

THE GUILD Reporter

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Which paper has the best wage scale?

Two months ago, The Guild Reporter published the same table we run every year of top minimum salaries for reporters and photographers. And, as has been true every year for a long, long time, the paper paying the highest top minimums was The New York Times.

But reporting just one's income can be deceiving. The cost of living varies tremendously from one city to another and among regions; what seems cheap to a New Yorker may appear extortionate to someone from Bismark. But how to balance one's income against one's expenses?

Enter the Economic Policy Institute, a labor-friendly think tank that recently surveyed basic living costs for households of various sizes in more than 400 metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) nationwide. The result, which EPI calls a "basic family budget," is the minimum income below which families are unable to support "a safe and decent standard of living." Families with incomes below the basic budget lack access to regular, preventive medical care, lack accessible quality child care, don't have "affordable and stable" housing and worry about food.

The "basic family budget" is roughly twice the poverty level; it's

also roughly 60% of the national median income.

Seven variables were examined in computing each MSA's basic budgets, including the costs of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care and "other necessities," plus taxes. Food costs were constant across all areas; the most variable expenses were housing and child care, with taxes likewise fluctuating widely because of their direct relationship to other costs and income.

Add it all together and it costs nearly twice as much to survive in the country's most expensive cities as in its cheapest. At the high end, a two-parent, two-child family has to budget \$52,114 a year in the Long Island counties of Nassau and Suffolk just to scrape by; at the low end, it takes \$27,005 for the same family to maintain the same minimum living standard in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Matching EPI's database to the Guild's top minimums therefore can give some insight into how well—or poorly—those negotiated minimums meet local costs. The table on page 3 does that by comparing each newspaper's top key scale—which includes not only reporters, photographers and copy editors but also many district man-

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In Providence, war of attrition

One predictable result of a drawn-out contract battle—especially if the lack of agreement is due to management pettiness or arbitrary behavior—is a hemorrhaging of talent. The irony is that such caprice also renders managers oblivious to the consequences of their actions.

Case in point: The Providence Journal, which has refused to return to the bargaining table since February, following 17 months of largely frustrating talks. The Provi-

dence Newspaper Guild, which represents approximately 500 workers at the Journal, filed three dozen charges of unfair labor practices against the paper over a five-month period; a hearing before the National Labor Relations Board is scheduled to begin Oct. 22.

And Journal staffers, as nationally memorialized in the most recent issue of the American Journalism Review, are jumping ship left and right.

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fuss over
'free' trade?
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NO ASESINARAN
la esperanza



BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

On track against fast track

TNG-CWA officers and staffers join an AFL-CIO-sponsored demonstration Aug. 1 against proposed "fast track" legislation. The picket line marched in front of the national headquarters of the American Chamber of Commerce, a prime supporter of the initiative, which is

intended to ease passage of new trade agreements: for story, see page 6. Guild demonstrators include President Linda Foley, in dark jacket, talking with Marian Needham, director, contract administration. TNG Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer is in cap at left.

Another Blethen paper, another labor stand-off

One virtue of a strike, as the folks at the Seattle Times know, is that it has an endpoint. No such luck for approximately 300 Guild-represented employees of the Blethen family's other significant properties—the Portland Press Herald and Maine Sunday Telegram—who have been in contract negotiations since early 1999 and who haven't received a raise in more than three years.

Although negotiations began on an upbeat note, with the Portland Newspaper Guild agreeing to off-the-record collaborative bargaining, the talks stalled after a few months when the company announced it was unilaterally ending its 401(k) plan. Forced to back down under the threat of a lawsuit, the company nevertheless prevailed on the union to continue the off-the-record approach—until it finally unveiled its economic proposal, in May 2000.

Bargaining team members were "stunned by the offensive offer," a Guild spokesman said—and when the offer was shared (with the company's permission) with the membership, so was everyone else. In a unanimous vote, the local demanded an end to the "collaborative" effort and a return to traditional bargaining.

These days the local is still trying to nail down the tentative agreements reached 18 months ago, but until it launched a 7-day byline strike in July, progress had been scant. Indeed, the withholding of their names by writers and photographers, although a time-honored Guild tactic and a contractually enshrined right, provoked exactly the wrong kind of management response: a memo from editor Jeannine Guttman denying that Guild members have a right to withhold their names—even though past byline strikes at

the papers have been honored. The memo soon reached a national audience, courtesy of the internet.

Whether because of the byline strike or for other reasons, management agreed to a series of eight meetings over the summer that are revisiting ground already covered during the off-the-record talks. Agreement has been reached on at least half-a-dozen issues, and further meetings are scheduled for Aug. 28, 30 and 31 and Sept. 4 and 5.

Still, the company's mis-steps have provoked deep mistrust among Guild members, who also are chafing at the lack of raises. In an interview with a local alternative newspaper, Guild vice president Ed Murphy confirmed that a strike committee has been formed even as he stressed that there are no active plans for a walkout.

More immediately likely is a publicity campaign, with the local planning to buy print ads and radio spots after Labor Day to drum up public support. "A strike is certainly not anything we hope comes to pass, and I'm sure the company doesn't, as well," Murphy told reporter Allen Dammann. "I think everyone learned in Seattle that no one comes out of that hole."

Inside this issue



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Copy editor Suzanne Zalev and reporter Justin Jouvenal (foreground), of the San Mateo County Times, serve cake to "celebrate" the birthday of MediaNews honcho Dean Singleton, who turned

50 on Aug. 1. ANG workers, in the middle of contract negotiations, also sent birthday cards with the overall message: we remember you, please remember us.

No 'summer of love' in Bay area negotiations

By Laura Linden
Northern California Media Guild

Two hundred reporters, copy editors and editors who work for six San Francisco Bay Area papers are tangling with MediaNews-owned ANG Newspapers this summer, in an effort to replace their painfully weak first contract with a far better one.

This is no summer of love.

Days before that first contract was to expire, Aug. 17, ANG said it intended to withdraw its proposal to extend the contract another six months. Talks between ANG and the Northern California Media Workers Guild/Typographical Union began in late June, but from the outset the company has attempted to further cripple an already weak agreement.

In a region as high-priced as Manhattan, for example, ANG has proposed eliminating overtime after an 8-hour workday at the Oakland Tribune and five other papers ringing the Bay. Management also is seeking to eliminate a worker's right to arbitrate in cases of discipline or discharge.

"ANG Newspapers has been unwilling to talk about our proposals in any meaningful way," said Robert Gammon, an Oakland Tribune reporter and vice chair of the bargaining unit. "Arbitration is the one thing that workers have to keep the company from violating the contract."

MediaNews began acquiring the papers that would become ANG in the early '80s and made a practice of fighting long-established unions. Some employees were booted, then rehired at substantially lower wages. ANG's editorial employees had to battle MediaNews for 12 years before winning their first contract, in 1998.

"We come to the table knowing that we are not in the same place we

were three years ago—we are much stronger now," said local representative Erin Tyson Poh. "We are certain the contract we ultimately negotiate will be radically different than the one currently in place."

Many ANG editorial employees want to make newspaper journalism a career, Tyson Poh said, but that's not possible under current wages and benefits. The chain ranked near the bottom in a recent TNG-CWA survey of reporter and photographer salaries nationwide.

"We are fighting so that ANG will be a stronger, more stable chain and a better resource to the communities served. That cannot be achieved until the company brings ANG out of the Dark Ages," Tyson Poh added.

Talking up a free press

The Newspaper Guild-CWA, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors have organized a one-day forum to advance a campaign to generate broad concern over attacks on the First Amendment rights and privileges of journalists, teachers and other intellectual workers.

The forum, titled "Free Thought, Free Press: Not for Sale," will be held Tuesday, Sept. 25, at 9:30 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, and will be open to any interested individuals.

In June 2000, TNG and AAUP issued a joint "Statement on Intellectual Workers and Essential Freedoms" and pledged to seek the support of other membership organizations that share their fears about attacks on Constitutional protections. The statement warned:

"Professors and journalists are pressured by management convictions that the generation of profit

is the engine and goal of all enterprise, and that the model of manufacturing processes applies to the creation, development, and distribution of ideas and knowledge."

Many other organizations have since expressed alarm at the arbitrary tactics of cost-cutting, layoffs and other devices used to satisfy Wall Street's demands in preference to maintaining the quality of the news product in all public media. In the academic world, teachers and researchers are under heavy pressure to seek outside contracts that put profit-making ahead of expanding knowledge.

The program calls for two panel discussions, to be followed by lunch and a talk by a well-known speaker. Participants are expected to include AFTRA, the Department for Professional Employees, the American Library Association, the Committee of Concerned Journalists and TNG's Committee on the Future of Journalism.

In brief . . .

A first contract won at TVOntario

The Canadian Media Guild has reached a tentative agreement with TVOntario which, if ratified, will be the public broadcaster's first contract for production and on-air employees. The deal calls for most contract employees to become regular staff, provides overtime pay for the first time and includes a 2% pay raise retroactive to July 1 and a 1% increase next July. The contract would cover approximately 115 employees organized two years ago; a ratification vote was expected in late August.

September is CWA-COPE month

September, by action of the national CWA convention, has been designated CWA-COPE Month. All Guild locals are being urged to participate by recruiting members to voluntarily contribute a minimum of \$1 weekly. The money raised by COPE is used for political activities which, under federal law, may not be funded by members' dues.

Without a pot to, er, plant in . . .

In an effort to trim \$10 million in non-personnel costs, Dow Jones threw out the baby with the bathwater. One of its "smarter spending initiatives" was to discontinue green-plant-care service at its World Financial Center and South Brunswick, NJ sites, which it estimated would save \$40,000 a year. Plants that employees weren't willing to care for at their offices were put on a loading dock for anyone to take. Nice idea—except that the plants, and the pots they came in, were being leased from an outside company vendor. . . .

NEDC to seek shared organizer

Growing Guild emphasis on organizing has taken a new twist in New England, where district council members have decided to seek a shared organizer under the CWA's 75-25 subsidy program. While most New England locals are too small to support their own organizing programs, a spokesman said, the region has 3,000 TNG-CWA members "in a compact geographical area with extraordinary organizing potential."

Pacifica board unraveling more

Yet another Pacifica board member has yielded to activists seeking to maintain the radio network's grassroots traditions: Andrea Cisco stepped down in late July, in exchange for being dismissed from a lawsuit accusing board members of mismanagement. Separately, Pacifica Executive Director Bessie Walsh fired the board's two law firms—and hired two others.

Let 'em eat cake

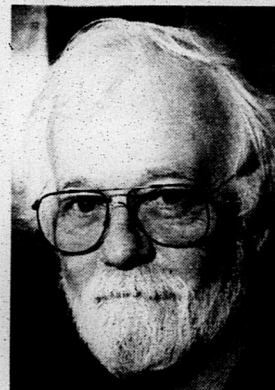
Maybe this is how Marie Antoinette got such a bad rap. Amidst all his corporate layoffs and downsizing, Knight Ridder CEO Tony Ridder got a different kind of publicity: seven photos in the September issue of House Beautiful, rhapsodizing about the "glamorous renovation" of his \$4.9 million home.

Two exec board members move on

Two members of TNG's executive board are stepping down. John Barker, regional vice president of Canada East, has resigned after accepting a new job in Yellowknife, Northwest Territory. He had served on the board the past two years.



Regional Vice President Russ Cain, meanwhile, accepted a Knight Ridder buyout and retired July 31 from the Monterey County (Cal.) Herald after 34 years as photographer, chief photographer and, most recently, as a page designer. Cain was a founding member of the Monterey unit of the San Jose Guild and served as president and vice president of the local. He also has been on the Representative Assembly since 1974, was the Monterey Unit chair for many years and has served on every negotiating committee for the Monterey Unit since 1974. He also is president of the Guild's Western District Council.



Sound bites:

The battle to gain TNG-CWA representation for employees of The Blade in Washington, D.C. ended July 20, with an 8 to 10 vote against the union. . . . The Lake Superior Newspaper Guild, Duluth, has a new e-mail address: guild@cpinternet.com. . . . Amazon.com is shipping still more customer service jobs overseas, this time to Ireland.

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Best wages? Try St. Louis

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agers, ad sales reps and computer techs—to the basic budget for families of two or four; the results are ranked by viability of income for a family where only one wage-earner is possible.

(Because EPI's sampling was confined to the U.S., no Canadian comparisons are possible. In addition, a handful of Guild-represented newspapers are not within an MSA sampled by EPI and therefore also aren't included in the comparison. Finally, results for the Wall Street Journal aren't shown because its workforce is dispersed throughout North America.)

One immediately obvious result of such a ranking is that some the highest paying newspapers drop in terms of "real" pay, while others leap upward. The New York Times drops from first place to 11th, the San Jose Mercury News from 11th to 43rd, the Washington Post from 18th to 53rd. Meanwhile, reporters and photographers employed by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch emerge as having the highest wage scales when matched against their cost of living, followed by their counterparts at the Toledo Blade and Cleveland Plain Dealer.

At the other extreme, editorial employees of five newspapers can't support themselves and one child on the wages they're paid at the top minimum.

A closer look at the data also suggests that 18 of these newspapers don't pay enough to maintain the idealized American family of one wage-earning parent and one parent at home taking care of two children. The offenders include the Chieftain in Pueblo, Colorado; the Herald-Leader in Lexington, Kentucky; and the Los Angeles Daily News and the Long Beach Press-Telegram in California. For these families, the political conservatives' accusation that working mothers choose to exchange "family values" for a higher standard of living doesn't wash: it's survival that's at stake.

The Economic Policy Institute

did a similar comparison for the general population and reported the results July 24, in a publication titled, "Hardships in America: The Real Story of Working Families." Its findings: 29% of working families in the U.S. with one to three children under age 12 don't earn enough to afford life's basic necessities. (The report may be downloaded at www.epinet.com. The site also includes a "family budget calculator" that visitors can use to calculate the basic budget for any of six family configurations in the 400-plus MSAs, which is how the information in the table was compiled.)

EPI stresses that its sampling occurred during a period of national prosperity. "Work alone doesn't ensure a decent standard of living," stressed Heather Boushey, an EPI economist and lead author of the study. "This report shows that official poverty measures don't tell the real story of working families today, and it provides strong evidence of the need for policies that strengthen our social safety net and boost wages."

The report also provides evidence of the need for stronger Guild contracts. While some may argue that many reporters and photographers are paid more than negotiated minimums—often as a result of so-called "merit pay"—such contracts fail to provide a collective bargaining agreement's most essential safeguard: the guarantee of a basic living wage. Indeed, such contracts encourage multi-tiered wage structures, in which less favored employees are paid at the minimum scale because "that's what the contract requires," while others are more richly rewarded.

Moreover, it bears emphasizing again that the wages at right are top minimums, reached in most cases only after four or more years on the job. Starting minimums can be significantly lower. In addition, these minimums are for a newspaper's highest-paid Guild-represented positions, which suggests that many more newspaper workers are substantially underpaid.

Real money

Metropolitan area/ Guild-represented newspaper	Minimum income needed:		Reporter top minimum	Top minimum as % of minimum needed for family	
	2 adults, 2 kids/1	adult, 1 kid		of 2	of 4
St. Louis (Post-Dispatch)	\$32,102.00	\$21,505.00	\$54,808.00	255%	171%
Toledo (Blade)	\$32,905.00	\$21,780.00	\$53,241.24	244%	162%
Cleveland (Plain Dealer)	\$34,531.00	\$23,848.00	\$57,366.92	241%	166%
Pittsburgh (Post-Gazette)	\$34,829.00	\$24,981.00	\$56,680.00	227%	163%
Memphis (Commercial Appeal)	\$31,873.00	\$21,804.00	\$48,856.08	224%	153%
Akron, OH (Beacon Journal)	\$33,460.00	\$22,546.00	\$50,180.00	223%	150%
Cincinnati (Post)	\$33,187.00	\$22,112.00	\$48,750.00	220%	147%
Philadelphia (Inquirer, Daily News)	\$39,312.00	\$30,035.00	\$62,400.00	208%	159%
Chicago (Sun-Times)	\$39,464.00	\$29,762.00	\$61,464.52	207%	156%
Erie, PA (Times-News)	\$33,188.00	\$23,035.00	\$46,879.04	204%	141%
New York (New York Times)	\$47,085.00	\$36,899.00	\$73,675.16	200%	156%
Canton, OH (Repository)	\$31,418.00	\$19,674.00	\$38,270.44	195%	122%
Youngstown, OH (Vindicator)	\$31,050.00	\$19,100.00	\$37,094.20	194%	119%
Minneapolis (Star Tribune)	\$43,199.00	\$30,045.00	\$57,941.00	193%	134%
Baltimore (Sun)	\$38,839.00	\$28,260.00	\$54,392.00	192%	140%
Denver (Post)	\$39,556.00	\$28,735.00	\$53,560.00	186%	135%
St. Paul (Pioneer Press)	\$43,199.00	\$30,045.00	\$55,900.52	186%	129%
Buffalo (News)	\$37,646.00	\$28,640.00	\$53,073.28	185%	141%
Indianapolis (Star, News)	\$33,807.00	\$24,336.00	\$44,772.00	184%	132%
Knoxville (News-Sentinel)	\$30,531.00	\$19,990.00	\$35,992.32	180%	118%
Honolulu (Advertiser)	\$41,205.00	\$32,433.00	\$57,188.56	176%	139%
Kenosha, WI (News)	\$35,784.00	\$26,133.00	\$45,929.52	176%	128%
Honolulu (Star-Bulletin)	\$41,205.00	\$32,433.00	\$56,576.00	174%	137%
Eugene, OR (Register Guard)	\$35,372.00	\$26,598.00	\$45,901.96	173%	130%
Scranton, PA (Times, Tribune)	\$34,299.00	\$24,386.00	\$41,937.48	172%	122%
Sheboygan, WI (Press)	\$33,495.00	\$23,010.00	\$39,552.24	172%	118%
Denver (Rocky Mt. News)	\$39,556.00	\$28,735.00	\$49,348.00	172%	125%
Manchester, NH (Union Leader)	\$40,628.00	\$29,006.00	\$49,755.16	172%	122%
Boston (Globe)	\$49,795.00	\$38,290.00	\$65,528.32	171%	132%
Providence, RI (Journal-Bulletin)	\$41,972.00	\$30,239.00	\$50,435.32	167%	120%
Milwaukee (Journal Sentinel)	\$36,720.00	\$27,179.00	\$44,720.00	165%	122%
Peoria, IL (Journal Star)	\$35,372.00	\$25,316.00	\$40,976.00	162%	116%
Duluth, MN (News-Tribune)	\$38,532.00	\$24,228.00	\$38,763.92	160%	101%
Yakima, WA (Herald-Republic)	\$35,573.00	\$24,861.00	\$39,374.40	158%	111%
Detroit (Free Press, News)	\$35,914.00	\$27,663.00	\$43,732.52	158%	122%
Seattle (Post-Intelligencer)	\$39,775.00	\$29,473.00	\$46,161.96	157%	116%
Seattle (Times)	\$39,775.00	\$29,473.00	\$45,768.84	155%	115%
Dayton, OH (Daily News)	\$33,204.00	\$22,214.00	\$34,346.00	155%	103%
Allentown, PA (Call)	\$38,285.00	\$28,980.00	\$44,578.04	154%	116%
Sacramento (Bee)	\$36,173.00	\$26,515.00	\$40,560.00	153%	112%
Fresno, CA (Bee)	\$33,634.00	\$23,329.00	\$35,100.00	150%	104%
Bremerton, WA (Sun)	\$37,138.00	\$26,874.00	\$39,945.36	149%	108%
San Jose (Mercury News)	\$47,520.00	\$37,813.00	\$55,439.28	147%	117%
Terre Haute, IN (Tribune-Star)	\$31,051.00	\$20,787.00	\$30,429.88	146%	98%
Modesto, CA (Bee)	\$34,818.00	\$24,960.00	\$36,400.00	146%	105%
Portland, ME (Press Herald)	\$38,583.00	\$29,299.00	\$42,561.48	145%	110%
Santa Rosa, CA (Press Democrat)	\$40,289.00	\$30,798.00	\$44,590.52	145%	111%
Sioux City, IA (Journal)	\$32,553.00	\$24,415.00	\$35,283.56	145%	108%
York, PA (Daily Record)	\$35,359.00	\$25,839.00	\$36,816.00	142%	104%
Pueblo, CO (Chieftain)	\$36,574.00	\$25,410.00	\$36,151.44	142%	99%
San Francisco (Chronicle)	\$48,138.00	\$38,431.00	\$54,276.56	141%	113%
York, PA (Dispatch)	\$35,359.00	\$25,839.00	\$36,174.84	140%	102%
Washington, D.C. (Post)	\$49,218.00	\$37,309.00	\$52,130.00	140%	106%
Albany, NY (Times-Union)	\$39,473.00	\$30,548.00	\$42,215.68	138%	107%
Jersey City, NJ (Jersey Journal)	\$38,408.00	\$30,044.00	\$41,341.56	138%	108%
Boston (Herald)	\$49,795.00	\$38,290.00	\$50,317.80	131%	101%
Lexington, KY (Herald-Leader)	\$32,779.00	\$22,779.00	\$29,900.00	131%	91%
Massillon, OH (Independent)	\$31,418.00	\$19,674.00	\$25,486.76	130%	81%
Los Angeles (Daily News)	\$38,780.00	\$29,258.00	\$37,499.28	128%	97%
Harrisburg, PA (Patriot-News)	\$35,965.00	\$26,546.00	\$33,753.20	127%	94%
Bakersfield, CA (Californian)	\$33,797.00	\$23,533.00	\$29,673.80	126%	88%
Long Beach, CA (Press-Telegram)	\$38,780.00	\$29,258.00	\$36,764.00	126%	95%
Hazleton, PA (Standard-Speaker)	\$34,299.00	\$24,386.00	\$30,456.92	125%	89%
Wilkes-Barre, PA (Citizens' Voice)	\$34,299.00	\$24,386.00	\$27,976.00	115%	82%
Lowell, MA (Sun)	\$45,872.00	\$34,419.00	\$39,059.28	113%	85%
Brockton, MA (Enterprise)	\$49,795.00	\$38,290.00	\$41,769.00	109%	84%
New York (El Diario-La Prensa)	\$47,085.00	\$36,899.00	\$38,305.80	104%	81%
Bellevue, WA (Eastside Journal)	\$39,775.00	\$29,473.00	\$28,392.00	96%	71%
Utica, NY (Observer-Dispatch)	\$36,734.00	\$27,807.00	\$20,150.00	72%	55%
Rochester, NY (Dem. & Chronicle)	\$39,804.00	\$30,819.00	\$21,788.00	71%	55%
New York (Noticias del Mundo)	\$47,085.00	\$36,899.00	\$23,777.00	64%	50%
Norwalk, CT (Hour)	\$49,718.00	\$38,620.00	\$21,580.00	56%	43%

Providence Journal staffers jumping ship

Continued from page 1

By the Guild's count, the exodus has now claimed 57, most recently including Rachel Ritchie, a photographer who this year was a Pulitzer finalist; and photographer Mary Beth Meehan, who this year won an in-house excellence award in the visuals department. Ritchie's departure was all the more ironic because she was the first woman photographer hired by the Journal full-time—a position she attained only by taking legal action against the paper.

Approximately three dozen news staffers have left the paper in the past 20 months, a level management attributes to mere attrition. But many of the departing employees are veterans who might have been expected to stay on at a publication

once renowned as "a writer's paper," and several, like Ritchie, are of national caliber. And for some, at least, the continued deterioration of the relationship with management played a role in their decision.

In a June letter to Robert Decherd, chairman of Belo Corp., the Journal's parent company, former Journal staffer Chris Chivers warned against corporate complacency. Although his four-year tenure with the paper had been "overwhelmingly a good one," Chivers decided to leave for better opportunities elsewhere—at The New York Times—and because he saw "worrisome signs of short-sightedness" by management.

"There were unnecessary fights over employee expenses, parking and automobile allowances," he wrote. "Other signs were less

obvious but insidious, including a dependence on irregular employees and interns who were neither coached nor rewarded on a scale commensurate with their contributions."

As Chivers summarized, "There can be little doubt, all these months and farewells later, that the recent climate has accelerated the resignations of many of the newsroom's journalists, and warned off potential applicants as well."

That climate also can be measured by the hail of unfair labor practices filed against the Journal, including 20 last December, 10 on Feb. 28 and six more May 23. Among the union's complaints: that the company has illegally imposed inferior medical plans and taken away a paid holiday and discounted parking for employees;

that it has failed to comply with proper information requests; and that it has tried to intimidate Guild members for their union activities. The claims are so extensive that two weeks of hearings have been planned.

Meanwhile, in the absence of any bargaining sessions since Valentine's Day, Guild members have taken to wearing black on Thursdays and have conducted several vigils and rallies. Although the company suspended dues collection—and suggested Guild members could resign—administrative officer Tim Schick reports that most members are continuing their dues payments and CWA has been picking up the local's legal costs.

The local also has made preparations for a possible circulation boycott.

The dirty wars are far from over

What's all this fuss about "fast track authority"? Why has the AFL-CIO made a battle cry out of "fair trade, not free trade"? Why did something as obscure as the Free Trade Area of the Americas have a place on CWA's convention agenda?

The fact is, organized labor in the U.S. has been involved in global trade issues for decades, not always with admirable results. The intersection of U.S. labor, U.S. foreign policy and Latin America in particular has a long and often bloody history. But as Cold War passions ebbed and the global marketplace became dominated by corporate interests, organized labor likewise began to understand that it has to reach across international borders—and, sometimes, that it has to oppose government policies that jeopardize workers' rights.

Unfortunately, what often gets lost in all the rhetoric about the World Bank and the IMF and WTO is any sense of human scale. Free trade proponents talk in abstractions, accusing their opponents of being isolationists or of being concerned only about their own special interests. "Free trade" becomes equated with "democracy," with anyone disputing the math vilified as a modern Luddite.

The reality on the ground, as detailed in the story at right by Guild member David Bacon, is something entirely—tragically—different. And not at all abstract. Moreover, as CWA organizer Lois Putzier explains in the article on page 5, the torture, murder and repression in Bacon's story is taught by Americans, in an American facility, paid with American tax dollars.

When union leadership means a death sentence

By David Bacon
Northern California Media Guild

Leading a union often means losing a job, even blacklisting. In many countries, it can bring imprisonment by governments who view unions as a threat to the social and economic elite. But in some countries, election to union office carries even greater peril—and the most dangerous country by far is Colombia, where labor activism is often punished with death.

By mid-May, 44 Colombian trade union leaders had been murdered this year alone. Last year's assassinations cost the lives of 129 others. The National Labor School reports that 1,500 have been killed in the past decade. And according to Hector Fajardo, general secretary of the country's largest union federation, the Unified Confederation of Workers (CUT), 3,800 trade unionists have been assassinated in Colombia since 1986. Out of every 5 trade unionists killed in the world, 3 are Colombian, according to a recent U.S. union report.

U.S. unions increasingly point to a network of U.S. policies which they believe contribute to the targeting of Colombian unionists. U.S. military aid provided by Plan Colombia often supports activities by rightwing paramilitary groups, who in turn target trade union leaders. Bush administration energy policies encourage the use of coal in U.S. power plants, and millions of tons are now mined in the midst of Colombia's civil war by U.S. corporations. And free-market economic reforms, pushed by the International Monetary Fund, are provoking a wave of resistance by Colombian labor which is being met by violent repression.

In mid-March, Valmore Locarno Rodriguez and Victor Hugo Orcasita were riding from their jobs at the Loma mine in northern Colombia. Locarno Rodriguez and Orcasita were chairman and vice-chairman of the union at the mine, a local of Sintramienergetica, one of Colombia's two coal miners' unions.

As the company bus neared Valledupar, 30 miles from the mine, it was stopped by 15 gunmen, some in military uniforms. They began checking the identification of the workers and pulled the two union leaders off the bus. Locarno has hit in the head with a rifle butt and was then shot in the face, as his fellow workers on the bus watched in horror. Orcasita was taken into the woods at the side of the road and tortured. When his body was later found, his fingernails had been torn off.

The Loma mine is now owned by a U.S. multinational corporation, Drummond Co., Inc., based in Birmingham, Alabama. Drummond opened the Loma mine in 1994, and it is now Colombia's second largest. At first, according to Ken Zinn, North American regional coordinator of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, the company promised workers in

Alabama, laying off 1700 members of the United Mine Workers. Its one remaining U.S. mine employs about 500 miners.

Last year, 5 million tons of Colombian coal crossed the Alabama State Docks in Mobile, bound for plants operated by the Alabama Power Co., a division of the Southern Co. The plants were formerly fueled by Drummond's U.S. mines. Another half million tons went to the Alabama Electrical Cooperative.

Alabama used to export coal: 13 million tons in 1996, mostly from Drummond mines. Last year's exports totaled only 3 million tons. At the Loma mine, production rose 4 million tons in 2000, to a total of 11.8 million, after the company built a huge drag line. For Drummond, the transfer has resulted in substantial savings on labor costs. A UMWA miner in Alabama earns \$18/hour, or \$3,060/month, not counting benefits. At the Loma mine, the four wage classifications range from 1,500,000 to 2,100,000 pesos a month, about \$477-955(US).

Drummond, says UMWA vice-president Jerry Jones, transferred operations to Colombia "knowing that country's hostile

Organization in Colombia. "One of those assumptions is that many union leaders support the guerrillas."

Locarno and Orcasita made repeated pleas to the company for protection. In a meeting just a week before the assassinations, the union demanded that Drummond provide security for its workers, and that the company abide by a previous agreement allowing them to sleep overnight at the mine. The company ignored the agreement and refused to allow the men to stay.

But while coal mine union leaders clearly are targets, they're not the only ones. Just days after the murders in Valledupar, two leaders of the Colombian electrical workers union, Andres Granados and Jaime Sanchez, were gunned down March 22. In mid-March, Eugenio Sanchez Diaz, a union activist in the oil town of Barrancabermeja was dragged from his home and shot in the street. On the last day of March, Jaime Alberto Duque Castro, leader of the El Cairo Cement Workers Union, was kidnapped by armed gunmen. Amnesty International accused the AUC of responsibility.



Graffiti on a bank building in Bogota: "Don't kill the hope."

LINDA PANETTA/SCA WATCH

political climate and egregious human rights violations." Conditions for Colombian miners are some of the world's most dangerous. An April 27 blast at the Cana Brava mine in Santander province took the lives of 15 miners. In October of 1997, another explosion buried 16 coal miners alive in El Diviso mine, near Cucuta.

Responsibility for the murders of Locarno and Orcasita was laid at the feet of Colombia's rightist paramilitary army, the United Defense Groups (AUC), by the police commander for Cesar Province, Hugo Alfonso Cepeda. He told Colombian television network RCN that "it appears that it's attributable to paramilitaries who operate in the region." According to Ken Zinn, the AUC issued a number of death threats against the leaders of the union at the Loma mine, accusing them of being in league with FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the country's main guerilla group.

The region has been the scene of intense conflict between the guerillas and the AUC. FARC allegedly levies a 10% tax on coal moving by rail out of the mine, which Drummond has refused to pay, and the 215-mile rail line to Puerto Drummond on the coast was bombed five times in the last year. In response, Drummond president Gary Drummond visited Colombian president Andres Pastrana last year to demand

Another assassinated union leader, Ricardo Orozco, vice president of the Colombian Hospital Workers' Union, had his name on a list of 50 union leaders in Barranquilla that was circulated by paramilitary death squads. He was shot by a gunman in April; his death was followed by two days of national labor protest.

The AUC is held responsible by unionists for almost all of the trade union assassinations. Robin Kirk, who monitors human rights abuses in Colombia for Human Rights Watch, says that there are strong ties between the AUC and the Colombian military. "The Colombian military and intelligence apparatus has been virulently anti-communist since the 1950s," she says, "and they look at trade unionists as subversives—as a very real and potential threat. Generally they see groups on the left as linked to the ideology that led to the formation of guerilla groups."

The AUC, which by numerous press accounts operates in cooperation with the military, is backed behind the scenes by some elements of the business and economic elite. "There are powerful economic interests that support the paramilitaries," Kirk says, "and they do target trade unionists, and attack union leaders again and again."

Violence against trade unionists is part of a larger context of violence against community leaders, human rights activists and

Fighting 'the ultimate union buster'

By Lois Putzier

Organizer, CWA Local 7026, Tucson

Recently I was tried, convicted and sentenced to six months in federal prison for the class B misdemeanor of "unlawfully reentering a United States military reservation." A union sister, on hearing of this, wrote my local, "Tell Lois not to break the law." But my conscience said I did not have that choice.

When I asked my boss, CWA Local 7026 President Michael McGrath, to write me a letter of support to give to the federal magistrate trying my case, I did not suspect my lawyer would use some of his words to form the direction of my testimony.

"Although we have never discussed it," Mike wrote, "I believe that after a lifetime at 'Bombs-R-Us' (Hughes Aircraft Co., builder of guided missiles), for Lois there was a certain amount of 'soul washing' necessary."

Becoming a union organizer was one step in the wash cycle. Another was protesting at the School of the Americas (SOA), the "ultimate union buster."

Ultimate union buster? How does a school that trains military personnel from Latin American countries get such a moniker?

Look at Colombia, the country claiming the highest percentage of more than 60,000 alumni in the school's 50-plus years of existence. Unionists have always been a target of SOA-trained troops and, true to form, the Colombian military has been murdering labor leaders at the rate of about six a week. This mirrors—no, magnifies—what happens wherever SOA graduates return from their U.S.-funded indoctrination.

Following my participation in a two-week Witness for Peace delegation to Guatemala, where Mayas spoke of massacres and labor leaders of "disappearances" at the hands of SOA-trained or influenced military and paramilitary groups, I began protesting the school by visiting my Congressional delegation. But I soon moved on to protest at the school itself—now located at Fort Benning, Georgia—because I realized the hopelessness of lobbying legislators who have been heavily subsidized by the military-industrial complex.

Putting me on the stand, my lawyer, Kerry McGrath, wanted the years I'd been employed by that complex on the record



The most recent group of School of the Americas protesters, now all safely behind bars.

because it is this unholy marriage my "criminal" behavior challenges. And having been a "communications specialist" (read "spin doctor"), I could readily recognize the lies spun by this complex in order to make itself palatable to the American public—just in case the public finds out, for example, that institutions such as SOA exist.

In spite of a growing number of protesters in Washington, D.C. and at the gates of Fort Benning each year, much of the public still does not know about the school. Here are some of the facts that have compelled me to be there each year since I learned of its existence and to twice "cross the line."

SOA was established as the U.S. Army Caribbean Training Center in Panama in 1946. In 1963, its name was changed and its focus became the Cold War. In 1984 it was forced to move from Panama, where it had been tagged "School of Assassins." SOA's graduates include some of the most notorious human rights abusers in Latin America, responsible—among other atrocities—for the Uraba massacre in Colombia, the El Mozote massacre in El Salvador, the La Cantuta massacre in Peru, the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the murder of

six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter, the torture and murder of a U.N. worker in Chile, and hundreds and hundreds of other human rights abuses.

Grassroots pressure eventually forced the Pentagon to release seven Spanish-language training manuals that had been used at the SOA until 1991. In them, SOA recommends interrogation techniques like torture, execution, blackmail and arresting the relatives of those being questioned. The manuals identify as "suspect groups" labor activists, students and community organizers, including priests and pastors. The manuals are gone; the information they contained and the philosophy they represent are not.

Over the years, repeated protests and thousands of letters from people not involved in the demonstrations have urged Congress to stop funding and to close this noxious school. We came close enough to achieving this goal that the Pentagon actually closed the school this past January—for 24 hours. The next day SOA was reopened, but this time it was being called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Different name, same shame: WHISC must be whisked away!

WHISC must be whisked away!

To achieve that end, my conscience tells me to protest even to the point of breaking a law if it will focus the public's attention on what is happening in its name and with its tax dollars.

Why, you may wonder, is it illegal to protest? We union people, after all, attend lots of demonstrations and protests—and it's all legal, isn't it? Aren't we guaranteed the rights of freedom of speech and peaceful assembly? Doesn't the Bill of Rights specifically deny Congress the authority of make laws that abrogate these rights?

Not, I learned, when such abrogation applies to military facilities, even in peacetime,

even at normally open bases.

Fort Benning ordinarily is an entirely open military base. No fences, no closed gates, no guards—except on one day a year: On the Sunday that thousands of SOA Watch supporters come to the school. That day the base is closed, at least to us.

We come from all political parties—Democratic, Republican, Green, Libertarian, Communist, Socialist, Labor. We come for humane reasons. We are non-violent. We cause no damage to person or property. We even carefully pick up our own trash and police our own ranks.

But when we, in a solemn funeral procession remembering the victims of SOA graduates, "cross the line"—a white line painted on the paved road into the base—we may be arrested, processed, photographed, interrogated. After a first arrest, we are given a "bar letter" banning us from Fort Benning, this normally open community, on any day for any reason for the next five years. When we come again we may be arrested again, and this time we may be indicted and commanded to appear at trial.

Note I write "may." In 2000, more than 3,400 people crossed the line but only some 1,700 were arrested. Of these, 65 were found to have bar letters. Of these 65, 26 were selected to be prosecuted. I was one of the chosen.

At our trial, all were found guilty. Maximum sentence for our "crime" is six months and/or a \$5,000 fine. The magistrate has complete discretion. This year, of 26 indicted, two received probation, one got 30 days, two got three months and the rest of us—including an 88-year-old nun—got six months. Our fines, with no rhyme or reason, varied from being completely waived to \$3,000. As an added "bonus," those of us receiving SSI will have it discontinued during the months we are in prison.

Most of us have yet to hear where and when we must surrender for incarceration. Meanwhile, we are not free to leave our mailboxes or to make plans for early 2002. We surely won't be going to Fort Benning this year. But next year. . .

Putzier, 69, reported July 17 to the federal prison camp in Phoenix to begin her six-month sentence.



Drummers from Common Ground, a group from Warren Wilson College in North Carolina, provide musical uplift at the most recent mass demonstration at Fort Benning. The quotation in

the sign behind them, "Those who have a voice must speak for the voiceless," is from Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was gunned down in San Salvador.

LINDA PANETTA/SOA WATCH

Labor round-up

Looking ahead to Labor Day

For the second consecutive year, the AFL-CIO is launching an on-line Labor Day festival. The nearly month-long experiment in virtual celebration, running Aug. 28 through Sept. 21, will feature music, games, e-cards, activism "and more," and can be accessed at www.aflcio.org/laborday. On a more traditional note, the federation also is planning a repeat of its Labor in the Pulpits program, with more than 500 events planned around the country. The program has union members addressing congregations over the Labor Day weekend about their faith, work and the union movement.

Union organizing glass is half empty

The Bureau of National Affairs has released its year-end union election statistics for the year 2000, showing a glass that's half empty. The number of NLRB representation elections declined to 2,849, from 3,114 in 1999, and the total number of wins also declined, to 1,484 from 1,598. The good news: the percentage of victories actually increased, to 52.1% from 51.3%. The bad news: in elections won by unions, the number of workers eligible to vote dropped to 90,330 in 2000, from 106,432 in 1999.

Big Brother is watching—again

As unions and other anti-FTAA protesters gear up for yet another in a series of demonstrations (see article at right), there's growing evidence that some police departments are reviving the notorious surveillance techniques of the 'Sixties. The Portland, Ore. city council last year adopted an ordinance increasing that city's use of police in "anti-terrorism" duty and put the Joint Terrorism Task Force under direct supervision of the FBI. The ordinance initially stated its purpose was "to identify and target for prosecution those individuals or groups who are responsible for right-wing and or left-wing movements." Similar joint task forces also are operating in Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, Denver and Sacramento, according to the August issue of Labor Notes. The Portland ordinance is up for review this fall, and 20 unions—including CWA—have signed a resolution demanding its revocation.

Charleston 5 face political trial

A flashpoint in the relationship between organized labor and the state will be ignited in September, when five longshoremen go on trial in Charleston, S.C. on felony riot and other charges. The case is being prosecuted by Attorney General Charlie Condon—who plans to run for governor, and who has openly linked the case to preservation of the state's anti-union "right to work" laws—after local officials dropped misdemeanor trespassing charges against nine longshoremen in exchange for community service. The "riot" occurred Jan. 20, 2000, when several hundred longshoremen clashed with more than 600 cops as they tried to form a picket line protesting the use of non-union stevedores by Nordana Shipping Lines. For a well-balanced account of the event and the race and class issues involved, see the South Carolina Progressive Network website at www.scpnet.com.

Wal-Mart tries to change the rules . . .

Stung by labor laws that prevent employers from barring union organizers if they permit other solicitations on their premises, Wal-Mart has enlisted the help of U.S. Senator Tim Hutchinson to, yep, rewrite the law. The "Preserve Charitable Giving Act" would amend the National Labor Relations Act to allow charities to solicit on premises that ban union solicitations. Hutchinson, no coincidence, is from Arkansas, Wal-Mart's home state.

. . . and funds 'right to work' campaign

The economic climate in "right to work" states like South Carolina and Arkansas looks so attractive to some Oklahomans that the state will be voting on a similar law Sept. 25—and Wal-Mart, no surprise, has been one of the biggest contributors to the pro-referendum campaign, kicking in \$100,000 as of mid-July. Oklahoma voters last rejected a similar measure in 1964, but business interests apparently believe the time is ripe for a fresh attempt: according to The Daily Oklahoman, supporters of State Question 695 were outspending their opponents four-to-one and mounting an advertising blitz that claims "right to work" laws will create more jobs. The last state to adopt such a law was Idaho, in 1986.

Labor gearing up for battle over 'free' trade

Fast track legislation, under which President Bush would have a freer hand to negotiate trade agreements, was derailed in late July by mounting opposition, much of it led by labor unions. Fast track and free trade were among the key topics of CWA's convention in Minneapolis, with delegates passing a resolution pledging to fight against the Free Trade Area of the Americas trade pact.

A House vote on the legislation, originally scheduled ahead of the August congressional recess, has been postponed until September. In response, the AFL-CIO has issued a "Call to Action" for next month, culminating in a "Global Justice Week" Sept. 26 through Oct. 1. A massive rally and march is being planned for Washington D.C. on Sept. 30, coinciding with annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Opposition to the FTAA has centered on its silence on labor and environmental safeguards while allowing investors and corporate interests to conduct business with virtually no government oversight or restraint. Opponents also have criticized the secrecy in which the pact has been forged, the lack of input

from labor, environmental and social activist groups, and the secrecy with which disputes under the FTAA are to be resolved.

Fast track authority, which Congress repeatedly denied to Bill Clinton after it was used to secure passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, would bar the U.S. Senate—which under the U.S. Constitution must ratify all treaties—from amending the FTAA. FTAA opponents contend that NAFTA, a more modest version of the FTAA, has lowered living standards in Mexico, hastened the export of manufacturing jobs from the U.S. and increased, rather than lessened, U.S. trade imbalances.

The protests against the World Bank and IMF, while hitting on these themes, also will support the unconditional cancellation of debts owed by the world's poorest countries and will seek priority treatment of HIV/AIDS patients.

More labor protests against the euphemistically named "free trade" bandwagon are being planned by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions for Nov. 9, the opening day of the World Trade Organization meeting in Doha, Qatar.

Colombian death sentence

Continued from page 4

the result of social and political violence in 2000. The CCJ attributes 80% of the cases to the paramilitaries, 5% directly to the government and 15% to left-wing guerillas. Roberto Molino of the CCJ told a delegation of U.S. unionists that "in the case of the paramilitaries, you cannot underestimate the collaboration of government forces."

Kirk draws a distinction between union assassinations by the AUC and union members killed by the guerillas. "The guerillas sometimes kill people who belong to unions because they believe they are cooperating with the AUC. But the paramilitaries kill them because they are trade unionists."

The Colombian government also views union activity as a threat because it challenges its basic economic policies. The Colombian administration of President Andres Pastrana is under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to cut the public sector budget, causing mass firings and cuts in education, healthcare and pensions. The savings are to be used to pay down the country's debt to foreign banks and lending institutions, making Colombia more attractive to foreign investors.

In March, the General Confederation of Democratic Workers organized a 24-hour strike of 700,000 workers, including 300,000 teachers and education employees, protesting mass layoffs. The Colombian Federation of Educators (FECODE) struck again on May 15, for 48 hours, over a proposal to cut the education budget by \$340 million. "If this bill is approved, it will have a very negative effect on educators and health care workers throughout Colombia," said FECODE President Gloria Ines Ramirez. Health care workers also joined the strike. On June 7, tens of thousands of Colombian workers took to the streets in marches across the country, opposing the IMF.

Ramirez predicted that the cuts would deprive 500,000 Colombian children of an education, and three million people have already signed petitions opposing them. "We will not allow the government to make budget cuts for two of the most important necessities for our poorest sector simply to pay interest on the foreign debt," she declared. An education strike would cancel classes for seven million Colombian children.

Being a teacher union activist in Colombia is as dangerous as being a coal mine leader. Since 1986, 418 educators have been murdered. In just one week in early May, Dario de Jesus Silva, a 22-year veteran teacher in Antioquia Department, and Juan Carlos Castro Zapata, another school worker in the same province, were assassinated. Both were activists in the CUT teachers' union, ADIDA. On May 14, Julio Alberto Otero, a university lecturer and union

activist, also was killed.

Another IMF mandate, privatization, has been just as bitterly resisted. The union for workers at the government corporation EMCALI, which provides garbage, water and electricity to Cali city residents, has fought the company's selloff. One of the union's activists, Carlos Eliecer Prado, was killed in May. "Colombian trade unionists have been targeted by dark forces moving inside the State itself," a union statement warned. "They seek to silence through assassination, eviction or terror those who are against privatization and those who defend human rights."

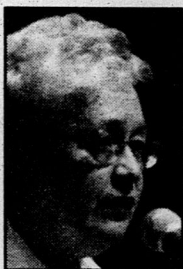
The wave of death and violence is made possible by growing U.S. aid to the Colombian armed forces. Under Plan Colombia, the U.S. has funneled over \$1 billion into the country, almost entirely in the form of military assistance. Colombia is the third-largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world.

Both Colombian and U.S. unions say this money funds a dirty war against all critics of the Colombian social and economic order, including unionists. This spring, the United Steel Workers sent a formal delegation to Colombia in the wake of the murders of Locarno Rodriguez and Orcasita. Led by attorney Dan Kovalik and Rapid Response Coordinator Glynda Williams, the delegation met with leaders of the main Colombian labor federation, the CUT. After the delegation made its report, Steel Worker President Leo Gerard warned the U.S. government that "we are strongly opposed to the amount of military aid being sent to the Colombian Army when trade unionists and innocent people are being killed by the very military forces we are financing."

The USWA criticism follows a position taken by the AFL-CIO last year, which also called for ending military assistance. That position puts the U.S. labor federation at odds with the Bush administration on a key foreign policy issue, and marks a basic change in relations between U.S. and Colombian labor. Labor's strong reaction to the Colombian murders contrasts with its relative silence during the Reagan years, when AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland tried to suppress widespread criticism of U.S. foreign policy in union ranks and blocked grassroots efforts to organize support for Salvadoran trade unionists, at a time when they were hit with the same wave of death now evident in Colombia.

Today, U.S. unions want relations with all sectors of Colombian labor and use a single standard in calling for the defense of unions under attack. "Trade union rights are human rights and our union will fight to protect them everywhere," says Gerard. "We demand that the Colombian government protect all trade unionists in their country and do everything in its power to bring these assassins to justice."

LOOKING AHEAD



We have our own margins to maximize

By Carol Rothman, TNG-CWA Chairperson

We've gone through a litany of buzzwords over the years. Some have inspired us and some have horrified us.

Labor buzzwords like "parity," "diversity," "organize" and "mobilize" rang out through past decades. Management buzzwords, like "sub-contracting," "decertification," "out-sourcing" and "down-sizing" beleaguered us in other years. But whether you work on the editorial side or the business side of your operation, the word you are hearing most often this year is *margin*.

I've worked on the business side, selling advertising for two major metropolitan daily newspapers, for more than 30 years. I have been involved in more conversations about margin in the last six months than in all those previous 30 years combined.

A story can't be assigned, an investigative series can't be started, an advertising section can't be contemplated, a promotion campaign can't begin unless we first determine the *margin*! And that margin must be great enough, in the eyes of corporate headquarters, to warrant undertaking any of these projects.

So, what is *margin*? The dictionary explains it as the difference between net sales and the cost of merchandise sold, from which expenses are usually met and profit derived. For our industry, however, the definition is a little more complicated. There is no simple cost of merchandise manufactured to compare to net sales. And expenses are not always followed by concrete or immediate results.

But that hasn't stopped management's fixation on increasing the elusive pool from which its profits are derived. In what's being called the worst economic slump since the 1991 recession, managers everywhere are hell-bent on showing the best margin ever.

Managers have reduced the cost of producing our merchandise—the newspaper—by printing it on smaller paper, by consolidating or dropping once-independent sections or features and by narrowing their vision to eliminate coverage areas. These cost-cutting measures do not always result

in a better product—often, just the reverse is true. With less to write about, there is less reason for customers to advertise with us and less reason for readers to buy our paper.

Managers then attempt to increase sales by boosting advertising rates and subscription and newsstand prices. Again, the desired result is not accomplished, as more readers and advertisers abandon us, but that's "management by margin." What is incomprehensible is why our managers continue to use it. A recent survey in Editor & Publisher reports that publishers and editors themselves, by a ratio of 4-to-3, feel that margin management is bad for the newspaper industry. But, Wall Street and the shareholders have tasted its fruits and clamor for more.

So we still have to deal with margin's major components: expenses and profit. If plans to reduce the cost of production and increase revenues falter, there is only one way for profits to claim the desired share of the margin: Expenses must go down dramatically!

Sadly, this is being accomplished in most of our workplaces with buy-outs and layoffs of our members. Hundreds of cuts are planned at the New York Times, at the New York Daily News, at the Wall Street Journal, at the Washington Post, at Time Inc., at the Boston Globe, at the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News. And the list goes on.

The most notorious example is the elimination of 2,000 jobs throughout the Knight-Ridder chain. This corporate slashing began in the fourth quarter of last year and will leave a wound through which the lifeblood of the chain's newspapers will drain. But nothing brought this ludicrous kowtowing to shareholders to the public's attention like the resignation of one of Knight-Ridder's publishers, Jay Harris. Who would have believed that the hero of the hour at any Guild meeting could be a publisher?

Jay Harris left his post as publisher of the Guild-represented San Jose Mercury News on March 19th in a valiant attempt to stop the runaway train of margin management at Knight-Ridder. Harris said that he could not remain as an unwilling co-con-

LETTER

To the Editor,

Are you listening? About every poll shows the public views the media as a part of the power structure, trying to influence instead of inform. Your June 15 page 8 article on Worcester, MA columnist Jim Dempsey's stubbing of Catholic sensibilities shows how correct those surveys are.

No wonder Catholics ask: "Why us?" One would expect a publication that goes to professional journalists to be careful and fair. Would you be so carefree with any other group of individuals? You felt at ease using the headline "Some readers shouldn't be crossed" on the Dempsey story. I can't imagine your editors running something about "skirting the issues" on your page one story about women and the

economy.

In addition, the story used the term "conservative Roman Catholics." Does that mean a "liberal" Catholic wouldn't be offended? Does the label, by its mere juxtaposition, make Dempsey a "liberal"?

I recently retired after 40 years in reporting, all as a staunch Guild member. I stepped aside early at 62 because, among other things, I got sick and tired of seeing labels tossed around so freely. I once ran the words "conservative and 'liberal'" through the system and the score was 4-1 for the former. Your staff should become more diverse, and I don't mean by hiring conservatives—just some grownups.

—Jim Clifford Sr. (retired, UPI-AP)
Redwood City, Cal.



Here's something to get really bugged about

Okay, you union guys and gals, here's a labor-friendly version of "Where's Waldo?": where's the union bug?

No, we're not talking about insects or hidden microphones or that pesky steward who keeps trying to get you to serve on some union committee. We're talking about the newspaper version of the union label you find in clothes that aren't made in China or Bangladesh. The label that lets you know you're reading a publication printed by union members.

Ours is always in the same place: in the masthead on page 8, at the bottom of the box, sandwiched in between the ILCA and CALM labels. It looks like a little flying saucer chasing a '14,' and if you blew it up about 600% you'd see something like this:



These modest, all but indecipherable "bugs"—as they're known in the trade—are your assurance that your paper was printed by workers who have a voice in the workplace and who work under a contract they negotiated.

We're not suggesting your reading habits be shaped entirely by bug considerations. But all other things being equal, if you have a choice between a paper with a bug and one without—by all means, pick up the former.

And now that you know about bugs, try finding them elsewhere: packaging labels, printed T-shirts, even communications from your own local. Or on literature from political candidates who claim to be attuned to labor issues. If nothing else, looking for the bugs will heighten your awareness of union presence—or absence—in the products you buy.

Now, if only someone could come up with a way to indicate union membership in a by-line. . . .

spirator. He felt Knight-Ridder's quick fix for Wall Street portended permanent, and possibly irreparable, damage to the company. His concerns were not only for the news operation, but for the business side as well.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Harris summed up his position in these words:

"When the interests of readers and shareholders are at odds, which takes priority? When the interests of a community and shareholders are at odds, which takes priority? When the interests of the nation in an informed citizenry and the demands of shareholders for ever-increasing profits are at odds, which takes priority?"

We must follow this brave and noble man's questions with one of our own: When the survival of the union and the shareholders' pursuit of profits are at odds, which takes priority?

All of us here and our members throughout the Guild and CWA family know what our answer must be: the survival of the union!

The union must survive Wall Street pressures! The union must survive stockholders' greed! The union must survive margin management!

We must persevere in organizing new members, as we have this year, to enhance the Guild's margin. And we have to keep expanding the Guild's margin with its most valuable assets—its historically sound programs. Last year we retooled the collective bargaining program. We could call that a profit-sharing of the Guild's margin, as each local benefits from successful negotiations under it. This year we expect to follow with a rejuvenation of our human rights agenda.

With this continuing success, how is it that people still ask if the Guild has a role to play in today's world?

Every day, in everything we do, our role must be to maximize the Guild's margin. It is certainly not a dollars and cents margin. But it is priceless to our members.

Excerpted from Rothman's welcoming speech at the TNG sector conference.

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: September 14.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

Achtung! We will have more readers!

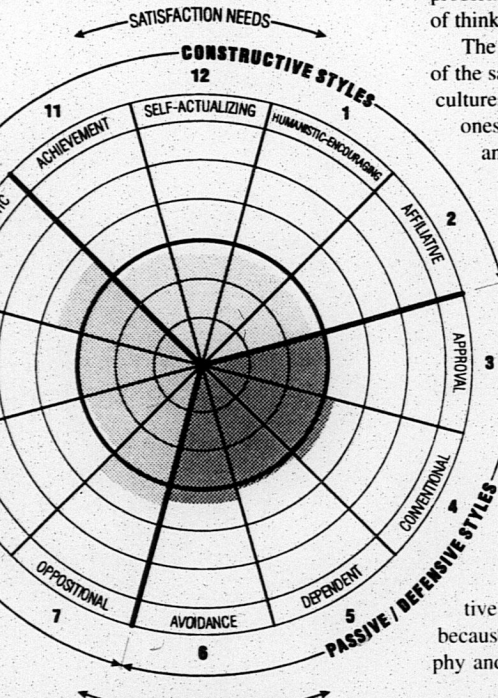
By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

What American institution's "culture"—its values and organizational dynamics—is most similar to the newspaper industry's? Would you believe... the military?

That's one of the most disturbing—although some would say not surprising—findings of the most exhaustive newspaper readership study ever conducted. Commissioned nearly two years ago by the Newspaper Association of America and by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the so-called Readership Initiative was undertaken to determine what—if anything—can be done to reverse the readership decline of the past 30 years. The good news: most of the solutions are internal. The bad news: so are the biggest problems.

The research was conducted last summer by the Readership Institute at Northwestern University and included a 450-question survey—answered by 37,000 readers—to determine what they want. But it also included a separate survey of 5,500 employees at a representative sample of 100 newspapers, including such Guild-represented newspapers as The Providence Journal, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, The Baltimore Sun, the San Jose Mercury News and The Seattle Times. And the findings of this latter survey confirm what many newspaper staffers already suspect: this is one stodgy industry we're in.

Institute director John Lavine has been presenting the study's findings and key recommendations since the beginning of this year, and consistently emphasizes that its eight "imperatives"—the initiatives that will improve the time, frequency and thoroughness that readers devote to their newspaper reading—are a package deal. Trying one here and one there won't accomplish much, he stresses: improved customer service will help, but not as significantly as it will when combined with increased emphasis on certain kinds of content. More local coverage



Newspapers as they are . . .

will boost readership, but that readership will increase even more with increased in-paper content promotion or by improving newspaper "navigability."

But the potential ringer in the bunch is the eighth and final "imperative": that newspapers "build an adaptive, constructive culture." And that, apparently, is much easier said than done.

The size of that challenge may have been conveyed best when Lavine presented his findings this past May to a joint convention of the NAA and the Canadian Newspaper Association. Newspaper cultures, he said, are "incredibly, incredibly defensive. I mean incredibly." In fact, he added, newspaper cultures are most similar to the military and to hospitals. And the

problem this creates is "a 'newspaper way' of thinking that is real change averse."

The study observes that more than 80% of the sampled newspapers have "defensive cultures," as contrasted with "constructive" ones, although Lavine also concedes in an interview that those papers categorized by the study as constructive are only marginally so. And the problem with defensive cultures, as the study explains, is that they "are intent on preserving the status quo and are resistant to change. People are expected to focus on how well they are doing, as opposed to how well the group, or the organization—or the customer—is doing. They tend to operate in departmental silos."

Such behavior was not maladaptive in the past, the study explains, because changes in technology, demography and competition were slow-moving. A faster-paced,

more competitive world, however, demands a more flexible and autonomous workforce for organizational survival.

More to the point, from an individual employee's perspective, are the study's findings regarding the kinds of behavior that newspaper cultures reward—and those they punish. The chart at left, for example, is a profile of newspaper culture overall; the chart below is a profile of the culture newspaper workers say is needed for individual newspapers and the overall industry to succeed. But a close examination shows that organizational success is closely intertwined with personal growth and reward.

Indeed, the biggest gaps between reality and the ideal are in the categories labeled as "humanistic-encouraging" and "self-actualizing." The former, the study explains, includes such characteristics as "give positive rewards to others," "encourage others" and "help others grow and develop." The latter includes measures like "enjoy their work," "think in unique and independent ways" and "maintain their personal integrity."

Closing those gaps, the survey contends, would result in happier employees and lower turnover—and therefore in improved readership. "Impact research shows that newspapers that have adaptive, constructive cultures tend also to have higher reader behavior scores—that is, time, frequency and completeness," the study asserts.

Of course, it adds, "constructive cultures are difficult to build, especially when defensive habits are well-entrenched."

Closing the gaps also might improve a newspaper's ability to implement the other seven "imperatives" that the study prescribes. Although Lavine resists the notion that having a constructive culture is a prerequisite for implementing changes (defensive cultures are perfectly capable of running house ads, he points out), there's also little question that any change is easier to implement in an environment that isn't strongly "perfectionistic," "conventional" and "avoidance" prone—three characteristics that current newspaper culture has in spades.

. . . and as they 'should' be.

"The Power to Grow Readership" can be downloaded at www.readership.org.

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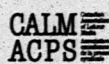
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DAYBOOK

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

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

Jobs w/Justice annual mtg.,
Sept. 6-9, Cleveland

AFL-CIO Conference on Work
and Family, Sept. 12, D.C.

TNG Executive Council,
Sept. 22-24, D.C.

Free Thought, Free Press,
Sept. 25, Washington, D.C.

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

TNG Canada Rep. Council,
Oct. 26-28, Halifax

Irving Leuchter scholarship
deadline, Nov. 1

Tri-Council Meeting,
Nov. 2-4, St. Louis

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Wilbur E. Bade ends a six-and-a-half-year run as editor of The Guild Reporter, stepping down to become executive secretary of the Twin Cities local. Stepping up to the plate is Charles E. Crissey. . . A front-page editorial in the Capital Times of Madison, Wisc., blasts the Associated Press and the United Press for distorting the news about Senator Joseph McCarthy "to promote his political fortunes." . . William Randolph Hearst dies in Beverly Hills, producing an orgy of Hearst-style coverage among San Francisco's four dailies.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The International Typographical Union, at its 118th convention, calls for stepping up "the pace and timetable" toward merger with other unions, including the Guild. . . The San Francisco Bay Guardian, an alternative weekly, ignores an offer by Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers, to mediate a strike by the Guild and a typographers unit.

Ten years ago this month:

More than 300 Guild participants from 33 U.S. locals join a massive, AFL-CIO sponsored Solidarity Day '91 rally in Washington, D.C. to "send labor's message to the Bush administration, the Congress and the nation." . . The Twin Cities Guild passes a motion to put to Guild-wide referendum a \$1 a month dues increase enacted by convention delegates. . . The House of Representatives passes the Workplace Fairness Bill, which would have banned the use of permanent replacement workers in economic strikes—but which subsequently was defeated in the Senate.