

THE GUILD Reporter

December 14, 2001

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 68, Number 12

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Strike—or lockout?

**Either way, CEP hits the street,
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Some 1,600 employees of the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. found themselves on the street Dec. 7, with the CBC claiming they had gone on strike and their union, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, saying they'd been locked out.

The impasse followed a breakdown in contract negotiations that had dragged on for more than seven months, with CBC seeking several concessions—notably regarding meal penalties and turnaround payments—that union officials estimated would result in more than a 5% loss of income to their members. But there also were indications that CBC had been looking for a fight. “They have been planning this lockout since August, when they first announced they would be hiring replacement workers for the Olympics,” charged CEP representative Mike Sullivan.

CEP members reported to work as usual Dec. 6, but many left their posts around noon for “study sessions” that lasted until late afternoon. Although the union said everyone returned to work, the CBC claimed they had not and therefore that a strike was in progress. At about 1 a.m. Dec. 7, an outside security firm started escorting CEP technicians off the premises.

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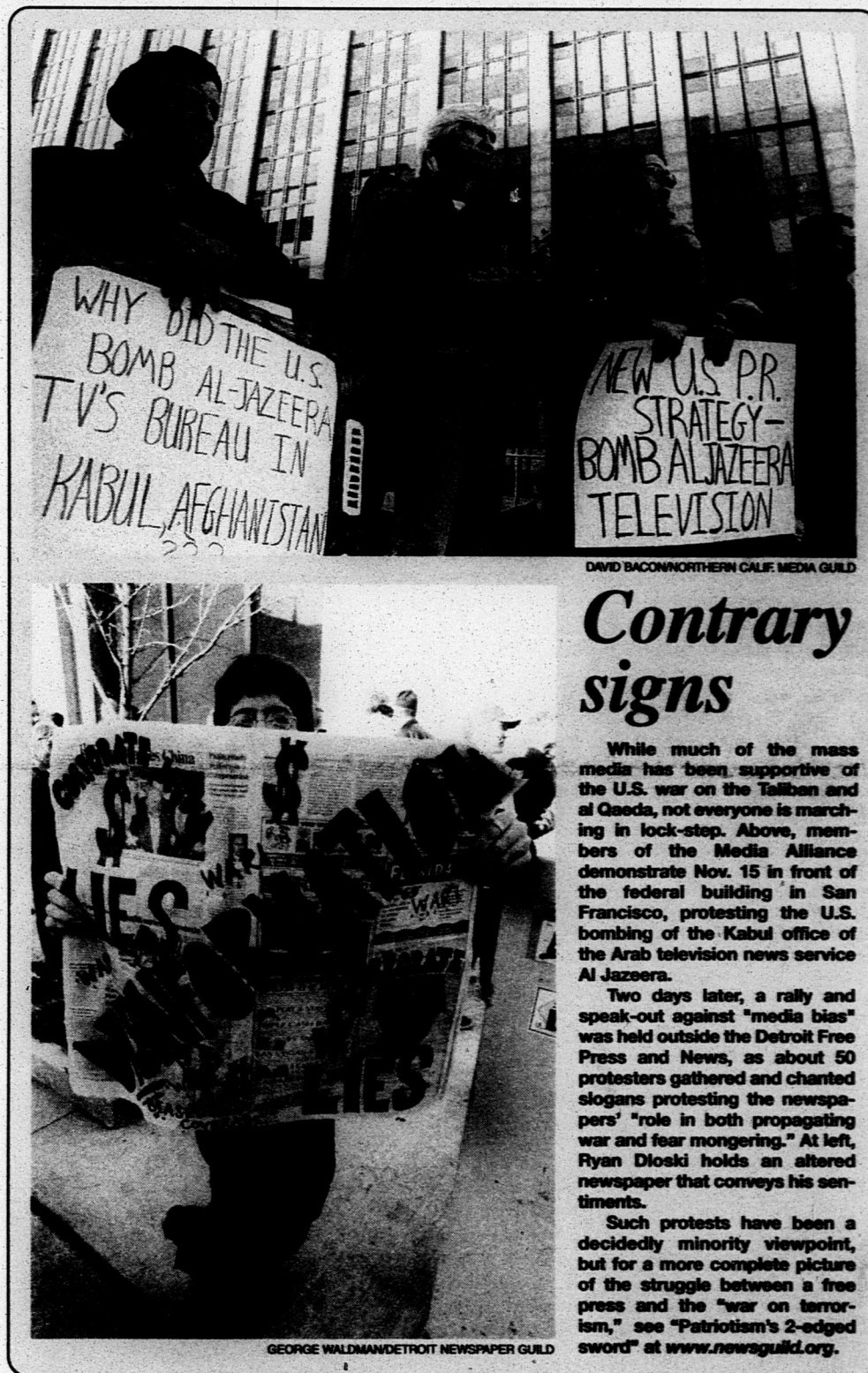
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the CBC's increasingly provocative actions. In addition to hiring replacement workers for the Olympics, the public broadcasting network took the highly unusual step Dec. 2 of imposing work conditions—including deposits of \$500 “signing bonuses” into CEP members' accounts. Throw in the unprecedented hiring of “an aggressive ‘goon’ security firm,” said CMG President Lise Lareau, “and what we have is the kind of in-your-face actions you don't see in this country.”

“By its unexplainable intransigence, the CBC is confirming what many of us have felt for years,” Lareau added. “The corporation's senior management has a fundamental lack of respect for its own employees, particularly those who do technical work. I think there is a perception that the digital revolution has made some people disposable.”

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Contrary signs

While much of the mass media has been supportive of the U.S. war on the Taliban and al Qaeda, not everyone is marching in lock-step. Above, members of the Media Alliance demonstrate Nov. 15 in front of the federal building in San Francisco, protesting the U.S. bombing of the Kabul office of the Arab television news service Al Jazeera.

Two days later, a rally and speak-out against “media bias” was held outside the Detroit Free Press and News, as about 50 protesters gathered and chanted slogans protesting the newspapers’ “role in both propagating war and fear mongering.” At left, Ryan Dloski holds an altered newspaper that conveys his sentiments.

Such protests have been a decidedly minority viewpoint, but for a more complete picture of the struggle between a free press and the “war on terrorism,” see “Patriotism’s 2-edged sword” at www.newsguild.org.

Perils of media concentration driven home

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At issue is a decision by Southam News forcing the Gazette—and the 11 other major metropolitan dailies it owns across

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The unprecedented centralization of editorial opinion outraged many Gazette employees, who quickly created a web site to publicize their views and to gather signatures on the letter of protest. “We believe this is an attempt to centralize opinion to serve the cor-

porate interests of CanWest,” the web site (gazreporters.tripod.com) explained. “Far from offering additional content to Canadians, this will practically vacate the power of the editorial boards of Southam newspapers and thereby reduce the diversity of opinions and the breadth of debate that to date has been offered readers across Canada.”

As if to underscore the point, CanWest's first editorial called on the federal government to reduce—and eventually abolish—capital-gains taxes for private foundations.

“Who would blame a reader for thinking the editorial simply serves the interests of the foundation run by the Asper family, owners of CanWest and Southam?” the web site asks.

Several score reporters and editors had signed the letter as The Guild Reporter went to press, with more signatures being solicited.

Critics of media consolidation have long warned that a democracy cannot afford to have public discourse monopolized by a handful of voices. Such protests, however, *Continued on page 3*

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DAVID BACON/NORTHERN CALIF. MEDIA GUILD

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GEORGE WALDMAN/DETROIT NEWSPAPER GUILD

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Belo loses yet another skirmish in Providence

An end to the protracted war in Providence, R.I., is nowhere to be seen, but the Providence Newspaper Guild keeps winning the skirmishes. The latest victory: a court order clearing the way for the Guild and the Providence Typographical Union to proceed with a lawsuit on behalf of six employees alleging breach of contract.

The employees, who work in the composing room and have been Guild members since 1998, signed personal service contracts with the Providence Journal more than 15 years ago that include lifetime job guarantees and a promise that they'll receive raises and other benefits given to other Journal employees. But as the Guild and Journal became bogged down in contract negotiations, now dragging into their third year, the company's new owners—Dallas-based Belo Corp.—refused to give the compositors the same wage hikes that have been paid to other, non-unionized employees.

The Guild grieved and moved for arbitration but the company refused, claiming that TNG-CWA had no standing in the matter because it had not negotiated the personal service contracts. So the Guild withdrew and a new case was filed, this time by the Providence Typographical Union—which had negotiated the personal contracts, and which today is also part of CWA.

But that didn't end the company's objections: although the suit was filed in federal court as a viola-

tion of Section 301 of the National Labor Relations Act, Belo countered by arguing that the dispute was not over a collective bargaining agreement but over individual personal contracts, and therefore properly heard in state, not federal court. Had it prevailed, the six compositors would have been forced to file six individual lawsuits in state court, at personal expense.

Instead, a federal magistrate dismissed Belo's motion for summary judgment by noting that the PTU had negotiated the original personal service contracts and retains an interest in enforcing them. The company's legal maneuvers, a local spokesman noted, also repudiate a claim by Mark Ryan, now the Journal's general manager, that Belo dislikes court suits and would "prefer to negotiate rather than litigate."

Among the Journal's other recent court losses: a Court of Appeals decision that if Belo is going to sell parking permits to employees, it has to provide them with parking spaces. Meanwhile, a list of 47 allegations against the company of unfair labor practices has been brought by the National Labor Relations Board and is scheduled for a hearing Feb. 25.

"If this sounds like an exhausting and long volley in a legal tennis match, it is," observed the Guild's web site. "It demonstrates again this underlying theme: the company is refusing to honor its legal obligations to Guild members and is willing to spend Belo dollars to keep even six workers from getting what they have a right to."

NLRB makes impasse a bit less lucrative for employers

An unexpected decision by the National Labor Relations Board suggests employers may find it increasingly fruitless to bargain to an impasse. Significantly, this latest wrinkle in contract negotiating is extrapolated from a 1996 case against McClatchy Newspapers regarding merit pay.

In the McClatchy case, the publisher attempted to unilaterally impose a merit wage plan after declaring that contract negotiations with the Guild had reached an impasse. Acknowledging that wages are a mandatory subject of bargaining, and that generally an employer may unilaterally implement its proposals on mandatory subjects after impasse is reached, the NLRB nevertheless carved out a narrow exception for wage increases.

Now, in a Sept. 28 decision against KSM Industries, the NLRB has broadened the exception by

forbidding the company from unilaterally implementing a health insurance plan. The company had been in contract negotiations with the United Paperworkers International Union and had proposed a new plan that would give it sole discretion to change the benefits, deductibles and coinsurance limits at any time. When the union balked, KSM declared an impasse and imposed the new plan, anyway.

As the board noted, in its McClatchy decision it had observed that a declaration of impasse did not terminate bargaining. Continued bargaining, however, would be undermined if an employer were granted *carte blanche* authority over wages. Moreover, "it would simultaneously disparage the [union] by showing, despite its resistance to the proposal, its incapacity to act as the employees' representative in setting terms and conditions of employment."

In other words, allowing an

employer to unilaterally impose wage increases was "inherently destructive of the fundamental principles of collective bargaining" and therefore shouldn't be tolerated.

The KSM case paralleled the McClatchy case, with the company announcing it would implement the plan despite union objections and admitting it had no intention of negotiating changes in its provisions. "As in McClatchy, therefore, the proposal nullified the Union's authority to bargain over the existence and the terms of a key term and condition of employment," the board wrote, making it "inimical to the postimpasse, on-going collective-bargaining process."

The board's decision further reduces one of the biggest incentives companies have had to bargain to impasse, which some have interpreted as an invitation to impose whatever conditions they desired. But it was not clear, as The Guild Reporter went to press, whether the NLRB would extend its reasoning to other mandatory subjects of bargaining, such as pension and 401 (k) plans; nor whether KSM Industries would appeal the decision in federal court.

Coincidentally, the KSM ruling came on the heels of a decision, won by the Gary Newspaper Guild, reasserting the NLRB standard that unless a union explicitly waives its rights, an employer is obligated to meet a union demand that it negotiate any insurance plan changes. TNG-CWA attorney Barbara Camens, who assisted the Gary local in that case, is preparing a more comprehensive analysis of the issue for distribution at the sector conference in Orlando.

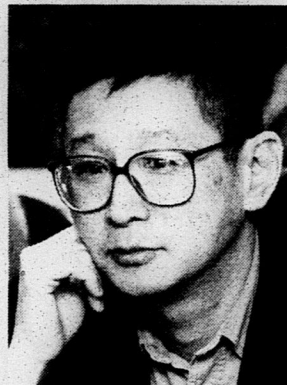
In brief...

Sun-Times, Guild settle 3-year pact

Having walked up to the brink of a strike, the Chicago Sun-Times and nearly 200 reporters and editors represented by the Chicago Newspaper Guild pulled back Dec. 10 with an agreement on a three-year contract. Guild members ratified the new pact 86-72, accepting no pay increase in the first year, a 1% hike in the second and a 1.25% increase in the third. Although the Guild failed to achieve a commitment for increased hiring, it did succeed in blocking a Sun Times proposal to replace its pension program with a 401(k) retirement-savings plan.

Lingering Seattle disputes settled

The Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild and The Seattle Times have resolved all but one of their remaining strike-related differences, with the newspaper agreeing to pay \$125,000 and the union agreeing to a \$50,000 payment into a common pool. The fund is to be disbursed by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to settle any remaining claims. The Times payment settles accusations that it improperly promoted workers who crossed picket lines; the union payment settles claims that it failed to keep its promise to promote the newspaper after last year's strike ended.



IAPE's Chen wins Leuchter award

Ron Chen, recently re-elected president of IAPE, the TNG-CWA local representing Dow Jones employees, has won the 2002 Irving Leuchter Memorial Scholarship. The \$10,000 award covers the costs of a six-week residential seminar in labor studies at Harvard University. Chen won re-election in mid-November to an eighth term as IAPE president, beating back a challenge from a former local vice-president.

Bringing back an old tradition

That old newspaper tradition, the gridiron, may be making a comeback: the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh and that city's AFTRA local combined their efforts Oct. 10 to produce their first gridiron-

style show, "Off the Record." In addition to raising nearly \$15,000 for several charitable causes, the evening reportedly kept approximately 600 attendees—including TNG-CWA President Linda Foley—in stitches and was so warmly received that union officials say they'll have to do it again.

Grievance award goes to disaster

In a creative resolution of a contract dispute that left everyone feeling like a winner, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette has written a check for \$61.55 to the CWA Disaster Relief Fund. The payment resolves a grievance filed by the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh over an exempt employee doing bargaining unit work; the amount represents the amount of overtime that would have been paid if a Guild member had done the work.

Scholarships now being offered

Looking for college money? Thirty scholarships of up to \$3,000 each will be awarded next year to CWA members, their spouses, their children or their grandchildren; the deadline for applications is March 31, although early filing is strongly encouraged. Contact your local for applications. Also available are one-time cash grants of \$500 to \$4,000 from the Union Plus Credit Card Scholarship Program (you don't have to be a credit card holder to qualify), with application forms available online at www.unionprivilege.com. Filing deadline is Jan. 31.

Harrisburg picks new leadership

The Harrisburg Newspaper Guild elected its executive committee for 2002 at a Nov. 14 membership meeting, including Jack Sherzer, president; John Luciw, executive vice president; Brett Marcy, vice president; Andy Isaacs, secretary; Steve Farley, treasurer; and Chris Millette and Kelly Bothum, stewards.

Guild president takes buy-out

John C.K. Fisher, accepting a buyout offer, has stepped down as president of the Cincinnati Newspaper Guild and has been succeeded by veteran reporter Bob Driehaus. Other new officers at the local are Jack Schicht, as vice president; and former secretary Doris Roetting, as treasurer.

Sound bites:

92 employees of the Providence Journal have accepted buyouts. ... Guild member Levon Sevunts, a Montreal-based reporter for the Gazette, survived a Taliban firefight that killed three other reporters.

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The Newspaper Guild International



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AFL-CIO defends cross-ownership ban

The AFL-CIO has added its voice to a chorus of consumer, civil rights and media groups defending a federal prohibition on cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations within the same market. The Federal Communications Commission, which enacted the ban in 1975 to promote "diversity of viewpoints and economic competition," is considering a proposal to rescind or modify the rule.

Because of the ban, newspaper owners have lamented that they're shut out of the rush toward media consolidation led by conglomerates like AOL-Time Warner and Walt Disney. And while they concede that some ban might have been warranted in the Dark Ages of the 1970s—before the internet, satellite dishes and cable TV wired virtually every American home into a national nervous system—the frustrated press lords insist it is now as archaic as a flat-bed press.

Responses to the FCC during its initial comment period, which ended Dec. 3, paint a very different picture. Writing on behalf of

the AFL-CIO's public policy department, economist Joel S. Yudken noted that decades of relaxing media ownership rules have resulted in wholesale consolidation within the industry. In 1975, for example, those rules prevented any single entity from owning more than 14 radio stations nationwide; today, one company owns more than a thousand. In the five years since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the number of owners of commercial TV stations has dropped to 350, from 543—and continues to shrink. Whereas in 1983 about 50 conglomerates controlled more than half of all U.S. broadcast and other media, today that figure has shrunk to eight.

Newspaper ownership has consolidated rapidly, too, Yudken points out. Gannett now produces one of every seven newspapers sold in the U.S., and three chains—Gannett, Knight Ridder and the Tribune Co.—together account for a quarter of all daily newspaper circulation. But with some few exceptions, the cross-ownership ban has blocked the big

broadcast conglomerates from muscling into the newspaper business—and for a democracy, that's a good thing.

"Diversity of ownership is essential for diversity of voice," Yudken avers, because cross-ownership would "create a homogenization of news products and diminished diversity of editorial and reporting viewpoints." The cost of such consolidation "could be high for a nation whose democracy depends on an informed citizenry."

Similar—if greatly more extensive—comments were filed with the FCC by a consortium that includes the Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, the Center for Digital Democracy, the Civil Rights Forum, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the Media Access Project. Drawing on the expertise of former journalism dean Ben Bagdikian, among others, the joint filing (which can be read at www.democraticmedia.org) reminds the FCC "of its heavy burden in this proceeding," citing Supreme Court decisions

upholding the cross-ownership ban and its explicit endorsement by Congress.

Moreover, the group filing observes, opponents of the cross-ownership ban claim it is an artificial barrier to consumer choice—indeed, that federal meddling in the marketplace disrupts the ultimate democracy. But that's nonsense, the group asserts, since "the media marketplace will not necessarily produce the content people want to watch" because advertisers' preferences often trump viewers' preferences.

"Finally," the filing notes, "media is [sic] a public good and possesses significant 'positive externalities.' Like clean air and national defense, benefits accrue to society at large that cannot be captured by the market. For example, investigative journalism uncovering government waste or consumer fraud benefits all—even those who do not read the newspaper or advertise on its pages."

Having received the first round of comments, the FCC is now accepting replies, in a process expected to last several months.

'Watch the door on your way out'

In 2001, Knight Ridder has announced new publishers at nine of its 30 newspapers, in Akron, Biloxi, Duluth, Fort Wayne, St. Paul, San Luis Obispo, San Jose, State College (Penn.) and Wichita.

All of these changes followed the appointment of Steve Rossi as president of the newspaper division last February. All of the changes also followed company chairman Tony Ridder's directive to cut labor costs at each paper by 10% to maintain the company's profitability.

The first high-profile resignation after Rossi's appointment was that of Jay Harris on March 19. Before Harris, the last high-profile resignation at a major Knight Ridder paper was in August, 1998, when David Lawrence resigned as publisher of the Miami Herald.

By comparison, Knight Ridder last year announced just one new publisher, in Aberdeen. In 1999 it announced two new publishers, at its newspapers in Bradenton and Wilkes-Barre.

There also have been several other high-profile resignations from key Knight Ridder management positions during 2001, including the executive editor and managing editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Also worth noting are several changes in corporate management this year, including the hiring in March and departure in May of Jean Mordo, who had replaced long-time CFO Ross Jones. Other executive changes at the corporate level this year included the vice president and controller, the vice president of marketing, the assistant vice president of news and, as already mentioned, the president of the newspaper division.



Joining the Guild

Bob Neil, president of the former Business Associates at the Patriot Ledger in Quincy, Mass., signs an affiliation agreement with TNG-CWA at the New England District Council meeting in November. Looking on are (l to r) Eric

Geist, the Guild's director of field operations; Lesley Phillips, vice president of TNG-CWA Region 1, which includes New England; and Leo Ducharme, TNG-CWA field representative. Ballots cast by members of the paper's Newsroom Associates, who are contemplating a similar affiliation, are to be counted January 17.

Feeling blue at Gannett

If ever newspaper employees needed an example of the difference a union contract can make in their lives, Gannett would be prime exhibit A.

For those without such a contract, the country's largest newspaper chain demonstrated the full meaning of "employment at will" when it fired three USA Today employees for tracing the words "Kilroy was here" on what they thought was a dust-covered sculpture in the new corporate headquarters. The three, all self-supporting women—one with 25 years at the company, one a single mom—apologized to no avail.

The pricey sculpture in question, a \$90,000 big blue ball, was not covered with dust but was coated with a pigment that hadn't been sealed yet.

The "Blue Ball Three," as the trio of fired employees has become known, has hired a lawyer. Other Gannettoids have started a legal fund and are showing their support by wearing lapel pins accented by a plastic blue ball. And protest ideas have poured in from around the country, including suggestions that the phone be answered "USA Yesterday" and that reporters file stories six—even seven—paragraphs long.

Somewhat closer to the middle of the spectrum, members of the Indianapolis Newspaper Guild voted 94-8 to accept a new, three-year contract with Gannett at the Indianapolis Star, which the company acquired last year. Although the agreement includes numerous changes—including some Guild concessions—the union did man-

age to block a company effort to tie all raises to merit pay. Among the provisions:

- Scale minimums to increase 1.5% this January, 1% the following year and 0.5% the year after that. A merit pool of 1.5% in 2002, 2% in 2003 and 2.5% in 2004, with merit raises to be based on performance evaluations.
- A signing bonus of \$1,250 for full-time employees hired before Oct. 28, 2000, \$625 for those after.
- An increase in the number of excluded positions to 56, from 30.
- A lessening of severance pay, from one week of severance per six months' service to one week per year; capped at 26 weeks' pay, down from 40.
- More stringent grievance procedures, including a 14-day filing deadline for complaints.

Media oligopoly at work

Continued from page 1

either have fallen on deaf ears—as suggested in the U.S. by the FCC's current push to eliminate a prohibition on cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations—or are dismissed as simply irrelevant to a market economy. Indeed, some critics of the critics dispute even the facts of media concentration, common wisdom notwithstanding.

"The number of media companies is only part of the picture," argued Benjamin Compaine at a recent conference in which he presented a paper titled, "The myths of encroaching global media ownership." As he explained, "For the most part, ownership of the media, especially in the U.S., is extremely democratic. Most of the largest media companies are publicly owned."

Public ownership is hardly a prescription for journalism that promotes democratic values, but whether publicly or privately owned, the media trend is toward greater oligopoly—which, as the Gazette's newsroom employees point out, can quickly lead to "a greatly reduced variety of opinion, debate and editorial discussion."

Southam chairman David Asper, on the other hand, has claimed the same mantle of press freedom as is often worn by U.S. newspaper monopolists. "I cannot find any provision that qualifies the right of free speech by virtue of one's position in life," wrote one of Canada's wealthiest citizens. "We are not afraid to openly participate in the discussion of the affairs of the day."

Although Southam's local papers will continue to reflect their local "markets," Asper added, "on certain national matters, sometimes that local view is not always what is arguably best for the nation as a whole."

Labor round-up

Back and forth on "free" trade

The battle over so-called "free trade" proceeds fitfully. According to one set of spin doctors, the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Qatar in mid-November was a success simply because the talks didn't collapse. But cut through the rhetoric and what the six days of closeted negotiations produced was an agreement on the agenda for the next three years of trade talks. On the other hand, one notable gain for the world's poorest nations was a declaration that they have a right to override drug patents when coping with serious health problems, such as the escalating AIDS pandemic. Meanwhile, on a related note, the CWA is one of 12 unions now supporting a boycott of World Bank bonds, in an effort to force that institution to acknowledge labor rights overseas.

Outpouring of disaster contributions

CWA officials report they have received more than 11,000 separate donations to the CWA Disaster Relief Fund, totaling more than \$350,000, most of which has been disbursed to the families of the 12 CWA members killed in the Sept. 11 attacks. Each family has received a \$10,000 grant to help with immediate expenses; in addition, a \$15,000 trust account has been established for each minor in the dozen affected families, to be dispersed when the children turn 18. The families also received additional help with living expenses. With some small amount of money remaining in the relief fund, the union has requested that any other CWA members who suffered losses from the events of Sept. 11 contact their District Disaster Relief Coordinator for an application; the filing deadline is Jan. 18.

Wal-Mart hammered by lawsuits . . .

The retailing sweatshop more commonly known as Wal-Mart is coming under increasing fire for the way it treats its employees, euphemistically called "associates." The NLRB issued two complaints of unfair labor practices against the chain last month, one regarding alleged interference in a union election at its supercenter in New Castle, Pa., the other for similar activities during a Teamsters organizing drive at a Missouri distribution plant. And a group of "associates" in the upper Midwest took matters in their own hands, filing a lawsuit in Milwaukee Circuit Court complaining that the company forces its employees to work off the clock, refuses to pay overtime, locks some employees in the stores overnight and has them working seven days a week. Other lawsuits on similar wage issues are pending in Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, California, Iowa, Oregon, Georgia, New York and Colorado.

. . . but loses top sweatshop award

For all of its unwanted accomplishments, Wal-Mart was edged out by Disney in the annual "Sweaties" competition. Awarded by the "No Sweat" campaign—sponsored by the Maquila Solidarity Network, Oxfam Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress, Students Against Sweatshops and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees—the "Sweatshop Retailer of the Year Award" went to Disney for its support of 12 Chinese factories in which employees work up to 16 hours a day, six or seven days a week, for wages as low as \$90 a month. Wal-Mart, which won the top award last year, was this year's runner-up, followed by Nike and Reitman's.

OK unions sue over 'right-to-work'

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Driving such activities is a growing awareness of the discriminatory nature of health plans that cover virtually all prescription drugs *except* birth control pills or other FDA-approved contraceptive methods—including Viagra, a male impotence drug. "If you can pay to crank it up, you'd better pay for the consequences," reasoned a UFCW negotiator who battled—successfully—to extend prescription drug coverage to birth control pills at an Alabama uniform supply company.

Moreover, note advocates of the broader coverage, refusing to cover contraceptives is economically foolhardy for the plans themselves, since most also pay for abortions. Adding contraceptive coverage raises plan costs by less than 1%, they point out, while savings can be substantially greater by reducing absenteeism and medical costs associated with unintended pregnancies.

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traception. Six months later, in a case known as *Erickson v. Bartell Drug Co.*, a federal judge in Washington state ruled that a comprehensive prescription plan that excluded contraceptives violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Under the act, he wrote, women's unique health care needs "must be met to the same extent, and on the same terms, as other healthcare needs." Failure to do so "creates a gaping hole in the coverage offered to female employees."

Despite such rulings, however, some employers continue to resist change. Within TNG-CWA, for instance, both IAFE and the Wire Service Guild have been rebuffed in their efforts to have contraceptive coverage added to their prescription plans. In rejecting a grievance filed by the Wire Service Guild, the Associated Press essentially responded that it doesn't see a problem with the status quo. The Guild is now waiting for an arbitration date and is receiving help from TNG-CWA under the legal services program.

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Although hard numbers aren't available, the phenomenon is widespread enough to prompt attention from the CWA executive board, which has approved dues waivers "for all members who are called to active duty" following Sept. 11. Dues are to remain waived until a member returns to his or her job.

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that must be followed upon return from service; and clarification of health plan and pension rights.

- The law requires all employees to provide their employers with advance notice, either written or oral, of military service.

- There is a general presumption that a returning veteran is qualified to reclaim his or her job; the burden of proof to the contrary is on the employer. Returning employees must be provided refresher training where appropriate.

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Labor round-up

Back and forth on "free" trade

The battle over so-called "free trade" proceeds fitfully. According to one set of spin doctors, the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Qatar in mid-November was a success simply because the talks didn't collapse. But cut through the rhetoric and what the six days of closeted negotiations produced was an agreement on the agenda for the next three years of trade talks. On the other hand, one notable gain for the world's poorest nations was a declaration that they have a right to override drug patents when coping with serious health problems, such as the escalating AIDS pandemic. Meanwhile, on a related note, the CWA is one of 12 unions now supporting a boycott of World Bank bonds, in an effort to force that institution to acknowledge labor rights overseas.

Outpouring of disaster contributions

CWA officials report they have received more than 11,000 separate donations to the CWA Disaster Relief Fund, totaling more than \$350,000, most of which has been disbursed to the families of the 12 CWA members killed in the Sept. 11 attacks. Each family has received a \$10,000 grant to help with immediate expenses; in addition, a \$15,000 trust account has been established for each minor in the dozen affected families, to be dispersed when the children turn 18. The families also received additional help with living expenses. With some small amount of money remaining in the relief fund, the union has requested that any other CWA members who suffered losses from the events of Sept. 11 contact their District Disaster Relief Coordinator for an application; the filing deadline is Jan. 18.

Wal-Mart hammered by lawsuits . . .

The retailing sweatshop more commonly known as Wal-Mart is coming under increasing fire for the way it treats its employees, euphemistically called "associates." The NLRB issued two complaints of unfair labor practices against the chain last month, one regarding alleged interference in a union election at its supercenter in New Castle, Pa., the other for similar activities during a Teamsters organizing drive at a Missouri distribution plant. And a group of "associates" in the upper Midwest took matters in their own hands, filing a lawsuit in Milwaukee Circuit Court complaining that the company forces its employees to work off the clock, refuses to pay overtime, locks some employees in the stores overnight and has them working seven days a week. Other lawsuits on similar wage issues are pending in Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, California, Iowa, Oregon, Georgia, New York and Colorado.

. . . but loses top sweatshop award

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Photog's murder shocks Merc staff

A week-long search for Luci Houston, a photojournalist at the San Jose Mercury News, ended Thanksgiving weekend with the discovery of her body in a parked car. She had been shot twice and covered with a tarp.

Houston's estranged husband, Raymond, was arrested a week later and arraigned on homicide charges. Oakland police said they had found a bullet embedded in the couple's bedroom wall, which had been replastered and painted. The couple had married in early 1998; Luci had petitioned for a divorce this past June.

Houston's death shocked the Mercury newsroom, where the photographer had worked since 1993 to high praise and great affection. "To Luci, the people she photographed were not 'subjects'—they were real people," explained David Yarnold, the newspaper's executive editor. "She cared about them and their lives, and her pictures showed it."

The discovery of Houston's body, about two miles from her home, ended days of searching by dozens of friends and co-workers who grew alarmed when she failed to meet a friend who was visiting for the holiday.

Houston, 43, graduated from Southern Illinois University in

1980 with a degree in journalism, then freelanced for several years. She got her first full-time job as a photojournalist in 1986, at the Kansas City Star, then moved on to the Cleveland Plain Dealer before ending up in San Jose. She was renowned for her warmth and charm, which relaxed those in front of her lens and endeared her to colleagues, and approached her work expressly to "build community."

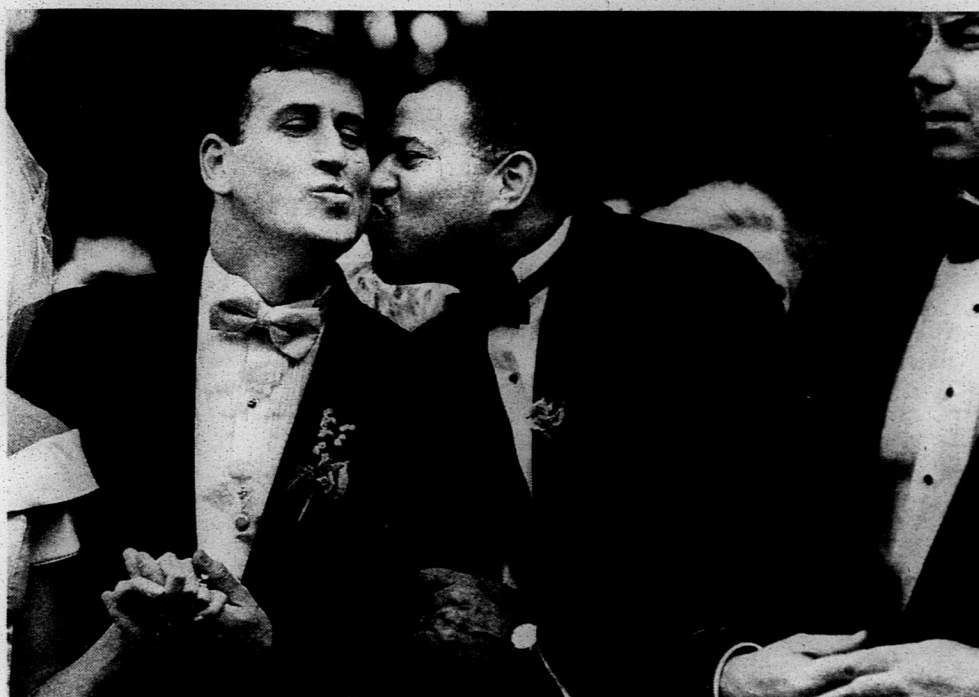
Recognizing those qualities, The Mercury News and the Bay Area Black Journalists Association have established the Luci S. Houston Scholarship Fund, which has a goal of identifying and helping African-American students develop an

interest in photography and photojournalism. The newspaper also is naming its photo lab in Houston's memory, with an appropriate plaque, and is exploring development of a mentoring program in East Palo Alto, where Houston had volunteered to teach photography to students.

Houston was born in Washington, D.C., one of six children in a solidly working-class family, and that's where she was laid to rest. A funeral service was held Dec. 4 in Temple Hills, Maryland. A memorial service followed in San Jose.



Luci Houston



Luci's work

"Wedding Kiss," above—from Houston's series of candid wedding photos, which she shot each weekend—is of groom Kurt Buecheler of Seattle getting bussied by one of his groomsmen, Mike Bush of Santa Clara.

The photo at left, from the 1998 Holiday Wish Book, is of 6-year-old Guadalupe and his 4-year-old sister, Angelica, both of whom have cataracts and are in need of new glasses. Guadalupe wants to become a policeman when he grows up so he can catch the bad guy.

Below left is another Holiday Wish Book entry, this one from 1999, of 5-year-old Bonnie trying to lick Julio Morones, 15, during a Hug-A-Pet assisted therapy program at the Pacific Autism Center for Education.

Below, 12-year-old Darius Thompson of Oakland looks out for Specialist Elizabeth Harter as Delta Squad does push-ups for failing to follow instructions. The photo was shot this past August for a picture story on the Oakland Military Institute, a charter school.

—All photos courtesy of the San Jose Mercury News



OBITUARIES

Roy W. Cummings, often described as the "Father of the Hawai'i Newspaper Guild," died Nov. 24 at the age of 88.

Cummings and a handful of other employees of the Honolulu Advertiser were fired for organizing the first Hawai'i Guild, in 1937, whereupon the local lost its charter. But the war correspondent and copy editor wasn't done: after gaining a full-time position with the

Honolulu Star-Bulletin, he reorganized the Guild in 1949 and later organized the editorial staff at the Advertiser, too. His wife, Susan, said he was driven to do what he did because "he worked 10 years without a vacation."

Although Cummings left Hawai'i in 1958 and subsequently worked for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, he had moved back to the islands two years ago.

Edwin L. "Ed" Beardsley, an employee of the Portland Press Herald for 21 years and a member of the Portland Newspaper Guild bargaining committee, died from an illness mere weeks before three years of negotiations ended in a new contract. He was 44.

A well-liked employee of Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc. (formerly Guy Gannett Communications), Beardsley also served

as a member of the Guild Executive Committee and had been a shop steward in the mailroom for more than 10 years. "Ed had many endearing traits," said Guild president Joanne Lannin. "Among them were his concern for others—his neighbors, fellow employees and youngsters whom he coached in soccer and baseball—and his willingness to quietly and without fanfare provide help to

those who needed his skills and insightful advice."

Beardsley also was credited with playing a crucial role in negotiations, with Lannin citing his "patience and honesty and his steady emphasis on a balanced, open-minded and fair approach" in helping reach a resolution. "All of us miss him, his infectious grin, his subtle sense of humor and his decency," she added.

Thanks to profit-driven media, 'Why do they hate us?' now on everyone's lips

By John J. Sweeney
President, AFL-CIO

[Excerpted from a speech given Nov. 30 at the biennial convention of the International Labor Communications Association, of which The Newspaper Guild-CWA is a member.]

By almost every measurement, the networks and major papers and magazines are less interested than ever in covering the concerns of our unions and union members. Labor reporters and labor beats, sadly, have all but disappeared in today's new twenty-first century media.

In the last century, more than a few writers and social philosophers worried about the power of the state and of governments to censor and distort information and thwart free expression. And in that era, of Hitler and Stalin and dictatorships and official propaganda, it was an understandable concern.

Today, it's not just government that we're concerned about: the power over speech and expression instead is increasingly in the hands of enormous, commercial media and entertainment enterprises that operate and dominate on a global scale.

Today, control over most news programming and much of the amusement provided on broadcast television is in the grasp of just a few industrial and entertainment giants, including General Electric, Westinghouse, AOL-Time-Warner, Walt Disney, Paramount and Rupert Murdoch's empire. And almost all of the significant national cable channels are now controlled by an interconnected network of ownership between TCI, Paramount, Disney and GE.

Longtime and once independent news operations are now corporate divisions expected to generate profit and not necessarily public service. Meanwhile, the promise of a diversity of voices through a 200 or 500 channel future simply hasn't become a reality and never may.

Let me quickly, though, state this very clearly: I am not imagining some devious and dark conspiracy theory about news coverage by the new mass media or about the ownership patterns of today's news operations. Nor am I suspicious that corporate CEOs are secretly manipulating the news and killing stories.

I am especially not concerned about the

men and women of the press corps who bring us the news. They are some of the most professional and hardworking reporters you can find anywhere, and most of them are working people just like those many of us represent.

But I am suggesting this:

In the new world of corporate-owned

news, where profits and the bottom line are paramount, there is a subtle and important influence on the news we get—how much of it is covered, what will drive up readership and ratings and whether corporate owners are willing to truly invest in news gathering.

It is a concern shared privately by more than a few veteran reporters and editors and by prominent journalism professors in our schools of communications.

And it is a new reality our union movement must contend with, more than ever, as we do what we can to get our story told to the public.

The venues for the views of working people are diminishing, and the trend toward chain ownership of daily newspapers, and of shutting down competing paper after paper, is silencing important voices in print journalism. During the last decade alone, dozens of papers—from the Kansas City Times, the New York Tribune, the Pittsburgh Press and Anchorage Times to the Dallas Times Herald, the Fort Lauderdale News, the Houston Post and Sacramento Union—all have been put out of business by their owners, supposedly because they weren't bringing in enough revenue.

Layoffs this year have been rampant in newsrooms large and small across the country, as the corporate owners try to maintain

what often are profits of 20 percent and higher.

Ironically, the first question after the September 11th terrorist attacks that was bannered across the national news magazines was, "Why Do They Hate Us?"

Well, unfortunately, we might have already known the answer if it hadn't been for

a decade in which the management quest for cost-cutting and downsizing slashed foreign news coverage. In the last ten years, the three major networks have cut their staffs abroad by half, shrinking or closing foreign bureaus in Frankfurt, London, Rome, Beijing, Johannesburg, Hong Kong and Paris.

Time magazine's ranks of foreign correspondents have been reduced by a third. ABC News, which once had 17 foreign bureaus, now has seven, and the once powerful United Press International barely survives.

We don't know "why they hate us," and we don't know the conditions of the sweatshops in Central America, or how many labor leaders are languishing in Southeast Asia, or why children continue to be forced into hard manual labor across the globe, for a simple reason: It's because too many reporters with their notepads and correspondents with their cameras are no longer there to let us see and know the world beyond our borders.

Our view here at home has also been blurred by the effects of bottom-line news management.

We all witnessed it after September 11th, when America suddenly was introduced to a new group of heroes: the firefighters and police officers, the paramedics, EMTs and

construction workers, all of them extraordinary rescuers. The media celebrated, in some remarkable and moving news coverage, the sacrifices and spirit of volunteerism of the workers—and rightly so.

Here was the backbone of the American way of life, men and women with a job to do and a dogged determination to roll up their sleeves and give of themselves and persevere. But, you know, these "new" heroes—they've been with us all along. But their story of real-life America has been mostly absent from our front pages and TV screens.

Instead, up until lately, the chase for media dollars has been driving news judgment in an altogether different direction. It's been driven toward trivia and celebrity gossip, consumer scams, sensational crimes, scandal in high places and "lifestyle" stories of the rich and famous—hardly the world of the American heroes we now honor.

The slogan since September 11th has been that, from now on, everything will be different.

Well, we can hope that the prediction applies to the managers of the mass media, and that finally there will be serious and persistent coverage of the stagnant wages earned by millions of working families.

Of the unsafe and dangerous conditions in too many workplaces.

Of the lack of health care and pensions for too many working men and women.

Of the blatant harassment and intimidation by too many employers of workers who want to form or join unions.

Of the marked benefits in wages and working conditions and satisfaction and longevity on the job that come from membership in a union.

More than ever, we must find effective ways to reach our members with our political message and energize and educate them and get them active and get the phone ringing on Capitol Hill.

That's the way we'll advance our agenda and build the powerful new movement we know we're capable of.

More than ever, we must reach the unorganized and tell them what they haven't been learning from the traditional media: that joining a union and bargaining collectively is their right, that union membership is good for their families and good for their communities and good for our country.



Sweeney leaves the ILCA convention after criticizing media coverage of working families—America's "new" heroes.

Unions? It's obvious: they're too damn powerful

By George Ehring

It amazes me sometimes to hear people say they think "unions have too much power." You hear it all the time—at least I do—even from "ordinary" working people. What are they thinking, I wonder?

"Do you mean," I ask, "that in the balance of power between workers and corporations, or between workers and governments, workers have become too strong?" Well, uh, I don't know. Maybe, they say.

"You mean," I point out helpfully, "like the corporations have become so weak that they've lost the power to fire their workers whenever they want, lay them off, or move their companies anywhere in the world where the labor or taxes are cheaper and there aren't too many pesky regulations?" Well, no, not exactly.

"You mean then that the workers have been able to force the bosses to pay them so much that they're practically earning as much as the boss, and that's not fair?" Uh, no.

"Then maybe it's that the workers have bargained for so much time off the job that the companies can hardly find anyone to keep the place going?" Not really.

"Is it because the workers have become so powerful that

they can force the boss to pay women as much as they pay men? You have a problem with that?" They are shaking their heads at this one. "Wait," I say. "Maybe it's that the workers have become so powerful that they can force the boss to hire minority workers—you know, immigrants. That's it, isn't it?"

This one is often met with an embarrassed silence and their eyes look away.

"Maybe the workers have become so powerful that they've been able to force governments to pass good laws protecting their rights, is that it? No? Then it must be that they've forced governments to pass laws making it real easy to organize new workplaces?" That's not really it, either.

At this point, still struggling to figure out what they mean when they say unions are too powerful, sometimes I might launch into a little bit of labor history.

"You mean, like when the workers demanded laws to get children out of the mines and factories? You mean today's workers are powerful like that?" I ask. This usually does not get a positive answer, either, and I continue to fish for the answer.

"Maybe it's like the times when workers demanded a 40-hour work week, and went on strike all over the place to gain it—which is why many Americans have the weekend off—

is that it?" Uh uh.

"Maybe, it's like the time of the famous sit-down strikes, when workers occupied the factories in order to win themselves a union. You mean that today's workers are militant like that, don't you?" Not really.

"I know now," I say. "It must be that you think every worker ought to have to go one-on-one against the boss. That would be a more equal balance of power, wouldn't it? Workers shouldn't have the right to act collectively, should they? That's not really fair to the boss, is it? One worker, one corporation—that's only right, eh?"

Usually by this point they are beginning to backtrack. But in the back of their minds they're still thinking about the time the teachers went on strike, and they had to scramble to find someone to look after the kids during the day. They might be remembering when the postal workers went on strike and they couldn't mail their aunt's birthday card. And, oh yeah, they saw something on TV about that big General Motors strike not too long ago. . . .

Unions? It's obvious. They're too damn powerful.

Excerpted from *Our Times*, Canada's independent labor magazine, to which George Ehring is a regular contributor.

After a tumultuous year, hopes for good fortune and great joy

By Linda Foley, President and Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer



As the president and secretary-treasurer of the Newspaper Guild-CWA, we could not let the year 2001 end without expressing our best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

The events of Sept. 11 caused us all to pause and reflect on our lives, our work and our families. Even in a "normal" year, this season traditionally evokes thoughts of joy and peace. This year, we realize how precious those hopes are.

The period since that fateful day has been a difficult time for Guild members, who have been working hard to get the story out while already feeling particularly vulnerable about their job security in an industry that had been laying off thousands of workers. We now face many new fears and enemies: anthrax, job loss, hazardous working conditions, bomb threats and, for some—including 12 CWA sister and brother union members who perished in the attacks—deadly terrorism.

At Guild-CWA headquarters we've been working to support our members, both in relationships with their employers and in other ways. We used our web site (www.newsguild.org) to pass along vital information immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks. We've also provided anthrax information during the initial crisis and continue to maintain current links as new information becomes available. We've posted informa-



tion on health and safety, along with letters of support we received from journalists' unions around the world. Perhaps most important were the messages from CWA President Morty Bahr, which we e-mailed to our activist members' list, about CWA members who had been killed or injured in the tragedy.

When two columnists (at non-Guild represented papers) were fired for writing unfavorable opinions about President Bush, we launched our "Patriotism's 2-Edged Sword" web page to spotlight new pressures being put on journalists.

Like other national tragedies, the aftermath of Sept. 11 has produced some unanticipated benefits. An apathetic American public now has a heightened consciousness about the rest of the world, and more citizens are anxious for accurate news and information. The labor movement's spirit of solidarity seems to be seeping into the national psyche. Union trademark slogans, such as "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All" and "United We Stand," have become the rallying cries of a wounded nation.

Still, the patriotism that unites us also threatens to divide us. As union members who work in the media, we are among the first casualties when civil liberties are attacked. Our natural inclinations to challenge authority make us prime suspects when national loyalty is questioned.

For these and other reasons, we know it's been a difficult year for you and all members of The Newspaper Guild-CWA. But, as always, you continue to meet these new challenges with amazing ingenuity, spirit and dedication to your work and your co-workers.

And that gives us hope.

Enjoy this holiday season, and may the next year bring you and your family good fortune, optimism and—above all—joy.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I've been a Guild member off and on (depending on whether the place I worked had a Guild) for more than 30 years. In Long Beach, Calif., I was an official of our local and participated often in the western district council. Here, I've been hitting my head against the wall to get our local to be more active in recruiting. We need numbers if we're to remain viable.

Anyway, the reason for this message is to inquire if any mention could be made in The Guild Reporter about the upcoming American Copy Editors Society's national conference, to be held in Louisville, April 25-27? We're a nonprofit group, run by a bunch of volunteers, and depending on the kindness of our publishers for postage and other expenses.

More information can be found on our web site, www.copydesk.org. Thanks for your consideration.

—Ed Gallardo

To the Editor,

To all the brothers and sisters of CWA, my son Matthew and I want to thank you.

Thank you for all your cards from all over this great country. Thank you for taking the time to share with us in our loss of our Renee.

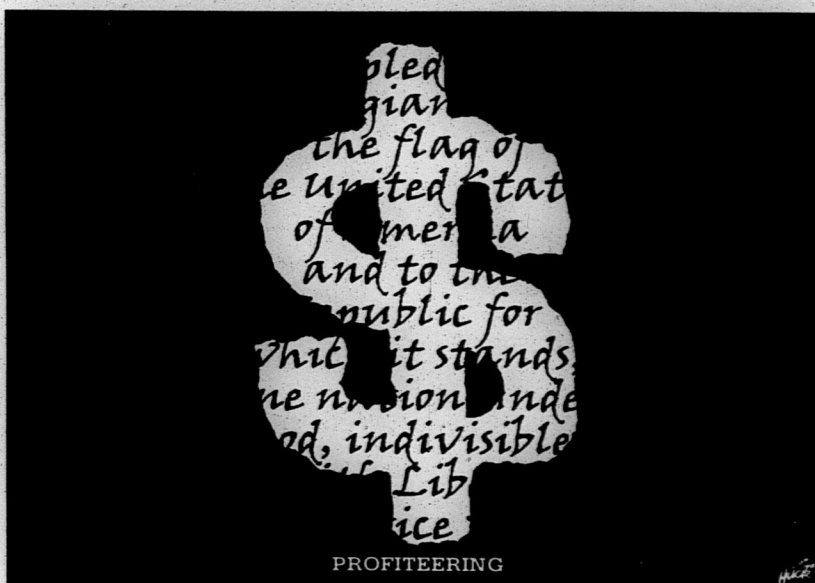
I can see why Renee had actively pursued trying to organize her fellow agents at American Airlines. She was a strong believer in what was right and what was wrong. She also loved working for her company. She just didn't like the way her agent group was treated. I was always telling her she would have made a great shop steward.

The cards we have received have made me very proud. She made the right choice trying to join and organize with CWA. You have made me and my son feel like we have another family to help us get through this senseless tragedy.

Again, our sincere thanks and may God bless each and every one of you and your families.

—Paul Newell and Matthew Newell (age 10) Cranston, R.I.

[Editor's Note: Renee Newell was a volunteer organizer working to bring her fellow American Airlines passenger service agents into CWA. She died aboard American Airlines Flight 11 on Sept. 11.]



Should labor editors be union stooges?

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

The New York Times reporter was in high dudgeon. Although his letter to TNG-CWA President Linda Foley readily conceded that he hadn't paid much attention to The Guild Reporter prior to Sept. 11, subsequent issues seemed to be criticizing reporters for parroting the government's official line. "In effect," he blasted, "The Guild Reporter is charging that members of The Newspaper Guild at The New York Times, The Washington Post and elsewhere are stooges for the corporate cronies of the Bush Administration."

Noting that he felt "personally insulted," the writer added that he'd never seen a labor publication "so openly and directly" attack its membership. In fact, he added, in his experience "union newspapers write stories highlighting the positive work of their own members."

As this litany of grievances was being scrutinized in Washington for a specific example of such attacks—none were described—I was sitting in a Las Vegas hotel discussing the role of union publications with other union editors. The setting was the biennial convention of the International Labor Communications Association, an organization founded in the 1950s to deter bogus union newspapers from selling ads by threatening labor problems as the price of not doing business. Such strong-arm tactics being somewhat unusual these days, ILCA members have time to ponder more meaningful questions. I don't know what the Times reporter would have made of the prevailing view.

"Propaganda," said a well-spoken, articulate editor for a white-collar union in California, with other editors nodding in agreement. "It's all about propaganda, but it's *our* propaganda," as contrasted to the corporate propaganda that dominates the popular press. Or as another editor put it, if we don't tell "our story," no one else will.

The problem we face, the labor editors agreed, is a mainstream press that glorifies fast-talking dot.com "entrepreneurs" or hack-and-slash CEOs; meanwhile, the working class generally, and unions in particular, get ignored—or worse. When the

mainstream press finally turns its gaze on unions, it's to marginalize them as irrelevant, scorn them with clichéd references to union "bosses" or demonize them by focusing on strikes while ignoring the underlying issues that provoke such job actions.

It's up to union publications to fill the void—to write the positive stories that are missing from the popular press. Moreover, with the popular press giving unions nothing but grief, why would a union publication add to the drumbeat of negativity by writing anything that might reflect badly on organized labor? Publishing critical analysis in a union newspaper is simply doing the devil's work, handing business interests the ammunition they need to further undermine the labor movement. Let 'em dig up their own dirt, most ILCA editors agreed: our job is to put a positive spin on whatever we publish.

That prescription seems to echo the Times reporter's call for stories "highlighting the positive work" of union members, and certainly there's a need for such stories in union publications. But the ILCA editors explicitly, and the Times reporter implicitly, are advocating something more: that there be *only* "positive" news. That the labor press, in essence, be defined by its opposition: if the mainstream press plays offense, we'll play defense. What they ignore, we'll trumpet. Let the reader find the truth somewhere in the middle.

There is, however, one crucial distinction between these two advocates of such Pollyanna "journalism." The ILCA editor from California at least sees himself as waging a war on behalf of his constituents, i.e. union members. His only hesitation about using the "P" word, he explained, was because of the bad press it gets—say "propaganda" and most people immediately think of Nazis and Joseph Goebbels.

The Times reporter, on the other hand, seems to have identified himself not with other union members—who have never been singled out by The Guild Reporter as stooges of anyone—but with his employer. Indeed, there is much to criticize about the ongoing consolidation, downsizing and bottom-line obsessing of the mass media, as well as its kid-glove treatment of the Bush administration.

And that's fair game for any union paper.

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: January 11.) Letters may be e-mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

As economy sours, workers hit hardest

An economic cloud settled over much of the continent as it headed into the holiday season.

The U.S. unemployment rate again surged, hitting 5.7%, as another 300,000 jobs were cut in November, for a three-month total of nearly 1 million—the fastest workforce reduction in more than two decades. Canada's jobless rate, meanwhile, rose to 7.5%. But in a harbinger of the new economic order, the number of part-time Canadian jobs rose for the second consecutive month, even as full-time jobs evaporated.

The layoffs were accompanied by more reports of a contracting economy, which shrank at an annual rate of 1.1% in the third quarter, its worst performance since 1991. But while corporate profits likewise were said to be "plummeting," down 8.3% in the quarter and off 22.2% when compared with the same period last year, such comparisons were less dire than they appeared because of the exceptionally robust profits of recent years: few corporate balance sheets are actually bleeding. Moreover, the alacrity with which many companies jettisoned employees has bolstered profits that otherwise would have sagged more.

(A prime example of this latter dynamic in the newspaper business was again provided by Tony Ridder, chairman and chief executive of Knight Ridder, who painted an upbeat picture Dec. 6 for analysts attending the Credit Suisse First Boston Media Week conference. Although advertising revenue will be flat to down next year, he prophesied, Knight Ridder's financial performance will

be in "the top tier" of its industry, thanks in part to a workforce reduction of more than 2,200.)

With the U.S. economy officially in recession, analysts scrambling for good news grasped at household spending as the economy's salvation, noting that consumer spending actually increased by 1.1% in the quarter. But that minor bump clearly wasn't enough: although manufacturers' inventories declined a hefty \$60.1 billion during the quarter, retailers' inventories rose \$1 billion, suggesting a bottleneck is forming. And because consumers fund their purchases primarily through paychecks or borrowing, the rising tide of layoffs does not bode well for a quick turnaround.

Nor does the chillier bargaining climate for unions trying to negotiate raises. A New York Times article Dec. 9, for example, cited several instances of wage offers to public employees being rescinded because of plummeting tax revenues. The Chicago Sun-Times took an extraordinarily hard-nosed attitude toward the bargaining team from the Chicago Newspaper Guild, forcing acceptance of a new, three-year contract with a 2.25% wage increase—total. IAPE, the TNG-CWA local representing Dow Jones employees, is debating whether to except a one-year "extension" of its contract that includes a 2.5% increase—but which freezes the scales.

Although lawmakers in Washington D.C. could relieve some of the pressure through the time-tested practice of injecting federal spending into the economy, a stand-off

Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, annual averages (2000 dollars)

	All	Men	Women
1979	\$558	\$677	\$424
1980	546	653	421
1981	541	648	419
1982	544	656	429
1983	541	654	436
1984	540	648	439
1985	549	650	443
1986	562	658	456
1987	565	656	459
1988	560	654	459
1989	554	650	455
1990	543	634	456
1991	539	623	463
1992	540	615	466
1993	547	608	468
1994	543	607	464
1995	541	608	459
1996	538	611	459
1997	540	621	462
1998	553	632	482
1999	567	639	489
2000	576	646	491

Source: Economic Policy Institute

between Democrats and Republicans—the latter preferring to cut corporate taxes, in the belief this will stimulate production—has blocked such assistance. Instead, a one-vote margin for passage of "fast track" authority in the House threatens to increase cheap imports, contributing to the ballooning growth of foreign debt.

"No one in the U.S. House who voted for fast track should underestimate the grave dis-

appointment and anger of the labor community," said CWA President Morton Bahr. "The 'yes' voters have condemned thousands, even millions, of Americans to adjust to a future without family-wage jobs, because those jobs will disappear to countries that offer cheap labor and no bothersome regulations to protect workers or the environment."

The Economic Policy Institute calculates that growing trade deficits—exacerbated by treaties like NAFTA—have already cost the U.S. three million jobs. But the economic boom of recent years papered over the loss of good manufacturing jobs with volatile high tech and low-wage service jobs that now are evaporating. Moreover, points out EPI President Jeff Faux, a growing net foreign debt—now at 22% of gross domestic product, headed toward approximately 40% of GDP by 2006—could derail any economic recovery. Argentina, for example, is teetering on the edge of economic collapse because its foreign debt is 50% of GDP.

"Simple arithmetic makes it clear that the United States cannot borrow forever in order to buy more from the world than it sells," Faux observed. "With the trade gap structured to grow faster than U.S. income, it's no surprise that trade agreements have had the perverse effect of widening the trade deficit and thus increasing U.S. borrowing from overseas."

Meanwhile, as the chart above makes painfully clear, the longest economic expansion in U.S. history meant remarkably little to most workers. And now the hard times are upon us.

More newspaper layoffs—and salary cuts

News of layoffs and other cutbacks continues to percolate throughout the newspaper industry.

The Chicago Sun-Times, despite being faced with a strike threat from the Chicago Newspaper Guild over sputtering contract negotiations, said it plans to cut five editorial positions, including three artists and two library assistants.

The San Francisco Chronicle announced 220 jobs—roughly 8.5% of its workforce—will be eliminated, just one year after it absorbed the staff of the San Francisco Examiner. The reduction will include 116 layoffs from both management and union ranks, but will affect only those hired after

July 27, 2000—the date Hearst Corp. bought the Chronicle and sold the Examiner—in keeping with a deal negotiated with the Northern California Media Workers Guild.

Members of the Hawaii Newspaper Guild, meanwhile, forestalled approximately eight layoffs at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin by agreeing to take 11.5% across-the-board pay cuts. The unanimous, 70-0 vote by the Guild's newsroom employees includes a provision to review the pay cuts every three months to determine if they're still needed; the Star-Bulletin agreed to make its financial books available for review.

Elsewhere, Tribune Co. officials announced that all 18,000 non-union employ-

ees will have their wages frozen for at least a year—then said they would seek "compensation cost savings" from the 4,000 employees with union contracts. But while Tribune officials defended the move by jumping on the slumping economy bandwagon, a key element in the company's deteriorating finances was a credit downgrade—to negative, from stable—by Moody's Investor Service. The Tribune Co. is among the most heavily leveraged companies in the newspaper industry, having borrowed heavily to finance its acquisition of Times Mirror last year.

Yet for all the breast-beating one hears from publishers when they're dumping employees, their mood is remarkably more

upbeat when they're talking to Wall Street. While most are still predicting lower profits in the current quarter, none are warning of losses and McClatchy Co. actually said fourth quarter earnings will be higher than previously expected.

Indeed, several industry forecasters are cautiously saying that the advertising recession has bottomed out and that 2002 should see gradual improvement—say, a 2.4% gain over 2001, helped in part by the Olympics and by congressional elections. Others aren't as convinced—Merrill Lynch is predicting a further 1.5% decline—but even that would be a marked improvement over the 6.9% decline it is predicting for 2001.

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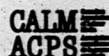
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DAYBOOK

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.

Nat'l Hispanic Journalists,
June 12-16, San Diego

CWA Convention,
June 17-19, Las Vegas

Native American Journalists,
June 19-20, San Diego

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Noting that the number of U.S. foreign correspondents has dwindled from 2,700 five years earlier to just 293, two veteran newsmen worry that "the flow of our information about developments abroad is seriously limited." . . . The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 7-1 decision, rejects an argument that newspapers may refuse to accept advertising "at any time and for any reason." . . . The Wall Street Journal, noting that there are more than 800 labor publications in the U.S., frets that they "could be a potent factor in determining voting results" because of their penchant for "stirring up rank-and-file discontent."

Twenty-five years ago this month:

TNG President Charles Perlik deplors a U.S. Supreme Court decision that employers don't have to provide disability benefits to pregnant employees. . . . Leonard Milliman, first president of the Wire Service Guild, dies of cancer at age 73. . . . The Chicago Guild fires its executive director of 13 years, Justin McCarthy, and replaces him with Gerald Minkinen, a former organizing director for AFSCME.

Ten years ago this month:

Guild members voting in a national referendum reject the idea of repealing a \$1-a-month dues increase to fund increased organizing. . . . AP reporter Terry Anderson, a Wire Service Guild member until he took an exempt position as Mid-East correspondent, is welcomed back to the U.S. after nearly seven years as a captive of radical Moslems in Lebanon.