

THE GUILD Reporter

November 21, 2003

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 70, Number 11

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Much to management's surprise, the long red-shirted line of pickets unexpectedly veered into the Providence Journal newsroom.

CWA pays a house call

An estimated 300 participants at a Nov. 6 lunch-time rally at the Providence Journal took an unscheduled 10-minute tour of the newspaper, as shocked managers stared and Guild members applauded and cheered.

Conducted during the annual CWA District 1 leadership conference, the rally was joined by members of Rhode Island Jobs with Justice, leaders of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and members of dozens of other unions. They were protesting the Journal's failure to remedy 27 unfair labor practice convictions and the newspaper's refusal to bargain a contract to replace one that expired almost four years ago.

As the growing crowd chanted, "CWA, The Journal must pay," the picket line turned suddenly into the newspaper entrance. Normally the crowd would have been stopped by a locked door, but at that moment the door opened for a manager heading to lunch—allowing hundreds of chanting union supporters to flow into the newsroom and the corridors outside the fourth-floor executive offices.

As police arrived, the protesters exited the building and marched a block to the Providence Biltmore Hotel, where union workers have been without a contract for three weeks. No arrests were made, but Journal management, fearful of an encore performance, immediately locked all interior doors, posted security guards and hired a police detail, which remained in place for three days.

Rhode Island historians said the building tours were the largest acts of civil disobedience in Providence in more than a decade. However, in keeping with its practice of censoring any mention of its labor dispute with the Guild, the Providence Journal published not a word of the day's events.



Media reform urged

Concern over democracy, rule of wealth

By Eesha Williams

Government must break up media monopolies and encourage the growth of non-commercial, locally-controlled alternatives, Jesse Jackson, John Sweeney, Bill Moyers and a half-dozen members of Congress told those attending the first National Conference on Media Reform. Held the weekend of Nov. 7-9 in Madison, Wisconsin, the event drew approximately 2,000 participants for a steady stream of speeches, workshops and networking opportunities with one common goal: democratizing the mass media that are crucial to a self-governing democracy.

The sense of urgency was palpable. "This year, my office got more calls about media reform in a few weeks than we got in five years about campaign finance reform," Sen. Russell Feingold (D-WI) told the conference.

Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) called media reform "the most critical issue facing our nation today."

"The very foundations of our
Continued on page 5

Wanted: young union turks

Canadian Media Guild leaders are digesting dozens of new ideas, after holding a conference specifically for members under the age of 35.

Seventy-five people from across the country attended the "Not Born Yesterday" conference in Toronto in mid-October, including four from other Canadian Guild locals. They were chosen as participants simply upon filling out an application. The Guild paid all costs for those who attended.

"We wanted to bring together people who may never have been to a Guild meeting before but who are interested in their workplace," said Lise Lareau, president of the CMG. "We wanted to hear what issues were at play with this age group, what ideas they had to contribute, and at the same time educate them about the Guild."

The conference began with a session that brought many complaints to the surface, especially from members living with the uncertainty of being temporary employees. It ended with participants breaking into subcommittees to brainstorm possible solutions to the biggest issues confronting media workers today, some of which were explored by several keynote speakers.

One such speaker was Irshad Manji, a Toronto-based TV host and author of the newly published "The Trouble with Islam: a Wakeup Call for Honesty and Change," which calls on young Muslims to expect greater debate of ideas in their religion. Manji encouraged conference participants to speak up by walking among them, mike in hand, seeking comment.

Elaine Bernard, executive direc-

tor of the trade union program at Harvard University, addressed one of today's dominant issues by speaking on the global trend toward "informalization" of the workplace—employers shying away from creating permanent positions.

And University of Toronto economics professor David Foot, author of "Boom, Bust and Echo," the hit book about demographic trends, shed a broader light on why it seems young journalists are hitting a wall of temporary work. Foot noted that there is a signifi-

cant "spike" in numbers of female journalists in the 25-34 age group.

A bearpit session, in which participants could discuss any and all workplace problems affecting them, was held to determine what they wanted to discuss more fully. The big issues? How to encourage real workplace diversity; how to assert rights to overtime in a budget-crunched environment; how to make convergence and multi-skilling work for—rather than against—us; what to do about the
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Detroit strike leader dies

By Lou Mleczo
President, Detroit Newspaper Guild

Donald C. Kummer, who served 17 years as the administrative officer for the Newspaper Guild of Detroit, died Nov. 3 after a long struggle with cancer. I knew him well.

As a 27-year-old activist helping to organize the Guild unit at The Detroit News, I first met Don at periodic meetings with the other unions that comprised the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions.

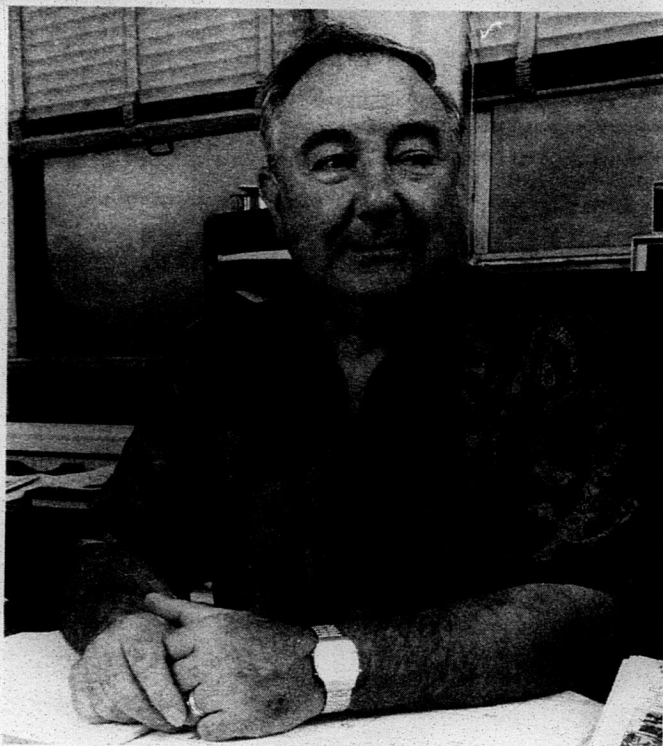
Don was then president of Detroit Pressmen Local 13-N. When the Detroit Guild was forced to set a strike deadline in July 1975, we were considerably uneasy with the council's leadership because the other unions all had no-strike, no-lockout language in their contracts. But when it came time for Don to state the pressmen's position, he was characteristically blunt and to the point. "If the Guild must go on strike, my union will support them," Don growled. "Pressmen don't cross picket lines."

The Detroit Guild successfully avoided that strike, as we obtained our first contract for News editorial employees. But for me, that was the start of a friendship that would grow for the next 28 years.

In 1977, the Guild had a chance to return the favor. Capital Cities/ABC, the new owners of the suburban daily Oakland Press, had unilaterally posted new conditions on the pressmen. Local 13-N was forced to go on strike, and in my first term as Guild president in Detroit, I was proud to see our Oakland Press editorial unit honor the pressmen's picket lines.

Unfortunately, Capital Cities used permanent replacement workers, as well as its huge financial resources, to eventually break the strike. Kummer, whose executive board had doubled union dues for Detroit pressmen not assisting the strikers, was defeated in the next local election. The silver lining in all this was that the pressmen's loss became the Guild's gain.

In 1979, the Guild was searching for a new administrative officer. Knowing that Don had



Donald Kummer

returned to the News pressroom, I called and asked him if he wanted to work for us.

Don was wary of being a blue-collar production worker representing white-collar editorial types, but I told him I would provide whatever political cover he might need if he could provide the bargaining and administrative savvy the Guild needed to advance Our team approach worked.

The following year, the Detroit Guild took the lead in setting a strike deadline against the News. Our aggressive style helped inspire the Council of Unions to obtain fully paid health insurance for the very first time at the News and Free Press.

We paid off a serious debt that had accrued in the 1970's, and the local prospered as we successfully bargained new agreements for our downtown and suburban units through the first half of the 1980's. Then Gannett came to Detroit, with its 1986 purchase of The News—and immediately sought a joint operating agreement with Knight-Ridder's Free Press.

Billed as the largest newspaper merger in the history of the federal law that allows these print monopolies, the proposed Detroit

JOA seemed assured of routine approval by the federal courts and the Reagan administration's Justice Department. But when the proposed corporate partnership refused to bargain in good faith with the Guild, Don and I persuaded the Detroit Guild to become the lead intervenor, triggering a legal battle that stopped the JOA in its tracks for more than three years.

Ultimately, a deeply divided U.S. Supreme Court voted in a four-four tie, with one abstention, to approve the JOA. The bargaining climate for the Guild and other Detroit unions soon plunged into a gathering winter chill.

The JOA ripped hundreds of jobs from the Guild's jurisdiction, and concessionary contracts became a part of the new reality for all the Detroit newspaper unions. By July 1995, those concessions turned into a sea of unilateral changes that triggered a strike, testing the very survival of the Detroit Guild and its colleagues in the Council of Unions. We became part of a battle that featured advertising and circulation boycotts, creation of a weekly strike newspaper and a relentless struggle to survive as a union local.

Don took part in a health fair the unions sponsored for our striking members, and it was here that the medical team discovered a tumor in his lung. He was forced to take a medical leave, which eventually led to his retirement, in 1996, even as the Detroit newspaper dispute continued unabated—although that didn't stop him from participating in an Action Motown labor rally in 1997 that brought in more than 100,000 demonstrators. He also volunteered to help the Council of Unions continue publishing the Detroit Sunday Journal.

On Oct. 12 of this year, the Detroit Guild and the Council of Unions ratified new contracts with the News and Free Press. However, that good news was tempered by Don's deteriorating health. Two weeks later he was gone, at the age of 70.

In brief...

Pittsburgh Guild seeks college unit

The Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild is awaiting a decision from the National Labor Relations Board, following a hearing earlier this month, on its petition to represent 68 full-time professors at Point Park University. The college administration cited a 1980 Supreme Court decision to bolster its contention that the faculty members are ineligible for collective bargaining. A decision favoring the union would be followed by a representation election which, if successful, would create the local's third unit.

Seattle columnist wins council seat

Long-time Guild member Jean Godden, a prominent columnist for each of Seattle's dailies, has a new job: she's now a member of the Seattle City Council. Entering the race at the last minute and choosing the most crowded field, she nevertheless won the primary and subsequently pushed past incumbent Judy Nicastro with 52% of the vote. During the newspaper strike three years ago she picketed, wrote a column for the Union Record and went into the community to educate the public about the dispute.



Guild gives the bird in St. Louis

Halloween in St. Louis, where the Pulitzer-owned Post Dispatch continues to stonewall at bargaining, saw this creature—otherwise known as Carrie Biggs-Adams—materialize in front of the newspaper office. The suckers it—er, she—handed out read "Union Busting is Disgusting."

AP swings ax, drawing blood

The Associated Press fired approximately 40 technicians, all at the management level, as part of a reorganization plan. Although Guild members were not directly affected, the way the cuts were implemented—laid-off employees were told of their fate as they arrived at work Oct. 20, then escorted off the premises—upset many workers.

"We need to restructure.

Everybody understands that because the technology is changing," said Karl A. Jendretzky, president of TNG-CWA Local 1314, which represents 235 technicians at the wire service. "What concerns people is the way the layoffs happened—the coldheartedness of it."

Changing of the guard at IAPE

Virgil Hollender has been elected president of the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees, TNG-CWA Local 1096, beating challenger Ken Martin by an unofficial tally of 287 to 156. Hollender succeeds Ron Chen, who stepped down after leading the Dow Jones union for an unprecedented 16 years. Local members also approved new bylaws, 408-28.

Photog's husband guilty of slaying

The husband of Luci Houston, a San Jose Mercury News photojournalist whose murder two years ago shocked her colleagues (Dec. 14, 2001 Guild Reporter), has been convicted of second-degree murder by an Alameda County jury. Raymond Houston, 41, was sentenced to a prison term of 40 years to life. The couple had been separated for five months before Luci Houston, 43, was found dead in her company car.

Seattle dispute put on fast track

The Washington state Court of Appeals agreed to hear an accelerated appeal of the legal dispute between The Seattle Times and the Post-Intelligencer, in which the Times is seeking to end a joint operating agreement between the papers. At issue is the question of whether the Times can use its strike-related losses in 2000 and 2001 to bolster its claims. Oral arguments before a three-judge panel could be scheduled as soon as January.

Last JRC unit agrees on contract

Members of the Delaware County Times unit of the Philadelphia Newspaper Guild voted 48-29 to ratify a new, five-year collective bargaining agreement, becoming the last of the local's three JRC newspapers to successfully negotiate a contract.

Kenosha Guild leader dies, 47

David F. Engels, a reporter, political columnist and member of the Kenosha Newspaper Guild executive board for 14 years, died at home Nov. 14. He was 47. Engels served as the local's president in 1993 and 1994 and was a member of four contract bargaining committees, including last year's.

ADDRESS CHANGE, SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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.

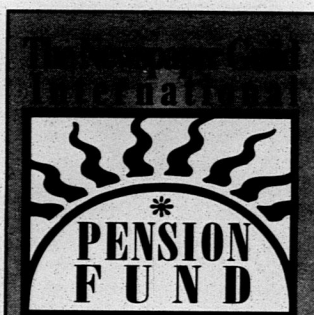
Periodicals postage paid in Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: The Guild Reporter, c/o Grace Comer, Communications Workers of America, 501 Third St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Address changes also can be e-mailed to: duesinfo@cwa-union.org.

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

Single copies: \$1.50



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Lift a toast to Monterey!

Contract ok'd after 6 years; numerous other locals settle; pressure on in Boston

It took only six years, 107 bargaining sessions and countless grey hairs—but Guild-represented employees of the Monterey Herald finally have a contract.

Elsewhere, meanwhile, agreement on a four-year contract was reached by the New York Guild at El Diario. And pressure at the Boston Globe ratcheted up when its pressmen reached a contract agreement, making that local the tenth of its 12 unions to do so.

Guild members of the Monterey Herald unit voted by an overwhelming 96% majority to accept a two-year agreement that was reached Oct. 23. The surprising breakthrough included signing bonuses and general wage increases, as well as a just-cause standard for dismissals and suspensions—a critical sticking point for Guild members that remained unresolved until the final day of negotiations.

"Our members in Monterey are remarkable," said Luther Jackson, executive officer of the San Jose Newspaper Guild and a member of the bargaining committee. "They stayed united, worked hard and never gave up hope that we'd win a fair contract." Jackson also praised the leadership of Guild unit chair Mac McDonald and the help provided by TNG-CWA rep Darren Carroll, as well as the activism of the Guild's "Contract Action Team"—including retired members Russ Cain and Joan Eich—for keeping members informed and involved.

Among the contract terms:

- A \$1,500 signing bonus for full-time employees, \$750 for part-timers.
- 1% pay increases this month and next November.
- A 2% merit pool in each year;
- A just-cause standard for suspensions and discharges, enforceable through binding arbitration;
- Acceptance of the Blue-Green medical insurance plan on the same terms as management employees.

El Diario

Tentative agreement was reached Oct. 23 on a new, four-year contract with El Diario, including wage increases of 3% a year retroactive to 2002. The agreement also defeats a company effort to eliminate the "Evergreen Clause," which keeps all provisions of an expired contract intact—including a ban on layoffs for economic reasons, which has been preserved in the new pact—while a new contract is being bargained.

The Spanish-language newspaper also agreed to continue paying the full cost of health insurance premiums for employees and their dependents.

In addition, the newspaper agreed to a one-time-only buyout package of significantly enhanced severance pay, according to the following schedule:

- For those with 11 or more years of service, three times the

employee's weekly base salary multiplied by completed years of service.

- For those with 6 or more but less than 11 years of service, 30 times the employee's weekly base salary.

- For those with less than 6 years of service, 15 times the employee's weekly base salary.

Time, Inc.

The New York Guild also won a three-year tentative agreement at Time Inc. that ends decades of manager-determined raises.

Ending the merit pool, which was the major cause of the Guild's only strike at Time, in 1976, was a major goal of this year's negotiations. Previously, only employees earning less than \$61,500 were guaranteed any kind of annual raise, and usually half of that raise was at management's discretion. Under the new agreement, all employees will receive the same 2% increase each Feb. 1, starting in 2004.

In addition, new contract language states that employees may request—and managers may give—merit raises on top of the contractually mandated raises.

As in the 2001 contract extension, all other elements of the new contract remain unchanged.

Boston Pressmen

Approximately 190 members of the Boston Newspaper Printing Pressmen's Union No. 3 ratified a nine-year contract with the Boston Globe with the assistance of a federal mediator, agreeing to a reduction in force of about one-third through attrition and voluntary buyouts.

The Boston Guild has been unable to agree on a new contract on the company's terms after nearly three years of negotiations. Ten of the newspaper's dozen unions have now settled, but the mailers and Guild-represented newroom employees are still in talks.

News Sentinel

The 51-member editorial-only unit of the Knoxville News Sentinel ratified a two-year status quo agreement that includes a 2.3% increase effective this month and a 2.4% increase next November. The 33-6 vote approved a company offer that both sides welcomed as a constructive alternative to the previous round of bargaining, which lasted more than three years and left a bitter taste on both sides of the table.

Although virtually all contract provisions were left intact, management did obtain several operational changes, including bi-weekly pay periods, a requirement for direct deposit, changes in the vacation policy and the elimination of holiday carryover.

TVOntario

Ninety-nine percent of Canadian Media Guild members voting on a new four-year contract with

TVOntario ratified the pact, which is retroactive to October 2002. The deal calls for an overall across-the-board increase of 11.5%, as well as improved provisions on workload and overtime, increased severance pay, improved procedures for resolving grievances and an increased temporary upgrade premium.

Hennepin Medical

Medical interpreters at Hennepin County Medical Center, organized last year by the Minnesota Newspaper Guild, ratified their first contract 37-1. Several provisions of the new pact deviate from other Guild contracts because of

patterns established by AFSCME, which represents county employees in larger, more established units: for example, the new agreement will expire next month because all union contracts in the county are negotiated simultaneously at two-year intervals. Nonetheless, the new pact includes a union security clause, just cause provisions, arbitration, pay progression and a 3% pay increase retroactive to last December.

Whig Standard

Three days past a strike/lock-out deadline, negotiators for the Kingston Typographical Union brought before their members six

final offers from the Osprey-owned Whig Standard that were so disjointed and incomplete even the negotiating committee couldn't comprehend or understand them, according to Paul Schliesmann, the local's vice-president.

Although a slim majority of workers voted to accept the offers, which provide 2% pay increases in each of three years, union leaders say the confusing package conceals several wording changes that could cause longlasting, negative repercussions. Moreover, they add, company managers in at least one instance instructed an employee on how to vote, prompting the filing of an unfair labor practice charge.



Switchboard operator Cheryl Parkinson, left, displays her sentiments as unidentified Manchester Newspaper Guild members walk a picket line in front of the Union Leader.

Manchester Guild starts turning up the pressure

After nearly a year of unsuccessful negotiations with The Union Leader, the Manchester Newspaper Guild decided to make its unhappiness public—and what better venue than one of the newspaper's own premier events?

So it was, on Oct. 7, that the local threw up an informational picket line outside the Palace Theatre, site of The Union Leader-sponsored Cooking School. A decades old, well-attended annual event, the Cooking School this year drew more than 700 amateur chefs.

More than a hundred Guild members made posters, filled "picket favor" bags with small items bearing the Guild logo, or walked the line. Members of other unions—notably IBEW and the State Employees Association—also joined the picket, as did Mark MacKenzie, president of the New Hampshire AFL-CIO; Manchester Mayor Robert Baines; and representatives from the Democratic presidential campaigns of U.S. Senator John Kerry and Congressman Dick Gephardt.

The result of all this attention? "Very minute movement" in negotiations after the job action, according to local President Pat Grossmith—so the heat was turned up. Donning Santa and Mrs. Claus costumes, Grossmith and local Vice President Tom Thibault greeted businessmen and city officials at the Nov. 3 annual kickoff luncheon for The Union Leader-Salvation Army Santa Fund. Santa and Mrs. Claus, together with Secretary Donna Ridener and other helpers, handed out holiday cards and small

candy canes wishing luncheon guests "Happy Holidays"—as well as observing that a fair contract would ensure that Guild members also would have reason to celebrate the season.

Two days later, Guild members were back at the Palace Theatre, handing out small American flags to those attending the U.S. Air Force Band concert, another event sponsored by The Union Leader. Concert-goers were urged to wave their flags high when the patriotic music played. On the flagpoles was the printed message: MNG employees at The Union Leader want a fair contract.

Still, the company and union are miles apart on many issues. Management wants to limit union leave time; change grievance and arbitration language to include a modified zipper clause; convert full-time positions into part-time ones as employees leave; and increase health insurance premiums while nearly doubling co-pays and slashing the lifetime coverage cap from \$2 million to \$1.3 million. Health insurance is a particularly thorny issue because nearly a third of those in the plan—managers, non-unionized employees and even employees of other company-owned entities, including a weekly newspaper—pay nothing for health care coverage which, in some cases, is better than the Guild's plan.

More job actions are planned, including a possible protest of the televised Democratic presidential debates—Dec. 9, Dec. 22 and Jan. 22—that are co-sponsored by The Union Leader and WMUR-TV, whose videographers are negotiating their first contract.

Labor round-up

Pensions, health care on injured list

The percentage of U.S. companies offering retirement plans—and the percentage of employees participating in them—has dropped sharply since the late 1990s, according to Census Bureau data. Meanwhile, a recent study by the Commonwealth Fund shows a dramatic upsurge in the percentage of employees at large companies who lack health insurance—not because health plans were eliminated, but because of higher copayments and eligibility requirements that make the plans too expensive for some low-income, part-time or short-term workers.

Manufacturing losses are global

More than 2.7 million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the U.S. in the past three years, many to overseas factories—but economists at Alliance Capital Management say the same problem is found worldwide. According to their recent report, more than 22 million manufacturing jobs were eliminated in 20 large economies between 1995 and 2002—a decline of more than 11%—including a 15% drop in China. Canada posted strong growth in factory jobs during the period, but Mexico, after increasing its manufacturing base during the late 1990s, has seen the trend reverse and today reports only a modest increase compared with 1995. The main reason for global trends? Too much excess capacity.

U.S. job market remains slack

The number of U.S. jobs bumped upward by 126,000 in October, continuing a weak reversal of the net losses posted earlier this year. But the gain fell short of the 150,000 additional jobs that must be created each month to pick up the slack in the labor market, which is still down 2.4 million jobs since March 2001, when the last recession began. Indeed, 4.5 million new jobs were needed just to keep up with growth in the working-age population over that period—which means the U.S. has accumulated a 6.9 million-job gap.

Attendants on final approach to CWA

On a per capita vote of 22,212 to 10,321, the board of directors of the Association of Flight Attendants has voted to support merger with CWA. AFA is the largest union of flight attendants in the U.S., with 34,000 members. Membership voting on the merger was to wrap up by Nov. 25.

15 years of ergo work down the toilet

After nearly 15 years of work on a national ergonomics standard, the National Safety Council has thrown in the towel. In surrendering its sponsorship of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Ergonomics Standard, the NSC bowed to employers who opposed development of a national standard and virtually assured such a standard will not be formulated. Several labor unions have had representatives on the NSC's ergonomics committee, including David LeGrande of CWA and—prior to the CWA merger—the Guild's research and education director, David Eisen.

House Ullico report sent to Labor Dept.

The House Education and the Workforce Committee finished its investigation of Ullico, a union-owned insurance company and pension fund, with a report concluding that the fund's directors "may well have violated federal labor and pension laws" when they set up "sweetheart" stock deals for themselves. The report was sent to the Department of Labor, which is conducting its own investigation of the fund. Committee Democrats criticized the report for not acknowledging that Ullico and labor leaders had moved to punish those who took part in the stock deal.

Canadian official decries media cartel

Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps has called for a review of cross-ownership in the media, saying Canada is threatened by "a monopoly of voices" that has followed the convergence of some of the industry's largest players. Her comments constitute the government's official response to the House of Commons heritage committee's report on Canadian broadcasting, which calls on the government to uphold its restrictions on foreign ownership in the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors.

Media groups blast Iraq news climate

Amid growing reports of journalists being harassed and intimidated by troops policing postwar Iraq, representatives of 30 media organizations have signed a letter to the Pentagon raising concerns about an increasingly hostile reporting environment. Addressed to Larry Di Rita, acting assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, the letter says the news organizations have "documented numerous examples of US troops physically harassing journalists and, in some cases, confiscating or ruining equipment, digital camera disks, and videotapes." It also states that the actions are in violation of the Pentagon's guidelines that stipulate, among other things, that "media products will not be confiscated or otherwise impounded."

Striving to put 'Canada' back into CBC airwaves

A Canadian public broadcasting advocacy group has launched the "Take Back Our Airwaves" campaign to press for greater support for Canadian programming and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Our Public Airwaves was launched earlier this year with support from the Canadian Media Guild, the TNG-CWA local that represents the CBC's program and production employees. OPA is asking concerned Canadians to log on at www.PublicAirwaves.ca and sign a petition to the Prime Minister, calling on the federal government to put the "Canadian" back in Canadian broadcasting.

More specifically, the group is drumming up support for a recent report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, released in June, that calls for increased funding for the CBC and for the Canadian Television fund, which subsidizes production of Canadian programming.

"There's a real danger that they'll just let it gather dust on a shelf. We can't let that happen," said Arthur Lewis, a former TNG member who is the group's executive director. "We've got to keep the pressure on the government to implement the report."

According to Lewis, there are two major problems in Canadian broadcasting today. One is the lack of

Canadian entertainment programming on TV in prime time. The other is the continuing decline of the CBC due to underfunding.

"CBC has an enormous number of fans across the country," Lewis said. "But everybody knows that the CBC is not what it used to be, and that's primarily because of the enormous cuts in government funding in recent years. And we feel there's a real danger that the new Martin government will impose yet another cut in its February budget."

Budget cuts also have contributed to the absence of Canadian TV drama and entertainment, with adverse implications for the sustainability of independent Canadian culture as the country moves economically closer to the United States. Canada is the only country in the world that allows programming from another nation to dominate its airwaves.

Our Public Airwaves is not advocating a ban on U.S. programming, but does want local TV networks to offer more Canadian alternatives—but that would require increased government support for the Canadian Television Fund, which was cut drastically earlier this year. Canadian drama and other programming with high production values require government subsidies because the Canadian market is too small to recover the cost from advertising revenue.

NAFTA record explains FTAA labor opposition

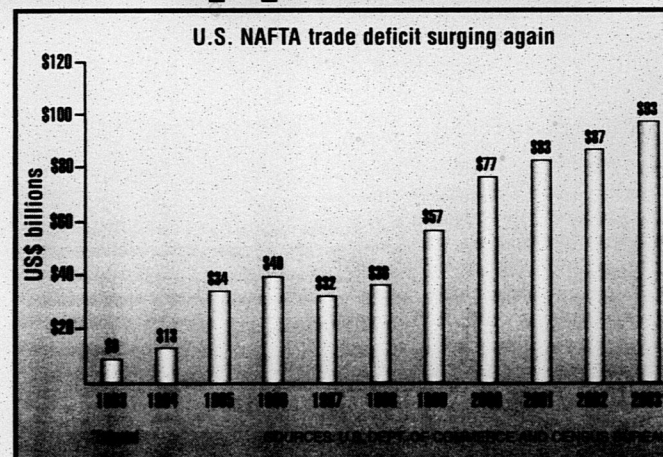
By David Bacon
N. California Media Guild

As this issue of The Guild Reporter was going to press, thousands of demonstrators were preparing to flood Miami's streets in a protest against lawless free trade. Opponents planned to hit the proposal for a Free Trade Area of the Americas with the same one-two punch of demonstrations and debate that forced a fruitless end to recent trade talks in Cancun.

The debate is hardly abstract. The North American Free Trade Agreement is now ten years old, and for the FTAA's opponents, the decade of devastation it wrought has been a key argument in stopping its extension to the rest of Latin America. By 2002, for example, the U.S. Dept. of Labor had certified 408,000 workers as qualified for extensions of unemployment benefits because their jobs had been moved south of the border. Many observers believe even that large number understates reality. For instance, the Economic Policy Institute estimates that NAFTA eliminated 766,030 actual and potential U.S. jobs between 1994 and 2000 because of the rapid growth in the net U.S. export deficit with Mexico and Canada.

Meanwhile, NAFTA's impact on Mexican jobs has been immeasurably greater. Before leaving office, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari promised Mexicans they would gain the jobs the US lost. And on tours to the US to promote the treaty, he promised that this job gain, although painful for US workers, would halt the northward flow of Mexican job seekers.

Instead, NAFTA's first year saw the loss of more than a million jobs all across Mexico. To attract investment, NAFTA-related reforms



required privatizing factories, railroads, airlines and other large enterprises, leading to further waves of layoffs. And because unemployment and economic desperation in Mexico increased, immigration to the US has been the only hope of survival for millions of Mexicans.

For a while, it seemed that the growth of *maquiladora* factories along the border would off-set at least part of the job loss. By 2001, more than 1,300,000 workers were employed in more than 2,000 border plants, according to the Maquiladora Industry Association. But tying the jobs of so many Mexicans to the U.S. market, for which the plants were producing, proved a disaster: when U.S. consumers stopped buying in the 2001 recession, the *maquiladoras* began shedding workers.

Now the Mexican government estimates more than 400,000 jobs disappeared in the process. A two-year public relations campaign by the association and the Mexican government to blame the loss on Chinese competition then sought to obscure the obvious fact that the plants produced far more goods than a recession-plagued market in

the U.S. could absorb.

But the most serious consequence of NAFTA has been its failure to protect the rights of workers. To attract investment to the *maquiladoras*, Mexican government authorities cooperated with investors and compliant official unions in maintaining a low-wage economy reinforced by a system of labor control.

According to Martha Ojeda, director of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, the government-mandated minimum wage for workers on the border is about \$4.20. She estimates that a majority of *maquiladora* workers earn close to this wage. A study by the Center for Reflection, Education and Action, a religious research group, found that at the minimum wage, it took a *maquiladora* worker in Juarez almost an hour to earn enough money to buy a kilo (2.2 pounds) of rice, and a worker in Tijuana an hour and a half.

And yet another study, by the Economics Faculty of the National Autonomous University in Mexico City, says Mexican wages have lost 81% of their buying power in the last two decades.

Labor round-up

Pensions, health care on injured list

The percentage of U.S. companies offering retirement plans—and the percentage of employees participating in them—has dropped sharply since the late 1990s, according to Census Bureau data. Meanwhile, a recent study by the Commonwealth Fund shows a dramatic upsurge in the percentage of employees at large companies who lack health insurance—not because health plans were eliminated, but because of higher copayments and eligibility requirements that make the plans too expensive for some low-income, part-time or short-term workers.

Manufacturing losses are global

More than 2.7 million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the U.S. in the past three years, many to overseas factories—but economists at Alliance Capital Management say the same problem is found worldwide. According to their recent report, more than 22 million manufacturing jobs were eliminated in 20 large economies between 1995 and 2002—a decline of more than 11%—including a 15% drop in China. Canada posted strong growth in factory jobs during the period, but Mexico, after increasing its manufacturing base during the late 1990s, has seen the trend reverse and today reports only a modest increase compared with 1995. The main reason for global trends? Too much excess capacity.

U.S. job market remains slack

The number of U.S. jobs bumped upward by 126,000 in October, continuing a weak reversal of the net losses posted earlier this year. But the gain fell short of the 150,000 additional jobs that must be created each month to pick up the slack in the labor market, which is still down 2.4 million jobs since March 2001, when the last recession began. Indeed, 4.5 million new jobs were needed just to keep up with growth in the working-age population over that period—which means the U.S. has accumulated a 6.9 million-job gap.

Attendants on final approach to CWA

On a per capita vote of 22,212 to 10,321, the board of directors of the Association of Flight Attendants has voted to support merger with CWA. AFA is the largest union of flight attendants in the U.S., with 34,000 members. Membership voting on the merger was to wrap up by Nov. 25.

15 years of ergo work down the toilet

After nearly 15 years of work on a national ergonomics standard, the National Safety Council has thrown in the towel. In surrendering its sponsorship of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Ergonomics Standard, the NSC bowed to employers who opposed development of a national standard and virtually assured such a standard will not be formulated. Several labor unions have had representatives on the NSC's ergonomics committee, including David LeGrande of CWA and—prior to the CWA merger—the Guild's research and education director, David Eisen.

House Ullico report sent to Labor Dept.

The House Education and the Workforce Committee finished its investigation of Ullico, a union-owned insurance company and pension fund, with a report concluding that the fund's directors "may well have violated federal labor and pension laws" when they set up "sweetheart" stock deals for themselves. The report was sent to the Department of Labor, which is conducting its own investigation of the fund. Committee Democrats criticized the report for not acknowledging that Ullico and labor leaders had moved to punish those who took part in the stock deal.

Canadian official decries media cartel

Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps has called for a review of cross-ownership in the media, saying Canada is threatened by "a monopoly of voices" that has followed the convergence of some of the industry's largest players. Her comments constitute the government's official response to the House of Commons heritage committee's report on Canadian broadcasting, which calls on the government to uphold its restrictions on foreign ownership in the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors.

Media groups blast Iraq news climate

Amid growing reports of journalists being harassed and intimidated by troops policing postwar Iraq, representatives of 30 media organizations have signed a letter to the Pentagon raising concerns about an increasingly hostile reporting environment. Addressed to Larry Di Rita, acting assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, the letter says the news organizations have "documented numerous examples of US troops physically harassing journalists and, in some cases, confiscating or ruining equipment, digital camera disks, and videotapes." It also states that the actions are in violation of the Pentagon's guidelines that stipulate, among other things, that "media products will not be confiscated or otherwise impounded."

Striving to put 'Canada' back into CBC airwaves

A Canadian public broadcasting advocacy group has launched the "Take Back Our Airwaves" campaign to press for greater support for Canadian programming and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Our Public Airwaves was launched earlier this year with support from the Canadian Media Guild, the TNG-CWA local that represents the CBC's program and production employees. OPA is asking concerned Canadians to log on at www.PublicAirwaves.ca and sign a petition to the Prime Minister, calling on the federal government to put the "Canadian" back in Canadian broadcasting.

More specifically, the group is drumming up support for a recent report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, released in June, that calls for increased funding for the CBC and for the Canadian Television fund, which subsidizes production of Canadian programming.

"There's a real danger that they'll just let it gather dust on a shelf. We can't let that happen," said Arthur Lewis, a former TNG member who is the group's executive director. "We've got to keep the pressure on the government to implement the report."

According to Lewis, there are two major problems in Canadian broadcasting today. One is the lack of

Canadian entertainment programming on TV in prime time. The other is the continuing decline of the CBC due to underfunding.

"CBC has an enormous number of fans across the country," Lewis said. "But everybody knows that the CBC is not what it used to be, and that's primarily because of the enormous cuts in government funding in recent years. And we feel there's a real danger that the new Martin government will impose yet another cut in its February budget."

Budget cuts also have contributed to the absence of Canadian TV drama and entertainment, with adverse implications for the sustainability of independent Canadian culture as the country moves economically closer to the United States. Canada is the only country in the world that allows programming from another nation to dominate its airwaves.

Our Public Airwaves is not advocating a ban on U.S. programming, but does want local TV networks to offer more Canadian alternatives—but that would require increased government support for the Canadian Television Fund, which was cut drastically earlier this year. Canadian drama and other programming with high production values require government subsidies because the Canadian market is too small to recover the cost from advertising revenue.

NAFTA record explains FTAA labor opposition

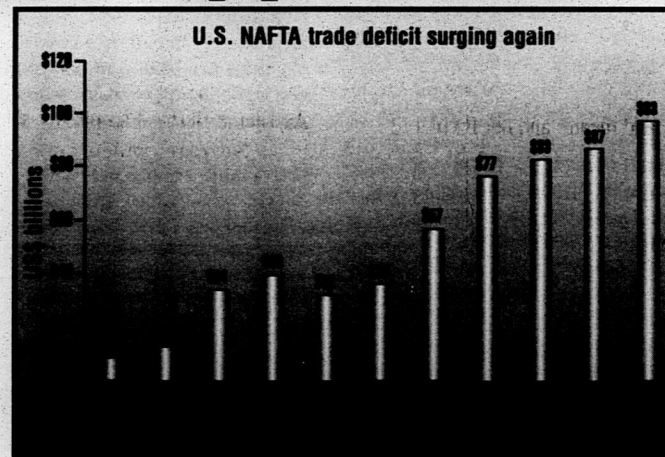
By David Bacon
N. California Media Guild

As this issue of The Guild Reporter was going to press, thousands of demonstrators were preparing to flood Miami's streets in a protest against lawless free trade. Opponents planned to hit the proposal for a Free Trade Area of the Americas with the same one-two punch of demonstrations and debate that forced a fruitless end to recent trade talks in Cancun.

The debate is hardly abstract. The North American Free Trade Agreement is now ten years old, and for the FTAA's opponents, the decade of devastation it wrought has been a key argument in stopping its extension to the rest of Latin America. By 2002, for example, the U.S. Dept. of Labor had certified 408,000 workers as qualified for extensions of unemployment benefits because their jobs had been moved south of the border. Many observers believe even that large number understates reality. For instance, the Economic Policy Institute estimates that NAFTA eliminated 766,030 actual and potential U.S. jobs between 1994 and 2000 because of the rapid growth in the net U.S. export deficit with Mexico and Canada.

Meanwhile, NAFTA's impact on Mexican jobs has been immeasurably greater. Before leaving office, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari promised Mexicans they would gain the jobs the US lost. And on tours to the US to promote the treaty, he promised that this job gain, although painful for US workers, would halt the northward flow of Mexican job seekers.

Instead, NAFTA's first year saw the loss of more than a million jobs all across Mexico. To attract investment, NAFTA-related reforms



required privatizing factories, railroads, airlines and other large enterprises, leading to further waves of layoffs. And because unemployment and economic desperation in Mexico increased, immigration to the US has been the only hope of survival for millions of Mexicans.

For a while, it seemed that the growth of *maquiladora* factories along the border would off-set at least part of the job loss. By 2001, more than 1,300,000 workers were employed in more than 2,000 border plants, according to the Maquiladora Industry Association. But tying the jobs of so many Mexicans to the U.S. market, for which the plants were producing, proved a disaster: when U.S. consumers stopped buying in the 2001 recession, the *maquiladoras* began shedding workers.

Now the Mexican government estimates more than 400,000 jobs disappeared in the process. A two-year public relations campaign by the association and the Mexican government to blame the loss on Chinese competition then sought to obscure the obvious fact that the plants produced far more goods than a recession-plagued market in

the U.S. could absorb.

But the most serious consequence of NAFTA has been its failure to protect the rights of workers. To attract investment to the *maquiladoras*, Mexican government authorities cooperated with investors and compliant official unions in maintaining a low-wage economy reinforced by a system of labor control.

According to Martha Ojeda, director of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, the government-mandated minimum wage for workers on the border is about \$4.20. She estimates that a majority of *maquiladora* workers earn close to this wage. A study by the Center for Reflection, Education and Action, a religious research group, found that at the minimum wage, it took a *maquiladora* worker in Juarez almost an hour to earn enough money to buy a kilo (2.2 pounds) of rice, and a worker in Tijuana an hour and a half.

And yet another study, by the Economics Faculty of the National Autonomous University in Mexico City, says Mexican wages have lost 81% of their buying power in the last two decades.

Young, yes — but not born yesterday

By Datejia Green
Canadian Media Guild

In the 1950 comedy "Born Yesterday," Judy Holliday plays Billie Dawn, former show girl and bombshell mistress of millionaire scrap metal tycoon Harry Brock (Broderick Crawford). They go to Washington, where Harry starts an illegal cartel but worries that Billie's street-wise, "unrefined" nature will embarrass him with the politicians he's trying to pocket.

So Harry hires a starving intellectual to teach Billie some "class." Once Billie meets his expectations he tries to use her in his dealings—only to learn that she's sussed the situation and wants no part of it. When he orders her to fall in line, Billie delivers her famous comeback: "Whaddya think, Harry—I was born yesterday?"

Over the years I've thought about Judy Holliday's brilliant performance many times. And as I reflect on the brief but eventful Canadian Media Guild Conference "Not Born Yesterday," I find remarkable parallels. As a young(er) black woman who is relatively new to the CBC, I can relate to the superficial judgments that underestimated Billie Dawn—and that typecast Holliday in movie roles as a dumb blonde, despite her talents, her passion for literature and theatre and her IQ of 172.

In the case of CBC, promises to reflect Canada's changing demographics, in programming and behind the scenes, have gone through decades of false starts. And as I looked around at the Not Born Yesterday conference, the small number of people of color in

the room left me wondering if the Guild had any intention to remedy that.

So I began the weekend somewhat skeptically. My own highly competitive and pressured workplace had sometimes left me feeling frustrated and alone. And I entered the conference with the baggage of my previous experience in male-dominated unions, where I was a marginal rank and file member with few meaningful avenues of engagement open to me.

The introductory session was curious. Media personality Irshad Manji slyly teased delegates out of their shells, and the result was a steady refrain of stories about being abused and compromised at work. People described harried experiences of temporary and casual employment, of working without a contract or job description, of revolving-door layoffs and rehires, of unpaid overtime, lack of communication and lack of clarity from supervisors—all sugar-coated with the almost universal promise of future permanence, status or promotion.

I was completely alarmed. I couldn't understand how managers and supervisors, many of whom have had permanent employment, uninterrupted income, union protections, benefits and status for decades, could enforce such insidious practices. And how could the Guild let them get away with it? As Elaine Bernard so plainly said in her Saturday morning presentation, rapid casualization of workforces, with resulting competitiveness and individualism, have reshaped how we relate to each other.

Informal hirings, blurred roles and duties, dubious job security,

exclusion from the culture and vision of the workplace . . . now more than ever, the media industry is at the cutting edge of all of this.

As a media Guild, we should be concerned for the erosion of quality professional work and the loss of commitment to diverse, balanced journalism. If we are to keep any of the job protections won in the past, then the CMG has to stand up most firmly for its most vulnerable members. We are the future membership.

Anyway, here I was with 75 members under age 35 who clearly shared a sense of pride in our work, but many of us were being given the bimbo treatment in one way or another. But all was not lost or bleak.

Despite the horror stories, the opportunity to meet was positive and transformative. It was a privilege just to have the time and space to speak—and it was empowering to be heard. All it took was a little opening and we put our talents together, coming up with constructive solutions and plans that potentially could invigorate the Guild's work.

We decided to get more involved in the union, to work collectively and proactively to change the culture of the workplace, and to stop the revolving door of equity hirings. We also placed a high priority on integrating young people from diverse backgrounds into the core of the union's work. We agreed that our employers need to

be more open to the demographics of the communities they serve.

For me, it was a time to make connections across language, race, geography and profession. And, thankfully, it was a moment to see the Guild in action. It was a way for me to bridge the isolation I sometimes feel with a new sense of solidarity and community within the Guild.

In the end, what was clear is that none of us—however young, however different in our background or perspectives—is content to be used simply to cover the tracks of our employers' hiring practices, whether with youth or equity groups. Many of us are not blonde, but like Billie, we were definitely not born yesterday.

Calling all young labor turks

Continued from page 1

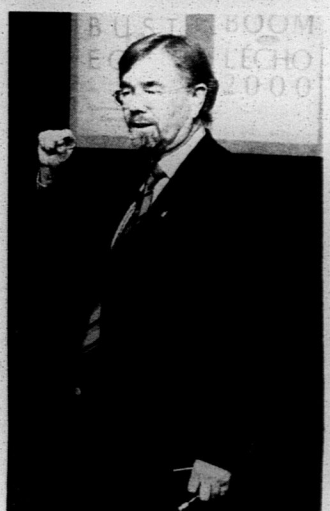
large number of temporary workers in the media; and how better to represent new members in the Guild.

"These subcommittees ended up delivering dozens of concrete resolutions and suggestions to those of us on the national executive, and I'm sure it won't end there," Lareau said. "I get the sense that many of the discussions started on the weekend will continue."

The weekend conference cost about C\$100,000 to host, according to Lareau, with travel costs for CMG members—who are scattered across Canada—a major expense. But unions will have to accept that sort of pricetag as the inescapable cost of reaching out to new members in new ways, she added, although locals based in single cities could hold similar events at a fraction of the price.



Canadian author Irshad Manji launches the conference with a call to younger unionists to speak up about issues that affect them.



David Foot, best-selling author of "Boom, Bust and Echo," talks about the harsh realities of being born only one generation after the baby boom.

Democratic media need unions, public funds

Continued from page 1

democracy are in jeopardy as a result of media consolidation," he said. "People all across the political spectrum are waking up to the danger of having a small elite controlling the ideas that can circulate in our society."

Although the conference did not produce a specific plan of action to combat that danger, supporters viewed the gathering as an opportunity to build on this year's grassroots campaign—including more than 2 million letters, phone calls and e-mails—opposing the Federal Communications Commission's relaxation of media ownership rules. Conference participants were urged to sign up for e-mail alerts from Free Press, the group that organized the event, at www.mediareform.net.

Two notable themes to emerge during the proceedings were the importance of unions to enlarging the middle class—and to journalistic independence and enterprise—and the importance of public news funding.

"If you are concerned that half of Americans don't vote, you've got to look at the media as partly responsible," said Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). "The richest 1% of Americans now own more wealth than the bottom 95% combined. If you turn on the TV you will immediately hear about how the stock market is doing. But when was the last time you heard on TV that workers who belong to a union make 30% more money?"

TNG-CWA President Linda Foley contended that news consumers who want more

journalism that challenges the status quo should support efforts to organize non-union reporters. "Media workers have to be able to fight for stories, to stand up to media owners," she said. "That means they need a union contract that says they can only be fired for just cause."

As an example, Foley recounted the story of Cincinnati Enquirer reporter Mike Gallagher, who was fired by the non-union, Gannett-owned daily after he wrote an exposé of bribery and corruption at Chiquita Banana Corp. His crime? Listening to Chiquita voice-mail messages without the company's knowledge.

"When I was a reporter, we were told to go after the story any way you could," Foley said. "I can't tell you the outcome would have been different if Gallagher had belonged to a union, but at least he would have had a fair hearing before he could be fired."

But fewer than 10,000 of the nation's 55,000 daily newspaper reporters have a union, added Juan Gonzalez, a Guild member and president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists [Guild estimates are closer to 15,000]. Union density is even lower among weekly newspapers, magazines, radio, internet and television.

On a related note, Gonzalez argued that Congress should increase funding for public radio to make it less dependent on corporate largesse—which, in turn, would increase its independence. For example, he observed, the BBC is more critical of the government

than NPR, despite its greater reliance on government funding. "There should be several NPRs, and they should be directly accountable to their communities," Gonzalez said. "The public should elect the boards of directors for the local stations and the national network."

Journalist John Nichols, who together with professor Robert McChesney founded Free Press, put a slightly different spin on the subject by proposing that Congress allow tax deductions for donations to non-profit news outlets like National Public Radio or the Progressive magazine.

"Congress has used the religion clause in the First Amendment to justify a tax deduction for donations to churches," he reasoned. "Congress should take the 'freedom of the press' clause and allow a write-off for donations to independent media."

Other high-profile speakers included Amy Goodman, host of "Democracy Now!" a daily news program on the Pacifica radio network that renounces corporate funding. Concluding her speech by asking audience members to buy "Democracy Now!" t-shirts, she added: "We will know media reform has arrived when the Pentagon has to sell t-shirts to buy a new bomb and community radio gets an \$87 billion blank check."

Ralph Nader, who received 2.8 million votes in the 2000 presidential election, spoke to a standing-room-only crowd and promptly was asked—to scattered applause and some boos—if he would refrain from

running for president next year. "I imagine you consider yourself a civil libertarian," Nader responded. "Would you ever tell a fellow citizen not to speak? Running for public office is one of the most of important forms of free speech. Please don't tell anyone not to exercise that right."

The audience responded with a lengthy standing ovation. Nader said he will announce by the end of December if he will run in 2004.

Both Democratic commissioners of the five-member FCC attended the conference, with Jonathan Adelstein confirming that only a "handful" of the public comments flooding the FCC supported its June decision to allow greater media concentration. But the U.S. Senate voted in September to overturn the move, and with pressure from the public mounting, the House now seems poised to follow suit despite leadership opposition and a threatened presidential veto.

Not all of the proceedings were polemical. Al Franken provided topical comedy, and live music was sprinkled throughout the conference. Billy Bragg, Lester Chambers, Tom Morello and other musicians performed for two nights at the sold-out 1,800-seat historic Orpheum Theater in downtown Madison.

Williams, author of "Grassroots Journalism," was fired from the Brattleboro Reformer this past summer for his union-organizing activities. NLRB charges in the matter are pending.

To survive, we must follow the work . . .

By Timothy Schick
Providence Newspaper Guild

At the beginning of the last century, the workforce was changing. Skilled workers, specialized in a particular craft, were being replaced by unskilled assembly line workers. Some unions fought to exclude the unskilled. Other unions embraced this new class of workers and grew, becoming one of the greatest forces for social change and employee rights the world has seen.

Over the last few decades there has been another restructuring of the workforce. Today, 30% of workers are "contingent": they are the independent contractors, the consultants, the freelancers and the temps.

They all have non-traditional relationships with their employer. In all but rare instances they are excluded from the protections of both a union contract and labor law. And as the contingent workforce has grown, unions have shrunk in size and influence.

This exclusion from union protection is not an accident. Independent contractors were specifically excluded from the National Labor Relations Act by the Taft-Hartley amendments to the Wagner Act. This exclusion was aimed specifically at the newspaper industry! It seems some Guild locals had won bargaining rights for paper carriers. The exclusion of independent contractor was an attempt to weaken unions.

What was once a small subclass of the

labor market is now a driving force. And if unions want to survive, they must follow the work. The Guild is in the process of considering a constitutional change that would specifically welcome members of the contingent workforce to the ranks of the labor movement.

Yet like the craft unions of a century ago, some in today's labor movement seek to exclude contingent workers. They cite concerns about conflicts between our traditional members and this new class of membership. Yet similar conflicts between the rights of full-time and part-time workers have been easily handled for years.

According to the literature on industrial relations, the use of "contingent workers" continues to grow. The labor movement has

been slow to respond to this development. The jurisdiction of unions must follow the work, not exclude workers who do the work in a non-traditional employment relationship.

The NLRB has begun to recognize this, with a ruling that extends union protection to temp agencies. The academics that study unions and the work force have applauded our move to extend union coverage through new forms of unionism, like WashTech.

As the Guild reviews the proposal to expand its membership, we need to make sure we are facilitating the growth of our union, not creating barriers to workers with unfamiliar employment arrangements. After all, they seek the same thing as the rest of us: Fair pay and fair working conditions.

. . . as well as live up to our ideals

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

As a date, Dec. 10 doesn't resonate for Americans with the same significance as Nov. 22 or Dec. 8 or Sept. 11. And the International Declaration of Human Rights hardly carries the cachet of the Bill of Rights, or even of the Magna Carta. Chalk up one more victory for the facile pretensions of most public school history courses.

Dec. 10 is the anniversary not of an assassination or a military strike but of the very antithesis of violence. On that date in 1948, Eleanor Roosevelt—coincidentally a Guild member—and delegates representing four-fifths of the United Nations signed a document that still challenges governments worldwide with its vision of human dignity and worth.

Some of the 30 articles of the International Declaration of Human Rights may seem pedestrian to Americans who take such guarantees for granted—or did, before we engaged in an open-ended "war on terrorism": rights to life and liberty, freedom from arbitrary arrest, a ban on slavery and torture. But other rights enshrined within the declaration would upend our economy and social order—if ever taken seriously.

Article 25, for example, declares that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." That's downright revolutionary, especially in an age when foreign adventures are sucking the financial lifeblood out of our schools, health system and vital social services, including police and fire protection.

Or consider Article 22, which declares that all members of society have the right to social security and to the "economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for their dignity." "Dignity" is not a concept we associate with social security in the U.S., and increasingly less so in Canada. Then there's the astonishing sweep of Article 23, which asserts that everyone has the right to work and to free choice of employment, as well as the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his or her interests.

Wow.

While much of the public remains ignorant of the war that's being waged against unions and against workers still trying to unionize, the numbers speak for themselves:

IN IRAQ,
THE DICTATOR'S
STATUES HAVE BEEN
PULLED DOWN...MEANWHILE
IN THE U.S. A NEW STATUE HAS BEEN ERECTED.

25% of employers illegally fire at least one worker during organizing campaigns, 75% hire consultants or union-busters to fight organizing drives, 78% force their employees to attend one-on-one meetings with their supervisors to argue against unionization. Nearly a third of those workers who weather such tactics to vote for unionization still don't have a first contract two years after the election.

That's why Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) are introducing the Employee Free Choice Act, which would allow card-check recognition of union representation; would provide for mandatory mediation and arbitration of first-contract disputes; and would establish stronger penalties for employers violating employees' rights. Guild members who educate themselves about the bill and lobby their own legislators to support it would do themselves a service.

And that's why union members across the U.S. will be protesting Dec. 10, both to draw attention to the Employee

Free Choice Act and to emphasize that workers' rights are human rights, not some sort of "vested interest"—which is how the extreme right typically dismisses any claims to humane behavior. "It's time for us to fight to regain what generations before thought they had already secured—the right to collective bargaining," asserted CWA convention delegates this past summer in a resolution supporting the Dec. 10 actions. The time has come, the delegates added, to "take back the [National Labor Relations Act] and the National Labor Relations Board and return them to their original mission of helping workers and promoting workers' rights."

More information about the Dec. 10 actions is on the web at www.laborgroups.org/Dec10ToolKit.pdf. A pamphlet of background information, titled "The Silent War," is at www.aflcio.org/aboutunions/joinunions/howjoin/upload/vatw_issuebrief.pdf. For a full copy of the Universal Declaration, see www.unhchr.ch/udhr. All are worth a visit.

International Declaration of Human Rights

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom

of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person

and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly,
Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

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LOOKING AHEAD

We must stand up for ourselves

By Linda Foley, President



I spent the last three days of October in seclusion on the eastern shore of Maryland with 25 or so prominent journalists and former journalists. We had been invited by the Aspen Institute to discuss the news business and journalists' role in policy decisions affecting it.

Our observations and conclusions will be published by the institute in a few months. (Hint: Don't wait for the movie.) But basically we all agreed that journalism is in crisis, and journalists themselves must act to prevent its demise.

Flip the planner page to a week later: University of Wisconsin in Madison. More than 1,600 activists gathered to hear speakers and panels describe what's happening to the media landscape in the United States. People like Bill Moyers, Al Franken, Jesse Jackson and Ralph Nader, as well as Congressional representatives, federal communications commissioners and a U.S. senator, all described how today's mass media have failed to live up to the promise of being catalysts for citizen involvement in our democratic process. All present agreed that journalism is in crisis and that we must act to prevent its demise.

The participants at the first meeting would have benefited from attending the

second—even though the setting was a little less pristine and the weather a lot colder. Besides myself, New York Daily News columnist Juan Gonzalez, current president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, was the only journalist to participate in both events.

In fact, if it weren't for the two of us and a scant handful of reporters from the so-called popular media who came on their own dime, no one in Madison was in a position to defend journalists who work in mass media.

Because delegates to the Guild's annual sector conference in August unanimously endorsed the media reform conference in Madison and encouraged rank-and-file participation, I expected to see more Guild members there. To put it bluntly, it was a golden opportunity missed.

The media reform movement, recently energized by a public outpouring over the FCC's proposed ownership deregulation, is gaining momentum for issues that affect Guild members every day. As I told the Madison conference during a panel discussion on media workers, "Our members are the first ones to feel the effects of the decisions made by corporate media."

Too often, those who advocate for media reform forget that media workers themselves



are on the front lines of the battle. Too often, plans to agitate for media reform can degenerate into disparagement of individual reporters. Too often, those who control the media and those who work for them get lumped into the same rotten-apple barrel.

Representatives of journalists and media workers, like Gonzalez and I, can help to clarify the line that separates our members' interests from those of the media corporations and their moguls. But more individual journalists and media workers need to speak out and stand up for themselves on this issue.

Workers in the news and media industries can't leave the fight for media reform

to surrogates—not when their livelihood and profession are at stake. That's exactly what the august group of journalists gathered by the Aspen Institute concluded.

In his extensive remarks to the crowd in Madison, Moyers, himself an award-winning journalist, called on U.S. journalists to stand up to the forces that are destroying their craft. He admitted it was somewhat risky to speak out against the media bosses. But he also pointed out that journalists in other countries around the world often are called upon to risk a lot more than just their jobs.

Besides, I would add, at least the Guild can protect your job.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I was embarrassed—ashamed, really—to see in the Oct. 24 issue of *The Guild Reporter* the compilation of the so-called "Top 25 Censored Media Stories of 2002-03." As a journalist and shop steward at an Associated Press bureau, I was furious to read such propaganda. It has no place in a newspaper for reporters and editors.

According to the projectcensored.org web site, the submissions are self-selected and judged by, among others, noted polemicist Noam Chomsky. I resent my union dues being misused this way, and I intend to raise this issue in the News Media Guild and see if others agree with me.

Don't get me wrong: it's not just the content I find disgusting—particularly No. 24, "Aid to Israel Fuels Repressive Occupation in Palestine," which is a grotesque reading of the Mideast violence. What's so revolting is the bias. It would be just as absurd to run another list with items such as "Bush Tax Cuts Spur Economic Growth."

Just stick to reporting Guild news. I would guess that's what most union members want from *The Guild Reporter*, not phony survey results from a self-promoting group of academics.

And by the way: No. 5, "The Effort to Make Unions Disappear" also is nonsense. Smug opinions dressed up as news by union organs such as *The Guild Reporter* alienate more potential union members than anything Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher or George W. Bush could ever dream up.

Keep up the good work!

—Stephen Singer
Manchester, CT

To the Editor,

Don Kummer's death is a huge loss for the Detroit Guild, The Newspaper Guild-CWA, the Detroit labor family and for me, personally.

Don was my mentor and a dear friend.

He literally changed my life. When I met Don in the early 1980s I was a journalist. Now I am a union activist and I can't think of a better job for me. He made me a better union member and a better person.

Don and I went through the fire together during my 12 or so years of activism in the Detroit local. There was the JOA, the DNA organizing campaign and increasingly tough bargaining leading up to the 1995 strike. During that time I found Don to be consistently thoughtful, innovative, entrepreneurial and strategic in his approach to labor issues. He was fierce in his devotion to our union members.

He will be with me for the rest of my life.

—Luther Jackson, Executive Officer
San Jose Newspaper Guild

To the Editor,

A brief correction to the lead of "Unfit to Print?" (page 8, Oct. 24): The Sherlock Holmes story mentioned is the wrong tale. The correct story is "Silver Blaze," in which the key to the mystery lies in the fact the dog did not bark during the night, meaning the horse thief must have been known to the dog.

—Rich Gotshall, The Indianapolis Star

[The chastened editor readily agrees, having excavated the following exchange—from "Silver Blaze":

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time."

"The dog did nothing in the night-time."

"That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes.]

To the Editor,

Re: News in Brief p.2 *Guild Reporter* September 12, 2003

It brings back memories of many years ago in Toronto, Ontario during a huge snow-

storm. Being a stereotyper I felt it was necessary to get to work at the Toronto Telegram the next day. I drove about 10 miles, left my car deep in a snowdrift, walked about 3 miles, and stayed at my parents' without much sleep. The next day I took public transport to work. All this in about a foot of snow.

So thumbs up to the Hudson News for paying double time to those who showed up. It never occurred to me to expect anything more than a regular paycheck.

—William J. Armitage, retired mailer,
North Vancouver, BC

[From time to time we send a letter to the few score readers who get complimentary copies of *The Guild Reporter*, asking if they wish to continue receiving it. Among our recent responses were the following:]

To the Editor,

Please continue sending me *The Guild Reporter*.

I started receiving it many years ago, when I was a communications professor (University of Southern California, Temple University, Emerson College). It was always useful in my teaching and research. Today, I'm editor of *Media Ethics* magazine, and still find it useful. There are all too few periodicals willing to publish Bob McChesney and others who don't accept the current structure of the industry, as well as act as a counter to Editor & Publisher.

I have another connection to the union: sitting on my desk is my father's 50-year pin from the International Typographical Union. Although he wound up doing typographical layout and design into his 80s, at one point in his career he was a reporter and editor on newspapers in New York and Kansas.

In fact, he used to claim that he was once a deputy sheriff in Dodge City—but he could always tell (and write) a good story.

—Mike Kittross, Acton, MA

To the Editor,

Thank you for your letter regarding my complimentary subscription to *The Guild Reporter*. I have had the subscription for about 10 or 15 years. As a journalism teacher at one of the largest journalism schools in the country, I think it is important that our students be exposed to the union viewpoint. I believe that I am the only faculty member receiving the *Reporter*; I certainly am the only one posting it outside his office door for students to read as they wait for their appointments. Please do continue the subscription.

—Kurt Kent, University of Florida,
Gainesville

To the Editor,

Thank you for continuing to send the Minnesota News Council *The Guild Reporter*.

As to your most felicitous phrase, "the virtues that elicited this generosity," I offer this explanation. The News Council's mission is to promote fair, vigorous and trusted journalism. We are a 501(c)(3) organization, and we offer programs to help the press resolve disputes with readers without going to court. We also conduct workshops in newsrooms (free) to help news people avoid lapses that produce unfair harm and complaints. Twenty percent of our operating funds come from news organizations. I am sure that, if they had more to send, send it they would.

The press establishment in Minnesota has recognized the Minnesota News Council with an award for its 33 years of service to the press and the public.

I deeply appreciate your letter, which is the most civilized, literate and witty business letter I have read since 1956. If you ever want to move to Minneapolis, call for a job interview.

Best wishes,

—Gary Gilson,
Minnesota News Council

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: Dec. 12.) 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.

Pornography as news

Declining news coverage reflects cost of newsroom budget cuts

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Here's a non-startling piece of news: newspaper companies are among the biggest money-makers among the Fortune 500. Indeed, by slashing payroll and requiring the survivors to perform multiple functions in "converged" newsrooms, newspapers have boosted their profit margins higher than those of the high-tech powerhouses that supposedly define our economy.

Here's another, at a time when media activists are attempting to reclaim the press's traditional role as a watchdog of democracy, media coverage of government and of economic pressures on government have eroded significantly.

Could this second item have any relationship to the first? Well, duh.

Two recent studies, one focused on government coverage and one on environmental reporting, drive the point home. "Government: In and Out of the News," a study released this summer by the Washington, D.C.-based Council for Excellence in Government, examined more than 400 hours of network evening news programs and more than 13,000 front-page newspaper stories during the first year of three presidential administrations. Among its findings: coverage of the federal government has declined sharply—and what there is of it increasingly skews toward the executive

branch, shifting Congress and the courts.

Perhaps as disturbing, the study's findings that nearly two-thirds of all sources quoted or cited in print and on television were in government service, an imbalance that tends to promote the status quo. Moreover, newspapers grew less likely over the period studied to turn to independent "experts" and to cite foreign sources, and even local newspapers "almost never" cited state and local officials in stories about the federal government, ignoring local perspectives on national issues.

A more comprehensive overview of declining news coverage—and how that decline has been propelled by the hollowing out of newsrooms—is provided by a 135-page study released in September by the nonprofit Institutes for Journalism and Natural Resources. Titled, "Matching the Scenery: Journalism's Duty to the North American West," the study focuses mostly on environmental and growth issues but makes observations that apply to virtually any complex news beat and how it's covered by second- and third-tier newspapers.

The bottom line? As summarized by Ray Ring in High-Country News, "Low newsroom budgets; inexperienced, low-paid and overworked reporters; rapid turnover of newsroom staffs; desks left vacant for months after resignations to save money; and news being oversimplified and written to the 'battleground' formula—

quote opposing sides and leave it at that, with little or no questioning of the veracity of whatever is rolled out in quotes.

Scathing, though that may sound, the details rolled out in "Journalism's Duty" are even more damning. Based on interviews with more than 150 managing editors and other senior supervisors, at Western dailies, the study's authors concluded that 83% have a "significant" shortage of reporters and 75%

struggle with "significant" time constraints for the reporters they do have. Some staffing levels border on the absurd: The Las Vegas Review-Journal, the state's largest newspaper, has a circulation of 166,000—but only 40 reporters.

Judging by the salaries these newspapers pay, no one will be beating down the doors to plug the gap. Entry-level pay for reporters at newspapers with less than 10,000 circulation is \$20,437; at papers with circulation between 30,000 and 50,000, it's \$26,057, while "experienced" reporters in the latter group average \$31,249. (Approximately 80% of the West's 285 dailies have circulations of less than 50,000.) And as the report observes, averages don't tell the whole story: starting pay last year at The Daily Herald in Provo, Utah, a 31,000 circulation daily owned by Pulitzer, was \$7.50 an hour—just \$15,600 a year. Workloads, meanwhile, confirm the adage that those paid the least work the most: one Daily Herald reporter quoted by the study, for example, said he has three beats and has to write more than 30 news stories a week.

Low pay and high work loads that emphasize quantity over quality take a predictable toll, with several supervisors estimating a complete staff turnover every 15 to 36 months. Staff churning often results in gaps affecting all beats, not just the environment; it also results in a loss of institutional memory and sophisticated subject mastery,

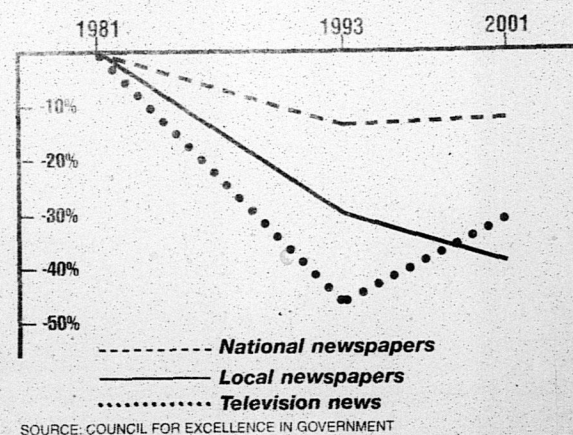
reducing "a news organization's cumulative understanding of local history" and its ability "to assess a news event's broader significance," the study observes.

Nor are newspapers attempting to make up such shortfalls through training. Indeed, the study asserts, "complaints about the lack of training and professional-development opportunities are much more prevalent at Western dailies than are such perennial sources of employee discontent as salary levels and chances for promotion."

There's evidence the wider public is beginning to cotton to what's happening. As Robert Kennedy Jr. recently told Salon, "There are now only 11 companies that control virtually every radio outlet, every TV outlet and every newspaper in our country. And because of that media consolidation, the news bureaus are no longer run by newspeople. They are now corporate profit centers."

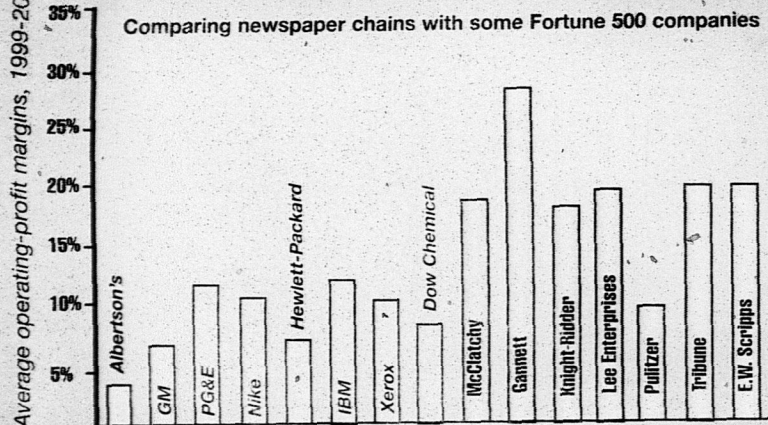
"Most of these companies have liquidated their foreign bureaus, because they're expensive to run," Kennedy added. "That's why you can't get foreign news in this country; you have to go to the BBC. And they've liquidated their investigative journalism units, because that kind of reporting is also expensive. So news has become the lowest common denominator, which is why you see sensational crime coverage, you see Laci Peterson and Kobe Bryant all the time, you see celebrity gossip, which is really just a form of pornography."

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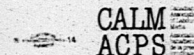
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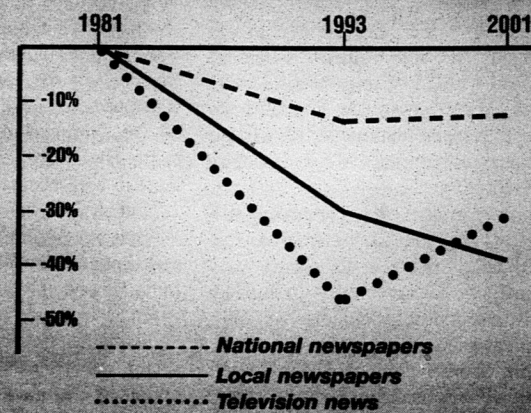
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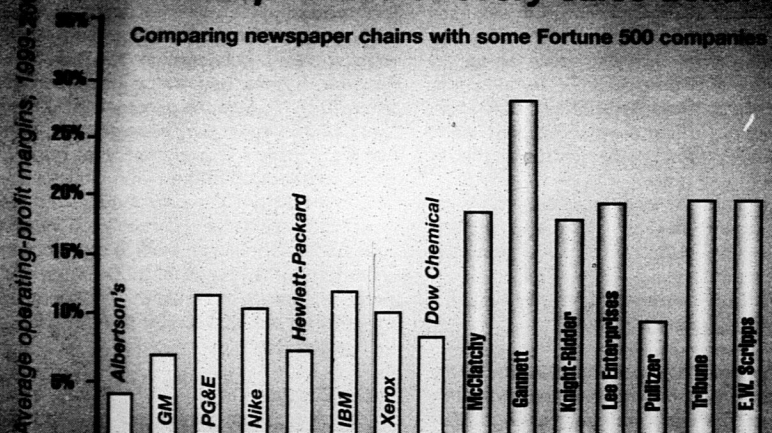
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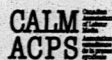
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VOL. 70

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