

THE GUILD Reporter

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And the
Broun Award
winner is ...

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'For Sale' signs roil news biz

Riding a record wave of advertising revenue, newspaper owners—corporate, shareholder and family alike—have engaged in a sudden feeding frenzy that will eliminate some competitors, lead to greater market dominance by others and put further pressure on newsrooms.

Leading the way, in size if not timing, was this week's announcement that Chicago-based Tribune Co. is buying Los Angeles-based Times Mirror Co. in an \$8 billion deal that will create the country's third largest newspaper chain, behind Gannett and Knight Ridder. A month earlier, Thomson Corp. said it will sell all of its 55 daily and 75 non-daily newspapers in North America—aside from the Toronto Globe and Mail—to concentrate on electronic information services. That was followed by a couple of weeks by a New York Times announcement that it will sell four of its smaller dailies and three non-dailies, and by news that Journal Register plans to sell all of its newspapers in Ohio, Illinois and Missouri.

Although the Times and JRC sales wouldn't normally merit

much attention—not when several score newspapers have gone on the block annually in recent years—the motives for each sale suggest industry consolidation and market segmentation are accelerating. The Times said it wants to concentrate on acquiring bigger newspapers; JRC explained it will focus on the northeast. Moreover, JRC's announcement was prompted by its realization that once Thomson's newspapers were in play, a potential buyer might be interested in consolidating newspapers from both chains.

Thomson's sale, meanwhile, means it is all but abandoning a business that accounted for less than 15% of its revenues. Ironically, the decision was made just as the company graduated its first class of "community journalists" from a 12-week training program it had established for its chain. The program, Reader inc., wanted people "committed to community journalism," its director had announced.

But while Thomson decided to concentrate on electronic delivery of information, the Tribune is taking the opposite tack, seeking to

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GUERRILLA WARFARE

Unhappy over a story? Trash it to judges

As the media increasingly pay more attention to the bottom line than to journalistic values, newspapers and broadcast networks also become more vulnerable to a bit of old-fashioned arm-twisting. Witness, for example, the 60 Minutes fade on cigarettes, or the alacrity with which the Cincinnati Enquirer caved in to Chiquita.

But now corporate America appears to be opening up a new front in its assault on "bad press": it's going after the honors that

many reporters—and their publishers—seek as a reward for aggressively investigating a company's misdeeds.

Three weeks after a panel of judges sifted through nearly 200 entries in the Heywood Broun Awards competition, TNG-CWA received an overnight mailing from the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis directly attacking one of the entries as falling "well below the standards of journalistic excellence that have been established by the Broun Award over the



BOB TOWNSEND/NEW YORK GUILD

Ratzo Reuters

A picket line outside Reuters' office in downtown Manhattan is bolstered by the formidable 35-foot-high presence of "Ratzo Reuters." The wire service's employees stepped up pressure on the company after going three years without

a contractual wage increase, withholding their bylines for two weeks in February and beginning a "work to rule" campaign March 1. Although Reuters rejected a recent Guild proposal for federal mediation, a settlement was reached just as The Guild Reporter was going to press. Details will be reported in the April issue.

Tempest in Toledo teapot

There are some things you can't make up. Things like the current brouhaha at the Toledo Blade, the 20-second version of which follows:

Reporter Larry Vellequette agrees to edit the latest eight-page issue of "Bleed," a "totally tasteless and supposedly funny" satire that each year is circulated at the Press Club of Toledo's "Ribs and Roast" show. Blade Executive Editor Ron Royhab sees a cover story mocking the publisher ("Who has the largest news organ in town?"), flexes his muscles as a Press

Club vice president and demands the item be killed.

Vellequette instead kills the entire issue, running off a one-page "Bleed" cover with a large "CENSORED" stamp across its face, and has 600 copies distributed at the show.

The Blade suspends Vellequette for five days, claiming insubordination, even though his work on the Bleed has nothing to do with the Blade.

An outraged Blade news staff responds with a vir-

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years." The package included a 14-page cover letter, optimistically headed "Confidential—Not for Publication," and an inch-thick book of several hundred pages that ran a typed version of the entry on the left side of each page—and a line-by-line commentary on the right.

The entry, "Deadly Alliance: How Government and Industry Chose Weapons Over Workers," was a six-part series reported by Sam Roe and published in The [Toledo] Blade last March. As

summarized by the Blade in a public statement released this past December, the series "showed that, over the past 50 years, the U.S. government and the beryllium industry have knowingly allowed thousands of workers to be exposed to unsafe levels of beryllium dust," resulting in hundreds of cases of lung disease and premature death.

Although spokesmen for the primary corporate target of the Blade investigation, Brush Wellman, are quoted throughout the

series, the company believes the series was "sensational and one-sided." And so it did what a growing number of companies are doing when they feel pilloried by the media; it got itself a law firm. More specifically, it retained Kirkland & Ellis, the same law firm deployed with such devastating effect by Chiquita.

Unlike that case, however—in which the Enquirer, desperate to avoid a lawsuit, coughed up \$10 million and printed front-page apologies for rifling through Chiquita's e-mail—the assault on the Blade has been more roundabout. Attorney Thomas Clare, described by his firm as specializing in "defamation counseling and ... litigation arising out of news-gathering tactics," says he sent

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Roll-call of recent contract settlements

By Deborah Thomas

Exec. Secretary, Contract Committee

A bevy of recent contract settlements and ratifications includes the following details:

Modesto-Northern California Media Workers: Agreement ratified March 1, approving a contract that expires Dec. 31, 2002. Minimum base salaries increased for all positions by amounts ranging from \$25 to \$90 a week. New language provides for flexible work schedules and telecommuting. Domestic partners added to bereavement leave.

Philadelphia: The local voted 456-68 on Feb. 22 to ratify a six-year extension of the agreement with The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News. The settlement includes a \$900 signing bonus, pro-rated for part-timers. The main unit diverted a portion of its percentage increase to cover higher health insurance costs; the suburban writers' and photographers' unit diverted a portion of its increase to the pension fund.

Pueblo Star Chieftain: The Guild and management agreed on a one-year extension of the contract, to March 2001, with a 3% across-the-board wage increase.

Non-Dailies

Foreign Policy, New York: Agreement extension effective Jan. 1 of this year through the end of 2002, with 5% wage increases at the start of each year.

Contract improvements include:

- Five days of paid bereavement leave for the death of an employee's mother, father, husband, child or live-in partner.
- Employees exhausting paid sick leave may opt to use severance pay, day for day, and other staffers may contribute up to 50% of their accrued leave to the employee.
- No loss of jobs due to new or modified processes or equipment.
- Leaves of absence of not more than three years granted to employees elected or appointed to a position with the Newspaper

Guild CWA. Convention delegates will be given time to attend.

- One hundred percent tuition payment.

SEIU Local 500, Washington-Baltimore: Two-year agreement ratified under a strike vote, with a \$250 signing bonus. Changes include the following:

- Probationary period for field reps and organizers is extended to eight months, remains at six months for all others.
- Employees who complete their probation and are discharged for any cause other than gross misconduct shall be given two weeks' notice or two weeks' pay in lieu of notice.

- Vacation accrual rate changed for employees hired after ratification of this agreement, as follows: after one year, 12 days instead of 15 days; 15 days earned after 5 years instead of after 4 years; and 20 days after 10 years instead of 4 years.

- In addition to the 11 paid holidays specified in the contract, employees completing one year of service are entitled to four personal holidays.

Employees are eligible for \$500 tuition reimbursement; for those with two or more years of service, the reimbursement increases to an annual maximum of \$750. Total payable tuition reimbursement increases to \$3,000 from \$2,500.

WPIX, New York: Contract extension to June 30, 2001, of agreement that expired last December, with a wage increase of 2% retroactive to last July, 2% effective this past February and 3% effective this July. News assistants received a \$26 upgrade.

Contract improvements include a death benefit equal to a regular full-time employee's salary. In addition, effective this past January the company was to establish a defined contribution pension plan to which it will contribute a sum equal to 2% of all straight-time wages. Employees are eligible to participate upon completion of 1,000 hours or on becoming regular full-time. The contribution will increase to 3% January 2001.

SEIU Local 105, Denver: A three-year agreement through Jan. 29, 2003, includes a 2% increase retroactively applied to salaries in effect before ratification. Effective Feb. 1 of this year, employees

accrue 50% of one full comp day for each month of service, or six full comp days per year. Employees may carry over one week of vacation into the next calendar year. Unused vacation not taken in the year of accrual may be assigned.

E.L. & Associates, Washington-Baltimore: Two-year agreement running through Dec. 31, 2001, includes pay increases totaling 11% to 17%. The employer's contribution to the pension plan rose to 5% of salary this past January and will increase to 5.25% a year later.

PhilaPOSH, Philadelphia: The four-member unit agreed to a one-year extension of its contract, to expire Dec. 31. The extension includes a pay increase of \$1 an hour and a 401(k) contribution by the employer.

Wire Services

Associated Press, Wire Service Guild: Guild members voted 464-123 for a new, three-year agreement that increases wages roughly 8% over term. Other improvements include 10% increases in city differentials; a 10% increase in Sunday and night differentials; and a \$30 increase in supervisory differential, effective Dec. 1, 2001. The agreement also increases the company's pension match and reduces employees' share of health care premiums.

Typographical Units

BMR Inc., Sault Ste. Marie: Agreement was reached on an initial contract that runs from Feb. 1 through January, 2003. The agreement provides for a full Guild shop with dues check-off, grievance and binding arbitration language, a 35-hour workweek, time-and-a-half after 35 hours or on holidays and 10 statutory holidays. Bereavement leave of four days covers domestic partners. Mileage reimbursement will be 38 cents per kilometer, while a per diem of \$40 is to be paid in the currency of the country in which the employee is working.

Barr entries due May 12

Entries for the David S. Barr Award, which recognizes journalistic achievement by high school and college students, must be received by the TNG-CWA office by May 12. Two original copies of the work, published or broadcast between Sept. 1, 1999 and April 30, 2000, should be submitted.

The contest honors the memory of former Guild attorney David Barr, who died suddenly three years ago. Entries should help right a wrong, correct an injustice or promote justice and fairness.

Winners will be announced in June.

In brief . . .

Knoxville paper folds on Allen

Throwing in the towel on the morning of a scheduled unfair labor practices hearing, the Knoxville News-Sentinel agreed to pay \$25,000 net of all taxes and withholding to an employee it had misclassified as a stringer, then fired when she sought Guild intervention. Although the employee, Geneva Allen, has decided not to return to the News-Sentinel, TNG-CWA attorney Barbara Camens said her situation was far from unique and urged other locals to "remain vigilant" for similar abuses.

LabourResearch.com. The unit, otherwise known as TNG-CWA Local 30248, was developed by business agent Nigel Sones and received more than 3,000 hits in its first month of operation.

Postal union staff votes for Guild

All 29 professional staffers at APWU national headquarters have voted to join the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, reports the Guild's Dick Ramsey, who says the staffers voted "to give themselves a voice in improving their working conditions."

Sudbury mailers vote 30-1 for TNG

TNG Canada Director Arnold Amber reports that TNG-CWA Local 30232 has been certified to represent 37 mailers at the Sudbury, Ont., Star, a Southam (Hollinger) newspaper. The vote was 30 to 1. The successful drive was conducted by Local 30232 President Dennis St. Pierre.

Guild, AAUP plan joint conference

TNG-CWA and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) will hold a joint conference June 9-11 in Washington, D.C. to examine the First Amendment and its applications for journalists and academics. An application will appear in the next issue of The Guild Reporter and on the Guild's web site. For more information, contact Eric D. Geist at 202-434-1271 or egeist@cwa-union.org.

Local treasurer dies in her sleep

Carolyn S. Poff, who was serving her second term as treasurer of the Terre Haute Newspaper Guild, died suddenly in her sleep Feb. 7 of a heart attack; she was 61. Poff had been a Guild member since 1992 and had served as her local's representative to Great Lakes District and international conferences several times.

Correction:

The Guild Reporter reported last month that the Harrisburg Newspaper Guild was entering its sixth year of contract negotiations, but vice president James Brown informs us it's not quite that bad: the fifth anniversary will be May 30.

Ergo hearings begin 9-week run

OSHA kicked off a nine-week series of public hearings on its proposed ergonomic standards, which would cover 27 million workers at 1.9 million general industry sites. More than a thousand witnesses are expected to testify, including TNG-CWA's Larkie Gildersleeve in Washington, D.C.; Gerry Minkkenen, executive director of the Chicago Guild in Chicago; and international rep Linda Cearley in Portland, Oregon.

'Stringer penalty' means \$100 bonus

Pittsburgh Guild members got an unexpected bonus of \$100 apiece, thanks to a "stringer penalty" clause in their contract with the Post-Gazette. The penalty kicks in when the newspaper uses freelancers beyond a certain limit.

Having their cake and eating it, too

The owners of Honolulu's two dailies, Gannett and Liberty Newspapers, moved to dismiss a state antitrust lawsuit on the grounds that the deal prompting the lawsuit has lapsed. On the other hand, the two also said they still want to terminate their joint operating agreement and close the Star-Bulletin, prompting opponents to note that the lawsuit is hardly moot. A hearing on the motion is set for May 15.

Canadian typos turn to internet

Canadian union members now have internet access to labor information, resources and support, thanks to the Peterborough Typographical Union's sponsorship of

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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In Eugene, freedom ends at front door

After stomping on workers' freedom of speech for more than a year and violating a prior agreement with their employees, the owners of The Register-Guard in Eugene, Ore., have been charged with unfair labor practices by the National Labor Relations Board.

The board's northwest regional director found that the company's "solicitation" policy, already the subject of a previous NLRB action, is an illegal restriction of rights in the workplace. The policy bars all employee communications in the workplace and was imposed in the midst of especially contentious contract negotiations with

the Eugene Newspaper Guild.

The Register-Guard used the same strategy—and the same union-busting lawyer, Michael Zinser of Nashville, Tenn.—to thwart a 1997 campaign to organize part-timers. But despite being forced then to back down, an unrepentant publisher Tony Baker recently assured employees that the charges are no big deal. "The issuance of a complaint is not a finding of violation or wrongdoing," he wrote in an open letter.

Baker was persuaded that the ULP charge was serious enough to cover as a news story, however, after other Eugene media reported on it. At that point the corporate

line was modified to suggest that quizzing the union wasn't the real issue. Instead, said human resources director Cynthia Walden, the charges were simply "one of a number of tactics the Guild has taken during negotiations."

But as pointed out by Lance Robertson, the Guild's chief negotiator, such claims are "bogus" because the dispute dates back to 1997, two years before bargaining started. Until then, unit members had used breaks and lunch hours to distribute Guild newsletters and other union materials, leaving them on co-workers' desks or placing them in mailboxes. But when the Guild started organizing

part-time workers, the decades-old practice was abruptly ended by a company edict banning employees from distributing anything in the workplace—even get-well cards or envelopes to collect money for retirement gifts.

The Guild soon filed a complaint with the NLRB, which sided with the union in 1998, prompting the company to agree it would withdraw the policy. But that turnaround lasted only a few months before the Register-Guard reinstated the ban, resulting in the fresh charges.

"We are saddened the company continues to fight rather than settle this long-running dispute, restore our rights in the workplace

and agree to a fair and equitable contract," Robertson said.

In addition to the distribution policy, the NLRB complaint charges the company with a second unfair labor practice for failing to provide information the Guild needs to negotiate a new contract. The NLRB agreed with the union that the company "falsely claimed" the information didn't exist.

"We're gratified the federal government agrees that the company hasn't been bargaining in good faith," said Local President Suzi Prozanski. "We need accurate information in order to address the sweeping changes proposed by the company at the bargaining table."

'For Sale' signs mean uncertainty

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further broaden its diversity and geographic reach. The Chicago-based company already owns four dailies, including the flagship Chicago Tribune, as well as nine TV stations, a handful of radio stations, several internet sites and a couple of cable stations. Buying Times Mirror will broaden its portfolio, adding the L.A. Times, Newsday, Baltimore Sun, Allentown Call and several smaller dailies, as well as half-a-dozen magazines and more internet sites.

But because the Tribune regularly posts some of the industry's highest profit margins (including a hyperventilating 29.2% in 1999) while Times-Mirror has poked along at two-thirds that altitude, the cost-cutters may be expected to start trimming shortly. And while the Los Angeles Times—withstanding the most shameless efforts by "cereal killer" Mark Willes to the contrary—is the financially weakest performer in the bunch, there's at least the unsettling possibility that the ax will swing more widely.

A saving grace, says Connie

Knox, a copy editor at the Baltimore Sun and president of the Washington-Baltimore Guild, is that the acquisition "is not an asset sale but a stock sale, so union contracts will continue." Sun employees have been told "the benefits will stay in effect for a year," she adds, although management conceivably could propose some changes—notably in health care coverage—before the Guild contract expires in 2003.

Even then if that occurs, Knox says, "We can anticipate they'll impose benefit changes on their managers first, then come after the union's benefits after that." Meanwhile, at least the sale missed the most unpleasant pitfalls. "We look around, as news people and as Guild people, and say 'It could have been worse,'" she laughs. "It could have been Gannett...."

The outlook is more uncertain at Thomson's newspaper in Sheboygan, where the Guild is in the midst of contract negotiations. Although the two sides have made surprisingly quick progress, especially when compared with the two-year battle over the last contract, President David Gallianetti says the sales announcement clearly surprised management, too.

Local members also were "stunned," Gallianetti adds. The paper has been sold twice before, once by a family owner to Ingersoll and then by Ingersoll to Thomson, and from the union's viewpoint both sales went smoothly, raising hopes history will repeat itself.

"Everyone is anxious to see what happens," Gallianetti said. "There are a lot of rumors floating around, and staff members are getting a lot of questions from the community, which is buzzing about what's happening. The sooner Thomson can complete this deal, the better for everyone."

Mixed in with all the angst is this one bright note: while the Tribune is offering \$95 a share for Times Mirror stock, many Sun employees had an opportunity to acquire shares for half that amount.



RAY CROWELL/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

High-tech high

Connie Knox, president of the Washington-Baltimore Guild, emphasizes a point to CWA staffer Yvette Herrera (left), CWA Executive Vice President Larry Cohen and TNG-CWA President Linda Foley (standing). Joined by Luther Jackson, executive officer of the San Jose Guild; Dick Ramsey, administrative officer of the Washington-Baltimore Guild; Carl Hall, president of the Northern California Media Guild; WashTech staffer Marcus Courtney; and other CWA staff and local leaders, the group

met Feb. 24 to plan a series of high-tech training centers around the country that will certify computer technology technicians. Funded in part by a \$1.5 million grant from the Dept. of Labor and modeled on apprenticeship programs offered by the building trades, the program eventually will teach a broad spectrum of computer skills and will be available at a discount to all TNG-CWA members. Freelancers and contingent workers also will be eligible, provided they first become union members. Additional information may be found at www.cwa-union.org.

Toledo tempest

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tually unanimous two-day by-line strike. Non-news employees show their support for Vellequette by wearing red. The Guild files a grievance.

The Blade... ah, the Blade. Toledo's newspaper's rapier-like minds announce a new byline policy: henceforth, there won't be any bylines. Unless, of course, management decides otherwise, on a case-by-case, story-by-story basis.

Guild attorney Chris Reardon puts the company "on notice that we're looking at our remedies," which is lawyerly talk for "check to see your powder is dry, 'cause we're coming at you like a ton of bricks."

Holy Toledo.

Another Fredericton reverse, as local files more charges

The long-running skirmish between TNG-Canada and

The Daily Gleaner in Fredericton, New Brunswick, took another twist recently, when an arbitrator's award ordering local president Tim Martell and fellow printer Ann Lingley back to work was overturned by a provincial court. But because the Gleaner laid off two other printers New Year's Eve to accommodate the arbitrator's decision, Martell and Lingley remain at work, anyway.

Such flip-flopping of events is par for the course in a dispute dating back more than 18 months, when Martell was first laid-off—just one month before contract

negotiations were to begin. From there it's been all downhill.

Now the local, properly known as Typographical Union Local 30664 of The Newspaper Guild Canada, has filed a new charge of bad faith bargaining with the provincial Minister of Labour, and charges of unfair labour practices with the New Brunswick Labour & Employment Board. The local also is seeking consent to prosecute Gleaner publisher Victor Mlodecki and the newspaper's parent corporation.

The local alleges that "the behaviour of the Employer, especially as exhibited by Mr. Mlodecki (both in his individual actions as

well as his instructions to counsel), exhibits an utter contempt for the laws of New Brunswick and further constitutes a purposive scheme to subvert those laws and the advantages and protections they provide to the Union and its members." Among the remedies being sought are a rescinding of all recent layoffs and the imposition of a new collective bargaining agreement between the two parties.

Hearings into four other charges against the Gleaner, including allegations of bad faith bargaining and intimidation of witnesses, have been under way since January of 1999 and are scheduled to resume next month.

Streamlining the ponderous collective bargaining program

By Tim Schick
Collective Bargaining Task Force

What has more ornaments than a Christmas tree, makes publishers gnash their teeth but is more misunderstood than a teenager?

Try the Guild's collective bargaining program, now undergoing an extensive renovation.

Born in 1937 in response to a coordinated effort by the American Newspaper Publishers Association to stymie Guild negotiators, the 11-point program set out a clear battle plan to counter the ANPA playbook. Moreover, the Guild constitution was amended to include key provisions that were to become part of every Guild contract and to require contract approval by the international leadership. The result was minimum standards for Guild contracts.

It worked. The Guild grew over the years. Contracts improved. And because nothing succeeds like success, the bargaining program became more ambitious.

As time passed, Guild conventions added more and more items to the bargaining program. Every time someone had a good idea, another mandate was added. What was once a basic plan for a few minimum contract standards grew to an unwieldy tangle of more than 100 requirements and recommendations, prompting a rising tide of complaints from some locals—and a decision by others simply to ignore it.

Finally, the Guild's officers and Sector Executive Council asked the 1999 Guild sector conference to review the situation, resulting in appointment of a task force comprising Guild activists, elected officers and local staff members. All task force members have experience in contract negotiations and include Lori Bromell (Sault Ste. Marie), Doug Cuthbertson (Northern California), John CK Fisher (Cincinnati), Lela Garlington (Memphis), Barry Lipton (New York), Melissa Nelson (then of Albany, now working in Philadelphia), Dick Ramsey (Washington-Baltimore), Tim Schick (Providence), Tracy Simmons (Denver), Dave Smith (Sydney) and Tom Thiabeault (Manchester). Connie Knox, Peter Szekely and Beverlyann Morris work with the task force as members of the EC's collective bargaining committee.

After months of review, the task force is recommending that the Guild Constitution be amended to eliminate the requirement that all provisions of the bar-

gaining program be included in contract proposals. Instead, it recommends that every local be required to seek a minimum of five specific contract provisions:

- A requirement of just and sufficient cause for discharge.
- A grievance procedure and binding, third-party arbitration.
- Wage scales that fix the minimum amount employees may earn.
- A union security clause.
- A jurisdiction clause protecting the union against loss of work.

All other aspects of the bargaining program have been refined into a series of principles, grouped into nine categories, to guide locals in drafting their contract proposals.

For example, the old program required locals to insist on "an annual vacation of at least five weeks," with no distinction made for length of service. In its place, the task force is recommending far more flexible language that reads, simply, "Employees shall receive ample annual paid vacation." Determining what constitutes "ample" would be left to local negotiators, who presumably are more familiar with their members' needs and desires.

In addition, the bargaining program will be supplemented by a summary of rules and procedures required by federal, state and provincial laws, and by tips for dealing with complex issues. The completed document will be a comprehensive and user-friendly handbook for negotiating a Guild contract.

Debbie Thomas, executive secretary of the contract committee, and Marian Needham, director of contract administration, have been attending the fall and winter rounds of district council meetings to discuss the recommended changes. Working with members of the task force, they have explained the group's recommendations and solicited suggestions to improve both the proposed bargaining program and the support offered by TNG-CWA to local bargaining efforts.

Final task force recommendations will be presented in May to the executive council, which then will issue its own recommendations to delegates attending the sector conference in August. Any proposed changes must be approved by the sector conference before they are implemented. The recommendations also will be posted on the Guild's web page and are available upon request to the Guild office.

More than one way to skin a cat...

Despite all media proclamations that this is the best of all times, ample evidence suggests that most of us are struggling simply to maintain our standards of living. But as last month's Guild Reporter noted, that struggle has scant chance of success if it's played by the old rules.

On one hand, the accelerating consolidation of the newspaper and other communications industries has profoundly changed the traditional employer-employee relationship. Techniques and strategies that gave unions some leverage at the bargaining table are increasingly meaningless when used against vertically and horizontally integrated corporations with the size and heft of AOL-Time Warner—or Gannett or Knight Ridder, as we've seen in Detroit.

On the other hand, much of our workplace environment is shaped by forces far beyond a bargaining table, as witness the current battle over ergonomic standards. Whether in state and federal legislative halls or through various regulatory agencies, the hours we work, the amount we get paid and the state of our working environment are determined by forces we must learn to influence—or be subordinated by them.

Here, then, is a brief run-down of some modified and alternative approaches to seizing the levers of power: at left, a discussion of streamlining the Guild's collective bargaining program; below, an introduction to political lobbying and activism through CWA's COPE program; and, at right, the efforts of Jobs with Justice to build community support.

Lots of reasons to sit on the sidelines

By Robert Master
Research Economist, CWA District 1

Lots of otherwise supportive union members get that deer-in-the-headlights look when you ask them to dig into their pockets for a political contribution—and perhaps none are as resistant as newspaper employees. Herewith a round-up of some of the "yeah... but's" we hear when we request their participation in CWA's Committee on Political Education:

1. Yeah... but won't a COPE contribution ruin my objectivity as a reporter?

No, it won't—no more than voting, joining the PTA or other community organizations, or even becoming an activist in your union hurt your objectivity as a news reporter. The union's political endorsements are at least as far removed from your decisions about how to write a story as are the newspaper's political endorsements.

Besides, only a small fraction of Guild members are responsible for political coverage, and many have no editorial responsibilities at all. Should all of them also be required to opt out of the political process, which has a direct impact on their lives at home and on the job?

2. Yeah... but won't a COPE contribution make it "appear" to harm my objectivity?

Not if you don't let it. The best way to do that is to continue writing fair, unbiased articles. That's your best investment in credibility.

3. Yeah... but our editors frown on this type of activity.

They shouldn't. After all, newspapers and publishers always get involved in politics, whether it's endorsing candidates or making their own contributions. In some extreme cases, like The New York Post, the newspaper barely makes any pretense of objectivity and virtually always supports anti-union, anti-worker candidates. Plus, many top newspaper industry executives make generous campaign contributions to the candidates of their choice, and no one questions their "professional objectivity." Why should newspaper workers sacrifice their right to defend their interests in the arena of politics?

4. Yeah... but we're professionals. We really don't have much in common with the rest of the CWA membership, so why should we get our political interests intertwined with theirs?

Well, the reality is that Guild members have a great deal at stake in state capitols and in the U.S. Congress. Consider issues like:

- The implementation of the ergonomics standard, which Republicans in the Congress are trying to block but which could protect thousands of Guild members from suffering repetitive stress injuries on the job.

- The Republican plan to weaken overtime, which could spell the virtual elimination of overtime for editorial and telemarketing workers.

- Legislation and regulations concerning freedom of the

press, copyright protections and intellectual property rights, which directly affect the livelihoods of Guild members.

- Issues that don't affect us immediately on the job but do affect the quality of our lives, such as the protection of Medicare and Social Security from plans to privatize or weaken the programs.

- Legislation to strengthen the right to organize, which will critically affect our ability to expand our membership—and our power—in the newspaper industry.

Furthermore, politicians can sometimes play a critical role in actually saving our jobs, as when the governor of Hawaii directed his attorney general to intervene in Gannett's attempts to close the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. Guild members, like all union members, have a great deal at stake in the political process and shouldn't be content to let others fight their battles for them.

5. Uh-huh. But what the hell is CWA-COPE, anyway?

CWA-COPE is the union's national program to raise money directly from members for the purpose of making political contributions to pro-worker candidates. Under federal law, candidates for federal office cannot accept campaign contributions from union dues money. That restriction applies to local candidates in some states as well. Thus, many of the union's political contributions can only be made from money voluntarily donated by members specifically for the purpose of supporting political candidates. The

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Jobs with Justice

Taking the fight to the streets

By Mary Beth Maxwell
Nat'l Field Director, Jobs with Justice

In a Chicago church basement decorated with banners proclaiming, "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All," caseworkers and clients come together to denounce welfare reform and pledge not to be pitted against one another.

On a Louisville university campus, students protesting sweatshops overseas join forces with garment workers who've lost their jobs to demand accountability from the garment industry. A few weeks later, hundreds crowd a room to hear sweatshop workers from El Salvador describe their working conditions and their union organizing campaign.

When workers are fired for organizing at a Brookline, Mass. nursing home, hundreds of members of local Haitian organizations and area unions rally to demand justice—and when contract negotiations reach a standstill, 12 community leaders and local clergy are arrested for civil disobedience. The result is a union contract with better wages and benefits—and, most importantly, a renewed sense of dignity and empowerment in the workplace.

The common denominator running through these and countless similar cases? A sometimes rag-tag coalition of religious, community and union members that draws its inspiration from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and his work with the Memphis sanitation workers. Founded at a spirited rally in Miami in the late 'Eighties, Jobs with Justice has since flowered into a network of 40 coalitions nationwide with a broad, shared vision of social justice—and a willingness to mix it up with society's power brokers to ensure that working people's issues are taken seriously.

Just this year, for example, local Jobs with Justice coalitions have been fighting for a living wage from Pittsburgh to Corvallis, have walked the Overnite picket-

line with the Teamsters in Atlanta and Cleveland and have launched new Workers' Rights Boards in Portland, Tucson and San Jose. In each case, JwJ activists are guided by the same principles that have propelled the organization since its founding:

Solidarity.

Direct action.

Broad, deep coalitions.

Investing in long-term relationships.

Those are hardly the virtues and activities one ascribes to most Guild members, who generally steer a less entangling course through life. So it may come as a surprise to learn that some of JwJ's most aggressive

News Sentinel expired two years ago, the company adopted a far more belligerent stance than in the past, making it "clear we needed to turn up the heat and embark on some job actions—and Jobs with Justice helped us get organized and get the word out," says the Knoxville local president, Stan DeLozier.

Last spring at the Dogwood Arts Festival, for example, Knoxville politicians and leaders were leafletted by Guild members and their Jobs with Justice allies as they paraded past a picket line thrown up in front of the News Sentinel. A few months later, JwJ and the Guild organized another

support Jobs with Justice can give to a local's organizing efforts is in Rhode Island, where a circulation department employee at the Woonsocket Call called the JwJ Workers Rights Hotline after fruitless complaints to the National Labor Relations Board and to the American Civil Liberties Union about horrendous working conditions: 60-70 hour workweeks with no overtime, people refusing to take needed medical leave for fear of losing their jobs and numerous other examples of abuse. The call was, in turn, referred to Tim Schick of the Providence Newspaper Guild, who immediately set up a meeting with the affected workers.

"Right away, all 12 folks at the meeting signed union cards!" he recalls—just before management woke up and launched a union-busting campaign. "It was like a text book from the 30's on how to deal with unions," Schick adds. Yet Rhode Island Jobs with Justice has continued to hang tight, sticking with the workers in their fight for a first contract and bolstering the Guild's informational picket line at the Providence Journal, where a separate contract is being negotiated. "Just last week, JwJ helped us out again at a big rally at the Journal," Schick notes. "Through Jobs with Justice we really can get the word out, and the people out, and it's not just other unions—it's a broad range of folks working for economic and social justice."

In return, the Providence Newspaper Guild has made a commitment to "being there" for others, providing office space for a new Jobs with Justice organizer this spring and helping to prepare for the coalition's national annual meeting July 20-23 in nearby Dartmouth.

As the Providence, Knoxville and Denver examples demonstrate, TNG-CWA is no stranger to building a stronger movement for workers rights that goes far beyond traditionally parochial union concerns. If you or your local are not already involved in JwJ, call our national office to find the coalition nearest you—or to learn how to start a Jobs with Justice coalition in your own community.

Mary Beth Maxwell is National Field Director of Jobs with Justice, with an office at the CWA headquarters in Washington, D.C. She may be reached at 202/434-1106 or at mmaxwell@cwa-union.org. The Jobs with Justice web page is at www.jwj.org.



Jobs with Justice members show their support for the Guild at the Providence (R.I.) Journal-Bulletin, where contract negotiations have been

unusually testy—to such an extent that the company started charging its employees for use of its parking facilities.

and pioneering supporters are TNG-CWA members, such as international rep Bruce Meachum, a co-founder of Colorado Jobs with Justice more than a decade ago.

"We saw the effectiveness of building coalitions with labor, community and religious groups then and are still doing it," says Denver Guild member Tony Mulligan, currently serving as co-chair of Colorado Jobs with Justice. "We saw the value of people showing up for our fights, and we have been there for others since then."

Or consider the situation in Knoxville, Tenn., where the Guild helped create Jobs with Justice. When its contract with the

public action as the city's business leaders and journalists, gathered at the Knoxville Convention Center to honor none other than ... union-busting Gannett.

The struggle at the News Sentinel continues, but the Guild's involvement with JwJ has already reaped benefits. "JwJ has really been there with us—any time we need them, they are ready," says DeLozier. But more importantly, "our work with Jobs with Justice has helped to build a culture of mobilization in our own local. We have a lot of solidarity in this newsroom, and more members now than ever in our history."

One the most dramatic examples of the

Sidelined by sitting on one's 'yeah but'

Continued from page 4

COPE program is organized to collect small contributions from CWA members throughout the country. Nationally, more than 50,000 CWA members contribute a total of nearly \$2 million annually to COPE.

6. Yeah ... but what if I don't support the candidates endorsed by the union?

CWA uses a democratic process to endorse candidates, based on issues of concern to our members. Throughout District One, for example, local political action committees interview political candidates about their stands on issues that affect us. If Guild members were part of the process, issues that specifically concern newspaper workers would become part of the litmus test for evaluating candidates. These committees then recommend endorsements to the District One Vice President.

You won't agree with every endorsement. But part of the price of gaining increased strength through unity is not getting your way on every single issue. That's part of what being in a union is about.

Politics should be understood as an extension of the collective bargaining process, and as long as we ground our endorsements on an issue-oriented agenda, we can usually figure out who the most pro-worker, pro-union candidate is.

7. Yeah ... but I think the whole campaign finance system is rotten and should be changed. Why should I participate in a rotten system?

We agree that the system is rotten. The best solution would be public financing of all elections. That would get the big corporate money out of the political process and give a bigger voice to ordinary people.

But real campaign finance reform seems like a long way off. And until it happens, if you want to be taken seriously in the world of politics you need to make contributions to candidates you support. We can't simply unilaterally disarm, and our friends in the Legislature desperately need our financial support to counter the resources of the millionaires and the big corporations on the other side.

8. Yeah ... but my two dollars a month won't make a difference, anyway.

Yes, it will. In 1999, CWA District One raised about \$340,000 in COPE funds—but only about 8,000 of our 140,000 members contributed. If another 10,000 members each contributed just \$2 per month, we could increase our COPE fund to \$580,000 (10,000 x \$2 = \$20,000 x 12 = \$240,000 + \$340,000 = \$580,000). This would give us more money to support candidates and organizations that fight with us on the issues we care about.

If you want to give more money, CWA has three Quorum programs. For \$10 per month, you become a member of COPE Quorum and receive a special T-shirt from District One. For \$20 a month, you become a member of Platinum Quorum and receive a special jacket or sweatshirt. And for \$30 a month, you join Triple Quorum, and can choose a jacket, embroidered denim shirt, or embroidered denim jacket.

[Master presented this list of "yeah ... but's" at the New England District Council after getting some friendly advice from yeah ... butting TNG-CWA staffers.]

'All we have is each other'

By Clare Noonan

Vice President, Northern California Guild

If there had been a complaint from the 40 or so new local officers attending the 19th annual Newspaper Guild seminar at the George Meany Center on Feb. 18-21, it probably would have been that their heads hurt, crammed full as they were of ideas for getting, enforcing and strengthening their contracts.

Sound dry? Far from it. Laughter echoed throughout the large conference room on the beautiful grounds in Silver Spring, Md., as participants from across Canada and the United States shared the highlights (and low points) of workplace activists making sure the voices of their co-workers are heard.

The training seminar covered the importance of mobilization, how to act on a grievance, where to go for information on human rights issues—and about 200 other issues.

President Linda Foley, Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer and numerous staffers fired up everyone to make their contracts living, breathing documents. And all aspects of the newspaper industry were represented, from copy editing to advertising sales to machine maintenance.



Stephanie Warsmith

The session was jam-packed with pithy quotes (regarding employers at the negotiation table, Marian Needham, director of contracts administration, observed: "The more important an issue is to you, the higher the price they can put on it."), nuts and bolts about how to form a union, who to have on committees (think diversity) and how to make the contract a real entity in the workplace.

No wonder, after hours of such intense interaction, that we could be seen walking the beautiful grounds of the former seminary mumbling to ourselves. Some were even heard murmuring the mantras offered by sector rep Bruce Nelson: "All we have is each other." "We change in relationships."

Sounds pretty New Agey, coming from the longtime organizer and former St. Paul Pioneer-Press reporter. But as a quick history of unions in the 1980s made clear—"Companies kicked ass. One thousand-



ALL PHOTOS BY BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

member unions fell"—the aphorisms made sense. Unless we learn to bargain collectively, we are powerless.

As for changing in relationships, Nelson told the story of the scab who stayed on after a strike was settled and of the Guild rep who wanted nothing to do with her. When they finally fell into a conversation in a bar, after six months of not talking to each other, the two discovered that neither understood the reasons for the strike—or even why it had ended. The scab, a single mother, had crossed the picket line to support her family.

The upshot? Both women decided to become more involved in the Guild. A scab was converted, and a rep learned to risk looking at an issue in a different way.

There was nothing Space Agey at a role-played negotiating session, however. After the four-hour exercise, in which both

sides tried to reach agreement on a change in vacation policy, it's lucky the members of the five groups were even talking to the unfortunate few who had been assigned management roles. Staff members were assigned to each team to give advice and sometimes sat in wonder at the alarmingly realistic conversions of participants to management.

One "manager" sternly admonished her group that it was "doing a disservice" to

other workers with its outrageous demands for more vacation time. And she had seemed so sweet. . . .

A great benefit of the seminar was learning whom locals can call when they need help (check the staff box on page 8 of each issue of The Guild Reporter for a comprehensive list).

There's probably no issue a local can bring up that these staffers, in conjunction with Foley and Lunzer, can't answer—or that, at least, was the premise at Sunday's "Stump the Staff" session, when we had an opportunity to pepper the staff with questions about four-day workweeks, probation extensions and a slew of other issues. Mercifully for staffers, the session only lasted an hour before the group adjourned to a bar on the premises for a concert of labor music, courtesy of Laurel Blaydes and Steve Jones.

Monday afternoon, local officers departed with bulging briefcases, their heads full of great experiences, new friends at other newspapers and a host of names to consult on contract and workplace issues. But the biggest benefit of the



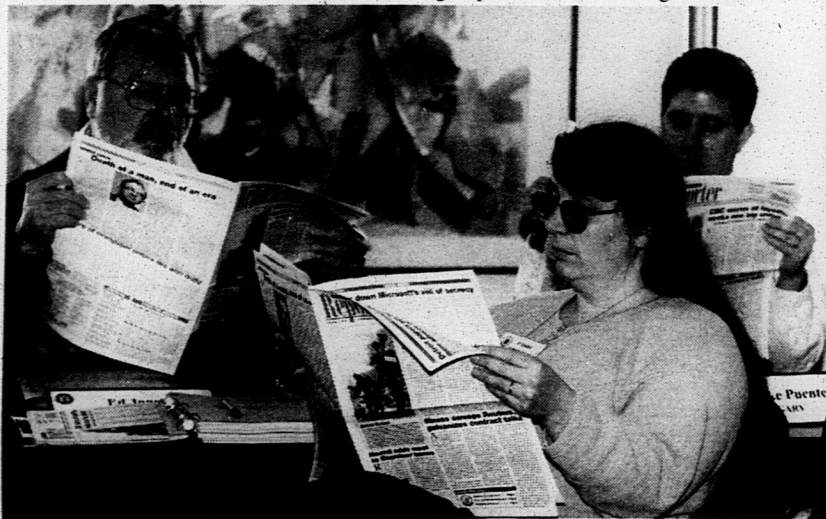
John Shostrom of New York describes a role-playing scenario.

long weekend may have been an intangible something the participants gained from each other.

"I feel really energized," said Rick Conrad, editor at the Halifax Chronicle Herald, where it took a recent strike threat to bring home a contract settlement "Meeting everyone all across North America, it makes you realize you're part of a bigger whole. I'm ready to kick some Herald butt!"



Susan Goracke of Eugene smiles as Courtney Kinney of Cincinnati makes a point.



A sight to gladden any editor's heart: Ed Jones of Philadelphia, Kate Rauhauser-Smith of York and Mike Puente of Gary peruse the latest issue of The Guild Reporter.



Jo-Ann Delisle and David Johnson of Manchester, Maurice Roman of New York and Clare Noonan of Northern California listen to an explanation of grievance filing.



LOOKING AHEAD

Trying to fathom why they bother

By Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer

Just as certain as the swallows to Capistrano, approximately 40 new Guild activists turned up this February at the Guild's new local officers' seminar. And, as usual, the annual trek was no perk, comprising the traditional two-and-a-half days of training, training and more training. True to form, this year's volunteers jumped in with panache and impressed the staff instructors with their passion and ability. They left more prepared as activists to face the daily challenges of their locals.

Why do they do it? What causes a person to give up free time to attend a seminar that prepares them to give up their free time on a regular basis for years to come? And why do it when the reward is getting to help others? We asked seminar participants that question in an exit survey, and they're all reasonable explanations. I also have my own theory, which I'll share last, but here are some of the responses:

"I want to correct wrongs in the work place and strengthen the contract." "They requested that I be an officer. I accepted the nomination." "An executive board member said she wanted my expertise and wanted to see some fresh faces." "My department needs representation." "Previously I worked for a non-union company." "Mostly issues, and I believe in the Guild's work." "I have a desire for positive social change and economic justice."

Some were more pointed: "It was time to take a firmer stance." "I had several issues and there was a leadership vacuum." "Issues needed to be addressed—you're either part of the solution or part of the problem." "There was a lack of leadership in my unit." "We were in the midst of terrible contract negotiations, and my department had a vacancy."

Some simply were interested or wanted to help out: "I wanted to get involved and learn more about the Guild." "I became an officer to give back to the Union for all it's given me and my family." "Just an overall sentiment to support the union." "We just organized our workplace and I wanted to see this thing through—this whole wonderful, wild union experience."

And, lastly, one fellow responded, "I said yes, without realizing the position was uncontested."

This sampling from this year's participants shows that everyone has a story. But as in this last response, many Guild leaders feel they just fell into the role. Yes, they had an interest, or were curious, but some event happened to triggered their involvement.

My own involvement "happened" because there was a grievance meeting and I was curious. Soon after, near the end of contract talks, my newspaper decided to string barbed-wire around our building and hire goon guards to harass us. I knew where I stood. The company made me do it. That's my explanation, but I don't think it gets to the truth.

These seminar participants were already leaders and just hadn't realized it. They couldn't help it: it's just who they are. The presence of the Guild in their workplace let their leadership show through. Some people are like that.

One of the prevalent myths in North America is that you can always start over, move on, go west. We're told the story of the continent is one of new beginnings. Workers are told that if they don't like their job, they can move on—vote with their feet. We're taught that classic economics are built on each person pursuing his or her own

HERE'S THE WORLD WAR I
FLYING ACE ZOOMING THROUGH
THE AIR HIGH OVER THE LINES..
"PICKET" LINES, THAT IS!



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Good grief!

Although the recently deceased Charles Schultz was best known for his wryly gentle observations of the human condition, he also was a friend of labor and drew this cartoon in support of the San Francisco newspaper strike of 1968.

interests, miraculously transmuting selfishness and greed into social virtues. I don't buy any of that, and every February I'm reminded that it's not true.

A classroom full of Guild activists tells a story at odds with the prevailing myth. These are folks who dig in, stay put, get the job done and improve where they are. They care about their co-workers. They're convinced that problems can get solved. This year I was again reminded of just how lucky

we are to have people like these seminar participants. Whatever their reasons, whatever their circumstances, why ever they do it, our future is built on their activism. I know we're in good hands.

What's your story? What got you involved in the Guild? Tell your story in a letter to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org. If you're not active and would like to be, contact your steward or e-mail me, at blunzer@cwa-union.org.

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Interesting that you should refer [Feb. 11, page 4] to the "now forgotten Kenner Commission," because—you forgot—it was the Kerner Commission, headed by Otto Kerner. By now, I can't remember whether he was governor of Illinois when he headed the commission, or ex-governor. Also I can't remember whether he went to jail for the misdeeds that later were uncovered.

Otherwise, I have no complaints with your fine article on the gap between rich and poor.

I am a publisher's son (not to burden you with this message), so I have spent my life in the newspaper business. My father was a sort of William Allen White, who wrote four editorials a day for a six-day-a-week daily. He also was editor and publisher, and he read all the proofs every day and cared little about the price of newsprint. One conservative, business-oriented trait he had was opposition to the Guild. He used to say that if the Guild organized the newsroom, it would be such a disaster that we would have to close. We did, however, have the ITU and still managed to function.

One thing I always remember, and it is the reason for this note. My father had a friend who was editor and publisher of a newspaper of our size in Pennsylvania. I can't remember which city it is right now. He used to say they were alike, more interested in news than newsprint, both writers.

They'd meet at the ASNE, and I went along on some of those trips.

I met him, and we talked shop. I said how difficult it was to keep new reporters. I said, "We hope they stay long enough to jump to Madison or Chicago, rather than to Rockford." He said, gee, he hadn't had that kind of problem. And there was one big difference between his paper and ours: He had the Guild.

Years later, when I was a Guild member in Providence, I noticed that the union leaders were people who had worked at the paper a long time. It then dawned on me that the Guild gives its employees a stake in the enterprise. They don't stay for a year, all the while scanning the ads in E&P.

—Yours truly,
Donald Breed

To the Editor:

I retired (due to disability) from the newspaper profession in 1981, but still enjoy The Guild Reporter, which I receive. This letter concerns the Dec. 17, 1999 issue and the photograph on page 5 of Heywood Broun.

The glass plate negative photograph of Heywood Broun was taken by editorial photographer Byron Filkins, who was roughly about five feet tall, dapper as all get out and loved to quote Shakespeare. He outlived the requirements of Social Security, retiring at about the age of 74, and has since passed on.

I never met Heywood, but when I came

across his two negatives (in those days the negatives were on 4" x 5" optical flat glass and were all taken by the trusty Speed Graphic cameras) while working as a photographer on the staff of the Cleveland News, I retained them in a personal file. Years later, I heard that Noel Wical (a local union biggie of the Guild) was going to Guild headquarters in New York, so I asked him to drop off the glass plates to someone there who would recognize their value.

Since I am now going on 82 that's really all I can recall, but hopefully this information can be added to the negative file for future use.

—William S. Nehez
Garfield Heights, Ohio

To the Editor:

I don't know who fed the erroneous information to the Guild [The Guild Reporter, Feb. 11, page 2] regarding a proposal by the Scranton Times to buy the Citizens Voice. The Times is *not*—I repeat, *not*—negotiating with the retirees. The bargaining is between the Times and the Citizen Voice management. The retirees, who are shareholders, will eventually have the final word.

The contract agreed to by TNG-CWA Local 120 and the Times as a prelude to any purchase is the most horrible piece of slavery I have ever seen. In 1978 we rejected a similar piece of junk offered to us by Capital Cities. I hope TNG will totally reject

approval of this horrible contract and, if possible, demand a total withdrawal of the local's approval as well.

—Jack Wallace
Wilkes-Barre, Penn.

[Wallace, who retired in 1997, is one of the original founders of the Citizens Voice and was president of the Wilkes-Barre Guild for 28 years. Although local Guild members approved a contract with the Scranton Times by an overwhelming margin of 62-9, TNG-CWA has rejected the pact because it removes Guild representation from a substantial portion of the bargaining unit. The proposed contract also would lengthen the workweek, allow at-will dismissal of employees without arbitration and permit subcontracting and out-sourcing of Guild work.]

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: April 7.)

Wash. Post's Boo wins Broun Award

Katherine Boo, a reporter for The Washington Post, has won the 1999 Heywood Broun Award for her reporting on the rapes, physical abuse and forced labor of the mentally retarded—and on the profiteering by city officials responsible for their care.

The contest judges also awarded special commendations to Ellen E. Schultze of The Wall Street Journal and to Jason DeParle of The New York Times. For the first time in recent memory, all entrants singled out by the awards committee are TNG-CWA members.

Boo's investigation, summarized in a two-part series last March and a lengthy follow-up this past December, was hailed by the judges as a "beautifully written" treatment of "one of society's most disenfranchised" populations. Sparked by a visit on an unrelated assignment to a Washington, D.C. funded group home for the retarded, "Invisible Lives" provided a grim window on a world of squalid living conditions and the ruthless exploitation of a helpless population. But the even more disturbing sequel, "Invisible Deaths," went a step further by chronicling how city officials had "disappeared" those who had succumbed to their abuse, through falsification and misplacement of records.

Documenting the official cover-up took months of painstaking research, but in the end Boo uncovered more than ten times the number of deaths city officials originally acknowledged. Moreover, in nearly half of these cases Boo found evidence of

neglect, delayed treatment or falsified circumstances that contributed to death.

Public reaction to these revelations was explosive, with the District of Columbia closing group homes, firing several top managers and indicting others. The Department of Justice, the FBI and the city's major crimes unit are all investigating. And the care and supervision of the District's mentally retarded residents has been handed over to the private, non-profit Kennedy Institute—all directly attributable to Boo's

reporting. Or as the Broun judges observed:

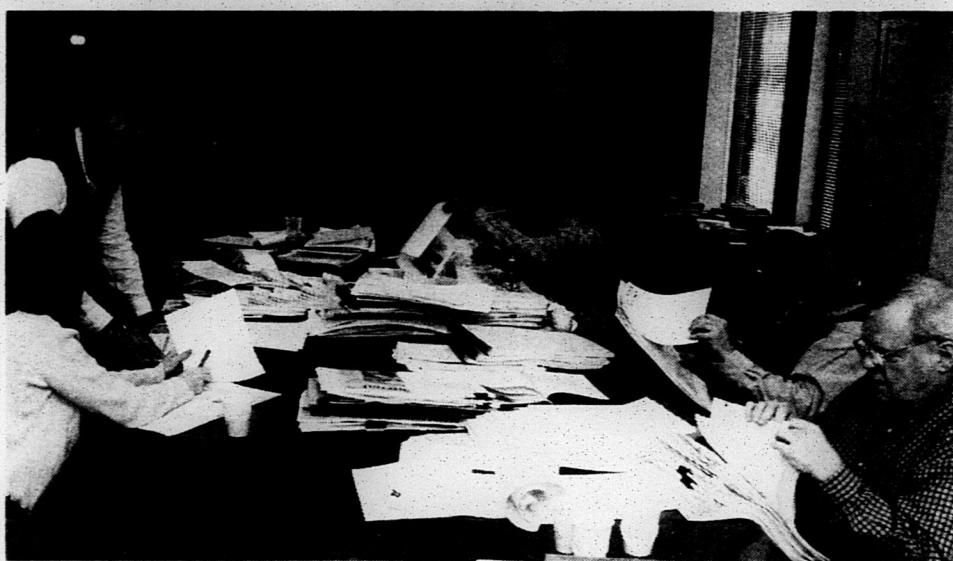
"What's awesome about Boo's work is she does an extraordinary amount of investigative reporting, unearths horrifying details and thousands of documents, and then writes in a remarkably powerful narrative that takes investigative reporting to a level few achieve."

"Her work would make Heywood Broun proud. Following in his footsteps, Boo championed the underdog and righted wrongs."

Also singled out for special mention were a series of articles by Ellen Schultze, published throughout 1999, probing corporate America's rush to "modernize" pension plans by converting to the so-called "cash-balance" method. The result, she demonstrated, would be sharply reduced benefits for older workers. Jason DeParle was commended for his year-long coverage of the effects of the welfare-to-work movement on people dropped from the welfare rolls, as well as on their communities and on public attitudes and social policy.

Judging this year's 195 entries were E.J. Dionne, columnist for The Washington Post; John E. Mulligan, Washington bureau chief of the Providence (R.I.) Journal; William Serrin, associate professor of journalism at New York University and former New York Times labor reporter; Alicia C. Shepard, senior writer for American Journalism Review; and Anna Maria Tremonti, Washington-based foreign correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Chairing the panel was Phillip Kadis, former TNG director of education.

The award and check for \$5,000 will be presented to Boo at a luncheon banquet May 2 at the National Press Club.



Broun Award judges sift through mounds of entries. Starting at left, they are Alicia Shepard, Phil Kadis, Anna Maria Tremonti, E.J. Dionne, John Mulligan and Bill Serrin.



Katherine Boo

Trashing a contest entry

Continued from page 1

possibly a dozen of the annotated critiques to various journalistic contest committees. But despite Clare's contention that the series has "seriously damaged Brush Wellman and its employees"—language that usually signals a lawsuit is in the works—no lawsuit had been filed against either the Blade or reporter Sam Roe as of March 10. The Ohio statute of limitations on defamation is one year.

While the ponderous document assembled by Clare's "brief" gripes about "specific falsehoods" in the series, much of its ire seems more focused on the murkier issue of "sensational headlines and misleading editorial comments." And Ron Royhab, the Blade's executive editor, insists that Brush Wellman has never documented even one factual error. "In our many, many conversations with them we've asked them repeatedly to point to any errors in fact and said we'd be glad to correct them, and they haven't," he says. "Every time they asked to meet with us we did. And no one has ever said, 'This fact is wrong.'"

The Blade issued its own statement Dec. 30, after Brush Wellman distributed a document titled, "A Chronicle of Reckless Reporting," that also asserted the company

had not requested a single correction of any fact. The series, the Blade statement noted, was the product of a 22-month investigation that delved into tens of thousands of court, industry and recently declassified government records. Based on that review and interviews with government and industry officials, the Blade concluded that "time and again, Brush Wellman Inc., America's leading beryllium producer . . . misled its workers and deceived safety regulators."

The question of whether the Blade got it right or whether Brush Wellman has a legitimate beef could be answered in court, but that might generate still more negative publicity. By taking this route, however, Brush Wellman can cast a cloud over the series without having to submit to additional scrutiny—not that it admits to such willingness. "We wouldn't ascribe an advocacy role to this," Clare told The Guild Reporter when asked about the chilling effect of a document like the one he prepared.

A Broun judge from a few years ago, on the other hand, said that Brush Wellman's efforts clearly have that intent. "It sounds to me like a harassment problem," Murray Seeger observed, noting that many judges would be inclined simply to set aside an entry that had been challenged in such a fashion.

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DAYBOOK

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, Hershey, Penn.

Joint TNG-AAUP meeting, June 10-11, Washington

CWA National-Legislative Political Conference, June 18-21, Washington

Tri-Council (Midwest, Great Lakes, Southern) meeting, June 23-25, Cleveland

Jobs With Justice national convention, July 20-23 U. of Mass at Dartmouth

TNG Sector Conference and CWA Annual Convention, Aug. 25-29, Anaheim, CA

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

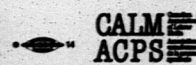
As a strike against the Arkansas Gazette—oldest paper west of the Mississippi—heads into its 100th day, each of the 32 strikers is "adopted" by other Guild units around the country for a minimum of \$25 a week. . . . Four months after its creation, the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (the IUE, currently in merger talks with CWA) wins its first major representation election in a head-to-head confrontation with its older rival, the "red-tinted" UE.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Dick Ramsey, currently administrative officer of the Washington-Baltimore Guild, is appointed executive secretary of TNG's Contracts Committee. . . . The average reporter top-minimum in effect in Guild contracts is \$280.42, following a record, inflation-driven two-month jump of \$6.08. . . . UPI White House reporter Helen Thomas breaks the gender barrier at Washington's Gridiron Club, becoming the club's first elected woman member.

Ten years ago this month:

New York Guild members vote 267 to 19 to authorize a strike against the Daily News, rejecting a contract proposal that contains a 30% wage increase over three years but includes extensive givebacks on health and pension benefits. . . . Implementation of a JOA in York, Penn., results in the immediate loss of 60 jobs. . . . Bernie Lunzer is appointed executive secretary of the Twin Cities Guild.



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