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Her excellency is
a Guild member

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Time rapped on pension plan

Groundbreaking decision gives boost to 'temps'

Win, lose or draw, the Department of Labor has already won a potentially groundbreaking decision in its effort to force Time Warner to properly classify hundreds of its workers as permanent employees. The decision was issued Sept. 3 by U.S. District Judge Denny Chin in response to Time Warner's motion to dismiss a federal lawsuit filed last October. The lawsuit accuses the publishing giant and numerous subsidiaries—many of which include Guild-represented units—of misclassifying employ-

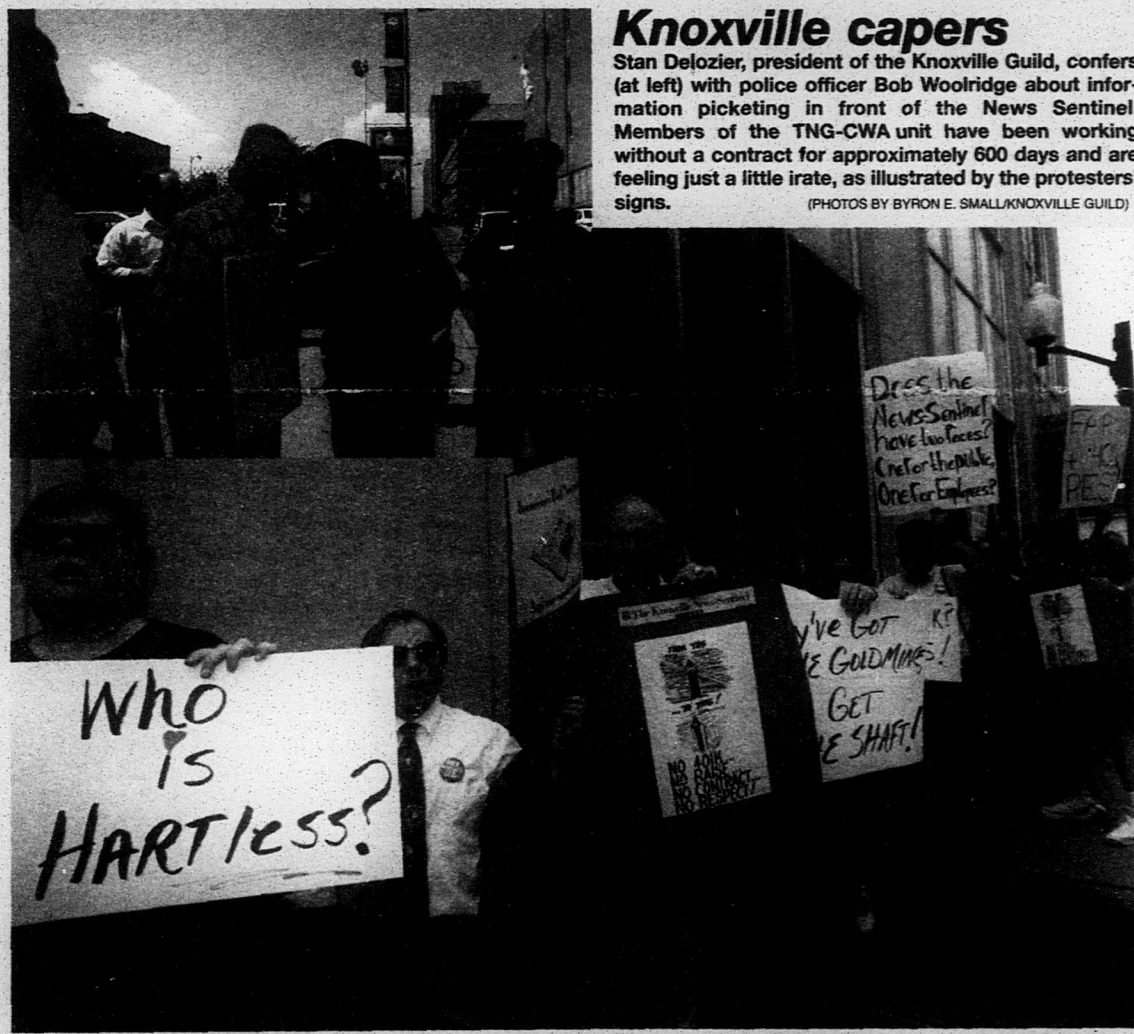
ees as "temporary workers" or "independent contractors" in order to deny them pension and health care benefits. But instead of challenging Time Warner under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Department of Labor sued under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act.

Time Warner, seeking to have the lawsuit dismissed, argued that the government's novel approach exceeded its authority and amounted to an "impermissible" claim. Not so, Judge Chin responded: because misclassified employees

might not know their rights had been violated, "it makes sense" for the government to intervene. Moreover, the fact that misclassified employees might have been deprived of benefits "does not mean that the plans themselves could not have been injured as well"—in other words, because some employees were not included in the pension plans, it was possible "that as a consequence the plans suffered losses."

But the most significant part of the ruling, according to

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Knoxville capers

Stan DeLozier, president of the Knoxville Guild, confers (at left) with police officer Bob Woolridge about information picketing in front of the News Sentinel. Members of the TNG-CWA unit have been working without a contract for approximately 600 days and are feeling just a little irate, as illustrated by the protesters' signs.

(PHOTOS BY BYRON E. SMALL/KNOXVILLE GUILD)

Microsoft will bounce permatemps

The battle on behalf of contract workers has taken another turn at Microsoft, where the TNG-CWA local popularly known as WashTech has obtained company documents of plans to pare—and perhaps end—its use of permatemps.

Although Microsoft spokesman Dan Leach told WashTech on Sept. 1 that the company doesn't have "any policy changes that we are announcing at this time," other Microsoft managers confirmed that a large number of permatemp positions will be converted into full-time jobs over the next 10 months. "Basically what they have told us," said one manager, "is that they are not going to have any people at the company as 'temps' who have been here for a year or more after June 2000."



WashTech member
Barbara Judd

While that's ostensibly good news for approximately 6,500 Microsoft employees who have worked—in some cases for years—without company benefits, there are no assurances that the permatemps will be hired for the jobs they've been doing. One company memo, for example, instructs managers to evaluate job candidates "based upon potential for development at Microsoft"—instructions that WashTech member Barbara Judd interprets, because of their emphasis on "potential" over skills and experience, as a veiled directive "to weed out older workers."

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Indonesian military targeting journalists

Different war, same problem: the deliberate targeting of journalists by war combatants.

With the Balkans relatively peaceful, the latest battleground for journalists has been East

Timor, where despite a state of martial law at least four journalists have disappeared. They include Peter Rohi, of the Jakarta daily Suara Bangsa; his son Joaquim Rohi, a freelancer; Mindho Rajagoekgoek, a stringer for

Radio Nederland; and Aderito Santa, a journalist for the newspaper Suara Timor Timur.

The disappearances prompted Aidan White, general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, to write to Indonesian

officials to "urgently investigate these reports and to provide information on the whereabouts of our colleagues." In addition, CWA President Morton Bahr wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to urge her intervention.

Noting that only 20 foreign journalists remained in East Timor, Bahr informed Albright that "journalists on the ground confirm that elements of the Indonesian military and police are actively cooperating in a deliberate strategy to intimidate and eventually silence independent news of the paramilitary's terrorism."

The government-tolerated targeting of journalists predates the U.N.-sponsored referendum Aug. 30, in which an overwhelming majority of East Timor residents

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Pacifica quagmire deepens

The Pacifica morass gets deeper every week, with no resolution in sight of the stand-off between the network's national board—chaired by Mary Frances Berry—and supporters of San Francisco Bay-area radio station KPFA.

Facing the near certainty of a subpoena from the California State Legislature, Pacifica finally acquiesced to demands that it provide financial statements and invoices to a legislative audit committee. That, in turn, elicited the information that the non-profit, listener-supported network had spent approximately \$500,000 for armed guards, a public relations company and other expenses associated with the KPFA crisis.

KPFA co-news director Mark Mericle, a union shop steward and

member of the station's negotiating team, was quoted by the Berkeley Daily Planet as saying the expense could be extremely hurtful if it is taken out of KPFA funds, rather than out of the Pacifica budget, but Pacifica officials did not clarify how the expense was being allocated.

Meanwhile, Pacifica's Los Angeles station, KPFA, dropped its Spanish-language public affairs program, *Enfoque Latino*, for informing its listeners of the dispute. The cancellation came just one week after KPFA banned Pacifica journalist Robin Urevich from the newsroom after she wrote an article critical of management for a local magazine.

Pacifica controls the licenses of five listener-supported radio stations in the U.S. Earlier this sum-

mer, faced with a staff mutiny at KPFA over its leaked plans to sell the station's license, it closed the studio for 23 days and broadcast canned programming as thousands of demonstrators took to the streets. Pacifica's critics now contend that the \$500,000 it spent in barricading the doors amounts to a hostile takeover and are pressing their case with California legislators, charging that the network has violated its non-profit charter.

On a related note, the NLRB ruled this week that unpaid staffers at Pacifica radio station WBAI in station in New York are not employees and therefore cannot be included in a bargaining unit.

The decision, overturning a regional director's ruling, is based on the board's finding that there is no economic relationship between the volunteers and the station. Rather than working for hire, the unpaid staff "work out of an interest in seeing the station continue to exist and thrive, out of concern for the content of the programs they produce, and for the personal enrichment of doing a service to the community and receiving recognition from the community," the board observed.

The regional director's differing conclusion was based, in part, on the station's most recent bargaining contract with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. The contract provided for unpaid staff to receive travel reimbursement and a child care allowance, and provided that unpaid staff substituting for paid staff receive compensation.

WBAI has been mentioned frequently as an alternative candidate for sale by Pacifica.

Last call!

As members of the Newspaper Guild of Albany received their last raises under the existing contract, Gary Hahn, chairman of the local's new social committee, prepares to serve a "last treat." The Italian ices were dished out in the parking lot of The Times Union as a first step toward mobilizing the membership for the contract talks that lie ahead.



Charlie
ICE CREAM COMPANY

Time takes it on the chin

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labor attorney Lowell Peterson, of the Long Island-based firm of Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, is Chin's assertion that ERISA charges benefit plan trustees with "a fiduciary duty to 'act to ensure that a plan receives all funds to which it is entitled, so that those funds can be used on behalf of participants and beneficiaries.'"

"I think this is groundbreaking," says Peterson, whose law firm represents the New York

Newspaper Guild and the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees. "The court has ruled that an action can be maintained to hold an employer liable as a fiduciary for misclassifying employees and depriving them of benefits."

The quandary facing Time Warner—and other employers who manage their own benefit plans—is that it's wearing two hats. As the employer, it may be sloppy or purposeful in misclassifying employees to duck its financial obligations. But as the plan administrator, it has a much greater responsibility to aggressively ensure that every employee is properly classified, both for the employee's benefit and for the benefit of the plan overall.

Chin's decision doesn't address the Department of Labor's basic claim, that hundreds of employees were misclassified, but does give it the green light to make its case. But Chin's ruling, which to Peterson's knowledge is the first of its kind to address contingent workers, also opens the door for others to prepare similar claims.

"This is more evidence that employers in this country have

gone too far in misclassifying employees," observes TNG-CWA President Linda Foley. "There are millions of workers who, because their employers refuse to classify them as employees, are being illegally and unfairly deprived of basic employment benefits and rights. The Newspaper Guild-CWA commends the Department of Labor for its aggressive pursuit of ERISA compliance for freelance and temporary workers."

In addition to seeking an order requiring Time Warner to pay back benefits—including group health insurance, pensions and employee stock ownership—the Department of Labor is asking the court for an independent audit to identify misclassified employees it doesn't know about. Furthermore, because the lawsuit was filed under ERISA, Time Warner is facing liquidated damages, typically an additional 20% of actual damages plus attorney fees plus interest.

Time Warner's alleged practices included manipulating breaks in service to ensure employees maintained their temporary status, a practice that has been used by employers like Microsoft.

In brief

Panel addresses journalism future

Murray Seeger, executive director of TNG-CWA's Committee on the Future of Journalism, hosts a panel titled "Journalism Reform: Where Are We? Where Are We Going?" Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C. Panelists include Andy Kohut, Barbara Cochran, Scott Bosley and Bill Kovach.

Canadians sharpen their pencils

TNG Canada/CWA is hitting the books, offering two training sessions this fall. An organizing school the weekend of Oct. 15-17, similar to a school offered two years ago, will be held in Toronto. And the union's first negotiation school will be offered Nov. 4-6, just prior to the annual fall meeting of the Representative Council, at the Holiday Inn Plaza de la Chaudiere in Hull, Quebec. Anyone wishing to attend can get more information from his or her local executive or by calling the national office toll-free at 1-877-486-4292.

Wilkes-Barre votes contract extension

The Wilkes-Barre local voted 37 to 5 to extend the expired contract at The Citizens' Voice by one year, through Feb. 12, 2000, while negotiations continue. Extension details include an immediate \$350 signing bonus for full-time employees (pro-rated for part-timers), plus a second, \$200 bonus if the Citizens' Voice achieves an audited operating profit of \$200,000 or more in 1999. The extension also creates one additional personal day per year in exchange for seven-hour (up from five) shifts on Good Friday, Memorial Day eve and July 3, plus a "me-too" clause.

Newest WBNG unit signs contract

Right on the heels of a strike authorization vote, the newest unit of the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild got a contract offer it could live with. The three-year pact, covering approximately 85 workers at the headquarters of the United Food & Commercial Workers International, includes a 3.5% wage increase retroactive to Dec. 20, 1998, a 1.5% signing bonus and second- and

third-year increases of 2%, plus simultaneous step increases ranging from 2.3% to 3.4%.

Achziger named unity council head

Gene Achziger, president of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, has been named chairman of the Seattle Newspaper Unity Council. The council serves as a forum for seven union locals representing employees of The Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Severance offer in Long Beach

Nearly two years after being unceremoniously dumped by Knight Ridder in its sale of the Press-Telegram, employees of the Long Beach, Cal. newspaper have voted to accept a \$1.2 million severance package. Although the offer represents only 61% of what TNG-CWA members believe they were owed under the contract, it is considerably more than the zero dollars Knight Ridder was prepared to pay initially. Approximately 156 people will benefit from the deal, "although we still have to sit down and hash out the details in writing," says former unit chair Natalie Shore.

Hearst's moves worry Detroit

With industry analysts predicting that Hearst will not find a buyer for the San Francisco Examiner, clearing the way for yet another monopoly, Detroit Guild officials wonder if a similar fate awaits the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press. "It goes without saying that there's nothing to prevent Gannett and Knight Ridder from doing something similar unless the antitrust division comes out of its coma," Detroit Guild President Lou Mleczo told The Detroit Sunday Journal recently. "We could end up with one newspaper here with fewer employees and a diminished product."

Padia steps down from CLUW board

After 25 years as a national officer of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Anna Padia, TNG-CWA's human rights director, has decided to make room for fresh blood. "It's time to hand over the torch," she said, although she plans on remaining active in CLUW.

The Newspaper Guild International



For information about your benefits, contact Helen L. Coleman, assistant to the trustees:
1-888-893-3650
hcoleman@cwa-union.org

Whig-Standard settles at eleventh hour . . .

Following several tense days of mediation talks, Whig-Standard management and Local 30204 struck an 11th-hour deal July 15 that averted a possible strike or lockout at the Kingston, Ontario newspaper.

Company negotiators essentially cleared a logjam of contentious issues—such as requiring a note from a company-appointed doctor if an employee were suspected of abusing sick time—from the table to pave the way for a settlement. The union, in turn, agreed to a four-year deal with 2% increases each year, as well as increased shift premiums for copy

editors and photographers.

Among the more significant gains: a memorandum outlining basic benefits for outside advertising sales reps, including vacation time and automobile allowance. All employees, meanwhile, will receive staggered increases in dental and eyeglass benefits, as well as increases in company contributions to the pension plan.

This year's talks were more strained than the last round of negotiations, four years ago, as the company's security staff adopted a higher profile and brought in surveillance equipment. The company also took a more belligerent posi-

tion at the table, balking at providing a union bulletin board and stating an unwillingness to allow employees time off, paid for by the union, to attend conferences.

Elsewhere, the Print-Media Union of Saskatchewan, Local 30663, negotiated a new three-year contract with PrintWest Communications, Saskatoon. The agreement, including retroactivity, gives increases of 2.8% in the first year, 2% in the second and 1.9% in the third, with a 25-cent contribution in each of the second and third years to the pension plan, improvements in shift differentials, vacation, bereavement and vision-care.

. . . but other Canadian locals look to conciliation

Newsroom employees at The Halifax Herald had to wait for more than a year before the company would sit down at the bargaining table—but not before it held a meeting of all excluded employees to discuss how to publish during a strike. Now Local 30130 is one of four Canadian TNG-CWA units that recently won appointment of a conciliation officer, suggesting that the country's labor relations aren't exactly amicable.

The Herald's newsroom bargaining committee applied for conciliation after nine negotiating sessions that essentially went nowhere. "The Guild acknowledges that negotiations for a first collective agreement are time-consuming," the committee wrote in its successful submission to the Nova Scotia Department of Labour. "However, these negotiations have proceeded at an unbelievably slow rate with the simplest of clauses not being agreed to."

After the Guild filed its application, the company abruptly added two dates to the four it had said it could meet throughout September and October, then claimed that most outstanding issues—more than 100 clauses in the Guild's proposals—could be settled in the scheduled six meetings.

Moreover, the company argued before the department of labor that appointing a conciliation officer before wages had been negotiated would be "unprecedented." Unprecedented or not, an obvious-

ly unimpressed labour minister appointed Charles Weir Jr., a former workers' representative on the province's Workers Compensation Board, as conciliator.

Meanwhile, Local 30130 is pursuing its unfair labor practices complaint, charging the company has violated sections of the Trade Union Act that freeze all working conditions until a first collective agreement is signed. The Herald announced in April—the same day the newsroom bargaining unit was certified—that it planned to close bureau buildings in Truro, Yarmouth and Bridgewater on Aug. 1. Although the bureau offices remain open, The Herald has indicated it still wants to proceed with the closings.

Elsewhere, the Saskatchewan Media Guild, which represents editorial workers at The Regina Leader Post, was to enter conciliation the week of Sept. 7-10. TNG Canada/CWA Western Representative Dan Zeidler reported that the Regina bargaining team has met with the company only twice, failing to reach agreement on any proposals.

The GCIU, which represents press workers at The Leader Post, reached a tentative agreement with the company about a month ago, but results of the ratification vote have not been released.

In addition, the Northern Ontario Newspaper Guild and the GCIU have applied for conciliation at The Sudbury Star. Although the company has agreed to some of the unions' non-monetary proposals, it still is insisting on take-backs. The joint council of unions, consisting of NONG, the Typographical Union (now part of NONG) and the GCIU, has agreed not to proceed on monetary issues until the employer removes take-backs from the table. The parties have yet to set dates for conciliation.

Finally, negotiations with The St. Catharines Standard to renew agreements that had expired last April 1 got off to a shaky start when the employer introduced extensive take-backs: removing the composing room supervisor from the bargaining unit, increased use of part-time employees and changes to priority protection. The company also proposed a three-year agreement with a wage freeze for most employees and the introduction of a two-tier wage system.

The union immediately applied for conciliation, which is set for Oct. 6 and 7, and will seek a strike mandate from the membership. St. Catharines Local 30416 of TNG Canada/CWA represents workers in composing, reader sales, classified advertising and advertising support staff.



BROOKE PALMER

Then—and now: Adrienne Clarkson, above, as she worked on a story for the CBC, and below in a publicity still.

Guild member named queen's rep

Guild member Adrienne Clarkson, who began her media career as a story editor and researcher for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. in the early 1960s, has been named governor-general of Canada.

The Canadian post, while without parallel in the United States, combines significant ceremonial and constitutional powers. As the Queen of England's representative to Canada, the governor-general summons and dissolves Parliament, authorizes treaties, receives ambassadors and other foreign diplomats and, perhaps most important, gives assent to bills before they can become law. In emergencies or exceptional circumstances, the governor-general also may appoint or dismiss the Prime Minister and dissolve Parliament.

Clarkson's appointment by Prime Minister Jean Chretien makes her the first immigrant—she was born in Hong Kong and moved to Canada when she was 3—to hold the post. Now 60,



she said she will share her duties with her husband, noted writer John Ralston Saul, whom she married this past summer after 15 years of living together.

The new governor-general, who has vice-regal status, was the on-air reporter and anchor for the program "Take 30," then became most recognized as one of three anchors on Canada's premiere investigative TV show, "The Fifth Estate." She also has written two novels, a book of essays and several movies, which she also produced and directed.

Although not a Guild activist, she was characterized by Arnold Amber, Director of TNG-Canada, as "always a strong supporter" of the union and a leader in a union campaign protesting government censorship efforts.

Living on the edge at Microsoft

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The new drive to eliminate permatemps follows a largely failed policy, established last year, that requires "temps" who have been at Microsoft for a year to stay off the job at least 31 days before renewing their assignment or accepting a new one. Many managers, however, ignored the edict because it was too disruptive, adding fuel to WashTech's organizing efforts and to a long-running class-action lawsuit against the company charging discriminatory behavior.

Unfortunately, say WashTech leaders, Microsoft appears intent on converting positions rather than people. Current long-term contractors are to be treated as "external candidates" and, according to one manager, will not be allowed to interview with their current supervisors. "They're telling us we may be prejudiced in favor of existing contractors," the manager explained, "the implication being that we are blinded as to how bad these people are."

Microsoft's low opinion of its

permatemps has been reported previously, notably including a public statement earlier this summer by company treasurer Greg Maffei that they're simply not good enough to be regular employees. "They are scared that a large number of the current contractors are duds," a Microsoft manager recently confirmed for WashTech. "They don't want to be stuck with these people."

Such sentiments, widely circulated within Microsoft, have done nothing to endear the company to

the permatemps. "It really makes me ill to think that I may soon have to compete with outsiders for my job if it gets offered as a full-time position," one tester wrote on WashTech's bulletin board. "By the time win2k [Windows 2000] ships, I'll have been here for almost a full year and that will suddenly count for squat in the so-called 'conversion' process. . . . Many of us tester types are going to get shafted no matter what we do, no matter how good of a job we have done, no matter what our reviews said."

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Sleeping with the enemy?

More than four years after six Detroit newspaper unions were forced into the streets, a significant number of former strikers have been recalled to work. Once-clear battle lines have blurred, as strikers work side-by-side with those who took their jobs. Yet if the Guild and other unions ever are to rebuild their strength, strikers and strike-breakers alike will have to remember who the real enemy is—and that their only source of strength is each other. Two former strikers describe the emotional hurdles they face.

By Susan Whittall
Detroit Newspaper Guild

It goes without saying that going back to work at the newspaper I picketed for two and a half years was a surreal experience.

It's been strange, lonely—a few times even unbearable. But for the most part, because my fellow returned workers have done their usual exemplary work, the replacement workers admire us, even (sigh) try to befriend us.

Like many strikers, while I was out I'd had dreams (nightmares?) of Daliesque vividness about walking back into the Detroit News. I knew that the newsrooms

had been reshuffled and renovated in the 90-year-old, classic Albert Kahn building, but in my dreams the elevator shot up in a 20-floor tower instead of its customary five floors. I pictured a huge newsroom in which strangers lurked around every corner.

The last part turned out to be true.

When I returned to work on the first working day of January 1998 the newsroom was big—all departments were now on one floor—and countless strange faces peered at me from all sides. Replacement workers—and over the head of each, my mind's eye would see a pop-up balloon of the friend whose job they'd taken.

There weren't many familiar striker faces to seek out, because only a handful of

us had been called back by then, and several were posted in suburban bureaus.

The News had been slower than the Free Press to call any of us back after the six unions had made an offer to return to work on Valentine's Day '97. News publisher Bob Giles may not have instigated the strike, but he took up the strike cause with unseemly gusto. It shouldn't have been a surprise, because after years of labor peace his reign as publisher marked the end of any sort of smooth management/labor relations.

After the offer to return to work, Giles could not bring himself to call one union newsroom employee back. Not one. And there were openings. But as one editor told me, there could have been three reporters

left in the newsroom and Giles would have still said: "There are no openings in the newsroom."

That finally ended when he left (for the Freedom Forum in New York) and the first striking reporter to be called back by seniority was Jim McClear, a respected veteran courts reporter. He was called back by the new publisher, Mark Silverman.

Having a new publisher and managing editor has created a better atmosphere for returned union workers. Even if it's a variation of the old good cop/bad cop routine, it helps one's daily peace of mind not to have to work for the "strike bosses."

It may sound absurd to say that there is

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DAYMON J. HARTLEY/DETROIT GUILD

All of the feelings wrapped up in months of shared strike duty are exposed once more, as Audrey McKenna welcomes returning photographer Pat Beck

'What we all did won't be in vain if we rebuild the Guild inside'

By Al Boulay
Vice President, GCIU Detroit 13N

Life inside. Sounds like a tale of someone behind bars in a prison. Well, it's not totally untrue.

I'm referring to working in a pressroom with scabs. It has been just over two years since I have returned to work after being on strike for 20 months. There are approximately 90 of us who have returned. Our staffing between two pressrooms is half union, half scabs.

Yet it is still a struggle to have to walk into that building day after day realizing that some of the people you work shoulder to shoulder with are the same ones who crossed a picket line and took your job.

It has taken its toll on all of us at some point or another. Some of our members have entered into therapy sessions or anxiety management classes to help cope with the stress of working with these people.

When I first returned in April of 1997, there were only 10 of us, and we were scheduled on nights because the company refused to recognize our seniority until the following year. It was strange and somewhat frightening to be so outnumbered. But as more and more union members returned, our confidence was restored.

All of the members who have returned are totally amazed at these scabs who think they did nothing wrong by accepting employment in a struck plant. I

have on several occasions listened to their reasons for crossing a picket line, such as money, benefits, or they just needed a job. But even though I hear their pitiful excuses, I will never understand how anyone could steal another person's job, especially when your own members cross over and return to work. It's mind-boggling and totally inexcusable.

Even today, conversation is mostly geared to press work. We as union members have to communicate with the scabs in order to get the job completed, but that's where the line is drawn. I don't want to know how a scab's golf game is, or how his wife and kids are doing. I might be forced to work with them for the time being,

but they'll never be invited to my home to share a meal, our children will never play together and we'll never stop for a couple of cold ones after work.

The scabs came in busloads, stealing good union jobs from union workers who had struggled year after year to maintain good working conditions, wages and benefits. We weathered the storm in this bitter labor dispute and after 20 months, when I walked back in to reclaim my job, I walked in with my head held high and my union card was still in my wallet. And that's what separates us from them: pride. Pride in knowing we did the right thing and they know they were wrong.

The National Labor Relations

Board has ruled this dispute as an unfair labor practices strike, stating that management did not bargain in good faith. This is why, when all appeals are exhausted, we will be victorious.

What we have to do now is educate our membership. We all need to be versed in the labor movement. We need to educate our membership on the advantages of being a union member. I believe that learning about the labor movement is as important as learning the various facets of our trade and is vital to our survival as a major trade union.

[Excerpted from a report delivered by Boulay to the North American Newspaper Conference.]

'Some of us are in therapy to cope with working with these people'

'My anxiety was short-lived: 'my' repo can't even look me in the eye'

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less anti-union sentiment at the News than in pre-strike days, but I think few newsrooms could have been as hostile to the Guild (and to non-management employees in general) as that pre-strike, Giles-dominated Detroit News. It probably also helped that before Jim McClear came back, upper management made it clear to the newsroom that he was a veteran reporter who was to be treated with respect by everybody in the newsroom, or else.

My friends at the Free Press have encountered more anti-striker incidents in their newsroom, partly I think because they still work for the same management team but also because it wasn't clearly spelled out to their replacement workers that the returned workers are to be treated with respect. One of my friends at the Free Press, for example, was reduced to tears by the anti-striker trash talking of a few co-workers, but when she complained to an editor he suggested that perhaps she needed counseling.

My work life hasn't been free of such aggravation, but whenever anybody's said anything derogatory about strikers or the strike in my presence, I politely but quickly object.

One annoyance has been an older, line-crossing copy editor in my department who does things like post cartoons up on the Newspaper Guild bulletin board (one making fun of strikers) and, within my hearing, denounces the still-active picket line.

Although I objected about this copy editor's various pranks, my complaints had to go to the publisher before he was stopped. By contrast, if a returned striker had dared to taunt replacement workers or had allowed the word "scab" to slip at the office, you can bet any protests wouldn't have had to rise that high to get a response.

In the year and a half since I've been back, the newsroom is looking more familiar as a steady stream of my co-strikers has been recalled. Just in my department I can reach out to the next cubicle and touch Betty DeRamus, feature-page columnist/returned striker; turn further around to the right and wave to Susan Pollack, features reporter/returned striker; and, if I stand up, see two returned striker editorial assistants,

Alesia Cooper and Jocelyn Brown.

I wish more had taken their jobs back—a number filed letters asking that they retain the right to return to their jobs later. Some said they didn't think they could work with repos.

Probably the toughest thing about coming back was having to be in close contact with the man who took my job. It took them several years to find a music writer who either didn't know me or didn't care that I was on strike and was willing to take my

the small weekly he came from) eases the pain somewhat.

It is ironic that the News had to fling so much money at so many people who never would have gotten so much as an interview before the strike. It's tough to work with people who otherwise never would have made it this far in journalism, although many of the more overpaid underachievers have been pushed out lately. One repo even told our pickets that, as a white male, crossing the picket line was the only way he'd ever get a job at the News. That might fly, except that the white male he replaced managed to get a job at The Washington Post without having to step on anyone's body.

One way we returnees amuse ourselves is to argue about which classification we disdain more—picket line crossers or "repos." I thought at first that the crossers would be easier to bear, since they at least were talented enough to be hired at a non-striking newspaper. But I've since found that the crossers' continual excuses about why they had to do it has

away from our jobs, just sort of threw them to the wind, for anyone to take. Others have woven elaborate fantasies to make themselves feel better.

One replacement worker told me that she was happy when we came back because we improved the paper. But, she added, there would have been no News for us to return to if people like her hadn't come in to "save" it while we were out on strike. I can't even fathom that level of delusion. I had no reply. I just thought of the supermarket where I worked for six weeks, alongside some of the best reporters I've ever known, packing meat and making sandwiches while she came here to take our jobs.

But then, we understood that we were fighting for the greater good. Most replacement workers aren't out for the greater good, they're not even out for the Detroit News. They're out for themselves.

I see more dishonest behavior and hear more complaining about work conditions from replacement workers than I ever did before the strike, so it's no surprise that their interest in what a labor union can do for them is intense. Crossing a picket line, it seems, doesn't necessarily mean that you aren't willing to let a labor union work for you.

Because we don't have enough workers to displace all the replacement workers, there's no question of not signing up the repos who will manage to cling to their jobs. So we smile and give them cards, and my striker friends who haven't been able to come back yet are very understanding about what we have to do inside. Most don't feel threatened by it, but rather, know that what we all did won't be in vain if we rebuild the Guild inside. And what keeps me going is thinking ahead to the day all the appeals will cease, and the fired workers will be back.

I was put on the spot not long ago, when my editor asked me if I thought there would ever be "healing in the newsroom." Would the returned workers ever be comfortable with the crossers and repos? Stunned into politeness, I stammered slowly that I believed in redemption, and that I thought people who did bad things could sometimes redeem themselves.

I try, every day, to believe it.

"Voices of the Strike," a photojournalistic look at the Detroit struggle, has been reissued in an enlarged and updated edition. First published in 1997 by photographer George Waldman, its voices include Whitall's, who wrote in part:

So many of us talk at our weekly Soup 'n' Suds gatherings, at the Anchor or wherever strikers clink glasses, about the good and bad things that have come out of the strike. There has been so much loss: so many gifts ungiven, houses and cars repossessed, and incredible people who are gone forever from these newspapers.

And yet I can't imagine my life without some of the good things the strike produced. I know now who my friends are, the people I could travel a dangerous path with who wouldn't abandon me at a key moment. I know now who the "friends" are I could never quite turn my back on again.

I'm saddened by the loss of friends to other cities, and yet others have found love, work, book contracts—all amidst the wreckage of the strike. . . .

I know that I'm proud of the personal courage shown by my friends in the face of incredible odds. These are people who had the depth of soul to take the harder road, to persist despite terrible uncertainty and economic deprivation. Even for those of us who were damaged by it, the strike somehow rearranged molecular structures and created new beings. What didn't kill us made us strong.

position. They had to go all the way to a small town in northern California to find this fellow and pay to ship his entire family here.

But my anxiety about having to deal with him was short-lived—"my" repo can't even look me in the eye. Every time we pass, his eyes are on the carpet. While I doubt that his character allows for any regret, if he does feel a twinge I'm sure the handsome salary he got to replace me (a substantial raise from

worn on me. I'd give anything to hear just one of them say, "You know what? I was weak. You guys were strong. I'm sorry." Instead, it's whining about mortgages and school fees and car notes, as if those were things unknown to strikers.

As for the repos wanting to be our friends, I never could have predicted it, but many of them are in denial about what they did. Some honestly think that we walked

Today's prickly relations took root decades ago

[The 1967-68 strike against the News and Free Press was the longest press strike in U.S. history to that point. That record has been shattered by the current dispute—but as illustrated by these excerpts from the Detroit Guild's web site, which is still under construction, Motown's newspapers have a long history of anti-union animus.]

I have never known a good newspaperman who was not loyal to his paper. Regardless of his salary, whether high or low, if he is a born newspaperman he is as loyal to his paper as a good Mohammedan is to Allah."

—Malcolm Bingay, Editorial Director, Detroit Free Press, July 23, 1937

When Malcolm Bingay published these remarks in the mid-1930s, his faith in the loyalty of "good" newspapermen must already have been shaken, for blasphemy was everywhere on the rise, the old virtue in decline. At Bingay's own paper, the traditional disdain for unions so long characteristic of editorial and white collar workers was palpably eroded, leached away by the wage

cuts and layoffs that swept over the newspaper industry after 1929.

Good newspapermen were joining the American Newspaper Guild, and in 1937, Local 22 of the Guild won significant concessions and de facto recognition from the publisher of Bingay's paper.

Bingay's passionate jeremiad invoked the horrors that would doubtless result from such backsliding: "The plan of the labor union," he warned, "destroys the spiritual essence of our work, lowers the level of personal achievement and makes the day's job a thing of factory routine. The competition that has been the joy of the job is gone." Today, Bingay's exaggerated fears seem a little comical, easily dismissed as the hyperbole of the disappointed evangelist. But while ironies abound in his ardent pleading, the singular irony is that even as journalists at the Free Press and Detroit Times joined the Detroit Newspaper Guild, their counterparts at the Detroit News remained true to Bingay's faith, then and for the next 40 years.

During those four decades, the DNG made repeated efforts to organize the News' editorial and commercial workers; until

1974, every organizing drive ended in failure. . . .

For the young man (and occasional woman) entering the Detroit newspaper industry before 1929, a journalistic career seemed to offer perpetual romance and adventure: the prospect of participating in late-breaking news, immortalizing the famous, exposing the corrupt, and "scooping" the competition.

The hours were long, weekend work was routine, and entry-level wages were at or below the earnings of the average autoworker; but in general, these drawbacks spawned little more than a characteristic cynicism or heavy drinking, not an interest in unions. Low wages were simply part of the apprenticeship, a rite of passage the industrious reporter would presumably leave behind as he climbed in status and security. . . .

Unions were for the mechanical trades: the pressmen, typographers, mailers and other craft workers who labored on the lower floors of the News, Times, and Free Press. These men were workers, destined to remain in their "lower" occupations. Journalists were professionals, destined for higher things, and a union contract would only

inhibit the more ambitious among them. So it seemed in the 1920s, when new papers still could be formed—the Detroit Daily, for example, in 1929—and when nearly half the cities in the United States had at least one daily paper, if not more.

1929 forced a rude awakening. Both the Detroit Daily and the Detroit Mirror closed, the latter without warning and with only one week's severance pay for its stunned employees. Steep wage cuts and layoffs were inaugurated at the Free Press almost immediately. At the Times, owner William Randolph Hearst initially maintained wage levels, but as the crisis deepened, editorial salaries were cut three times in the space of nine months, reducing average earnings between 30 and 40 percent.

The axe didn't fall at the News until 1932, when a dozen reporters "walked the plank" on what became known as Black Friday. Among the laid off were "men of 10 or 16 years' service, conscientious, able workers whose loyalty was unquestioned." Wage cuts averaging 25% soon followed. For surviving workers at the News, "security walked out the door with those men and fear walked in."

Labor round-up

Pay demands are heating up

After years of watching their wages stagnate despite a gangbusters' economy, unions are starting to turn up the heat—although the difference is still incremental. On average, contracts negotiated in the first half of 1999 called for first-year pay increases of 2.7%, up from 2.4% in the first half of 1998. But unit labor costs rose at an annual 4.5% in the second quarter, the largest such jump in five years, suggesting still higher compensation—or lower productivity. Meanwhile, just to keep things in perspective, two think tanks report that the ratio of top executive pay to factory worker pay has exploded to 419-to-1.

US Airways may be on verge of strike

Just weeks after CWA finally prevailed in its years-long battle to organize passenger service agents at US Airways, the airline may be grounded—but by a different union. A 30-day cooling-off period expires Sept. 26, after which the carrier's 7,000 mechanics will be free to strike if they don't have a contract. The International Association of Machinists has been negotiating with US Airways for four years and was meeting with the company in "super mediation" as The Guild Reporter went to press. Meanwhile, US Airways flight attendants are promising they will start scattered job actions Sept. 27 if there's no progress in their contract talks. The attendants are working under the terms of a 1993 contract and haven't had a raise since 1996.

Using the web to promote thought . . .

The media rarely report on themselves, much less on the thinking of editors and senior journalists who determine what does and doesn't get reported. Now a Vancouver, British Columbia effort calling itself Guerrilla Media is seeking to fill the void with The Tattler, which says it will expose editors who routinely kill stories to promote their ideological goals; it also wants to expose the effects of corporate downsizing on newsroom morale and on its ability to inform the public: <http://www.guerillamedia.org>. Elsewhere, the International Labor Organization and the International Confederation of Trade Unions are launching an on-line debate about the future of trade unionism in the new millennium. The debate, or conference, is expected to run for approximately a year, with new panelists invited each month to field questions on that month's hot topic. Those interested in participating can sign up at www.ilo.org/public/english/130inst/research/network/index.htm.

. . . and as an organizing tool via e-mail

What better way, in this cyberspace era, to reach potential union supporters than through corporate e-mail? That's precisely what organizers at a Pratt & Whitney factory in Palm Beach, Florida, reasoned when they wanted to reach about 2,000 engineers, distributing approximately 10 mass mailings before the company tumbled to the sedition within its ranks and suspended two union officials. Two years later, however, the Florida Professional Association has agreed to drop its unfair labor practice charges against the company in exchange for its pledge to allow limited use of its system for such e-mail in the future. The agreement appears to be a first, and although it's not precedent-setting—no NLRB ruling is involved—it has encouraged other unions to think about pushing for similar access.

What's in a name, you ask?

The obfuscators are hard at work on Capitol Hill, gilding skunk-cabbage legislation with floral names to disguise the odor. Among the current efforts: the Family Friendly Workplace Act, which would trim overtime wages by expanding the 40-hour week into an 80-hour fortnight; the SAFE Act, which would restructure OSHA to allow private contractors to perform some workplace safety inspections; and the Workplace Preservation Act, which has already passed the House and would delay implementation of ergonomics standards for at least two years. No sign yet of a Worker Preservation Act, however—one that would, for example, raise the minimum wage or levy criminal penalties against employers who obstruct organizing drives.

Politics and labor do mix

Surprise, surprise—more than 1,500 union members hold political office (not to mention one very significant office holder in Canada—see story on page 3) in the U.S., and many of them will be attending the AFL-CIO's third annual conference designed specifically for them. Meeting Oct. 13-14 in Los Angeles in conjunction with the federation's biennial convention, the union member-officeholders will share experiences, exchange campaign strategies and encourage other union members to run for office.



Flying their colors

Pittsburgh Guild members and TNG-CWA President Linda Foley march in their city's Labor Day parade,

joining more than 130 participating unions. Elsewhere, New York organizers claimed a turnout of 60,000, and even the GOP presidential candidates took to the streets to profess their devotion.

There is a better way: card-check recognition

Among the drumbeat of negative statistics that describe organized labor's precarious position, one that bucks the trend is the surprising success some unions have achieved in gaining card-check recognition.

While there are no Guild contracts with card-check language, CWA and others have convinced some employers to forego representation elections if they submit a sufficiently high percentage of signed authorization cards. The results can be extraordinary. In Las Vegas, for example, the Culinary Workers have organized nearly 10,000 hotel and casino employees in the past several years through card check agreements, creating one of the most heavily unionized cities in the country.

Going the card-check route gives unions an opportunity to avoid the heavy-handed, sometimes illegal anti-organizing campaigns mounted by some employ-

ers—but it also must be negotiated into a contract, which means the most anti-union employers are precisely the ones least likely to agree to such a provision. Still, once card-check recognition becomes a central bargaining proposal it can prevail—eventually.

At CWA, card-check recognition has been negotiated into contracts with Ameritech and SBC, formerly Southwestern Bell, and in recent months has resulted in hundreds of newly unionized members. But getting to that point took years, as summarized by a CWA publication with the telling title, "CWA at Southwestern Bell: Five Years to Card Check."

As the publication notes, the Bell company repeatedly "unleashed anti-union campaigns" and was "openly hostile" to CWA organizers despite a long relationship with the union. But by starting slowly with a weak neutrality agreement, then expanding that

language with arbitration for disputes, the union eventually was able to achieve its "landmark" agreement in 1997.

Sometimes, however, existing contract language may provide a previously unappreciated opening. CWA Local 1096, representing Dow Jones workers as the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees, had for years included language in its contract that extended the agreement "to each other separate office or location of the Company . . . at which the Union may hereafter . . . demonstrate that it represents a majority of employees."

Although the IAPE provision makes no mention of card-check recognition, the union for the first time last year argued that the language was broad enough to include such demonstrations—and after initially opposing that interpretation, the company conceded the point.

'Watch out—we will kill you'

Continued from page 1

voted for independence from the archipelago nation. Although the poll results triggered a wave of violence by anti-separatist militias—reportedly with the passive acquiescence of the Indonesian military—the intimidation of journalists began at least two weeks earlier.

According to the Alliance of Independent Journalists in Jakarta, a press photographer was threatened Aug. 15 by two men identifying themselves as members of the Intelligence Agency Unit. Ten days later, Time magazine journalist John Stanmeyer and his assistant were attacked by knife-wielding members of the Aitarak militia, resulting in serious injuries to the assistant. On Aug. 26, militia members threatened five journalists at gun-point in full view of Indonesian police officers, who did not intervene.

On Aug. 28, several youths in the village of Becora threatened to stab Kompas journalist Rien Kuntari. According to the AJI, they demanded: "Are you one of those Indonesian journalists who writes false news? Watch out—if you do so, we will kill you. Tomorrow we are going to buy all the Indonesian newspapers and magazines, and we'll see if Indonesian journalists have started to write the truth yet. If not, we will kill all Indonesian journalists."

Most Indonesian journalists were evacuated the day before the vote count was announced, Sept. 4, with the balance airlifted out of the U.N. compound in the provincial capital of Dili on Sept. 10. "It was clear from quite early in the process that the military and their militia allies were deliberately targeting Indonesian national journalists, including Indonesian nationals working for foreign

media," says IFJ President Chris Warren, an Australian national. "While the police intervened on a number of occasions to rescue foreign journalists from militia attacks, they stood by—and at times participated—in the shooting and beating of Indonesians. Now we have four journalists missing in the territory and we have grave fears for their safety."

Although East Timor is a relatively insignificant blip in a nation of 17,000 islands—it has only 800,000 people, mostly Roman Catholics in a predominantly Moslem country, and has few natural resources—the savagery unleashed by the independence vote reflects a deep fear of a chain reaction that could splinter Indonesia into hundreds of pieces. It appears that "Balkanization" is not a purely European phenomenon—with similarly bitter consequences wherever it occurs.



LOOKING AHEAD

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble

By Linda Foley, President

Whoever invented bubblegum had a strange sense of humor. Just think about how you're supposed to "enjoy" it. You stuff your mouth with a sugary, fruity wad that has the consistency of an eraser. You chew it very obviously and very loudly (because you have to), then roll it around, ball it up behind your teeth and—using your tongue as a guide—bl-o-o-o-w.

The first few tries usually result in small pockets of air that quickly snap back into your mouth. But if you really concentrate, really work that gum over, you can find yourself staring at a huge pink sphere that threatens to obscure your face.

At this point, you really have only one choice. You must keep blowing. If you stop, the bubble will deflate and you'll have to take the gum out of your mouth, ruining any chance for further chewing pleasure. So you continue—knowing full well that the bigger the bubble gets, the more you invite disaster. Sure enough, the bubble eventually bursts all over your face, hair and eyelashes. You worked so hard, and now you have nothing to show for it except a sticky mess.

With apologies to Alan Greenspan, I think today's economy is a lot like bubblegum.

For a while, we experienced small air pockets of prosperity (modest wage gains and low inflation), and we all could savor the flavor of a growing economy, thanks to the so-called "rising water lifts all boats" theory. But now I fear we're past that stage. Now our economy is definitely in big-bub-

ble mode—and the bigger this bubble gets, the more likely we'll wind up in a sticky mess when it bursts.

That's because we've changed the way we measure prosperity. Whereas working people used to covet a good job with good wages, we now pay more attention to stock options and profit-sharing. It's not how much you make; it's how much you acquire. Not so long ago, economists looked to disposable income to measure how well the economy was doing. Now, as the stock market goes, so goes the nation. Wealth has replaced income as a marker of economic success.

The trouble with wealth is, it's finite. That's why Greenspan *et al* spend so much time fretting about inflation, which eats away at wealth. Income is universal and can be adjusted for inflation. Wealth benefits the wealthy, who beget more wealth—and let's face it, most of us aren't wealthy.

A recent study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that since 1977, the after-tax income of the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans rose 115 percent, and the income of the richest fifth rose by 43 percent. Meanwhile, the poorest fifth now receives 9 percent less income than it did in 1977. Americans in the middle eked out a tiny gain of less than 8 percent in 22 years. The study was based on figures from the Congressional Budget Office.

In a Labor Day weekend story on the study, the Washington Post pointed out: "Wealthier households are benefiting from a



booming stock market, rising pay and an economy that increasingly rewards the well-educated and the highly skilled. Poorer Americans have little or no money in stocks, and while wages have gone up and unemployment down lately, global competition and an increasingly technology-driven economy have lessened the demand and the rewards for poorly educated or unskilled workers."

There are some signs of recognition that we need to share the wealth if society as a whole is to become richer. The so-called "living wage" movement has persuaded 28 communities, the first being the city of Baltimore, to adopt legislation requiring companies with government contracts or economic development incentives to pay employees enough so they can afford to live where they work.

This approach seems only fair. Businesses that take advantage of public resources to get wealthy should share their prosperity with the very people who built the tax pool which enabled the resources to be offered in the first place.

A raise in the federal minimum wage would also help, but it's not enough. We need to pay attention to disposable income and to the growing gap between the haves and have-nots. We need to remember that the bigger the bubble gets, the messier it will be when it pops.

To the vast majority of ordinary people who don't trade stocks on the Internet and don't have a 401(k), their wages are their wealth. After all, you can't buy groceries with stock options—or even bubblegum, for that matter.

OTHER VOICES

Labor's search for justice reflects bishops' values

The bishops' annual labor day message this year reminds us of the importance of the labor movement and Social Security. They point out that "many of the virtues imbedded in the labor movement's search for social justice reflect our own faith values, as we seek public policies that promote strong families, expand a stable middle class, create decent jobs, and reduce the level of poverty and need in our society."

Cheers for that sentiment. To hear unions demonized is disheartening and tiresome. We need a strong, active democratic

labor movement. Through their efforts, our great middle class was born.

It's hard to understand how people can be so short-sighted as to think that weakening the middle class—the foundation of our economic strength—would be good for our nation, but that's exactly what has happened under economic policies over the past 20 years.

The economy is booming, to be sure, but trickle down and other policies that favor the already rich and powerful have badly undermined our once strong foundation. As the bishops point out, the nation's wealthiest 5 percent took 24 percent of personal income in 1996 compared to a 16 percent share in 1968. Over the same period, the share of income going to people in the middle 60 percent has declined by nearly 10 percent, with an even sharper decline for those in the bottom 20 percent.

There's no excuse for such a situation in this wealthy country. . . .

Let's heed the bishops' call, and recommit to economic justice and security for all.

—Catholic Sentinel, Aug. 27

SF Chronicle: one more newspaper assassination

The famous Newspaper Preservation Act, which legitimized the JOA, or joint operating agreement, has killed another newspaper, as it has killed many since its enactment in 1970. One of its victims, of course, was the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. The most recent looks to be the San Francisco Examiner, though it means the death of the famed San Francisco Chronicle as we know it.

The law is just one of many established to protect capitalists from their own stupidity and allow them to use government help to become richer while decrying the same sort of help for poor people. It fosters monopoly in the name of competition.

San Francisco's newspapers, the independent Chronicle and the Hearst-owned Examiner, have been working under a JOA, which allows two newspapers to share advertising and circulation revenue, along with printing and distribution costs. Theoretically, both newspapers would thrive. In effect, it has usually allowed the weaker paper to die more slowly while increasing profitability to owners of both. . . .

The Examiner has been staggering for years, as have most afternoon newspapers, but the Hearst Corporation, which does not have to answer to stockholders, offered \$660 million for the Chronicle. The purchase is quite secure, though not final, so the Examiner is on the block. However, don't look for a buyer to invest in a newspaper whose circulation is one-fourth of its competitor and which does not have printing and distributing facilities. . . .

Only a dozen agreements remain across the nation, and as two-paper cities vanish, so will they. Many call it a proper demise for a bad law. Bruce B. Brugmann, publisher of the San Francisco Bay Guardian, an alternative weekly, called the sale of the Chronicle "the assassination of a newspaper," a term many St. Louisans used when the Globe-Democrat folded. . . .

—St. Louis Journalism Review, Sept. 1999

'Professional' unions are vocational by-products

Some unions are essential unions while others are unions "per accidents"—that is, they are merely incidental. "Union" is a by-product of their vocation. It is on the side. In unions like yours, and in most building and trade unions, and Teamsters and others, union is what you are. It is a part of the very fabric of your lives. There are, unfortunately, a great many people today who merely belong to a union. They use the union only as a tool to gain benefits. But they almost resent being organized. Many of these are "professional people."

But you represent hard-working men and women, family people who struggle every day to make a living. And when you say "I am union," it means you are a part of the union family. You speak the words "I am a laborer" proudly.

—Excerpted from an address by Monsignor John Gilchrist to the Eastern Regional Conference of the Laborers International Union, May 25, 1999.

By TNG Convention action, letters to the editor 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: October 15.)

LETTER

Editor:

Dick Ramsey writes [Letters, Aug. 27] that the Guild Reporter should "dispassionately" report the events surrounding the contract settlement at the Baltimore Sun and avoid terms like "dirty laundry" which harm the union's relationship with management.

If Ramsey finds such mild rhetoric damaging, it sounds like his relationship to management is much too cozy.

Personally, I think the labor movement needs more passion, not less. The long decline in union membership figures indicates that the dispassionate business unionism that has dominated the labor movement for fifty years is not working.

—Jim West
Detroit Guild

Internet said to push up wages

Newspaper salaries are rising for both entry-level and experienced reporters and other newspaper workers—and it's all because of the Internet. Or so concludes the Newspaper Industry Compensation Survey.

Conducted by the Inland Press Association of Des Plaines, Illinois, the annual survey found

that average base pay for experienced reporters rose 5.3% in 1999 over 1998, while entry-level reporters started at a level 4.5% higher. Base salaries for top management positions increased 6.1% for advertising executives, 5.3% for editors, 5.2% for circulation executives, 7.6% for general managers and 6.5% for publishers.

Also reported by the survey, for only the second year, was average base pay for half-a-dozen on-line jobs. Although the figures must be regarded with some skepticism because of the relatively few newspapers—less than a hundred—reporting on such positions, those averages include \$36,367 for webmasters, \$37,353 for content

producers, \$32,244 for graphic artists and \$33,534 for sales representatives.

It is the Web itself that is credited by the survey for much of the increase in reporters' wages, which this year took the biggest jump in its 12-year history. Several other reports also have noted that newspapers have had to boost salaries to compete with on-line companies hiring experienced reporters, while Editor & Publisher observes that the Internet "is a near-perfect scouting tool for certain types of talent."

"Legions of newspaper professionals—reporters, artists, and photographers—have their names attached to their work," E&P explains. "Bylines are beacons for recruiters who use search engines to find or track prospects. E-mail then makes it easy to make contact—or to maintain it."

But while the reporters' gains

are statistically significant, the industry's average starting salary is so low—less than \$25,000 a year—that the actual dollar increase for many reporters is negligible. Contrast that with increases at the top of the food chain, where the publishers' average increase in base pay of 6.5% makes a significant difference—and that's before adding incentive pay.

Publishers' total direct pay, which includes incentives but not stock options and other deferred income, actually climbed 10.5% this year, the survey found. Average direct compensation for publishers, presidents or chief executives of daily newspapers with a circulation of less than 10,000 was \$94,819; of those with a circulation between 30,001 and 50,000, it was \$192,741; and of those with a circulation between 100,001 and 150,000, \$309,163.

Waiting was stressful, but survey ready to go

It wasn't stress that delayed distribution of TNG-CWA's latest safety and health survey, but stress is what it's all about as the questionnaire gets distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada over the next few weeks.

Based on responses by Guild members at the Baltimore Sun to a test version of the questionnaire, distributed earlier this year, a substantial revision was prepared. But the unexpected delay "was worth it," contends Larkie Gildersleeve, TNG-CWA's director of research, information and technology. "This is an important and ambitious project."

The survey is the Guild's second comprehensive effort in the past 15 years to assess workplace safety and focuses primarily on stress. "This will be a chance for both members and non-members to tell us whether they are having stress-related illnesses caused by changing working conditions," Gildersleeve explains. "In fact, the more people who return the questionnaires, the more reliable the data will be. If we are to learn which working conditions are causing stress, in which kinds of jobs—or even how serious stress on the job is—we need everyone to return the forms."

In a climate of long hours, layoffs, job restructuring, continuous introduction of new software and

endless management and ownership shuffles, reports of job-related stress illnesses have been rising. For example:

- Downsizing left many departments chronically understaffed. Fewer people are being asked to do more work.

- Jobs are changing. New software is introduced constantly, often plagued with bugs. Training is inadequate.

- Software for one task doesn't communicate with software for other tasks.

Jobs are changing in other ways, too. Verbally skilled people are being asked to do layout. Writers are being asked to broadcast. Artists are being asked to learn new technologies and software. Librarians are research specialists. Sales people carry laptops. Sophisticated programs monitor every keystroke of clerical workers, sales representatives and service personnel.

Members of one union, with one set of hours, pay and benefits, often work side by side with members of other unions with different conditions of employment. Jobs and work disappear from one department and pop up in another, or at a different job site.

Supervision, well... let's just say some people cause untold grief to the people they supervise.

And the list goes on. "It is

common knowledge in the workplace that today's Guild members are working in a pressure-cooker environment where things often don't go smoothly," says Gildersleeve, "but we have not got credible statistics to help guide us to trouble hotspots, or to help us find solutions to the problems. Unfortunately, there has not been research—especially not in the media—on the patterns of workplace stress."

Working with David LeGrande of the CWA's Occupational Safety and Health Department, Gildersleeve recruited Dr. Mike Smith of the University of Wisconsin's Industrial Engineering Department to do the statistical analysis of the returned questionnaires. "A professional analysis is essential to our ability to understand the significance of stress illness in our industry," Gildersleeve says.

The survey will be sent in bulk to each Guild local in late September and early October for distribution by shop stewards. Although it consists of several pages, the survey's questions can be answered within five to 10 minutes. Completed questionnaires will be returned to TNG headquarters and forwarded to Dr. Smith.

Individual answers will be kept confidential and only the statistics will be summarized.

Ergonomic programs can be grandfathered

In what amounts to a preemptive strike to counter Congressional delaying tactics, OSHA administrator Charles Jeffress is urging the nation's employers to institute ergonomics programs now—even before a national standard is promulgated—because effective programs will be allowed to continue once the national standard is adopted.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration "is not asking folks to start over again," Jeffress told a regional conference on ergonomics best practices held Sept. 9 at the George Meany Center in Maryland. Rather, he explained, OSHA wants to encourage businesses to implement practical solutions in their workplaces and will work with them on a "programmatic" rather than prescriptive basis.

The long-awaited national standard, he added, will be proposed this fall unless Congress intervenes. The House has passed a bill delaying such a standard by two years, but the Senate has yet to act.

Government statistics indicate that 600,000 workers—many within the keyboard-intensive newspaper industry—lose time on the job each year because of repetitive stress injuries. OSHA's ergonomics standard is intended to reduce that incidence, but has been opposed by business lobbyists as too expensive to implement and not sufficiently supported by scientific research.

Pat Seminario, the AFL-CIO's director of occupational safety and health, says the actual number of injuries is even higher because the government's statistics don't include government workers.



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DAYBOOK

New England District Council
Oct. 2-3, Manchester, NH

AFL-CIO Biennial Convention,
Oct. 11-13, Los Angeles

Pennsylvania Caucus meeting,
Oct. 16, York, PA

TNG-CWA Executive Council,
Oct. 21-23, Baltimore

Journal Register Council
Oct. 23-24, Fall River, MA

Western District Council,
Oct. 30-31, Los Angeles

TNG-Canada Representative
Council, Nov. 6-7, Hull

Great Lakes District Council,
Nov. 5-7, Buffalo, N.Y.

Midwest District Council,
Nov. 12-14, Chicago

Working Women Conference
2000, March 11-12, Chicago

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

The first national contract negotiated with the Associated Press is rejected by the membership, 651 to 93, after a bargaining committee recommendation for a "no" vote. . . . One of the most contentious elections in Guild history ends with a clean sweep by the incumbents, led by executive vice president Sam Eubanks. . . . Signs of the times: a full-page story headlined "How the Voice of America Is Combating Misunderstanding Throughout the World," which follows an unrelated item headlined, "Lines Are Drawn for CIO Showdown With Commies". . . .

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Hannah Jo Rayl [now administrative officer of the Northeast Ohio Guild] and Anna Padia [now TNG-CWA's human rights director] join the Guild's staff of international representatives as part of a special two-year organizing push. . . . With support from publishers and broadcasters drying up, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism drops its seven-year-old minority training program. . . . Staffers of the Montreal Star get an initial contract after striking for just one hour. . . .

Ten years ago this month:

California's OSHA issues a three-page order of corrective measures the McClatchy-owned Fresno Bee must take to combat repetitive strain injuries. . . . The Rev. Jesse Jackson joins informational picketers at Gannett's Rochester dailies, which have gone three years without a contract. . . . TNG President Chuck Dale brings a message of support to striking Pittston mine workers, citing his father's death in a mining accident.