

THE GUILD Reporter

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Special package
**Labor: the
big picture**
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What a deal!

New York Guild shows value of strong contract

While newspaper publishers nationwide jump on the layoff bandwagon, one Guild unit in particular may be excused if it acts a little smug.

When the New York Times unit of the New York Newspaper Guild ratified its current contract in the fall of 1997, there was little reason for most employees to think its layoffs ban would have any personal relevance. Nor, for that matter, was there much reason to dwell on its provision of a voluntary buyout program. Those were the boom years, after all, when the only direction was up—not out.

But that was then and this is more than three years later, when the Times wants to reduce its ranks by approximately 120 Guild-covered positions. And because of their contract, all regular full-time or part-time employees who completed their trial periods by Sept. 11, 1997, can't be dismissed or suffer a reduction in salary for another two years.

The upshot is that a couple of hundred Times employees have been offered exceptionally lucrative buyout packages that were negotiated by the Guild last month. Because of the no-layoffs clause, the Times had to make the package rich enough to entice as many takers as it needs—rich enough, in fact, that some employees have complained not enough buyout offers were made.

"This voluntary buyout will be a beneficial windfall to some of our members and a financial parachute to others," observed unit chair Lena Williams. Added Guild President Barry Lipton, "the value and importance of these two provisions [in the contract] certainly have been realized in recent days."

Recipients of the buy-out offers have until June 15 to consider their options. If an insufficient number opt in, however, the company may lay off more recently hired employees.



LEN VAUGHN-LAHMAN/SAN JOSE NEWSPAPER GUILD

Dozens of employees of the San Jose Mercury News—many wearing "j" T-shirts in honor of former publisher Jay Harris—show

their support for the man who quit rather than lay them off in a vain effort to maintain inflated profit margins during an economic

slump. The group portrait was taken from a cherry picker parked on Ridder Park Drive and will be presented to Harris.

Coast to coast, papers slashing hundreds of jobs

As Knight Ridder's body count climbs week by week, a string of other large newspapers has joined in the blood-letting by announcing scores of lay-offs and buy-backs. All, ostensibly, are caused by dire economic times—rising newsprint prices, declining ad revenues and protestations of poverty—and all are accompanied by statements of regret and promises that readers won't notice a difference.

The Boston Globe, for example, has made "voluntary separation offers" to 466 full-time Guild-represented employees, plus another 333 exempt managers and other supervisors, although there's been no public statement of just how many of those offers the company wants accepted. The newly created Denver Newspaper Agency

—publisher of The Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News—has offered buyouts to 330 non-newsroom employees and wants at least 60 to bite. The Buffalo News, despite posting a 34% operating margin (operating profit as a percentage of revenues) last year, is maintaining the hiring freeze it imposed early this year.

The New York Daily News, where employees two months ago received their first significant across-the-board raises in eight years, has decided to forego buyouts and proceed straight to layoffs: approximately 35 employees are getting the ax, including 20 who are represented by TNG-CWA, most in the editorial department. Because the Guild has been unable to negotiate a contract at the paper, the layoffs are not gov-

erned by seniority provisions.

And Gannett's USA Today has laid off half-a-dozen newsroom employees—its first since the paper was founded, in 1982—and eliminated nearly 100 other positions.

Knight Ridder, meanwhile, which has gained the highest lay-off profile nationally because of its unabashed chase after higher profits regardless of personnel costs, is sacking employees at most of its 32 daily newspapers. More than 120 jobs are being cut at the non-unionized Kansas City Star and its community papers. Detroit Newspapers—publisher of Gannett's Detroit News and Knight Ridder's Detroit Free Press—said it is downsizing by 100 positions, including both buyouts and "an involuntary force reduction."

The St. Paul Pioneer Press will be cutting about 10% of its 840 full-time positions, with early retirement packages and buyout offers expected in early June—and layoffs some weeks thereafter. Two dozen positions are being eliminated at the Grand Forks Herald—a 12.8% reduction in force—less than six months after another 12 jobs were slashed, and 17 positions are being eliminated at the Duluth News Tribune.

The two Knight Ridder-owned dailies in Philadelphia plan to cut 200 jobs by July 1—although publisher Robert J. Hall insists the reductions will have "minimal impact" on content and "won't affect editorial quality. And the goal at the San Jose Mercury News, the poster child of newspaper layoffs thanks to the highly public resignation of publisher Jay Harris, is to reduce staff by about 120 positions.

The public rationale for all the mayhem continues to be a much lamented drop in advertising, which supposedly results in lower revenues and therefore less money

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CBC employees (no surprise) love their work, not the job

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has released the overall results of its employee survey, which turned out to hold few surprises: people are proud to be associated with CBC and Radio-Canada, but are increasingly unhappy about working there.

The CBC, as reported in the March *GR*, contracted with Hay Management Consulting to poll employees about their opinions of the CBC as an employer as well as a national institution. Positive findings included the following:

- 75% of respondents feel proud to work for CBC/Radio-Canada.
 - 70% feel that CBC/Radio-Canada has a highly qualified workforce and provides high-quality programs for Canadian audiences.
 - 75% feel that CBC/Radio-Canada does a better job than other broadcasters of providing a national perspective on important events.
- But the survey also revealed some disturbing trends:
- 58% of respondents believe that the corporation is not effectively managed.
 - 53% don't feel that employees' interests or concerns are taken into account when important decisions are made.
 - 60% believe that overall morale has fallen over

the past two years.

- 77% feel that one of the best descriptions of the culture at CBC/Radio-Canada is "cost-conscious;" 78% would use the term "bureaucratic."

- 50% feel that the level of stress is unacceptable.
- 44% feel that CBC/Radio-Canada is unable to retain quality employees.

- Only 8% feel that the corporation is concerned for its employees.

Although this is the first time the CBC has done a survey of this type, the Canadian Media Guild has surveyed its members a number of times over the years, with similar findings: people believe in CBC/Radio-Canada and in public broadcasting, but they have serious concerns about the institution itself. Employees are concerned about workload and staffing levels, and stress levels continue to rise.

"This is exactly what we've been telling the corporation for years, but CBC managers have consistently denigrated our surveys," said CMG President Lise Lareau. "Now that the CBC has actually spent money gathering these opinions in an objective manner, we hope that they won't ignore us again."

CMG officials promised that their bargaining team will make good use of the survey data in the upcoming round of bargaining, to start later this year.

Guild gears up for 66th gathering of the faithful

The 66th convening of The Newspaper Guild-CWA has been called for July 6 and 7 at the Millennium Hotel Minneapolis (formerly known as the Regal Minneapolis Hotel) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It will be followed July 9 and 10 by the 63rd annual convention of the Communications Workers of America, to be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

The Guild's Executive Council will meet at 9 a.m. on Thursday, July 5, to be followed by a "council of councils" meeting—for those interested in learning how district councils conduct business—at noon. Registration will be at the Millennium Hotel from 2-5:30 p.m., with a forum for new delegates scheduled for 3:30 p.m. An informal reception will be held 7-9 p.m. in the Market Barbeque Restaurant.

The plenary session is scheduled to start promptly at 9 a.m. Friday, July 6, and will run until noon, followed at 1 p.m. by a panel discussion titled "A Rank

and File Perspective on The Decision to Strike." Committee meetings are planned for 3 p.m.

Saturday will begin with four workshops, each presented at 9 a.m. and again at 10:45. Topics will include "The Complete Contract Campaign," a workshop on discretionary pay, an organizing workshop and a workshop on the intricacies of the CWA's Member Relief Fund and the CWA Defense Fund. Committee reports to the full body will take place after lunch.

The conference will adjourn at the completion of business on July 7, but no earlier than 5 p.m.

Copies of any resolutions to be introduced at the conference must be received by TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer no later than June 21.

Housing will be handled through CWA, and only by faxing reservation forms to the CWA Housing Bureau—phone calls will not be accepted. Reservations must be made by May 30, 2001.

Service award winner named

Four activists were nominated this year to receive the Guild Service Award, the union's highest honor, which is bestowed annually in recognition of outstanding service at the local union level. The award includes a scholarship of up to \$2,000 for a

course in trade union education appropriate to the winner.

This year's nominees were Betsy Regan of Brockton, MA; Jonathan Ment of Kingston, NY; Lance Robertson of Eugene, OR; and Ron Chen of IAPE.

"Each of them deserves our congratulations for the special recognition they received from their peers with this nomination by their respective local executive boards," said TNG-CWA International Chairperson Carol Rothman, who chaired the awards committee. Nonetheless, she added, "One candidate impressed the selection committee with her boundless energy and the variety of projects she undertook for her local."

That candidate was Betsy Regan, who as her local's secretary-treasurer helped a new local president and vice-president pick up the pieces after a difficult leadership transition; worked diligently until she balanced the local's books; then took an active role on

the bargaining committee.

But Regan also was credited with unifying departments within the local, recruiting new members to hold local office and become shop stewards, and then mentoring those she encouraged to get involved. She also became involved in a mobilization and organizing campaign at a neighboring newspaper.

Regan also was hailed as an outspoken advocate for union members dealing with illness, disability and grievances. Rallying the members behind her, she waged a six-week fight to enforce the Guild contract, ultimately winning severance, additional life insurance and long-term disability for a terminally ill employee.

As summed up by her local president, "Company executives view Betsy as somebody they are kind of afraid of because she's a strong, vocal union member. Deep down they respect her because she commands respect."

In brief...

In Rhode Island, Christmas in May

Ten months after an arbitrator ruled that the Providence Journal had violated a Guild contract by failing to give Guild members the same 3.02% wage increase given other union members, the company has paid an estimated \$500,000 in back wages—retroactive to Jan. 1, 1999—and hiked its pay scales accordingly. But the payments, prompted by a federal lawsuit filed by the Providence Newspaper Guild, didn't come gracefully: an accompanying, rather petulant letter chided the arbitrator for buying into a "literalistic argument"—i.e. for respecting the wording of the contract.

Monessen agrees to 4-year contract

A tentative agreement for a four-year contract with 3% annual wage increases has been reached by Pittsburgh Guild-represented employees of The Valley Independent in Monessen, PA. The agreement includes pension increases in the first three years; a mileage increase, to 25¢ per mile; and short-term disability, after an employee has exhausted sick leave, of two months at full pay and one month at half pay. The employer also pulled an open-shop proposal off the table; there were no union give-backs.

Minnesota Guild wins another unit

Twenty-five employees of the Resource Center for the Americas, a non-profit advocacy organization in south Minneapolis, have joined the Minnesota Newspaper Guild through card-check recognition. The center operates a bookstore and cafe, runs community education programs and an immigrant workers center and is active on free-trade, child labor and sweatshop issues. This was the second success story for organizer Marty Demgen, who was hired by the Guild Jan. 1 under the CWA's 75-25 subsidy program.

Scorecard needed for Boston guilds

The BGEA is no more—not in name, anyway. Voting in secret ballot April 19, members of what used to be known as the Boston Globe Employees Association gave overwhelming support for revising their constitution and by-laws—which, among

other provisions, included a name change to the Boston Newspaper Guild, TNG-CWA Local 31245. That other Beantown Guild local, by the way, is formally known as the Newspaper Guild of Greater Boston, TNG-CWA Local 31032.

Eight years later, NY Guild in court

The New York Guild was headed for court May 23, when oral arguments were to be made before the U.S. Court of Appeals over the firing of Guild-represented employees while they were on strike against the New York Post—in 1993. The NLRB ruled last fall that Rupert Murdoch had acted legally in the matter, prompting the Guild to file suit.

Canadian actors vote for union

The Canadian Media Guild came one step closer to formal recognition in the film industry May 10, when the Ontario Labour Relations Board held representation votes for background performers on two productions. One of the two representation choices was the Guild's PACT branch, and Guild officials say they are confident PACT prevailed—although the ballots won't be tallied until after board hearings in late May and early June.

A short breather, then fresh talks

Guild-represented employees of The Leader Post in Regina finally got a first contract—thanks to an order from the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board. But the board also denied the Guild's request for a six-month extension, which means the retroactively applied two-year pact will expire in November—kicking off fresh negotiations.

Chinese News election contested

Employees of the Chinese Daily News in Los Angeles voted for Guild representation March 20, but their employer has held up final certification of the results. The NLRB held a hearing earlier this month into management claims that some supervisors participated in the organizing campaign—even though 16 days of hearings prior to the election ostensibly resolved the issue. A final ruling was still pending as the Guild Reporter went to press.

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TNG council mulls Guild name change

Following years of tentative suggestions that The Newspaper Guild modify its name to better reflect a changing membership, TNG-CWA's executive council agreed at its April meeting—with three dissenting votes—to recommend a change to "The Media Guild-CWA." The council's recommendation will be presented for a membership vote at the July 6 sector conference.

In a subsequent teleconference, the council won over a couple of the dissidents by amending its resolution to acknowledge "it will, and should, generate substantial debate within the Guild." As the motion further noted, "We also must do a full review of the impact of a name change, so that we use the appropriate process both internally, and with our broader union, the CWA."

One of the other names floated at the meeting, then withdrawn under a barrage of

protests, was "Communications Workers of America, Guild Sector." A new name would be the union's third since it was founded in 1935, as the American Newspaper Guild.

In other business, the council also resolved to eliminate its remaining two at-large vice presidential seats, effective at the end of the terms currently held by Percy Hatfield and Larry Hatfield. The reduction of the council to 12 seats was mandated by the 1999 sector conference.

The council also changed the name of the Guild Defense Fund to the Guild Mobilization and Defense Fund to more accurately reflect its use for internal mobilizing, contract campaigns and strike situations for which money is not available from the CWA's Defense or Member Relief funds. Effective next year, the council is proposing that the TNG-CWA per capita be adjusted by 1.5% to maintain the Guild's

renamed fund, plus another 1.5% to be paid into the CWA Member Relief Fund. The combined increase, if implemented today, would be 49 cents per member per month.

Also on the council's agenda was a resolution establishing a task force to develop recommendations for overhauling the TNG-CWA Human Rights Program. The existing program was fashioned in the mid-70s, before the Guild's merger with CWA, which "introduced a new organizational structure, legislative activism and educational events that add more dimension and choices to the Guild," the council resolution noted.

The task force will be charged with reporting back to the council this fall.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a motion that the collective bargaining committee develop guidelines for negotiating drug policies with employers; and that it develop recommendations for negotiat-

ing over publishers' clustering strategies;

- Discussed the desirability of eliminating the "at-large" category of Guild membership, with existing at-large members encouraged to join a specific local;

- Approved a finance committee recommendation to forgive a \$60,000 loan to the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, as well as half of a \$120,000 strike benefit payment, that helped sustain the strike against the Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer;

- Approved a proposed budget for fiscal year 2001-2002 totaling \$2,663,439.

- Urged locals to respond to a letter from Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer requesting payroll information on discretionary pay, commissions and other incentives; and to provide electronic copies of their contracts.

- Received a report that the legal services program has generated, to date, \$1.7 million in back pay awards.

Hundreds of jobs slashed

Continued from page 1

with which to maintain payroll. But one incident after another illustrates that there is no lack of cash, just a desire to spend less of it on labor. The Wall Street Journal, for example, reported that Knight Ridder told some of its executives that they would enjoy "significant" increases in their bonuses if they meet their staff reduction targets. One Knight Ridder manager said the bonuses could be twice the size of such executives' annual salaries.

Just how much cash is rolling around Knight Ridder's coffers is demonstrated even more dramatically by its share buy-back program, which over the past three years has returned more than a billion dollars to stockholders. Although some buy-backs are prudent—for example, to prevent dilution of earnings when new shares are being issued through stock options—in many cases they're a sign that a company has no better ideas about how to reinvest its earnings to generate still more profits.

Share buy-backs also may signal an effort to woo back stock-

holders who are abandoning a company—and in Knight Ridder's case, as with many other publishers, there's reason enough for investors who care only about stock appreciation to jump ship. Knight Ridder's share price has risen roughly 50% over the past five years, or about half the increase in the S&P 500—a far less risky investment for anyone buying an indexed mutual fund.

Yet another indication that Knight Ridder has more money than it knows what to do with: Chairman Tony Ridder's recent predictions that it may finally succeed in buying the 51% of the Seattle Times that it doesn't already own. Knight Ridder's \$750 million offer last year was spurned, but Tony Ridder has been publicly speculating that the recent 49-day strike, higher newspaper costs and lower ad revenues may finally bring the majority owners to their knees.

To which Seattle Times CEO Frank Blethen responded, according to a Bloomberg News report, "They must smoke real interesting stuff in corporate offices in San Jose."

Guild-represented employees throughout the Knight Ridder empire are circulating a petition protesting the cutbacks, with a goal of collecting at least a thousand signatures before it's submitted to Ridder. The petition also protests the company's ongoing refusal to agree to a contract at the Monterey Herald, despite four years of fitful bargaining.

Some locals, meanwhile, are aiming closer to home. A May 3 membership meeting of the Newspaper Guild of Greater Philadelphia adopted a resolution noting Knight Ridder's plan to reward executives who meet staff-cutting goals, then added: "Cutting deeper into the human and other resources of these profitable newspapers threatens long-term harm to both newspapers and the advertisers and readers they serve."

"Paying bonuses for cutting staff creates a serious conflict of interest, inviting executives to put their own gains ahead of the long-term health of the newspapers and the urgent needs of the communities they serve."

Four days later, the trade publication Editor & Publisher released newspaper circulation figures for the first three months of the year under the headline, "Circ takes it on the chin." Daily circulation for the Philadelphia Inquirer, compared to the same period a year earlier, was down 3%.

Detroit workers pay Gannett a visit

In addition to gloomy revelations about plummeting ad revenues and shrinking circulation company-wide, Gannett shareholders and directors heard May 8 that there still is no peace in Detroit—thanks largely to the company's own managers.

For the sixth straight year, striking and (now) locked-out workers publicly confronted company management about its hard-nosed tactics. Shawn Ellis, editor of Metro Detroit Labor News, noted that 150-200 workers still remain on recall lists, that an equal number have been fired and that the issue is preventing any "healing" in Detroit.

Ellis also told shareholders that Tim Kelleher, vice president for labor relations at Detroit News Agency, recently wrote to a union

official that the papers would not rehire any of the fired workers. Copies of Kelleher's letter were forwarded to the Detroit City Council, which at that moment was considering a resolution to lift a city boycott of the papers, releasing about \$500,000 in legal advertising.

Disclosure of Kelleher's letter resulted in a prompt withdrawal of the resolution, leaving the boycott in place.

Also Tuesday, an unfriendly shareholder resolution was proposed asking management to nominate at least two candidates for every opening on the board. Although defeated, the resolution garnered 4% of the vote. A similar resolution at the Knight Ridder annual meeting won 3.5%, and at Verizon, 11%.

Labor union staff

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild (TNG-CWA Local 32035), a labor union representing workers primarily in the newspaper and information industry, seeks to hire a staff representative who will be responsible for servicing multiple bargaining units. Duties and responsibilities include contract negotiations and enforcement, representation, organizing new members, and leadership development of rank and file activists.

A successful candidate will have a minimum of 3-5 years' experience bargaining union contracts, preferably in the private sector in the newspaper and information industry. Experience organizing new members is preferable. Demonstrated oral and written communication skills, including the ability to utilize computer software.

APPLICANTS MUST HAVE familiarity with local union structures, and demonstrated knowledge of the NLRA/NLRB. Research and analytical skills required. The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild offers a competitive salary and benefit package. Apply to:

**WBNG, 1100 15th St. NW, Suite 350,
Washington, DC 20005.**

Deadline immediate.

Job Announcement: Newspaper Guild Administrative Officer

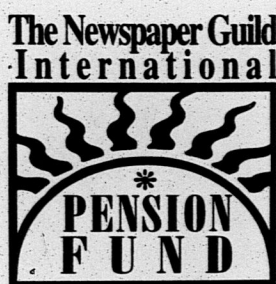
The Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild is seeking candidates to fill the position of Administrative Officer.

We are a progressive Seattle-based union of 1,300 members and an affiliate of the Communications Workers of America. We are looking for candidates who can encourage and enhance member involvement, who can build ties to the local labor community, and who are skilled at contract negotiations and grievance management.

Applications must be submitted by June 6, 2001, and addressed to the attention of:

**Hiring Committee,
CWA/TNG, Local 37082,
2900 Eastlake Ave. E., Suite 220,
Seattle, WA 98102.**

Please include a resume and a cover letter describing why you want the position and how you view the role of an Administrative Officer. We offer competitive wages and benefits.



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

**1-888-893-3650
hcoleman@cwa-union.org**

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Copies of the Declaration of Fundamental Principles, the Rights at Work poster and a screen-saver poster can be downloaded from the web at: www.aflcio.org/iloposter/iloscreen-saver.htm. Posters also can be ordered from the federation by calling 800-442-5645.

Which side are you on?

By David Bacon
Northern California Media Guild

Even though she was working 40 hours a week at the Valencia St. Travelodge in San Francisco, Matilda (last name withheld), who moved to the U.S. from Mexico a decade ago, couldn't afford to clothe her four children. "First I go to churches where they give clothes and food away," she said. "When school begins, we get pencils and books from the Salvation Army. If it wasn't for this kind of help, we couldn't live in San Francisco."

Meanwhile her coworker, Patricia, was paying \$635 a month for a studio apartment for her children and husband—and considered herself lucky, since rent for a San Francisco studio usually starts at \$1,000. At the end of each month, after spending \$250 for food, nothing would be left of her \$6.25/hour paycheck.

So it's not surprising that Matilda, Patricia and their coworkers were inspired to join a union, Hotel Employees Local 2. But as soon as the union signed its first contract, says organizer Chito Cuellar, supervisors began threatening the workers with immigration problems. In May, 1999, the general manager called nine of them into his office—including Matilda and Patricia—and told them Social Security had notified the motel that their numbers didn't match the government's database. A week later, when they tried to punch in, security guards told them they'd been fired.

Twenty years ago, most unions would have written off such workers and their problems. As recently as 1986, the AFL-CIO supported the "employer sanctions" provision of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which make it possible for employers to use Social Security "no-match" letters as a pretext for firing immigrants who assert their rights.

The federation reasoned that if it became illegal for the undocumented to work, fewer immigrants would come to the U.S., while those working here illegally would return home. But the AFL-CIO's position also reflected cold war, business-union attitudes that sought to protect wages for native-born workers by excluding immigrants, as contrasted with the approach of an earlier CIO and the Wobblies, who had sought to organize everyone.

And sanctions didn't halt the migrant flow—they only undermined the migrants' rights once they got here. Sanctions provided employers with a pretext for firing workers who tried to organize unions. By making the undocumented more vulnerable, sanctions helped lower their wages and increase their exploitation.

Moreover, unions began recognizing that organizing immigrant workers had become important to their own survival. Last year, for example, the proportion of U.S. workers belonging to unions dropped from 13.5% to 13.3%, and to just 9% in the private sector. For the overall percentage to stay constant, unions must organize 400,000 new workers each year; to grow by a mere 1%, they have to organize twice that number. And while the AFL-CIO recently set a goal of organizing a million workers annually, that's a rate not seen since the 1940s.

Over the past decade, meanwhile, such growth as has occurred within unions often has come from immigrant workers. In Los Angeles, the resurgence of union activism

has largely rested on strikes and organizing drives among immigrant janitors and hotel workers. Immigrant carpenters, harbor truckers, garment workers, factory hands and tortilla drivers have staged pivotal strikes and organizing drives. Immigrant day laborers, domestics and gardeners have built independent organizations, even without labor law protection or support from local unions.

And L.A. is not an isolated case. As union activity among immigrant workers grew into a national phenomenon, the federation began to see that defending immigrants' rights to organize was in its own self-interest. "Every period of significant growth in the labor movement was fueled by organizing activity among immigrant workers," says HERE President John Wilhelm. "We're a labor movement of immigrants, and we always have been."

In 1999, labor activists in Oakland wrote a resolution calling for the AFL-CIO to change its old pro-sanctions position. Picked up and adopted by labor councils across the country, the resolution generated a wave of support that crested at the national convention in Los Angeles in the fall, where a succession of union presidents spoke in its favor. Wilhelm declared that his own union's support for sanctions in 1986 had been a big mistake: "Those who came before us, who built this labor movement in the great depression, in strikes in rubber and steel and hotels, didn't say, 'Let me see your papers' to the workers in those industries. They said, 'Which side are you on?' And immigrant workers today have the right to ask of us the same question: Which side are we on?"

Following the convention, the AFL-CIO executive council adopted its own resolution in February 2000, calling for the repeal of sanctions and for a legalization program to allow undocumented immigrants to normalize their status.

But while many immigrants' rights activists assumed the federation's change of heart would result in a national campaign for amnesty and for repeal of sanctions, no bill for such reforms has made it into Congress. Instead, Henry Cisneros, former secretary of housing and urban development, proposed last April that unions and immigrant communities support expansion of the H1-B program—which supplies contract labor to high-tech industry—in hopes that such a compromise might garner Congressional support for proposals ending discrimination against Central American and Haitian refugees and for other reforms.

TNG-CWA, among other unions, strongly opposed the H1-B program on the grounds that it was unnecessary—because there was an ample supply of qualified part-time and contingent U.S. workers looking for such jobs—and because its net effect was to depress wages by flooding the labor market. Many civil rights groups also opposed H1-B, pointing out that increasing the number of contract-labor visas makes it more difficult for engineers of color to find jobs in the high tech industry, where the percentage of African-American and Latino engineers is very low.

And, as it turned out, Cisneros' tactical approach didn't work, either. "High tech was only interested in its own issue, and had no desire to link it to any broader program," says Eliseo Medina, vice-president of the Service



Freelance Guild member David Bacon, a former union organizer, has made a career of chronicling the lives of immigrants in words and images. A selection of 58 of his photographs, documenting farm labor in California and the activities of the United Farm Workers, is on display at the Oakland Museum of California through Aug. 26. The images follow the four-year campaign of the UFW among Watsonville strawberry workers, the strike at D'Arrigo Brothers Produce Co. in Salinas, and the month-long march from Delano to Sacramento in which the union renewed its commitment to organizing in the fields. Bacon's most recent contribution to *The Guild Reporter*, 'Jonkeados' put NAFTA to the test, was published January 19.

Employees and a leading immigration strategist, in recounting how Congressional Republicans steamrollered over all opposition to get H1-B without compromises.

With the Bush administration in office, the political terrain is becoming even more difficult for immigrants' advocates. In January, Texas Senator Phil Gramm, the most rabid anti-immigrant voice in Congress, flew to Mexico City to meet new Mexican President Vicente Fox, a former Coca-Cola executive with close links to major Mexican and U.S. corporations. On his return, Gramm announced that he and Fox had discussed a vast expansion of *bracero* contract labor programs—programs that ostensibly give immigrant workers more legal protections, but which require them to maintain their employment to stay in the United States. Employers, in other words, gain not only the power to fire workers who protest bad conditions, but in effect to deport them as well.

Gramm's visit to Fox was followed by one from Bush himself, who carefully cultivated a pro-Latino, pro-immigrant image

during his election campaign. But Bush also opposes amnesty, fearing to cross the right wing of his own party, to whom immigration is still anathema. His solution? Tout contract labor to Latinos as a chance to work legally in the U.S., while telling his conservative base that it affords no one the opportunity to stay. Bush's position also aligns him with industries that want guestworkers, such as agriculture and meatpacking.

For his part, Fox needs to protect the huge economic role that migrant labor plays in the Mexican economy. The remittances of Mexicans working in the U.S.—estimated at \$6 billion to \$8 billion a year—rank as the country's third largest source of foreign income, after oil and tourism. Politically, Fox has to speak to the needs of millions of Mexicans who seek a way to cross the border without trekking through the desert, which for hundreds every year is a walk to their deaths. He supports a general amnesty but he also supports contract labor, seeing like Bush that it can be portrayed as a means of providing the sought-after opportunity to

Continued on page 6

Marching toward a showdown on FTAA

The Summit of the Americas, hosted by Quebec City April 20-22 behind a wall of chain-link fence and 6,000 riot police, produced no more than its detractors expected. Ostensibly responding to charges that the proposed Free Trade Agreement for the Americas will sacrifice labor standards for corporate profits, the 34 leaders of all-of-the-Americas-but-Cuba adopted a brief paragraph pledging to "consider" ratification of the International Labor Organization's Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (see related article, page 4).

That lukewarm commitment brought a snort of derision from Bill Jordan, general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Over the past 20 years, he observed, "inequalities between and within countries have worsened at the same time as the globalization process has intensified—often with very negative effects on workers."

The AFL-CIO and CWA likewise have criticized the proposed plan, sometimes described as "NAFTA on steroids," a reference to the North American Free Trade Agreement. Some contend it is more of a social engineering plan than a trade treaty. "NAFTA's main outcome has been to strengthen the clout of multinational corporations, to limit the scope of governments to regulate in the public interest, and to force workers into more direct competition with each other," summarizes a CWA position paper.

The FTAA, however, "seeks to extend the most problematic aspects of NAFTA," the position paper adds. "If the negotiations continue along their current path, they will yield an agreement that undermines workers' rights and environmental protections (and) exacerbates inequality in the hemisphere."

Key to blocking FTAA, union strategists believe, is the defeat of a White House ini-

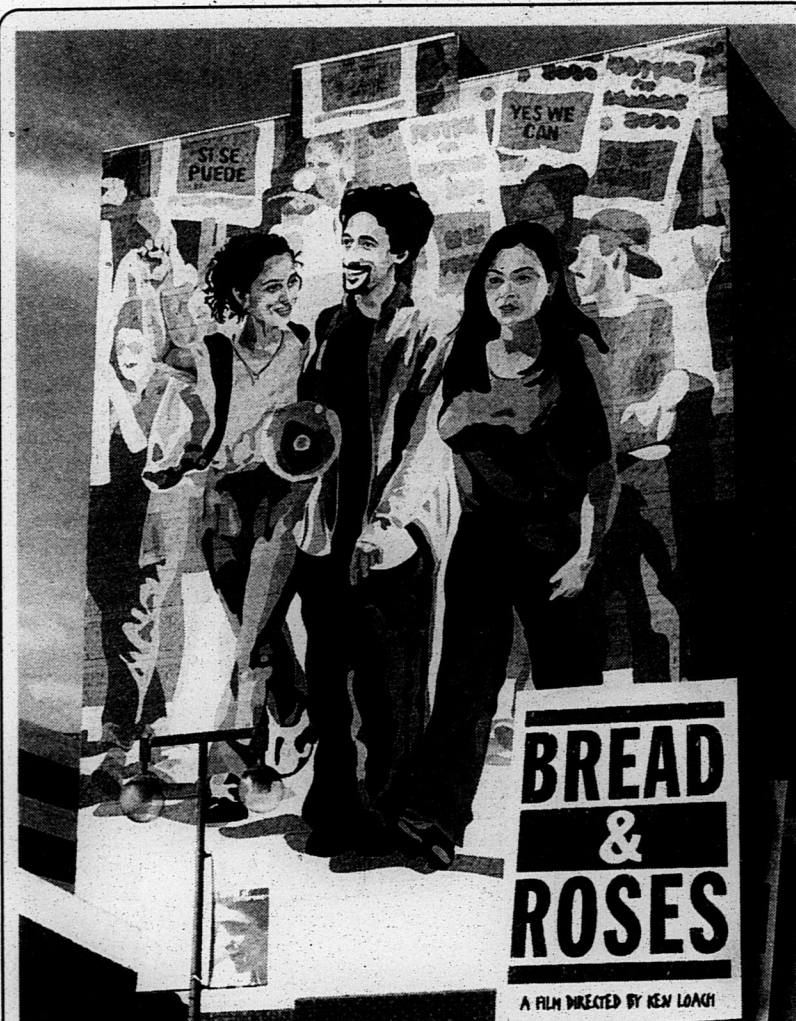
tiative to get "fast track" trade authority. Such legislation surrenders Congressional rights to amend trade treaties negotiated by the president: agreements like FTAA would be brought for a simple yes or no vote, with limited debate and no opportunity to introduce amendments.

Previous fast-track authority expired in 1994, following Bill Clinton's negotiation of NAFTA, and repeated efforts to resuscitate it have been defeated by a consortium of labor, environmental and public interest groups. But because such a streamlined approach is considered essential to passage of an agreement as complex as FTAA, the Bush administration has revisited the issue but under a different name, saying it seeks "presidential trade promotion authority."

Regardless of the names being used, both the FTAA and the Bush administration's effort to jam the results through Congress are inherently antidemocratic. The FTAA was concocted behind closed doors without public input or review—its details are still a secret—but that doesn't mean the process was neutral: Quebec City "sponsorships" were sold to multinational corporations, for example, giving companies with the ability to cough up \$500,000 the right to waltz right past those annoying demonstrators and the clouds of tear gas they seemed to attract.

The direction Bush and his team would take if he wins his bid for fast track should be clear: the administration's proposed budget, for example, includes a 63% cut in funding for international programs to combat child labor. Moreover, the White House has said it wants to accelerate FTAA negotiations to conclude a deal within two years, rather than the scheduled four—presumably to insulate a reelection bid from any political fallout over the treaty.

Or as Quebec proved, "free" trade often means freedom from accountability.



Bread and Roses opening

Hollywood isn't exactly awash with films about labor, so when one does emerge it's worth noting. "Bread and Roses," based on the Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles, opens nationwide June 1 after strong reviews at last year's Cannes Film Festival and as winner of the best foreign film at the Rio de Janeiro Film Festival. Directed by Ken Loach and produced by Lions Gate Films, "Bread and Roses" spotlights L.A.'s most marginalized residents and their struggle for decent pay and working conditions; it also illustrates how immigration laws are used to coerce migrant workers into accepting their exploitation.

The Service Employees International Union, which is promoting the film, also is sponsoring a national day of fasting June 15, Justice for Janitors Day, to promote workplace justice and immigration reform.

Still being asked: which side are you on?

Continued from page 5
work in the north.

Indeed, behind all the back-slapping between the two weekend cowboys on Fox's Guanajuato ranch, expanding guest-worker programs was the only area of immigration reform on which agreement might be possible. Mexico's foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda, revealed at the time that talks already are under way on expanding contract labor in agriculture. "There is no better way for Mexicans to defend themselves than to be legal," he declared. Of course, the nature of that legal status—whether it grants people all the rights of citizenship or, like contract labor, makes residency contingent on employment—is the question.

As it fights guestworker schemes, labor also is preparing a legislative program that includes legalization, repeal of employer sanctions and workplace protections regardless of legal status. And while GOP control of both houses of Congress and the White House suggests tough going, SEIU's Medina believes there's reason for optimism—although perhaps not in the short-term.

"There is a coalition out there that can win," he insists. "We need immigrant communities to unite. We have to strengthen

labor support, and we need churches, especially the Catholic Church, which has historically been the most active. Even some sectors of business will support us. For them, sanctions have failed—they fear a new *bracero* program and don't have the resources to take advantage of one."

Adds HERE's Wilhelm: "The Democratic Party can rely on the votes of African Americans today because some people in it supported the African American freedom movement. Those who didn't are still paying the price. It's going to be the same with the votes of immigrants."

Illinois Congressman Luis Guterrez introduced one bill at the end of January to end discrimination against Central American and Haitian refugees, and another at the beginning of February to expand legalization opportunities for immigrants who arrived before this year. Still not in the hopper, however, is any legislation repealing sanctions or containing the AFL-CIO's other program points.

Ironically, the conversion of Phil Gramm and at least part of the Republican right (including, most recently, longtime immigrant-basher Jesse Helms) to the pro-*bracero* position actually may help clarify the immigration debate. Gramm, the AFL-CIO, and immigrant-rights activists agree on one thing: The choice to be made is not over

what will or won't stop people from coming across the border, but over their status in the U.S. It's the age-old American dilemma: bondage (whether as slaves, indentured servants or *braceros*) or freedom (even if that still leaves workers with the need to organize and fight to improve conditions).

Behind the immediate political debates over individual reform proposals lies a fundamental question: Is the purpose of immigration law to supply labor to industry on terms it finds acceptable, or is its purpose the protection of the rights and welfare of immigrants themselves?

Punitive policies and the militarization of borders cannot stop the flow of migrants—but there is a model, other than contract labor and repression, for dealing with migration. In 1990, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The convention extends basic human rights without distinction to all migrants, documented or undocumented. It supports the right of family reunification, establishes the principle of "equality of treatment" with citizens of the host country in employment and education, protects migrants against collective deportation, and makes both sending and receiving

countries responsible for protecting them.

Predictably, countries that send immigrants favor the convention, and countries that receive them don't. The U.S. has not ratified it. The convention does not answer all questions, but it takes two basic steps that still paralyze U.S. debate: it recognizes the global scale and permanence of migration. And its starting point is the protection of the rights of migrants themselves—which is where an immigration policy based on human rights must begin.

As for the Travelodge firings and deportation threats? Their impact reverberated throughout Local 2, resulting in master contract language that strengthens the union's ability to represent immigrants and protect their job rights. It also produced an historic arbitration ruling that a no-match letter is not a legal reason to fire workers, setting a precedent that could help thousands who lose their jobs each year because of such letters.

"Our members understood we needed stronger protection for immigrants and were willing to fight for it," says Cuellar. "Not just the Latinos. The Anglos, the Filipinos, and others who weren't directly affected also knew why it was important. If a hotel can use immigration to make some workers work faster, the pressure affects everyone."

LOOKING AHEAD



New Ridder tack: bounties for lay-offs

By Linda Foley, President

I have to admit I just don't get it. Maybe it's because I don't understand (or don't want to understand) what motivates Wall Street analysts. Or maybe I have no appreciation for corporate executives who make decisions based solely on today's market without regard for tomorrow's consequences.

Maybe I just don't like greedy people. People who reap large bonuses and growing profit margins off the backs of ordinary working folks.

Whatever the reason, I just don't understand why Knight Ridder continues to add insult to the injuries corporate executives have inflicted on their consortium of once-quality newspapers.

Fresh from a round of corporate-wide job cuts which, among other things, prompted the very public resignation of San Jose Mercury News Publisher Jay Harris, CEO Tony Ridder announced last week that the corporation's workforce would remain reduced even if the economy turns around. Efficiencies resulting from new technology make smaller workforces viable, Ridder told Editor & Publisher magazine.

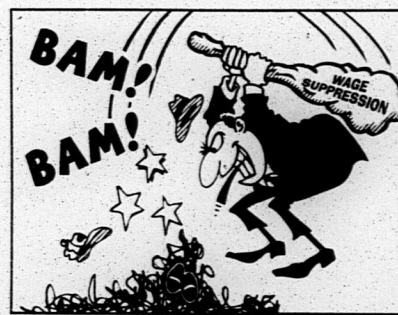
And we thought it was because he had

promised Wall Street that Knight Ridder papers would maintain high profit margins despite a nosedive in classified advertising revenues! Wrong. Ridder now has indicated those cuts weren't for profits; they were for efficiency. I'll bet that makes those out-of-work reporters in Akron feel much better.

Harris, a respected publisher who was considered by some as Ridder's possible successor, resigned because he felt he could not implement the cutbacks ordered by corporate bosses and still maintain the quality of the Mercury News. He believed his credibility and the credibility of the newspaper he had nurtured were on the line. Knight Ridder responded to his resignation by laying off scores of Guild members in San Jose, and hundreds more throughout the company.

Following Harris' resignation, the Wall Street Journal reported that Knight Ridder was offering bonuses to other publishers who actually fired workers to achieve savings, lest any more of them get a notion to exercise their consciences. In the Old West they used to call that a bounty. Yee-ha!

Not that any of this actually matters to Ridder personally. No matter what happens, he'll still receive his own multi-million dol-



lar bonuses. Besides, it's not like he'll ever be "downsized." Despite all the hand wringing about pressure for higher profits from stockholders, family members or stockholders who have close ties to family members hold a controlling interest in KR stock. I doubt they'll want to fire Cousin Tony anytime soon.

Knight Ridder didn't become the second largest newspaper corporation in the U.S. by exploiting efficiencies at the expense of a qualified and dedicated workforce. Its newspapers didn't garner a reputation for consistent quality journalism by operating on a shoestring.

Knight Ridder papers like the San Jose

Mercury News spent years building a solid reputation and credibility with readers and advertisers. KR employees worked to produce better newspapers because they believed quality was a goal they shared with their bosses. Jay Harris shared that goal, but he's gone, as are many other talented KR employees.

What's left is a corporate culture that fosters low morale, encourages minimal effort and rewards only the bottom line. Knight Ridder, once a shining example of how quality journalism could pay off, wants to cash in on its reputation while it sells out the workforce that earned it. Isn't that trying to have it both ways?

Junk-food journalism is cheating us all

[From the comments delivered by CWA President Morton Bahr April 24, at the Heywood Broun Award luncheon at the National Press Club.]

I am pleased to join you again this year for the Heywood Broun Award luncheon. I commend this year's judges for selecting Mary Hargrove of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette as our 2000 Heywood Broun Award winner. On behalf of the 700,000 members of CWA, I add my congratulations, Mary, and express our admiration for your excellent work.

Mary's reporting reflects the values of Heywood Broun. Broun practiced a simple but powerful code of journalism: He believed that reporters should help right wrongs, ease social ills and call the mighty to account.

Mary is most deserving of this recognition. But I wonder how many other journalists today can truthfully say that their work is devoted to righting wrongs, easing social ills, or calling the mighty to account? Even those who may want to follow Broun's example may find it difficult.

One recent study by The Pew Research Center found that more than a quarter of journalists polled said they had avoided pursuing some newsworthy stories that might conflict with the financial interests of their news organizations or advertisers.

Little more than a month ago, Bill Moyers stood in this very building and talked about the rise of megamedia and its impact on news coverage. "Our founding fathers," said Moyers, "didn't count on huge private corporations that would own not

only the means of journalism but the vast swaths of territory that journalism should be covering."

We can barely imagine today that in the early twentieth century all daily papers were independent. By the mid-1970s, more than 70% of daily circulation came from newspapers published by chains. According to newspaper brokers Dirks, Van Essen & Murray, that figure has risen to more than 87% today.

Even large family-owned companies such as The Times Mirror Co. and Central Newspapers Inc. sold out to still larger conglomerates. What is the result? Local news that is homogenized, sanitized and sterilized into junk food for the brain.

I see it in the faces of our members when I talk to them about arsenic in their water, ergonomics, CO₂ in the atmosphere, electricity deregulation, and so on. They look at me clueless. Most of them have no idea how or why these decisions are made by their government. It is not that our members are stupid. They just don't get the information from their local news that they need to understand these complex issues. Somebody has decided that hard news, real information, is not entertaining enough to sell.

The Guild recently publicized a report on election coverage by the Committee of Concerned Journalists. The CCJ found that in the critical closing weeks of the presidential race, press coverage of Vice President Gore was "decidedly more negative, more focused on the internal politics of campaigning, and had less to do with citizens" than articles on George W. Bush. I do not believe these findings are a quirk of cam-

paign reporting. Corporate decisions affect news coverage.

Even publishers now offer a grudging acknowledgment to public concerns about the corporatization of the industry, and how that is influencing news coverage and editing decisions.

Earlier this month, the Guild led a series of nationwide solidarity actions at Knight Ridder-owned operations to protest cost-cuts implemented to meet unreasonable profit goals. Knight-Ridder's 32 newspapers last year posted profits of nearly 21%—but it wasn't enough.

At a time when working families need more, not less, news coverage, Knight-Ridder made a devastating corporate decision, a decision that will wreak havoc with the lives of hundreds of newspaper workers and their families and surely lower the quality of journalism in the communities served by these newspapers.

I want to commend Linda and the officers and members of the Guild for taking a stand on this serious issue. The Guild plays

an important role in the debate over the future of journalism, and has made significant contributions to improving the profession. This action is but one example.

Fortunately, there are many journalists like Mary who set high standards for themselves and their profession. We are here this afternoon to celebrate journalism and to recognize her achievement with the Heywood Broun Award.

This award, and the individual for whom it is named, is an honor of high prestige, an award given to Mary by her peers who represent an organization founded on the values of human dignity and worth.

Through our merger with the Guild, CWA is the inheritor of a great responsibility not only to keep Broun's spirit and name alive, but to amplify its power and reach across the nation so that journalists can act like journalists.

Reporters such as Mary Hargrove make this challenge less daunting and more attainable.

Thank you, Mary, and congratulations.

LETTER

To the Editor,

I want to thank the Guild for the lovely award presentation last week. It was such an honor, and such a prize!

I can't tell you how much I've looked at this award in awe over the years because of what it represents. Today, there are so many social problems that need investigation. But I am convinced that the media are not delving thoroughly enough into how we treat children in trouble with the

law. I'm hoping that winning this award will encourage other reporters to look at both state-run and privately-owned programs for juvenile offenders.

I am grateful you allowed me time to explain my project to your members at the Heywood Broun Award luncheon. I hope it will generate more interest in this, very important topic.

—Mary Hargrove
Arkansas Democrat Gazette

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: June 8.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

Feeling stressed? You're not alone

You might assume that work-related stress is nothing new to most TNG-CWA members—not in an industry of constant deadlines and a daily stew of disasters and tragedy. But the surprise is that the stress Guild members feel is more likely to be caused by work load.

Analyzing more than 5,000 questionnaires that were returned by Guild members last year, researchers at the University of Wisconsin Industrial Engineering department found that issues of work organization appear more highly correlated to stress than broken or lousy equipment or the physical work environment—although these, too, cause work place stress.

The factors most likely to correlate with perceived stress, in descending order of importance, are:

- Workload, including amount, pressure and pace;
- Multiple and unrealistic deadlines;
- Crowded work areas;
- Sitting or standing for prolonged periods;
- Computers or tools that malfunction or need repairs.

These and other findings are still being teased out of a mass of data in a survey designed in 1999 by TNG staffer Larkie Gildersleeve, in consultation with David LeGrande, CWA's director of safety and health, and Dr. Michael Smith and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin's Industrial Engineering Department. The aim of the project was to determine what workplace factors are causing the most stress for Guild members.

Approximately 15% of the Guild's 35,000 members filled out the surveys, representing a broad cross-section of the membership geographically and in the kinds of work they do. Respondents were grouped into 60 different job titles at newspapers, broadcast outlets, print shops, non-profit and other kinds of employers throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico; the 60 job titles were then combined into 10 broad categories for a preliminary statistical analysis.

(Some job titles, such as photographers and librarians, had too few respondents to allow meaningful analysis.)

The good news emerging from all this number crunching is that Guild members like their jobs and find them interesting, even when they are stressful. At rates of 75% to 80%, respondents in all 10 job categories said they like their jobs always or often. Moreover, 71% to 80% always or often find their jobs to be interesting.

At the same time, Guild members say they pay for having interesting work. This was most notable

among workers in production and distribution, outside advertising, broadcast journalists and managerial assistants, more than 60% of whom responded that their jobs are always or often highly stressful.

Almost as high a percentage—50% to 60%—of print reporters, classified sales workers and customer service representatives reported similar stress levels. By contrast, fewer than half (40%-50%) of editors, artists, composers, marketers, clerks, receptionists, news assistants, telephone operators and technical information systems workers reported that their jobs were always or often highly stressful.

Specific questions about work organization, however, would sometimes raise doubts about the accuracy of self-reporting. For example, although the majority of clerks reported that their jobs were not highly stressful, when specific questions were asked about factors that cause stress, clerks reported that workload and work pace were related to high stress at a highly predictable rate.

Smith and his colleague, Maria Castillo, who analyzed the questionnaires for TNG and CWA, found several relatively consistent stress "predictors." The most significant was workload: among all 10 occupational groups taken together, work pressure is a "strong statistically significant variable." It also is a statistically significant variable for all job classifications, as are deadlines, particularly among broadcast reporters and anchors, circulation workers and clerks of all kinds.

The preliminary analysis also turned up some surprises. For example, gender, age, job and length of employment were not statistically significant variables in predicting stress in all 10 job categories taken together.

Also a surprise was the age distribution of the respondents, which contrasted sharply with similar surveys conducted 15 years ago. In the mid-1980s, the industry was characterized by an inverse age bell-curve: there were more very young and more older workers than workers in their 30's and 40's. In this survey, however, the average age of the respondents in every job category was between 40 and 43.3 years; the overall average age was 41.3.

And, contrary to the conventional wisdom that newspaper workers have high job mobility, the average tenure with the same employer of all respondents was 11.4 years. As might be expected, circulation and distribution workers average longest, at 14.3 years, but broadcast reporters, anchors and newspaper reporters average between 10.2 and 11.8 years.



RAY CROWELL/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

In Broun's tradition

Mary Hargrove, above right, accepts the 2000 Heywood Broun Award from TNG-CWA International Chairperson Carol Rothman. The presentation was made April 24 at a luncheon at the National Press Club, marking the 59th time a reporter or columnist was honored for work that best embodied the principles of the Guild's founder and first president, Heywood Broun. Hargrove's winning entry was a series in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette that explored the failures of that state's juvenile justice system. Below, Hargrove and Rothman socialize before the awards presentation with TNG President Linda Foley and William McLeman, who retired as the Guild's field operations director in 1996. McLeman chaired this year's panel of Broun judges, which included Marvin Kalb, Alan L. Otten, Sanford Watzman and Lena Williams.



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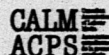
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DAYBOOK

Tri-Council Meeting,
June 2-3, Memphis

Native American Journalists,
June 13-16, Buffalo

Nat'l Assoc. Hispanic J'lists,
June 20-23, Phoenix

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

TNG Sector Conference,
July 5-7, Minneapolis

Annual CWA Convention,
July 9-10, Minneapolis

Asian-American Journalists,
Aug. 1-4, San Francisco

Nat'l Lesbian and Gay J'lists,
Sept. 6-9, Dallas

Nat'l Assoc. Black Journalists,
Sept. 22-26, Orlando

CLUW Biennial Convention,
Oct. 4-7, Las Vegas

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Concluding that the 17-month strike against the Arkansas Gazette has degenerated into a prolonged stalemate, the Guild's executive board decides to discontinue strike benefits for seven Guildsmen still walking the picket line. . . . The executive board, following "warm" debate, votes to oppose a convention bid to have Canada designated as a separate Guild region. . . . Although the Los Angeles Guild doesn't have an arbitration clause in its contract with the Daily News, a strike threat convinces the publisher to submit its proposed discharge of nine janitors to an arbitrator—who promptly rules for the Guild.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Guild leaders prepare a convention proposal to establish a fully portable industrial pension plan. . . . The Guild's general fund records its first operating surplus in eight years. . . . A 43-minute Guild strike produces a two-year contract at the New York Post, that city's only afternoon daily. . . . Morris L. Ernst, who helped found the Guild and was the union's first general counsel, dies at the age of 87.

Ten years ago this month:

The Guild's executive board agrees to recommend that the convention ban smoking at all sessions. . . . Heywood Hale Broun, son of the Guild's founding president, steals the show as guest speaker at the 50th anniversary Heywood Broun Awards presentation. . . . Researchers at City University of New York conclude that failed efforts by Tribune Co. to break the unions at the N.Y. Daily News cost more than \$400 million.