

International Brotherhood Of Electrical Workers Local 1245, AFL-CIO November 1998 Vol. XLVII No. 11

UTILITY REPORTER

Labor turnout helps elect Davis, Lockyer Elections brighten workers' prospects



GETTING OUT THE VOTE Volunteering for phone bank duty at the San Mateo Central Labor Council during the fall election campaign are PG&E General Construction Linemen Chris Reefe, Andrew Thompson, and Lonnie Fletcher. (Photo: Landis Marttila)



nion members proved they could make a real difference in state and national politics when they lect pro-labor can

helped elect pro-labor candidates as Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General of California, and led the way in defeating Proposition 9. Union households, which

Supplied 21% of the votes in the Nov. 3 election nationwide, propelled Gray Davis into the Governor's seat in California, were a significant factor in the election of Cruz Bustamante as Lt. Governor and Bill Lockyer as Attorney General, and helped Barbara Boxer win re-election to the U.S. Senate. In the last mid-term election, in 1994, union households provided only 14% of the total vote nationwide.

Local 1245 members worked phone banks and walked precincts to promote Davis's bid to become California's first Democratic governor in 16 years. Local 1245 members were especially active in the campaign against Proposition 9, which would have sharply curtailed utility revenues and repealed worker protection measures contained in the state's electric restructuring law. (*See story below*).

Union leaders expect Davis will move quickly to

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CALENDAR

November 7-8 Advisory Council Concord, Ca.

Labor activism produces results Members mobilize to trounce Prop. 9 roposition 9, the ill-con-



ceived ballot measure to rewrite the rules for electric restructuring, went down in flames on Nov. 3, ending an extremely seri-

ous threat to the job security of utility workers at Pacific Gas and Electric and California's other regulated utilities.

Local 1245 members played an active role in the campaign to defeat Proposition 9, which would have sharply curtailed utility revenues and repealed worker protection measures contained in the state's electric restructuring law.

Opposition was particularly intense in San Luis Obispo, where the jobs of Local 1245 members at Diablo Canyon Power Plant were at serious risk. Advisory Council member Dan Lockwood helped coordinate two rallies totaling about 900 people on Oct. 27 and 28.

Proposition 9 would have severely See PAGE FOUR



NO ON NINE!

Managers and union members at PG&E joined forces to fight Proposition 9. Demonstrating with managers against Prop. 9 in San Luis Obispo last month were union stewards Jim Grady, Dan Lockwood, Lynn Moon, and Robyn Boeck. (Photo: Mike Haentjens)

1245

LABOR AT LARGE

OTILITY BEPOBTEB

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Workers here and abroad

Rolling the union on. .

Boss: A Canadian mine-drilling executive became a guerrilla hostage in Colombia after trading places last month with an employee he had never met, according to the Associated Press. Norbert Reinhart, 49, exchanged himelf for drill foreman Ed Leonard, who was captured in June by ransomseeking leftists rebels. According to Reinhart's wife, the two Canadians met for the first time during the

Richard Cole

Richard Cole, a journeyman lineman working for Campanella Constrction in Visalia, was fatally injured Oct. 24 when he was hit by a pick-up truck as the crew was setting up for the day at the side of the road. Brother Cole was 41.

Local 1245 offers its condolences to all who knew Brother Richard Cole. exchange. "(Norbert) said to him, 'Your shift is done, you can go home,' " Mrs. Reinhart told reporters.

The Creating Chaos: After threatening to implement its CHAOS program, the Association of Flight Attendants has won a contract at AirTran Airlines, Labor Notes reported. CHAOS, which stands for "Create Havor Around Our System," promised random, unannounced job actions on individual flights. The agreement gives flight attendants an immediate 10% raise, followed by 4% annual increases over the four-year contract.

No Layoffs!: Tens of thousands of workers, civic movement activists, farmers and teachers demontrated in South Korea on Nov. 8 to demand that the government take measures to keep companies from laying off workers. The organizations demanded the government cut its defense spending and use the money to help the unemployed, and called for the legalization of a teach-



"Gentlemen, I think we should settle."

ers' labor union, Reuters reported.

No Interviews: Vice President Al Gore, several election winners and entertainment figures refused interviews with ABC in a show of support for the 2,200 technicians who were locked out Nov. 3 after staging a legal one-day strike over unfair labor pretices. ABC's parent, Walt Disney Co., is demanding that the workers abandon their current health care coverage.

Shutdown: A strike by three unions completely shut the underground metro system in Brussels, Belgium, and affected buses and trams, Reuters reported. The 24-hour strike was called to protest the alleged failure of management to respond to demands on conditions and working hours.

IS North American Solidarity: The Dana Workers Alliance, along with the AFL-CIO, Candian Labour Congress and the National Union of Workers in Mexico, has filed complaints under side agreements to NAFTA against Dana Corp. for firing union supporters and brutalizing employees at its Echlin brake plant in Itapsa, Mexico. The UAW, Steelworkers and paperworkers represent about 12,000 Dana workers. Other members of the alliance include the Teamsters, the Canadian UAW, UNITE, and the unaffiliated United Electrical Workers.

IBEW Yes: In Huntington, W.Va., 21 workers at

Asplundh Tree Experts voted for IBEW Local 317, according to the AFL-CIO's Work in Progress. In Fort Polk, La., 17 Lockheed Martin Co. workers voted for IBEW Local 861 representation.

Winning in Las Vegas: Teamsters Local 995 won three elections in Las Vegas, bringing union representation to 187 workers, according to the AFL-CIO's Work in Progress. Some 140 retail workers at the Excalibur voted for the union, along with 25 laundry workers at the Desert Inn, and 22 wardrobe attendants and seamstresses at Circus Circus.

Miners Won't Mine:

Miners at a lead and zinc mine in southern Bulgaria went on strike Nov. 10 after management failed to raise their wages as part of pledges made during a previous strike eight months ago, Reuters reported. Some 250 miners refused to go underground. Antiquated working conditions result in frequent accidents causing deaths and injuries.

Teacher's Walk: Lebanon's primary school teachers on Nov. 10 joined secondary-level teachers in a strike which shut down all state-run schools in the country, Reuters reported. The striking teachers are demanding better pensions and revised salary scales to narrow the gap between their pay and that of teachers at Lebanon's state-run universities.

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POINT OF VIEW

Forty Years Ago **1958: Labor's banner political year**

Union members in California will have good reason to remember 1998: in June we defeated the anti-union Proposition 226 and in November we elected a pro-worker governor. That much you already know. But what you may not know is that these victories come exactly 40 years after another banner political year for labor: 1958.

orty years ago, American labor beat back one of the strongest ployer political

em-

offensives in history. In the 1958 mid-term elections, six states, including California, considered "right-to-work" initiatives that would have outlawed the union shop. That is, the initiatives would have prohibited unions from negotiating union security clauses that require all employees to join the union.

But in a campaign resembling the recent victory over Proposition 226 in California (the so-called Paycheck Protection Act), union people in 1958 turned the tide, defeating right-to-work in five of the six states, sweeping into office a new generation of pro-labor US Senators, and setting the stage for the Democrat's winning the White House in 1960.

The 1958 battle had its roots in the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which permitted states to enact "right-towork" laws. Within ten years after 1947, most southern and a number of plains states

APPOINTMENTS

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

IBEW

National Construction Organizing Conference Jack McNally **Darrel Mitchell Richard Dunkin Bob Choate**

IBEW 1998 Nuclear Conference Mike Haentiens Dan Lockwood warren Brown

IBEW NECA Employee Benefits Conference Darrel Mitchell Art Murray **Richard Dunkin**

had outlawed the union shop. In 1956 and 1957, organized business and its **Republican** Party allies launched efforts to enact right-to-work laws in northern and midwestern states where unions were strongest. In 1957, the Indiana state legislature passed right-to-work, and a similar bill almost passed in Connecticut.

In early 1958, business coalitions gathered money and signatures to place referenda on the fall 1958 ballots in California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Ohio, and Washington. The grassroots-sounding "Ohians for the Right to Work" was actually organized by the Chamber of Commerce, General Electric, and other business heavy-weights. Some early polls showed majority support for the referenda.

The AFL-CIO responded with massive registration and fund-raising drives, and defended the union shop as "nothing more than industrial majority rule," thereby linking it to core American values.

In Colorado, surveys showed that many of those expressing sympath for "right-to-work" did not know what the term meant. The AFL-CIO organized a citizens committee against right-to-work to educate the public.

In Ohio, labor registered 200,000 new voters, the majority as Democrats, including 40,000 black voters registered in a special Operation Registration drive coordinated with the Ohio NAACP.

The AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education focused on educating union members on how right-towork would weaken their organizations, and as a result COPE raised more voluntary contributions from

union members in 1958, a "mid-term" election, than it had in the Presidential election year of 1956.

In November, right-towork was decisively defeated in four of the six state referenda, and narrowly defeated in another. Only in Kansas did the right-to-work initiative pass.

In California, right-to-work lost by 3 million to 2 million, a 60-40 margin. An increase of 300,000 registered voters resulted in a record turnout, and William Knowland, the former Senate Minority leader who resigned from Congress to run for Governor and who made the alleged power of unions the dominant theme of his campaign, went down to defeat. California voters instead elected Pat Brown, who went on to lead the state into an era of unparalleled growth and prosperity, a prosperity that working people shared in thanks in part to Gov. Brown's prolabor beliefs.

Other candidates swept into office with labor's help in 1958 were US Senators Philip Hart of Michigan, Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, Vance Hartke of Indiana and Edmund Muskie of Maine, all of whom went on to compile distinguished and pro-labor records in the years to come.

Mobilizing members, working with allies, and educating on the issues, labor in 1958 stopped "right-towork" from spreading and elected its own champion to state houses and Congress. James McDevitt, COPE director at the time, exulted: "More than anything else, this campaign proved that when labor is aroused and forgets its differences it in turn can arouse the people."

(Adapted from an article by Jon Bloom, editor of the New York Labor History Assoc. Labor History News Service.)

You did it!

Jack McNally, IBEW 1245 Business Manager

You did it.

It's a fact. Union families provided the margin of victory for pro-worker candidates in this month's elections. When you went to the polls on Nov. 3 you not only exercised your rights as a citizen, you made a difference. I personally want to thank each of you who worked at a phone bank, walked a precinct, or handed out a flier. And I want to thank each member who took the time to vote.

According to the Los Angeles Times, union members and their families were 29% of all voters in California. Union families delivered 70% of their vote to Gray Davis for Governor, while nonunion voters went for Davis by a much smaller 54%. Likewise, union families gave 64% of their votes to Barbara Boxer for Senator, while non-union voters gave her just 50% of their votes.

Davis's overwhelming victory gives him a clear mandate to lead California in a new direction, and your efforts played a direct part in giving him that big margin of victory.

As a result, for the first time in 16 years we will have someone in the governor's office who will listen to our concerns. And there will be increased pro-worker majorities in the state Senate and Assembly to help ensure those concerns gets addressed. One of those concerns, the restoration of overtime after 8 hours of work, should be making headlines very early in the next legislative session.



Proposition 9 was another success story for our members. Proposition 9 directly threatened the jobs of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Local 1245 members. Dozens of Local 1245 stewards agreed to travel around the PG&E system in order to alert their fellow union members about this threat. Untold numbers of you shared this information with your fellow employees, your friends and your families. Again, I want to thank you for this extraordinary effort. In the end nearly three out of every four voters cast their vote against Proposition 9.

Some people want to turn their back on politics. But that's like turning your back on your own family. Politics is where democracy happens. Politics is where the rules of the economic marketplace are spelled out.

Post-election data suggests that union members and their families understand this: approximately 70% of people in union households nationwide cast their votes for labor-endorsed candidates.

Many of those votes were cast by you-our members. That's why, in this election, all of us came out winners.

LOCAL AT LARGE

Provco-EPA tree trimmers approve first contract



The contract vote was the culmination of talks that began six months ago with Provco-EPA's chief executive, Sam Heinrich.

"He indicated in June he would sign a contract with union wages and benefits," said Local 1245 Senior Business Rep. Landis Marttila. "All he asked for was the time to negotiate specific language and to question and understand the impact of

Prop. 9 trounced

From PAGE ONE

restricted PG&E's ability to recover its investments in Diablo Canyon, making it likely that PG&E would close the plant if the measure passed.

Diablo Canyon was not the only location where Local 1245 members mobilized against the proposition. In Fresno, Executive Board member Chris Habecker conducted a series of "rolling rallies" on Oct. 16 at PG&E's Fresno Call Center. In San Francisco, San Jose Unit Chair Bill Brill joined PG&E chief Gordon Smith on Oct. 29 in addressing a noon rally outside PG&E headquarters in downtown San Francisco.

In the final weeks of the campaign, Local 1245 members active in the campaign made job-site presentationsin Lakeport, Willow Creek, Clear Lake, Weaverville, Morro Bay, Ukiah, Eureka, Santa Rosa, Monterey, Salinas, Hollister, and Santa Cruz.

California voters rejected Proposition 9 by a 73-27 margin. seniority, grievance and other processes contained in the agreement."

Marttila called the process "a very cooperative endeavor" and said both sides make gains by signing an agreement.

The secret ballot vote, conducted Nov. 5 in the Stockton and Frenso yards, covers Provco-EPA line clearance tree trimmers working on the PG&E and Sacramento Municipal Utility District systems, as well as subject pole clearance personnel performing work for PG&E. Subject poles are specific poles that are required by law to have all vegetation removed from within a 10-foot radius of their base.

Provco-EPA bid and won a significant tree trimming contract at SMUD during the summer. Part of the bid process included assurances from Provco-EPA and Local 1245 that Provco-EPA would perform the work at the prevailing union wage and benefit level.

"It is a pleasure to work with an individual whose

> Provco-EPA's Sam Heinrich (left) and Local 1245's Landis Marttila seal the deal with a h an d s h a k e following the ratification vote.



Provco-EPA workers in Stockton were all smiles following ratification of the new labor agreement.

word is his bond," said Marttila. "We moved very quickly from an oral commitment to a written agreement with Sam Heinrich and Provco-EPA."

Under the terms of the agreement, Provco-EPA line clearance tree trimmers at PG&E began receiving union wages on Nov. 9. Instead of a six-month waiting period for entry into the employer-paid medical plan, the tree trimmers on the PG&E contracts will be covered effective Jan. 1, 1999.

Provco-EPA expects to almost double its tree trimming workforce over the next two to three months, as well as expanding the number of subject pole workers. Provco-EPA's total workforce should reach about 150 union members by early 1999.

Elections brighten workers' prospects

From PAGE ONE

fulfill his campaign promise to restore California's daily overtime law, which was repealed last year with the connivance of Gov. Pete Wilson. Unionists are also confident they will soon be seeing new faces in key state agencies that wield significant power over workers' lives, such as Cal-OSHA, the Industrial Welfare Commission, and the Public Utilitites Commission.

The new governor's hand will be strengthened by increased Democratic majorities in the California Assembly and Senate. Democrats picked up four seats in the Assembly, where they now have a 48-32 margin, and two seats in the California Senate, where their margin is now 25-15.

And thanks to a pre-election candidate survey by Local 1245, many of the new Democratic faces in the California Senate and Assembly are already on record in support of overtime and other important labor issues.

"We surveyed every Assembly and Senate candidate running in northern and central California," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally. "In every single case where a Democrat was elected to an open seat, that candidate has already expressed support in writing for our position on overtime and numerous other labor issues."

In the Assembly, those Democrats newly-elected to open seats are Patricia Wiggins (Napa-Vallejo), Darrell Steinberg (Sacramento), Ellen Corbett (Hayward), John Dutra (Fremont), and Sarah Reyes (Visalia Area).

Support for Local 1245 on these issues was also expressed in writing by:

■ Dean Florez, a Democrat who upset incumbent Robert Prenter in Assembly District 30, the Kettleman City area;

■ Anthony Pescetti, a Republican who narrowly defeated Debra Gravert for the Assembly District 10 seat in the southern part of Sacramento County; and

■ Abel Maldonado, a Local 1245-endorsed Republican in the San Luis Obispo area, who supported Local 1245's position on sick leave policy, fair treatment for older workers, and strong safety standards, but took no position on restoring overtime.

In the California Senate, newly-elected Democrats all support restoring the 8hour day and most other labor issues outlined in the Local 1245 candidate survey. These successful candidates are: Wes Chesbro (Vallejo to Eureka), Deborah Ortiz (Sacramento), Jackie Speier (San Mateo-San Francisco), and Liz Figueroa (Southern Alameda County).

In addition to Davis as Governor, Bustamante as Lt. Governor, and Lockyer as Attorney General, labor-endorsed candidates won three other state-wide races: Phil Angelides as Treasurer, Kathleen Connelly as Controller, and Delaine Eastin as Superintendent of Public Instruction. Republican Chuck Quackenbush won re-election as Insurance Commissioner, a race where Local 1245 made no endorsement. In an extremely close race, Secretary of State Bill Jones beat back a challenge by labor-endorsed Michela Alioto.

Johan Klehs, a labor-endorsed candidate who came to Local 1245's defense during PG&E's downsizing back in 1995, won re-election by a huge margin to the Board of Equalization.



Ron Weakley: 50-Year Member of the I.B.E.W.

The man who made a union

Lots of people talked about organizing a union at PG&E.

Ron Weakley did it.

hat difference can one person make?

The next time you deposit your paycheck or take a paid vacation or see a doctor at the company's expense, you are enjoying the legacy of a man who made a bold stand more than a half-century ago.

This year Ron Weakley celebrates his 50th anniversary as a member of IBEW Local 1245. But his contribution to the union dates back even further, 57 years to be exact, to an informal meeting of PG&E workers in the bar of the Plaza Hotel, a nondescript two-story rooming house in Concord, Ca.

About a dozen men were present, united by a belief that PG&E employees had a raw deal, and that a union would give them the strength to demand changes. The only problem was that PG&E was one of the leading bad-ass union-busting corporations in the world and this was just a small group of guys with a gripe

By Eric Wolfe

corporations in the world and this was just a small group of guys with a gripe. But Weakley helped transform that discontent into something else: a fervent belief that it could be done, that a bunch of ordinary workers like themselves, if united, could move the corporate mountain.

"He acted like he had the experience and the background to know what to do and what to expect. And we just followed," recalled Ray Michael in a 1991 interview.

Weakley, whose stepfather joined the IBEW in 1905, was born and bred to unionism. While working on a ship in his youth, Weakley was fired for union activity and put

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Weakley From PAGE FIVE

ashore in Baltimore, far from his home in California. During the 1934 General Strike in San Francisco, Weakley was among the thousands who protested the killing of two union supporters with a dramatic silent march up Market Street.

Weakley hired on at PG&E in 1940 for 50cents an hour in the steam generation department in San Francisco. At that time, the IBEW barely had a toehold at PG&E and showed little interest in classifications other than lineman. Weakley decided the best hope of organizing PG&E lay with the Utility Workers Organizing Committee, a project of the militant industrial unionism of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

"The CIO principles were equality for everybody," Weakley recalled in a 1991 interview. "The basis of mass organization was that you shouldn't discriminate against anybody, for political beliefs, sex, race, or anything else."

Weakley and the others determined they would try to organize one union to represent everyone at PG&E—physical and clerical, urban and rural, up-state and down-state. Everyone. In 1941, several UWOC locals were charted in the Bay Area with the aim of organizing PG&E. That same year, the IBEW chartered Local 1245 to compete with the UWOC effort.

By 1945 virtually the entire PG&E system was organized by divisions, with various locals of the UWOC reigning in the Bay Area and IBEW Local 1245 winning in the outlying areas. By 1947, however, it was becoming clear that the two unions had fought to a stalemate. Thus divided, the unions could not effectively confront PG&E at the bargaining table.

Weakley, a man interested in achieving results, became discouraged with this state of affairs. His discouragement deepened when he attended the founding convention of the Utility Workers Union of America—with which the UWOC was affiliating—and watched many of the delegates engage in redbaiting attacks on their fellow union members.

Finally Weakley called Don Hardie, a fellow union activist at PG&E, and proposed something radical: Why not end the internal labor warfare at PG&E by leading all their members out of the UWOC and into the IBEW? "Almost out of the blue, Ron called me about exploring the idea of saving what we could and getting out," Hardie recalled in a 1991 interview. "We were both on our days off at the time, so we went over to [IBEW] Local 595 in Oakland."

That meeting led to another meeting that afternoon in San Francisco with Oscar Harbak, the IBEW vice president for the Ninth District in San Francisco. Shortly thereafter, the IBEW agreed to create a new local, IBEW 1324, to house Weakley and other UWOC dissidents. Both Local 1324 and Local 1245 were put under International supervision for the duration of the organizing campaign at PG&E.

It was hardly a typical organizing campaign. Weakley and his allies faced obstacles on three fronts. First, they had to keep the peace with Local 1245, whose leaders were none too happy about being upstaged by a bunch of radical industrial unionists. Second, Weakley's group had to persuade thousands of rank and file UWUA members to join them in crossing over to the IBEW, a move that was being fiercely resisted by UWUA's national leadership. And third, there was PG&E to worry about.

Every Trick in the Book

The company employed every trick in the book to gum up the works, including an effort to eliminate 51 classifications from the proposed bargaining unit. Both Weakley and Hardie testified at length on this issue during hearings conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. The late Stanley Neyhart, the attorney representing the union at these hearings, said at the time he had never seen a corporation display such a vicious and vindictive attitude toward its employees.

While they waited for the NLRB to rule on the 51 classifications and set an election date, Weakley and his cohorts criss-crossed the state, attending UWUA meetings and trying to persuade the UWUA rank and file to switch allegiance to the IBEW.

"Of course there was a lot of arguing at meetings of both groups—the Utility Workers and [IBEW]—about how we should proceed," Weakley recalled. "We'd go to the meetings and debate and harangue about getting one union on the system, and how the Utility Workers weren't serving the people and so forth. The UWUA barred some of us, but quite often we'd get in."

In October of 1949, still awaiting word from the NLRB about an election date,



Ron Weakley (standing, second from right) presides as in the early 1950s. (Photo by L.L. Mitchell: Local 1245 a



Weakley (right) meets with then-Senat 1245 archives)



Weakley greets Vice President Hubert H. Humphr archives)

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Ron Weakley (standing, second from right) presides as first business manager of the combined Local 1324/1245 in the early 1950s. (Photo by L.L. Mitchell: Local 1245 archives)



Weakley (right) meets with then-Senator Alan Cranston in the 1960s. (Photo: Local 1245 archives)



Weakley greets Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in the 1960s. (Photo: Local 1245 archives)

Weakley and the o organize one union to physical and clerical down-state. Everyon charted in the Bay A PG&E. That same ye compete with the UV

Weakley's group published "An Ec Program for Bay Division Employ Among its provisions were: a busir manager and full time representati represent the members; wage increthe board, and a study of inequitie reclassifications; adequate pension administration; improved hospitalihealth plan; uniform grievance made the entire system; a joint apprention program; improved arbitration macomplete organization of clerical w joint job bidding committee to det awards; and stronger seniority guar

In this blueprint, PG&E employ see the outline of the program that ultimately be achieved by the IBEV next two decades of Weakley's lead

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Weakley Speaks Out

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"I remember a few years ago, ard pioneering a union, when it was too advance the cause of Organized La this system," Weakley wrote. "The Union was built, not because of, bu of, eastern pie-cards and johnny-co Our full time, elected leadership in



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Alan Cranston in the 1960s. (Photo: Local



y in the 1960s. (Photo: Local 1245

Weakley and the others determined they would try to organize one union to represent everyone at PG&E physical and clerical, urban and rural, up-state and down-state. Everyone. In 1941, several UWOC locals were charted in the Bay Area with the aim of organizing PG&E. That same year, the IBEW chartered Local 1245 to compete with the UWOC effort.

Weakley's group published "An Economic Program for Bay Division Employees." Among its provisions were: a business manager and full time representatives to represent the members; wage increases across the board, and a study of inequities and job reclassifications; adequate pension with joint administration; improved hospitalization and health plan; uniform grievance machinery for the entire system; a joint apprentice training program; improved arbitration machinery; complete organization of clerical workers; a joint job bidding committee to determine job awards; and stronger seniority guarantees.

In this blueprint, PG&E employees could see the outline of the program that would ultimately be achieved by the IBEW over the next two decades of Weakley's leadership.

Finally, in November of 1949, the NLRB rejected PG&E's motion to exclude 51 classifications from the bargaining unit, and ordered an election.

Weakley Speaks Out

Up to this point, most of Weakley's work was accomplished behind the scenes. To most outsiders, it would not even be apparent that Weakley was the driving force behind the massive union organizing drive at PG&E.

But with an election finally scheduled, Weakley decided to speak out.

In an open letter to the UWUA leadership, published in the IBEW newsletter, Weakley displayed the vigorous self-confidence and acid style that had propelled him to the head of this massive union organizing drive:

"I remember a few years ago, around here pioneering a union, when it was tough to advance the cause of Organized Labor on this system," Weakley wrote. "The old CIO Union was built, not because of, but in spite of, eastern pie-cards and johnny-come-latelys. Our full time, elected leadership in those days worked hard with many of us to build a Union of 7000 members on this Coast...Those days are gone forever. The old CIO is dead and you can take much of the credit for its funeral. We, whom you continued to slander, are not proud and do not boast about the death of a good Union...

"You demanded a Union of political adherents to you and your planned program," Weakley's letter continued. "We demanded a strong, unified Union which would and could act in our behalf in collective bargaining. You have placed your program before the employees and we have submitted ours. The employees will soon decide which they believe to be the better program."

On January 25, 1950, the employees rendered their decision in the certification election for all physical employees at PG&E. The IBEW received 6,749 votes. The UWUA got 2,550.

Following this election triumph, the PG&E unionists attended the International convention of the IBEW in Miami, where they were treated as virtual celebrities. Here Weakley for the first time met L.L. Mitchell, a long-time Local 1245 activist who shared Weakley's vision of organizing PG&E workers into one union.

In early 1951, Local 1245 was folded into Local 1324. The combined union was called Local 1245, but it more closely resembled a modern industrial union on the CIO model than a craft union in the IBEW tradition. Weakley became business manager. Mitchell, who died in March of this year, became Weakley's top assistant.

Mitchell, in his usual pithy manner, once summed up how Weakley got the top job: "Weakley was a leader."

Merging the two locals was not an easy job. As Weakley observed years later:

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Weakley From PAGE SEVEN

"The old 1245 was a centralized thing, the executive board had all the power and that was it. The [UWOC] was *too* democratic: it had eight local unions and a central body. And they had to get a majority of the eight to do anything, and they were always canceling each other [out]."

Over the objections of the International, Weakley devised a completely new structure for the new Local 1245. The Business Manager was given broad powers to hire and direct a staff to carry out his policies, which enabled the union to act decisively when dealing with employers and other outside entities. But an Executive Board of rank-andfile members was given complete control over expenditures by the union, and a Policy Committee (later renamed the Advisory Council) was created to give rank and file members a mechanism for checking the power of the Executive Board. And all three entities-Business Manager, Executive Board, and Advisory Council-were to be elected by the entire membership in secret ballot elections.

It is a structure that has endured to this day, a testament to Weakley's understanding of how democracy can co-exist with organizational efficiency.

In 1952 the IBEW survived a last gasp challenge from the UWUA, handily winning elections to represent both physical and clerical employees. Ron Weakley's bold vision of one union for all of PG&E had become reality at last. But Weakley has always insisted that the credit for this victory ultimately



Ron Weakley in 1990, 50 years after he first hired on at PG&E.



Ron Weakley (left) joins members of his staff from the early 1960s in celebrating the union's 50th anniversary in 1991. (Photo: Eric Wolfe)

belongs to the hundreds of rank and file union activists who never gave up the fight.

"An organized effort is what did it, not an individual," said Weakley. "It's an honor to have been involved in it. But like I say, the other people deserve the credit. You have to have someone to pilot the boat, but if you don't have anybody pulling the oars then you sink."

Bargaining Improvements

After the union was certified by the National Labor Relations Board, Weakley and Mitchell could settle down to the real task: bargaining improvements for employees at PG&E and other utilities, and fashioning Local 1245 into an influential player on the political scene.

During Weakley's 20 years as business manager, much of the "economic program" outlined in the organizing drive became reality:

A business manager and full time representatives to represent the members. Wage increases. Pension. Employer-paid health plan. A uniform grievance procedure, including improved arbitration provisions. Joint apprentice training program. Improvements for clerical workers. A job bidding system. Stronger seniority guarantees.

But Weakley's vision of the union's purpose went beyond improving living standards for PG&E employees. Weakley saw Local 1245 as an industrial union on the CIO model. Under his leadership Local 1245 organized power companies, a telephone company, Navy personnel, electronic manufacturing plants, BART technicians, and others, although in some cases the units were taken away by the International and given to other IBEW locals.

Weakley cultivated relations with trade unions in other countries, believing that Local 1245 could both learn from and assist other unions in the world. And Weakley prided himself on cultivating diversity by hiring the union's first African-American and female business representatives at a time when many unions were still dragging their feet on diversity issues.

Still, Weakley's most visible legacy is the economic improvement that Local 1245 contracts delivered to the membership. Weakley understood that the employees' financial security resided first and foremost in having a strong, effective union. And he understood that a union couldn't be achieved by just dreaming about it, and less still by just sitting around complaining.

He knew that people standing up together could match the power of the bosses, even when those bosses presided over one of the most powerful corporations in the country. Fifty years after his induction into IBEW, in 1948, Local 1245 remains Ron Weakley's contribution to workers in the utility industry.

It's a contribution each Local 1245 member takes to the bank every payday.

Editor's note: Ron Weakley is still agitating for social justice from his home in Kaunakakai, Hawaii, where he maintains a lively correspondence with elected officials and the local newspaper.

LOCAL AT LARGE

THE UNION Unions Raise Wages--ADVANTAGE Especially for Minorities and Women

Union membership helps raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap that disadvantages minority and women. Union workers earn 34% more than nonunion workers, according to the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Their median weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary work were \$640 in 1997, compared with \$478 for their nonunion counterparts. The union wage benefit is even greater for minorities and women. Union women earn 40% more than nonunion women, African American union members earn 44% more than their non union counterparts, and for Latino workers the union advantage totals 53%.



Source: US Department of Labor, Employment and Earnings, January 1998

PG&E employee associations invite you

Employee associations at PG&E work to foster respect for diversity within and outside the company. Membership in these associations is open to all employees. For more information, you may contact the associations at the following numbers:

Asian Employees Association (AEA)	Tam Nguyen, President, 201 Mission, P18C, SF, 223-4374 (TMN1)	
Black Employees Association (BEA)	Al Thomas, President, Safety, Health & Claims, 123 Mission, H4a, SF 223-2801 (AXT4)	
Filipino Employees Association (FEA)	Fred Tamse, Capitol Accounting, 77 Beale (B11A), SF, 223-7561 (FTE2)	
Hispanic Employees Association (HEA)	Ester Vera, Corp Liaison, Customer Services, 41800 Boscell Rd., Fremont, 474-3004 (ESV2)	
The second second	Johnny Villegas, President, Bay Area Chapter, Oakport Service Center Oakland, 442-2122 (JAVA)	
Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Employees Association (LGBEA)	Jo Selleres, Vice President, Bargaining Unit, 4801 Oakport Service Center, 443-2212 (JASS)	
Access Employeees Association (ACCESS)	Heike Oplanic, C&TS, 77 Beale St. B21D, 223-6528	
The Women's Network (WNEA)	Gwen Landon, HR Services-DCPP, Bldg. 104, 3/320 DCPP, 691-4710	



By Local 1245 Safety Committee

Good time for changes

The recent change from Daylight Savings Time to Standard Time is a good excuse to remember other things that need changing-like the batteries in your home smoke detectors.

Test the alarms tomake sure they are in good working order. Don't be caught with a faulty alarm.

Also take the time to inspect the filter in your furnace. Replace it if needed.

When was the last time you inspected the lint trap on your dryer?

Remember, safety doesn't stop at the job site.

Meter malfunction poses high voltage danger

A recent product defect could pose a hazard to those who work around Fluke digital multimeters (DMM).

These products started shipping on May 15, 1998. Only nine models are affected--the Fluke Series III, Model 21, 23, 26, 70, 73, 75, 77, 79; and Series II, Model 73 meters imprinted on the bottom with serial numbers between 70800000 and 7100000. No other fluke instruments are affected. The malfunction may occur after the DMM has received an impact, such as being dropped, causing part of the function switch to become dislodged from its mounting. Even though in most cases a failure will result in an inoperative meter, it may be possible for the meter to indicate a reading of (or near) zero volts.

When the malfunction occurs, the meter may not indicate that high voltage is present, placing the user in a potentially hazardous situation.



SERVICE AWARD CEREMONY

Union honors members for long-time service



Business Rep. Mike Haentjen, the late Dave Reese, **Business Manager Jack McNally**



South Coast Valley 1998





40 YEARS WOODS, DONALD

35 YEARS LAMOUREUX, GUY WINN, C. H.

30 YEARS CARLSON, ROBERT FARLEY, G. D. HILL, LOWELL KIRBY, RONALD VARNER, ALVIN JR

25 YEARS BEZERRA, RJ **BONINI, DANIEL** BRICKEY, GEORGE CAMACHO, FELIX JR CASILLAS, FRED JR

DAVIN, LAURA DAVIS, HUGH JR DE LEON, SYLVIA GAGARIN, F JANOWCIZ, F J JR. LASTER, PHILIP LAWRENCE, RICHARD JR LAYOUS, JOSEPH MAY, STEPHEN MAYSEY, MICHAEL MCGREGORY, JR OBESO, A M PAYTON, LARRY PEYSAR, LANNY PORTER, JIMMY POWER, JEFF ROWE, JAMES SIMMS, RONALD STARK, DK TAMAKI, LUKE WARD, SC

20 YEARS

ACKERSON, KELLY ARMSTRONG, STEPHEN BAUER, ROGER BROOKS, BONNIE CARPENTER, KEVIN CASIDAY, JAMES DAVENPORT, DAVID DYKSTRA, JAMES EDIE, ROBERT ELLIS, ROBERT GODETT, ROBERT HAYS, NANCY HEINEN, SUSAN HELBERG, MICHAEL HILLIARD, RICHARD HOLLOWAY, LYNDA KEMPER, RONALD KNISLEY, JEFFREY KNUTSON, KEVIN LACROSS, MARC

LEWIS, RAY MANCEBO, JOHN MAYFIELD, JOE MAYFIELD, MARLENE MCNEIL, MICHAEL MOLNAR, NICHOLAS NOLAN, BRENT OLSON, RICHARD PATTI, PAUL PEAK, ANDREW PEREZ, MARIO PETERSON, FLOYD RADEMACHER, TIM REENTS, MARK SILVA, KEVIN TAYLOR, MARK WAGNER, GH WHITELEY, JAMES WILLIS,



RETIREES CORNER

Elections brighten workers' prospects

By Orv Owen

uring our working years we shared a common bond with all workers to enhance the quality of life and standards of living for urselves and our families. To that purpose and cause, we banded together in thebuilding of our union. As history and the record shows, our union served us well.

Now, in our retirement, we still share a common bond to enhance and protect our quality of life that we worked and fought for during our working years. Our union has established our Retrees Club to provide the opportunity and programs that allow retired members to participate for the benefit and well-be9ng of working families and retirees families.

As I view it, retirement is merely beginning another stage of life and is not a signal towithdraw from life. Retired members share a common bond with all senior citizens with Social Security and Medicare programs, as well as affordable hyousing, Older Americans At, Patients Bill of Rights, Eeucation of our children and grandchildren. All of these programs are at risk. Seniors must support and promote programs to meet the educational, social and eocnomic needs of all our citizens. Further, seniors and retirees cannot afford to not be involved with the political affairs at the local, state and the national levels.

Our Retirees Club is affiliated with the National Council of Senior Citizens and the Congress of California Seniors. Both organizations lobby the state Legislature and Congress for seniors and retirees programs and benefits.

When I am asked, "What are the advantages of membership in the local union's Retirees Club?" I think first of the local union's many programs, such as: Group Legal Services Plan, Death Benefit, Dental Plan, Social Activities, Utility Reporter, Spouses Membership, Retiree Club monthly meetings and the feeling of belonging. But I also think of a larger reason for joining the Retirees Club, and perhaps it is the most important reason of all: Being a member of our Retirees Club is a privilege because it gives all of us who are retired an opportunity to keep faith with those who came before us and those who will follow.

Join the Club and Keep the Faith!



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.

Exploding some myths about Social Security

MYTH: Social Security won't be there for me when I retire.

REALITY: Social Security has provided a lifeline to millions of Americans with millions of checks, and in more than 60 years has never missed a payment—and this track record can continue. Social Security is basically a sound system that can meet 100% of its obligations for the next 33 years, and with responsible changes it can continue to do so indefinitely. Social Security will be there for young workers-if we insist that it will be there. There are plenty of things we can do to make the necessary repairs to Social Security, and we've got time to do them. If we choose to make these adjustments, Social Security will be around for generations to come.

MYTH: The Social Security trust funds will run out of money in 2032.

REALITY: The Social Security trustees project that the Social Security trust funds, now growing by \$90 billion a year, will be drawn down to zero in 2032 if no changes are made. But after 2032, Social Security will *not* be broke. As it does today, Social Security will continue to collect payroll taxes from workers and em-

ployers. In fact, Social Security payroll taxes will be sufficient to finance about 70% of the payments that will be owed to the program's beneficiaries. With responsible modifications to the program, Social Security will be able to continue meeting 100% of its payment obligations to retirees, disabled workers and survivors.

MYTH: Social Security won't be able to pay for all the Baby Boomers when they retire.

REALITY: When the Boomers were babies, their parents and the government found ways to provide for them, to build new schools and later to finance expensive college educations for many of them. And ever since the Baby Boomers were born, we have known that they would begin retiring by 2010. So the Social Security tax has been set higher than necessary deliberately to help defray the costs of the Baby Boomers' retirement. This money has been saved in the Social Security trust funds. At present the trust funds are running an annual surplus of \$90 billion; by the end of 1997, more than \$655 billion had been saved in the trust funds for the retirement of the Baby Boom generation.

Finally, we should not look only at the number of retirees per worker, but also at the number of dependents (retirees and children) per worker. It is projected that in 2030, there will be about 79 dependents per 100 workers—well below the ratio in 1965 of 95 dependents to 100 workers.

MYTH: Ending all the bureaucratic waste would solve Social Security's projected shortfall.

REALITY: Administrative costs for Social Security are less than 1 cent per dollar paid out in benefits. This is much lower than the average administrative costs of 12-14% for private insurers. In Chile, which instituted a system of mandatory private savings accounts in the early 1980s, administrative costs exceed 20%.

MYTH: We can't afford Social Security anymore.

REALITY: The Social Security system was put in place during the Depression. If we could afford it then, we can afford Social Security today when the country is four times richer. The United States is the richest country in the world, and we can provide for our elderly as do nations not nearly as rich as we are.

MYTH: Social Security is a welfare program.

REALITY: Social Security benefits are earned by workers through payroll tax contributions that they pay on their wages. And when workers or their families become eligible to receive benefits under the rules of Social Security (because a worker has retired, become disabled or died), those benefits are paid. These features make Social Security very different than welfare programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid and food stamps, which pay out assistance based on need.

MYTH: I would have a lot more to retire on if I put my money in the stock market rather than paying into Social Security.

REALITY: Individual stock market accounts would cost a bundle. We'd have to pay for two Social Security systems at the same time: today's program for current beneficiaries and the privatized system. To cover the price tag, we would have to raise the retirement age, cut Social Security benefits, hike taxes, cut or eliminate cost-of-living adjustments some mix of these bad choices.

Privatization would be good for Wall Street, banks and insurance companies—just the folks who are supporting the idea. But it would be bad for working families.

Social Security benefits are guaranteed, lifelong and protect whole families. The security of these benefits—which provide the foundation of retirement, disability and survivor protections for working families—should not depend on how well individual workers can play the market or whether a worker retires shortly after the stock market has plunged.

Congratulations to the newly-retired!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club extends its congratulations to these recently-retired members of the union. We invited you to participate in a Retirees Club chapter in your area, or to start one in your area if there is none! Call Austin Lea at 925-933-6060 Ext. 240.

Name Palma Kahlen	Residence Bakersfield, CA	Yrs/Srvc.
Diane Laurent	Lemoore, CA	20

SERVICE AWARD CEREMONY



Union honors members for long-time service

Stockton 1998











45 YEARS MANDICH, JOHN

40 YEARS BARNETT, BILL SWOFFORD, JAMES

35 YEARS BYGUM, RICHARD DARBY, RODNEY HALL, JACK HENSLEY, R E KENDALL, CHARLES SPANGLER, D L

30 YEARS BUKER, ROBERT CANTANDO, SHERIDAN CLOVIS, MICHIEL COMER, DAVID ENDICOTT, JIM FISHER, ALBERT GALLI, GARY GONI, MARTIN HITE, LINDA KEREKES, JESS JR MOORE, DOUGLAS PACHECO, CHARLES SCOTT, CARL ZANARDI, A R

25 YEARS BROWN, R L CASEY, HOWARD CHAVEZ, MANUEL COMBS, CHARLES JR COTHRAN, CHRIS CUTLER, ARTHUR DEFTEREOS, KIMBALL DEI RAPPA, PONALD DELBARBA, RONALD GARCIA, LOUIS GOMES, DAVID GONZALES, GABE HARDEN, SCOTT HARRIS, CHUCK HARNES, CHOCK HICKS, JACK JOHNSON, GARY JONES, RONALD KRIGBAUM, JAMES LAWRENCE, EDWIN LEAL, RUDY LEMOS, RAYMOND MALONE, KEVIN MARTINEZ, LUCIO MENDEZ, FRANK NARANJO, ANGELITA NUNES, ANTHONY OLMOS, STEVE PAINTER, DAVID RASMI IS EN, JOHN REA, DANIEL SMITH, MARTIN SOUTHARD, ALLENE SPAHN, ALEXANDER THORPE, CRYSTAL WADE, ANNIE WANNER, HOWARD WILKERSON, FELIX WILLIS, JAMES WOFFORD, MICHAEL

20 YEARS

ALLBRIGHT, ROBERT AMARAL, DAVE ANDEREGG, ARNOLD APODACA, GARY ATKINSON, RAYMOND AULDRIDGE, STEVE BAILEY, DENNIS BAKKER, TONY BALLARD, KEVIN BARROW, MARGARET BATES, WILLIAM BECK, JAMES 20 Years BELLAR, DANIEL BENNING, PHILLIP BIEDINGER, GERALD BJORNSON, MARY BORGEN, ERIC BROWN, CARL BYERS, CHRIS BYRD, LARRY CHANDONAIS, BRENDA COBLE, RICKY COBLE, NICKT COLE, WALTER COWAN, CONSTANCE COX, EDWARD CRISMON, LARRY CROWELL, ALLEN DAVIDSON, SAMUEL DAVIS, CHARLES DING, JEFFREY DODGION, JOHN DONHAM, CALVIN DONHAM, GLEN DOVER, DOUGLAS DRUFFEL, WILLIAM DUNNAM, JAMES DURRER, WALT ELDRIDGE, SAMUEL ERMANDJIAN, JOHN FISHER, BARRY FISICARO, RODNEY FOSTER, WILLIAM FROMM, GARY GAMBEL, MICHAEL GILBERT, CRAIG GINES, BASILIO GINGRICH, MARY GLASS, MICHAEL GOFORTH, STEVEN GOINS, DAVID GONZALEZ, ROBERT GUTIERREZ, TIM HARSCH, HERBERT HARTY, DARRELL HAYCRAFT, GEORGE HELLMAN, DAVID HELLMAN, LYNN HEMBREE, DAVID HIGBEE, DEWAYNE HIGGINS, DON HOLCOMBE, RICKEY HONEYCUTT, DANIEL JENKINS, ROBERT JOHNSON, JAMES JOHNSTON, CHYRL JOHNSTON, JOHNNY JONES, ROY JORDAN, JERRY KIMBALL, LINDA KISNER, ROY KOHLNHOFER, NORBERT LAMBERT, RANDY LARA, GARY LARRIBAS, MARK LAWS, ZACHERY

LAWSON, JOHN LEATHERMAN, AARON LEDERLE, JOE LEWIS, THOMAS LLOYD, G SCOTT LOPES, JOHN MAGGARD, STAN MARTIN, PEGGY MATULICH, NICHOLAS MAXIM, ROBERT MCKINSTRY, PATRICK MELLO, ANDY MELROSE, TERRY MEYN, DAN MONTGOMERY, ROBERT MORALES, RAY MORENO, MICHAEL MOUNT, CHARLES MUNOZ, GRACIELA MURCH, DENNIS NEATHERY, ROBERT JR NOBLE, SCOTT NORWOOD, J E NORWOOD, JON ORTON, DEWITT OWENS, BRIAN PARRISH, RANDALL PETERS, LAWRENCE PITTMAN, DAVE PITTMAN, FAYE POE, REGGIE PRICE, DENNIS PRIDE, RICHARD QUIJALVO, ROBERT RAMORINI, KERRY RAMORINI, KERRY RANEY, MICHAEL RAVEN, KENNETH RICHARDS, GLENN RIGMAIDEN, KENNY ROMANO, GARY SALDANA, MANUEL SEVERIN, JEFFREY SHEPPARD, RONNIE SILVA TONY SILVA, TONY SMALLING, KARL SNELL, RICHARD SPESSARD, MIKE STANFIELD, GARY STOUT, MIKE SWEEENY, ROBERT TRINIDAD, EVELYN TRINIDAD, RODOLFO TWEEDY, STEVEN VANDER, JACK VELASCO, REX WALTER, WILLIAM WEESE, TROYCE WEIR, KENNETH WILLIAMS, KEN WILLIAMSON, TERRI YOUNG, BRUCE

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