

THE GUILD Reporter

November 16, 2001

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BELL & HOWELL (C)
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When an interstate support group for the Providence Newspaper Guild showed up at its doorstep, the Providence Journal finally had to give its contract dispute some ink.

Guilders, politicians flock to Providence

Guild members from as far afield as Boston and Manchester, N.H. traveled to Providence, R.I. for a spirited weekend rally Oct. 20, protesting the illegal conduct of negotiations by The Providence Journal. Approximately 200 people marched, sang labor songs and listened to fiery speeches from the state's political and labor leaders, drawing radio, TV and newspaper coverage.

For the first time in months, The Journal itself took note of the story on its front steps, although its brief news item glossed over the deeper issues underlying the 2-year-old dispute between the Providence Newspaper Guild and the company.

U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy urged unity in challenging the Journal's law-breaking tactics, which have drawn a barrage of unfair labor practice charges from the National Labor Relations Board. Other speakers included Frank J. Montanaro, president of the state AFL-CIO, who promised: "We'll stand behind this union until the day we see victory." Montanaro was joined by the state AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, George H. Nee.

Lt. Gov. Charles Fogarty also attended, and Secretary of State Edward S. Inman III sent word of his distress that top staffers have left the paper because of the dispute.

But not everyone was content merely to speak. Kate Coyne-McCoy, director of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Alliance of Social Workers and a Congressional candidate last year, belted out "Step by Step," an old labor song. Other labor tunes were contributed by George Mann, a New York-based Wire Service Guild organizer and singer.

Scott Molloy, a bus-driver-turned-professor, noted in a speech that the nation is under attack not only by terrorists but by economic mischief-makers who are trying to reverse decades of progress by working folks. "Now, merely because you've got new corporate masters who speak with a Southern drawl, it's undermining us in a similar way," Molloy said, referring to



Guild supporters come in all sizes.

Dallas-based Belo Corp., which bought the Journal in 1997.

Other notable Guild representatives attending the rally included Bob Jordan, president of the Boston Guild; Barry Lipton, president of the New York Guild; Bernie Lunzer, TNG-CWA secretary-treasurer; and Lesley Phillips, a TNG-CWA vice president.

Fueling the rally have been two years of on-again, off-again contract negotiations, with Belo management stonewalling the union more often than not: the last time the

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Sept. 11 still reverberates

One more CWA member dies; asbestos threatens the survivors

The effects of the collapse of the World Trade Center—and of the subsequent "war on terrorism" in Afghanistan—continue reverberating weeks after the Sept. 11 hijackings.

CWA member Deborah Merrick died in late October from burns over 95% of her body, received when an enormous fireball exploded out of an elevator shaft onto the floor where she was standing. And three European reporters were killed in early November while reporting from the Afghan front lines, prompting a call from the International Federation of Journalists for journalists to pull back from unsecured areas.

But those deaths, however tragic, were at least proximate to the cause. Less predictable are the ongoing hazards posed by the smoking ruin that dominates lower Manhattan—and by the potent mix of pulverized asbestos, fiberglass, cement and various chemicals that it pumped into surrounding neighborhoods. "The explosions and fires had a witch's brew of fuels" that were inhaled by those who escaped the collapse, notes Barry Lipton, president of the

Newspaper Guild of New York. And even after the fires were extinguished, various potentially harmful particles remain as fine dust, prompting concerns that workers might suffer long-term health problems.

One possible victim is Rich Regis, deputy national editor at The Wall Street Journal, who was hospitalized with a massive allergic reaction known as vasculitis. Although doctors told Journal management that Regis' illness might have been caused by the dust he inhaled Sept. 11, they also acknowledged that his condition might have been completely unrelated.

That kind of uncertainty prompted Lipton to request all Guild members who were exposed to respiratory contamination to register with a research project organized by Deborah Wallace, an officer in the Consumers Union unit, and her husband, Rodrick Wallace, on behalf of CWA. Rodrick is an epidemiologist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute; Deborah is senior project leader in home environment for Consumer Reports and is on the research

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Early winter chills CBC negotiations

Winter is beginning to creep across Canada—and through management's ranks at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which is in contract negotiations with its two largest unions.

Although negotiators for the Canadian Media Guild characterized both sides in early October as having "a sincere desire to conduct these negotiations efficiently and relatively quickly," parallel talks between the CBC and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union have reached an impasse. A 60-day conciliation period ended Nov. 6, triggering a 21-day waiting period before either a strike or a lock-out is legally permissible, on 72-hours' notice.

CMG officials, expressing concern at the stalemate, said they were particularly disturbed over the CBC's confrontational approach. "The CBC is seeking major concessions from its technicians and has taken

provocative actions," charged a Guild spokesman. Among the provocations was a September announcement that CBC's host coverage of Olympic curling events will be staffed by freelance technicians, followed Nov. 6 by an announcement that the entire technical crew for CBC's coverage of the Salt Lake City Olympics will be made up of freelancers.

The Guild local responded by saying it will do "everything possible" to support its colleagues.

CMG and CBC negotiators have met twice to date, with the next round of talks scheduled for Nov. 21-23 in Toronto. Rather than issuing a long "laundry list" of contract demands, the Guild opened bargaining by presenting a comprehensive list of objectives as a starting point for discussion. For example, instead of seeking a specific wage increase, it stated its desire to gain an increase "which reflects lost income over the past decade." On pensions, it seeks "a process for fair distribution of any current and future surpluses in the CBC pension plan."

Discussions thus far have covered such topics as workload, multi-skilling, training, freelancers, and layoff and recall. Guild negotiators said they will propose specific language on several key issues at the talks later this month.

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Like a sinner who in times of crisis finds religion, only to revert to old habits once the danger passes, the newspaper industry has swung back to its pre-Sept. 11 passion: cutting payrolls to buttress profit margins. But as it does, some high-ranking casualties have been claimed as well.

Most notable was the resignation of Philadelphia Inquirer editor Robert Rosenthal after four years on the job. That makes him the second highly placed Knight Ridder executive to quit after the company ordered widespread staff cuts, but unlike San Jose Mercury News publisher Jay Harris, Rosenthal didn't leverage his departure into a political statement. Instead, his rueful comment that he had no plans other than to "rake leaves" suggested he'd simply been beaten down.

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Being female—and underpaid

This may be a new century but it's still colored by some rather old-fashioned attitudes—including, for example, the notion that women can be paid less than men for doing precisely the same work. The latest (but hardly exclusive) illustration comes from Guild-represented employees at the Modesto Bee, where female reporters are earning an average of \$720 a week, or \$146 less than male reporters; female copy editors, meanwhile, are earning an average of \$728 a week, or \$102 less than the men.

Detroit Teamsters opt for new leader

One of the most prominent figures in the Detroit newspaper strike is out of a job: Al Deery, head of Teamsters Local 372, was unseated in a recent election by newspaper strike activist Dennis Nazelli. Local members also elected Nazelli's running mate to the number two spot. Nazelli is a member of the anti-Hoffa group, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, but won in Hoffa's home local.

New local officers' seminar set: Jan.

TNG-CWA's annual residential seminar for new local officers, traditionally held over the Presidents' Day weekend in February, has been rescheduled to the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend so as not to conflict with the sector conference. As in the past, however, the three-and-a-half day program will be held at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, just north of Washington, D.C. Attendance is limited to two participants per local, with partial subsidies offered to smaller locals that don't have professional staff; the deadline for applications is Jan. 7.

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Providence boycott on hold until January

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two sides held a bargaining session was on Valentine's Day. The company's behavior has been so dismissive of its obligations under federal labor law that the National Labor Relations Board has filed charges of 47 unfair labor practices, scheduled for a hearing in February.

And although a negotiating session was scheduled for Nov. 14, in apparent response to a Guild letter urging a resumption of talks, there may be more form than substance behind Belo's willingness to talk: citing reduced ad revenues, the company recently withdrew its proposed wage increases and announced a corporate-wide downsizing. Under federal law, the company is obliged to discuss any changes in its contract proposal at the bargaining table.

The Nov. 14 meeting would be only the 19th bargaining session since negotiations started, on Oct. 28, 1999. The Feb. 14 meeting,

ironically, followed Belo's withdrawal of its wage proposal for 2000. "The company offered to meet, but there was no substantive progress that came from the session," local officials noted, voicing skepticism that the latest negotiating offer will be any more productive.

Despite the company's demonstrated unwillingness to bargain constructively, the Providence Guild's executive board has postponed a membership vote on launching a circulation boycott until early next year. A referendum had been scheduled for late October, but a company buyout proposal offered just one week before the vote prompted the delay. "Board members, as well as rank and file, expressed concern about the impact of retiring members voting on an issue that will have serious implications after they leave," explained the local's web site.

Belo is offering up to 18 months' pay to workers 55 and



TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer addresses the rally as a photographer strains for the best angle on the subject.

older if they leave the Journal. Guild officers believe 79 of the local's 500 members are eligible for the buyout—including several of the 11 members of the executive board. At least one executive board member has said he will

accept the offer. Local officials warned Guild members to review the offer carefully, however, since those who accept the buyout will give up any back pay claims resulting from the pending ULPs.

Meanwhile, the company's con-

tinued attempts to wear down the union notwithstanding, additional evidence of its untenable situation keeps popping up. The latest came Nov. 13, when a U.S. Court of Appeals upheld an arbitrator's finding that Belo—which had sold parking garage passes to its employees—also had to provide parking spaces. Although the company argued that it was contractually obliged only to sell the passes, not provide the spaces to go with them, an unimpressed court observed that "plain language would seem to dictate that a parking pass entitles one to actually park."

A week earlier, the District Court of Rhode Island rejected management's attempts to avoid a court order to arbitrate a dispute about dues checkoff and union security. The Journal had unilaterally suspended both provisions of the Guild contract, then argued that it didn't have to honor the Guild's demand to go to arbitration on the issues.

Worrying about WTC dust

Continued from page 1

faculty at Columbia University. She also has done studies on firefighters who battled the New York Telephone blaze in 1975 and on people who survived the MGM Grand Hotel fire. The couple's research this time will include members of the New York Guild, IAPE, NABET and other CWA employees who live or work in downtown Manhattan.

Other unions have weighed in with similar concerns. Lowell Peterson, who frequently represents IAPE and other TNG-CWA locals, spoke Nov. 8 to the New York City Council on behalf of Local 78 of the Asbestos, Lead & Hazardous Laborers—a group to

whom such hazards are old hat. Still, as Peterson observed, the WTC clean-up poses a problem of unprecedented scale because of its contamination of a wide area.

The towers "contained a great deal of asbestos," Peterson said, and when they collapsed "all that asbestos became friable and was carried through the air through the surrounding area." Moreover, "As we are learning, day by day, there were also enormous levels of lead and other hazardous materials, such as PCBs and benzene."

Despite the dangers, many property owners have been in such a rush to clean their premises that they have hired cheap laborers and turned them loose with brooms, rags and leaf blowers—thereby only aggravating the dangers. Peterson contended.

As if to prove the point, tests at Dow Jones' offices in the World Financial Center—where Rich Regis worked, directly across from the twin towers—turned up several air and dust samples with asbestos levels at two to seven times more than the acceptable limits under EPA standards. Although asbestos exposure is believed to be hazardous only when repeated over a long time, the company's employees have been advised to wear respirators when entering the building.

Most, of course, don't: Dow Jones continues to operate largely out of mid-town Manhattan and New Jersey. But even when the pricey digs are fully restored the employees won't be back in the same numbers: the company has announced it will reduce its occupancy from seven floors to three.

Three—three—years of retro payments

You have to know that any contract settlement that includes three years' of retro payments is the result of a long and often bitter struggle—but that's how long it took for an agreement to be struck at that other Seattle Times Co.-owned newspaper, the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram.

The unusually long-termed agreement, on which members of the Portland Guild were to vote as The Guild Reporter was going to press, goes forward five years and includes retroactive wage increases of 3.5% as of Dec. 1, 1998, Feb. 1, 2000 and April 1, 2001. The retroactive increases are not compounded,

however, but are based on the scale for each job classification effective Nov. 30, 1997.

Future increases of 3%, which will compound, kick in on June 1 of each year starting 2002. Numerous scales also were upgraded, some at least partially retroactive.

Other provisions:

- The amount of service needed for five weeks' vacation was reduced to 20 years, from 23.

- An increase of four exemptions, but with a binding arbitration provision on new exemption positions.

- A graduated increase in employee copays on health insurance premiums to 20%.

Correction

Sharp-eyed readers of the October issue of the Guild Reporter may have noticed that a front-page story stated that an envelope received at The New York Times had tested positive for anthrax, whereas Linda Foley's column on page 7 said the test was negative. Foley had it right and the editor did not.

The Newspaper Guild International



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

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

LABOR ORGANIZER

The New England District Council of The Newspaper Guild-CWA seeks applicants for full-time labor organizer, focusing on the newspaper, information and related sectors in New England.

The member locals of the Council have joined together to seek a self-starter with organizing experience to organize workers in targeted sectors throughout the six-state region. The successful candidate will be headquartered in Boston but will spend a considerable time traveling in the field.

Salary commensurate with experience; excellent benefits package.

Applications should be addressed to:

Organizing Committee
The New England District Council
TNG-CWA Local 31032
645 Morrissey Blvd.

Job Listing

Theatre: Communications/Membership Education and Student Outreach

Performing Arts Union seeks qualified applicant for communications department and implementation of membership education programs. Strong oral and writing communications skills required. Knowledge of Office 97 and MS Word also required. Knowledge of theatre industry, performing arts and/or labor background helpful. EOE. Salary commensurate with not-for-profit organizations in the theatre industry. Excellent benefits. Some travel.

Responsibilities include assisting Communications Department with ongoing publicity efforts and membership education programs to promote a positive image and foster union pride. Administer union's student outreach programs at universities associated with regional theatres.

Send cover letter and resume to:

Marie Gottschall, AEA
165 West 46th Street
New York, NY 10036
or fax to (212) 719-9815.

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Detroit Teamsters opt for new leader

One of the most prominent figures in the Detroit newspaper strike is out of a job: Al Deery, head of Teamsters Local 372, was unseated in a recent election by newspaper strike activist Dennis Nazelli. Local members also elected Nazelli's running mate to the number two spot. Nazelli is a member of the anti-Hoffa group, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, but won in Hoffa's home local.

New local officers' seminar set: Jan.

TNG-CWA's annual residential seminar for new local officers, traditionally held over the Presidents' Day weekend in February, has been rescheduled to the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend so as not to conflict with the sector conference. As in the past, however, the three-and-a-half day program will be held at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, just north of Washington, D.C. Attendance is limited to two participants per local, with partial subsidies offered to smaller locals that don't have professional staff; the deadline for applications is Jan. 7.

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Single copies: \$1.50

Providence boycott on hold until January

Continued from page 1

two sides held a bargaining session was on Valentine's Day. The company's behavior has been so dismissive of its obligations under federal labor law that the National Labor Relations Board has filed charges of 47 unfair labor practices, scheduled for a hearing in February.

And although a negotiating session was scheduled for Nov. 14, in apparent response to a Guild letter urging a resumption of talks, there may be more form than substance behind Belo's willingness to talk: citing reduced ad revenues, the company recently withdrew its proposed wage increases and announced a corporate-wide downsizing. Under federal law, the company is obliged to discuss any changes in its contract proposal at the bargaining table.

The Nov. 14 meeting would be only the 19th bargaining session since negotiations started, on Oct. 28, 1999. The Feb. 14 meeting,

ironically, followed Belo's withdrawal of its wage proposal for 2000. "The company offered to meet, but there was no substantive progress that came from the session," local officials noted, voicing skepticism that the latest negotiating offer will be any more productive.

Despite the company's demonstrated unwillingness to bargain constructively, the Providence Guild's executive board has postponed a membership vote on launching a circulation boycott until early next year. A referendum had been scheduled for late October, but a company buyout proposal offered just one week before the vote prompted the delay. "Board members, as well as rank and file, expressed concern about the impact of retiring members voting on an issue that will have serious implications after they leave," explained the local's web site.

Belo is offering up to 18 months' pay to workers 55 and



TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer addresses the rally as a photographer strains for the best angle on the subject.

older if they leave the Journal. Guild officers believe 79 of the local's 500 members are eligible for the buyout—including several of the 11 members of the executive board. At least one executive board member has said he will

accept the offer. Local officials warned Guild members to review the offer carefully, however, since those who accept the buyout will give up any back pay claims resulting from the pending ULPs.

Meanwhile, the company's con-

tinued attempts to wear down the union notwithstanding, additional evidence of its untenable situation keeps popping up. The latest came Nov. 13, when a U.S. Court of Appeals upheld an arbitrator's finding that Belo—which had sold parking garage passes to its employees—also had to provide parking spaces. Although the company argued that it was contractually obliged only to sell the passes, not provide the spaces to go with them, an unimpressed court observed that "plain language would seem to dictate that a parking pass entitles one to actually park."

A week earlier, the District Court of Rhode Island rejected management's attempts to avoid a court order to arbitrate a dispute about dues checkoff and union security. The Journal had unilaterally suspended both provisions of the Guild contract, then argued that it didn't have to honor the Guild's demand to go to arbitration on the issues.

Worrying about WTC dust

Continued from page 1

faculty at Columbia University. She also has done studies on firefighters who battled the New York Telephone blaze in 1975 and on people who survived the MGM Grand Hotel fire. The couple's research this time will include members of the New York Guild, IAPE, NABET and other CWA employees who live or work in downtown Manhattan.

Other unions have weighed in with similar concerns. Lowell Peterson, who frequently represents IAPE and other TNG-CWA locals, spoke Nov. 8 to the New York City Council on behalf of Local 78 of the Asbestos, Lead & Hazardous Laborers—a group to

whom such hazards are old hat. Still, as Peterson observed, the WTC clean-up poses a problem of unprecedented scale because of its contamination of a wide area.

The towers "contained a great deal of asbestos," Peterson said, and when they collapsed "all that asbestos became friable and was carried through the air through the surrounding area." Moreover, "As we are learning, day by day, there were also enormous levels of lead and other hazardous materials, such as PCBs and benzene."

Despite the dangers, many property owners have been in such a rush to clean their premises that they have hired cheap laborers and turned them loose with brooms, rags and leaf blowers—thereby only aggravating the dangers. Peterson contended.

As if to prove the point, tests at Dow Jones' offices in the World Financial Center—where Rich Regis worked, directly across from the twin towers—turned up several air and dust samples with asbestos levels at two to seven times more than the acceptable limits under EPA standards. Although asbestos exposure is believed to be hazardous only when repeated over a long time, the company's employees have been advised to wear respirators when entering the building.

Most, of course, don't. Dow Jones continues to operate largely out of mid-town Manhattan and New Jersey. But even when the pricey digs are fully restored the employees won't be back in the same numbers: the company has announced it will reduce its occupancy from seven floors to three.

Three—three—years of retro payments

You have to know that any contract settlement that includes three years' of retro payments is the result of a long and often bitter struggle—but that's how long it took for an agreement to be struck at that other Seattle Times Co.-owned newspaper, the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram.

The unusually long-termed agreement, on which members of the Portland Guild were to vote as The Guild Reporter was going to press, goes forward five years and includes retroactive wage increases of 3.5% as of Dec. 1, 1998, Feb. 1, 2000 and April 1, 2001. The retroactive increases are not compounded,

however, but are based on the scale for each job classification effective Nov. 30, 1997.

Future increases of 3%, which will compound, kick in on June 1 of each year starting 2002. Numerous scales also were upgraded, some at least partially retroactive.

Other provisions:

- The amount of service needed for five weeks' vacation was reduced to 20 years, from 23.

- An increase of four exemptions, but with a binding arbitration provision on new exemption positions.

- A graduated increase in employee copays on health insurance premiums to 20%.

Correction

Sharp-eyed readers of the October issue of the Guild Reporter may have noticed that a front-page story stated that an envelope received at The New York Times had tested positive for anthrax, whereas Linda Foley's column on page 7 said the test was negative. Foley had it right and the editor did not.

The Newspaper Guild International



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

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

LABOR ORGANIZER

The New England District Council of The Newspaper Guild-CWA seeks applicants for full-time labor organizer, focusing on the newspaper, information and related sectors in New England.

The member locals of the Council have joined together to seek a self-starter with organizing experience to organize workers in targeted sectors throughout the six-state region. The successful candidate will be headquartered in Boston but will spend a considerable time traveling in the field.

Salary commensurate with experience; excellent benefits package.

Applications should be addressed to:

**Organizing Committee
The New England District Council
TNG-CWA Local 31032
645 Morrissey Blvd.**

Job Listing

Theatre: Communications/Membership Education and Student Outreach

Performing Arts Union seeks qualified applicant for communications department and implementation of membership education programs. Strong oral and writing communications skills required. Knowledge of Office 97 and MS Word also required. Knowledge of theatre industry, performing arts and/or labor background helpful. EOE. Salary commensurate with not-for-profit organizations in the theatre industry. Excellent benefits. Some travel.

Responsibilities include assisting Communications Department with ongoing publicity efforts and membership education programs to promote a positive image and foster union pride. Administer union's student outreach programs at universities associated with regional theatres.

Send cover letter and resume to:

Marie Gottschall, AEA
165 West 46th Street
New York, NY 10036
or fax to (212) 719-9815.

Labor round-up

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Supply and demand, of course, are opposite sides of the same equation, so adding more to the wrong side of the equation tends only to exacerbate a pre-existing imbalance. Despite Republican attempts to the contrary, the evidence is that we already have a surplus of supply—of cars, computers and just about anything else—but not nearly enough demand. And every new wave of layoffs increases that imbalance even more.

Brave New World—not

If any group of workers has seen itself as being too much of an elite to bother with grubby unionism, it's been the software warriors of the dot.com nation. Highly educated, caught up in a technological whirlwind that promised to transform civilization, they tended to regard quotidian concerns like overtime pay, pensions and job security as vestiges of another era.

But not even dot.com warriors can repeal the laws of supply and demand—including the one that predicts an increased supply of labor will drive down its value. Now the lesson is sinking in.

The first attempt to flood the market with cheap software programmers came in the mid 'Nineties, as industry groups successfully lobbied Congress to raise the annual cap on specialized H-1B visas, under which skilled foreign workers—many educated in U.S. schools—can work in the U.S. for six years. From a maximum of 65,000 such visas in 1997 and 1998, the cap moved to 115,000 a year in 1999 and 2000, then jumped again to 195,000 in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30.

While industry groups insisted they needed the

higher numbers because the domestic supply of software programmers was inadequate, unions like TNG-CWA's WashTech argued that industry wanted the foreign workers because they're willing to work for lower wages and fewer benefits. Now the industry has inadvertently ceded the argument: despite the higher cap on H-1B visas this past year, only 163,200 visa applications were filed on behalf of overseas applicants.

Does that mean industry was suddenly hiring more homegrown programmers? Not at all: instead of importing workers, it's found that it's cheaper still to export the work. As reported in the Nov. 5 issue of Newsweek, U.S. employers increasingly are turning to India, Russia, China and other new labor markets for programmers who will do the work for one-third of what their American counterparts costs.

It's not just low wages and inexpensive office space that contribute to the lower price tag. Overseas developers, Newsweek notes, are often more "productive"—a euphemism for such long hours as to make Silicon Valley's notoriously driven programmers look like slackers.

And, of course, they're also non-unionized.

Pacifica mediation falters

The slo-mo disintegration of the Pacifica Radio network nearly lurched into reverse in early November, following a 12-hour mediation that new board chairman Robert Farrell called "a stunning success." But the Berkeley plaintiffs who have waged a two-year legal fight against some board members struck a more cautious note, saying all points of contention had not yet been resolved—and, sure enough, subsequent talks were broken off.

Even before the latest impasse, grassroots supporters of New York-based WBAI were urging a continued funding boycott of all Pacifica stations until several changes were implemented, including revocation of a gag rule, reinstatement of fired staffers and full financial disclosure. But once mediation failed the pressure picked up, with picketing planned Nov. 14 at approximately 10 Fannie Mae offices around the country to protest Pacifica Board treasurer Wendell Johns' alleged squandering of the network's finances. Johns is a Fannie Mae employee.

Protesters say Johns has "brought the foundation to the brink of collapse," authorizing more than \$2 million over the past three years on corporate law firms, security guards and public relations agencies. As of late October, Berkeley-based KPFA had racked up more than \$100,000 in unpaid and overdue bills, including a \$9,400 tab at PG&E for electricity.

Several Pacifica board members have already resigned under such pressure, including vice chairman Ken Ford, who resigned Oct. 31 after denying that he'd told the San Francisco Examiner that he'd advocated selling WBAI and KPFA. Executive director Bessie Wash also departed recently, amid conflicting statements about whether she quit or was forced out. Wash's two-year tenure was marked by controversial firings, lockouts, on-air protests by employees and alleged threats of violence.

A successful outcome to the mediation talks, Farrell had predicted, would result in an interim board to chart the network's future, including new by-laws and election of a new, permanent board. The 19-member interim board was to include six members appointed by the plaintiffs, eight by the defendants, and one appointed by each of the local advisory boards at the network's five stations.

The collapse of the settlement, however, means four lawsuits seeking to remove the existing board will go to trial Jan. 7. The existing board also could take a judicial hit as soon as next week, when an Alameda County judge is scheduled to rule on whether the Pacifica Foundation's articles of incorporation mean what they say when they limit the board to five members: it now has nearly triple that number, mostly from Washington, D.C.

TNG-CWA boosts Barr, Broun awards

In a major burnishing of the Guild's top two journalism awards, a TNG-CWA committee of executive committee members has determined that the Broun and Barr awards should be presented at an evening banquet—instead of a luncheon—that also features a keynote speaker. Early plans also call for staging the event as a fund-raiser, with proceeds to benefit an individual or organization working to defend free press and free speech.

Meeting since early this year, the committee also voted to create a separate category in the Broun competition for broadcast entries, which always have been judged with print submissions; and to award two cash prizes of \$1,000 for "entries of substantial distinction" in addition to the main \$5,000 award. One of the new awards will be reserved specifically for a broadcast entry.

Committee members include Arnold Amber, director of TNG

Canada, and TNG vice presidents Larry Hatfield and Connie Knox.

Other changes endorsed by the committee include the following:

- A long-term prohibition on entries from freelancers has been dropped. Entries on behalf of an entire staff remain ineligible, however, as are entries written or reported by managers.

- Internet entries will be welcomed if submitted as print-outs and will be judged in the print division.

- The eligibility period for Barr entries has been changed from the previous school year to a calendar year, to enable greater coordination with the Broun award.

Committee members also took aim at a growing tendency within the newspaper industry to commoditize contest entries—to such an extent that some companies now turn to outside public relations firms to prepare entries on their behalf. "Entrants should note," the revised rules now state,

"that in keeping with the award's emphasis on individual achievement, the judges frown on obviously mass-produced entries."

As a further check on assembly-line production, the committee also is requiring at least one complete set of tearsheets for Broun print entries.

The deadline for entries in both competitions will be Jan. 25, 2002, with work published or broadcast in calendar year 2001 eligible for consideration.

The Broun Award, intended to recognize "individual journalistic

achievement by members of the working media, particularly if it helps right a wrong or correct an injustice," is named after Guild founder Heywood Broun. The Barr Award is given in memory of David S. Barr, who served as the Guild's general counsel for 25 years, and recognizes high school or college journalists who write about social issues. The Barr Award includes \$500 for the high school winner and \$1,500 for the college winner.

Full rules and submission requirements for both contests

may be seen on the TNG-CWA web page, at www.newsguild.org.

In addition to raising the overall profile of the awards, committee members said they hoped to make them more recognizable within the broader labor community. Although the Broun Award continues to stress journalistic values, they noted, the eponymous columnist championed the underdog and the disadvantaged in print even as he served as the fledgling union's first president—a combination the committee said should be recognized more widely.

Chicago Guild votes for strike authority

By an overwhelming margin of 96%, Chicago Sun-Times members of the Chicago Newspaper Guild told management what they think of the current state of contract negotiations: they authorized their bargaining team to take whatever job action seems most appropriate, up to and including a strike.

The Nov. 12 secret-ballot vote came after three months and 19 bargaining sessions that produced little movement, according to the Guild's executive director, Gerald Minkinen. The unit, comprising approximately 200 reporters, photographers, graphic artists and other newsroom staff, has been working without a contract since Sept. 30.

The main issue in the negotiations has been staffing, Minkinen said. Since 1994, Guild representation has dropped from 255 to 192 employees, a 25% reduction, while

non-union staff has fallen from 36 to 34 employees, only a 6% reduction. A Guild proposal for a minimum staffing plan has been largely ignored by the company.

Meanwhile, although the Sun-Times has frozen overtime, Guild employees have given the company countless hours and dollars in unpaid labor during the past several months. Management's response has been to propose freezing contributions to medical coverage, gutting the employee pension plan and offering no salary increase during the first year of a new contract.

While the Guild modified its salary proposal to ask for annual raises of 6%, 5% and 5% over a three-year contract, Sun-Times management has offered a four-year contract with only a 1% raise in the second and fourth years and no raises in the other two years—an offer bargaining co-chairman Bob Mutter called "a slap in the face."

Time cuts mailroom

Timing is everything—everywhere, ironically, except at Time Inc. itself.

As anthrax scares both real and faked terrorized mail rooms up and down the East Coast, Time Inc. chose that moment to announce it was firing its entire mailroom staff of 37—including 29 Guild members—and outsourcing the work. Some of the employees had been with the company more than 25 years.

"The timing is unfortunate, to put it mildly," noted a statement from the Newspaper Guild of New York. While anthrax scares dominated the headlines, Time Inc.'s response was to "get rid of dozens of trusted longtime employees, hire an unknown firm of unknown qual-

ity to deliver the mail and packages and further terrify the already frightened workforce."

A unit petition to Don Logan, chairman and chief executive of Time, deplored the abrupt move—which included having the mailroom employees escorted out of the building by security personnel—and contrasted it with parent company AOL Time Warner's much publicized generosity toward victims of the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

"To eliminate these employees at this time is cruel, unfair and an affront to the dignity of all Time Inc. employees," the petition declared. The lay-offs, however, were not rescinded and a company called Archer now sorts the mail.

Reporter wins four ILCA awards

In competition with 139 union publications throughout the United States, The Guild Reporter won first place for "best front page" for the issue published last December, shown at left. The awards competition is sponsored annually by the International Labor Communications Association, of which TNG-CWA is a member.

The Guild Reporter also received three third-place awards, for general excellence, best feature story and best column. The feature award went to freelancer and Guild member David Bacon for his uncompromising look at media coverage of the working class, published last November.

TNG-CWA President Linda Foley won in the column category for her January column, "Should we save jobs—or papers?" which the judges lauded for having a "snappy lead" and "thoughtful conclusion." Foley received an honorable mention in the same category last year.

TNG internet party-line now open for business

A new "intranet" site that can be accessed only by TNG-CWA members is up and running, with the hope that it will generate a greater exchange of ideas and information within the union.

Known as the Guild Members Site, the on-line service includes a discussion area for posting group messages, an updates and mobilization area for posting notices, and a Guild library for sharing electronic files. "We think this is a valuable new tool," explained Bernie Lunzer, the Guild's secretary-treasurer. "It cannot—and should not—replace people talking to each other, but if it generates more communication within the Guild that will make us a stronger union."

The site can be reached from TNG's web page, www.newsguild.org, which also is accessible to the general public. To get into the members-only site, however, Guild members will have to use the following procedure:

- Click on the Member Site button on the left-navigation bar.
- Find the number directly above your name on your Guild Reporter mailing label. Ignoring the pound (#) sign, type in the first 11 digits as your CWA ID.
- Use the generic password "cardcheck."
- In the form that pops up, change your ID and

password to something you can remember and put your e-mail address in the blank provided.

That's it! Once in, TNG-CWA members may explore various issues in the "Discussion Area," which is divided by subject matter; may submit notices for posting in the "Updates & Mobilization" section; or may submit computer files for the "Guild Library." Discussion messages will be posted immediately; other notices and files will be reviewed by the systems operator prior to posting. The only restriction on speech, pending further review by the Guild's executive council, is a requirement that all postings must identify, by name and local, the source of the message.

Users also will be greeted by a full legal disclaimer that explains the forum is intended only for the private and exclusive use of members of TNG-CWA, but because its security cannot be guaranteed, reasonable caution should be exercised in communicating sensitive information. Specific technical information is available at the site, and any members who have trouble accessing the forum can get help by sending e-mail to guild@cwa-union.

The Newspaper Guild-CWA will not share any member information obtained on the site, such as e-mail addresses, in keeping with Guild policy.

Labor round-up

Thomson sells last two dailies

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a year—even as 48 million new job seekers entered the job market.

Congressional response to the hemorrhaging, however, has been split between a Senate Democratic plan to give more support to workers—through additional tax rebates to low-income wage earners, additional unemployment compensation and a higher minimum wage—and a House of Representatives attempt to rebate more money to corporations and high-income individuals. The different approaches reflect an ideological split that dates back to the New Deal: is an economy more readily revived by increasing demand (by putting more money into working class pockets) or supply (by giving that same money to those who might use it to create new jobs)?

Supply and demand, of course, are opposite sides of the same equation, so adding more to the wrong side of the equation tends only to exacerbate a pre-existing imbalance. Despite Republican attempts to the contrary, the evidence is that we already have a surplus of supply—of cars, computers and just about anything else—but not nearly enough demand. And every new wave of layoffs increases that imbalance even more.

Brave New World—not

If any group of workers has seen itself as being too much of an elite to bother with grubby unionism, it's been the software warriors of the dot.com nation. Highly educated, caught up in a technological whirlwind that promised to transform civilization, they tended to regard quotidian concerns like overtime pay, pensions and job security as vestiges of another era.

But not even dot.com warriors can repeal the laws of supply and demand—including the one that predicts an increased supply of labor will drive down its value. Now the lesson is sinking in.

The first attempt to flood the market with cheap software programmers came in the mid 'Nineties, as industry groups successfully lobbied Congress to raise the annual cap on specialized H-1B visas, under which skilled foreign workers—many educated in U.S. schools—can work in the U.S. for six years. From a maximum of 65,000 such visas in 1997 and 1998, the cap moved to 115,000 a year in 1999 and 2000, then jumped again to 195,000 in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30.

While industry groups insisted they needed the

higher numbers because the domestic supply of software programmers was inadequate, unions like TNG-CWA's WashTech argued that industry wanted the foreign workers because they're willing to work for lower wages and fewer benefits. Now the industry has inadvertently ceded the argument: despite the higher cap on H-1B visas this past year, only 163,200 visa applications were filed on behalf of overseas applicants.

Does that mean industry was suddenly hiring more homegrown programmers? Not at all: instead of importing workers, it's found that it's cheaper still to export the work. As reported in the Nov. 5 issue of Newsweek, U.S. employers increasingly are turning to India, Russia, China and other new labor markets for programmers who will do the work for one-third of what their American counterparts costs.

It's not just low wages and inexpensive office space that contribute to the lower price tag. Overseas developers, Newsweek notes, are often more "productive"—a euphemism for such long hours as to make Silicon Valley's notoriously driven programmers look like slackers.

And, of course, they're also non-unionized.

Pacifica mediation falters

The slo-mo disintegration of the Pacifica Radio network nearly lurched into reverse in early November, following a 12-hour mediation that new board chairman Robert Farrell called "a stunning success." But the Berkeley plaintiffs who have waged a two-year legal fight against some board members struck a more cautious note, saying all points of contention had not yet been resolved—and, sure enough, subsequent talks were broken off.

Even before the latest impasse, grassroots supporters of New York-based WBAI were urging a continued funding boycott of all Pacifica stations until several changes were implemented, including revocation of a gag rule, reinstatement of fired staffers and full financial disclosure. But once mediation failed the pressure picked up, with picketing planned Nov. 14 at approximately 10 Fannie Mae offices around the country to protest Pacifica Board treasurer Wendell Johns' alleged squandering of the network's finances. Johns is a Fannie Mae employee.

Protesters say Johns has "brought the foundation to the brink of collapse," authorizing more than \$2 million over the past three years on corporate law firms, security guards and public relations agencies. As of late October, Berkeley-based KPFA had racked up more than \$100,000 in unpaid and overdue bills, including a \$9,400 tab at PG&E for electricity.

Several Pacifica board members have already resigned under such pressure, including vice chairman Ken Ford, who resigned Oct. 31 after denying that he'd told the San Francisco Examiner that he'd advocated selling WBAI and KPFA. Executive director Bessie Wash also departed recently, amid conflicting statements about whether she quit or was forced out. Wash's two-year tenure was marked by controversial firings, lockouts, on-air protests by employees and alleged threats of violence.

A successful outcome to the mediation talks, Farrell had predicted, would result in an interim board to chart the network's future, including new by-laws and election of a new, permanent board. The 19-member interim board was to include six members appointed by the plaintiffs, eight by the defendants, and one appointed by each of the local advisory boards at the network's five stations.

The collapse of the settlement, however, means four lawsuits seeking to remove the existing board will go to trial Jan. 7. The existing board also could take a judicial hit as soon as next week, when an Alameda County judge is scheduled to rule on whether the Pacifica Foundation's articles of incorporation mean what they say when they limit the board to five members: it now has nearly triple that number, mostly from Washington, D.C.

"Mencken got it right: when you hear some men talk about their love of country, it's a sign they expect to be paid for it"

By Bill Moyers

[Excerpted from a keynote address presented by journalist Bill Moyers Oct. 16 to a meeting of the Environmental Grantmakers Association. The full speech can be read at www.commondreams.org/views01/1030-07.htm]

The playwright Tony Kushner wrote more than a decade ago: "There are moments in history when the fabric of everyday life unravels, and there is this unstable dynamism that allows for incredible social change in short periods of time. People and the world they're living in can be utterly transformed, either for the good or the bad, or some mixture of the two."

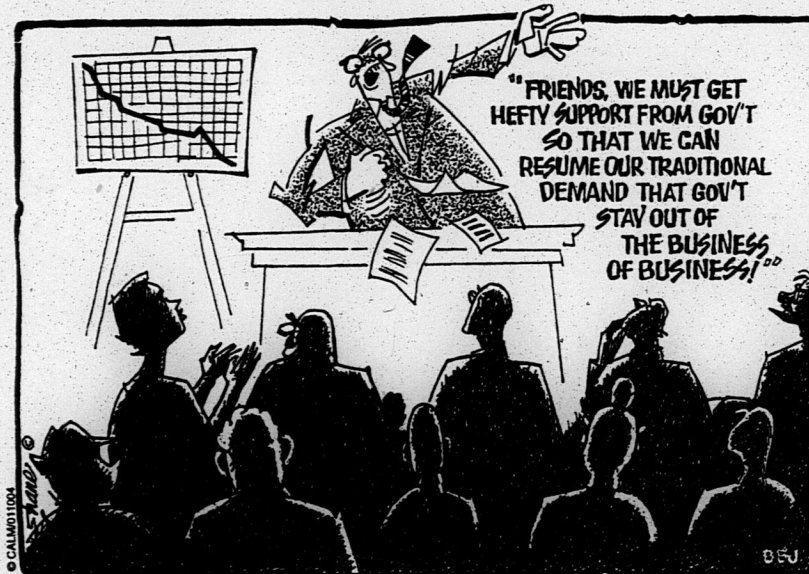
He's right. This could go either way. Here's one sighting: in the wake of September 11th, there's been a heartening change in how Americans view their government. For the first time in more than 30 years a majority of people say we trust the federal government to do the right thing "just about always" or at least "most of the time." It's as if the clock has been rolled back to the early Sixties, before Vietnam and Watergate took such a toll on the gross national psychology. This newfound hope for public collaboration is based in part on how people view what the government has done in response to the attacks.

I have to say that overall, President Bush has acted with commendable resolve and restraint. But this is a case where yet again the people are ahead of the politicians. They're expressing greater faith in government right now because the long-standing gap between our ruling elites and ordinary citizens has seemingly disappeared. To most Americans, government right now doesn't mean a faceless bureaucrat or a politician auctioning access to the highest bidder. It means a courageous rescuer or brave soldier.

Instead of representatives spending their evenings clinking glasses with fat cats, they are out walking among the wounded. In Washington it seemed momentarily possible that the political class had been jolted out of old habits. Some old partisan rivalries and arguments fell by the wayside as our representatives acted decisively on a \$40 billion fund to rebuild New York. Adversaries like Dennis Hastert and Dick Gephardt were linking arms. There was even a ten-day moratorium on political fundraisers. I was beginning to be optimistic that the mercenary culture of Washington might finally be on its knees.

But I once asked a friend on Wall Street what he thought about the market. "I'm optimistic," he said. "Then why do you look so worried?" And he answered: "Because I'm not sure my optimism is justified."

I'm not, either. There are, alas, other sightings to report. It didn't take long for the wartime opportunists—the mercenaries of



Washington, the lobbyists, lawyers, and political fundraisers—to crawl out of their offices on K Street determined to grab what they can for their clients. While in New York we are still attending memorial services for firemen and police, while everywhere Americans' cheeks are still stained with tears, while the President calls for patriotism, prayers and piety, the predators of Washington are up to their old tricks in the pursuit of private plunder at public expense. In the wake of this awful tragedy wrought by terrorism, they are cashing in.

Would you like to know the memorial they would offer the almost six thousand people who died in the attacks? Or the legacy they would provide the ten thousand children who lost a parent in the horror? How do they propose to fight the long and costly war on terrorism America must now undertake?

Why, restore the three-martini lunch: that will surely strike fear in the heart of Osama bin Laden. You think I'm kidding, but bringing back the deductible lunch is one of the proposals on the table in Washington right now. There are members of Congress who believe you should sacrifice in this time of crisis by paying for lobbyists' long lunches. And cut capital gains for the

wealthy, naturally—that's America's patriotic duty, too. And while we're at it, don't forget to eliminate the Corporate Alternative Minimum Tax, enacted 15 years ago to prevent corporations from taking so many credits and deductions that they owed little if any taxes. But don't just repeal their minimum tax; give those corporations a refund for all the minimum tax they have ever been assessed.

You look incredulous. But that's taking place in Washington even as we meet here in Brainerd this morning. What else can America do to strike at the terrorists? Why, slip in a special tax break for poor General Electric, and slip inside the Environmental Protection Agency while everyone's distracted and torpedo the recent order to clean the Hudson River of PCBs. Don't worry about NBC,

CNBC, or MSNBC reporting it; they're all in the GE family.

It's time for Churchillian courage, we're told. So how would this crowd assure that future generations will look back and say "This was their finest hour"? That's easy. Give those coal producers freedom to pollute. And shovel generous tax breaks to those giant energy companies; and open the Alaskan wilderness to drilling—that's something to remember the 11th of September for. And while the red, white and blue wave at half-mast over the land of the free and the home of the brave—why, give the President the power to discard democratic debate and the rule of law concerning controversial trade agreements, and set up secret tribunals to run roughshod over local communities trying to protect their environment and their health. It's happening as we meet. It's happening right now.

If I sound a little bitter about this, I am; the President rightly appeals every day for sacrifice. But to these mercenaries sacrifice is for suckers. So I am bitter, yes, and sad. Our business and political class owes us better than this. After all, it was they who declared class war 20 years ago and it was they who won. They're on top. If ever they were going to put patriotism over profits, if ever they were going to practice the magnanimity of winners, this was the moment. To hide now behind the flag while ripping off a country in crisis fatally—fatally!—separates them from the common course of American life.

Some things just don't change. Once again the Republican Party has lived down to Harry Truman's description of the GOP as guardians of privilege. And as for Truman's Democratic Party—the party of the New Deal and the Fair Deal—well, it breaks my heart to report that the Democratic National Committee has used the terrorist attacks to call for widening the soft money loophole in our election laws. How about that for a patriotic response to terrorism?

Mencken got it right—the journalist H. L. Mencken, who said that when you hear some men talk about their love of country, it's a sign they expect to be paid for it.

Understandably, in the hours after the attacks many environmental organizations stepped down from aggressively pressing

their issues. Greenpeace canceled its 30th anniversary celebration. The Sierra Club stopped all advertising, phone banks and mailing. The Environmental Working Group and the PIRGs postponed a national report on chlorination in drinking water. That was the proper way to observe a period of mourning.

Furthermore, in work like this you have to read and respect the mood of a country in crisis, or a misspoken word, even a modest misstep, could lose you the public's ear for years to come. But the polluters and their political cronies accepted no such constraints. Just one day after the attack, one day into the maelstrom of horror, loss and grief, Republican senators called for prompt consideration of the President's proposal to subsidize the country's largest and richest energy companies. While America was mourning, they were marauding. One congressman even suggested that eco-terrorists might be behind the attacks. And with that smear he and his kind went on the offensive in Congress, attempting to attach to a defense bill massive subsidies for the oil, coal, gas and nuclear companies. To a defense bill! What a shameful insult to patriotism! What a slander on the sacrifice of our armed forces! To pile corporate welfare totaling billions of dollars onto a defense bill in an emergency like this is repugnant to the nostrils and a scandal against democracy!

But this is their game. They're counting on your patriotism to distract you from their plunder. They're counting on you to be standing at attention with your hand over your heart, pledging allegiance to the flag, while they pick your pocket!

Let's face it: they present citizens with no options but to climb back in the ring. We are in what educators call "a teachable moment." And we'll lose it if we roll over and shut up. What's at stake is democracy. Democracy wasn't cancelled on the 11th of September, but democracy won't survive if citizens turn into lemmings. Yes, the President is our commander-in-chief, and in hunting down and destroying the terrorists who are trying to destroy us, we are "all the President's men"—as Henry Kissinger put it after the bombing of Cambodia.

But we are not the President's minions. If in the name of the war on terrorism President Bush hands the state over to the energy industry, it's every patriot's duty to join the loyal opposition. Even in war, politics is about who gets what and who doesn't. If the mercenaries in Washington try to exploit the emergency and America's good faith to grab what they wouldn't get through open debate in peace time, the disloyalty will not be in our dissent but in our subservience. The greatest sedition would be our silence.

Yes, there's a fight going on—against terrorists around the globe, but just as certainly there's a fight going on here at home, to decide the kind of country this will be during and after the war on terrorism. To the Irishman's question: "Is this a private fight or can anyone get in it?" the answer has to be: "Come on in. It's our economy, our environment, our country, and our future. If we don't fight, who will?"



LOOKING AHEAD

Push for profits transforms news into propaganda

By Linda Foley, President

A lesson in basic Journalism 101: Tell them who, what, when, where, how and why.

Good journalists know that telling who did what when and where, and how he or she did it, is called "straight reporting." Discovering the "why" turns a mere report into a good story.

Since Sept. 11, the news media have focused on many aspects of the terrorist attacks on the United States and their consequences. The immediacy of 24-hour news television and accessibility of digitally produced Web-based information sources have allowed the public to follow events as they unfold. Still, the context of these events—the "why" of the story—is absent from most of the news coverage we receive.

The reason is money, or if you prefer, cost. Broadcasting a briefing by the Secretary of Defense costs next to nothing compared with sending reporters to Afghanistan to cover the war firsthand. Rebroadcasting an unedited videotape from Al Jazeera television is infinitely cheaper than assigning reporters to investigate what motivates Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network.

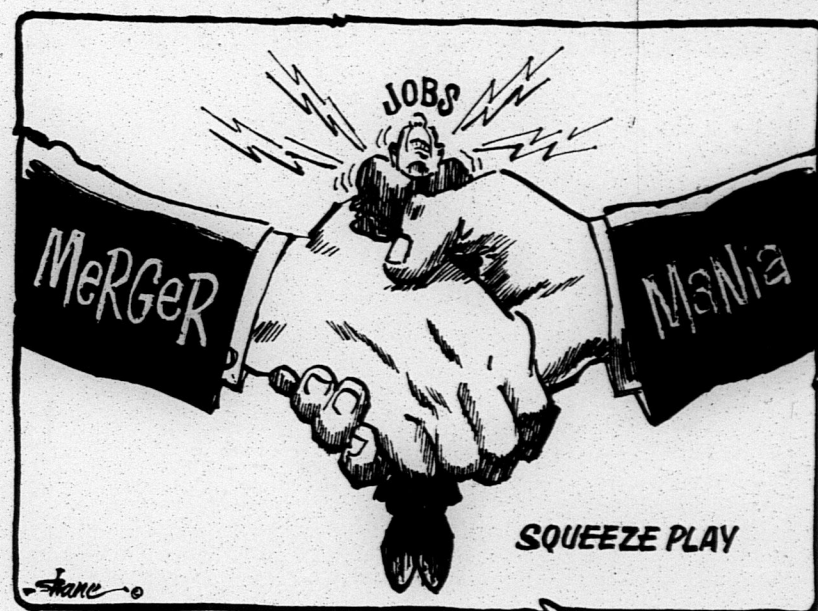
News coverage largely has become a series of reports by news sources who, unlike staff reporters, aren't paid salary or

expenses by the news organizations that carry their message. What little context is provided usually comes from pundits, many of whom are highly paid by non-media entities or corporations and who often have a political agenda in mind. Spin by a pundit is no substitute for the dispassionate perspective brought by a good story, nor can the mere transmission of what a news source says be called journalism. But it does cost a lot less to "cover" the news this way.

Syndicated columnist Molly Ivins on Nov. 8 wrote a column scolding American media for cutting foreign coverage in recent years and getting caught off guard on Sept. 11. "A news organization has only one way to cut costs, and that is to cut news gathering," she observed.

"As the ownership of American news media becomes more and more concentrated, with all outlets subject to judgment by some 25-year-old hotshot on Wall Street as to whether they 'meet earnings expectations,' the pressure to cut news gathering gets worse. As far as the media conglomerates are concerned, newspapers and television networks are just 'profit centers.'"

Ivins points out that Michael Powell (son of Colin), Republican head of the Federal Communications Commission, is poised to



further deregulate media concentration by repealing several cross-ownership restrictions, including the ban on owning a newspaper and TV station in the same market. The pressure to maximize earnings by cutting news personnel no doubt will intensify.

Through their sustained efforts to reduce costs and thereby boost profits, America's media conglomerates effectively are turning news into propaganda. Garbage in, garbage out, as they say. The media shouldn't be surprised, therefore, when—for example—the Bush administration tries to control what's broadcast or limits questions that can be asked of government officials. Most of the information being reported probably originated with their spokespersons anyway.

Objecting to government control of the news on First Amendment grounds is pretty hard to defend when media conglomerates themselves place their Constitutional responsibilities way behind the quest for ever larger profit margins. The kind of shallow reporting that has devolved in recent years doesn't do much to engender public support for press freedoms that benefit only "profit centers."

At a time when civil liberties and access to information are being curtailed in the name of homeland security, a free press that promotes rigorous investigative journalism is essential to the preservation of our democracy.

Otherwise, the public may begin to ask why. As in "Why do we need it?"

Our strength? To be there for each other

By Jeff Faux

President, Economic Policy Institute

There is no silver lining to the cloud of horror that has descended on America in recent weeks. But the attacks of Sept. 11 revealed some truths about the American political economy that have been obscured in recent years.

One is just how much of our economy is made up of what used to be called the "working class"—the non-supervisory, non-college-educated people who make up 70% of our labor force. For the last half-dozen years the media saw economic trends through the eyes of the glamorous, globe-trotting, business executive—to the point where it seemed to many that they must represent the vast majority of American workers. And one could hardly find a more fitting symbol of the new global economy than the World Trade Center, surrounded in the evening by a herd of sleek limousines waiting to serve the masters of the universe at the end of the day.

And yet, it turns out the building was run by thousands of data clerks and secretaries, waiters and dishwashers, janitors and telecommunication repair people. The roll of trade unions mourning their dead is long: firefighters, hotel and restaurant employees, police, communication workers, service employees, teachers, federal employees, pilots and flight attendants, longshoremen, professional engineers, operating engineers, the electrical workers, federal employees, building trades, and state, county and municipal employees.

And many were in no union, meaning job insecurity, no benefits and certainly no limousines.

A second insight revealed by the awful gaping hole in the Manhattan skyline was how ill-served we have been by a politics that perpetuates the illusion that we are all on our own and, in particular, holds the institutions of public service in contempt. For two decades, politicians of both parties have celebrated the pursuit of private gain over public service. Shrinking government has become a preoccupation of political leaders through deregulation, privatization and cuts in public services.

One result is that the U.S. is the only major nation that leaves airline and airport security in the hands of private corporations, which by their very nature are motivated to spend as little as possible. So the system was tossed into the lap of lowest-bid contractors who hired people for minimum wages. Training has been inadequate and supervision lax. Turnover was 126% a year and the average employee stayed in airline security for only six months. Getting a job at Burger King or McDonald's represented upward mobility for the average security worker. In an anti-government political climate the airline corporations were able to shrug off the government inspections that consistently revealed how easy it was to bring weapons on board.

Private provision of public services has been the dominant philosophy of government in our time. Only natural, the economists told us. People were motivated by

money. It's human nature. "Greed is good," said the lead character in the movie send-up of Wall Street—a sentiment echoed by politicians of both parties. "Collective solutions are a thing of the past. . . . The era of big government is over. . . . You are on your own." Public service was "old" economy, just for losers. A teacher in New York City schools starts at \$30,000. A brand new securities lawyer starts at \$120,000. Does anyone believe that this reflects sensible priorities?

And does anyone believe that the firefighters who marched into that inferno did it for money? Does anyone think that people working for a private company hiring people for as little as possible would have had the same motivation—would have been as efficient? At a moment when efficiency really counts?

When the chips are down, where do we turn? To the government's firefighters, police officers, rescue teams. To the nonprofit sector's blood banks and shelters. And to Big Government's army, navy and air force. During his campaign, the President of the United States constantly complained that the people knew how to spend their money better than the government did. Overnight, we appropriated tens of billions for the government to spend however it sees fit. Who else would we trust?

Finally, perhaps we learned something about our national identity. It is common—almost a cliché—among political philosophers and pundits to define America as an "exception." For many, America's exceptionalism means it is the best place to get rich.

For others, it means our unique set of laws—our Bill of Rights. Still others see America not in national terms at all, but as a patchwork of ethnic groups and regional interests.

There is some truth in all these views. But those who risked and gave their lives—both the public servants and the brave civilian passengers who rushed the terrorists and forced the airliner down in Pennsylvania before it could get to Washington—are unlikely to have acted out of reverence for the deregulated market or for our court system or for some ethnic or religious loyalty.

Everything we know tells us that they acted as human beings responding to the agony of other human beings, or trying in one last desperate effort to spare their country more damage, not because it is the world's superpower but simply because it is their country. No country has a monopoly on simple patriotism.

If America is, as the politicians often remind us, the "last best hope" for humankind, then it is not because we as individuals are exceptional and different from the rest of the world, but because we are much the same—full of the normal set of human traits, which at times of stress often bring out the best in us.

It is obvious that we can no longer rely on our exceptionalism to keep us safe. In the coming weeks and months and years we are likely to be reminded of that. To get through this, we need to be disabused quickly of the illusion that we are all on our own. America's strength, like the strength of any other society, is in our ability to be there for each other.

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: December 7.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

Minority journalists as window dressing

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

The propensity for America's newsrooms to look at the world from a narrow white perspective is an ongoing and much lamented scandal. But surely, within a universe of some 1,500 dailies scattered from coast to coast, there must be at least some newspapers that give more than lip service to diversity?

Maybe—but the preliminary news isn't encouraging.

In releasing the first results of a two-year national study of how television news and newspapers deal with issues of race and ethnicity, a team of researchers sponsored by The Poynter Institute for Media Studies reports that even the best newsrooms fall short of the mark. "Although some excellent work is being done in American journalism, even the best newsrooms in the nation short-change their readers and viewers when it comes to representing the full range of cultures and races and ethnicities that make up America," summarized study director Edward C. Pease.

Two recent developments add to the study's significance. The first, reported earlier this year, is an actual decline in minority staffing of newsrooms, as fewer blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Native Americans stay on the job. And as they leave, a newspaper's willingness and ability to cover news of ethnic minorities also leaves: although nearly 29% of all Americans are defined by the U.S. Census as racial and ethnic minorities, coverage of these groups comprises less than 10% of all newspaper and TV news stories.

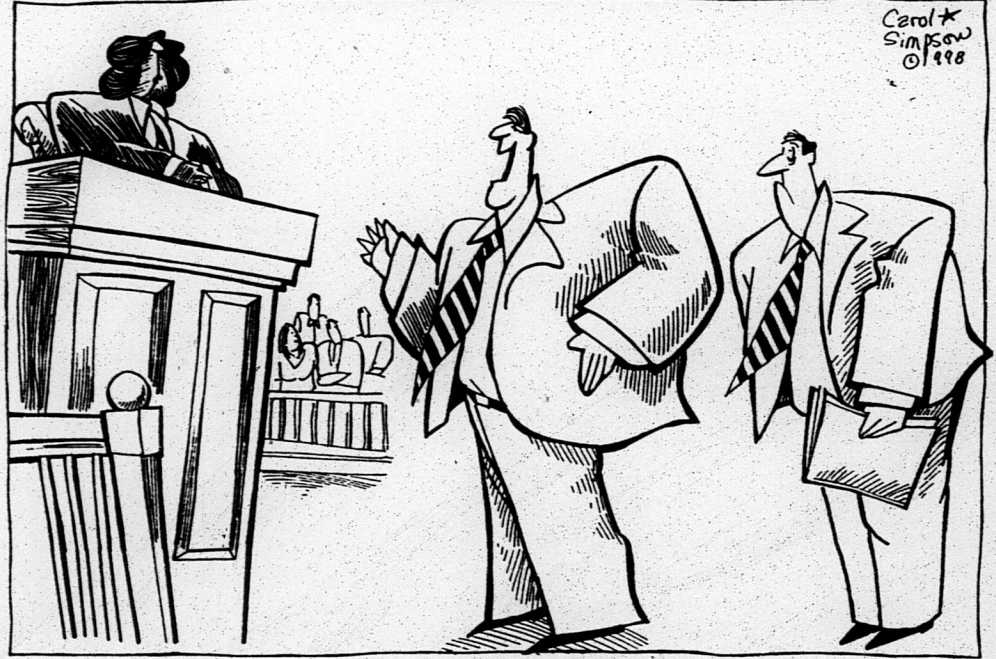
Meanwhile, the linking of the events of Sept. 11 to Arab and Islamic extremists has placed a much higher premium on understanding different people and cultures. "One of the greatest chal-

lenges facing America is how we relate with each other and understand one another," contends Pease. "Most of what we think we 'know' about the world comes to us through the lenses of the mass media. Understanding how the press sees America and then expresses that vision to the nation is a first step in assessing how well Americans really understand one another."

To test that vision, Pease and two other researchers gained the cooperation of six metropolitan newspapers and six major-market television news stations that were generally regarded as among the nation's "best" in terms of hiring, retention and promotion of non-white journalists. The sample was not designed to be representative of the news industry overall, but rather to see how high the bar had been set by newsrooms operating in diverse communities that were themselves staffed by a diverse workforce.

Of the six newspapers picked, three have Guild-represented newsrooms: the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the San Jose Mercury News and the Seattle Times. (It bears noting that the survey was conducted before the strike at the Seattle Times and prior to publisher Jay Harris' resignation from the San Jose Mercury News.) The other three newspapers were the Dallas Morning News, the News-Journal of Wilmington, Del. and the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

All 12 news organizations provided the researchers with information on their hiring and personnel practices and permitted a survey of newsroom employees' attitudes on issues of racial diversity at their workplace. The researchers also conducted a year-long content analysis of each organization's news coverage. (Because the St. Louis Post-Dispatch provided only half of the content sample, it was dropped from the overall content audit.)



"How could we discriminate against minority employees... we don't even have any."

The news room surveys, Pease reported, found the same "radical disconnect" in the attitudes of minority and white journalists that had been documented by other studies a decade ago, although the perception gap in this select sample was smaller than in the industry overall. But despite the overall improvement, a so-called "race climate quotient" found that white journalists are in all cases less supportive than their minority colleagues of efforts to improve diversity in hiring and content—sometimes underwhelmingly so. While the San Jose Mercury News and Seattle Times had the lowest scores on this measure, at 26.8 and 37.7—on a scale in which 0 indicates perfect agreement—the St. Louis Post-Dispatch had the highest, at 115.4.

(The higher the number on this measure, the greater the disparity of perception between minority and white respondents.)

Meanwhile, in assessing how

well their employers were performing on diversity issues, the gap universally tipped in the opposite direction: white journalists consistently rated their employers more highly than did their minority counterparts. The San Jose Mercury News once again scored the smallest perception gap, at -8.6. But the Seattle Times plunged on this measure, to -103.5, and the St. Louis Post Dispatch maintained its overall lowest rating, at -118.9. (The three non-Guild papers all ranked between the extremes on both measures.)

Add it all up, and the San Jose Mercury News emerges as having the most unified newsroom, across ethnic and racial lines, in terms of the staff's shared values and its perceptions of management's commitment to diversity. So perhaps it's not surprising that the researchers rated news coverage of minority groups most highly at the Mercury News, "whose coverage of people of color was consis-

tently most positive in tone." As the study further observed, "the more staffers who were on the same page regarding diversity efforts, the greater the amount (depth and quantity) of coverage about people of color."

Still, the study's overall conclusion is that even the "best" newsrooms fall short of the mark, as evidenced by the ongoing exodus of minority journalists. "I was very excited when I landed this job at what I considered one of the country's top-tier newspapers," a black woman is quoted as telling the researchers. "Now, I thought, 'I could really make a difference.' But soon I discovered that I'm nothing more than window dressing here. I won't be in the business much longer."

"The News and Race Models of Excellence Project," may be downloaded in PDF format at www.poynter.org/offthenews/101701_diversitystory.htm

THE GUILD Reporter

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DAYBOOK

AFL-CIO Civil, Human Rights
Conf., Dec. 2-3, Las Vegas

AFL-CIO Biennial Convention,
Dec. 4-7, Las Vegas

Sector conference subsidies
deadline, Dec. 17

New Officers' Training,
Jan. 19-21, Meany Center

Deadline for Barr, Broun
entries (postmark) Jan. 25

TNG Sector Conference,
Feb. 14-17, Orlando

CWA Legislative Conference,
March 3-6, Washington, D.C.

Nat'l Civil Rights, Equity Conf.,
April 25-28, St. Louis

CWA Safety & Health Conf.,
May 5-8, Cleveland

Broun, Barr Awards Dinner,
May 14, Washington, D.C.

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Top CIO leaders endorse the concept of a national labor daily, and UAW-CIO President Walter Reuther names a special committee to report on proposals for interim financing of a promotional campaign to advance the idea. . . . Northern New Jersey joins the trend toward monopoly journalism, as Hoboken's Jersey Observer ends 59 years of publication with less than 48 hours' notice to its employees. . . . The Guild's executive board petitions President Truman to modify new national security orders that increase government secrecy.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The Canadian Wire Service Guild caps nearly 20 months of hard bargaining to win an initial contract for 275 employees of Candian Press; the wire service had defeated a Guild organizing campaign in 1950. . . . An international, portable industrial pension plan for Guild members is established by the Guild's executive board. . . . Guild-represented employees of the New York Post respond to the purchase of their paper by Rupert Murdoch "with a combination of relief, exultation and trepidation."

Ten years ago this month:

The Guild's executive board rules that the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild has violated TNG's Constitution by transferring most of its assets and funds to a nonprofit corporation. . . . The Guild is rocked by a controversial motion, to be put to a membership vote next month, seeking to repeal a \$1-a-month dues increase for organizing.