

THE GUILD Reporter

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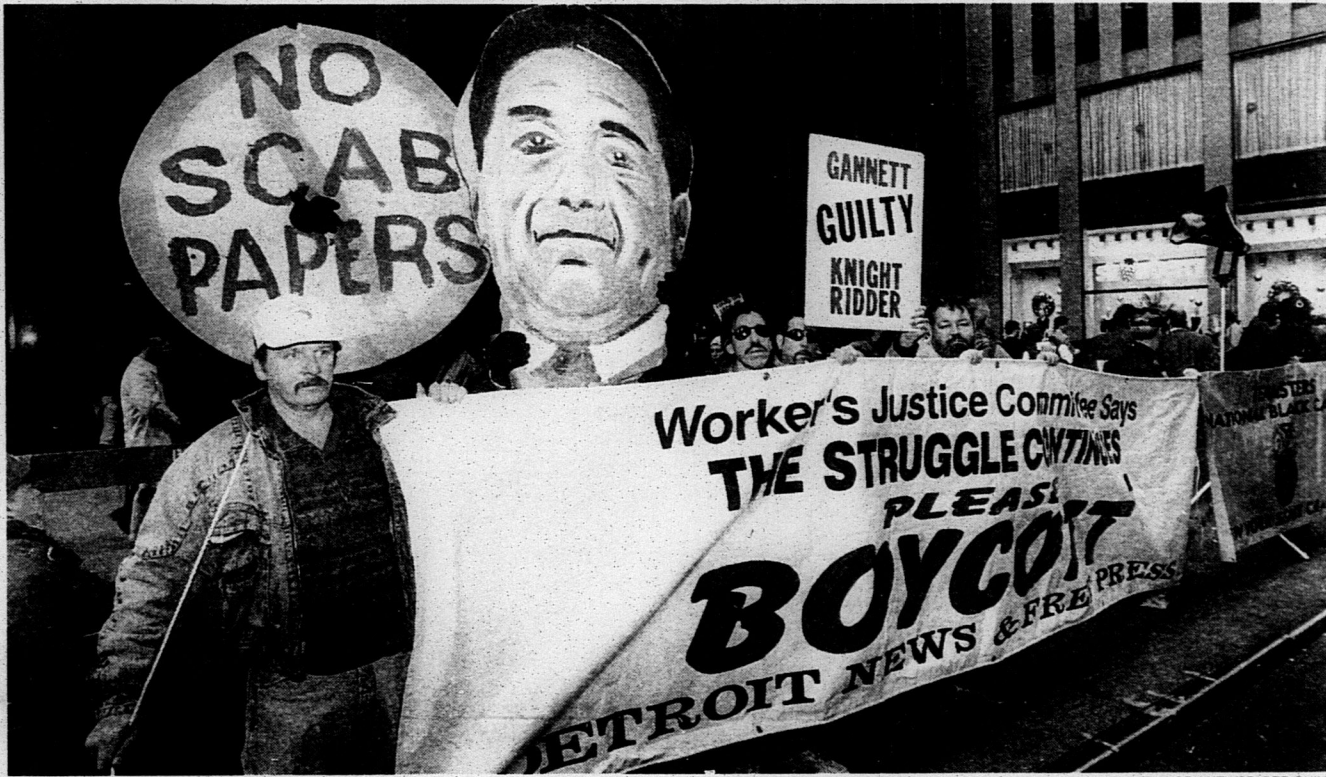
Marie Antoinette! Scrooge!
And they're both at the
Washington Post

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Motown takes a bite of Big Apple

Detroit workers picket PaineWebber media gathering



JACK MILLER/NEW YORK NEWSPAPER GUILD

CHATTANOOGA NO-NO

Justice Dept. ignores antitrust implications of newspaper 'sale'

Despite a TNG-CWA appeal to the Justice Dept. citing antitrust concerns, the Chattanooga Times is being sold to the rival Chattanooga Free Press and will be closed Jan. 4. The sale ends the 120-year legacy of Adolph S. Ochs, who bought the paper 18 years before he acquired The New York Times; aborts a joint operating agreement that was scheduled to run another 17 years, and will result in the lay-offs of at least a dozen Guild-represented newsroom employees.

It wasn't supposed to turn out this way. Earlier this year, it was the Free Press that went on the auction block and the family-owned Times that tried to buy it. But the winning bid was entered by Walter Hussman, Jr. of WEHCO Media, who made his mark by beating Gannett at its own game in Little Rock, Arkansas and subsequently merging that city's two newspapers.

Chattanooga, however, is a far different story—not least because it is indeed home to a JOA. As argued by TNG-CWA attorney Donald Baker, such agreements were authorized by the Newspaper Preservation Act as a way of preserving alternative newspaper voices while

consolidating competitors' business operations. Without the act, two newspapers contemplating a merger in the same market would not only have to show that one was failing, "but that a good faith and diligent search had been made to find a less anticompetitive alternative."

The irony is that while Hussman is believed to have paid a premium for the Times, he now argues that it is a failing property and must be closed immediately. Indeed, financial circumstances are so dire that they justify ignoring a JOA requirement that three-years' notice be given of any decision to end the agreement.

"The economic and competitive forces are far stronger than the legislation," he recently told Editor & Publisher. And then, in a classic example of blame-the-victim rationalization: "JOAs have been a failure in perpetuating or preserving two-paper markets, but a success in prolonging them."

Baker's unsuccessful petition to the Department of Justice antitrust division questioned Hussman's assessment that the Times is failing, noted that apparently no other buyers had been sought and concluded that the resulting monopoly will be "a prima facie antitrust viola-

tion not immunized by the Newspaper Preservation Act." More critically, he stressed the larger implications of the division's failure to act. "The same freight train may roll through any of the many other communities which still have locally competitive newspaper voices protected by joint operating agreements," he warned.

(In a bizarre twist, apparently intended to deflate just such claims, Hussman has said the Free Press will have two editorial pages.)

Michele Baum, president of the Chattanooga Newspaper Guild, and TNG-CWA International Rep Bruce Meachum were still in effects bargaining with Hussman's attorneys at press time. But tentative terms of the severance package included a minimum of 13 weeks' pay, plus one week of pay for each year of employment in excess of eight; one years' severance pay for salaried unit members; and a \$2,000 lump sum payment in lieu of severance for any unit members accepting employment with the Free Press.

The Guild's price for such a package, however, includes "acknowledging the cessation of its collective bargaining status" for Times employees.

Chants of "ABC, scab TV!" and "Knight Ridder, Gannett, the fight ain't over yet" drilled through the skyscraper walls of the McGraw Hill Building in Rockefeller Center Dec. 10, as 200 locked-out Detroit newspaper workers and their supporters from New York area unions marched outside.

Inside, the chief executives of the country's largest newspaper empires were telling analysts and money managers at Paine Webber's annual media conference how they intend to pump up profit margins next year. The atmosphere, however, was remarkably more sober than in 1997, when the economy was still booming. And all that noise from outside, much of it aimed squarely at Knight-Ridder CEO Tony Ridder, wasn't helping.

"We had to sneak Tony in and we'll have to sneak him out," Ross Jones, the company's chief financial officer, told the audience. "I don't want to stand too close to him."

Ridder's unenviable task included explaining away his company's overall weak results this past year, including a scant \$20 million in earnings at the Detroit Free Press amid declining circulation and advertising. Elsewhere, he acknowledged, a slowdown in Silicon Valley has pummeled classified advertising at the San Jose Mercury News, and The Miami Herald likewise is weakening. What to do? "Watch every dime," replied another company official.

Despite that thin prescription, Ridder told analysts he expects his company to post a 20% operating margin after all expenses by the year 2000.

On the streets below, the numbers told a different story. "Let me tell you what this is all about: 41 months locked out of my job, our jobs, by Gannett and Knight Ridder corporate greed," Larry Hoffman, of Teamsters Local 2040, told the crowd. "They've been ordered not once, but twice, by the National Labor Relations Board to rid the buildings of the scab replacement workers and to take back 1,100 locked-out union workers."

"We've done 41 months, that breaks down to over 1,200 days, and up there in their ivory tower, Gannett and Knight Ridder made millions off of our backs."

Hoffman was among a busload of locked-out workers from Detroit

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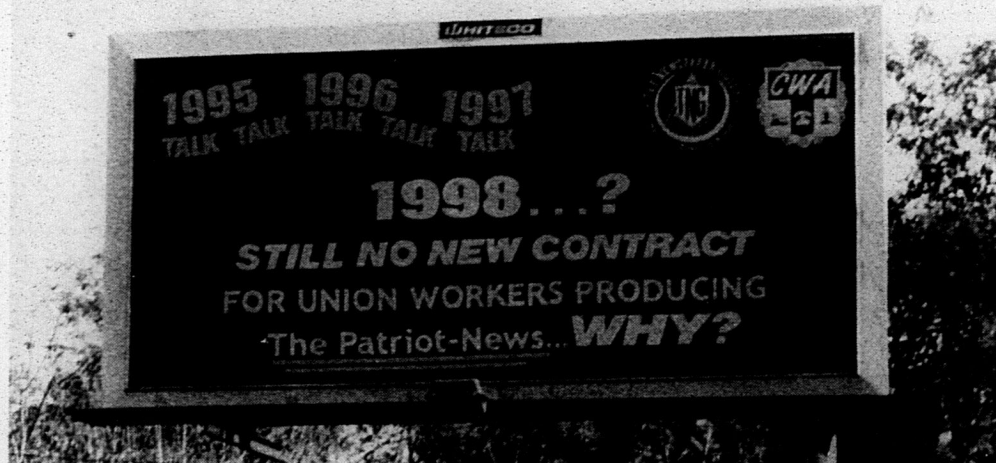
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JIM BROWN/HARRISBURG GUILD

One of two billboards erected by the Harrisburg Newspaper Guild, this sign went up Oct. 10.

Sign of the times

H'burg turns up the heat

Even elephants carry their young to term more quickly. Forty-three months after contract talks began between TNG/CWA Local 38016 and The Patriot-News in Harrisburg, Penn., progress toward a new agreement can be measured by the spoonful.

Major outstanding issues include scale increases, which the Newhouse-owned paper wouldn't even discuss during the first three years of negotiations; job security, especially with regard to temporary and part-time workers; and a company effort to impose a cap on its share of health insurance premiums.

"Obviously it's frustrating," acknowledges Local treasurer Jim Brown, "but we'll go on as long as it takes."

Despite the glacial pace of talks, currently scheduled only once a month, the Local has notched a few gains. Most notable was a Patriot-News decision to settle an unfair labor practice charge by rescinding its March 15 declaration of partial impasse. And the unit has turned up the heat through informational picketing, by buying space on two billboards along major local thoroughfares and by placing several dozen day-glo signs in the news-

room—where they're sure to be seen by tour groups—urging "Guild Contract Now!"

On a more whimsical note, a handful of Guild members succeeded in a bit of guerrilla theater. When the Patriot-News invited employees to sign their names on two large steel beams in a new production facility, Jim "Contract Now!" Brown and Mary "Fair Contract" Klaus were only too happy to oblige. Klaus is the Local president and chairs the bargaining committee.

At last notice, the company still had not painted over the names.

You know you're in trouble when your face is on the web

It's tough—really, really tough—to maintain your dignity in the new information age. Just ask Dennis Britton.

Britton is editor of the Denver Post, a Dean Singleton-owned newspaper that has more than its share of troubles. The competing Denver Rocky Mountain News was recently recognized as the nation's fastest growing major newspaper. Its fifth publisher in about a decade just resigned—to work for a comic strip distributor. And until recently, contract nego-

tiations with the Denver Newspaper Guild were so rancorous that a one-day byline strike was supported by 100% of Guild-covered employees on the city, business and features desks.

But here's the ultimate ignominy: the "Welcome to the Dennis Britton Go-Home" web page. Featuring such amusing items as "The Britton Roll Call of Embarrassments" (and there are many), "The Dear Dennis Letters" and "The many holiday faces of Dennis" (head shots of Britton

decked out in various guises), the site makes no bones about its purpose. "We're here to bring down the biggest bully in American journalism," it proclaims. "By visiting this site, you're helping."

Those who do visit, at <http://members.aol.com/empirvoic/dennispag>, have the opportunity to vote on how long before Britton gets the boot (a recent tally had 3,743 rooting for Dec. 31, 2,389 for Feb. 28). A "holiday bonus question," with results to be announced Jan. 1, give visitors the option of voting which of seven Post editors "is most likely to go down with Britton."

No telling who's behind all the merriment, of course, given the Internet's capacity for anonymity. But once you get past all the buffoonery there's enough substance to the grievances to strongly suggest this is an inside job.

More stuff to file under 'truly weird'

In the pantheon of Scrooge-like publishers, Thomson Newspapers isn't as bad as some—but that's not saying much, as can be attested by Guild members in Sheboygan and Terre Haute.

So what is one to make of Thomson chief executive Stuart Garner's comments at an Editor and Publisher symposium in September? Asked to identify the biggest threat faced by the newspaper industry, Garner replied: "Biggest threat? Arrogance and self-indulgence."

So what is it, exactly, that rais-

es the hackles when someone like Garner talks about "arrogance and self-indulgence"? Maybe it's the salaries of top newspaper executives, as reported Dec. 7 by Advertising Age.

Total compensation for Richard Harrington, president and chief executive of Thomson Corp. (and therefore Garner's boss) was \$3.96 million in 1997, vs. \$3.18 million in 1996—a nifty 25% increase. But that pales beside the compensation awarded to Robert Jelenic of the Journal Register Co.: \$11.58 million last year, up from \$1.35 million in 1996

In brief . . .

Indianapolis wins on web freelancing

The Internet is so pervasive that every publication is a potential competitor for every other—which means virtually all freelancing by newsroom employees should cease. Or at least that's how the Indianapolis papers reasoned, until an arbitrator agreed with the Guild that such a sweeping conclusion violates the collective bargaining agreement. One fly in the ointment: the arbitrator suggested it would be "prudent" for employees to seek management permission for online freelancing.

Social workers ratify first contract

The Peterborough local of TNG Canada, comprising approximately 40 social workers who were organized earlier this year, unanimously ratified its first contract.

Twin Cities votes yes on typo merger

Members of the Twin Cities Newspaper Guild and of Typographical Union Local 30 overwhelmingly voted to merge the two units. The new local, claiming about 1,200 members, is known as the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/Typographical Union; its new office is at 2855 Anthony Lane South, Minneapolis, MN 55418. The phone number is 612-789-0044; fax, 612-789-2844.

Contract talks start for UFCW staff

Following a nearly year-long organizing drive by the Washington-Baltimore Guild, negotiations are underway over an initial contract for the headquarters staff of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. The new unit has 84 members and was recognized after a card check campaign enlisted 81% of them.

Falling all over themselves in PA

Some locals have a hard time getting even a single candidate to stand for office. Not the Philadelphia Newspaper Guild, where eight plucky souls tossed their hats in the ring for the privilege of adding "vice president" to their resumes. Fortunately for four of them, the local has five second seats. The winners: Beth Gillin, Henry Holcomb, Jonathan Storm, Linda Dooling and Janet Jasper.

First the contract, then the details

It took 11 years for TNG-CWA members in the Alameda Newspaper Guild to negotiate their first contract, but that doesn't mean the battle is over. The ink on the pact had scarcely had time to dry before the Singleton-owned group of newspapers declared it would terminate 401(k) benefits for Guild members—but only for Guild members. When the local challenged the unilateral decision, the publisher recanted, but with a twist: TNG-CWA members now have a cloned version of the 401(k) plan offered to non-represented employees, but Alameda Newspaper Group maintains it "can change the plan for unrepresented employees in the future without changing the plan covering the Guild bargaining unit." Stay tuned.

Keep on truckin'

Twenty-one truck drivers employed by the Observer-Reporter in Washington, Penn.—"little Washington," as it is sometimes described locally—vote Jan. 6 to affiliate with the Guild.

Pink slips flow amid holiday glow

The end of the year may mean holiday festivities for most people—but it also marks the time when corporations on a calendar fiscal year clear the decks. Among the layoffs, early retirement plans and other terminations that have been already announced: 250 at the Los Angeles, 40 at the Baltimore Sun, 200 at the Dallas Morning News and more than 300 at Dow Jones.

Outsourcing hits Chicago newsroom

"Outsourcing" in the newspaper industry usually is reserved for such support functions as bookkeeping, delivery and telemarketing—but at the Chicago Sun-Times it now includes the newsroom. Since September, the tabloid has given three pages of its Sunday business news to Bloomberg, complete with Bloomberg logo, bylines and a "best-of-Bloomberg" box of excerpts from past articles.

Canadian snafu

Because of a computer glitch, some 2,000 copies of last month's Guild Reporter were mailed three weeks late. Our apologies.

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POST SEZ:

Let 'em eat cake

Stymied by their employer's obdurate bargaining posture, Guild-represented employees at the Washington Post recruited two of history's greatest caricatures of oppressive economics: Marie Antoinette and Scrooge.

Following expiration of their contract Nov. 12, Post employees took to the pavement Nov. 18 and again Dec. 8 to protest the company's "let them eat cake" proposals: a virtual wage freeze, a scheme to reduce sick leave for long-term and older employees and an attempt to exclude an additional 60 employees from contract protection.

Nearly 200 people participated in the lunch hour rally featuring the miraculously reconstituted French queen, who demonstrated an intimate familiarity with sharp objects as she sliced into a four-foot-high cake. And nearly as many turned out in a relentless drizzle three weeks later to hear a top-hatted Post representative explain management's position—an explanation repeatedly summarized as "Bah, humbug!"

Driving the demonstrators, however, was the realization that Post employees—once among the nation's media elite—are rapidly losing ground. The newsroom's top minimum scales, for example, now lag those of nearly a dozen large metros, including the Baltimore Sun, Cleveland Plain Dealer, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Chicago Sun-Times and Boston Globe. Compared with that other national agenda setter, The New York Times, the Post's top minimum is 36% lower.

But the Post, which posted \$353 million in after-tax profits for the first nine months of the year, is seeking a wage freeze and a one-time lump-sum "bonus" in the first year of a three-year pact and increases thereafter that aver-

age as low as 1.4% per year over the life of the contract. Contrasting that with the recent 3.7% increase bestowed on federal employees, unit leaders call the offer "mean-spirited" and miserly.

"Both in and outside of the bargaining room, the union continues to search for a warm spot in the cold corporate heart of the highly profitable Washington Post," declared administrative officer Dick Ramsey.

But not all was doom and gloom—for how could it be during the holiday season? So it was that Scrooge, instead of being vilified, was serenaded by several timely carols—including the following adaptation by Julie McCall to the tune of "Up on the Housetop":

Up in the boardroom the bosses scheme

Busting the union's their fondest dream

Top brass all have a big bankroll

They think we'll settle for lumps of coal.

Chorus:

Ho! Ho! Ho!

Let's share the dough

Ho! Ho! Ho!

Let's share the dough

We want a contract quick! quick! quick!

We won't fall for the company's tricks.

Record profits are really huge

Still the Post acts just like

Scrooge

Lump sum payments without a raise

That's a game the Guild won't play.

Repeat chorus . . .

. . . and have a happy holiday!

Motown in Big Apple

Continued from page 1

who arrived the night before the PaineWebber conference and immediately plunged into a separate but related fray, joining the NABET-CWA Local 16 picket lines at the ABC/Disney studios.

As Jim Joyce, the local's mobilization coordinator, told protesters in Rockefeller Center: "It's sad that we're here today, that the Detroit newspaper lockout continues, that corporate greed at the expense of human lives continues after 41 months. We haven't been locked out 41 days yet, but the same dynamics are at work. Disney ABC has chosen during the holiday season to cut off medical benefits for 2400 families, to cut off employment for 2400 fam-

ilies. It was invigorating to see the busload of people from Detroit get off the bus last night, not checking into their hotel first, not even getting a meal first, but coming to our picket line to show solidarity with us as we face the same corporate monsters."

Also on the hook for its Detroit actions is Gannett, although Chief Executive John Curley managed to duck most of the criticism that hit Tony Ridder. His projections for the coming year were also modest, however, including flat to 2% growth in national advertising lineage. Plans for the company's \$1.8 billion in free cash flow call for paying down debt and buying back stock rather than further acquisitions.



BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Even celebrity-studded Washington might have been nonplussed at hosting Scrooge (alongside only slightly less famous Pete Cattucci, CWA Vice

President District 2, and TNG-CWA President Linda Foley) and Marie Antoinette, who served cake to the toiling Washington Post masses.



BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

As the year winds down, more contracts settled

More contract agreements have been struck in recent weeks, including the following:

Peterborough Examiner

Full-time unionized employees at the Hollinger-owned Peterborough (Ontario) Examiner voted 82% in favor of a three-year deal worth about 6.5% over the life of the contract. Details include a 1.75% increase on ratification, 1% next August, 1% in mid-February 2000 and a final 2% mid-August, 2000.

The increases mean top scale for reporters will reach \$755.92 a week by contract's end.

Other gains include a third week of vacation after four years (instead of five), addition of a fifth step to circulation department scales, improved language on discipline and new language on leaves for union business.

Eastside Journal

After more than a year of bargaining, TNG-CWA-represented employees at the Eastside (Washington) Journal have reached tentative agreement on a five-year contract.

Economic highlights include a total 14% wage increase, alternating between 3% and 2.5% annually with no retroactivity, plus scale increases ranging from 35 cents an hour to \$1.70 for some lower-paid classifications. Other economic gains: an increase in the photographers' equipment stipend from \$115 a month to \$150 a month; a new 10% differential for employees filling in at excluded positions; and pay for employees on out-of-town assignments for every day they are gone, with overtime for daily hours in excess of eight, including travel time.

But the local also made some concessions, not least among them an expansive management rights clause that permits sub-contracting. Other givebacks include a waiting period of one year before new hires get dental and vision health coverage; an expansion of the employer's right to withhold severance for misconduct terminations; and acceptance of a possible new drug-testing policy.

Denver Post

At press time, the Denver Newspaper Guild and the Dean

Singleton-owned Denver Post reportedly were on the verge of an agreement but no details were available. The economic aspects of any settlement will be of special interest to unit members at the Denver Rocky Mountain News, who recently approved a contract that includes a "me-too" clause for compensatory increases tied to the Post's final package.

Boston Globe

No, the Boston Globe Employees Association isn't finished dickering yet. But local President Bob Jordan reports that 11 months of talks have yielded tentative agreement "on most key issues," including a higher salary cap on pensions; a new payment plan for photographers that includes higher salaries; and a new job classification for outside sales.

Part-timers also have some tentative gains, including pay when subpoenaed to appear in court on a regularly scheduled work day and weekly updates on the vacation and holiday time they've accrued. Thus far, however, the Globe has not moved on the union's proposal for sick leave for part-timers.

BARGAINING:

Is it a call to arms . . . or an appeal to reason?

By Andy Zipser
Editor, Guild Reporter

Contrary to the image many corporate managers have of union negotiators—and vice versa—most people don't like to fight. Indeed, most will go out of their way to avoid unpleasantness, which is one reason why the company side of a bargaining table is usually manned by mercenaries, also known as lawyers.

That same impulse also leads to a periodic search for new bargaining formulas, for some fresh paradigm that recognizes a) we're all reasonable, thinking people and b) employer and employees share common economic interests. Given a) and b), isn't there a c) in which reasonable, thinking people can figure out how to advance those common interests without bludgeoning each other into submission?

The latest attempt at such a consensus, known as "interest-based," "mutual gain" or "win-win" bargaining, is attracting growing interest among TNG-CWA locals. At least two, in Chicago and Buffalo, have negotiated contracts using the approach, and the Erie local currently is in the middle of interest-based bargaining. The Midwest District Council meeting in mid-November devoted an afternoon to the subject. And the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, convinced that the traditional adversarial method of bargaining is dysfunctional, is offering training to both sides of the table.

Yet there is reason for caution. "At its root, interest-based bargaining is a way to approach discussing tough issues—it's not a silver bullet for solving them," notes Marian Needham, executive secretary of the Guild's contracts committee. "It begins with both sides taking their power and shelving it, and that may not always be a good idea."

Interest-based bargaining has five basic steps, starting with both parties identifying issues—rather than "positions"—for negotiation, then identifying their separate and mutual interests with regard to those issues. The two sides are then supposed to brainstorm options for satisfying their interests, identify "objective" standards by which to evaluate the various options (market value, the law, precedent and tradition, efficiency, fairness, etc.) and then agree—by applying the standards—which options best meet both party's needs. Only then is contract language hammered out.

The process works best, in Needham's experience, when applied to non-economic issues. It tends to break down over money, however, because to date no publisher has agreed to objective economic criteria. And it is in the struggle over how the economic pie

will be divvied up—what the academics refer to as the "distributive process"—that unions and management traditionally come to blows the fastest.

But there are other reasons for questioning the long-term effectiveness—or desirability—of interest-based bargaining.

While virtually all analysis of the approach has an ivory-tower feel to it, a notable exception was produced earlier this year by The Labor Center at the University of Iowa. Written by faculty members Laurie Clements and Roberta Till-Retz and by Dan Holub, of IBEW Local 204, "The New Model of Bargaining: 'Mutual Gain' or unilateral loss?" critiques both traditional adversarial bargaining and the interest-based approach.

Interest-based bargaining, the Iowa report observes, runs the risk of cooptation—the heart of the process, after all, is the creation of joint proposals that attempt to fit union concerns within a corporate

agenda. "With its focus on corporate interests, union leaders run the serious risk of losing their credibility with their own membership," the authors warn—especially because the new bargaining model, at its worst, shares several of the least desirable features of the traditional approach. These include an insulated bargaining dynamic, with little membership involvement, scant communication with the rank and file and a failure to integrate bargaining with a union's other organizing or political goals.

There must be yet another way, the report argues.

There is, too, although it's even less tested than the interest-based approach. Called "the organizing model" by Clements, Till-Retz and Holub, the third way begins with the assumption that management and labor have differing class interests—and that the only way the working class can satisfy its inter-

ests is through high membership involvement at every step of the bargaining process.

That means separate union and management proposals, open and frequent communications with the membership, and more time allocated by the leadership to meeting with members than to meeting with the company. It also means a bargaining version of a full-court press: all levels of the union get involved, confronting all levels of management—including shareholders, customers and first-line supervisors—at all times, so that bargaining never stops.

"Traditional bargaining concedes power over the general direction of the enterprise to management. It instead attempts to narrowly modify management's authority," the report observes. The organizing model, on the other hand, "challenges the power and control of corporate owners by advancing the broad interests of all workers."

Radical though that prescription

may sound in a post-Marxist world, it's not entirely foreign to TNG-CWA. The Guild's growing practice of filing shareholder proposals, for example, is one aspect of such a full-court press; so are readership councils, such as the one established in Monterey; so is the creation of the TNG-CWA Committee on the Future of Journalism.

These and other initiatives are all ways of advancing the Guild's interests outside the confines of a conference room. They broaden the traditional concept of what constitutes a union by creating a broad coalition of Guild members, readers, shareholders, academics and other organizational allies. And, of course, they challenge the power of the managerial class to define the agenda.

There are, of course, drawbacks to the organizing model, too, not least among them the fact that it puts people back in the position of being confrontational—the very thing interest-based bargaining is designed to avoid. It also requires a lot of work because it is so open-ended: unlike both traditional and interest-based bargaining, which end with a handshake when a contract is signed, the organizational model is continuous. It's all bargaining all the time with all levels of power. Just contemplating the idea can be exhausting.

Yet in theory, at least, the third way is the only approach with the potential for lasting effectiveness—precisely because it is so never-ending. And in theory, again, it should become easier to maintain as it gets more established. But first there's that little bit of unpleasantness that needs to be confronted . . .

Permatemps face another Micro-threat

Just six months after Microsoft implemented a 31-day "break-in-service" policy for its permatemps, reports WashTech (TNG-CWA Local 37083), the company is considering extending the mandated break to 90 days or more and expanding the categories of workers it might affect.

The mandatory break in service enables Microsoft to claim the permatemps are not employees, who would therefore be entitled to health and other benefits. "They're just dancing around the employment law and trying to evade their responsibilities as an employer," said WashTech spokesman Mike Blain. "The irony is that this new policy is being considered despite Microsoft's public claims of a critical shortage of skilled technology workers."

Nationally, Microsoft employs about 6,000 permanent "temps."



A more "in your face" style of labor-management relations is expressed in this painting of a corporate pig busting through an American flag. Painted by Brenda Everson, an artist and UAW member, "The Union Fights Back" was removed from a May

exhibit at a conference center in Ypsilanti, Mich. after several corporate clients complained to the center's managers. About 800 copies were sold, with the proceeds split between Everson and locked-out newspaper workers in Detroit.

Labor round-up

ABC hazardous to NABET's health

ABC's decision to play hardball after NABET/CWA-represented employees staged a 24-hour walkout hardened after Nov. 19, when a regional director for the National Labor Relations Board ruled the broadcaster's lockout of about 2,000 workers was legal. With that, the company terminated the locked-out employees' health coverage, a move one NABET local president described as "economic terrorism." NABET officials said they would appeal the adverse ruling, while CWA began picking up the tab for the membership's health care premiums.

Teamsters turn to a familiar name

A scrappy underdog campaign by Tom Leedham couldn't overcome high name recognition and a vastly bigger campaign war-chest. The result: James P. Hoffa has picked up the reins once held by his father, amid promises he will restore the Teamsters to their former glory. Hoffa's victory also promises a return to the more traditional state of hostility between the Teamsters and the leadership of the AFL-CIO, which Hoffa has criticized for being too cozy with the Democratic Party.

N.J. nurses vote big for CWA

CWA expanded its New Jersey presence by almost a thousand members in mid-November, when the New Jersey Nurses Union voted to affiliate by an 8-to-1 margin.

Mickey Louse wins on third attempt

Faced with a threat by Walt Disney to revoke even the slight pay increase it had on the table, hourly workers at Walt Disney World voted 4-to-1 to accept a contract they already had rejected twice. The new pact increases Disney's starting wage for the people inside those fuzzy costumes to \$6.25 an hour—and boosts employee-paid health insurance premiums by more than the increase. How magical.

Pace of unionization picking up

Recently released mid-year union election statistics, compiled by the National Labor Relations Board, show an increased tempo. Representation elections increased 8.9% in the first six months of 1998, compared with the same period a year earlier. And unions are winning more often: 833 vs. 728 a year earlier, a 14.4% improvement that raised the percentage of overall wins to 51.7% from 49.2%.

Laboring to join the political fray

Some 1,400 delegates of the fledgling Labor Party convened in Pittsburgh Nov. 13-15 and agreed on a political agenda that includes health care, Social Security, fair trade and bringing the Bill of Rights into the workplace. But despite the support of nine international unions, as well as numerous local unions and other groups, much of mainstream labor maintains that a third party only dilutes whatever influence it has in a two-party system.

The best organizer? Crappy wages

As the U.S. economy careens uncertainly toward the new year after years of record corporate profits, evidence that a rising tide does *not* lift all ships keeps accumulating. The latest numbers: according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. has failed for the seventh consecutive year to rank among the world's top 10 nations in a comparison of hourly compensation—including wages, benefits, social insurance, holidays and vacations. Leading the pack are the usual suspects: Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria and Japan, all of which have strongly unionized workforces.

Looking for a union "point of light"

The Point of Light Foundation is seeking local unions to be nominated for the 1999 President's Service Awards, billed as "the nation's highest community service award." Last year's winner in the union category was Columbus Fire Fighters Local Union #67 of Columbus, Ohio, whose members—every single one—are involved in such service projects as the annual Operation Feed food drive, fund-raising for muscular dystrophy research and toy collections for the needy. Nominations are due Jan. 13, with a presentation of the awards at a White House ceremony traditionally scheduled for National Volunteer Week, April 18-24. For more information about the awards, check out the web page at awards.pointoflight.org, or call the Recognition Hotline at 202/729-8184.

Given corporate example, unions also rush the altar

Although corporate mergers and acquisitions have grabbed most of the headlines, a similar implosion of labor unions also is underway. And just as many corporate mergers are overshadowed by cultural conflicts and philosophical differences, so too is the proposed marriage of the Screen Actors' Guild and the American Federation of Television & Radio Artists.

Now in its final chapter, with ballots to all 123,000 members due back by Jan. 25, the urge to merge has the solid backing of both boards of directors but has stirred strong opposition within SAG's membership ranks—and, to a lesser extent, within AFTRA as well. That opposition, no surprise, also shares similarities with its corporate counterparts: the perception that rather than a marriage of equals, this is an example of one

organization swallowing another.

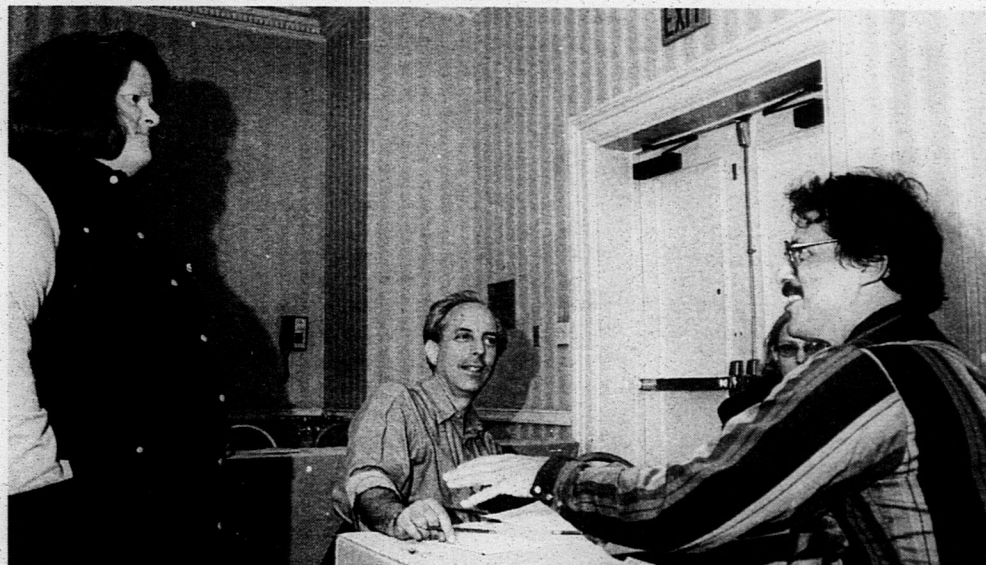
"The proposed merged union looks nothing like the current Screen Actors Guild," complain SAG's nay-sayers in an official "con" statement. "SAG is being absorbed by AFTRA. If this merger passes, the most successful actors' union in the world... will vanish. In its place will be a very different, very big, very diverse union."

Such sentiments may resonate for some TNG-CWA members, but the pro-merger arguments also are familiar. Just as large corporations justify growing even larger through mergers because of globalization and economies of scale, the SAG and AFTRA boards maintain their union will result in better use of resources, coordinated planning and better targeting of lobbying targets.

Moreover, argues the SAG pro

contingent, rejection of the merger will signal the end of a jurisdictional truce between the two unions—and the outbreak of all-out war. "Our agreement to jointly negotiate all shared contracts... was put into place on the assumption that merger was the ultimate goal," SAG's leadership has warned. "If we choose not to merge right now, we almost certainly are choosing to go into battle. The only sure winners: our employers."

Even with the truce, however, the two unions have had their differences. Of special interest to Guild members, for example, was SAG's heavy lobbying in recent months for the so-called "privacy bill," designed to curtail media intrusion into celebrities' lives. AFTRA refused to endorse the measure because it represents TV news staffers.



CWA staff member Martha Flagg, CWA Executive Vice President Larry Cohen and Jay Jorden of the Wire Service Guild, at right, exchange war stories during a conference break.

Crippling injuries are found in white-collar factories, too

By Jim Militello
Wire Service Guild

Brain damage, high cancer rates, debilitating injuries. The list sounds like a litany of Victorian workplace horrors, but as delegates to the CWA's annual Safety and Health Conference in mid-November learned, such problems persist a century later. Moreover, workplace dangers are even more insidious in a modern office than in a sooty, machine-filled factory, if only because they're less obvious.

"It is hard for some people to believe that you can get injured at a computer, sitting down," acknowledged Dr. Michael Smith, a professor in the University of Wisconsin's Industrial Engineering Department. "But the data present strong evidence of a high rate of musculoskeletal injuries among this workplace."

That data was developed by Smith, in conjunction with the

CWA, from a study he developed of VDT use among New Jersey state employees. The most comprehensive survey of its kind in the public sector, it unearthed an unexpectedly high percentage of crippling symptoms and disorders associated with repetitive motion activities. Conference delegates then had an opportunity to attend ergonomic workshops to learn ways of preventing repetitive motion illnesses.

But the conference explored other contemporary workplace hazards, too. Research over the past two decades, for example shows CWA workers have incidents of asbestos-related diseases, such as lung cancer, as much as ten times more often than the national average. The conference also explored the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act and workers' compensation, addressing differences in coverage and how union reps can ensure workers receive

the maximum protection.

If it sounds incongruous that unions still must fight for basic workplace safety, chalk it up to politics. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, for instance, is charged with enforcing federal workplace regulations. But as explained by Frank Strasheim, regional administrator for OSHA Region 9, funding and staffing cuts by a Republican-controlled Congress have weakened enforcement.

Two bright notes were sounded, however. One, a five-year plan outlined by Strasheim to maximize OSHA's resources, is intended to improve outdated safety standards and to identify the country's worst violators. The second was an announcement by M.E. Nichols, CWA Executive Vice President Emeritus, of a \$175,000 grant by the Department of Labor to the CWA for developing and distributing health and safety literature.

Leuchter winner switches careers

"This is not a business I want to be in any more"

Some people can point precisely to the moment when their lives career off one track and onto another. For Liz Brown, it came when she put a notice on her union bulletin board explaining why she was pulling her byline from her newspaper's Sunday supplement.

Management at the Eastside Journal in Bellevue, Washington, did not appreciate a reporter broadcasting her "moral" and "ethical" concerns to the rest of the newsroom. But how else, Brown asks, could a professional journalist respond to being assigned stories by the advertising department?

"Newspapers are a good business to get out of right now," she

sighs, "especially if you're working for a small suburban daily. I just found that the ideals that had led me into journalism I no longer came into contact with on a day-to-day basis."

As it happens, Brown was more than just a features writer—she also has been an active union member for the past decade, serving on the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild bargaining team, as its delegate to various conventions, and for the past two years as its president. And the more involved she got, she says, the more her "job" satisfaction came from her union work rather than her journalistic efforts.

Now Brown will plunge in with both feet, as winner of the

TNG-CWA Irving Leuchter Memorial Scholarship. The \$10,000 stipend will underwrite a 10-week residential seminar at Harvard University starting Jan. 4. When she finishes, Brown says, she'll be returning to Bellevue—but as the local's assistant to the administrative officer, not as a reporter. The career switch, she says, "couldn't make me happier."

More than a career shift, Brown's decision also marks a significant reorientation for a local that for many years was staffed by "hired guns." As Brown wrote in her scholarship application, "My union developed a dangerous habit. Instead of recruiting, promoting and training our leaders from within, we relied on hired

outsiders to do the work of negotiating our contracts and running the daily affairs of our union."

Just how dangerous that can be became apparent earlier this year, she added, when the chief administrator quit and Brown took a leave of absence from the Eastside Journal to run the office—and discovered that the local's finances were in complete disarray. "We're still cleaning up the mess that a legacy of hands-off oversight helped create," she wrote, observing that such neglect "left us vulnerable to theft, fraud and potential lawsuits for failure to represent our members."

Going to Harvard, Brown says, will provide her with an academic grounding in labor law, union gov-

ernance and economic analysis. It will help her network with other union activists and expose her to trends in labor-management relations. And, as significantly, it will add an articulate female voice to labor's ranks.

"Labor needs women like me," she announces. "At a recent trade-union convention, I was surprised to see how few women held positions of leadership. The majority of the seats in the audience were filled with men. With women making up more of the workforce, the labor movement must look beyond the fight for better wages and benefits—we must tackle social issues that are of importance to women, including affirmative action and child care."

Scholarship season is upon us

TNG-CWA members with college-bound children are eligible to apply for several scholarships. Additional information and application forms for each of the following may be obtained through the TNG-CWA office in Washington, D.C.:

JOSEPH ANTHONY BEIRNE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Thirty partial scholarships of up to \$3,000 each for students in undergraduate or graduate programs; selected on a competitive basis. Second-year scholarships of up to \$3,000 may be offered to 1998-99 first-year award winners subject to demonstrated achievement. The application deadline is March 31, 1999, but early application is encouraged.

The foundation also administers several other programs for which TNG-CWA members may apply, including grants for community and social services training, fellowships and internships.

RAY HACKNEY SCHOLARSHIP

Now in its 34th year, this program awards eight \$4,000 scholarships annually in a lottery conducted each May; each scholarship is disbursed in four \$1,000 increments over four years. Applications must be submitted by Feb. 28, 1999.

UNION MASTERCARD SCHOLARSHIP

Funded largely by Union Privilege, this program offers one-time cash grants of \$500 to \$4,000 to help defray the costs of higher education and will disburse \$150,000 in awards next year. Applicants or their parents must have at least one year of continuous union membership in good standing; graduate students are not eligible. Awards will be based on academic achievement and potential, character, leadership, social awareness, career goals and financial need. Application deadline is Jan. 31; winners (only) will be notified by May 31.

Feeling stressed out? Our survey might help

By Larkie Gildersleeve
TNG Director of Research,
Information and Technology

What do you do when you aren't in a crisis? The local president sounded almost wistful as he posed that question at a recent district council meeting, nostalgically recalling the mobilizing power of a strike. "We need to find a means of keeping our members active," he added.

Yet "crisis," to the extent it can be equated with "stress," is with us all the time—and it's growing. New software is constantly introduced, often plagued with bugs. Training is inadequate. Software for one task doesn't communicate with software from another. Photographers have to master new equipment, verbally skilled employees are assigned layout tasks, artists have to become technically proficient.

People who support one union—with its own contract, pay and other working conditions—

work alongside members of other unions with different rules. Jobs and work disappear from one department and reappear elsewhere, or not at all. Supervision sucks.

The list goes on, a litany of abuses and challenges that slowly corrode many employees' sense of competence and self-worth. But like most erosion, the process can be so gradual it isn't noticed until it's too late to stop the damage. Instead of a clarion call to arms like a good old-fashioned strike, workplace stress is a relentless series of muted notes.

Now, in an effort to crank up the volume, the Guild has developed a questionnaire that will be distributed nationwide early next year, following a trial run that is currently underway at the Washington-Baltimore Guild. Comprising 57 questions that should take less than 15 minutes to answer, the survey seeks information about such subjects as hours worked, training, how jobs have changed, health effects attributed to stress and suggestions for change.

Answers will be kept confidential and will be tabulated and analyzed by Mike Smith, a faculty member of the department of industrial engineering at the University of Wisconsin. The results then will be shared with locals, broken down by local and unit, and will be compared with the overall nationwide response—so the higher the response rate, the more useful the results will be for everyone.

Although clearly not as exciting as a picket line, the stress questionnaire can be an effective mobilization tool because it is designed for distribution by local stewards. Locals also should benefit from the results by gaining information that will be useful at the bargaining table. But perhaps most significantly for the long term, the survey will help us identify stress "hot spots" that we can explore more thoroughly with follow-up surveys and interviews.

There's more than one way to keep members active—and some are less stressful than others.

Barr, Broun awards seeking entries

The 1998 Heywood Broun Award call for entries has been issued, with a January 29 deadline for submissions, but this year it has a junior partner: the David S. Barr Award, created to honor the Guild's former general counsel.

Barr, a cum laude graduate of Harvard University law school, served as the Guild's general counsel, mentor, role model and institutional memory for a quarter of a century. He was widely acknowledged as having guided a union of 32,000 often contentious media professionals with good humor, passion and panache. When he died suddenly March 8, 1997 of a heart attack, his passing left an enormous void.

In an attempt to fill that void, TNG-CWA approved an award, specifically aimed at students, "to provide inspiration for a younger generation of journalists by recognizing work which contributes to the pursuit of justice and fairness."

Open to all high school and college students—including those enrolled in vocational, technical or special education programs, part-time students and those in community colleges or graduate programs—the David S. Barr Award will recognize the two entries that best contribute to that pursuit of justice. The high school winner will receive \$500; the college winner will receive \$1,500.

Entry forms for the Barr competition may be obtained from the TNG-CWA office in Washington. The entries themselves must include work published or broadcast between Sept. 1, 1998 and

April 30, 1999. Judging the entries will be a four-member panel including a journalist, an academic, a labor lawyer and a member of the Barr family. Winners will be announced June 1.

Meanwhile, the Heywood Broun Award is in its 58th year and still offers but a single prize: a \$5,000 award "intended to encourage and recognize individual journalistic achievement by members of the working media, particularly if it helps right a wrong or correct an injustice."

Created two years after the death of the man most directly responsible for starting The Newspaper Guild, the Broun award has consistently recognized stories and series that champion the underdog and the underprivileged.

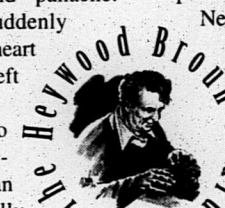
Last year's winners, for example, were three reporters at the Cleveland Plain Dealer who exposed flaws in the nation's organ allocation and transplant system; the 1996 winner, Molly Gordon of the N.Y. Daily News, revealed how Chinese immigrants were being victimized by charlatans posing as doctors.

Rules for entering the Broun competition are available from the TNG-CWA office in Washington but remain unchanged from last year. There is no entry form, and reporters are encouraged to apply on their own behalf—there is no requirement that editors or publishers "sponsor" entries. Eligible work must have been published or broadcast in calendar year 1998; submission deadline is Jan. 29, with the winner to be announced in March.

Guild Reporter wins one, too

Although not quite in the same category, the Guild Reporter won an award, too: second place for general excellence for union

newspapers of less than 100,000 circulation, awarded by the International Labor Communications Association. Huzzah!



LOOKING AHEAD

The real state of the union

By Linda Foley, President

Sex, lies and videotape. Add a mid-summer gasp by the stock market and you've just about summed up the headlines of 1998.

Yet aside from the titillation it provoked, Kenneth Starr's X-rated report to Congress confirmed something more substantial: it instantly established the World Wide Web as a viable vehicle for sending and receiving news (if the Starr report could be considered news). It's therefore significant that 1998 also was the year The Newspaper Guild/CWA affirmed the right of on-line workers and "digital employees" to union representation.

That historic turn of events began with a ruling from the National Labor Relations Board that employees of the Baltimore Sun who produce its Web page belong in the Guild. A separate NLRB unit-clarification case at the Providence Journal-Bulletin was settled when the Guild negotiated union rights for employees in the paper's new media department. Arbitrations, meanwhile, established Guild contract coverage for on-line workers at the Pueblo (Col.) Chieftain and affirmed the rights of Indianapolis members to freelance for non-competing Web publications during their off-hours.

Moreover, because TNG-CWA is looking beyond the traditional newsroom, we recently chartered a local union of workers at Microsoft and other Washington-based high-tech companies. WashTech, an organization of so-called temporary and independent workers, is now TNG-CWA Local 37083.

While the Internet improved the delivery and immediacy of news coverage, the events of 1998 tested traditional media's ability to deliver controversial information quickly and accurately, prompting a growing public crisis of confidence in the industry. That's why TNG-CWA joined such groups as the Committee of Concerned Journalists in an examination of journalism's changing role. One outgrowth of this concern was the creation of a rank-and-file Guild Committee on the Future of Journalism, which recently issued a comprehensive report on the state of journalism in North America. The report will provide a platform for concrete recommendations on how to maintain a high degree of trust, accuracy and thoroughness in journalism.

At the same time, we helped spur community groups to demand accountability from their local media in cities such as Monterey and Long Beach, Calif. The Guild and its parent union, CWA, also were instrumental in developing a media watch program in New Jersey, where increased ownership concentration of the print media has reduced the number of newspapers by at least half in the past decade. We also submitted shareholder resolutions that would require executives of media corporations to be more responsive to local communities.

The issues TNG-CWA is raising affect anyone who cares about or works in the information sector of the world's economy. That's one reason we've forged new ties with freelancers and independent contractors, whom our employers continue to exploit in record numbers. That's why the Philadelphia Guild signed a 26-month contract in June covering 200 correspondents in the suburban bureaus of Knight-Ridder's Philadelphia Inquirer. That historic collective bargaining agreement came on the heels of an affiliation by 300 freelancers, formerly members of Canada's ACTRA, with TNG-CWA's Canadian Media Guild.

Similarly, two groups of independent court interpreters voted to merge with TNG in 1998, adding several hundred more language interpreters and translators to our membership rolls. And we ended the year with the U.S. Department of Labor challenging the right of Time-Warner Inc. to withhold benefits and pensions from hundreds of independent contractors and so-called "casual" workers at the media conglomerate's magazines.

Still, our biggest challenges came not from new technology but from an old vice: greed. The employers we face today are greedier and more powerful than ever. In their continuing quest for profit margins of 25 percent or more, media conglomerates such as Gannett, Knight-Ridder, Media News and Journal Register Co. don't hesitate to trample employees' rights.

Asset sales and newspaper swaps disrupted the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of Guild members during the past year. More than 17 months after Knight-Ridder acquired the Monterey Herald, for example, the unions are still without contracts. And

Can "liberal bias" survive the market?

By Jim Naureckas
Editor, Extra!

Conservatives generally offer the "free market" as the solution to all problems. Just let market forces rule, they say, and consumers will get everything they want.

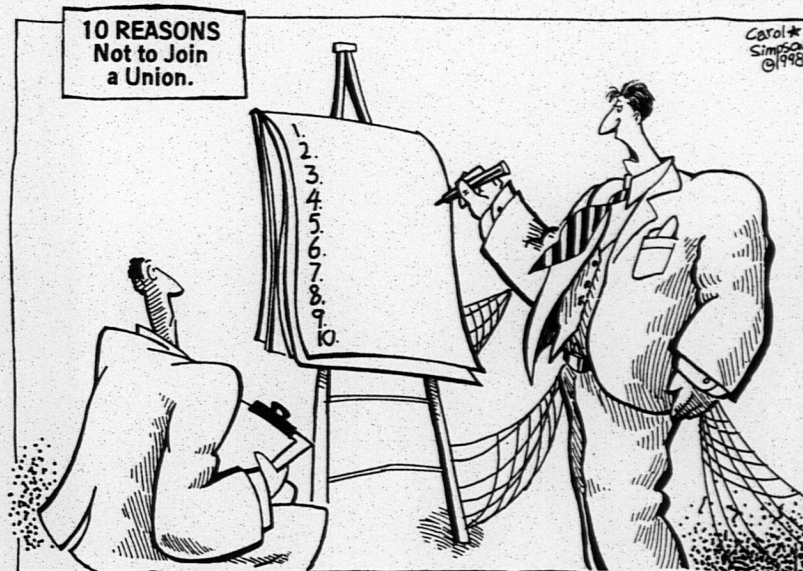
Except when it comes to media.

It's an article of faith on the right that mainstream media have a "liberal bias." Following conservative logic, this must be because people are demanding "liberal" content from the media marketplace. Are conservatives saying the public has a liberal bias?

Of course, progressives don't believe

that the market always gives people what they want. And they know that the primary economic motive in most media is selling advertising: The main "market" for most news outlets is one in which readers, viewers or listeners are sold to advertisers.

[The July/August] issue of Extra! is devoted to debunking one of the most persistent media myths—the idea that corporate-owned, advertiser dominated news outlets nonetheless are carrying out some kind of left-wing agenda. The centerpiece of the issue is sociologist David Croteau's survey of the elite of the Washington press corps, which demonstrates that on economic issues, these journalists' views are largely to the right of public opinion. . . .



Knight-Ridder's sales of the Long Beach Press Telegram and the Gary Post-Tribune to Dean Singleton's Media News and Conrad Black's Hollinger Corp., respectively, have thrown us into more tough bargaining over worsened working conditions. Journal Register Co.'s purchase of several former Goodson newspapers thrust other Guild units into similar circumstances.

In Detroit, meanwhile, Knight-Ridder and its partner in crime, Gannett, were again found guilty of causing and prolonging the nearly four-year-old strike/lockout in Motor City. Yet despite being ordered—yet again—to rehire all the strikers (even if it means firing the scabs who illegally replaced them), the two newspaper giants continued to flout the law and refused to comply with the NLRB order until all appeals are exhausted.

Other newspapers, however, haven't been as successful in thwarting the Guild's quest for justice. Singleton's attempt to steamroll the Guild at the Lowell (Mass.) Sun, for example, was stopped in its tracks after the threat of an NLRB-sought injunction resulted in a new collective bargaining agreement. And north of Lowell, in Portland, Maine, Guild mobilizing and community organizing ensured that the purchaser of the family-owned Guy Gannett Co. would deal fairly with the employees and their unions. Ultimately, the Blethen family of the Seattle Times Co. wound up acing

Singleton out of a deal to purchase Guy Gannett's three newspapers.

Capping an unprecedented year of Media News victories, the Northern California Guild finally achieved an initial contract with Singleton's Alameda Newspapers—more than 15 years after the group was first organized.

Meanwhile, several Guild locals have formulated mergers of their own. The Northern California Guild merged with the Bay Area Typographical Union, forming the Northern California Media Guild of CWA. The Newspaper Guild of Twin Cities recently completed a merger with the local CWA typographical union. And the Canadian Media Guild, whose members at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. were threatened with downsizing and privatization, grew by 750 members when the Canadian Union of Broadcast Employees voted to affiliate.

Finally, the Guild's narrow defeat in a decertification vote at the San Diego Union-Tribune sent a powerful message about our mission as the TNG-CWA heads into 1999. That experience taught us that when a company is hell-bent on destroying its relationship with its workers, it will go to any lengths to accomplish the goal without regard to cost, ethics or the truth.

The Guild can take steps to deal with overzealous coverage of sex scandals and the growth of the Internet. Lies, however, are another story.

LETTERS

Editor:

Re: Journalism on the Couch

To this day we don't know for certain who murdered George Polk in 1948, but we do know that establishment journalists such as Walter Lippman played a shabby role in the U.S. government's manipulation of the crime. The New York Newspaper Guild fought the good fight for the truth, but was no match for the Cold War spooks and their allies. In the words of I.F. Stone, Lippman was "a willing sucker instead of a real reporter." Stone and others (such as Alan Nairn, who won the Polk award in 1995) have been the real reporters.

As reported by Carl Bernstein in Rolling Stone (1977), more than 400 journalists have been used in one way or another by the CIA over 25 years. We know who some of them were, but others keep their connections to themselves. At the very least this poisons the national discourse. When a journalist writes a piece supporting some government action we can ask, Is this the journalist's honest judgment or is it a CIA

effort to hide the truth?

I don't know what the solution is, but we need to deal with the problem. I'm glad the Guild is concerned about the mega-corporate control of the media, but we need to go further. The corporations are the natural allies of the spy agencies.

The problem is still with us. I think that Gary Webb was shabbily treated by the San Jose Mercury News, and by the New York Times and Washington Post. What is the Guild doing on his behalf? I would also like to know how the Philadelphia media have reported the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

—Per Fagereng
Portland, OR
(retired from S. F. Examiner)

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: Friday before publication. (Next deadline: January 13.)

"Ordinary people" make history, too

By Matt Witt and Gaye Williams
Int'l Brotherhood of Teamsters

Many labor leaders and activists agree that unions can become a more effective force for workers only by getting members, families and retirees more involved and by building alliances with other community groups.

But many working Americans have been trained throughout their lives not to get involved in organized action. They have been taught that as a mere "average Joe" or "Joe Sixpack" they don't have the skills, knowledge or experience needed to speak out or organize. Many think their efforts won't make a difference. Some are concerned that union activity will take time away from other family responsibilities. Others fear retaliation from their boss.

The idea that "ordinary" people can't make social change is first learned in school, where stu-

Editor's note: TNG-CWA is completing two videos of its own, one as a brief visual introduction to the Guild, the second underscoring its commitment to diversity. Both will be available to locals and other interested parties early next year.

dents sit passively and consume lessons about how history was made by "great men."

The same message is reinforced by television—both because it treats viewers as passive consumers and because working people are largely invisible in most programming. TV rarely shows people organizing for any purpose.

Workers and their representatives virtually never are chosen to be among the "experts" who comment on issues. The constant drumbeat of advertisements conveys the subliminal message that corporations are at the heart of public life—that not only is what's good for General Motors good for America, but that General Motors is America.

Increasingly, big corporations

reinforce workers' sense of powerlessness through internal communications programs that use videos as one element. Major companies like United Parcel Service and Anheuser-Busch distribute videos to employees that feature talks by the CEO and other executives, backed by charts and graphs with financial figures. The underlying message is that these executives—not the workers—are the corporation and hold all knowledge and power.

Teamster communications traditionally echoed these images. The only role for rank-and-file workers was to praise the benefits they received—as if they were the union's customers and not its members. There were no scenes of them organizing, speaking out,

demonstrating, leafleting or taking any other action.

The message: members are spectators in their own organization. Unions are officials in offices. Unions are technocratic bureaucracies. Unions are history.

Since 1992, however, the Teamsters have made more than two dozen videos that take a new approach. Most address directly the reasons workers don't get involved in the union by presenting people who felt those fears but overcame them.

A good example is *Turn It Around: Teamster Stewards Solving Problems on the Job*, a video that shows workers challenging unfair management actions without solely relying on the long, legalistic grievance procedure provided in most union contracts. It shows how members can work with their steward to confront management with unity on the shop floor, instead of just waiting for "the union" to deliver

a solution.

Videos like this can add a spark to union education programs and action campaigns, as long as they are seen as tools for—and not replacements for—person-to-person communication.

Integration into active campaigns ensures that videos sent out from union headquarters won't sit unopened on shelves in local union halls. "Management has its videos, and now we do too," said Anheuser-Busch brewery worker Rob Hermann. "The difference is that videos and letters from management are all they have. We've got a whole organization."

Adapted from the July/August issue of WorkingUSA; the authors are director and assistant director of communications for the Teamsters. A list of videos, almost all priced at \$5 each and available to non-Teamsters, are available from the Teamsters' education department at 202/624-8117.

Calif. showed power of one-on-one outreach

By Ken Grossinger
Field Operations Organizer, AFL-CIO

Communicating with members is a relatively easy task for unions—but it doesn't always happen the way it should. For instance, union representatives often lobby elected officials, but they rarely think of reporting on the substance of these meetings to their members via worksite leaflets or through newsletters sent to their homes. Hence, the way union members think about lawmakers and legislative issues is shaped almost exclusively by public media and not through union communications or direct member contact.

Consider, for example, the California battle earlier this year over Proposition 226, a measure that would have required unions to

get annual written permission from each member before using union dues for political purposes. It would have been fatal to allow public opinion and, in particular, California union members' views on Prop. 226 to be shaped by anti-worker forces—from the governor to the "Yes on 226" campaign. Through television commercials, the "Yes on 226" committee repeatedly claimed that the initiative would allow union members to exert greater influence over their union's political decisions and over how their dues money was spent. Who would vote against that? Labor could counteract this deception and advance its own message only with an ongoing member contact campaign.

The process included contacting members through leafletting, phone calls, mail and one-to-one

meetings. These are not terribly glamorous activities, and their value is too often diminished in day-to-day operations. But polling and focus groups reinforced clearly that if this was to become a sound-bite campaign battled over the air waves, labor would lose. But when workers recognized this initiative as an attack, they would resist it and fight back. This resistance depended upon their understanding a deceptively worded initiative, and that required in-depth discussion.

Leaflets, mailings, question-and-answer fact sheets and videos were prepared for mass distribution at worksites and sent to members' homes. The United Food and Commercial Workers sent 80,000 videos to the homes of its members throughout the state. Union members received mail from their

locals, state and national offices and campaign headquarters.

The breadth and effectiveness of the member contact, education and mobilization was revealed in election day exit polling and post-election polls commissioned by the AFL-CIO and the California Labor Federation. Pollster David Binder found:

- Of those who received union handbills and leaflets, 73% voted "No."
- Of those who attended worksite meetings, 83% voted "No."
- Of those who had one-to-one discussions, 83% voted "No."
- Of those who received a phone call and had a one-on-one discussion, 90% voted "No."

A key lesson in the fight against 226 is that to engage members, unions must organize around issues, not just political parties or candi-

dates. While there is great disenchantment and outright hostility toward partisan politics, union members hold critical views on a wide range of issues, and they expect unions to advance their interests to counter corporate money. Indeed, a Peter Hart poll found that 68% of union members think unions should invest in politics and legislation to counter the influence of corporations and the wealthy.

Recent political and legislative victories—from the come-from-behind 226 campaign to fast-track to the minimum wage hike—all provide hard evidence that in the face of great odds, workers who participate in politics make a huge difference.

Adapted from the September/October issue of WorkingUSA; the author organizes legislative field operations for the AFL-CIO.

THE GUILD Reporter

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DAYBOOK

Sector Executive Committee meeting, Jan. 10-15, TNG-CWA headquarters

Western district council, Jan. 23-24, Hawaii

TNG-CWA new officers' training, Feb. 12-15, George Meany Center

Midwest, Great Lakes, Southern tri-council meeting, Feb. 20-21, Minneapolis

New England district council, Providence, R.I. Feb. 27-28

Jobs with Justice annual meeting, Feb. 26-28, Louisville, Kentucky

Working Women (AFL-CIO) Conference 2000, March 11-12, Chicago

TNG-CWA sector conference, April 29-May 2, Ottawa

Unity '99, July 7-11, Seattle Convention Center

CWA Nat'l Convention July 12-14, Miami

CWA Equity Conference, Sept. 8-12, New Orleans

When you want to reach out and get something . . .

Face it: the Internet is a fact of life. More, it's a great resource for acquiring the information that union stewards, officers and members need to make a point, buttress an argument or fill in a hole. Here, courtesy of a wide variety of sources, are some e-mail addresses that may be especially helpful:

www.paywatch.org—part of the AFL-CIO website, Paywatch tracks the salaries of top CEOs.

pathfinder.com/fortune/fortune500—summarizes revenues, profits, assets and other data on Fortune 500 companies

www.mediainfo.com—contains information on private companies; scroll to "Media Info Links Online Media Directory," click on newspapers and then on the state to search for information.

www.mediaownership.org—contains data on ownership of TV, radio, films, books, music, newspapers and magazines

www.aflcio.org/women/equalpay.htm—provides women with a way of calculating how much money they stand to lose during their careers—adjusted for individual earnings, age and education level—because of continued pay inequity.

www.stats.bls.gov—access to the mother of all meaningful numbers, the Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.nlr.gov—access to the mother of all labor decisions.

www.clc-ctc.ca—contains information of interest to Canadian unionists, including news releases from federations across the country.

www.newsguild.org—home to your favorite media union.



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