

# UtilityReporter

IBEW LOCAL 1245 • AFL - CIO



Vol. 48 • No. 2

February 1999

Unity Is Strength



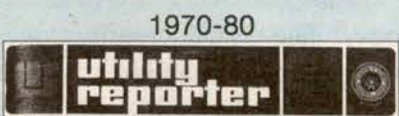
## Our new look

With this issue, the Utility Reporter adopts a new look, the first major change in our front page banner since 1989.

Our new 4-column format sports a less-crowded look, with new typefaces and new logos for some of our features. We also introduce two new features: "Speaking Out," which offers perspectives from our members on a variety of topics, and "Women at Work," which addresses issues of concern to working women and working families.

In other changes, the Business Manager's column now appears on Page 2, as does the calendar of union events. "Workers Here and Abroad" has been renamed "Solidarity."

Some examples of earlier banner designs appear below.



## Utility employees face continuing threat from gas & electric deregulation in 1999

By Eric Wolfe

As California nears the first anniversary of its experiment with electric markets, utility employees still harbor many concerns about the effects of competition on job security and the quality of service to customers.

But at least one aspect of electric competition is working precisely as utility unions and consumer advocates had hoped: the newly-created Power Exchange is providing all ratepayers, whether residential or large industrial, with equal access to

the cheapest electric supplies available.

The success of the Power Exchange can be seen in the decision by millions of California electric consumers to remain with their current utility. Just 78,881 households have chosen to switch providers since "customer choice" was launched on March 31 of last year. That represents 1.1% of the 8.7 million customers served by the state's three major investor-owned utilities: Pacific Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric.

"By creating the Power Exchange, and leaving the existing utility as the default provider, the electric restructuring law has made it possible for residential customers to get competitive wholesale prices by doing nothing. That's why customers have felt no need to switch providers—they're already getting the best deal," said Marc Joseph, an attorney representing utility unions on restructuring issues.

However, as the Electric Restructuring law continues to be phased in, many uncertainties remain for utility employees and the customers they serve.

Customers have been victimized by marketing scams. Power plant workers have watched with deep concern as their employers back out of the power generation business. And utility companies themselves show troubling signs of replacing their traditional commitment to qual-

Page 12 ►



Photo: Eric Wolfe

Working on a recent job in Petaluma, CA were, from left: Mike Scafani, fitter, Art Braga and Leroy Wright, equipment operators, and Jim Meehan, foreman. Together they have 111 years on the job, experience that could be lost if the CPUC is permitted to proceed with its plan to radically restructure the natural gas industry.

## Davis appoints labor leaders

Gov. Gray Davis has begun transforming the political landscape for working people by appointing a labor activist to direct the state's top labor agency.

Steve Smith, who managed labor's campaign last June to defeat the horrific Prop. 226, will head the Department of Industrial Relations, which is responsible for California's occupational health and safety, apprenticeship, workers' compensation, and labor law enforcement programs.

In a display symbolic of the new stature labor enjoys in Sacramento, Smith was sworn in by Art Pulaski, leader of the California Labor Federation.

Other labor officials appointed by Davis include Dallas Jones, Office of Emergency Services; Bill Lloyd, Director of Senate Relations and Labor Issues; Jane Crawford, Deputy Director of Appointments, and Marty Morgenstern, director of the Personnel Department.

### Honoring Our Own



Joe Valentino 10

### Speaking Out

Advice for Gray Davis 3

### Inside

#### Point of View

CPUC Driven by Ideology 2

#### In Times Gone By

'Old Clum Some' 6-7

### Safety Matters

Poison Oak Remedy 11

### Retiree Corner

Tackling Key Issues 8

### Women at Work

The Union Advantage 9



## EVENTS

February 6-7  
Advisory Council  
Concord, CA

February 20  
Power Plants  
Stewards Conference  
Walnut Creek, CA

April 10  
Service Awards  
Bakersfield, CA

April 17  
Service Awards  
Bay Area, CA

April 24  
Service Awards  
Chico, CA

April 24  
PG&E Steward Conferences  
Bakersfield, CA  
Belmont, CA  
Chico, CA  
Concord, CA  
Eureka, CA  
Fresno, CA  
Sacramento, CA  
Salinas, CA  
Santa Rosa, CA  
Stockton, CA

May 1-2  
Advisory Council  
Concord, CA

May 15  
Service Awards  
Fresno/Merced, CA

May 22  
Service Awards  
Redding, CA

June 5  
Service Awards  
Reno, NV

June 12  
Service Awards  
Riverside, CA

## APPOINTMENTS

### CONFERENCES, COUNCILS & CONVENTIONS

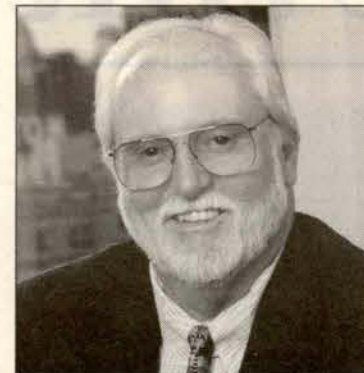
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
National Executive Board Meeting  
Dorothy Fortier  
Kathy Tindall

North Bay Central Labor Council  
Russell Fairbanks  
Dennis Ray Shockey

## POINT OF VIEW

# CPUC puts ideology ahead of the public interest

By Jack McNally, Business Manager



In its relentless promotion of natural gas deregulation, the California Public Utilities Commission seems increasingly detached from the various constituencies with a stake in this extremely important question.

During legislative hearings earlier this month, our union offered testimony opposing any further restructuring of the natural gas industry. We noted that the industry has already been restructured to permit natural gas to be bought and sold as a commodity, and that rules governing the use of pipelines have been changed to provide access to all who need it.

These changes have had the effect of creating a wholesale market, and that market is working.

As I listened to various other parties testify at this hearings, I was struck by how little support or enthusiasm was being voiced for further deregulation of natural gas. It seemed apparent the public has little interest in these proposals. The only engine pulling this train is the CPUC itself. Some commissioners seem driven by an ideological commitment to "free market" policies, regardless of the impact of those policies on those of us who live in the real world.

What some commissioners want to do is get the utilities out of the business of buying natural gas for core customers, and prohibit utilities from participating in "revenue cycle" activities like meter reading, billing, and collecting.

What's missing is any compelling reason to change the existing structure for natural gas service. The average natural gas bill for customers in California is below the national average, and has been for some time. This is not a situation screaming out for some new radical restructuring plan.

In fact, there is good reason to leave the existing structure as it is. The average core customer of PG&E enjoys a reasonable rate because PG&E can secure gas at very competitive prices due to the high volume it purchases. If you take the utility out of the purchasing business, you lose PG&E's bargaining clout. More likely than not, rates for core customers would actually go up if the CPUC's ideas are implemented.

There is another very compelling reason to leave things as they are: natural gas service belongs in the hands of a trained, experienced and dedicated workforce. Natural gas is an inherently dangerous substance. PG&E employees have a long and distinguished record in managing this resource in a conscientious manner. Why on earth would anyone want to let this workforce be dismantled and scattered to the winds?

The only answer I can see is "ideology." The CPUC commissioners want to deregulate apparently for its own sake, because they think that expanding competitive markets is always good, and that regulation is always suspect. It's a shame when ideology is placed ahead of the public interest in such an important public policy matter.

This year Local 1245 will be working with the California legislature to introduce some common sense into the discussion of natural gas service.



## UtilityReporter

February 1999  
Vol. 48 No. 2  
Circulation: 26,800



**Business Manager & Executive Editor**  
Jack McNally

**Communications Director & Managing Editor**  
Eric Wolfe

**President**  
Howard Stiefer

**Executive Board**  
Jim McCauley  
E. L. "Ed" Mallory  
Anna Bayless  
Chris Habecker  
Kathy F. Tindall  
John Mendoza

**Treasurer**  
Michael J. Davis

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

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

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

Single copies \$1. Subscription by arrangement. Have you moved recently? Please send complete new address and your Social Security Number (by U.S. Mail) to: "Address Change", IBEW Local 1245, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Our Web Site can be viewed at [www.IBEW1245.com](http://www.IBEW1245.com). Our phone number is (925) 933-6060.





## Q: What Would You Like To See Gray Davis Accomplish During His Four Years As Governor?



► "I would like him to do something about unemployment. Especially in the Sacramento area where they're going to close McClelland Air Base. He should do what he can to create some jobs."

**Arlene Cook**  
Sr. Operating Clerk I  
PG&E, Sacramento



► "I'd like to see him accomplish his goals for public school education. I'd like the eight-hour day back, and I'd like for him to continue appointments to commissions and boards in a balanced manner, as he has already begun to do--like the appointment of Arturo Rodriguez (president of the United Farm Workers) to an agricultural board."

**Ed Mallory**  
Electric Technician  
PG&E, Bakersfield



► "Affirmative action, to assure that everything is equal, both education-wise and employment, as well as in small business. He should defend all of the labor laws that protect people, protect the bargaining rights of employees. Remove some of the barriers to organizing unions. So many people are afraid they'd be out of a job if they tried to organize."

**Norma Ricker**  
Sr. Service Rep. I  
PG&E, Sacramento



► "Restore overtime pay--eliminate the law that banned the daily overtime premium. Create more jobs in the state for the working class."

**Leslie Davis**  
Service Rep.  
PG&E, San Carlos

Have a union issue you'd like to see addressed in **Speaking Out**? Send your suggested topic to: Speaking Out, IBEW 1245, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596





## Chavez, Moses, & Wally's big win

**W**hen officials of Westlock County in Alberta, Canada, voted to contract out the work of the county's maintenance shop, they shoved Wally Singleton out of his job just four months shy of a full pension. Wally didn't like that. Four months later, he ran in the municipal elections against the council president who had contracted out his job. Singleton, a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, won the election 350-183.

► **Chavez Honored:** The late Cesar Chavez, founder of the United Farm Workers union, will be honored Jan. 28 at the Labor Hall of Fame at the US Department of Labor's headquarters. Chavez "was a visionary and a man of courage who fought for the dignity of all workers," said US Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman.

► **Bomb Squad:** When an anonymous caller telephoned a bomb threat

to Disney World last summer, a manager told several workers to search the Space Mountain for "anything unusual," but wouldn't tell the workers specifically what they were looking for, Labor Notes reported. Only after a worker kicked at a strange bag did the workers discover they were searching for a bomb. Apparently management thought calling the police bomb squad would be bad for business.

► **Not Good Enough for Moses:** Actor Charlton Heston is opposed to the merger of his Screen Actors Guild with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Labor Notes reported. The man who played Moses leading his people to freedom in The Ten Commandments says the merger would put legitimate actors in the same union as "broadcasters and weathermen."

► **Pakistani Child Labor Pact:** The International Labour Organization reported that it has reached agree-

ment with the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association to remove all child laborers under the age of 14 from work in the carpet industry--Pakistan's largest cottage industry--and prevent other children in that age group from doing such work.

► **Families Working Harder:** The number of work hours needed to earn the average family income has increased from 2,800 in the mid-1960s to 3,600 today, according to data compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

► **Going Up:** Union membership rose by more than 100,000 in 1998, an increase over the previous year that the AFL-CIO attributed to more aggressive organizing. At the same time, the percentage of workers represented by organized labor slipped due to the growth of the overall workforce. However, this slippage was by the smallest amount in several years.

### French utilities OK 35-hour week

France's electricity and gas utilities EDF-GDF will introduce a 35-hour week under an agreement signed Jan. 25 with unions in the sector, according to the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions.

At the same time, the utilities committed themselves to take on an extra 20,000 young workers over the next three years. Since about 15,000 of EDF-GDF's 142,000 employees are due to retire during that period, the agreement means a net gain of around 5,000 jobs. This is viewed as a sign of confidence in EDF-GDF's future at a time when parts of their market are about to be opened up to competition.

The strong emphasis on shorter hours and more jobs is due in large part to the bargaining policies of the FCE-CFDT union, which stressed that the new agreement builds on previous EDF-GDF experience of reducing work times while simultaneously boosting employment.

The agreement also provides for voluntary moves to a 32-hour, four-day week. Those who opt for the 32-hour week will receive 97.1% of full pay (99.1% for the lower wage categories).

FCE-CFDT strongly favors the 32-hour option because "the employment effects are greater." The union said the 32-hour week "is also the best route to an innovative work organization that reconciles individual aspirations with the requirements of public service, in the context of the opening up to competition."

OUT WITH THE OLD...



...IN WITH THE NEW!!!

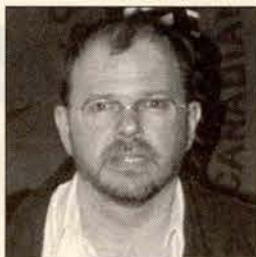


ORGANIZE IN '99

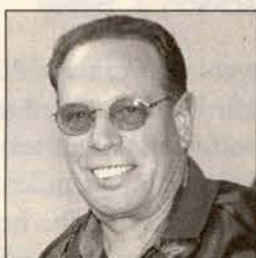


## New staff at Local 1245

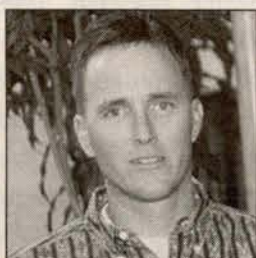
Business Rep. Roy Runnings, PG&E materials leadperson at the Geysers, was hired in December and initially assigned to the North Coast area represented by Kit Stice and earlier by Bob Choate.



Business Rep. Bill Brill, PG&E meter reader and unit chair in San Jose, has been initially assigned to assist in union organizing.



Business Rep. Ray Thomas, tree trimmer for the City of Redding and former member of the Advisory Council and Safety Committee, has been initially assigned to assist union efforts in Nevada.



Junior Ornelas, formerly an organizer for the Teamsters, has been hired as a Temporary Organizer.



## PG&E 1999 Shift Premiums

See Section 110.2 and 110.7 of the Physical Contract and Sections 11.2 and 11.7 of the Clerical Contract. Premiums are based on a 1999 weighted average straight-time hourly rate of \$25.31.

Second Shift Premium	\$1.14
Third Shift and Sunday Premium	\$2.28
Sunday Second Shift Premium	\$3.42
Sunday Third Shift Premium	\$4.56
Relief Premium	\$23.34



## 1999 Nuclear Premiums

Certified Fuel Handler Premium	\$1.83
Reactor Operator License Premium for Nuclear Operator	\$3.65
Reactor Operator License Premium for Senior Control Operator and Control Operator	\$4.56
Senior Reactor Operator License Premium for Senior Control Operator & Control Operator	\$5.93



## 1999 Remote Reporting Expense Allowance

See Section 202.21(c) of the Physical Contract.

Less than 15 Miles	\$15.00
15 Miles or More	\$21.00



## 1999 Personal Vehicle Expense Allowance

See Section 201.6 of the Physical Contract and Section 15.2 of the Clerical Contract.

\$0.325 per mile (effective 1/1/99 to 3/31/99)
\$0.31 per mile (effective 4/1/99)

## Members in Need

### Marrow donation could save life

John Anzaldo, a 15-year member of Local 1245 employed at the PG&E Milpitas Gas Terminal, is in great need of a bone marrow transplant to help him fight a life-threatening illness.

John's father, Louis Anzaldo, a retired Local 1245 union steward and trustee, called upon all union brothers and sisters to register with the National Bone Marrow Donor Program. John is Hispanic/Caucasian, and anyone of similar descent is particularly encouraged to register.

To register, call 1-800-GIVELIFE and ask for the nearest bone marrow registration center. There is no cost for the test for those of minority descent, as there is a shortage of minorities registered. Others may have to pay a small fee.

Donating marrow is a fast, painless process. Registering creates no obligation to donate--and can provide the satisfaction of saving a life. If you are able to assist Louis in getting the word out, please call him at (510) 795-6759.

### Injured tree trimmer needs help

Financial contributions are greatly needed to assist the family of Walt Bushman, a Local 1245 member employed by Davey Tree.

Walt was seriously injured on Christmas Day. He was the passenger in a pickup which went off the road. Walt was ejected from the pickup, which then rolled onto him.

Walt, 21, has a young wife and two children, aged one and three years old. Financial contribu-

tions will be greatly appreciated.

The goal is to raise enough money to cover the cost of COBRA payments for 18 months to continue the family health insurance. Davey Tree has agreed to match all contributions dollar for dollar.

Please send checks--payable to Davey Tree--to:

Randy King  
Davey Tree  
P.O. Box 351  
Livermore, CA 94551





Jackson Bailey, 3rd generation PG&E, in the 1950s.

"After a 10-mile patrol in a blinding windy rain storm I found the trouble right in the middle of the old Antioch Auto Bridge on the San Joaquin River. The wind was blowing so hard the state Highway Department had closed the bridge to auto traffic. I stumbled up the bridge, through the blowing wind, carrying all my equipment and climbing tools until I got to the middle of the bridge approximately 250 feet above the murky water."

## 'Old clum some' rem

By Jackson J. Bailey

I went to work for PG&E June 10, 1946. I started as a helper and hoed weeds around poles for miles and miles and days and days. I became a groundman, then advanced to apprentice lineman, lineman, and troubleman.

As troubleman in Rio Vista you

service both electric and natural gas service for all customers.

I like to talk about my accomplishments. I have climbed the highest towers in the PG&E system, I saw my buddy one span away get electrocuted. We did artificial resuscitation for three hours. I closed a switch on a dead short (wires crossed)



James Bailey, 2nd generation



James Norris Bailey, 4th generation



Dan Muick, 4th generation



Norris Marion Bailey, in his jewelry store.



# members the job

at Grand Island substation. I had a lid of a transformer up a pole blow off right in my face. I saw set of cut outs blow off a pole when closed in on a underground river crossing that was leaking. I had a bolt of lightning hit the ground in an alfalfa field close to where I was working on a pole. I assisted in splicing back together blown underground submarine cable on a barge in the middle of the Sacramento River (4000 volts).

**I have read meters on Grizzly Island by motor boat alone.** By boat is the only way to get to these meters from Rio Vista.

I saw a good friend, Robert Kolko, get electrocuted on a pole one span away from the pole I was working on. We did artificial resuscitation for 3 hours, long after the doctor pronounced him dead.

I have climbed many river crossings on two 90-foot wooden poles spliced together. A great thrill.

As a troubleman I serviced the high pressure natural gas pressure control to Antioch distribution center from Rio Vista (two #8 copperweld wires underbuilt on a 22KV pole line).

**One dark and stormy night I got an emergency alert call from Antioch Gas Control.** The circuit was out and this could be dangerous as this was the control over the gas pressure being transported to Antioch distribution center. I think the pressure was 1100-1300 pounds per square inch.

After a 10-mile patrol in a blinding windy rain storm I found the trouble right in the middle of the old Antioch Auto Bridge on the San Joaquin River. The wind was blow-

ing so hard the state Highway Department had closed the bridge to auto traffic. I stumbled up the bridge, through the blowing wind, carrying all my equipment and climbing tools until I got to the middle of the bridge approximately 250 feet above the murky water.

The two control wires were on an arm extended about eight feet out from the bridge. I hung in my safety belt out over 250 feet above the San Joaquin River and spliced the broken #8 copperweld wires back together with a micro sleeve. The boys that know about micro compressed sleeves know it takes at least two people, if not three, to compress these sleeves. All of this sleeving was done with bulky gloves on because I didn't have any grounds to put on the wires.

With one broken wire in one hand and one broken wire in the other hand, I put these two ends together at the sleeve and pulled a long blinding blue arc. Luckily the circuit was put back in operation and the explosive fear was gone. The next A.M. when I walked into the office one of my fellow workers asked, "Did you have any trouble last night?"

Speaking of natural gas and gas pressures on Dec. 10, 1935, as a young boy, I watched the first gas well in the enormous Rio Vista gas field come in right in the middle of my uncle's ranch.

My grandfather, Norris Marion Bailey, owned a jewelry store in Rio Vista. He read the first PG&E meter installed in Rio Vista in about 1927. Rio Vista was served with a one gut 60kv line from Dixon, Ca. Norris was stabbed and robbed on April 9, 1927, in the exact spot as he is shown in this picture, facing the opposite direction. He died one week later.

This is one of the Solano County Sheriff Department's unsolved crimes.

**My father, James Bailey,** helped build the first garage in Rio Vista. There was no garage for PG&E in Rio Vista until about 1938 when my father was promoted to garage foreman and was sent (from Sacramento) to Rio Vista to supervise the building of the garage. My dad committed suicide in 1947 in the garage he helped build. Another resuscitation job. My average is not too good—we lost this one, too.

Both my sons are PG&E meter readers in the El Dorado District. James Norris Bailey has 10 years with PG&E. Dan Muick (my step-

son) has 12 years and serves as a shop steward. Four generations of PG&E'ers.

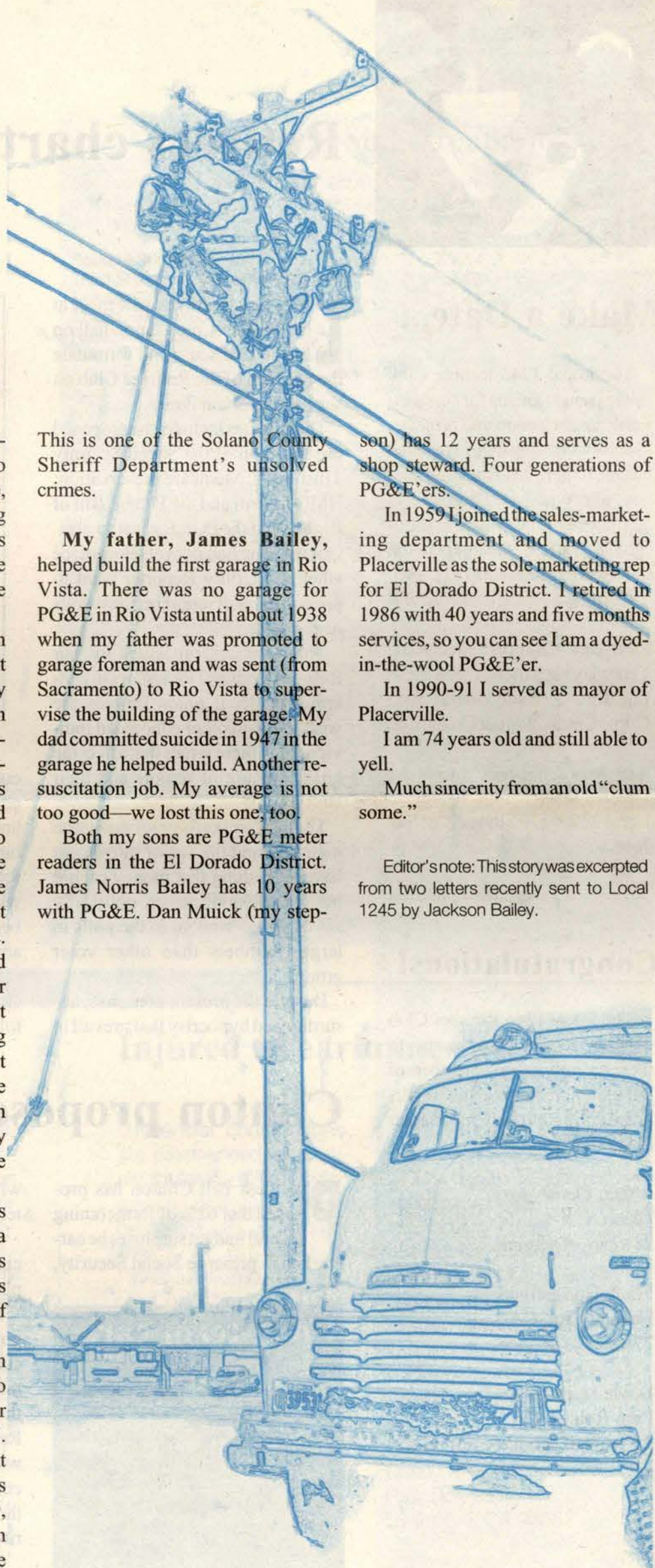
In 1959 I joined the sales-marketing department and moved to Placerville as the sole marketing rep for El Dorado District. I retired in 1986 with 40 years and five months services, so you can see I am a dyed-in-the-wool PG&E'er.

In 1990-91 I served as mayor of Placerville.

I am 74 years old and still able to yell.

Much sincerity from an old "clumsy."

Editor's note: This story was excerpted from two letters recently sent to Local 1245 by Jackson Bailey.







## Retirees chart positions on key issues

By Orv Owen

**L**ocal union retirees will meet at the Walnut Creek union hall on Feb. 6 to discuss and formulate the position of the Retirees Club on several important issues.

These issues include: the proposed privatization of the Social Security Trust Fund; Medicare preservation; HMO reform and the Patient Bill of Rights; and the PG&E pension plan. Our meeting had not yet taken place when the Utility Reporter went to press, but I will report on the results next month.

These are critical issues for our Retirees Club and for seniors in general. Our local union retirees are working with other concerned individuals on these issues that affect the quality of life of seniors and their families.

The last election is proof that union members and the senior movement have something that money cannot buy--millions of active, politically savvy voters who go to the polls in larger numbers than other voter groups.

Despite the present nonsense, absurdity and hypocrisy that prevail in

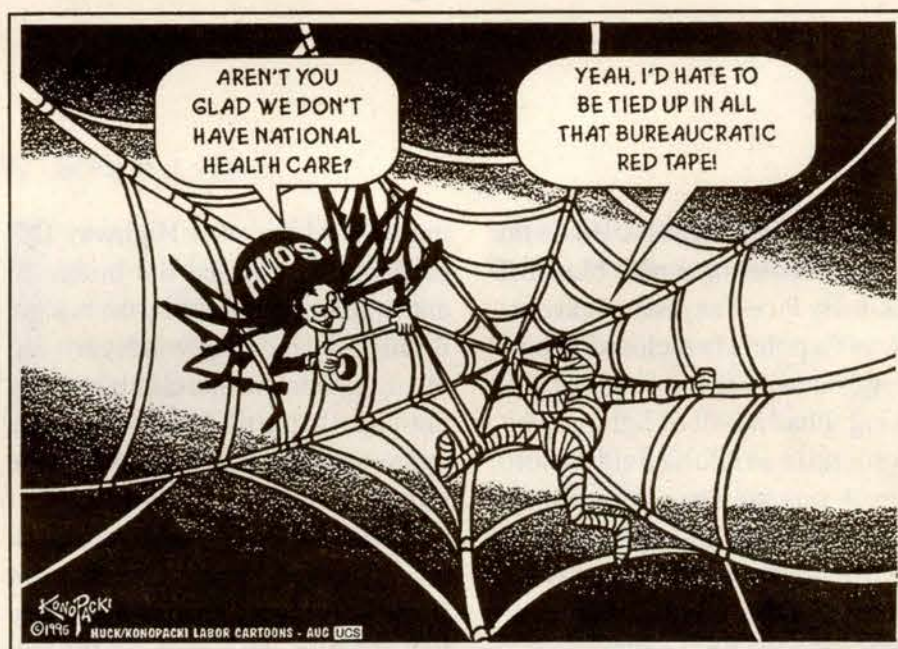
our nation's capitol by the so-called adults who are our elected officials, hopefully sometime in the near future our elected adult officials will return to the people's business for which they receive more wages and benefits for less productivity than anyone I know.

We are hopeful that when the elected adults return the nation's capitol to the people they will bring some

level of sanity and do the people's business of improving the quality of life for all our citizens.

Union members and seniors can and should help in affecting the policy that affects our quality of life. Join us at our Retiree Club regular meetings and special gatherings--this is your opportunity to get involved and to make a difference.

Keep the faith!



### Make a Date...

The Local 1245 Retiree Club invites you to join us for companionship, discussion and projects. Monthly meeting dates are listed below. If there is no meeting near you, and you'd be interested in helping start one, please call Local 1245 Office Manager Austin Lea at (925) 933-6060 ext. 240.

Current meeting locations are:

**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.

### Congratulations!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club extends its congratulations to these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retirees Club chapter in your area.

Robert Flansburg  
Ukiah, CA  
28 years of service

Frank Hunsperger  
Nevada City, CA  
27 years of service

Doyle Stark  
Paso Robles, CA  
25 years of service

## Clinton proposes limited privatization

**P**resident Bill Clinton has proposed that 62% of forthcoming federal budget surpluses be earmarked to preserve Social Security,

### Long-term care

President Clinton's new initiative to help families with long-term care for the elderly and disabled--including a \$1,000 tax credit--"would help ease both the emotional and economic stress that caregivers often experience," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who urged Congress to approve the measure.

with another 15% dedicated to protecting Medicare.

Clinton called for maintaining Social Security as a "defined benefit" plan--one with a guaranteed payout.

The Clinton plan would have the government invest some of the Social Security trust fund in the stock market, which in theory could boost the fund's earnings. But he rejected Republican proposals to let individual workers invest their own Social Security earnings as they see fit and run the risk of losing their income security if their investments do poorly.

Clinton proposed setting up a system of personal savings accounts

similar to what the Republicans are seeking, but Clinton wants the new accounts to supplement Social Security, not replace it. Each worker would receive a flat payment to open an account. The government would then match a part of any additional deposits the individual made to his or her account.

About 11% of the federal budget surpluses would be devoted to funding these individual accounts.

In all, Clinton proposed that \$2.7 trillion of a projected \$4.4 trillion in surpluses over the next 15 years be reserved for strengthening the Social Security system.



## Union jobs have higher likelihood of providing benefits families need

A recent study has provided powerful new evidence that union membership greatly increases the chance that workers will have access to the resources they need to care for their families.

A major aim of the Business Work-Life Study, as reported by Labor News for Working Families, was to determine what companies are most likely to provide assistance and support for the work-life needs of their employees. Of the over 1000 companies surveyed, 12% were found to have a large proportion of unionized workers (defined as 30% or more). Companies with larger proportions of unionized workers were more likely—sometimes much more likely—to provide certain benefits and policies addressing these needs.

For example:

- 65% of companies with larger proportions of unionized workers provide time off to care for mildly ill children without lost pay, compared with 46% of companies with no unionized workers.

- 40% of companies with larger proportions of unionized workers pay the entire premium for family health insurance, compared to 8% of non-unionized companies.

- 87% of companies with larger proportions of unionized workers provide temporary disability insurance versus 66% of companies with no unionized workers. Temporary disability is often used to cover maternity leave.

- 79% of companies with larger proportions of unionized workers provide guaranteed benefit pensions versus 40% of companies with no unionized workers.

The above differences show companies with larger proportions of unionized workers dramatically outperform companies with non-unionized workers.

The study also finds a set of less dramatic, but still significant, differences between the two types of companies:

Employers with 30% or more unionized workers are more likely to offer: replacement pay during mater-



nity leave; over 12 weeks of paternity leave; adoption or foster care leave; longer than 12 weeks leave to care for a seriously ill child; health care benefits for part-time workers on a full or prorated basis; employee assistance programs (EAPs); educational assistance to the children of employees; and contributions to individual retirement plans.

It's proof positive: it pays to get organized!

### Wilson appointees try to pull fast one

## Labor's protest halts attack on disability leave

Wilson-era appointees at the California Employment Development Department rescinded the state's long-standing policy on disability benefits for pregnancy, then changed their minds and reinstated long-term procedures after a letter of protest from the California Labor Federation and unfavorable media attention, California Labor News reported.

"As sponsors of the original bill authorizing coverage of pregnancy by state disability insurance, we take

exception to these changes," wrote Tom Rankin, Federation president. "The system for determining eligibility has been working smoothly."

For many years, pregnant women have received disability benefits for four weeks prior to and six weeks after delivery.

Annually, more than 120,000 California workers rely on disability benefits during pregnancy. Pregnancy claims are about 20% of all paid disability claims, and are important to the health of mother and newborn.

However, in late November, EDD issued new policies and a 30-page claim form for pregnancy-related disability. EDD required that doctors certify disability and specify how long the new mother can stay out of work.

After a brief letter from the Federation and coverage in the Contra Costa Times, the department retracted the changes, claiming it had failed to clear the policy with the EDD director and then-Gov. Pete Wilson before implementing it.

## Clinton seeks to reduce wage gap

President Clinton last month proposed new laws and \$14 million to help close the gap between men's and women's wages.

"When a woman is denied equal pay, it doesn't just hurt her," Clinton said in a radio broadcast. "It hurts her family. And that hurts America."

Various studies have found that women earn only about 74 cents for every dollar a man earns. Clinton's proposal would triple the number of

enforcement workers at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and provide technical assistance to employers on how to comply with equal pay laws. The average 29-year-old woman with a college degree will lose \$990,000 to the pay gap over her career.

A new AFL-CIO website offers advice on fighting unequal pay. Check out: [www.aflcio.org/women/equalpay.htm](http://www.aflcio.org/women/equalpay.htm).

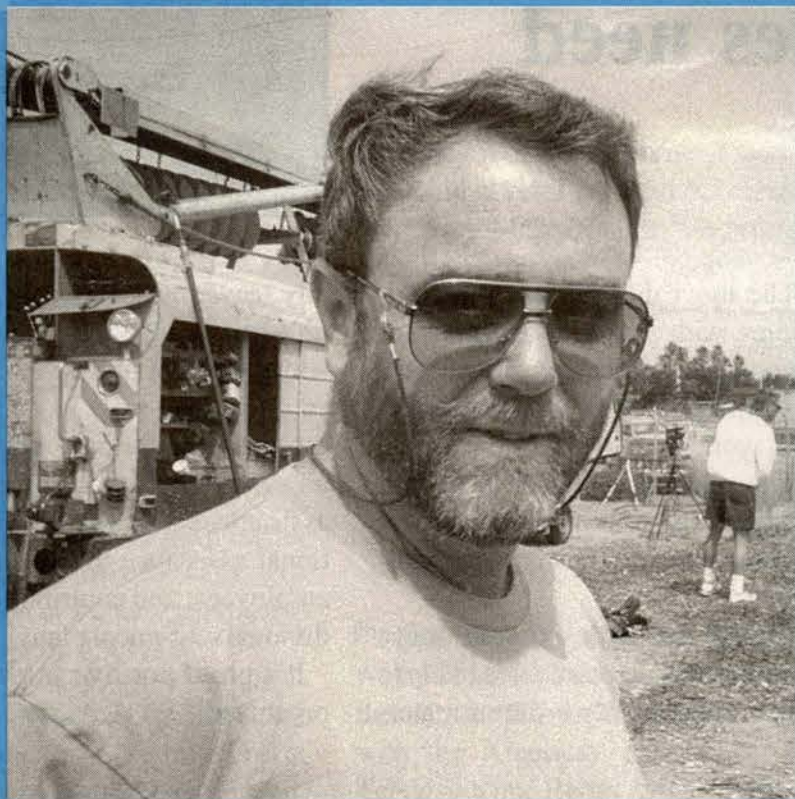
HUCK/KONOPACKI LABOR CARTOONS -

KONOPACKI  
©1998

THE WOMAN'S DOLLAR







# Spirit ablaze

A Remembrance  
By Tom Dalzell

**E**ven now, six years after he died, Joe is here, present, *presente*.

Joe was loyal, passionately, fiercely and without hesitation. He was loyal to his family, to his Business Manager Jack McNally, to his members, to his friends, to those he loved. His was a loyalty without reservation or condition. It was a comfort.

Joe was curious, a sponge, always eager to learn. He took knowledge from wherever he found it—from shop steward Mike Higgins leading a strike vote with a two-by-four as a gavel in a hot barn in Merced in July with the Merced Irrigation District ditchtenders,

from a biography of Harvey Milk, from the PG&E Meter Readers whose extraordinary internal organizing efforts changed meter reading at PG&E in the early 1980s, from management lawyers such as Bob Lieber, Marcia Hoyt, and Jim Goodfellow. He picked my brain about my years with the United Farm Workers; knowing of my love for language, he asked questions, probed, and learned.

Joe also loved controversy and trouble. While he believed that a good run beats a bad stand, what he loved most of all was a good stand. When trouble didn't find Joe, Joe found trouble. There was the

occasional sheepish retreat (I can still see that look in his eyes), but more often than not he emerged unscathed, stronger, energized from the fracas. In trouble as in everything else, Joe's sense of humor transcended.

Joe's spirit blazed with life. When he approached, you shone in his fire. All of us who worked with Joe imagine him still here, moving from office to office, meeting and greeting, looking for answers and hoping for trouble. We hear his voice, feel his hands on our shoulders. We miss you Joe, and still shine in your fire.

Tom Dalzell is staff attorney for Local 1245.



## Member offers remedy for poison oak symptoms

**Editor's Note:** The following letter from a retired member offers a first-hand account of dealing with the effects of poison oak.

To the Editor:

When I read the article about poison oak in the last Utility Reporter, I just had to send you this.

In 1966 I was building an RV Park in the hills just outside Santa Margarita Lake. In the course of dozing roads through the poison oak-covered hills it was inevitable to get dust in your boots.

Naturally that begot the infection. About the time it was unbearable and all the common solutions were tried, I was going nuts and working was torture.

Then we had to run into San Luis Obispo to an auto shop where the owner was known. I was rubbing my feet and ankles, one shoe and the other, when the owner, a native of the area about 80 years old, asked me if I had poison oak.

After a "Yes," he asked me if I wanted to get rid of it, really get rid of it.

"What do you think?"

So he says, "Go home and heat a

small pan to boiling (water). When it boils, fold the corner of a face cloth and dip the end in the boiling water, then gently apply it to the rash." Emphasis: to the rash, not the adjacent skin.

Needless to say I thought he was nuts and ignored it for about three days, until I reasoned they'd feel better cut off than the way they were.

So I gingerly tried it and it was a shock it felt so good. It feels better than if you were gently scratching it. Heavenly!

Because (there was) so much and so blistered, it took four days--three to four times a day and bed time--for it to disappear without a mark or blemish on the skin. Whenever it started again I would attack it immediately and it would be gone over night.

Poison Oak is a parasitic infection of some sort and the boiling water immediately kills it.

Four years (1965-69) with three 100-year rains broke us, but I last heard it was now a KOA campground. In 1970 I went to work at PG&E's Santa Margarita line camp. I retired 1980 out of Diablo Canyon.

Carl R. "Dick" Holmes

By the Local 1245  
Safety Committee



## Report injuries promptly

In 1998, Local 1245 received reports of 254 accidents. Out of those reported, there were two fatalities, and the following specific injuries: 40 hand, arm and shoulder; seven head and neck; 29 knee, leg and foot; 28 back; 7 pulled muscles; 29 lacerations; 63 poison oak; and 35 miscellaneous.

The Safety Committee would like

to urge all members to report all injuries when they occur. You can report these to your union business representative, your union steward, or you can report them to the Safety Committee, P.O. Box 4790, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

Remember, your safety is only as safe as you make it.

## Don't let safety go to the dogs

Avoiding situations in which you are unsure of how a dog will respond should be your first concern when it comes to dog safety.

As you approach new surroundings, look for signs that there might be a dog present, and remember a dog may be more aggressive protecting its master.

One third of all home insurance claims are related to dog attacks, according to the Insurance Information Institute (III). That's 4.5 million dog bites costing \$1 billion and a ton of home owner headaches.

To reduce the chances of your

family pet biting someone, the III recommends:

- ◆ Have your dog spayed or neutered. Studies show that unsterilized dogs are three times more likely to bite than sterilized dogs.

- ◆ Socialize your dog so that it knows how to act with other people and animals.

- ◆ Play non-aggressive games with your dog such as "go fetch." Playing aggressive games, like "tug of war," can encourage inappropriate behavior.

Above all, remember that dogs can be unpredictable. Stay alert for dogs!

### Cletus Pacholzuk

Hiring hall lineman Cletus Pacholzuk, a Hiring Hall lineman with PG&E General Construction in Bakersfield, died in a fall from a bucket truck on Jan. 27. Brother Pacholzuk was attempting to climb into the cradled bucket on the truck when he fell approximately nine feet and struck his head.

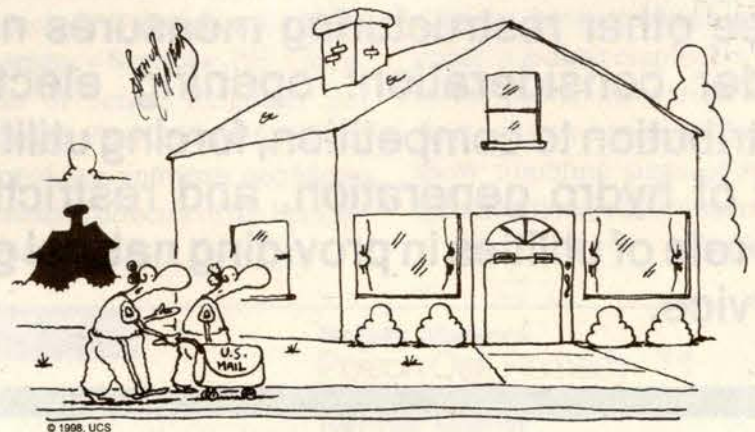
The precise cause of death has not yet been established.

Local 1245 extends its condolences to friends and family of Cletus Pacholzuk.

## Pattern of failure

An analysis of 224 electrocution deaths by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health has found a pattern of failure in the usage, training, and supervision of Personal Protective Equipment.

"Factors common to these incidents included the lack of enforcement of existing employer policies concerning the use of personal protective equipment, and the lack of supervisory intervention when existing safety policies were being violated," the report noted. Over half of utility line worker fatalities were due to the failure to use required personal protective equipment.



"This is the place I warned you about."



# Utility employees face continuing threat from gas & electric deregulation in 1999

## ► From Page 1

ity service with an ethic of "competition by cost-cutting."

These problems could be magnified by three other restructuring measures now under consideration: opening electric distribution to competition, forcing utilities out of hydro generation, and restricting the role of utilities in providing natural gas service.

"We have some serious concerns about competition in the area of electric distribution," said Local 1245 Business Manager Jack McNally.

"We have members at irrigation districts and municipal utilities as well as PG&E. Any radical change of the existing arrangements for electric distribution could threaten the standards we have established at these employers. Competition would create incentives for employers to attempt to cut labor costs," said McNally.

A proposal to bar PG&E from hydro generation would almost certainly have consequences for mem-

bers of Local 1245. The Office of Ratepayer Advocates, a division within the CPUC, believes hydro facilities should be auctioned off. Utility unions, along with some environmental and ratepayer groups, want these facilities to be kept with PG&E or its affiliate, US Generating.

The sale of hydro facilities to an outside buyer could have far wider ramifications than the already-approved sale of fossil fuel plants because hydro facilities are closely tied to timber, water and recreation resources. Environmentalists worry that an outside buyer might exploit these resources in an irresponsible way.

Ratepayer groups also have good reason to favor keeping hydro with PG&E. If hydro facilities are sold to outside entities, it would trigger capital gains taxes for PG&E, which in turn will lengthen the amount of time that PG&E must collect Competition Transition Charges (CTCs) under the restructuring rules adopted by the legislature and the CPUC.

Consumer groups obviously would prefer to see CTCs ended sooner rather than later.

The on-going effort by the California Public Utilities Commission to restructure natural gas service poses a significant threat to union members employed on the gas side at PG&E. (See "Point of View", page 2.)

Local 1245 has been harshly critical of the CPUC's lack of perspective in pursuing natural gas deregulation. In a letter last year to CPUC President Richard Bilas, Business Manager McNally blasted the CPUC staff for failing to recognize the "obvious relationship between an adequately-sized and trained utility workforce, and consumers' overriding interest in reliable service."

McNally noted that the CPUC's "Green Book" on restructuring the natural gas industry put forward policies that would destroy hundreds of good California jobs and impair reliability.

"Most appalling, the Green Book never acknowledged, much less analyzed or justified, the devastating impact on employees," McNally wrote.

All of these developments show that utility deregulation is still very much in play in California. In the first stages of this struggle, Local 1245 helped secure important protections for utility employees and consumers by insisting on enforceable reliability standards for electric service and job security protections for displaced utility employees.

While new theaters of action continue to emerge, the union remains clear on the principles we must uphold: the public has a right to insist on safe, reliable gas and electric service at equitable rates, and this right can be realized only by preserving an adequately staffed workforce whose compensation is commensurate with the skills and training the job demands.

## Ukiah, East Geysers have new meet times

Unit 3714, Ukiah, will now meet at 5:30 p.m. The meetings will continue to be on the first Wednesday, except June, when the meeting will be on June 9. Meeting locations remains the Discovery Inn, 1340 N. State St. in Ukiah.

Unit 3713, East Geysers, has been reestablished. Meetings will be held at American Legion post 850, Starview Lodge, Cobb Mountain, on Thursday of the first full week at 5:30 p.m.

Roy Runnings,  
Business Rep.

## Unions boost productivity

**A** new study has found that in union worksites where employee participation is an integral part of quality programs, productivity is 20% higher than in the average nonunion firm.

The study, conducted by researchers from Tufts University and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, found that regular staff meetings to discuss workplace issues, profit sharing, and self-managed teamwork are behind the increased productivity.

The researchers and other union experts agree on several key reasons behind high union productivity:

- Union workers have a greater stake in their workplace.
- Unions enable workers to communicate ideas to management.
- Union workplaces have lower rates of turnover, and productivity increases with experienced workers.
- Union workers are better trained.
- Seniority rules make it easier for skilled workers to share their knowledge with others.

The researchers examined 1,500 workplaces, 20% of them unionized.

**Problems concerning service reliability and job security could be magnified by three other restructuring measures now under consideration: opening electric distribution to competition, forcing utilities out of hydro generation, and restricting the role of utilities in providing natural gas service.**