

SMUD excels in line rodeo

Local 1245 members at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District won several awards at the fourth annual Public Power Lineworkers' Rodeo held March 6 in San Antonio, Texas.

The journeyman team of Walt Lyons, John Flatland and Ray Padilla won second place in Crossarm Changeout, and took third place in Hurtman Rescue and Insulator Changeout. The journeyman team of Brad Merl, Jeff Palm and Steve Hintze won third place overall.

Apprentice Val Leslie won second place in the Hurtman Rescue, apprentice division.

Family Tree signs agreement with union

A year-long conflict with Family Tree, a line clearance tree trimming contractor, came to an end when the company agreed to sign a labor agreement with Local 1245.

The two-year agreement, effective March 29, increases wages from 9.5% to 33%. It also requires the company to honor State of California prevailing wage standards for its Climbers. Foremen will be paid \$22.87 per hour, one dollar above the Climber rate. Future increases will be subject to increases in the craft rates as defined by the state prevailing wage.

"This agreement did not solve all of the issues that need to be addressed at Family Tree, but it is a step in the right direction," said Local 1245 Senior Business Rep. Ray



Employees of Family Tree, shown here with Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas, right, will receive wage increases ranging from 9.5% to 33% under their first IBEW labor agreement.

Thomas.

The dispute with Family Tree arose in early 2003, when the company won a contract to perform line

clearance tree trimming for PG&E in the Fort Bragg/Point Arena area.

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Committee appointed to oversee upcoming Local 1245 election



Serving on the Local 1245 Election Board are, seated from left: Dave Reishus, SMUD; Lem Stubblefield, Judge, PG&E North Bay; Sheila Lawton, Frontier Communications; Norma Ricker, PG&E Sacramento Clerical. Standing, from left: Virgil O'Neal, Davey Tree; Larry Gibson, PG&E North Bay; Larry Darby, PG&E General Construction; Assistant Business Manager Howard Stiefer, staff liaison; and Vickie Borst, Sierra Pacific Power. Not pictured: Ray Shepherd, PG&E East Bay; Larry Thomson, Outside Construction.

Local 1245 President Ed Mallory appointed the committee that will oversee the upcoming election of union officers, Executive Board members, and Advisory Council members.

The responsibilities of the committee (officially known as the Election Board) include determining the eligibility of all those nominated for an office, notifying candidates of the procedures for submitting their resumes and photographs, compiling all candidate materials for publication in the Utility Reporter, supervising the mailing of ballots and the processing of completed ballots.

Please watch for the May issue of the Utility Reporter, which will carry biographical information about the candidates.

Election Schedule

The May issue of Utility Reporter, with information about the candidates, will be mailed around May 10. Ballots for the union election will be mailed on May 28 to all eligible Local 1245 members. Completed ballots must be received at the union's post office box no later than 10 a.m. on June 22. Any member who does not receive a ballot by June 10 should notify the union immediately at (707) 452-2700. If you've moved recently, please notify the union immediately at (707) 452-2700 to ensure that we mail your ballot to the correct address.

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Service Awards Eureka 10, Bakersfield 12, Chico 16

APRIL 16

Blood Drive at Weakley Hall
Vacaville, CA

APRIL 17

Service Awards &
Stewards Conference
Reno, NV

PG&E GC Stewards Conference
Vacaville, CA

APRIL 24

Service Awards &
Stewards Conference
San Luis Obispo, CA

MAY 1-2

Advisory Council
Vacaville, CA

MAY 8

Local 1245 Golf Tournament
Vacaville, CA

MAY 15

Service Awards &
Stewards Conference
San Francisco, CA

MAY 22

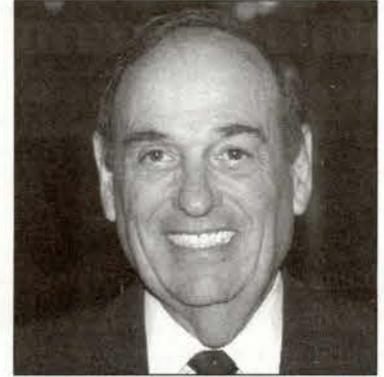
Service Awards &
Stewards Conference
Emeryville, CA

JUNE 22 – 10 A.M.

Deadline for Completed Ballots to
be Received at Post Office in
Local Union Election.

The Anatomy of a Business Manager's Decision

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager



As I sit down to write this column, I do so at the end of a remarkable week.

Nominations for local union officers closed this week, and we have seen an unprecedented level of interest from our membership in running for union office. I see this as a success and as a direct result of our efforts over the last few years to open up the union at all levels to greater member participation. With only a few exceptions, the many candidates for different union office are serious, committed, dedicated unionists, and the fact that so many are running for

office is an encouraging sign.

The other backdrop to this column is a three-day training session that we put on at local union headquarters in Vacaville on contract costing methodologies and compensation survey methodology and interpretation. Almost 80 members attended three tough days of computer training that will leave them better equipped to improve the wages, benefits, and working conditions of our members in negotiations for years to come. Just seeing our large meeting room filled with members from Washington, Oregon, Nevada, and throughout California, gathered for three days of very hard work, was an inspiration.

It is in this context that I turn to the subject of this column, which you might call "The Anatomy of a Business Manager's Decision." Several months ago, PG&E approached Local 1245 about its pressing need to meet a CPUC mandate that it conduct visual inspections of approximately 5,000,000 gas meters for signs of atmospheric corrosion by the end of 2004 and that it take corrective action on those gas meters identified in the inspection process as needing work by the end of 2006.

From the start, PG&E has sought to have the inspections performed by Meter Readers. From a business point of view, it is easy to understand why the company wants to have Meter Readers do the inspections. After all, Meter Readers visit every meter every month, and the Itron devices they carry could be easily programmed to include a field noting of the extent to which there are signs of atmospheric corrosion. In relatively short order, the company reasons, it could accomplish the required inspections and move on to take corrective ac-

tion where needed.

As is almost always the case, there is an "other hand" here. On the other hand, virtually all the atmospheric corrosion inspection work in the past has been done by the Title 200 Fieldman classification. While we work hard to avoid the craft union mentality that protects craft jurisdiction lines at all costs, we still adhere to the basic principle that certain work belongs to certain classifications.

There are several distinct advantages to our letting Meter Readers do this work—it helps our argument that automated meter reading is a bad idea and it reflects labor-management cooperation. In the end, though, we decided to grieve the company's action and to arbitrate it in late April.

The integrity of the bargaining agreement, in our mind, trumped the company's business justifications for wanting to have Meter Readers do the work and our willingness to cooperate with management if we can do so within the confines of the collective bargaining agreement. The employees who do the atmospheric corrosion inspections will be subject to DOT urine testing, and we have always tried to limit the number of employees subject to urine testing to the greatest extent possible. Further, it is not our fault that the company has reduced its Title 200 Fieldman workforce from 382 to 194 in the last 15 years, making it difficult for the correct classification to do the work.

So there it is—a decision and the background that surrounds the decision. Within a few months we will know what the arbitrator thinks of our contractual argument, but whatever the arbitrator says, I believe we made the right decision in choosing to take on the company on this issue.

Appointments appear on
Page 5 this month.



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Letters from Local 1245 members



The Wrong People

Editor's Note: The following letter was originally published in West County Times. It is reprinted here by permission of the author, Donna Schober, wife of PG&E Troublemaker Jim Schober.

To the Editor:

I really enjoyed the letter from Frank Nieman about the large salary for the PG&E chief executive and his buddies: at least \$84.5 million from a company claiming to be bankrupt and, therefore, unable to hire enough people, buy proper equipment or give a decent raise to the linemen or retirees.

My husband has been with PG&E for more than 40 years and I am positive he and the other linemen can do the job of the CEO and his board members.

Also, I am sure not one of those executives would get out of bed on Christmas morning, during a storm, with 80-mph winds, and climb power poles for 36 hours straight to restore power to thousands of customers. The pay is going to the wrong people.

Donna Schober
El Sobrante, CA

Thank You

To the Editor:

If I knew who to write a "letter" to, I would nominate you for the Pulitzer Prize! Your piece for the Utility Reporter for Rex was wonderful (*Quota: Utility Tree's Dan-*

gerous Gamble, Utility Reporter, March 2004). We thank you so very much. You have touched our hearts and souls for all that you have done. Thank you!

Chloe Pickering
Berry Creek, CA

Save 9/80 Schedule

Editor's Note: PG&E managers at various locations have decided to rescind the local Letter Agreements that provided for alternative work schedules. The following response by Richmond Lineman John W. Johnson was originally sent as an e-mail to numerous managers at PG&E. It is reprinted here with Brother Johnson's permission.

Dear (Managers):

I am writing this letter to you as a long-term employee that has observed the organizational changes at PG&E for almost 40 years. I work in the Richmond yard as Lineman, and have also served as a Supervisor for over 15 years. This letter is about the proposal to discontinue the work schedule of 9/80 [80 hours work spread over 9 days instead of 10].

In my 40 years of experience, [the alternative schedule] has been the only change that has been made for the employee. This change has impacted the employee positively in many ways: savings on gasoline consumption; savings on escalating toll prices; and most importantly, provided valued time for men and women to spend precious time with their families. All these factors, I believe, contributed to a happier employee and therefore a more productive employee.

I ask you to consider what is the impact for employees, and then consider what is the impact for the company. The impact of canceling 9/80 for the employee would be: more money and time, especially for those that travel outside their work area,

and less time for connectedness and relationship with family and friends.

As you are aware, when San Francisco was threatening to go municipal, the union members used their own time to get a "NO" vote, on three occasions. And when the company cut the manpower, mandating that every department must do more with less, we made it happen. We continued to keep our spirits high, doing whatever was required to hold the company in the highest esteem, while simultaneously striving to practice the highest level of safety.

I feel that one's attitude about their job is always an important factor in terms of safety. When you feel that you are respected and appreciated for the fine job that you are doing, you pay attention and are motivated to strive even harder to ensure the company's safety record. There is no doubt in my mind that the employees are doing a good job, because we hear and read all the time about the benefits to management in terms of bonuses—while as employees, we have no money for tools, no money for vehicles and not enough human resources to keep up with all the work that is required to keep our customers happy. But even with these realities, we have kept on doing a good job.

Why not allow us to keep this perk of 9/80 for the employees? Why not keep our morale high, in the face of ever changing transitions. Why not listen to our voice, for we know what keeps us happy and productive.

I would hope that you seriously take some time to reflect on all that I have shared. I speak for the employees in my yard and all other employees that are currently working 9/80. I speak because I must speak; it is important to share ones authentic truth and this is what is in my heart.

With Appreciation,
John W. Johnson
Richmond Service Center

Speak Out

Got something to share with your fellow union members? Send letters (with name and phone number) to:

Utility Reporter Letters

IBEW 1245

PO Box 2547

Vacaville, CA 95696

Note: We can't print personal attacks or letters dealing with union politics. Opinions expressed in Speak Out are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IBEW Local 1245.

Unit update

Unit 1128, Lemoore, has a new meeting time: 5:00 p.m. Meeting location and dates remain the same.

Ed Dwyer
Business Rep.



Setback for Bush's overtime takeaway

Senate Democrats won a major skirmish on March 24 in their all-out effort to protect overtime pay for an estimated eight million American workers.

President Bush's plan to abolish overtime pay, announced last year, generated so many e-mails of protest that the White House set up a blocking system to prevent the e-mails from getting into the White House system. At a Senate hearing Jan. 20, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao said she would put the new rules in place before the end of March.

In a last-ditch effort to block Bush's plan, Democrats attached an overtime protection amendment to a tax bill now under consideration in the US Senate. Republicans needed 60 votes to block the Democrat's overtime amendment, but fell 9 short in a 51-47 Senate vote.

Federal law generally grants workers overtime pay of time-and-a-half if a worker puts in more than 40 hours a week. Bush's regulations would rewrite technical provisions, some dating to 1949, to define which "white collar" workers are ineligible for overtime pay protection.

Among the eight million workers who stand to lose overtime pay protections are US military veterans. Under the Bush proposal, if an employer determines that the training veterans have received in the military is equivalent to a four-year professional degree, that employer would then be allowed to deny the veterans overtime eligibility and refuse to pay them anything for overtime work.

Rabbi wages, Micky Rat, pay us or we jump

President Bush is supporting \$37 billion in tax breaks for US firms' offshore operations as part of Senate Bill 1637. Trade and tax policies supported by the Bush administration make it profitable to send US jobs abroad and have encouraged many employers to ship jobs overseas. Nearly 3 million jobs have disappeared since Bush took office, including some 2.8 million manufacturing jobs. In addition, as many as 14 million white-collar jobs could be lost to offshore outsourcing in the years ahead, according to a 2003 study by the University of California at Berkeley.

► **A Union Labor Secretary:** Democratic Senator John Kerry said he'd appoint a union member to be Secretary of Labor if he defeats President Bush in the November election, Bloomberg.com reported. "You deserve a Secretary of Labor from the house of labor, and most importantly you deserve a president who puts jobs first," Kerry told a conference of building trade union members in Washington by satellite from Boston. Kerry said \$1.7 trillion in tax cuts Bush pushed through Congress have failed to reverse 2.2 million in jobs lost since 2001. About 1.1 million workers exhausted their unemployment benefits March 31.

► **Pay Up or We Jump:** Two dozen laid-off hotel employees in China threatened to jump from its sixth-floor garden unless the company settled outstanding pension benefits, the South China Morning Post reported. Police reportedly arranged for Coca-Cola to be sent to the workers to get them to go to the toilet faster. Those who left to relieve themselves were not allowed to re-join the group. A labor department official who arrived at the scene said it would receive the protesters' complaints. The remaining protesters later came down.



► **Electric Privatization:** About 50,000 workers, farmers and political activists in Thailand protested last month against the planned privatization of the nation's electricity company, the Associated Press reported. Workers at the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, or EGAT, fear privatization would lead to layoffs and higher electricity prices.

► **Rabbis' Wage Protest:** Israel's chief rabbis demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's office March 31 in protest of unpaid salaries owed to employees of religious councils, Maariv International reported. "We must all cry out for the protection of the very existence of rabbis and religious councils, who are performing their jobs faithfully but are being prevented their rightful wages," said Rabbi Shlomo Amar. Some employees haven't been paid in 14 months.

► **Locked-In Mom:** The director of a garment factory in Newcastle, South Africa was fined on March 31 for the death of twins at his factory. One of the employees at the factory lost her twin babies after giving birth on the floor of the factory where she had been locked in all night by the

director, Cheng I. Yang. Yang said employees were required to work night shift and, as a result, they were locked in. Emergency services couldn't get into the building when the twins were born.

► **Mickey Rat:** The International Longshoremen's Association sued the Disney Cruise Line and Canaveral Port Authority last month after Disney banned the image of Moe the Rat during protests at the Disney cruise ship terminal. Disney officials say the rat's image makes a mockery of Mickey. When Disney's ships arrived in port, picketers greeted passengers with a 15-foot high statue of Moe and leaflets with his image. The longshoremen have been protesting Disney's use of a contractor that has no collective bargaining agreement with cruise ship employees.



Family Tree signs agreement with union

► **From Page 1**

The contract award displaced Local 1245 members working in that area for Davey Tree, the company that previously held the contract.

Local 1245 responded with informational pickets last spring at PG&E facilities in Willits, Fort Bragg and Ukiah, alerting the public to the negative impact on the displaced tree trimmers, and possible consequences for service reliability. The picketing was led by displaced Davey Tree Trimmer Carl Lamers, now an orga-

nizer for the union. Several PG&E employees took personal vacation time to join the picket line last spring, including Ed Jones, Mike Emerson, Ian Amo and Frank Villa.

Family Tree has subsequently hired two of the former Davey Tree employees.

"We are pleased that employees at Family Tree are now enjoying improved wages, and will have an opportunity to bargain for additional improvements in the future," said Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. "This is an important

step in our continuing campaign to organize all tree trimming contractors so that we can improve wage and benefit standards in this industry."

The agreement was reached on Feb. 25 after meetings in Healdsburg and Ukiah. Participating in the final negotiations, besides Thomas, were Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell and Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer.

Zimmerman said the union looked forward to building a positive working relationship with Family Tree.

Union hosts blood drive

Local 1245 will host a Red Cross blood drive at Weakley Hall in Vacaville on April 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The entire process takes about an hour, including registration, medical history, mini-physical, blood donation and refreshments.

If you are interested in donating blood, please call Local 1245 Officer Manager Tonya Alston at 707-452-2718. The address is 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, Ca. For directions, visit the union website at: www.ibew1245.com and select "Contact Us."

APPOINTMENTS

IBEW LOCAL 1245

2004 Pre-Election Board

- Lem Stubblefield
- Larry Darby
- Vickie Borst
- Norma Ricker
- Ray Shepherd
- Larry Gibson
- Sheila Lawton
- Virgil O'Neal
- Dave Reishus
- Larry Thomson

2004 Election Board

- Lem Stubblefield, Judge
- Larry Darby
- Vickie Borst
- Norma Ricker
- Ray Shepherd
- Larry Gibson
- Sheila Lawton
- Virgil O'Neal
- Dave Reishus
- Larry Thomson

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC

Electric Meter Ad Hoc

- Michael Starr
- Renee Cederquist
- Paul Scherer
- Dennis Istre
- Victor Badasow
- Dave Pyle
- Gary Lindquist

Atmospheric Corrosion

- John Sot
- Ray Shepherd
- Cindy Choate
- Peggy Kelleher

CGT Consolidation

- Kevin Herd
- Patrick Rouanzon

Materials Labor Management

- Mark Patterson
- Stephen M. Pitts
- Janice Cannon
- Angel Morse
- Ralph Rigg
- Erik Takaashi

Fleet Labor Management

- Kevin Goodner
- Ray Gerber

ISTS Labor Management

- Lem Stubblefield

Corrosion Mechanic Training Ad Hoc

- Charles Lynch
- Jon Creecy
- Dave Galimba
- Dennis Thompson

DAVEY TREE

General Negotiations Committee

- Mario Hernandez

FRONTIER/CITIZENS (Needles District)

Bargaining Committee

- Tony Frazier

RESORT IMPROVEMENT DIST.

Bargaining Committee

- Doug Culbert
- Todd Nuse

CITY OF WILLITS

Bargaining Committee

- Tobey J. Dale
- J.C. England
- Joe Mondo

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

Coalition of Labor Union Women Executive Board Meeting

- Dorothy Fortier
- Kathy Tindall

IBEW 2004 Annual Construction & Maintenance Conference

- Perry Zimmerman
- Richard Dunkin
- Ray Thomas

33rd Annual Outside Line Apprenticeship Conference

- Perry Zimmerman
- Richard Dunkin
- Roy Dunkin
- Jeff Johnstone
- Dave Crawford

IBEW 2004 Utility Conference

- Perry Zimmerman
- Ed Mallory
- Howard Stiefer
- Chris Habecker
- Anna Bayless
- Grover Day
- Mike Stout
- Larry Rodriguez
- Joe Osterlund
- Dave Cannon
- Dan Mayo
- Steve Potter

Scholarships

The California Labor Federation will award \$2,000 scholarships to high school seniors in California this year. The application date is May 1, 2004.

Any graduating senior who plans to enroll in an accredited college or technical school in 2004 is eligible to apply.

Applicants must write an essay describing an important event in the history of California unions, explaining why the event was important at the time and what impact the event has on all working people in California today.

Essays must be no more than 1,000-words, typed or neatly printed.

An application form is available on-line at:

www.calaborfed.org/pdfs/Scholarship2004.pdf

For additional information, contact the California Labor Federation at (510) 663-4000 or by email at:

scholarships@calaborfed.org



Business Manager Perry Zimmerman accepts a proclamation from the California Public Utilities Commission honoring the performance of utility workers during last fall's disastrous fires in Southern California. Presenting the proclamation are Commissioners Susan Kennedy (middle) and Carl Wood (right). The proclamation read, in part: "We commend the utilities and transportation companies, their dedicated personnel, and the mutual assistance and contractor crews for their tireless and heroic efforts to minimize utility service outages, and in doing so, lessen the impact of the devastation caused by the fires."



Eric Wolfe

Asplundh Tree Trimmer Paul Ray at work on a job for the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.



Eric Wolfe

Shery Burton is a Service Representative at PG&E's Berkeley Service Center.



Eric Wolfe

Representing the union in negotiations with PG&E over commercial drivers licenses are, clockwise from left: Lee Thomas, Mike Jameson, Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer, Business Rep. Rich Cowart, and Leroy Foster. Representing the company (continuing around the circle) are Director of Industrial Relations Steve Rayburn, John Moffat, and Maggie Brown. Also on the committee for the company, but not pictured, are Lisa Kinimaka and Don Anderson.

In the Local 1245 Spotlight

The U.S. Jobs Crisis

by the numbers



America is experiencing its longest sustained jobs crisis in 65 years. Since January 2001, America has lost almost 3 million private-sector jobs and more than 2.2 million jobs overall.

To the extent the nation has added jobs, all of the net growth has been from government hiring, not in the private sector, America's traditional job creation engine.

February 2004 marked the 43rd consecutive month of manufacturing jobs loss.

More than two-thirds of the states have fewer jobs today than at the beginning of 2001. California has lost 276,400 jobs during this period.

From September through February, during the third year of the so-called economic recovery, the nation's employers created only 364,000 new jobs, fewer than 61,000 per month on average, and only about one-third the number needed to absorb new workforce entrants. Although March brought a spike in new jobs, the net job loss during Bush's term remains around

2 million—making Bush the only president in 60 years to preside over a net loss of jobs.

In a recent Wall Street Journal survey, economists estimated roughly 690,000 American jobs have been moved abroad since the beginning of 2001. NAFTA alone has cost the nation 879,280 manufacturing jobs over 10 years. At the same time, experts say as many as 14 million white-collar jobs could be shipped overseas in coming years.

Roughly 14.3 million US workers are unemployed or underemployed. Of that number, 8.2 million count in the official unemployment rate because they are looking for work now. Another 1.7 million unemployed individuals are seeking jobs but are not in the official count because they did not look last month. And 4.4 million individuals who are working part-time want full-time work but cannot get it. Hundreds of thousands of US workers who want jobs have abandoned the workforce, primarily because the job market is so bleak.

There are at least three jobless workers for every job opening.

Long-term joblessness is breaking records.

In February, 1.9 million unemployed workers had been out of work for more than six months. The rate of long-term joblessness, 22.9%, and the average duration of unemployment, 20.3 weeks, are at a 20-year high.

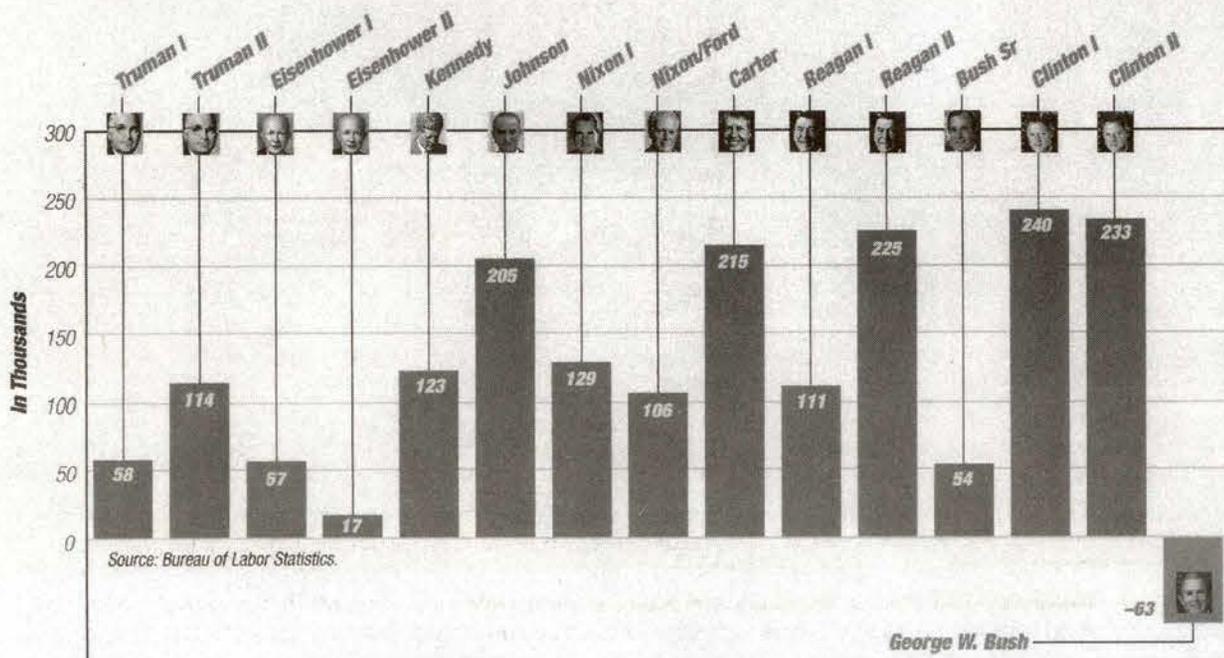
Since the emergency federal unemployment benefits program ended in December, more than 760,000 jobless workers have exhausted their state unemployment benefits without finding work – and now they have no federal assistance either. About 2 million unemployed workers will be in this boat by the middle of the year.

The economy is broken for America's working families. Enormous tax loopholes give companies big breaks when they move their headquarters overseas, generate profits abroad or reinvest profits in foreign operations. Some proposals supported by President Bush and members of Congress would actually give American companies even bigger tax breaks, rewarding them more for shifting income and operations abroad than for keeping jobs in America.

America's job crisis will not go away until our elected leaders acknowledge the problem and make job creation a top priority.

Bush Headed Toward Worst Jobs Record in 58 Years

Average Monthly Growth in Employment During Presidency



“I’m not concerned about the level of job outsourcing that I hear about.”

Don Evans
Secretary of Commerce
Bush Administration

Sources: AFL-CIO; US Department of Labor; Center on Budget & Policy Priorities; Economic Policy Institute

Testing Stewards' Know-How

Can a supervisor tell a grievant he or she would get a better result by speaking directly with the Plant Manager?

Can a supervisor tell a union steward to remove a pro-union button?

Can a steward call a supervisor a jackass during a grievance meeting?

These are some of the workplace scenarios stewards pondered during a day-long conference to help the union's jobsite representatives test their knowledge and improve their skills.

The Feb. 28 gathering drew 62 stewards to Weakley Hall in Vacaville, representing public sector employers, tree trimming companies, and

Frontier Communications.

The stewards were welcomed by Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, who thanked them for taking personal time on a Saturday to learn more about defending the rights of members at the jobsite.

Presentations by state and federal representatives helped explain how intractable disputes can be resolved through mediation, but the parts of the program that sparked the most interest and discussion were those that dealt with grievance handling and stewards' rights.

Business Rep. Lynne Morel tackled the issue head on in her presentation, "Is it a grievance?" Business Rep. Sam Glero reviewed the seven key issues in determining whether discipline was administered for "just cause." Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas reviewed the issue of prevailing rates.

Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer challenged the stewards with a series of questions about their rights in the workplace. Even the most experienced stewards found themselves scratching their heads over some of the questions, such as: "Can a supervisor tell a steward to shut-up during a grievance meeting?"

Phil Alleman, a steward at Bella Vista Water District, was one of several stewards who gave especially high marks to the stewards' rights discussion. In a post-conference evaluation, Alleman wrote:

"This is where the rubber meets the road. Dennis did a great job."

"Very informative, and the training session was great," wrote Mike Stout of Modesto Irrigation District in his evaluation.

David Vipond, a steward at Frontier, gave high marks to all parts of the conference.

"They all helped me and I hope you have more of these in the future," Vipond wrote.

Just for your information:

- It is *not* legal for a supervisor to tell an employee he or she has a better chance to resolve a grievance without the union.

- Employees generally *do* have a right to wear union buttons on the job.

And, since you've been waiting to find out, a steward *cannot* be disciplined for calling the supervisor a jackass in a grievance meeting. Salty language during grievance meetings may be counterproductive, but, short of extreme profanity, it is protected.



Stewards are quizzed on what their rights are in the workplace.



Val Pender, US Bureau of Reclamation



Business Rep. Sam Glero



Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas



Stewards from 21 different employers gathered at Weakley Hall to hone their skills.

Conference Participants

AC Transit

Guy Greenwood

Alameda Power & Telecommunications

Al Fortier

Arbor Tree

Gerald Edwards
James Hanlon

Bella Vista Water District

Philip Alleman

City of Lodi

Robert Aadland

City of Redding

Dwayne Baker
Matthew Cervenka
Sean McCall
Gary Moeckli
Dwayne Norman
John Roberts
Robert Sandoval

City of Roseville

Terry Bakkie
Darryl Hughart
Doug Willford

City of Santa Clara

Richard Hill
Terry Holopirek
George Tway

Davey Tree

Matt Gilliam
James Gorman
Tim Gray
Mike Myers
Virgil O'Neal
Rafael Rodriguez
John Shepherd
Daniel Woody

EPA Provco

Tom French
Fred Wann

Frontier Communications

Karen Carter
Tom Greer
Larry Martin
Dave Morrison
Monte Nelson
Marianne Philipenko
John Ramos
John Shepphird
Eric Tanaka
Dave Vipond

Merced Irrigation District

Michael Brown

Modesto Irrigation District

Kurt Celli
Peter Gartner
Denise Miller
Mike Quigley
Mike Stout

Northern California Power Agency

Frank Carter

Port of Oakland

Dave Cuthbertson
Dave Nemcik

Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Paul Easley
Daniel Newton
Joseph Pica
Dave Reishus

Sacramento Regional Transit

Tiger Badhan
Lauren Bartlett
Rodney Beverly
Constance Bibbs

South Feather Water & Power Agency

Dorinda Scofield

Turlock Irrigation District

Heath Schab

United States Bureau of Reclamation

Michael McKay
Val Pender
Dan Wyand

Western Area Power Administration

Ronald Cochran Jr.



Denise Miller, Modesto Irrigation District



Business Rep. Lynne Morel



Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer

Ronald T. Weakley Hall February 28, 2004

- Public Sector
- Tree Trimmers
- Frontier Communications





Eureka, CA
March 12, 2004

The Honorees

40 YEARS
 Mayes, M D
 Swensen, D R

35 YEARS
 Cruse, Tim J
 Mitchell, John A
 Myers, Michael J

30 YEARS
 Biondini, Theodore
 Pizzini, Paul A
 Williams, Dennis B

25 YEARS
 Burns, Danny L.
 Harmeyer, Robert M
 Rodriguez, Arol S
 Southworth, Brian O
 Sutter, Steve T
 Townsend, David H



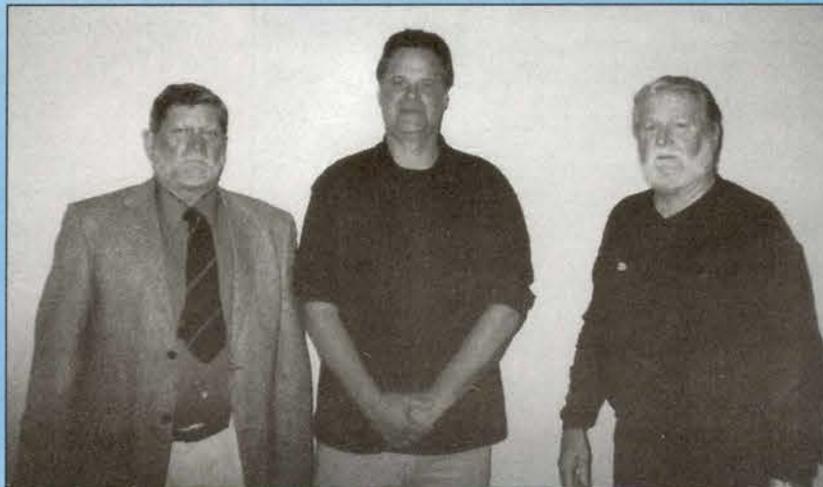
35 Years: John Mitchell, left, and Mike Myers, 3rd from left, accept 35-year awards from Business Rep. Richard Cowart and Senior Business Rep. Frank Saxsenmeier.



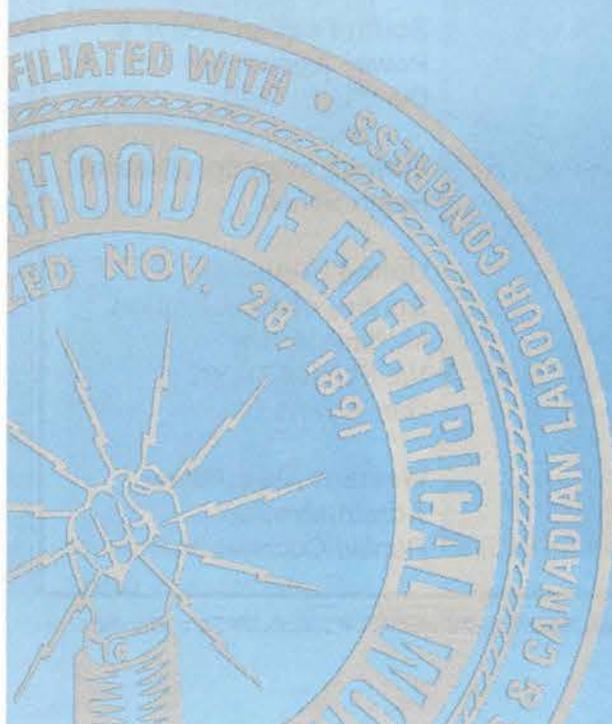
40 Years: Dennis Swenson, left, accepts 40-year award from Business Rep. Richard Cowart.

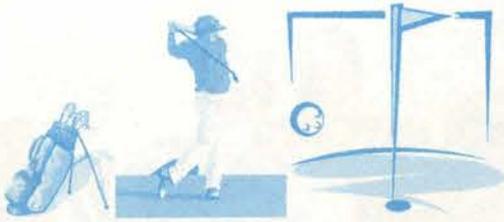


30 Years: Dennis Williams, Paul Pizzini and Ted Biondini accept 30-year awards.



25 Years: Brian Southworth (center) receives 25-year award.





Perry Zimmerman's 18th Annual IBEW Local 1245 Golf Tournament



Where: Green Tee Golf Course, Vacaville, CA

When: Saturday, May 8, 2004

Time: 8:00 a.m. Shot Gun Start

Entry Fee: \$80.00 (Includes Cart, Green Fee & BBQ)

Entry Deadline: May 1, 2004 - Limited Tee Spaces

Prepare for the Contest!!!

Closest to the Hole



Wine Hole

Longest Drive



Beat the Bus. Mngr.



Texas BBQ and AWARDS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING !



1. Name _____
 Address _____
 2. Name _____
 Address _____
 3. Name _____
 Address _____
 4. Name _____
 Address _____

For Information, Call:

Jim McCauley (707) 462-2710
John Mendoza (510) 331-6729

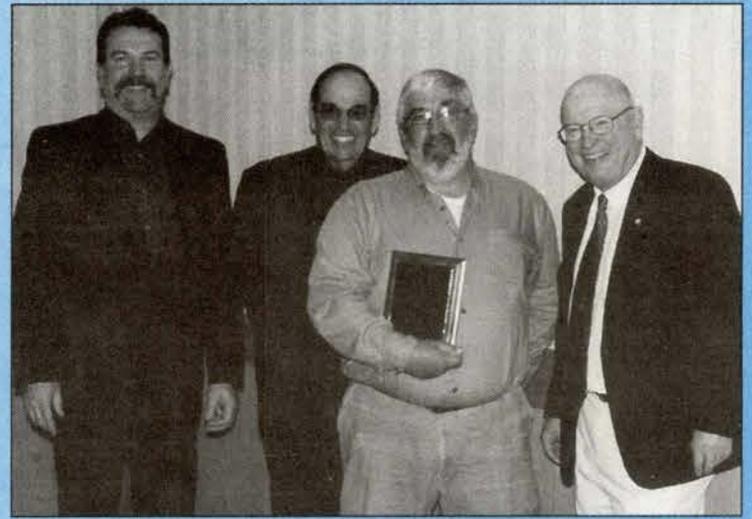
Golf Course Information:

Green Tee Golf Course
999 Leisure Town Road
Vacaville, CA 95687
(707) 448-1420

Send this form, along with a check for your entry fee made payable to IBEW Local 1245, to:
IBEW Local 1245, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696. Remember, the deadline is May 1.



Bakersfield, CA
February 21, 2004



40 Years: Ernie Watson (with plaque) is recognized by (from left) Business Rep. Ed Dwyer, Business Manager Perry Zimmerman and President Ed Mallory.

The Honorees

40 YEARS
 Mizner, G. D.
 Watson, Ernest

35 YEARS
 Andrews, Michael
 Reynolds, Edward G
 Stock, Clifford
 Vasquez, Felix M

30 YEARS
 Aaron, Raymond L
 Fisher, Thomas
 Frank, Robert S
 Harrer, Thomas
 Rodrigues, Louis
 Rollins, Rickley
 Schmitt, Richard A

25 YEARS
 Bell, John M
 Chaulet, Rudy L.
 Earl, Patrick A
 Hamilton, Billy W
 Hay, Andrew P
 Ketchum, Gregory E
 Lanza, Richard L
 Myers, Michael D
 Reyes, Tony
 Scott, David
 Sherman Jr, Donald W
 Stanfill, Thomas J
 Van Der Horst, Ed A
 Wilder, Jerry R
 Woolfolk, Lee C



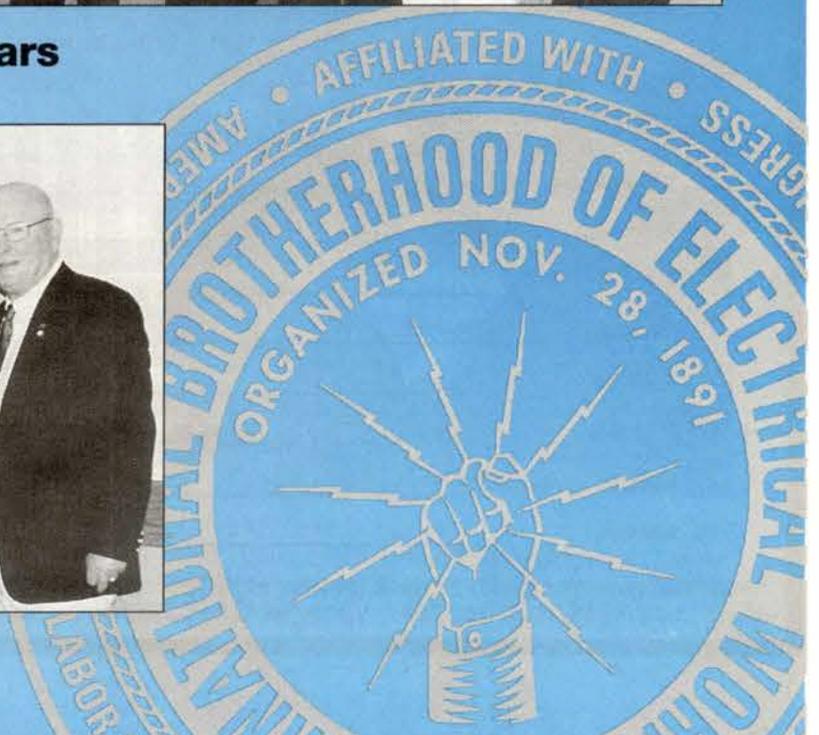
35 Years



30 Years



25 Years



Bill on joint safety committees wins backing from Local 1245

Local 1245 on March 24 contacted the California Legislature to offer strong support for AB 3037, a bill to increase occupational safety and health protections.

The bill requires joint labor-management occupational safety and health committees for employers in high hazard industries or for employers who have bad safety records. It sets minimum criteria so the committees function properly, including duties, structure, selection, and training. This cooperative approach recognizes government's limited resources for enforcement and focuses

on solving problems at the workplace before involving Cal/OSHA.

The bill sets up a reward system for effective safety and health programs incorporating joint labor-management safety and health committees or liaisons. It provides for a 5% workers' compensation insurance premium rebate. And it establishes a safety presumption for employers who bid on public contracts.

The bill was authored by Assembly Member Leland Yee at the request of the WORKSAFE coalition, of which Local 1245 is a part. Local 1245's letter is reprinted here:

Dear Assembly Member Yee:

IBEW Local 1245 would like to thank you for authoring Assembly Bill 3037 and we encourage every state legislator to support this important piece of legislation.

Our union represents 20,000 workers at Pacific Gas & Electric and other energy-related companies in California. Because our members deal with gas and electricity, we are especially sensitive to the issue of jobsite safety. Through long experience we have learned the critical importance of active labor-management cooperation on safety issues.

AB 3037 strengthens occupational safety and health protection for workers by *requiring* a joint labor-management safety and health committee for high hazard and unsafe employers. We believe this requirement, in the long run, will save workers lives.

The bill permits any employer who has a good safety program with a joint labor-management committee to apply for a certificate entitling him or her to a workers' compensation insurance discount. It would also entitle the employer to a presumption of safety in order to meet one aspect of the definition of what is a responsible bidder when bidding on public contracts.

We know from bitter experience that work is often dangerous. Those who do the work are in the best position to evaluate the dangers and help find ways to reduce risks. But too often workers' insights are lost because they are never asked for their input. We believe AB 3037 will help prevent injuries and deaths by increasing worker involvement in safety programs.

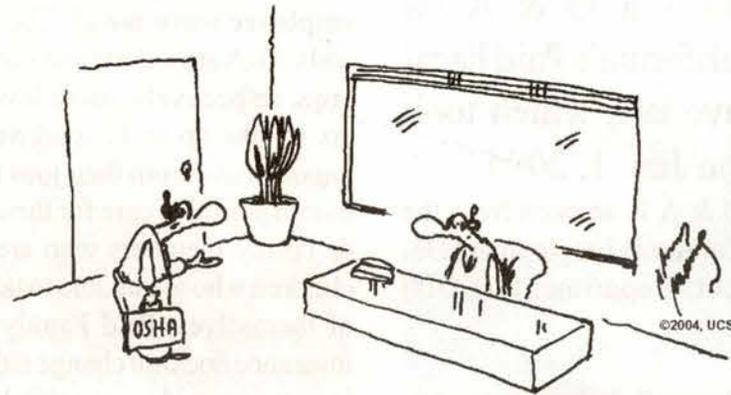
Joint safety committees work. We know this from direct experience. We ask all state legislators to support AB 3037. Thank you for your consideration.

Safety Tailboard

Receive an IBEW cup and cap for submitting a safety question selected for publication in the Utility Reporter's Safety Tailboard. Safety Tailboard is an open forum for discussion and learning about safety issues. Submit your question, along with your name and phone number, to:

Safety Tailboard,
c/o Jim McCauley, IBEW 1245, PO Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696

By the Local 1245
Safety Committee



"The blood stains on all those notes in the suggestion box didn't alarm you just a little bit?"

Taking care of our backs

Each of us uses our back for our job. Our work may include heavy lifting, repetitive motion, digging, shoveling, climbing, etc.

Reaching and straining should be done with caution. Consider using different tools. Examples are hand trucks, carts, ropes and lines. Try to get another person to help complete the task, if needed.

Consider daily exercise to keep

your back in good condition. Choose a back exercise program that is best for you. You may want to consult a physician.

Use proper lifting techniques. Avoid twisting at the waist if you have heavy objects in your hands.

Back injuries can be very painful. Think about what you're doing before you act. Avoid a painful injury.

Stoney Burk

Drive safely in the rain

There's still a chance of rainy weather before California's dry season begins. When the road is wet, it's important to drive carefully and keep proper distance between your car and others.

I know it is hard to keep that distance because everyone is in a hurry and will cut you off. Try to keep a safe distance even if others

don't.

Never slam on your brakes because you can start sliding on water and lose control of your car.

Always remain aware of everything around you. If you need to drive slower, then do it.

Anytime you're in your car, think safe.

David Vipond

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee: Stoney Burk, Alameda Power & Telecom.; Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; David Vipond, Citizens Communications; Rich Lane, Turlock Irrigation District; Art Torres, Sacramento Municipal Utility District; Gil Suarez, Davey Tree; Bob Burkle, City of Santa Clara; and Assistant Business Manager Jim McCauley.



Q & A on Paid Family Leave (Part II)

This month we continue with our Q & A on California's Paid Family Leave law, which took effect on Jan. 1, 2004.

The Q & A is adapted from the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD) website.

Are the payroll deductions mandatory? Yes, beginning January 1, 2004, employers are required to deduct the Paid Family Leave insurance contributions from the wages of employees who are covered by the SDI program.

How much will it cost? For calendar years 2004 and 2005, the Paid Family Leave insurance contribution rate will be .08 percent (.0008) of the taxable wage limit.

The taxable wage limit in 2004 will be \$68,829. This means that wages above this amount are not taxed for SDI. Therefore the maximum contribution for Paid Family Leave insurance would be \$55.06 in 2004, in addition to the existing SDI contribution.

The taxable wage limit in 2005 will be \$79,418. This means that wages above this amount are not taxed for SDI. Therefore, the maximum contribution for Paid Family Leave insurance would be \$63.53 in 2005, in addition to the existing SDI contribution.

The cost of Paid Family Leave insurance will be incorporated into the base SDI contribution rate from 2006 and beyond.

What is the relationship between Paid Family Leave insurance and employee leave laws? The FMLA and CFRA are federal and state leave laws, respectively, that allow workers to take up to 12 workweeks of *unpaid* leave from their jobs in a 12-month period to care for themselves or family members who are ill, or children who are unable to take care of themselves. Paid Family Leave insurance does *not* change either law in any way and is completely separate from them. It merely provides up to six (6) weeks of paid benefits to workers who suffer a wage loss when they take time off work to care for others.

For more information about FMLA, visit the Department of Labor's Web site at www.dol.gov. For more information about CFRA contact the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing at 1-800-884-1684 or visit them on the Web at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

Are employees required to take leave under the federal FMLA and the CFRA at the same time they are receiving Paid Family Leave insurance benefits? Yes, if your company is subject to the provisions of FMLA and CFRA. For additional information about the CFRA, visit the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing's Web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

Is a Paid Family Leave claimant's job protected? The Paid Family Leave program does not protect anyone's job. It simply provides partial wage replacement when a person cannot work due to the need to care for a child, parent, spouse, or

registered domestic partner, or to bond with a new child. Some persons may have their job projected under other laws, such as the FMLA or the CFRA.

How will my weekly benefit amount for Paid Family Leave insurance be determined? Your weekly benefit amount will be calculated based on the calendar quarter with the highest earnings during the base period. You must have at least \$300 in wages in your base period.

How much will I receive? For Paid Family Leave insurance claims beginning July 1, 2004, through December 31, 2004, weekly benefits will range from \$50 to \$728. To qualify for the minimum weekly amount (\$50), an individual must have at least \$300 in wages in the base period. To qualify for the maximum weekly benefit amount (\$728), an individual must earn at least \$17,183.65 in a calendar quarter during the base period.

For Paid Family Leave insurance claims beginning January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005, weekly benefits will range from \$50 to \$840. The same minimum qualification applies. To qualify for the maximum weekly benefit amount (\$840) an individual must earn at least \$19,830.92 in a calendar quarter during the base period.

Will my Paid Family Leave insurance benefits equal my full pay? Your weekly benefit amount will be approximately 55% of your earnings up to the maximum weekly benefit amount.

How long can I receive Paid Family Leave insurance benefits? You may collect up to six (6) weeks of Paid Family Leave insurance benefits during a 12-month period.

May a person collect other benefits while also collecting Paid Family Leave insurance? A worker

may not receive Paid Family Leave insurance benefits if he or she is also eligible for or already receiving State Disability Insurance, Unemployment Compensation Insurance, or Workers' Compensation.

How is the Paid Family Leave insurance benefit affected when an employee receives sick leave benefits and Paid Family Leave at the same time? Consistent with the SDI program, sick leave wages are treated as wages. Paid Family Leave insurance benefits will be reduced by the amount of sick leave wages received, and may render the individual ineligible for benefits depending on the amount of sick leave wages received and the individual's weekly benefit amount.

When will Paid Family Leave insurance benefit payments begin? Claims are payable for benefit periods that begin on or after July 1, 2004. In other words, benefits will not be paid for leave taken prior to July 1, 2004.

May SDI claim forms be used for Paid Family Leave? No. The EDD will issue a separate form for Paid Family Leave insurance claims.

When will EDD make Paid Family Leave insurance claim forms available? The claim form should be available in April 2004, but claims are payable for benefit periods commencing July 1, 2004.

Are employers required to provide Paid Family Leave insurance claim forms to their employees? No.

How can employees obtain a claim form? Claim forms can be obtained by calling 1-877-BE-THERE (1-877-238-4373) or visiting EDD offices after April 2004.

Internet: www.ibew1245.com

PG&E Intranet: From Page One, select "Employee Services," then select "IBEW site."

Medicare actuary: White House suppressed truth



In testimony before Congress, Medicare's chief actuary last month described how the Bush Administration threatened him with termination if provided accurate numbers to Congress during the debate over the Medicare drug bill.

Richard Foster testified he had shared his cost estimates with Doug Badger, the president's special assistant for health policy, and with James Capretta, associate director of the White House Office of Management and Budget. But he said that Thomas Scully, who was then administrator of the Medicare program, ordered him to withhold the information from Congress, which was engaged in a heated debate over the bill.

The Medicare bill, which eventually passed by a razor thin margin, was supposed to be a feather in Bush's cap going into an election year. While Bush was telling Congress the legislation would not cost more than \$400 billion over 10 years, Foster knew the true cost estimates were "\$500 billion to \$600 billion all the way through the process."

The true cost of the program isn't the only thing the Bush Administration hoped to hide. The other little secret of the bill is that it will increase bureaucratic spending because it will funnel large amounts of public money through private insurance plans.

While Medicare's administrative overhead is less than 4%, overhead

at private insurance companies averages about 12%, according to Harvard researchers. Channeling all the new Medicare money through private insurance plans will generate an estimated \$64 billion in administrative costs. And that doesn't even count the estimated \$14.2 billion in subsidies to private insurance plans to "lure" them into new areas.

In his testimony, Foster said he had struggled to preserve the independence and integrity of his office. But it's hard to be independent when someone is threatening your job.

In this case, that man was Thomas Scully. Foster said there was evidence that Scully was "acting on direct White House orders."

Make a Date...

The Local 1245 Retiree Club invites you to join us for companionship, discussion and projects. Current meeting locations are:

East Bay Chapter:

Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA.

San Jose Chapter:

Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose.

Congratulations!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in – or start! – a Retirees Club chapter in your area.

Joseph Barrera Jr, 34 Years
Nevada City, Ca

Philip Ostrander, 35 Years
Santa Rosa, Ca

Richard Perez, 34 Years
Hood, Ca

Michael Phelps, 37 Years
Angels Camp, Ca

Arnold Sanchez Jr, 34 Years
Fresno, Ca

John Varfolomeff, 36 Years
Santa Rosa, Ca

Karson Yamanaka, 31 Years
Fresno, Ca

Elizabeth Cayas, 31 Years
Fremont, Ca

Chris Damron, 26 Years
Elk Grove, Ca

Elias N. Afana, 37
Paso Robles, CA

Joe Alvarez, 33
San Mateo, CA

Harold Anderson Jr., 35
American Canyon, CA

Thomas Boggs, 34
Clovis, CA

Peter A. Bonardi, 33,
Petaluma, CA

George M. Brakey, 39
Penn Valley, CA

Raymond Bravo, 38
San Jose, CA

Herbert M. Brynjolfsson, 34
Campbell, CA

Paula Caracristi, 30
Sacramento, CA

Ronald Costa, 36
Crockett, CA

Harold Crandall, 37
Fort Bragg, CA

Melvin H. Eurich, 37
Santa Clara, CA

Lonn R. Fisher, 36
Bakersfield, CA

Gary E. Gray, 34
Freeland, WA

Steven Gray, 38
Hayward, CA

Spencer W. Hough Jr, 32
Oakley, CA

Jack Hunsperger, 40]
Nevada City, CA

Joseph Jackson, 34
Manteca, CA

Richard Johnson, 37
Santa Clara, CA

Charles Kasper, 30
Marina, CA

David P. Kevern, 32
Discovery Bay, CA

Ron M. Layugan, 23
Morro Bay, CA

Daniel Love, 33
Santa Cruz, CA

Billy Mc Nabb, 36
Oroville, CA

Ronald A. Perron, 34
Aptos, CA

Lee Prince, 28
San Leandro, CA

Felix L. Reese, 35
Bay Point, CA

David L. Santori, 37
Rohnert Park, CA

Crystal Thorpe, 31
Copperas Cove, TX

Marlene Turco, 22
Hammond, LA

Leonard C. Ferretti, 30
Petaluma, CA

George D. Goulart Jr., 35
Livermore, CA

Linus W. Jewell, 32
Orland, CA

Robert M. Mickelsen, 30
Marysville, CA

James F. Paisano, 31
Oakland, CA

Ronald Carl Schultz, 31
Madera, CA

Leonie C. Solomon, 31
San Leandro, CA

Ronald A. Tucker, 33
Burney, CA

Fred Vella, 34
San Carlos, CA

Clifton Earl Walters, 36
Fresno, CA

Earl Leroy Wright Jr., 37
Petaluma, CA

Dick Wrobel, 38
Paradise, CA



Chico/Oroville, CA
January 24, 2004



40 Years



35 Years



30 Years



25 Years

The Honorees

40 YEARS

Manley, Richard
 Young, Dale

35 YEARS

Bonner, Ernest
 Davidson, Gary D
 Devoll, Wayne A
 Harris, Jack
 Henson, Ronald D
 Kelley, James M
 Krause, Ken
 Pickering, Richard L
 Retallack, Thomas T
 Sharp, Michael T
 Tardiville, Arthur P
 Thayer, Michael J

30 YEARS

Alaniz, Roy
 Andes, Gary
 Bane, Randall
 Belmont Jr, Jack
 Bloomdale Jr, Harry
 Bonner, Robert
 Brum, Douglas K
 Cardoza, Kenneth J
 Carter, Luckey J
 Deyoung, Thomas
 Evins, Randy L
 Gieselman, Larry R
 Gray, William G
 Hayes, James
 Johnson, Michael
 Llapitan, Jacinto
 Mickelsen, Robert M
 Plank, Gary A
 Pompati, Richard R
 Ramirez, Mark
 Rojas, Frank E
 Scott, Neil P
 Scott, Paul S
 Stearns, James
 Stephens, Larry D
 Ybarra Jr, Modesto

25 YEARS

Anderson, Mark A
 Anderson, Randy
 Andrews, Wendell L
 Barrett, Robert A
 Borrayo, Sergio M
 Bryan, Craig H
 Buck, Byron T
 Carey, David J
 Dion, Michael D
 Fonley, Douglas E
 Gomes, David A
 Goody, Kenneth E
 Habe, James R
 Hogan II, James H
 Hubvard, Danny P
 Kelsch, Randy L
 Kennedy, Ronald M
 Kuersten, Neil G
 Layman, Cindy K
 Mack, Kenneth W
 Mayberry, Danny D
 McNary, R L
 Mowry, Scott E
 Perry, Wayne S
 Roath, Richard C
 Rogers, Matt W
 Rudick, Lawrence
 Sanders, James C
 Secord, William H
 Shaw, Gary F
 Simmons, H. Gene
 Spiller, Mike F
 Stickelman, Thomas H
 Strang, Gregory C
 Thibodeau, Donald L
 Wilson, Jeffery L