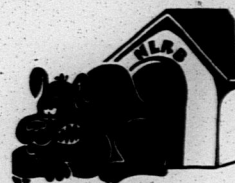


THE GUILD Reporter

March 23, 2001

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Dealing with
a toothless
labor law
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NIGHTY-NIGHT, RIDDER

Damn the economy—cut staff!

The new newspaper war—the one that pits journalistic values against Wall Street's lack of values—claimed one of its most respected victims this week, as Jay T. Harris, publisher of the San Jose Mercury News, quit his post to protest Knight Ridder's insistence on maintaining unrealistically high profit margins.

The unexpected resignation was announced to Mercury News employees in a March 19 memo, in which Harris described a letter he had written to Knight Ridder CEO Tony Ridder and newspaper division president Steve Rossi. The letter

explained Harris was "stepping down in the hope that doing so will cause [them] to closely examine the wisdom of the profit targets we've been struggling to find a way to meet." Those targets, Harris added, can't be met "without risking significant and lasting harm to the Mercury News, as a journalistic enterprise and as the special place to work that it is."

Although Harris' abrupt resignation shocked co-workers, it was only the loudest in a volley of criticisms that have been leveled at the company's avowed determination to earn record-breaking profits despite a cooling economy. While newspaper

ad revenue has declined since Christmas and newsprint costs are rising, Knight Ridder's newspapers are being pushed to achieve profit margins of 22% to 25%—or roughly 50% above the industry's long-term average. In many cases that has meant layoffs; Harris warned of an unspecified number of job cuts just two weeks before he resigned.

Four days before Harris quit, an open letter to Tony Ridder from three Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters made many of the same points that Harris would raise. "Newsroom layoffs are not a self-cauterizing form of surgery—the bleeding continues as morale declines," wrote Pete Carey, Eric Nalder and Rick Tulsy. (Nalder, until recently a reporter for The Seattle Times, won two Pulitzers during his tenure there; Tulsy is former president of the Philadelphia Newspaper Guild.) "With a diminished staff we won't be able to give reporters the time and attention their work requires. Our most capable people will begin looking elsewhere," the letter observed. "As the newspaper diminishes in its ability to cover the community, the community will pay the price."

Belt-tightening measures elsewhere within the Knight Ridder chain also have prompted cries of alarm, including a unanimous statement March 3 from the TNG-CWA Knight Ridder Council. Deploping the "layoffs, destructive changes to content and quality, and low employee morale" caused by company-wide budget cuts, the council noted that Knight Ridder "is a healthy company financially, with a competitive profit margin." As it further noted, "these cuts [are] unnecessarily severe and hurtful to the newspapers individually, their reputations, the communities they serve and the company as a whole."

Among the chain's other newspapers, The Kansas City Star—whose workers are not represented by TNG-CWA—said it would reduce its page count on

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BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Up in the sky! It's . . .
well, it's just a photographer, actually. The real news is down on the ground, where the latest group of 47 union leaders from around the U.S. and Canada gathered for

the annual "class picture" at the TNG New Local Officers' Seminar. The annual event is held at the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Maryland; a full account of this year's four-day workshop appears on page 5, courtesy of Joe Mosley of Eugene, Ore.

Hudson News agrees to contract

Few organizing campaigns have been as nasty and difficult as the one shouldered by the New York Guild two years ago—and then again last year—among newsstand employees of the Hudson News Company. So it comes as a surprise not only that Hudson News has agreed to a first contract less than six months after its employees voted for Guild representation, but that the agreement is extraordinarily decent.

"It's a terrific contract," exulted Guild President Barry Lipton. "It's like a model contract. It includes a full union

shop, grievance procedures, steps in the scales—you name it, it's got it."

The agreement, unanimously recommended to the membership by all nine members of the bargaining committee, also resolves a federal lawsuit brought by employees who had been forced to work unpaid overtime. Thirteen workers are to share \$40,000 in back pay under terms of the settlement.

Membership meetings to explain the contract—a task complicated by the unit's ethnic diversity, its members speaking seven different languages—were being scheduled as The Guild

Reporter went to press. A ratification vote, Lipton said, will be held in late March or early April.

The four-year pact, covering approximately 325 workers at newsstands throughout Manhattan, includes pay raises of at least 12.55% over the life of the contract plus a signing bonus. Current employees who haven't received a raise recently will be given up to two years' credit for experience, bumping their salaries to the top end of the newly established wage scales.

The proposed contract also requires

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Hargrove wins Broun Award

Mary Hargrove, an award-winning investigative reporter and associate editor at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, has won the Heywood Broun Award for a series that explored the failures of the Arkansas juvenile justice system. The award, which includes a plaque and a check for \$5,000, will be presented at an April 24 luncheon at the National Press Club.



Mary Hargrove

Three honorable mentions also were awarded: to reporter Darcy Spears and photojournalist/editor Steve Miller, of KVBC News in Las Vegas, for a segment on a man wrongfully imprisoned for 15 years; to columnist Carl Strock, of the Schenectady (NY) Gazette, for a series of columns that were instrumental in winning a new trial for a man accused of sexually abusing a young girl; and to the late Lars-Erik Nelson, of the New York Daily News, for columns criticizing the New York Times' coverage of the Wen Ho Lee nuclear espionage case.

As originally conceived, Hargrove's series was supposed to bring readers good news, not become the impetus for reform. Three years earlier, Hargrove had documented how guards were

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SF Gate swings open to admit Guild contract

Resolving a years-old dispute, the Northern California Guild and the San Francisco Chronicle have agreed that editorial and advertising employees of web site S.F. Gate are eligible for Guild representation. The agreement ends a grievance that started when the Chronicle decided to operate the Gate as a separate enterprise, in part to keep it union-free.

The agreement extends all key provisions of the Guild contract to non-management employees at the Gate, including a shorter workweek, improved health-care and pension options and much-enhanced job security. While much of the main contract applies to the Gate workforce, some sections have been amended—through negotiation—in recognition of the greater need for management flexibility in the fast-moving online world.

Nearly three dozen Gate employees are covered by the pact, which took effect Feb. 16.

Newly hired Gate employees will have the same Guild obligations as Chronicle staffers, but employees already on the payroll when the new agreement was signed may opt out of union membership. Nevertheless, said Guild president Carl Hall, "We expect all will want to join and take an active part in the Chronicle bargaining unit. In fact we already have several members at the Gate, including former employees of the Examiner who were transferred around the time of that newspaper's sale to the Fang family."

Guild officials say they hope the agreement paves the way for a closer working relationship between the Chronicle's print and online operations.

Canadian arbitrators erode members' rights

Arbitrators' adverse rulings in several recent grievances brought by the Canadian Media Guild against the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation could have a significant—and undesirable—impact on future layoff and recall cases:

- An arbitrator has ruled that a Guild journalist is not eligible for redeployment to a videojournalist position in his location, even though he is qualified to do the work. Instead, a videojournalist represented by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union will be transferred from another location—at significant expense to the CBC—and the Guild member will be forced to find other work.

- In another decision only a few days later, the same arbitrator ruled that the CBC has the right to change an employee's position from full-time to half-time. The arbitrator determined that in a layoff, the employer is within its rights to offer part-time work to

individuals even though the collective agreement says that employees will not be forced in any way to accept part-time employment.

- In a decision CMG officials call "the most egregious we've seen in a long time," an arbitrator ruled that a Guild reporter with more than ten years' experience was not qualified to fill another reporter position at the same level. That determination was reached despite testimony that the individuals responsible for filling the vacant position did not look at the grievant's résumé, did not view any tapes of his work and did not speak to anyone in the newsroom who could attest to his abilities.

The Guild is reviewing the arbitrators' decisions to determine its next step. Judicial review of some decisions may be possible; in other cases, the issues will be addressed in the next round of bargaining, scheduled to begin this fall.

Psst! Waddya think of CBC?

Struggling with budget cuts and an overall crisis of confidence, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is asking employees what they think of the CBC as an employer.

The corporate-wide employee survey, launched March 12, is supposed to help management "with the prioritizing of important issues and the development of an action plan for addressing them," according to a statement by the Canadian Media Guild. Although the Guild was not initially consulted about the survey, subsequent discussions resulted in some survey changes and a commitment by CBC managers to share the results with Guild officials, leading to the

union's lukewarm endorsement of the effort.

"Given past experiences with similar initiatives that were deemed illegal by the Canada Industrial Relations Board, the Guild was initially skeptical of this process," a Guild spokesman conceded. "However, because of the CBC's assurances and approach, the Guild believes this process could be constructive—the survey results will be useful data for identifying and dealing with fundamental issues at the CBC, such as management effectiveness, leadership, training, workload and communications."

The survey, which is several pages long, is being administered by Hay Management Consultants.

In brief

'Extras' get short shrift

The Canadian Artists and Performers Professional Relations Tribunal (CAP-PRIT) has rejected a bid by Canada's "background performers" to be represented by the Canadian Media Guild, ruling that they fall under the jurisdiction of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA). The tribunal did not acknowledge that ACTRA has done nothing to represent the vast majority of background performers since its certificate was issued in 1996. ACTRA's existing master agreements list no rates for background performers who are not members of ACTRA, and background work does not count toward ACTRA's apprentice membership program. As a result, there are thousands of performers working regularly in the Canadian television and film industries without any clearly defined rights.

This just in . . .

The news took a little time to reach us, but the Bakersfield Newspaper Guild finally has a contract—after going without one since mid-1999 while it unsuccessfully contested an outsourcing provision. The new agreement, reached Dec. 19, reportedly contains "several minor improvements," but the biggest was renewed employee interest in the union: a dozen new members were signed up within the first month after the new contract was announced.

New digs in Pittsburgh

The Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh has moved its office into the headquarters building of the United Steelworkers of America, in downtown Pittsburgh—and next door to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, where the local represents about 260 editorial employees. The new address is: 60 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh PA 15222. The new phone number is: 412-880-4001.

After the fireworks . . .

It's not too soon to be planning for the next sector conference, which will follow hard on the heels of the Independence Day holiday in the U.S. Scheduled for July 6 and 7 at the Millennium Hotel in Minneapolis, Minn., the conference will be followed July 9 and 10 by the CWA Convention, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. All reservations for lodging must be made through CWA, on forms it will provide in the Convention Official Call; hotel rates will be \$138 a night. Of special interest: a panel discussion the afternoon of July 7, titled, "Guild Strikes, a Rank-and-File Perspective."

How to get on the A-list

Join the Guild's Activist List and get e-mail notification of important events and information. All Guild members in good standing are eligible. To register, send an e-mail to guild@cwa-union.org and put "subscribe to activists list" in the subject line.

Canadians pick VPs

Two vacancies on the Canadian Media Guild's executive committee have been filled by acclamation. Claude Gagnon, of CBC Sudbury, is the new Central Vice President; Lucy Van Oldenbarneveld, of CBC Whitehorse, is Northern Vice President.

New officers elected

The Victoria-Vancouver Island Guild, CWA Local 30223, recently elected the following officers: president, Kathy Small; first vice-president, Chris Carolan; second vice-president, Massey Padgham; secretary, Bob Rowlands; treasurer, Melanie Zimmerman Duncan; and unit chairperson, Sue Moore Duncan.

Kudos for strike paper

The Seattle Union Record, produced by striking employees of the Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer, has won an Award of Excellence from the Society for News Design. The award recognized the newspaper's issue on the WTO anniversary protests. Meanwhile, the Union Record's managing editor, Chuck Taylor, and his wife, Annie Koch, have both accepted the Times' voluntary-dismissal buyout. Taylor was aerospace reporter, Koch a copy editor.

Bernotas wins reelection

Adolphe Bernotas, dean of Wire Service Guild Local 31222, has been re-elected to a fourth term as president of the New England District Council. Robert Jordan of the Boston Globe Employees Assoc. was elected 1st vice president; Larry O'Brien of the Woonsocket local, 2nd vice president; Lesley Phillips of Boston, secretary; and Tom Thibeault of Manchester, treasurer.

—Obituaries—

Alex Waterson, an outstanding union leader who spent more than 20 years with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (broadcast division) at the CBC, died at home March 1. He was 67. Prior to retiring in 1992 as a senior clerk in the finance department of CBC Toronto, Waterson was national treasurer for the Canadian Broadcast Employees Union of CUPE and had been involved in negotiating several collective agreements.

Clara Bennett, third vice president of the New York Guild from 1982 until 1994, died Feb. 23 from complications arising from her long struggle against diabetes. She was 68. Bennett chaired the Amsterdam News unit from 1982 until her retirement in 1996, was a delegate to many Guild conventions and was a long-time member of the Guild's executive committee.

Bea Eastman Pfister died of a heart attack Feb. 22 at the age of 84. She had worked 35 years as the executive secretary to every New York Guild president starting with Thomas J. Murphy, in 1951, retiring in 1986 under Barry Lipton.

The Newspaper Guild International



For information about your benefits, contact Helen L. Coleman, assistant to the trustees:

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NOW THAT'S A WRAP

Guerrilla tactics in Eugene (of all places)

"Local Newspaper Gets Greedy," the headline screamed. "Register-Guard owner Tony Baker Refuses to Bargain in Good Faith," shouted the deck, on what looked like the lead story in the Feb. 27 edition of the Eugene, Ore. daily.

In the early morning hours, anonymous activists in a town famous for its protests had opened coin-operated newspaper boxes and covered hundreds, possibly thousands, of copies of the paper with a sheet of newsprint filled with pro-labor stories.

The guerrilla operation was as much a surprise to members of the embattled Eugene Newspaper Guild as it was to readers. "We didn't plan, produce or distribute it," said chief negotiator Lance Robertson. But publisher Tony Baker, who is offering a \$2,500 reward for tips to identify and prosecute the people involved, apparently thinks otherwise: In a letter to all R-G employees decrying the "attack on the integrity" of the paper, Baker made a snide reference to Guild President Suzi Prozanski "claiming" there was no Guild involvement. In fact, Prozanski stated firmly in other media stories that the union was uninvolved.

The wrap-around included some of the estimated hundreds of letters to the editor, urging the company to bargain in good faith, that Baker has refused to print. One, from U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), warned Baker that the newspaper's "reputation as a good citizen is at risk as this labor dispute continues month after month." Another, from one of Eugene's legendary 1960s activists, observed that the "R-G has jumped on the union-busting bandwagon

with a vengeance." The writer, Trim Bissell, was about to be the subject of an unrelated Sunday profile in the R-G, but Baker deep-sixed the story, the day after the wrap appeared.

The wrap-around's main story was a comprehensive look at the Guild's two-year struggle to negotiate a new contract. The local has been bargaining since February 1999; its contract expired April 30, 1999.



Robertson and the Guild team have been up against union-busting lawyer Michael Zinser, first hired by Baker in 1997 to defeat the union's effort to organize part-time workers. Based in Nashville, Zinser flies to Eugene just once every six to eight weeks for roughly two days of bargaining.

"It drags everything out," said Robertson, the paper's longtime environmental reporter. "Without Zinser, my feeling is that we would have spent the same amount of time bargaining in six to eight months that

we've spent now in more than two years."

As it happened, the wrap's appearance coincided with the first day of a brief, low-key subscription boycott. Members passed out cards to friends and neighbors and asked them to stop their papers for four days—a time when Zinser would be in town for bargaining. The cards asked people to pledge to restart their paper delivery March 2.

"We didn't want to hurt the company financially," Robertson said, estimating that 500 readers participated. "We just wanted to send a message."

The message is that the 155-member Guild has tremendous support in Eugene, a college town where protests are as common as rain. From gray-haired hippies to black-clad anarchists, activists rally outside the courthouse and the county jail, picket the Nike store, climb condemned trees and march the streets with battered cardboard signs that decry police action, the federal government, timber companies and multinational giants.

"I think the community sees what's happening to the paper the same way they would see a large employer who was polluting the environment or trying to muscle its way into some kind of zoning change," Robertson said. "People here react very negatively when they see someone getting pushed around. When they perceive that somebody is bullying someone else, there's an outcry."

Except for Baker's pledge to prosecute anyone involved in the wrap—police say the incident is a misdemeanor under Oregon law—he has ignored the public campaign. Never mind, activists point out, that the paper's century-old masthead proclaims the R-G is a "Citizen of its Community."

The labor unrest isn't helping circulation, which shrank by about a thousand in

the past year—from around 75,000—just as the company was pumping money into its failed "80,000 in 2000" campaign to increase readership.

Little has changed at the bargaining table in two years. Recently, the Guild fought back part of a "management rights" proposal, but language still on the table would permit the company to assign part-timers, contract workers or managers to Guild jobs once Guild-covered employees have quit or retired.

Although the company has backed off from a couple of other proposals—including one to reduce part-time pay—those gains came largely in the form of a settlement to avoid a National Labor Relations Board trial for unfair labor practices. But many major issues remain on the table, including company demands for a four-year freeze on pay and commissions for advertising sales people, who haven't had a base pay raise since 1994. The paper also wants a 4% pay cut for circulation district managers.

For other employees, the company is offering 2% raises each year for four years. The Guild wants a three-year contract, with annual raises of 5%, 3% and 4% for all workers.

Also blocking an agreement are proposed changes in the grievance procedure, with the company seeking to reduce the deadline for filing complaints to 30 days from 75 days. It also wants to bar Guild officers from handling grievances on company time.

The next bargaining session is set for April. While Robertson said the long, slow process has been tough for negotiators, he is heartened by the community's concern, as well as members' strong support. "I'm amazed at how well people are hanging in there," he said. "You would expect that after two years, a small minority of your members would be complaining about not getting a contract and blaming the union negotiators. But I haven't heard that at all."

Hargrove a winner

Continued from page 1

physically, emotionally and sexually abusing children in state-run institutions; this series was intended to look at how the system had been improved.

Instead, the suicide of a youth within the state penal system was Hargrove's first clue that policymakers had not delivered on earlier promises. Subsequent investigation found that children were being warehoused without badly needed physical or psychological treatment and that the lack of treatment contributed to violence inside and outside the system—including attacks on weaker children by stronger, more dangerous ones, as well as attacks on the general population by youths released from custody.

This time, it seems, Hargrove's work couldn't be ignored: as a result of her series, several bills to reform Arkansas' juvenile justice system have been introduced in the state legislature, including one that would compel treatment of juveniles in need of medical or mental intervention.

"We believe Ms. Hargrove's series was completely in keeping

with Heywood Broun's passionate championing of the underdog and the disadvantaged," the judging panel said in reaching its decision. "During his lifetime, Broun maintained a steadfast belief that journalists could help right wrongs, especially social ills."

Guided by Bill McLeman, the Guild's former director of field operations, the judges screened 208 entries in this year's competition—including a record-setting 55 from television journalists. (The competition also rang one unusually discordant note, although not until after the judging was done, when the Guild learned that honoree Carl Strock is *persona non grata* among unions in upstate New York for several columns a few years back that blasted teachers—and their union leaders—as overpaid and underworked.)

This year's judges were:

- Marvin Kalb, executive director of the Washington office of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. A former chief diplomatic correspondent for CBS News and NBC News, Kalb was a moderator



Guards subdue a youth, in one of many photos taken by Stephen B. Thornton to help illustrate

Hargrove's series on Arkansas' "one-size-fits-all" system for handling juvenile delinquents.

of Meet the Press and has authored or co-authored nine non-fiction books and two novels.

- Alan L. Otten, who retired from the Washington bureau of the Wall Street Journal in 1990, after 44 years with the paper as a reporter and editor. He is a past

president of the White House Correspondents Association.

- Sanford Watzman, a former investigative reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer, who retired from journalism as editor of the U.S. State Department's magazine, State. He also is a vet-

eran of two Guild strikes.

- Lena Williams, a sports reporter for The New York Times and chair of the Times-Guild unit at the paper. She is the author of "It's the Little Things: The Everyday Interactions that Get Under the Skin of Blacks and Whites."

News flashes

Chinese daily employees join Guild

Employees of the Chinese Daily News, in Los Angeles, voted 78 to 63 to be represented by the Northern California Media Guild, TNG-CWA Local 39521. The March 19 vote had been delayed by the publisher since last fall, when it hired a professional union-buster and required staff to attend lengthy meetings "at which we were grilled and badgered about the union," said one employee. But an average wage of \$24,000 a year and a notorious lack of job security convinced the majority it was time for a change, resulting in the country's first unionized Chinese-language newspaper.

Nursing group staff avoids strike—just

Some 120 Guild-represented employees of the American Nurses Association ratified a two-year contract Feb. 15, one day after overwhelmingly voting in favor of strike authorization. The agreement came after 11 days of negotiations, assisted by TNG-CWA staffer Marian Needham, culminating in an all-night session. It provides 3.5% pay increases each year, plus length-of-service raises ranging from 0.5% to 2% in a combination of minimum increases and lump sums; requires consultation with the union on proposed subcontracting of unit work; improves language on bumping in case of layoffs; and provides the right to grieve evaluations given during probationary periods.

Freelancers head for Supreme Court

The case of Tasini v The New York Times, in which freelance writers are arguing that publishers violate copyright law by putting their work on line and on CD-ROMS without permission or additional compensation, will be heard March 28 by the U.S. Supreme Court. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled in favor of the plaintiffs—including Jonathan Tasini, president of the National Writers Union—in September 1999. A rally to show support for the freelancers, featuring Tasini and TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, will be held March 27 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Gay magazine staff to vote for Guild

An April 2 representation election in Minneapolis is likely to result in the nation's first unionized gay magazine. Although 12 of 16 employees of Lavender signed cards to be represented by the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/Typographical Union, a company challenge resulted in a National Labor Relations Board ruling that two of those who signed cards are supervisors and therefore ineligible to vote. Employees said they decided to organize in response to a perceived lack of professionalism at the magazine.

Time to prepare Barr Award entries

The deadline for David S. Barr Award entries is May 11. Named in honor of the Guild's former general counsel, the award recognizes one high school and one college journalist for work that promoted justice and fairness or that helped to right a wrong. Work published or broadcast between Sept. 1, 2000 and April 30, 2001, is eligible. For more information and entry forms, contact Kathy Mulvey at TNG-CWA international headquarters, at 202/434-7177.

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empres@IAPE1096.org

Why the penny-pinching? Look who gets the bucks

Knigh Ridder is not the only publisher to forecast declining revenues and earnings this quarter and for the foreseeable future. E.W. Scripps said it expects first quarter earnings of 30-35 cents a share, compared with 45 cents a year earlier. The New York Times warned that first-quarter profits will fall as much as 26% compared to last year. And Dow Jones said that first-quarter earnings may be only a third of what analysts had projected.

But amid all these tales of woe, it bears remembering that all these companies are still making money—and lots of it. The difference today, compared with similar downturns decades ago, is that virtually every newspaper has a monopoly in its market. And because they have monopolies, newspaper companies worry less about their readers and more about the demands of Wall Street—which expects monopolies to generate profits considerably higher than those delivered by truly competitive mass-market industries, like retailers or commodities manufacturers.

For example, today's newspaper profit margins are expected to exceed 20%. But in 1957, when most newspapers were still privately owned, The Guild Reporter published an article about newspapers posting their third consecutive year of strengthened earnings—an average of 5.25% of total revenue.

Because newspapers are in a cyclical industry, with advertising-driven revenues rising and falling with changes in the economy, their profits—all things being equal—should likewise be expected to rise and fall. But as Knight Ridder is now illustrating, the new expectation is that profits can be maintained because of infinite elasticity on the part of employees, adver-

tisers and readers—an elasticity that will absorb layoffs, price increases, smaller news holes, abandonment of long-term development projects and various other sleights-of-hand without a murmur. So, for example, The Wall Street Journal has pumped up its newsstand price by a third, to \$1 an issue, while The New York Times boosted its local price by 25%, to 75 cents a copy. Overall newspaper circulation, meanwhile, has been in a decade-long slide.

All the dust kicked up by such scrambling sometimes obscures the fact that the pain is not shared equally—indeed, that one person's pain may result in another's reward. Take Dow Jones, which has announced it will compensate for lower ad revenues by laying off an undetermined number of employees, shutting down a new internet-based business called Work.com—which has another 113 employees—and postponing indefinitely the launch of Weekend Journal.com.

But despite these and other glitches—including the company's ongoing losses from its foray into electronic data delivery over the past decade—Dow Jones also bumped CEO Peter Kann's salary last year by 7.4%, to \$846,000. It also inflated his bonus 35.3%, to \$888,000, and granted him 60,000 stock options. If the options appreciate annually by 5% over the length of their term, they'll give Kann a \$2.4 million windfall; if they appreciate 10% annually, he'll profit by \$6.1 million.

No surprise, then, that the people who run today's newspaper monopolies pay more attention to stock market valuations than to humdrum journalistic—or human—values.

Merc News publisher quits

Continued from page 1

Mondays, when readership dips anyway. The Guild-represented Akron Beacon Journal plans to eliminate up to 10 positions in its newsroom and has deep-sixed its Sunday magazine. And the Philadelphia Inquirer recently junked its "long-term strategy" in the suburbs by combining several regional sections, while also trimming its page size by about 8% to the narrower, 50" web width that is gaining industry favor because it decreases newsprint consumption.

"Everyone's stressed from having to do more with less," reports Philadelphia Newspaper Guild President Henry Holcomb. In the past six weeks, he adds, two Guild members have died and two have collapsed from heart attacks that he attributes to job pressures.

Driving the San Jose protests—including a demonstration of approximately 200 employees the day after Harris announced his resignation, with many participants wearing "People Before Profits" buttons—is a realization that Knight Ridder is far from being economically hard-pressed. "There's no question they're not profitable—they're making a ton of money," says Luther Jackson, administrative officer of the San Jose Guild. "There is no crisis at the

Mercury News. The only crisis is at Knight Ridder corporate headquarters in downtown San Jose."

Although newspapers everywhere are forecasting lower profits this year compared to last year's record numbers, the comparisons in San Jose—home to the much battered dot.com industry—may be worse than most. Indeed, Jackson says the Mercury News' profit margin in 1997, when Silicon Valley was riding high, was an extraordinary 29%. It may be years before those margins are seen again.

But that doesn't mean Knight Ridder is now bleeding. First-quarter earnings, it announced March 19, should come in around 15 to 20 cents a share below the 74 cents a share it earned in the same period last year. After years of heady profit-building in a historically cyclical industry, any publisher should be prepared to weather much worse before dumping its greatest assets.

And, just possibly, the message is getting through. Following Harris' blockbuster announcement, Tony Ridder said the company would lower its profit targets for the Mercury News and would not accept newsroom layoffs. Still facing an uncertain future, however, are employees in circulation, advertising and marketing.

Hudson News okays contract

Continued from page 1

overtime pay for all work on holidays or normal days off, as well as for work more than four hours past the end of a normal shift. Reasonable advance notice of required overtime will have to be given, except in emergencies.

Other contract provisions include:

- A decrease in employee health insurance premiums, from 25% of costs to 15%, depending on length of service.

- Four weeks of vacation after 10 years of employment, three weeks after five years, two weeks after two years and one week after seven months.

- No dismissals or discipline except for just cause. Lay-offs by seniority, with a "no-layoffs" clause for employees with at least 15 years of service. Laid-off employees have bumping rights for other jobs for

which they are qualified, at no loss of salary.

- Severance of up to four weeks' pay, depending on length of service.

That Hudson News employees will have the opportunity to vote on such a comprehensive contract is a remarkable turn-around from last year, when the company waged one of the dirtiest anti-union campaigns local organizers had ever seen. Security cameras monitored employees to ensure they didn't talk to each other about unionizing, supervisors threatened to fire anyone who voted for the union and promised raises to those who voted against it, and company representatives spread numerous lies about the Guild.

As local rep Dona Fowler said at the time, management "accused us of everything but ritual infanticide."

Four key words: 'It's all about power'

By Joe Mosley
Eugene Newspaper Guild

It was toward the end of Day One when someone spoke the four words that pulled everything together.

The 47 participants in The Newspaper Guild's annual New Local Officers Seminar already had heard from many of the Guild's top national officers and staffers. We'd been told about regressive bargaining by publishers intent on union-busting; about oblivious disregard for contract language and labor law by unrepentant managers; about divide-and-conquer tactics used to thwart union organizing drives, discrimination both blatant and subtle, and purposeful inattention to ergonomics standards.

Then came the four words: "It's all about power."

That would become the theme for everything that followed in the Feb. 16-19 gathering at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in suburban Washington.

My first thought about power, coming from a local that's been without a contract and under attack by a union-bashing publisher at The Register-Guard for two years, was that *they* have it and we don't. The media conglomerates and chain operations and family-owned, corporate wannabes play their trump cards, and those of us who turn the engines of their businesses are left glumly to follow suit.

It's all about power.

But as I heard the stories of seminar delegates from Bakersfield and Brockton, from Kenosha and Kingston, I began to sense the strength that comes from all of us and from each of us.

There was the organizing drive and drawn-out bargaining process that recently resulted in a first-ever contract for the Guild unit in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

There were the grievances and successful arbitrations that brought justice to advertising employees in Terre Haute, Ind., and to circulation employees in Worcester, Mass.

And, of course, there was the 49-day strike that validated the Seattle Guild, exposed to that community the callousness of its newspapers' owners and reminded us all of the reasons for unity.

It's all about power.

Guild President Linda Foley and Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer reminded us throughout the long weekend that we must rely upon each other and we must guard against complacency.

On my note pad from the seminar is written the thought: "Apathy is an unspoken sense of powerlessness." I don't remember now who said it, or if it was an uncharacteristic profundity that just came to me during one of our daily eight-hour barrages of information and insight. But indifference clearly has no place in an organization that relies upon collective strength, and we were advised to avoid it by communicating clearly, delegating authority and connecting with each member of our bargaining units.

We must remember that our members have busy lives, and so we must find other ways to keep in touch with those who are unable to attend meetings. Surveys, for instance, can serve not only as conduits for constituents' opinions, but as tools to generate interest and participation.

Guild staffers Larkie Gildersleeve and Anna Padia worked with seminar delegates on issues of workplace ergonomics and human rights, while Director of Contract Administration Marian Needham and Sector Representative Bruce Nelson headed up a session on contract negotiations.

To simulate bargaining situations, delegates were broken off into four groups and each of those were split again—with half assigned to represent Guild positions and half assigned to portray managers. The exercise was enlightening, and not only due to how easily (and believably) a few of the mock managers assumed the smarm and swagger of the authentic item.

The lesson I learned was one of recognizing small victories. I was on the union side of a proposal to expand insurance coverage to employees' domestic partners. In a pre-bargaining strategy session, our team prepared to defend its position against conservative, anti-gay arguments and to present data on the minimal additional cost incurred by companies that have pioneered domestic partner coverage.

Then we were blind-sided when the



Face-off during role playing by Brian Whelan, unit vice chair at the Boston Herald, and Jocelyn Meek, newsroom shop steward in Brockton.

management team joined us at the bargaining table and said they could agree to domestic partner coverage, but due to rising overall costs, employees would have to begin picking up the full insurance bills of all dependents—domestic partners included.

Members of our Guild bargaining team took turns sputtering about unfair linkage of the two items and the unreasonable burden such a move would have upon employees. We finally called for a caucus to regroup, but it wasn't until we debriefed the session later that we realized the course we should have taken: immediately accept the company's offer to include domestic partners in the insurance plan, then take up the issue of dependent costs separately. It's a matter of recognizing advances, and of seizing opportunities.

It's all about power.

We shared the Meany Center campus that weekend with a handful of other labor groups from around the country—"Pride at Work" was one of the concurrent programs, "Workplace Safety and Health" another. I had lunch with an auto worker and beer with a pipefitter. We were served by a life-long union bartender, entertained by a pro-labor singing duo and even driven to catch our respective flights home by drivers from one of the Washington area's few unionized taxi companies. It raised in me—and I assume in other delegates—a sense of fellowship and empowerment, of a strength in numbers.

I carried all that with me back to

Eugene, to a fight that's become increasingly antagonistic and to negotiations with a company many believe has become resolute and immovable in its anti-worker positions. But there is also a new strength in our effort, a sense of determination among Guild members and snowballing solidarity with other unions and community members. Early this month, to demonstrate the Guild's backing among readers and our ability to quickly mobilize that support, we organized a temporary subscription drive to coincide with our most recent bargaining session. About 500 customers participated, and have agreed to serve as a core group for larger-scale actions we plan in the future.

Proof, once again: It's all about power.



Ralphine Magby, of the Buffalo Newspaper Guild.



Among the staffers leading exercises are, left, Larkie Gildersleeve, director of research, and Debbie Thomas, executive secretary, contract committee.



R. Michael Ditto, president of the Terre Haute Guild, reads a handout while Laura Bernier, Worcester unit vice chair, listens to a discussion about mobilization techniques.

Needed: human rights, not labor laws

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Second of two parts.

Saying that the National Labor Relations Act is a colossal failure is like saying that the sky is blue: it's so obviously true that repeating it makes you sound like an idiot. Yet like the man who tries to hide his bald spot by combing a few wistful strands of hair across a sea of scalp, organized labor continues to behave as though the act actually protects employees' rights to organize.

The numbers tell a different story. The percentage of American workers belonging to unions is at its lowest point since the NLRA was adopted, in 1935, at 13.5%. Moreover, even that's too rosy a picture because nearly 44% of all union members are government workers, who aren't covered by the NLRA. Strip them out of the picture and union membership in the dog-eat-dog world of the private sector dropped to 9% last year, down from 9.4% in 1999.

It might be argued that such a woeful decline is no more significant than the passing of harness-makers or blacksmiths—that fewer working people belong to unions because unions are irrelevant in today's economy. But a substantial segment of the working public doesn't feel that way. According to Peter D. Hart Research Associates, which surveyed 1,005 adults early this year—including 462 "potential union members"—60% approve of unions, up from 55% in 1981. And given a chance to vote for union representation, 50% of the "potential members" say they would definitely or probably vote for a union, compared with 43% who say they definitely or probably would vote against.

But the most compelling argument for the ongoing importance of unions is provided not by workers, but by their employers, who spend an enormous amount of money combating organized labor. Corporate America has given birth to an entire subspecies of union-busting law firms. And despite its apparent success at decimating labor's ranks, virtually abolishing strikes and electing a deceitfully anti-labor president, corporate America and its servants continue to demonize unions in language usually reserved for degenerates and subversives.

U.S. District Court Judge Joe Kendall, for example, wasn't content simply to levy a \$45.5 million fine against pilots at American Airlines for their 1999 sickout. In issuing his contempt order, he also compared the sick-out to "the type of negotiations one usually sees doing business with one of the five [Mafia] families in New York."

That a federal judge can compare workers withholding their labor to criminals who beat, blackmail and murder their victims may not be news—Kendall's comment went all but unremarked by the media—but it does attest to the depth of feeling capitalist interests still harbor toward labor. And those feelings aren't the kind one harbors toward a hapless or irrelevant foe. Moreover, Kendall's comment lays bare the most fundamental fear that corporate interests have always had of their workers: that one day those workers will simply put down their tools or keyboards or stethoscopes and refuse to pick them back up.

The National Labor Relations Act was supposed to keep that from happening, as discussed in last month's Guild Reporter. But despite its apparent purpose of protecting workers' rights to organize, the NLRA's

true mission can be seen in the legal foundation on which it was constructed: Congress's constitutional power to regulate interstate commerce. The NLRA, Congress averred, would help eliminate strikes that "disrupted" markets, that "crippled" business and that caused "disorganization, obstruction or even paralysis of interstate commerce."

The courts soon picked up on the idea. Within just a few years of the act's passage, for example, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that employers could permanently replace strikers, laying the groundwork for eventually neutralizing organized labor's biggest weapon. The NLRA, in other words, had very little to do with protecting workers but quite a bit to do with clamping down on agitators and malcontents who might disrupt the accumulation of profits.

So what's a labor movement to do?

For much of its existence, the AFL-CIO's answer was "not much"—which explains the steady erosion of membership strength. More recently, the federation has pursued a two-



pronged strategy of encouraging its unions to devote at least 30% of their budgets to organizing, while seeking to educate the public—and union members themselves—about the legal and ideological war that corporate America is waging against working people.

But results have been mixed, not least because many unions still haven't awakened to the seriousness of their position. While a handful of unions—notably SEIU, which dedicates half or more of its revenues to organizing—have more than met the national federation's goals, organizing tens of thousands of new workers in the process, others essentially have thumbed their noses at the idea. The largest union of all, the Teamsters, has devoted—on a per capita basis—virtually nothing to organizing. Its membership rolls, no surprise, have hardly changed.

The AFL-CIO also has a "voice at work" campaign, through which it attempts to publicize the employers' onslaught on workers' rights. But because the federation fundamentally still accepts the bargain its predecessors struck with the government in 1935, the rights it seeks to protect already have been severely circumscribed. And in the past year or more, the "voice at work" campaign got pushed to a back burner while most union resources were devoted to political campaigning, further muting an already weakened message.

On an individual union level, other strategies to cope with the shrinking NLRA playing field have been developed, such as the CWA's strategy of "bargaining to organize"—that is, demanding at contract negotiations that companies agree to card check recognition and maintain neutrality in organizing

campaigns. The CWA has had some significant successes with this approach, as at SBC Communications, but the tactic also has some obvious limitations. As one organizer concedes, bargaining to organize requires "some modicum of good faith on the part of the employer"—and when an employer like AT&T reneges on its agreement, the result can be months of antagonistic grievances and a poisoned organizing atmosphere.

"Bargaining to organize" also is limited because it is analogous to urban in-fill: it fills vacant turf that's already been staked out, but doesn't push into previously unclaimed territory. But proponents like Larry Cohen, CWA's executive vice president, argue that as more unions seize on the idea and card check and neutrality become accepted bargaining goals, the groundwork is laid for eventually incorporating the concepts into federal law.

Such an outcome isn't impossible, but it does challenge today's overall trend of using labor law and the courts to give unions

less rather than

more running room. So a small but vocal minority of labor leaders is questioning whether there isn't a better way out of the box—a rethinking of core principles. Perhaps, they argue, the decades-old reductionism that separates the world into labor and capital can be replaced by an emphasis on . . . human rights. Not workers' rights, but human rights. Not labor issues, but human issues.

"There's a whole human rights dialogue going on internationally that we're just not having in this country," observes Elaine Bernard, director of the Harvard Trade Union Program. "The question everyone else is asking is what it takes to sustain human beings, whereas here in the U.S. the question of human rights is viewed much more narrowly, as one of political rights. So our challenge is taking an international dialogue that's been going on for a long time and translating it into American terms."

Actually, the "terms" are already spelled out in those most American documents, the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The first amendment guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of association. The thirteenth amendment outlaws slavery and involuntary servitude. Put them together and you have a foundation for upending most of the laws, rules and regulations that tie unions into knots while employers get to frolic in the "free marketplace." The more fundamental problem, Bernard acknowledges, "is that we still have to get through to people that the American Revolution never hit the workplace."

The idea that the thirteenth amendment applied not just to slaves but to supposedly "free" men and women is hardly new—it's

just been forgotten. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court itself ruled long ago that the thirteenth amendment was passed "to make labor free by prohibiting that control by which the personal service of one man is disposed of or coerced for another's benefit." And while most courts interpreted that simply as preserving an individual worker's right to quit a job, organized labor insisted well into the 1930s on a much broader interpretation, arguing that in a modern industrial economy it is impossible to prevent control of "personal service" without the freedom to organize, strike, picket and boycott.

Or as Samuel Gompers put it, "The truth is that in complex modern industry, the only really free labor is organized labor. The only workers not laboring under terms and conditions arbitrarily imposed upon them from a source wholly foreign to themselves, are the organized workers." The right to strike, boycott and picket was "nothing more than the application of the constitutional bill of rights to the conditions of our time."

The historical irony is that the sponsor of the Norris-LaGuardia Act, a 1932 law that was passed to bar anti-strike injunctions, specifically drew a connection to the anti-slavery provisions of the thirteenth amendment. Such injunctions, Senator George Norris noted, cause "involuntary servitude on the part of those who must toil in order that they and their families may live."

Three years later, when Senator Robert Wagner introduced the NLRA to improve on—and supersede—the Norris-LaGuardia Act, he voiced similar sentiments, including the claim that the non-union workplace resembled slavery. His bill, Wagner promised, would emancipate workers and give them "an opportunity to walk the streets free men in fact as well as in name." But at the urging of his lawyers Wagner agreed to ground the new law in the Constitution's commerce clause instead of the first and thirteenth amendments, unintentionally planting the seeds of its undoing.

What does discussion of the thirteenth amendment mean today? Perhaps nothing. "How do you get people to organize around that?" asks CWA organizer Steve Early. "It's an interesting theory, but so what? It's an abstraction. It's like saying, 'Let's have a constitutional amendment for full employment'—great idea, but how do you do that?"

But for Bernard, who has been working with the new Labor Party to develop the concept, a discussion of the applicability of the thirteenth amendment to the workplace is a return to basics. "You can't build a human rights movement for workers without first spelling out some core principles," she explains. "There's a profound reservoir of natural justice in the American people, but we have to learn how to address that. We need a vision of what's right and proper."

There are some tentative signs that the public dialogue may be shifting toward human rather than workers' rights. The release last fall of a 217-page report by Human Rights Watch [Sept. 2000 GR] that documented widespread discrimination by employers against union supporters broke new ground in that respect. As the report observed, "Many Americans think of workers' organizing, collective bargaining and strikes solely as union-versus-management disputes that do not raise human rights concerns."

Instead, Human Rights Watch added, its report "approaches workers' use of these tools as an exercise of basic rights"—rights, it might have added, such as those already enshrined within the U.S. Constitution.

LOOKING AHEAD



'Family owned' doesn't mean 'family values'

By Linda Foley
President

For a business that sells itself as being "objective" and "credible," the newspaper industry has no compunction about ignoring important facts and realities when it comes to itself.

Take the strike at the Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer. Recent articles in Press-time, the official publication of the Newspaper Association of America (the publishers' association), in the Society of Professional Journalists' Quill magazine and in the American Journalism Review all have taken stabs at analyzing what went wrong in Seattle.

In February's AJR, John Morton, a respected analyst of the newspaper business, accuses the Guild of trying to reinvent the wheel by going on strike in Seattle. Anyone with any experience in labor relations knows a strike isn't an invention; it's a reaction. But Morton and others would rather blame the strike on a nefarious conspiracy of national Guild leaders, who supposedly "targeted" the Seattle papers, than accept the fact that employees had had enough of paternalism and take-it-or-leave-it bargaining tactics. This strike belonged to the members of the Pacific-Northwest Newspaper Guild, who could have cared less what—if any—national agendas were out there.

Both Presstime and Morton describe the Bléthen family, majority owner of the Seattle Times, as a generous employer with a pro-union, worker-friendly reputation. "As one of the few remaining family-owned U.S. newspaper businesses, the Times is widely known for paying as much attention to the needs of its employees and community as to the bottom line," writes Mary Sepucha, director of employee relations for the NAA.

But that hardly describes the reality.

First, the Seattle Times Co. is no mom-and-pop operation. Knight-Ridder, a publicly traded corporation, owns 49.5% of the company. And while the remaining bare majority is owned by one family, the company more accurately is described as a small conglomerate, operating six daily papers and several weeklies in two states, Washington and Maine.

As for its reputation as a worker-friendly employer, consider these points:

- Since 1987, the Seattle Times and Hearst Corp.'s Post-Intelligencer refused to bargain wages with the Guild, instead deferring to "pattern bargaining"—which meant the labor relations director at the Times and a local Teamster leader went to lunch and decided on wage increases for unionized employees at both papers. This time, however, the wage "pattern" was rejected by the Teamsters' own membership a few days before the Guild's strike began. Nevertheless, the papers vowed not to add "another dime" over the pattern in the economic package proposed to the Guild—a proposal that remained virtually unchanged from the time bargaining began in July until the waning days of the strike in December. (In the end, the papers did add money by increasing the amount paid for health insurance by more than \$500,000 and upgrading the pay scales of 10 job classifications at the Times.)

- A unilaterally controlled "pay-for-performance" system and advertising commission plan, which changed monthly, allowed the Times to grant increased compensation as a reward or withhold it as punishment.

- Almost a year before the strike began, the Times tried to cut jobs when the paper converted from afternoon to morning publication—a proposal that was resoundingly rejected by the Guild's membership. Despite bitterness over the Times' attempts to shove the brunt of the conversion onto its

Fat Cat got your tongue?



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Don't let corporations abridge union free speech!
Defeat "paycheck protection" laws

employees, the workers nevertheless went on to make the transition—in Frank Blethen's words—"almost seamless."

- Days before the strike began, the Times erected chain-link fences around its plants and boarded up windows. The publisher sent Guild members a letter encouraging them to resign their union membership. The paper hired a 24-hour uniformed security force that patrolled all entrances and parking lots. The guards constantly videotaped strikers on the picket line and at other functions. Guards and fences remained in place for the entire strike, despite no reports of violence or arrests.

- "Job cuts became an issue only after the disruption dragged on," Morton wrote in his AJR article. But the "disruption" dragged on because six days before Christmas, the Times announced it was permanently replacing striking Guild members (some with more than 30 years' service) with temporary workers it had hired less than a month earlier. The Times made its threat the very day Richard Barnes, head of the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service, announced he was entering the negotiations. Times management ignored Barnes' pleas to postpone the move and was roundly condemned by many public offi-

cials, from the governor to the mayor, and by virtually every religious leader in Seattle. As a result, the next day thousands of subscribers cancelled their subscriptions. We had reports there were as many as 40,000 cancellations.

Articles about the strike all point out that the Times' joint operating agreement partner, the Post-Intelligencer, settled 11 days earlier for what was essentially the same contract package. But Hearst did not hire guards or put up fences, nor did the P-I threaten to permanently replace strikers. The strike there ended without the need for job cuts or staggered return-to-work arrangements. And while top reporters and advertising sales representatives—including a two-time Pulitzer-Prize winner—have left the Times in droves since January, a comparable exodus has not occurred at the P-I.

Now, while the Guild is working with P-I management to help rebuild circulation, many Times' strikers find themselves still out of work, permanently replaced by scabs who were promoted into their jobs. It seems the Times is determined to continue the same tactics that cost it thousands of subscribers during the strike. So much for paying attention to the needs of workers and the community. So much for the bottom line, too.

Spinning the news out of Detroit, AP style

When the UAW International Executive Board recently voted to become the last union to lift its boycott against the Detroit News, Detroit Free Press and USA Today, it issued the statement below. Following the statement is the Associated Press story on it and on the concerns it raises.

The UAW was proud to support the members of the newspaper unions throughout their long, courageous fight to force the Detroit News Agency to resolve this conflict at the collective bargaining table.

Now that News and Free Press employees are once again working under ratified union contracts, we believe that the most effective way the UAW can support their ongoing efforts to win justice for those workers who have yet to be recalled and to rebuild their unions is by lifting our boycott.

However, News and Free Press management should not mistake the lifting of our boycott as a sign that the UAW thinks all the issues have been put to rest.

We remain deeply concerned about all the workers who were discharged during this conflict—many simply for joining with community leaders in peaceful protests. Basic decency demands that all these workers receive fair hearings in a timely manner, and the UAW will pay close attention to how News and Free Press management resolve this critically important issue.

We also expect News and Free Press management to comply fully with the collective bargaining agreements—and to respect the rights of their employees to join unions and engage in union activity.

"The Detroit News and Detroit Free Press have paid a stiff price—lost circulation, lost advertising revenues, and tarnished reputations—for their anti-worker, anti-union actions. Whether the News and Free Press can repair that self-inflicted damage hinges on how they treat their workers in the months ahead. The UAW—and Detroit's entire progressive community—will be watching closely.

AP—The United Auto Workers union lifted its boycott of The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press on Tuesday, two months after the last of six unions ratified new contracts and called off their 5-1/2-year boycott.

Publishers of both newspapers welcomed the action as another step in closing out the dispute that produced a 19-month strike and cost the papers hundreds of thousands of subscribers, which they now are working to win back.

The UAW's executive board said the most effective way the UAW can support the unions' "ongoing efforts to win justice for those workers who have yet to be recalled and to rebuild their unions is by lifting our boycott," UAW President Stephen Yokich said in a statement.

Heath Meriwether, the Free Press' publisher, called the UAW's move "a very positive development" in bringing an end to the labor dispute. "I certainly herald it and look forward to really moving forward to getting

our paper in front of their union members," notably in auto plants where the UAW—the region and state's largest union—had banned the newspapers during the boycott, Meriwether said.

Mark Silverman, the News' editor and publisher, said in a statement on the News' Web site that "we're grateful to the UAW and look forward to their support as we work to build circulation and include the labor community's important voice in our daily coverage."

The UAW also lifted its boycott of USA Today, the flagship of Gannett Co., the News' parent. The Free Press is owed by Knight Ridder Inc. Two Teamsters locals in December became the last of six unions to ratify new contracts with Detroit's newspapers, prompting the Teamsters' call for its members to build readership and help heal from the dispute.

The circulation and advertising boycotts began in July 1995 when the unions went out on strike against the newspapers.

By TNG Convention action, letters to the editor shall be limited to 200 words and shall avoid libel and subjects detrimental to the Guild. Members subjected to

personal attack shall be given opportunity to reply in the same issue, but publication of either attack or reply shall not be delayed longer than one issue.

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

Star-crossed in Hawaii

Investigative reporter Ian Lind has been chronicling the planned demise of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin since September, 1999; a major portion of his journal was published in the January, 2000 issue of The Guild Reporter. Here, with that saga apparently at an end, are Lind's final entries, heavily edited for space. Those interested in reading the full text are encouraged to visit Lind's web site, at www.ilind.net.

February 22—Welcome to the journal that ate my job. At least the wait is over.

The letter that finally arrived from Oahu Publications was no happy valentine, despite the February 14th date. It was a short four sentences, signed by John Flanagan. A form letter, by the way. The bottom line: "Your services will not be required by the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. . . ."

There's a third-hand tale that it was [owner David] Black's lawyer who advised against any face-to-face meetings to let staffers know their respective fates. Treat everyone equally, they supposedly advised. So they did. Badly.

February 26—Trini Peltier was apparently among those pushed into retirement. You may recall that just last month we celebrated the contributions of three longtime employees, including Trini's nearly 50 years with the paper. Pushing her out the door further whittles away at the spirit that has kept the staff together during the last year and a half of turmoil. Here's how one of my colleagues put it in an email over the weekend:

"Several of the reporters, editors and workers being terminated or 'convinced to retire' from the old Star-Bulletin have multiple years of experience, some more than 30 years' worth. These are people who stuck it out and continued to work and support the Star-Bulletin during the last 18 months despite job offers elsewhere. While it was the Guild that organized the community and created the legal groundwork for preserving the newspaper for a new owner, it was the staff who kept it as a product worth buying.

During this same period, the Star-Bulletin's highly-paid managers hid in their offices and had no comment."

February 27—It's clear that some staffers are uncomfortable being around those of us who have been informed that our services are no longer required. Someone quipped yesterday that perhaps we need to make up a few "Dead Man Walking" T-shirts for wear in the newsroom.

March 3—A few staffers were under pressure to step out of bargaining unit positions into "exempt" management positions as part of this move, but have hesitated after seeing the way Black's management treated [editorial page editor] Diane Chang, who was apparently dismissed without being offered any severance package. Just "best wishes in your future endeavors" and out the door. That's not a confidence builder for folks considering giving up Guild protections.

And one staffer stopped at my desk yesterday, leaned over the partition and extended her hand along with a big smile. "I don't know what to say, and even when someone dies I know what to say."

March 7—Just one week to go before the final edition, followed by the first morning edition of the "new" Star-Bulletin—and how much things have changed in a month. From the business side, developments appear to be positive and encouraging. From down in the newsroom, where the Star-Bulletin's human assets reside, there's been a slow but dramatic deterioration in the general mood.

One indicator is the startling difference between the reactions to reporter Rod Ohira's decision to move to the Advertiser last month and newsroom reaction to yesterday's news that writer Bill Kwon will follow.

There was some sadness yesterday at the news about Kwon's decision, but the more common reaction was simple. Good for him. Serves them right! Them, in this case, being Black, Flanagan, and the rest of those calling the shots in these critical weeks. The consensus is that there have been and continue to be a series of very bad management calls,

and under these circumstances a decision to take a better offer elsewhere, even across the hall at Gannett's Advertiser, is being seen positively as an act of defiance.

More serious are remaining salary issues. Although the new contract with Black gave up pay "differentials," the provision was interpreted by staff to refer to shift differentials and other specific contractual items. But the new salary offers, first conveyed in the recent employment letters, simply swept everyone back to scale, even those who had received merit increases or had been previously placed above scale. Several of these cases remain unresolved, as some staffers have balked at the salary cuts, but it isn't clear whether Black's Star-Bulletin management is going to negotiate these cases or adopt a "take it or leave it" posture. If it's the latter, there could be more key staff departures ahead.

March 9—Word went around in the morning that Rupert Phillips has requested a suitable memento of his ownership of the Star-Bulletin. Phillips, who controls the general partner in the Star-Bulletin's outgoing owner, Liberty Newspapers Limited Partnership, is remembered among staffers mostly for his attempt to close the paper and run with the cash, and there were quite a few unprintable suggestions of what to send him.

It sounds funny, but except for going along with Gannett's monopoly scheme and trying to shut us down, Rupert was a pretty good newspaper owner and, looking back, the Star-Bulletin thrived during most of this period. He rarely visited Honolulu, and didn't appear to meddle in the daily operations of the paper. He had no interests in Hawaii politics, so we were on our own. I have a feeling that S-B staffers will be looking back with some nostalgia at those aspects of his term of ownership.

March 10—Staffers were greeted Friday morning by uniformed guards posted immediately outside doors to the newsroom, and others at each outside door of the building. It gave that warm prison-camp feeling to the day.

Once past the guards, several staffers expressed anger that a blessing ceremony for the new Star-Bulletin offices had been held the night before, along with a party attended by hundreds of people, and folks in the Star-Bulletin newsroom weren't even informed that it was going to happen, much less invited to attend. A photo of the event appeared in the first edition of the S-B. Someone quickly clipped the photo and added it to the newsroom bulletin board, adding the handwritten

note, "What are we—chopped liver?"

March 11—I've been thinking about the bind that some Star-Bulletin staffers may have found themselves in as employment offers from Black's new paper were distributed and considered. Some individuals balking at the terms were coaxed along by section editors or others in management trying to come up with enough to keep them in the S-B camp. But all their efforts were undercut by an employment letter with its own legal kicker, a final clause disavowing any and all verbal promises, offers, or representations, and stressing that any verbal offers are completely superseded by the specific written terms of the employment letter, unfortunately a form letter. And questions about the contradiction between the letters and verbal offers made during these last-minute negotiations would be perceived as ungrateful or worse, so might not be expressed. A classic double bind, capable of inducing schizophrenic episodes, or even jumps to Gannett.

Another potentially worrisome bit of news from Waterfront Plaza. I've heard that in the Star-Bulletin's new production work flow, the last review before going to press will be made by the advertising folks. Pages will be set up and get their last tweaks in the newsroom, and then be sent for a final review upstairs by advertising staff.

March 12—I did get around to reading the interview with David Black in this week's Pacific Business News. On the question of staffing:

"Reporters won't have the luxury of turning in one story a day or one story every two days anymore. They're going to have to work hard to do this, but that's the way the economics are; that's the number of people we can afford to have."

March 15—Staffers from Gannett's human resources office set up shop in the conference room to process people out, taking keys and parking passes in exchange for final paychecks and instructions on what happens next. Last minute packing, tears, hugs and handshakes, then it was pipers piping, banners, cheering, more hugs, and the Star-Bulletin was gone as a procession of staff and supporters left the news building and headed down along South Street to a new home, new owner, and an uncertain future.

One staffer commented later: "It is good to be out of that old place, though. A large weight left when we walked out of there."

The Star-Bulletin is dead! Long live the Star-Bulletin!

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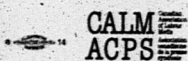
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DAYBOOK

TNG-CWA Exec Meeting,
April 22-24, Washington DC

CWA Legislative-Political
Conference, April 22-25,
Washington DC

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

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

Western District Council,
May 5-6, San Francisco

CWA Nat'l Women's Conf.,
May 9-12, Las Vegas

Mid-Atlantic District Council,
May 19-20, Albany NY

Tri-Council, June 2-3,
Memphis, Tenn.

Pride at Work Convention,
June 21-24, Everett, WA

TNG Sector Conference,
July 5-7, Minneapolis

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

The Guild's executive board unanimously favors creation of a labor daily newspaper and proposes that the next convention establish an exploratory committee on the subject. . . . 700 representatives of organized labor meet in Washington to stress labor unity and to push for an effective anti-inflation program. . . . The Swedish Journalists Union files its first notice of intent to strike in its 50-year history. . . . Alan Barth, editorial writer for the Washington Post and a Guild Reporter columnist, decries the growing trend toward loyalty oaths.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The U.S. Supreme Court, now weighted by four Nixon appointees, reverses its 1968 decision and rules that there is no constitutional protection for picketing on private property. . . . The Canadian Labour Congress holds its first conference of women trade unionists, while the Coalition of Labor Union Women asks its members to demand that their unions endorse the Equal Rights Amendment. . . . The Sacramento Bee pledges to have a workforce at least 36.7% women and 21% minority by 1979.

Ten years ago this month:

A Guild-wide referendum overwhelmingly approves ending annual conventions and going to a biennial format, starting in 1993. . . . The 152-day strike against the New York Daily News ends, as British publisher Robert Maxwell agrees to buy the tabloid and strikebreakers are fired. . . . An advertising slump results in 35% of Guild units reporting job cuts, but industry analyst John Morton says the industry is still highly profitable.