utilities argued that they built such facilities to meet their "obligation to serve" the public, and that utilities should be adequately compensated for these investments. The CPUC agreed with this position and provided for a surcharge on retail customers' bills to enable the utility to recover "transition costs."

### Divestment Ordered

However, the CPUC also heeded the concerns of those who believe that utilities would have too much market influence if they controlled substantial generating assets as well as controlling transmission and distribution. The CPUC plan provides incentives for utilities to divest at least 50% of their fossil fuel generating assets.

The unions have opposed such divestment requirements, believing that utilities need to maintain substantial generating capacity in order to assure system reliability. The unions also worry that new owners could try to turn power plants into non-union operations, threatening employee wage and benefit standards and perhaps throwing current employees out of work.

The CPUC divestment order applies only to fossil fuel plants. It would not apply to PG&E's Diablo

Canyon nuclear facility. Under the proposal, Diablo Canyon would keep its current pricing scheme until 2003, at which time Diablo Canyon's output would be priced by the market.

In another provision designed to foster a competitive market, the CPUC calls for the creation of an independent system operator to control the power dispatch and transmission functions. This would require utilities like PG&E to turn over control, but not ownership, of their transmission assets to the independent system operator.

### Debate Continues

The CPUC's decision is an important milestone in the debate over utility deregulation, but it is by no means the end of the debate. Many changes to the state public utility code would have to be enacted by the legislature in order for the CPUC decision to take effect. That could prove to be a difficult and lengthy process, given the current partisan strife in the legislature.

Another basic problem raised by the CPUC proposal is: Who will be in charge?

Under the CPUC plan, the independent system operator and the power exchange would be regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rather than the CPUC, although the CPUC would still have authority over power distribution. This division of regulatory authority leaves it unclear who would be ultimately responsible for assuring that California citizens continue to enjoy safe and reliable electric service.

**The CPUC's decision is an important milestone in the debate over utility deregulation, but it is by no means the end of the debate.**

## Police give PG&E crews a hand



Benefitting from the Special Law Enforcement Services program of the San Francisco Police Department was this PG&E General Construction gas crew out of the Potrero yard. From left: Dave Brown, Mark Garner, Ernie Quinonez (seated), Denise Torkelson and Ray Daty.

**W**hen you're trying to bury 2-inch High Pressure Plastic Pipe on Powell Street between Market and O'Farrell in San Francisco, you're likely to find yourself exactly where lots of other people want to be.

That portion of Powell Street is home to residences, hotels, businesses, and a bustling tourist trade. Not to mention the fact that it's also a turn-around point on the city's popular cable car line.

It's precisely for situations like this that the San Fran-

cisco Police Department created Special Law Enforcement Services (SLES). When PG&E crews began work in the area, a San Francisco police officer was hired through SLES to help keep traffic and pedestrians moving-away from the worksite. And don't even think about leaving that delivery truck in the No Parking zone.

The police program was originally designed to help with traffic control during the filming of movies in San Francisco. It's a good deal: business projects get quality security-and the SFPD picks up some revenue to offset the cost of special

services.

The cooperation with PG&E was described this way in The Notebook, the police union newspaper:

"PG&E officials have consistently utilized our officers in the true spirit of community policing. They have stressed problem solving and communication with the people affected by the work, in order to minimize the negative impact and impositions on the community."

OK, make that "Don't even think about leaving that delivery truck in the No Parking zone-please."



### METER READERS

Meter readers at PG&E's Colma yard last November when the Utility Reporter came to visit included old hands and new faces. From left: Sherman Peacock, two days; Everett Patton, two days; John Burns, 29 years; Junion Luavasa, one year; Sergio Salinas, six years; and Mark Stefani, 16 years. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)



# Senate examines PG&E's performance during storm

From PAGE ONE

12 approximately 2 million calls were placed to PG&E. Of these, PG&E service representatives answered 249,000—compared to about 50,000 on a normal day.

## Severity Described

To illustrate the severity of the December storm, Glynn compared it to the January and March storms in terms of damage done to utility facilities.

In December, Glynn said, "Forty transmission towers and 120 transmission poles went down (compared to two towers and 86 transmission poles in the January storm, and one tower and no transmission poles in the March storm)." In terms of downed distribution poles, downed wire and lost transformers, the damage wreaked by the Decem-

**"Largely as a result of this storm, price (of electricity) is not the only concern. It's service and reliability."**

*Senator Steve Peace*



Steve Peace (right), chair of the Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee, and State Senator Quentin Kopp (I-San Francisco), grilled CPUC and PG&E representatives about prolonged outages during December's storm. (Photos: Eric Wolfe)

ber storm was about equal to that of the January and March storms combined, according to Glynn.

## Adequate Staffing?

State Senator Steve Peace, who chaired the hearing, criticized PG&E on several counts, questioning

whether PG&E had adequate staffing to respond effectively to emergencies. Peace suggested that PG&E should have a single individual responsible for coordinating disaster response. He seemed particularly irritated that PG&E paid for media ads to convey outage information, noting that state law requires the media to provide free air time during disasters.

In PG&E's defense, McNally noted that it is "very difficult to judge what the right size of the workforce should be in this industry." He said the company had been working cooperatively with the union to identify maintenance needs and to determine the appropriate workforce size.

"Unfortunately we are not quite there yet," McNally said.

## Deregulation Derailed?

Peace reserved his most

stinging criticism for the CPUC.

"If there's an inadequacy, an inability to respond, it's your fault," Peace told CPUC representative Kevin Coughlan during the hearing. Peace reminded Coughlan that it was the CPUC's responsibility to regulate utilities in the public interest.

Following the hearing, Peace suggested to reporters that the December storms could derail the CPUC's plan to deregulate California's electric utilities, saying the CPUC plan had "no prospect of getting votes in the legislature" until the CPUC addressed concerns about electric service.

Before the storms, the debate over deregulation centered on the price of power, said Peace. "Largely as a result of this storm, price is not the only concern. It's service and reliability."

Peace's remarks to reporters on deregulation echoed the testimony offered during the hearing by McNally.

## "Utilities Feel Threatened"

McNally told the legislators:

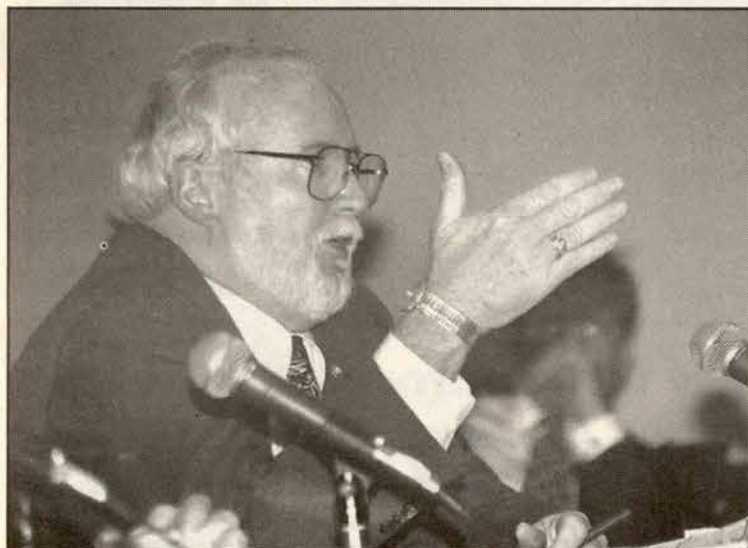
"I think it is extremely important that the legislature, the commission, and all the customer classes understand the possible side effects of introducing competition in this industry. Real or perceived, utilities feel threatened. Utilities in California as well as the rest of the nation are reacting, and reorganizing their companies in an attempt to be competitive in order to retain their business."

As pressures mount on utilities to be competitive, policymakers must stay focused on the issues "that most customers care most about—safe, reliable, responsive, essential electricity service," McNally said.



## DESCRIBING THE STORM

PG&E President Bob Glynn (left) describes the severity of the December storm during the January Senate hearing. Looking on is Nettie Hoge of Toward Utility Rate Normalization (TURN), the consumer advocacy group.



Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally defends the performance of employees during the December storm.

**"It is the culture and the nature of the utility employee to respond to emergencies and do their best to restore service... In doing so, they at times have to take verbal abuse and work in very hazardous conditions over long hours. However, they realize it is part of the job and they do the best they can with what they are given to work with. All too often, they are taken for granted."**

*Jack McNally*



## PG&E 1996 Shift Premiums

See Section 110.2 and 110.7 of the Physical contract and Sections 11.2 and 11.7 of the Clerical contract. Premiums are based on a 1996 weighted average straight-time hourly rate of \$22.55.

**Second Shift Premium**  
\$1.01

**Third Shift & Sunday Premium**  
\$2.03

**Sunday Second Shift Premium**  
\$3.04

**Sunday Third Shift Premium**  
\$4.06

**Relief Premium**  
\$21.24

## 1996 Nuclear Premiums

**Certified  
Fuel Handler Premium**  
\$1.63

**Reactor Operator  
License Premium**  
\$3.25

**Senior Reactor Operator  
License Premium**  
\$4.06

**Senior Reactor Operator  
License Premium for Senior  
Control Operator at Diablo  
Canyon Power Plant**  
\$5.28

## 1996 Remote Reporting Expense Allowance

See Section 202.21© of the Physical Contract.

**Less than 15 miles:** \$13.50  
**15 miles or more:** \$19.00

## 1996 Personal Vehicle Expense Allowance

See Section 201.6 of the Physical Contract and Section 15.2 of the Clerical Contract.  
\$.31 per mile



# Auto repair and travel service discounts now available to members of Local 1245

# W

here can Local 1245 members get auto club benefits, auto repair discounts and travel services

that rival American Automobile Association (AAA) offerings and at a low cost that also covers the member's spouse and driving-age dependents?

Through Union Driver & Traveler.

A recent individual benefits comparison between Union Driver & Traveler and various AAA branches reveals that the union travel program outperforms AAA in several important categories.

In the area of roadside assistance, for example, Union Driver & Traveler offers up to \$100 in coverage (per disablement) for such roadside services as towing, jump starts, flat-tire repairs

and fuel delivery for members living anywhere in the US. AAA of Boston, on the other hand, offers only three miles of free maximum tow coverage or up to \$25 worth of coverage, and only limited monetary coverage on roadside services.

In terms of auto repairs, the AAA branches in the comparison offer only repair referrals and guarantees, whereas Union Driver & Traveler offers money-saving discount repair coupons

that may be used at a variety of national automotive maintenance and repair chains, including AAMCO, Meineke Muffler, Jiffy Lube and US Auto Glass.

Additional services include:

- Emergency locksmith service, bail bonds and legal defense reimbursement.

- Computerized trip routings featuring union-organized hotels along the way.

- Coverage for additional family members.

And, finally, in the area of travel services, Union Driver & Traveler offers nearly everything the representative AAA branches offer and more, including 5% cash back on all completed commissionable domestic air and train travel purchased through the program.

But the best news is that Union Driver & Traveler offers all of these services at a low \$49.95 for members, their spouses and their dependents, ages 16-23, or an average of about \$52 less than the price of a basic family membership at the AAA branches in the comparison.

Go ahead: compare the union program to your local AAA franchise. You're likely to be surprised at what you discover.

In terms of auto repairs, the AAA branches in the comparison offer only repair referrals and guarantees, whereas Union Driver & Traveler offers money-saving discount repair coupons that may be used at a variety of national automotive maintenance and repair chains, including AAMCO, Meineke Muffler, Jiffy Lube and US Auto Glass.




**Union  
Driver &  
Traveler**

**For more information, call  
1-800-547-4663**

\* Services provided through Cross Country Motor Club, Inc., Boston, Mass. 02155, except in Calif., Ore., Wis. and Wyo., where services are provided through Cross Country Motor Club of California, Inc., Boston, Mass. 02155. Specific benefits underwritten by Minneboma Insurance Co., Tulsa, Okla., under policy #GAL-672-825-1280. Benefits may vary to conform with the laws of your state.

Illustration by Tom Gonzalez



# You Can Make the Difference!

**Register to Vote for the March 26 California Primary.**

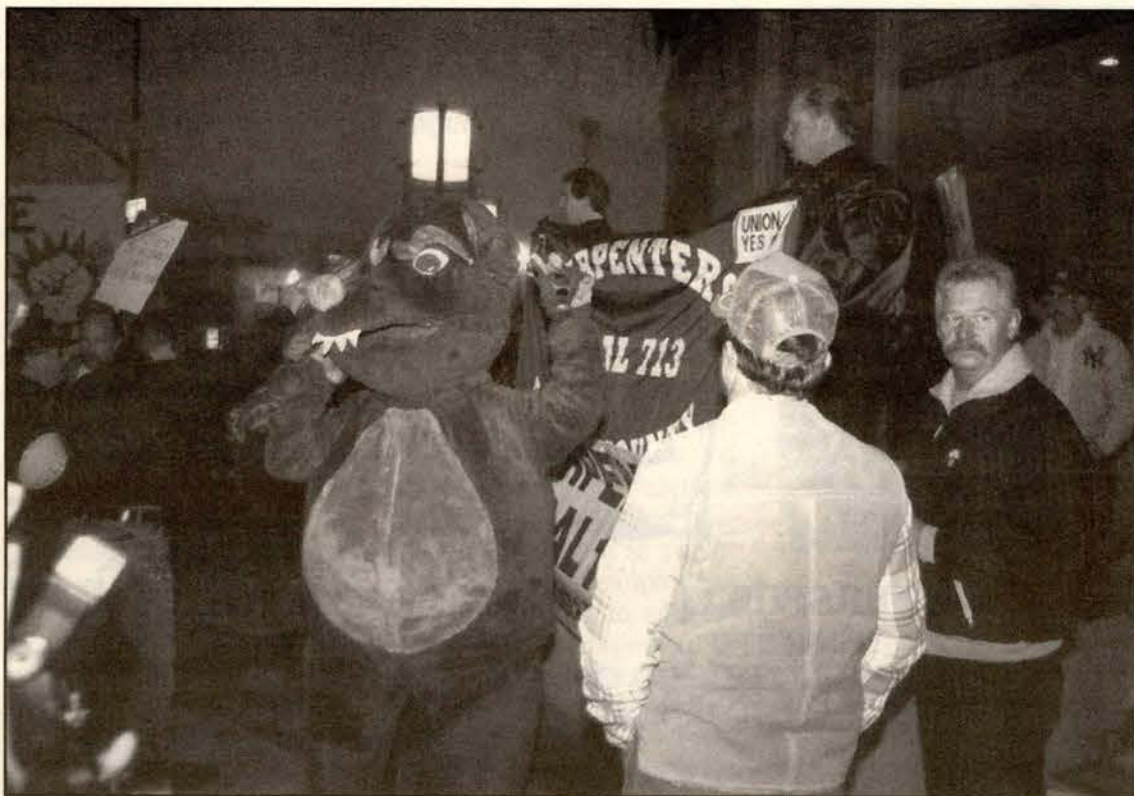
If you haven't voted recently, or if you've moved since the last election, you need to re-register.

It's easy: You can register by mail! To get a registration form, call:

**1-800-345-VOTE**

But do it today.

Your signed registration form must be returned to the Secretary of State—postmarked no later than Feb. 26.



**GO HOME NEWT!**

US Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich got a rowdy reception from California trade unionists, senior citizens, and other concerned citizens last month when he appeared in Walnut Creek, Ca. at a Republican fund-raising event. Many signs protested Republican proposals to cut Medicare and Medicaid. It wasn't immediately clear what the rat was protesting. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

## Attention Golfers!

Mark your calendar for the 11th "Almost-Annual" Local 1245 Golf Tournament.  
Four-man best ball scramble.

**Saturday, June 1, 1996  
Indian Valley Golf Club  
Novato, California**

\$75 includes green fees, golf cart, and sit-down dinner. Prizes and awards!

Hurry! Limited Tee-space available! First 20 foursomes are guaranteed. Singles will be placed.  
Deadline to register is May 1, 1996.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

For more information contact Frank Saxsenmeier at (415) 898-1141 or (510) 933-6060 or write to the address given below.

To register, make checks payable to "Local 1245 Golf Tournament" and send with registration form to:

**Local 1245  
Golf Tournament  
P.O. Box 4790  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596**





# Financial Planning Seminars

Free to Union Members!!



## BAKERSFIELD

RED LION HOTEL  
3100 CAMINO DEL RIO COURT  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93308  
(805) 323-7111  
February 2  
7:30 P.M.

## FRESNO

FRESNO HILTON  
1055 VAN NESS  
FRESNO, CA 93721  
(209) 485-9000  
February 3  
9:00 A.M.

## SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO HYATT  
345 STOCKTON  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94108  
(415) 403-4832  
February 6  
6:00 P.M.

## SACRAMENTO

RADISSON  
500 LEISURE LANE  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95815  
(916) 922-2020  
February 10  
10:00 A.M.

## MONTEREY

HYATT REGENCY  
1 OLD GOLF COURSE ROAD  
MONTEREY, CA 93405  
(408) 372-1234  
February 15, 1996  
7:30 P.M.

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

EMBASSY SUITES  
333 MADONNA ROAD  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93405  
(805) 549-0800  
February 17  
9:00 A.M.

## WALNUT CREEK

IBEW UNION HALL  
3063 CITRUS CIRCLE  
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596  
(510) 933-6060  
February 20  
7:30 P.M.

## SANTA ROSA

FLAMINGO HOTEL  
FOURTH AND FARMERS LANE  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95405  
(707) 545-8530  
February 22  
7:30 P.M.

## SAN RAFAEL

MARIN WINDOM  
GARDEN HOTEL  
1010 NORTHGATE DRIVE  
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903  
(415) 479-8800  
March 5  
7:30 P.M.

## REDDING

RED LION INN  
1830 HILLTOP DRIVE  
REDDING, CA 96001  
(916) 221-9800  
March 8  
7:30 P.M.

## CHICO

CHICO HOLIDAY INN  
685 MANZANITA COURT  
CHICO, CA 95926  
(916) 345-2491  
March 9  
1:30 P.M.

## STOCKTON

HOLIDAY INN  
111 EAST MARCH LANE  
STOCKTON, CA 95207  
(209) 474-3301  
March 14  
7:30 P.M.

## SAN JOSE

HOLIDAY INN PARK CENTER PLAZA  
282 ALMADEN BLVD.  
SAN JOSE, CA 95113  
(408) 998-0400  
March 25  
7:30 P.M.

## OAKLAND

FRANCESCO'S  
8520 PARDEE DRIVE  
OAKLAND, CA 94621  
(510) 569-0653  
March 28  
7:30 P.M.

## FOSTER CITY

SAN MATEO HOLIDAY INN  
1221 CHESS DRIVE  
FOSTER CITY, CA 94494  
(415) 570-5700  
April 2  
7:30 P.M.

**L**ocal 1245 has made arrangements to offer Financial Planning Seminars to the union's members and their spouses. These free seminars will cover aspects of

financial planning, pre-retirement preparations, and tax planning, which will be explained by financial advisors employed by Merrill Lynch.

The seminars are designed to help members begin to inform themselves of the many options to be considered in planning their financial future, and to help members identify areas in which they may need additional information and preparation.

The Merrill Lynch presentation will be given by Robert Gallo, first vice-president, David Brantly, vice-president, and assistant financial consultants Kristin Kendall, Dawn Bloom and Patrick Scholz. They have agreed to discount their services to any Local 1245 members who wish to schedule additional consultations after the free seminar.

But remember: the seminars advertised here are free of charge and involve no obligation.

Members wishing to attend, but who have not yet sent the union a reservation card, should contact the union hall to make a reservation. Inquiries can be addressed to Julie Rodriguez, Local 1245, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, or call (510) 933-6060.



# Meeting set to explore Retirees Club expansion

By Orv Owen

**R**epresentatives from the East Bay and San Jose Retirees Club chapters have scheduled a meeting at the Local Union's headquarters in Walnut Creek for the purpose of discussing the ways and means for the improvement of communications between the Retirees Club chapters and all the members of Local 1245 Retirees Club.

Many of our retiree members live in areas that do not have established Retirees Club chapters and we want to find the best method for a two-way flow of communications with them. We welcome suggestions from both active and retired members in our efforts to reach out to all our retirees.

In March the Congress of California Seniors will hold its annual conference, this year in San Mateo. Our Retirees Club will send delegates.

Visitors are welcome, too. There is a wealth of information and communications available at these conferences regarding senior citizens issues and problems. The majority of the delegates and visitors come from labor movement retirees clubs, seniors clubs and other concerned seniors.

We all share the concern for our country and our earned right to have a voice in its direction. Remember: we will have justice and fair

play only when we rise up, united, and demand it at the ballot box, if possible, or in the streets, if necessary.

Keep the faith!

IBEW  
Local  
1245



Retirees Corner



H/K FEB. 1996



HANDS OFF MEDICARE!

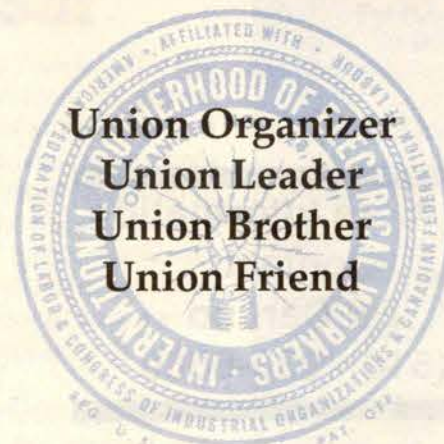
Local 1245 Retiree Club member Louis Rangel joined about 200 unionists, seniors and other concerned citizens in protesting a visit to Walnut Creek by House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). Many of the citizens were protesting Republican-proposed cuts in Medicare and Medicaid funding, cuts that would fall hardest on senior citizens.



MONTHLY GET-TOGETHER

Local 1245 retirees in the East Bay met at the Walnut Creek office in January for their regular monthly meeting. Local 1245 retirees in the East Bay who are interested in finding out more about Retirees Club activities can call union headquarters at (510) 933-6060. Ask for Julie Rodriguez.

Mert Walters



1921-1996



Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

# NINETEENTH ANNUAL SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

IBEW LOCAL UNION 1245

Saturday, June 8, 1996  
Willow Pass Park, Concord, California



## Four Divisions

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

*Family Members Eligible!*

**Women  
Encouraged  
to Participate!**

Individual Bat Bags  
for the 1st Place Teams

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

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

**\$160 Entry Fee  
Due No Later  
Than May 16, 1996**

**For More Information,  
Contact:  
Ed Caruso  
(510) 933-6060**

**USSA Umpires Provided**

## Local Union 1245's 19th Annual Slow Pitch Softball Tournament June 8, 1996

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
1995 Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print:

1. _____	11. _____
2. _____	12. _____
3. _____	13. _____
4. _____	14. _____
5. _____	15. _____
6. _____	
7. _____	
8. _____	
9. _____	
10. _____	

**Men's D  
Coed  
Women's  
35 & Older  
(Circle One)**

Entry Fee: \$160  
Deadline: May 16, 1996, 5 p.m. at Local 1245 Headquarters in Walnut Creek  
Make Checks Payable to: Ed Caruso  
P.O. Box 4790  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596