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#### News briefs

**Real wages** fell in September by 1.2% over the previous month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. The 0.2% increase in wages was more than offset by a 1.4 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index. For the 12-month period ending in September, real wages fell by 2.7%.

**Thousands of workers** will rally during the week of Dec 5-10 in over 60 cities to demand the passage of legislation to restore workers' freedom to form unions. You can speak up, too, by telling your Congressional representatives to co-sponsor the Employee Free Choice Act. Go to: [www.unionvoice.org/campaign/Support\\_EFCA](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/Support_EFCA).

**An all-out strike** was threatened by electricity workers in Lebanon on Oct. 18, who say they want the people responsible for squandering the company's funds to be held accountable for their actions, the Daily Star reported. The union also objected to the government's cancellation of the company's allocations for maintenance and renovation works.

**The electric restructuring program** in South Africa is ill-considered, ill-advised and rushed, claim union workers, according to that country's on-line Business Report. Unionists say the program will result in job losses and higher costs to consumers. High salary packages to the heads of the new, commercialized electricity distribution bodies were called "the great political feeding trough" by one union official.

# Utility Reporter

IBEW LOCAL 1245 • AFL-CIO

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UNITY IS STRENGTH

For up-to-the-minute news, see our web site: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

## PG&E NEGOTIATIONS LEAD TO TENTATIVE AGREEMENT



Gas Service Rep Lou Mennel minces no words in making the case for wage increases, as company negotiators take notes.

## Moment of Truth

After months of research, weeks of deliberations, and a final 14 hours at the bargaining table, Local 1245 members on Oct. 14 negotiated wage increases for members at PG&E, a raise for LTDers, and a one-year contract extension to protect medical benefits. Members will pass judgment in a mail-ballot due back Dec. 1.

Full story starts on page 6.

## "Far apart as you can get"

Negotiators for IBEW Local 1245 met with Sierra Pacific Power through much of October to bargain a new labor agreement, but the talks showed little progress as the month drew to a close.

"We were about as far apart as you could get," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Randy Osborn, who is leading the union delegation to the talks.

To date, the two sides have traded proposals on medical benefits, post-retirement medical benefits, wages, holidays, time off, scheduling, and some work rules.

"We still have several titles (of the

agreement) we have not traded proposals on yet," Osborn said.

Negotiators will return to the table on Nov. 9 for two days of talks, then plan to meet three days a week through the end of the year until a settlement is reached.

The contract expires Dec. 31.

Negotiators for the union are: Gino Aramini, Gary Bailey, Tom Cornell, Aaron Dorman, Mike Grimm, Reto Gross, Dale Huntsman, Jerry McAllister, Wayne Paterson, Rita Weishaar, and Samson Wilson.

See photo of Winnemucca Unit on page 4.



## North Bay Retirees

Local 1245 retirees in the North Bay will launch a new chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club in December. The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 6, at 8 a.m. The location for the initial meeting is the IBEW Local 551 union hall, 2525 Cleveland Ave., Suite B, in Santa Rosa. For further information, contact Business Rep. Joe Osterlund at (415) 238-2898.

## Agency shop approved at South Feather unit

Local 1245 members in the Water Distribution and Treatment Unit at South Feather Water and Power Agency voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new agency shop provision in the labor agreement.

The vote, conducted Nov. 2, was 26-3.

Members in another Local 1245 unit on the property-South Feather Hydro Power Generation-won agency shop in 2004 through a petition process.

Local 1245 Business Rep. Jack Osburn said that the passage of SB 739 several years ago "gave us the mechanism" to press for an agency shop vote.

continued on page 4



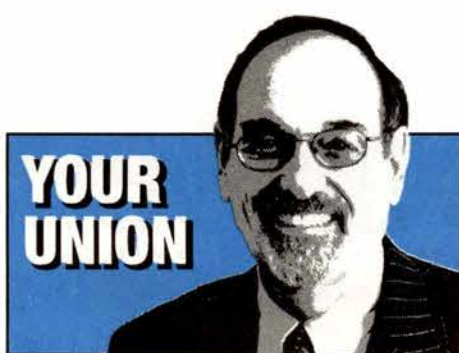
Jack Osburn



Business Representative Landis Marttila and PG&E Night Cable Splicer Vince Jones worked the phones at the San Francisco Labor Council Oct. 18 to persuade voters to defeat Proposition 75, the anti-union initiative backed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. They were relegated to using cell phones in the hallway because other union volunteers had already filled all the chairs in the rooms set up for phone banking.

Photo: Eric Wolfe





**Perry Zimmerman**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

## Globalization and Outsourcing: Now it's our problem, too

**L**ike many of you, when I read the stories about globalization and outsourcing of American jobs, the question that I ask myself is, "What impact will these trends have on our members? Do these trends pose problems for our members?"

Until a month ago, I had not seen any evidence of globalization having a significant impact on our members' jobs, but I have now seen it.

In discussions with PG&E about the company's Business Transformation process, we learned that work formerly done by union members on single-phase residential meters and smaller transformers may be discontinued because the cost of replacing the meters and transformers is now less than the

cost of repairing or recycling them. The low cost of new meters and transformers is due in part to technological advances, but it is also the result of meter and transformer manufacturers moving their plants to third world countries with low labor costs.

Sierra Pacific has threatened to outsource call center jobs, either to a location within the United States with lower costs of labor (something that Frontier communications did to its call center in Elk Grove several years ago) or even to India. It may be that these threats are nothing more than bargaining tactics, but the availability of cheap labor abroad cannot be ignored and certainly is not being ignored by many signatory employers.

Another factor exacerbates the problems presented by the globalization and outsourcing trends, and that is the impending repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act in January. Repeal of PUHCA was part of the recently enacted energy bill, and it will set off a feeding frenzy of utility mergers and acquisitions starting in January. To avoid being a target for acquisition, utilities will maximize their efforts to reduce costs and boost production, and as they seek to reduce costs the temptations offered by globalization and outsourcing may be hard to resist.

With the convergence of these two forces, utility workers are in danger to a degree not found in the recent past. The big issues of the day are not just somebody else's problem—they're our problem.

of looking out for ourselves and not putting money in the pockets of the members, even though we were successful in obtaining wage equity increases as well as general wage increases for all our members in our last contract. I'm sure you've heard all this before. It's fairly common for newer employees to be looking at current dollars in their pockets and not looking at retirement as something to worry about until they are older or have many more years invested in the company.

It was encouraging to see that we have been traveling the correct path, at least in your opinion, and that it is not only OK, but our obligation to travel that same path in the future. We begin another contract negotiations in November. Among our proposals will most likely be improvements to our retirement program and post retirement benefits. I pray that our members will see that we are working toward their future as well as our own and that they will support us in our efforts. I definitely intend to share your article with the members when we meet to discuss proposals.

*Rosana Matlock*  
Customer Billing Supervisor  
Truckee Donner PUD

## IBEW 1245 Union Shopper!

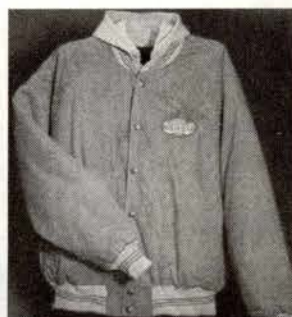
The holidays are approaching. Time to check out the IBEW 1245 Union Shopper! Tee-shirts, sweat shirts, sport shirts and jackets provide an opportunity to wear your loyalties on

**Union Shopper**

your sleeve. Or on your coffee mug. And now we have on-line, credit card ordering! Just go to [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com) and select the Union Shopper link in the lower right-hand part of the page.



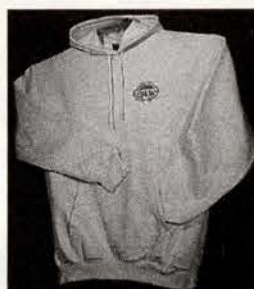
Stadium Jacket



Denim Jacket



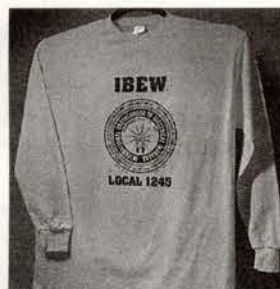
Embossed T-Shirt



Hooded Sweatshirt



Crewneck Sweatshirt



Longsleeve T-Shirt



Coffee Mug



Travel Mug

### CALENDAR

**Nov. 12:** Outside Line Service Awards, Sacramento, CA

**Nov. 19:** Outside Line Service Awards, Bakersfield, CA

**Dec. 1:** Be sure to meet the 10 a.m. deadline for having your completed PG&E ratification ballot back to the union's post office box.

### APPOINTMENTS

#### EPA-PROVCO

Bargaining Committee

Angel Mondragon

David Pendergast

#### CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

California Alliance of Retired Americans (CARA)

2nd Annual Convention

Jack Hill

Waite Anthony

## Letters to the Editor

*Editor's note: The following e-mail was sent to Perry Zimmerman and is reprinted with the member's permission.*

Thanks for the article ("Helping Retirees Is In Everyone's Interest," Utility Reporter, October 2005). I have been a shop steward for Truckee Donner PUD for over 14 years now. I have been involved in several negotiations.

This past few years, our negotiations team has made great strides in providing improved retirement benefits and post retirement medical coverage for our members. Unfortunately, we are taking our bumps from members on these issues. Many of the newer employees regard our efforts as self-serving because the negotiations team members are each in their late 40's to early 50's and have a number of years with the District. We have been accused



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Our phone number is (707) 452-2700.





Perry Zimmerman's 19th Annual IBEW Local 1245 Golf Tournament

# Par-Tee Time!

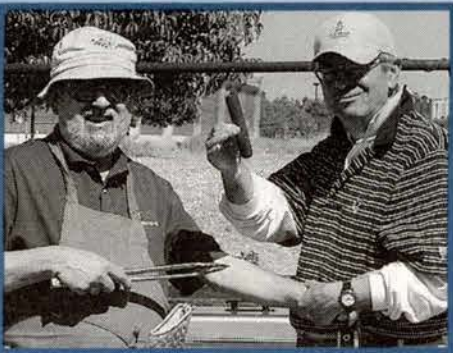
Photos by Lita Martin



Git yer raffle ticket here, cries Joy Wagoner, Local 1245 Accounting Associate.



Local 1245 Treasurer Cecelia De La Torre won Women's Long Drive contest on Hole 2. Winning the Men's Long Drive was Eric Wright (did we get that name right?)



Workers Comp Attorney Stu Boxer offers compliments to Assistant Business Manager and Chief Chef Sam Tamimi.



The Local 1245 Golf Tournament would not have been possible without the efforts of Executive Board members John Mendoza and Art Freitas.



"I don't know how to define style, I just know it when I see it." Setting the trend for fashion at the tournament was the Western Area Power Administration team of Rich Perry, Wence Galindo, Eric Galindo and Greg Sawyer.

Members and friends of Local 1245 came to Vacaville on Sept. 24 to test their mettle on the Green Tee Golf Course in the union's 19th annual golf tournament. They teed up, they swung, maybe

even cursed a time or two, but no one complained about the food and even Tiger Woods never saw a sunnier day nor a bluer sky. Congratulations to the winners and we hope to see you all again next year!



ABOVE: Local 1245 Administrative Assistant Lita Martin, right, served as chief photographer for the tournament, but Lee Clark took this photograph of Martin with Local 1245 Treasurer Cecelia De La Torre.



LEFT: Amanda Uhrhammer won Women's Long Drive contest on Hole 14.



Taking First Place in the Foursome competition were Eddie Courtney, Dennis Gow, Larry Rodriguez and Greg Smith, but two slipped away when the camera showed up.



Pulling off a second place finish in the Foursome competition were Anthony Costanzia, Drew De La Cruz, Rick De La Cruz and Tom Smith.



Many participated in the Putting Contest but Mike Kollman walked away the winner.



Capturing Third Place in the Foursome competition were Victor Cipparonne, Ken Mellor, Frank Saxsenmeier and Paul Velasco.



Bringing in a heroic Last Place finish in the Foursome competition was the team from Mastagni, Holstedt, Amick, Miller, Johnsen & Uhrhammer, a Workers Comp law firm.



## Yerington agreement raises wages

Members of Local 1245 at the City of Yerington, Nev. ratified a new agreement that raises wages 5% effective July 1, 2005.

Wages will rise 5.5% on July 1, 2006 and 5.5% on July 1, 2007.

The agreement deleted conditional language on cost-of-living allowances (COLAs).

The cap on employer-paid health care premiums for employees was raised from \$389 to \$550, which is believed to be sufficient to keep health care premiums 100%-employer paid. If the cap is exceeded, negotiations would resume for health care only.

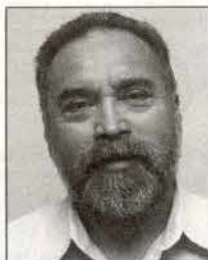
Bargaining for the union were Sylvia Banta, Jack Smith and Business Rep. Sal Salazar.

Another provision provides \$250 for every certification that an employee has that is not called for by the job description.

The agreement adds language requiring PERS compensation on emergency overtime and standby pay. The City had been making the payments prior to 2002, but then stopped. The status of PERS payments from 2002-2005 has yet to be determined.

The agreement makes a concession on medical payments. While the City will continue paying 80% of the premium for the employee and family, there will now be an 8% cap over the next two years on dependent coverage premiums. If premiums exceed that amount, bargaining with mediation will be automatically triggered.

Negotiating for the union were Katy Bennett, Dale Groves and Business Rep. Sal Salazar.



Sal Salazar

## Wages gains at Fernley

Members of Local 1245 employed by the City of Fernley, Nev. unanimously ratified a new agreement that raises wages and other compensation.

Under the agreement, all employees immediately received a minimum increase of 6.75% in a combination of equity adjustments, improvements in the wage steps, and general wage increases, effective July 1, 2005.

Wages increases in following years are 7% effective July 1, 2006 and 7% effective July 1, 2007.

In addition the agreement provides for a longevity bonus of \$150 for anyone employed by the City for eight years or over, with payment coming on the employee's anniversary date each year.

### South Feather unit... from page 1

"It's something I worked hard on for a long time," he said.

Agency shop provisions in labor agreements assure that all represented employees share the costs of union representation.

The bargaining unit was first organized in 1962 by Business Rep. Charles "Ron" Reynolds. Reynolds had to negotiate the first agreement "in open session with the public and everybody there," Osburn noted.

The observer for the election was Rich McCullough, a foreman, shop steward, and member of the negotiating committee.

Local 1245 is in bargaining right now for a wage reopener for the Water Distribution and Treatment unit, Osburn said. The Hydro Power Generation unit has a wage reopener provision that calls for parity with PG&E.

## Members reject Mirant contract

Members of Local 1245 at Mirant rejected a contract offer that would have increased wages but also increased employee contributions to medical premiums.

The rejected pact included equity increases as well as a general wage increase. It also, for the first time, would have provided a wage structure that included a wage progression.

"This was a clear statement from this bargaining unit, which is a relatively new unit," Local 1245 Business Rep. Hunter Stern said of the lopsided "no" vote.

Mirant, an independent power generator, has been struggling in recent years with the after effects of the 2000-2001 energy crisis. It operates three plants in Local 1245's jurisdiction: in

San Francisco, Antioch and Pittsburg.

Retention could become an issue for the company as some employees look at potential opportunities at Pacific Gas & Electric, where many Mirant workers were formerly employed.

Serving on the union's bargaining committee, along with Stern, are Barry Mitchell, Jason Todd and Kevin Bellflower. Also assisting with assembling the union's initial package were Kirk Davis, Larry Jasaun, Ric Huelster, and Rick Flores.

The union and company are scheduled to return to the bargaining table on Nov. 9.



Hunter Stern



"But if we trim the fat won't we both be out of jobs?"



The August unit meeting in Winnemucca, Nev. focused on upcoming contract negotiations with Sierra Pacific Power.



# SERVICE AWARDS



## Bakersfield, CA

April 16, 2005



James Williamson, 55-year member, is congratulated by Executive Board members Dave Scott and Chris Habecker.



35 Years



25 Years

### THE HONOREES

#### 55 Years

Bohn, William A  
Williamson, James A

#### 50 Years

Broussard, Robert L.  
Rowerdink, Gerdus

#### 40 Years

Frazier, Anthony

#### 35 Years

Blevins, Wm  
Fullmer, William  
Hogan, Louis

Jennings, Dwight  
Rogers, James  
Romero, Arthur  
Ross, William  
Whitfield, Louis  
Williams Jr., Marshall

#### 30 Years

Bailey, Samuel  
Haring, Lee  
Ramirez, Daniel  
Salyers, Grant  
Silva, Joe

#### 25 Years

Brookey, Jimmie  
Carter, Gary

Davis, David  
Dougherty, Charles  
Elijah, Marshall  
Grundhofer, David  
Hagans, Larry  
Heriford, Jennifer  
Iaconis, Timothy  
Kunz, Jeff  
Lee, Charles  
Morris, Steve  
Nelson, H L  
Rollins, Jeannine  
Sahlstrom, Dave  
Sears, Mike  
Smith, Raymond  
Sturtevant, Brian  
Weilage, Billy  
Winn, Charles

## CCSF class ties labor history to current issues

Today's attacks on public sector unions by right wing politicians and their corporate backers are unprecedented. Or are they?

In "California Labor History," a three unit San Francisco City College course offered at 7 p.m. Thursday evenings at James Lick Middle School, beginning in January, students learn that these battles are, unfortunately, nothing new. In fact, the struggle between unions and their enemies goes back to the mid-19th century, and today's issues often eerily resemble earlier ones. The efforts by right wing politicians to roll back Social Security and institute paycheck deception have taken other forms at other times, for example.

These are the types of battles examined in "California Labor History," taught by California Federation of Teachers communications director Fred Glass. Emphasizing the history of ordinary working people, along with their leaders, the class provides an understanding of why so many people have been inspired over the years to become union activists.

As the percentage of workers represented by unions has declined over the past few decades, especially in the private sector, fewer union members are around to provide an "oral culture" that transmits the lessons of labor history. "That's why I teach this class," says Glass, "so that those lessons can be passed on."

Central to these lessons is the great San Francisco General Strike of 1934, in which the entire city was shut down for four days in support of striking maritime workers and to protest the brutal murders of a longshoreman and cook on the picket lines. Few people today know about this event, which nevertheless had an enormous impact on labor relations for decades, and helped to convince the U.S. Congress to pass the National Labor Relations Act in 1935.

The dramatic story of the General Strike is one of those told in *Golden Lands, Working Hands*, the ten-part public television video series on which the "California Labor History" course is based. If you've ever wondered where your rights on the job came from, or how working people won the 8 hour day, or when the right to bargain collectively was enacted, this class is for you.

For more information or to register call Bill Shields at the CCSF Labor and Community Studies Department, 415-550-4472, or Fred Glass at 510-832-8812.



The police murders of striking longshoreman Howard Sperry and cook Nick Bordoise near their union hall during the maritime strike of 1934 precipitated the San Francisco General Strike.

## PG&E System Operator agreement

Local 1245 and PG&E on Oct. 14 reached an equity settlement of the Business Manager's grievance challenging the company's interpretation and implementation of Letter Agreement 05-21 (System Operators).

As a result of the equity settlement, the approximately 25 Operators in Training who were OITs before the letter agreement was signed will proceed to the top step of System Operator pay after six months as a System Operator in keeping with the agreement in place when they became OITs. Their conversion to apprentices by the JATC will not affect their wage progression.

Secondly, the 3% equity increase and top step of the System Operator pay scale will be given to all 52 System Operators as of the date of the Letter Agreement who were denied the increase and top step because they did not have 30 months in the position. These wage increases will range from \$42 a week to \$217 a week.

Both company and union grievance handlers emphasized that this was an equity settlement made in the hope of moving forward to the challenges facing the ECCO organization.

## Lassen MUD seeks lineman

The Lassen Municipal Utility District in Susanville, Ca. is seeking qualified applicants for a full time Lineman position. Salary is \$30.84 hourly (\$31.77 beginning Jan. 1, 2006). Complete health benefits, dental package and retirement plan are included. Test Requirements: A written examination along with an oral interview. A controlled substance test, provided by LMUD, is required prior to employment.

Interested individuals must submit a Lassen Municipal Utility District employment application. A resume is strongly recommended. To obtain an application, please contact Jerri Kresge at (530)-257-4174. Visit the website at [www.lmud.org](http://www.lmud.org) for a complete listing of requirements and to download an application.



PG&E NEGOTIATIONS LEAD TO TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

"We're not going to (offer a counter proposal) as long as the company proposal treats one bargaining unit as second class citizens. If your bottom line is lump sum for Clerical, tell us now and we'll cancel dinner."

—Tom Dalzell, Senior Assistant Business Manager



Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell, left, led the negotiations for the union.



Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier discusses strategy with Cecelia De La Torre during a break.



PG&E Chief Negotiator Steve Rayburn explains a company proposal. In the background is Gas Crew Lead Mike Scafani.

# Moment of Truth

## IBEW 1245 negotiators voice members' concerns

By Eric Wolfe

General bargaining is the moment of truth for a union. Employees belong to unions to gain a voice at the workplace. That collective voice is what gives a union power, and general bargaining is when that power gets turned into money.

A wage hike for current employees in 2006 and 2007 was the issue on the table during the just-completed negotiations between IBEW Local 1245 and Pacific Gas & Electric. But there were other issues — and other constituencies — hovering at the edges of the table: Retirees needing relief from crushing medical costs. Disabled employees being cut up by inflation. The potential loss of jobs in the company's latest effort at reorganization. A perception that strong performance by employees was less valued than retention of top executives during bankruptcy without regard to their performance.

When the hour gets late and the coffee-

pot is working overtime, the issues come into sharp focus and the talk gets blunt. Where money is at stake, everyone pays close attention.

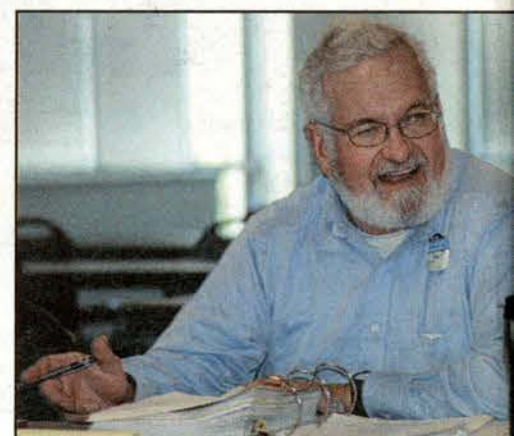
When union negotiators arrived at Weakley Hall on Oct. 14 for the final round of scheduled wage bargaining with PG&E, the first order of business was unity. The company's initial proposal—genuine wage increases for some employees and one-time lump sum bonuses for others—amounted to a wedge between the Physical and Clerical bargaining units. It would be bad medicine indeed for the day to begin with a division among the union's own ranks.

"We're not going to (offer a counter proposal) as long as the company proposal treats one bargaining unit as second class citizens," said Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell early in the day. "If your bottom line is lump sum for Clerical, tell us now and we'll cancel dinner."

Lump sum payments are a way for

management to put cash in an employee's pocket without incurring any future liability: next year's wage goes back to what it was before, and the employee's pension calculation remains unchanged. It's a device many employers have used to quietly trim labor costs, leaving employees with wages quietly eroded by inflation.

"A lump sum payment is a slap in the face to women in general and to minorities in particular," said Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, sitting





## Statement from the Local 1245 Bargaining Committee at Pacific Gas & Electric Co

On October 14, your Union Bargaining Committee and PG&E came to a table agreement for the 2006 and 2007 Wage Re-Opener and Benefit adjustment.

The items agreed to are:

1. **WAGES** – The Company will grant General Wage Increases as follows:

- January 1, 2006: 3.75%
- January 1, 2007: 3.75%
- January 1, 2008: 3.75%

These wage increases apply to both the Clerical and Physical bargaining units.

2. **TERM** – The parties agree to a one-year extension of the current term of the Physical, Clerical, and Benefit Agreements through December 31, 2008.

3. **LTD Plan** – Effective January 1, 2006, participants who are receiving LTD payments and who are Social Security-qualified will have their payments increased as follows: Disabled 1985 and earlier – 9.0%; Disabled 1986-1995 – 5.0%; Disabled 1996 to 2001 – 2.5%.

Your Local 1245 Bargaining Committee recommends a YES vote on this offer. The offer provides a reasonable wage increase, protection of our medical premium co-pay, and a pay adjustment for some LTDers who need it the most. It also keeps our contract intact through the transformation process by the one-year extension.

*Your ballot will be mailed to you on November 1. Please mail your completed ballot so that it is received by the union by 10 a.m. on December 1.*

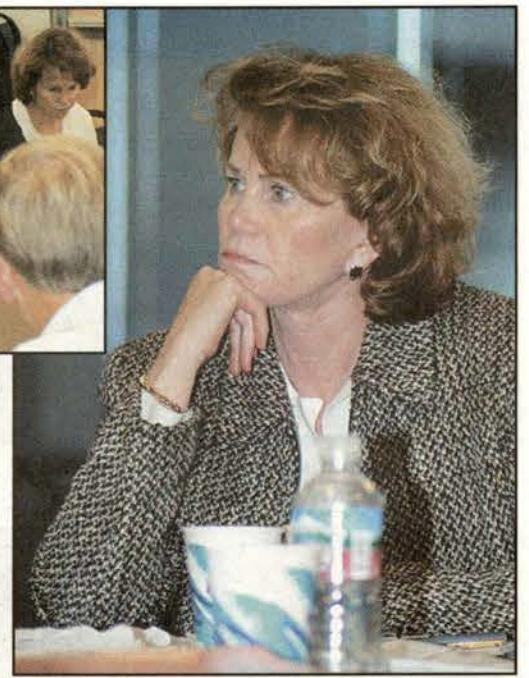
We believe we bargained all that there was on the table. The decision is yours.

*In Unity,*

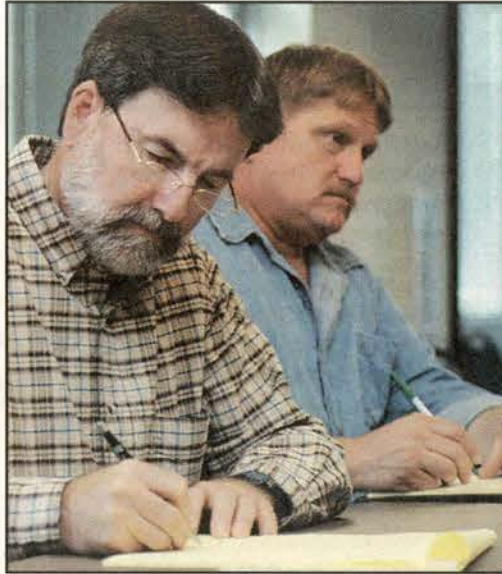
*Your IBEW Local 1245 Bargaining Committee*



Mark Newman discusses employee morale and its effect on performance.



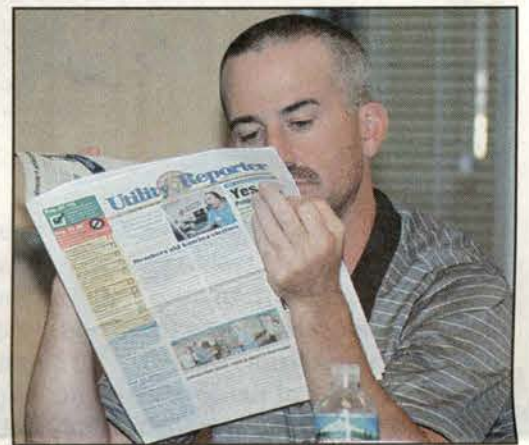
Local 1245 consultant Marlayne Morgan, former Business Manager for Engineers and Scientists of California, the other major union at PG&E.



Dan Mayo and Mike Saner take notes on one of the company's early proposals.



Electric Crew Foreman Terry Andreucci, right, offers his perspective on company's transformation initiatives. Listening are Mark Newman, Donna Ambeau and Marlayne Morgan.



Pat Duffy, Shift Control Tech, caught up on some important reading during a company caucus. Later that evening, when company caucuses seemed to grow longer and longer, some union members passed the time watching a Clint Eastwood video. The title: "A Fistful of Dollars," of course.



ABOVE: During the last union caucus, Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, right, suggests a contract extension as a way to protect health insurance benefits an additional year.

LEFT: Telecomm Crew Lead Stu Neblett was on hand in his customary role as chief numbers cruncher.

across from company negotiators in the sunny and spacious union conference room named for L.L. Mitchell, the tough-as-nails negotiator who negotiated Local 1245's first contracts with PG&E in the 1950s and 1960s. Especially at a time when the company is planning other initiatives that threaten Clerical jobs, Fortier said, "Lump sums will be viewed in a very negative light."

Fortier's comments triggered the first of many lengthy caucuses that would eventually stretch the bargaining into afternoon and evening. After deliberating in a separate conference room—with the blinds drawn—management negotiators returned with a strong defense of the company's record on women and minorities, stressed that "senior management does want everyone to be more unified," and withdrew the lump sum proposal.

Sometimes bargaining looks and sounds like people shouting at each other across a table, with the outcome determined by which side can inflict the most damage on the other. But at its best, bargaining can also

be an exercise in values where people attempt to speak the truth as they see it—person to person.

The company offered a variety of statistics to justify wage increases more modest than what the union sought. Specifically, the company noted that past wage increases at PG&E had outpaced those at other utilities nationally and in the western region. Toward the end of bargaining, when the company had an offer of 3.5% and 3.5% on the table, Chief Negotiator Steve Rayburn pointed out that the "weighted average" for two-year wage increases at other utilities was 6.96%.

No union negotiator questioned the accuracy of the company's statistics. They questioned the relevance.

One after another, union negotiators recounted the attitudes they encounter among their fellow employees in the workplace. They spoke of deep disillusionment with past efforts at "restructuring," and skepticism about current plans for "transformation."

continued on following page





ABOVE: Assistant Business Manager Bob Choate offers a perspective on company proposal.



Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier says lump sum payments would not be well-received.



LEFT: Mike Scafani, Mark Newman and Donna Ambeau listen to company negotiators explain a wage proposal.

continued from previous page

After a year or more of hearing about the company's planned transformation and the importance of unity in achieving that transformation, management itself was undermining that unity, union negotiators warned.

You can speak of trying to earn our trust, said one union negotiator, but then you turn around and talk about outsourcing our jobs. "One way to gain our trust is to prove to us we are valued," he said.

"The bargaining unit is very skeptical," said another union negotiator. "What we've seen so far is the (planned) closing of local offices and AML." This is hardly a recipe for getting the bargaining unit motivated, he observed. To be successful, "the company is going to have to honor the people who do the work—with pay."

One union negotiator spoke of a trend where, in his opinion, employees are now more qualified for supervisory positions than their own supervisors. "Generally speaking, those most qualified to take these important leadership jobs are the least interested in doing so," he said. While employees are still "rising to the occasion of keeping things going," the company is not inspiring the sort of motivation and enthusiasm it claims will be needed to remake itself for the future.

One topic that came up repeatedly was the large discrepancy between huge bonuses for a few managers in the wake of the energy crisis, and the modest wage increases being proposed for the people who actually keep the lights on and the gas flowing.

"If you really want the workforce to help this company succeed then you have to treat them fairly," said one union negotiator.

"You're going to need the 'subject matter experts' to get through transformation," said another. "Without us, you're going to fail."

"How are you going to get the bargaining unit motivated?" asked another. "One way is money." To be successful, "the company is going to have to honor the people who do the work—with pay."

As the bargaining over wages saw-sawed back and forth, another constituency kept surfacing in the conversation. The union insisted on increases for employees on long-term disability. The company was equally adamant in its opposition to any increases in the LTD benefit.

Once again, for the union, the issue was values. A person on LTD cannot be fairly valued for the contribution he or she might make to the company in the future, although some people on LTD can and do make a successful transition back into the workforce. Instead, as with retirees, they must be valued for what they have already given to the company—in jobs that can take a severe toll on the human body.

In September, union negotiators successfully persuaded the company to provide financial relief to retirees by passing through approximately \$4 million in federal rebates the company will receive in connection with the new Medicare Part D prescription drug program. Although this action did not improve the pension formula for current retirees, it will provide substantial relief at a time when retirees are being squeezed by ever-increasing medical premiums.

For the union, helping those on LTD, like helping retirees, was a matter

## EFFECT OF AGREEMENT ON SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATIONS

Hourly Pay	2005 Hourly	2006 Hourly	2007 Hourly	2008 Hourly
Average wage	\$30.00	\$31.13	\$32.29	\$33.50
Lineman	\$36.44	\$37.81	\$39.22	\$40.70
Gas Service Rep	\$32.29	\$33.50	\$34.75	\$36.06
Fitter	\$30.05	\$31.18	\$32.34	\$33.56
Customer Service Rep	\$28.08	\$29.13	\$30.22	\$31.36
Monthly Increase in Pay	2006 Monthly Increase	2007 Monthly Increase	2008 Monthly Increase	
Average wage	\$195.00	\$202.31	\$209.90	
Lineman	\$236.86	\$245.74	\$254.95	
Gas Service Rep	\$210.37	\$217.24	\$225.90	
Fitter	\$195.31	\$202.64	\$210.24	
Customer Service Rep	\$182.50	\$189.34	\$196.44	

Bryan Carroll jumps into a discussion of appropriate compensation as the evening wears on.



of principle in the negotiations. A matter of values.

As bargaining progressed through dinnertime (pizza delivered to the union hall) and into the night, Business Manager Perry Zimmerman became more directly involved in the strategy for bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion. The company was giving strong indications that it had reached the limit of what it would offer: 3.75% in 2006 and 3.75% in 2007. Zimmerman suggested to the union committee that they go to bat one last time for the LTDers. He also suggested that the union propose a one-year contract extension, with a 3.75% wage increase in 2008. Extending the contract an additional year would have the added advantage of delaying a fight over health benefits until 2009.

After hearing the union's proposal, company negotiators returned to their caucus room. Around 11 o'clock they emerged with their "last, best and final" offer—language that signals the end of the line for the conventional bargaining process. The company agreed to the contract extension, with the additional 3.75% wage increase, and benefit increases for Social Security-qualified employees on LTD.

No one, of course, is ever fully satisfied with a union contract. There is always the lingering question of whether more might have been possible. But at some point you have to pull the trigger

and close the deal, and leave the "might have beens" to another day. The union bargaining committee decided that time had come, and that the company's proposal should be forwarded to the members with a recommendation for ratification.

Of course, when you have a union nothing is settled forever. "Another day" will come three years down the road, bargaining will resume, and the members of Local 1245 will have another opportunity to turn their power into money.

## PG&E Bargaining Committee

**Donna Ambeau**, Sr. Service Rep. I, East Bay

**Terry Andreucci**, Electric Crew Foreman, Sierra Division

**Bryan Carroll**, Fieldperson, Placerville

**Bob Choate**, Assistant Business Manager

**Tom Dalzell**, Senior Assistant Business Manager

**Cecelia De La Torre**, Service Rep., Stockton

**Pat Duffy**, Shift Control Tech, Diablo Canyon

**Dorothy Fortier**, Assistant Business Manager

**Dan Mayo**, Troublemaker, Fresno area

**Lou Mennel**, Gas Service Rep, Sacramento

**Stu Neblett**, Telecomm Crew Lead, Shasta

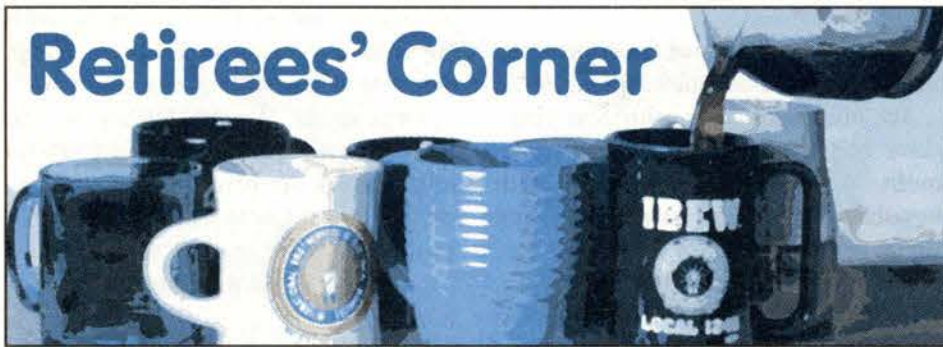
**Mike Saner**, Subforeman A, General Construction

**Mike Scafani**, Gas Crew Lead - Welding, North Bay

**Perry Zimmerman**, Business Manager



## Retirees' Corner



### Fortier fields questions on PG&E Open Enrollment

Retirees in the East Bay discussed the Open Enrollment period for the PG&E medical plan at the October meeting. Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier was on hand to present information and answer questions.

"Everyone in attendance seemed very satisfied with the session," said Unit Chairman Mike Silva. "I find the information from the company's booklet somewhat confusing. I'm sure I'm not alone in this, and Dorothy has a way of making things pretty clear."

The East Bay retirees also received a status report on PG&E wage negotiations. (The negotiations concluded with a tentative agreement the day after the East Bay retirees' meeting.)

Silva reported that he had attended the first meeting of the newly-formed Sacramento/Vacaville Chapter of the Retirees Club and was "very impressed with the members who had signed up." Silva said he believed the Vacaville Chapter could be one of the most influential chapters in the expanding list of Retiree Club chapters.

Following in the footsteps of the Sacramento/Vacaville group, another new Retirees Club chapter is scheduled for launch on Dec. 6. The location for the initial meeting of this chapter will be the IBEW Local 551 union hall, 2525 Cleveland Ave., Suite B, in Santa Rosa. Time is tentatively set for 8 a.m. For further information, contact Business Rep. Joe Osterlund at (415) 238-2898.

#### Current meeting locations

**East Bay Chapter:** 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA

**San Jose Chapter:** 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose, CA.

**Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter:** 2nd

Wednesday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA.

**Santa Rosa Chapter** (beginning in December): 1st Tuesday each month, 8 a.m., at IBEW Local 551, 2525 Cleveland Ave., Suite B, Santa Rosa.



#### Oakhurst in the 1950s

An Oakhurst crew for Pacific Gas & Electric at work in the 1950s. IBEW 1245 archive

UtilityReporter

## Congratulations newly-retired members

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retiree Club chapter in the East Bay, San Jose, Sacramento/Vacaville, or Santa Rosa. If you don't have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Diosa Cardenas  
16 years  
Stockton, CA

Peter Castaneda  
39 years  
Merced, CA

Robina M De Marco  
14 years  
Charlston, SC

Alan Fong  
25 years  
Stockton, CA

Patrick Gates  
33 years  
Oroville, CA

Alfonzo Jimenez  
23 years  
San Jose, CA

Kenneth Kish  
27 years  
Trinidad, CA

Kathleen Kunstal  
26 years  
Brentwood, CA

Frank Lehne  
26 years  
Pleasanton, CA

Carlos Medina  
21 years  
Woodland, CA

Michael Murray  
39 years  
Klamath Falls, OR

Akiyoshi Nakai  
31 years  
Santa Rosa, CA

Jon Sands  
20 years  
Los Osos, CA

Ronald Sobrero  
29 years  
Crescent Mills, CA

James Sweatt  
35 years  
Fresno, CA

Thomas Thorne  
32 years  
Newark, CA

Barbara Toso  
1 year  
Eureka, CA

## Protest the cuts

The Republican leadership in the US Congress now plans to cut critical programs, such as Medicaid and food stamps, even as they push for another \$70 billion in tax breaks that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest Americans. The union-backed Alliance for Retired Americans requests its supporters to oppose this latest effort to help the rich at the expense of the poor by going to this website: [www.actnow.org](http://www.actnow.org).



Access better technology

and online services - All at big savings

It's easy!

Union Plus Internet Service -  
Save over \$100 per year compared with AOL.  
[www.unionplus.net](http://www.unionplus.net) or call 1-888-868-6818.

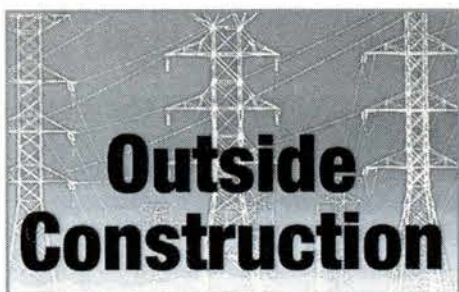
Union Plus Computer Discounts -  
Save up to 25% on all Dell computers, printers  
and other accessories. Bonus specials are  
available when you visit  
[www.unionplus.org/computers](http://www.unionplus.org/computers) or you can  
call 1-800-695-8133  
and reference member ID: PS16626766.



[www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org)

Web-Comp ISP-405





## An early winter for utilities

I want to thank our Brothers and Sisters who have volunteered to work hurricane repairs, or who have donated money to the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



Dave Crawford

As I wrote last month, we Brothers and Sisters are the best of the best. And you have shown that. Accidents are down. But we cannot let ourselves overlook the most basic rules: second point of contact, working a 3-man hot crew, not stowing a boom on a line truck, etc. The red book is a part of our agreement and cannot be ignored. This will not be tolerated by Local 1245. Larry Thomson and I will be monitoring in the field.

In the construction market we are starting to see a very early winter coming for some of our utilities. Work is slowing down.

We will have two Outside Line Pin Dinners: in Sacramento on Nov. 12 and in Bakersfield on Nov. 19. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Let's go out there and work smart and safely so that we can go home to our families.

*David Crawford, Senior Outside Line Business Representative*

## THE NUMBERS

Since last month's report, we had 70 calls for Journeyman Lineman; 7 calls for Equipment Specialist; 27 calls for Groundman; zero calls for Cable Splicers; 35 calls for U.G. Techs; and 6 calls for Apprentices, for a total of 145 calls.

Total crews working on Outside Agreement: 90  
U.G. Agreement: 35 crews  
Pole and Test Agreement: 30 crews  
Teledata Agreement: 14 crews  
Total crews working: 169

Currently we have 295 apprentices: 5 are traveling, 51 are working out of Local 1245; 229 are working out of Local 47; 4 are working out of Local 396 and 16 are laid off due to various reasons. 50 apprentices have passed their test and are Journeymen. We have indentured 115 apprentices this year.

## OTHER NEWS

First Aid & CPR is the 3rd Saturday of every month in Sacramento.

Sierra Pacific Power is putting out small projects. We have addendum to our Outside Agreement for a project: the Tracy to Silver Lake 120 KV, Phase 1 Transmission Line Project, which has been awarded to PAR.

PG&E is putting out small packages. Livermore Transmission U.G. Project is starting up. However they are having a rough start on the 230 KV Underground Project in San Francisco. There

is talk of alliance.

SMUD is putting out small projects. Starting some windmill work.

We are negotiating with San Francisco NECA on the Light Rail Agreement. We have an agreement with Republic Electric for street light and signal work.

We are still negotiating with NECA & Henkels & McCoy on the Teledata Agreement. However, we have a new

agreement called Fiber to Home with Henkels & McCoy FTTP. With NECA Teledata we are still open at this time.

Organizing: We are talking to the Line School participants in Idaho about union opportunities. We are targeting a contractor in Nevada Pole Line Construction. We are making progress in signing Outback Communications.

The next Joint Safety is Nov. 2, 2005.

## Top 10 ways injured workers get screwed by Schwarzenegger's Workers Comp reforms

Julius Young

**R**eforms led by Governor Schwarzenegger and his insurance company allies have resulted in major reductions in the rights and benefits of injured workers. Here is a top 10 list.

Temporary disability has been capped at two years. Workers who are taken off work to undergo treatment more than two years after injury will not receive weekly benefits. After two-years? SDI and then welfare here we come!

Awards for permanent disabilities are drastically reduced due to a new schedule with pitiful benefits that comes nowhere close to adequately compensating actual wage loss for most workers, particularly those who cannot return to work. Schwarzenegger's administrators failed to follow the RAND study of wage loss of California worker wage losses. Check out the study by UC Davis professor Paul Leigh at [www.caaa.org](http://www.caaa.org).

Vocational retraining has been eliminated for workers injured after Jan. 1, 2004. In its place is a pathetic "voucher" benefits that will give some workers who are unable to return to their old work a non-cash coupon between \$0 and \$10,000. The timing for getting this benefit, the limitations on its use, and the low amount of the benefit mean it will be of almost no use to most workers.

Physical therapy sessions are capped now at 24 visits. It makes no difference how many surgeries the worker has or how catastrophic the injury is. If there is a failed spinal fusion, can the doctor redo the fusion if there is no follow up physical therapy?

Compensation for permanent disability is to be reduced by amounts received for injuries that occurred decades ago even if the injured person had recovered fully over a number of years or adapted so that they had no labor market limitations. See Labor Code Section 4664.

Penalties for delay of benefits such as delay of a weekly disability check or delays in authorizing a medical treatment have been greatly reduced. The reduction in the monetary amount of penalties that can be slapped on an



insurer takes away incentives for the insurer to handle claims properly.

Deduction from benefits (called "apportionment") from the award of monies otherwise due an injured worker may now be allowed (subject to further court clarification) for "the aging process" or "progressive nonindustrial degenerative process." This may be applicable to injured workers who had no symptoms or limitations before their injury! Older workers in particular got screwed.

After Jan. 1, 2005 most workers no longer have free choice to designate a doctor and will have to see company doctors in company-contracted clinics. The law is written so that the employer can keep tabs on the doctors in the network by doing "economic profiling" to eliminate doctors who are too sympathetic to workers on treatment and disability issues!

Medical treatment authorization requests can now be sent through an outside contractor "gatekeeper" called utilization review. The utilization review doctor never sees the patient, has very few of the medical records, rarely speaks to the treating doctor, yet determines what treatments are ok'd. From San Ysidro to Yreka this "UR" system is being used to harass treating doctors and stall claimants from getting treatments.

Injured workers gave up all of this, yet insurers have barely decreased rates. Schwarzenegger refused to back provisions that would have included regulatory reform to guarantee that insurers passed along savings to their insured, the employers. Guess those \$100,000 contributions from some of the insurance companies such as AIG bought something!

Governor Schwarzenegger calls injured workers and their advocates "special interests" yet takes hundreds of thousands of dollars from the insurance companies. It is so ironic that the governor's wife, Maria Shriver, is the daughter of Sargent Shriver, one of the architects of the 1960s War on Poverty. Shriver devoted a substantial part of his life toward the goal of creating a better life for the less fortunate members of society. In California, the Terminator has for injured workers terminated the Shriver dream of compassion for society's less fortunate. But, of course, injured workers don't contribute money like the special interests Arnold loves, such as the insurance industry!

Injured workers should check out <http://www.arnoldwatch.org/> and Voters Injured at Work ([viaw.org](http://viaw.org)).

Julius Young is an attorney with Boxer & Gerson. The firm can be reached at (510) 835-8870.





## 'Market' leaves US at risk of flu epidemic

President George W. Bush has taken belated notice of the flu threat and has pledged to take action. But in his recently-announced initiative, Bush avoided discussing why the United States allowed itself to become totally dependent on foreign manufacture of flu vaccine-sources that would be unable to respond to a major flu outbreak.

This lapse in national security is potentially more dangerous to the US population than other recent policy failures by the Bush Administration, including the lack of preparedness at FEMA prior to Hurricane Katrina and the refusal to heed intelligence reports about Osama bin Laden prior to the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington.

Worldwide flu pandemics have struck in 1918, 1957 and 1968. Scientists have long warned the next pandemic is a matter of "when," not "if."

The appearance of the H5N1 virus and the high mortality rate among the small number of known cases finally prompted a Washington response. US Health Secretary Michael Leavitt last month toured Southeast Asian nations hit by the virus, and Bush called for more vigor-

ous efforts to prepare for a pandemic.

But according to Paul Starr, writing in *The American Prospect*, the reason the United States is so woefully unprepared to meet the threat is that the Bush Administration has a blind allegiance to market-based solutions for any and all problems.

Unfortunately, the "market" has not proved itself capable of responding to the flu threat. Vaccines often are not an attractive product for pharmaceutical companies. Unlike the most profitable drugs, which need to be taken frequently, a vaccine is typically given only once or a few times. Every year, because of mutations in the virus, the flu vaccine must be changed, and the past year's unsold inventory becomes worthless.

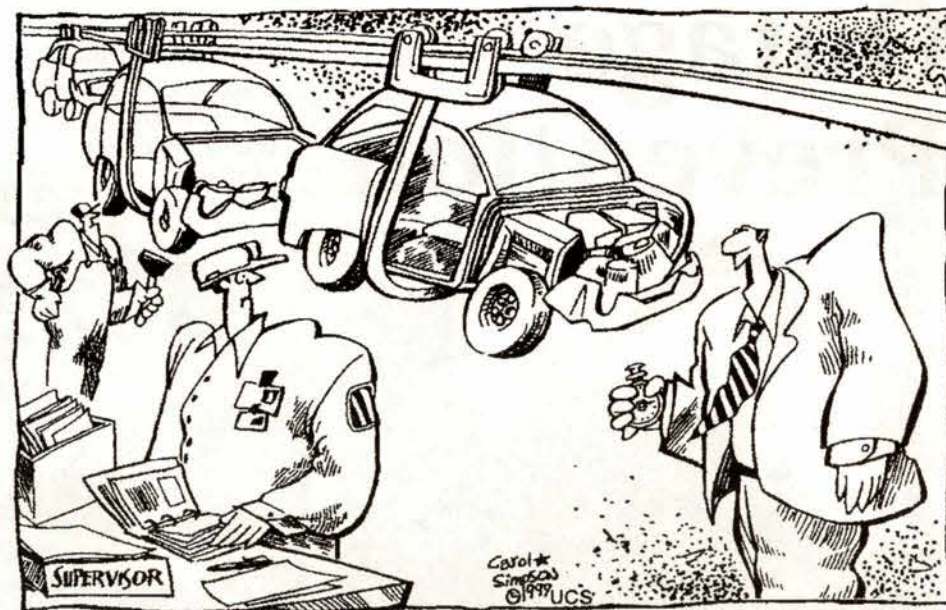
Preparing for a flu epidemic, according to Starr, is a situation where government has to provide the incentives-and direction-that the market "cannot be expected to generate on its own."

Protecting Americans from killer flu will require money-in short supply since Bush cut taxes for the rich and invaded Iraq-to launch a crash effort to develop new vaccine technologies and construction of new facilities to produce both vaccines and antiviral drugs.

"No one knows whether the H5N1 virus will mutate into a form transmissible from one person to another or, if it will, how much time we have left to prepare," says Starr. But we know from recent research that the 1918 virus was a bird flu, just like the H5N1 virus spreading across the world today.

By its vast expenditures on the occupation of Iraq and its narrow definition of "national security," the Bush Administration has unwittingly left Americans more vulnerable to threats on other fronts.

The flu pandemic of 1918 killed 50 to 100 million people worldwide.



"You haven't had a serious accident in 8 months, so I know the employees could be working faster."

## Seasons Change

The change in season is upon us. Depending on where you live it can vary from severe winter storms to mild yet wet weather.

It is during this time of year, due to the drastic change in weather, that we see a rise in "slip and fall" accidents. Although it might seem difficult to avoid these kinds of accidents, it really isn't.

A simple quick solution is to treat yourself to a new pair of work boots. Boots with good soles have better traction on icy wet surfaces. Besides the comfort they also keep your feet warm and dry.

But warm dry feet may not be enough to ward off the cold and flu-type symptoms that appear during this season. As the season changes, and people spend more time indoors, colds are more easily spread. It is extremely important to choose the proper cold and flu medicine. Many of these prod-

ucts contain alcohol or other ingredients that can make you drowsy. Make sure your cold or flu remedy is for daytime use so that you can keep a clear head when using heavy equipment.

By following these simple safety tips we can have a safer and happier holiday season.

Gil Suarez

## Local 1245 Safety Committee

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee are Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; David Vipond, Frontier; 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 Howard Stiefer.



Emergency hospital during 1918 influenza epidemic, Camp Funston, Kansas.

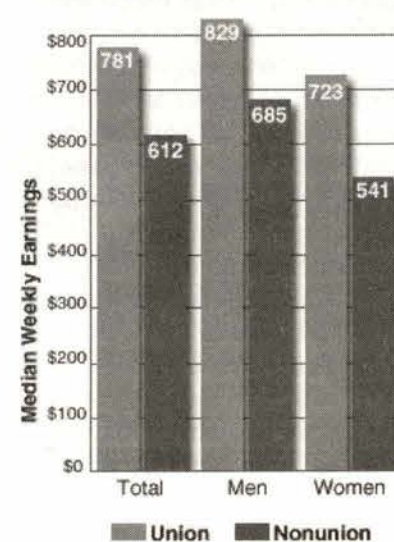
Courtesy of the National Museum of Health and Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, D.C., Image NCP 1603

UtilityReporter

## WORKING Women

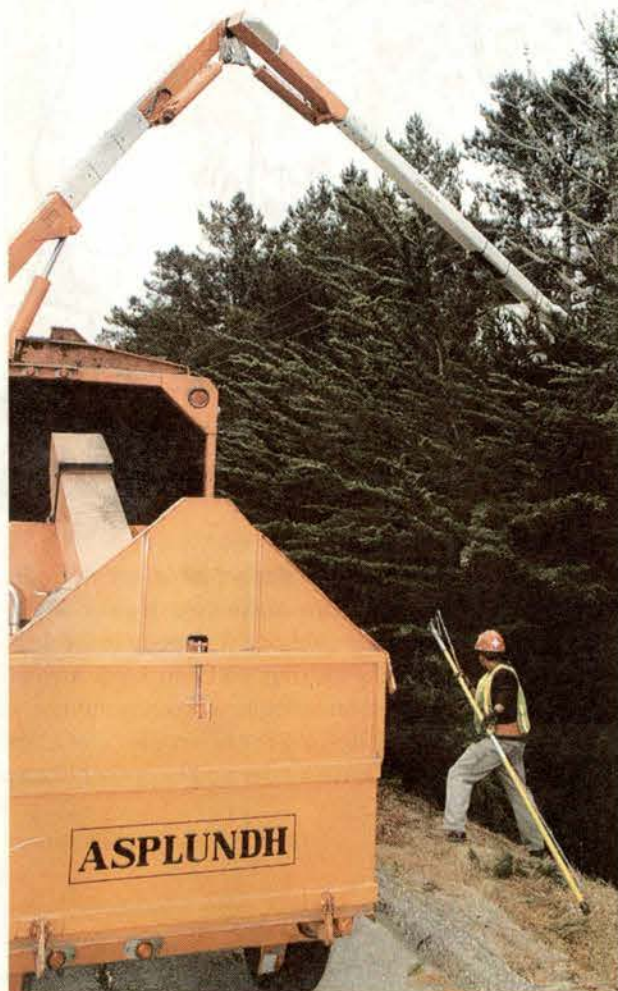
### Unions Raises Wages—Especially for Women

Union membership helps raise workers' pay and narrow the income gap that disadvantages women. Union workers earn 28% more than nonunion workers, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Their median weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary work were \$781 in 2004, compared with \$612 for their nonunion counterparts. The union wage benefit is even greater for women. Union women earn 34% more than nonunion women.





# Outage Prevention



In the coastal hills where families roam this time of year to find good deals on pumpkins, Line Clearance Tree Trimmers for Asplundh Tree Expert Co. were busy clearing Cypress and Pine along a mile stretch of electric lines near Pescadero, Ca. last month. If not for their efforts, trees would eventually grow into the lines and possibly cause the sort of outages that spoil Halloween celebrations or Thanksgiving dinners. These Local 1245 members, forming a super crew of four on the day the Utility Reporter visited, worked out of the bucket and also did some climbing.

Photos by Eric Wolfe

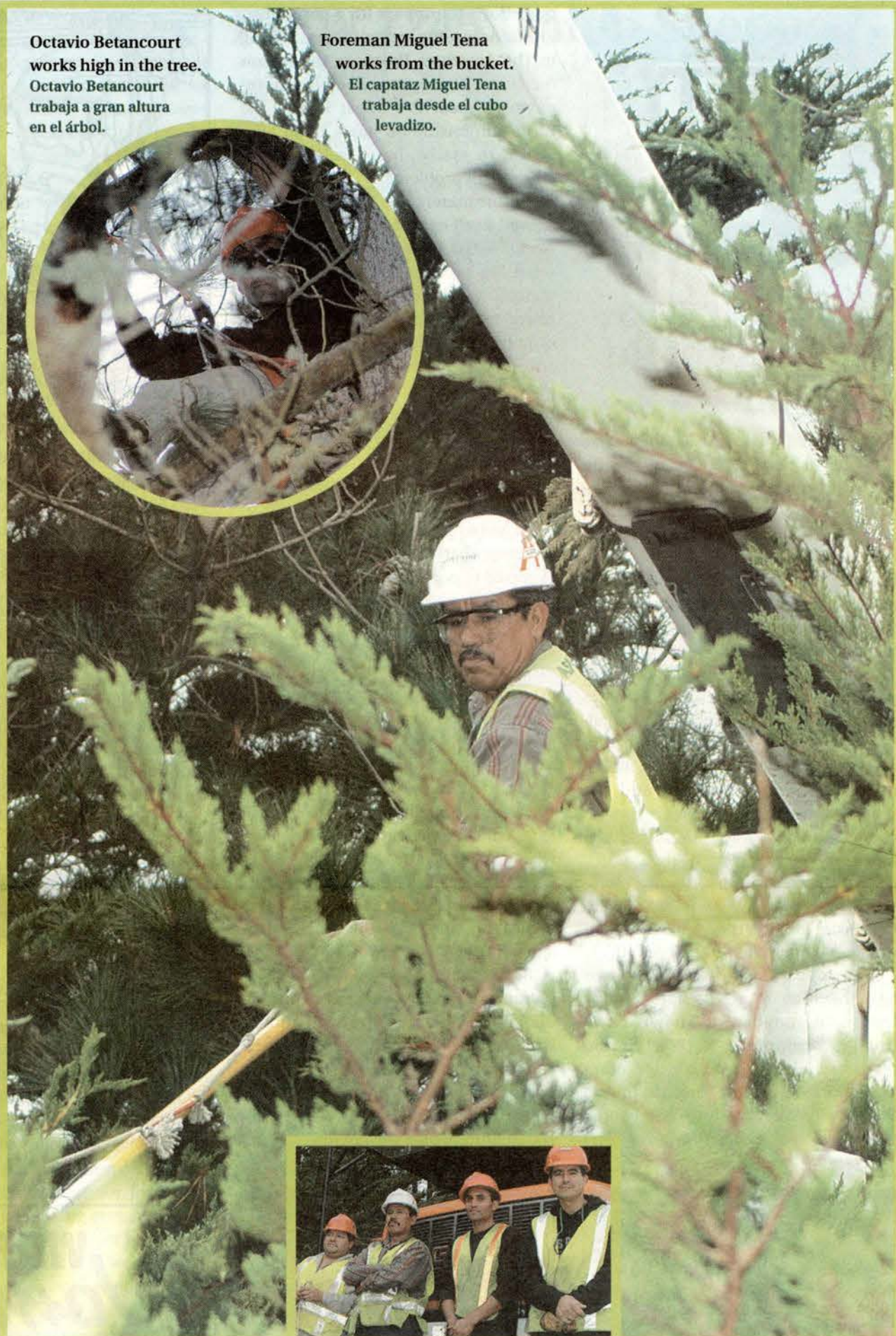
Working on the crew are, from left, Jose Medina, Groundman; Miguel Tena, Foreman; Octavio Betancourt, Foreman; and Gerardo Magana, Climber ACA. Trabajando en este grupo están, de izquierda a derecha, José Medina, asistente de tierra, Miguel Tena, capataz, Octavio Betancourt, capataz y Gerardo Magana, trepador ACA.

## Prevención de fallas eléctricas

En las lomas de la región costanera, a donde las familias viajan en esta temporada del año para comprar calabazas a bajo precio, los podadores de árboles de limpieza de líneas de Asplundh Tree Expert Co. estaban muy ocupados el mes pasado trabajando a lo largo de un trecho de una milla de largo de líneas eléctricas, cerca de Pescadero, California. Si no fuera por sus esfuerzos, las ramas de los árboles llegarían a crecer y tocar las líneas, creando posiblemente el tipo de falla eléctrica que afecta tanto las celebraciones de Halloween o las cenas del día de acción de gracias. Estos miembros del Local 1245, que formaban un grupo de cuatro el día que visitó el reportero de la revista Utility Reporter, trabajaban desde un cubo levadizo y también a veces trepaban los árboles. Fotos por Eric Wolfe

Octavio Betancourt works high in the tree. Octavio Betancourt trabaja a gran altura en el árbol.

Foreman Miguel Tena works from the bucket. El capataz Miguel Tena trabaja desde el cubo levadizo.



Gerardo Magana, Climber ACA, feeds cut branches into the chipper. Gerardo Magana, trepador ACA, pone las ramas cortadas dentro de la máquina trituradora.



Groundman Jose Medina fishes for a cut branch tossed down by Miguel Tena. El asistente de tierra José Medina pasa las ramas cortadas a Gerardo Magana, para que las ponga dentro de la máquina trituradora.



Gerardo Magana uses a blower to clear debris from the highway. Gerardo Magana usa un soplador para limpiar las basuras de la carretera.