

THE GUILD Reporter

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BELL & HOWELL (C)
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Guild and CEP picketers listen as Colin Graham, head of the Victoria Labour Council, tells a broadcast reporter why employees of the Victoria Times-Colonist are out on strike.

LETTER FROM VENEZUELA

What if it's the press that threatens democracy?

By Robert Collier
Northern California Media Guild

U.S. journalists are accustomed to defending their colleagues in other nations when freedom of the press is threatened by antidemocratic forces. But what should be done when it's foreign reporters themselves who are part of the problem?

This unusual dilemma is at the forefront in Venezuela, where the private media and leftist President Hugo Chavez are locked in a no-holds-barred battle for power.

The International Federation of Journalists, the international affiliate of The Newspaper Guild-CWA, has recently found itself in the uncomfortable position of trying to persuade Venezuelan journalists to back out of their political fight with the government. It's unclear whether the IFJ's efforts are having any effect, however, as Venezuela continues lurching toward a possible repeat of the April military-led coup that temporarily overthrew Chavez.

By any measure, the fight between Chavez and the media is a two-way street. Chavez frequently condemns the media, sometimes criticizing individual reporters and media owners by name. The media, for their part, return the favor in spades, throwing objectivity to the winds by playing a stridently partisan role supporting the opposition.

In the months leading up to the April coup, most media outlets (all but one of the Caracas newspapers, and all four private national TV channels) gave blanket coverage to anti-Chavez political activities and called for the democratically-elected president to be overthrown. During the 48-hour coup that installed a conservative military-civilian junta, the media blacked out pro-Chavez street protests and complete-

ly ignored the military counter-coup that eventually rescued Chavez and returned him to the presidency.

Venezuelans only found out about Chavez's return by watching U.S. cable television broadcasts, which fully reported the news.

Now, Venezuela's media are again playing the same role, as the opposition is again calling for Chavez's overthrow. International media owners' groups, such as the Inter-American Press Association, have lined up solidly against Chavez, denouncing him for allegedly dictatorial conduct and repressing freedom of the press.

In June, the IFJ sent a three-person delegation to Venezuela to sort out the competing claims. The delegation—comprising IFJ General Secretary Aidan White, Argentinian media union representative and IFJ vice president Osvaldo Urriolabeitia, and TNG representative and San Francisco Chronicle reporter and columnist Robert Collier—met with Venezuelan journalists and representatives of the government, media owners, labor unions and human-rights groups.

In their meetings with journalists, the IFJ members heard repeated complaints about pressures from media owners to press an anti-Chavez political slant. But it also was clear that rank-and-file journalists, like the rest of the Venezuelan population, are deeply divided along political lines. Local journalists hotly debated among themselves whether it was legitimate for the media to have a strong political bias—and, if so, whether that slant should be pro- or anti-Chavez.

The IFJ delegation concluded that Chavez and the media were equally responsible for their tensions. In a final report released in July, the IFJ praised rank-and-file media workers, saying "many Venezuelan journalists have shown extraordinary courage, dignity,

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BC local hits the streets

The same kind of in-your-face arrogance that led CanWest Global last year to issue one-size-fits-all editorials this year has resulted in the shuttering of a newspaper.

Almost 275 unionized employees of the Victoria Times-Colonist, including 200 members of the Victoria-Vancouver Island Newspaper Guild, CWA Local 20223, and 40 mailers with TNG-CWA Local 30403 walked off the job Sept. 4 after five months of fruitless contract negotiations. The strike was called despite the appointment in late July of a provincial mediator, "who booked out Aug. 20 because the two sides were so far apart he wasn't able to be of much assistance," reported Guild President Chris Carolan.

At issue, Carolan said, is the company's "continued agenda of concession bargaining." Among the 15 rollbacks CanWest has been demanding: reducing benefits to part timers, rolling back sick pay benefits, introducing unlimited use of freelancers and, at least initially, transferring call center jobs from Victoria to corporate head offices in Winnipeg. While the company at one point dropped this last demand, union officials are unclear whether it is back on the table now that the company has been struck.

The strike, which completely stopped publication of the paper, is the first major labor stoppage at the Times-Colonist since a six-month strike that started December, 1973. That strike succeeded, among other gains, in earning fully paid sick leave; one of CanWest's core demands now is to reduce sick pay to 75% of normal wages.

Other company demands include full discretion to cancel vacation time and the elimination of three more district managers. Two district managers were cut in the last round of contract negotia-

tions. CanWest also is seeking to erase union jurisdictional boundaries, allocating jobs without regard for work assignments that were confirmed by previous arbitral decisions.

Joining Guild members on the picket line are members of the newspaper's two other unions, the pressmen of the Graphic Communications International Union and the compositors of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union. The three unions comprise a joint council that negotiates common issues, with each union bargaining separately over issues particular to its members. Before they went on strike, however, the individual unions hadn't had an opportunity even to present their separate proposals.

Strike votes were taken between Aug. 8 and Aug. 13 and drew between 94% and 100% support. As a result, Carolan said, morale is high. Community support also has been strong, with members of the Victoria Labour Council walking the picket line and other unions bringing doughnuts, muffins and other food to the picket line.

The local has been running radio and newspaper ads, to which the company has reacted with its own ads and with replies on the canada.com web page. The local's web page can be visited at www.vving.ca.

No talks were scheduled through the first two weeks of the walkout.

One final note: while Can West apparently feels it can bully a couple of hundred of its employees, it must have realized it had bitten off more than it could chew in its effort to bully the nation. The national editorials that began flowing out of Winnipeg last year have stopped, presumably in response to public protests but with no explanation or acknowledgment.

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The new pact satisfied a key union demand by raising the cap on yearly pension income, from \$30,000 to \$40,000. Guild negotiators estimated the increase would protect even the highest-paid editorial employees for at least the next 15 years, while lower-paid employees won't have to worry about the cap for approximately 40 years.

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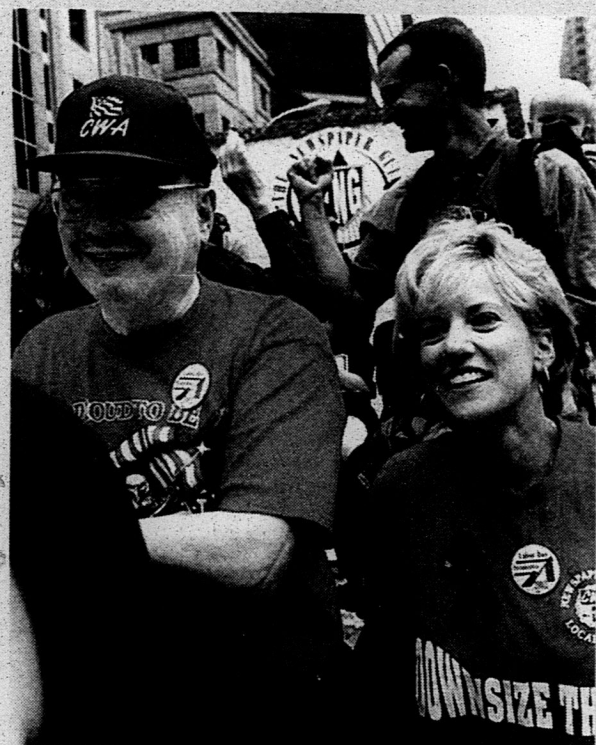
Single copies: \$1.50

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



Down-size this!

Plans by the Philadelphia Inquirer's new editor, Walker Lundy, to lay off 10 editorial assistants have run into a buzzsaw of opposition from members of the Greater Philadelphia Newspaper Guild. Protests have included entering a float for the first time in the city's Labor Day Parade (at left, with Guild President Henry Holcomb and Daily News reporter Diane Mastrull in the foreground), repeated picketing outside the building, wearing black ribbons at work and displaying 'no-layoffs' signs on office computers. The protests also have included two demon-



strations outside the Knight Ridder-owned newspaper's offices (above). "Lundy's just trying to throw a bone to Wall Street, which has a shoot-from-the hip notion that all companies have too many support people," Holcomb told the crowd. "The peo-

ple Lundy wants to terminate aren't coffee-fetching gofers. They do work that's important to our readers." The layoffs, initially scheduled for Oct. 1, have been postponed to Oct. 12 while the Guild negotiates to rescind the cuts.

NLRB judge slams ProJo on ULPs

Orders two years of benefits restored; 22 more ULPs to be heard next month

If there's any truth in the adage that where there's smoke there's fire, the Providence Journal should be a four-alarm inferno by now.

The spark? A sweeping, long-awaited ruling on 44 charges of unfair labor practices that have confounded contract bargaining for nearly three years and demoralized the newspaper's employees. The 45-page decision by Administrative Law Judge William G. Kocol, issued Sept. 12 following a trial held in late February and early March that was prosecuted by general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board, upheld 28 of the most serious charges. Only the most minor issues were dismissed, according to Tim Schick, administrative officer of the Providence Newspaper Guild.

Taken as a group, the sustained charges amount to an indictment of the Belo-owned newspaper for disregarding federal labor law,

engaging in sham bargaining and imposing its will regardless of legal precedent or contractual obligations. The judge's cease and order lists 19 activities the Journal must stop; it adds another 24 affirmative actions the company must take.

Devoid of personal observations or editorializing, the ruling nevertheless paints a damning portrait of corporate managers run amok. For example, in ruling on a charge that the Journal illegally retracted its offer of a wage increase after the Guild threatened a consumer boycott, Kocol rebuffed the Journal's claim that it was only exercising its own form of economic leverage.

"Respondent's regressive bargaining proposal was not designed to pressure the Union to accept its bargaining proposals," he reasoned, which would have been acceptable. "Rather, it was designed to punish the Union for engaging in protected concerted activity."

The bulk of Kocol's order requires making Guild members whole for losses going back nearly two years, at a cost that had not been estimated as The Guild Reporter went to press. Specifically, the Journal was ordered to:

- Pay Guild employees the same raises received by nonunion workers, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2000, under a "me-too" provision of the expired contract.
- Replace Blue Cross with an equivalent plan, also retroactive to Jan. 1, 2000.
- Retroactively restore the original UnitedHealthcare and Delta Dental plans, or replace them with equivalent plans.
- Restore the cap on increases in employees' share of health insurance premiums, as well as reimburse employees for the extra premiums they've already paid.
- Restore the second floating holiday and make employees whole for the loss of this holiday

since Jan. 1, 2000.

- Restore the vacation policy as it existed before Jan. 1, 2000, and make employees whole for any losses experienced as a result of the change.

- Restore the parking voucher program for newly hired and part-time workers and reimburse them for their losses.

- Restore the taxi voucher system.

The judge also ordered the Journal to provide the Guild with a wealth of information that had been requested but denied.

Given the vastly one-sided outcome of the decision and the

scheduled start of yet another trial Oct. 21, when the Journal will be charged with 22 additional ULPs, Guild leaders were of two minds as to what lies ahead. While some hoped the decision would provide the company with a wake-up call to start serious contract negotiations, others wondered if Belo would appeal and keep slugging it out in court.

But one clue might have been provided by company attorney Richard Perras. "The most important thing to the Journal is that ultimately all of these matters will have to be resolved at the bargaining table," he told an AP reporter.

ATTENTION TNG/CWA MEMBERS AND TNG/CWA RETIREES

"I have always felt that it was important that everyone who was a worker join a labor organization . . ."
—Eleanor Roosevelt, 1941

If you, or members of your family, ever worked with or met Eleanor Roosevelt; if you heard her speak at a political rally or local union meeting; if you read her My Day columns; if you have letters to or from her; if you have stories about Eleanor Roosevelt and your family or your union, then we want to hear from you.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers is an exciting new project to collect and publish the work of Eleanor Roosevelt so that it will be accessible to labor and human right activists, policy makers, students, and scholars. We want to make sure that her legacy is used to help today's labor organizing and educational efforts and we need your help.

PLEASE CONTACT:

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THE CORPORATE STATE (OF MIND) AND FREE EXPRESSION

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2002 - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

Alarmed over the intrusion of corporate America into our nation's newsrooms and classrooms? Concerned about "corporate-speak" infringing on our rights of free speech and free expression?

Then, join the Department for Professional Employees of the AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers, and The Newspaper Guild-CWA, as we explore these issues and their impact on America's future.

Two panels discussions featuring leading journalists, academics and free speech experts as well as a luncheon forum will address these topics. (If you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem.)

Registration fee of \$25 includes lunch. For more information and early registration, go to: www.dpeaflcio.org

Paul Almeida
President, DPE

Sandra Feldman
President, AFT

Linda Foley
President, TNG



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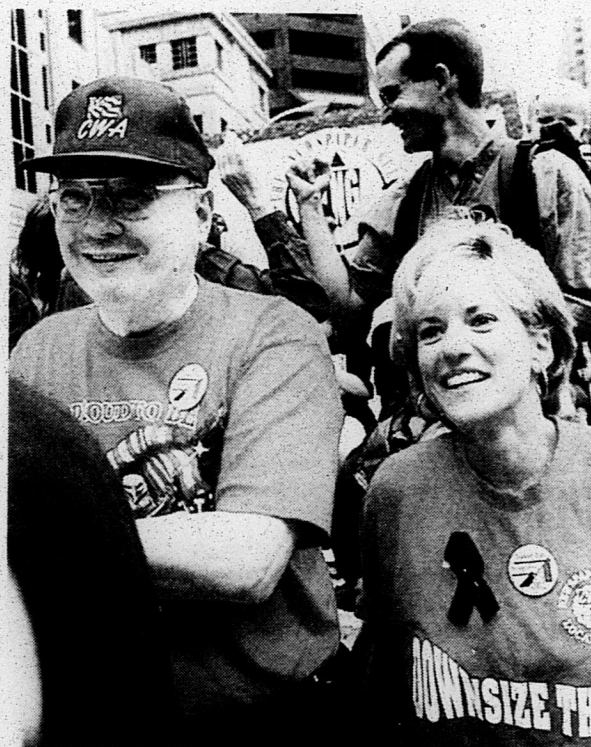
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The Newspaper Guild International



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

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



Down-size this!

Plans by the Philadelphia Inquirer's new editor, Walker Lundy, to lay off 10 editorial assistants have run into a buzzsaw of opposition from members of the Greater Philadelphia Newspaper Guild. Protests have included entering a float for the first time in the city's Labor Day Parade (at left, with Guild President Henry Holcomb and Daily News reporter Diane Mastrull in the foreground), repeated picketing outside the building, wearing black ribbons at work and displaying 'no-layoffs' signs on office computers. The protests also have included two demon-



strations outside the Knight Ridder-owned newspaper's offices (above). "Lundy's just trying to throw a bone to Wall Street, which has a shoot-from-the hip notion that all companies have too many support people," Holcomb told the crowd. "The peo-

ple Lundy wants to terminate aren't coffee-fetching gofers. They do work that's important to our readers." The layoffs, initially scheduled for Oct. 1, have been postponed to Oct. 12 while the Guild negotiates to rescind the cuts.

NLRB judge slams ProJo on ULPs

Orders two years of benefits restored; 22 more ULPs to be heard next month

If there's any truth in the adage that where there's smoke there's fire, the Providence Journal should be a four-alarm inferno by now.

The spark? A sweeping, long-awaited ruling on 44 charges of unfair labor practices that have confounded contract bargaining for nearly three years and demoralized the newspaper's employees. The 45-page decision by Administrative Law Judge William G. Kocol, issued Sept. 12 following a trial held in late February and early March that was prosecuted by general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board, upheld 28 of the most serious charges. Only the most minor issues were dismissed, according to Tim Schick, administrative officer of the Providence Newspaper Guild.

Taken as a group, the sustained charges amount to an indictment of the Belo-owned newspaper for disregarding federal labor law,

engaging in sham bargaining and imposing its will regardless of legal precedent or contractual obligations. The judge's cease and order lists 19 activities the Journal must stop; it adds another 24 affirmative actions the company must take.

Devoid of personal observations or editorializing, the ruling nevertheless paints a damning portrait of corporate managers run amok. For example, in ruling on a charge that the Journal illegally retracted its offer of a wage increase after the Guild threatened a consumer boycott, Kocol rebuffed the Journal's claim that it was only exercising its own form of economic leverage.

"Respondent's regressive bargaining proposal was not designed to pressure the Union to accept its bargaining proposals," he reasoned, which would have been acceptable. "Rather, it was designed to punish the Union for engaging in protected concerted activity."

The bulk of Kocol's order requires making Guild members whole for losses going back nearly two years, at a cost that had not been estimated as The Guild Reporter went to press. Specifically, the Journal was ordered to:

- Pay Guild employees the same raises received by nonunion workers, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2000, under a "me-too" provision of the expired contract.
- Replace Blue Cross with an equivalent plan, also retroactive to Jan. 1, 2000.
- Retroactively restore the original UnitedHealthcare and Delta Dental plans, or replace them with equivalent plans.
- Restore the cap on increases in employees' share of health insurance premiums, as well as reimburse employees for the extra premiums they've already paid.
- Restore the second floating holiday and make employees whole for the loss of this holiday

since Jan. 1, 2000.

• Restore the vacation policy as it existed before Jan. 1, 2000, and make employees whole for any losses experienced as a result of the change.

• Restore the parking voucher program for newly hired and part-time workers and reimburse them for their losses.

• Restore the taxi voucher system.

The judge also ordered the Journal to provide the Guild with a wealth of information that had been requested but denied.

Given the vastly one-sided outcome of the decision and the

scheduled start of yet another trial Oct. 21, when the Journal will be charged with 22 additional ULPs, Guild leaders were of two minds as to what lies ahead. While some hoped the decision would provide the company with a wake-up call to start serious contract negotiations, others wondered if Belo would appeal and keep slugging it out in court.

But one clue might have been provided by company attorney Richard Perras. "The most important thing to the Journal is that ultimately all of these matters will have to be resolved at the bargaining table," he told an AP reporter.

ATTENTION TNG/CWA MEMBERS AND TNG/CWA RETIREES

"I have always felt that it was important that everyone who was a worker join a labor organization . . ."
—Eleanor Roosevelt, 1941

If you, or members of your family, ever worked with or met Eleanor Roosevelt; if you heard her speak at a political rally or local union meeting; if you read her My Day columns; if you have letters to or from her; if you have stories about Eleanor Roosevelt and your family or your union, then we want to hear from you.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers is an exciting new project to collect and publish the work of Eleanor Roosevelt so that it will be accessible to labor and human right activists, policy makers, students, and scholars. We want to make sure that her legacy is used to help today's labor organizing and educational efforts and we need your help.

PLEASE CONTACT:

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THE CORPORATE STATE (OF MIND) AND FREE EXPRESSION

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2002 - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

Alarmed over the intrusion of corporate America into our nation's newsrooms and classrooms? Concerned about "corporate-speak" infringing on our rights of free speech and free expression?

Then, join the Department for Professional Employees of the AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers, and The Newspaper Guild-CWA, as we explore these issues and their impact on America's future.

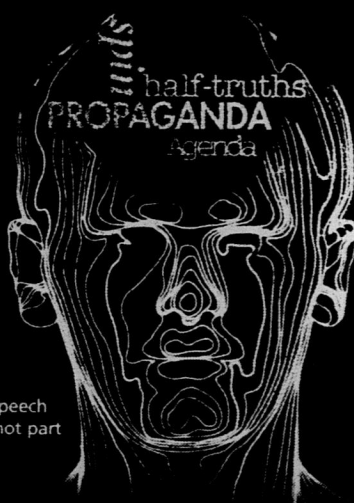
Two panels discussions featuring leading journalists, academics and free speech experts as well as a luncheon forum will address these topics. (If you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem.)

Registration fee of \$25 includes lunch. For more information and early registration, go to: www.dpeaflcio.org

Paul Almeida
President, DPE

Sandra Feldman
President, AFT

Linda Foley
President, TNG



Labor round-up

Bush bucks growing labor support

Unlike other U.S. presidents, Bush did not issue a Labor Day proclamation this year, choosing instead to deliver a few general remarks at a Carpenters' union training site near Pittsburgh. In mid-August, Carpenters President Douglas J. McCarron was the only union president at Bush's economic summit in Waco, Texas—a summit other union leaders and congressional Democrats denounced as a sham that did not address working families' economic ills. The holiday, meanwhile, served as backdrop for release of poll results showing a pro-union majority in the U.S. for the first time in 18 years. The survey of 900 adults, by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, showed an 8-point jump in the approval rating from last year's 42%, apparently in reaction to the tidal wave of corporate scandals: the same survey gave a 30% positive rating to business, down from 42% a year ago.

U.S. economy continues hemorrhaging

August saw the loss of 68,000 more manufacturing jobs in the U.S., the 25th consecutive month of factory job losses; 844,000 such jobs have been lost in just the past 12 months. Manufacturing employment peaked in March, 1998, at 18.9 million jobs. Subsequent losses have brought the U.S. to its lowest level of manufacturing employment since August, 1963. Meanwhile, the US current account deficit for the second quarter jumped 15.6%, to \$129.96 billion—a record high—as Americans continued to buy cheaper goods and services from overseas. That news came on the heels of a sobering announcement that initial claims for state unemployment benefits for Labor Day week rose to 426,000, the highest figure in more than four months.

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Can you say 'national health care'?

The United States is virtually alone among industrialized nations in not having a national health plan, in part because employers have picked up a major piece of the tab—but that's changing at a rapid pace. The non-profit Kaiser Family Foundation reports that single workers are paying on average 27% more toward their insurance premiums this year compared to last, while families are paying 16% more. Annual deductibles, meanwhile, rose an average 37%.

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Censored cartoonists in online show

Print and video journalists aren't the only victims of censorship post 9/11: quite a few cartoonists also have been fired, censored or otherwise punished for their politically incorrect views. Now some of their offensive artwork can be viewed online, thanks to the efforts of labor cartoonists Gary Huck and Mike Konopacki, whose work frequently appears in these pages. The USA PATRIOT Art show can be seen at www.solidarity.com/hkcartoons/artshow/artshow.html and features the work of 41 editorial cartoonists in the U.S. and Mexico.

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Oct. 19 set as 'No More Business as Usual' Day

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Sounding a theme that will culminate in an Oct. 19 mobilization, federation president John Sweeney said members of the labor movement must "rededicate ourselves to changing the way business is done and the way government is run" in the U.S. Actions planned for Oct. 19, dubbed "No More Business As Usual" day, will include phone banks, precinct walks, leafleting, rallies and other events to demand further corporate reform, a ban on big business "corruption of politics" and specific pro-worker policies, such as putting workers first when corporations declare bankruptcy.

The federation has established a toll-free number, 1-888-971-9797, that union leaders may call to obtain supporting materials. Fliers discussing issues workers can use to quiz candidates may be downloaded at www.workingfamielstoolkit.org, and other information may be obtained from Oct19@afcio.org.

Among the issues ahead:

- The Bush administration's proposed Dept. of Homeland Security includes a provision that its 170,000 workers be non-union. Bush claims that union membership would threaten national security by impeding the department's flexibility; unions claim that without union protection, Homeland Security workers are far less likely to blow the whistle on bungs and cover-ups.

- A House bill, introduced by Rep. Charlie Norwood of Georgia, would prohibit card-check recognition of union representation. Card-check provisions are a crucial component of CWA's contract negotiations.

- Although Republicans have said little about privatizing Social Security in recent months, that doesn't mean they've given up on the idea. With stock market losses destroying many pensioners' savings, as well as decimating the 401(k) portfolios that corporate America swapped for many defined benefit retirement plans, Social Security remains the only secure source of income for most retirees.

- Continued attempts to privatize virtually all government services, including air traffic control and drinking water supplies. Conservative legislators also are pushing further deregulation of electric utilities and are seeking repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act, which if successful would open the door to noncompetitive monopolies.

Press endangers democracy

Continued from page 1

and professionalism." But it balanced that praise with sharp criticism of media bias, concluding, "all international media organizations in the Americas and worldwide must repudiate unprofessionalism by media employers and insist that media should not be used as weapons for the illegal overthrow of elected government."

The delegation also found that Chavez had used unacceptably harsh language against the media and had been slow to urge his supporters to refrain from attacking or intimidating reporters in the streets. Despite this heavy-handedness, however, the government has not closed a single media outlet or imprisoned or killed a single journalist.

The IFJ is organizing a conference on media professionalism later this fall in Caracas. The conference, co-sponsored with UNESCO, will bring journalists from all over Venezuela to discuss how rank-and-file journalists can avoid becoming political pawns in the battle between the government and their bosses.

The situation is especially tricky for the IFJ because the Venezuelan journalists' union, the National Union of Press Workers (SNTP), generally lines up with the opposition. Even more controversial is the role of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation (CTV), which has long had close relations with the AFL-CIO and other international unions. CTV

President Carlos Ortega is a strident opponent of Chavez, and Ortega worked closely with Fedecamaras, the nation's business federation, to carry out the general strike/lockout that led to the April coup. Only when Ortega was edged out of the junta by Fedecamaras leader Pedro Carmona did he withdraw his support for the coup.

Since the coup, not dissuaded by the treachery of big business, Ortega has renewed his offensive against Chavez, repeatedly calling for Fedecamaras to join the CTV in another general strike/lockout.

The AFL-CIO has expressed strong solidarity with the CTV, pointing out that Chavez has violated International Labor Organization conventions—notably by mandating National Election Commission authority over CTV internal elections. With U.S. government funding, the AFL-CIO has carried out union training courses for CTV activists and helped the federation carry out last November's internal elections.

This support has proved controversial in Venezuela and at home. Although the AFL-CIO condemned the coup, it denied that the CTV had played any role in the plotting and has remained mum about the CTV's aggressively radical stance since then. Some U.S. union activists have grumbled that the AFL-CIO's conduct appeared to come perilously close to its Cold War-era practice of helping the U.S. government overthrow leftist foreign governments.

CWA president Watts dies

Former Communications Workers President Glenn E. Watts, who led the union during tough negotiations with AT&T and helped chart its future when "Ma Bell" was dismantled, died Aug. 30 in Washington after complications from gastrointestinal surgery. He was 82.

Watts, a North Carolina native, joined CWA when he began work in 1941, as an installer for the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company. He rose through local offices to become its executive vice-president, then secretary-treasurer, before being elected president in 1974. He retired in 1985, to be succeeded by Morton Bahr.

"Glenn Watts showed a labor leader could be a gentleman and speak softly and yet be as tough as they come in standing up for working people," Bahr said in a statement. "He presided over the golden age of workers in the Bell System, but when the big breakup came, Glenn had the vision to help guide us

towards the many changes we would have to make in the new information age."

Coping with the AT&T breakup, ordered by a federal judge during the Reagan administration, Watts named a CWA "Committee on the Future" to create a new organization plan for the union. Before AT&T broke up, its negotiations with CWA every few years were a major event and forged the largest private-sector contract in the U.S., covering 500,000-plus workers.

Besides his service with CWA, Watts also held international labor and United Way posts and was a Democratic National Committee member and close confidant of former President Jimmy Carter. Carter brought Watts into Middle East peace talks at times to help bring Egypt and Israel to agreement. Watts also established a center for understanding between Jewish and Arab union members, in Jerusalem.

Survivors include Watts' wife, Bernice, and two daughters. —Press Associates

Not all arbitrations cut from same cloth

[Editor's note: One key element of virtually every union contract is a grievance procedure for resolving disputes, typically culminating in arbitration. Arbitration is sought by unions as a faster, less expensive alternative to filing law suits, but recent negative publicity about commercial arbitration—in which the corporation unilaterally sets the rules and knows who the arbitrators are, while the consumer doesn't—may have some TNG-CWA members wondering about the process. Here to set the record straight is Ken May, a lawyer and staff writer for the Bureau of National Affairs.]

By Ken May
Washington-Baltimore Guild

My father was hit by a car about eight years ago. When he recovered, he did what any good American does: he sued the driver—or more accurately, the driver's insurance company.

When I was in law school, 30 or so years ago, my father's case eventually would have gone to a jury. Instead, it went to an arbitrator. But even 30 years ago, if you were a labor union member and the company violated the contract, your case didn't go to court, it went to an arbitrator. And that's a good thing, because while no justice system is perfect, the labor arbitration system is better than going to court. I know because I cover arbitration.

At a recent conference I attended, an arbitrator said that although she is a neutral, she believes in collective bargaining. She also could have said that she worked for a state labor relations agency for years and knows a lot about labor relations.

Most, if not all, labor arbitrators can say similar things. They believe in collective bargaining and they know labor relations, often from having worked as union staffers or attorneys.

You can't say the same thing about judges. Most are corporate lawyers, intrinsically more sympathetic to their former clients than to their former clients' employees. And they probably didn't handle labor matters before they became judges, anyway.

But let's get back to my father. The arbitrator in his case was a retired judge, who probably had heard a lot of auto accident cases in his time and who probably came to a reasonable decision. If only that were true all over.

In the past decade or so, companies have learned the value of arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution to

resolve possible legal cases against them. This may not be all bad, especially now that the courts are so overloaded they may not get to cases for years. Allowing for mediation can be good for everybody. But companies also have put in systems that compel their employees or consumers to arbitrate instead of going to court.

These days, if you buy a house, the contract may require you to arbitrate any dispute—perhaps in front of an arbitrator whose main job is as a lawyer for real estate companies. Non-union employers may require employees to arbitrate discrimination claims in front of an arbitrator who may be a full-time management lawyer.

Because of such potential conflicts of interest, arbitration is beginning to get a bad name. California recently passed strict legislation requiring arbitrators to disclose any past relationships with the parties appearing before them.

But access to labor arbitration is one of the advantages of having a union.

Before unions created some protection for employees through their collective bargaining agreements, managers could fire anybody for any reason at all. That's no longer as true as it once was, with mistreated employees in some cases able to sue under civil rights or other laws. But most workers are still a lot better off having labor arbitration and unions to protect them, rather than running up legal bills and spending years waiting for a court hearing.

But our members and potential members need to know that. I can think of more than one case in my career as a shop steward that got unnecessarily complicated because the grievants got private attorneys before they filed grievances. It's no fun to negotiate a good settlement for a grievant only to be told that his attorney, who never handled a labor case in his life, is sure he could get twice as much.

However, we also need to be on guard against arbitration cases that are handled less than scrupulously or see our members lose confidence in the process. I cover some arbitrators and union attorneys who are developing codes of conduct for non-union arbitration because they fear that if people view non-union arbitration as crooked, they will think the same thing about labor arbitration.

We in The Newspaper Guild-CWA have more than enough to worry about without being anxious about the integrity of non-union arbitrations. But we need to be aware of what is going on, and we need to educate our members and potential members about the advantages of labor arbitration.

J-grads on unions: duh

How do recent journalism and mass communication graduates feel about labor unions?

The good news is that fewer than one in 10—or less than half the rate for the general public—disapprove of unions. But the bad news is that only 37%—compared with 61% of the general public—hold a favorable opinion. That adds up to a huge 54% that just don't know or have no opinion.

This and a raft of other findings were reported recently by the Henry Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, at the University of Georgia. The school's annual survey of journalism graduates is sponsored in part by TNG-CWA and

will be reported in greater detail in the October Guild Reporter. Survey findings also may be reviewed on the TNG web site, at www.newsguild.org.

Other findings, meanwhile, include the following:

- Fewer journalism grads are finding full-time employment after school.
- Salaries paid to 2001 grads dropped sharply from a year earlier.
- Those 2001 grads who found full-time jobs received fewer benefits than the previous year's grads.
- Job satisfaction has declined.

If this keeps up, the percentage of grads undecided about unions might change.



MICHAEL KUCHTA/MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER GUILD

Labor Day thunder

Abram Isaacs, organizer for the Minnesota Newspaper Guild Typographical Union, talks with a visitor at the Guild's table in the organizational tent during St. Paul's Labor Day Extravaganza. The event combined the traditional Labor Day Picnic, sponsored by the Saint Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, with Jim Hightower's Rolling Thunder Down Home Democracy Tour in an attempt to strengthen relationships among unions and the rest of the Twin Cities' progressive community. It featured free food; music; children's events; activist tents; workshops on such topics as organizing, fair trade, a living-wage economy, campaign finance reform and food safety; and speakers Hightower, Cornel West, Barbara Ehrenreich, Joel Rogers and Sen. Paul Wellstone.

Guild owes much to its own 'Joan of Arc'

The obituary heading was as puzzling as it was direct: "Emily Fine, co-founder of newspaper guild." The text was more baffling still, averring that Fine, who died Aug. 4 at the age of 94, was "an economist who helped found the American Newspaper Guild."

But did she? And if so, why could no one at TNG remember who she was, or what role she had played? But if not, then who was she—and how did her name get linked by an obituary writer to that of Heywood Broun, whom she "joined . . . in starting the American Newspaper Guild in 1933"?

The answer, once it was understood that Emily Fine was christened Emily Brown, is captured in a single Guild Reporter article. Published September, 1934, under the headline "The Guild's Militant Joan," the brief item described Brown as "known to readers of the Long Island Daily Press as Miss Fix-It." She also was one of eight Guild members—all women—summarily fired by owner S.I. Newhouse, with a promise of more to follow if the Guild unit were not dissolved.

But instead of meekly accepting her fate, Brown charged off to the freshly minted New York Guild with an appeal for help, then organized a picket line outside the newspaper's offices. The line was so thinly filled—despite Broun's own portly participation—that "when there were not enough pickets to carry all the banners, she carried two," the Guild Reporter reported.

The Long Island Press picket was ANG's first, as well as the first time in the history of American journalism that editorial workers walked the line. And although it lasted only four days—New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia brokered a settlement—it also set the pattern for all subsequent Guild job actions. Handbills were printed and distributed to the public, an auto procession drove through Jamaica, Queens, with banners

attacking the newspaper, and a soundtrack cruised the streets explaining the Guild's position.

The media workers also worked the media, sending news releases to all outlets and making radio appearances. A one-sheet newspaper urged readers not to buy "a paper that intimidated its writers" and asked advertisers if they really wanted to hawk their goods in a "medium that is incurring the enmity of all people working for a living."

The job action, as recounted by Dan Loeb in his book on the Guild's early years, "A Union of Individuals," came at the very lowest point of the new labor organization's fragile founding. More than a quarter of the Guild's first 8,000 members had already dropped out, many distressed by a philosophical struggle over whether it should be a union or a professional association. Growing publisher hostility and the economic pressures of the Great Depression further eroded the Guild's initial support.

And then Emily Brown took to the barricades. As a result, enthused the Guild's executive secretary, Jonathan Eddy, the New York Guild "is at last an out-and-out labor union!"

In that sense, then, it can be said that Emily Brown really was one of the Guild's "founders"—though truth be told, her 15 minutes of fame were soon over. Although she was rehired by the Press, Newhouse eventually reneged on all the promises he had made. Brown, meanwhile, had already realized there wasn't much future for her in newspapers: she married a labor economist, Nathan Fine, and worked first an economist for the Wage Stabilization Board in Washington, D.C., then as a librarian. In her later years she became active in the League of Women Voters.

There is no Guild record that she ever worked for newspapers again.

Labor round-up

Bush bucks growing labor support

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Among the issues ahead:

- The Bush administration's proposed Dept. of Homeland Security includes a provision that its 170,000 workers be non-union. Bush claims that union membership would threaten national security by impeding the department's flexibility; unions claim that without union protection, Homeland Security workers are far less likely to blow the whistle on bungs and cover-ups.

- A House bill, introduced by Rep. Charlie Norwood of Georgia, would prohibit card-check recognition of union representation. Card-check provisions are a crucial component of CWA's contract negotiations.

- Although Republicans have said little about privatizing Social Security in recent months, that doesn't mean they've given up on the idea. With stock market losses destroying many pensioners' savings, as well as decimating the 401(k) portfolios that corporate America swapped for many defined benefit retirement plans, Social Security remains the only secure source of income for most retirees.

- Continued attempts to privatize virtually all government services, including air traffic control and drinking water supplies. Conservative legislators also are pushing further deregulation of electric utilities and are seeking repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act, which if successful would open the door to noncompetitive monopolies.

Press endangers democracy

Continued from page 1

and professionalism." But it balanced that praise with sharp criticism of media bias, concluding, "all international media organizations in the Americas and worldwide must repudiate unprofessionalism by media employers and insist that media should not be used as weapons for the illegal overthrow of elected government."

The delegation also found that Chavez had used unacceptably harsh language against the media and had been slow to urge his supporters to refrain from attacking or intimidating reporters in the streets. Despite this heavy-handedness, however, the government has not closed a single media outlet or imprisoned or killed a single journalist.

The IFJ is organizing a conference on media professionalism later this fall in Caracas. The conference, co-sponsored with UNESCO, will bring journalists from all over Venezuela to discuss how rank-and-file journalists can avoid becoming political pawns in the battle between the government and their bosses.

The situation is especially tricky for the IFJ because the Venezuelan journalists' union, the National Union of Press Workers (SNTP), generally lines up with the opposition. Even more controversial is the role of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation (CTV), which has long had close relations with the AFL-CIO and other international unions. CTV

President Carlos Ortega is a strident opponent of Chavez, and Ortega worked closely with Fedecamaras, the nation's business federation, to carry out the general strike/lockout that led to the April coup. Only when Ortega was edged out of the junta by Fedecamaras leader Pedro Carmona did he withdraw his support for the coup.

Since the coup, not dissuaded by the treachery of big business, Ortega has renewed his offensive against Chavez, repeatedly calling for Fedecamaras to join the CTV in another general strike/lockout.

The AFL-CIO has expressed strong solidarity with the CTV, pointing out that Chavez has violated International Labor Organization conventions—notably by mandating National Election Commission authority over CTV internal elections. With U.S. government funding, the AFL-CIO has carried out union training courses for CTV activists and helped the federation carry out last November's internal elections.

This support has proved controversial in Venezuela and at home. Although the AFL-CIO condemned the coup, it denied that the CTV had played any role in the plotting and has remained mum about the CTV's aggressively radical stance since then. Some U.S. union activists have grumbled that the AFL-CIO's conduct "appeared to come perilously close to its Cold War-era practice of helping the U.S. government overthrow leftist foreign governments."

CWA president Watts dies

Former Communications Workers President Glenn E. Watts, who led the union during tough negotiations with AT&T and helped chart its future when "Ma Bell" was dismantled, died Aug. 30 in Washington after complications from gastrointestinal surgery. He was 82.

Watts, a North Carolina native, joined CWA when he began work in 1941, as an installer for the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company. He rose through local offices to become its executive vice-president, then secretary-treasurer, before being elected president in 1974. He retired in 1985, to be succeeded by Morton Bahr.

"Glenn Watts showed a labor leader could be a gentleman and speak softly and yet be as tough as they come in standing up for working people," Bahr said in a statement. "He presided over the golden age of workers in the Bell System, but when the big breakup came, Glenn had the vision to help guide us

towards the many changes we would have to make in the new information age."

Coping with the AT&T breakup, ordered by a federal judge during the Reagan administration, Watts named a CWA "Committee on the Future" to create a new organization plan for the union. Before AT&T broke up, its negotiations with CWA every few years were a major event and forged the largest private-sector contract in the U.S., covering 500,000-plus workers.

Besides his service with CWA, Watts also held international labor and United Way posts and was a Democratic National Committee member and close confidant of former President Jimmy Carter. Carter brought Watts into Middle East peace talks at times to help bring Egypt and Israel to agreement. Watts also established a center for understanding between Jewish and Arab union members, in Jerusalem.

Survivors include Watts' wife, Bernice, and two daughters. —Press Associates

Not all arbitrations cut from same cloth

[Editor's note: One key element of virtually every union contract is a grievance procedure for resolving disputes, typically culminating in arbitration. Arbitration is sought by unions as a faster, less expensive alternative to filing law suits, but recent negative publicity about commercial arbitration—in which the corporation unilaterally sets the rules and knows who the arbitrators are, while the consumer doesn't—may have some TNG-CWA members wondering about the process. Here to set the record straight is Ken May, a lawyer and staff writer for the Bureau of National Affairs.]

By Ken May
Washington-Baltimore Guild

My father was hit by a car about eight years ago. When he recovered, he did what any good American does: he sued the driver—or more accurately, the driver's insurance company.

When I was in law school, 30 or so years ago, my father's case eventually would have gone to a jury. Instead, it went to an arbitrator. But even 30 years ago, if you were a labor union member and the company violated the contract, your case didn't go to court, it went to an arbitrator. And that's a good thing, because while no justice system is perfect, the labor arbitration system is better than going to court. I know because I cover arbitration.

At a recent conference I attended, an arbitrator said that although she is a neutral, she believes in collective bargaining. She also could have said that she worked for a state labor relations agency for years and knows a lot about labor relations.

Most, if not all, labor arbitrators can say similar things. They believe in collective bargaining and they know labor relations, often from having worked as union staffers or attorneys.

You can't say the same thing about judges. Most are corporate lawyers, intrinsically more sympathetic to their former clients than to their former clients' employees. And they probably didn't handle labor matters before they became judges, anyway.

But let's get back to my father. The arbitrator in his case was a retired judge, who probably had heard a lot of auto accident cases in his time and who probably came to a reasonable decision. If only that were true all over.

In the past decade or so, companies have learned the value of arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution to

resolve possible legal cases against them. This may not be all bad, especially now that the courts are so overloaded they may not get to cases for years. Allowing for mediation can be good for everybody. But companies also have put in systems that compel their employees or consumers to arbitrate instead of going to court.

These days, if you buy a house, the contract may require you to arbitrate any dispute—perhaps in front of an arbitrator whose main job is as a lawyer for real estate companies. Non-union employers may require employees to arbitrate discrimination claims in front of an arbitrator who may be a full-time management lawyer.

Because of such potential conflicts of interest, arbitration is beginning to get a bad name. California recently passed strict legislation requiring arbitrators to disclose any past relationships with the parties appearing before them.

But access to labor arbitration is one of the advantages of having a union.

Before unions created some protection for employees through their collective bargaining agreements, managers could fire anybody for any reason at all. That's no longer as true as it once was, with mistreated employees in some cases able to sue under civil rights or other laws. But most workers are still a lot better off having labor arbitration and unions to protect them, rather than running up legal bills and spending years waiting for a court hearing.

But our members and potential members need to know that. I can think of more than one case in my career as a shop steward that got unnecessarily complicated because the grievants got private attorneys before they filed grievances. It's no fun to negotiate a good settlement for a grievant only to be told that his attorney, who never handled a labor case in his life, is sure he could get twice as much.

However, we also need to be on guard against arbitration cases that are handled less than scrupulously or see our members lose confidence in the process. I cover some arbitrators and union attorneys who are developing codes of conduct for non-union arbitration because they fear that if people view non-union arbitration as crooked, they will think the same thing about labor arbitration.

We in The Newspaper Guild-CWA have more than enough to worry about without being anxious about the integrity of non-union arbitrations. But we need to be aware of what is going on, and we need to educate our members and potential members about the advantages of labor arbitration.

J-grads on unions: duh

How do recent journalism and mass communication graduates feel about labor unions?

The good news is that fewer than one in 10—or less than half the rate for the general public—disapprove of unions. But the bad news is that only 37%—compared with 61% of the general public—hold a favorable opinion. That adds up to a huge 54% that just don't know or have no opinion.

This and a raft of other findings were reported recently by the Henry Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, at the University of Georgia. The school's annual survey of journalism graduates is sponsored in part by TNG-CWA and

will be reported in greater detail in the October Guild Reporter. Survey findings also may be reviewed on the TNG web site, at www.newsguild.org.

Other findings, meanwhile, include the following:

- Fewer journalism grads are finding full-time employment after school.
- Salaries paid to 2001 grads dropped sharply from a year earlier.
- Those 2001 grads who found full-time jobs received fewer benefits than the previous year's grads.
- Job satisfaction has declined.

If this keeps up, the percentage of grads undecided about unions might change.



MICHAEL KUCHTA/MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER GUILD

Labor Day thunder

Abram Isaacs, organizer for the Minnesota Newspaper Guild Typographical Union, talks with a visitor at the Guild's table in the organizational tent during St. Paul's Labor Day Extravaganza. The event combined the traditional Labor Day Picnic, sponsored by the Saint Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, with Jim Hightower's Rolling Thunder Down Home Democracy Tour in an attempt to strengthen relationships among unions and the rest of the Twin Cities' progressive community. It featured free food; music; children's events; activist tents; workshops on such topics as organizing, fair trade, a living-wage economy, campaign finance reform and food safety; and speakers Hightower, Cornel West, Barbara Ehrenreich, Joel Rogers and Sen. Paul Wellstone.

Guild owes much to its own 'Joan of Arc'

The obituary heading was as puzzling as it was direct: "Emily Fine, co-founder of newspaper guild." The text was more baffling still, averring that Fine, who died Aug. 4 at the age of 94, was "an economist who helped found the American Newspaper Guild."

But did she? And if so, why could no one at TNG remember who she was, or what role she had played? But if not, then who was she—and how did her name get linked by an obituary writer to that of Heywood Broun, whom she "joined... in starting the American Newspaper Guild in 1933"?

The answer, once it was understood that Emily Fine was christened Emily Brown, is captured in a single Guild Reporter article. Published September, 1934, under the headline "The Guild's Militant Joan," the brief item described Brown as "known to readers of the Long Island Daily Press as Miss Fix-It." She also was one of eight Guild members—all women—summarily fired by owner S.I. Newhouse, with a promise of more to follow if the Guild unit were not dissolved.

But instead of meekly accepting her fate, Brown charged off to the freshly minted New York Guild with an appeal for help, then organized a picket line outside the newspaper's offices. The line was so thinly filled—despite Broun's own portly participation—that "when there were not enough pickets to carry all the banners, she carried two," the Guild Reporter reported.

The Long Island Press picket was ANG's first, as well as the first time in the history of American journalism that editorial workers walked the line. And although it lasted only four days—New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia brokered a settlement—it also set the pattern for all subsequent Guild job actions. Handbills were printed and distributed to the public, an auto procession drove through Jamaica, Queens, with banners

attacking the newspaper, and a soundtrack cruised the streets explaining the Guild's position.

The media workers also worked the media, sending news releases to all outlets and making radio appearances. A one-sheet newspaper urged readers not to buy "a paper that intimidated its writers" and asked advertisers if they really wanted to hawk their goods in a "medium that is incurring the enmity of all people working for a living."

The job action, as recounted by Dan Loeb in his book on the Guild's early years, "A Union of Individuals," came at the very lowest point of the new labor organization's fragile founding. More than a quarter of the Guild's first 8,000 members had already dropped out, many distressed by a philosophical struggle over whether it should be a union or a professional association. Growing publisher hostility and the economic pressures of the Great Depression further eroded the Guild's initial support.

And then Emily Brown took to the barricades. As a result, enthused the Guild's executive secretary, Jonathan Eddy, the New York Guild "is at last an out-and-out labor union!"

In that sense, then, it can be said that Emily Brown really was one of the Guild's "founders"—though truth be told, her 15 minutes of fame were soon over. Although she was rehired by the Press, Newhouse eventually reneged on all the promises he had made. Brown, meanwhile, had already realized there wasn't much future for her in newspapers: she married a labor economist, Nathan Fine, and worked first an economist for the Wage Stabilization Board in Washington, D.C., then as a librarian. In her later years she became active in the League of Women Voters.

There is no Guild record that she ever worked for newspapers again.

AFL-CIO finds organizing focus . . .

All stories this page by Mark Gruenberg
PAI Staff Writer/Washington-Baltimore Guild

Labor's organizing focus is about to become—well, more focused. Meeting in Chicago in early August, the AFL-CIO Executive Council decided to measure union density in each of 11 economic sectors and use that information to guide future allocation of organizing resources. Details of the new focus will be hashed out at a special conference in Washington early next year, but is expected to include a plan for matching unions with their core industries to minimize jurisdictional conflicts.

The new approach will de-emphasize the current numbers game—in which unions try to get as many new members as possible, regardless of their employment—and place more emphasis on increasing labor market

share in the targeted sectors, much like construction unions do now. Increased market share leads to increased union influence and better wages and benefits for workers, labor leaders say.

The 11 sectors include health care, government and postal services, manufacturing, construction, entertainment and services, retail trade, food production, transportation (including airlines and maritime trades), communications and utilities, and finance-investment-real estate. Labor has a high market share in some sectors and a low share in others, such as finance.

"In New York City, a certified nursing assistant earns \$12.42 an hour, with 100% employer-paid family health care coverage and good pensions. The same thing goes for hospital service and maintenance workers," said Service Employees President Andrew Stern, who gave one of three presentations

to the council on sectoral campaigns. "In Chicago, the same worker makes \$9.01 an hour with benefits that look like Swiss cheese."

The difference? Fewer than 10% of Chicago hospital workers are organized, compared to almost 60% in New York.

The trick to getting from 10% to 60%, pioneered by the building trades, is to compute workforce density by industry and then set density goals within that industry—and not to organize in other sectors unless no other union is present, according to Laborers President Terence O'Sullivan. The building trades unions represent 18% of all construction workers, but the numbers have been pushed much higher in individual industries, states and cities by concentrated organizing drives.

Innovation also is critical for sectoral organizing success, said Stern, who pointed to CWA's use of contract bargaining to force

recognition of card-check agreements as one example. But Stern also warned that multi-union sectoral organizing campaigns won't succeed unless the unions agree in advance who gets what—as the Teamsters and the maritime unions did in February.

The division of organizing by sectors will not mean the AFL-CIO is abandoning its goal of one million new members a year, said Deputy AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff. Rather, it means the AFL-CIO will better target its assistance to individual unions, as it did when helping UNITE organize laundry workers in New Mexico or AFT organize teaching assistants.

"The goal of spending 30% of a union's budget on organizing is behind those strategic partnerships" for sector organizing, Acuff explained. "It's not just for investment in getting new members, but for recruitment research, training and focus on fundamentals."

. . . and gears up for fall elections

Faced with a volatile electorate concerned more about the economy than the war on terrorism, the AFL-CIO decided at its August meeting in Chicago to target approximately 75 key races nationwide where it can make an impact this fall. The targets include 23 governorships and 12 U.S. Senate and 40 U.S. House races.

"It's like a roller-coaster out there this year," says AFL-CIO Political Director Steve Rosenthal, who will step down from the job after the Nov. 5 election. "Races are coming in and out of play every week. We'll have a lot of ups and downs."

While organized labor concentrates on economic issues, the Bush administration and Republicans have been focusing on the war on terror as an electoral rallying point. George Bush scheduled three commemorative events for September 11, the first

anniversary of the terrorist attacks that killed more than 3,000 people last year in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

Labor leaders say the economy will trump the war as an election issue. Indeed, polls and focus groups show it already has, with voters paying attention to the rising cost of health care, corporate corruption, the declining stock market—which affects their pensions—and unemployment.

"There's a lot of attention on the corporate scandals at Enron. People's attitudes are changing because of the economic downturn," says federation Executive Vice-President Linda Chavez-Thompson. "What I see creeping up, into the patriotism, is economic concerns."

To take advantage of that trend, Rosenthal says, the federation is emphasizing face-to-face communications with

members and is aiming for a goal of more contacts than the 21% recorded in the 2000 election. Although the effort will stress overall economic issues, such as Social Security, it also will address worker issues, such as the right to organize and the minimum wage, and it will compare candidates' records.

As usual, labor will depend more on getting its troops out on the hustings and to the polls to have an impact on specific elections. It instituted a 10-point registration and

get-out-the-vote program for locals nationwide, and Rosenthal says the program "is well on its way to achieving its goals" in the 75 targeted races. "We've got the organizing up and running in all of them; now we have to get the staff there," he adds.

The stakes couldn't be higher, according to Laborers President Terence O'Sullivan. "We'll be on the defensive until we get individuals in Congress, the Senate and the White House who are receptive, who look like us and think like us—then we can go on the offense," he says. "It's a class struggle. Without organized labor, there won't be a middle class in this country."

Purple haze

Organized labor has some choice words on corporate accountability. With the prose turning positively purple in a statement released by the AFL-CIO's executive council at its August meeting in Chicago. Here are some excerpts:

"The sudden and spectacular collapse of Enron . . . shocked the nation. The conviction of Arthur Andersen, among the most prestigious accounting firms, and the bankruptcy of WorldCom, the largest in our history, confirmed the depth of the problem. And the drumbeat of scandals at Global Crossing, Tyco, Adelphia, Halliburton and others has raised the anxiety of the public concerning the enormous scope of the crisis in American corporations and capital markets.

"American working families are the real victims of the greed gripping American business . . . At Enron, WorldCom and Arthur Andersen alone, corporate greed cost 28,500 workers their jobs and nearly \$2 billion in retirement savings. Overall, two million other workers have been thrown out of work by failing companies, and \$1.5 trillion has been drained from worker retirement and savings funds."

Now comes the key point:

"Corporate wrongdoing is not the product of a few bad people. It is the systematic result of markets that were once well-regulated but are now trapped in a destructive cycle where

short-term financial pressures combined with the greed of corrupt corporate insiders manipulating conflicts of interest in the accounting and financial services industries to destroy companies, industries and lives.

"American corporate governance is rigged to entrench and enrich speculators and corrupt corporate insiders at the expense of employees, shareholders, communities, companies themselves and the national economy," the federation declared.

Read that statement again: Corporate governance is rigged to enrich speculators and corrupt corporate insiders at the expense of the rest of us. The key word: "Rigged."

It's a damning indictment, and the federation promises to campaign for proposed solutions "to end business as usual."

There will be a National Day of Action on October 19 to demand an end to such practices and further wide-ranging reforms. They may not go far enough, but AFL-CIO proposals include:

- Federal rules requiring companies to list executive stock options as an expense—or, better yet, to outlaw them. The feds should also ban CEOs from selling company stock while they are in office, and ban offshore tax havens for firms.

- "And they must give workers and pension funds real power to choose corporate directors so we can replace the aiders and abettors

of corporate corruption with genuinely independent directors," the federation adds.

- Put workers' wages, benefits and severance pay first in line for cash when a company goes broke, rather than paying its bankers, brokers and corporate executives. Enron put its execs first—to the tune of \$100 million—and the AFL-CIO had to go to court, successfully, to get Enron's mostly non-union workers their severance pay. Enron's bankers opposed the workers.

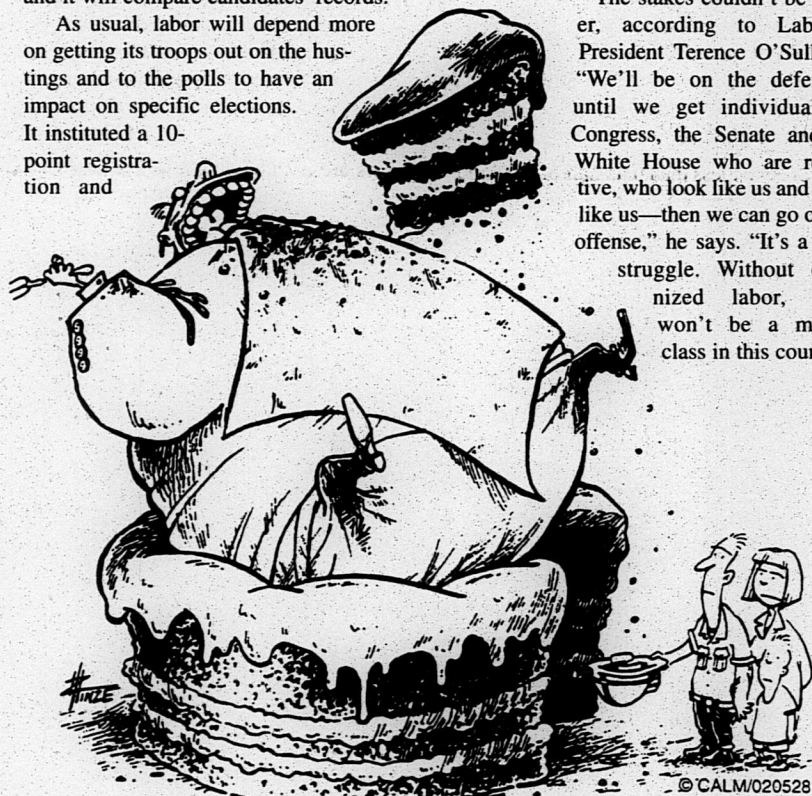
- The AFL-CIO's own plan to use \$6 trillion of workers' pension money to demand—and get—corporate honesty. "Company by company, starting with the Standard & Poor's top 100, we will demand accountability through shareholder action, cyber-action, suite action and street action," the federation warns.

- Put corporate accountability on the election agenda, by making it a top item for

the nation's 13 million union members and their families when they go to the polls this fall—while telling the country how corporate crooks stole our pensions.

"We will publicly link corporate criminals with their congressional co-conspirators. On Labor Day, we will launch the most-aggressive effort in our history to replace anti-worker members of Congress with men and women who reject insiders and put people first," the federation declared.

Notably missing from the political target list are George W. Bush and Dick Cheney—but only because they're not on the ballot. Bush took insider loans and was on the board of an oil company with offshore subsidiaries that hid money. Cheney was the well-compensated CEO of Halliburton. The feds are probing its funny-money "paper profit" transactions that he ordered.





LOOKING AHEAD

Organizing free riders

By Eric Geist, Director of Field Operations

Are some of your co-workers free riders? Nonmembers? Scabs? Or, as 31222 Administrative Officer Kevin Keane calls them, future members?

Does it really matter? Well, yes.

"Free rider" is the term used most often for employees who don't belong to the union but who get the benefits of a union contract. Because U.S. law requires unions to represent *all* employees under a collective bargaining agreement we treat all employees' grievances equally, regardless of union membership status. Such even-handedness is more than just a legal obligation: it's common sense. Our foremost responsibility is to protect our contract, so we can't jeopardize working conditions for our members by treating nonmembers differently.

That means we can't let personal feelings compromise our union representation. Nonmembers enjoy all the contract provisions that members have—minimum pay scales, vacations, sick leave, pensions, 401(k) plans, health insurance, seniority protections, overtime provisions and whatever else your contract ensures—as well as a grievance and arbitration process to protect those rights. Although some union members may be angered by the free ride these nonmembers are getting, we can't let our emotions get in the way of how we treat them.

Somewhat less than half of all Guild contracts have no membership requirement, allow members to quit the union during specified periods of the contract or require members to remain members only during the life of the contract. [Note: U.S. law bars compulsory union membership. Guild contracts "requiring" membership actually require that non-members pay a service fee equivalent to dues. These people are usually called agency-fee payers.] That means there are thousands of employees covered by Guild contracts who are not members.

Having more members matters, because the strength of any Guild contract is directly proportional to the strength of the Guild unit. Compare the contracts of The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, The San Francisco Chronicle or any contract in Canada with the contracts at newspapers with weak or no union membership requirement and you'll quickly see

the advantages of Guild membership.

So, why is that some employees do not become Guild members? If your contract allows for nonmembers, then you're familiar with the following reasons:

- I can't afford it.
- I was in a union once, and they never did anything for me.
- I get all the benefits, anyway.
- I won't be here for long.
- My father was in a union, but times were different then. We don't need unions any more.
- I can do better on my own.
- I don't believe in unions.
- The union didn't help me when I had a problem.

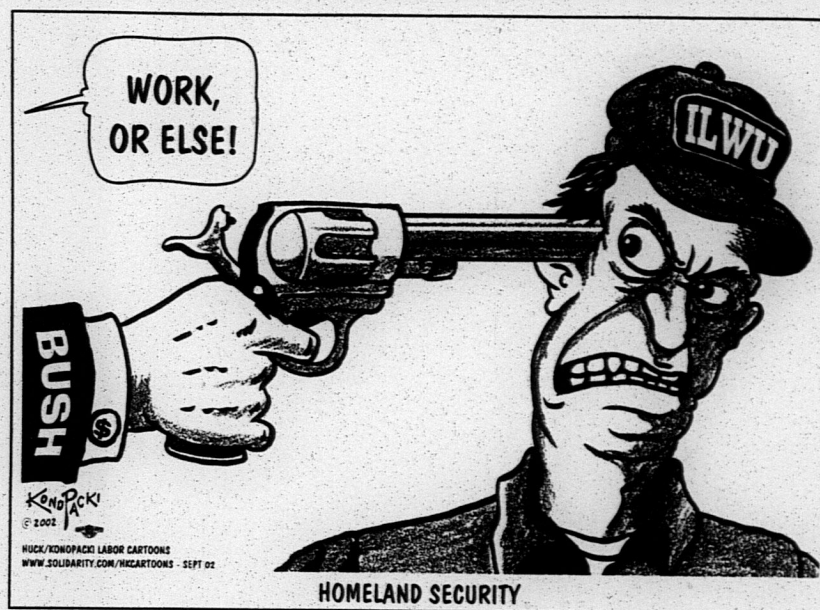
• Unions only protect the incompetent. (I could go on. If I left out any of your favorites, feel free to send me an e-mail at geist@cwa-union.org.)

I heard all those excuses when I worked at The Washington Post, where I started not long after a strike had fractured the Guild unit and left us with no membership requirement. That's also when I learned the number one reason you may work with people who haven't joined the Guild: because nobody asked them. I know this, too, because nobody asked me.

The number two reason some of your co-workers are not Guild members is that new employees are not approached until they pass their probation period. That's what I was told by my shop steward when I tried to join the Guild. The reason given is that the contract does not cover new employees. That is not true! All provisions of the contract, except for just-cause dismissal, apply to new employees. The minimum pay is set by the contract. Vacation, sick leave and pension credits are based on the first day of employment, not after completing probation.

The problem with this approach is that people work for three or six months or longer without paying dues—long enough for many nonmembers to get used to enjoying the benefits of a Guild contract without having to pay for them. And that suggests we need to change our approach to internal organizing.

Next month, I'll explore some strategies for reducing our nonmember ranks.



On the waterfront: what's at stake?

By David Bacon
Northern California Media Guild

A labor war is looming on the west coast docks that could become the defining union conflict of the Bush administration. But the traditional issues of union bargaining—wages, benefits and working conditions—have been preempted by a much more basic one: Do dockers have the right to strike at all? And if they don't, how will curtailing that right affect all other unions—as it almost certainly will?

Negotiating the West Coast longshore contract every three years is usually a fractious affair, but there has been no coastwide strike since 1971. That confrontation marked the end of an era of great technological change, when the introduction of container cranes revolutionized shipping and reduced the number of west coast longshore jobs from more than 100,000 to the present 10,500.

Today, dockworkers are looking with trepidation at the beginning of another era of great change. Decades from now, the waterfront will be largely automated. Workers in front of computer screens, often hundreds of miles from the docks, will control the movement of cargo on and off ships. Ports like Singapore and Rotterdam already have this new technology, and the world's shipping companies want to introduce the same system on the Pacific coast.

That would be a difficult problem to resolve in any round of negotiations, since the changes will eliminate many jobs. But another issue has overshadowed the automation question in this year's bargaining, causing every other union in the country to watch closely: the Bush administration seems poised to take action that would affect all unions as profoundly as President Ronald Reagan did when he broke the air traffic controllers union in 1982.

One possibility is that Bush would invoke the Taft-Hartley Act, under which striking longshoremen would be ordered to return to work for 90 days. Another is that he might call on Congress to place the union under the Railway Labor Act, instead of the National Labor Relations Act, which gives the union a clear right to strike. Under the

RLA, the government could prohibit a strike and impose a contract.

Or, as Department of Labor sources told the L.A. Times, the union's coastwide bargaining structure might be declared an illegal monopoly. All West Coast ports have worked under a single contract since the end of the 1934 general maritime strike, in which the ILWU was born. The threatened administration action would mean that if the union struck one port, shippers could simply load and unload their cargo in another, making a strike pointless.

Finally, the administration might replace striking longshoremen with Navy personnel. When President Reagan used the military to replace striking air traffic controllers in 1982, imprisoning the union's leaders for conducting an illegal strike, two decades of bitter industrial conflict followed. Large corporations viewed Reagan's action as an invitation to permanently replace striking workers, an act that, while legal, had been largely untested until then.

All the Bush proposals have the same intent: to make a waterfront strike impossible. But their longterm effect would extend far beyond the docks. The use of national security as a pretext for militarizing the workplace and replacing strikers could affect any union. Instead of defining a threat to national security in terms of vital life-dependent services, such as firefighting, this view of national security would define it in purely economic terms. Any strike halting the continued operation of an industry or large profitable enterprise could be defined as such a threat and made illegal.

In 1982, the rest of the labor movement complained when the controllers were replaced. But when William Winpisinger, then head of the International Association of Machinists, called on unions to support the controllers, the rest of labor did little more than mount picket lines. Over the next 20 years those unions paid a heavy price, as their own striking members were replaced.

This time the AFL-CIO has set up a task force to help the ILWU, hoping to prevent a defeat on the docks and its consequences. Unions across the board now face a corporate coalition, and a labor war on the docks could be on the horizon.

LETTER

To the Editor,

I read the articles [in The Guild Reporter, Aug. 9] on corporate media with a sad heart. I retired two years ago after 40 years in reporting, a span split between UPI and AP. The nation lost a great deal when UPI hit the iceberg and left the news waters to AP, so I know first-hand how serious the problem of media concentration is. But believe me, it is not our only problem, and Congressman Sanders should take heed.

We reporters and editors can blame ourselves for much of the distrust we face. Sanders bemoans all the talk-radio people, but fails to note that there would have been no Rush and such if newspapers hadn't demonized and disenfranchised large segments of our society from the national debate.

I have spent my retirement years attempting to establish Operation Medua (Media Education Drive-USA) to force the media to look at itself. I also hope to make media people savvy. I don't think I am dealing with bias as much as lousy journalism, most of it the result of herd reporting and lack of even an attempt at objectivity.

For example, my class would note that your Daybook in the Aug. 9 edition lists the meeting of the National Lesbian, Gay Journalists and then wonder how a reporter can belong to an advocacy group. The students might even ask where gays received the power to call non-gays "straight."

Lots of roads to follow. . . .

—James O. Clifford, Sr.
Redwood City, CA

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

Newspaper readers are slip, sliding away

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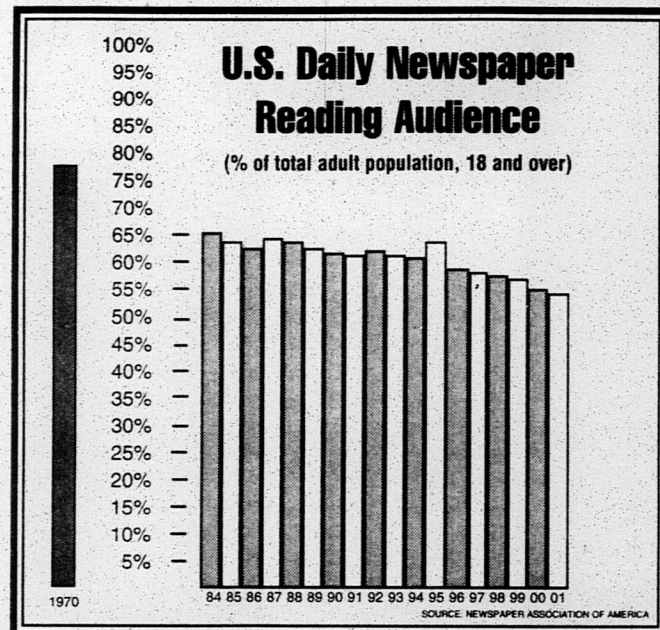
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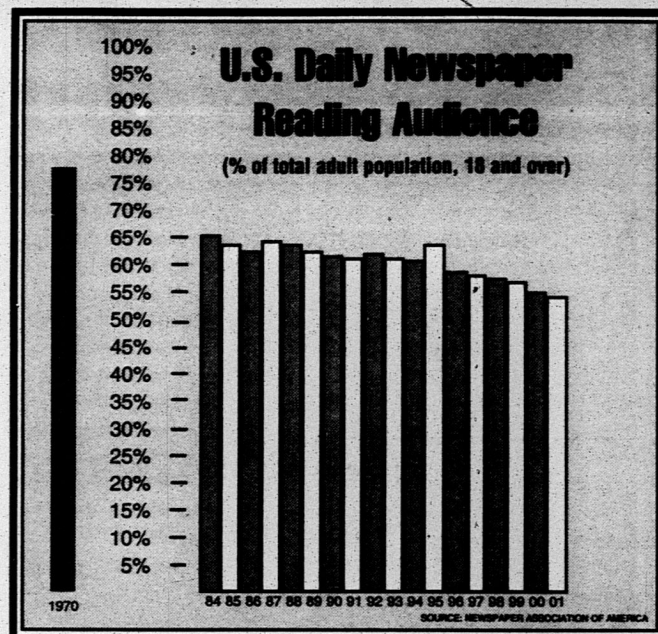
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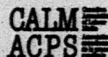
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