THE GUILD
Reporter

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The bloom is off the Blethen rose
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TNG-CWA delegates at work at the first CWA convention of the new millennium.

CONVENTION 2000

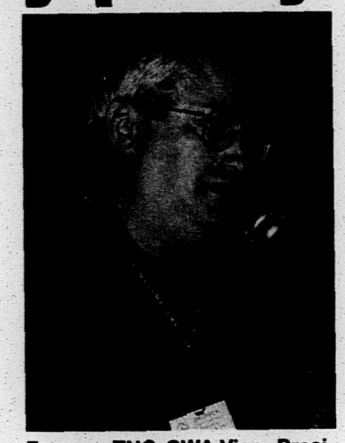
Bargaining revamp ok'd, strike pay policy debated

This year's TNG-CWA exercise in union democracy, held Aug. 24-29 in Anaheim, Cal., was the usual carefully crafted series of speeches, resolutions and celebrity appearances, including Democratic vice-presidential hopeful Joe Lieberman.

And then there were the unscripted moments, as usual.

In terms of Guild-wide impact, the most important piece of business before delegates at the TNG sector conference was a sweeping revision of the union's bargaining program. The product of months of work by a committee of leading Guild activists, the revised program had already been vetted by the TNG executive council and at district council meetings, and its outlines had been sketched out in prior issues of The Guild Reporter. So the only news would have been if the proposal had provoked a sudden groundswell of opposition. It didn't: the revisions were adopted unanimously.

In conjunction with the revisions, TNG-CWA's 146 conference delegates received a comprehensive manual that incorporates the program and includes information on bargaining procedures, strike policy, contract information and a report on the news industry. (The manual will be mailed to locals that did not have delegations at the conference.)



Former TNG-CWA Vice President Tom Thibeault, accepting the Guild Service Award.

In response to a question about freelance workers and their participation in the bargaining program, TNG-CWA President Linda Foley said TNG intends to convene a working group of freelance and Guild represented independent contractors to help convert the program's principles into strategies that will assist workers who don't have access to collective bargaining.

Although most of the time and substance of the sector conference was devoted to collective bargaining, most of the controversy came from the finance and administration committee, chaired by Local 31245 President Bob Jordan.

The conference adopted a committee recommendation to give locals the option of substituting a benefit payment at the end of the first week of a strike in lieu of a benefit increase in the fifth week. The option became available when the CWA Members Relief Fund, from which strike benefits are paid, recently increased the $200 weekly benefit to $300 after four weeks on strike. Under MRF rules, the first strike benefit is paid on the 15th day of a strike. The sector conference's action will allow Guild strikers, whose locals opt for it, to get a benefit payment after seven days.

A more controversial issue surfaced when Canadian delegates raised a question regarding pay-

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JOA WATCH

Buyers line up in Hawaii

Justice okays Denver deal; life gets weird in San Francisco

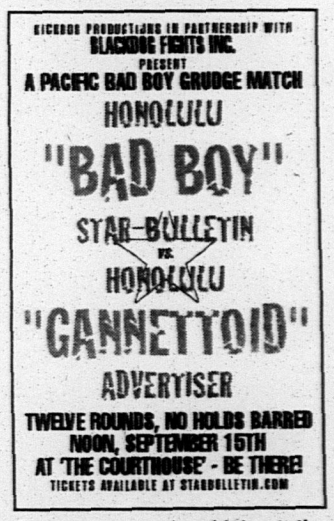
After months of anxiety and nervous speculating that there wasn't enough on the table to attract a buyer, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin got a big dose of good news: at least three—and maybe more—suitors have lined up, including David Black of British Columbia, who is vowing to invest "tens of millions of dollars" in the newspaper.

Federal magistrate Barry Kurren was to announce by Sept. 15, as this issue of The Guild Reporter went to press, whether any of the bids were viable. But Black's proclamations suggested there's at least one serious bid in the bunch, which also includes offers from Hadland Communications of Los Angeles; and from the Hawaiian-based publishers of the monthly Kauai Business Report.

Black—no relation to Canadian "press baron" Conrad Black—runs Black Press Ltd., which owns 80 community newspapers in Canada and Washington.

While Gannett's attempts to end the Honolulu joint operating agreement may yet have a happy ending for Star-Bulletin employees, the bid by publishers of the Denver Post and Denver Rocky Mountain News to start a new JOA got a thumbs up from the

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Spirits are running high at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, where this mock poster appeared in advance of a judge's expected decision on a sale of the paper.

Temp workers gain right to join unions

In a decision with limited immediate impact but with profound long-term implications, the National Labor Relations Board has voted 3-1 that temporary workers should have a right to join a union. The decision reverses years of past findings, which required temporary workers to obtain the consent of both the temp agency that placed them and the company for which they were working before they could unionize. As a practical matter, such consent was rarely—if ever—given.

The NLRB's opinion, issued in response to two cases, M.B. Sturgis, Inc. and Jeffcoat Division, holds that temporary employees can be included in bargaining units with permanent employees if both groups are jointly employed by a "single user employer." It also allows temp workers to jointly bargain with both the workplace employer and with the temp agency through which their jobs were obtained.

Prompting the board's reversal has been a growing trend toward corporate use of "contingent" workers, with temps more than doubling their share of the workforce in the past decade. And while temps are a relatively small slice of the workforce, the parallel increase in part-time, contract and other "nonstandard" employees resulted in a General Accounting Office report this past June that highlighted the disadvantages of such working arrangements.

Titled "Contingent Workers: Income and Benefits Lag Behind Those of Rest of Workforce," the GAO report found that contingent workers are "much less likely"

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Washington-Baltimore gains four new units

Two unaffiliated unions representing employees of two labor organizations merged with the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild in August, adding 168 members to the local. Together with two other units organized earlier this year, WBNG has gained more than 190 members at new locations.

The Association Staff Union, representing 112 employees of the American Nurses Association, signed a merger agreement August 17 to become a unit of WBNG two weeks later. In balloting on affiliation, 85 percent of the voters selected WBNG. The remainder split between no affiliation and another union.

Almost all of the staff is employed at ANA's headquarters in Washington, D.C. The unit includes attorneys, staff representatives, researchers, accountants and administrative and clerical employees. Its contract with ANA, a professional association and labor organization, expires February 14, 2001. WBNG will administer the contract and bargain successor agreements.

On August 7, the Union of Staff Employees—representing 56 employees of the Association of Flight Attendants—signed an agreement to merge with WBNG as of October 1. USE's contracts with AFA, one covering Fair Labor Standard Act-exempt employees, the other for employees covered by hours-and-overtime legislation, expire December 31, 2002.

Ninety percent of USE members voting in the merger referendum chose to affiliate with WBNG rather than maintain an independent union.

Included in the unit are attorneys, negotiators, organizers, international representatives, safety and health researchers, accountants, secretaries and clerks. Most work in AFA's Washington, D.C., headquarters, with 15 employed in Chicago, Atlanta or Pittsburgh.

WBNG Administrative Officer Dick Ramsey directed both merger initiatives. Local representative Lori Calderone assisted in the ANA staff union merger.

Ramsey also won voluntary recognition for WBNG, in May, on behalf of 20 professional and technical employees working at the headquarters of the American Postal Workers Union. Included in the unit are staff attorneys, researchers, librarians, a safety and health specialist, managing and assistant managing editors, accountants, programmers and network administrators. All 20 in the unit signed Guild cards.

In addition, the staff of the National Coalition for the Homeless voted by secret ballot in a National Labor Relations Board election to be represented by WBNG. The eight employees in the non-profit's D.C. headquarters include the directors of field organizing and education; analysts in health, housing, and income policies, and administrative assistants. Seventy-five percent of the voters in the March election marked ballots for WBNG representation.

Fear, loathing in San Diego

When business reporter Mike Drummond gave two weeks' notice at The San Diego Union Tribune recently, the event was unremarkable. After all, eight editors have come and gone at the section over the past seven years, and the revolving door for reporters is spinning at near-hurricane speed.

But then Drummond wrote a six-paragraph note to his colleagues explaining why he was leaving—and that, apparently, was all too remarkable. A month after the president of the Graphic Communications International Union was arrested for leafletting outside the Union-Tribune building, Drummond was marched out of the newsroom a week ahead of schedule and told not to return.

The latest incidents mark an unceasing war on its employees by the Copley-owned newspaper, which succeeded two years ago in its decertification campaign against TNG-CWA and which has refused to negotiate a contract with its GCIU-represented pressmen since 1992. Two other unions at the newspaper also have been disbanded, in a concerted management effort to quash all organized resistance—even if that means trampling on free speech.

Drummond's letter, asserting that the question he heard most often—"What's wrong with the business department?"—was misplaced, insisted that a more appropriate question would be: "What's wrong with a newspaper that would allow this kind of turnover, particularly in a department covering technology and business during a global and local technology business renaissance?"

Of course, one of the problems with having business reporters is that they're supposed to know how to answer such questions. Drummond's response? "The problem is quite obvious—executive management's unwillingness to pay a competitive wage, despite the paper's substantial profit margin. . . . As one astute observer here put it, the paper is still paying salaries as if these were recession times. Alas, the times have a'changed."

But not, quite obviously, a management still gripped by a siege mentality.

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. . . but Bremerton is no picnic, either

The Sun in Bremerton, Wash. has never been known for its union friendliness, but now it seems intent on burnishing its reputation. The Pacific Northwest Guild has filed three charges of unfair labor practices against the newspaper in recent months and there are more than a dozen grievances pending. But the corker is a company claim that because of a petition it had received from a majority of its composing room employees, it no longer would recognize union representation.

Such a petition would not be a legally valid reason for the company to withdraw recognition, but The Sun isn't serious about it, anyway: it has never shown the purported document to TNG-CWA. "It's a simple, all-too-familiar theme: a corporation that treats its workers with contempt," observes local rep Liz Brown. "A company that forgets who makes its profits possible."

Management's guerrilla war against the union, including captive sessions and one-on-one meetings with employees, apparently started in response to an NLRB ruling last year that graphic artists should be included in the unit. The decision seemed to derail contract negotiations that had been underway for several months, culminating in management's unilateral decision to withdraw recognition. The local is awaiting an NLRB ruling in the matter.

Meanwhile, Brown adds, the company also has engaged in retaliatory behavior against a reporter who—with management permission—took a leave of absence earlier this year to do union work. On her return she was assigned to a new beat "that posed considerable hardship for her," Brown says, but attempts to remedy the situation were met with an "openly hostile" response. That, too, is the subject of an NLRB investigation.

In brief . . . .

A skunk by any other name . . .

. . . still smells, as evidenced at the Boston Globe, where management recently proposed a "new job category" of "staff correspondent." Staff correspondents, management said, would be assigned to suburban zones to cover town meetings and other local events—and would be paid significantly less than "reporters." Not so fast, replied TNG-CWA Local 31245, formerly known as the Boston Globe Employees Association: the "new job category" is just a lame attempt to introduce a two-tiered wage scale and therefore a contract violation. A grievance has been filed.

No atheists in this foxhole, either

Just as there are no atheists in foxholes, so there are few anti-union conservatives who stick to their guns when their livelihood is on the line: Boston Globe columnist Jeff Jacoby, an agency fee payer who makes no secret of his antipathy to unions, has accepted TNG-CWA Local 31245's help in filing a grievance. Jacoby, who received a four-month unpaid suspension in July for alleged plagiarism, apparently reconsidered his position after several weeks without a pay stub.

Denver thumbs up to JOA contract

As expected, members of the Denver Newspaper Guild overwhelmingly approved a contract negotiated with the Denver Newspaper Agency, with 85% of those voting in favor. The contract won't go into effect until the U.S. Justice Dept. approves a joint operating agreement between the Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News.

A Kennedy steps up for Providence

Contract negotiations at the Providence Journal have been stalled since February, when management refused to change an offer that was rejected by Providence Newspaper Guild members by a resounding margin of 354 to 28. Now Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy has received a taste of what union negotiators are facing: following his unsolicited offer to intervene on behalf of the Guild, Kennedy met with Belo chairman Robert Decherd and Journal publisher Howard Sutton and was told, in essence, that the company's best offer is the one still on the table. "I'm going to come down on the side of the union," Kennedy later said he told the management team. "The union is the heart of the paper, and I hope that you treat them fairly."

CMG wants your memories, photos

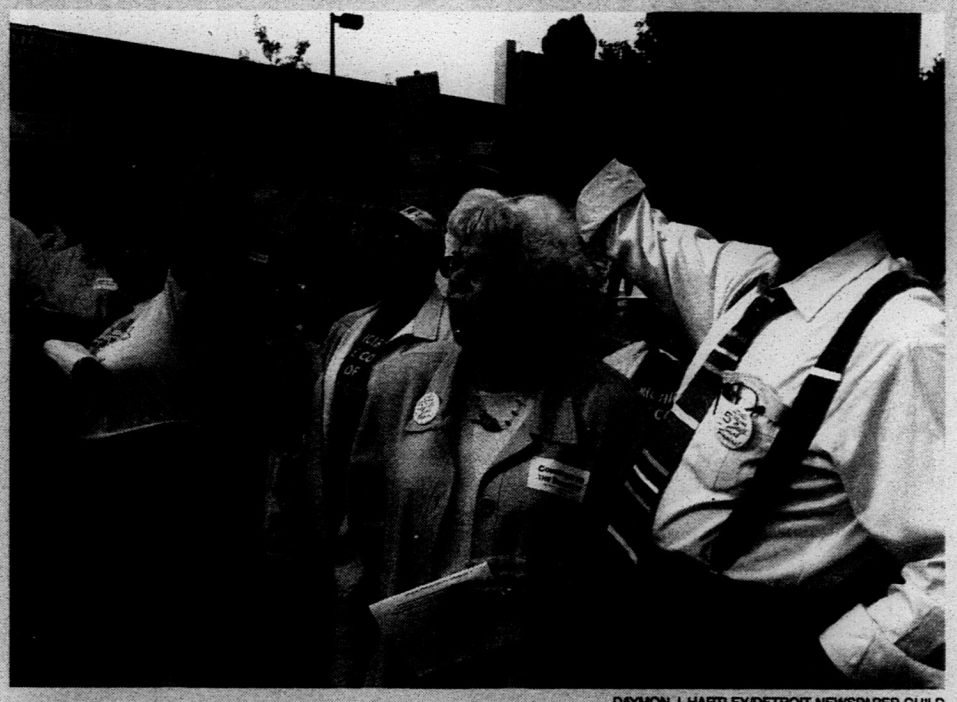
The Canadian Media Guild, gearing up for a celebration of its 50th anniversary, is looking for historical content for a pamphlet it is assembling. Especially desired are photos from the old Canadian Wire Service Guild, as well as from all the other unions that eventally merged into CMG, including both CUPE broadcast locals, ATPD, CTPDA, NRPA and ACTRA. Anyone with materials to loan is asked to contact staff rep Keith Maskell at 800-465-4149 (in Toronto, dial 416-591-5333) or at *keith@cmg.ca*

Donations sought for Sudbury strike

Delegates to the TNG-CWA Sector Conference in Anaheim pledged and collected nearly $10,000 (U.S.) to support 33 child and youth workers on strike in Sudbury, Ont. The strikers, members of the Northern Ontario Newspaper Guild, walked off their jobs Aug. 8 to protest low wages and appalling working conditions at Northern Lights Program, an operator of group homes for troubled boys between the ages of 8 and 17. The strike for an initial contract is TNG Canada's first since the merger with CWA. Additional donations should be sent to: Northern Ontario Newspaper Guild; P.O. Box 472; Sudbury, ON P3E 4P6.

Guild Reporter racks up awards

Okay, so this can be filed under the "tootin' our own horn" category—but as the big boys put it, if we don't, who will? The Guild Reporter has racked up half-a-dozen prizes in the International Labor Communications Association's annual awards competition, including three honorable mentions (for general excellence, feature story and front page), two seconds (for column and series) and one first, for a profile that ran last December on Heywood Broun. The awards are to be presented at a Nov. 17 luncheon in Washington, D.C.



DAYMON J. HARTLEY/DETROIT NEWSPAPER GUILD

Raising a little hell

Congressman John Conyers and Detroit city councilwoman Maryanne Mahaffey cheer on speakers at an Aug. 22 rally in front of the Detroit News building, held to expand a boycott of the News and the Detroit Free Press; below left, locked-out reporter Steve Jones sings one of several songs he has written for the struggle; below right, locked-out workers and supporters march around the building.

More than 400 protesters turned out for the rally, which was sparked by a recent federal decision reversing an NLRB ruling on behalf of the former strikers. A second bad piece of news was delivered Aug. 2, when a federal district court judge issued an injunction blocking the NLRB from prosecuting 59 allegations of unfair labor practices by the newspapers; the trial in that case had been scheduled to begin Sept. 13.

All three of the judges who reversed the NLRB in its determination that the newspapers precipitated the strike through unfair labor practices were Republican appointees, as was the district court judge, prompting several rally speakers to urge a large voter turnout this November. This election, averred Conyers, "is the most important in the 35 years I have been in Congress."





Local president, laid off second time, resigns

Nine years after taking office, Tim Martell has resigned as president of the Fredericton Typographical Union, local 30664 of TNG Canada-CWA—and has been laid-off a second time.

In the latest twist to the New Brunswick saga that began with his first lay-off, two years ago, Martell told local members he was stepping down to dispel rumors that he was "hijacking negotiations" between the FTU and The Daily Gleaner. Moments later, new FTU President Stephen Llewellyn appointed Martell temporary secretary-treasurer "to ensure a sense of continuity and to keep the money flowing." The local previous treasurer resigned earlier this year to accept a non-bargaining unit position with the company.

The announcement was made shortly before presentation of the company's latest contract offer to Guild members. The offer, presented without recommendation by the bargaining committee, included provisions for an 8% wage increase over six years as well as several givebacks, including elimination of sick pay, double time and of the composing department. The proposal was rejected, 16 to 10.

Despite its ongoing standoff with the union, the Irving-owned daily recently unveiled a restructuring plan that includes a new "pod" system for creating advertisements. The pod approach, said Gleaner publisher Victor Mlodecki, would end the "antiquated, assembly-line style composing room," giving the company a pretext for refusing to recognize the work as falling within the bargaining unit's jurisdiction.

"The company's position is that (the union) represents the 'composing room,' not the work that is performed there," Martell explained. "However, if they ever decide to call one of their rooms a 'composing room' again, it's all ours," he added, sarcastically.

Because Mlodecki's restructuring called for an immediate reduction in staff in the composing department, layoff notices were given to Martell and fellow printer Ann Lingley. Ironically, it was the September 1998 layoff of Martell and Lingley—just one month before the expiration of the last contract—that precipitated a rash of grievances and charges that have yet to be settled. The pair was rehired in January of this year, following a December, 1999 interim order by the New Brunswick Court of Queen's Bench.

Following the latest notices, Lingley resigned at the end of July. Martell was laid off—without severance—August 5.

At least five more positions are to be eliminated in the composing room, through early retirement and severance. The remaining four composing members are to be offered jobs in non-bargaining unit positions. Although management has refused to discuss the terms and conditions of these jobs with the union, potential employees have been assured they will continue to work at current pay rates until next January, at which time their salaries will be "reconsidered."

The restructuring, management has said, will be completed by Oct. 7, regardless of whether the company and union resolve their differences. The next round of bargaining is scheduled for Sept. 20.

Meanwhile, FTU and Gleaner representatives await a decision of the New Brunswick Labour & Employment Board regarding the union's charges of unfair labor practices, bargaining in bad faith and intimidation of union witnesses. Hearings on the claims, which date back to the fall of 1998, concluded in July.

Canadian media workers squeezed from all sides

Canadian media workers may be forgiven if they feel a bit beseiged: they are, after all, getting it from all sides.

First there's the threat of cultural imperialism, forever implicit in the looming presence of the United States. It's bad enough that Canadians get bombarded with an incessant flow of American media content, but now the messenger himself may be a foreigner.

Case in point: the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.'s decision to import American announcer Rich Waltz from FoxSportsNet to call a number of Toronto Blue Jays home games. As pointed out by a Canadian Media Guild staffer, "This would mark the first time in CBC history that a baseball game played by a Canadian team in a Canadian city would be called entirely by non-Canadians."

CBC said it made the move because most of its on-air talent is in Sydney for the Olympics. But as the CMG pointed out, numerous other CBC sportscasters are chomping at the bit for on-air time, as is a large pool of available freelance talent. Adding insult to injury, the broadcaster claimed to be ignorant of the federal requirement that it consult with its unions before hiring foreign workers.

So it goes, in an incident that reflects the steady erosion of a once-proud Canadian institution.

Meanwhile, CBC's decision not to promote a sportscaster from within follows by only a couple of weeks its short-changing of a training fund for employees who are being restructured out of their jobs. Roughly 235 CBC jobs are being eliminated, but only $500,000 has been set aside for retraining, which CMG President Lise Lareau says is less than half of what's needed.

"Senior CBC managers have told us they didn't use a head count or any other specific method to determine the amount of money needed," Lareau said. "They've told us they decided on $500,000 simply because it seemed like a reasonable amount of money."

The problem of creeping Americanism parallels the rise of corporatism, which in Canada has been accelerating at breakneck speed. Only weeks after Conrad Black announced that he was selling virtually all his Hollinger newspapers to broadcast giant CanWest Global Communications, the Thomson family and BCE—parent company of Bell Canada—reportedly are hammering out a multi-billion dollar alliance that would merge some of the country's most prominent media and internet assets. "Merger" quite often means "layoffs," as economies of scale—not to mention a drive to lower costs to justify such deals economically—lead to pruned payrolls.

The proposed merger, which neither group had confirmed as The Guild Reporter went to press, would include The Globe and Mail, the CTV broadcast network and BCE's Sympatico internet portal. Also potentially part of the mix are Toronto's professional hockey and basketball franchises—but not, it seems, the Toronto Blue Jays.

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

Union members urged to turn out the vote

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ment of strike benefits in Canada. TNG and TNG Canada leaders originally were told by CWA that all strike benefits were paid in U.S. dollars. More recently, CWA officials claimed it has been long-standing policy to pay benefits to Canadians in Canadian dollars, since per capita payments are made that way. (The Canadian dollar is worth about 35 percent less than the U.S. dollar.)

The sector conference unanimously adopted a resolution that "the commitment to pay MRF strike benefits in U.S. dollars be confirmed immediately" and that TNG-CWA, TNG Canada and CWA work together to seek "a permanent resolution of the issue."



Nestor Soto, UPAGRA

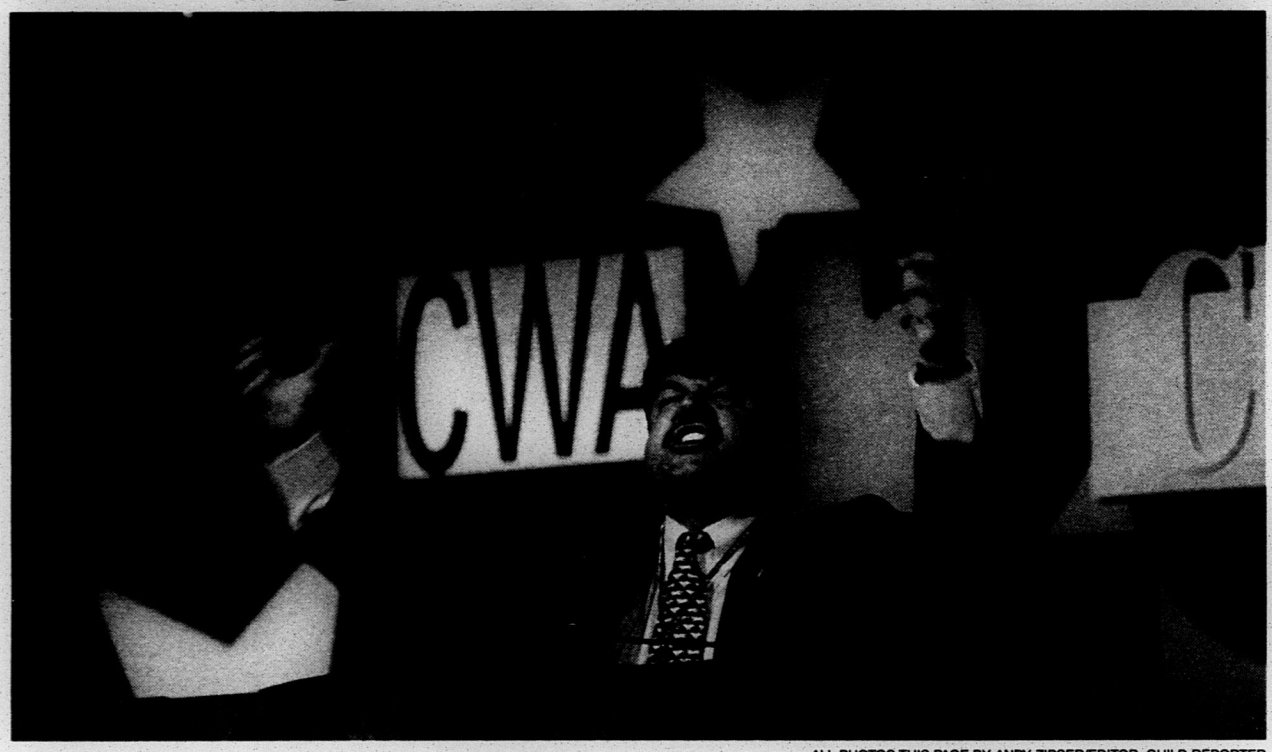
Meanwhile, CWA President Morton Bahr has agreed to keep the commitment to pay $200 U.S. dollars in place for now.

But the Canadians weren't alone in stirring the collective juices. The Puerto Rican delegation likewise generated controversy, at both the sector conference and at the CWA convention, with a pair of parallel resolutions calling on the United States to stop using the island of Vieques for bombing practice. Presented by UPAGRA President Nestor Soto, with assistance from an interpreter, the resolution puts TNG-CWA on record as supporting "the position taken by the Puerto Rican Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, the Union de Periodistas Artes Graficas y Ramas Anexas, the Government of Puerto Rico and the general public in support of the struggle of the people of Vieques."



Jack Norman, Milwaukee

As is often the case when politics and the Guild intersect, the proposal drew quick condemnation from a few delegates who said they feared loss of journalistic credibility. In the end, however, it was adopted by the conference with only a handful of robust "nays," and subsequently was approved by the full CWA convention.



ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY ANDY ZIPSER/EDITOR, GUILD REPORTER

Few stump speakers are as impassioned as Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer, here in full flower at CWA convention.

In other business, TNG-CWA delegates:

• Endorsed a June 11, 2000 statement, jointly adopted by TNG-CWA and the American Association of University Professors, that pledges the two organizations will work together in support of free speech, academic and journalistic freedom, protection of intellectual property rights and development of workplace democracy and diversity.

• Approved a resolution, also adopted by the CWA convention, urging TNG and CWA locals to hire unionized translators and interpreters "whenever possible."

• Urged each TNG-CWA local, when practicable, to em-ploy at least one full-time organizer; and to seek financial assistance, under an existing CWA program, for external organizing.



Lise Lareau, Can. Media Guild

The much larger—if no more lengthy—CWA convention that followed TNG's sector conference traditionally is tightly scripted, but this year had to contend with internal tensions caused by the uneven end to the Verizon strike. Chanting delegates from Districts 2 and 13 staged a united march into the convention hall, pumping their fists and waving banners, but cooler heads ultimately prevailed and CWA President Morton Bahr's pleas for civility carried the day.



Robert Jordan, Local 31245

If there was one major theme to the proceedings, it was that this year's elections—with control of the White House and Congress in the balance, but also that of the U.S. Supreme Court—are the most important in the past 50 years. Or 60 or 68. The point was hammered home repeatedly by Bahr and by CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling, by AFL-CIO Vice President Rich Trumka and by vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman himself, who stressed that the Republicans are no friends of the working class.

"To me, this election should be no contest: Al Gore is the best man for the job," Lieberman told the convention, paving the way for a CWA resolution reaffirming its Gore endorsement of last year.

As with the original endorsement resolution, a TNG-CWA voice was raised to abstain from political entanglements, with TNG Vice President Peter Szekely explaining, "To effectively tell the world about this election, we [as journalists] need to remain impartial and maintain an appearance of impartiality." But not all TNG-CWA delegates agreed, of course, with a considerable number supporting the Gore endorsement.

And in another show of willingness to grapple with political issues, TNG Vice President Jack Norman was the most impassioned speaker on behalf of a resolution supporting trade with Cuba in food and medicine. The same resolution was shot down last year, when the CWA convention was held in Miami—home to a large population of anti-Castro Cuban emigres—but moving it to southern California failed to affect the outcome: it still lost, by a lopsided margin.



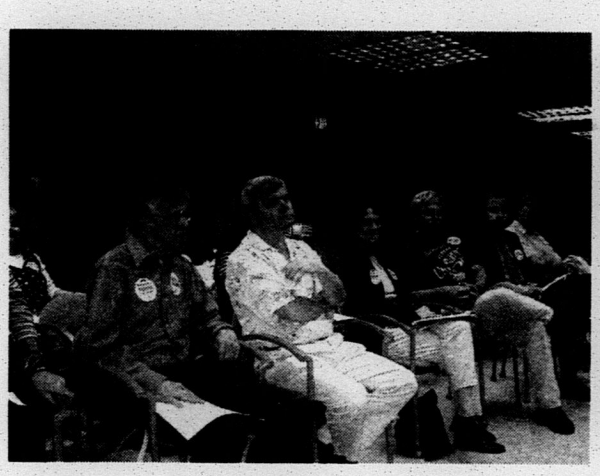
Arnold Amber, TNG Canada



The IAPE, TNG-CWA Local 1096 delegation, including (l to r) Tracy Karas, Al Venus, Secretary-Treasurer Virgil Hollender, President Ron Chen and Vice President Bernadette Prati.



TNG-CWA President Linda Foley greets Democratic vice-presidential contender Joe Lieberman.





NAOMI ISHISAKA/PACIFIC NORTHWEST GUILD

Three members of the Portland (Maine) Guild and former King County Councilman Brian Derdowski join the Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer bargaining team. Above right, Seattle Times zone reporter Keiko Morris addresses the newspaper's two-tiered wage system while wearing a "Remember the Maine (Guild Members)" sticker. Zone staffers are paid 15% less than the city newsroom.

Blethen's long-distance romance is on the rocks

Long-distance romances need special attention if they're going to flourish, but the Blethen family of Seattle doesn't seem up to the task.

When the owners of the Seattle Times reached across the continent two years ago to buy the Guy Gannett newspaper chain in Maine, TNG-CWA-represented employees of the Portland Press Herald and Maine Sunday Telegram heaved a collective sigh of relief. Of all the potential buyers, the Blethens seemed the most likely to continue an ownership style that viewed newspapers more as a civic trust than as cash-generating machines.

And so, as an expression of goodwill and to ensure a smooth ownership transition, the Portland Guild agreed to an unconditional, three-month extension of its contracts past the Nov. 30 expiration.

But the bloom is off the rose. After more than 18 months of frustrating "collaborative" negotiations that by mutual agreement were held behind closed doors, the local's leadership decided to show members just what is on the table—and by all accounts it ain't pretty.

"It was an insult," Ted Cohen, a reporter with 25 years' experience, told the alternative weekly Maine Times, as quoted in a leaflet now being circulated in Seattle. Although Cohen said he was prepared for some belt-tightening because of the rumored premium the Blethens paid for the paper, the company's proposed five-year contract goes beyond mere tightening: annualized raises of only 1.85%, an increase in the workweek from 37.5 to 40 hours, a tripling of employees' share of health care costs and a change in calculating over-time, from a daily to a weekly basis.

As frosting on the cake, the company also is seeking a "management rights clause" that would allow unilateral changes in job descriptions.

Realizing its collegiality had been interpreted as a sign of weakness, the Portland unit has resumed a traditional negotiating relationship: head-to-head, with frequent membership involvement and mobilization. The bargaining team also has reached out to its counterparts in Seattle, where the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild is in contract negotiations at the Seattle Times and Hearst's Post-Intelligencer.

Traveling to the West Coast to observe those talks, a group of Portland Guild members delivered a petition to publisher Frank Blethen that warns of sinking employee morale. "When the Seattle Times bought the Portland papers in 1998, you said that one of the things that attracted you was that we shared the same values," the petition recalls. "That should be as true today as it was then."

Akron maintains .com jurisdiction

Guild-represented employees of Knight Ridder's Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal voted 66-7 to ratify a three-year contract that maintains the unit's jurisdiction over on-line work. The new contract reflects the Guild's continuing jurisdiction in the wake of a corporate realignment that spun off Ohio.com from the Beacon Journal.

The contract bars publication in the Beacon Journal of editorial content generated for on-line ventures by non-Beacon Journal employees. It also creates a new job classification of e-journalist, whose responsibilities include reporting, writing and copy-editing.

Step increases provided by the pact are 3% effective Aug. 25, 2.9% next August and 2.8% in 2002, raising the key top wage to $1,021. Interns' minimum wages also were increased, from $300 to $350; as were student correspondents', from $325 to $350 in the first year and from $375 to $400 in the second. Sports statisticians also received separate wage upgrades.

The contract also increases the company's 401(k) match, from a maximum of 4% of an employee's salary to 6%, and increases an employee's maximum pre-tax contribution from 10% to 15% of wages. The number of 401(k) investment options also has been increased, from 4 to 15.

Other contract changes:

- Night-shift differential was increased to $7 per shift from $6.
- Maximum severance pay was increased to 52 weeks, from 50. But the company's right to withhold severance was expanded, from "gross misconduct or willful neglect" to "plagiarism, falsification of records, theft," intoxication, physical assault or damage to the employer's property.
- Medical and pension benefits wee extended to same-gender domestic partners on the same basis as spouses, "to the extent possible."
- Domestic partners were added to bereavement leave, which was expanded to five days, from three, for immediate family members.
- Notice of a reduction in force will be shortened from 90 to 60 days.

Temp workers win

Continued from page 1

that standard full-time workers to have employer-provided health insurance, less likely to be included in employer-provided pension plans and less likely to be covered by key laws designed to protect workers.

Not only does this disparity create a greater incentive for employers to increase their reliance on contingent workers, but employers increasingly are tempted to misclassify regular employees, the GAO found. Among the cases it cited: the WashTech permatemps' court battle with Microsoft.

The NLRB, in explaining why it had reversed its prior position, referred to the GAO study to buttress its conclusions about the "ongoing changes in the American work force" and the increase in contingent workers—workers, it contended, who have been "effectively denied representational rights guaranteed them under the National Labor Relations Act."

JOA two-step causes no end of anxiety

Continued from page 1

antitrust division of the U.S. Dept. of Justice. Its report, recommending approval of the JOA application without a public hearing, was forwarded Sept. 8 to Attorney General Janet Reno for her final decision, to be issued after a 30-day comment period.

Assuming Reno concurs, the two largest dailies in Colorado would be free to combine their business operations 10 days later, although a combined weekend section isn't expected until January. The agreement is supposed to remain in force for the next 50 years.

Meanwhile, an example of how such deals can have a shortened life expectancy can be seen in California, where the court-sanctioned dissolution of the JOA between the San Francisco Chronicle and the San Francisco Examiner has led inevitably to the next question: what to do with all the bodies? For while the Examiner's new owners say they'll be happy to consider job applications from existing staff members, virtually the entire newsroom is expected to take advantage of Hearst's offer to provide all Examiner employees with jobs at the Chronicle.

Although it's too soon to declare David Black, 54, the next owner of the Star-Bulletin, he's certainly shown a high profile recently, touring the building, giving a local television interview and meeting with advertisers.

Black reportedly bought his first newspaper, the Williams Lake Tribune in central British Columbia, in the mid-'70's and has since built up a chain of community newspapers with a combined circulation of 1.2 million and estimated annual revenues of a bit more than $100 million.

Described by some current employees as fair, friendly and straight-forward, Black also is reputed to be a hard-driving businessman who isn't necessarily anti-union but is most attentive to the bottom line. He also is politically conservative and has on at least one occasion used his growing media clout to push his agenda, raising questions about the editorial integrity of his publications.

But Black also is saying the kinds of things the Star-Bulletin's employees want to hear, expressing an interest in combining his bid with an ESOP and in adding 200 to 300 new employees. "The objective is to save the Star-Bulletin," he told a reporter. "You can't do that with one hand tied behind your back."

But the logistical problems of combining two staffs have raised anxiety levels in both newsrooms, especially among beat reporters and specialized writers: how many movie reviewers can one newspaper have, after all? Even under those circumstances, however, a recent memo from the Examiner's education reporter to executive editor Phil Bronstein broke new ground for hysteria: as reported in the alternative S.F Weekly, Julian Guthrie blasted a colleague as "worthless and generally negative," expressed her desire to be the Chronicle's chief education reporter, listed her seating preferences in excruciating detail and noted, "I'm not interested in joint bylines. I'm not interested in collaborating on investigative pieces or longer-term projects. . . . I want to win a Pulitzer Prize."

The Chronicle's chief science writer—and president of the Northern California Guild—Carl Hall defused some of the hostility engendered by Guthrie's chest-beating by distributing a parody that opened, "First off, I'd like to say that I want to be the chief science writer at the Chronicle. . . . I am especially intrigued about science stuff breaking every day in Paris, Greece, and the American Virgin Islands. Also Maui."

No telling who will be assigned to sit next to Hall, but the exchange illustrates the kind of emotional pitfalls that to a lesser extent await Denver's newsrooms and which have already dogged the Star-Bulletin for almost a full year. "Everyone understands there will be changes if we are purchased and go independent, but there's a general anxiety about how deep or fundamental those changes will be," reporter Ian Lind wrote on his website—before relaying a rumor that some staffers at the Gannett-owned Honolulu Advertiser have been feeling out the possibility of getting jobs at the Star-Bulletin once a sale is completed.

"Now there's a dramatic reversal," he observed, providing "a clear indication of how deeply the past year's drama has cut into morale or both sides of the building."

Labor round-up

Freelancers continue to raise hell

More lawsuits are being filed against companies that get paid for digitally reproduced work but don't pay the writers for additional sales. Joining the fray: a federal lawsuit filed in San Francisco Aug. 14 by a group of freelance writers against three online publishers, followed a day later by a similar suit filed in New York by the Authors Guild against five companies. The latter action claims the defendants, all of whom operate large computerized data bases for a profit, make unauthorized use of works dating back to 1978.

Wages don't keep up with productivity

The economy just keeps rollin' along, but pay raises—while strengthening—fail to keep pace. Weighted average first-year wages in newly negotiated contracts increased by 3.7% in the first 36 weeks of the year, according to the Bureau of National Affairs, compared with 3.4% for the same period in 1999. But productivity was up a robust 5.7% in the second quarter. The bottom line? Labor costs keep declining, corporate profits keep rising.

NLRB in limbo as election nears

As the Clinton presidency enters its twilight, the outlook for the National Labor Relations Board gets blurrier. Board member Sara Fox's term expired last December, when she received a recess appointment that will end when Congress adjourns next month; although Clinton has nominated her for a second term, the Senate has not acted on the nomination. Similarly situated is the NLRB's general counsel, Leonard Paige, whose recess appointment also will expire in October and whose nomination also has been ignored.

At least waiting tables pays

The strike of union actors seeking residual payments for commercials on cable is nearing the end of its fifth month, threatening to exceed the grueling 22-week Writers Guild strike against producers in 1988, but there are no signs a settlement will be reached any time soon. Although the two sides were to return to the bargaining table Sept. 13, the session would have been only the third since the strike began and came two weeks after SAG and AFTRA sought to resume the talks. Meanwhile, more than 150 high-profile acting celebrities signed a letter to AT&T asking that the telecommunications giant sign interim agreements with the strikers, and pickets have demonstrated outside General Motors' regional headquarters in Manhattan to protest its use of scab actors in commercials.

More World Bank, IMF protests ahead

More pressure on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is expected Sept. 26, when the sister agencies will hold a semi-annual joint meeting in Prague. Tens of thousands of demonstrators are expected to repeat the kinds of protests that buffeted the agencies when they met in Washington, D.C. this past spring, according to the Campaign for Labor Rights.

Federal judge muzzles CWA protest

When a pre-work meeting to discuss grievances at US West ran long, the company suspended two CWA shop stewards for conducting union business on company time. The punishment was so excessive—especially in light of recent labor-management stress at the company—that CWA members the next day wore black armbands in protest. US West's response? To haul CWA into federal court, where it claimed the armbands violated the contract's grievance and arbitration procedure. The judge bought the argument, issing a permanent restraining order that "absolutely prohibits" the union or its members from engaging in any kind of job action, including handbilling, wearing armbands or buttons or any protest activities that might put the company in a bad light. CWA has appealed.

Looking for those censored stories

Project Censored, who annual selections are reported in The Guild Reporter each year, is seeking nominations. A censored news story, according to its guidelines, is one that contains information the American public "has a right and need to know, but to which it has had limited access," presumably through self-censorship by the media. Nominations should be sent to *censored@sonoma.edu*.

Human rights group blasts U.S. labor law

Labor unions have long contended that U.S. laws are stacked against them, and for just as long have been dismissed by many policy makers as whiney sore losers. But now Human Rights Watch, long respected for documenting human rights abuses overseas, has turned its gaze inward—and found abundant proof that the unions haven't exaggerated.

In a 217-page report based on a year-long investigation and field research in more than a dozen states—including a visit with WashTech members—Human Rights Watch documents widespread discrimination by employers against union supporters; an imbalance that favors employers in communicating with workers; pervasive lack of on-the-job access by union members to their union representatives; and forced attendance and discipline of employees at captive-audience meetings.

More to the point, the group also finds that U.S. laws designed to protect workers from such abuse are either too weak or so rarely enforced as to be largely useless. Disputes take years to resolve, in a system susceptible to delay through numerous appeals; staff and budget cuts have hobbled the National Labor Relations Board, further increasing delays; and government intervention in disputes disproportionately favors employeers and penalizes union members. Moreover, millions of workers are denied even a theoretical right to organize and bargain; the effectiveness of labor's primary weapon—the strike—has been nullified by the permanent replacement doctrine; and U.S. laws prohibit workers in a labor dispute from seeking help from other workers through secondary boycotts.

There's much more to the report, "Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States," which may be read in its entirety on the web at *www.hrw.org*. But its most valuable insight lies not so much in its litany of woes, which have been detailed elsewhere, but in the filter through which Human Rights Watch views the world. "Many Americans think of workers' organizing, collective bargaining, and strikes solely as union-versus-management disputes that do not raise human rights concerns," the report observes. "This report approaches workers' use of these tools as an exercise of basic rights where workers are autonomous actors, not objects of unions' or employers' institutional interests."

In other words, the health of the union movement is an indicator of the health of democratic society overall—or as the report adds, "strong, independent, democratic trade unions are vital for societies where human rights are respected. Human rights cannot flourish where workers' rights are not enforced."

On that score, Human Rights Watch concludes, the United States is ailing. Although U.S. workers do not face the government-sponsored repression of death squads and forced labor camps found in some countries, they do have to contend with a low-grade form of intensive corporate warfare that includes spying, harassment, threats of various kinds, firing, deportations and other reprisals that have a cumulative effect of chilling constitutional rights to assembly and free speech.

The growing pervasiveness of this "culture of near impunity" can be seen in NLRB statistics, which counted hundreds of workers in the 1950s who suffered reprisals each year for exercising their right to freedom of association. That number climbed steadily throughout the 'Sixties, reaching slightly more than 6,000 in 1969—then tripled in the 'Nineties, hitting 23,580 back-pay orders in 1998.

As the report concludes, "workers' freedom of association is under sustained attack in the United States, and the government is often failing its responsibility under international human rights standards to deter such attacks and protect workers' rights."

'Strike of 21st century' ends with card-check recognition

In a successful high-stakes bid for a role in the so-called "new economy," some 87,000 members of CWA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers ended an 18-day strike against Verizon Communications in which they won card-check recognition for the company's wireless division. The CWA also won critical improvements in working conditions, including a 50% cut in forced overtime and limits on workplace monitoring.

The victory came on the heels of the largest union walkout in at least 20 years, and was generally hailed by the mainstream press as a revolutionary step forward by organized labor. But it didn't come without a major headache for CWA, with District 1 members returning to work three days ahead of their counterparts in Districts 2 and 13, ostensibly because of a communications breakdown. That led to a modern version of the War Between the States, with CWA members from the southern districts picketing Verizon facilities in the north, posing a quandary for their District 1 counterparts.

Perplexing though that was—and despite tensions that overflowed into the CWA convention, held just days later—the staggered settlement attained what many observers had thought impossible, a commitment by Verizon to recognize a union at its wireless division when it can produce signed authorization cards from 55% of employees in an appropriate unit. Such card-check agreements are both faster and less acrimonious than National Labor Relations Board-supervised elections, which often become battlegrounds for company officials determined to block unionization.

Only 46 of the 8,000 employees in the former Bell Atlantic mobile division currently are CWA members. (Verizon is the product of a merger among the former Bell Atlantic, GTE and Nynex telephone companies.)

As critical as the card-check issue was for many CWA members, so was the union's insistence that working conditions in the "new economy" not lapse into those of the *old* "old economy." That ran counter to the conventional wisdom, which holds that new technologies are developing much too quickly to be constrained by rigid, "old economy" workplace rules, virtually guaranteeing a confrontation.

One such issue was forced overtime. While CWA demanded that the company hire more employees, Verizon insisted it needed the "flexibility" of a smaller workforce—even if that meant many employees routinely worked 15 hours of overtime per week, often with no advance notice. New contract provisions prevent the company from forcing employees to work more than 7.5 hours of overtime a week.

Another key issue was Verizon's treatment of its customer service reps, who were forced to work in highly regimented electronic sweatshops that included monitored phone calls and discipline for those who took too many bathroom breaks. New contract provisions address these problems, too, setting aside periods in which the reps can stay off the phone while catching up on paperwork and by creating a joint stress relief committee that is to report back next January.

The rest of the three-year settlement wasn't shabby, either, including a 12% wage increase over term, a 14% increase in pension benefits, a profit-sharing plan and a no-layoffs agreement. But it was the card-check agreement and the reductions in overtime and harsh work rules that proved crucial to ending the walkout, and it is these provisions that lay the foundation for organizing at other telecom companies.

LOOKING AHEAD

Building the Guild has political aspect



By Linda Foley
President, TNG-CWA

Excerpted from remarks delivered Aug. 25 at the TNG-CWA sector conference in Anaheim, California

Welcome to the third meeting of The Newspaper Guild as a sector of the CWA and the 65th convening of the Newspaper Guild's annual conference.

I'm especially pleased this year to welcome several new groups to The Newspaper Guild-CWA. We have, for the first time as *delegates*, representatives from Local 1096, the union representing Dow Jones employees otherwise known as IAPE. We also have delegates from the Washington Alliance of Technical Workers (or Wash-Tech): they, too, have attended our meetings before, but this is the first time they've come as delegates.

We have a delegate from one of our newest units, the Bay Area Court Interpreters of the Northern California Media Guild, as well as some guests representing our new court interpreters' group, the California Federation of Interpreters.

Did you know we now have actors in The Newspaper Guild? I mean real actors —background performers, to be precise. The members of the Professional Association of Canadian Talent are now members of TNG-CWA by virtue of their joining the Canadian Media Guild. And did I also mention we now have social workers in the Guild? In Peterborough, Ont., and also in Sudbury, Ont., where they are on strike against Northern Lights, a counseling service for juveniles.

So you can see, just by these introductions, that we are building the Guild. Build the Guild: that's our mission. That's what this particular sector conference is about. Building the Guild by improving and modernizing our collective bargaining program. By bolstering our organizing efforts. By building on the base we already have in the U.S. and Canada.

Building the Guild enables us to accomplish a lot. This past year, for example, we assisted a community coalition in Honolulu and the Hawaii attorney general to rescue the Star-Bulletin from a Gannett scheme to snuff it out by ending a JOA. Meanwhile, in Denver, the Guild and other newspaper unions were able to use their employers' desire for union support of a JOA to hammer out a groundbreaking agreement that protects jobs, guarantees benefits and actually *adds* members to Guild ranks. That agreement was just ratified by the Denver membership.

These developments are symptomatic of a sea change in the traditional industries where we represent workers. Hardly a week goes by at TNG headquarters that we don't get word of another acquisition or sale of a Guild-represented property. Hardly a day goes by that we don't deal with issues related to ownership changes and corporate restructuring, from KR dot com to CanWest Global.

In June alone, newspaper deals in the U.S. amounted to $4.5 billion and involved 54 dailies and weeklies. That doesn't even include the $2.6 billion deal that Hollinger struck with CanWest for its Canadian properties.

And despite all the corporate power and money being waved around our core industry, we've had a good year at the bargaining table. We've had major contract settlements at the Associated Press, the Baltimore Sun and the Philadelphia Inquirer. And at our newest news industry unit, Dow Jones. We achieved one of our best settlements in decades at the San Jose Mercury News.

We have a stellar contract at Reuters, after 18 months of intense bargaining and one big rat. We got contracts in Harrisburg after five long years of bargaining and at the Long Beach Press-Telegram, two years after Media News purchased that paper and walked away from the previous collective agreement.

All of this adds up to the best contracts our members have seen in decades.

We also did something this year that I never thought I'd see again in my lifetime. We organized a group of district managers at the Worcester Telegram-Gazette. Ten years ago, when the Reagan-appointed NLRB stripped union representation from several groups of DMs who had been Guild members for years, I thought we would never again sign a district manager to a Guild card, at least not in the U.S. I was wrong, and so was the Reagan-Bush NRLB.

But unfortunately, it's not enough to make up for the years before 1992, when unfriendly political forces were determined to see to it that unions like ours were ravaged and weakened.

For all of our success at Knight-Ridder papers this year, we still don't have a contract at the Monterey Herald. And we had to disclaim interest in our units at Gannett's Wilmington Delaware News-Journal.

Our legal case in Detroit was destroyed by three Republican-appointed judges on the D.C. Court of Appeals. They dismissed the unfair labor practice charges that the NLRB ruled had caused the strike there. With that ruling, the last five years of struggle were reduced to a few names on a rehire list.

Which brings me to the one thought I want to leave with you at this year 2000 sector conference, at this U.S. presidential election year: There isn't one victory, one gain, one step forward that we've achieved this year that hasn't had an element of political influence attached to it.

A Republican president appointed an NLRB that circumvented our ability to organize district managers. This NLRB, appointed by Democrat Clinton, restored our rights to represent all types of workers.

The U.S. Department of Justice in this administration listens to our concerns about newspaper monopolies and JOAs. The previous one ignored our issues.

The Hawaii state attorney general and governor, both Democrats, helped us save a newspaper and 82 editorial jobs. The Republican governor in Tennessee couldn't care less.

And need I remind you that a Democrat-appointed NLRB saw the injustice of Gannett and Knight-Ridder's actions and ruled on the side of the strikers. The Republican-appointed judges of the Court of Appeals sided with the corporations.

If we are to continue to build the Guild, we need to elect leaders who will help us—or at least not prevent us from doing so. We cannot move forward if we have to play defense all the time, like we did in the 1980s during the Reagan-Bush and Mulroney days. We need elected leaders who will permit us to play some offense. Otherwise, forget about a level playing field. We won't even get into the ballpark.

Politics *do* matter. A lot. Just ask our Canadian sisters and brothers, who rely on provincial governments for most of their union rights. Progressive labor policies can be—and have been—wiped out within weeks of an election because the wrong party won.

So if you're a reporter, I say to you, cover the political news objectively and fairly. Make sure your stories don't take sides. That they stay above the fray.

But if you're a trade unionist, I encourage you to do everything you can to make sure we elect leaders who will encourage union-building, not prevent it. I encourage you to make sure we elect leaders who will fight for justice, not thwart it. A trade union song asks, "Which side are you on?" This is not about objectivity; it's about power; it's about effectiveness; it's about survival of our union and the entire union movement. It's about the three elements crucial to every union's success: Organizing, representation and political action. And it's all connected. It all matters.

Now let's go build the Guild.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I chuckled in agreement with the letter from former ITU printer Bertt Lependorf [July 21 Guild Reporter]. He is right on the money about Linotype operators and printers helping reporters—I was one of those often helped by an eagle-eyed typesetter.

But just when you take to criticizing, it seems that something rises up and bites you. (There must be one of those verities, or whatever you call 'em, that covers this, a la Murphy's Law, etc.)

In Bertt's case, he too was bitten. It's not Galludet University; it's Gallaudet.

—Jerry Guibor, N. California Guild

Actually, replied the sheepish editor. it wasn't Bertt who was bitten: it was the editor, who in these days of cold type functions also as typesetter. So yeah, let's bring back the printers. . . .

To the Editor,

No, Bertt Lependorf, I don't miss you old printers. I don't miss the composing room foreman telling the editor "Go to hell" and walking away when asked to make a change. If we saw a minor error we let it go because the printers would screw up something else trying to correct it.

—O.K. Patton, Harrisburg Guild (retired)

To the Editor,

The book jacket for "Slanting the Story," featured in your July 21 review of four books, caught my eye—I had just finished reading it!

The review correctly identifies author Trudy Lieberman as a director at Consumers Union, but TNG members should know that Ms. Lieberman was a long-time member of Local 3, The New York Newspaper Guild, and for a period of time in the 1980s actively participated in her union as a member of Consumers Union's Unit Council. Throughout the pages of "Slanting the Story," Trudy's labor roots are evident. Hopefully, the media will hear her wake-up call.

—Mary Tobias, New York Newspaper Guild (retired)

To the Editor,

I still can't believe it—the federal court panel's ruling in favor of Gannett and Knight Ridder in the Detroit case.

What planet are those judges on, what set of rules are they adhering to? My God, if ever there was a blatant case of union busting, of unfair labor practices, of downright dirty pool, it was in Detroit. My guess is that you sanitized President Linda Foley's reaction for your story down to that "travesty of justice" quote, but I'm sure the air in her office must have been even more polluted with obscenities than it was here in my home as soon as I read the first graph.

What do we have to do in this country of ours to get justice for workers? I'm tempted to grow a beard, buy a beret and start a revolution, since the alternative seems to be a nation bought and paid for by big business.

—Chuck Dale, Past-President, TNG

To the Editor,

I recently left a small-town newspaper to work at the Bureau of National Affairs, where I immediately joined the Guild. My previous job was more challenging, harder, and requiring of greater skill and dedication. It paid almost exactly half the salary I now get from BNA, and my work went into a product of much lower quality than BNA's.

Most newspapers in the part of Virginia where I live, and in much of the Southeast, are owned and run (for lack of a worse word) by Media General, a company without, to my knowledge, any unionized employees. Residents of the town where I worked routinely complained about the quality of the newspapers (MG owned two in that town) and blamed the low quality on the high turnover—which, in turn, they blamed on the low pay. I agree entirely with this general opinion.

Many people asked me to stay at that job, as they ask most reporters who decide to leave after they've learned something about the place and begun to do a decent job of reporting on it.

For the sake of the communities involved (because, after all, newspapers can serve an important function), as well as for the families of the workers, I would love to see Media General workers unionized. If anyone has any ideas, recommendations, or proposals for attempting such a thing, please contact me at *dcswan@cstone.net*.

—David Swanson, Washington-Baltimore Guild

By TNG Convention action, letters to the editor shall be limited to 200 words and shall avoid libel and subjects detrimental to the Guild. Members subjected to personal attack shall be given opportunity to reply in the same issue, but publication of either attack or reply shall not be delayed longer than one issue.

Deadline: Friday before publication. (Next deadline: Oct. 13.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at *azipser@cwa-union.org*.

Wages finally break decade-old average

If you broke into the newspaper business last year and were paid the average wage, the good news is that you earned more than you would have in 1989. Finally. The bad news is that the median starting salary in journalism and mass communication was still more than 10% below that of the average liberal arts graduate.

Those are just two of the findings—reinforcing those of the Inland Press Association, reported in last month's Guild Reporter—in the 1999 Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Graduates. Currently conducted by the Henry W. Grady College at the University of Georgia, the survey is in its 12th year and is based on 2,826 questionnaires returned by journalism students who graduated last year. Sample error for the undergraduate data, according to the college, is 1.9%.

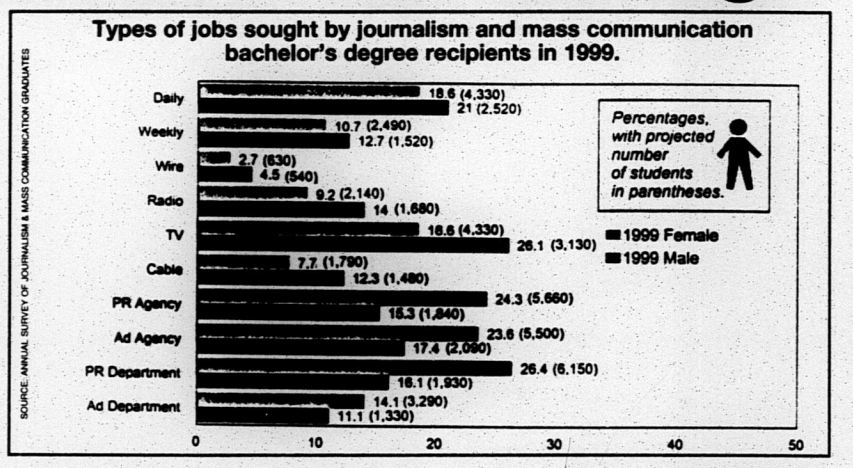
The survey's rosiest finding is that the labor market remains strong, with more than eight out of 10 grads receiving at least one job offer upon graduation. But as indicated above, the financial reward for getting into newspapers is stingy indeed: adjusted for inflation and expressed in 1985 dollars, annual starting salaries in 1999 were $15,700—the first time that figure has exceeded the $14,600 (also expressed in 1985 dollars) paid in 1988 and 1989.

In nominal terms, last year's average starting salary for newspaper journalists was $25,000. Meanwhile, liberal arts college graduates overall were entering the workforce at an average salary of $27,664, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Perhaps it's not surprising, therefore, that the survey also discovered a waning sense of commitment to the industry. Almost 30% of the recent grads said they wished they'd chosen a different career, with nearly 7 in ten citing low salaries as their primary reason. "This is an alarming trend, especially given the high availability of jobs in the current market," the survey analysts observe. Overall, fewer than one in five graduates expects to stay in the profession until retirement.

On a related note, the survey found a three-year decline in the percentage of employers paying all the costs of major benefits such as basic medical, major medical, disability and retirement. Interestingly, however, the percentage of employees participating in all such plans has increased, despite cost-shifting that requires employee co-pays.

Also of note—given persistent chest-beating by publishers and executive editors over the lack of newsroom diversity—is a sudden increase in the difficulty non-white graduates have encountered in finding jobs. Although minorities have lagged for much of the decade behind Anglos in their ability to get jobs, the gap narrowed significantly in 1998—only to widen again in 1999.



Among other findings:

• Roughly one in four full-time workers reported being expected to work overtime with no compensation.

• The highest median salary, at $28,000, was reported by those who took online jobs—but that figure is down $2,000 since 1998, suggesting the bloom may be off the internet rose.

• As has been traditionally the case, the lowest starting salaries are in television—just $19,968 in 1999.

• There are notable differences in job-seeking patterns between men and women (see chart above), with significantly higher percentages—and numbers—of women going to work in public relations agencies and departments and at ad agencies. A higher percentage of men goes into television.

Articles on death, racism snag Barr prizes

The second set of winners of the David S. Barr Awards has been announced, with top high school honors going to Debra Leigh Siegel of Staten Island and the college prize to Rebecca Blocksome of Fort Hays State University, Kansas. Honorable mention was awarded to Jason Richard Decker of Indiana University, Indiana.

Siegel, 16, received a $500 prize; Blocksome, 20, received a prize of $1,500.

Named after the Guild's longtime general counsel, the Barr Award is intended to inspire a younger generation of journalists by rewarding work that "promotes the qualities of justice and fairness" embodied by Barr. It was authorized by the 1997 TNG-CWA convention and is funded by contributions from Guild locals and by TNG-CWA.

Although Siegel is still a student at Tottenville High School, her entry comprised two opinion pieces published in the Staten Island Advance. The first focused on the acquittal of four New York City police officers in the shooting death of Amadou Diallo, who was gunned down in the hallway of his home while reaching for his wallet; the second, on the snatching of Cuban 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez by armed federal agents.

"I may be, for the most part, unfamiliar with the power of hollow point bullets, but even I know that it doesn't take 41 bullets to bring a man to his knees," Siegel wrote, excoriating the actions of "four armed men [who] panicked and acted out of fear and rage.

Blocksome's winning effort was more modest in subject but more effective in outcome. Writing on the editorial page of her twice-weekly campus newspaper, she challenged the exhumation of a brass plaque from the university's archives that was then mounted in a new wing of the oldest building on campus, Picken Hall. The plaque's overheated prose "came not from Louis L'Amour, romanticizer of the American West," but rather from William A. Lewis, the school's president from 1913 to 1933.

The plaque's opening line, "The power of forts and regiments was required to control the haughty, stern-spirited red man," is followed by hyperbolic references to the men "whose indomitable spirit made them the heroes of our nation," to their "lesson of superb courage, of true comradeship, of clean lives, of unselfish devotion," and to the site "over which have looked the greatest men of our nation." It was unveiled, Blocksome noted, just in time for the school's celebration of "Diversity Week."

"With all due respect to William A. Lewis," Blocksome wrote, "I don't think that every element of our heritage is necessarily deserving of a halo. It's a shame that he and others of his day weren't enlightened enough to realize that all human beings have an intrinsic value, regardless of the color of their skin or the shape of their eyes. But time and education have benefitted our generation with a clearer view of humankind, and we have a responsibility to employ that knowledge for the betterment of society."

Her comments, concluding with a plea that students "demand the removal of this propaganda filled with hatred and lies," apparently struck a nerve. A month later, noting that the plaque "had inappropriate wording," school officials had it removed and returned to the university archives. "It wasn't a flattering description," affirmed Herb Songer, vice president for student affairs.

This year's Barr Award judges also presented the competition's first honorable mention, recognizing Decker, 21, for his article on the hate-crime murder of a Korean graduate student. Published in Arbutus, Indiana University's yearbook, the article examined how the student's family and the community had responded "with courage, strength, dignity and unity, thanks to student-initiated programs to combat hate-driven crimes," according to the judges' summary.

The deadline for entries in next year's competition is May 1.

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DAYBOOK

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

CWA Women's Conference, originally scheduled for Sept. 28, postponed to May 10-13, Las Vegas

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

Midwest District Council, Oct. 20-22, Milwaukee

New England Dist. Council, Oct. 28-29, Worcester, MA

Southern, Mid-Atl. councils, Oct. 28-29, Baltimore

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Hearst folds the Post-Enquirer in Oakland, Cal. after 64 years, throwing 147 Guild members out of work. . . . Delegates to the ITU convention unanimously support a Guild proposal for unions to underwrite new newspapers in monopoly markets; the Oil Workers International, meanwhile, renews its call for the founding of a union-funded national daily of general reader interest. . . . The CIO, continuing to purge its ranks of communists, expels "three commie-controlled west coast maritime unions." . . . Congress passes the Wood bill, requiring members of the Communist Party or of "communist fronts" to register with the government; the Senate takes up the more sweeping McCarran bill, paving the way for McCarthyism.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Guild and ITU lawyers argue before the NLRB that reporters and copy editors are not "professionals," as defined under federal law, and therefore may be part of bargaining units that include other, nonprofessional newspaper employees. . . . Charles E. Crissey, former editor of the Guild Reporter for more than 11 years, dies at the age of 80.

Ten years ago this month:

The NLRB indefinitely postpones two secret-ballot elections on representation by the Detroit Guild of approximately 475 employees of the newly formed Detroit Newspaper Agency and its employees at the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News. . . . Guild-represented employees at the N.Y. Post vote for a 20% pay cut in order to keep the tabloid from closing.