

Reporter

January 24, 2003

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 70, Number 1

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Pushing back at the FCC

Joined by a growing chorus of voices opposed to letting big media companies get even bigger, Newspaper Guild and CWA representatives urged the Federal Communication Commission to preserve rules that ensure diverse ownership of television, radio, cable and newspapers.

Four of the five FCC commissioners attended the January 16 forum, held at Columbia Law School in New York City. Michael Copps, the commission's most outspoken critic of further changes and its most visible proponent of public dialogue, said the hearing "may well be the most important meeting taking place in America today."

"I don't say that lightly," Copps told the audience of about 200. "Certainly no issue before the FCC is so important. At stake are

core values of localism, diversity, competition and maintaining the multiplicity of voices and choices that undergird our precious marketplace of ideas and that sustain American democracy."

Commission chairman Michael Powell, quoted widely in the past as favoring further deregulation—and of being mystified by references to the "public interest"—softened his tone by blaming the current debate on federal law. "The statute requires the FCC to presume each rule is no longer needed unless we prove otherwise," he said. "Unless we can re-justify each broadcast ownership rule under current market conditions, the rule goes away."

Powell's explanation was applauded by business members of the day's five panels, most of

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NYT code: is it about ethics—or Big Brother?

The New York Times and the Newspaper Guild of New York have agreed on a document that attempts to define conflicts of interest for newsroom and editorial employees. But precisely what the agreement means, and what impact it will have outside of the Times, is unclear—and that's caused some consternation among TNG-CWA's executive council members.

The wide-ranging document, comprising 155 numbered paragraphs, two sample letters and a 6-page index, purports to pull together and update years of memos issued by managers defining ethical behavior for the newspaper's

reporters, editors, editorial writers, photographers, photo editors, art directors, artists, designers, graphics editors and researchers. The result is a complete prohibition on any political activity other than voting, barring staffers from displaying support for any political cause or making campaign contributions of any size.

The document also warns, in one of several instances in which it extends its reach to employees' relatives, "that perfectly proper political activity by . . . spouses, family or companions may nevertheless create conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflict."

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PHOTOS BY PETE FISHER/CWA LOCAL 30248

Baby, it's cold up there . . .

Three months to the day after they went on strike against the Cobourg Daily Star and the Port Hope Evening Guide, approximately 45 members of the Peterborough Typographical Union and another 150 or so supporters turned out to let their community know they're still out and still resolute. The Jan. 11 rally included a march through falling snow, above; at right, Diane Cross, a striking employee of the Daily Star, rests her head on a picket sign while listening to a short pep talk by Arnold Amber, director of TNG Canada. The strike began just after midnight Oct. 11 over wages, with the local declaring that employees of the two papers "are some of the poorest paid newspaper employees in the country." The average wage is C\$10.91 an hour, or less than \$7 in U.S. currency.



By-line strike, pickets at AP

Turned by the lack of progress in contract talks, the 1,700 or so Guild-represented reporters, photographers and other editorial workers at the Associated Press withheld their bylines for a 24-hour period Jan. 9-10—then planned a 48-hour byline strike starting Jan. 22.

Sandwiched between the two actions was an informational picket Jan. 16, in which 50 or so hardy souls braved the icy winds outside Rockefeller Center in New York. The picket line was further braced by supporters from The New York Times, other CWA locals, the New York City Fire Department and other unions.

At the end of the picket, a small contingent delivered a trash can filled with diversity keychains to Robert

Naylor, AP's director of editorial planning. AP had distributed the keychains to employees to "celebrate" its corporate diversity; one of the biggest sticking points in negotiations, however, is the company's persistent refusal to extend health insurance and other benefits to the unmarried domestic partners of its employees.

The News Media Guild, whose members have been working without a contract since Nov. 30, also has rejected proposed pay hikes of 2.7% and 3% as inadequate and is resisting efforts by the wire service to offload up to 40% of increased health care costs. Sub-standard pay and benefits, say Guild leaders, are causing a "brain drain" at AP, with 180 staffers leaving the company in the past 18 months.

More FCC hearings ahead

Continued from page 1

whom argued vigorously against any rules governing ownership other than existing anti-trust laws. But working journalists stressed that more than just property rights are at stake.

"We urge you to take seriously the criticisms of some of the nation's most prominent journalists and scholars, who keep warning about the negative relationship between media consolidation and the quality and diversity of news," said Juan Gonzalez, president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and longtime member of The Newspaper Guild of New York. "Nothing less than the future of democratic discourse and the role of a free press is at stake."

Jim Joyce, vice president of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-CWA, said consolidation has already affected local news programming in New York and Los Angeles, where Fox has merged station and news management at two stations in each city. Among the consequences: one newscast has been reduced, news footage is being shared and a New Jersey station is being shut down.

"Merged and reduced news production, staff reductions, interstate job transfers and changes in union representation are just some of the tangible results NABET-CWA has seen arising from the Fox New York and Los Angeles duopolies," Joyce said. "While these changes may be more 'efficient,' they do not advance the goals of diversity and localism."

The Jan. 16 hearing followed submission of a brief

Worth quoting

"... any major deregulation that's come out of the Federal Communications Commission, and the government in general, around the media and telecom space for the last several decades has led to consolidation. It's just a fact. ... It has always happened."

—From remarks by William B. Drewry, managing director of Credit Suisse First Boston in New York City, to an industry newsprint conference last November, as quoted in the January issue of *Presstime*, a trade publication.

his past legal problems, an editor rewrote the story to downplay the man's troubles [see the December *Guild Reporter*, page 4]. The reporter learned later that the publisher and editor were friends of the chairman.

• A reporter in a city where the company owns the newspaper and a TV station was told to write a big story if the Nielsen ratings for the TV station were good and to bury the story if the ratings were bad.

Although Powell initially announced that there wouldn't be any public hearings on the proposed rule changes, growing opposition to lifting the ownership caps has caused a grudging reversal. A second hearing has now been confirmed for Feb. 18 in Los Angeles, where it will be hosted by the University of Southern California. A "formal" hearing, called by Powell, is to be held in late February in Richmond, Va., but a firm date has not been set.

by CWA challenging the proposed rule changes. Included were anecdotes from Guild members describing instances of past censorship resulting from too cozy a relationship between the media and big business—a trend expected to accelerate with further media consolidation. Among the examples:

• When a transportation reporter at a large Midwestern daily newspaper wrote about a regional airline's financial problems, the airline pulled its advertising and demanded a letter of apology. The editor agreed, and the airline's troubles haven't been covered since.

• When a reporter at a mid-size Midwestern daily profiled the new port authority chairman, including

In brief...

Health care derails one contract...

Rising health care costs are putting the squeeze on contract negotiations everywhere—and resulted in the Kenosha Newspaper Guild rejecting a contract offer, despite an improved wage proposal, by a decisive vote of 27-4. The deal-breaker: a company proposal to drop language that guarantees employees won't pay more than 25% of the health insurance premium. The previous three-year contract expired a year ago, but its terms have been extended while negotiations continue.

... but is resolved a few miles north

On a happier note, more than 17 months of contentious negotiations over health-care language ended in the signing of a one-year contract extension at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The agreement, now running through Dec. 31, 2004, caps employees' share of health-care premium costs at 14% this year and 17% in 2004. It also increases minimums in all classifications by 5% next January; employees paid above the minimum will receive a 2% general increase, with additional raises to be distributed from a discretionary pay pool of 1.5%.

AFP contract rich in non-wage gains

Guild-represented employees of Agence France Presse ratified, 32-to-3, a two-year contract to replace the one that expired Dec. 31. The new agreement preserves all benefits—including health care—and guarantees a minimum scale increase of 2% a year or cost of living, whichever is greater. The contract also awards a \$1,400 signing bonus this year and \$300 in 2004, increases in the AFP contribution to the 401(k) plan, taxi/parking reimbursement plan and child-care allowance, extension of healthcare coverage to domestic partners of any gender, a trial job-sharing plan, a new 7.5% differential for shifts that start before 6 a.m., a monthly bonus for technicians who complete certification courses and a 0.5% increase in marketing commissions for most levels on the scale.

Waterville settles on 5-year contract

The Waterville unit of the Portland (Maine) Newspaper Guild had agreed to a five-year contract on behalf of editorial employees of the Morning Sentinel. Two years in the crafting, the contract expires in 2006 and includes a ratcheting up of employees' share of health insurance premium costs by 2% a year, to 20% from 10% last year, with a partial cap if premium costs jump more than 15% in one year. The deal includes a

retroactive lump-sum payment ranging from \$750 to \$1,400, depending on salary grade, and wage increases of 4.26% Feb. 1 this year and 3% on Feb. 1 of 2004 and 2005.

Monterey Herald does about-face

One surprising location in which the health plan grinch was beaten back is the Monterey unit of the San Jose Newspaper Guild, where Knight Ridder has refused to agree on a new contract for the past five years. Nevertheless, despite its announced intention of implementing Jan. 1 a 70-30 split on family health care premiums, management at the Monterey Herald assured employees it cannot implement an increase of that size—and that it also wouldn't cancel its insurance plans, as it had implied in negotiations with the Guild.

Union-busters at work in St. Louis

Contract negotiations with the St. Louis Post Dispatch began Dec. 10 and can only be described as ugly: management's opening volley included demands for an open shop, weakened seniority protection in layoffs, ending payroll deduction for union dues, pay cuts of as much as 16% for some workers, elimination of progressive discipline, denying a reporter's right to withhold bylines and removing health care coverage from the bargaining table. The company is represented by an attorney from the Nashville firm of King & Ballow, right up there with Michael Zinser in its reputation for union busting.

'No confidence' vote taken at CU

The Guild-represented staff at Consumers Union, locked in months of unproductive contract negotiations, unanimously approved a resolution Jan. 16 that says they have no confidence in the integrity of CU President Jim Guest, the company's senior leadership or its bargaining team regarding their commitment to employees. The company continues to push retrogressive proposals that would slash health benefits while escalating their cost to employees and is threatening their retirement plan.

Sound bites...

The Eugene Register-Guard joins the ranks of newspapers extending health plan coverage to contraceptives... Rollee Dreussi, local rep for the Northeast Ohio Guild, was awarded the Irving Leichter Memorial Scholarship and is attending the Harvard University Trade Union Program... Pat Gormley succeeds Phil Fairbanks as the new president of the Buffalo Newspaper Guild... Eleven of 15 Guild members, furloughed a year ago by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, returned to the payroll Jan. 5.

Decoding the Times code

Continued from page 1

Other sections of the document circumscribe the work that Times journalists can do for other media; prohibit some more narrowly defined employees from owning any stock in any company other than the New York Times (while also limiting all other newsroom staffers' investments); and require inquiries from other news organizations to be referred to the corporate communications department.

Although Times employees received copies of the document in recent weeks, a side letter that the New York local has been negotiating with the Times for at least two months still had not been resolved as The Guild Reporter went to press. The side letter is intended to carve out exceptions for employees who participate in Guild activities

that on their face violate the rules, such as wearing campaign buttons while running for Guild office.

What is not clear is whether the document's ban on political activities would prohibit a Times reporter from political activity that supports CWA or TNG initiatives, such as lobbying the Federal Communications Commission not to lift the media cross-ownership ban. New York Guild President Barry Lipton, when asked if the side letter addresses the subject, replied "no comment."

Also unclear is the nature of the document itself, which a Guild news release and the side letter still being negotiated both describe as a "policy," but which the document itself labels a "code of conduct." Such codes historically have been resisted by TNG-CWA, and Lipton said the New York Guild never agreed to the label and was surprised to see it when the document was released. "We're starting to deal with that now," he added.

TNG executive council members contacted by The Guild Reporter expressed varying degrees of uncertainty and concern about the code. "The widespread nature of the ban on community activity—not just political activity—really struck me," said Vice President Scott Edmonds, a Canadian Press reporter. While everyone understands that partisan politics are to be avoided, he added, "this is a sweeping ban" that intrudes into "every aspect of the public and private life

of journalists."

For Vice President Scott Stephens, a reporter at the Cleveland Plain Dealer, such documents "send up a slew of red flags. I always have a concern when publishers start telling us what we, and our families, can do at home," he added. "And I never think it's a good idea to muzzle reporters, as the Times policy appears to try to do. It changes us from a forum for diverse ideas into a monolithic gang whose members must support one another regardless of the merits of an issue."

But Vice President Peter Szekely, a Reuters reporter and member of the New York Guild, said the Times code seems no more intrusive than one promulgated by the Washington Post a few years ago, with no discernible concern being raised at that time, so why the fuss now? Then again, he added, "any restriction on outside activity has to be really carefully looked at," so it might be appropriate for the executive council to review the overall issue of ethics policies.

Meanwhile, the Times' standing in the newspaper industry made Vice President Lesley Phillips, a page designer for the Boston Herald, wonder about the wider fallout. "The ramifications of it are a little unnerving, because we're all going to start seeing this sort of thing at our (bargaining) tables," she said. "I definitely think this is something the executive council will have to address at its next meeting."

The Guild Reporter (ISSN: 00175404) (CPC # 1469371) is issued monthly, generally at four-week intervals, at 501 Third St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Periodicals postage paid in Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Koran Cassidy, Communications Workers of America, 501 Third St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Address changes also can be sent by e-mail to: kcassidy@cwa-union.org.

Subscription: \$20 a year in U.S. and Canada, \$30 a year overseas. Send subscription orders to: Andy Zipser, TNG-CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Single copies: \$1.50

Minnesota cold characterizes labor relations

It's not just the Minnesota weather that's cold at two Guild-represented newspapers owned by Knight Ridder. Labor relations at the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Duluth News Tribune are downright arctic.

Management at the Duluth newspaper, where contract negotiations started Dec. 10, laid off eight employees—including three part-time telemarketers and a receptionist, as well as four managers—Jan. 16. The layoffs came despite the newspaper's success in hitting its profit target, set at corporate headquarters in sunny San Jose.

Publisher Marti Buscaglia said the layoffs were needed because, despite its profitability, the newspaper had missed its 2002 revenue goal by \$1 million. That contrast wasn't lost on John Myers, president of the Lake Superior Newspaper Guild. "The terrible irony here is that the News Tribune is a very profitable venture," he observed. "It's a bad solution to a non-problem—the company clearly is putting increased profits above people."

In St. Paul, meanwhile, contract negotiations continue to be undercut by management's insistence on a wage freeze until 2006 and a 50% increase in family health care costs. The Guild's previous contract expired last July, following a workforce reduction of 10%, but bargaining has been so unproductive that even a federal mediator has been unable to break the logjam.

The situation has been dire enough to prompt members of the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/Typographical Union to take to the

streets in subzero temperatures Jan. 14, leafletting a Minnesota Wild hockey game. "We are working for a fair and equitable contract that will recognize our role in producing the paper," the leaflets informed fans. "But we fear the continued bottom-line push that focuses on profits could diminish that quality and our ability to serve you."

As in Duluth, the issue in St. Paul is not whether there's money available for modest increases. Although the company hasn't broken out financial numbers for each newspaper in its chain, chairman and chief executive Tony Ridder announced Jan. 21 that its overall financial performance is "stronger than anything we have seen in more than two years." Indeed, per-share earnings for 2002 were up 40.7% over 2001.

But that's apparently not the point. As explained in a Dec. 5 letter to Mike Sweeney, the local's executive officer, from Jill Taylor, the Pioneer Press vice president for employee relations: "We are not pleading poverty, nor have we ever pled poverty! . . . There is a big difference between saying that there is an 'inability to pay . . . wage increases versus the 'unwillingness' to pay."

That hard-line position is further buttressed by the company's continued insistence on scrapping a contract clause permitting Guild members to honor picket lines established by other unions at the Pioneer Press. "I've never seen labor relations as bad as they are now," Sweeney observed, calling the company's position on the "strike sympathy" clause a "union-busting" effort.



Pioneer Press employees have a new screen saver: Give the dog a bone.

JOA angst: to be, or not to be?

Frank Blethen, the Hamlet of newspaper publishers, has them spinning in Seattle.

Last fall he told staffers at the Seattle Times of a provision in the joint operating agreement with the Post-Intelligencer that allows either partner to withdraw from the deal after three years of losses. The Times had already lost money in 2000 and 2001, he said, and seemed certain to lose more in 2002.

"If the P-I doesn't invoke it," Blethen reportedly said of the provision, "we will."

Since then, however, the signals have been mixed. Yes, the Times has said, 2002 was a loser. No, said a Times spokeswoman, no decision had been made on how to proceed. P-I owner Hearst announced that it doesn't believe that either party has any grounds

for terminating the JOA. And following a quarterly board meeting of the Seattle Times Jan. 16, board member Tony Ridder told financial analysts that no decision affecting the JOA had been made.

Then again, Ridder—chairman and CEO of Knight Ridder, which owns 49.5% of the Times—has been famously at odds with Blethen, whose family owns the other 50.5% and who has rebuffed years of efforts by Ridder to buy him out. The relationship has grown so strained that Ridder now says he'd like to bail—if only he could get an "attractive" price for his stake.

There are lots of other complications, ranging from the Justice Dept.—which conceivably could object to ending the JOA—to Hearst's likely challenge of any

attempt by the Times to portray 2002 as a financial loser: as already reported in a local weekly, the Times hired 71 news staffers last year at a time when other newspapers were laying off employees.

But the most provocative new hire was made earlier this month, when the Times made a deal with a freelancer to cover the JOA itself. The unusual contract, designed to assure balanced coverage, guarantees Bill Richards a monthly stipend for the next three years—even if he quits. That provision would be triggered if a mediator agreed with Richards that a story had been improperly spiked but the Times still refused to publish it.

Richards' first story? That the Times may have deliberately lost money last year to end the JOA.

Fired while organizing, reporters get a hand

In a morale-boosting show of support for newspaper employees fired just 10 days before a union affiliation vote, council members from two Maryland counties excoriated the publisher.

At a Jan. 9 press conference, Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan and eight county council members blasted Ryan Phillips, publisher of the Montgomery Journal, for firing four of the newspaper's five reporters (the fifth was on maternity leave) and moving its operations to Virginia, resulting in a newspaper stuffed with wire copy. "The right of employees to form a union, without reprisals from their employers, has been the law of the land for nearly 70 years and involves First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and association," Duncan stressed in a publicly released letter to Phillips. All of the county's council



Fired Journal reporter Karl Hille speaks at a press conference as Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan (at left) looks on.

members signed similar statements, concluding with the advice that if Phillips can't preserve his franchise he should "consider selling it to someone with a commitment to the newspaper and the community."

An even stronger position was staked out in nearby Prince George's County, where fired Journal reporters addressed the county council Jan. 14. The meeting was preceded by a Jan. 2 memo from council member

Thomas Hendershot to his colleagues in which he urged that the Journal "be discontinued as a county paper of record." The lack of county news in the paper, he reasoned, will result in "declining circulation and reduced public notice effectiveness."

Loss of "paper of record" status would mean losing public notice advertising.

While Phillips has protested that the firings were economically justified, they came just before the holidays, without warning and without severance. They also followed a decision to give raises to Journal employees in northern Virginia but not to those in Maryland, as well as the company's hiring of two "labor consultants" from California, all in an apparent attempt to derail a representation election scheduled for Dec. 12.

The Washington-Baltimore Guild has filed unfair labor prac-

tice charges against the company and successfully sought to have the election suspended, arguing that numerous management actions have made a fair election impossible. Journal editorials on the subject, however, claim to be mystified at the suspension, which they say leave Journal employees "in a kind of legal limbo."

Instead, Phillips has suggested that either Montgomery County or the Guild buy his two Maryland newspapers. "This is a serious offer," he wrote in a letter—that was then liberally quoted in a Journal "news" story. Neither the county nor the union took the offer at face value.

While the Guild seeks relief from the National Labor Relations Board and through public pressure, the CWA has approved strike benefits for seven employees fired by Phillips, including two in Virginia, where the Guild also had started an organizing drive.

New face of war

By Jim Wolf
New York Newspaper Guild

Get down! Spread out!" barks a young drill instructor. Would-be war correspondents have bolted from a Marine Corps CH-53 helicopter into what troops call a hot LZ—a landing zone under enemy fire. White and green fog pours from smoke grenades. The rotors' whomp-whomp-whomp chops the air. Hidden foes open with automatic rifles—firing blanks.

Clad in full camouflage, face paint, flak vests and Kevlar helmets, the reporters are getting a taste of what they might run into if they trail troops into combat in Iraq or elsewhere. They scramble toward a tree line, a football field away, hitting the deck every few steps. "Alpha Squad, go!" a commander bellows. They're up, they're seen, they're down. "Bravo Squad, go!"

It's Day 5 of the Pentagon's first-ever boot camp for reporters, photographers and camera people. The Defense Department began offering such courses in November, as a kind of Military 101 in the run-up to a possible invasion of Iraq. The sessions have been a big hit among U.S. and foreign reporters, many of whom—unlike earlier generations subject to the draft—have had no military experience. The first was hosted by a Navy-Marine Corps team and included a reporter from Russia's Itar-Tass news agency and one from the United Arab Emirates' Abu Dhabi television. It began in earnest on the beach at Camp Lejeune,

North Carolina, where media types hopped onto hovercraft en route to the amphibious assault ship Iwo Jima at sea. Later, reporters received a rare briefing from Navy SEAL commando team leaders at Little Creek Amphibious Base near Norfolk, Virginia, followed by a more physically demanding stint at the Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia.

As might be expected of a 50-odd press rabble, one participant ended up on crutches, another with an ankle sprain and a third with jeans on fire and a badly burned hand. But our biggest concern was preserving the bright line between U.S. forces and the independent reporters who cover them, as we were acutely aware of the power of the press to send a false impression that we were being trained to take part in combat. In fact, no training in the use of any weapon was included in the course, although a news agency distributed a shot of a pig-tailed reporter staring down the sights of an M-16 assault rifle.

Indeed, the week-long boot camp was only the latest twist in the Pentagon's long battle with the press over war coverage. Since reporters like Ernie Pyle donned uniforms to move with GI's in World War II,



M.E. Sprengelmeyer, correspondent for Scripps Howard News Service, applies his "Alice Cooper Style" camouflage face paint during field safety training at the U.S. Marine Corps training base in Quantico, VA.

ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL RICHARDS/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

both war-fighting and journalism have changed radically. A more adversarial relationship took hold in Vietnam, where the military and the media each seemed to lose respect for the other's trustworthiness. Many military people believe that "rice-roots" reporting from Vietnam eroded public support for the war, forcing a U.S. retreat. Residual mistrust prompted the military to corral pools of reporters for the very limited front-line coverage of the U.S.-led war that drove Iraq from Kuwait in 1991. Likewise, the military severely restricted press access during the operation that ousted Afghanistan's Taliban militia after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

The generals have cause for concern. Reporters with satellite phones and laptops now have instant transmission capabilities that could erode a military unit's operational security if they report about an impending attack, although ground rules typically bar such reporting in the run-up to a strike. Perhaps more to the point, the military clearly fears the

impact of images of operations such as the 1993 U.S. action in Somalia—the Black Hawk Down fiasco. Still another potential pitfall: the "CNN effect," when the public can watch a war unfold live on television, which some claim has spurred generals and their civilian bosses to make hasty judgments rather than wait for better information.

Yet despite all those concerns the Pentagon is returning to the Vietnam-era practice of letting reporters actually cover the fighting, although with specific assignments to units of the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force. The reasoning this time is that such reporters could help document discoveries of banned chemical or germ warfare stockpiles, especially for an Islamic world deeply suspicious of U.S. motives in Iraq. And despite past unhappiness over televised displays of carnage, the Pentagon also hopes to sway public opinion at home.

Promising "a distinct difference from the past," Victoria Clarke, the Pentagon's chief spokeswoman, said the Defense Department



Pam Hess, UPI Pentagon Correspondent, gets a hands-on-view of the U.S. Marine Corp's M16A2...



... while Brett Baier, Pentagon correspondent for FOX News, brandishes an AT4 anti-tank rocket launcher. Are they blurring the line between reporter and combatant?



Members of the media leave the gas "confidence" chamber last November, during field safety training for 58 journalists participating in a 7-day "Media Boot Camp."

would "embed" perhaps hundreds of reporters, including foreigners, with U.S.-led combat units if President Bush orders an invasion. "Embedding" is military jargon for living and traveling with a unit for an extended time, possibly all the way to the homecoming victory parades the Pentagon hopes await at the other end. "You'd march on whatever capital we happen to march on with them," Bryan Whitman, Clarke's deputy, told bureau chiefs at a Jan. 14 Pentagon meeting laying out the new approach.

If past practice holds, Iraq may permit a handful of foreign correspondents to cover any war from its side. But thousands more are expected to seek slots with U.S. forces. As of mid-January, the Pentagon said it had received a total of 771 requests for its boot camps from 197 news organizations, including 81 it identified as foreign. By the time the fourth boot-camp session was to wrap up in early February, a total of 238 news organization personnel would have been schooled in such things as camouflage, land navigation, combat first aid, mine awareness and donning M40 field masks in nine seconds or less. "Why nine seconds?" posed an instructor rhetorically. "Because in 10 seconds you're dead."

The training's main goal was to "raise the comfort level" of the media and the military with each other, notably so that commanders would welcome reporters' joining their troops. Still, many journalists worried that embedding might look suspiciously like being in bed with the military—something that could erode credibility. "Potential enemies have enough difficulty understanding

that American journalists are not working for the CIA or the White House," said Vince Crawley, an Army Times reporter who was in a combat correspondent pool in the 1991 Gulf War. "To suddenly show up wearing military-issue rain coats, parkas, helmets, etc., only serves to cloud an already murky issue," added Crawley, who rode in a Humvee all-terrain vehicle through tank battles between the 2nd Armored Cavalry

Regiment and Iraq's Republican Guard.

Sensitive to such fears, the Pentagon said it would leave it to news organizations to outfit their correspondents with battlefield gear of their own, not government issue—although the military will provide bio-chemical protective suits and masks. "This isn't a dog and pony show—this is real training," Brig. Gen. George J. Flynn, head of the Marines' training command, told the first batch of reporters to go through Quantico. "If you cover a unit, we don't want you to be a burden to that unit. Every man and woman in that unit has a job to do, and part of that job isn't taking care of you."

What of the danger that embedded reporters might be tempted to play up acts of heroism and play down any lapses as they get swept up in the camaraderie of their units? That risk exists, to be sure, but also is a risk on presidential campaigns or other assignments that have the same element of "clientitis," as well as the siren song of greater access for playing ball.

"It's even true for other reporting beats, from police to sports," said Walter Isaacson, CNN's outgoing chairman and chief executive, and Eason Jordan, CNN's president of news gathering. "Good journalists know how to keep their independence by reporting honestly, and bad ones don't," they wrote in a Wall Street Journal column, tipping their hats to the Pentagon for letting embedded

reporters compete rather than requiring that all their coverage be pooled. Still, the Pentagon's national media pool—a clutch of rotating reporters hand-picked to share their material with a larger audience during a specified short-term event—remains available in case the Pentagon chooses to use it.

At Quantico, reporters were rousted each day at 0500, or 5 a.m., by bellowing officers kicking on doors to great effect. Classroom sessions were sandwiched between long stints in the field, including an overnight bivouac on a teeth-chattering cold November night. One particularly useful session took place in the "confidence chamber." There, reporters felt the sting of CS riot-control gas when they peeled off their M-40 masks. The idea was to develop confidence in the gear's ability to protect when worn correctly.

Private companies, such as Centurion, run by former British Royal Marine commandos, have been training reporters to a similar end. Reporters who have taken both courses found them highly complementary, with minimal overlap. Centurion spends more time on minefield detection and includes a highly valuable session on surviving the shock of capture.

Wolf reports for Reuters in Washington, D.C.; Richards is a photographer for Agence France Presse.



Brett Baier of FOX News is fitted in a fireman's protective suit by a firefighter crewman aboard the USS Iwo Jima.

Global network created to protect journalists

Spurred by the prospect of a new war in Iraq and by regional armed struggles in the Middle East and elsewhere, an unprecedented coalition of media companies, journalists, press freedom groups and international organizations has launched a new global network to protect journalists and media staff.

The International News Safety Institute, based at the International Press Centre in Brussels, has been established by the International Federation of Journalists and the International Press Institute.

"The institute will bring safety into the media mainstream," said Aidan White, general secretary of the IFJ, noting that some 65 journalists and media staff had been killed in 2002 while on duty, with hundreds more affected by such violence. "It is time for media to work together to reduce the risks and to confront those who threaten journalism around the world."

Richard Tait, vice president of the IPI and former editor-in-chief of ITN, said the institute will forge a unified approach by broadcast and print media. "We need to dispel the attitude that safety is optional. It must be taken seriously by everyone, including managers," he said. "We need to change the culture of indifference."

The inaugural discussion creating the institute was attended by representatives of more than 50 international news organizations, including the BBC, CNN, ITN, Reuters, a number of national media and the world's largest network of regional broadcasters, the European Broadcasting Union. Also participating were journalists' unions from Great Britain, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and South Africa, and such press freedom groups as Reporters Sans Frontières. Representatives of international organisations, including UNESCO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and NATO, also pledged their support.

"More than 80 organizations working for news safety have already signed up," said Aidan White. "This is a unique network of solidarity that will provide practical assistance to journalists and media staff most in need anywhere in the world."

The institute, which plans to establish regional groups, has already adopted a draft plan of action that includes:

- Setting standards. The Institute will set international standards for safety training and equipment. "The standards should be global, not one code for the north and one for the south," the meeting concluded. Training programs organized

by military and private organizations will be verified. A common international safety code is planned.

- Safety training for all. The institute will expand access to risk-awareness training for journalists and media staff and plans to raise funds for projects that will provide training, organized according to local needs, for those who currently cannot afford courses, including freelancers.

- Information hub. The Institute will have a regional focus and will bring together knowledge and experience from working journalists, regional experts, press freedom groups and professional trainers. It also will provide access to equipment, safety manuals and materials for media and journalists.

- Lobbying for safety. The institute will be a key lobbying organization, putting pressure on industry and governments for more effective action to protect journalists—including protection for those at risk of violence at home, whether covering potentially violent events or carrying out investigative journalism.

A pioneer of news safety work, Chris Cramer, president of CNN International Networks, has agreed to be the institute's first honorary president.

Media round-up

African famine no match for royals

Stories of humanitarian crises threatening—or claiming—the lives of hundreds of thousands of Africans and citizens of other war-torn regions around the world have been eclipsed in the U.S. media by the Bush-led “war on terrorism,” according to the international medical aid group, Doctors Without Borders. The group, also known as Medecins Sans Frontières, reports that the three major U.S. networks devoted more air time in the first 10 months of last year to British royalty (26 minutes) than to eight of the top 10 crises combined (25 minutes). Five of the 10 crises were in Africa.

Ad revenue up 250% over 50 years

While newspaper executives overreact to the current economic slowdown by slashing payrolls, a study in the latest issue of the Newspaper Research Journal reports that newspaper advertising grew consistently during the second half of the twentieth century. In fact, the study asserts, U.S. publishers received 250% more advertising revenue in real terms in 2000 than they did in 1950. That growth, wrote the study's author, Robert G. Picard, “provided the primary resource that increased newspaper profitability, allowed newspapers to increase their number of pages, and led to the growth of large newspaper groups.”

Imperiled workers imperil employers

Newspaper publishers are notorious for confusing assets with costs, which explains why they so often view their employees—whose salaries make up the biggest chunk on the liabilities side of the ledger—as expendable. But they've taken the same approach to their second-biggest line item, newsprint, and now their penny-pinching is having a boomerang effect: papermakers, who collectively are worth less today than they were a decade ago, are on the verge of collapse. Speakers at a recent newsprint conference warned of a “staggering disinvestment” in the industry, with NAA Chairman Dean Singleton acknowledging that while newspaper profits have fallen, those of newsprint producers “have disappeared.” Or as one newsprint manufacturer noted, “imperiled suppliers eventually imperil their customers.”

Readers spend more on internet

A study by Peter Francese, founder and former editor of American Demographics magazine, concludes that Americans are willing to pay for news and information—but, increasingly, not from daily newspapers. Based on government data on consumer spending, the study found that the average U.S. family spent \$56.81 for newspapers in 2001, or about three-fifths of the \$90.33 it spent on internet services. Spending on newspapers declined 5% from 2000 and fell among all age groups, but most notably among people ages 35 to 44.

All those ads? People don't like them

“Convergence” has come to mean all kinds of things being mashed together—usually with the expectation that resulting “synergies” will mean higher profits. But U.S. consumers are noticing—and objecting to—the increased merging of advertising into TV and movie content, according to an Advertising Age survey. The trade magazine's online poll found that 62% of respondents find product placement and other new advertising genres, such as online ad films, distracting rather than entertaining; in a separate question, 72% said the development is too pervasive.

'Total surveillance society' now possible

Thanks to a mistaken belief that weakening the Constitution will strengthen America, says the American Civil Liberties Union, the U.S. has reached a point in which a total “surveillance society” has become a realistic possibility. The only defense from such a Big Brother scenario, the ACLU says, “are the legal and political institutions we have inherited as Americans”—including a free press.

Feds push probe of alt weeklies

Antitrust prosecutors wrapped up depositions in their investigation of a deal struck by the country's two largest alternative newspaper chains that closed competing weeklies in Los Angeles and Cleveland. Although representatives of the two chains argue that there remain numerous other news sources in both cities, the feds seem to be taking a narrower perspective. “The government is saying, ‘No, your closest competitor, the one that made you jump and decide things, was something called an alternative weekly,’” reported former LA weekly columnist Mark Haefele after a four-hour deposition.

Feeling stressed? Go and demonstrate!

Finally, an up-beat note for TNG-CWA organizers: getting involved in a campaign, strike or political demonstration is good for your mental health, according to psychologists at the University of Sussex in London. Their conclusion, according to a Reuters report, was based on in-depth interviews with nearly 40 activists from a variety of backgrounds, who reported deep happiness—even euphoria—from the collective identity fostered by their participation in various kinds of protests.

AFL-CIO mobilizing on corporate greed

Stories by Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates, Inc. Staff Writer

When it comes to past problems, labor's top organizers didn't beat around the bush. Meeting in Washington, D.C. Jan. 10-11 for the AFL-CIO Organizing Summit, they outlined labor's shortcomings—then moved on to discuss new ways to mobilize more workers.

“How do we build a labor movement big enough and strong enough to challenge corporate greed?” federation President John J. Sweeney demanded of the 200 delegates in his opening address.

The first answer, he said, is to “get angry” at denial of workers' rights nationwide, especially in the present environment of an anti-worker federal government and big business clout.

But then Sweeney cited the labor movement's own failings, including a lack of spending on organizing, failure to retool unions to emphasize organizing, and the fact that “we haven't worked hard enough to build community and political support.”

“The public doesn't have a clue about what employers do to destroy unions,” Sweeney said.

An AFL-CIO paper, quoting Human Rights Watch, says the public doesn't know about 23,000 illegal firings yearly, threats to call federal immigration officials in 52% of campaigns that involve undocumented workers, and threats to close the plant in 51% of all organizing drives, among other things.

Other speakers cited more specific problems:

- Organizers must “persuade, argue and speak out” in their own unions to involve members in organizing, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said. Organizing can't be left to professional staff from Washington—as AFSCME did until 1997-98, added Paul Booth, top aide to President Gerry McEntee.

“We need an army, and it has to come from our members,” Booth said. AFT Executive Vice President

Nat LaCour said too many locals view organizing as a national union responsibility.

- Internecine struggles over workers. Booth drew knowing laughter when he said “what brought us at AFSCME from 160,000 workers to 1.25 million in 25 years was getting public employee bargaining laws enacted—and then fighting the rest of you off.” Booth contended the AFL-CIO must enact stronger rules against inter-union competition, defining more clearly which unions should organize which job fields.

- LaCour, a former local president in New Orleans, cited lack of effort in areas where unions are weak, especially the South. He also said there must be a stronger push to bring in free-riders and agency fee-payers.

- Setting unattainable goals. Booth said AFSCME had “come close” in achieving its annual goal of recruiting 75,000 new members—65,000 in 2001, 50,000 in 2002—but the goal itself was unrealistic. As he added, is the AFL-CIO's long-term goal of a million new members a year.

- International unions must give their locals money and technical help to organize, Laborers President Terry O'Sullivan declared. “It didn't take us long” after the Laborers established their organizing department in 1993 to realize “that \$3 million we provided... wasn't enough, and that organizing couldn't be run from Washington.” The Laborers instead established regional organizing funds, assessed all members 5 to 15 cents an hour to pay for them—and now are spending \$29 million a year, have hired at least 35 new organizers per region and report to local and regional officers every six months about their progress.

- Greater use of, and accountability by, state labor federations and local central labor councils. Labor has “many paper state feds and CLCs,” O'Sullivan said. He announced the AFL-CIO Executive Council will set accountability goals for state feds and CLCs in February. State feds and CLCs must also be used to unite other unions behind an organizing campaign.

Cohen: shut down NLRB

Stewart Acuff is normally low-key, committed and unflappable, as befits a preacher's son. But the AFL-CIO Organizing Summit he ran and chaired in Washington left him a little surprised.

“There's a lot more consensus about what we need to do than many of us expected” to invigorate union organizing, Acuff, the federation's new organizing director, said after the close of the Jan. 10-11 summit. The event drew more than 200 top union organizers from 39 of the AFL-CIO's 66 unions.

Acuff said the surprising consensus centered around three points: The need to be “more aggressive and righteously indignant about the right to organize,” the need for more strategic organizing, and the need for unions to change internally to put more emphasis on organizing. The catch? How to do all that—and do it quickly. “The labor movement has never changed rapidly,” Acuff observed.

For too many years, he noted, individual union organizers were isolated and did not work across union lines. Individual drives were left to the unions involved. While state federations and central labor councils would support them, other unions stayed on the sidelines.

And, too often, U.S. union organizing has not been linked to human rights, even though international standards proclaim freedom of association—which includes the right to unionize—is a basic right. Now that is starting to change, Acuff noted, as labor campaigns to add new immigrant workers to its ranks.

Faced with unexpected agreement on the nature of the problem, summit panelists and delegates turned to the “how to” question, providing a host of ideas to take to the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Florida in late February—although Acuff warned that the federation can't tell its affiliated unions what to do. Instead, the AFL-CIO must rely on the bully pul-

pit, urging its affiliates to commit more people, money and talent to organizing—and to widening the scope of the issue and the range of labor's allies.

One idea, advanced by CWA Vice President Larry Cohen, is to dramatize the weakness of labor law via a one-day nationwide shutdown of National Labor Relations Board offices. Protesters would spotlight slow NLRB procedures, labor law's weak penalties for corporate law-breaking during organizing drives, and the fact that firms routinely fire, harass, intimidate and threaten pro-union workers.

“I'm not at all opposed” to such a shutdown, Acuff said with a smile. “After all, I organized the local effort in 1993 to do that in Atlanta—and got him (Cohen) and Paul Booth (a top AFSCME official) and 15 other people thrown in jail. The notion is we need to do something dramatic that calls attention to the failure of the law, and do it nationwide in a big way. We should be willing and prepared to use dramatic, militant mobilization, including civil disobedience, to restore the right to organize” as envisioned when the National Labor Relations Act was adopted in 1935.

Delegates also tackled the tough issue of how to reduce employer opposition to organizing. AFL-CIO data show routine use of “union buster” consultants, threats to move to Mexico, illegal firings and employer statements that voting union would be futile because the firm will never agree to a contract, among other tactics.

Delegates didn't come to one conclusion on that and other issues—and Acuff didn't want them to. What he wanted, he said, was to get them to “think broadly and creatively about what it will take to create a right to organize movement” nationwide. “We didn't say we would unveil a magic bullet” to accomplish organizing goals, Acuff cautioned. “But what we haven't done, until now, is challenge our organizers.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Threat to media starts sinking in

By Linda Foley, President

I think it's beginning to sink in. The Federal Communications Commission's review—and possible revocation—of the rules governing media ownership is a big deal.

The CWA (led by The Newspaper Guild and the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians), as well as other entertainment and media unions, consumer groups, media reformers, community advocates and Federal Communications Commissioner Michael Copps, have been saying it for months: deregulation of mass media will have profound and probably irreversible effects on the functioning of American democracy.

Lately, other high-profile voices have joined the chorus urging the commission to go slowly and to deliberate carefully. Members of the Senate Commerce Committee recently expressed their concerns at a hearing with the five FCC commissioners. Senators from both sides of the aisle let the commissioners know they are carefully watching the rulemaking process to make sure the FCC gets it right.

Even FCC Chairman Michael Powell has

modulated his heretofore deregulatory tune, sounding a note of caution (albeit somewhat *sotto voce*) about acting too precipitously.

Both before the Senate committee and at a Jan. 16 public hearing at Columbia University in New York, Powell assured his critics that when all is said and done, "there will be rules" governing the ownership of mass media. "There will not be," he emphasized, "just one person owning" all the media.

That's not much assurance, however, considering that five media conglomerates already control 90% of the top 50 cable TV channels, broadcast networks and cable providers in this country, according to figures supplied by Commissioner Copps at the Columbia forum. These corporations also control the top 20 news web sites, he added. (I wonder what Powell would say about two or three owners?)

Until now, the concentration of media ownership in the United States has been one of the most under-reported news stories of the new millennium. It's not hard to understand why those five media conglomerates would want to keep their 90%-share audi-



ence in the dark about how drastically the media landscape could be altered. But it is disappointing that more reporters and other journalists have not weighed in or demanded more accountability on this important issue, which has the potential to fundamentally change their profession forever.

Ironically, on the eve of the public forum on media ownership, held at the magazine's parent university, Columbia Journalism Review was bemoaning the lack of journalistic representation in the media ownership debate.

"The media companies have an agenda: the fewer commercial shackles the better," asserts an editorial in CJR's January/February edition. "But the journalists who work for those companies ought to look beyond the commercial perspective. Where are the journalistic organizations and leaders who could illuminate these issues? In a discussion that will affect everything journalists care about, where is the voice of the journalists?"

If CJR had done even a modicum of investigative journalism before publishing that editorial, the magazine could have answered its own questions. The Jan. 16 forum at Columbia was attended by four of the five FCC commissioners and scheduled testimony by 21 prominent individuals with media ties who argued both for and against

deregulation; they included at least three journalists, a journalism professor and a representative of the Pew Center for Excellence in Journalism.

In addition, the CWA's comments on media ownership rulemaking filed with the FCC, as well as those filed by the AFL-CIO and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, were rife with references and examples of the threats to good journalism posed by media consolidation.

Nevertheless, CJR's basic argument is a good one. Journalists cannot sit on the sidelines of this important debate, as they tend to on so many issues. To paraphrase the magazine's editorial, it's not too much to ask the press to be a messenger on this issue.

Journalists will have at least two more opportunities to speak directly to the FCC on media ownership, at upcoming public hearings in Los Angeles and Richmond, Va. Information on the hearings, as well as copies of FCC filings and proposals, can be found at www.saveourmedia.org.

CJR's editorial says, "Nobody can argue that the problem with American journalism is that it has too many voices."

It's time journalists themselves make their voices heard, joining the chorus against media deregulation before conglomerate owners in the industry gain enough power to silence them altogether.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

Nice piece on media monopoly in the Dec. 13 issue. I have never gotten over how easily the nation let UPI slide away, limiting the nation to one major wire service. Fulcrum Publishing of Golden, Colorado, will soon publish "Unipress-United Press International: Covering the 20th Century." It was written by the late Dick Harnett, a Guild leader for many years, and could be a peg for you to warn that "it can happen here."

—Jim Clifford, retired AP
Redwood City, California

To the Editor,

Just a note to say keep up the good work. Just read the two longer pieces you did on the media mergers and the economy in the Dec. 13 issue. Your focus is absolutely necessary, and yet missing from so much of what passes for media coverage of "the issues."

Hell, we're on our way to an insane war when, as you note in the article on the economy, our jobs are flying across the border at a rate of 47%. In Michigan there was a report that our unemployment rate increased by 50% in the past year. There's a war on jobs, on our children, on the elderly, on immigrants, etc. yet we've got the royal unelected pinhead mesmerizing the press with his criminal effort to make war on Iraq. Ay, yi, yi. . .

Sometimes you gotta vent. Anyway, in case you need to hear it, thanks again for the hard work, and a happy and peaceful new year.

—Kate deSmet, former Detroit striker

To the Editor,

I really enjoyed your article on media conglomerates. We seem to be a nation that is nodding off in front of the TV.

Sure, go ahead and put media ownership in the hands of one or two corporations. Sure, say the country's at war (when did Congress declare it and against whom?), so toss out our constitutional rights. Sure, make me dump everything out of my pock-

ets and rifle through my bags before I fly anywhere so I don't meet a horrible death. (Who ever said we were guaranteed dying at a time and way we want?)

Sure, send our sons and daughters, husbands and fathers, wives and mothers off to fight a war against a man we don't like, but is less of a threat to us than a country building nuclear weapons and ICBMs. Sure, give the corporations more tax breaks so that they can ship more jobs out of the country and pocket the bigger profits from paying only sweatshop (or worse) wages. Sure, give the fat cats more tax breaks while leaving those who were laid off from jobs that were shipped overseas bereft of unemployment benefits.

I don't think I or the country can stand much more compassion from this compassionate conservative.

—Ed Gallardo, Northeast Ohio Guild

To the Editor,

I wanted to publicly thank my TNG/CWA and CWA brothers and sisters for their recent outpouring of sympathy and support for my family when we experienced the loss of my granddaughter and her grandfather (my husband) within 17 days of each other. The response from members in Toledo locals 34043 (The Blade Newspaper) and 4319 (Ameritech) and many others was both overwhelming and touching. My current Newspaper Guild co-workers and my former Ameritech co-workers sent cards of sympathy and support, food, flowers, contacted other friends and co-workers to let them know of this tragedy, contributed to a fund to help bury my granddaughter, answered the phone for me and helped in more ways than I can remember. My union sisters and brothers have never failed me, and in this time of tremendous sadness they are the bright spot. I am proud to be part of such a compassionate group of labor people.

In solidarity,

—Lillian Covarrubias,
President, Toledo Newspaper Guild

It's not just the French who dither about Yanks

The word "freelance" is short for freelance journalist—and it doesn't need the rogue "r" added by Americans to make freelancer. Although the American form is fairly common over here, it's not likely to replace freelance. In the same way, intro is unlikely to give way to lead, cutting to clipping and literal to typo.

On the other hand, the Americanism of the past can easily become an everyday expression. Today's British children tend to be raised rather than brought up and often play with toy trucks instead of lorries. And truck gives us trucker, which is a useful headline word.

But some short American words, like vet for army veteran and hike for increase, just don't work at all. Vets are animal doctors and hiking is what boy scouts do in the countryside.

It is perverse to use raise instead of rise for an increase in pay: this is Americanism for its own sake—with an extra character added. And except to sound transatlantic,

there is no point in using apartment for flat, elevator for lift, envision for envisage, sidewalk for pavement, or loan as a verb for lend.

At least in these cases the damage is to style not meaning. It is worse to use without thinking an American expression whose meaning may be unclear, such as pants for trousers, vest for waistcoat, potato chips for crisps, wash up for wash your hands, purse for handbag, or first floor for ground floor. What would we make of a man jumping from a first floor window in his vest and pants? It would help to know whether we're talking underclothes here.

The French word *entrée* also causes problems as it crosses and recrosses the Atlantic. Originally an intermediate course, the *entrée* is now the first course in France and everywhere else in the world—but the main course in the U.S.

Excerpted from the Aug.-Sept. issue of *Journalist*, official magazine of the National Union of Journalists, in Great Britain.

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

You thought the anthrax scare was over?

By Paul Grondahl
Albany Newspaper Guild

After a few loud raps on aluminum, the overhead garage door rolls up with a metallic rattle. "Welcome to the dungeon," says Brett Paulsen, who has one of the more unusual offices at the Albany Times Union.

A mail/dispatch clerk for the past eight years, he's been working out of a garage on the periphery of the plant for the past year. Ever since the anthrax scare, Paulsen has been donning latex gloves and sorting mail in isolation in the bowels of a crumbling, abandoned bungalow that looks like something out of a Stephen King novel.

Yet he takes his mail duties with utmost seriousness—neither sleet nor snow nor impudent rodents will keep Paulsen from his appointed rounds. Although a plant crew has been trying to control that last problem with poison baits, a rat recently fell off the makeshift sorting cabinet and plopped at his sneakered feet.

"The rat must have just eaten the poison, because it was kicking around as it was dying," Paulsen says. "Lucky I had my gloves on. I picked the rat up by the tail, opened the garage door and launched it out into the yard." And Paulsen just keep on sorting, the Energizer bunny of the stamp-and-envelope set.

The next day the rat was gone, presumably a meal for some scavenging predator. When Guild officers scheduled a September labor-management meeting in Paulsen's work area, the matter got swift action. A dumpster arrived, the house was cleaned up and the Guild's concerns about sanitary conditions in Brett's ad hoc workplace were resolved without the need for further negotiations.

Paulsen says the garage has a sort of grim charm and macabre appeal. It's growing on him—perhaps literally. The rats have been joined by squadrons of creepy spiders and flies inhabiting the musty wooden floor joists a few inches above his head, the low, cramped garage space littered with a boneyard of parts and broken-down curbside newspaper coin boxes.

Paulsen never expected a wild kingdom when he left a career as a chef in favor of a better schedule and daytime hours at the Times Union. "I wish I could go back to my mail room in the main building, but I under-

stand the need to be careful. But it's very isolated and more work for me over here," says Paulsen, 33, who lives in Waterford with his wife, Lucretia, a state employee, and her son, Tim, 14.

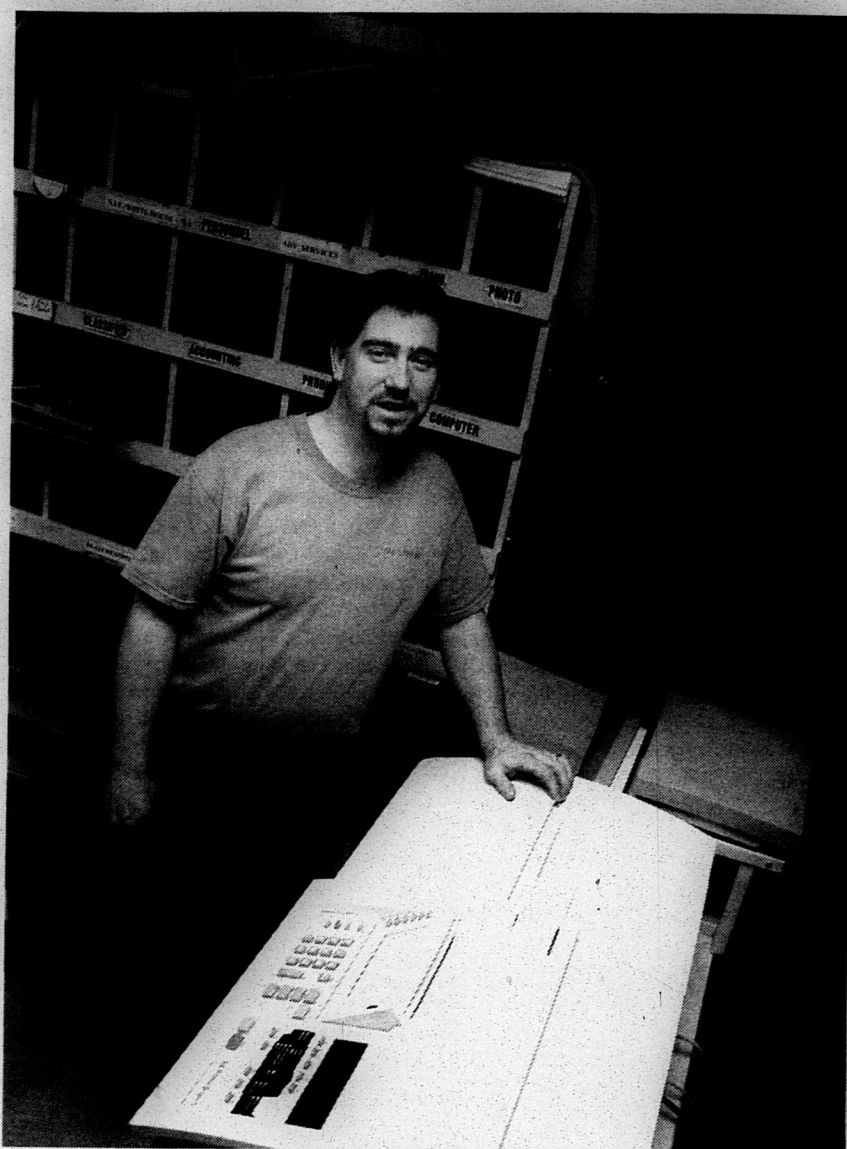
Paulsen uses the garage to sort all incoming mail until he deems it safe and free of any possible tampering. "This way, if something suspicious comes through, I can isolate it here, lock down the house, and not have to evacuate the whole main building," he says. Following U.S. Postal Service guidelines, Paulsen has alerted authorities over a couple of suspicious packages and a lumpy letter from Scotland with no return address. All were inspected and tested by hazardous materials experts and declared safe.

Paulsen says he's not scared of the risk. "I have the post office pamphlets and follow regulations," he says. "I'm very careful and don't shake the letters around. I think the threat is pretty much gone at this point."

Paulsen starts his day at 8 a.m. and makes deliveries of page proofs to advertisers. He drives a company car 50 to 100 miles each day. "It's a lot of driving, but I like being busy and out of the garage," he says. Back at the main building, Paulsen works from a mail room on the second-floor near the elevator, running outgoing mail through a Pitney Bowes mail meter that has logged more than 1.5 million pieces of Times Union mail in the past decade. Later, Paulsen drives to the Postal Service facility on New Karner Road in Colonie to pick up an average of 30,000 pieces of mail each week. Holidays that fall on a Monday are a killer when he makes his Tuesday pickup.

"It's real heavy after a long holiday weekend and I've really got to hustle to keep up with it," Paulsen says. On those super-heavy Tuesdays, Paulsen uses bungee cords and piles his mail high above the top of the shopping cart he pushes on his afternoon mail delivery rounds throughout the building. He sorts the mail into 30 separate departments and offices. The features department—with its steady stream of videos, compact discs and books—gets the most mail each day hands-down; the city desk is a distant second. The press room, library and cafeteria rarely receive incoming mail.

Paulsen knows a few things about cafeterias. He earned a degree in culinary arts from the prestigious Johnson & Wales chef train-



ALBANY NEWSPAPER GUILD

Brett Paulsen, on the front lines of the war on terrorism.

ing school in Rhode Island. He's cooked in several area restaurants, including Milano's and Ralph's in Colonie. "I like cooking, but it's a stressful, high-pressure job and I'd put in 60 hours a week of nights," Paulsen says. He tried to keep a restaurant job for about five months after starting at the paper, but burned out quickly working both. "The Times Union was only supposed to be a temporary job. But it's worked out well for me," says Paulsen, who enjoys his free time and uses it to go four-wheeling in his Jeep

Cherokee and to bowl in a Friday night league, where he carries a 184 average.

The easygoing, quiet, goateed Paulsen has a fierce work ethic. With space heaters fighting off the garage's drafty chill and a radio tuned to the classic rock of PYX 106, he sorts and stacks mail at a feverish pace. "The volume keeps going up and I can't slow down or I get way behind," he says. "I don't think many people know I'm over here or what I do. But if they don't get their mail on time, I'd sure hear about it."

THE GUILD Reporter

Official publication of
The Newspaper Guild-CWA (AFL-CIO, CLC)
501 Third St., NW, Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20001-2797
Telephone: (202) 434-7177 FAX: (202) 434-1472
E-mail: azipser@cwa-union.org

Volume 70, Number 1

JANUARY 24, 2003

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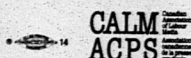
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Printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co.

DAYBOOK

Deadline for Broun, Barr
entries, Jan. 31 (postmark)

Midwest District Council,
Jan. 31-Feb. 2, Milwaukee

New Local Officers Seminar,
Feb. 14-17, Silver Spring, MD

New England District Council,
Feb. 22-23, Boston

Amer. Copy Editors Soc. Conf.,
March 6-8, Chicago

CWA Leg.-Political Conference,
March 9-12, Washington, DC

CWA Nat'l Women's Conference,
April 3-6, Atlanta

TNG Canada Council,
April 26-27, Winnipeg

TNG-CWA Executive Council,
May 4-5, Washington, DC

Freedom Award Fund Banquet,
May 6, Washington, DC

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

The new year is predicted to be happy and prosperous except for "the boys on the frozen crags of Mid-Korea"—but only if "business does not become dizzy and frightened" and starts cutting spending. . . . A federal grand jury charges the Kansas City Star with two counts of violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. . . . In a New York speech, Guild Executive Vice President Ralph Novak says the near-unanimity of support for Republican candidates by the nation's editorial pages wasn't surprising, since publishers have interests inseparable from those of "big business."

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The U.S. Justice Dept., claiming the Cincinnati Post had failed to establish it was in danger of failing, calls for hearings on a proposed joint operating agreement with the Cincinnati Enquirer. . . . The Guild files a friend-of-the-court brief challenging police use of no-notice search warrants to raid news offices. . . . Right-wing forces unleash a barrage of mail to the U.S. Senate to defeat labor law reform legislation.

Ten years ago this month:

The New York Guild moves to launch a corporate campaign against all of Mortimer Zuckerman's businesses after he scraps the Guild contract at the New York Daily News and fires a third of the newspaper's Guild-represented employees. . . . Brian Williams, president of the Cincinnati Guild, is named editor of The Guild Reporter. . . . The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette resumes publication after an 8-month hiatus.

VOL. 70

ISS. 2

FEB 21

2003