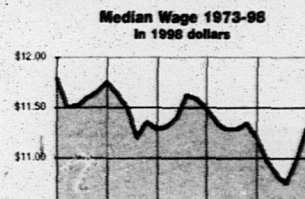


THE GUILD Reporter

February 11, 2000

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And to think:
these are the
good times
page 4



TOSH TANAKA/NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Extra! Extra!

Guild spirits are running high in Modesto—under the watchful eye of the McClatchy Corp.'s "The Paperboy"—despite heavy going in contract negotiations at the Modesto Bee. Although some progress was made prior to the bargaining session Feb. 9, management froze raises and increased health premiums Jan. 7 in an approach Linda Frediani of the Northern California local called a "sledgehammer" strategy. Thus far the company has resisted Guild proposals for beeper pay and to include online employees in the bargaining unit, while demanding the right to assign bargaining unit work to non-unit employees.

Hearst adds meat to Examiner bones

Responding to continued criticism of its plans to close the San Francisco Examiner if it can't find a buyer, the Hearst Corp. announced Jan. 25 a significant increase in the assets it is willing to sell. The complete sales package now includes the Examiner's offices, a printing plant, approximately 100 delivery trucks and additional assets as needed, plus a requirement that any buyer offer "substantially the same" terms and conditions of employment as currently exist.

The original sales offer included only the Examiner's name and circulation list, provoking charges that the sale was a sham. It also drew unusually close scrutiny from the Justice Dept., which until now has largely ignored publishers' efforts to end Joint Operating Agreements. The Examiner is in a JOA with the San Francisco Chronicle, which Hearst has purchased.

"In the wake of what appeared to be all-but-certain anti-trust litigation, Hearst's decision to offer a

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CBC warns of layoffs, seeks one big union

Upheavals suggest end to years of drift

Significant layoffs were to be announced at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. as The Guild Reporter was going to press, affecting an unknown number of Guild-represented employees. At the same time, the CBC is asking the Canadian Industrial Relations Board to consolidate all of its English-speaking bargaining units into one, to be represented by either the Canadian Media Guild or the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union.

News of the impending layoffs was delivered to Guild leaders Jan. 21 by the CBC's vice presidents for radio and television, Alex Frame and Harold Redekopp. The job cuts are part of a drive to close operating deficits by the end of the fiscal year, with savings of at least \$3 million needed in radio; Redekopp did not give a specific target for the television side. Specific job cuts were to be announced by mid-February.

Meanwhile, the CBC request

for a bargaining unit consolidation portends further workplace disruption, not least because unions generally don't yield jurisdiction without a fight.

Ironically, the CBC application was filed in response to a CMG petition seeking board permission to consolidate the two units it already represents, program production and general administration. CBC's response not only repudiates its long-standing "divide and conquer" philosophy of labor relations but petitions the board to go one step further by amalgamating the third unit under its roof, the CEP-represented technicians.

Such a consolidated unit would represent more than 4,500 permanent employees, of whom more than 3,000 are currently in the Canadian Media Guild.

The industrial relations board has yet to determine how it will respond to the CBC's request, and the Guild is still preparing its own reply. But the CBC has requested

that the board order a representation vote by the end of November if the two unions haven't reached a prior agreement on representation, and it's virtually certain the board will schedule hearings over the next several months to explore these and other suggestions.

The CBC also wants to have all existing contracts expire June 2001, so it can start negotiations with the "new" bargaining unit.

As the impending layoffs and changing labor situation suggest, the CBC suddenly is trying to overcome years of mismanagement and organizational drift. Leading the charge is a new president, Robert Rabinovitch, who met with Guild leaders for the first time Jan. 25. "We touched on many issues, and while a good rapport was established, it was agreed that in the interest of maintaining an open dialogue the discussions would be kept confidential," said CMG President Lise Lareau.

Illness sweeps Reuters, galvanizes contract talks

After more than two years and a hundred inconclusive bargaining sessions with Reuters management, nearly 90% of New York's editorial staffers called in sick Jan. 18.

New York Guild officers promptly stated they were not responsible for workers' illnesses and that it would be "improper and illegal" for the union to sanction a sick-out, but Reuters took a decidedly more cynical view, withholding a day's pay from anyone who didn't produce a doctor's note to excuse his or her absence. The Guild, noting a long-standing company policy of requiring such notes only after five days of absence, has filed a grievance and has declared it is "committed to litigating the issue."

The wave of illnesses struck Reuters at a particularly inopportune time, coming on a day choked

with year-end earnings announcements. It also captured a fair amount of media attention, especially in New York, and gave local President Barry Lipton a platform from which to chide Reuters for its persistent foot-dragging in contract talks. "A lot of the employees we represent are extremely angry and disillusioned by the company's position at the bargaining table," he told the Wall Street Journal.

That message apparently was not lost on Reuters. A bargaining session the day after the illnesses resulted in tentative agreements on six "important but not critical" issues, according to a Guild bargaining bulletin, including higher insurance coverage for employees working in war zones and payment for unused comp time. But the key issue of employment security remains unresolved, with Reuters persisting in demands for

greater flexibility in transferring work from Guild-represented employees to non-union subsidiaries.

As if to affirm the danger that demand poses for Guild members, Reuters announced just one week later that it will transfer all of its internet technology and hardware—as well as 400 employees—to a new, non-unionized joint venture with a Dutch telecommunications company, Equant. Company negotiators said they don't expect any Guild-represented employees to be among the transferees, but also acknowledged that they don't know precisely which employees will have to go, nor whether work done by Guild members will be transferred to the new company, forcing layoffs at Reuters.

A similar situation with a very different outcome played out in early January, when Reuters and Dow Jones formed a joint venture called Factiva. Although approximately 300 Guild-represented employees were transferred to Factiva, IAPE/CWA Local 1096 negotiated recognition of the union—and of IAPE's contract with Dow Jones—at Factiva, despite Reuters' resistance.

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Detroit papers get two more adverse decisions

The Detroit Newspaper Agency suffered two more legal reverses in recent weeks, as the National Labor Relations Board affirmed it had illegally changed working conditions and said DNA would have to answer complaints it had illegally fired another 59 employees because of union activities.

The NLRB's Jan. 14 decision upheld an administrative law judge, who ruled last March that the agency had illegally implemented a final bargaining offer while unfair labor practices found in two prior decisions remained unremedied. The Detroit Newspaper Agency oversees the non-editorial operations of the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News. The ALJ had ordered the agency, upon request of the unions, to rescind the unilateral changes in pay and working conditions it imposed nearly three years ago

and to "make whole" employees who suffered financial losses because of the changes.

In a second decision, issued at the end of the month, the NLRB unanimously denied motions to dismiss a complaint alleging that the agency had illegally discharged an additional 59 employees because of strike-related activities. Although the agency argued that the complaint had been filed too late, the board agreed the allegations were similar to earlier complaints that had met filing deadlines and therefore could be heard.

(In a related decision issued in December, an administrative law judge recommended that the agency and two newspapers be ordered to rehire 50 of 85 other workers who had been terminated over allegations of strike-related misconduct. Gannett and Knight Ridder are appealing the decision, however.)

Proving once again that neither

modesty nor logic will sway its obdurate stance toward the former strikers, the Detroit Newspaper Agency argued in the broader case that its unilateral changes in working conditions were legal because the unions had disqualified themselves as its employees' bargaining agent. How? By publishing a "competitor," The Detroit Sunday Journal.

But as the law judge noted, the argument was on its face absurd—albeit a "resourceful" effort by the agency "to escape its legal and ethical responsibilities." Whereas the News and Free Press had a combined daily circulation of more than 800,000, the strike paper was published once a week with a press run of 45,000.

Meanwhile, joint bargaining in the years-long stand-off resumed Feb. 8 under the auspices of a federal mediator. The talks are off the record.

Breakthrough in Sheboygan augurs well for negotiations

If they're not quite tap-dancing in Sheboygan, TNG-CWA members at least have cause for a quick click of the heels.

After just five bargaining sessions, with management of the Thomson-owned Sheboygan Press, reports local President David Gallianetti, "the two sides are making tangible progress. The tone at the table is positive, and both sides are showing flexibility and respect for each other and for the bargaining process."

That marks a sharp turn-around from the last contract talks, which dragged on for two years, and may be the result of a volley of unfair labor practice complaints filed against Thomson by the National Labor Relations Board. Thomson agreed to settle the charges just ahead of a January hearing, reversing several unilateral decisions that had poisoned its relationship with the Guild. As part of the settlement, Thomson agreed to:

- Rescind a decision to move the advertising display sales staff

out of Guild jurisdiction and into the composing union;

- Stop using a job application that informs prospective employees they will be hired on an "at-will" basis, with no contractual protection from arbitrary dismissal;

- Respond to the Guild's requests for information about work changes at the newspaper's distribution center and about its insurance plan.

The company also agreed it would not refuse to bargain in good faith and would prominently display a poster detailing terms of the settlement.

But despite the thawed relationship and "big strides" already achieved at the bargaining table, Gallianetti warns that the heaviest lifting still lies ahead. Aside from demanding more "flexibility" in work-transfer language, Thomson

wants to break apart several wage classes to create separate job classifications for layoff purposes—even though the company says it isn't planning any layoffs at this time. It also wants to change the advertising commission plan and has proposed eliminating the ever-green clause.

The Guild, meanwhile, is seeking a company match for the 401(k) plan, as well as several other economic upgrades, including lower employee co-premiums on health insurance, better holiday pay and higher night-shift pay. "There are some considerable hurdles to clear, but these talks are going well," summed up an optimistic Gallianetti. "We're not going to settle this contract tomorrow, but we're glad the company shares our goal of improving our relationship."

Looking for a job?

Lela Garlington, president of the Memphis Newspaper Guild, has advised TNG-CWA that there are three job openings for reporters at the Memphis Commercial Appeal.

Two of the openings are on the business desk, covering health care and technology. Inquiries

may be directed to Quintin Robinson, the assistant business editor, at (901) 529-2379 or isrobinsonqu@gomemphis.com

The third slot, for a fine arts writer and critic for the features section, requires some expertise in theater, classical music, dance and opera. It apparently also requires a deft touch, "someone who's comfortable in making tough coverage decisions and keeping relations with the various arts groups around town on an even keel," Garlington advises.

Top pay is about \$900 but could go higher for the right person; the department wants to fill the position by the end of February. Inquiries should be directed to Leanne Kleinmann, the features editor, at (901) 529-2535 or to kleinmann@gomemphis.com.

In brief....

Amazon.com slashing workforce

Amazon.com, the darling of high-tech investors whose employment practices got a more critical look in The Guild Reporter a year ago, laid off approximately 150 employees on one hour's notice at the end of January. The job cuts will affect about 2 percent of the electronic retailer's total workforce and follow the appointment of a new chief operating officer last fall, who promptly set about slashing fringe benefits. Looks like WashTech will have its hands full.

Gannett: more Hawaiian punch

Gannett has been back in court in Hawaii in its continuing effort to shut down the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. On Jan. 21 it filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court that seeks to have the state's lawsuit blocking the sale declared unconstitutional. A day earlier it demanded that the court require the state to post a \$21 million bond to cover its losses in the event Gannett wins the case. A hearing on the motion has been scheduled for March 28.

Milwaukee faces more job losses

Although the Milwaukee Guild began bargaining with the Journal Sentinel last May, the end of the year—and of the existing contract—rolled around without an agreement. But the news got worse in early January, when the company announced it will cut its News Information Center roughly in half due to "technological advances and the elimination and reassignment of some duties." Although the company is offering buyouts, nine employees will lose their jobs, a development that concerns Guild officials because it comes "in addition to a shrinking newsroom staff, the result of unfilled positions over the past several months."

Whom do you call for help? An RN

The Buffalo Guild, seeking a replacement for departing local service rep Tina Destro, looked outside the newspaper industry—and hired itself a nurse. RN Carol Goldstein also is a graduate of Cornell's Labor Studies program and has

worked as a business rep for two other AFL-CIO unions. She begins her new assignment as the local's office manager, but with the expectation that she'll be promoted to local service rep within a year.

Calling it quits—after 21 years

The Citizens' Voice in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., was started in 1979 by more than 200 Guild members on strike against The Times Leader. But two decades of publishing apparently has been more than enough: the former strikers are talking to Times-Shamrock Communications in nearby Scranton about selling the paper. One hitch: the potential buyer is insisting the Guild give up bargaining rights for all non-editorial employees, while TNG-CWA has rejected the demand.

Subsidies offered for conventions

April 15 isn't just tax day—it's also the deadline for locals to apply for TNG-CWA subsidies to send delegates to two conventions: that of the Native American Journalists Association, which meets June 14-17 in Ft. Lauderdale; and of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, June 21-25 in Houston. For more information, contact TNG-CWA Human Rights Director Anna Padia at 202/434-1263 or apadia@cwa-union.org.

Eugene leaders step to the fore

The Eugene Guild, bogged down in nasty contract negotiations at The Register-Guard, has elected a larger executive committee, including four members new to leadership roles. Suzi Prozanski succeeds Jeff Berger as president, who remains on the committee; Patsy Raffin was elected vice president; Susan Goracke is secretary; and Lance Robertson was re-elected treasurer.

Manchester elects officers

The Manchester Guild elected four officers without opposition, only to have its new secretary step down within a few weeks, forcing a fresh round of nominations in the near future. The surviving officers are: John Whitson, president; Pat Kissell, vice president; and Daphne Whitmore, treasurer.

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

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Ripping down Microsoft's veil of secrecy

Confirming the validity of complaints filed by WashTech, a TNG-CWA local representing high-tech workers in Washington, the state's labor department has concluded that Microsoft acted as a "co-employer" in keeping performance evaluations on contract workers.

Moreover, in a letter to WashTech dated Jan. 26, the state agency said such evaluations fit the definition of "personnel files" and must, under state law, be accessible to workers who want to examine the records kept on them. The interpretation, which had been requested by WashTech a month

earlier, challenges Microsoft's continued insistence that it does not maintain personnel files on employees of temporary agencies.

Approximately a third of Microsoft's 18,000 employees in the Puget Sound area are permatemps, some of whom have worked at the software maker for years. The company insists, however, that any records it keeps on them are "customer feedback," not personnel files, and therefore exempt from review.

In a related development, the corporate veil shrouding the permatemp phenomenon came under attack on another front through the

introduction of a bill in the Washington State Legislature that would mandate disclosure of "bill rates." The bill rate is the fee charged by a staffing agency for the workers it provides to an employer, like Microsoft, but is not disclosed to the workers themselves.

Most temp agencies argue that the bill rate is a vital "trade secret" and that disclosure would undermine their competitiveness. But WashTech and others contend that since both the agencies and their clients know the bill rates, the only ones kept in the dark are the workers themselves, who get a lower

pay rate. "By learning their bill rates, contractors can fairly evaluate how much their labor is worth in the marketplace," explains David Larsen, a permatemp who supports the bill.

WashTech, in an analysis of more than 190 bill rates that the staffing firm BEST Consulting charged Boeing in 1998 and 1999, found that the average mark-up was more than 200%. In one case, BEST charged Boeing \$80 an hour for a contractor it was paying only \$21.63 an hour—a markup of nearly 400%.

Because bill rates are kept secret, the potential for abuse

abounds. WashTech member Bob Chapman told a Jan. 31 legislative hearing on the bill of a conversation in which his supervisor "stopped by my cubicle and asked how I liked my pay raise. Surprised, I said, 'What raise?'" As it turned out, his supervisor had authorized a higher bill rate so Chapman could get a raise, only to have the difference pocketed by his temp agency. And when Chapman confronted the agency, it took several weeks before it acknowledged the increase and raised his pay—but didn't make the raise retroactive.

The bill is HB 2756.

At least 354 ways to say 'no' in Providence

How's this for lopsided? In two days of balloting, through Feb. 3, the Providence Guild voted 354 to 28 to reject the "last, best and final" contract offer from the Belo-owned Providence Journal. Both the negotiating team and the executive board had recommended rejection, contending that the company's unilateral changes in medical plans, parking and other benefits have broken federal labor laws.

Not that the terms of the final offer, presented after only 14 bargaining sessions,

were all that grand. Proposing annual wage increases of 3% over three years, the company sought to reduce the terms of its health coverage plan, refused to offer the 401(k) and pension plans provided to non-unionized employees at the newspaper, attempted to rescind a personal day and sought to create a second, lower wage tier in the pre-publishing department. Adding insult to injury, it also demanded the Guild drop all outstanding grievances and National Labor Relations Board complaints.

But the change in benefits that most

frosted Guild members may have been the Journal's repeated efforts to impose parking fees. "I still for the life of me don't get the parking issue," commented Suzanne Misunas, in the billing department. "Why can't a company as large as this provide parking for their employees who use their cars for the job?" Or as a part-timer added, after calculating that he'd paid more than \$1,600 for parking over 18 months, "That is almost two months' salary for a part-timer. Doesn't this seem crazy?"

Apparently so. The local's previous

record vote to reject a contract offer was in 1994, when the final count was 306 to 26. Moreover, the 382 Guild members who cast ballots this year comprise 83% of the unit's membership, which local leaders believed is the highest turnout in its history. Several non-members joined the Guild expressly to qualify for the voting.

Armed with the decisive vote count, Guild negotiators have requested management to improve its offer, but as The Guild Reporter went to press additional bargaining sessions had not been scheduled.

AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2000

BUILDING MATERIALS & TOOLS

BROWN & SHARPE MFG. CO.

Measuring, cutting and machine tools and pumps

► Teamsters

JET EQUIPMENT & TOOLS, INC.

Auburn, Wash., distributor of "JET" brand metal- and wood-working power and hand tools for home and commercial use

► Teamsters

SOUTHWIRE CO.

Commercial and industrial wire and cable; Do-It-Yourself brand homewire

► Electrical Workers

CLOTHING

MASTER APPAREL

Men's and boys' trousers. Labels include Hills and Archer and Ivory Hill

► Electronic Workers

ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION

BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION

BET cable television, Action pay-per-view, BET on Jazz

► Electrical Workers

FOOD & BEVERAGES

CALIFORNIA TABLE GRAPES

Table grapes that do not have the United Farm Workers' label on their carton or crate

► Farm Workers

DIAMOND WALNUT CO.

Diamond brand canned and bagged walnuts and walnut pieces

► Teamsters

FARMLAND DAIRY

Milk sold under the Farmland Dairy label in stores in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York.

► Teamsters

MT. OLIVE PICKLE CO.

Pickles and relishes sold under the Mt. Olive and other labels, including the Food Lion and Harris Teeter supermarket "house" labels

► Farm Labor Organizing Committee

FURNITURE

STRAITS FURNITURE CO.

Jackson, Miss., manufacturer of entertainment centers, dining-room and bedroom furniture. Brands include: Canbrough Oak Collection, Downing Street Collection, Cherry Creek Collection, Hood, Straits

► Electronic Workers, Furniture Workers Division

TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL

ALITALIA AIRLINES

Air transport for passengers and freight

► Machinists

BEST WESTERN-GROSVENOR RESORT

Hotel in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.; located at Disney World, but separately owned and operated

► Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

CROWN CENTRAL PETROLEUM

Gasoline sold at Crown, Fast Fare and Zippy Mart stations and convenience stores

► Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical & Energy Workers

FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON

Hotel in Waterbury, Conn.

► Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

HOLIDAY INN SUNSPREE HOTEL

Hotel in Kapaa, Hawaii

► Longshore & Warehouse Union

NEW OTANI HOTEL & GARDEN

Hotel in downtown Los Angeles

► Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

OTHERS

CF&I STEEL and OREGON STEEL MILLS, INC.

Steel, including, rod, bar, rail, pipe and steel plate

► Steelworkers

WELLS FARGO and NORWEST BANKS

Wells Fargo has branches in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington; Norwest has branches in Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming

► Steelworkers

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► Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers

PLEASE POST

AP, Wire Service Guild reach deal

Two weeks after being slapped with a 10-day byline strike, the Associated Press reached a tentative agreement with the Wire Service Guild on a three-year contract with full retroactive pay increases. Ratification ballots were to be mailed by Feb. 7 and will be accepted until March 1.

Agreement wasn't reached without a price, however: the trade-off for retroactivity, which AP said it would otherwise deny, was acceptance of a company proposal to relax scheduling rules during general and state primary election weeks. Members of the guild's steering committee, calculating the loss of retroactivity would cost top-scale reporters more than \$370, voted 12-3 to recommend ratification.

The tentative agreement includes annual increases of 2.5%, 2.5% and 3% in basic wage scales for top scale news people, increasing their weekly wage to \$978.50

in the third year. In addition, city differentials will be increased by 10%, and San Diego and Springfield both will be upgraded to Class B.

The agreement makes no changes in the basic pension plan but increases the company match in two steps, to 50 cents on the dollar for the first 4% of earnings contributed as of next Dec. 1, and to 50 cents on the dollar for the first 5% of earnings contributed a year later. Employee contributions to health care premiums for two-person and family coverage will drop to 18% of the premium (from 20%) in the contract's second year, and to 15% the following year.

Union concessions include a provision that allows AP not to rehire an employee who has been on sick leave more than two years. The company also won language that obliges employees to sign a release not to sue before they can receive dismissal pay.

A meatier Examiner

Continued from page 1

more viable Examiner for sale was the right thing to do," observed TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, before adding: "Potential buyers should also recognize that honoring the workforce's union contracts is also the right thing to do."

But even with the added assets, there's no certainty a buyer will step forward. For one thing, Hearst set a Feb. 15 deadline for expressions of interest. For another, the

JOA that has enabled the Examiner to keep publishing is not part of the deal—and without such an arrangement, it's questionable whether the paper could survive financially.

If a buyer does not step forward, Hearst added, it nonetheless will honor an earlier commitment to provide employment to all those currently on the payroll at the Examiner, the Chronicle and the San Francisco Newspaper Agency, which administers the JOA.

It's time to talk politics . . .

This is the best of all times, according to breathless media coverage—yet that describes only the top layer of society. Spreading the wealth will take more than clever contract negotiating skills.

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

It's all too easy these days to get a severe case of economic whiplash.

As January rolled to an end, the media were chock-a-block with stories extolling the longest economic expansion in U.S. history. One hundred and seven months—and counting—of steady growth in gross domestic product, personal consumption, declining unemployment, a booming stock market. . .

And then there was the front page of The Washington Post on Feb. 3. Anchoring the upper left corner was the headline, "Fed Hikes Interest Rates; Inflation Fears Spur Quarter-Point Rise." Anchoring the upper right corner: "Senate Approves Bankruptcy Bill; Industry-Sought Overhaul Passes 83-14."

That curious juxtaposition of statistical euphoria and Capitol Hill alarm lends itself to at least two observations. One, that most statements can indeed be divided into lies, damn lies and statistics. Two, that our economic well-being is determined to an enormous extent by lobbyists, lawmakers and the modern equivalent of unelected shamens—such as the Federal Reserve—who exercise special powers beyond the grasp of mere mortals.

Meanwhile, the lessons to be drawn from such observations are, first, that it's important to look at as much data as possible before drawing any conclusions about economic trends. And, second, that unions seeking to improve their members'

economic security and well-being can't afford to restrict their efforts to the bargaining table. Or as that old warhorse, Walter Reuther, once noted, "There's a direct relationship between the bread box and the ballot box [because] what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls."

Reading the economic pundits, one soon detects a note of unease amid all the rhapsodizing—yet the dissonance is vague and unfocused. Worse, it's tinged with Puritan angst: it's all been too much of a good thing. Too much, too fast. One of these days we're going to get ours. . .

Attempts at analysis tend to degenerate into a "what goes up, must come down" critique, as in Newsweek's we're-just-folks headline, "Economic Expansions Ain't Eternal." Others assure us that "trees don't grow to the sky," that "the economic cycle hasn't been repealed," that "every boom ends with a bust."

All of which is true enough, if beside the point because it describes only a fraction of the economic spectrum. While there is a rentier class in America fretting about interest and foreign exchange rates, the price-to-earnings ratio of the S&P 500 and whether margin requirements should be tightened or loosened, for a substantial slice of the population those discussions might as well be in a foreign language. The economic reality for most middle-class working people is that they are worse off today than they were 25 years ago—and

that's after 107 months of economic expansion. If the pundits are right and no tree grows to the sky, one can only imagine how the non-rentier class will look after the fall.

Most media descriptions of the economy tend to be shaped by its most prominent features, as if surveyed from an airplane flying between mountain peaks. But as documented in two recent reports, the view from 'ground level' is altogether less heady: "Divided Decade: Economic Disparity at the Century's Turn," issued Dec. 15 by Boston-based United for a Fair Economy; and "Pulling Apart: A State-by-State Analysis of Income Trends," issued in

January by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and by the Economic Policy Institute, reflect a rather more stark reality. As documented by these and other studies, the army of workers in "non-standard" jobs—temps, on-call workers, independent contractors, the self-employed and regular part-time workers—keeps growing at a relentless pace. Although there are no statistical breakouts describing how many newspaper jobs fall into such categories, anecdotal evidence from around the U.S. and Canada suggests this industry is as prone as any other to the trend and that employer

pressure in contract talks for more hiring "flexibility" is increasing. Yet as the graph at left illustrates, non-standard employees pay for that flexibility with lower wages—and especially so if they're female.

A second well-documented development of the past couple of decades is the stagnation of minimum and entry-level wages, as shown at the top of this page. Adjusted

for inflation, the minimum wage is 30% below its 1968 peak. Entry-level wages for all occupations—including newspaper jobs, as reported in recent issues of The Guild Reporter—are lower today than they were a quarter-century ago. Small wonder, then, that the median wage for the overall workforce also is down from 1973, even after a resurgence over the past couple of years.

All this would be acceptable had the economy itself been stagnating or contracting, but as the mainstream media have underscored, just the opposite is true. The Economic Policy Institute calculates that productivity grew 46.5% between 1973 and 1998—a growth rate, were it reflected in wages, that would have boosted the median hourly wage to \$17.27 in 1998 instead of \$11.29. Where did the difference go? Most got siphoned off as higher corporate profits and bigger management wages, bonuses and stock options.

Indeed, as seen in the graphs on the next page, the wealthy Forbes 400 grew incomparably wealthier yet, while corporate CEOs didn't exactly have a shabby time of it. But with average pay for everyone else barely outpacing inflation, all the negative indices we associate with financial strain have ballooned: bankruptcies are up 116% in a decade and credit card debt has more than tripled, while a third more Americans are without health insurance. All of which, of course, provides The Washington Post

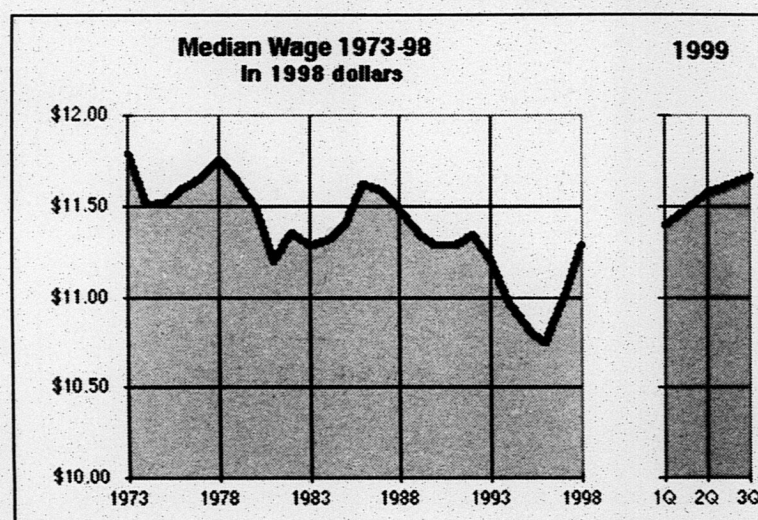
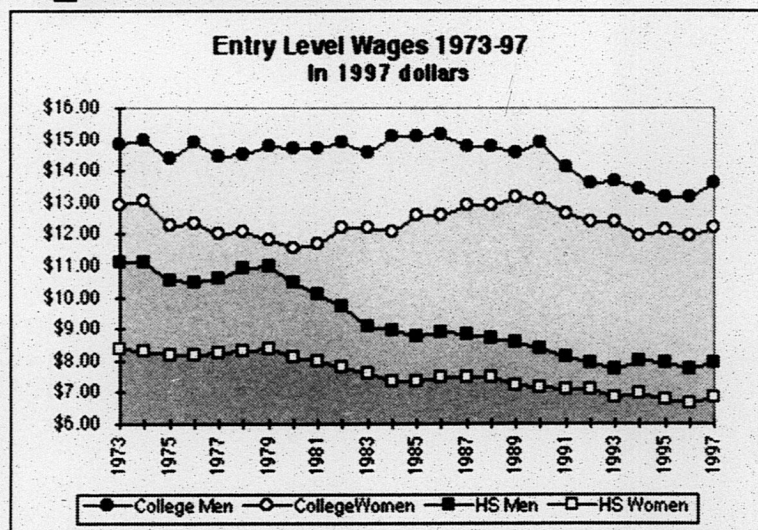
with the material for a front-page story describing the financial industry's success in lobbying the U.S. Senate to make it harder for people to wipe out their debts.

As these trends have played out over the closing quarter of the twentieth century, the gulf between the haves and the have-nots has grown ever wider. Whereas all Americans prospered in the quarter-century after World War II, the past two decades have seen a very different dynamic, with income inequality reaching record levels. Family income for the top fifth of the population rose 38% between 1979 and 1998, but grew a mere 8% for the middle fifth—and fell 5% for the lowest quintile.

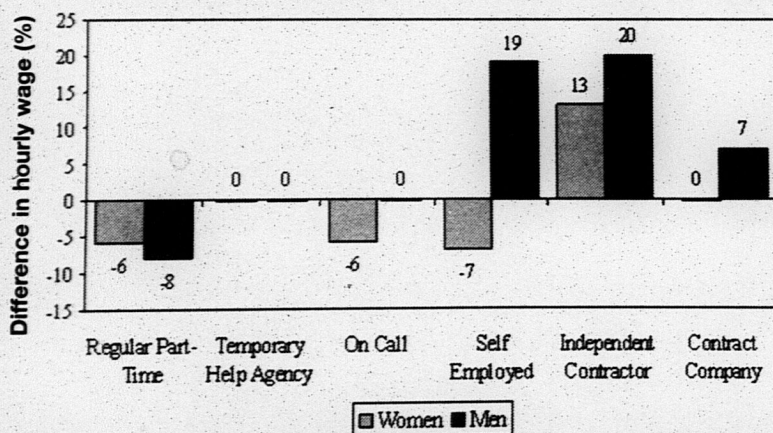
Moreover, the middle class also would have slipped backward, were it not for the rise of the two-income family and longer working hours put in by all employees. Women's participation in the labor force jumped from 43% in 1970 to 60% in 1998. Hours worked per year, meanwhile, increased by 158 for men and 223 for women.

The upshot, as we head into a new century, is an economically fragmented society. And it's not just the gap between the nation's richest families and its poorest that has increased: as virtually all the rewards for working harder have gone to the high end, the gap between the rich and the middle class—the group most TNG-CWA members fall into—keeps growing, too.

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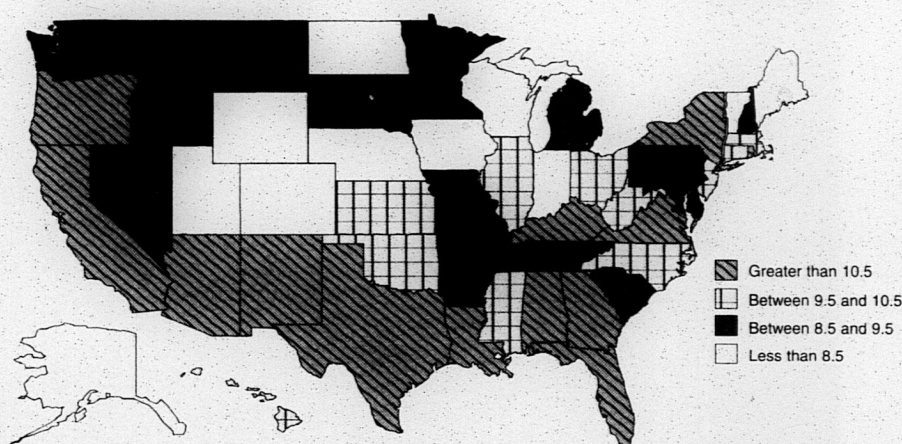


Wage differences between nonstandard and regular full-time workers with similar personal and job characteristics, 1997



An estimated 30% of the workforce is employed in "non-standard" kinds of arrangements—at considerable cost to the workers. The graph above shows the wage penalty paid by workers with comparable personal and job characteristics, including education, industry, occupation, union representation and receipt of health insurance or a pension. (all graphs from The Economic Policy Institute)

Ratio of income of top and bottom fifth of families, 1996-1998



But so what? What does it matter if the rich get richer—isn't that what being an American is all about? And regardless of whether it is or isn't, what can anyone do about it, anyway?

The "so-what" lesson was taught in the 'Sixties, when scores of American cities went up in flames—in the middle of the country's second longest economic expansion. Unemployment then was even lower than it is today, as was inflation, and there was so much money that both guns and

butter were on the public agenda. But as the now forgotten Kenner Commission reported, growing income inequality—as well as absolute poverty—proved to be a tinderbox for social upheaval.

Wealth and income disparities exacerbate social tensions. The less well-off feel disenfranchised and turn away from democratic institutions, as summarized in a Jan. 12 headline in *The Wall Street Journal*, "Campaign Kickoff Is Met by Voter Apathy in Iowa and Nation, as People Feel Little Guy

Has No Say." The wealthy, in whose hands political power becomes more concentrated, see an increasingly narrow cross-section of the world and simply can't comprehend the problems faced by those who have to scramble for a living.

"For example," notes the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "it can be difficult for an upper middle-income family living in a suburban neighborhood to understand the lack of decent housing available to poor families. Simi-

larly, wealthy families with the resources that allow access to private schools for their children can lose sight of the need to support public schools."

Indeed, an enormous proportion of today's political agenda, both in state houses and on Capitol Hill, is devoted to issues that could widen the income gap and further fray the social fabric, from attempts to privatize Social Security to continued resistance to increasing the minimum wage to changes in tax policy that favor the rich while ignoring or penalizing the working poor and middle class. Federal rules governing overtime pay are under attack. International trade agreements have encouraged capital to roam overseas in search of cheap labor, eliminating well-paid jobs domestically.

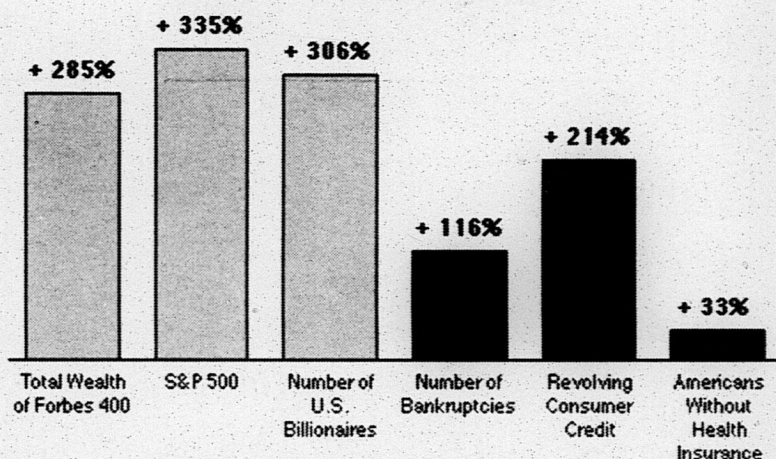
These and other issues lie outside the conference rooms in which collective bargaining agreements are hammered out, yet affect every negotiation, contract, arbitration and complaint filed with the National Labor Relations Board. Public policy can affect the newspaper industry directly, as in passage of the Newspaper Preservation Act. But it also can be extraordinarily arcane. For example, changes in IRS valuations of

newspapers in the 'Sixties gave a huge boost to the chain phenomenon by making it increasingly difficult for heirs of deceased publishers to pay their estate taxes. A change in income tax law further accelerated development of chain ownership by creating incentives for newspaper owners to retain earnings—with which they financed further acquisitions—rather than disburse them to shareholders as higher dividends.

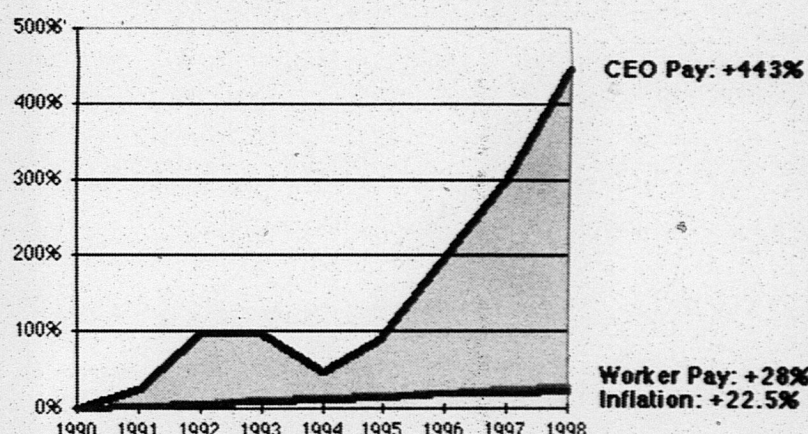
To ignore such dynamics in the belief that it somehow is unprofessional for newspaper workers—notably reporters—to become politically involved is like trying to drive a car on just two wheels, a feat stunt drivers but few others can pull off. But the belief persists. The irony is that the American Newspaper Guild was created specifically in response to an extreme political situation: the workplace rules being promulgated by the National Recovery Administration, and publishers' all-out efforts to make sure the new rules wouldn't be applied to them—ostensibly because that would violate the First Amendment.

Next month: Ways to move the struggle for economic justice beyond the bargaining table.

Winners and Losers Since 1989



CEO Pay, Worker Pay and Inflation 1990-98



What does a union endorsement mean?

By Morton Bahr
President, CWA

Ever since the 1690 publication of North America's first newspaper, "Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestic," a robust and tumultuous press has been a hallmark of the American experience. But what does that mean today for members of The Newspaper Guild, especially following its merger with The Communications Workers of America?

I have become personally concerned with this issue as a leader of union journalists, as a newsmaker and as a consumer of news. We need to talk openly in our union about fairness, bias and judgment in the news media. The aspect that interests me most is the attitudes of TNG-CWA members about the role of their union in the political process.

CWA has a long tradition of participation in politics. We view political action as a vital citizen responsibility. We encourage our members to vote and to be actively involved in politics, regardless of their political affiliation. We are proud that the percentage of

union members who vote is increasing.

We also recognize that any progress we achieve at the bargaining table for our members can be wiped out with the stroke of the pen from some politician who is beholden to anti-worker or anti-union forces. CWA is committed, as is organized labor in general, to making the voice of working people heard in political and legislative arenas.

To further this objective, our union endorses candidates—regardless of political party—whose public record supports the goals and dreams of working families. We look at the total record of a candidate, not at a "single issue," and in particular at how a candidate's positions affect our members' standard of living and their rights as workers.

The purpose of a CWA endorsement, however, is never to tell a member how to vote. Our goal is to be part of the mix of information that a member uses to decide his or her vote. We want CWA's endorsement to be given the same credibility and thought that a member will give to other information sources. If our endorsement influences nonunion workers, so much the

better, but as required by federal law our political information is communicated exclusively to CWA members. Furthermore, no dues money is ever spent on contributions to federal candidates.

CWA's endorsement of Vice President Al Gore for president is an example of how we arrive at our positions. After carefully examining the record of all known candidates for president, we concluded—based on his votes and positions—that Vice President Gore stood head and shoulders above all others on workers' rights and economic issues affecting CWA members. CWA polls among our leaders and members showed widespread support for him. The resolution endorsing him was debated and voted upon in July 1999 by some 2,000 CWA convention delegates elected by rank-and-file members to represent them. TNG delegates participated in that debate and vote, with some—including the Canadian delegation—abstaining.

Does CWA's endorsement of Gore somehow undermine the credibility of union journalists in the public's eyes?

No more so, in my opinion, than an endorsement by the newspaper that employs them, by the associations representing their employers or by a contribution by their employer to a particular candidate. The public is sophisticated enough to know that many factors weigh in news decisions and that the media owner has much more power over what goes into the paper or on the air than you or I.

The kinds of biases with which journalists are usually charged, such as ideological bias or personal animus, are less worrisome to the public than the far more subtle and dangerous ways in which journalists frame events and the world around us. As pointed out by journalism professor Jay Rosen, "There are values and assumptions hidden in those decisions that are extremely important to name and to debate, and, at this point, to change." Now, that's a debate worth having among journalists.

Meanwhile, journalists should take their union's political endorsements for what they are: our best recommendations of the candidates most worthy of your vote.

Labor round-up

Ergonomics comment period extended

After receiving more than a thousand requests for more time to comment on its proposed new ergonomics standard, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration has extended the public comment period by 30 days, to March 2. The Labor Department also postponed the first day of OSHA hearings on the ergonomics proposal from Feb. 22 to March 13, in Washington, D.C.

Strike heats up at Calgary Herald

It may be winter in Alberta, but things are heating up at the Calgary Herald, where a strike by the GCIU and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers unions is well into its third month. The situation evidently so rankles owner Conrad Black that he recently fired off a letter to the BC Federation of Labor calling the strike an "attempted left-wing coup d'etat." Above, a sports writer pokes fun at Black's scabs, also known on the picket line as the Bully Boys.



Four papers rapped for blacklisting

Four newspapers owned by the Herald Co.—the Grand Rapids Press, Bay City Times, Saginaw News and Flint Journal—have been ordered to provide back pay to five pressmen they refused to hire while the workers were on strike against the Detroit Newspaper Agency. The Sixth Circuit Court's unpublished decision upholds a finding by the National Labor Relations Board that the newspapers violated their duty to bargain with the GCIU and unilaterally changed their existing substitute referral systems. A full list of other blacklisted workers—all of whom also will be owed back pay—is to be developed in a compliance hearing before an NLRB administrative law judge.

Card-checks lead to more success

Union organizing campaigns are proving substantially more successful when using card-check recognition and neutrality agreements than by following traditional representation elections. According to Adrienne Eaton at Rutgers University and Jill Kriesky of West Virginia University, a union win rate of approximately 50% in NLRB-supervised elections rose to 67.7% under the newer approach, which requires prior negotiations with an employer.

Time = sanitized history²

For those who worry that increased concentration of media ownership will result in a reshaping of the news—you're too late. When Time magazine devoted 15 pages to its "Person of the Century," it conspicuously managed to avoid any mention of Albert Einstein's socialist views or his several critiques of capitalism—including this relevant observation: "Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights." Point taken.

Free trade not all it's cracked up to be

U.S. supporters of free-trade agreements like NAFTA and organizations such as the WTO got some bad news in early February: a considerable jump in the number of workers who lost jobs in fiscal year 1999 for trade-related reasons. The Labor Department certified 151,353 workers as eligible for aid under a federal program designed to help such workers, compared to 99,739 the previous fiscal year. There were 1,621 specific company layoffs related to the job losses in FY1999, compared to 890 a year earlier. Meanwhile, as proof that a good trade balance isn't enough to sustain economic expansion, the Japanese economy apparently slipped back into a recession at the end of 1999.

Tired of being invisible, cash extras turn to Guild

By Kaith Maskell
Canadian Media Guild staff

Imagine a job where you are paid seven dollars an hour. Some days you might work six hours, other days 16 or 17—if you work at all, that is.

When you do work, you have to show up with no less than three changes of clothes, purchased at your own expense. You may or may not get a meal break; if you do, there may or may not be food available for you. If there is, chances are you'll have to pay for it; the money will be clawed back out of your day's pay.

You also have to shell out 10%-15% of your day's pay to the person who got you the job, plus several hundred dollars a year for the privilege of being in the labor pool. And to top it all off, you know that the person standing next to you—doing exactly the same work as you are—is making more an \$18 an hour while you're getting \$7.

Welcome to the life of a background performer, or "cash extra," as they're sometimes called. There are well over a thousand Canadians trying to make a living at this tenuous profession, in which they're hired to "fill out" scenes in television programs and feature films. They're there in the restaurants, on the street, in arenas. Think of the last TV drama or feature film you saw, populated by dozens, hundreds, maybe thousands of background performers to whom you never gave a moment's thought.

And that's part of the problem. Despite their importance to the film and television industry, the vast majority of background performers in Canada have not been represented by a union. Although the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio

Artists historically has claimed jurisdiction over this type of work, and a quota system ensures that a certain number of ACTRA members also appear in backgrounds, most performers on a set are paid less than half the ACTRA scale.

"We lived with our frustration for years. Then we finally decided to take control of our own destiny," says Charlie Fife, president of the new Professional Association of Canadian Talent.

Initially, says Fife, PACT members felt their best chance of improving working conditions would be to raise their profile within ACTRA. But after meeting with ACTRA's leadership five times over a period of five months, PACT's elected officers "got nowhere, so we made the decision to look elsewhere for help," he adds.

Enter the Canadian Media Guild, one of the unions PACT called in its search, which was especially encouraging to the nascent union. The result? The two groups signed a merger agreement, ratified by PACT's membership Jan. 7, within a couple of months of opening discussions.

Now it's on to get government certification—which will give PACT members the right to bargain collectively—but with a twist. While all of the Guild's current bargaining certificates were issued under traditional labor laws, in PACT's case the Guild is seeking certification under the federal Status of the Artist Act through a labor-board-like entity, the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal.

So the next time you watch a movie or TV series which was shot in Canada (like "The Hurricane" or "Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict"), look past the stars and into the background. You'll see Guild members smiling back at you.



PHOTO BY CURTIS LODGE

PACT president Charlie Fife addresses a general membership meeting prior to an overwhelming vote in favor of joining the Canadian Media Guild.

Freelancers strike at Pacifica

Dozens of freelance reporters and contributors struck Pacifica's national news program Jan. 31, saying they would withhold their work for three months unless network chairwoman Mary Frances Berry reasserts the editorial independence of Pacifica's local and national news divisions.

"The independence of news production is now seriously under threat," contended Pacifica Network News contributor Aaron Glantz. "Management has failed to stop censoring the news, so we're going on strike."

The striking journalists comprise a majority of active contributors and reporters to Pacifica Network News—PNN—a daily, half-hour news program that airs on some 70 radio stations nationally. In a recent two-month period, nearly 70% of Pacifica's stories came from its stringers.

Support for the strike is coming from the media watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, which had several stories censored by the network before its show was canceled altogether, as well as from Project Censored and from the National Association for Freedom of Expression.

The irony of a strike against listener-supported Pacifica over censorship issues is that the network has long been a bastion of free speech, from broadcasting Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" to defying the HUAC witch hunts of the 1950s. More recently it has broadcast the commentaries of death-row prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal. But since last spring, when armed guards were hired to lock-out staff at KPFA—the network's San



Francisco Bay area station—Pacifica reporters say management repeatedly has altered, suppressed and censored news stories and public-affairs programming. Management also has silenced programs in mid-broadcast and ousted such signature voices as Polk award-winner Larry Bensky's.

In November, Pacifica Network News director Dan Coughlin was "removed" after airing a story on a boycott by 16 Pacifica affiliates over the censorship issue. More recently, veteran news anchor Verna Avery-Brown, the only African-American national-news anchor in public broadcasting, resigned in protest over the network's actions, citing censorship and a trend away from progressive news coverage as contributing to her decision.



LOOKING AHEAD

Sanitize reporting, not the reporters

By Linda Foley, President

The Republican establishment types who decided early on that George W. Bush would be a sure bet to win the U.S. presidency have a new explanation for his latest series of "bumps" (make that, "stumbles") on the road to their envisioned coronation.

The media love John McCain.

Michigan Gov. John Engler, an early and key supporter of Bush, told the Washington Post that Bush has been hurt by "a fawning press that built the Bush campaign into mythic proportions and then turned their affections to John McCain to see if they could create a race."

My, my, those reporters are a sly, conspiratorial bunch, aren't they? The GOP elite has accused the press for months of being apologists for the Clinton administration and promoters of Democratic causes. Now it's discovered the media's real agenda was to influence Republicans, not promote Democrats.

Haley Barbour, former Republican national chairman and Bush backer, pointed out in the same Feb. 6 Post article, "The Boston Globe endorsed Senator McCain. The New York Times gives Senator McCain a big wet kiss on the front page every day. The liberal media would love to move the Republican Party to the left, and they think McCain is the vehicle."

Pretty clever, if true, but of course it's not. McCain hasn't gotten any more media coverage than George W. Bush has. And if the press likes him, it's because he feeds them information—not doughnuts, as one GOP leader suggested. More important, McCain's candidacy is making news.

By blaming the press for McCain's success, the GOP elite believes it can discredit both the senator and the reporters who cover him. Unfortunately, some reporters will aid and abet that effort.

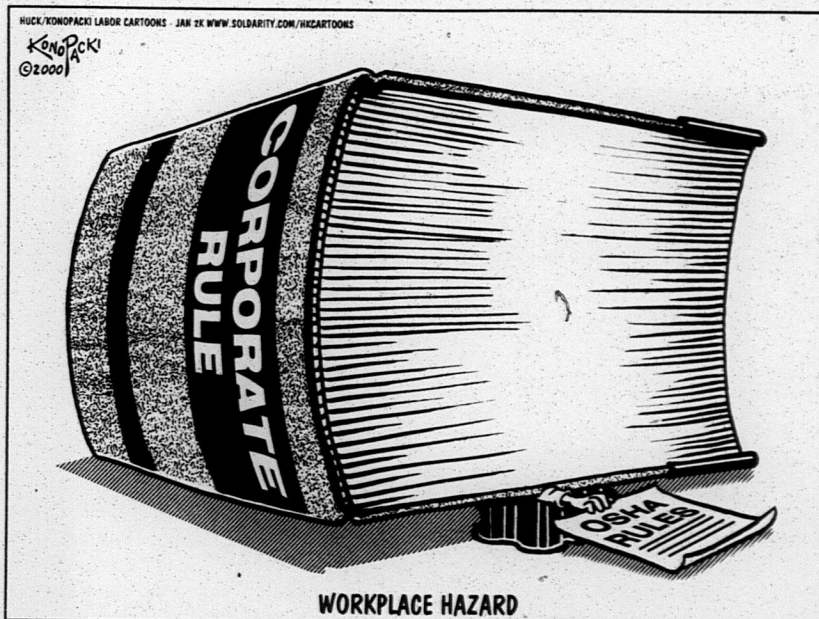
There are many reasons for the current credibility crisis that has engulfed the journalistic profession. One, certainly, is that today's journalists are too willing to be defined by those they cover, rather than let their work speak for itself.

The public trusts a particular journalist, not because of his or her beliefs, political persuasion or ethnic background, but because it knows it can trust the information the reporter has been providing.

The Committee of Concerned Journalists, a reform group created by the Pew Foundation's Project for Excellence in Journalism, for which TNG recruited several hundred Guild members, recently distributed what the group calls a "Statement of Shared Purpose" for journalists. It was developed after months of discussions, surveys, studies and forums involving journalists from all media.

The statement begins, "The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society." It then lists nine core principles:

1. The first obligation of journalism is to the truth.
2. Serve citizens and the public interest first.
3. Monitor the powerful and offer voice to the voiceless.
4. Provide society a forum for comment, criticism and compromise.



5. Employ an ethical method of verification.

6. Maintain independence from faction.

7. Make the news engaging and relevant.

8. Keep news comprehensive and proportional.

9. Remain true to personal conscience.

In its explanation of these principles, the committee points out that objectivity does not imply journalists are "free of bias." Rather, objectivity calls for "a consistent method of testing information . . . precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their [the journalists'] work."

Further, the committee's principles state, "Independence of spirit and mind, rather than neutrality, is the principle journalists must keep in focus. While editorialists and commentators are not neutral, the source of their credibility is still their accuracy, intellectual fairness and ability to inform—not their devotion to a certain group or outcome."

Finally, the statement suggests, "Each of

us must be willing, if fairness and accuracy require, to voice differences with our colleagues, whether in the newsroom or the executive suite. News organizations do well to nurture this independence by encouraging individuals to speak their minds."

I have sent the document to all local Guild presidents and administrative officers and suggested they initiate a dialogue with management about the principles. The complete Statement of Purpose also is available on TNG's web site, www.newsguild.org.

Any journalist who has ever been accused of biased reporting because he likes a politician, or has a certain ethnic background, or because the paper she works for took a political position—or, perhaps, because her union endorsed a candidate—should embrace CCJ's ideas.

It's high time journalists demand they be given the correct tools and support to verify what they write, not who they are. Unbiased, accurate news coverage is a product of sanitized reporting, not sanitized reporters.

'Happy talk' can't replace newspaper's soul

By L.J. Davis

Tolstoy's dictum—happy families are all alike, but unhappy families are miserable in their own ways—does not appear to apply to newspapers, especially the newspapers owned by Times Mirror and Knight Ridder. The reporters for Times Mirror and Knight Ridder are unhappy for precisely the same reason. Their owners want them to make happy talk.

Among professional reporters, especially if their teeth are long, there is no executive fantasy more pernicious than the idea that they should make nice to the readership. The usual rebuttal to this is that reporters are a dour and snarly lot whose egos are in excellent shape, which is true enough. But the current plight of Knight Ridder's Miami Herald suggests that the reporters might be on to something. The plight of the Herald also suggests that if a country wants a newspaper press worthy of the name, the owners of said press should not issue publicly traded stock.

There probably is no truth in the persistent rumor that Knight Ridder is preparing the Herald for a sale to some greater fool. By all appearances, CEO Tony Ridder moved corporate headquarters from Miami to San Jose because the Herald was no longer the flagship of the chain, its place usurped by the San Jose Mercury News. But there is a reason the Herald is no longer the flagship of the chain, and close analysis suggests that reason is not the one offered by

Mr. Ridder, by the financial press or by the investment community.

The Herald is no longer the flagship because, for a whole lot of reasons that seemed to make eminent business sense, it lost its soul.

Only a decade ago, the Herald was, by its own accurate description, the premier kick-ass newspaper in the second tier of American journalism, just below The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. It won many Pulitzers. Its columnists were known nationwide. It had a bureau in New York. It had bureaus in Europe. It had gone bilingual, with a Spanish edition to serve the region's large Latin American community. It owned the future, and the future was good. Everybody wanted to work for the Herald.

Then the recession of the early 1990s occurred, while the price of newsprint roared into the stratosphere. It was noticed, as though this hadn't been apparent before, that many of the region's new immigrants didn't read newspapers. Miami reflected the national falloff in readership among people aged 23 to 55. The stock price of the parent company fell. And the world discovered the Internet. Management, it seems safe to say, panicked.

Despite a number of previous, bad, and presumably instructive experiences, Knight Ridder once again raced into cyberspace—where, like just about everybody else, it proceeded to lose pots of money. As for the Herald, Tony Ridder mused aloud about the

danger of a raider swooping down; he seemed unaware of what had happened when no less a company than American Express tried to raid McGraw Hill and once again proved the truth of Lincoln's warning against picking a fight with a man who buys newsprint by the barrel.

Bureaus were closed and staff was cut, to the point where young reporters who were little more than stringers found themselves covering (after a fashion) major stories; the Herald resembled a restaurant that had decided to improve its margins by serving smaller portions of inferior food. The editor was caught wondering in a memo why the hell anybody should be interested in Bosnia.

He spoke, as it happens, with the voice of prophecy. Trying to repair the Herald while tearing it apart, Knight Ridder flew by the seat of its pants while consulting focus groups. It would give the readership what it said it wanted; the paper did so, and profits miraculously recovered.

These two events may not be connected. At a newspaper, the readership doesn't pay the bills. The advertisers do, and advertisers are another sort of people who believe in things like focus groups. Small wonder, then, that revenues rose on the wings of belief and not on the wings of competence.

It is a time-tested adage of the business that a serious newspaper succeeds—and, in the long run, can only succeed—when it engages a portion of its readership on a regular basis, when the paper itself becomes

news as people ask each other in tones of excitement if they've read the story about the mayor and the goat.

As for all the worries about losing the younger cohorts of the population, it seems to have been lost on both management and the advertisers that the over-50 cadre is about to become the largest age group in the nation, has a large disposable income and still reads newspapers—or reads them until, as Knight Ridder discovered in an experiment in Boca Raton, the paper begins to serve up sweetness instead of news. Profits may be up, at least temporarily, but it looks as though Knight Ridder, like Times Mirror, has gotten itself on the wrong track.

L.J. Davis is a writer in New York and the author of "The Billionaire Shell Game: How Cable Baron John Malone and Assorted Corporate Titans Invented a Future Nobody Wanted." This column was originally published in *The Daily Deal*.

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: March 10.)

SENDER GARLIN

Death of a man, end of an era

Sender Garlin's name won't mean a thing to contemporary Guild members. He was 31 when he became a charter member of the American Newspaper Guild, an anonymous young man in an organization dominated by more experienced pros. He worked as a journalist for a couple of decades, but always on the fringes of the mainstream. He wore a Guild pin all his life, yet it's doubtful that he ever worked under a Guild contract.

But when he died Dec. 6, after nearly a century of relentless activism, a certain Guild school of thought died with him.

Garlin was a communist.

He was much more than that, of course: as one of the many journalists of the 'Thirties who viewed their craft as a tool for social change, he also became a trade unionist, labor organizer and agitator. It was his mission to chronicle injustice and successful struggles against oppression, so he covered the Gastonia textile strike and the trial of the "Scottsboro Boys" and churned out a series of political pamphlets, exploring subjects as diverse as Huey Long, Eddie Rickenbacker, the McCarran Act and "The Truth About Readers Digest." His interview subjects included a who's who of the political left, from Clarence Darrow, Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis to Woody Guthrie and Lucy Parsons, widow of one of the four men hanged in 1887 for their alleged participation in the Haymarket Riot.

Although he started his career conventionally enough, as a reporter for the Bronx



Home News, Garlin's career quickly veered to the left. Throughout the 'Thirties and early 'Forties he was a reporter and regular columnist for the Daily Worker—whose printers had union contracts but whose editorial employees apparently did not, despite near-universal Guild membership—and was that newspaper's Moscow correspondent from 1935 to 1938. He edited several other publications, including the Coal Digger—newspaper of the National Miners Union, a left-wing rival of the United Mine Workers—and became founding editor of the Western Worker, forerunner of the Daily People's World. In 1934 he also founded—with William Phillips and Philip Rahv—the Partisan Review, the magazine of the John

Reed Clubs, named after the American journalist immortalized in the book, "Ten Days That Shook the World."

Extreme though such activities might seem today, they weren't unusual then—and, indeed, explain much of the Guild's turmoil of that time. "The Guild effectively was in the hands of communists—it was in disarray," says Daniel Leab, author of the definitive text on the Guild's early years, "A Union of Individuals." Some of the union's most energetic locals, including Cleveland—its first—and San Francisco were almost entirely dominated by communists; others, especially New York, were as passionately committed to anticommunism. Further exacerbating the tension were journalists, like Garlin, who belonged to the Guild more for ideological reasons than because of bread-and-butter issues, card-carrying union members who didn't sweat the details of negotiating and enforcing contracts.

The pragmatic and philosophical clash finally boiled over in the years immediately following World War II, when the full extent of Stalin's murderous totalitarianism became known and virtually all American unions purged the communists from their ranks. Garlin, at that point editing a newspaper for Local 6 of the Hotel and Club Workers' Union, was blacklisted and unable to find work until 1957, when he changed his first name to Alexander and became associate director of public relations at the New York Heart Association. In 1963 he started editing Physicians' Legal Brief, a

newsletter about legal decisions relevant to doctors, and stayed with it until his retirement in 1975.

Alexander Cockburn, no newcomer to the radical left, confesses in a Jan. 31 salute to Garlin in The Nation that he didn't meet the old man until the late '80s, when he was showing students at the University of Colorado "how to put together campaigns against U.S. intervention in Central America." As he added: "I guess Sender was America's senior radical when he died, though he may be survived by some other Red vet, since those Commies were often long-lifers, no doubt seasoned by lasting through many a lengthy meeting till it was time to ram through the resolutions."

Yet throughout all those years, says Garlin's older son, Victor, Sender always wore his Guild pin. And although Garlin was notably tight-lipped about his early years—a caution common to most survivors of the anticommunist purges—Victor says he remembers walking as a young boy with his father on a picket line at the New York Telegram. It was 1943, he recalls, when the animus of New York journalists toward their pinko brethren was at an all-time high, "and the Telegram was one of the most red-baiting, union-busting papers in New York. I never got over the irony of him fighting to get union representation for columnists who were trying to do him in print."

Garlin Sender died at his Boulder, Colorado home a month before the turn of a most tumultuous century. He was 97.

Future of newspaper unions lies with Guild

The last couple of decades have not been kind to unions overall—and even less to unions in the newspaper industry. Thanks to tax code changes, a technological revolution, media consolidation and strained inter-union relationships, organized labor has suffered through a dramatic loss of bargaining leverage. But while the prognosis is not rosy, there is the hope—and challenge—that as digital newspapers dominate their print counterparts, "the Guild will be the union to determine the fate of all newspaper unions."

Or that, at least, is the conclusion reached by Howard Stanger of the State University College at Buffalo, who was

commissioned by the CWA to examine the state of labor relations in the U.S. daily newspaper industry. Stanger's findings, released in late January, pay special attention to the 1975 strike at The Washington Post and the Detroit strike 20 years later, both provoked by a corporate drive to "regain control over the labor process" and change "the tenor of labor relations practices to increase shareholder value."

Management succeeded in both cases, perhaps inevitably so. "The narrow, decentralized bargaining structure covering many separate trades has become grossly outmoded in the face of media conglomerates and newspaper chains," Stanger writes. "When compa-

nies can shift human and capital resources at will, suffer big circulation declines, and continue to realize sufficient corporate profits to appease shareholders—as in the recent Detroit strike—unions stand little chance of winning strikes or favorable contracts."

On the other hand, continued changes in technology may reverse the pendulum's swing, blurring traditional union jurisdictions and lowering the barriers to union consolidation, too. Meanwhile, the change from print to electronic publication means a dramatic change in the industry's traditional production and distribution methods, further eroding the power of craft unions such as the GCIU and the Teamsters.

"Business changes such as the ones described here call for an all-inclusive media union, of which the CWA's Guild would play an important role," Stanger concludes, noting TNG's various strategies to "bring online newspaper workers into the union fold."

Of course, Stanger adds, numerous obstacles stand in the Guild's way. The industry's growing fondness for clustering can be countered only by centralizing bargaining units into regional or chain-wide structures—a formidable challenge. "Unrealistic" and "illogical" NLRB rulings also are a hindrance. But for all that, Stanger observes, the Guild is the one union best positioned to navigate the choppy seas ahead.

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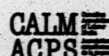
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DAYBOOK

TNG-CWA new officers'
training, Feb. 18-21,
George Meany Center

New England District Council,
Feb. 26-27, Fall River, MA

Western District Council,
Feb. 26-27, Monterey, CA

Knight-Ridder Council,
March 3-5, Twin Cities

Working Women Conference
2000, March 11-12, Chicago

Great Lakes District Council,
March 10-12, Cincinnati

CWA National Civil Rights &
Equity Conference,
March 23-26, Las Vegas

TNG Canada Council,
April 15-16, Victoria, BC

TNG-CWA Executive Council,
April 29-May 3, Washington

Mid-Atlantic District Council,
May 6-7, location TBA

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Subscription cancellations start rolling into The Arkansas Gazette, and a slew of unfair labor practice charges are filed by the Guild, as 32 striking editorial and circulation workers are replaced with scabs. . . . How's this for a fateful move? The Daily News, Los Angeles' only 24-hour newspaper, axes 47 Guild members as it abandons its morning editions to concentrate on the afternoon market. . . . The Guild Reporter runs a swimsuit photo of "Miss Photoflash of 1950." Oh, well—it was only a one-column shot

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The Guild's executive board calls for "immediate and massive" emergency measures to correct a "dangerously out-of-kilter" U.S. economy, authorizing TNG sponsorship of a legislative conference in May toward that purpose. . . . Selwyn Raab wins the Heywood Broun Award for his story raising serious questions about the 1967 conviction of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter—now in a theater near you. . . . The U.S. Supreme Court rules, 6-3, that employees have a right to union representation while being interrogated by management.

Ten years ago this month:

McClatchy Newspapers challenges a California OSHA order that it remedy unsafe working conditions for VDT users. . . . Ed Asner and Cesar Chavez join 500 Guild members in a demonstration at the San Diego Union and Tribune protesting stalled contract talks. . . . Barney Peterson, one of the founders of the Guild in San Francisco, dies at 77.