

THE GUILD Reporter

**Laboring
in the
polls**
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December 15, 2000 A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 67, Number 12



Striking Guild members, including Pulitzer Prize winner Eric Nalder, center, picket outside The Seattle Times.

HARLEY SOLTES/SEATTLE UNION RECORD

Seattle walks!

First newspaper strike in 47 years prompted by wage increases that lag living costs

Following a lost weekend of mediation ending Dec. 10, marked by negotiations for the Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer reiterating their unwillingness to put more money on the table, members of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild hunkered down for a long, cold strike and vowed to step up their boycott campaign.

The walkout of approximately a thousand newsroom, advertising and circulation employees started Nov. 21, following months

of bargaining that foundered over compensatory issues. The job action gives Seattle its first newspaper strike since 1953 and—through publication of the Guild's strike paper—makes it a three-newspaper town for the first time since the Seattle Star folded, in the 'Forties. The Seattle Union Record, boasting several Pulitzer Prize winners on its staff and a print circulation of 40,000, can be seen on the web at www.unionrecord.com.

The struck newspapers, joined at the hip

by a joint operating agreement that makes the Times responsible for all support functions, were already gearing up for an old-fashioned newspaper war after the Times switched to morning production early this year. But the strike has introduced a new dynamic, shriveling the papers' ad base and editorial content and forcing the two publishers to distribute their wares for free.

Now the Guild, frustrated that the companies' highest offered wage increase averages less than 2% a year for many employees, is going after the subscriber base. Following a mediation session described by Bruce Meachum, the Guild's chief negotiator, as a "waste of our time," Guild members began distributing leaflets and airing radio commercials that encourage advertisers and subscribers to withhold their support from the papers. The local also is working with state and county labor councils in an extensive telephone campaign that asks subscribers to cancel their papers.

While management has not hired replacement workers, it has announced plans to cut staff positions and allegedly has been phoning striking employees at home to warn them they could lose their jobs if they didn't return to work immediately—a practice, if true, that violates federal labor law. Local leaders, after collecting signed affidavits from 14 Times employees attesting to such calls, filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

Meanwhile, Times publisher Frank Blethen pitched a personal appeal to strikers in an open letter that contends the Times "is a bet-

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NAOMI ISHISAKA/PACIFIC NORTHWEST GUILD
Bullhorn in hand, TNG-CWA President Linda Foley takes to the picket lines.

National first: dot-commies, seeking union, turn to Guild

It's the economy, stupid—and whether it's the "old" economy or the "new" economy, it all comes down to wages, working conditions and job security.

That lesson was lost briefly in the heady days when venture capitalists would float any e-boat and workers willingly accepted poverty wages and long hours in exchange for stock options. But those days are over, perhaps permanently. As the e-workforce sees its rewards trampled by a panicky stock market, the old reward of a fair and reliable paycheck has taken on a new allure. And as

**Microsoft agrees to
\$97 million settlement in
permatemp case—see p. 3.**

"new economy" workers seek a voice in their workplace, their employers—no surprise—show themselves perfectly capable of resorting to "old economy" retaliation.

So it was, on Nov. 27, that 36 customer service representatives at etown.com, a consumer electronics site owned by privately held Collaborative Media, apparently became

the first dot.com employees of any U.S. company to file with the National Labor Relations Board for a union representation election. The good news is that their vote to become part of the Northern California Media Workers Guild-CWA is scheduled for January 12. The bad news is that so many of the employees who filed for the election have been fired that the unit has only 15 workers left to represent.

Meanwhile, a significantly larger group of customer service reps at web retailing giant Amazon.com has started circulating

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CONTRACT NEWS

Regina gets mediator; two other locals ratify

Guild-represented employees of The Regina LeaderPost got an early Christmas present this year, when the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board appointed the province's chief mediator to help break the logjam in contract negotiations. The Saskatchewan Media Guild had been bargaining a first contract for almost two years without reaching agreement on nearly a dozen issues, including seniority, wage scales and layoff and recall rights.

The appointment apparently lit a fuse under the LeaderPost's new owners. "These guys suddenly wanted to talk," said TNG Canada rep Dan Zeidler, adding that virtually all the outstanding issues were resolved over three days of talks in early December. Among the gains were such standard contract features as seniority and recall rights, which management had been resisting. Still unresolved and awaiting the mediator's decision are wages and shift differentials.

Under Canadian law, mediators are empowered to impose terms of a first contract for two years. Zeidler said he expects a decision on the outstanding issues in early January; both sides then have seven days in which to appeal to the full board, whose decision will be final.

This month's hearing follows an earlier award by the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board to the LeaderPost's editorial employees of more than \$250,000 in back pay and bonuses. The board ruled that the company attempted to punish its employees for joining the Guild by giving only non-union employees a 3% wage increase in Nov. 1998, followed by a Christmas bonus

that year and a second bonus in 1999.

In addition to ordering the LeaderPost to pay retroactive increases to Guild members, the board took the apparently unprecedented step of adding interest to the amount owed, plus an additional 5%. Management has said it will appeal the decision.

More positive contract news was reported by the Memphis Newspaper Guild, which recently ratified a four-year agreement with the Memphis Commercial Appeal by a margin of 94 to 31. Retroactive to Jan. 10 of this year, the new contract includes annual wage increases of 2.5%, 2.75%, 3% and 3% and the following changes:

- A 90-day time limit on filing grievances, plus a limit of two representatives from each side to the grievance joint standing committee;
- The addition of Memorial Day to holiday language;
- The addition of step-children to bereavement leave provisions;
- New language permitting elimination of overscale payments to employees rated "unacceptable" on three different reviews within a nine-month period.
- An increase from 13 to 20 days on out-of-the-country assignments before premium pay kicks in.

Also ratifying a new contract recently were members of the Youngstown Media Guild, who voted 105 to 41 to accept a two-year agreement at the Vindicator that pegs most raises to circulation gains. The Vindicator's weekday sales have dropped 17% over the past decade, to approximately 74,000.

But in keeping with his company's anti-union profile, Robert C. Woodworth, the chain's new president, has declared that employees "signing a union card would have grave consequences for themselves and their families," according to Pollack. The company also has given out some raises and increased the car allowance by three cents, to 29 cents a mile.

Meanwhile, the Guild's efforts continue, with all Journal employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act—more than 250 reporters, photographers, sales staff, secretaries, typesetters and press operators—being asked to sign cards requesting a union representation election. Local officials say they'll deal with all the Journals collectively or on an individual basis, depending on what kind of support they can drum up.

St. Louis Guild reaches out to suburban chain

When the Pulitzer-owned St. Louis Post-Dispatch decided it wanted to play hardball with its unions a decade ago, it signalled its intentions loud and clear by hiring the union-busting law firm of King and Ballou. And now that Pulitzer has bought the Journal chain of 38 free newspapers ringing St. Louis, King and Ballou is representing management there as it attempts to rebuff a Guild organizing drive.

The St. Louis Newspaper Guild's organizing foray follows its failed efforts to convince the National Labor Relations Board that Journal workers—as St. Louis-based Pulitzer employees—should automatically be placed under Guild jurisdiction. Its job has been made more difficult by a failed earlier attempt at organizing the chain, when the company divided itself into a multiplicity of corporations—one for each newspaper—to make such drives more expensive and time consuming.

Despite such hurdles, the need for unionization seems obvious. According to Joe Pollack, a past president of the Guild local, salaries at the Journal newspapers are perhaps half those paid under a Guild contract with the St. Louis Review, a weekly archdiocesan newspaper with a similar coverage area and advertising base. Moreover, the Review's contract includes a 35-hour week, a pension plan, a grievance procedure and protection against firing or discipline without just cause—all benefits most Journal employees are unlikely to receive without a union.

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: Grace Comer, Communications Workers of America, 501 Third St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Address changes also can be sent by e-mail to: gcomer@cwa-union.org.

Subscription: \$20 a year in U.S. and Canada, \$30 a year overseas. Send subscription orders to: Andy Zipser, TNG-CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Single copies: \$1.50

In brief . . .

NLRB gives thumbs up to workplace e-mails

Yes, you can use your employer's e-mail system to communicate union news—provided, of course, that such communication takes place on non-work time. That's the thrust of a Dec. 6 ruling from the NLRB in a case filed by the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild against BNA, which in the midst of contract negotiations ordered unit chair Reza Namdar to stop using the e-mail system for distributing bargaining bulletins—even though BNA itself was using the system to issue frequent and lengthy memos on the talks. BNA's e-mail policy prohibited use of company e-mail for non-business purposes, but the NLRB has taken the position that e-mail policies must conform to the same standards it has established for other workplace solicitations.

Chicago Guild loses weekly accretion bid

An NLRB regional director has rebuffed efforts by the Chicago Newspaper Guild to extend jurisdiction to newsroom workers at a chain of nondailies owned by a subsidiary of Copley Press. The Guild already represents editorial employees at the Copley-owned Herald-News in Joliet, IL, and argued that employees of Sun Publications, a group of 14 free-circulation weeklies, worked for the same employer and were shuffled back and forth among the various publications to such an extent that "substantial overlap and interchange" mandated accretion. But the regional director found that the daily and the group of weeklies had separate organizational structures and revenue streams, that employees for the two organizations did not share supervisors or assignments—and, perhaps most tellingly, that the Herald-News contract defines the bargaining unit by location, not by the type of work done.

TNG-CWA locals urged to send in contracts

CWA and the Guild are building a computerized database of contracts and are requesting all TNG locals to submit electronic copies of their agreements to dtomas@cwa-union.org. Contracts also may be mailed on disk to:

Debbie Thomas
The Newspaper Guild-CWA
501 3rd Street NW
Washington, DC 20001-2797.

To review contracts already on file, visit www.cwa-union.org/intranet and click on "Contracts Database" on the left-hand side.

For second time, IAPE members nix dues hike

For the second consecutive year, members of IAPE—the Guild local representing Dow Jones employees in the U.S. and Canada—have rejected a dues restructuring that would bring the local's dues more in line with the rest of TNG-CWA. The 553-430 vote means IAPE dues will remain at

0.55% of salary, or roughly half the rate paid by other locals, with a cap of \$25 a month regardless of income. It also means the local will be forced to dip into its reserves next year, said local officials, as they trim spending but are still forced to adopt a deficit budget.

Detroit's Teamsters to vote on contracts

Two Teamsters locals representing delivery drivers and mailers at Detroit's daily newspapers were to vote Dec. 17 on contracts in the 5-year-old labor dispute. If they ratify the agreements, a GCIU local will be the only one of six striking units left without a contract. Teamsters Local 372 represents about 750 full- and part-time workers for Detroit Newspapers Inc., the joint business and production agency for the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News; mailers' Local 2040 represents about 350 full- and part-time workers.

Strike preparations backfire in Baltimore

Fearful that the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild might strike when its contract expired 18 months ago, and that GCIU pressmen might honor its picket lines, management at The Baltimore Sun held training exercises in May, 1999, to teach managers and supervisors how to operate the presses. Now a federal judge has affirmed an arbitrator's decision that the Sun owes back pay to the pressmen, who were barred from the exercise despite a contract provision that gives them exclusive jurisdiction over pressroom floor work.

Kenosha president ends up on critical list

Bill Guida, president of the Kenosha local, landed on the critical list with a serious pancreatic infection and is expected to be laid up until spring. Anyone wanting to send cards can mail them to the Kenosha Hospital and Medical Center in Kenosha, WI, 53140; or send an e-mail to Guida at bguida@juno.com.

Another old radical passes on—at 99

Marvel Cooke, who joined the Communist Party while walking a Guild picket line in the 1930s, died of leukemia Nov. 29 at the age of 99. A journalist who broke into the business as an assistant to W.E.B. Du Bois, Cooke worked for the NAACP's Crisis magazine, the Amsterdam News and the Compass, writing exposes on segregation in New York and on the demeaning life of black domestic workers. She broke her engagement to Roy Wilkins, later executive secretary of the NAACP, because he was too conservative for her tastes; in the 1970s, she served as treasurer of the Angela Davis Defense Fund. But she also was New York director of the Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions during the 1950s.

Newspaper war shaping up in Hawaii

The white knight known as David Black is transforming Hawaii into an old-fashioned newspaper battleground, quickly negotiating a five-year contract with Guild-represented editorial employees of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, then announcing his purchase of RFD Publications.

RFD owns MidWeek, a 280,000 free weekly newspaper that is mailed to homes in Oahu. More significantly, it has an advertising, distribution and circulation staff that can assume those functions for the Star-Bulletin when Black takes it over March 16; it also owns a printing plant, ending Black's search for presses. The Star-Bulletin currently is published as part of a joint operating agreement with the Gannett-owned Honolulu Advertiser, which provides all support services.

Separately, the Advertiser settled contract negotiations with its unionized

employees—including the Hawaii Newspaper Guild and other members of the Hawaii Newspaper and Printing Trades Council—by agreeing to two-year pacts retroactive to June 12. The Guild contract, ratified Dec. 7 by a vote of 121 to 20, includes a 1.5% signing bonus in lieu of a retroactive raise, a 4.5% increase in scales and a no-layoff clause.

The Star-Bulletin contract, approved 54 to 7 with three abstentions, preserves existing salaries and medical benefits and gives workers a 5% stake in the newspaper through an employee stock ownership plan. More specifically, it includes 2% bonuses in the first, third and fifth years and 2% raises in the second and fourth years of the contract. But it also reduces starting wages for new hires, extends the workweek to 40 hours from 37.5, doesn't provide for paid sick leave until the second day of an illness and requires half of the editorial staff to

work from home.

The givebacks caused initial consternation among some staffers, with one longtime employee emotionally recalling a 40-day walkout in 1963 that was triggered by an attempt to impose the same reduced sick-leave policy. Ultimately, however, the final agreement was recognized as a significant improvement over the situation a year ago, when the Star-Bulletin supposedly was on its death-bed. Moreover, the history of contract negotiations at newspapers that have changed hands in recent years—the Monterey Herald providing a prime example—encouraged many to set aside their qualms.

Having won labor peace, Black's swift move to capture RFD—the purchase is expected to close in January—establishes him as a serious player. "You have the making of a newspaper war," antitrust lawyer Stephen Barnett told Star-Bulletin reporter

Rick Daysog. Indeed, Gannett's willingness to accept only a two-year contract at the Advertiser suggests it may be keeping its options open, in case the new competitive situation is more than it bargained for.

The one piece still missing from Black's puzzle is an adequate newsprint supply. The Canadian publisher claims to have secured about 5,000 metric tons a year from a British Columbia supplier, which is approximately the amount currently used by the Star-Bulletin, but Black says he needs at least that much again to add a Sunday edition and to increase circulation by at least 50%.

Also of some concern to Star-Bulletin staffers has been scattered evidence of low-grade guerrilla warfare by Gannett, from delayed press runs to missing newsracks to a reported attempt to bar Black from the newsroom until March 15, hampering transition efforts.

Smashing the e-myths

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union election cards with help from WashTech, also a TNG-CWA local. "This campaign should end the myth that high-tech workers in the new economy do not want to seek representation on the job and that unions are irrelevant in the 21st century," observed WashTech organizer Marcus Courtney.

The new economy myth was put to rest at Collaborative Media

earlier this fall, when employees frustrated at being repeatedly ignored when they complained about low pay and long, sometimes erratic working hours staged a one-day walk-out. The day after the impromptu job action, etown.com management fired two of the most outspoken workers.

Angered more than intimidated by this draconian response, the service reps started distributing union cards—and saw two more of their co-workers fired just before Thanksgiving. While company spokesmen explained it was apparent that the two were "unhappy," the Guild filed an unfair labor practice charge with the NLRB, then filed Nov. 27 for the representation election. (An initial hearing in the complaint was scheduled for Dec. 15, as The Guild Reporter went to press.)

Five days after the election filing, Collaborative Media struck again by eliminating 28 of 127 etown.com jobs, including 13 more of the customer service reps. Company president Lew Brown blamed the downsizing on "ongoing pressures from our investors and the generally poor condition of the financial marketplace" and said it was unrelated to the Guild's organizing drive.

At Amazon.com, meanwhile, employees have complained for years [see Jan. 1999 GR, p. 8] about working in a high-tech sweatshop of long hours, low pay, cramped quarters, a rigid management style and scant opportunity for advancement. What kept them at their desks was the tantalizing promise of stock options that would vest after five years—an eternity in new-economy years. Worse yet, because Amazon's stock price has dropped sharply since most such options were granted, their strike price will be considerably higher than their value, rendering them worthless.

But the past year has seen even more bad news for Amazon.com workers, as the company laid off 150 employees last January with

only an hour's notice, abruptly reassigned 260 full-time, permanent employees in May, then began outsourcing some of its customer service work to India in September. Given such turbulence, the only surprise is that the company's employees waited until this November before circulating union petitions.

But, as at etown, Amazon management quickly demonstrated that workplace relationships in the new economy are no different from the old. Less than 24 hours after its service reps had adopted a mission statement outlining the issues they want addressed, the company kicked off an aggressive anti-union campaign with a mandatory "all-hands" meeting, then told employees they must respond to customer inquiries with the following statement:

"As you may be aware, there have been media reports that a union has recently had discussions with some Amazon.com customer service representatives regarding unionization in Seattle. While unions do have a role in society, at Amazon.com everyone is an owner and can exercise individual rights to raise any workplace issues or concerns at any time. . . ."

Union protests forced Amazon to retract the statement, which appears to violate federal labor law and was, in any case, too reminiscent of the old economy's heavy-handed tactics. Instead, the company fell back on the dot.com world's more established practice: bribery. It offered free massages.

Still, the temptation to resort to old economy tactics keeps reasserting itself. In yet another likely violation of labor law, Amazon management gave the boot Dec. 8 to four employees who were distributing union literature in the company cafeteria. As an astonished Alan Barclay, one of the ousted four, later asked, "Whatever happened to the great tradition of democracy? Don't we have a right to contact our fellow co-workers about work conditions?"

Indianapolis gets whiff of Gannett

As employees of both Honolulu dailies wonder how the notoriously anti-union Gannett Co. will respond to being stymied at creating a Hawaiian monopoly, employees of The Indianapolis Star are getting a firsthand taste of Gannett's preference for lean cuisine.

Gannett bought the paper this past summer from the Pulliam family. Late last month it rejected a Guild proposal to extend the contract that expired Oct. 31, countering with a proposal to freeze wages and to ban all freelance work for any medium that might broadcast its material on the web. It also laid off 15 employees in the information technology and marketing departments, following the September dismissal of seven employees in the human resources department, and is outsourcing its security force.

"Gannett's tactics in these negotiations are clear—it wants to bust the union," Local President Marc Allan wrote in a memo to Guild members. "The irony of this is that Gannett says it allows local control of newspapers, but when it comes to negotiating we're talking to Virginia," where Gannett is headquartered.

The Guild submitted a formal contract proposal Dec. 6 and was awaiting a response as The Guild Reporter went to press, but Allan said he was not optimistic.

CBC lays claim to after-hours time

While Gannett seeks, in effect, to end all freelancing by its Indianapolis employees (see item above), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has taken a different tack in trying to monopolize its employees' time: it has suspended a member of the Canadian Media Guild indefinitely, without pay, for taking a part-time job.

The suspended employee, who sells tickets at the Glenn Gould Studio in the Toronto Broadcasting Centre, took a part-time administrative position whose duties consist largely of coordinating volunteers and typing program notes. But the CBC, claiming that the company for which she works might rent the Glenn Gould Studio, posing a potential conflict of interest, has demanded she quit her second job to get the suspension lifted.

A CMG spokesman, asked to explain management's position, said the CBC believes a conflict of interest would be created if the employee handled money from ticket sales for the part-time employer's shows at the studio. "To draw a parallel," staff representative Glenn Gray explained, "the CBC is saying that a clerical assistant who is assigned to a program such as Hockey Night in Canada would be in a conflict of interest for working part-time at a hockey arena's ticket window. We believe this position is patently absurd."

The Local, citing contract provisions that stipulate that employees "shall be free to engage in activities outside the hours of work provided," has filed a grievance. "We have made it clear that employees do not belong to the Corporation once their working day is over," Gray added.

Microsoft settles for \$97 million

Seeking to end eight years of litigation over its alleged discriminatory treatment of "permatemp" employees, Microsoft has agreed to settle two class-action lawsuits for \$96.9 million. U.S. District Court Judge John C. Coughenour, who granted preliminary approval of the settlement Dec. 12, has scheduled a final hearing on the matter for Feb. 27.

Affected by the decision are an estimated 12,000 employees who worked for Microsoft between Dec. 29, 1986 and June 30, 2000 while classified as independent contractors or as employees of third-party employment agencies. Such workers were denied participation in the company's stock purchase plan and were refused other benefits, including sick leave and paid holidays and vacation.

In addition to their pro rata share of the settlement, the named plaintiffs in the two lawsuits will receive as much as \$65,000 to compensate for their losses. *Vizcaino v. Microsoft* was filed Dec. 29, 1992; *Hughes v. Microsoft* was filed in 1998.

Seattle strike in fourth week

Continued from page 1

ter place to work today than it was ten years ago, and together we can make it even better in the future." Instead, Blethen wrote, his striking workforce has offended him with "characterizations of me and my family as greedy and uncaring."

"Most of all," he added, "I'm angry because this strike wasn't necessary and should never have happened."

Ironically, many Guild representatives have expressed similar feelings, puzzled by their employers' unbending insistence on forcing a strike that will cost more in lost profits than the union sought in higher wages. "We're baffled by what's going on here," said Ron Judd, a Times columnist and Guild spokesman. Blethen "is just about as ideal a publisher as you could hope to have," Chuck Taylor, managing editor of The Union Record, told The New York Times. "I just think he's got a blind spot in the compensation area."

Indeed, unlike strikes that are complicated by issues of power or control, the Seattle walkout has been prompted solely by economic issues. While the Seattle metropolitan area over the last decade has had one of the fastest growing economies in the country, newspaper wages have grown at a rate only half that of the increase in the cost of living: as the Seattle/King County consumer price index soared nearly 44%, minimum wage scales rose 21%. Some Guild-represented employees are paid as little as \$421 a week.

Struggling to make up for lost ground, the Guild initially sought a three-year contract with an overall raise of \$6.15 an hour, but before walking off the job had

scaled that back almost by half, to \$3.25. The Times and P-I, meanwhile, have never budged from their initial terms—a six-year contract, with an overall raise of \$3.30 an hour—and more recently have suggested even that is too much because of the strike's financial impact.

The Guild also is seeking to end a two-tier wage system that pays zone reporters 85% of the scale paid to reporters in the downtown office; and wants company 401(k) contributions similar to those already paid to non-union employees.

But five hours of talks with mediator Jeff Clark ended Dec. 10 without any progress, despite a new Guild proposal that accepted the company's wage offer but pushed for higher company contributions toward health insurance and other benefits. "The Guild offered specific initiatives on how to resolve the strike and we showed a willingness to move on most issues," said Meachum. "The company said 'no' and didn't see a point in future talks at this time."

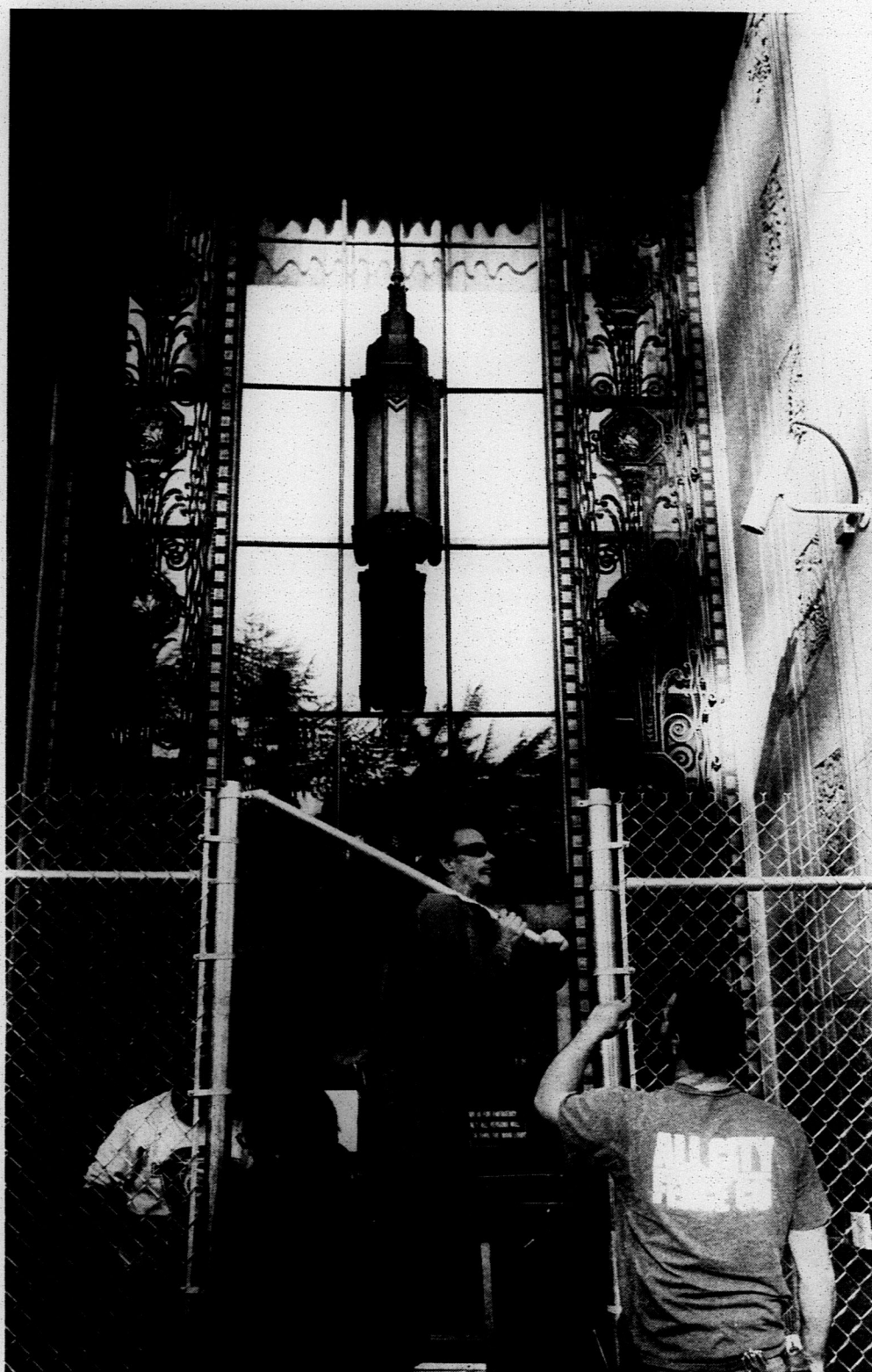
Charging the company with negotiating in bad faith, Guild negotiators concluded their only recourse was to dig in for the long haul and wage economic war.

Support for the strikers has been offered by TNG-CWA, with Guild President Linda Foley making repeated trips to the West Coast and promising \$10,000 a week to help underwrite the strike newspaper and its on-line cousin. TNG staffers also are gearing up to launch an "Adopt-a Striker" program, similar to one through which Guild locals helped support striking newspaper workers in Detroit, should the walkout extend much past the new year.

Solidarity on the picket line remained high as the strike headed into its fourth week, with more than 90% of Guild-represented employees staying off the job. Teamsters Local 174 also is honoring the picket line; Times pressmen are not. And although a county court commissioner has ordered that pickets not block vehicles entering or leaving the Times plant for more than 45 seconds, that's 45 seconds more than the Times was seeking—and long enough, say union leaders, to attempt to convince drivers to support the strike.

While the walkout has not been marred by violence, it has registered its first casualty: Mark Trahan, a Times columnist for nearly three years, quit his job Dec. 12. In his resignation letter, Trahan wrote that he couldn't support the strike because he believed such support would hurt his independence as a journalist—but that he also couldn't bring himself to cross a picket line.

"It's been colliding principles, no doubt about it," Trahan told the Union Record.



A strike's dark face can be seen in the siege mentality that grips management, which ordered workers (above) to erect a fence around The Seattle Times' main building. It's also visible in the

way it divides friends, as striking Seattle Times reporter Kathleen Triesch Saul (below, left) hugs her friend, Pacific Northwest Magazine editor Kathy Andrisevic, a manager.



BETTY UDESEN/SEATTLE UNION RECORD



NAOMI ISHISAKA/PACIFIC NORTHWEST GUILD
Steve Kenote of Teamsters Local 174 scrambles up a mess of eggs for strikers on picket duty. The local, which represents truck drivers at the Times and P-I, is honoring Guild picket lines.

It's been a while—but this is old hat

By Drew DeSilver

Pacific Northwest Guild/Seattle Union Record

Seattle, to put it mildly, doesn't have much of a tradition of newspaper strikes. Unlike, say, New York, where newspaper strikes have been almost as common as Yankee pennants, Seattle's newspapers have enjoyed decades of relative labor peace. The strike under way now by the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, against The Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer, is an anomaly of the modern era.

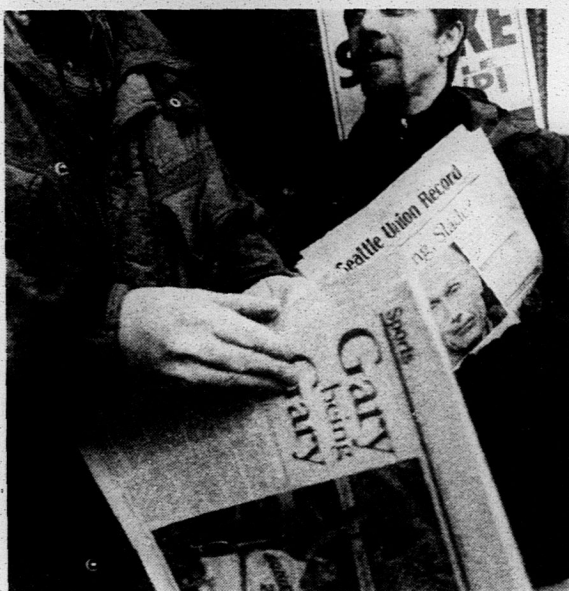
But from the mid-1930s to the early 1950s, relations between Seattle's daily papers and their unions were the most contentious in the nation.

The 1936 strike against the Post-Intelligencer helped establish the Newspaper Guild as a permanent feature of American journalism. A series of strikes in 1953 shut down The Seattle Times, then as now the city's largest daily, for three months. And strikes in the '30s and '40s helped doom the Seattle Star, the struggling third paper.

The 1936 P-I strike has received the most attention from scholars and historians, not only because it was one of the first major actions of the then-fledgling Guild, but because the union dared to take on William Randolph Hearst himself.

"It was the strike that organized the Newspaper Guild and gave it a contract here in Seattle," said Roger Simpson, a University of Washington communications professor and co-author of "Unionism or Hearst," a history of the 1936 strike.

The immediate cause of the strike was the firing of two Guild organizers, photographer Frank Lynch and reporter Thverhardt



ALAN BERNER/SEATTLE UNION RECORD

The Seattle Union Record, the city's new strike paper, has a noble pedigree: the first Union Record, also a labor-backed paper, was published during the General Strike of 1919, when 65,000 Seattle workers shut the city for five days.

Armstrong. But long-festering resentment of Hearst's cost-cutting and anti-New Deal policies already had laid the groundwork.

The Guild, founded only a few years earlier, was struggling to win recognition from major publishers. In the 1930s, there was no publisher bigger than Hearst, who called unions "communistic" and had vowed never to recognize the Guild.

The strike was called Aug. 13 and initially involved only a few dozen Guild members. They quickly were joined, however, by most of Seattle's organized labor

community, which saw the strike as an opportunity to defeat Hearst. In response, the P-I stopped publishing.

The most critical ally proved to be the Teamsters, led by Dave Beck. Indeed, the strike soon took on the aspect of a personal battle between Beck and the city's newspaper publishers: The Teamsters leader sued both the Times and the P-I for libel, settling out of court for \$25,000.

As the P-I strike wore on through the late summer and fall, it exposed the deep divisions in the local and national labor movement. Both the Guild and the Teamsters belonged to the American Federation of Labor, considered the conservative end of the labor movement. But, Simpson said, many in the Guild were sympathetic to the more radical Committee on Industrial Organization, which before long split from the AFL entirely and became the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

The P-I strike was settled in November, when Hearst agreed to recognize the Guild, and by 1953 the Guild was a familiar part of the Seattle newspaper scene. That year, 250 Guild members struck the Times over wages; when 450 pressmen, engravers and other members of the "mechanical craft

unions" honored the picket lines, the Times shut down.

As in the current labor dispute, the Guild argued that its members were underpaid compared to employees of papers in other cities. The Guild asked for a 7.8% across-the-board wage hike; the Times proposed 3.5% raises for people making less than \$100 a week and somewhat higher increases for reporters, photographers and other relatively well-paid workers. (The top reporter minimum was \$102 a week; the Times offered to raise that to \$108, while the Guild held out for \$110.)

Also, as in the current dispute, Times management argued that "a substantial number of Times employees receive premium salaries, above the minimum," according to the July 25, 1953 issue of "Editor & Publisher."

The Times had prospered during the 1936 strike; now it was the P-I's turn. The morning paper ran daily editions almost twice its normal size. Ad lineage in August soared to 1.9 million lines, compared to 932,121 lines in August 1952.

Meanwhile, E&P reported, about 20 Times employees found temporary jobs on the piers, unloading bananas and coffee.

After 80 days of off-and-on bargaining, the two sides settled Oct. 3. Guild members received raises of about 6%; the top reporter minimum rose to \$109 a week.

But it took another two weeks for the Times to settle with the five craft unions that had joined the Guild on the picket lines. The paper reappeared Oct. 19; along with the news and sports, in its first week back the Times printed 80 full pages of back comics.

What it means to be vested, Seattle-style

By Ron Judd

Pacific Northwest Guild/Seattle Union Record

I'm vested. A lot of us are, actually. My personal vest is hunter's orange, with sufficient amounts of reflective material, we can hope, to avoid man-vs.-truck collisions on the picket line, which is where I'll be getting my exercise in coming days, weeks or months.

However long it takes.

Those are four words many of us newspaper hacks—particularly us orange-vested picket captains—will be uttering, over and over, as we walk the sidewalks in front of our employer in Seattle's first newspaper strike in a half-century.

Not a single one of us wanted to be here. But the alternative was far worse: a continuation of more than a decade of callous disrespect at the bargaining table by The Seattle Times Co., which somewhere along the line forgot that negotiation is a two-way street.

This isn't the place to get bogged down in the details of cents-per-hour and retirement funding and mileage reimbursement. But know this: Our strike is no whimsical power grab. Organizing an unruly herd of writers, photographers, graphic artists, editors, ad-sales reps, customer-service clerks and paper-delivery people is like trying to put cooked spaghetti back in the wrapper. We are free thinkers, malcontents, crusaders and curmudgeons—the proverbial Pisces sign on the astrological worker's chart.

At the risk of stating the obvious: It takes prolonged and inspired managerial intransigence to anger a bunch of journalists enough to make them abruptly quit doing

what they love to do most.

The truth is that under normal circumstances, we would be loath to organize a barbecue, let alone a prolonged work stoppage.

These are not normal circumstances. We're angry. We have a cause. We're willing to do something about it. And I've got a vest to prove it.

Mine was handed to me... by a group of people proud to call themselves Boeing nerds—and even more proud to call themselves members of the winning side in their union's strike against the aircraft giant. Remember the signs? NO NERDS, NO BIRDS. Nobody thought they'd ever strike. They stayed out for 40 days. They came back in stronger, empowered—together.

You can still feel it in them, months afterward. Saturday, they came to offer picketing tips (not to mention a spiffy, EPA-approved, burn-barrel "SPEEA stove," complete with chimney) and heartfelt inspiration to us, the latest group of Seattle white-collar workers priced out of their own market.

Their message was clear: They won their strike because this is Seattle, and in Seattle, the words "limited dispute" have been declared an oxymoron by the region's hundreds of thousands of union family members. They won because from the time they walked out to the time they came back



NAOMI ISHISAKA/PACIFIC NORTHWEST GUILD

Boeing nerds, creating burn-barrels for striking Guild members.

in, they knew they were part of something bigger, more profound, and more powerful than their own lingering issues. They won because in Seattle, the labor movement really is one.

We'll win for the same reasons.

Not that we're expecting waves of sympathy, cards of support (or, heaven forbid, hastily organized HACK-AID concerts) from the general public. Let's be honest: A lot of us at both newspapers have good jobs, love what we do, and respect the people we do it for. As my new Seattle Union Record colleague Art Thiel so aptly puts it, there is no heavy lifting in this job.

But there is heavy lifting—plenty of it—in the hundreds of other newspaper jobs filled by hundreds of newspaper workers, many of whom, starting today, are forgoing their fam-

ily's only paycheck to regain what they have lost along the way.

That would be respect.

Some people, especially in this age of "new prosperity" (which you might have read about lately in a competing paper) define that in dollar terms. Some don't. All will acknowledge that for more than a decade, we have given ground—repeatedly—at the bargaining table to help make our company "competitive" and "successful." At the risk of raining on the nouveau-riche parade, a question: If a successful company is made so solely by workers who can't maintain their own standard of living, how successful is it? And for whom?

We're still waiting for answers.

In the meantime, some of us are resolute about walking a picket line. Others, to be quite honest, are fearful.

For me, the choice was easy. It is to some degree in my blood. Saturday morning, accepting that vest from those brothers from Boeing, it struck me how true it is that foremost among all the gifts you receive from your parents is character.

For 30-plus years, my dad was a Boeing machinist. Strikes were an unfortunate fact of life at our house. I remember them clearly. For someone like my dad, who for the greater part of my youth worked seven days a week, every week, just to support his family, losing those paychecks was especially painful.

But he never crossed a picket line.

Neither will I. I'm vested. And the longer I wear it, the better it fits.

Labor round-up

Pacifica devours more of its young

The Pacifica network of community-supported radio stations continues to self-destruct, most recently with the dismissal of WBAI's long-time general manager, Valerie Van Isler, after she refused an involuntary transfer to Washington, D.C. WBAI is the Pacifica station in New York. Van Isler had locked horns with management over the airing of a speech by Fidel Castro in September, over WBAI's coverage of Palestinian issues and over the network's treatment of Democracy Now! host Amy Goodman. Goodman has been ordered to comply with a new set of work rules that include advance notification of guests and content, an end to use of volunteers and prior approval of outside speaking engagements.

H-1B—surprise!—riddled with fraud

Only days after President Clinton signed a bill raising the annual cap on H-1B visas, used by high-tech employers to import "temporary" programmers and other electronics workers, the Labor Dept.'s inspector general said the program is riddled with fraud. The inspector general's most recent semi-annual report to Congress avers that petitions for H-1B visas routinely are filed on behalf of fictitious companies, that petitions are filed by on behalf of legitimate employers without their knowledge or permission, and that workers recruited for such visas typically fail to meet the program's specialized skill requirements. News accounts, meanwhile, have documented that many of the H-1B workers find themselves working in high-tech sweatshops.

Judge trips employer on way to border

It's not unusual for employers to respond to union organizing drives by pulling up stakes and moving to a country with a more docile—and cheaper—workforce. What is unusual is the recent order issued by a federal judge in Los Angeles, barring a jewelry company from relocating to Mexico one day after its 118 employees voted for representation by IUE-CWA. The ruling, say NLRB attorneys who prosecuted the case, marks the first time a court has blocked a company from leaving the country to avoid a union.

Unions improve their batting average

Organized labor's batting average is improving. Unions won 52.4% of 1,474 representation elections in the first half of 2000, up from 51.6% of exactly the same number of elections in the first six months of 1999. On the flip side, the number of decertification elections for the same period declined to 188 from 199, while the union win rate inched slightly higher, to 33.5% in 2000 compared with 32.2% a year earlier.

SAG starts identifying strike breakers

Now that their six-month strike against advertisers is over, Screen Actors Guild activists are sending video reels of non-union TV ads to agents to help identify approximately 1,000 scabs. SAG members who crossed the picket line face suspension, fines and possible expulsion; non-union strike-breakers, meanwhile, have been permanently denied SAG membership. The strike, which ended Oct. 30, gave the union a foothold in internet advertising and increased payments for work shown on cable.

Union scales ivory tower ramparts

In a decision overturning two decades of precedent, the National Labor Relations Board ruled recently that graduate students at private universities have the right—as was already conceded to their public university counterparts—to organize and negotiate as a union. The unanimous ruling freed up the results of an April election, in which NYU teaching assistants voted 597 to 418 for representation by the United Auto Workers, and presages increased organizing campaigns on college campuses.

Big Apple becoming a pressure cooker

The Daily News and The New York Post are slugging it out in an old-fashioned newspaper war—and seeing their circulations jump as they slash newsstand prices. Now the pressmen's union at the Post is complaining that its members are required to produce an extra 60,000 papers in almost the same time as before, while Post management accuses the union of sabotage in its attempt to slow things down.



The Rev. Jesse Jackson and supporters kneel in prayer in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, in one

of two demonstrations that drew large numbers of union supporters of a Florida vote recount.

What a long, strange trip it's been . . .

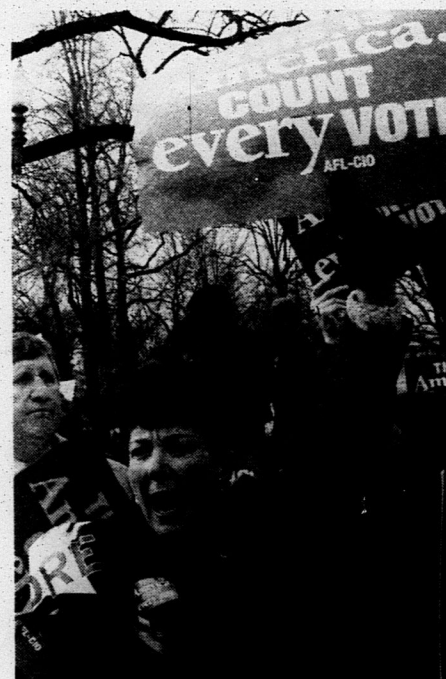
Five weeks after most voters cast their ballots for the next president of the United States, the final choice rested with just one person—the deciding vote in a 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court decision that effectively gave the job to George Bush. For most union supporters, who had provided crucial support to Al Gore in his campaign, the final verdict seemed as arbitrary and politicized as all the other post-election turmoil.

Yet for all of organized labor's disappointment, somewhat overlooked amid all the hubbub were its many election gains. Union turnout was critical in several states, for example, in defeating anti-worker measures: Oregon voters defeated two measures that would have prohibited payroll deductions for any form of political advocacy. Colorado voters, responding to Republican promises to make "right-to-work" legislation a top priority next year, won seven of 10 targeted seats in the state Senate, gaining control of that chamber for labor-backed Democrats for the first time in 40 years.

Campaign 2000, union leaders pointed out, was the largest mobilization in organized labor's history, with union members—comprising just 13% of the workforce—and their families accounting for 26% of votes cast. AFL-CIO offi-

cialists estimated that 100,000 union members volunteered on campaigns for working-family candidates, making phone calls, knocking on doors, distributing leaflets and turning out for rallies. The concerted push is credited with several key wins for Gore, most notably Pennsylvania, but also made the critical difference in numerous other races. In Washington, for example, Maria Cantwell lost the non-union household vote by 7% but won the union vote by 21%, propelling her past incumbent Slade Gordon in a squeaker of a race for U.S. Senate.

So much energy was generated during the campaign, the AFL-CIO is hoping to maintain pressure on Congress next year. "The corporate crowd will be pushing to roll back the OSHA ergonomics standard, angling to cut overtime pay and erode worker protections through a phony comp time pro-



TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, dividing her time between the two coasts, raises a little hell outside the U.S. Supreme Court Dec. 11.

posals, and undercutting our unions with some version of the TEAM Act," explained federation president John Sweeney. "That's why we need to build on the momentum of the elections and inoculate against the attacks by putting forward a positive agenda at the start of the year."

E-gifts at a union discount

In an effort to get a computer—and e-mail links—into every union member's home, CWA and the AFL-CIO have teamed up to negotiate discounts with industry hardware and internet providers. Among the programs now being offered:

- IBM—Complete systems, including monitor, a year of free internet service and a year of onsite service for as little as \$592. Call 1-877-426-5621 x6200 or visit www.cwa.workingfamilies.com for more information. Supplies and peripherals also are available at a discount.

- Union Friendly (UFSI)—Offers union-assembled computers starting at \$595 (without monitor), including one year of onsite service. Call 1-877-728-6466 or go to www.unionmadepc.com.

- Dell Computer—Discounts for all CWA mem-

bers, with prices starting at \$728, including monitor, printer and three years of onsite service. Systems can be customized to meet your specific requirements. See www.dell.com/eppyes or call 1-888-806-3355. Supplies and peripherals also are discounted; financing is available.

- CDW—A large computer reseller, CDW carries computers (including Macs), software, peripherals and consumer electronics. Discounts vary by product. See www.cdw.com/epp (access number kt4qx7ex) or call 1-888-419-7208. If you call, you will need to state that you are employed by Communications Workers of America and will have to provide the access number referenced above. If you use the web site, you will be asked to enter your CWA email address to verify employment.

LOOKING AHEAD

There's no mystery behind Seattle strike



By Linda Foley
President

Eighteen days after 1,000 members of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild and several hundred other supporting union members struck the Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer, the newspapers claimed to be clueless.

Following the first bargaining session since the strike began in the wee hours of Nov. 21, a spokesperson for the Seattle Times on Dec. 8 said newspaper executives were still trying to figure out exactly why Guild workers walked out, given what she described as The Times' and P-I's "outstanding" contract offer.

The "outstanding" offer she referenced would include annual wage increases of about 1% in each of six years for some (but not all) Guild-covered employees, would maintain a two-tier wage system that discriminated against newer employees and would continue an advertising bonus plan that continually changes so no one can count on a consistent salary from one month to the next.

The fact that this proposal was soundly rejected by the Guild is no mystery.

It simply wasn't good enough. Not good enough in Seattle, where new media job opportunities abound and the cost of living has increased more than 40% in the past 10 years. Not good enough in the year 2000, when there is a veritable brain drain of journalistic and marketing talent from print media. Not good enough after a decade that saw soaring profits for newspaper companies, flat or negative annual wage increases for newspaper workers and declining circulation of newspaper readers.

For management in Seattle and at media companies throughout North America, let me see if I can put it another way: We want and deserve more money.

Meager or nonexistent cost-of-living increases and inequitable merit pay schemes just don't cut it anymore. Guild

members have too many opportunities to shop their talents elsewhere without being trapped in jobs where they are overworked, under-compensated and unappreciated.

As advanced communications technology continues to provide new opportunities for the dissemination of information, and as media companies continue to amalgamate and combine operations to maximize their profits from such ventures, content has become a valuable commodity. If the internet is the engine driving the new economy, then content is the gasoline that keeps it running. Our mem-

See page 8 for a related story on the health of the industry; Seattle strike coverage begins on page 1.

bers—the journalists in the newsroom and the salespeople and customer service representatives in the commercial departments—create and maintain the content.

And we want the value of our contributions to content reflected in our paychecks—in all of our paychecks.

One of the true inspirations of the Seattle strike is how much of the strikers' commitment is rooted in the concept of not just better wages, but better wages for everyone. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists explain why a fair incentive plan for advertising salespeople is important. Advertising salespeople, meanwhile, condemn a two-tiered wage system that keeps reporters who work

in the suburbs at lower pay rates.

Art Thiel, award-winning sports columnist for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the Guild's spokesman during the strike, told a recent meeting of community leaders that through this struggle, he and his co-workers have come to realize that "we're all connected." And, he went on to say, making sure everyone gets fair compensation means everyone will work harder to produce a better newspaper.

It is past time for newspaper companies to get a clue and start paying employees competitive wages. Or, as Editor and Publisher put it, "they will continue to face the prospect of employees walking out the door to join a competitive medium—or a picket line."

In Seattle, they joined the picket line.

OTHER VOICES

From the editorial page of the Dec. 4 issue of Editor & Publisher:

Given up for dead, unions are feisty again. Call it good news or bad, myopic industry practices are a big reason why.

On a drizzly Sunday three weeks ago, members of Detroit Newspaper Guild Local 22 voted reluctantly, but overwhelmingly, to ratify the final contract offer the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News made in a labor dispute that started well before six unions struck in July 1995.

For many union journalists, the strike had taken a devastating toll on their family budgets, on their friendships with colleagues who crossed picket lines, and on their careers, as they returned to the newsroom years later to find permanent replacements had taken over the best beats. In the end, Detroit's Guild employees found themselves essentially forced to ratify a contract containing provisions they had fought vigorously for five years; merit pay instead of scheduled wage increases for virtually all News journalists, an open shop, and no

amnesty for employees fired for alleged misconduct during the strike.

Yet, not even 10 days after the Detroit vote, nearly 1,000 Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild members streamed out of their workplaces, setting off a strike against the jointly operated Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the Seattle Times.

How can that be? Didn't the failure—and there's no other word for it—of the Detroit newspaper strike, a contest conducted on the labor movement's home field, ensure that newspaper unions would never again resort to strikes?

The fact is, newspaper unions have grown increasingly feisty in recent years. Unions are well aware of how they were hurt in Detroit, but they know that publishers, too, can see the dangers bruising strikes still hold for newspapers. Detroit's dailies suffered a \$100-million financial hit before returning to profitability about two years into the strike. Combined circulation is still down about 30%.

Union tenacity is beginning to pay off in some of the industry's lengthiest impasses. After years of quarreling with owner Dean

Singleton, for instance, Guild employees achieved a contract this summer at the Press-Telegram in Long Beach, Calif. Organizing is on the rebound as well—often in nontraditional areas. In September, one Guild local organized the 400 employees in New York's biggest newsstand chain. In Seattle, another Guild local is in the headlines for its audacious plan to organize thousands of Amazon.com workers.

We're agnostics about who's right in Seattle, Detroit, Long Beach, or at any other paper where unions and management contend. But we do think that the newspaper industry's outmoded compensation practices account for much of labor's recent assertiveness. At a time when an exploding media environment is bidding up the price of creative content producers, newspapers are still trying to attract the best and brightest journalism graduates with a median starting salary of about \$24,000. Until newspapers abandon the notion that journalists have taken a vow of poverty, they will continue to face the prospect of employees walking out the door to join a competitive medium—or a picket line.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I am the former Vice President of BGEA/TNG Local 31245. I have worked at the Boston Globe for 21 years. I went to Detroit to rally and march with striking members to the front door of both Detroit newspapers. I was tremendously impacted by the reality of it all. It takes a ton of guts to walk out of a place you put so much of your life into.

I am offended by Secretary-Treasurer Lunzer's column [Nov. GR, page 7] blaming the local and the NLRB for this labor defeat. Where was the international Guild leadership and the AFL-CIO before this strike was undertaken? The international's strategy is to suggest the struggle go on inside. The international is committed to rebuilding the local. What strategy caused us to have to rebuild the local?

Secretary Lunzer suggests that Local political infighting damaged the Guild's credibility. That, I suggest, is the problem with the international labor movement: all too many leaders are not members of a

labor union. They are members of a political machine that keeps them in office and well paid.

Yes, politics had a lot to do with this labor defeat—but on a much larger scale than the union local.

—Mark L. Anastas
Boston, MA

To The Editor:

Bernie Lunzer's sweeping general conclusions about strike strategies in Detroit were wrong in a number of areas and require a response for the record. Regarding mobilization and communications with members as well as strategies for printing a strike paper, the facts are:

- Several months before the strike, the six Detroit unions met with international officers from the AFL-CIO and our parent organizations to set-up a strike HQ and put together an advertising/reader boycott. The AFL-CIO's George Curtin was brought in to set up that program, which resulted in more than 500 advertisers and one-third of

the readership disappearing from the News and Free Press. John Beck, professor of labor and industrial relations at Michigan State University, called our boycott program the most sophisticated and successful that he had ever seen.

- Long before the strike, we launched monthly and later weekly mobilization training meetings for Guild members. Heading that effort were Luther Jackson and David Hecker from the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO. Hecker was assigned full-time to our ongoing pre-strike and post-strike operations.

- We launched a daily on-line electronic newspaper one week after the strike start. The three international unions that represented the striking Detroit locals—including TNG—rejected initial proposals for a printed strike paper and didn't provide funding for the Sunday Journal until three months after the strike started.

- Prior to the strike, local officers spoke before dozens of labor bodies, city councils and other community groups seeking support for a boycott and advising them of the

hostility we were facing with the Detroit papers. After the strike, dozens of union members were assigned to a speakers bureau, which made hundreds of similar appearances throughout the state and region.

- Local 22, using its own funds, provided fully paid health insurance for all strikers for eight months. This was possible because we had built a substantial strike fund for just such an emergency.

- Unlike many previous strikes in our industry, all of the unions of the Metro Council walked out together and remained in full solidarity with each other for the duration. It was our diligent efforts and hard work that made such a united union front happen.

- No union is ever "ready" for a strike, and with hindsight always being 20/20, there are always things that could have been done differently. But we in Detroit are proud of the preparations we made for a strike that was forced upon us by two greedy national newspaper chains.

—Louis J. Mleczo
President, Local 22

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: Jan. 12.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

For publishers, a rollickin' good year

To hear the publishers describe it, hard times are upon us: profit margins at most companies were down in the third quarter, and a combination of rising newsprint prices and signs of an economic slowdown portend even lower margins ahead.

Addressing investors at the UBS Warburg media conference Dec. 6, officials of several publicly traded newspaper companies warned of lower revenues and profits. Dow Jones reported a 12% drop in November ad lineage, thanks to a cratering of initial public offerings, and said it expects a 30% decline in December compared to last year. Tribune Co. said revenues from publishing will be flat this quarter. Scripps warned that fourth-quarter earnings won't meet analysts' projections. The New York Times Co. foresees more moderate growth next year.

But for all of the cautions, 2000 is shaping up as a banner year for the industry, with profit margins at levels that would have beggared the imagination a decade ago. Indeed, despite some slowing in the third quarter, year-over-year comparisons for the first nine months—shown in the chart at upper right—show more gainers than losers. And that's coming off an extraordinarily healthy 1999, when newspaper publishing—as

recently reported in the 18th Annual Veronis Suhler Communications Industry Report—had a 17.6% operating cash flow margin, placing it among the top six media sectors for profitability.

The much hyped internet sectors, meanwhile, continue to bleed red ink: operating cash flow margins for internet service providers last year were -7.8%, for internet search engines -20.7% and for internet content providers -112%.

Still, there's little doubt that the superheated growth of the past several years can't be maintained. Retail ad spending, which constitutes the newspaper industry's single biggest source of advertising revenue, is growing sluggish even as national advertising—which benefits primarily the larger national papers, such as USA Today, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times—is booming, up 14.5% in the third quarter. Of even greater long-term concern: both daily and Sunday circulations continue to stagnate or decline, with the biggest losses found in smaller markets.

Having scaled Olympian profit peaks, however, many publishers have indicated they can't tolerate a return to the less exuberant returns the industry has notched historically. Their solution? Further belt-tightening, typically by starting with whacks at payroll.

	Profit margin July-Sept.		Profit margin January-Sept.	
	1999	2000	1999	2000
Belo	21.2	20.8	21.7	21.7
Dow Jones	19.8	16.7	20.9	26.9
Gannett	27.0	25.5	27.0	26.6
Journal Register	27.2	27.6	27.2	27.5
Knight Ridder	21.3	21.1	20.2	21.6
McClatchy	20.6	20.6	19.7	20.3
Media General	28.5	23.0	27.6	25.8
New York Times	17.6	18.2	18.8	21.0
E.W. Scripps	22.7	20.4	23.1	20.5
Tribune	17.6	16.7	18.9	19.3
Washington Post	18.2	15.4	17.9	15.9

SOURCE: MORTON RESEARCH

So Knight Ridder said it will cut its workforce by 2% next year, Dow Jones recently announced it was closing its regional editions—eliminating 34 jobs—and a handful of other major papers have announced double- or triple-digit staff cuts, including 60 at the Baltimore Sun, 60 at the Arizona Republic, 100 at Philadelphia Newspapers and 170 at the Los Angeles Times.

Overlooked in this paring away is the relationship between staffing levels and

product quality, which may explain why circulation continues to drift lower. And, of course, it doesn't help that an industry which keeps growing faster than the gross domestic product insists that its employees accept wage increases that don't keep pace with the cost of living—resulting in strikes like the one in Seattle, negotiating deadlocks like those in Eugene, Ore. and Portland, Maine, and editorials like the one excerpted on page 7, from Editor & Publisher.

Former field director to chair Broun Award

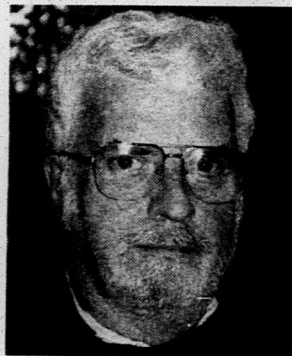
William McLeman, who retired as the Guild's field operations director in 1996, will chair the 2000 Heywood Broun Award competition. The panel's chairman does not cast a vote but is responsible for guiding its deliberations.

The deadline for this year's entries, as in the past, will be the fourth Friday in January—Jan. 26, 2001—with work published or broadcast during 2000 eligible for consideration. The award is named after columnist and Guild founder Heywood Broun and honors work that champions the underdog or helps to right a wrong or correct an injustice.

Last year's winner was Katherine Boo of The Washington Post,

who was commended for a two-part series that exposed the rapes, physical abuse and forced labor of the mentally retarded wards of the city of Washington, D.C. Her reporting touched off a flurry of criminal investigations, firings and administrative reforms.

McLeman, a native Canadian, began his Guild activist career in 1957 while working as a circulation district manager for the News-Herald in Vancouver, B.C. That same year, while he served as



William McLeman

the local's secretary, its members voted to affiliate with TNG instead. The change, alas, was short-lived: later that year the News-Herald folded, forcing McLeman to take a circulation job with the Vancouver Sun.

McLeman went on to serve as treasurer of the Vancouver Guild from 1960 to 1962, and as local president from 1963 to 1964, when he also served a brief stint on the Guild's International Executive Board—a

position he resigned in 1964 to become executive secretary of the Vancouver Guild.

In 1973, a year after the position had been created, McLeman was appointed Canadian director (a slot that wouldn't become an elective position until 1993) and served in that capacity for all but a short period over the next 15 years. In that position he worked on organizing drives that brought in new units in Montreal, Windsor, Vancouver, Winnipeg and at the Canadian Press. He was then named to TNG's field director post in 1988, where his most notable organizing drives were at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. and the Boston Globe.

McLeman's most lasting legacy,

however, may be his work on integrating the Guild into a larger union. During the early 1980s he served on a committee that negotiated a merger agreement with the former International Typographical Union, but that initiative was voted down by ITU convention delegates. His second effort was more successful, however, as McLeman served on the committee that negotiated the CWA merger agreement.

"We have Guild leaders who have smarts and Guild leaders who have heart," TNG-CWA President Linda Foley said of McLeman as he announced his retirement. "Bill McLeman is one of those rare trade unionists who has an abundance of both."

THE GUILD
Reporter

Official publication of
The Newspaper Guild-CWA (AFL-CIO, CLC)
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Volume 67, Number 12 DECEMBER 15, 2000

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DAYBOOK

Heywood Broun Awards
deadline, Jan. 26

New Local Officers
Seminar, Feb. 16-19,
Meany Center

New England District
Council, Feb. 24-25,
Fall River, MA

CWA Legislative-Political
Conference, April 22-25,
Washington, D.C.

Heywood Broun Luncheon,
April 24, Nat'l Press Club

TNG Canada Rep. Council,
April 28-29, Kingston, ON

CWA National Women's
Conference, May 10-13,
Las Vegas

Annual CWA Convention,
July 9-10, Minneapolis

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

The CIO convention, warning that the growth of newspaper monopolies is diminishing news coverage, approves a resolution supporting the Guild's proposal for "establishing centrally located daily newspapers owned and operated by unions." . . . Prices are sky-high, corporate earnings "point to a year unmatched in American history"—but a wage stabilization board is named, ahead of a wage freeze and price controls. . . . Enrollment in the nation's journalism schools drops 20.5%, following an 11% drop the previous year.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The Washington Post declares talks with its striking pressmen at an impasse and starts training permanent replacements. . . . The average of reporter top minimums at dailies under Guild contracts breaks \$300 for the first time; it passed the \$200 threshold only five years earlier. . . . The San Juan Star and the Puerto Rico Guild reach a contract agreement, ending a 52-day strike.

Ten years ago this month:

Canadian unions call for a moratorium on cutbacks at CBC that will cost 1,100 employees their jobs, including 60 covered by the Guild. . . . San Francisco, heavily lobbied by a coalition of unions that includes the Guild, adopts the only U.S. law specifically aimed at improving the safety of workers using VDTs. . . . Members of an unaffiliated union at Dow Jones, the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees, vote 655-419 not to affiliate with the CWA. (A successful affiliation vote came in 1996.)