

THE GUILD Reporter

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Tale of Two Cities: 1 history, 2 fates?

Minneapolis and St. Paul, a single urban mass split by the Mississippi River, have long been America's rival siblings. St. Paul is the state seat of government, Minneapolis has the greater share of commerce. Minneapolis views St. Paul as a country-bumpkin kind of town, a city of neighborhood bars and bowling alleys. St. Paul's resi-

dents, led most famously by Garrison Keillor, recoil at the pretensions of their more restless neighbors.

And yet, for all their differences, Minneapolis and St. Paul also define themselves as the Twin Cities: yin and yang. Two sides of the same coin. Employees of the Minneapolis Star Tribune and of the St. Paul Pioneer Press compete

mightily for stories, ad dollars and subscriptions, but they also belong to the same Newspaper Guild local and fight for the same kinds of salaries, benefits and working conditions. Historically, as one staff benefited, so did the other.

Until now, that is.

In an apparent reversal of stereotypes, newspaper management in the more laid-back precincts of St. Paul seems determined to break its unions, dragging out contract talks for more than a year with a demand that the Guild drop decades-old language allowing members to respect other unions' picket lines. The Knight Ridder-owned paper also is seeking to bolster its parent company's 20%-plus profit margins by offering annual raises of no more than 2.2% a year, and is insisting on a 70/30 premium split with employees for health care coverage.

And as icing on the cake, it recently sacked its part-time cartoonist, Kirk Anderson, after eight years on the job. Warm and fuzzy the Pioneer Press isn't.

Across the river, meanwhile, management at the McClatchy-owned Star Tribune—if hardly one big happy family—at least acted with business-like efficiency in settling its contract. True, Guild members were taken aback by the Strib's unusually hard-fisted

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WILL WEYANDT/MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER GUILD
Gayle Grundtner (left) and Kathy DeRong send a message on "Black Friday," the Aug. 1 anniversary of their contract's expiration.

Opposition grows to new OT rules

The more that labor advocates delve into the U.S. Dept. of Labor's new rules for overtime, the more it becomes clear that the department is turning the Fair Labor Standards Act on its head. And as that awareness grows, so does political opposition to changes that could affect millions of workers—and their paychecks—as soon as next month.

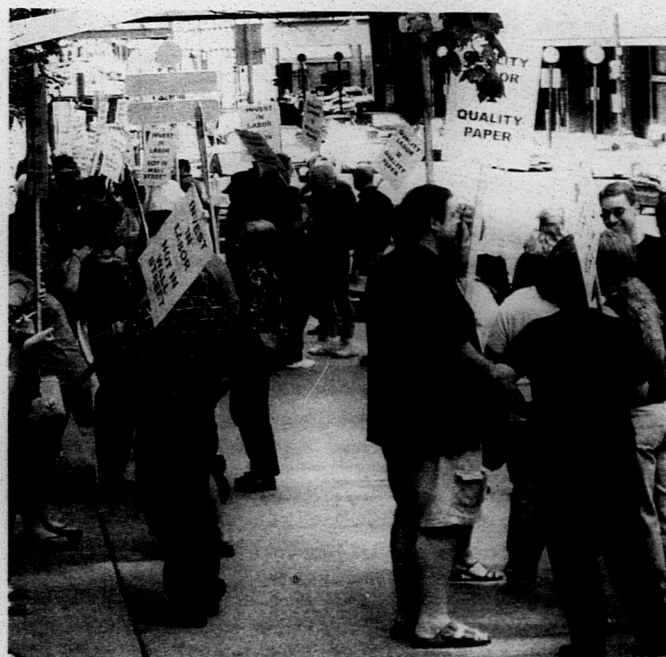
For example, offers Ross Eisenbrey of the Economic Policy Institute, whereas recent interpretation of the FLSA exempted roughly 30% of all reporters from overtime, the new rules would exempt 70%. Or more. "It might be higher—it might be almost 100%—but we took a conservative approach," he adds.

Eisenbrey and Mark Wilson, an attorney specializing in employment law whose primary client is the CWA, were the key speakers at

a July 29 press briefing organized by TNG-CWA to explain the full impact of the new rules. While most attention has been paid to the impending loss of extra pay, the real struggle, explained TNG President Linda Foley, is "about a fundamental shift in what is arguably workers' most valued right—the right to a life beyond your job."

The House of Representatives on July 10 narrowly defeated, 213-210, a CWA-backed bill that would have blocked the changes, but 14 Republicans crossed party lines, underscoring the bipartisan nature of the issue. Now the action is shifting to the Senate, where Tom Harkin and Ted Kennedy have introduced The Overtime Compensation Protection Act to accomplish the same aim. The full Senate is expected to take up the bill after its August recess.

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ABRAM ISAACS/MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER GUILD

Afternoon crowds of Pioneer Press employees have become a common sight in St. Paul, as Guild members hold solidarity breaks to protest lack of bargaining progress. Below, reporters (l to r) Scott Carlson, Les Suzukamo and Mike Hughlett discuss the stalled talks.



WILL WEYANDT/MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER GUILD

Eight fired for unionizing win 8 months' back pay

Ryan Phillips, the publisher who last December closed two Maryland newspaper offices and fired eight employees to thwart a unionization drive, has agreed to pay a total of \$71,500 in lost pay and benefits.

In a pre-trial settlement with the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, the Journal Newspapers agreed to pay the fired reporters and editorial assistants 80% of their back pay, plus interest, 401(k) contributions and health insurance reimbursements. Payments were reduced by earnings from other jobs, but fired workers who had not found other jobs and were willing to return to the Journal received an extra \$1,000 in lieu of reinstatement.

In addition, the settlement included payment of 4% raises received last August by employees of the Northern Virginia Journal but denied to employees of the two Maryland Journals. The Guild and the National Labor Relations Board had charged that withholding the raises had illegally discriminated against employees trying to form a union.

Phillips also agreed to post notices at the Journal, and to mail the same notices to current and former employees, stating that management will not interfere with employees' rights under federal law to form a union.

"It was a good settlement," said reporter Susan Gervasi, one of the fired employees. Although it fell short of remedies sought by the NLRB—which included a demand that Phillips reopen the two closed offices and rehire the workers he'd fired—"we felt it could have dragged on for another three years," Gervasi added. "It seemed it would be better for the Guild and better for us just to settle."

Gervasi and her co-workers were fired, without notice or severance pay, 10 days before a scheduled union representation election that was subsequently called off by the NLRB at the union's request. Charges against the company claiming violations of federal labor law were filed by the regional NLRB office May 29, with a trial before an administrative law judge set for July 21.

The notice the Journal agreed to post and mail to employees states that the Journal "recognizes that the National Labor Relations Act gives employees these rights: to organize; to form, join or assist any union; to bargain collectively through representation of their own choice, and to act together for other mutual aid or protection."

Reciting a list of unfair labor practices that the Guild and the labor board had accused it of committing

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Journalism pay is still the pits page 8

Hawaii gets 5-year pact . . .

The Hawaii Newspaper Guild has reached tentative agreement on a new five-year contract with the Gannett-owned Honolulu Advertiser. Although contract provisions are retroactive to June 10, 2002, the first wage increase won't take effect until May 1, 2004.

Most of the company's demands for givebacks were beaten back, including: cuts in medical coverage and sick leave; higher employee costs for medical, dental and life insurance and long-term disability; use of subcontractors and managers to do unit work; elimination of overtime premium pay; and introduction of a two-tier pay scale and benefits. The most notable union concession was to agree to an additional four managers, supervisors and confidential employees, raising the total to 18.

Gains include Gannett's agreement to provide a non-contributory 401(k) plan, which it historically has denied to unionized employees. The agreement also includes an extension of the no-layoff guarantee to

Jan. 1, 2005; contract coverage for the first time of temporary employees, except for job security and severance provisions and most benefits; and a first extension of severance pay to part-timers.

Economically, the deal provides only token gains, although all full-time employees will get a \$500 signing bonus and part-timers half of that. All increases will go on scale and include 1% next May and May 1, 2005; 1.5% May 1, 2006; and 2% November 1, 2006.

Other details:

- The probationary period, previously 30 days with an option for the company to extend it for another 30, will be 60 days without a renewal option.

- Increases in auto mileage and the weekly minimum.

- Elimination of several one-day "waiting periods" before allowing sick leave.

- Updating a clause that bans lay-offs due to introduction of new equipment, extending the ban to all employees on payroll on the contract ratification date.

. . . as does the Ottawa Guild

With job security as its foremost concern, the Ottawa Newspaper Guild succeeded in nailing down a new five-year contract with the Canwest Global-owned Ottawa Citizen after just seven bargaining sessions.

The transfer of more than 100 Citizen circulation and business office jobs to Winnipeg over the past year, followed by Canwest's move to slash jobs through the centralization of news gathering, raised concerns that the company would target job security clauses in the Guild's contract. Further contributing to this concern was a major arbitration decision last year, effectively prohibiting the paper from laying off any newsroom employees as long as the Citizen uses freelancers. Last year's freelance budget at the Citizen was about C\$1.8 million.

So local officials were not surprised when, on the first day of bargaining, the Citizen proposed a weakening of the freelance language that would have allowed at-will layoffs. By then the Guild already had launched an awareness campaign, using desk-top "tents" imprinted with the Guild logo and adorned with "No Concession" stickers, and had garnered

wide support for its line-in-the-sand approach to job security issues.

Seven all-day sessions later, the two sides agreed to a contract that calls for an immediate pay raise of 2.25% and subsequent annual increases of 2%, 2%, 2.5% and 2.5%. In addition, there was an increase of 2.5 cents per kilometer in the mileage rate paid members using their private cars on company business, and those with children needing orthodontic work made a big gain when the company agreed to coverage for braces.

The Guild agreed to allow its editorial employees to work weekly shifts combining days and nights in the same week on a strictly voluntary basis. The company will be required to pay night differential for all shifts if three of the five are at night.

A provision that required the company to pay a member for a minimum full day at overtime rates when called in to work on a day off has been changed to a guarantee of four hours, but all must be paid at double-time rather than time-and-a-half.

Membership ratification of the agreement drew the support of 90% of those voting.

Journal workers win back pay

Continued from page 1

ting, the notice further states that Journal management "will not interrogate, discourage or coerce employees by soliciting grievances from employees; will not create the impression that employees' union activities are under surveillance; will not close and/or consolidate offices to discourage employees from organizing; will not terminate employment of employees because of their sup-

port of and activities on behalf of the Guild; will not fail to provide raises to employees because of their support of the Guild."

The legally conciliatory tone marks a sharp turn-around from the pugnacious attitude Phillips had adopted earlier, extending to editorials attacking local politicians for their support of the fired employees and taunting offers to them or the Guild to buy the Journals. But the attacks apparently didn't dissuade the employees' supporters.

"The fact is that people were fired for doing what they have a

constitutional right to do—that is, to associate, to organize and to make a better life for their families," Virginia State Senator Leslie Byrne told those who attended a June 10 rally for the fired workers. "The National Labor Relations Board has said that the Journal has done wrong and we expect them to do something about it, and we expect our elected officials in Virginia to do something about it," Byrne added, while wearing a picket sign. "We are here to ask the Journal to do the right thing."

And despite the permanent loss of their jobs—Phillips apparently has no intention of reopening the two offices—the former Journal employees seem to have no regrets for having stood up for themselves. Gervasi, who is currently freelancing and who says this was her first experience with unions, says she was struck by the compassion of Guild members who worked with her and by their readiness "to always be responsive to us and to what we wanted—they weren't an outside force trying to come in and 'get' us."

"It just made me feel so good," she added. "It was one of the few times in my life in which I was involved in something in which I had no doubt about what I was doing. It just felt so right, and I think people felt very gratified that the union stood by us."

The Newspaper Guild International



PENSION FUND

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

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

In brief . . .

Kenosha agrees to 3-year contract

The Kenosha Newspaper Guild has agreed to a three-year contract, retroactive to June 1, with the Kenosha Labor Paper. Gains include continuation of 100% paid health care, annual across-the-board wage increases of 3% and, effective June 1, 2005, an increase from \$27.50 to \$30 per week of contributions to the Guild International Pension Fund. The new contract also establishes for the first time a reporter job classification. In exchange, the Guild agreed to eliminate severance on voluntary resignations, including retirement and termination for just cause; elimination of a two-week advance notice for termination; and a 30-day probationary period for new hires.

Web sites don't make competitors

An arbitrator has ruled that The Seattle Times violated the Guild contract when it told a copy editor she couldn't write book reviews for another publication because it was a competitor. Observing that the Times' definition of a competitor "is so sweeping as to render the rights granted to employees to freelance meaningless," the arbitrator blasted the company's testimony that one of the factors in its decision-making is whether another publication has a web site.

All the news that's fit to pay

The Belo-owned Providence Journal, whose profit-wringing excesses have resulted in dozens of charges of unfair labor practices, has taken a new tack in its dollar chase: it's charging its readers for printing the news. Instead of publishing announcements of births, engagements, graduations, business promotions, retirements and wedding anniversaries as it has in the past, the Journal now puts them in a new classified advertising section. Minimum charge for publication? \$20—plus an additional \$50 to include a picture.

Hundreds in Philly protest layoffs

Hundreds of Philadelphia Newspaper Guild members, brandishing signs that read "Corporate Greed vs. Customer's Need" and "No Layoffs," turned out for a lunchtime rally Aug. 13 at the Daily News and the Inquirer. In recent weeks, the Knight Ridder-owned newspapers have eliminated three advertising positions, four in the prepress department, three in the research library and three in the Daily News newsroom. "It has now come to the point where management is cutting through muscle and hitting bone," Guild president Henry Holcomb told the cheering crowd.

Ontario locals ponder merging

Guild-represented workers at The Beacon Herald of Stratford were to decide Aug. 18 whether to merge their dwindling local with a larger one in nearby Kitchener, Ont. Membership in TNG-CWA Local 30139 plunged from more than 50 to fewer than 30 after the family-owned newspaper was taken over by Sun Media four years ago. Meanwhile, the 400-strong Local 80400, which represents employees at La-Z-Boy about half an hour's drive away, is flourishing.

This union not born yesterday

The Canadian Media Guild wants to see some fresh young faces—so it's hosting a three-day "Not Born Yesterday" forum targeted specifically at Guild members who are 35 and younger. "The overall idea is to inject new ideas into the union, and to discuss workplace issues that may not be getting full attention" in a union whose leadership and staff consists almost entirely of the 40+ crowd, a spokesman explained. The forum will be held Oct. 17-19 at the Hotel Novotel in Toronto.

Changing attitude toward arbitration

One measure of changing management-labor relations at the Buffalo News: a backlog of nearly 40 grievances where there used to be none. Guild leaders attribute the change to a new generation of managers. "Managers used to think arbitration represented a failure of the grievance process," said Guild President Pat Gormley. "Now they regard it as part of the process."

350 interpreters join Calif. local

The first of three groups of court interpreters seeking Guild representation has been certified by the courts in southern California. Approximately 350 interpreters in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo will become part of the Northern California Media Guild after 74% of eligible employees signed cards supporting representation. Two other groups of California interpreters are awaiting court certification of their card-check process and also would become part of the Northern California local.

Personal notes:

"Curtain Going Up," a collection of short plays written by Stewart Benedict, retired copy editor for The Jersey Journal, has been published by FATA Press of New Paltz, N.Y. . . . Denis St. Pierre, president of the Northern Ontario Newspaper Guild, won first place in a media awards competition sponsored by the International Association of Fire Fighters.

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The two faces of Radio Free Asia

By Robert A. Senser
TNG-CWA Associate Member

As a worker in China, she dared to protest labor abuses in her candy factory. For this, she was locked up for a year in the late 1970s.

Twenty-five years later, as a senior member of the professional staff of Radio Free Asia in its Washington headquarters, she dared to give strong support to her fellow employees' initiatives to form a union. For this, she was recently fired.

Between these two crucial events in her life, Xiaoxia Gong acquired the intellectual assets—including a Master's degree at Peking University and a PhD. at Harvard—to qualify for a job matching her skills and ideals. In January 1998, she joined Radio Free Asia (RFA), a U.S. government-funded private organization, as director of its Cantonese language service.

In its daily broadcasts of news and commentary to the People's Republic of China and five other countries (Burma, Cambodia, Korea, Laos and Vietnam), RFA is unequivocally on the side of freedom, including the freedom to organize. A popular feature of its Mandarin service is a twice-weekly "Workers Calling" program, in which a former Beijing labor leader—now in Hong Kong—relays the voices of Chinese workers using the RFA hotline, including their struggles for the right to organize.

Non-supervisory employees of RFA's nine language services form a highly diverse

group of 125, almost all Asian, marked by differences of language, dialect, culture and typical ethnic rivalries. Yet, somehow, most of them last year united in a desire to form a union. They circulated a "mission statement" that proclaimed, in part:

"Every day in RFA, we work on broadcasting news and information to the countries where liberty and democracy and human rights are still deprived to their people. . . . The spirit of liberty should not be confined to the words that we broadcast; it should be our deeds in daily life. By organizing, we hope to create a more harmonious and healthy environment within RFA, both between the management and workers and among workers ourselves, which is instrumental in pursuing RFA's mission."

The employees who signed that statement were not naïve enough to believe that management would warmly welcome a union. Still, the vigor of the opposition they provoked was startling. Although a major management argument against their plans was its opposition "to an outside third party that will create a wall between RFA and its employees," it was "an outside third party" that promoted this line, planned the RFA's tactical anti-union campaign and participated actively in its execution.

An eight-page document, titled "Union Awareness for Managers, Prepared for RFA" by the law firm of Hogan & Hartson, listed "10 Reasons RFA Employees Don't Need a Union." Among them: "RFA treats employees fairly." To employees in the language

services, that argument was not persuasive because it followed three lay-offs last fall that many deemed unfair.

As a supervisor, Xiaoxia [Shou-SHA] Gong—like other directors of language services—became a prime target for a systemic training program in "Union Awareness for Managers," which stressed the undivided loyalty owed to RFA and its policies. After attending a 90-minute training program led in part by two lawyers, she expressed her reaction in an e-mail to her colleagues. "The rhetoric and methods in the anti-union training clearly violate my principles, my convictions, and my conscience," she wrote.

Xiaoxia's e-mail also criticized RFA's insistence on undivided loyalty as "the same thing" as the hard-line opposition to independent unions consistently taken by Chinese Communist authorities. RFA President Richard Richter responded with a letter terminating her for "continued insubordination."

Despite the training program for managers, despite a volley of anti-union messages to employees and despite Richter's personal involvement in the campaign, employee support for unionizing clearly seemed to be strengthening as election day approached. So in an apparent attempt to buy time, RFA lawyers argued at a May 1 hearing before the National Labor Relations Board that many RFA employees were so lacking in English skills they couldn't understand the NLRB ballot or election notice and would need help from interpreters

to vote intelligently.

In fact, all of RFA management's communications with employees are in English, and language services employees are explicitly required to have some English proficiency to do their work. The NLRB therefore rejected the claim and, in response to an employee petition, set May 28 as the day for RFA's senior broadcasters, researchers, production assistants, production coordinators, and administrative assistants to vote on representation by the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild. The outcome was 77 yes, 37 no.

Although RFA appealed the outcome, arguing once again that its employees lacked the "rudimentary English skills" to cast a ballot, the regional NLRB director on July 16 certified the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild as their exclusive representative. Xiaoxia Gong, meanwhile, has filed a class-action complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission charging RFA with racial discrimination in hiring, assigning and promoting Asians. She remains unemployed.

Senser is a former journalist and U.S. Foreign Service Officer and was program director of the AFL-CIO Asian-American Free Labor Institute. He currently maintains Human Rights for Workers, a web site that focuses on the effects of globalization on working men and women, where this article first appeared. The site may be visited at www.senser.com

No wonder they're sleepless in Seattle

The intricate gavotte that's playing out in Seattle, where the majority Blethen-owned Seattle Times is trying to put an end to its joint operating agreement with the Hearst-owned Post-Intelligencer—presumably killing off the P-I itself, in the process—acquired another dance partner July 14.

That's when a King County Superior Court judge gave the nod to a freshly minted Committee for a Two-Newspaper Town to intervene in a lawsuit filed by Hearst to block the break-up. In doing so, he rejected arguments that the committee is simply a front for the Guild, although Guild members do play a prominent role in it. And in an ironic twist, he supported the committee's right to intervene by quoting from the JOA, which justified its inception by stressing the community value of keeping two competing newspapers.

The decision gives the committee virtually equal rights to conduct depositions, file motions, produce evidence and call and cross-examine witnesses.

Meanwhile, although the judge also ruled that the committee's intervention would not "unduly delay or prejudice" the case, it did result in a rescheduling of the first hearing to give the committee time to prepare. Originally set for July 18, the hearing has been postponed to Sept. 12.

The delay, in turn, prompted Hearst to announce it would have to put the Post-Intelligencer up for sale prior to the hearing "in order to comply with its contractual

obligations under the JOA." Hearst contends it must start marketing the newspaper now if the JOA is actually to be terminated Oct. 29, 2004, a deadline that was triggered this past spring by the Times' declaration that it had suffered three consecutive years of financial losses—the formula for ending the arrangement.

More complications abound. Turning up the heat on Hearst, Times publisher Frank Blethen announced he might seek court approval to shorten the 18-month period because of Hearst's efforts in April to stop the clock while its suit was heard. That effort, Blethen has contended, "unambiguously constitutes a material breach" of the agreement, which states that neither paper will attempt to suspend its provisions.

Meanwhile, given Hearst's stated intention to put the P-I up for sale, the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild has formally requested information about Hearst's plans for the paper, which employs 155 Guild members. The request "reminds Hearst that they are obligated to bargain over the effects of the sale of the P-I," noted Liz Brown, the Guild's administrative officer.

Hearst, however, showed it knows how to play both sides of an issue, responding that it expects to win its litigation and therefore such information requests "are premature." Brown, saying she is "disappointed" at Hearst's lack of regard for its employees, is considering whether to file an unfair labor practice charge.



More than 150 supporters rally July 9 on behalf of workers at the Chinese Daily News, above; at right, reporter Lynn Wang describes conditions at the newspaper to a camera crew.



How do you spell 'union'? At this rally, R-E-S-P-E-C-T

A multicultural crowd of 150—many wearing white shirts symbolizing opposition to management oppression, others donning stars-and-stripes vests—turned out July 9 at the Monterey Park, Cal. headquarters of the Chinese Daily News for a two-hour protest against the company's antiunion activities.

Joined by numerous elected officials and labor and community leaders, the crowd sported signs, buttons and balloons emblazoned with the English and Chinese words "Respect."

A letter of support for the workers, signed by 47 Taiwanese trade federations, unions and labor organizations, was read in both languages. Most prominent among the signatories were the United Daily News Union, which represents the employees of CDN's mother company, UDN Group, and the union representing UDN's major competitor, the China Times.

Bruce Meachum, a TNG rep and master of ceremonies for the rally, announced that nearly 500 letters of support had poured in from more than 30 countries, including one he read from the Inter-

national Federation of Journalists. At the end of the rally, a delegation of union representatives, including TNG's director of field operations, Eric Geist, delivered the letters to CDN management.

Employees at the newspaper voted for TNG-CWA representation March 19, 2001, despite an intense campaign of intimidation and harassment by an anti-union consultant. CDN management subsequently filed a series of appeals challenging the election, has refused to recognize the union or to negotiate a first contract and has continued harassing union supporters. For example, word was spread among employees not to wear white July 9—although many, while complying, wore white the next day to show their support.

On the day of the protest, CDN hired six security guards and parked a truck between the rally and its building to block employees' views.

The Guild has filed approximately 30 charges of unfair labor practices with the National Labor Relations Board, which issued a consolidated complaint of nine cases against CDN management that have yet to be heard.

Labor round-up

Media ownership rules still in play

Pressured by a huge public outcry, the House of Representatives voted July 23 by a lopsided, veto-proof margin of 400-21 to block some of the new media ownership rules approved by the Federal Communications Commission. Although the House action leaves undisturbed the FCC decision to permit cross-ownership of newspapers and TV stations in the same markets, a bipartisan group of 35 Senators has signed a little-used "resolution of disapproval" that could torpedo all the rule changes. Meanwhile, threatened court challenges to the FCC changes are taking shape, as both the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance and the National Association of Broadcasters filed separate notices with the U.S. Appeals Court that they plan to seek reversal of portions of the new ownership rules. Media General, which owns TV stations and newspapers, filed a notice of appeal in the same court on the newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership restrictions.

Dayton paper now at war with mailers

Guild-represented employees at the Dayton Daily News have worked years without a contract. Now the Cox-owned newspaper is going after its mailers, represented for the past year by the Graphic Communications International Union, who have had no success in negotiating a first contract. The company's most recent "offer" was to cut mailroom workers' pay by 4% annually over the next five years, prompting a rally at the paper and informational picket lines at Cox headquarters in Atlanta. The Dayton Daily News also is forcing the mailers to work 14-hour shifts on straight pay, constantly changes shift schedules and refuses to pay benefits to full-time employees, according to a GCIU publication.

Verizon talks: 2 steps forward, 1 back

Contract negotiations between Verizon and its 60,000 CWA-represented employees were continuing as The Guild Reporter was going to press, with outsourcing and job security as major stumbling blocks to an agreement. But not all the news has been bleak. Even as the talks were starting, approximately 2,400 former Verizon workers were ordered back to work—with another 1,000 promised they would get their old jobs back—after an arbitrator ruled July 11 that the company had broken its contract when it fired them and changed their jobs last December. One month later, on Aug. 11, 150 Verizon employees in western North Carolina returned to work after ending a 12-week strike. Their new contract calls for a 12% wage increase over three years, a 4% pension boost and improvements in health care and other benefits.

Coke: 'Unthinkable! Undrinkable!'

The AFL-CIO and several major labor unions have launched a worldwide boycott of Coca-Cola under the slogan, "Unthinkable! Undrinkable!" Boycott organizers allege that the soft-drink maker has been working with a right-wing paramilitary group to intimidate and assassinate union members in Colombia and is seeking signatures for 1 million protest petitions addressed to the company's board of directors. Coca-Cola, meanwhile, insists the accusations are "nothing more than a shameless effort to generate publicity using the name of our company, its trademark and brands."

What's wrong with this picture?

The 400 wealthiest taxpayers accounted for more than 1% of all U.S. income in 2000, more than doubling their share in just eight years, according to the Internal Revenue Service—even as their tax burden plummeted. The IRS data show that the average income of the 400 wealthiest taxpayers was almost \$174 million in 2000, nearly quadruple the \$46.8 million average in 1992. At least some of that increase is attributable to a cut in capital gains tax rates in 1997, to 20% from 28%, which encouraged long-term holders of assets to sell them. This year's tax cut reduced the capital gains rate further, to 15%, so expect those income numbers to keep rising.

Ground Zero claims deadlines nearing

Deadlines are fast approaching for filing compensation claims by reporters or other Guild-represented workers who may have been injured while working at or near the World Trade Center following the Sept. 11, 2001 attack. Workers or volunteers who have symptoms of illness, such as a persistent cough or extreme anxiety, also may be eligible for compensation. Compensation is available through a state program, New York State Workers' Compensation, as well as from the federally administered September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, and many individuals are eligible for compensation from both programs. For more information, call the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health at 212-627-3900 or send e-mail to nycosh@nycosh.org.

Labor Notes conference: raising hell

Subscribers to Labor Notes tend to be hell-raisers, and that's what they'll be doing at the biennial Labor Notes Conference in Detroit on Sept. 12-14. See www.labornotes.org for details.

'Big sucking sound' is growing louder

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates, Inc.

The U.S. job market keeps getting more dismal. While the July unemployment rate registered a nominal improvement over June, dropping to 6.2% from 6.4%, the economy actually lost 44,000 jobs: the only reason the unemployment numbers looked better was because nearly half a million jobless Americans threw in the hat and quit their fruitless job hunting.

Many of those jobs, it turns out, have been flowing overseas, thanks in large part to U.S. "free trade" policies. Now even IBM, that icon of American technological superiority, is joining the exodus—to such an extent that the IBM executive who disclosed the company's plans has forecast that its workers could respond by union organizing.

Two CWA locals, including Guild affiliate WashTech, are stressing exactly that point. Without a union to fight on behalf of employees, says WashTech President Marcus Courtney, IBM will export thousands of jobs in accounting and in memory chip and software development.

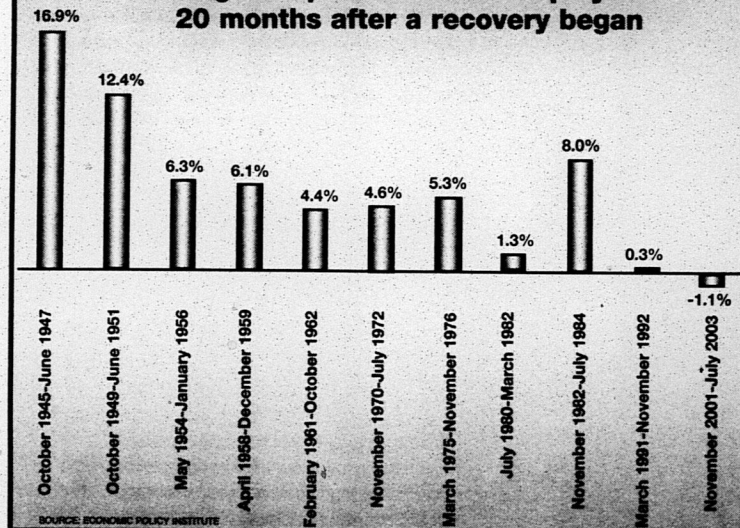
Courtney disclosed IBM's plans after IBM Global Employee Relations Director Tom Lynch discussed them at a meeting last March. WashTech later received internal IBM slides and a tape about the job exports. Besides exporting U.S. white-collar jobs, IBM plans to fly its own Chinese managers and workers to the U.S., have U.S. workers train them for better posts, then return them to China—taking U.S. jobs with them, Courtney noted.

Such importation of a company's own foreign workers is legal under the federal L-1 visa program, which last year alone permitted U.S. firms to import and train approximately 500,000 workers.

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Changes in private sector employment
20 months after a recovery began



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Labor round-up

Media ownership rules still in play

Pressured by a huge public outcry, the House of Representatives voted July 23 by a lopsided, veto-proof margin of 400-21 to block some of the new media ownership rules approved by the Federal Communications Commission. Although the House action leaves undisturbed the FCC decision to permit cross-ownership of newspapers and TV stations in the same markets, a bipartisan group of 35 Senators has signed a little-used "resolution of disapproval" that could torpedo all the rule changes. Meanwhile, threatened court challenges to the FCC changes are taking shape, as both the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance and the National Association of Broadcasters filed separate notices with the U.S. Appeals Court that they plan to seek reversal of portions of the new ownership rules. Media General, which owns TV stations and newspapers, filed a notice of appeal in the same court on the newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership restrictions.

Dayton paper now at war with mailers

Guild-represented employees at the Dayton Daily News have worked years without a contract. Now the Cox-owned newspaper is going after its mailers, represented for the past year by the Graphic Communications International Union, who have had no success in negotiating a first contract. The company's most recent "offer" was to cut mailroom workers' pay by 4% annually over the next five years, prompting a rally at the paper and informational picket lines at Cox headquarters in Atlanta. The Dayton Daily News also is forcing the mailers to work 14-hour shifts on straight pay, constantly changes shift schedules and refuses to pay benefits to full-time employees, according to a GCIU publication.

Verizon talks: 2 steps forward, 1 back

Contract negotiations between Verizon and its 60,000 CWA-represented employees were continuing as The Guild Reporter was going to press, with outsourcing and job security as major stumbling blocks to an agreement. But not all the news has been bleak. Even as the talks were starting, approximately 2,400 former Verizon workers were ordered back to work—with another 1,000 promised they would get their old jobs back—after an arbitrator ruled July 11 that the company had broken its contract when it fired them and changed their jobs last December. One month later, on Aug. 11, 150 Verizon employees in western North Carolina returned to work after ending a 12-week strike. Their new contract calls for a 12% wage increase over three years, a 4% pension boost and improvements in health care and other benefits.

Coke: 'Unthinkable! Undrinkable!'

The AFL-CIO and several major labor unions have launched a worldwide boycott of Coca-Cola under the slogan, "Unthinkable! Undrinkable!" Boycott organizers allege that the soft-drink maker has been working with a right-wing paramilitary group to intimidate and assassinate union members in Colombia and is seeking signatures for 1 million protest petitions addressed to the company's board of directors. Coca-Cola, meanwhile, insists the accusations are "nothing more than a shameless effort to generate publicity using the name of our company, its trademark and brands."

What's wrong with this picture?

The 400 wealthiest taxpayers accounted for more than 1% of all U.S. income in 2000, more than doubling their share in just eight years, according to the Internal Revenue Service—even as their tax burden plummeted. The IRS data show that the average income of the 400 wealthiest taxpayers was almost \$174 million in 2000, nearly quadruple the \$46.8 million average in 1992. At least some of that increase is attributable to a cut in capital gains tax rates in 1997, to 20% from 28%, which encouraged long-term holders of assets to sell them. This year's tax cut reduced the capital gains rate further, to 15%, so expect those income numbers to keep rising.

Ground Zero claims deadlines nearing

Deadlines are fast approaching for filing compensation claims by reporters or other Guild-represented workers who may have been injured while working at or near the World Trade Center following the Sept. 11, 2001 attack. Workers or volunteers who have symptoms of illness, such as a persistent cough or extreme anxiety, also may be eligible for compensation. Compensation is available through a state program, New York State Workers' Compensation, as well as from the federally administered September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, and many individuals are eligible for compensation from both programs. For more information, call the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health at 212-627-3900 or send e-mail to nycosh@nycosh.org.

Labor Notes conference: raising hell

Subscribers to Labor Notes tend to be hell-raisers, and that's what they'll be doing at the biennial Labor Notes Conference in Detroit on Sept. 12-14. See www.labornotes.org for details.

'Big sucking sound' is growing louder

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates, Inc.

The U.S. job market keeps getting more dismal. While the July unemployment rate registered a nominal improvement over June, dropping to 6.2% from 6.4%, the economy actually lost 44,000 jobs: the only reason the unemployment numbers looked better was because nearly half a million jobless Americans threw in the hat and quit their fruitless job hunting.

Many of those jobs, it turns out, have been flowing overseas, thanks in large part to U.S. "free trade" policies. Now even IBM, that icon of American technological superiority, is joining the exodus—to such an extent that the IBM executive who disclosed the company's plans has forecast that its workers could respond by union organizing.

Two CWA locals, including Guild affiliate WashTech, are stressing exactly that point. Without a union to fight on behalf of employees, says WashTech President Marcus Courtney, IBM will export thousands of jobs in accounting and in memory chip and software development.

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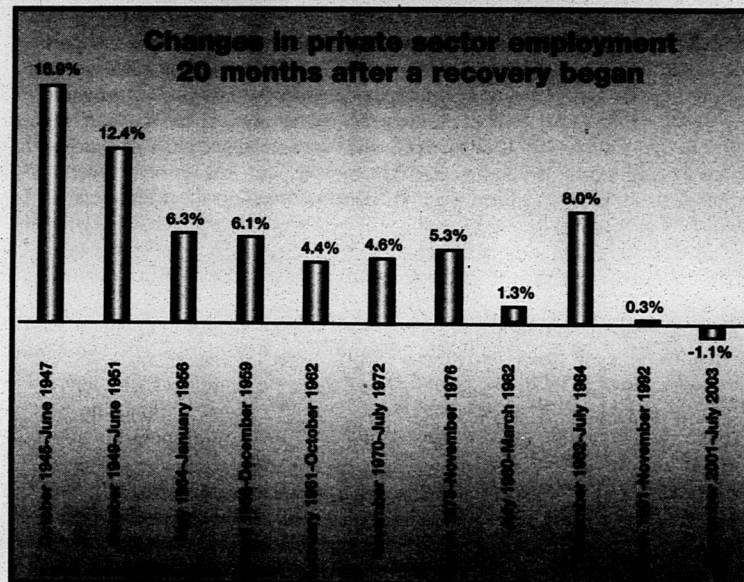
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Overtime blues

Continued from page 1

While the Dept. of Labor has projected that only 644,000 workers would lose their overtime eligibility under its proposal, Eisenbrey and Wilson aver that the department's math is selective and that it ignored some of its own calculations in making the prediction. For example, although DOL's own documentation indicated that 44 out of every 100 "professionals" would be made exempt under its new rules, its conclusions baldly state that the new rules would not result in any significant change in the number of professionals made overtime exempt.

Moreover, the duo argued at the briefing, the new rules are vague enough to invite abuse—and sometimes actually spell out how employers can circumvent its costs. Under the proposed rules, for example, work experience can be substituted for formal education to qualify an employee as a "learned professional," and therefore exempt from overtime. With this change, Eisenbrey said, a rule once intended to exempt doctors, lawyers and other highly trained professionals could be applied to cooks, LPNs and other blue- and pink-collar workers.

Some of the DOL changes are long overdue, notably one that would extend overtime protection to anyone paid less than \$425 a week, even if classified in the much-

abused "manager" category. But as Wilson explained, the new DOL regs spell out how employers can avoid a financial hit: simply change an employee from salaried to wage status. At \$5.25 an hour, an employee could be worked for more than 65 hours a week—including time-and-a-half for every hour more than 40—and still cost less than \$425.

But the biggest problem, Wilson added—and the reason the DOL's actions may finally get some attention on Capitol Hill—is that the department doesn't have the legal right to make some of the changes it is proposing.

Meanwhile, although most opposition to the rules changes has focused on low-paid workers who stand to lose some of their income, the DOL also is proposing to exempt any employee earning more than \$65,000 a year from overtime pay. That may not prompt concern among the majority of workers, who earn on average roughly two-thirds that amount, but for higher-paid employees it signals an end to the 40-hour workweek—if they still have one.

That's not what Congress intended in 1938, Wilson said, when it adopted the FLSA with the assumption that everyone should qualify for overtime, then created certain narrow exemptions; the new rules do exactly the opposite.



PHOTOS BY RAY CROWELL/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Linda Foley, who in addition to being president of The Newspaper Guild-CWA is president of the Berger-Marks Foundation, welcomes participants in the foundation's first organizing school for women, above. A problem-solving group, at right, includes (l to r) Rosemary Lohrke of IUOE; Donna Marks of the Quincy Guild; Tommye Mayer of UAW; and Sheila Moore of IUE-CWA.



From Tin Pan Alley to Norma Rae

Inspired by the example of The Newspaper Guild's first female organizer—and with a strong assist from her foundation—29 women organizers from 10 unions and the AFL-CIO attended a special organizing institute in late July. The training will be followed by grants to local unions nationwide to help train more women organizers, said Linda Foley, the Guild's president.

Foley spoke at the July 25 luncheon for the scholarship winners, whose participation was fully funded by the Berger-Marks Foundation. Established by the late Edna Berger, TNG's first female organizer, the foundation is funded by royalties from her late husband Gerald Marks' Tin Pan Alley compositions, including such sentimental favorites as "All of Me."

"This foundation is to bring the benefits of unions to working women and to help organize

women into unions," Foley explained. Berger, she noted, recruited some of the nation's most prominent—and mostly male—journalists for the Guild.

Women make up 39% of all union members, and AFL-CIO data show they also are among the most committed unionists. But women remain under-represented in labor's top ranks, and organizing training generally has not been targeted at women or at issues of particular importance to women.

Institute participants came from TNG, CWA, the Bakery Workers, Flight Attendants, NABET, Operating Engineers, IUE-CWA, the National Writers Union, the Teamsters and the National Education Association, and were picked from more than 60 applicants, Foley said. "That was great—until we had to turn people down," she added ruefully. —Press Associates, Inc.

Tale of two cities

Continued from page 1

approach to bargaining this year, marked by initial offers of only a 1% wage increase and dark warnings in a company financial report that it might have to endure a strike. But the two sides wrapped up negotiations in a bit more than three months, just days after the previous contract had expired. And while their five-year agreement, on which unit members were to vote Aug. 18 and 19, is not an unqualified success—the local's web site warned that "lively debate is expected" at ratification meetings—it does leave the health care premium split unchanged and includes annual raises of 2%, 2.5%, 2.5%, 3% and 3%.

It also leaves untouched the Star Tribune's strike-sympathy/picket line language, which is comparable to the Pioneer Press's.

(Fueling the anticipated "lively debate" will be several jurisdictional concessions, including removal of three Guild newsroom positions from the unit, the hiring of seven new deputy editors into exempt slots and a provision allowing managers to do "occasional and irregular" unit work for demonstration purposes. But the tentative agreement also provides for Guild representation at new suburban weeklies, gives news assistants and library researchers another step in scales, increases life insurance coverage and retains an annual company contribution to a supplemental pension fund known as a cash balance account, which management sought to end.)

The relatively quick manner in which contract negotiations were

wrapped up at the Star Tribune does more than highlight differences in labor relations. To a large extent it marks a discernible shift in management priorities and editorial emphasis by the Pioneer Press, which historically had gone toe-to-toe with the Strib despite its smaller size and more limited resources. Laying off cartoonist Kirk Anderson was one sign of that change, interpreted by Mike Sweeney, the Guild's administrative officer, as "a calculated move designed to engender fear." Another is management's apparent indifference to the effect its intransigence might have on employee morale.

Not that the unit is rolling over. A by-line strike in May has been followed by several published warnings that the real thing may be next. A subscription cancellation pledge campaign has been unfurled, with cards being returned in packaged lots from the area's large number of unionized subscribers. And an unfair labor practice charge has been filed with the National Labor Relations Board, over management attempts to meet directly with Guild members to discuss negotiations, undermining the collective bargaining process.

After a hiatus of several weeks, the two sides were scheduled to meet Aug. 13 and 19. Regardless of the outcome, however, it seemed that some fundamental relationship—within the Pioneer Press, and between the Press and the Star Tribune—had already changed. In terms of its newspapers, the twin cities now are just two towns, adjacent but apart.

'Ethics' flap-doodling

Efforts by publishers to monopolize their employees' energy and intellect under the guise of "ethics" have been most notoriously on display at The New York Times, where the Jayson Blair scandal unfolded mere weeks after that company unveiled a 44-page "Code of Conduct" that inventoried scores of trees but completely missed the forest.

But where the Times treads, others readily blunder. The Washington-Baltimore Guild, for example, is challenging a Washington Post innovation that smacks of the worst kind of Big Brother intrusion: an "ethics hotline," which any employee can call to anonymously snitch on a co-worker for alleged wrongdoing. Adding insult to injury, the hotline is being managed by the Pinkerton Agency.

Given all this overwrought attention to ethics, TNG-CWA members may be surprised to learn that the Guild adopted a code of ethics in 1934, at its second annual convention, as "a symbol of the Guild's concern for the standards of the industry." Just seven paragraphs long, it is a model of economy and directness, if also reflective of the sexism of its time:

1. That the newspaperman's first duty is to give the public accurate and unbiased news reports, and that he be guided, in his contacts with the public, by a decent respect for the rights of individuals and groups.

2. That the equality of all men before the law should be observed by the men of the press; that they

should not be swayed in news reporting by political, economic, social, racial or religious prejudices, but should be guided only by fact and fairness.

3. That newspapermen should presume persons accused of crime of being innocent until they are convicted, as is the case under the law, and that news accounts dealing with accused persons should be in such form as not to mislead or prejudice the reading public.

4. That the Guild should work through efforts of its members, or by agreement with editors and publishers, to curb the suppression of legitimate news concerning "privileged" persons or groups, including advertisers, commercial powers and friends of newspapermen.

5. That newspapermen shall refuse to reveal confidences or disclose sources of confidential material in court or before other judicial or investigating bodies; and that the newspaperman's duty to keep confidences shall include those he shared with one employer even after he has changed his employment.

6. That the news be edited exclusively in the editorial rooms instead of in the business office of the daily newspaper.

7. That newspapermen shall behave in a manner indicating independence and decent self-respect in the city room as well as outside, and shall avoid any demeanor that might be interpreted as a desire to curry favor with any person.

How badly do you want to win?

[It's no exaggeration to say that unions are rapidly qualifying for endangered species status—and given the current administration's record of environmental concern, that's not a good thing. Few politicians have rung the alarm as loudly or passionately as Rep. Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, who summarized what's at stake—and what must be done—in this June 4 speech to the "Take Back America" conference.]

By Rep. Jan Schakowsky
(D-9th District, Illinois)

Do you want a different president in 2004? I'm asking this as a serious question, not a rhetorical one. Do you want it badly enough to actually do what is necessary to win the election that will take place just 17 months from now?

Everywhere I go, everywhere every Democrat goes, we hear, "Where are the Democrats?" I take that challenge seriously, and many of us are working day and night to make ourselves heard, putting together a strategy with members who are willing to use tougher language and "creative" tactics in coordination with outside organizations.

Yes, we need more Democrats who believe, as Paul Wellstone said, that "the politics of conviction is a winning politics." But I challenge you to do the same by asking, "Where are you?" I say that as an activist and organizer myself, and with a great deal of respect for the work that all of you are doing. I acknowledge the magnificent visibility of the antiwar activities, and the web-based organizing that has generated millions of e-mails to Congress, the work of the Anti-Tax Cut Coalition and others. I say that with enormous respect for the work of organized labor nationally and locally. I know we are all grateful to President John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO and his incredibly effective leadership.

Even so, there have been too few examples of viewpoints, other than those consistent with the administration's, breaking through to the public. If we are to win, it's clear we need to do more, do it louder, do it faster, and do it better. And if we don't, in 2008 we will live in a country, and a world far different from the one we have had and the one to which we aspire.

This president is seriously undermining the rule of law, the Constitution of the United States and our precious civil liberties—and he's doing it all in the name of patriotism. But where are the lawyers and judges? Why am I not hearing your protests? Where are your e-mails and phone calls, your letters to the editor, your calls to talk radio, your high-profile lawsuits? Privacy is a major concern for average Americans, and Big Brother is mining our most private information as we sit here. I realized how serious this was when a woman asked me how she could get another perspective on the Iraq war and I suggested a few web sites. She asked me if she went there if she would find herself on a list. In all honesty, I found that I couldn't say with confidence, "Absolutely no; this is still the United States of America, and you can look at anything you want."

Lawyers, judges, where are you? Seniors, where are you? I want to see sustained, loud, angry activity. After all, the Republicans still want to privatize Social Security and Medicare and cut Medicaid so they can give tax cuts to their rich friends and destroy those basic programs to boot. It's a twofer for them.

Even veterans are not immune. Many veterans have to wait 15 months just to get a doctor's appointment. The drug companies

are conducting a \$150 million campaign to prevent any move to lower drug prices, allocating \$9.5 million to public relations, even \$1 million to get rid of the national health care system in Canada. When I was director of the Illinois State Council of Senior Citizens, our group was chasing Dan Rostenkowski down the street. Seniors, now is the time to get on your running shoes. You should be chasing George W. Bush and Dick Cheney and Tom DeLay all over the country.

Environmentalists: Alaska is melting. The journal *Nature* reports that 90% of all large fish, such as tuna, marlin, swordfish, cod and halibut, are gone from our oceans; fuel efficiency of our cars is at a 22-year low. It's now considered patriotic, for crying out loud, to drive a Hummer. So where the hell are you? I want to read about you or even join you protesting at hearings in Washington or Big Oil shareholder meet-

done little to help victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

We all need to join in the efforts of organized labor on behalf of all working families in this country. This week we may be considering a so-called comp-time bill that shreds the basic concept of a day's pay for a day's work and makes time-and-a-half pay for overtime a thing of the past. Just picture another four years of a Bush administration unfettered by concerns of re-election. Unions are not in the 2008 picture. In 2008 there may not be any public employees, let alone public-employee unions. Everything will be privatized and contracted out. Private-sector unions will be under siege; a constant barrage of well-financed referenda will be launched in state after state; legal assaults and investigations will take place at every level, and we'll always be the target of well-financed media campaigns.

now we need to do more, do it louder, do it faster and do it better.

Clearly the right has a number of tools at its disposal now that we don't have:

- Republicans control the White House and are placing ideologues at every level of the administration, the Senate and House, and much of the judiciary.

- The right controls much of the media, which creates a very effective echo chamber for the Republicans' initiatives and smear campaigns. The June 2 ruling of the Federal Communications Commission lifting most restrictions on consolidation will allow the Foxification and Clear Channelization even more.

- The Republicans have most of the money, and their corporate agenda and tax cuts for the rich ensure that they will continue to do so.

- The Republicans lie with impunity.



BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Sporting tiaras and top hats, some of the 1,500 people who attended the "Take Back America" conference march on the Naval Observatory—official residence of Vice President Dick Cheney—to protest the administration's economic policies.

ings. We need the activists and scientists to challenge this aggressively antiscience administration. Some things we may be able to reverse when we wrest power over the planet from their control. But extinct is extinct.

My sisters, where are the demonstrations against the war on women that is being waged every day in every way. Today on the floor is the bill to ban the mythical partial birth abortion, which is a thinly disguised assault on fundamental reproductive rights. On his first day in office, President Bush attacked the poorest, most vulnerable women in the world when he cut U.S. funds to organizations that have the gall to counsel, refer, or—God forbid—perform abortions in countries where it is legal (which it happens to be in ours, by the way).

Our women in the military can't, with their own funds, have a safe and legal abortion at a military hospital, even if they are in Iraq or Saudi Arabia. A rabidly antichoice man who thinks that women's health concerns can be cured with prayer now heads up the Food and Drug Administration's Advisory Committee for Reproductive Health Drugs. The Republicans want to eliminate Title IX, equal opportunities for women in education and sports. They've

I salute the leadership that the religious leaders—clergy and lay people—have shown on the war. Don't stop now. "God is a Republican" is a guiding principle for this administration. As long as there are congressional resolutions and official days of prayer, the United States can continue to preemptively attack any country it wants. As Senate Leader Bill Frist said at a large gathering I attended, "All you need to know is the difference between right and wrong, good and evil."

Their God is homophobic and anti-choice. Education Secretary Rod Paige said: "All things equal, I would prefer to have a child in a school that has a strong appreciation for the values of the Christian community. In a religious environment the value system is set. That's not the case in a public school where there are so many different kids with different kinds of values." The dangerous destruction of the wall between church and state is well underway. Religious leaders and the faith community need to address this.

Disability rights activists, immigrant advocates, housing advocates, civil rights leaders, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender activists, all warriors for social and economic justice, thank you for what you do. And

Let's face it. They're liars. They lied about the reason they took our sons and daughters to war. They spend millions of dollars in campaign ads saying they are for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. They call their dirty-air legislation "Clear Skies" and their plan to give the timber companies our trees, "Healthy Forests." They call their job-killing economic program a "jobs program." They say they are for peace when they are for war. Millions of children are left behind under their miserly "No Child Left Behind" education bill. They tout a child tax credit and then silently drop it in favor of more tax cuts for millionaires.

- Perhaps most important, the Republicans are unabashed and unapologetic about pushing their right-wing agenda, no matter what. They are always playing offense. I used to think, oh, they can't be serious about this or that—another huge tax cut, eliminating Title IX, continuing tax breaks for companies that move their offices to Bermuda, locking up immigrants indefinitely without due process, using federal dollars to build churches—it's just a trial balloon. Forget it. They mean what they say and they don't give up until they get it. This is where we come in.

Continued on page 7

LOOKING AHEAD

Crisis not one of ethical lapses but of credibility

By Linda Foley, President

What's in a word? A lot. Especially when we can deliver sound bites and text-messages as quickly across a room as around the world. To a great extent, however, the meaning of words lies in the eye or ear of the receiver.

Take, for example, the word "spin." To a Maytag repairman, "spin" is what follows the rinse cycle. To a physical fitness enthusiast, "spinning" is a vigorous workout. And in the news business, "putting spin" is a way to shade or influence a situation or set of facts.

Here's another word: ethics. In the wake of the Jayson Blair scandal at the New York Times, many in the news business have concluded that an "ethical" crisis is gripping today's newsrooms.

I have different spin. The crisis facing the news industry is not about ethical lapses; it's about credibility gaps.

A recent CNN/USA Today poll found that 62% of the American public question the accuracy of the news they view or read. An article in the July issue of Quill, the magazine of the Society of Professional Journalists, opines that the Blair incident simply validated concerns the public already harbored about "accuracy" and "perceptions of fairness."

Perhaps that's why, earlier this year, more than a million citizens from across the political spectrum objected to media ownership deregulation proposed by the Federal Communications Commission. People simply don't trust today's media companies, and their distrust has little or nothing to do with the ethics of reporters.

If there's a credibility gap between the media and the public, the fractured relation-

ship and lack of trust between those who run the media and those who work for them is a chasm.

A few years ago, Northwestern University's Readership Institute, with support from the Newspaper Association of America, began a massive study to determine how newspapers could gain and retain more readers. The research involved scores of newspapers, thousands of readers and hundreds of newspaper employees. The institute concluded that the primary fix for attracting more readers was a change in the "defensive" culture of newspapers. In other words, end the blame game.

Lately, industry leaders themselves have begun to acknowledge that newspapers could do more to open themselves up for change. They agree that newspapers have become too "insular."

Try "arrogant."

While news executives give lip service to "changing our culture," they continue to turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the concerns of their readers, viewers and, in particular, their employees.

I can't speak for the public at large, but from our members' point of view, examples of the denial abound. For example, Dallas-based Belo Corp. executives want to enforce a code of conduct on all employees, which includes a prohibition against violating the law. Belo's Providence Journal officials, meanwhile, have been found guilty of 27 violations of federal labor law related to Guild bargaining. When challenged by a Guild leader during a recent stockholder meeting, corporate executives said they considered these violations a "negotiations" issue, not an "ethical" one. (One has to won-

der which laws they had in mind. Littering, maybe?)

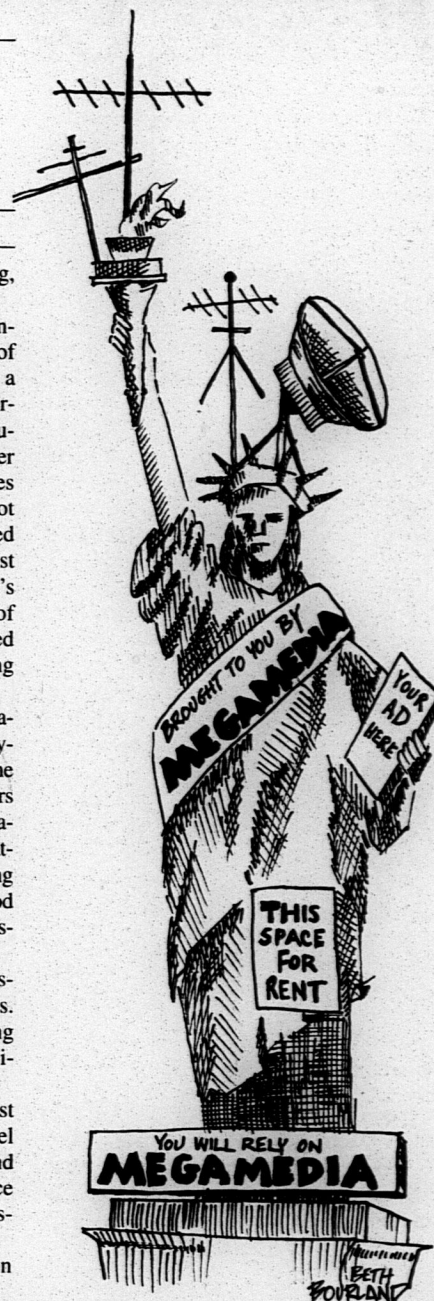
The Public Editor of the Akron Beacon-Journal recently impugned the objectivity of the paper's own reporting staff by writing a column that implied the reporters' membership in the Guild (a CWA affiliate) influenced coverage of a labor dispute by other CWA members at the Children Services Bureau. If the shoe were on the other foot and Beacon-Journal reporters publicly tied the newspaper's draconian stance against their union at the bargaining table to, let's say, coverage of the local Chamber of Commerce, they would have been accused of disparaging the newspaper and hurting the company.

Layoffs and staff cuts have created situations at most newspapers that require employees to work longer hours. Yet even as the workload continues to pile higher, publishers are lobbying to exempt thousands of newspaper workers from overtime payments mandated by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Cutting someone's overtime pay is not exactly a good way to boost the sagging morale that recession-induced cutbacks have produced.

The stream of hypocrisy and mixed messages to our members is almost endless. And the results are reflected in the sagging readership numbers and a growing credibility gap with employees and the public.

A newspaper's workforce can be its best marketing tool, but not if the employees feel besieged and berated by their editors and bosses. Putting the screws to the workforce won't repair what ails the newspaper industry. It's time for the blame game to end.

That's not "spin." It's just common sense.



Fed up with the Democrats? Get over it.

Continued from page 6

If we are serious about getting rid of George W. Bush in 17 months, then we have to make some decisions and some commitments. During the war, a couple of nuns came to see me in my Chicago office. They were on their way to jail to serve a three-month sentence for an aggravated misdemeanor for protesting the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. They crossed a line in the road and now they were going to prison. Think of it. Anyway, on their way to jail, they had been arrested on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago in an antiwar protest. The police got a bit carried away even though the City Council had passed a strong antiwar resolution.

The nuns wanted to know what could be done to change the state of affairs. I said I thought someone needed to take voter registration forms to every meeting and demonstration and get people fired up to vote. They said that would be hard. Why? Because people were fed up with the Democrats. I said, then they are going to have to get over it, and you are going to have to help them. Because like it or not, either George W. Bush or the Democratic nominee, whoever he may be, will be our next president.

All of you know who I'm talking about; I may be talking about you. We should, by

all means, be working to promote a progressive agenda with each and every candidate and to make the nominee as progressive as possible.

But in the end, we are going to have to dedicate ourselves to electing the Democrat. To do otherwise is a luxury we cannot afford. I look forward to our campaign for a universal health care plan or a real education bill or labor law reform. We cannot even have that conversation now. We are trying to hang on by our fingernails to what we have now. And we are losing.

The good news today is that we have them on the run on several fronts. They were hoping that the conversation this week would be about the flag burning amendment that passed the House yesterday and partial birth abortion. Instead, it's about their decision to cut 6.5 million American families with 12 million children, including families of servicemen and -women, out of their tax relief bill because they jeopardized tax cuts for the rich. Some Senate Republicans realize this level of greed may have been a tad too much for most Americans, but Tom DeLay, God love him, is really steaming that Democrats are demanding action on the issue. He says, "There are a lot of things that are more important than that." Like more tax cuts for the rich. He indicated that he'd think

about it if it were part of a package that permanently repealed the estate tax.

The missing weapons of mass destruction are becoming a real annoyance to them now, and the media is starting to pick it up. More and more members of Congress, even some Republicans, are asking for investigations. Editorial boards are beginning to write about it.

We need to take advantage of these opportunities. The polls tell us that the president is in fact vulnerable. His re-elect numbers are not that great. We have to do with fervor what we already know how to do. We have to register base voters who have left us at least in part because they think we don't speak to them. And here you have another choice. You can bitch that the Democrats don't speak to them, or you can speak to them, one on one, door to door, worker to worker, meeting after meeting, neighbor to neighbor. Set a goal for yourself, perhaps to register 100 new Democratic voters between now and Election Day.

Become part of a progressive echo chamber. When the Republicans go after Tom Daschle or Nancy Pelosi for being unpatriotic when they criticize the president, Fox News and Rush Limbaugh begin spinning the same line. We need to push back, writing letters to the editor, calling talk

shows, e-mailing Congress, e-mailing Sean Hannity and telling him he's out of line, calling them un-American for stifling dissent.

When Republicans launch a really bad proposal or Democrats a good one, we need to have coordinated efforts throughout the country. We need to use our think tanks and grassroots and Web-based organizations in increasingly creative ways and coordinate that with activities of the Democrats that are becoming more and more vocal in the Congress.

You can tell the truth. We don't need to lie. Democrats are better for their health and well-being, their kids' education and their family budget, and—Republican propaganda notwithstanding—our national security, stopping terrorism, and peace on earth.

LETTER

To the Editor,

I noticed your recent review of "Newsworkers" in the Guild Reporter. Don't know if it is of interest, but IWW has shrinkwrapped copies of Newsworkers available at \$10. The University of Minnesota remaindered it a while ago, and the IWW picked up a few cartons. Your readers can find copies at ghq@iww.org

—Jon Bekken, Editor,
Industrial Worker

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: Sept. 5.) Letters and articles proposed for publication may be e-

mailed to the editor at azipser@cwa-union.org.

For address changes, see the box on page 2 or e-mail to duesinfo@cwa-union.org; sending such changes to the editor will merely delay processing.

Wanna be rich? Stay out of journalism

Depending on what salary survey you picked up in recent weeks, reporters are having either a helluva great year in terms of their paychecks—or they're just barely treading water.

The glowing assessment came from the Newspaper Industry Compensation Survey, which is reporting that reporters' salaries in 2003 "experienced the biggest year-to-year gains ever measured" by the survey, which is sponsored by the Inland Press Association. Survey data are provided by individual newspapers in the U.S. and Canada; 455 daily newspapers responded this year, compared to 478 in 2002.

Specific salary figures are released only to study participants, so there's not much available for analysis. But the folks at Inland Press say that year-to-year comparisons among the 375 newspapers that responded to the survey in both 2002 and 2003 show that entry-level reporters' average base pay jumped 6.8%. Experienced reporters, meanwhile, saw an average base pay increase of 7.1% over the previous year, almost double the average annual increase for the previous five years.

Altogether, the responding newspapers reported on base pay increases averaging about 3% across 85 newspaper job categories, including a 2.8% increase for publishers; 3.7% for editors; and a mere 0.9% increase for graphic artists. The only salary drop was among marketing services directors, whose base pay dropped an average 1.2%.

Such statistics make for gripping reading, but abstract percentages without a numerical base can be grossly misleading—as anyone getting a 3% bump on a \$75,000 salary can attest to someone getting a 10%

raise on \$20,000. At the very least, a 7% increase in reporter salaries in the current economic climate should raise a few skeptical eyebrows.

A different view—if one dealing with older numbers and a different reporting methodology—was provided August 1 via the Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Graduates. Prepared each year by the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia (and sponsored in part by The Newspaper Guild-CWA), the annual survey tracks bachelor's degree recipients within the first year after they graduate to learn what kinds of jobs—if any—they end up taking, how much they earn and how they feel about their work. The latest survey therefore reports on college students who graduated from 463 schools in May or June of 2002, based on a sampling of 7,416 individuals attending 103 representative programs.

Their experience in the job market? "The 2002 graduates had few job offers on graduation, had difficulty finding work within the first year after completing their studies, and received salaries that were identical on average to the salaries of the 2001 graduates," the survey observes. "Employers also were less likely to pay for benefits," it adds.

Among some of the broader points:

- Six to eight months after graduation, only half of the journalism and mass communications graduates were actually working in a communications job—a ratio that hasn't been this low since the last recession, in 1992.

- The median salary for all such graduates with a full-time job was \$26,000. For those working in daily newspapers, the

median salary dipped to \$25,000 from \$25,900 the previous year.

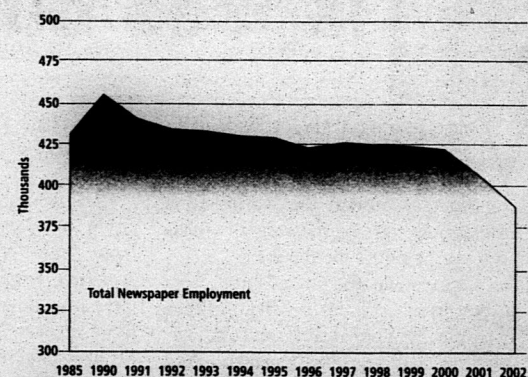
- Benefit packages remained essentially unchanged from the previous year—which was not as positive a development as it might sound, since "more graduates were paying for the benefits entirely by themselves."

- Job satisfaction remained low, as "an increasing number of graduates reported regretting their decision to study for a career in journalism and mass communication."

In some ways, however, the most disturbing trend—if only because of all industry efforts to the contrary—disclosed by the survey is a growing inability by members of racial and ethnic minorities to get hired. Only 60.7% of minority graduates found full-time employment, compared with 71% of non-minority graduates, continuing to widen a gap that had narrowed to 4.3% in 1998.

As always, the survey asked respondents to give some advice "to those who follow you." Most stressed the need to network, to chase unpaid internships, to master as broad a set of job skills as possible—and to lower expectations. "Love what you do or you'll

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics



Slip, slidin' away

The graph above, cribbed from the latest "Facts About Newspapers" pamphlet prepared by the Newspaper Association of America, makes an unavoidable point: recessions like the one a decade ago slash newspaper payrolls, but a return to prosperity does not restore them. Indeed, newspaper staffing continued to decline throughout the go-go 'Nineties before dropping off a cliff in 2000, leaving newspaper employment at its lowest level since the 1970s. No telling when the current downtrend will flatten out—but in any case, don't look for an uptick.

be miserable in this highly competitive, underpaid field," counseled a female master's degree recipient now working at a radio station.

Added another master's degree recipient, this one unemployed: "I really can't be positive about my education right now because after six years of school I have less money, more debt, and a harder time getting a job than ever before in my life."

One beneficiary of unemployment: grad schools

As the old bromide put it, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach"—or, these days, go back to school.

An especially tight job market for graduates from journalism and mass communications programs produced a bumper crop of graduate school enrollments last fall, according to the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. In a supplemental survey, the college found a 20.7% increase in master's degree enrollments over 2001, and a 13.4% jump in doctoral program enrollments, "almost certainly the largest enrollments ever in the field."

That growth outstripped the increase in undergraduate programs in journalism and mass communications, which grew 5.9% last year, to 182,218 students. The number of bachelor's degrees awarded last year jumped 9.4%, to 42,060; the number of graduate degrees spiked an even sharper 14%, to 3,879. Extrapolate the numbers and it's clear the job market is being flooded with job seekers even as the number of available jobs keeps dwindling.

One time-honored recourse to tight job markets, of course, is grad school—but that only delays the day of reckoning.

Meanwhile, other undesirable repercussions make themselves felt.

One is the downward pressure on wages caused by too many job seekers chasing too few jobs. Indeed, one unmeasured but anecdotally more prevalent development is an increase in unpaid "internships" and "apprenticeships," with recent college grads extolled to contribute their labor as a way to get workplace seasoning and to have their work recognized. As observed in one of the survey's supplemental reports, graduates "who have personal connections with those making hiring decisions are significantly

more likely to receive job offers."

Another apparent trend that may be attributed to downward pressures on wages is the continued feminization of the industry. The percentage of journalism and mass communication undergrads who are female increased again last year, to 64.1%, the highest on record. Women made up an even higher percentage of students at the master's level, 67.2%, and their share of doctoral candidacies also is growing and is now at 54.7%.

But women still are playing catch-up in teaching all those j-students: only 38.8% of faculty in 2001 were female.

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(See box on page 2 for change of address notification)

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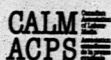
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DAYBOOK

TNG-CWA Sector Conference,
Aug. 22-23, Chicago

CWA Annual Convention,
Aug. 25-26, Chicago

Nat'l Lesbian, Gay Journalists,
Sept. 11-14, Los Angeles

Pride at Work convention,
Sept. 18-21, Tyson Corner, VA

CWA Customer Svc./Mgt. Conf.,
Sept. 24-27, Fort Worth

CLUW 12th biennial convention,
Oct. 9-12, Seattle

Western District Council,
Oct. 25-26, Eugene, Ore.

New England District Council,
Nov. 1-2, site TBA

CWA Legislative Conference,
March 28-31, Washington DC

CWA Civil Rights Conference,
April 22-25, Jacksonville, FL

FROM THE MORGUE

Fifty years ago this month:

Guild President Harry Martin proposes creation of the Brown Memorial Foundation, to include a hall of fame for American journalism. . . . Joseph Collis seeks to unseat Harry Martin after six years as Guild president, while 10 candidates vie for six positions as vice president-at-large and two regional vice-presidencies are contested. . . . Vice President Richard Nixon torpedoes a presidential speech that would have put President Eisenhower on record as opposing some of the more extreme provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Backed by the Guild and other craft unions, the Pressmen close all three Manhattan dailies—the second New York City newspaper strike in fewer than two months—idling 4,200 Guild members. . . . An NLRB administrative law judge rules, in a Memphis case, that a printing company erred when it prohibited employees from humming "Solidarity Forever" on the job . . . 73 years later, the Los Angeles Times is taken off labor's do-not-patronize list.

Ten years ago this month:

Convention delegates unanimously adopt a four-year strategic plan that calls for major changes in how the union conducts itself; delegates also approve greater autonomy for Canadian members. . . . Carol Rothman is acclaimed as international chairperson, becoming the first woman in Guild history to hold a top international office. . . . Bruce Meachum challenges Charles Dale for the Guild presidency.

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