

THE GUILD Reporter

July 21, 2000

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 67, Number 7

Four books
for summer
reading lists

page 5

THE
BUSINESS
OF
JOURNALISM
10 LEADING REPORTERS AND
EDITORS ON THE PERILS AND
PITFALLS OF THE PRESS

Denver deal struck, TNG backs JOA

Unraveling of San Francisco JOA awaits judge's ruling

MediaNews and E.W. Scripps Co. really, really want to create the country's first new joint operating agreement in more than a decade.

They want it badly enough to plunge into marathon contract negotiations with six unions simultaneously. And they want it badly enough to get results: six tentative agreements in less than 30 days, reached in the Guild's case after only seven sessions. The tentative agreements—none have been ratified, and indeed none had been reduced to writing as The Guild Reporter went to press—are

for seven-year contracts that include promises of no-layoffs in the first two years and a pledge to maintain two editorial voices in Denver for the next half-century.

The quid pro quo? TNG-CWA's first-ever commitment not to oppose a proposed JOA.

The Denver Rocky Mountain News, according to owner Scripps, is a failing newspaper whose only salvation is to have its business operations merged with the Denver Post's. Whether that is in fact the case remains to be seen—the Justice Department won't indicate its position for

another six weeks—and at least three non-union requests for public hearings on the proposal have been filed. But for Guild and other members who wondered if their jobs were on the line, the reassuring message was, simply, "No."

"We were able to hold on to virtually everything, and that's huge—that's mind-boggling," says the local's assistant administrative officer, Tracy Simmons. "We were negotiating what amounts to a first contract with a new owner and trying to maintain working conditions it took 60 years of bargaining to establish,

and we were successful in that."

Maintaining terms and conditions of employment was one of three criteria—the other two being a no-layoffs clause and guarantees that two newspapers will be published for the duration of the JOA—articulated by TNG-CWA as a prerequisite for its support of the proposal. Guild officials are optimistic that the results are indicative of better times ahead.

"We were able to achieve all three criteria, and as a result of that we think this is a good deal for all involved," said TNG-CWA President Linda Foley. "The com-

panies' willingness to work with us should be a harbinger of an improving relationship at other Media General and Scripps publications."

The Guild was forced to make two minor concessions: it lost participation in the Scripps stock purchase plan, and it agreed that the Denver Newspaper Agency will be allowed to phase in use of independent contractors for single-copy distribution of the two newspapers. But full-time employees in those positions have their positions guaranteed for the life of the

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Seeking providence

Stan Israel, executive vice president of SEIU District 1199, addresses a TNG-CWA rally at the Providence (R.I.) Journal in mid-June. Organized as part of the AFL-CIO's national "Protect Our Voice@Work" campaign, the demonstrators were supporting their contract negotiating team and an organizing drive

among 100 outside circulation delivery service reps. The last Guild contract expired in January, but progress on a new agreement has been bogged down by several charges of unfair labor practices, prompting two byline strikes to date. The organizing drive, meanwhile, was met by management pleas to "give us another chance" and rumored \$5-an-hour wage increases, resulting in a 37-53 loss.

San Jose strike threat breaks logjam

It's not just imminent death that can concentrate the mind wonderfully: a strike deadline will suffice as well.

That's what it took to resolve the stand-off at the San Jose Mercury News, which hasn't had a strike since 1959 but where members of the San Jose Newspaper Guild and four other unions had been working without a contract for more than a year and a half. So when the unions on June 12 set a June 23 strike deadline, both sides got down to business. "Clearly, setting a strike deadline helped focus everyone's attention, as it always does," observed Luther Jackson, the local's executive officer.

The result, ratified by Guild members July 9 on a vote of 213-39, is a contract running through

June 30, 2006 that is retroactive to November, 1998. Wage increases over term will average 4.15% annually at the higher job classifications, before diversions for health insurance and the pension plan, and 4.63% at lower classifications. After the diversions, Jackson calculates, the pay increases will average 3.3% and 3.6%, respectively. Full-time employees also will receive a \$1,000 signing bonus, while part-timers averaging at least 21 hours a week will get \$300.

Guild officials were jubilant, with TNG Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer describing the pact as "perhaps the best newspaper industry settlement in recent years." Indeed, the new scales

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U.S. Court rules against Detroit strikers

Less than a week shy of the five-year anniversary of the Detroit newspaper strike, a three-judge federal panel in Washington, D.C. reversed years of administrative findings by ruling that management had not precipitated the strike through unfair labor practices.

The finding overturns a National Labor Relations Board order that the Detroit News and

Detroit Free Press reinstate hundreds of locked-out former strikers, at a potential cost of millions of dollars in back wages and benefits. That drew predictable responses of outrage not just from union officials but from former NLRB chairman William B. Gould IV, who called the appeals court ruling "just incredibly tragic." The court "did not defer to the board at all as the expert agency

on fact and law," Gould said, and treated facts "selectively."

TNG-CWA attorneys are reviewing the decision, said Guild President Linda Foley, calling the panel's ruling "a travesty of justice." Officials of five other unions representing the locked-out workers have said they will appeal the decision, either to the full court of appeals or to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ironically, the court's decision came just as Harvard University was reviewing candidates for the prestigious post of Nieman curator. Among the leading contenders: Freedom Forum senior vice president Robert Giles, who was publisher and editor of the Detroit News when the bitter strike began.

News that Giles was under consideration sparked an outpouring

of letters to Harvard president Neil Rudenstine, accusing Giles of helping to precipitate the strike and of subverting journalistic values in its coverage. Donald Boggs, president of Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO, contended Giles' appointment would be seen by journalists nationwide as "a deep betrayal by an institution they revere."

Foley argued that Giles' behavior showed he was committed "not to high journalistic standards but instead to the corporate agenda of the Gannett Co." And CWA President Morton Bahr observed that Giles was "a leading player in one of the most outrageous cases of workplace abuse that we've seen in many years."

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Scarifying up profits—and papers Page 8

BNA, Ottawa ratify; Seattle talks begin

Contract settlements apparently come in all kinds of packages, from the sublime to the stressful, as evidenced by recent TNG-CWA developments

On the stressful side, Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild members at the Bureau of National Affairs ratified a new three-year pact after rejecting an earlier deal that did not provide for full retroactive pay increases. The June 27 ratification followed months of increasingly vociferous protests and rallies—including one on the last day of bargaining—and personal appearances by top AFL-CIO officials. Highlights include:

- Pay increases for employees at top scale of 3%, retroactive to Feb. 27, and 3.5% in each of the next two years; and of 2% a year for those still working their way through the scales. In addition, a joint compensation committee has been established, with four representatives from each side, to make recommendations for upgrading the compensation system.

- Extension of full employer payment of family health insurance premiums to part-timers scheduled to work at least 30 hours a week, plus extension of tuition aid to part-timers working at least 20 hours a week after six months of service, rather than two years.

- Addition of 15 days of paid leave within the first 90 days of birth or adoption of a child.

On the down side, the union agreed that future claims of past practice can be extended only to practices that have been reduced to writing, signed by both parties and made a part of the collective bargaining agreement.

A far more amicable resolution of contract negotiations was reported out of Ottawa, where TNG Canada-represented employees of the Citizen overwhelmingly ratified an agreement reached through "interest-based" bargaining. The talks followed two days of training in March—with negotiators from both sides participating together—by Harvard-trained facilitators, after which each side presented the issues it wanted to discuss.

Guild representatives said they wanted to talk about job security, use of freelancers, wages, exclusions, adoption leave and emergency days off. Management, not surprisingly, had a virtually identical list. What the two sides agreed to included wage increases of 3%, 2.5% and 2% over the three years of the agreement, plus a cost of living adjustment of not

more than 3% in each of the last two years; and increased job protection against contracting out and technological change for 85% of the unit's members, including part-timers. Other improvements include an increased vision-care allowance, increased paternity leave and extension of Guild jurisdiction to include the chief librarian and letters editor.

Elsewhere, the Brockton Guild ratified its new contract, 33-6, as its members prepared for the announced sale of their newspaper. The 18-month agreement, retroactive to the May 2 expiration of the old contract, includes two wage increases totaling 4% over term and increases the employer's contribution to the TNG pension plan by 25 cents a shift. It also increases the employer's contribution toward health care premiums by \$6.25 a week for the two-person family plan.

As always, of course, as some negotiations wrap up others are just beginning, notably those in Albany (see related story, page 3) and in Seattle. The latter seems to embody a corporate version of the good cop-bad cop routine, with the Post-Intelligencer presenting a more moderate posture when contrasted with a belligerent Seattle Times. At the Times, for example, chief negotiator Chris Biencourt has contended that Guild-proposed contract improvements are "not in the long-term interest of the Times—or its employees."

Among the Times' initial proposals: elimination of overtime for working more than eight hours a day, doubling the number of new employees permitted to opt out of Guild membership and adding a "zipper" clause that gives the Times the right to change or eliminate any benefit or working condition not specifically mentioned in the contract. The Post-Intelligencer's proposals, meanwhile, are no less onerous despite a softer tone: a quadrupling of the percentage of new hires allowed to opt out of Guild membership, limiting back-pay awards in arbitrations to 45 days, expanding "temporary" status of new hires from six months to a year and lengthening internships from 4 months to a year.

Company responses to Guild proposals have been largely dismissive. Responding to the Times' famously vague sick-leave policy, for example, the Guild proposed a 10-day bank of sick days that workers could take as needed. But Biencourt dismissed the idea by contending that clear language about sick leave "increases the likelihood it will be used, and we can't be as generous."

This vote needs no translation

The Guild's pool of multilingual talent swelled again last month, as members of the California Federation of Interpreters voted virtually unanimously to affiliate with the Southern California Media Guild. With 77%

of the federation's members voting, 99% cast their ballots in favor of affiliation.

The CFI, representing foreign- and sign-language court interpreters, was founded as an independent organization five years ago. Two years ago, it staged the first-ever walkout of court interpreters in southern California to protest low pay rates.

In joining TNG-CWA, CFI is following the lead of the Bay Area Court Interpreters, which last year

affiliated with the Northern California Media Workers Guild. Together, the two organizations represent about half of the state's 1,200 certified and registered court interpreters.

Driving the affiliations is a growing anger by court interpreters, in California and elsewhere—other Guild-represented units of interpreters and translators are in New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C.—over being denied basic workplace rights.

"Court interpreters are classified as independent contractors, but we don't make our own hours, we don't set our own pay rates and we don't work independently—we're supervised and controlled by the court," explained CFI President Uri Yaval. "Obviously, we're court employees in all but name. Yet in spite of the fact that we're an integral part of the justice system, we are denied the protections and benefits that the law affords to other workers."

The Guild Reporter (ISSN: 00175404) (CPC # 1469371) is issued monthly, generally at four-week intervals, at 501 Third St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Periodicals postage paid in Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: The Guild Reporter, 501 Third St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001

Subscription: \$20 a year.
Single copies: \$1.50.

The Newspaper Guild International



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In brief . . .

Official slammed in back-pay award

In a sharply-worded opinion that stops just short of calling a MediaNews executive a liar, an NLRB administrative law judge has ordered back pay and reinstatement for 21 transportation department employees that were terminated by the Long Beach (Cal.) Press-Telegram more than two years ago. Although the company claimed the employees were terminated after negotiations with the local TNG-CWA unit reached impasse, the judge concluded that such talks were started only after the company had made a final decision. Moreover, he accused company official Jim Janiga of being "intentionally deceptive and untruthful" and said his testimony "appeared to be evasive and often unclear or unresponsive." Whew.

CBC suspends letter writer

Censorship comes in many forms (see book reviews, page 5) but the Canadians still do it the old-fashioned way: via Big Brother. TV producer Peter McKinnon was suspended for six days without pay by the government-owned CBC for submitting two op-ed pieces to the Ottawa Citizen. Ironically, the second was in defense of local news, which the CBC is slashing in half. The Canadian Media Guild not only is grieving the discipline but, in an unprecedented move, paid McKinnon's salary during the suspension.

Calgary strikers call it quits

Striking journalists at the Calgary Herald, represented by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, voted to disband their local and accept a back-to-work agreement that includes enhanced buy-out packages for those who choose not to work without a contract. The bitter strike was called off after nearly eight months in recognition that the Hollinger-owned paper "apparently will never agree to recognize the rights of its employees, regardless of the costs," explained local union president Andy Marshall. "We chose to end this dispute with dignity rather than sign a contract without normal job security and seniority provisions."

And one more thing . . .

The list of mandatory requirements in the Guild's revamped Collective Bargaining Program has grown by one, as a unanimous Executive Council voted to add a seventh item: that all contract proposals include provisions "that promote diversity and protect against discrimination." Final approval of the revised program is expected at the TNG-CWA sector conference in August.

Headquarters sold to drug rehab unit

The Newspaper Guild Building in Silver Spring, Md., finally has a buyer: Second Genesis, a non-profit drug rehabilitation company, which is paying \$2.6 million for the property. Final closing was scheduled for next week.

Local staffers coming and going

You won't know the players without a scorecard, as several Guild locals experience staff turnover. At the Buffalo Newspaper Guild, office manager Carol Goldstein resigned after less than five months on the job, saying she felt hamstrung by a policy that gives the membership final say on all matters. "The membership itself, and the stewards and officers have taken on a lot of the rep's responsibilities," she explained. At IAPE, meanwhile, organizer Karen Szczepanski cited her long commute and domestic demands as her reason for quitting a job she accepted only a year ago. The San Jose Guild, on the other hand, has hired Bill Wyland as its new organizer; Wyland had been on temporary assignment to the Southern California Media Guild.

Organizing? Get help from AFL-CIO

With a renewed emphasis on organizing throughout the union movement, locals might want to take advantage of the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute's three-day training workshops, held nationwide. Cost is minimal for participants sponsored by CWA, but space is limited and some sessions close out quickly, so interested parties should notify TNG organizing director Eric Geist as promptly as possible.

Bahr visits Times Union as Zinser shapes talks

Contract negotiations at the Times Union in Albany, N.Y., are off to a mixed start, with the current agreement set to expire August 1.

On the one hand, the Hearst-owned newspaper signalled months ago that it was stewing for a fight when it retained union-busting attorney Michael Zinser. And it confirmed the Albany Guild's worst suspicions when it announced it would not extend the contract if talks continued past the expiration date. Any lingering doubts were sealed when management unveiled a draconian set of contract proposals, including elimination of the union security clause, elimination of lost time for union activity and a sharp increase in employee health care costs.

On the other hand, all that was before CWA President Morty Bahr and District One Vice President Larry Mancino came to town, visiting first with the negotiating committee and then with the newspaper's general manager and its publisher. Two days later, when the two sides returned to the bargaining table, the company agreed to extend the contract at least through Sept. 21 while talks continue. Zinser was not at the table. And management removed some of its most onerous demands from the table, including "horrific strike and lockout language," reports TNG-CWA representative Jim Schaufenbil.

Not that Bahr's visit gets all the credit for the apparent thaw. The local has made a major commitment to mobilization, with members wearing stickers, threatening public demonstrations and circulating a

petition "requesting" that the company not terminate the contract at expiration. With more than 75% of the local's members signing the document, management said it was agreeing to the Sept. 21 extension "in response to the requests of our employees."

"Our members are mobilized," local President Tim O'Brien told Bahr and Mancino. "I have been meeting with other labor leaders in the area," he added, "and those unions will support us should the need arise."

Still uncertain is the extent to which Zinser's trademark approach of throwing sand in the gears will gum up the talks. To alert its members to the threat, the Albany local hosted a visit by Lance Robertson, chief spokesman for the Eugene Newspaper Guild, which has been confronting Zinser for the past 18 months. Zinser's "technique"? Divide and conquer. Stall. Just say no. Screw with the bargaining team.

"Publishers don't hire this guy to get a fair contract," Robertson told the Albany local. As of mid-June, the two sides had failed to agree on any significant issue; Zinser's steadfast proposals, meanwhile, include wage freezes for some employees and pay cuts for others, elimination of union jurisdiction, and a "management rights" clause that runs to more than four pages of single-spaced type.

But Zinser has been beaten—he lost in Hilo and was canned in Bakersfield after the publisher tired of the battle—and Albany's union leaders say a mobilized membership can beat him again.



Hundreds of union employees stream through the Mercury News cafeteria to sign a petition to the publisher, urging that a new contract be settled before a strike deadline. Signed petitions also arrived by fax and messenger from the bureaus.

Display ad sales top minimum salaries

Contract	Minimum	After	Contract	Minimum	After
New York, NY, Times	1,384.05	2 yrs	Mt. Clemens, MI, Macomb Daily,		
Boston, MA, Globe	1,232.23	4 yrs	Daily Tribune (2)	764.74	5 yrs
Philadelphia, PA, Inquirer,			Montréal, PQ, Gazette	757.00	5 yrs
Daily News (2)	1,200.00	4 yrs	Bremerton, WA, Sun	753.12	6 yrs
Victoria, BC, Times-Colonist	1,139.55	5 yrs	Fall River, MA, Herald-News	750.67	4 yrs
Honolulu, HI, Advertiser, Star-Bulletin,			Albany, NY, Times-Union	741.28	4 yrs
Hawaii Newspaper Agency (2)	1,088.00	5 yrs	Lowell, MA, Sun	732.96	5 yrs
St. Louis, MO, Post-Dispatch	1,054.00	5 yrs	Sault Ste Marie, ON, Star	725.63	3 yrs
St. Paul, MN, Pioneer Press	1,048.78	5 yrs	Duluth, MN, News-Tribune	a-723.74	5 yrs
San Francisco, CA, Chronicle,			Canton, OH, Repository	714.53	5 yrs
Examiner (2)	1,007.03	6 yrs	Sheboygan, WI, Press	a-668.79	4 yrs
Denver, CO, Post	1,000.00	5 yrs	North Bay, ON, Nugget	661.46	2 yrs
Toledo, OH, Blade	996.60	4 yrs	Pueblo, CO, Chieftain	a-655.31	5 yrs
Washington, DC, Post	990.85	4 yrs	Sacramento, CA, Bee	649.00	6 yrs
San Jose, CA, Mercury-News	983.13	6 yrs	El Diario - La Prensa, N.Y.	646.03	3 yrs
Boston, MA, Herald	978.24	3 yrs	Lynn, MA, Item	634.33	4 yrs
Maui, HI, News	976.78	5 yrs	Yakima, WA, Herald-Republic	594.64	4 yrs
Baltimore, MD, Sun	976.00	5 yrs	Woonsocket, RI, Call	b-594.35	4 yrs
Providence, RI, Journal-Bulletin	960.91	4 yrs	Monessen, PA, Valley Independent	572.27	5 yrs
Akron, OH, Beacon Journal	937.00	5 yrs	Terre Haute, IN, Tribune-Star	b-561.40	5 yrs
Manchester, NH, Union Leader	932.73	3 yrs	Bellevue, WA, Eastside Journal	546.00	5 yrs
Delaware County, PA, Times	912.75	5 yrs	San Juan, PR, Star	a-528.00	5 yrs
Memphis, TN, Commercial Appeal	892.18	5 yrs	Wilkes-Barre, PA, Citizens' Voice	524.00	4 yrs
Eugene, OR, Register Guard	882.73	5 yrs	Pawtucket, RI, Times	498.07	4 yrs
Erie, PA, Times-News	875.27	5 yrs	Bakersfield, CA, Californian	495.00	2 yrs
Seattle, WA, Times	809.02	5 yrs	Norristown, PA, Times Herald	483.80	5 yrs
Pottstown, PA, Mercury	a-800.99		Kingston, NY, Daily Freeman	483.25	4 yrs
Portland, ME, Press Herald	795.96	4 yrs			
Hilo, HI, Tribune-Herald	776.68	5 yrs			
St. John, NB, Telegraph Journal,					
Times Globe (2)	769.22	5 yrs			
Brockton, MA, Enterprise	a-765.00	4 yrs			

Deferred Increases

Baltimore: \$21 on 6/25/00, 6/24/01 and 6/23/02.
 Boston Globe: \$26.71 on 1/1/00.
 Bremerton: \$15.06 1 on 1/14/01.
 Brockton: \$19.12 on 5/1/00, \$19.60 on 5/1/01.
 Canton: \$21.43 on 9/6/00.
 Denver Post: \$30 on 1/1/01, \$31 on 1/1/02.
 Duluth: \$21.72 on 1/1/01, \$22.36 on 1/1/02.
 El Diario: \$19.38 on 7/1/00, \$19.96 on 7/1/01.
 Erie: \$26.25 on 3/2/01, \$31.55 on 3/2/02 and \$27.99 on 3/2/03.
 Hilo: \$23.30 on 1/01/01, \$8 on 1/1/02.
 Lowell: \$12.36 on 8/25/00.

Lynn: \$25.33 on 1/1/01.
 Manchester: \$30.31 on 1/1/01, \$31.29 on 1/1/02.
 Monessen: \$11.76 on 5/1/00.
 Mt. Clemens: \$20.90 on 1/1/01, \$20.16 on 1/1/02 and \$19.42 on 1/1/03.
 New York: \$27.78 on 3/31/01, \$28.34 on 3/31/02.
 Norristown: \$14.51 on 6/7/00, \$14.95 on 6/7/01.
 Pawtucket: \$11.20 on 1/1/01.
 Sheboygan: \$20.06 on 1/31/01, \$20.66 on 1/31/02.
 St. Paul: \$30.80 on 7/6/00, \$31.73 on 9/27/01.
 Terre Haute: \$14.03 on 8/16/00, \$14.38 on 8/16/01.
 Toledo: \$17.18 on 9/22/00, \$10 on 3/22/01, \$17.20 on 9/22/01, \$11.45 on 3/22/02 and \$17.24 on 9/22/02.
 Washington: \$11.45 on 2/26/01.

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

Logjam broken

Continued from page 1

make top minimum wages for Merc reporters—at \$1,054.02—the second-highest in the West, second only to Honolulu and ahead of San Francisco. But given the high cost of living in Silicon Valley, a vocal minority argued at a two-hour ratification meeting that it still wasn't enough. Others had trouble reconciling low single-digit wage increases with parent company Knight-Ridder's double-digit increases in profitability.

The Guild should have done more to publicize the disparity

between "obscene" executive salaries—CEO Tony Ridder got a 37% increase last year—and the small raises being offered to union workers, charged Glenda Chui, from the editorial department. Teresa Hennessy of classified insisted the settlement is "ludicrous" and wondered, "Why aren't we as a union trying to get annual cost-of-living increases?"

But as Jackson observed, getting a better deal would have required hitting the streets. And as the 85% vote in favor of ratification indicates, the great majority of union members liked the package.

TNG backing JOA

Continued from page 1

agreement, although they may be offered buyouts or job transfers.

A written version of the agreement is expected within the next month, to be followed by meetings with Guild members to explain the details. A ratification vote should be scheduled by September, according to Simmons.

While creation of the Denver JOA seemed to be rushing toward approval, the dissolution of a similar arrangement in San Francisco remains in limbo pending a decision in a private lawsuit. And that decision seems to have been delayed because of repeated attempts by U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker to determine what antitrust attorneys at the Justice Department thought of Hearst's attempts to buy the San Francisco Chronicle.

The apparently reluctant answer? That the Justice Dept.

stopped its investigation after learning of Hearst's proposed sale of the San Francisco Examiner to the Fang family, which it concluded would be sufficiently competitive to allay antitrust concerns.

The lawsuit before Walker, filed by failed Examiner bidder and Fang enemy Clint Reilly, contends that the sale of the Examiner is a sham designed to give Hearst a lucrative monopoly. Initially dismissed as a publicity stunt, the case has in fact elicited a wealth of information embarrassing to both Hearst and the politically prominent Fangs, including Hearst's proposed three-year, \$66 million subsidy to Ted Fang to take the Examiner off its hands.

Elsewhere, meanwhile, the fate of a third JOA likewise remains uncertain, as potential buyers of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin—including a group of employees—continue reviewing financial records.

Labor round-up

Crossed wires

It's a jungle out there. The world's biggest telecommunications deal—the proposed \$124 billion merger of WorldCom and Sprint—disintegrated when the U.S. Justice Dept., citing its threat to long-distance and internet competition, said it would sue to block the combination. Separately, the CWA has filed an unfair labor practice charge against the third major long-distance provider, AT&T, over its failure to abide by a commitment to stay neutral on union organizing within its wireless, cable and local service divisions. CWA and IBEW officials, meanwhile, are forecasting difficult contract negotiations at Verizon—formerly Bell Atlantic—because of the company's reneging on promises made in the current pact, due to expire Aug. 5. And CWA officials are adopting a cautious wait-and-see attitude toward the ongoing acquisition of largely unionized U S West by non-unionized Qwest.

Permatemp rebellion goes national

The revolt of the permatemps, first given national prominence by WashTech, has taken another leap forward with the recent formation of the National Alliance for Fair Employment. A network of workplace and advocacy groups—including WashTech, the AFL-CIO, 9to5 and the National Association of Working Women—the new alliance was formed to fight unequal treatment of so-called “contingent” employees, who by some estimates comprise nearly a third of the workforce. Meanwhile, on a related note, a Washington Court of Appeals affirmed that a company leasing its workers from a staffing agency nevertheless must pay their worker compensation premiums—even though the leasing agreement specifies that the workers are employed by the leasing company for purposes of worker compensation—because it controlled the workers' physical conduct.

Actors' strike gathers momentum

Contract negotiations between television advertisers and actors represented by SAG and AFTRA were scheduled to resume yesterday, following an increased pace of demonstrations nationwide and a steady defection of major advertisers, who have struck side deals to keep the cameras rolling. CWA and IBEW workers joined the actors in rallies July 11 against AT&T to protest its use of non-union actors, and several dozen SAG and AFTRA members have started taking classes in civil disobedience. Meanwhile, Lincoln Mercury, Yahoo!, Pepsi Cola, Chevrolet, America Online, Toyota, McDonald's and hundreds of smaller companies have signed interim agreements with the unions so they can keep producing commercials with unionized talent.

Senate joins in ergonomics rule delay

Following the example set by the House, the U.S. Senate voted largely along party lines June 23 to prohibit OSHA from issuing new ergonomic standards for at least another year. The action came as an amendment to a bill for next year's funding of the Dept. of Labor, but faces a promised presidential veto. On a related note, the FDA announced it has entered into a formal partnership with the cell phone industry to underwrite new studies into the possible health hazards of the instruments.

Wage increases on upward trend

The Bureau of National Affairs reports that wage increases in the first half of 2000 averaged 3.9% for the first year of newly negotiated contracts, compared with 2.8% in the first 28 weeks of 1999. Manufacturing contracts provided a weighted average increase of 3.4%, compared with 3.1% in 1999, while the weighted average increase in the non-manufacturing sector (excluding construction) was 4.1%, compared with 2.5% percent in 1999.

Two new resources available

Locals and TNG-CWA members searching for help in setting up websites can get it from a new 48-page manual prepared by CWA's research department, the “Guide to Establishing and Maintaining Websites.” Copies were mailed to locals in early June, but the guide also is available online, at www.cwa-union.org/about/local_web_manual.asp. Separately, anyone looking for a reliable source of union-made products should go to www.look4unionlabel.com, which is developing a full-blown shopping catalogue across a rapidly growing spectrum of consumer goods.

Journalists, academics find common ground

Judging by a recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, the American Association of University Professors would be the first to concede it's not a dynamic labor organization. Its higher education membership rolls are less than half those of the NEA and AFT, both of whose members are drawn primarily from grade-schools. And its collective bargaining arm, fewer than 22,000 strong, comprises less than half of the AAUP's already limited membership.

But even the ivory tower is not immune to the commoditizing forces that afflict doctors, journalists and other professionals. And as AAUP members have watched their graduate teaching assistants organize—typically with non-academic unions, and often with industrial unions at that—they've belatedly realized their organization risks becoming irrelevant.

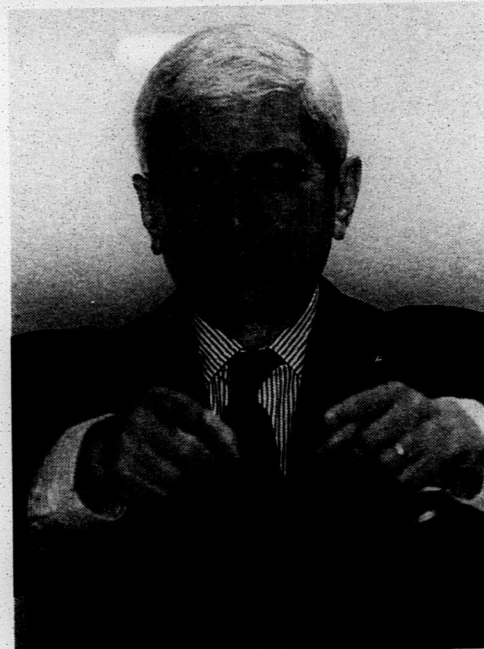
The answer? An increased emphasis on partnerships and joint ventures, such as last month's precedent-setting co-sponsorship of an AAUP annual conference by an outside organization, TNG-CWA. Meeting at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., the academics were addressed not just by CWA President Morton Bahr and TNG President Linda Foley, but by more luminaries—Stephen Jay Gould, Marvin Kalb, Nadine Strossen—than are usually attracted to the event, according to the Chronicle article. [See page 6 for related item.]

Disparate though academics and journalists may seem at first blush, both share values and professional goals that were summarized by the conference's working title, “Intellectual Work and Freedom.” And as noted in a joint statement issued at the end of the four-day meeting, such a meeting of minds is hardly new: in 1953, Washington Post editorial writer Alan Barth addressed the AAUP's 39th annual meeting and observed that both groups have as a central mission the task of challenging complacency. Both, he warned, have to guard against efforts “to change our function from challenging popular prejudices to mere reflection of them.”

Barth had in mind primarily the threat posed by congressional investigating committees, but his concern for intellectual freedom applies equally well to an era in which the profit motive is trumping all other values. As summarized 47 years later by Foley, “It's all becoming commercialized. It's all for sale.”

Examples of the rush to commercialization were provided in back-to-back workshops that addressed the corporatization of journalism and of the university. Geneva Overholser, former editor of the Des Moines Register, detailed the rapid surge in the profitability of that newspaper after Gannett bought it in 1985—accomplished, in part, by “lopping off readers, not by the handful but 20,000 here and 20,000 there,” that advertisers weren't interested in reaching. In the real estate business the practice is known as red-lining and it's illegal; in the newspaper industry it's considered good business, despite its erosion of traditional press functions.

But Guild members, for whom such observations might be old hat, may be less informed about a parallel development within the academic community. (Such



BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

An animated Marvin Kalb makes a point at a workshop titled “Changing Structure of Intellectual Work.” Despite an upbeat and sometimes humorous delivery, the former CBS and NBC newscaster pronounced the news business to be “in a parlous state” and lamented that he has no solutions.

lack of awareness is suggested by the revolving door between the two workshops: while the one on corporatization of journalism was attended largely by journalists and only a handful of professors, just the reverse was true at the one on corporatization of the university.)

The new paradigm for higher education, asserted Ellen Schrecker of Yeshiva University, is “the university as an engine of development.” Ironically, she pointed out, public support for higher education has eroded precisely as public demand has increased—although the demand is for credentialing rather than for education. With public funding in decline and endowments benefiting primarily top-tier private schools, public universities increasingly shape their educational priorities according to their success in attracting research grants—or worse. Some schools have in essence become venture capital firms; others have gone a step further by leasing entire departments, notably in biomedical research.

Against such threats, journalists and professors agreed, the only defense is a collective one. AAUP's new president, Jane Buck, once a staunch opponent of faculty unionization, insists now that it may be the only way to maintain academic integrity. Despite the profession's still privileged status, she warned her colleagues, academics are still “wage slaves who serve at the mercy of those who control the purse strings of our institutions.” Under the circumstances, “Bargaining is now an important way of maintaining the traditional values of the academy—and on some campuses, the only way.”

TNG-CWA Representative

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The worst censorship? Our own

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Considerably more than a lifetime after Herr Goebbels gave propaganda a bad name, we still tend to think of censorship as something imposed by an outside force. For constitutional scholars, that means the government; for those who worry about the corporatization of the media, that means Wall Street or Rupert Murdoch.

But consider the recent survey by the Pew Research Center, commissioned by Columbia Journalism Review, that polled nearly 300 journalists and news executives. Nearly 25% acknowledged having "purposely avoided newsworthy stories," while a nearly equal number said they had "softened" the tone of their stories to benefit their news organizations.

Or flip through FAIR's current issue of Extra! to a pair of stories about PBS's National Desk, a public affairs series that tackles heavyweight public policy issues without disclosing its extreme right-wing funding sources, including the Lynde and Harry Bradley, John M. Olin and Sarah Scaife foundations. The result? When examining the issue of public school privatization, for example, 38 of the program's 42 sources support the premise that the "business" of teaching children should be directed away from "failing" public schools and toward the "customers," or students.

As it happens, these two current examples handily illustrate the underlying themes of two recently published books that deal with the censorship issue from oppos-

ing viewpoints: whereas *The Business of Journalism* describes the variety of sins of omission, *Slanting the Story* delves into the forces that shape sins of commission. It's a deadly combination, one that even Goebbels would have admired.

The Business of Journalism, edited by former New York Times labor reporter—and now associate professor of journalism at NYU—Bill Serrin, benefits from a marquee list of contributors, each of whom explores yet another facet

of the complex issue of self-censorship. For Pat and Tom Gish, it's economic pressure; for Ronnie Dugger, it's the increasingly familiar if depressingly stifling hand of corporatism. E.R. Shipp writes about the conformist pressures caused by the desire for professional advancement; James Warren about the profession's ever growing clubbiness and the pressure to ensure access by not rocking the boat.

Vanessa Williams lends her insights into the peculiar prism caused by lack of newsroom diversity. Sidney Schanberg castigates the press for not being as critical of its own performance as it is of the rest of society, resulting in the ultimate act of censorship: a virtual blackout of news about the news industry as a powerful social and political institution.

It all adds up to a mosaic of seemingly discrete filters, of a variety of unrelated blind spots in the news industry's field of vision. But Jay Harris argues that there is a "master narrative" at work: "The narrative that constrains the news is not scripted from

the top by a cabal of corporate owners, but evolves organically, with often eerie cohesion, from a dozen factors common to the corporate news world. The narrative is part ignorance, part arrogance, part bias, part laziness and part the economic self-interest of media owners, publishers, editors, and aspiring reporters.

"As eyeballs are chased, profits reported, and promotions and bonuses announced, as the cultural barriers between editors and key corporate sources fall, as competition is bought out, as business synergies between news and entertainment are sought, a news channel of least resistance is dredged. Short of a crisis, it's damned hard to change the course of that river."

While Serrin's contributors describe a largely evolutionary model of self-censorship, Trudy Lieberman's tome outlines a far more deliberate campaign to—in Noam Chomsky's words—"restore passivity and obedience" to the press specifically and to society in general. The well-spring of that campaign? The capitalist class, no surprise, through its network of right-wing politicians, wealthy foundations and conservative think-tanks and policy institutes.

Lieberman, the director of the Center for

Consumer Health Choices at Consumers Union and a contributing editor to Columbia Journalism Review, traces the campaign's roots to the raucous 'Sixties and the startling success of the consumer, environmental and public interest movements—all of which constrained the capitalist class. Thanks to Ralph Nader and the legions that followed him, a roster of new regulations—the Truth-in-Lending and Truth-in-Packaging laws, the Fair Credit Reporting Act and others—meant that suddenly the government was being marshalled on behalf of the public to restrain capitalistic excess.

Thus began a decades-long campaign, not just to reverse the setbacks of the 'Sixties and 'Seventies but to delegitimize the government itself. The means of accomplishing that would be through molding public opinion. And the primary tool for molding public opinion was, quite clearly, the media.

Lieberman describes the process of co-opting the media in quick strokes before devoting the bulk of her book to several case studies to illustrate her thesis: the muzzling of AARP, the campaign to "modernize" the FDA, the attack on Head Start—and the remaking of Medicare. But the quick strokes are telling, such as her description of right-wing propaganda machines that cloak their ideology behind pseudo-academic labels: not "lobbies" but "institutes," not "political tract writers" but "senior scholars" and "research fellows."

Thirty years later, as the PBS National Desk example underscores, the campaign has been all too successful.

**SLANTING THE STORY
THE FORCES THAT
SHAPE THE NEWS
TRUDY LIEBERMAN**



Slanting the Story: The Forces That Shape the News, by Trudy Lieberman; The New Press, 208 pages, \$21.95

Labor thinking needs a touch of class

By Steve Early
CWA Rep., District One

In recent years, the new AFL-CIO has spent millions of dollars highlighting the concerns of what it calls "working families." The "working families" mantra has now become a staple of speeches by politicians trying to appear responsive to these concerns. (Usually they're Democrats, but even George Bush recently had a rally for "working families.") In New York, there's even a "Working Families" ballot line for labor-backed candidates.

To the extent that the term implies the existence of a constituency broader than just organized workers, it reflects a commendable effort to project unions as the voice of the unorganized, too. It also seems to be a response, of sorts, to the Republican right's claim to be the main defender of "family values"—and, by extension, of families themselves.

But one thing that "working families" rhetoric does not do is lift the fog of confusion that has long obscured the existence—and condition—of a working class in the United States.

"Class," explains economist Michael Zweig, "is one of America's best-kept secrets. Any serious discussion of it has been banished from polite company. Yet the sooner we realize that classes exist and understand the power relations that are driving the economic and political changes swirling

around us, the sooner we will be able to build an openly working class politics."

Zweig's highly readable and useful new book, *The Working Class Majority*, strips away the usual misconceptions about this topic. Employing down-to-earth examples and a writing style free of academic jargon, the author places current trends like wage stagnation, privatization, deunionization and the erosion of social programs within the broader context of class structure and conflict.

"We often think of class in terms of different status, income or life styles," he says, "and it is true that these differences exist. But the real basis of social class lies in the varying amounts of power people have—at work and in the larger society."

Using U.S. Dept. of Labor data, Zweig effectively rebuts the myth "that a vast middle class contains the overwhelming majority of Americans." In fact, more than 82 million people—or 62% of the total labor force—do the direct work of production, typically have little control over their jobs and have no supervisory authority over others.

Zweig's book examines the ways in which upward mobility, Cold War ideology, consumerism and racial divisions have inhibited the political mobilization of this majority on behalf of economic justice. The resulting "increase in inequality is not just a case of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer," even though many workers have in fact experienced a steady decline in

their living standards and quality of life.

Rather, Zweig argues, growing inequality of wealth masks a growing inequality of power. "One of the great weaknesses of the standard view of class is that it confuses the target of political conflict," he contends. When the working class disappears into the middle class—or into amorphous PR formulations like "working families"—"the capitalist class disappears into 'the rich.' And when the capitalist class disappears from view, it cannot be a target."

Striking Steel, by labor educator Jack Metzger, makes Zweig's point about the damaging political and even psychological effects of the "everyday theory of social class"—that is, the three-class model of rich, poor and middle that leaves the working class out of the picture. But Metzger does so in a much more personal way. The son of a steelworker, he has written both a moving family memoir and a detailed history of post-war labor relations in the steel industry, with a particular focus on the Steelworkers' four-month nationwide strike in 1959.

In Metzger's view, the 'Fifties were "the golden age of the American working class," an era when shop floor power and pride, steadily rising living standards and solidaristic blue-collar communities—like his hometown of Johnstown, Pa.—provided a bulwark against such hostile cultural values as competitive individualism. "It was a time," he writes, "when the working class sense of possibility was large, and there was

a unity and coherence to working class life that is not there today."

Many social and economic forces over the past 40 years have eroded that collective identity. Metzger lays particular blame on the "cultural hegemony" of the "professional middle class," both its conservative "managerial-technical wing" and its more liberal "cultural-communications" segment.

Operating within a framework established by "the power of the market and Big Money," middle-class professionals dominate politics, the mass media, entertainment, higher education and the arts. Through their control over "what to remember and what to forget," they have shaped an "official memory" of life in post-war America that renders

the working class invisible and depicts union influence as negative or negligible.

"Now that the American labor movement is indeed small and weak, it has begun to dawn on some of us within the liberal wing of the professional middle class how important labor was when it was large and strong," Metzger notes. "But the telling of history hasn't caught up with that perception yet."

As both Metzger and Zweig suggest, unions can help rebuild their strength by reclaiming the idea of class from the dustbin to which it has been consigned. Their books should be widely read as part of that process.

This review previously was published in Labor Notes and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered, by Jack Metzger; Temple University Press, 264 pages, \$22.95

BILL OF WRONGS, PART II

When intellectual workers collide with new economy, demographics

By Christopher Edley, Jr.
Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

Let me start in the following somewhat combative stance: What are the principal threats to the freedoms most essential to the work of academics and journalists in 21st century America? Are they born of corporatism, in its many manifestations? Well, those threats are real enough, and growing. But more threatening, I believe, is our arrogance. Our smugness. Our unapologetic claim of entitlement to rights and privileges that so many in the public simply do not believe we have earned.

What is the nature of these entitlements? For journalists, it includes the asserted rights to be wrong, to be sensational, to be libelous (provided not malicious). The assertion that such rights are necessary to guard core freedoms. But the public perceives that journalists take these misdemeanors to be not only protected activity, but accepted activity; not only beyond the reach of government regulation, but beyond the reach of civic criticism. These claims by and for journalists are important sources of the public cynicism and distrust so widely felt in relation to the media. And although this cynicism surely is part of a broader pattern of civic malaise, that does not make the trends innocuous or immaterial.

For academics, the essential entitlement is academic freedom—the freedom to determine who our students will be, what we must teach them and how. First Amendment rights of expression and association make the legal bedrock for our claims, but then there are the broader social goals of knowledge creation and dissemination built upon that bedrock. . . .

But are our privileged sanctuaries of academia worth the price the public pays? The tuition? The real estate tax breaks? The taxpayer funding? It is no surprise that state prison budgets are creeping up on, and in some places exceeding, state higher education budgets. It is no surprise that political actors are growing bolder in imposing their judgments on academic matters such as admissions and even curriculum. More is coming—mark my words. . . .

It is arrogance and hubris if we fail to perceive that in order to preserve the freedom and independence we deem so essential, the public must believe these freedoms are worthwhile. The fact that we believe it will not suffice in the face of deepening cynicism and distrust. And I say this for both journalism and academia.

Indeed, we must not underestimate the possibility of a major shift, tectonic in nature, transforming the character of our professions. In my generation, as young adults, many of us were vaguely envious of our peers who were headed into medicine. But consider the dramatic changes in that profession over the past 30 years. Managed care has brought a wholesale redefinition, for better and for worse. If public cynicism about us prevails, a generation from now the professions of journalism and academia likewise may be virtually unrecognizable.

Let me emphasize that my argument is not a legal one—that constitutional protections should be delimited by a cost-benefit analysis in some court of public opinion. No, but three things are clear. First, the law itself,

in the long run, is about politics. This is true because the fuzzy, disputed boundaries of doctrine are resolved by courts and based in part on how judges clumsily and inexpertly weigh the public policy arguments. It is true because politics determine who becomes a judge. It is true because, beyond the wars of constitutional doctrine, there is room for policymaking by federal and state legislatures. And finally, it is true because even the most sheltered of judges is a product of, and lives within, the social context. He or she will witness the broader civic discourse, and from that will judge in which direction points the arrow of history.

Second, the law is a blunt instrument, and also an imperfect shield. It leaves us ill-equipped to protect against the tyranny of petty insults and the oppressions flowing from corporatism—the budget pressure, advertiser pressure, alumni pressure, legislative pressure—whatever. The law is an imperfect shield.

Third, this imperfection exists in part because First Amendment rights, as non-lawyers often fail to recognize, are formally only a restraint on governmental actions. A newspaper has no First Amendment protection against powerful private voices or concerted private action—the civil rights protest against homophobic editorial practices, for example. And a professor at a private university has no constitutional protection against that university imposing some penalty for the professors' perusal of pornographic web sites—whether for personal or research purposes. Thus, there is a wide field for civic argument about the scope of our privileges. And it is there that we must engage the threats.

Let me shift gears, turning to the essential freedoms for the public, and the role of intellectual workers with regard to those freedoms.

I returned last week from a trip to Capetown, South Africa, where I attended an international conference on comparative race relations. The conference began with an address by Nelson Mandela. In his remarks and in his autobiography, which I have since read, it is absolutely clear that education is a tool of revolution and a tool of freedom. By "education" I mean much more than the academic studies customary for preparation in a trade or profession. For the revolutionaries, it was important that both the leaders and the people appreciate history, context, and the multidimensional character of their struggle.

Well, viewed from the long perspective of human history, the American experiment in democratic self-government, especially coupled with a liberal market economy, is itself a revolutionary idea. And, indeed, it is still experimental. We are still making adjustments. "Gay Pride Day at the CIA" is a headline in every newspaper today because this development is dramatic evidence of our evolving perfection of the quality norm. The ascendancy of the Hispanic population will

rock our political and cultural assumptions, showing those assumptions to have been provisional. Racial segregation in schools and neighborhoods is actually increasing today, showing the persistence and powerful legacy of that most anti-democratic institution of all, racial caste. So we are in fact involved in a continuing revolution, in which our ideals must struggle against the human tendencies and social forces that would cause our experiment to founder and fail. To protect our freedoms and perfect our ideals in the face of all this, the public must be educated. How?

Consider this example. Most people in this audience will recall the 1996 Hopwood decision in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, striking down

a voluntary race-conscious affirmative action plan at the University of Texas Law School at Austin. In that opinion, the court wrote that while diversity is admittedly an important consideration for university admis-



Edley, co-director of The Civil Rights Project at Harvard, delivered these comments June 10 at "Intellectual Work and Freedom," a conference co-sponsored by TNG-CWA and AAUP. See story, page 4.

sions, attention to diversity on the basis of race is as irrational as attention to blood type. This court's reasoning raises two questions. First, what planet are these judges from? And second, who were their teachers?

On a related note, I cannot tell you how often I have a conversation with a 20- or 30-something year-old reporter or producer interviewing me on some race related matter with their mind virtually a blank slate—blank except for their sense that the greatest civil rights challenge of today is the oppression of white males. Again I ask: who were their teachers?

Well, clearly we were, and are, their teachers. They have learned in schools and from the news media, or they have not. If the public is not educated, then the rights of the public with respect to racial justice will be vulnerable to assault, or insidious erosion, powered by ignorance.

The same can be said for other essential freedoms, unrelated to race. Low voter participation and failed political reform, for example, are current examples that the health of our democracy is at risk because the public seems to have failed the basic course in American civics. It is only the work of journalists and teachers—we certainly can't count on the politicians—that can educate citizens in the responsibilities of citizenship.

There are, of course, essential rights beyond the familiar political liberties. In particular, I speak of economic justice. In the 21st century, this means inclusion of those who have been locked out and left behind. For intellectual workers, our contribution to these essential public rights must come through what we study, what we teach and to whom we teach it. Through our work we must promote understanding, and thereby promote inclusion.

This brings me to my final theme: the application of all that I have said to the collection of essential freedoms one might group under the heading "racial justice." I have three brief points to make.

The first concerns demography. I need not detail for this audience the sweeping

changes the next few decades will bring to the population makeup of our country. By mid-century there will be a nonwhite majority. This is already the case in several major cities, most large public school districts, and—soon—our most populated state.

To be candid, I feel sorry for those of you who are white. But you have had a good run. More painfully, I admit that I am very unhappy about the prospect of Hispanic-Americans soon outnumbering African-Americans—so, a few months ago, I married a Latina. I now feel that my bases are covered.

The new demography has parochial implications for our professions. A stunningly more diverse population means a dramatically different set of constituents. Whatever strategy we have for securing our legitimacy will have to adapt to that new reality. Of greater importance, however, are the implications for the social and economic fabric of the nation. . . . We should recognize that America's exploding diversity poses challenges in the century ahead which, if ignored or mishandled, will impoverish our dreams and rend our social fabric. . . .

Difference, and specifically difference based on color, will be the news story of the 21st century, and it should be the research topic for the century, as well.

Moving beyond demography and its implications, I come to my second, quite simple point. Our most important professional contributions to the preservation of essential public freedoms will consist of the stories written by journalists, the research and teaching conducted by academics, and the contribution these make to the advancement of racial and ethnic justice. We have a responsibility to define our burden of carrying the American experiment forward, and then to shoulder it.

Third, the essential freedoms we enjoy as intellectual workers will best be preserved by doing our jobs well. In part, that means serving the broader public through our contributions on the question of color, as I just suggested. It also means recognizing that in view of the demographics, it increasingly will be true that diversity and inclusion in our workplaces is an essential part of excellence.

At Harvard Law School, for example, we aspire to be not merely the best law school in the nation or in the world, but the best law school in the solar system. Of our approximately 75 tenure-track professors, however, there are zero Hispanics, zero Asian-Americans and zero Native Americans. This is scandalous, bordering on educational malpractice. Not because the skin tones offend some political aesthetic, but because the absence of diversity corresponds with deficits in the content of our teaching, our research products and our mentoring for a diverse student body destined to lead in diverse communities. Inclusion is an essential ingredient of excellence.

My conclusion, therefore, is that as journalists and academics we must earn our privileges, not because the Constitution thus conditions our privileges, but because it is prudent to do so. We cannot rely on the prescience of the founding fathers, great as it was. To secure these rights we must ensure our contribution. And to ensure our contribution, we must be ever mindful of the crying needs of the society we serve.



LOOKING AHEAD

Trying to divine Guild's future

By Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer

The Guild's Executive Council began a discussion about the Guild's future at our spring meeting, with a goal of developing a larger dialogue within the union. Here are some thoughts on what I think our future might look like.

First, I believe we'll choose to stay a part of CWA. Although we can still undo our merger through June 30, 2002, I don't believe we will because the merger has been good for us. Instead of worrying about finances we've been focused on important things, like organizing and getting contracts.

What of the Guild's structure within CWA? We have already agreed to reduce our Executive Council by two more seats in 2002. We haven't agreed on which seats to eliminate, but there seems to be a developing consensus that the two at-large vice president positions will go dark. Although some of the other groups merging into CWA have chosen not to keep their executive councils, I think we'll choose to retain ours: the merger agreement gives us that right, and I believe Guild members expect it. We have the same right to keep our current officers—sector chairperson, president, secretary-treasurer and Canadian director—and I predict we'll keep those, too, with our direct elections. Maintaining our democracy is a big part of maintaining our credibility with our members.

What of our name, "The Newspaper Guild-CWA"? That's a tough issue, with many opposing a change. Others have suggested "The Media Guild," "The News Guild," "The Guild Sector of CWA" or even "Wired Workers of the World." Why change our name? Because it defines us—and limits us, too. We're already much more than newspapers, and in this age of synergy among broadcast, print and the web we continue evolving. The Communications Workers of America was once only a tele-

phone union, and called itself the National Federation of Telephone Workers. By changing its name it allowed groups like ours to be comfortable in a union that is now about one-half telephone workers.

There's something even more important to consider. Various groups of media workers have merged into CWA for greater strength. We need to work closely with those workers, with the eventual goal of one media sector. It seems inevitable, and if you think in terms of what is best for our members, it is desirable.

Turning to other issues, I believe our locals will place increased emphasis on organizing new members. Just as our locals have accepted membership mobilization as a prerequisite for winning good contracts, so too they'll recognize that organizing new members adds strength to a local. Initial dissension about this, coming from those who think we don't have the time or resources for organizing, will be overcome by CWA's new program for local organizers.

How will collective bargaining change? I think the proposed remake of the Collective Bargaining Program—shaped by input from numerous Guild activists—will reinvigorate our ability to get and maintain strong contracts. The existing program, with its list of more than 100 goals, caused us to lose sight of what is most important in contract negotiations—working together—but our renewed emphasis on process and communication will change that.

That's all to the good, because I also believe that labor relations will get tougher before they get better. We're seeing even reasonable employers adopt a slash-and-burn approach to labor relations (witness events in both Albany and Eugene), but as we become more mobilized, and represent a greater density of media workers, employers will be forced to turn away from their

current destructive course.

Will political activity continue to be an important issue in the Guild? Yes. Some of our journalists have genuine conflicts that must be respected, and we'll continue to insulate them through programs like our Political Objector choice. But as hostility against the labor movement intensifies, many other members will demand an opportunity to be active. I'm certain the Guild will stay clear of endorsements, but I think we'll choose to work harder than ever on the issues.

One example of the increasingly politicized world we live in is the recent Appeals Court decision regarding Detroit, which effectively slapped a unanimous National Labor Relations Board in the face. The board's former chairman, Bill Gould, called the court's action "incredibly tragic," but it was more than that: a mere three Republican appointees to the Appeals Court hijacked the law. For this and many other reasons we can't ignore politics. And although we'll maintain a zone of neutrality for those who need it in the Guild, I predict that more and more members will choose to get active.

What next? What does most of this mean to the average Guild member, who doesn't sit around pondering our union's future? The choices we make as leaders can renew our members' belief in the Guild and can spur greater membership involvement. As activists, our members will continue to improve their work life and value the Guild.

Our two biggest challenges as a union remain the same as always: improving the

If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

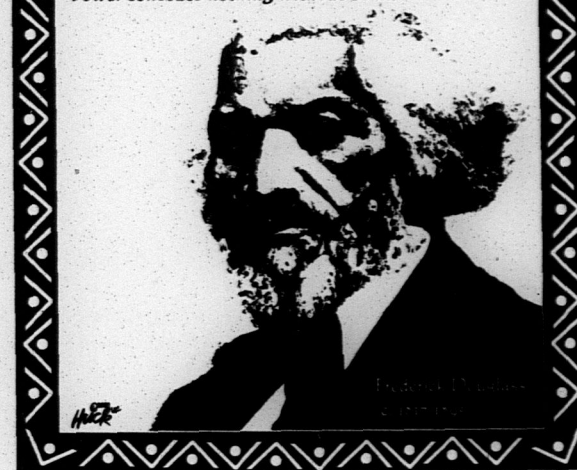
Those who profess to favor freedom, yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground.

They want rain without the thunder and lightning.

They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both mental and physical; but it must be a struggle.

Power concedes nothing without demand.



overall trust and belief of our members in their union and organizing new members, thus achieving greater density in the information industry. Yes, this is an exciting time to be a gatherer and disseminator of information—but does this new dot.com world really guarantee us a chance to be involved in making the decisions, or in properly sharing the financial rewards? The Guild can give us such assurances, and I predict it will.

The Executive Council has started this dialogue, and I hope this column further promotes it. Please share your opinions on our future with your representatives on the council, all of whose names appear in the masthead on page 8, as they prepare for a "blue-sky" or brainstorming session at their next meeting. You can also e-mail your thoughts to guild@cwa-union.org. The Council's thoughts will be reported in future issues of The Guild Reporter.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

Thanks to the Guild, in 1964 I got a 10 percent increase in pay, assured overtime payment, job security—in short, dignity in the workplace—when I moved from then non-Guild Canadian Press to the Victoria Daily Times as a reporter.

Thanks to the Guild, through a negotiated agreement last September with the Victoria Times Colonist, I was able to look forward to an early retirement. Thanks to the Guild again, when the company suddenly withdrew this tentative agreement, precipitating a strike vote, the tentative agreement was restored.

And at the end, it was thanks again to the Guild—for launching a group grievance when the company suddenly stopped the retirement incentive program last April, stranding the last six of us. One month later, the buyout program was back in place and we could proceed with arrangements for leaving.

Between 1964 and 2000, thanks to the Guild, I was able to join with others in union activity to significantly improve the working life at the Victoria newspapers and to

play a part at the regional and international levels. Assisting in the organizing of Canadian Press is a special memory for one who worked there for eight years when it was non-Guild.

I wrote -30- to my full-time journalism career on June 30. Goodbye to all my Guild friends in Canada and the United States, and good luck in all the struggles ahead.

—Roger Stonebanks
Victoria-Vancouver Island Guild

[Stonebanks was Western Canada Regional Vice-President, TNG, from 1973 to 1985. He also was a founding co-chairperson of the Victoria Joint Council of Newspaper Unions and served the council in numerous positions between 1966 and 1995, including president, first- and second vice-president and member or chairperson of various negotiating committees.]

To the Editor,

I'm a retired ITU member, now merged into the CWA and The Guild. After a lifetime of working with editorial staffs from

Baltimore, MD to Oakland, CA, it was most apparent that reporters really needed us typesetters and proofreaders to polish up the spelling, punctuation, capitalization and nuances of their journalistic efforts.

For example, from the May 2000 issue of The Guild Reporter:

• There is a horrible redundancy that reads, "May 1 was the one-year anniversary . . ." Anniversary means an annual recognition or celebration of an event; it couldn't possibly be a weekly or monthly anniversary, ergo the proper expression is "first anniversary."

• There is reference to "half-a-dozen," of which there is no such thing. There could be "half of a dozen," or better yet "a half-dozen." If you check your pocket change you will find "quarter-dollar" and "half-dollar," not "quarter-a-dollar" or "half-a-dollar."

• Regarding the headline, "Ink-stained wretches visit the ivory tower": they visit ivy-covered halls of academe, such as the "Ivy League" colleges in New Haven and Boston, or even Galludet University in Washington, D.C. The towers are not made

of ivory, they are covered with ivy.

Geez, you guys sure miss us old printers, huh?

—Bertt Lependorf

The editor replies: Yeah, we do, if only because you old guys also cared about this stuff. But we'll split this round with you.

Good catch on the anniversary faux pas.

Mixed call on the half-a-dozen. Our AP and Wall Street Journal stylebooks both assert that when one uses "half" it is not necessary to use the preposition "of," then add: "half the time is correct, but half of the time is not wrong." So, by extension, if "half of a dozen" is correct, so is "half-a-dozen"—although "half-dozen" is more economical yet. And may sound better.

We will, however, stick with the ivory tower metaphor. As defined in our "Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable," the term refers to "a place of refuge from the world and its strivings and posturings," and as such is frequently—if, admittedly, somewhat condescendingly—used to describe the often insular world of colleges and universities, ivy-covered or otherwise.

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: August 11.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

Publishers sucking up profits, papers

Quick-stepping to the rousing beat of rosy earnings reports, the newspaper industry accelerated its consolidation pace through June and into July.

Shareholders of Tribune Co. and Times Mirror overwhelmingly approved the \$6.5 billion acquisition of the latter by the former, for the largest newspaper transaction in U.S. history. The combination creates the country's third-largest U.S. newspaper company when measured by circulation, trailing only Gannett and Knight Ridder.

But Gannett wasn't standing still, either. In addition to snapping up 21 of Thomson Co.'s newspapers, it agreed to fork out \$2.6 billion for the six dailies owned by Central Newspapers. The deal was unusual because it adds The Arizona Republic—with week-day circulation of about 433,000—and the

Indianapolis Star to a stable of significantly smaller newspapers; the exception, of course, is USA Today. Some Star employees are represented by TNG-CWA.

Thomson's exit from the newspaper business, which it is abandoning as part of a corporate makeover that favors electronic publishing, means several Guild-represented units are ending up under new man-

Newspapers is buying The Register-Herald in Beckley, West Virginia, where TNG-CWA recently led an organizing drive with mixed results. And The Repository in Canton, Ohio, has been snapped up by San Diego-based Copley Press, which has waged all-out war on its unions for more than a decade.

Whether the new owners at these and other locations will recognize Guild representation or existing collective bargaining agreements is still unknown. But TNG-CWA locals at each of the newspapers have requested copies of the sales agreement to assess their situations and are preparing to assert their legal rights.

The flurry of deals comes at a time of strong profit announcements, propelled by a wave of advertising that has buoyed the industry far longer than even the optimists predicted. Second-quarter earnings at the New York Time Co., for example, were up an astonishing 21.8% over the same period a year earlier. Gannett's earnings were up 13% in the same quarter—on a 21.4% surge in advertising revenue.

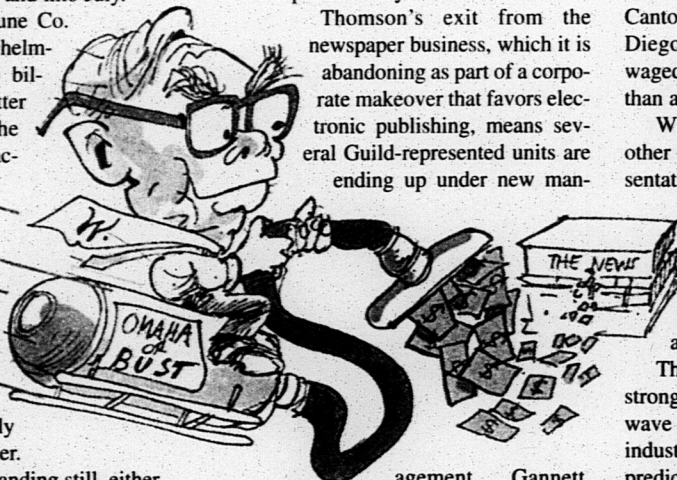
The major industry players, in other

words, have tons of cash with which to fund their acquisition drives. As summarized in late May by John Morton, generally regarded as the leading newspaper securities analyst, publicly owned newspaper companies last year had pre-tax profit margins of 22%, or more than twice the earnings rate of non-media companies. Which is why, he added, "large newspaper companies are so eager to buy up the remaining independently owned papers."

But amid all the frenzy there is one disquieting note: Warren Buffett, who can out-sniff a bloodhound on the trail of a loose dollar—and who owns the Buffalo News, whose 35% profit margins make it the most profitable newspaper in the country—thinks the newspaper business is inching toward its deathbed. The internet, Buffett insists, is to newspapers what cars were to buggies.

Those companies shelling out big bucks for newspapers? "They have their billfolds in their past," he told USA Today—a newspaper in whose parent company he once held a 4% stake.

Illustration courtesy of the Buffalo Newspaper Guild.



NEXPO a showcase for industry's euphoria

By Larkie Gildersleeve
Director of Research,
Information and Technology

Newspaper publishers and managers brandished renewed optimism at this year's NEXPO, the annual show put on by the Newspaper Association of America, despite continuing worries about declining readership and the migration of ad revenue to other media.

As if anticipating the more upbeat mood, the NAA outdid itself by producing its largest annual conference and trade show ever. The printed program was so large and heavy, most attendees simply tore out the pages for each day and left the rest in the hotel room. The June 17-20 extravaganza consisted of three conference tracks, but that must have been insufficient because it was

preceded by a three-track, four-day pre-conference special session—not to mention the ancillary workshops and seminars that ran parallel to the main program.

All the hoopla had the desired effect. Publishers gloated unabashedly over profit margins that handily exceed those of other industries. Panelists purred about their success in producing newspapers that are competitive for advertisers' dollars, attractive to new readers and that work well when integrated with broadcast and online products. Vendors in the exhibit hall reported vigorous buying.

Much of the success was attributed to a growing grab-bag of tricks, such as delivering targeted markets—by age, income level, residence or other criteria—to advertisers, a technique that broadcast media can't duplicate. Others included integrating print

and online advertising, squeezing out greater efficiencies through technological and production changes and improving print and color quality, making the paper more attractive to advertisers and consumers alike.

The implications of such practices for newspaper employees are numerous, of course, if scarcely mentioned at a conference like NEXPO. For example, newspapers will continue to go on the auction block at a rapid rate, as their owners jockey for market position and to take advantage of economies of scale through clustering. Some such deals may increase job openings; most will see payrolls decline.

Similarly, increased acquisition of new software and hardware will streamline production methods, further tempting employers to get by with fewer employees, if only to justify the capital expense.

A prime example of this was provided at NEXPO via the introduction of three different computerized ad-design programs, all of which promise that they can eliminate at least some sales staff. AdLizard, which is already available, and Pongrass and Mactive, which are to debut this fall, enable—or require, depending on your point of view—advertisers to create their own ads.

Each of the new systems allows an advertiser, working via an internet link, to order insertions and create an ad online by following a series of prompts. For example, a real estate agent can type in text, then manipulate his or her standard format—including the font, logo and borders—and insert photos of the property being sold. The client won't need to know technical rules for ad production—background technology will format the ad to print specifications.

Such internet ad packages are as accessible and convenient as fast food. And if they become widely used, internet ad systems could dominate classified and display advertising in print and online products in a very short time.

Such gee-whiz developments notwithstanding, there were a few nagging concerns to keep complete euphoria at bay. The old

standbys—principally declining readership and competition from new media—were in evidence, of course. But this year also saw a grudging acknowledgement of public concern about the corporatization of the industry and how that is influencing news coverage and editing decisions.

Yet the overall mood was one of greater confidence than in years past, perhaps exemplified by the publisher who proclaimed that almost every newspaper chain could take a drop in net revenues and still make "a lot of money."

Or consider wunderkind publisher Dean Singleton, who when asked whether he is worried about losing money to online media replied—looking pointedly at Stuart M. Garner, chief executive of Thomson Newspapers—that "there will be fewer of us at this event next year, but we will be doing well."

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

The Guild strike against the New York World-Telegram and Sun enters its seventh week, with the plant shut down and AFL and independent craft union workers refusing to cross around-the-clock picket lines. Meanwhile, the strike against the Arkansas Gazette—which started Dec. 17—continues. . . . Sam Eubanks, the Guild's executive vice president, urges a House judiciary subcommittee to use public funds to increase U.S. newsprint production; shortages are so severe they're blamed for the closing or merging of 26 newspapers since the war.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The Guild's 42nd annual convention calls on TNG to "move with all prudent speed toward eventual merger" with the ITU and to continue working for "closer relationships among all unions in shops where there are Guild members." . . . TNG also is directed by the convention to explore the possibility of establishing an industry-wide pension plan, to follow Guild members as they change employers.

Ten years ago this month:

Convention delegates nix a proposal to make the event a biennial affair and endorse a bill to repeal the Newspaper Preservation Act, calling it a "mockery" of antitrust law. . . . Convention delegates join an informational picket line outside Reuters, which has stonewalled contract negotiations for months while seeking numerous concessions. . . . TNG's International Pension Fund reports a 17.1% return for the previous year.

THE GUILD Reporter

Volume 67, Number 7

July 21, 2000

Official publication of
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DAYBOOK

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

Western District Council,
Oct. 13-15, Eugene, Ore.



Printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co.