

From: Cherry, Brian K
Sent: 1/28/2013 8:25:10 PM
To: Autumn Pray (Autumn_Pray@gap.com); Marzia Zafar (marzia.zafar@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fwd: SF, OT - Gnomes Get Pardoned by Utility That Threatened Eviction

The Great Oz granted a reprieve. No need to make extra room at the inn.

Brian K. Cherry
PG&E Company
VP, Regulatory Relations
77 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA. 94105
(415) 973-4977

Begin forwarded message:

From: News Flash <newsflash@pge.com>
Date: January 28, 2013, 7:49:44 PM PST
To: Real time PG&E coverage {PG&E Internal - #PRIVATE#} <Newsflash-Real-Time@pge.com>
Subject: SF, OT - Gnomes Get Pardoned by Utility That Threatened Eviction
Reply-To: <newsflash@pge.com>

The *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Oakland Tribune* published a stories about painted gnomes that have been popping up around the Lake Merritt area of Oakland – including on power poles. Jason King, PG&E spokesman, was quoted about PG&E's commitment to find homes for the small paintings of gnomes.

Gnomes Get Pardoned by Utility That Threatened Eviction

By Carolyn James

San Francisco Chronicle, January 28, 2013

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Gnomes-get-pardoned-by-utility-that-threatened-4230428.php>

There was joy Monday in Middle Earth, and Oakland, too: Pacific Gas and Electric officials have changed their minds and will not evict thousands of gnomes nestling on their utility poles.

The reprieve came shortly after the utility announced it would remove the diminutive, hand-painted creatures that have been proliferating around Lake Merritt for six months on the grounds they were "compromising" utility equipment.

"We received a great deal of public feedback, so we're declaring the poles gnome-man's land. We're not going to remove them," **PG&E spokesman Jason King** said. "We're committed to working with the artist, the city and the community to find a peaceful resolution."

The gnome paintings, which have been screwed to the base of utility poles in Haddon Hill, Adam's Point and other neighborhoods, have invoked much love in a beleaguered city that's been struggling with the state's worst violent crime problem. They've inspired dozens of delighted blog posts and tweets, and have been the talk of nearly every cafe and preschool.

Children's Fairyland, on the banks of Lake Merritt, even offered the artist a lifetime golden key, which the artist politely declined because he didn't want to risk his anonymity.

After The Chronicle reported Sunday that PG&E had threatened to remove the gnome paintings, the gnomes' creator begged the utility for clemency.

"I'm a resident of Oakland who simply thought this would be a nice way to make my fellow Oaklanders happy and proud," he wrote in an e-mail

to PG&E. "We see too much garbage on the streets here, too many shootings, too much violence, not enough that makes one stop and smile. ...They were meant to be an ongoing gift to my community."

He also called City Hall, hoping officials could grant political asylum. The city responded by calling an emergency meeting with PG&E staff members.

"We are holding peace talks in a secret mushroom patch near the Rose Garden," said Zac Wald, chief of staff to City Councilwoman Lynette McElhaney, whose district includes the preponderance of the gnome population. "People love the gnomes, and they are District 3 residents."

The artist, a house painter by trade, wanted to remain anonymous because he's not seeking publicity for himself. He just wants to paint gnomes, affix them to utility poles and watch people's reactions.

Each night he roams the Oakland streets with his terrier, installing 10 or more new gnomes per outing. So far, he's "gnomed" neighborhoods as far flung as Jack London Square and the area around Highland Hospital.

He said there are more than 2,300 gnomes in Oakland.

Ultimately, PG&E wants to see the gnomes migrate to other locales, but is not going to forcibly relocate them, **King** said.

Staff at Fairyland were ecstatic at the PG&E pardon.

"We are thrilled that a giant organization like PG&E can appreciate a little magic," said Shannon Taylor, Fairyland art director. "It's great that so

many people came together to try and save these little creatures."

PG&E: Utility Poles Are Gnome-Man's Land in Oakland

By Natalie Neysa Alund

Oakland Tribune, January 29, 2013

http://www.insidebayarea.com/oaklandtribune/localnews/ci_22468823/pg-e-utility-poles-are-gnome-mans-land

It's easier to catch a gnome than you think. Especially if you're in the right spot in Oakland these days.

Whimsical painted gnomes have been cropping up around Oakland, in neighborhoods near Lake Merritt. Yes, hundreds of little men in pointy hats and boots, painted on pieces of wood and then affixed to utility poles and buildings in the area are delighting residents and annoying PG&E. So much so, that the utility company plans to remove the gnomes from its property -- and the mysterious artist who created them is stepping in to help relocate his artwork.

The hand-painted mini portraits, which began popping up last year, are often screwed to the base of utility poles while others can be spotted outside the front doors of local businesses just off Merritt Boulevard. The tiny creatures painted on pieces of six-inch blocks of wood wear red hats, white beards and brown boots. Some are accompanied by a mushroom.

More than 2,000 gnomes are now hanging around the area -- many of them on PG&E utility poles, said **Jason King**, spokesman for the agency. The utility says it will remove the small pieces of art from its

poles so others don't repeat the pattern with other objects that could jeopardize the integrity of the equipment.

But some residents aren't taking too kindly to PG&E's plans to evict the happy little fellows.

"They're quirky," said Trisha Mallicoat, 31, of Oakland, as she stared at gnome screwed into a utility pole at Wesley and Wayne avenues. "A harmless creative outlet that makes Oakland funky."

Francis Heath, a local real estate broker, said they are mysterious, cute creatures that don't bother anyone.

"We received an outpouring of support from the community today to save the gnomes and that's what we're going to do," **King** said Monday.

"People really enjoy them. We just need to find a more appropriate spot. Power poles are 'gnome-man's land,' so we want to find a place where people can enjoy them in their current neighborhood. They'll remain in place until we work with city officials and community groups to find them new homes."

He also said the artist, who wishes to remain anonymous, contacted **PG&E** on Monday.

"He told us he has a map of the installation points and said he'd help us with moving them once we have a plan for where they will be relocated," **King** said.

The artist told the agency he began putting up the art in January 2012 to brighten the neighborhood.

One person surmised they have an even more benevolent purpose.

"Maybe they are there to protect the gardens in the area. Or maybe to protect the people of Oakland," said 46-year-old Oakland resident Day Pollini.

Garden gnomes do have a proud history as protectors of property, notes author Marcus B. Mennes, who wrote "The Garden Gnome Book."

Lawn and garden ornaments date back to the Roman period, Mennes wrote, and most of the early ornaments were religious in nature or meant to be guardians of the property.

"I think that was probably the incentive of the person who put them up," Pollini said.

Anyone who wants to adopt a gnome or has an idea of where they'd like to see them moved to can contact PG&E at [Twitter.com/PGE4Me](https://twitter.com/PGE4Me) or on Facebook via [Facebook.com/pacificgasandelectric](https://facebook.com/pacificgasandelectric).

This e-mail contains copyrighted material and is intended for the use of the individual to which it is addressed. No redistribution or rebroadcast of the contents of this email is permitted. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately and permanently delete the original and any electronic or hard copy of this e-mail.