

# UTILITY REPORTER

Proposition 226:  
Assault on Workers  
Pages 4-5

## Gag the Workers



See Pages 4-5

## Union prevails in effort to safeguard transmission system

**L**ocal 1245 has prevailed in its year-long quest to insure effective third party oversight of transmission maintenance practices.

Transmission maintenance standards are a critical element in the electric markets now being created in California. Without adequate and reliable transmission capability, market

exchanges cannot be conducted in an efficient manner and overall system reliability is jeopardized, raising the spectre of blackouts.

Due in large part to lobbying efforts by Local 1245 and other IBEW local unions, transmission maintenance standards were mandated by Assembly Bill 1890, the massive electric restructuring bill enacted in 1996. That law provided for the creation of the Independent System Operator (ISO) to insure continued system reliability as California moves into an era of competitive electric markets.

In early 1997, the trustee of the ISO appointed an advisory committee to develop the transmission maintenance standards called for by the legislature. Participating on that committee were representatives from the state's investor-owned and municipal utilities, and representatives from IBEW Locals 1245, 47, and 18.

Developing such standards is no easy task, and the parties met twice weekly through March of 1997, and then weekly through June, to fashion a mutually-agreeable proposal. In July, the outlines of an agreement began to emerge.

The unions agreed there could be marginal differences between maintenance practices of the major Investor-Owned Utilities, but insisted that the ISO must have absolute authority to

See PAGE NINE

## Cool heads, quick response combine to save lineman's life

By Eric Wolfe

It was not the sort of weather you associate with trees falling down: clearing skies, brilliant sun, just a whisper of wind.

But with the surrounding soil saturated by fierce El Niño storms, that delicate breeze was enough to uproot a 120-foot pine tree and send it crashing into the utility pole being worked on that day by PG&E linemen Steve Wilson, Mike Degner and Glenn Crane.

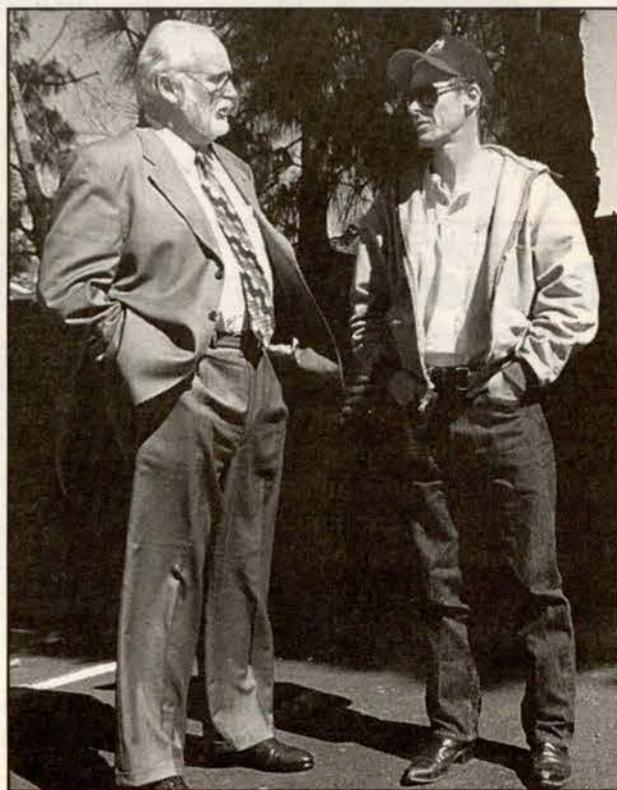
The crew, working on a 60kv transmission line, had tied in two conductors and were securing the third when the pine tree fell into the conductors, broke off the insulators, and pulled the line down on the crew.

After a terrific lurch knocked him several feet down the pole, Crane heard guys yelling on the ground. Then he heard the voice of Steve Wilson, near him on the pole:

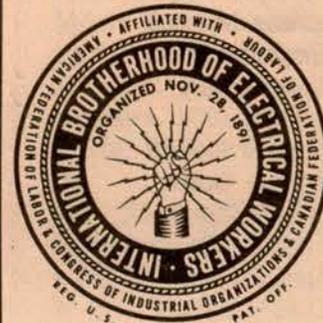
"I'm hurting, Glenn."

It's the moment that every lineman

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Hiring Hall lineman Glenn Crane, right, is congratulated by Business Manager Jack McNally for his role in rescuing Steve Wilson.



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An Attack on Unions  
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### CALENDAR

March 13  
Service Award Dinner  
Bakersfield, Ca.

March 14  
PG&E Stewards Conference  
and Service Award Dinner  
Fresno, Ca.

March 20  
Service Award Dinner  
Oroville, Ca.

March 21  
PG&E Stewards Conference  
and Service Award Dinner  
Sacramento, Ca.

March 27  
Service Award Dinner  
San Jose, Ca.

April 4  
PG&E Stewards Conference  
Monterey, Ca.



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### Workers here and abroad

## Rolling the union on...

**Piercers Organize:** A quartet of body piercers at San Francisco's Gauntlet piercing boutique voted for Food and Commercial Workers Local 101 representation in January, California Labor News reported. The piercers were apparently anxious about production expectations that created an "assembly line" atmosphere. The company had demanded that they sign a one-sided contract, so they approached the UFCW.

**Quality Declining:** An SEIU survey of healthcare professionals reports that a large majority feel that the quality of patient care in their facilities is good, but going downhill. Thirty-eight percent of these feel that their facility is understaffed. Those interviewed said that several trends have hurt health care, including hospital closures, managed care expansion, the growth of national hospital chains, subcontracting, and privatization.



"I don't mind a labor-intensive job, but I wish it wasn't so management-intensive!"

### APPOINTMENTS

#### CITY OF GRIDLEY

City of Gridley  
Negotiations Committee  
Gary Andes  
Gloria Gonzales  
Tim Hill

#### OUTSIDE LINE

Smith Denison General  
Bargaining Committee  
Matthew Goldsmith

#### CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

IBEW1998 Utility  
Conference  
Dorothy Fortier  
Darrel Mitchell  
Roger Stalcup

California Labor  
Federation Ergonomics  
Awareness Conference  
Julie Cash  
Dorothy Fortier  
Karen Russell  
Annette Spencer  
Maggie Wang  
Mary Wise

APRI 1998 Western  
Regional Conference  
Dorothy Fortier  
Norma Ricker  
Lula Washington

CLW National Executive  
Board Meeting  
Dorothy Fortier  
Kathy Tindall

AFL-CIO  
Full Participation/Civil  
Rights Conference  
Dorothy Fortier  
Kathy Tindall

**Martyrs Immortalized:** The National Park Service has designated the Haymarket Martyrs' Monument as a National Historic Landmark, Labor Notes re-

ported. The monument is in Forest Home Cemetery in Forest Park, Ill. It commemorates the activists in the 1886 fight for an eight-hour day who were arrested and subsequently executed

after an unknown person threw a bomb at police. The police were trying to disperse a rally called to protest previous police misconduct.

**UFW Rally:** The United Farm Workers are visiting 15 major cities to rally public support for the campaign to organize California strawberry pickers. A major rally is scheduled in San Francisco for March 29.

**Janitors March:** Twenty-five janitors, representing 1200 who want to form a union in Sacramento, marched 150 miles through fierce rainstorms from Sacramento to Cupertino, Ca., to ask stockholders at Hewlett Packard to support their efforts to unionize at Somers Building Maintenance. HP contracts Somers to clean its buildings in California, Oregon and Colorado. "We may be poor, but we don't deserve to be treated this way," said Marta Villalobos, a Somers employee who earns \$6 an hour and has no health benefits. Somers has been fined eight times for health and safety violations, ordered to repay \$14,000 in "dues" illegally collected from workers for a company union, and ordered by the courts to stop intimidating union supporters.

## Electrical unions pursue international solidarity

Leaders of US and United Kingdom unions that represent 350,000 electric utility workers pledged mutual solidarity, especially regarding their common employers.

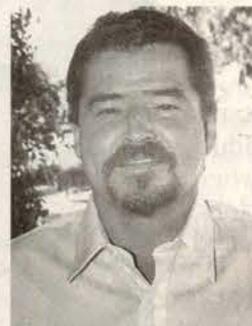
The IBEW, Utility Workers, and Mine Workers met in Washington last month with leaders of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, Engineers' and Managers' Association and the Transport and General Workers unions of the United Kingdom.

"As our employers expand globally, the international community of organized labor needs to respond accordingly in the interests of workers," said Jim Bushaw, IBEW's utility department director.

Seven regional power companies in Great Britain have been bought by US-based multinational companies.

## Grill joins Local 1245 staff

Mike Grill has been hired as a Business Representative for Local 1245, assuming the duties of representing those Local 1245 members formerly represented by Business Rep. Chuck Davis.

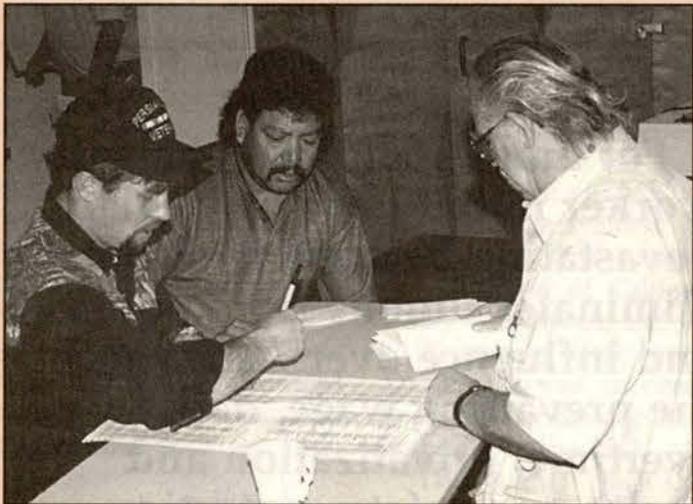


Grill's assignment will include the following areas:

- PG&E-Fresno/Kern Division
- PG&E-Gas System Maintenance & Operations (Hinkley, Hollister, Kettleman, Topock, Milpitas, San Jose, Walnut Creek)
- Lindmore Irrigation District
- Asplund Tree

April is the last month you can register to vote for California's June elections.

## Around the union...



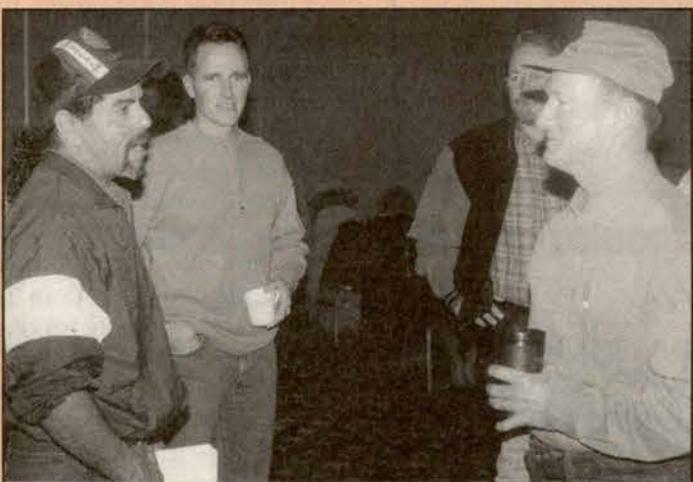
### DAVEY TREE RATIFICATION

Processing the ballots in the recent Davey Tree contract ratification vote are (from left) Local 1245 members Mike Despain, Mario Corona, and Business Rep. Mickey Harrington. The agreement was ratified by a large margin. See last month's Utility Reporter for contract details.



### FOCUS ON ERGONOMICS

Representing the IBEW at a recent ergonomics conference in Oakland are (from left) IBEW members Annette Spencer and Karen Russell, and Maggie Robbins of OSHA.



### TREE TRIMMERS CONFER

Tree trimmers from three employers exchanged ideas during a break at last month's Advisory Council meeting in Concord. From left: Dino Corriea, SMUD tree trimmer; Ray Thomas, City of Redding tree trimmer; Business Rep. Jack Osburn; and Bob Irwin, Davey tree trimmer. (Photos: Landis Marttila)



## Union will defend members' interests in PG&E's General Rate Case

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

The upcoming PG&E General Rate Case is an important milestone for our members and the customers we serve.

The California Public Utilities Commission is scheduled to make a decision on PG&E rates by December, with the rates to be effective in 1999. That is also the year that our labor agreement with PG&E is up for bargaining.

In many respects the financial condition of PG&E has a direct bearing on the outcome of general bargaining. We have a big stake in this case and we must be involved. There is no alternative.

As a public utility, PG&E's revenues from gas and electric rates are set by the CPUC. Those rates, called tariffs, are set every three years.

The last GRC took effect in 1996. As those rates were being hammered out in 1995, we were actively opposing PG&E downsizing. Our protests, winter storms, and public concern over service and safety issues forced the cancellation of 800 planned layoffs, and PG&E had to hire new additional employees. Not all of these positions were funded by the rates set for 1996.

PG&E says it has not been able to recover the costs of a substantial number of employees who have been working to restore system reliability and improve emergency response. The company will present evidence of

this to the Commission.

These costs are a big part of the requested one billion dollar increase.

As most members at PG&E know, our union is no stranger to this process. We have had to defend our wages and benefits in these GRCs for the last 15 years. This time around, there are three areas of concern for us.

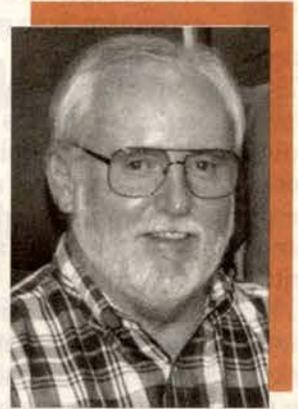
1. Our wages and benefits will again be under close scrutiny. We will vigorously defend our wages and benefits.

2. The commission will probably try to force restructuring concepts in the case, which we have already hammered out in other forums. We have to be on guard. With our Coalition of Utility Employee organization, we will be prepared to defend our turf in the restructuring issues.

3. This case is in large part about jobs. Safe and reliable electric and gas service is made possible by the work that we do. We won't be shy about making the connection between jobs and service.

There is going to be sizable opposition to this case. We are preparing strategies to participate in the case and to gather support. We have a story to tell and we're going to tell it.

Customers expect and deserve safe, reliable, and responsive service. But they need to understand that it takes people to provide that service. There is good evidence of this in the efforts by our mem-



bers to restore power in the recent El Nino storms. There is good evidence in the improvement our members have made in the infrastructure that delivers the gas and electricity.

It takes a skilled, qualified workforce to accomplish these things. That's what our members do.

A part of our overall strategy is to inform the public. We will be contacting other local unions, labor councils, the state federation of labor, as well as members of the California state legislature, to explain the importance of this case to us and ask for letters of support.

We need you, our PG&E members, to be informed about the GRC so that you can explain to your friends, your neighbors, your customers, and your communities, why this case is important to them.

It takes revenue to keep a workforce strong and service reliable. In the wake of the El Nino storms, we have a message for the regulators, and for the people in the communities we serve: We're the ones who keep the gas flowing and the lights on.

# Prop. 226 would muzzle workers' political voice

**T**he real aim of a June ballot initiative primarily supported by out-of-state right-wing extremists is to get unions out of politics.

This anti-worker initiative—Proposition 226—contains a provision that would require unions to annually sign up members who want to donate money to political activities.

This mandate would present unions with a huge task that would require shifting resources from such important activities as organizing, winning fair contracts and leadership development to solicit signatures and political donations.

Currently, unions sign up members once. If members later decide to defer political donations they have the right by law to request the deferral in a brief letter to their union.

For union members, the anti-worker initiative is particularly devastating be-

cause it all but eliminates unions from politics and influence over issues such as the prevailing wage, daily overtime, privatization and health and safety protection.

If passed in June, the initiative would require the notoriously slow Fair Political Practices Commission to develop a form for workers to sign authorizing deduction of dues for political purposes. Then unions would have to sign up members and collect donations before contributing monies to candidates for governor or the Legislature, a task that would prevent union workers from fully participating in the 1998 elections.

## Corporations Get an Unfair Edge

Unions and other community groups such as the League of Women Voters, Congress of California Seniors and the Consumer Federation have mounted opposition to the initiative under the coordination of

Californians to Protect Employee Rights. Their opposition stems from the fact that, if enacted, the proposition would allow corporate donations to candidates at the expense of working people's organizations.

Already, corporations outspend unions in political campaigns by 17 to one. In 1996, for example, unions contributed less than 4% of the \$1.6 billion raised by candidates and political parties, while corporations contributed \$677 million or more than 40%.

"The proposition would further tilt political power in favor of corporations" says Howard Owens, legislative director of the Congress of California Seniors. "We oppose the initiative because its main backers are extremists who want to destroy Medicare and get rid of Social Security. If they got working people out of politics, it would be easier for them to impose an extremist agenda on the rest of us."

**For union members, the anti-worker initiative is particularly devastating because it all but eliminates unions from politics and influence over issues such as the prevailing wage, daily overtime, privatization and health and safety protection.**

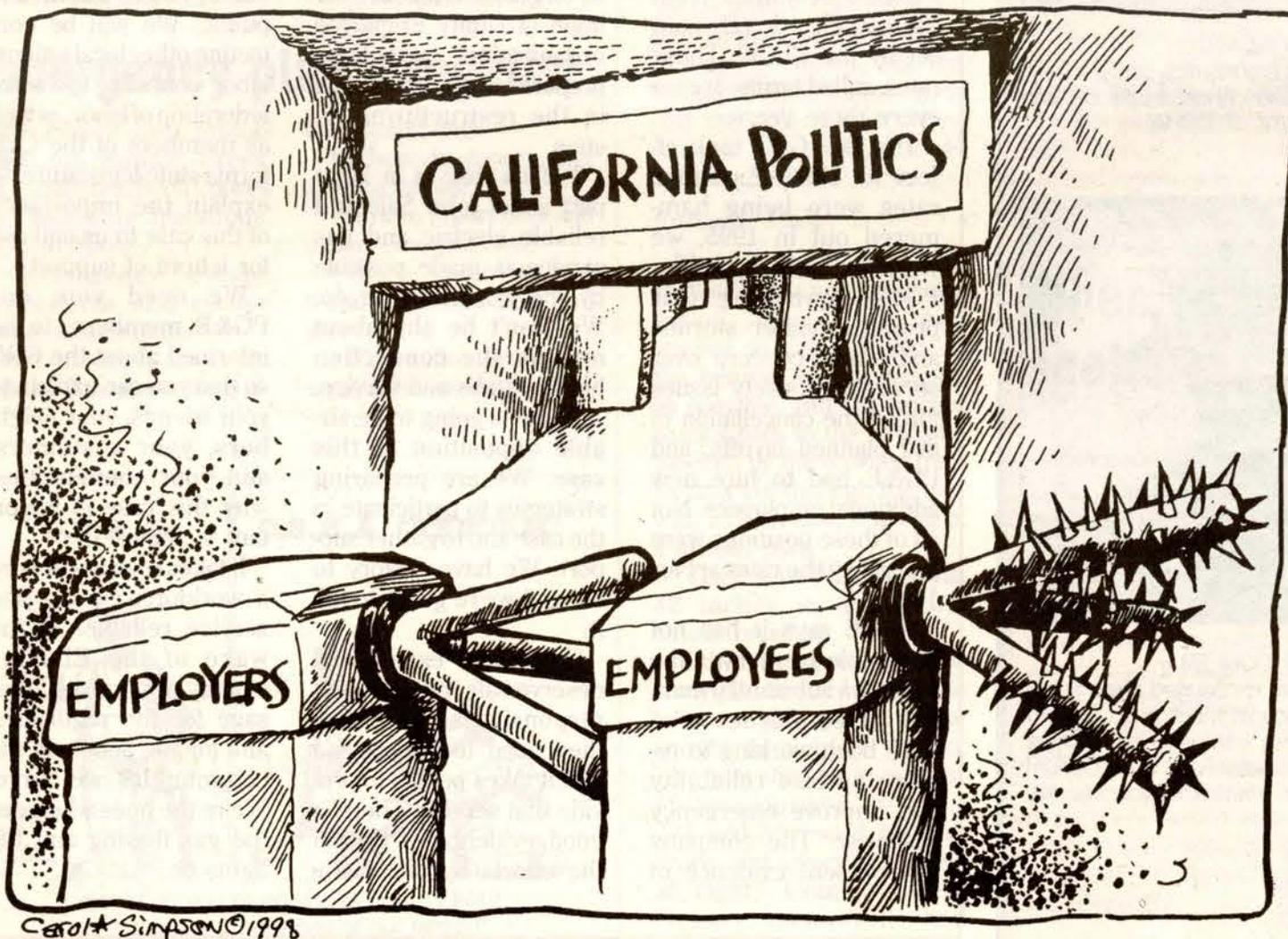
Indeed, one of the backers of the proposition is the Indiana-based J. Patrick Rooney, an insurance magnate and major Republican donor on par with giants such as Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco. Rooney's company, Golden Rule Insurance, is infamous for cherry picking, or skimming off the healthiest consumers from the health care pool.

Rooney and his company have fought legislative measures in states such as Vermont, Colorado and Kentucky that would prevent cherry picking by insurance companies.

Both Rooney and another major backer, Grover Norquist, a Washington, DC-based lobbyist, rabidly support right-wing causes, including privatization of government services such as public education, Medicare and Social Security.

Gov. Pete Wilson enthusiastically agreed to serve as honorary chair of the anti-worker initiative campaign. California is just one of 10 states the right wing has targeted for measures that would cripple union political participation. Others include Alaska, Michigan, Nevada, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Arizona. California, however, is a key site because of its size and popular wisdom that the state's voters forecast national trends.

Union observers believe the California measure satisfies the Republican vow made after the 1996 election to curb workers' influence over politics. At a recent meeting of the Republican Governors Association, for example, supporters of the initiative boasted that it would either cause unions to lose political funding or force them to spend millions of dollars defeating it.



Carol Simpson © 1998

## Corporate vs. union spending on politics

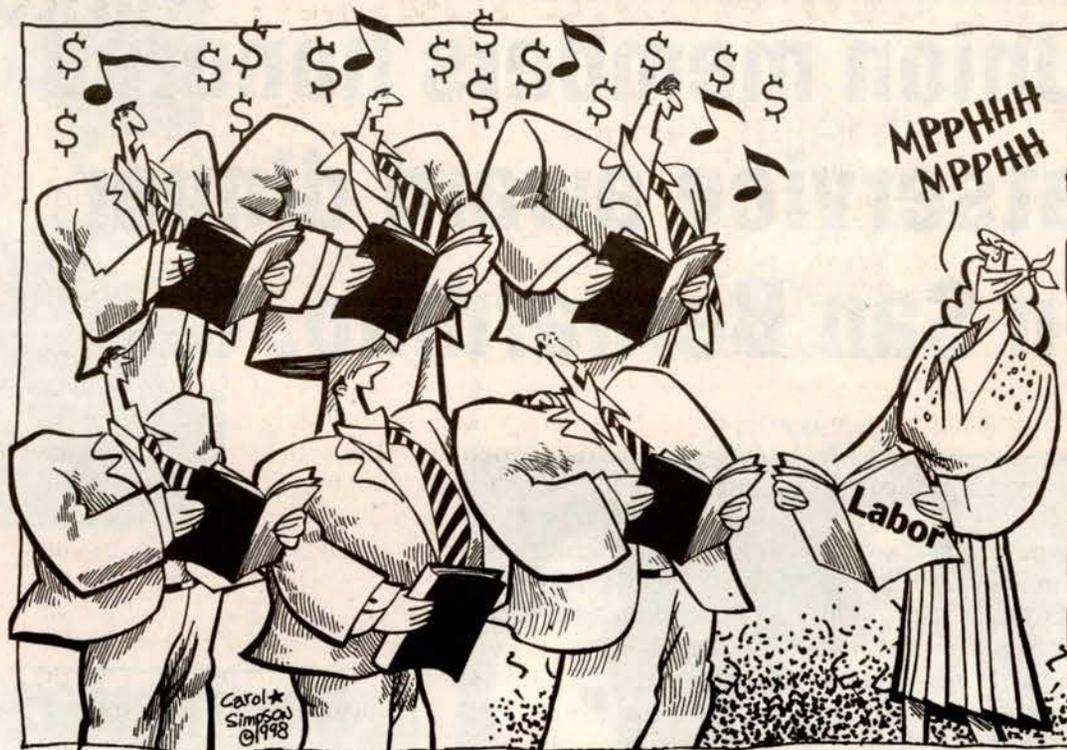
*There's too much money in politics-- but it's not union money*

The political balance of power is already tilted heavily in favor of corporations.

In the 1996 election cycle, corporate interests spent more than \$677 million on political contributions - 11 times more than unions spent. So while unions contributed less than 4 percent of the \$1.6 billion raised by candidates and parties in 1996, corporations contributed more than 40 percent.

The disparity between corporate and union spending is growing.

Since 1992 (when the ratio was 9-to-1), corporate political contributions have increased by \$229.8 million, while union contributions rose by only \$12.1 million.



*The Big Biz Chorus*

In "soft money" contributions, the gap is even wider.

While both corporations and unions have increased their unrestricted, so-called "soft money" contributions since 1992, corporate spending grew twice as fast. In 1996, corporations spent more than \$176 million—19 times more than unions did.

Corporate special interests are pushing initiatives that would skew the balance even further.

By backing special restrictions on unions while imposing no such limits on themselves, big corporations are trying to remove working families and their unions from the political playing field.

Corporations, right-wing foundations and anti-union lobbying groups are raising hundreds of millions of dollars to "de-fund" unions.

At a recent meeting of the Republican Governors Association, proponents of the initiatives noted that the de-funding ploy has two strategic benefits: If it works, unions will lose funding. Even if it doesn't, unions will be forced to spend millions of dollars in the fight.

**Join the Fight  
Against Prop. 226!**

**Tell Your Friends  
& Co-Workers  
to Vote No.**

**Register to Vote  
(Call the Union at  
510-933-6060 to  
Find Out How)**

**Vote "NO"  
on June 2nd**

Total Contributions			
	Corporations	Unions	Ratio
1996	\$677,442,423	\$60,352,761	11-to-1
1994	\$492,956,181	\$48,319,054	10-to-1
1992	\$447,594,985	\$48,152,256	9-to-1

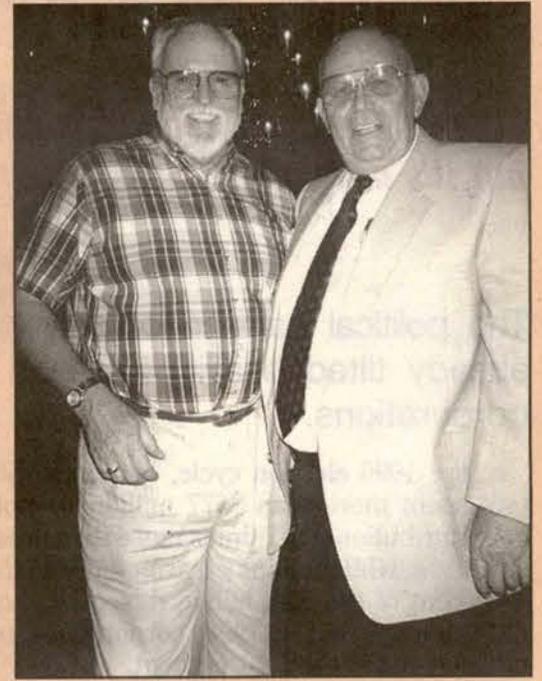
Soft Money Contributions			
	Corporations	Unions	Ratio
1996	\$176,108,186	\$9,505,745	19-to-1
1994	\$ 64,753,971	\$4,293,459	15-to-1
1992	\$ 66,342,241	\$4,251,334	16-to-1

Hard Money Contributions			
	Corporations	Unions	Ratio
1996	\$501,334,237	\$50,847,016	10-to-1
1994	\$428,202,210	\$44,025,595	10-to-1
1992	\$381,252,744	\$44,067,720	9-to-1

# Union members honored at service award dinner in San Bernardino, Ca.



**July 18, 1997**



## 45 Years

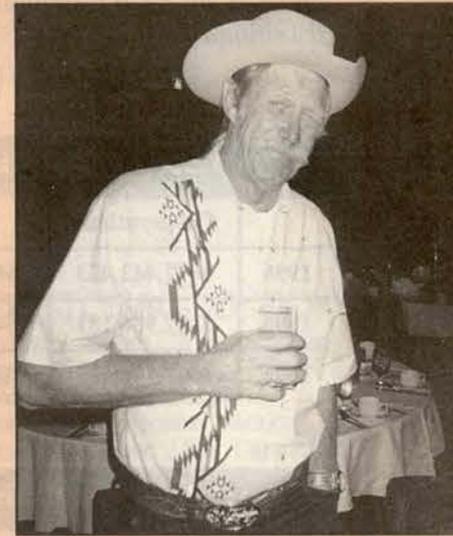
45-year member Jack Martin, right, is congratulated by Business Manager Jack McNally.

## 50 Years

Bernard Guzenske (at right with guest) accepts award from Business Manager Jack McNally (above).



Providing entertainment with a karaoke version of Bugle Boys from Company "B" are Mrs. Dudley, Johnstone and Murray.



Bobby Dutton



Micky Walsh and wife.





## 40 Years



## 20 Years



Former Executive Board member Tube Dudley (left) receives award from Business Manager Jack McNally.

Jerry Dillow and wife.



## Recipients

### 50 Years

Bernard Guzenske

### 45 Years

Jack Martin

### 40 Years

Andrew "Tube" Dudley

Bobby Dutton Sr.

Dale Parrott

Alan Wade

Michael Walsh

Jerry Dillow

### 35 Years

Carl Winner

Richard Edwards

Larry Kidney

Carl Bichel

### 30 Years

David Alschbach

Donald Dillon

James Henderson

Carl Gardner

Larry Paul

### 25 Years

Hugo Torres

Larry Skoglund

Lon Peterson

### 20 Years

Larry Cournoyer

Jim D'Avanzo

Ray Obregon

Gregory Krogh



Boycotts  
Endorsed by  
the AFL-CIO

**Please Don't Patronize!**

Boycotts  
Endorsed by  
the AFL-CIO

**BUILDING MATERIALS & TOOLS**

**BROWN & SHARPE MFG. CO.**

Measuring, cutting and machine tools and pumps  
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers

**ROME CABLE CORPORATION**

Cables used in mining and construction industry  
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers

**SOUTHWIRE CO.**

Commercial and industrial wire and cable; Do-it-yourself brand Homewire  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

**CLOTHING**

**MASTER APPAREL**

Men's and boy's pants. Labels include Botany 500, Hills and Archer, and Blair  
Electronic Workers

**FOOD & BEVERAGES**

**CALIFORNIA TABLE GRAPES**

Table grapes that do not bear the UFW union label on the carton or crate  
United Farm Workers of America

**DIAMOND WALNUT CO.**

Diamond brand canned and bagged walnuts and walnut pieces  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

**FARMLAND DAIRY**

Milk sold under the Farmland Dairy label in stores in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York.  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

**TYSON/HOLLY FARMS CHICKEN**

Chickens and processed poultry products  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen & Helpers of America

If you had to strike because your employer was unfair, you wouldn't want someone to cross your picketline. It's the same with boycotts. These boycotts have been called because unfair employers have refused to honor the rights of working people. Think of it as a consumer picketline: *don't cross it!*

**FURNITURE**

**TELESCOPE CASUAL FURNITURE CO.**

Lawn, patio, other casual furniture. Brand name: Telescope.  
Electronic Workers

**TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL**

**ALITALIA AIRLINES**

Air transport for passengers and freight  
International Association of Machinists

**BEST WESTERN-GROSVENOR RESORT**

Hotel in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.; located at Disney World, but separately owned and operated  
Steelworkers

**CROWN CENTRAL PETROLEUM**

Gasoline sold at Crown, Fast Fare and Zippy Mart stations and convenience stores.  
Oil Chemical & Atomic Workers

**FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON**

Hotel in Waterbury, Conn.  
Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees

**KAUAI RESORT**

Hotel in Kapaa, Hawaii  
Longshore & Warehouse Union

**MICHELIN**

Michelin brand tires  
Rubber Workers

**NEW OTANI HOTEL & GARDEN**

Hotel in downtown Los Angeles  
Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

**OBLEBAY PARK**

Wheeling, W. Va., park/resort/recreation complex  
Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

**OTHERS**

**BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION**

BET cable television, Action pay-per-view, Bet on Jazz  
Electrical Workers (IBEW)

**R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.**

Cigarettes: Camel, Winston, Salem, Doral, Vantage, More, Now, Real, Bright, Century, Sterling, YSL/Ritz; Smoking Tobaccos: Prince Albert, George Washington, Cater Hall, Apple, Madeira Mixture, Royal Comfort, Top, Our Advertiser; Little Cigars: Winchester  
Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers International Union

**Please Post**

# Union safeguards transmission

From PAGE ONE

reject or modify the maintenance practices submitted by the utilities.

"In our view, the ISO had to have this authority in order for any standard to be meaningful," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally.

By August, the unions were relatively satisfied with the agreement they had worked out with the utilities.

"It contained the three elements we were interested in," said Business Rep. Landis Marttila, who represented Local 1245 on the advisory committee. "The agreement provided that qualified workers would perform the inspections, and that there would be an auditable documentation of that inspection, including the inspector's timeline on when work should be performed. And third, it provided the ISO with the authority to unilaterally make changes if any particular utility's maintenance practice appeared deficient."

The advisory committee continued to meet periodically in September and October to fine tune some statistical measures for performance. But in late autumn there was some attempt to diminish the ISO's authority to reject or modify particular maintenance practices at the utilities.

"At one point it looked like the ISO might not retain sufficient authority to modify or reject utility practices," said Marttila.

The union found this prospect unacceptable.

"Even if the ISO found something wrong, its ability to take corrective action would have been impeded," said McNally, who is a member of the ISO governing board.

"The intent of AB 1890 was to insure that the state's transmission system be well maintained," said McNally, noting that unions were the ones primarily responsible for getting maintenance language included in that law. "Putting some

teeth into the law in terms of maintenance was our achievement—on behalf of consumers and on behalf of our members. We didn't want to see it eroded."

Working in concert with the other IBEW locals in the Coalition of California Utility Employees, and with CUE attorney Marc Joseph, Local 1245 was successful in preserving the regulatory authority of the ISO.

"The utilities must comply with the standard, and if there's something they don't like, the burden is on the utility to appeal," said McNally.

Under the agreement,

utilities must annually submit to the ISO all their inspection records for major facilities.

"In the long run this is in everybody's best interests—the consumers, the utilities, and our members," said McNally. "It would be a disaster for the utilities as well as the consumers if the system experienced significant failures due to inadequate maintenance of the transmission system. The union has made sure there are solid protections in place to preserve the integrity of electric transmission in the competitive era," said McNally.



Local 1245 Business Rep. Landis Marttila, left, and Local 47 Business Rep. Scott Hanlon confer on transmission maintenance standard. The two unions, together with Local 18, helped preserve the ISO's authority to regulate maintenance.

## Help build the labor movement

All members living in Contra Costa County who want to help themselves by helping others, please fill out and clip this Rapid Response Team volunteer form and mail to Business Rep. Frank Saxsenmeier at the address below. Remember, we are only as strong as our weakest link!

Frank Saxsenmeier  
IBEW Local 1245  
PO Box 4790  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

## Contra Costa Labor Council Rapid Response Team

Yes, I want to help and be part of building a strong labor movement in Contra Costa County. You can count on me to support five activities in a year to help another working person's struggle to have a better future.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Union & Local # \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- I Will:
- Attend pickets and rallies
  - Help with phone banks & precinct walks
  - Attend a legislative visit

**Special Notice:** Those participating in five actions in a year will receive special recognition at the yearly Labor Council Dinner.

# Think



## before you switch

The bell that will open the competitive era in electric service is set to ring on March 30. Many Energy Service Providers have already ramped up their phone and mail solicitations in an effort to get consumers to switch providers.

Before you switch, think about what's involved.

Your current provider (PG&E, SMUD, Sierra Pacific Power, etc.) has a labor agreement with Local 1245, and its employees therefore enjoy the benefits of union representation.

Currently there are no known union Energy Service Providers entering the market. What's worse, some of the new Energy Service Providers are playing fast and loose with the truth, such as claiming they can provide you a 10% cut in your electric rate.

The truth is that a 10% reduction was mandated by the California Legislature with the passage of AB 1890, and you have been enjoying that 10% reduction since the beginning of January.

There are many changes ahead in the electric industry. One new Energy Service Provider is already under investigation by the California Public Utilities Commission for allegedly operating a pyramid scheme.

Look before you leap. Think before you switch.

# Safety Matters

By Local 1245  
Safety Committee

## Send in accident reports

The Local 1245 Safety Committee would like to ask all shop stewards and employees to please send in all accident reports regardless of the severity, so we can document and investigate them.

The reports are essential for this committee to monitor potential unsafe work practices and/or unsafe working conditions.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Remember: Safety First!

## Insecticides & lubricants

When using aerosol lubricants or insecticides inside vaults or panels that have energized equipment in them, be aware that some of these products may be flammable.

Some of these "environmentally safe" aerosol sprays may have a flammable propellant. They

can be ignited due to a spark while working in these enclosures.

Make sure that your work area has been properly ventilated before resuming work. Always wear your personal protective equipment as well as your flame retardant clothing when working on energized equipment.

## Emergency plan checklist

For your own protection, Rodale Press' "Safety Check" poses the following questions. Do you know:

- Emergency escape procedures and escape route assignments?
- Procedures to be followed if you operate criti-

cal equipment?

- Where to report after an evacuation?
- How to report fires and other emergencies?
- Where hazardous materials are handled and stored?
- Where fire protection equipment is located?



"What do you mean you're from OSHA?  
I thought you were one of our temps!"

## Cool heads, quick response . . .

From PAGE ONE

dreads. It's also the moment that Crane and every other IBEW lineman has been trained to anticipate.

"Wait until they can get to you," Crane replied.

Although stunned by his own drop down the pole, Crane quickly moved to Wilson's side. Wilson's arm, dangling at his side, had been nearly severed by the falling conductor and insulator. Crane noted the steady flow of blood from Wilson's jacket sleeve. As members of four crews working in the area scrambled to mount a rescue, Crane got his hand under Wilson's arm.

The doctors who later treated Wilson credited Crane's quick response with saving Wilson's life.

But Crane knows the rescue was a group effort.

"If it wasn't for the guys on the ground we would have been screwed," he said in a recent interview.

Wilson wasn't the only injured man on the pole. Below them, Mike Degner had been working at the distribution level. Crane could see that Degner was now hanging upside down, his leg wedged between a crossarm and the pole. Crane called down to him, but got no response.

### Furious Pace

Meanwhile, Todd Walker's crew was flying into action. They knew they needed to get a bucket to the injured men as quickly as possible. But the bucket truck's path to the pole was blocked by the downed tree. So they cut through the tree with a chain saw, working at a furious pace.

"They said that tree was 42 inches in diameter," Crane recalled.

While the crews below struggled to get help to the men on the pole, Crane sought to comfort Wilson, who was slipping in and out of consciousness.

"I told him we'd get him down and everything'd be all right," Crane recalled. Degner, meanwhile, had regained consciousness be-

low them.

"I was talking to him, telling him he was going to have to hang there for a while," said Crane.

About 10 minutes after the tree toppled onto the line, the crews below managed to get the bucket up to Wilson and brought him down, being careful to support the badly-injured arm.

Then Walker came up the pole to assist in Degner's rescue. While Walker hung the hand line from above, Crane got under Degner.

"I put his back under my shoulder and kept inching up. Then we put his left gaff in the pole and as he put weight on it we could free up his right foot," said Crane.

The men got the hand line tied around Degner and lowered him down. Neither Degner nor Crane suffered serious injury.

Wilson's injury was serious indeed, but the quick rescue effort gave doctors at the Stanford University Medical Center a chance to save Wilson's arm with microsurgery. Crane, who has stayed in close touch with his injured buddy, said Wilson was already anticipating his return to work.

"He's in real high spirits. He's real optimistic about his recovery," said Crane.

"He hopes to return to work as soon as he can."

Crane, a hiring hall employee since March of 1996, was initiated into Local 57 in Salt Lake City in 1979. He participated in last year's Gas & Electric Rodeo at Rancho Seco, where one of the events—the "Hurt Man Rescue"—tests linemen's skills in helping get injured workers off a pole.

Among PG&E teams competing at the rodeo, Crane's team took second place and went on to compete in the national rodeo in Kansas City.

Crane believes the emphasis on safety at PG&E makes a difference.

"The classes we've had while I've been here, I think it's great," he said. "The First Aid classes, the First Aid reviews, the CPR—the more you practice it, the easier it is to use it when someone's in need."

Crew members assisting Crane and Walker in the rescue effort were: Joseph Adamo, Mike Saner, Russ Martin, Michael Amaro Jr., Daren Arnold, Dixie McDaniel, John Frazier, Juan Barron Jr., Jesus Diaz, Bob Gibbs, Mitch Green, Mark Maire, Craig Gilbert, Cris Ratfield, John Kinard, Jim Lehnertz, Kevin O'Connor, and Dave Stickel.

## When you have trouble seeing at night...

If you have trouble seeing at night, "Safety Check" recommends the following:

First, see your physician to rule out any eye problems related to other disorders. If your thyroid isn't working properly, for example, you may suffer from increasing night-blindness.

Also, visit your eye doctor if you haven't already. If there is no discernible cause for your difficult seeing at night, your optometrist may recommend putting an antireflective coating on a pair of glasses to help you.

Antireflective coatings on glasses are usually recommended for cosmetic purposes—they reduce the Coke-bottle look of strong prescriptions. But the reduced reflection also gives you sharper vision, especially at night, by eliminating halos and glare, according to James Sheedy, a clinical professor at UC Berkeley.

# Social Security must be preserved for all

By Orv Owen

**P**resident Clinton announced in his State of the Union speech that this year there will be meetings in town hall settings covering the Social Security program for improving the stability of Social Security for all present and future recipients. It is extremely important for all of us to participate in discussions and keep informed on the proceedings and developments.

For over 60 years Social

Security has been the most successful and broadly supported Federal government activity. Without Social Security, millions of older persons would be poor, families of disabled workers would be destitute and the status of low income families would be in crisis.

It has secure funding for full benefits well into the next century. Over the past 60 years, Social Security was modified often to meet the changing needs of American citizens as family structures and economic condi-

tions have changed. These changes included disability benefits, age 62 benefits and the introduction of the COLA.

The political intent of the Congress was to extend and secure benefits for American workers and families. As a result, Social Security

is not just the most popular social and economic governmental program, it is also the most successful national program. For many of us, it is the single most important program binding the American people together as a national community.

Keep the faith!

**Social Security is not just the most popular social and economic governmental program, it is also the most successful**

IBEW  
Local  
1245



Retirees Corner

### Retiree Club dates

**East Bay Chapter:**  
Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at Local 1245 headquarters, 3063 Citrus Circle, Walnut Creek, Ca.

**San Jose Chapter:**  
Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m. at Local 332, 1870 Stone Ave., San Jose.

# Health care is at risk with Proposition 226

**A** lot is at stake in this June's election for Californians concerned with preserving quality health care and work environments.

The main threat is Proposition 226, a ballot measure that would require annual authorization to use membership dues for candidates

who fight for working families. The anti-worker initiative is funded by wealthy out-of-state special interests, whose agenda is to severely weaken the ability of health care employees to participate in the political process.

If Prop 226 should pass, the balance of power over HMO reform would almost

entirely belong to the big corporations, leaving health care workers and consumers without a significant voice.

These corporations already have Gov. Pete Wilson on their side, fighting against any positive reform. For example, the Patient Bill of Rights would protect health professionals from

termination without cause. It would also protect those who speak out about unsafe conditions.

But without union representation defending quality health care, the legislative votes to override a Wilson veto on important components of the Patient Bill of Rights simply are not there. Also in jeopardy are improved hospital staff-to-patient ratios and certain elements of Title 22.

Also at risk are vital health and safety standards that protect patients and staff. Health care workers are frequently subjected to extreme dangers, such as airborne diseases and unsafe waste disposal, that can be properly controlled only by a strong regulatory agency. That's why union influence must be maintained, to ensure that Cal-OSHA remains in place to enforce existing standards and to promote a safer working environment. Furthermore, because of the rate of work-related impairment in the health care industry (such as back injury and needle sticks), union representation is imperative to assure adequate workers compensation coverage.

### Mental Health Coverage

Mental health is particularly vulnerable to reforms that favor the corporate HMOs, and employees in this field could see drastic

changes in patient treatment.

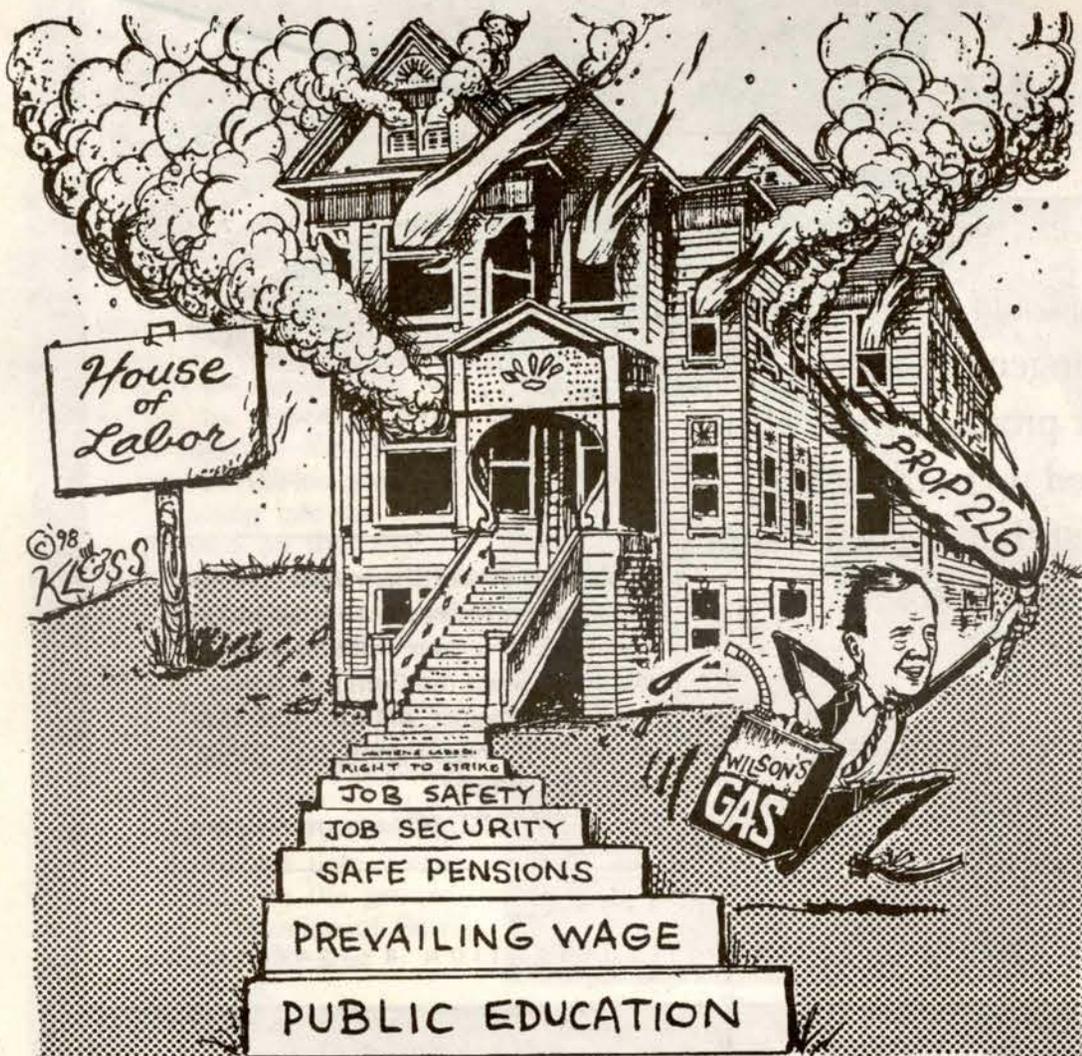
While a recent UCLA study found that offering broad mental health benefits would not add significantly to insurers' costs if a managed care approach is used, insurance companies reacted with their usual cost-benefit defense.

"Anything that adds cost, no matter how seemingly small," argued the health care policy manager for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "is of concern to us." At a time when many states, including California, are considering legislation to mandate some form of parity between mental health and other medical coverage, the opposition is mobilizing, too.

In a service industry like health care, issues that affect workers—like the eight-hour work-day affect consumers, too. And those issues must be fought for on a day-to-day basis.

That's why nurses, physical therapists, medical technicians, hospital pharmacists, medical social workers, drug rehabilitation counselors and health care consumers rely on unions to counter the negative influence of the corporate health care industry.

Proposition 226 would silence unions and the health care employees they represent, putting us at the mercy of wealthy corporate executives.





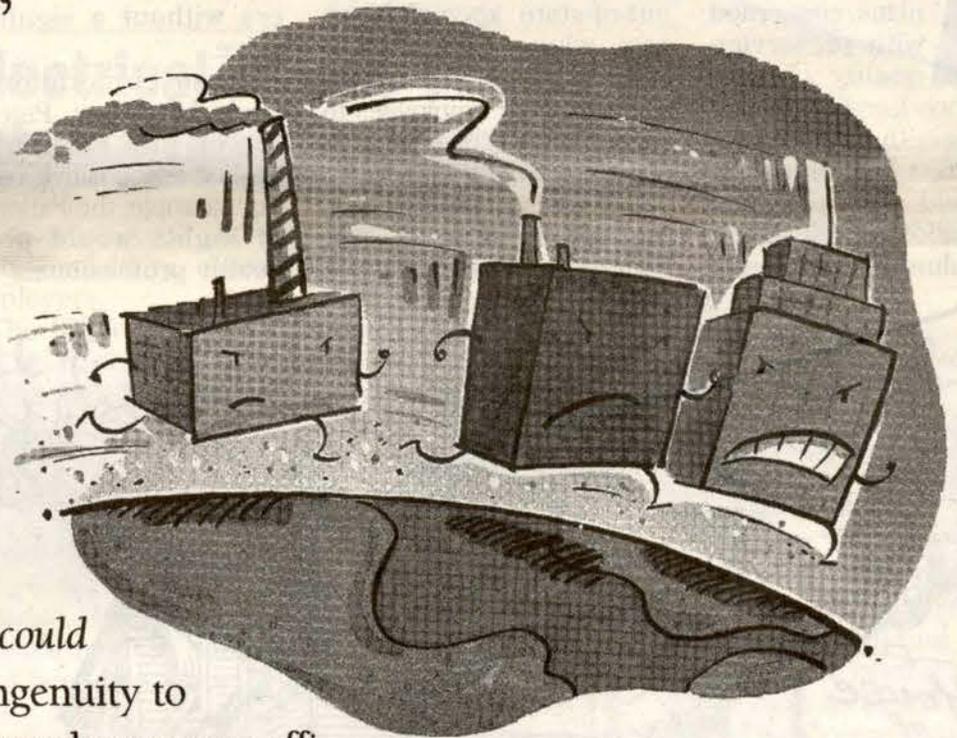
# THE NEXT TIME SOMEONE BLAMES *global competition* FOR DRIVING DOWN AMERICA'S WAGES, SPEAK UP—AND SHARE THE FACTS:

## “GLOBAL COMPETITION” HAS BEEN A GREAT

EXCUSE for driving down wages and workers' rights. Ever notice that some of the companies using the “global competition” excuse do *all* their business right here in the U.S.? Mining companies, for example, and construction and retail companies—even government.

Where global competition is real, *we could have won!* Instead of using American ingenuity to expand their markets and make better products more efficiently, when global competition heated up in the 1970s, U.S. businesses took the low road. First they slashed wages and benefits here, then packed up the jobs and sent them to the lowest-wage countries they could find.

**The bottom line:** *Corporate America has no business crying about global competition. It's an excuse for multiplying its profits without sharing the wealth.*



**SPEAK UP!** Please share your favorite myths about today's economy, and stories about how your working family is coping. Contact the Common Sense Economics Project, AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Fax: 202-508-6987. E-mail: 71112.2271@compuserve.com.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE KLUG