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June 16, 1989

Congress hears 'devastating' RSI issue

Tacoma unions' message closes on 12K Sound to Narrows finish

Gary Larson of the Pacific Northwest Guild unit at the Tacoma News Tribune nears finish line of 12-kilometer Sound to Narrows run June 10 holding aloft message from memberships of the four unions working without contracts since the McClatchy chain bought the daily in June 1986. The News Tribune sponsors the run. Dozens of members of the Guild, Teamsters, Communications Workers Mailers, Graphic Communications Pressmen and other area unions participated in the annual race and/or festivities surrounding it. Most, like Larson, wore "almost official" T-shirts proclaiming that "The McClatchy News Tribune runs because we do/The News Tribune employees." They also distributed leaflets explaining management's bargaining demands. Running alongside Larson is his spouse, Barbara Klein, a member of the Tacoma Education Assn.



Lexington copy editor tells of plight

Washington—A Guild-represented copy editor afflicted with carpal tunnel syndrome has described her pain and her plight to a congressional committee studying the "devastating impact" of repetitive motion disorders, including those related to work on VDTs.

Rebecca Krieg, testifying in hand splints June 6 before the House Subcommittee on Employment and Housing, said she was forced to leave her job at the Lexington Herald-Leader for three months when her right hand "just wouldn't work anymore."

She said the hand became so weak she "could not even hold a coffee cup," much less carry groceries or perform simple housework.

Krieg and TNG Director of Research and Information David J. Eisen, representing newspaper industry employees, were among 11 witnesses who gave sometimes emotional testimony during a four-hour hearing on the "dramatic rise in repetitive motion injuries and OSHA's response."

Now diagnosed as having carpal tunnel syndrome in both wrists and a nerve disorder called thoracic outlet syndrome in both shoulders, Krieg faces an uncertain future in journalism. She can no longer do keyboard editing and has been reassigned to a makeup editor position (requiring no typing) at the Knight-Ridder Herald-Leader.

She testified that initially her fingers "turned cold and purple" on the job, and that doctors were baffled by the symptoms. One doctor said pain in the right shoulder appeared to be a "lifetime thing"

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Financial priorities top convention agenda

Albany, N.Y.—Chief issues facing delegates to TNG's 56th Annual Convention here June 19-23 appeared to center in proposals for shifts in the way the union finances the priority areas of organizing and contracts' defense

and for economies in other areas, including the frequency of future conventions.

Some 200 delegates and alternates representing more than 50 Guild locals in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico were ex-

pected to take part in the week-long meeting at the Desmond Americana Inn here.

Scheduled speakers included New York Gov. Mario Cuomo (Wednesday morning, June 21) and Ed Caldwell of WGRZ-TV in

Buffalo, representing the ad-hoc Journalists Committee to Free Terry Anderson, the Associated Press correspondent who has been held captive in Lebanon since March 16, 1986.

One of the proposals for belt tightening, being put before the convention by the Cleveland Guild's six delegates, would make this year's meeting the last of the annual policy-making sessions, converting the union to biennial conventions instead.

A proposal for biennial conventions was rejected in April by TNG's Int'l Executive Board, on a 9-7 vote, as it was assembling

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Hamilton unit strikes over pay equity

Hamilton, Ont.—A Guild-represented group of 95 part-time mailroom employees, nearly all of them women, struck the Hamilton Spectator early June 9 over a demand for pay equity with male employees doing comparable work in the paper's delivery department.

The Spectator mailroom unit of the Southern Ontario Guild set round-the-clock picketing at the Southam-chain evening daily and launched a boycott campaign among the Spectator's 140,000 subscribers after talks on a new contract broke down.

The Guild also appealed to other unions and women's rights groups to support the strike, believed to be the first in Canada directly triggered by a pay-equity issue.

Members of the Guild's Spectator newsroom unit joined picket

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Keyboards triggering Information Age plague?

JOURNALISTS LONG have accepted dangerous assignments during war, natural disasters and social and political upheavals, considering them part of the business.

They know the stress of facing deadlines, irregular hours and intimidating subjects. They are susceptible to alcoholism and heart attacks.

It's unlikely, however, that journalists, and their co-workers in other newspaper departments, have faced in great numbers anything as insidious as the dangers of repetitive strain injury, or RSI, associated with day-to-day use of computer-linked VDT keyboards.

Various RSI disorders strike the hands, wrists, arms, shoulders and necks of office workers with tingling or piercing pains, sending some home for extended rest and

New 'black lung'?

recuperation, and others to hospital operating rooms.

Although the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not keep figures on VDT-related injuries as such, disorders associated with repeated trauma in all industries ranked No. 1 in 1986 and 1987, and increased from 45,500 to 72,900 in one year. These figures represent employer reports only, and are thought by some occupational safety experts to represent only a fraction of the total.

There is growing evidence that prolonged VDT keyboarding may be dangerous to delicate body joints. Computers are "getting

on people's nerves" in a very real and sinister way.

With cases proliferating among the nation's 28 million work-place VDT users, RSI has been dubbed "the industrial disease of the Information Age."

In some circles, VDT has come to mean "video display trauma," rather than video display terminal. Manchester Guild President Tom Thibeault calls it "the black lung disease of the '80s and '90s."

The RSI phenomenon has even spread to video-game-playing teens, some of whom have developed "Space Invader's wrist," according to a National Safety Council publication.

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Lexington's Rebecca Krieg
Testifying in splints.

Mailers at Hamilton Spectator on strike over pay-equity issue

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lines during off-duty hours, but were prevented from joining the strike by a separate contract that runs through Dec. 31, TNG Canadian Director John Bryant said.

Local Representative Barry Stephens and Bryant are assisting the local in the dispute.

The only other organized Spectator employees are its full-time mailers, printers, press operators and delivery department workers. They are represented by the Graphic Communications union and have not joined the strike.

The paper continued publication, "but we're certainly slowing them down; the timing of the paper has been disrupted," Bryant said.

It was not known if the company had hired replacements for the strikers, but Bryant said the Guild received reports that "wives and children of management people had been hired as fill-ins, at up to \$25 per hour."

Experienced part-time mailers were receiving \$7.20 an hour under terms of the Guild contract that expired Oct. 6, 1988. It was SONG's second contract for the group.

The Guild sought an immediate \$2 "pay-equity" boost, plus incremental increases, to bring the hourly rate nearer to that of part-time helper-loaders in the delivery department, who earn slightly over \$12 an hour, Bryant said. Experienced full-time mailers earn as much as \$16 per hour.

The company's final offer included a \$1.13 raise in three increments over two years. Unit members rejected that proposal, 70-1, at 11:30 p.m. June 8, a half hour before picket lines went up.

The part-time mailers, who work a maximum of 24 hours per week, insert advertising sections and circulars as papers come off conveyor belts. The Guild maintains the duties are comparable to those of the predominantly male group of helper-loaders.

"The women certainly deserve a lot more pay," said Bryant, who noted that there are only about a

half-dozen men in the unit. In addition to picketing, Guild members distributed subscription-cancellation cards at employee entrances to the Stelco steel plant, the first step in the boycott effort.

"We plan to keep hitting them in the pocketbook," Bryant said.

Hamilton is an industrialized port city of 300,000 on the western crescent of Lake Ontario about 30 miles south of Toronto and 50 miles northwest of Buffalo, N.Y. It has a concentration of unionized workers and is considered a strong "labor town."

Bryant said the company also is "somewhat sensitive on the pay-equity issue," one in which Ontario has taken a leading role.

The province approved landmark legislation in 1987 that re-

quires companies with more than 500 employees to have a pay-equity plan in place by Jan. 1, 1990.

At the Spectator, a committee of Guild and management representatives has been working on such a plan involving the part-time mailers and helper-loaders.

Twelve negotiating sessions over seven months failed to produce an agreement, and the unit voted May 9 to set a June 8 strike deadline and to authorize its bargaining committee to call a strike if an equitable settlement was not forthcoming.

TNG sanctioned the walkout, making the mailers eligible for strike benefits, after the Southern Ontario Guild sought such approval May 23.

Financial priorities top TNG Convention agenda

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its package of recommendations to the convention. Thereafter, one district council, the Western, endorsed switching to biennial meetings while another, the Middle-Atlantic, endorsed retention of annual sessions.

Delegates also will nominate candidates for all 16 of the union's international offices, including international chairperson, 13 vice presidents and the two full-time positions of president and secretary-treasurer.

Going into the convention, 15 of the incumbents had announced plans to seek re-election, while the 16th was mum. There were no other announced candidates for any of the offices. Uncontested nominees will be declared elected by the convention. Contests will be resolved by membership vote late in the summer.

On financing the Guild's operations for the 1990s, the IEB is recommending "that delegates approve dedication of 10-percent of TNG's regular, general-fund income to organizing. TNG's Special Organizing Fund has been supported for the last 15 months by

divisions of Defense Fund interest earnings.

Defense Fund interest would remain in the fund to help support such activities as "alternative strategies," short of strikes, to seek to elicit equitable resolutions of disputes with recalcitrant publishers. At the same time, the Defense Fund also would be supported through dedication of 5 percent of general fund income, rather than as now through a 20-percent apportionment of per-capita payments.

As an optional approach, the IEB also is supporting recommendations of a Special Guild Organizing Committee that would continue diversion of Defense Fund interest to the organizing fund through June 1991 and also increase per-capita payments by an extra \$1—in 25-cent increments at six-month intervals—with the new funds going exclusively to organizing.

At the same time the IEB is recommending that TNG tighten its operating belt by cutting the board's own meetings to three a year, from four, for an estimated saving of \$23,000, and reducing

Sac'to Victims Fund tops \$102,700

Sacramento—The Northern California Guild reports receipt of contributions totaling \$102,782 for its Sacramento Union Victims' Fund through June 2, with \$6,982 received since Feb. 25.

The fund was established to replace wages and benefits lost to the four-member Guild bargaining committee fired by the Richard Mellon Scaife-daily in mid-October of 1987. The company has appealed to federal court a ruling by the National Labor Relations Board last Oct. 31 upholding an earlier finding by an administrative law judge that the firings were illegal and ordering the four rehired.

Previously unreported contributions to the fund include:

Bristol Guild	\$ 20.00	—Modesto Bee unit	96.80
Brockton Guild	150.00	—Oakland Tribune unit	100.00
Central Valley Typographical Union	43.00	—Retiree-unit members	184.00
Eugene Guild	100.00	—Sacramento Bee unit	110.00
Great Falls Guild	25.00	—San Diego Guild unit	45.00
Hawaii Guild	500.00	San Joaquin Labor Council	100.00
Marin County Council	25.00	San Jose Guild	500.00
Northern California Guild	741.00	Stanislaus & Tuolumne Central Labor Council	25.00
—Fresno Bee unit	35.00	TNG staff (checkoff)	1,052.00
—Examiner unit	125.00	Youngstown Guild	300.00
—Newspaper Agency unit	30.00		

The Modesto Bee unit total includes funds raised in a garage sale. Contributions should be addressed to: The Victims Fund, c/o The Newspaper Guild, 1330 21st St., Sacramento, Calif. 95814.

the frequency of publication of the Guild Reporter by four issues a year, to a minimum of 18, saving an estimated \$36,000.

The Cleveland proposal for biennial conventions, advanced by the local's convention delegation and endorsed by its executive board late in May, also would mandate that in non-convention years both the IEB and district councils meet at least once per quarter to maintain "contact and communication" between locals and the international. It notes estimated annual savings of \$250,000 to locals and TNG combined.

Several earlier conventions, including last year's, have rejected proposals for biennial conventions put forth from various quarters, including the IEB as recently as 1985. In 1985 delegates also rejected by more than 2-1 in a roll call a proposal to submit the question to Guild-wide referendum.

Other IEB recommendations to the convention include calls for a push for increasing expedited arbitration provisions for the resolution of disputes under Guild contracts and for increased efforts to

combat a perceived increase in discrimination by the news industry against persons 40 and over, in hiring, promotions and pay.

Following are the incumbent TNG office holders who have announced that they will seek re-election:

President Charles Dale, Secretary-Treasurer John C. Edgington and Int'l Chairperson Peter E. McLaughlin.

At-large Vice Presidents Robert C. Holt, Jr., David M. Mulcahy, Carol D. Rothman, Marie A. Shellock, Stanley J. Souza and Gene Turner.

Regional Vice Presidents David M. Rousseau (U.S. Northeast), Faye McCracken (U.S. South and Puerto Rico), Luther P. Jackson, 3rd (Midwest), Larry D. Hatfield (U.S. West), Richard J. Bradow (New York City and environs), and Lee C. Clifford (Eastern Canada).

Vice President Doug M. Louth (Canada West) said he would make his intentions known before the convention's final day, when nominations are scheduled.

Dan Zeidler assigned as representative in Canada

Silver Spring, Md. — Dan Zeidler, a veteran leader of the Canadian Wire Service Guild and its branch at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., will become the Guild's Int'l Representative assigned to Canada effective July 17, TNG President Charles Dale announced June 12.

Zeidler, 37, will work out of his home in Vancouver, where he has been a reporter-editor with the CBC radio and television news bureau for most of the last 13 years, with a stint also as a senior editor, at the CBC's bureau in Edmonton, Alta.

Currently and for the last five years he has held the office of director of the nation-wide Guild local's CBC branch and has served on the local's last two CBC bargaining committees, including the one currently seeking renewal of the contract expired since last Nov. 22.

Zeidler has been a Guild member since the summer of 1968 when he went to work for CBC as a relief copy clerk while going to school. He became a member of

CBC's reporting staff in Thunder Bay, Ont., in 1972, the same year he and 11 other members of his local became known as the "dirty dozen" for honoring Broadcast Engineers & Technicians picket lines in the face of a court order that Guild members not do so.

In 1972 he also was named to his first formal leadership position in the Guild, shop steward, one he held while also serving as chairperson of the Guild CBC unit in British Columbia until becoming branch director.

He is a delegate to TNG's 1989 Convention and has represented his local at each of the last three years' policy-making sessions, as well.

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Firing of UPI writer spurs coast-to-coast protest

Dozens of United Press Int'l staffers and others, many wearing symbolic gas, picketed at bureaus of the wire service across the United States June 3 in support of Gregory Gordon, who was fired by UPI for refusing a management demand that he submit to it the manuscript of a book about the company he is writing.

The Wire Service Guild is taking the firing to arbitration on grounds that it was done in blatant disregard for the job security provisions of its contract with UPI, which expires July 1. Management told the union it wanted to review the manuscript to make sure it doesn't put the company in a bad light.

A veteran reporter who has been nominated for Pulitzer prizes eight times by UPI, Gordon visited the estimated four-dozen who picketed outside UPI's Washington headquarters.

In Detroit, former United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser

stopped by the picket line to offer encouragement.

There also were picket lines in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Miami and several smaller cities.

Others on the Washington picket line included the Associated Press's Supreme Court reporters, Richard Carelli and Jim Rubin, Wire Service Guild President Kevin Keane and the other members of the local's UPI bargaining committee, plus William H. McLeman and Phillip M. Kadis, respectively TNG's director of field operations and of education.

Demonstrators' signs referred both to Gordon's firing—"UPI, no friend of free press," "Employees denied free speech at UPI," for example—and to UPI's demands for major retrogressions in a new Guild contract. One Washington staffer carried a long, bare pole topped with a tiny sign reading: "The new streamlined, market-dri-

ven Paul Steinle Xmas Tree." Steinle is UPI president. The company has proposed eliminating Christmas and other days as paid holidays.

"UPI is supposed to stand for freedom of the press, but the Gordon affair was handled as if he were a pesky whistle blower in some obscure government agency," said Jonathan Ferziger, who led a group of pickets through a rain storm in Albany.

Gordon and Ron Cohen, former UPI managing editor, now executive editor of Gannett News Service, have been collaborating on the book about the company's struggle to survive in recent years.

The company has been aware of the project since 1986, when then-UPI Chairman Luis Nogueles gave unqualified written permission for Gordon to proceed with the book.

In 1985 and 1986, UPI assigned Gordon to cover the company's difficulties, including the legal disputes between owner Mario Vazquez Rana and current UPI Chairman Earl W. Brian. Recently, he covered the Justice Dept.



SOME OF FOUR DOZEN PICKETS AT UPI-WASHINGTON
"Censored" photo on placard at left is Gregory Gordon, staffer fired June 3 for refusing to submit book manuscript to company.

U.S. antitrust chief urges approval of JOA in York

York, Pa.—A proposed joint operating agreement for York's two daily newspapers has been endorsed by the chief of the U.S. Justice Department's antitrust division.

Saying "the issue in this case was a close one," Michael Boudin recommended to Attorney General Dick Thornburgh that the York Daily Record and York Dispatch be given an antitrust exemption to allow merger of non-editorial operations.

The papers applied for the exemption Feb. 22, citing a provision of the 1970 Newspaper Preservation Act that allows such an arrangement for competing papers if one of them, alleged to be the

Record, is "in probable danger of financial failure."

The York Guild, representing about 130 employees at both papers, and two other unions originally opposed a merger. In exchange for representation rights for employees in Guild jurisdiction in the JOA, the Guild dropped its opposition [Guild Reporter, May 26].

The Guild also won guarantees for extra severance pay, extended medical benefits, career counseling and job-hunting services for employees losing their jobs in the merger.

Thornburgh is expected to rule on the matter by mid-July.

Interim pact raises Detroit rates \$22

Detroit—Three years after their last contract raises, Guild members at the Detroit Free Press and in the Detroit News maintenance unit have approved an interim one-year agreement providing \$22-a-week increases for employees at all levels of all classifications, retroactive to May 1.

The stop-gap settlement will expire April 30, 1990, or upon implementation of a proposed joint operating agreement between the News and Free Press, owned by the Gannett and Knight-Ridder chains, respectively. Guild contracts with both papers expired June 17, 1987.

The agreement also stipulates that all other contractual terms and conditions of employment remain unchanged.

The Detroit News editorial unit

did not approve the proposal, because of uncertainty about "terms and conditions." News management declared an impasse in bargaining last August and imposed conditions that included an employee-evaluation program and changes in Guild jurisdiction.

The nation's two largest newspaper groups have been seeking government permission to merge non-editorial operations since mid-1986, but legal challenges, including one that is before the U.S. Supreme Court, have delayed implementation despite approval by Edwin Meese when he was Attorney General. A high court decision is expected next spring.

The \$22 boost raises the top minimum for Detroit Free Press reporters, photographers, financial and copy editors, artists, and advertising copywriters to \$669.84; to \$674.74 for outside ad salespersons.

Other new top minimums at the Free Press include: \$583.29 for classified phone sales; \$445.61 for library reference clerks; \$636.54 for computer operators.

The new rate for experienced janitors at the News is \$482.78.

The agreement with the publishers was negotiated jointly by the Detroit Council of Newspaper Unions, which includes the Guild and locals of the Communication Workers and Graphic Communications unions.

Earlier, on June 5, another coalition of unions, led by Teamsters locals of drivers and mailers June 5 approved a nearly identical agreement, also providing across-the-board \$22 increases.

Worker's courage, Guild action help preserve \$10,417 bonuses

Tacoma, Wash.—Thanks to a classified salesperson's courage coupled with the Guild's active presence at the Morning News Tribune here, the salesperson has been paid the full \$10,417 in bonuses she earned for three months' sales under the company's unilaterally crafted pay and commission system.

Management had tried to limit her to bonuses that would have totaled one-fifth that amount.

At first, in February when she landed a big real estate account and other smaller new accounts that en-

titled her to a bonus of nearly \$3,000, more than double her \$350 weekly wage for the month, management said there was a \$700 limit on monthly bonus entitlements.

She pointed out, however, that there were no bonus limits in the pay system Pacific Northwest Guild members at the paper reluctantly voted to accept last November while they continued to bargain for an equitable, full contract with the McClatchy-chain daily. Not a Guild member herself, she informed a co-worker who was and who alerted the union to the situation.

Quickly realizing then that it could not change the rules without bargaining with the Guild, the company proposed at the next contract session that the bonus program be changed for all outside salespersons.

While conceding that the salesperson's new business (approximately \$7,300 in February) more than covered the bonus, a company representative called it "ludicrous" to pay that big a bonus to an employee with so low a base wage, the Guild reported.

The company proposed capping bonuses at 10 percent of qualifying revenue, then admitted under questioning that the cap would affect only the salesperson whose February sales touched off the whole discussion.

Later the company proposed limiting bonuses to 10 percent only in territories with monthly quotas below \$15,000, then admitted that

there was only one territory that fit that bill, too.

Before the first meeting, said Wayne Cahill, the Guild local's treasurer and full-time representative in Tacoma, company counsel told him to that "something awful had happened," that a salesperson had gotten a "windfall."

Meanwhile, the salesperson continued her sales push in March and April, earning a \$1,251 bonus in March (when she sold \$6,700) and \$6,212 in April (when she sold \$18,000).

At a bargaining session scheduled for mid-June, the Guild was to press again for a report on her May sales and bonus entitlement.

The Guild has been without a contract in Tacoma since McClatchy bought the News Tribune in June 1986.

The situation with the salesperson's bonus underscores the need for a contract, one member wrote in the unit's "Bulletin Board" newsletter for April, continuing:

"Unless we have all the rules written down, they are harder to enforce. Without a contract, the company can try to change the rule any time it wants. Without the Guild they could probably get away with it."

Meanwhile, McClatchy Newspapers' chief executive officer, Erwin Potts, reported to the company's stockholders meeting that the News Tribune's operating profits increased by more than 30 percent in 1988.

U.S. Committee to Protect Journalists GUILD MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Guild Local _____

Make check or money order for \$35 payable to:
Committee to Protect Journalists
16 West 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017

joining its efforts to aid journalists who have been beaten, arrested or abducted, simply because they were doing their jobs, Dale noted.

"We have supported the committee financially, worked with it to free Terry Anderson (the AP correspondent kidnapped in 1985 in Beirut) and often joined in its efforts to protect journalists harassed, imprisoned, tortured or threatened with death," Dale wrote.

CPJ membership entitles sup-

porters to the organization's periodicals, including the widely acclaimed "Attacks on the Press" annual report. The 1988 edition examines nearly 80 countries, with documentation on the 26 journalists who were killed and 90 who were physically attacked. More than 250 were arrested, and 23 foreign correspondents were expelled.

Other CPJ publications include the quarterly "CPJ Update" providing accounts of individual attacks, and the "Background," published every six weeks and covering press conditions in various countries. The 1989 issues cover the United Kingdom, Haiti, the Soviet Union, El Salvador and the Philippines.

Guild members may join by sending \$35 with the coupon below.

Membership in the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists costs \$20, and Guild members can join by sending a check to: Nick Fillmore, Executive Director, 97 Oakcrest Ave., Toronto, Ont. M4C 1B4.



Int'l Executive Board, post-convention meeting, June 23, Desmond American Inn, Albany.
Knight-Ridder-chain all-unions conference, June 25-26, Radisson Hotel, St. Paul.
Conference on Global Labor Solidarity, July 7-9, Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C.
Int'l Executive Board, fall meeting, Oct. 23-25, Montreal (tentative).
Southern Council of Guild Locals, fall meeting, Oct. 27, Delta Hotel, Ottawa.

Canadian District Council, fall meeting, Oct. 28-29, Delta Hotel, Ottawa.
Western District Council, fall meeting, Oct. 28-29, Eugene, Ore.
Great Lakes District Council, fall meeting, Nov. 4-5 (tentative), Indianapolis.
Midwest District Council, fall meeting, Nov. 11-12, Denver.
57th Annual Convention, June 25-29, 1990, Sheraton Centre Hotel, New York City.

Guild testifies as Congress probes 'dramatic rise' of RSI

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and that she could compensate by doing more work with her left hand.

Krieg, whose appearance before the committee was arranged by TNG, also testified that at least four other employees who operate VDTs in the Herald-Leader newsroom were suffering "some problems with their hands and arms."

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a disorder caused by injury to the median nerve where it passes through the wrist. It is manifested in tingling and numbness in the hand and fingers and can lead to loss of grip and other hand functions.

It is often associated with repeated flexing of the wrist, and physicians sometimes advise use of hand and wrist splints to reduce such movements.

Eisen testified that TNG has seen cases of repetitive injury "erupting all over the country" among its members in the past two years and that these may be only "the tip of the iceberg," since repetitive strain injuries have long gone unreported.

He said some publishers have been slow to recognize the problem, and he urged quick action by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration to deal with what some have called "the industrial disease of the Information Age."

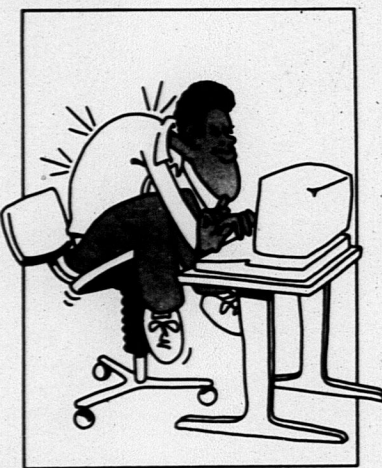
"It's time that OSHA took its head out of the sand and began to draft an ergonomic standard that would cover keyboard operators," Eisen told the committee.

"In the meanwhile, it's time that OSHA's force of inspection and ergonomics officers were beefed up so that it can adequately enforce the general-duty clause in RSI cases; it is a continuing disgrace that on the entire OSHA staff there is only a single fulltime ergonomics specialist."

ERGONOMICS is the study of work-place design that emphasizes the safety of workers. The Guild maintains that part of the cause of crippling repetitive strain injuries is inadequate equipment and furnishings, including tables and chairs in newsrooms.

Krieg and Eisen found a sympathetic ear in Subcommittee Chair Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), who opened the hearing by saying "cumulative trauma disorders have reached epidemic proportions" and closed it by blistering OSHA for not taking a stronger lead in attacking the problem.

Others testifying about their carpal tunnel injuries were Donna Bazemore, a former chicken trimmer at a Perdue Farms poultry-processing plant in Salisbury, Md.; Gloria Wilson, disabled after cutting catfish fillets for four years at the Delta Catfish plant at Indianola, Miss.; and Pat Thompson, a former supermarket cashier in Philadelphia who required surgery on both wrists after using computerized price-scanning equipment for six years.



—From TNG-CWA Health Guide for VDT Users

Furniture and equipment that force awkward movements is believed to be factor in RSI.

New RSI fact sheet goes to all locals

Silver Spring, Md.—A TNG fact sheet on repetitive strain injury, explaining RSI symptoms and treatment, has been prepared by TNG Research & Information Director David J. Eisen.

The four-page document, being distributed to all Guild locals, explains what changes in workplace equipment and duties will help reduce RSI incidence and what help can be obtained from two federal agencies, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

In the day's most poignant moment, Thompson said, "I never realized a cash register could cripple me," and then broke into tears when she told of not being able to hold her grandchildren. She also told of having "to sleep with my hands across my chest, like I was laid out in a coffin."

All four crippled workers, in answer to a question by Lantos, said they had never seen an OSHA inspector at their work place.

Lantos also pressed OSHA Acting Administrator Alan C. McMillan for an explanation of why the agency hasn't developed an ergonomic standard and industry-wide policies on repetitive strain injuries.

McMillan replied that although OSHA did not have a specific safety standard it had issued about 200 citations on ergonomic hazards found at both large and small corporations. The major citations have been issued against meatpacking companies.

LANTOS ALSO demanded to know why OSHA has only one ergonomist among its 2,400 employees and "hundreds of lawyers," perhaps as many as 500. (That figure was later clarified to mean 500 lawyers in the entire U.S. Labor Department, of which OSHA is a part.)

"Has it occurred to you that you could get by with 498 lawyers and treble the size of the ergonomist force?" Lantos asked. "Why doesn't the agency move without being pushed into moving by congressional committees?"

McMillan replied that the agency has more than 140 safety and health compliance officers trained in ergonomics issues in OSHA offices around the country.

Lantos, however, noted that these people had only brief training and joked about the rare status of Dr. Roger Stephens, the agency's only fulltime staff ergonomist.

"Does OSHA allow you to walk around without body guards?" Lantos asked facetiously. "You are incredibly precious; you are THEIR ergonomist. You should be encased in sort of an impenetrable plastic folder of some kind."

Returning to serious inquiry, Lantos asked Stephens if it was not "reasonable to expect a newspaper editorial room environment in which people can expect to lead normal lives?"

Stephens conceded that was a reasonable expectation.

Eisen testified that since the late 1970s the Guild had been concerned about the potential health hazards of computer VDTs, including adverse effects "on the vision and musculoskeletal systems of people who operated them."

"Newspaper publishers, echoing the computer manufacturers, greeted that concern, for the most part, with a combination of jeers and jokes," Eisen testified.

It wasn't until after a large number of keyboard operators in Australia began reporting crippling injuries to arms and wrists (mockingly called "Kangaroo Paw") in the mid-1980s that VDT-related injuries began to be taken seriously, although not widely

in the United States, Eisen testified.

IN 1987, WHEN 200 reporters and copy editors at the Los Angeles Times were forced to seek medical attention for repetitive strain injuries, the problem suddenly hit home for U.S. newspapers, Eisen said. Since then, TNG has become aware of scores of RSI cases at more than a dozen papers with Guild-represented workers, he added.

"It's time, finally, for universal recognition of RSI as a work-related injury fully compensable under workers' compensation—not just so that injured employees can receive their due but so that work performed under continuing physical suffering does not become the price of economic survival," Eisen asserted.

Also testifying was Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America, who called repetitive motion disorders a "truly catastrophic health issue" among the estimated 28 million VDT operators in America, 475,000 of them represented by the CWA.

AT LEAST one RSI-related firing has been reported at a non-Guild paper. Deborah Tager, a features editor, was terminated in December by the Concord (N.H.) Monitor during her second medical leave of absence. She is now receiving workers' compensation payments from the paper's insurance company.

Dena Bunis, a former Rochester Guild president who was stricken with RSI after moving to Newsday, has received more sympathetic treatment from her employer.

Bunis, a labor reporter who has been unable to type or drive since tenosynovitis incapacitated her in October, has been assigned to "light-duty work" in which she uses soft-touch phones and dictates her notes and stories as part of an investigative team.

The novel procedure was developed by Bunis and other RSI victims, and approved by management, at the Long Island, N.Y., daily, where about 40 staffers have been stricken.

Bunis, who led the Rochester Guild local from 1983 through 1988, is happy to be back at work, although her prognosis is uncertain and she knows she'll "never type 120 words a minutes again."

These reports on repetitive strain injury were written by John R. Small Assistant Editor

For Lexington's Krieg, no escape from RSI

Lexington, Ky.—No matter where she goes, Rebecca Krieg can't escape her repetitive strain injuries, not even in church.

"I can't hold the hymnal," says the Lexington Herald-Leader copy editor whose struggle with RSI might have tested the patience of Job.

In her present condition, Krieg, 35, who played piano as a youngster, could not play even an electronic church organ. About all she can do is sit with her splint-wrapped hands in her lap and pray.

Now diagnosed as having carpal tunnel syndrome in both wrists and thoracic outlet syndrome in both shoulders, Krieg has endured "searing pain" in her hands, arms and shoulders. The double-whammy RSI has forced her off her former job as a Herald-Leader Lifestyle slot person because she can't type.

She missed three months of work early this year, and returned May 13 as a makeup editor in the composing room, a job that requires no VDT work.



TNG'S DAVID J. EISEN DISPLAYS PHOTOS OF FRESNO RSI PATIENTS In photo visible on easel is Denise Rio, Fresno Bee Guild unit chairperson.

Quick diagnosis difficult on insidious disorders

FOR SOME victims of repetitive strain injury, getting an early, accurate diagnosis has been an ordeal in itself, according to several frustrated patients.

However, the blame need not be laid on the medical profession, especially when the ailments are tendinitis and carpal tunnel syndrome, two of the most common forms of RSI.

When found in the hand, tendinitis (inflammation of tendons and adjacent muscles) can lead to carpal tunnel (compression of the median nerve in the wrist), prompting doctors to call tendinitis "the real culprit."

The median nerve and finger-flexor tendons both run through a channel formed by the hand's carpal bones and the transverse carpal ligament. Tendinitis causes swelling that gradually pinches the nerve in the cramped channel. That, in essence, is carpal tunnel syndrome, the most-crippling RSI.

Diagnoses can be delayed because these insidious disorders often develop slowly and are not easily pinpointed in early stages.

"All that tingles in the hand is not carpal tunnel syndrome," says Dr. Rodney I. MacDonald, a San Diego orthopedic hand surgeon, who noted that tingling could be a sign of diabetes or spinal disk problems in the neck area.

The debilitating carpal tunnel disorder (compression of the median nerve in the wrist) has temporarily crippled her hands, and thoracic outlet syndrome (compression of nerves and blood vessels in the neck and shoulder) limits her upper body movements.

The combined disorders plague her at home, too. Simple housework is painful, and her apartment "is a mess." Doing laundry and folding clothes is difficult. She can lift only a few pounds.

If she wants to escape her apartment, she can't go jogging, play tennis or other sports—not even miniature golf. "What can you do where you don't use your hands?"

Taking a vacation seems out of the question. Packing and carrying luggage present major problems; holding a camera to take snapshots is a hassle. She has been forced to stop driving to her native Illinois to visit relatives and friends, whom she could no longer "even give a hug."

Thus, a patient developing RSI may have to wait until things get worse before doctors can be certain of the problem.

"The more severe the condition, the easier it is to diagnose," said Dr. Robert Harrison, chief of the Occupational Health Surveillance and Evaluation Program for the state of California.

Harrison said it's "not that difficult" to diagnose tendinitis and carpal tunnel after they pass their early stages, but "the milder forms are much harder to diagnose."

The danger in delayed diagnosis is that effects of severe, long-term carpal tunnel—including nerve damage and atrophy of lower thumb muscles—are usually irreversible, Harrison said. As treatment is delayed, damage may be increasing.

There are numerous factors that can bring on a case of carpal tunnel—wrist size, pregnancy, use of oral contraceptives, wrist fractures, auto accident injury, thyroid disorder, gout, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and highly repetitive hand motions according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

MacDonald, who says he has performed between 2,000 and 2,500 carpal tunnel operations (including several on employees

(Continued on Page 6)

RSI hit Krieg in mid-1987, about two years after she began VDT work (sometimes up to 12 hours a shift) at the Knight-Ridder paper in Lexington. After graduating from Lincoln (Ill.) Christian College, she had worked for seven years as a reporter/photographer/editor at the Lincoln Courier, a 17,000 circulation daily where all newsroom work was done on manual typewriters.

She has sought the help of five doctors. She has undergone a spectrum of "conservative treatments" that included steroid injections in both wrists, use of painkillers and muscle relaxants, electrical stimulation, massage, passive stretching exercises, and biofeedback—a relaxant technique.

So far, she has avoided surgery. Now wearing splints on both hands, Krieg has seen some progress and is gaining hope. "I can even do a whole sinkful of dishes now," she says.

RSI plagues Information Age; 'seductive' keyboard to blame?

(Continued from Page 1)

Since about 1900, repetitive strain injuries (also known as cumulative trauma disorders) have been recognized by the medical profession as an occupational hazard for assembly-line workers, fish slimmers, meat cutters, garment workers and laborers using high-power drills and pneumatic tools.

News workers, however, traditionally have had few fears about their physical well-being while hitting typewriter keys and rapidly moving soft-lead pencils through copy in relatively comfortable (if sometimes cluttered) offices.

The computer VDT, as it entered more and more newsrooms in the 1970s and 1980s, was embraced by reporters and copy editors, who liked its "user friendly" way of speeding up writing and editing.

FEARS WERE EXPRESSED about possible radiation dangers, but no one suspected that gentle key tapping (a much easier task than pounding manual typewriters) might be fraught with danger.

The first dramatic evidence in the United States came in 1987 when more than 200 of the Los Angeles Times 1,100 newsroom employees sought medical help on repetitive strain complaints.

That outbreak "did a good job of stirring up the pot," suddenly putting the news industry on alert, says Dr. Roger Stephens, an ergonomist (workplace design safety expert) for the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Numerous reports surfaced at papers across North America, including a major outbreak at the Fresno (Calif.) Bee, where 45 known cases exist among 230 employees.

The Fresno Guild recently filed a complaint with California-OSHA on behalf of 35 Guild-represented newsroom employees alleging the McClatchy-chain daily is violating the law by not remedying conditions causing the injuries [Guild Reporter, May 26].

According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, the most common forms of RSI are:

Tendinitis (including variations known as tenosynovitis and epicondylitis)—inflammation and swelling of tendons, tendon sheaths and nearby muscle tissue; thoracic outlet syndrome—compression of nerves in the neck and shoulder; Raynaud's syndrome (also called white hand syndrome)—impaired circulation caused by vibration shock or cold; and carpal tunnel syndrome—compression of the median nerve that gives feeling to most of the hand.

CARPAL TUNNEL can cripple hands, rendering them useless for typing or grasping objects heavier than a few ounces. It is increasing among VDT typists and has been reported among circulation district managers who must toss bundles or individual papers.

As OSHA's Stephens has observed: "If newspaper reporters lose the use of their hands, they're in big trouble."

Ergonomists believe VDTs are a factor in RSI because they encourage large-scale increases in rapid hand movements.

Dick Christian, a Buffalo News columnist who is awaiting diagnosis on his own RSI symptoms, agrees that soft-touch VDT keys create "electronic seduction" that keeps workers typing long after manual typewriters would have fatigued them.

"By and large, the hardest workers are the victims," Fresno Bee Personnel Director George C. Randol said in the June issue of "presstime," magazine of the ANPA.

If "workaholics," indeed, are at greatest risk, that would disprove earlier assertions

'If newspaper reporters lose the use of their hands, they're in big trouble.'

—OSHA ergonomist

that most complaints came from malingers.

In an effort to determine the extent of RSI among Guild-represented workers, the Guild Reporter surveyed all locals in April.

Results of the survey and information collected by TNG Director of Research & Information David J. Eisen indicate that RSI has hit employees of at least 17 of the 138 dailies with Guild representation.

About one-third of the responses indicated no incidence of RSI among members in their locals.

SURVEY INFORMATION was collected by local health and safety officers and represents only a sampling of RSI incidence, not a scientific study. The survey revealed the following:

✓ Fresno Bee—45 employees affected, 35 in the newsroom, several carpal tunnel cases; many employees wearing arm and wrist braces at work; complaint filed May 16 against employer by Northern California Guild alleging violations of California work-place safety laws.

✓ Buffalo News—4 severe cases, including 1 tendinitis, 2 carpal tunnel, 1 ulnar nerve entrapment; preliminary survey of newsroom employees by Buffalo Guild reveals nearly 40 complaints of hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, neck and back pains, and shocks from keyboards; comprehensive survey of audit, circulation, classified and editorial departments under way.

✓ San Diego Union and Tribune—Numerous cases, including 5 carpal tunnel (4 among circulation district managers), 1 epicondylitis; numerous employees wearing arm and wrist braces.

✓ Manchester Union Leader—3 cases,

For San Diego's Baldwin, throwing papers led to pain

San Diego, Calif.—For many Americans, one of life's small joys is opening a mayonnaise jar. Not so for Connie Baldwin, who can barely hold the mayo, much less twist the lid.

A circulation district manager for the San Diego Union and Tribune, Baldwin suffers from bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. She underwent surgery on her right wrist in February and on the left in April, and now she literally has "lost a lot of my grip."

An admitted one-time "couch potato," Baldwin, 39, now cannot lift even a 5-pound sack of potatoes. Her disabled hands strictly limit her to light-duty housework. If her three teenage sons want her to make sandwiches, it's up to them to open the mayonnaise.

Her condition apparently was brought on by eight years of highly repetitious acts in tossing and delivering 2,000 newspapers a day to carriers and individual homes. If a carrier failed to show up, she would fill in by "banding and throwing" 200 to 300 papers by hand on individual routes.

She developed carpal tunnel in the wrists and tendinitis in the elbow, starting about three years ago. Tingling sensations were accompanied by a tendency "to be dropping things continuously."

all carpal tunnel; several other undiagnosed complaints.

✓ Pittsburgh Post-Gazette—4 cases, including 1 carpal tunnel and 1 tendinitis; all cases clustered in features section of newsroom.

✓ Akron Beacon Journal—7 cases, including 2 of carpal tunnel and two of tendinitis; copy editors reporting the most symptoms.

✓ Modesto Bee—5 cases; some employees wearing arm braces after work hours.

✓ Lexington Herald-Leader—5 cases, including one employee with bilateral carpal tunnel (both wrists) and thoracic outlet syndrome in both shoulders, and another employee with carpal tunnel.

✓ Monterey Herald—1 case involving wrist injury; numerous reports of muscle and eye strain; two employees transferred after reporting back problems.

✓ Monessen (Pa.) Valley Independent—5 cases, mostly involving persistent, piercing neck and shoulder pains; no specific ailments diagnosed, but medication and exercises prescribed.

✓ San Jose Mercury News—1 recent case of epicondylitis; 4 carpal tunnel cases occurred about 5 years ago.

✓ Victoria Times-Colonist—4 cases, mainly complaints of chronic shoulder, neck, wrist and hand pains.

✓ San Francisco Chronicle—1 case, carpal tunnel.

✓ Seattle Times—1 case, carpal tunnel.

✓ Philadelphia Inquirer—2 cases, both carpal tunnel.

✓ Washington Post—2 cases, both carpal tunnel, in the circulation department.

✓ Indianapolis News—1 case, carpal tunnel.

The San Jose Mercury News is unusual because four cases of carpal tunnel were reported about five years ago among VDT users, but none since, according to San Jose Guild Administrative Officer William

(Continued on Page 6)

"I thought the tingling was basically old age, until I started dropping things. Then I thought, 'There's something definitely wrong here,'" Baldwin said.

She's been out of work since November, but hopes to return to work at the Copley-chain papers after a 12-week recovery period. She said a company policy requiring returning workers to be "100 percent fit" could be a barrier.

Other district managers at the papers have developed similar symptoms. A San Diego surgeon, Dr. Rodney I. MacDonald, estimates he has treated 10 to 15 employees of the company for carpal tunnel syndrome, "a majority of whom chose surgery."

MacDonald is a strong proponent of surgery for carpal tunnel, and told Baldwin that "99 percent of the people having surgery can go back to the job, but he's not quite certain about circulation."

Baldwin says two factors in repetitive strain injury for DMs are increased size of papers and vastly increased advertising inserts. She also says carriers are in short supply in Southern California, forcing DMs to do more single copy deliveries.

"Throwing the routes really activated" her RSI, she believes.

Quick diagnosis difficult on hidden RSI disorders

(Continued from Page 5)

at the San Diego Union and Tribune), calls repetitive motion the most prevalent cause today.

Generally, carpal tunnel diagnosis has included tests of hand movement and touch, tapping on the carpal area and a nerve-conduction test involving an electromyogram.

However, a new instrument called a "vibrometer" offers hope for earlier detection. The vibrometer examination is less costly and painful than an electromyogram, which requires placing needles in the patient.

Medical practitioners differ on the best course to follow after the carpal tunnel disorder is found, generally choosing between "conservative treatments" and surgery.

Non-surgical treatment includes bracing the wrist with splints to reduce flexion; use of heat and cold packs; steroid and non-steroid medication and injections; and special exercise.

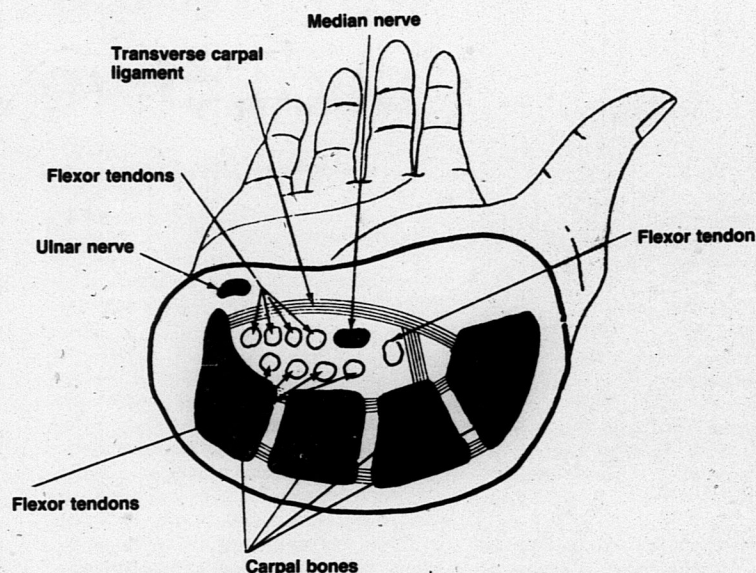
A manual published by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health urges conservative treatment first. "They should be the least costly and least painful, and they should have the fewest side effects," the manual says.

Harrison said he "used to think surgery was a pretty good mechanism for correcting it," but now he sees some benefit in conservative treatment, especially "holding the affected joint in a neutral position" with restraints.

Others have attacked non-surgical treatments, especially deep-heat treatments, wrist-strengthening exercises and use of Vitamin B-6 to correct hormonal imbalances among women, among whom carpal tunnel incidence is higher than among men.

MacDonald has little faith in conservative treatments, calling them "stopgap measures" or "interim solutions." He believes "a majority of patients have an evolution" of the ailment and eventually require surgery.

Cutaway view of wrist's carpal tunnel



A crippling form of repetitive strain injury occurs when finger flexor tendons running through carpal tunnel become inflamed and swollen, compressing median nerve providing sensation to hand.

—Graphic from National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health

VDT keyboards may be biting hands that knead them

(Continued from Page 5)

T. Davis, who testified before a California Assembly committee in 1984 about the outbreak.

Three of the carpal tunnel victims required surgery at that time, and one remains employed at the paper, Davis said.

Only one recent RSI case (tendinitis in elbow) has been reported to the San Jose Guild, although Executive Editor Robert D. Ingle said in ANPA's June issue of "presstime" that five cases were reported beginning late last year.

Some survey responses included poignant reports on RSI misery, and samples of that follow. A Post-Gazette reporter in her 30s wrote:

"In 1986, I began waking up every morning with pins and needles in my left

hand. The condition would come and go during my work day. Soon afterward, I began having some pain in the same wrist and forearm, but mostly the trouble was numbness.

"In spring 1987, my chiropractor diagnosed the trouble as carpal tunnel syndrome and prescribed a wrist brace. . . . I wore it 24 hours a day for nine months, and the condition finally disappeared. Lately, the numbness has been recurring on occasion."

LEXINGTON GUILD President Rita Gatton said Herald-Leader RSI victims have had a terribly, terribly hard time getting doctors that have heard of this." Gatton also said one worker "left with tears" when the pain frustrated her efforts

to remain productive.

Sharri Todd, 26 a classified ad taker for the Monessen Valley Independent spends her day taking calls on a headset and typing at a VDT, at 65-70 words per minute.

She and a co-worker have experienced very similar symptoms—neck, shoulder and arm pains and headaches "that just creep up on me. It's such a strange feeling, so hard to describe. Sometimes it makes me sick in my stomach," Todd said.

A physician who specializes in treating joint and muscle disorders could find no specific ailment; no joints were inflamed.

Still, the "strange pains" just keep popping up, several times a month. Todd has not missed work because of it and uses ice and warm packs to keep going. "I just come to work and live with it," she says.

Rick Schroeder, a Buffalo News reporter recently diagnosed as having carpal tunnel in his right wrist, said the ailment "kept me awake many nights" when the pain became persistent last fall. It now hurts him to type, drive, work in the garden, even do dishes.

Schroeder is head of the Buffalo Guild health and safety committee, which is conducting a survey of work site conditions in all departments. The committee also has proposed to management a comprehensive list of actions to prevent RSI, including "ergonomics training that explains how best to sit and hold hands and arms" and creation of "work stations that give maximum user flexibility."

SCHROEDER SAYS the paper has a "beautiful newsroom," filled with outdated equipment and furniture, including "cardboard boxes everywhere over VDT screens" because of glare problems.

The survey indicated that almost no employers have education programs or posted warnings about RSI. Notable exceptions are the Lexington Herald-Leader (educational seminars) and Monterey Herald (posted warnings).

There have been no reported firings of Guild-represented RSI victims unable to continue work, but some have been transferred to other jobs. The survey revealed no employer with a formal RSI-related transfer policy.

For Fresno's Finken, it's 'computer elbows'

Fresno, Calif.—Dee Anne Finken almost considers herself one of the "lucky ones" in a group of repetitive strain injury victims at the Fresno Bee.

She only has tendinitis, and as a part-time reporter has been able to take time off for recuperation of her "computer elbows."

One of her colleagues, Jeannie Borba, a reporter, underwent surgery June 8 for hand-crippling carpal tunnel syndrome.

Another Bee reporter, Arlene Morris-Versaw, was stricken with a case of RSI that forced her once-retired husband to return to work when her disability benefits ran out.

Morris-Versaw also suffered from a "fright reaction" to RSI that triggered muscle spasms in other parts of her body.

Copy editor Deborah McKown, whose two-year RSI ordeal is almost legendary in California, suffers from bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, meaning it affects both wrists. She has had surgery on both hands, missed many, many months of work while undergoing "endless therapy," and has testified at least twice before state legislative committees about her affliction.

Finken is one of 20 to 25 staffers diagnosed with tendinitis, the most common RSI form and one that can lead to the more severe carpal tunnel syndrome.

The mother of a 4-year-old boy, Finken is expecting her second child, a factor that increases her RSI risk.

To say she is one of the lucky ones at the Bee is not to make light of tendinitis,

a painful condition in her hands, arms and elbows. Since its onset in May 1988, it has caused her many sleepless nights, and early this year forced her to miss four weeks' work on her religion beat.

"There have been times when my son would look up at me, and I couldn't pick him up because my hands hurt so much."

She describes herself as "a bit of a workaholic" and believes her tendency "to try to get everything done in an 18-hour

week" contributed to development of RSI, which her doctor is "very convinced is job-related."

Finken has "religiously followed" doctors' orders to take work breaks, wear plastic splints, soak her arms in cool and hot water, and engage in occupational therapy.

So far, it has helped. She is back at work, feeling better and looking forward to giving birth in November.

For Buffalo's Christian, some mysterious symptoms

Buffalo, N.Y.—Dick Christian says he "has always been a very healthy guy." Seven months ago, however, the action-line editor of the Buffalo News was forced to re-evaluate that positive self-image.

It started with a numbness in his left hand. "You could stick a needle in my the top of my left hand, and I couldn't feel it," Christian said. "That alarmed me; I didn't know what the hell that was."

A family physician and a nerve specialist were unable to tell Christian, 50, what was wrong.

A few weeks later, a new symptom developed. "I started getting very sharp pains in the back of my neck that would

radiate up to the right side of my head . . . every once in a while shooting up to my right eye."

Doctors suspected a pinched nerve in his spine or neck and recommended that he wear a neck brace, "which hasn't done a damn bit of good."

"At this point, I was becoming kind of crazed about all this stuff, wondering what's going on with me because I've never had these problems before," said Christian, a former Buffalo Guild president.

The symptoms persisted, so doctors scheduled more tests, including a CAT scan. They hope to give him a better diagnosis by late June.

For more than 20 years, Christian had hammered manual typewriters at the News. About 18 months ago, he started using a soft-touch VDT to write his om-



Christian

budsman "News Power" column and answer some of the 200 letters it generates a week.

He doesn't know if there's any connection between VDT work and his problem; he's not certain his condition is repetitive strain injury. "They do believe my nervous system is affected. They don't know how or why. I can't honestly say, 'It's the damn computer.' I do know, six months ago, I didn't have it. I had none of these symptoms before the system came in."

Doctors suspect his desk and his posture at work might be a problem. He hopes they find some answers for him soon. If his VDT, indeed, is the culprit, and the paper refuses to correct conditions, he says he'll leave his job.

"I love my business, but I love my health, too."

New York—A new, three-year contract providing annual wage-increase packages of 6 percent, 5.25 and 5.25 percent has been ratified by the membership of the New York Guild at Time Inc.

The settlement was reached in a marathon, 17-hour bargaining session held with the assistance of federal mediator Ken Kowalski two days after the membership unanimously had rejected the company's "final offer" and authorized Guild bargainers to call a strike if necessary for a fair settlement.

The contract covers editorial-department and a variety of other employees who produce the company's magazines—Time, Life, Fortune, Sports Illustrated, Money, People—and Time-Life Books.

The settlement, retroactive to Feb. 1, contains what the local described as "major breakthroughs" in the longstanding "despised merit-pool pay system" and the company's profit-sharing policy. In addition, none of ten retrogressions demanded by the company was in the settlement.

The initial year's 6-percent pay package is a full 1 percent above the company's "final offer," according to N.Y. Guild President Barry F. Lipton, who assisted Local Representative Jim Madden and the unit bargaining committee in fashioning the settlement. The package is divided 55 percent for general increases, 45 percent for the merit pool, the first time the Guild has won a better than 50-percent portion for general increases.

The second and third years' increase packages also are higher than the amounts in the company's "final offer" and are divided evenly between general increases and the merit pool.

Under a complicated general increase/merit-pool provision, employees below a \$37,500-annual-pay cutoff (up from \$32,500) are guaranteed at least the general increases while those above the cutoff receive raises only from the merit pool. The contract guarantees that the employees in the latter group will get raises producing at least \$3,400 over the three years.

One-time increases in contrac-



Velma Wilkerson, right, of the Washington-Baltimore Guild unit of cafeteria employees at the Sunpapers, hands a soda to Marian Cook, left, of the Guild unit at the dailies themselves outside the papers' plant during boycott of the cafeteria there by members of the Guild and the other unions. Looking on, center, is Nellie Cunningham, another member of cafeteria unit. Boycott was launched June 1 when a new

firm took over operation of the cafeteria, refused to recognize the Guild contract with the former operator and offered jobs to only a few of the members of the unit—at inferior pay and benefits. A boycott of the cafeteria under nearly identical circumstances in 1972 ended when the operator that just was replaced recognized the Guild's contract with the previous operator.

tual minimum-pay rates range to as much as \$85 a week—for the employee group at the magazines that includes artists, reporter-researchers, correspondent- and

writer-apprentices, putting their after-one-year top at \$535.

Largest minimum-rate increase at Time-Life Books is \$63 a week, putting the top at \$472 for those

with two years' experience as copy co-ordinators, writers, assistant designers and librarians.

Highest minimum at the magazines is \$625, up by \$74, for designers, photographers, staff correspondents, writer-editors and senior systems engineers.

Highest minimum under the settlement at the books division is \$691 a week for a new pay category for text and picture editors and senior designers.

IT SEEMS

TO US

Anyone take a Bulletin for a Globe-Democrat?

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Editor:

I have the macabre hobby of collecting "last editions" of daily newspapers. I'm missing a copy of the final Miami Daily News and the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Any brother or sister out there have one to spare? (I'm willing to trade a final Philadelphia Bulletin.)

I'm looking for other final editions and I'm willing to swap with any other newspaper ghouls out there.

STU BYKOFSKY
Daily News unit
Philadelphia Guild

Editor's note: Bykofsky, a columnist, can be reached: c/o the Philadelphia Daily News, 400 N. Broad St., P.O. Box 7788, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101.

N.Y.'s president urges study, care by delegates

NEW YORK, N.Y.

Editor:

Delegates to this year's Guild convention will be asked to eliminate annual conventions, and take other drastic actions that would severely curtail our members' ability to maintain an active role in the affairs of our union. We ought first to examine that "financial crisis" very carefully, to see how real it actually is, and then limit ourselves to any economies that might truly be needed, and that don't result in the destruction of the democratic structures of our union and the limiting of our members' ability to have a voice in and to oversee the Guild's operation.

Barry F. Lipton
President
New York Guild

By TNG convention action, letters shall be limited to 200 words and shall avoid libel and subjects detrimental to the Guild. Members subjected to personal attack shall be given opportunity to reply in the same issue; but publication of either attack or reply shall not be delayed longer than one issue.

Deadline for letters is the Friday before publication.

Letters relating to elections or referendum to appear in the issue immediately preceding distribution of ballots and subsequent issues preceding the official voting period shall contain no new charges.

Wire Service pair laud Joyner steward session

SEATTLE, WASH.

Editor:

We are writing to thank Art Joyner, administrative officer of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, for including us in his shop stewards training session May 20.

Far from giving a parochial, narrow lecture on contract problems peculiar to his own local, Joyner provided a wealth of information useful to any shop steward in any union, all in a clear and well-organized manner.

It was also good of TNG Int'l Representative G. Richard Pattison, who has worked on numerous problems in our own local over the years, to welcome us to the workshop.

We hope similar opportunities will be available to Wire Service Guild leaders in other cities with TNG locals, and we urge our colleagues to avail themselves of those opportunities.

Stronger ties between WSG leaders nationwide and TNG locals can only be to the good for all concerned.

TIM KLASS
AP vice president
RORY MARSHALL
Seattle AP chairperson
Wire Service Guild

Keep yearly convention, TNG, N.Y. officer urges

NEW YORK, N.Y.

Editor:

There are people who believe that the solution to the Guild's financial problems is to dismantle the democratic foundations that make our union unique and responsive to our membership. The annual convention is one of the Guild's most valued institutions, placing it among the most democratic in the labor movement today.

At the upcoming convention in Albany, elected delegates will again discuss problems and reach for solutions to them. I hope that the collective mind of the Guild leadership will come up with better answers to the financial situation than doing away with annual conventions, and with other democratic features of this union. The democratic principles in which the Guild was founded should not be sacrificed in the name of "economies." Certainly, we can find better ways to finance our future than by sacrificing democracy.

PETER E. McLAUGHLIN
TNG Int'l Chairperson
and Local Chairperson
New York Guild

Position on 'muzzling' of marchers challenged

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Editor:

In telling those who marched in favor of abortion that they could not cover the abortion issue [Efforts by editors to muzzle reporters condemned by IEB, Guild Reporter, May 5], Max Frankel and Ben Bradlee [executive editors respectively of the New York Times and the Washington Post] were not muzzling reporters. Rather, they

were upholding a code of conduct to which all journalists should adhere: Not only avoid conflicts of interest, but even the appearance of a conflict.

I would have hoped that my union, of which I have been a member for 25 years, would also urge its members to conduct themselves in a professional manner. But, alas, in seeking to advance its leftist agenda, the TNG continued to offer a simple, black-and-white world to what it apparently conceives as its simple, unsophisticated membership: If management favors a position, that position must be wrong.

If I were a friend of George Bush's and asked to cover the White House, I hope my editor would have the good sense to muzzle me.

JAMES F. MOFFATT
Inquirer unit
Philadelphia Guild

Retiree says footnote bolsters 'choice' beef

CHALFONT, PA.

Editor:

The footnote to my letter protesting the Guild's actions in the so-called "choice" demonstration in Washington [Guild Reporter, May 26] strengthened my contention that the Guild has no business meddling in issues not related to collective bargaining.

So the 1981 Convention mandated "opposition to government restrictions on both abortion and contraception." When did Guild conventions become omnipotent and the supreme arbiters of right and wrong?

So TNG filed no "court brief defending abortion," as I said. It merely joined "in a gag case," as

the Missouri challenge to Roe vs. Wade was described. Why didn't the Guild, zealous watchdog of First Amendment rights, file similar briefs when anti-abortionists were gagged?

These actions reflect the abortionists' deceptive tactics. They use appealing labels like "choice," "privacy" and "rights" to obscure the fact that abortion is essentially and primarily a moral issue rooted in nature. The Guild, apparently, has been gulled into propagandizing their cause.

In doing so, the leadership compromised the Guild's human rights policy and made it suspect. If "human rights" do not include reverence for life, the words are a meaningless fraud.

If Guild leaders can't support morality, let them at least be neutral—and stick to their legitimate job.

MICHAEL CASINO
Retired
Philadelphia Guild

Editor's note: As the editor's note referred to also pointed out: "Similarly, in 1986 TNG joined a brief to the high court supporting the First Amendment right of a 'pro-life' newsletter to publish the names of 'pro-life' candidates in a Massachusetts election."

Correction

The Guild Reporter erroneously identified Joy Cook, one of four signatories to a letter in the May 26 edition, as a current member of the New York Guild and its unit at the N.Y. Post. She is a former member of the local and was chairperson of its Post unit when she left the paper's employ early in 1988.

Paddling (and then some) for a park in Yakima

Doing it is Kate Myra, Yakima Guild secretary and part of five-member team the union sponsored in the Gap to Gap Relay Race June 4 to raise funds for the Greenway, a nine-mile area along the Yakima River. Guild team traversed the several legs of the 48-mile race course—via bicycle, on foot, swimming and otherwise—in just under four-hours, seven minutes, good for fourth place in the nine-team "recreation almost prime" division. At the other end of Myra's canoe was Guild President Pete Menzies. Also on the team: Stan Eichwald, Kirk Hirota and Greg Wilder.



DATELINE: OTTAWA

PM ('Plumber' Mulroney) swings wrench at press

By Hugh Winsor, Southern Ontario Guild



THE EVENING before the Canadian government's annual budget was to be presented to the House of Commons, a prominent reporter for the Global Television Network, Doug Small, broke breathlessly into the supper-hour newscast waving a three-cent pamphlet entitled "Budget in Brief."

The pamphlet contained most of the major features of the budget, including the Conservative government's decision to make deep cuts in spending on foreign aid and on defense, increased taxes on cigarettes and booze and a number of other fiscal matters.

On that evening of April 26, it appeared that Mr. Small had the scoop of his lifetime but this week, when the reporter and four other people were arraigned in court on charges of theft and possession of stolen goods, the whole incident has taken on a far more ominous meaning.

To offset its embarrassment and inconvenience associated with the budget leak, the government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has permitted criminal charges to go forward, putting freedom of the press in the prisoner's dock as a result.

ALTHOUGH BUDGET secrecy has always been taken seriously in Canada, especially when breaches of secrecy could lead to manipulation of the financial markets, and Finance Minister Michael Wilson has come under extreme pressure in the House of Commons to follow the parliamentary tradition of resigning, this is the first time a reporter has faced criminal charges in Canada for

making use of a leaked document.

The other people charged include an employee of the government printing plant where the documents were produced, an employee of a waste recycling firm that serviced the printing plant, a civil servant who apparently was showing a copy of the leaflet around in an Ottawa bar, and an insurance salesman who also obtained a copy and sent it to his company.

There is no doubt Mr. Small's scoop threw the government into a tailspin, with the finance minister taking an almost unprecedented decision to release his whole budget in a televised press conference later on that fateful evening. Once the leak was confirmed, the government decided it was better to disseminate the budget as widely as possible so that none could benefit from inside knowledge, even though Canadian political tradition always has dictated that the budget be revealed first to Members of Parliament.

Prime Minister Mulroney was quick to brand the leak a criminal act, but it will be up to the courts to decide whether a pamphlet which was intended to be distributed a day later to 110,000 people for nothing can be considered stolen.

Canadian governments from time to time have ordered the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to investigate leaks of government documents and in some cases have laid charges of breach of trust against civil servants who had done the leaking.

CHARGING THE recipient, however, marks a departure which has to reflect a deliberate policy of the government to get tough on journalists. Various spokesmen, including Justice Minister Douglas Lewis, have denied this assertion, telling the House of Commons it is up to the RCMP, the national police force, to decide whether to lay charges.

To have intervened in any way would amount to interfering in a police investigation, both Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Lewis have argued. But both politicians have deliberately fudged the situation in

TNG region raps 'attack on press'

Ottawa—TNG's Canadian Region has protested as "an attack on the freedom of the news media" the government's filing criminal charges against reporter Doug Small.

"It is our view" that Small had "a right and an obligation to disclose the federal budget information that came into his hands in order to best serve the Canadian public," TNG Canadian Director John Bryant wrote to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Justice Minister Douglas Lewis.

an attempt to downplay the political significance.

Similarly, Mr. Wilson and other ministers did not inform Parliament there had been a second leak having nothing to do with the television reporter which the government tried to keep secret, even though the latter leak was potentially more damaging because the budget information was made available to a large insurance company with millions tied up in investments. (The company made no use of the information, however, and volunteered its co-operation with police to track down the leaker.)

THE GOVERNMENT has denied the criminal charges represent an assault on the media, but the explanation about the independence of the RCMP has been challenged. Although it is up to the police force to lay charges, the minister of justice or a provincial attorney general always can stay the charges if they decide a prosecution is not in the public interest and decisions to discontinue prosecutions frequently have been taken in the past on this basis.

In Mr. Small's case, however, the government has decided it is in its own political interest to use the RCMP and the courts to establish a new set of ground rules for the press.

New CP pact OK'd; all up at least 11%; news top to hit \$918

Toronto— Guild members at Canadian Press-Broadcast News have ratified a new two-year contract that raises minimum and over-minimum pay rates by at least 11 percent and increases the minimum for experienced reporter/editors by a total of \$93.30, to \$918.94 a week next Jan. 1.

The Canadian Wire Service Guild represents some 400 employees of the news service, the large majority reporter/editors and including office, sales and other support staff, as well.

The settlement, retroactive to Jan. 1, also cracks the \$1,000-a-week barrier by pushing the flat minimum for assistant chiefs of bureau to \$1,056.72 a week, up a total of \$108.28. (Up by \$47.42, to \$995.86, from Jan. 1, then up by \$60.86 next Jan. 1.)

Largest increase goes to a group of "TV listers" who were upgraded to a new pay category of their own. In the process, their top minimum rate is increased by a total of \$165.14 a week (43 percent), to \$486.52 for those with three years' experience. Initial increase over the old top rate for the category the group formerly shared with editorial assistants and others is \$137.60 a week (36 percent), to \$458.98.

Next largest percentage increase is 18 percent over the contract's term, for those in the category that includes editorial and library assistants, audio control operators and stockroom and mail clerks. It takes the top minimum for those with two years' experience to \$445.20 a week, up by \$68.59. (Up first by \$43.39, to \$420, from Jan. 1, then by \$25.20 next Jan. 1.)

First-year increases for others

are 5 percent, retroactive to Jan. 1, with an additional 6 percent next Jan. 1. There is no cap on the dollar amounts produced by application of the percentages to the pay rates of those paid more than the contract minimum rates for their jobs, said David Gersovitz, local Guild representative.

First-year increase in the top-minimum for reporter/editors, national photographers and persons in the new classification of "editorial translator" is \$41.28, to \$866.92 a week, followed by a raise of \$52.02 next Jan. 1. It goes to those with five years' experience.

Another new job, "commercial translator," is added to the pay group for artists and darkroom technician/photographers and the top minimum is increased by \$79.07, to \$778.81, in increments of \$34.99 and \$44.08.

Lowest minimum in the contract, a flat rate for messengers, is increased by \$36.11, to \$355.62, in increments of \$15.98 and \$20.13.

Other improvements include: Boosting company-paid life insurance coverage to two-times annual pay, to a maximum of \$60,000 coverage. Previous maximum employer-paid coverage was \$25,000.

A year's reduction, to 12, in service required for five weeks' vacation, and addition of a sixth week of annual vacation for employees with at least 25 years' service.

Retroactive guarantees of credit for part-time and temporary employees' service-time, pro-rata, to assure their moving up on the pay-step schedules.

The Guild Reporter



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Next issue of the Guild Reporter will be published on July 14 and will be the only issue published during that month.

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