

Denver tries to join JOA club

San Francisco trial wraps up; Hawaii explores ESOP

The first new joint operating agreement in more than a decade is being proposed in Denver, where E.W. Scripps and MediaNews have been locked in a bloody circulation war. But the proposal, which would combine most non-news operations of the Denver Post and Denver Rocky Mountain News, comes as the unraveling of similar JOAs in San Francisco and Honolulu raises fresh questions about the viability of such combinations.

In California, where Hearst is attempting to "sell" the San Francisco Examiner so it can buy the San Francisco Chronicle, final arguments have been made in a lawsuit seeking to block the transaction. The trial has produced so many embarrassing revelations that the Justice Department, which for

the most part has ignored the requirements of the Newspaper Preservation Act, may be forced to scrutinize JOAs more closely. One of the last disclosures elicited in the courtroom, for example, was a Hearst study indicating profits would rise by \$20 million a year and that 208 jobs—mostly in printing and distribution—could be phased out if Hearst were able to operate a single morning paper.

In pursuit of its goal, Hearst repeatedly has promised that every current employee will have a job after it buys the Chronicle and pays someone to take the Examiner off its hands. But the attorney for Clint Reilly, who brought the suit, blasted the \$20 million as "monopoly profit" gained by squelching competition for advertising.

In Hawaii, meanwhile, a Gannett-driven effort to dissolve a JOA between the Honolulu Star Bulletin and the Honolulu Advertiser took a fresh tack with an ostensible effort to sell the Star Bulletin. But despite reported expressions of interest from at least seven potential buyers, the odds of a legitimate bid seem as slim as the goods being offered. "What is for sale is not a newspaper, but certain assets of a newspaper," summarizes Josh Wolf-Powers.

An attorney who specializes in assembling employee stock ownership plans, or ESOPs, Wolf-Powers was retained by the Guild to explore the feasibility of an ESOP bid for the Star Bulletin. But a June 19 deadline for bids is fast approaching, and Star Bulletin employees are still learning

about the idea. "The move towards creation of an ESOP... is still bogged down in high anxiety, general confusion and lack of clear information," reporter Ian Lind wrote on his web page in late May.

Such frenzied efforts to undo established JOAs notwithstanding, the Denver initiative apparently is the result of Scripps crying "uncle" in its long-running duel with MediaNews. With subscriptions being offered for as little as a penny a day, Scripps claims to have lost \$123 million over the past decade and has declared the News "a probable financial failure."

The proposed solution involves creating the Denver Newspaper Agency, which

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Monterey Herald employees win \$2 million in severance

The San Jose Newspaper Guild, duking it out with Knight-Ridder in protracted contract negotiations at the San Jose Mercury News and the Monterey Herald, won a big morale booster—not to mention a huge chunk of cash—in an arbitration decision May 25.

Ruling in a case dating back to the mid-1997 purchase of the Herald by Knight Ridder from E.W. Scripps, arbitrator Gerald R. McKay ordered that full severance be paid to all union-represented employees on the payroll at the time of sale. Guild officials estimated the award at \$2 million, with 120 or more employees eligible for up to \$35,552 each, plus interest.

"This has been a very gratifying victory—there are some nice smiles down here," observed Luther Jackson, the local's executive officer. "The Monterey people have been through some tough times, but this truly shows the value of a union contract."

The decision may have implications far beyond Monterey. "This is the first Guild arbitration award to squarely acknowledge the seller's obligation to pay severance to

employees who are terminated as a result of an asset sale—including those subsequently rehired by the buyer," said TNG-CWA attorney Barbara Camens. "The threat of severance liabilities gives the Guild significant leverage in negotiating on behalf of employees affected by the sale."

When Knight Ridder bought the Herald, its sales agreement specifically required Scripps to terminate all employees. All were then encouraged to reapply for their old jobs, and 124 were rehired—but without a contract. None of the rehired employees received severance, despite a provision in the Scripps contract providing for severance "upon termination of employment," under the rationale that they had suffered no loss. Moreover, Knight Ridder argued, 13 employees who chose not to reapply for their jobs had effectively resigned and therefore also weren't entitled to severance.

Sound solipsistic? McKay clearly thought so, contrasting Knight Ridder's requirement that Scripps terminate the employees with its subsequent claim that no employees had been terminated. "It is what

the arbitrator would describe as a win-win proposition for Scripps and KRI," he wrote. "It is, of course, a lose-lose proposition for the Scripps employees who now work for KRI."

Ironically, while it's not clear if the decision will have any effect on contract negotiations that have dragged on for more than two years, the lack of an agreement was cited by the arbitrator as one indication that there had been a change in employment.

The good news also may be expected to spill over at the Mercury News, where Guild-represented workers voted unanimously to give the bargaining committee strike authorization. The other four unions at the paper also have taken strike votes. Contract negotiations on economic issues are scheduled to resume June 12, after a hiatus of nearly two months.



The San Jose Guild prepared these "trading cards" to publicize unfair treatment of pressmen at the Mercury News.

A reprieve for CBC news, but layoffs loom

Fierce public pressure has forced CBC Television to scrap a plan to replace local newscasts with a national news show produced in Toronto. Instead, the dinner-time news hour will be split in half, devoting 30 minutes to a national program and 30 to regionally produced shows.

Favored by Canadian Media Guild President Lise Lareau as "a positive compromise," the belt-tightening change nevertheless means further layoffs are in the offing. Although network officials said it will take weeks to estimate how many employees will be axed, TNG Canada President Arnold

Amber predicts the final number will be around 250, including approximately 110 Guild members.

"The Guild, along with CEP and Friends of Public Broadcasting, worked very hard to reverse the original plan," Amber said. "It was a great victory, although not a complete one."

The news-cutting proposal is part of a larger, three-year revitalization plan that CBC management says is needed to stave off bankruptcy. Eliminating more than a dozen separately produced newscasts each night—slashing payrolls at regional stations by half—looked like a smart move on a bal-

ance sheet, but it provoked a torrent of protest from communities irate at the idea of being force-fed a "Torontocentric" news show.

While the protesters are happy to have salvaged at least part of the status quo, not all the news is in yet. CBC's executive producers are rumored to have been ordered to cut their budgets by 30%, which suggests Amber's estimates may be optimistic. And a request to have a CMG representative participate on a committee that is redesigning the news package has been rejected, raising the possibility of more protests ahead.

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With mediator's help, BNA talks near finish

Helped along by federal mediator Jean Kolb, the Washington-Baltimore Guild and the Bureau of National Affairs were on the brink of a new collective bargaining agreement as the Guild Reporter went to press.

Following two mediated bargaining sessions, May 24 and June 6, the unit's bargaining team agreed to submit a contract package to a membership referendum June 14. The only outstanding issue: whether the team would recommend ratification, which bargaining chairman Dick Ramsey said depended on BNA's willingness to grant full retroactivity.

The Guild's last BNA contract, which expired February 29, provided for 60-day retroactivity of pay raises in a successor agreement, "and we're about six weeks past that point," Ramsey said.

A contract settlement would end a surprisingly contentious round of negotiations, with Guild-represented employees smarting at BNA's apparent low-balling of its economic proposals: despite posting solid revenue and income gains, the company's proposed compensatory increases for most employees amounted to 2% or less per year.

Whether by design or accident, BNA also managed to commit several public relations blunders that further stoked employee ire. Among the most egregious: when AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka came to BNA to meet with the bargaining committee, one or more members of the

management team distributed copies of a vindictive Wall Street Journal editorial headlined, "Who Is Richard Trumka?"

One answer, as pointed out by TNG-CWA President Linda Foley in an angry letter to BNA officials: a major BNA client. "This kind of personal attack by any management would be considered unprofessional and unproductive to good labor relations," Foley wrote. "In the case of BNA, it is also bad business relations."

Thibeault wins service award

TNG-CWA each year recognizes outstanding service at the local union level by presenting the Guild Service Award. The award—a scholarship of up to \$2,000 for a course in trade union education appropriate to the winner—signifies recognition by one's peers and honors and encourages the development of local Guild leadership.

This year's nominees, judged by a committee comprising TNG officers Carol Rothman, Beverlyann Morris and John Barker, were: Jim Brown of Harrisburg; Dave Gallianetti of Sheboygan; Lise Lareau of the Canadian Media Guild, and Tom Thibeault of Manchester.

The Guild's Executive Council noted that each nominee had a remarkable record of recent accomplishments. "In another year, each

BNA's president and CEO, Paul Wojcik, soon responded with a letter of apology to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, saying the editorial was handed out by mistake but acknowledging that it was a "somewhat precipitous, and admittedly ill-thought-out act."

Wojcik's contrition apparently swept over his bargaining team as well—and just in time. The unit had just launched a campaign to solicit subscription cancellation notices from BNA customers.

of these candidates would easily have outpaced the field and been an easy choice," observed committee chair Carol Rothman. "Together, they are complementary chapters of a Guild 'how to' manual on activism and service. Choosing one award winner from this group was indeed difficult."

Nevertheless, Rothman added, the committee was impressed by Thibeault's record of accomplishments: over a period of more than 20 years, he has served as local secretary, vice-president, president and grievance chairman, a demanding post he held for 10 years.

Moreover, Thibeault led organizing drives in new units in his own local and assisted in organizing in another local in the region. He chaired a recent negotiating committee that settled a four-year pact with fair wage increases, improved benefits and no give-backs. He remains active in the state AFL-CIO and Central Labor Council, and founded the Unity Council that coordinates the activities of the four unions at his plant.

According to the president of the Manchester local, Thibeault's time is "spent encouraging and educating workers . . . of the benefits of becoming union members . . . for little more than a 'thanks' and the knowledge of what was accomplished."

"For his impressive accomplishments, his daily efforts in his local, and his dogmatic demands for the members' respect," concluded the awards committee, "we award the 2000 Guild Service Award to Tom Thibeault of Manchester."

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In brief . . .

Beckley workers split on unionizing

A heavily contested TNG-CWA organizing drive at the Register-Herald in Beckley, WV ended in a split decision May 24, as workers in the mailroom voted for representation 21 to 16 but employees in the editorial, composing and circulation departments rejected the union, 45 to 13. Two charges of unfair labor practices are being filed with the NLRB, over the firing of one worker and the harassment of another for their organizing activities.

Guild disclaims in Wilmington

After a decade of frustrated efforts to negotiate two contracts at the Wilmington News Journal, the Newspaper Guild of Greater Philadelphia has disclaimed further interest in representing the newspaper's editorial and circulation department employees. The Guild gained bargaining rights for the newsroom in late 1989 but never achieved a first contract; the circulation department had been represented since 1952, but its last contract expired in May of 1990.

Reuters reporter killed in Africa

American Reuters correspondent Kurt Schork, 53, was one of two journalists killed in late May while covering the civil war in Sierra Leone; the other was Miguel Gil Moreno de Mora, a Spanish cameraman for Associated Press Television News. A third journalist was killed May 8, and at least 10 journalists were slain in Sierra Leone last year.

Providence vote delayed by NLRB

Mailing of ballots in a representation election by 105 outside circulation employees of the Providence Journal Bulletin, originally scheduled for right after Memorial Day, was delayed until today by the regional NLRB director to give management adequate time for an appeal. Ballots must be returned by June 26 and will be counted in Boston the next day.

Gannett under fire here, abroad

The locked-out workers at the Detroit News and Free Press got a shot in the arm from the United Methodist

Church, which has called on its 8.4 million members to boycott Gannett's USA Today. In England, meanwhile, the National Union of Journalists voted to boycott the Freedom Forum because of its links to Gannett, which is "responsible for the appalling attack against the unions at the Detroit News."

First, let's hear the good news . . .

Some Guild families have all the luck—like Joe Trela, son of longtime San Jose Mercury News employee Carmel Trela. Back in 1992 he won a Guild scholarship that helped him attend CalTech; now the folks at the local say perhaps that's how he got the smarts to become one of Regis Philbin's million-dollar winners on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?"

. . . then the bad

Then again, luck runs in more than one direction. As it did for Janice Hill, treasurer for the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, who was stopped by a state trooper recently as she was driving to work. Hill was driving on a suspended license, said the trooper, who had her car impounded and gave her a citation. Unfortunately, the state's computerized records were messed up—but that didn't save Hill from having to pay a \$114 towing charge after a long walk off the highway. . . .

Foley heads new economy group

TNG-CWA President Linda Foley has been tapped by CWA President Morton Bahr to head a committee to deal with the issues raised by a growing contingent workforce. Also on the committee are CWA vice presidents Larry Mancino, Jeff Rechenbach, John Thompson, Tony Bixler and John Clark; TNG Administrative Assistant Eric Geist will staff the committee.

Plan ahead for newsletter class

Calling all newsletter editors: check your calendars to see if you can take the week of Sept. 10-15 to attend an advanced news writing and editing workshop at the George Meany Center. Contact Elise Bryant at 301/431-5408 for more information.

TNG issues sector conference call

The official call for the Guild's 65th annual conference was mailed this week to all locals. Now known as the TNG-CWA Sector Conference and scheduled in conjunction with CWA's annual convention, the meeting will be held Aug. 25 and 26 at the Anaheim Hilton in Anaheim, Cal.

Delegates to the conference are apportioned under the TNG-CWA Constitution, which provides that local representation will be determined by "the average number of members on which dues were paid or collected by the International for the twelve (12) months ending the fifth month preceding that in which the Convention begins its session."

Each local that has maintained average monthly per capita payment of at least seven members in good standing during this twelve-month period is entitled to at least one vote. In addition, each local is entitled to one vote for the first 50 monthly per capita or major fraction thereof; one vote for the second 50 per capita or major

fraction thereof; and one vote for each 100 additional per capita or major fraction thereafter.

Locals wishing to submit resolutions for conference action are urged, in accordance with a 1963 convention resolution, to provide them well in advance of the conference. Four copies of such resolutions, signed by their supporters, must be sent to TNG Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer at TNG-CWA headquarters by Thursday, Aug. 10 to be considered at the conference.

The TNG-CWA Executive Committee will appoint the Credentials Committee and draw up slates of other committees for recommendation to the Sector Conference. The EC will establish a committee structure that allows for a democratic and efficient two-day meeting.

The CWA convention will be held Aug. 28 and 29, also in Anaheim, at the city's convention center. A formula different from the Guild's, detailed in the CWA Constitution, will determine the size of each local's delegation.

Reporter/photographer top minimum salaries

Contract	Minimum	After	Contract	Minimum	After
New York, NY, Times	\$1389.05	2 yrs	Peoria, IL, Journal Star	765.00	5 yrs
Boston, MA, Globe	1260.16	5 yrs	Mt. Clemens, MI, Macomb Daily, Daily Tribune (2)	764.76	5 yrs
Philadelphia, PA, Inquirer, Daily News (2)	1200.00	5 yrs	Bremerton, WA, Sun	752.71	6 yrs
Victoria, BC, Times-Colonist	1197.20	5 yrs	Lowell, MA, Sun	751.14	5 yrs
Chicago, IL, Sun-Times ^a	1175.14	5 yrs	Detroit, MI, News	750.54	4 yrs
Montréal, PQ, Gazette	1166.00	5 yrs	Detroit, MI, Free Press	749.84	4 yrs
Wall Street Journal ^b	1163.00	6 yrs	Sheboygan, WI, Press	738.47	5 yrs
Honolulu, HI, Advertiser	1088.00	5 yrs	Peterborough, ON, Examiner	724.79	flat
Honolulu, HI, Star-Bulletin	1088.00	5 yrs	Duluth, MN, News-Tribune	723.74	5 yrs
Ottawa, ON, Citizen	1082.10	5 yrs	Stratford, ON, Beacon Herald	719.25	5 yrs
Minneapolis, MN, Star Tribune	1081.75	5 yrs	Fall River, MA, Herald-News	719.12	4 yrs
Cleveland, OH, Plain Dealer	1077.21	5 yrs	El Diario - La Prensa, NY	715.20	4 yrs
Pittsburgh, PA, Post-Gazette	1065.00	6 yrs	Canton, OH, Repository	714.53	5 yrs
St. Louis, MO, Post-Dispatch	1054.00	5 yrs	Los Angeles, CA, Daily News	707.00	6 yrs
St. Paul, MN, Pioneer Press	1048.78	5 yrs	Modesto, CA, Bee	700.00	6 yrs
Baltimore, MD, Sun	1023.00	5 yrs	Youngstown, OH, Vindicator	695.35	5 yrs
San Francisco, CA, Chronicle, Examiner (2)	1018.68	6 yrs	York, PA, Dispatch	681.93	4 yrs
Denver, CO, Post	1000.00	5 yrs	Pawtucket, RI, Times	676.80	4 yrs
Buffalo, NY, News	998.81	5 yrs	Pueblo, CO, Chieftain ^g	675.30	5 yrs
Washington, DC, Post	990.75	5 yrs	Fresno, CA, Bee	675.00	6 yrs
San Jose, CA, Mercury-News	983.60	6 yrs	Knoxville, TN, News-Sentinel	672.00	4 yrs
Maui, HI, News	976.78	5 yrs	York, PA, Daily Record	667.50	4 yrs
Providence, RI, Journal-Bulletin	968.91	4 yrs	Kingston, NY, Daily Freeman	665.07	4 yrs
Denver, CO, Rocky Mountain News	949.00	5 yrs	Dayton, OH, Daily News	660.50	5 yrs
Akron, OH, Beacon Journal	937.00	4 yrs	Sioux City, IA, Journal	656.38	4 yrs
Manchester, NH, Union Leader ^c	926.00	3 yrs	Harrisburg, PA, Patriot-News	651.00	4 yrs
Boston, MA, Herald	917.18	4 yrs	Lynn, MA, Item	633.33	4 yrs
Chester Delaware County, PA, Times	912.75	5 yrs	Yakima, WA, Herald-Republic	615.44	4 yrs
Cincinnati, OH, Kentucky Post (2)	907.50	5 yrs	Medicine Hat, AB, News	599.62	5 yrs
Memphis, TN, Commercial Appeal	892.18	6 yrs	Woonsocket, RI, Call	594.35	4 yrs
Eugene, OR, Register Guard	882.73	6 yrs	Hazleton, PA, Standard Speaker	585.71	4 yrs
Moncton, NB, Times Transcript	877.28	5 yrs	San Juan, PR, El Vocero	580.00	5 yrs
Indianapolis, IN, Star, News (2)	861.00	6 yrs	Lexington, KY, Herald-Leader	575.00	4 yrs
Seattle, WA, Post-Intelligencer	858.88	6 yrs	Waterville, ME, Sentinel	571.16	5 yrs
Kenosha, WI, News	858.50	5 yrs	Terre Haute, IN, Tribune-Star	561.40	5 yrs
Seattle, WA, Times	857.73	5 yrs	Lindsay, ON, Daily Post	550.29	5 yrs
Santa Rosa, CA, Press Democrat	857.51	6 yrs	Bakersfield, CA, Californian	550.00	5 yrs
Allentown, PA, Call	857.27	4 yrs	Bellevue, WA, Eastside Journal	536.00	5 yrs
Sudbury, ON, Star	854.44	6 yrs	San Juan, PR, Star	528.00	6 yrs
Milwaukee, WI, Journal Sentinel ^d	844.60	5 yrs ^e	Monessen, PA, Valley Independent	526.33	5 yrs
Kingston, ON, Whig-Standard, ^f	834.93	5 yrs	Wilkes-Barre, PA, Citizens' Voice	504.00	4 yrs
North Bay, ON, Nugget	831.41	5 yrs	Massillon, OH, Independent	487.46	4 yrs
Waukegan, IL, News-Sun	820.00	5 yrs	Norristown, PA, Times Herald	468.35	5 yrs
Portland, ME, Press Herald	818.49	4 yrs	Noticias del Mundo, NY	457.25	4 yrs
Erie, PA, Times-News	818.23	5 yrs	Rochester, NY, Democrat & Chronicle	419.00	4 yrs
Joliet, IL, Herald News	810.36	4 yrs	Norwalk, CT, Hour	415.00	2 yrs
Hilo, HI, Tribune-Herald	810.24	5 yrs	Utica, NY, Observer-Dispatch	387.50	5 yrs
Monterey, CA, Herald	808.00	6 yrs			
Sault Ste. Marie, ON, Star	807.30	4 yrs			
Scranton, PA, Times, Tribune (2)	806.49	3 yrs			
Pottstown, PA, Mercury	800.99	5 yrs			
Jersey City, NJ, Jersey Journal	795.03	4 yrs			
Albany, NY, Times-Union	788.20	4 yrs			
St. John, NB, Telegraph Journal, Times Globe (2)	781.72	5 yrs			
Sacramento, CA, Bee	780.00	6 yrs			
Fredericton, NB, Daily Gleaner	771.79	5 yrs			
Brockton, MA, Enterprise	765.00	4 yrs			

Average Reporter Top Minimum: \$796.17

- a—\$1175.14 for reporter/ass't. editor.
 b—\$1,307 for special writer.
 c—\$938.77 for senior reporter.
 d—\$929 for senior journalist.
 e—after 3 years for fully qualified practitioner.
 f—photographer/reporter \$849.93 plus \$110 per month camera allowance.
 g—an additional \$20 per week after 15 years.

(Number of papers per contract in parentheses)

Deferred Increases

Baltimore: \$23 on 6/25/00, 6/24/01 and 6/23/02.
 Bellevue: \$16.97 on 12/17/00; \$14.57 on 12/23/01; \$17.92 on 12/22/02.
 Bremerton: \$15.06 on 1/14/01.
 Buffalo: \$21.83 on 8/1/01.
 Canton: \$21.43 on 9/6/00.
 Chicago: \$47.01 on 10/1/00.
 Cincinnati: \$30 on 1/1/01; \$25 on 1/1/02.
 Cleveland: \$33 on 3/1/01.
 Denver Post: \$30 on 1/1/01; \$31 on 1/1/02. (rep./photo combo, \$30 on 1/1/01; \$34 on 1/1/02.)
 Duluth: \$21.72 on 1/1/01; \$22.36 on 1/1/02.
 El Diario: \$21.45 on 7/1/00; \$22.09 on 7/1/01.
 Erie: \$26.25 on 3/2/01; \$31.55 on 3/2/02; \$27.99 on 3/2/03.
 Harrisburg: \$10 on 7/1/00, 7/1/01 and 7/1/02.
 Hilo: \$24 on 1/1/01; \$8.34 1/1/02.
 Joliet: \$24.31 on 7/1/00; \$25.04 7/1/01.
 Los Angeles: \$14.14 on 5/9/00; \$14.43 on 5/9/01.

Mt Clemens: \$20.90 on 1/1/01; \$20.16 on 1/1/02; \$19.42 on 1/1/03.
 New York: \$27.24 on 3/31/00; \$27.78 on 3/31/01; \$28.34 on 3/31/02.
 Norristown: \$14.05 on 6/7/00; \$14.47 on 6/7/01.
 Pawtucket: \$15.22 on 1/1/01.
 Peterborough: \$14.53 on 8/16/01.
 Pittsburgh: \$15 on 7/1/00; \$10 on 1/1/01; \$15 on 7/1/01.
 Sheboygan: \$22.15 on 1/31/01; \$22.85 on 1/31/02.
 Sioux City: \$19.69 on 3/14/01.
 St. John: \$14.23 on 5/1/00.
 St. Paul: \$31.46 on 7/6/00; \$32.40 on 9/27/01.
 Stratford: \$12.37 on 1/1/00.
 Terre Haute: \$14.03 on 8/16/00; \$14.38 on 8/16/01.
 Toledo: \$10 on 3/22/00; \$17.18 on 9/22/00; \$10 on 3/22/01; \$17.20 on 9/22/01; \$11.45 on 3/22/02; \$17.24 on 9/22/02.
 Washington Post: \$11.45 on 2/26/01.
 Waukegan: \$25.34 on 3/1/01.
 York Daily Record: \$20 on 10/1/00; \$22 on 10/1/01.
 Youngstown: \$8 on 5/16/00.

Source: TNG-CWA Collective Bargaining Dept., 4/1/00; Canadian newspaper wages in Canadian dollars.

Amplification

Additional details of the Joliet and Waukegan contract settlements, mentioned in last month's Guild Reporter, include: 3% increases each year; bonuses of \$300 on signing and an additional \$100

next January; and substantial improvements in benefits for part-time and temporary employees, including sick pay, bereavement leave and participation in the 401(k) and retirement plan. Joliet also won increases in night differential and mileage expenses.

Denver JOA seeks union OK

Continued from page 1

would be responsible for both papers' business operations—including advertising, circulation, production and distribution—for 50 years. Both newspapers would continue publishing in their current formats on weekdays; on weekends, a combined edition would be published under a joint flag and would include editorial pages and content from each newspaper.

That's the plan. The reality, given the recent adverse publicity generated by the San Francisco and Honolulu situations, is that MediaNews—in the form of its chairman and CEO, William Dean Singleton—and Scripps have concluded they can't afford to make enemies in closing the deal. And so both corporations suddenly have been bending over backwards to enlist union support, meeting with CWA and TNG officials in Washington and in Denver, promising to honor all contracts and praising past instances of union-management cooperation.

"Your union, along with all the others, helped save The Denver Post when it was at death's door more than a decade ago," Singleton raved in a May 16 letter to TNG-CWA President Linda Foley. "And with your help and support, we will do the same for the Rocky Mountain News. I pledge to work with you and your union leadership in a spirit of partnership to forge agreements that will work for both the newspapers and their employees."

But despite such warm overtures, union officials remain guarded. Approximately 2,200 CWA-represented jobs are at stake at the two papers, including 1,400 or so in the Denver Newspaper Guild, which is seeking a guarantee that a JOA would not result in layoffs of union members. Thus far, at least, the two companies have said only that they expect a "minimal" loss of jobs, to be achieved "primarily through attrition."

Meanwhile, relations between TNG-CWA and both corporations have been strained elsewhere. In Knoxville, for example, Scripps negotiators have dragged their heels in contract negotiations for more than two years. In Long Beach, Cal., only a couple of items have stood between the Guild and a contract at the Press-Telegram—but there's been little movement by Media News on those items for more than a year.

"This has to be put in the overall context of our relationship with these employers," Foley said, observing that it makes little sense for union officials to accept an olive branch in one city while their members are being kicked in the teeth somewhere else.

Off-the-record talks between corporate and union officials, held June 5 and 6 in Denver, were described by Foley as "produc-

tive." A formal filing to propose the JOA was to be made today, with publication in the Federal Register, starting a 30-day period in which the affected unions—also including the Teamsters, Machinists and Graphics Communications—may petition for hearings.

Judging by recent events, however, winning labor peace may not be enough. One potential vulnerability: Scripps' claim that the News is a failing newspaper. Although the company cites its \$123 million loss over a decade, that's in surprising contrast to Singleton's claim that the rival Post earned about \$200 million over the same period. How could two newspapers, fighting tooth and nail against each other, have such widely disparate results?

One answer—and undoubtedly there are several—is that not all losses are equal. As reported by Editor & Publisher, the \$123-million loss claimed by Scripps is virtually all noncash depreciation—an accounting charge, in other words, not cash outlays that exceeded cash revenues. True cash losses, the E&P analysis shows, amount to roughly \$2 million, which spread over a decade amounts to a statistical blip.

Scripps, in defending its bookkeeping practices, has pointed out that if it can't generate enough cash to cover depreciation it isn't recovering its investment in plant and equipment. That is, in fact, a standard accounting practice; whether it is enough to meet the definition of a "failing enterprise" under the Newspaper Preservation Act, however, is another—and still unanswered—question.

But there is yet one more wrinkle in this bookkeeping exercise that bears examination. The paradox of the San Francisco JOA dissolution is that the newspaper Hearst wants to dump, the Examiner, is smaller and weaker but more profitable than its rival. The reason, of course, is that its costs are lower—because it's smaller—but because of the JOA it gets a 50-50 split of the profits.

One result of this strained financial relationship, as brought out in the just-concluded trial, is that both newspapers have stunted on investing in plant and equipment—the very kinds of expenses Scripps says have driven it into the red, at least on its books. The Examiner didn't have to: it was assured of a profit regardless. And the Chronicle didn't want to, because half of such investments would benefit its rival. Now the JOA partners are complaining that the house they've built is near collapse because of inadequate maintenance.

Depending on how it's structured, a Denver JOA could have a similar dynamic—eventually resulting in efforts to end it by using the same arguments that were advanced to promote it.

Labor round-up

Economic contradictions grow sharper

As unemployment figures hit a 30-year low, real interest rates—the interest rate minus the inflation rate—get pumped up to near-record highs by a nervous Fed and stock prices rise and fall like drunk ballerinas. But inflation itself has been all but nonexistent, prompting AFL-CIO head John Sweeney to blast the Fed's tightened grip as "the wrong medicine for the wrong problem." The unemployment rate, meanwhile, has been driven artificially low by a plethora of jobs paying slave wages, prompting more than 40 U.S. cities and counties to adopt living wage laws. Last month Illinois Rep. Luis Gutierrez and Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone said they would introduce companion bills in Congress requiring all companies with federal contracts to pay their workers no less than poverty-level wages for a family of four—currently \$8.20 an hour.

Knight true to union-busting roots

One of the most notable flash-points in the sweatshop debates has been Nike boss Phil Knight, who recently yanked his generous contributions to the University of Oregon for joining the anti-sweatshop, AFL-CIO-linked Worker Rights Consortium. Like father, like son: back in the late '50s, William W. Knight—then publisher and one of three trustees of the now deceased Oregon Journal—presided over a five-and-a-half year strike in a successful bid to break the AFL-CIO-affiliated unions at his paper.

Don't wait for OSHA—go to the web

It is by now common knowledge that you could die waiting for OSHA to visit your workplace: the backlog of routine inspections runs to 107 years, given the agency's current funding and staffing levels. But this being the age of the internet, OSHA recently launched a new web site, "The Workers' Page," that gives employees the opportunity to file safety and health hazard complaints quickly and confidentially; just go to www.osha.gov.

Union highlights:

The U.S. rebound in union membership is being echoed across the Atlantic, where British trade unions announced that their membership grew last year for the first time since 1979, the year Maggie Thatcher took office. . . . The Service Employees International Union, with 1.4 million members, has surpassed the Teamsters and AFSCME to become the largest union in the AFL-CIO. . . . UAW members at the University of California have ratified a first contract covering approximately 10,000 student teaching employees. . . . The nation's 50 labor studies centers at colleges and universities are merging with union labor educators to create the United Association for Labor Education, an affiliate of the CWA.

The friendly skies could get bumpy

US Airways, where CWA-affiliated flight attendants recently prevailed in militant contract negotiations, successfully solicited a buy-out offer from United Airlines. But the \$4.3 billion merger of the country's biggest and sixth-largest airlines is anything but a done deal: the combination has raised anti-trust concerns and sparked fears that competitors will rush into similar marriages to avoid being shouldered aside. Moreover, the pilots at United—who with machinists and white-collar workers own 55% of the company's stock—are less than enchanted at the possibility of having their seniority structure disrupted even as they're in the middle of contract negotiations.

Attacks on ergo rule keep mounting

After apparently deciding to pay only perfunctory attention to OSHA hearings on new ergonomic standards, business interests have instead trained their guns on Congress and the courts. An amendment passed on party lines by the House Appropriations Committee, for example, bars the use of federal funding to issue or enforce any ergonomic standards—despite a 1997 commitment by the committee to "refrain from any further restrictions" on the subject. The White House has said it will veto the appropriations bill in that form. Meanwhile, business lobbies like the National Association of Manufacturers reportedly are preparing lawsuits to challenge the standards once they're implemented, claiming the benefits will be smaller and the costs considerably higher than estimated by OSHA.



Sign of the times

Yes, workers do have a right to wear their opinions on their sleeves—or on their vans. So said an administrative law judge last month, in a case in which IBM threatened to discipline two employees for displaying their pro-union sentiments while on

company property. The two workers, Peter Plavchan (owner of the van above) and William Costine, are members of Alliance@IBM/CWA, formed in response to the company's decision to move most of its employees into a lower-paying "cash-balance" pension plan. They were represented by CWA Local 1120.

Labor loses on China, but the real fight is still ahead

Organized labor's high-stakes fight over China ended in defeat, as more than enough Democrats—73 of 211 in the House—broke ranks to side with the Clinton administration. The final vote to grant permanent normal trading status to the world's most populated country wasn't even close, passing by a solid 40-vote margin.

Now the issue moves to the Senate, but passage there is all but assured. Instead, the next real battle will be within union circles, as the AFL-CIO leadership tries to keep the rank-and-file committed to Al Gore even as it excoriates Bill Clinton for sacrificing working class interests.

The distinction will be hard to draw. Federation president John Sweeney, while blasting the "Clinton-DeLay team"—pairing the Democratic president with the arch-conservative Majority Whip—nevertheless kept insisting that the vice-president was his own man and that the trade bill was Clinton's, not Gore's. Yet while Gore was relatively quiet on the matter, he made no secret of his support for the bill and, in a larger

sense, has built his campaign on his record within the Clinton administration.

That kind of hair-splitting has not gone down well with the leaders of two of the biggest AFL-CIO affiliates, the Teamsters and the United Auto Workers. Teamsters president James Hoffa, stressing that his union is still looking "at all the options" before making a presidential endorsement, added after the vote that the Teamsters ultimately may opt "not to make an endorsement at all."

UAW chief Steve Yokich, meanwhile, went a heretical step further by raising the possibility his union could endorse Green Party candidate Ralph Nader. Nader, one may recall, burst onto the national scene in 1965 by blasting General Motors over its design of the Corvair. Nor has he had much good to say since then about the industry that employs most UAW members.

Dissident union chiefs aside, a bigger problem facing the AFL-CIO's endorsement of Gore—one strongly supported by CWA—is rank-and-file cynicism. After so much beating of the drums about

the importance of the China vote, Gore's failure to swing behind labor may deter some union activists from pushing for his election. Many more may simply sit on their hands come election day.

Meanwhile, as debate on the China issue moves to the Senate, it's instructive to look at the promises—and reality—of an earlier battle over so-called "free" trade. Not quite seven years ago, the same arguments now heard on behalf of an open-door trading relationship with China were made in defense of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The reality? As University of California professor Harley Shaiken points out, post-NAFTA Mexico has become far more important as a low-wage manufacturing center than as a market for U.S.-produced goods. Promised labor and environmental reforms were ignored, independent labor unions have been effectively banned and—no surprise—Mexican workers as a result have seen an 18% decline in real wages since 1993.

In short, the China vote has been about cheap labor—and that fight will last many more years.

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

TNG-CWA Representative

There is an opening for a sector representative (International Representative) on the TNG-CWA staff. Experience in organizing, collective bargaining and/or membership mobilization necessary. Arbitration experience desirable.

The position will be located in Chicago, IL, and will work out of the CWA District 4 Chicago-area office. Contractual minimum weekly wage ranges from \$1,123 to \$1,458, depending upon experience. Excellent benefits.

Preference will be given to women and minority candidates. Submit resume to:

Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer
The Newspaper Guild-CWA
501 Third St. N.W., 2nd Floor
Washington, D.C.
20001-2797

Getting buttoned-down at Journal Register

Separated by a wide geographic span but united on a number of common issues, the eight TNG locals or units at Journal Register Co. newspapers staged a concerted "Unity Day" action June 1 in which hundreds of Guild members—nearly wall-to-wall at most sites—took part.

Nor was the action limited to Guild unions: the in-house ABC union at The Trentonian in Trenton, N.J.—in the same building as JRC corporate headquarters—participated enthusiastically as well. "The ABC union is a proud supporter of Unity Day," said president Delores Ciacio.

Union members wore "WE are the UNION" buttons and big, colorful "JRC Contract Now" stickers at Guild-represented locals in Rhode Island, at The Call of Woonsocket and The Times of Pawtucket; in Massachusetts, at the Herald News in Fall River; in New York, at The Daily Freeman in Kingston; at three units of Local 10 in Philadelphia, including the Times Herald in Norristown, The Mercury in Pottstown and the Delaware County Times in Primos; and in Ohio, at The Independent in Massillon, a unit of Cleveland-based Local 1 in North-east Ohio.

With four of the JRC-owned Guild papers in contract negotia-

tions—for a combined total of more than seven years—the action was meant to emphasize the need to share information and resources, especially on contract issues.

"It's obvious that what this company tries to get, and what they offer, at the bargaining table is onerously consistent from paper to paper," said Doug Hadden, president of the two-year-old Journal Register Council. "Unity Day was just a tangible way of showing not only that we're all well aware of that, but also the solidarity we feel with each other."

"It may seem a simple act for a union member to wear the union buttons and contract stickers," added Hadden, who also is president of the Pawtucket local. "But done collectively by the hundreds, and across the board on the same day, it shows we've become fully aware that we share common obstacles and must continue to help each other overcome them in our mutual interest."

In Kingston, where a company contract offer was recently rejected by members working without a contract since June 1999, "everybody wore the stickers and pins," reported local president Patricia Dosey.

In Woonsocket, which has gone almost two years without a new agreement, "We had 100%—



Sporting their "We are union" pins and "JRC Contract Now" stickers are Pawtucket members Doug Hadden, Jim Baron, Donna King, Milton Valencia, Eric Benevides, Jon Baker and Bill Hamilton.

everybody," said Larry O'Brien, local president. "We even had two new members sign up that day. The publisher was all over the building, taking a head count."

"It's the kind of thing that pulls together each unit, and all the units together. The game has changed. The company isn't going down to Norristown and not have somebody know about it in Pawtucket right away."

In Pottstown, said advertising sales rep Mike Comfort, all Guild members wore the buttons. In Pawtucket, participation was virtually wall-to-wall on both the morning and night shifts, according to Hadden. And employees at Fall River, a unit of the Boston Newspaper Guild that has gone without a

new contract for almost four years, embraced the event, reported administrative officer Tim Hiltz.

In Norristown, meanwhile, virtually everyone wore the buttons and most wore the stickers, too—including a newly organized composing unit now in negotiations—said union officer Judy Baca. The Primos unit at the Delco Times likewise showed strong support, according to Melissa Nelson, the JRCouncil coordinator out of Local 10.

In Massillon, which is among the newspapers JRC has put on the block, the "Contract now" stickers were a particular hit with members, said unit chair Chris Beers. Beers said contract talks have proceeded at a glacial pace in part due to long-

standing anti-union animus by the area JRC general manager, who presents proposals with little apparent point beyond riling the union.

"They want to take the sports editor out of the union and put him in management," Beers relates as an example. "And they want people who take a sick day during the week to come back on their day off on a Saturday and work on straight time—in other words, negating your sick day."

Beers said he expects all his members will wear the "WE are the UNION" buttons when contract talks resume July 1. Hadden said the next meeting of the JRCouncil, which began organizing "Unity Day" at its April meeting, is set for Oct. 21-22.

And don't try meeting on the sidewalks . . .

As the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild and the Hearst-owned Seattle Post-Intelligencer prepared for contract negotiations this spring, P-I management took the unprecedented step of having union meetings barred from a building it does not own. And while the P-I later retreated, it did so only after a series of almost comic confrontations with Guild officers.

Although the P-I's home is called the "Seattle Post-Intelligencer Building," the newspaper actually rents its space from the Sabey Corp. The P-I leases the second and part of the third floors; occupying a good deal of the first floor is American Express, which historically has allowed other busi-

nesses and organizations to schedule use of its conference rooms.

But on learning that the local's new administrative officer, Larry D. Hatfield, would be using one of the conference rooms to meet members, P-I management suffered a meltdown. Summoning local President Gene Achziger to his office, P-I business manager John Currie accused the union of exploiting the newspaper's name to gain access to the room.

The union "has no right to meet in the P-I's building," Currie averred, pledging to take up the matter with American Express. Moreover, Currie charged, Achziger should have asked P-I management for permission to hold such a meeting and should have

avoided a time that would "cause a major disruption to our operations."

Shortly thereafter, American Express notified Hatfield that the scheduled meeting could proceed—but that henceforth the room would be unavailable for Guild use.

But the more the P-I pushed its position, the more absurd it became. When Achziger pointed out that the meeting had been scheduled for a time traditionally used by the company for newsroom meetings and social events, Currie shifted gears: the meeting would be held on company time, he charged, and therefore Guild members who attended would be subject to disciplinary action.

And when the P-I was told that

Guild members would use their lunch hour or rest breaks to attend the informal meeting, Assistant Managing Editor Janet Grimley maintained that federal law exempts reporters from rest periods. "Because reporters can come and go as they please, they are not eligible for breaks," she insisted—even though employees are notified, via state regulations posted in the company cafeteria, that they have a right to a paid 10-minute rest period every four hours and a half-hour meal break for every four hours of work. Somehow, Grimley never could produce the federal language she maintained overrules state law.

Finally, in response to Achziger's demand that the threat of

disciplinary action be placed in writing, the company faxed its position to Hatfield—with a request for a meeting to "discuss a process for scheduling future meetings."

Hatfield's response, after registering amazement that someone in Currie's position would "go out of his way to create problems when none exist," observed that management was courting unfair labor practice charges, then offered a prescription: "Perhaps after you take a deep breath, we could start again."

Currie apparently took the deep breath: following a lunch with Hatfield and TNG-CWA rep Bruce Meachum, he announced the Guild could meet in the "P-I building," after all. The Guild quickly did so.

Labor Organizer

Full-time labor organizer needed to work primarily in the newspaper and publishing industry in the state of Washington. Organizer will be responsible for developing and running campaigns in both organized (non-member) and unorganized shops. Experience required.

The primary job location is Seattle. Some in-state travel and out-of-town stays required.

Salary range, dependent on experience: \$33,800 to \$39,000. Full benefit package provided.

Equal opportunity employer.

Submit resume and references to:

Larry Hatfield
Administrative Officer
Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild
2900 Eastlake Ave., East
Seattle, WA 98102

Job Opening - Labor Editor

Responsibilities include reporting, writing, editing and layout of the Union Advocate, twice monthly newspaper for union members in the St. Paul area. Requirements include a commitment to the labor movement and to telling labor's story. Must have strong communications skills, be self-motivated and be able to meet regular deadlines. Proficiency in desktop publishing (specifically QuarkXPress in a Macintosh format) preferred. Excellent salary and benefits under union contract.

For a detailed job description, call 651-227-0106. Submit resumé and writing samples by Friday, June 16, to:

President
St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly
411 Main St., Room 202
St. Paul, MN 55102

BILL OF WRONGS

What's the difference between a newspaper and a grocery chain?

By Stan Tiner

This is a most unlikely moment, when you think on it. A poor, unemployed itinerant editor from Alabama speaking to a group of New England publishers on the great danger of our day: the rise of the newspaper as a business, endangering the privilege of the First Amendment protections we now enjoy. . . .

From time to time we have been tested, by the likes of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798—acts ended by Thomas Jefferson—and in the 1860s by Civil War generals Burnside and Dix, who suppressed war news from certain newspapers. Attacks on the press are never-ending and have come from some of our biggest demagogues, including Louisiana's Huey Long and Richard Nixon's vice president, Spiro Agnew. Agnew's attacks seemed to put the focus on the press's shortcomings for a season, but in time Agnew was in prison, his president impeached for the several crimes exposed by the Watergate scandal.

But the problems of our day are more difficult, for they flow not so much from the printing of ideas and the quest for truth and justice. Rather, we have become imperiled by the vast wealth of our "properties"—the euphemism for newspapers that has reduced them to little more than a valuable business in a time of corporate mergers and acquisitions.

Consequently, readers often see us as little more than just another business, too—a sometimes arrogant, lazy and unresponsive business at that. And they wonder, as perhaps we all should, how long the protection of the First Amendment can survive.

I ask you now to think for a moment and recall the various conversations you've had with your colleagues at this gathering. If we were able to take those thoughts directly from your brains and flash the results on a screen, I predict we'd see that far more of your thoughts have centered on the business or corporate sides of your newspapers than on the quality of your news reports, or on the courage of your editorial convictions in the face of public opinion. . . .

Think quickly back on the last several "stories" about newspapers that you may remember. Were they about a jailed editor fighting about principle, or about a newspaper fighting a protracted battle in court to uphold a journalistic cornerstone? I don't think so, although 20 or 30 years ago that might have been the case. . . .

On the other hand, I imagine you *do* know about the recent announcement that the Tribune Company is acquiring Times Mirror—a move that will put one media giant in the stable of another. If bigger is better, this must be very good because this is a very big deal.

But no sooner had the \$6.4 billion deal been announced than the Chicago Board of Options Exchange announced it is investigating a flurry of trading in Tribune stock prior to the sales announcement. The Chicago Sun-Times reported this could be just a first step, perhaps to be followed by additional probes by the New York Stock Exchange or the SEC.

Do you understand how all this might cause the average reader to see your newspaper as little different from, say, the gas company or a grocery chain? . . .

Now for item number two in our review of recent journalism business news of note: the announcement by Thomson Corp. that it intends to sell all of its 54 newspapers, except for the Globe and Mail in Toronto. This news has caused a great many folks in the newspaper business to swallow hard and to wonder what Thomson knows that they do not.

Only five years ago, Thomson owned more newspapers than anyone in the industry—and now it's going away. Thomson was a leader in our industry, and its profit margin of 17.3% was far ahead of most other businesses. But now it's cashing out, the first newspaper publisher to leave print and move wholly to electronic delivery of information. Oh, someone will pony up the estimated \$2 billion needed to purchase the Thomson papers, but it does give one pause.

So what's the point here? Newspapers are a business, we are all creatures of budgets, and the concept of profit and loss certainly is not new to newspapers or their editors. Indeed, some of the old family-owned newspapers were

notorious for their skin-flint owners, and many of them didn't even pretend to be fair, regularly abusing their First Amendment privileges by making sacred cows of their friends while savaging their enemies. At least in the age of group ownership there is a line below which most newspapers do not, or will not, go. At the same time, however, there seems to exist a ceiling above which none dare rise.

And with every new acquisition or merger, as ownership of newspapers is reduced to smaller and smaller numbers, it becomes more and more difficult to see a newspaper as your friendly representative of the First Amendment—and easier to see it as one more money-grubbing business using the Bill of Rights to protect its owners and their unusually large

Stan Tiner was editor of the Oklahoman from last April until January, when he was fired without explanation after running part one of a retrospective on Karen Silkwood; parts two and three were spiked. These comments, edited for space, were delivered at the New England Newspaper Association's spring conference.

profits. And that's even as the newsroom is asked to give up more of its autonomy to the bean counters and as newsholes and staffs shrink to serve the gods of profit.

You may argue that times change and that public ownership of newspaper companies has allowed ordinary readers/stockholders to share in those handsome profits—just as the owners of old. Accordingly, editors should understand that part of our responsibility is to act as good stewards of these investments, and to see the bottom line as equal in value to more news space or bigger staffs.

A great many editors have bought into this philosophy, for they have little choice in the matter. . . . Modern journalism is not so much in search of greatness as it is a search for newsroom managers who respond sensibly to a bonus system based on goals whose implementation may ultimately lower the quality of the newspaper. No, every newspaper cannot be The New York Times, and most editors will understand that. But too few companies have recognized there may be a correlation between a newspaper's quality and its circulation. . . .

My purpose today is to ask all of us to think about our position in the world today and to wonder *if*—or even *when*—some clever fellow with a political agenda is going to come along and raise the First Amendment question with the American people. Imagine a modern-day Spiro Agnew—not indicted or imprisoned or even as unlikeable as Mr. Agnew, perhaps even a charismatic and articulate voice—enumerating all the reasons people seem to despise us today. And then asking why, why should our business be afforded any consideration above all other businesses?

His message might resonate loudly if he speaks of the business conglomerates that own some of the media. How can ABC report on Disney fairly? Can CBS be persuaded to drop an investigation of some other part of its big corporate empire? Then there's the ownership of sports franchises. Can a newspaper—even a good one—be expected or relied on to report the truth about its own economic interests? Most readers would say it can not.

So in the end, our political fellow may say, we are no different than R.J. Reynolds or General Foods. We are a business whose multimedia activities may include programs many of our readers find morally offensive and certainly not worthy of protection by the Bill of Rights.

Then there is the matter of the Failing Newspaper Act, subsequently known as the Newspaper Preservation Act. Now here was governmental intervention of the most intriguing kind. It is said people should not watch the making of sausage or laws, for each is unappetizing, but perhaps none is more unappetizing than this act that exempted newspapers from antitrust laws and sanctioned existing and prospective joint agency operations. . . .

What was the stated purpose of the preservation

scheme? Its sponsors said it was dedicated to maintaining "a newspaper press editorially and reportorially independent and competitive in all parts of the United States." Remember, now, this is stated despite the fact that most towns had already become one-newspaper places. But this act allowed two newspapers to share in a monopoly business activity, as long as they kept their editorial operations separate and independent.

The making of this law was kept largely from public view. . . . At its height, 28 cities shared in this experiment; now, 30 years later, JOA after JOA has died and will continue to die—not because a diversity of viewpoint is no longer desirable, but because the only reason for the act in the first place was economic viability. So far as I know, no one ever audited the JOAs for philosophical bent or editorial diversity. Rather, their real reason for existing was to keep many papers which were not necessarily failing, but which might not have reached the 20% or 30% or even 40% profit margins of that day without this assistance from the government.

Is there anyone in this room who can honestly argue that news consumers in any of the existing JOA cities are dependent on the second or "failing" newspaper in a given market to receive another daily news report or editorial opinion? Of course not, but no one is willing even to question whether the Newspaper Preservation Act is or even was good for the republic. . . .

But enough of this doom and gloom. Let's take stock of where we are and see if we can't reconnect to the primary reason we were given such privileges in the first place. We were given a social contract, which the public understood and accepted and often applauded, even when we were at our most cantankerous selves.

It was understood that we had certain obligations; to uphold and print the truth, to provide a forum for comment, criticism and compromise, to be a voice for the voiceless. We were to be the protectors of America's core values, and we were to be the nation's watchdogs and guide dogs. The Scripps Howard company symbol of a lighthouse shining its beacon through the night might be too syrupy for our day, but I'll tell you the truth, it's the kind of sentimental stuff for which most of us are yearning. . . .

How can we reconnect with those great concepts of democracy?

Let me give you a modest proposal that I think is worthy of some consideration: why not dedicate a certain percentage of each newspaper's profits as a set-aside for the operation of a superior newsroom? Set that amount aside, and let a trust of editors and reporters—with some public representation—be in charge of it.

"The Newsroom Trust," or TNT, would be above and beyond the regular newsroom budget. It might range from a few thousand dollars at a small weekly to a few hundred thousand or a million dollars at larger-sized papers, but regardless of size it would allow a level of excellence many editors no longer see possible. It might allow for travel, or research, or the hiring of writing coaches. It might finance an investigative team to attack a large community problem. Some trusts might choose to hire an author-in-residence for a year to write about a region's culture, or support a group of historians in a project on ethnic contributions.

Think of the flowering this would make possible in journalism across the land. It would empower the nation's newsrooms, reconnect newspapers to credibility and reignite the passions that lured so many of us to newspapers in the first place.

There is a moment, in the film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, when the archaeologist played by Harrison Ford has just been given the go-ahead to search for the Ark of the Covenant. Once his benefactor has told him to go for it, an ebullient Indiana Jones exclaims, "The Ark represents everything that we got into archaeology for in the first place!"

Newspapers and journalism cry out for such an epiphany just now—a rallying moment when we are reminded of who we are and what our central mission still is: to serve the public trust, to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. We really don't have to reinvent newspapers. We merely have to reclaim their purpose, and greatness.



LOOKING AHEAD

Even professions see union appeal

By Linda Foley, President

Just the title of the May 22-23 gathering would have made George Meany choke on his cigar: "Seminar on Unions for Professionals and Knowledge Workers."

And if the title of the Albert Shanker Institute's seminar would have caused Meany to choke, the line-up of participants would have made him give up smoking altogether. There were nurses, actors, musicians, teachers, journalists, programmers, engineers, psychologists and even doctors.

Yes, doctors. The participant from the American Medical Association, a pediatric surgeon from Detroit, sat next to me. She, like the rest of us, was interested in how organized labor could assist professionals to form unions.

Many professionals, such as teachers and nurses, already have been organizing for years. As a group, a specially commissioned poll told us, teachers have relatively favorable impressions of unions, mostly because they have a history of effective collective bargaining. Nurses, too, have discovered that their grievances about overwork and long hours can be addressed through collective action.

We heard how union membership among engineers at Boeing actually rose during a recent strike there. We heard how unions in the arts and entertainment field

have been a recognized force for a long time. Our own experience with WashTech's organizing among high-tech workers was used to illustrate how work itself—in this case maintaining a cyber network—can be used as an organizing tool.

But we spent most of our time focusing on the difficulties of organizing professionals. Poll results, focus groups and academic studies identified many hurdles for unions as they try to woo professional workers. For example, professionals subscribe to individualism, not collectivism. Many are independent contractors and don't depend on one employer for work. They don't view unions as a positive force. They don't view their employer as a clear enemy. They don't like conflict in the workplace. They may not like their jobs, but they love their work.

For union organizers, this all sounds pretty familiar. However, one revelation that wasn't really articulated became clear to me: the "new economy" has caused professionals to rethink their relationship to their work, their co-workers and the corporations that sponsor them. It's reduced the ability of the individual to affect his or her own circumstances, and that makes individuals more open to collective action and to unions.

Why else would doctors be flirting with unionism? Why else would engineers walk picket lines? Why else would a psychologists' association affiliate with an established union? Because they want power. The power that professionals once had by virtue of their expertise and knowledge is rapidly fading. The devaluation of professional skills has been facilitated by new technology and exacerbated by globalization. The same technology that allows U.S. doctors to diagnose an acute infection in India also permits medical tests taken in the U.S. to be screened by technicians in India. The right to import cheaper foreign labor to perform highly technical work in the U.S. under the H-1B visa program is the professional workforce's equivalent of moving auto factories to Mexico and clothing manufacturing plants to China. Another important factor contributing to this skills devaluation is who the bosses are. Managers don't come up through the ranks anymore. Technical or professional expertise is not a prerequisite if you want to grow

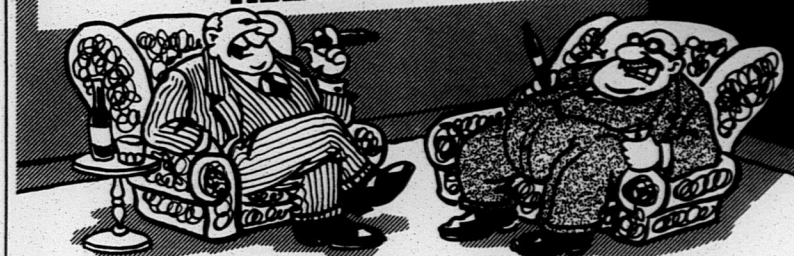
'Today's economic environment encourages extraordinary people to stick to ordinary things.'

Why else would doctors be flirting with

BIG BUSINESS SUPPORTS THE U.S.

HINA

TRADE PACT



REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO FIRE PEOPLE FOR BEING COMMIE SYMPs?

up and become a corporate decision maker. Management has become a career unto itself, and to succeed you must be able to do two things: cut costs and maximize profits. Neither of these qualities is coveted by most professionals.

One seminar participant gave his definition of "the professions" as "systems that allow ordinary people to do extraordinary things." By contrast, today's economic environment encourages extraordinary people to stick to ordinary things. Combine that with a cost-cutting management averse to rewarding quality, and the professional job venue is a pretty dismal place to work. Today's professionals want more from their work than today's corporations are giving them.

When labor leader Samuel Gompers was asked in 1893, "What does Labor want?" he said, in part, "More constant work and less crime; more leisure and less greed; more justice and less revenge; in fact, more of the opportunities to cultivate our better natures."

Spoken like a true professional.

Nightmare gives birth to 'A Dream on Wheels'

Even the worst kind of misfortune can produce humor and art, as witness these lyrics from a new CD by Guild member Steve Jones: 10 of the 12 songs on "A Dream on Wheels" are either about or directly inspired by the Detroit newspaper strike. Two-thirds of all sales proceeds—the CD costs \$15—will benefit the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions. To order, contact the Detroit Guild or e-mail Gate3music@aol.com.

Management Folk

*Well it's hard to run a paper, it ain't no easy caper
When workers all complain
That I love to make them suffer, but now I could make things tougher
'Cause I haven't got a brain*

*I can rake in tons of profits, pile cash up to the soffits
And ethics I disdain
I can be so glad and greedy, leave the workers bruised and bloody
'Cause I haven't got a brain*

*Oh I can tell you why
The profit margin has to soar
A logic that you've often heard before
Them that has, they get some more*

*I do no apologizin' when job cuts keep a risin'
Inflicting lots of pain
I can keep my outlook sunny by just basking in the money
'Cause I haven't got a brain*

*I'm so happy I'm so chipper
I'm a corporate Jack the Ripper
'Cause I haven't got a brain*

Darth Vega Must Go And Not Me

*I've worked many years for this paper
to make it the best it can be.
Now they say they've got too many workers.
Darth Vega must go and not me.*

*They pushed merit pay to deceive us,
They claimed it's as fair as can be.
But we know the way they define merit,
Is all of us working for free.*

*They wail that there aren't enough profits,
The newspapers cut and we bleed.
A million a week can't sustain them,
It's nothing but corporate greed.*

*They tried to divide us and conquer,
They cheated and bullied and lied.
But Darth Vega and friends can't defeat us,
As long as we stand side by side*

*They threw us all out like the garbage,
They forced us to take up this fight.
But the NLRB made its ruling,
And told the whole world we were right.*

*The moral of all this is simple,
A truth that just won't go away:
Stand up and work hard for your union,
And struggle for justice each day*

Stand Up For Justice

*Come all you good people so fair and so fine
And please don't you swallow the company's line
For Gannett and Knight-Ridder are ruthless and cold
They'll bleed you for profits and shatter your soul*

*So cancel subscriptions and don't advertise
Don't buy their scab papers or their corporate lies
Self-respect or our jobs, why should we have to choose?
So stand up for justice at the Free Press and News*

*All the brothers and sisters in the struggle today
Know we're out here because of that damned JOA
It gave the papers the power, now they seem to think
That the way to make money is use our blood for their ink*

CHORUS

*We tried hard to bargain, we tried compromise
We didn't get contracts, all we got were their lies
They've tried to destroy us and they forced us to fight
For our jobs and our families and for justice and right*

CHORUS

*Now we must draw a line here, we must take a stand
For the future of workers throughout our land
They won't break our spirit, as hard as they've tried
They won't break our unions, we'll stay unified.*

CHORUS

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 subject-

ed 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: July 14.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

JOURNALIST TO JOURNALIST

Welcome to (an unusual) America

By Gabriela Banovic
Editor, Stvarnost

When The Newspaper Guild invited me to spend seven weeks in the United States to improve my journalistic skills, I accepted with enthusiasm. I expected to learn a lot about journalism, unions and American culture—but what I encountered went far beyond my expectations and opened my mind in unexpected ways.

During my six weeks at the Philadelphia Inquirer I learned a lot about editing and preparing articles for print; but I also discovered a new approach to reporting, one quite different from the methods we use in my country. I also discovered that a union can be helpful in resolving questions of worker rights and obligations, and from my experiences living with an American family learned a lot about the American people and culture.

This was the first time I crossed the Atlantic and my first meeting with a different civilization. Although I arrived at the beginning of April, the sky over Washington was full of snow, which the Americans I met explained was unusual. They also said that the strong wind that blew for the next several days was unusual for that time of the year, that the extreme cold was unusual—and, later, that the extremely warm and sunny weather was unusual. All in all, I had a chance to meet all four seasons in seven weeks. *That's unusual!*

For a journalist from Bosnia-Herzegovina, working with the prize-winning journalists at the Philadelphia Inquirer was an excellent opportunity. My editor on the city desk, Conrad Grove, quickly taught me the nuts and bolts of American journalism by cutting my first story in half. He also stressed the use of easy language, lots of facts and fewer



Gabriela Banovic

descriptions, all of which are a sharp contrast to our approach in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where we prefer descriptive stories, complicated language and unusual expressions.

(I understand that readers in the States prefer easy, understandable language and do not have time to read long, descriptive, stories. But journalists in my country don't have those problems: we are a small nation with lots of unemployment, so we have lots of time for reading papers; the problem is that we don't have the money to buy them.)

Writing stories was difficult for me not only because of the different styles but because English is not my native language. But through my reporting I learned about the life of Australian veterans of the Vietnam War, and also had the opportunity to visit two Bosnian families now living in Pennsylvania. I was more than proud when my stories were published. I also was gratified to receive two e-mails from Vietnam veterans who liked my story and thought it would improve public understanding of the veterans' position in other countries.

Among my more interesting experiences was the day I spent with police reporter Tom Gibbons, with whom I attended a police press conference about illegal gambling and dogfights. The cameraman from one of the local TV stations caught me while I was taking notes behind the police spokesman, putting my face on the evening news. On a more sober note, I was astonished by Pennsylvania's crime statistics, which I learned in a visit to the state attorney general's office.

My co-workers at the Inquirer were more than polite: they were always smiling and ready to help me, and had a lot of questions about my country, people and culture. One of the subjects they seemed most interested in exploring, at our brown-bag lunches, was how the newspapers in Bosnia-Herzegovina have managed to survive over the last decade. Without even half of the comfort and equipment that journalists have here, our newspapers have managed to publish every day, even during the hardest warfare. Such tenacity was almost incomprehensible to me; it was incomprehensible to me, too, once I saw their working conditions.

Members of the Philadelphia Newspaper Guild explained to me that most of the good working conditions I was enjoying were provided by the effort of the union and its members. They said that being united in a strong organization is the only way workers could ensure that no one would violate their rights. That left me wondering why workers in my country have not reached the same conclusion: there, five years after the war, we have five journalists' unions—three of them defined by nationality.

But Bosnia-Herzegovina is confronting a very difficult post-war period: the economy is still weak, social stability is still unsafe. Salaries and pensions are paid irregularly and in any case are very low. Nobody pays taxes and the pension fund is nonfunctional. Many workers are forced to strike, but the factories don't have the money to pay their workers. On the other hand, they don't have to: there are so many unemployed that it's not a problem to hire new workers. Three ethnic groupings (Muslims, Serbs and Croats) and three religions (Islam, Orthodox and Catholic) divide my country in

many ways—three different educational systems and textbooks, three languages, three different histories and, finally, three different opinions and attitudes in the press.

How many years will pass before three different groups of Bosnian workers find out that only by uniting can they force the government and their managers to respect their work? I don't know, but the sooner they understand that an individual cannot change a lot, the sooner they'll become united. The members of five different journalists' unions will have to come together in one, unique union with a unique attitude: that's the biggest lesson I learned in the States, and that's the lesson I'm now trying to teach other journalists in my country. Only if we're united can we prove to the world—and to ourselves—that we are part of the world, part of Europe and ready to live according to Western standards.

Banovic, one of two journalists from Bosnia-Herzegovina sponsored by TNG-CWA's Journalist-to-Journalist program, returned home May 25.

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Harry Truman attends the Guild's annual convention, marking only the second time in U.S. history that a labor union is addressed by the chief executive (the first, natch, being FDR). The list of speakers also includes Secretary of State Dean Acheson. . . . The San Diego Journal folds, less than seven years after its founding, throwing 213 out of work. . . . Three futile months of negotiations end in more than 400 Guild members going on strike against the New York World-Telegram and Sun, flagship paper of the Scripps-Howard chain. The strike, honored by other union members, is the first to close down a major New York daily.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Despite recession gripping the U.S. economy, newspaper profits hold steady or increase—and publishing executives' total compensation climbs. . . . Although the tempo of Guild organizing picks up, a dozen other unions are actively organizing among employees on traditional Guild turf—including, ironically, the CWA.

Ten years ago this month:

In a clear attempt at union busting, the New York Daily News launches a series of "Monday Massacres" in which it opens each week with layoff announcements affecting a different union. . . . Eight journalists, including a Guild-represented AP copy editor, file a \$270 million lawsuit against the Atex company over repetitive stress injuries allegedly caused by its keyboards. . . . The Scrantonian (Pa.) Tribune closes, displacing 200 workers.

DAYBOOK

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

Great Labor Arts Exchange, June 18-20, Meany Center for Labor Studies, MD

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

CWA Occupational Safety and Health Conference, Sept. 17-20, Philadelphia

CWA Women's Conference, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, Las Vegas

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