

THE GUILD Reporter

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Guild wins 'one big union' vote

Faced with having to decide which of two unions at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should continue as their sole bargaining agent, employees of the public broadcaster opted 59% to 41% to go with the Canadian Media Guild. The vote ends more than 50 years of representation by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union and its predecessor.

Voter turnout over the six-week balloting period, which ended Dec. 12, was more than 71% of all eligible employees—even higher than the 68% turnout in the 1993 election that determined which union would represent CBC production workers. The final count was 2,452 for the Guild vs. 1,717 for CEP.

"This sizeable victory gives us

good ground to build a bigger and stronger union at the CBC," said CMG President Lise Lareau. "It shows that a significant majority of CBC employees recognize the Guild's track record at the corporation."

Prior to the election, the Guild represented approximately 3,400 permanent and more than 700 temporary CBC employees, or a bit more than twice the number represented by CEP. As a result of this month's voting, Guild strength at the broadcaster will exceed 5,000.

"I am elated at the results," said Arnold Amber, Director of TNG Canada/CWA and president of the CBC branch of the Guild. "We now have one strong union that will be able to better present our views forcefully at the CBC,"

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Battle of black ties, black tees

By Michael Sorkin, Carolyn Tuft
St. Louis Newspaper Guild

When reporters and other employees at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch tried to attend a recent black-tie dinner at the Ritz-Carlton hotel, they were met by hotel security guards who threatened to evict them and called local police. And when the journalists finally were seated, the hotel parked a tableful of guards nearby to watch over them throughout the meal.

The journalists' crime? They wore black t-shirts calling attention to stalled labor negotiations between the Post-Dispatch and the St. Louis Newspaper Guild.

The dinner was sponsored by the Press Club of Metropolitan St. Louis, which was honoring the newspaper on its 125th birthday. Some 530 people attended the posh affair, including media celebrities, local and state dignitaries—and the publisher, editor

and managing editor of the newspaper, along with the president and CEO of the newspaper's owner, Pulitzer Inc., and Emily Rauh Pulitzer, the company's largest shareholder.

Although the St. Louis Newspaper Guild had purchased a table to support the celebration, arriving Guild members were intercepted by a Press Club official and security guards and told they wouldn't be allowed to enter. Robert Cohn, chairman of the Press Club, then intervened and announced he had agreed to allow the Guild members to wear their t-shirts. Moreover, he pointed out, the Newspaper Guild was listed in the evening's program as an official sponsor of the event.

When the Guild retinue finally was admitted, it was seated as far as physically possible from publisher Terry Egger, who was to be "roasted" that evening. But that didn't dissuade columnist Betty

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A Chinese lion demonstrates its displeasure at the way workers at the Chinese Daily News have been treated by their union-busting

employer. More than 1,000 workers were led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson to the rally, in Pershing Square, Los Angeles.

Thousands rally Dec. 10 to defend labor rights

By Mark Gruenberg
Staff Writer, Press Associates Inc.

From a march in New York to a candlelight protest in San Francisco, from a 1,000-person meeting in a Chicago union hall to a San Antonio teach-in, union members and their allies rallied nationwide Dec. 10 for the right to organize.

Ninety demonstrations in 38 cities across the U.S. celebrated the 55th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was drafted largely by Guild member Eleanor Roosevelt. But although the U.S. signed and pledged to honor the document, rally speakers stressed, the declaration's guarantee of the right to organize has been ignored.

"Behind the closed doors of workplaces of America, workers face incredible, often ruthless, opposition when they try to come together in a

union," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told more than 2,000 people at Federal Plaza in New York City.

"Employers are literally robbing working people and their communities of better lives," Sweeney added. "At a time when the middle class is shrinking, when the gap between the rich and poor is growing, workers deserve the right to form a union to win a real voice on the job through collective bargaining."

CWA took the lead in organizing the protests in Cleveland, Phoenix and Los Angeles. "There are workers in many sectors who have been struggling to gain a first contract for too many years because their employers are following an anti-union playbook of delay and stalling tactics," CWA President Morton Bahr told a rally at SBC's downtown location in Cleveland. Bahr cited Comcast, Adelphia,

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Chinese Daily News workers rally Dec. 10 as reporter Lynn Wang, on microphone, describes their struggle. Also shown, left to right, are edi-

tor Yun-min Pao, wire translator Dominic Kao, sales rep I-sen Huang, clerk Yu-fang Kai, packer Shieh-shen Wei and driver Jeffrey Sun.

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Watson to chair Broun

Sue Watson, a prominent Guild leader during the Detroit newspaper strike, will chair the 2003 Heywood Broun Award competition.

A former reporter and city editor for the Detroit Free Press, Watson became a columnist in 1984 and for a dozen years observed every aspect of urban life, from the Los Angeles riots to the proliferation of drug paraphernalia at local gas stations to political conventions. But in 1995 she hit the streets with other unionized employees of the Free Press and the Detroit News, writing a regular column for the Detroit Sunday Journal—the strike newspaper—that took a decidedly labor-oriented view of her home town.

While on strike Watson worked as an assistant to Congressman John Conyers Jr. and currently is editor of The Detroit Teacher, newsletter for the Detroit Federation of Teachers. She was elected to the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame in 2000—although it took the news almost two weeks to make it into the pages of the Free Press—and received Knight Ridder's news-editorial Award of Excellence in 1993.

And, in a fitting coda, Watson shared the 1978 Heywood Broun Award with Paul Magnusson for a series exposing the abuse of patients at Michigan's Plymouth Center for retarded children. That was the first time in the competition's then-38-year history that a woman had received or shared the award.

Established in 1941 to honor the Guild's founding spirit and first president, the Heywood Broun Award memorializes a man who—like Watson—achieved his greatest renown as a columnist. Yet despite his stature as the highest-paid columnist of his time, Broun



championed society's underdogs and the disadvantaged and saw his work on behalf of the Guild as having more enduring value than his writing. The award is judged each year by journalists in that light, seeking to recognize work that helps to right wrongs, especially social ills.

As usual, entries for this year's competition must be postmarked by the last Friday in January—Jan. 30 this time—and submitted in triplicate, including at least one original tearsheet; there are no entry fees or forms. The award includes a plaque and a cash prize of \$5,000, while two awards of "substantial distinction"—including one reserved specifically for broadcast entries—will include \$1,000 cash prizes. For a more detailed description of the rules, visit the Guild web site at www.newsguild.org.

Jan. 30 also is the deadline for submission of entries for the Barr Award, which each year recognizes one high school and one college student for journalistic achievement on issues of social justice. The award—including \$500 to the high school winner and \$1,000 to the college winner—is presented annually in memory of David S. Barr, who for a quarter of a century served as the Guild's general counsel, mentor and role model.

As with the Broun Award, the Barr competition does not charge an entry fee but *does* require a completed application form. Entry forms may be downloaded from the Guild web site or obtained from Dominique Edmondson, at 202-434-7177.

Broun and Barr prizes will be awarded May 19 at the third annual Freedom Award Fund Banquet, to be held at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Funded by a bequest from political cartoonist Herbert Block, the Freedom Award recognizes a body of work that exemplifies Block's devotion to free speech and assembly. In addition to their cash prize, Barr winners will be provided with transportation and hotel lodging to attend the banquet.

Guild briefs . . .

IAPE board calls for contract veto

Following a weekend of intense debate, the IAPE/TNG-CWA Local 1096 board of directors voted 19 to 1 to recommend that local members reject a tentative contract agreement. Mail balloting will take an estimated six weeks, so polling results won't be known until late January. Although the bargaining committee reached the TA Nov. 19, board members argued that the agreement "represents a setback for employees" in wages and healthcare. Nevertheless, the board added that it "overwhelmingly felt" that members should have the opportunity to decide whether to accept the proposal.

WashPost callers speak to LaCrosse

The Washington Post boasts about how much it cares about the community—but who knew "the community" is LaCrosse, Wisconsin? In a cost-saving experiment, certain calls from subscribers are being routed to non-union employees of APAC, an outsourcing specialty company in LaCrosse, which presumably will try to talk said customers out of their decision. The Washington-Baltimore Guild is encouraging calls to the APAC number—202-334-6100, then press 4—with a dose of encouragement to those weary Wisconsinites to start fighting for a union.

APTN techs follow newsies into Guild

By a strong majority, technical and operations employees at the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network have voted to join the Canadian Media Guild. The 25-member unit includes studio crew, directors and maintenance technicians who began organizing soon after the Guild negotiated a first contract covering approximately 20 APTN news and current affairs employees. The deal gave those employees overtime rights, industry-level salary scales and job classifications for the first time, favorably influencing the tech group's decision to seek representation.

Seattle P-I gets quiet reprieve

While oral arguments in the legal tussle between The Seattle Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer have been scheduled for Jan. 21, a quietly reached agreement between the antagonists assures that the P-I likely will keep publishing at least until 2007. As reported by Bill Richards, Times attorneys have agreed not to restart an 18-month countdown to the end of the two papers' joint operating agreement until a final decision in the lawsuit is issued. In return, P-I owner Hearst agreed not to oppose an expedited appeal. Without the agreement, the JOA conceivably could have been ended as soon as next October.

CBC says it will cut IT paychecks

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has announced it intends to cut the pay of its information technology employees when the current contract expires, at the end of March. The announced action would eliminate payments above the minimum pay scales, instituted by CBC two contracts ago as an inducement to retain employees because other employers were paying higher salaries. Although CBC seems to have concluded that its pay scales are now competitive, it has not provided the Guild with corroborating data.

Conciliator called into Halifax talks

A conciliator is attempting to help Halifax Herald workers reach a second contract after talks hit an impasse in October. Talks were scheduled for Nov. 24 through 27 to tackle outstanding issues, which included proposed changes to jurisdiction, salary increases and improved benefits, including pensions. The union represents about 100 reporters, editors, clerical and library staff members affiliated with the newsroom.

Guild Reporter garners awards

The Guild Reporter received half-a-dozen awards from the International Labor Communication Association at its biennial convention, held last month in Orlando. Among them: second place for best news story, for an article by Andy Zipser on an industry trade show; second place for best cartoon for a cartoon by Beth Bourland on media consolidation; third place and honorable mention for columns by Andy Zipser and Linda Foley, respectively; and honorable mention for general excellence and for best front page. In addition, the Guild web site received an honorable mention for general excellence.

Guild is 'one big union'

Continued from page 1

which is in constant change. At the same time, we are even stronger in our fight for public broadcasting in Canada. The future is ours to ensure a better working life for all of us."

The recent development is a direct outgrowth of a Guild application filed nearly four years ago with the Canadian Industrial Relations Board—the Canadian counterpart to the National Labor Relations Board in the U.S.—seeking to merge two existing Guild units. The CBC counter-applied, asking the CIRB to include a CEP-represented trades and technical unit in the merger.

The Guild agreed with the CBC's application because of the bargaining strength gained by having one union, and to give employees greater mobility at a time when technology and work practices have blurred job descriptions.

During the "One Big Union" campaign, the Guild highlighted its record of tough bargaining and strong contracts won without labor stoppages, in contrast to a CEP history of strikes. The Guild also pointed to its history of successfully adapting to significant changes at the CBC—including its fights against subcontracting and downsizing—and its history of inclusiveness following mergers with other unions.

As if to emphasize that point,

Lareau rolled out the welcome mat as soon as the election results were announced. "We welcome our new members from CEP," she declared. "We value your expertise, your talents, your input and your commitment to the union's role at the corporation."

Lareau also credited the Guild's campaign team with the favorable outcome. "CBC-TV senior producer Ken Dodd and a team of more than 200 volunteers across the country did an incredible job," she said. "All of our team were CBC employees who campaigned on CBC issues."

The CIRB is expected to decide shortly—possibly as soon as January—when the Guild will be issued its new bargaining certificate. Until it does, CEP's leadership retains authority for administering the CEP contract. Guild leaders expect to negotiate a new, single contract for all members beginning this spring.

In the interim, CMG leaders said, they'll work with CEP leaders to set up transition teams and political structures to ensure proper member representation.

Correction

The November Guild Reporter erroneously stated that management at the Knoxville News Sentinel had won several operational changes in recent contract talks. The two-year contract extension is a status quo agreement, preserving all former contract provisions while increasing wages.

ADDRESS CHANGE, SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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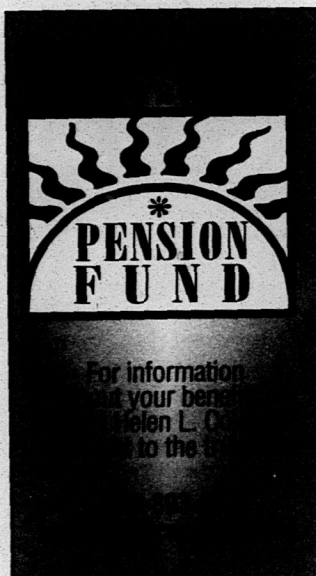
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Deck the halls with lots of pink slips, fa-la-la...

December is a colorful time of year, resplendent as it is with green holly wreaths, glistening white snow, colored lights and the seasonal blizzard of pink slips.

Although not as severe as in recent years, and in some cases tempered by buy-out offers, recent workforce reductions continue a trend that has reduced newspaper employment by double-digit percentages even as newspaper profit margins continue climbing.

About a dozen jobs have been cut at the Bureau of National Affairs in recent months. Nineteen positions have been eliminated at the Boston Herald, where eight veteran Guild members accepted early-retirement packages and two Guild members were laid off.

Philadelphia Newspapers has laid off three library staffers with more than 50 years of aggregate experience, while reducing hours for three remaining editorial assistants at the Inquirer to 15 hours a week—a change the Guild believes “is tantamount to dismissal because these employees cannot live on 15 hours’ salary a week.” And efforts by Reuters to slash at least 3,000 jobs worldwide by the end of 2005 include targeting 24 Guild-covered jobs across the U.S.

One of the deepest—yet in many ways most generous—staff cuts is under way at The Washington Post, where an estimated 120 staffers meet age and years of service requirements for a buyout package that includes at least two years of salary, additional credit toward pension benefits and health care coverage until age 65. Aimed at employees 55 and older with at least a decade of service, the package was modified after negotiations with the Washington-Baltimore Guild to include transitional counseling and health coverage for domestic partners.

Not unexpectedly, the size of the offer is tempting some of the Post’s most noted reporters and editors. Although employees had until Dec. 21 to opt for the plan, with management saying it expected about 30 takers, those who had already signalled their intentions as The Guild Reporter went to press included columnists Bob Levey and William Raspberry.

While buyouts are preferable to outright layoffs, Guild leaders worry about the long-term implications. “There is a broader trend at work here, which seems

to be accelerating with each passing year: a continued diminishment of resources,” wrote Tom Ferrick in a memo to Philadelphia Guild members. Non-personnel budgets at the Inquirer, he observed, have been cut anywhere from 25% to 60% in just the past year; the Sunday magazine was eliminated; news holes are being shrunk and a strict job freeze is further reducing payroll through attrition.

Others worry about the loss of institutional memory, as experienced employees take the money and run. And speculation in Boston is once again rife that the Herald’s downsizing is intended to position the newspaper for sale, despite repeated denials by all concerned.

More disturbing, perhaps, is the trend toward offering buyouts, then contracting with select employees who accept the offer to continue on a freelance basis. Boston Herald television columnist Monica Collins and political columnist Wayne Woodlief, for example, will continue writing for their paper as freelancers, albeit only once a week. At the Washington Post, nationally syndicated columnist William Raspberry will continue writing for the paper on contract, as will veteran Style writer Ken Ringle. Editor Mary Hadar is to continue at the Post as a writing coach. Pulitzer Prize-winner Henry Allen has said he’ll retire but continue editing under contract.

Although at first blush it might seem like a redundant expense for a newspaper to offer hefty buyout packages, then rehire those same employees as freelancers, cash for early retirement offers usually comes out of a newspaper’s pension fund, not from its operating budget. And writers with “brand name” recognition are cheaper as freelancers than as union-represented employees who are owed fringe benefits and regular raises—and they’re more easily jettisoned, if need be.

Meanwhile, the Guild experience at BNA and Reuters underscores the value of diligent union oversight of layoffs. At BNA, several meetings with management resulted in saving one production department position that had been slated for elimination. And Guild members of a joint committee at Reuters persuaded management not to cut two Washington-based television camera operators by pointing out the amount of freelanced work that could be brought in-house.



BOB PASSARO/EUGENE NEWSPAPER GUILD

Guilda’s ba-a-a-ck!

“Guilda the Superhero,” for several years the fighting mascot of the Buffalo Newspaper Guild, is branching out. Most recently she appeared—in numerous incarnations—in the Eugene Celebration parade, helping the Eugene Newspaper Guild win top prize for “best use of humor” as a dozen Guild members gyrated to Queen’s “Don’t Stop Me Now” in a never-ending battle for truth, justice and family-wage jobs. Among those pulling on their bright red union suits/superhero outfits were internet editor John Heasley and ad sales rep Sandy Raney, above. Guilda originally was conceived by cartoonist Mike Konopacki

‘ChocolateGate’ compounds St. Louis woes

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Cuniberti, one of the speakers on the dais with Egger and loyal Guild member, from pinning a red-and-white “I support the Newspaper Guild” button to her evening gown. During her speech, Cuniberti said it was unfair that one person be given credit for the work of more than a thousand employees.

Also speaking was Craig Schnuck, chairman of the regional Schnucks grocery chain, which recently settled with striking and locked-out grocery workers. Schnuck pointed out that he had read about his labor troubles on Egger’s front pages—but when the Post-Dispatch has a labor dispute, Schnuck added, he has to read about it on union billboards.

Meanwhile, a group of security guards sat throughout the evening at a table next to the Guild, while two uniformed police officers stood by outside the ballroom. Police Department records show that hotel security called the officers in case of a “peace disturbance.” Indeed, one of the officers pointed to a reporter’s t-shirt and said: “We’re here to watch you.” Told that the journalists were there to eat, the officer replied: “It only takes one person to incite a crowd.”

As word of the t-shirt wearers spread throughout the ballroom, dignitaries and others began stopping by the Guild table. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and his chief of staff, Jeff Rainford, promised support in case of a strike. (Union members met Dec. 7 and voted 353 to 15 to give the executive committee strike authority.)



The sign at right says “It’s Post Time,” so taking time to post an appearance are these St. Louis merrymakers. Standing, (left to right) are Sarah Bryan Miller, Robert Cohn, Yvonne Samuel, Michael Sorkin, Carrie Biggs-Adams and Carolyn Tuft. Seated are Kathy David, Jo Mannies, Heather Ratcliffe and Valerie Schremp

Mayor Robert Lowery of Florissant pinned a union button to his suit and told the Guild members, “If they kick you out, I’m leaving.”

The journalists weren’t kicked out, but they faced yet one more obstacle: ChocolateGate.

Every other table, it turned out, had plates of white chocolate emblazoned with the newspaper’s mascot, the Weatherbird—a 102-year-old cartoon that graces the front page of each edition of the Post-Dispatch. The chocolates were a gift to each diner—but not at the Guild table.

When Guild members asked about their

Weatherbirds, waiters first expressed surprise, then suggested that the journalists must already have eaten them. Finally, a Ritz representative confessed that the wait staff had been ordered not to bring the chocolates to the Guild table.

Once again Press Club president Cohn, appearing mortified at the slight, intervened on behalf of the Guild. And once the chocolates had been delivered, Cohn apologized to each Guild member and asked to have his photo taken with the group.

While the festive affair was “black tie optional,” most men opted for business suits. The “we mean business” t-shirts worn by the

Guild delegation were a demure black emblazoned with less-than-demure white letters. The front read: “Stop Outsourcing Our Work Now!” The back asked, “Is Your Job Next?” in reference to the paper’s decision in 2001 to eliminate about 60 Guild circulation positions. Pulitzer Inc., which owns the Post-Dispatch, subsequently created a subsidiary, STL Distribution Inc., to perform the same work. Employees of the subsidiary make a fraction of the amount Guild workers did.

The St. Louis Newspaper Guild represents some 600 reporters, copy editors, photographers, advertising representatives, circulation workers and other Post Dispatch employees. Its last contract with the company expired nearly a year ago, but negotiations that started last December have foundered over management efforts to eliminate the union shop clause and to pave the way for outsourcing Guild work. The union has responded in recent weeks with a public campaign of billboards, radio ads and a new web site, PostGreed.com.

Negotiators for the Guild and the Post-Dispatch met most recently on Dec. 8, for their 26th bargaining session. A company spokesman said management would present a “comprehensive proposal” Dec. 22, but declined a Guild request to provide the union with a written copy of the proposal prior to the meeting. The company was informed that Guild members had unanimously adopted a motion requiring preservation of the existing union shop clause in any new contract.

TONY JACOB/ST. LOUIS NEWSPAPER GUILD

News round-up

It's official: AFA now part of CWA

Members of the Association of Flight Attendants voted 57% in favor of a merger with the CWA, effective Dec. 31. Forty-seven percent of AFA's 36,000 flight attendants voted. AFA began as the Air Line Stewardesses Association in 1945 and was affiliated with the Air Line Pilots Association from 1960 until 1973, when the modern AFA was born. While still the largest flight attendants' union in the world, AFA has lost more than 10,000 members over the past two years, following a massive restructuring of the airline industry after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

AFL-CIO sues Chao over new regs

The AFL-CIO has filed a lawsuit against Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, complaining that in issuing a new regulation that requires detailed financial reporting by large unions she acted in a way that was "arbitrary, capricious and in excess of her statutory authority." The rule, effective Jan. 1, requires national, regional and local unions with an income of more than \$250,000 to itemize all expenses and receipts of more than \$5,000 and to detail the finances of related trusts. Labor Department officials say they're simply updating forms that haven't been changed in more than 40 years and that the changes will cost about \$80 million to implement; the lawsuit contends the new rule "imposes massive new reporting requirements" that place "an enormous, unjustified burden on unions" and will cost well over \$700 million.

Tote up one more Bush deficit: jobs

Although the Bush tax cuts were promoted as an economic stimulus package—with a promise that 306,000 new jobs would be created each month starting this past June—job growth remains stubbornly stunted. Only 57,000 new jobs were created in November, down from 137,000 the previous month, boosting the White House job deficit thus far to 1.25 million; 150,000 new jobs per month are needed just to keep up with population growth. The U.S. jobless rate, meanwhile, remained unchanged in November, at 5.9%.

Child labor making a comeback

Unions brought us the 40-hour work week and an end to such medieval practices as child labor—so perhaps it's not surprising that as right-wing zealots attack one, they attack the other. What may be surprising is the locale: in British Columbia, where the "Liberal" Party-controlled government is implementing regulations that allow children as young as 12 to work full-time at any occupation under provincial jurisdiction, no matter how dangerous, with the consent of one parent. The new rules allow 12-year-olds to work up to 35 hours a week when not in school and up to four hours a day and 20 hours a week when school is in session.

More income means profits, not jobs

While newspaper executives—with the notable exception of Dow Jones—are cautiously predicting a rosier 2004, don't look for much of the increased wealth to trickle down to the hoi polloi. Judging by the pattern established in the last post-recession period, higher profits are more likely to benefit shareholders rather than employees. Consider these numbers, compiled by the Poynter Institute, for the nine-year period ending in 2000: Newspaper advertising revenues, up 60%; operating profit margins nearly double, to 26.6% from 14%; actual profits up 200%. Growth in full-time professional news-editorial staff? About 5%.

INSI laments newspaper 'dark ages'

The International News Safety Institute, created early this year with TNG-CWA as a founding member, held its first annual general meeting Nov. 5 in Budapest. Formed to promote safe practices for journalists in combat zones, INSI and its directors lamented a general reluctance by newspaper managements to support their work. Chris Cramer of CNN, for instance, observed that print "remained in the dark ages" on matters of personal safety, according to meeting minutes. More recently, both the Boston Globe and CBS News have become INSI members.

Time to apply for Beirne scholarships

Applications for Joe Beirne Foundation Scholarships, for which all CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren are eligible, are being accepted—but only online—until March 31, 2004. Thirty scholarships of up to \$3,000 each will be awarded, and winners will receive a second-year award of an equal amount upon completing a satisfactory academic first year. Details and applications are at: cwa-union.org/members/beirne/index.asp.

Need to track hard-money sources?

Just in time for election season, a new web-based resource provides detailed comparisons of federal campaign contributions broken down by zip code. "The Color of Money," released by Public Campaign, the Fannie Lou Hamer Project and the William C. Velasquez Institute, is at www.colorofmoney.org.

Congress slips home without doing its job

There once was a time—and it wasn't so very long ago—that virtually the entire federal government shuddered to a halt if Congress and the White House couldn't agree on a budget. But that was then and this is now, a time of fiscal giddiness when the federal budget and trade deficits are locked in a near-trillion-dollar embrace.

So it was that Congress decamped from the shores of the Potomac last week, more than two months into the new fiscal year, without agreeing on hundreds of billion of dollars in federal spending. Although the House passed a pork-riddled omnibus appropriations bill, the Senate refused to play along; now the whole thing is on hold until everyone comes back Jan. 20, for the State of the Union address.

The presumably temporary stalemate is a good news-bad news story for organized labor. Aside from the fiscal irresponsibility it underscores, the lack of agreement means a second consecutive year in which federal unemployment benefits have not been extended into the holiday season. The 13-week federal benefit kicks in for those who exhaust the customary 26 weeks of state unemployment, but must be renewed periodically. When the federal program was approved last March, unemployment was 5.7%; now it's 5.9%.

More than two million workers face the loss of all unemployment benefits by the middle of next year; an estimated 90,000 a week will be running out of benefits by the end of this month. Meanwhile, the unemployment compensation fund is flush with \$20 billion; an extension would cost \$900 million per month.

The good news is that by bottling up the omnibus bill, Senate Democrats have bought some time in the fight to preserve overtime pay. Although the House and Senate both voted earlier this year to for-

bid the Department of Labor from implementing new overtime rules, the ban was attached to different appropriations bills. And when the department's funding—now rolled into the omnibus appropriations measure—ended up in conference committee, White House veto threats and arm-twisting by the House Republican leadership shot it down.

By organized labor's estimates, more than 8 million workers will lose their overtime protection if the omnibus bill is approved in its present form. A campaign to preserve overtime protection may be accessed at www.saveovertimepay.org.

Separately, the omnibus bill also contains a House provision that allows the FCC to change its media ownership rules. Although both the House and the Senate initially demanded that the FCC keep its 35% audience cap on network ownership of television stations—compared with a new 45% cap the FCC approved in June—the House changed its mind after President Bush threatened to veto the entire omnibus measure and agreed to a 39% limit.

The higher cap, curiously described in some news accounts as a "compromise," means CBS and Fox—which already exceed the 35% limit—would not have to sell any of their stations, while NBC and ABC will be free to expand their holdings. Moreover, the new legislative language permits broadcast networks to exceed the higher limits for two years without penalty.

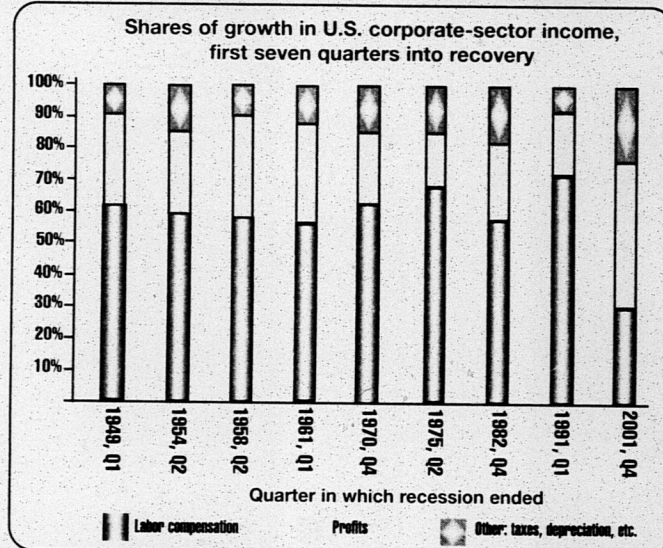
Nothing in the omnibus bill, however, challenges the FCC's other rule changes, which include lifting the ban on cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations in the same market. Implementation of all FCC rule changes has been suspended, however, by a federal appeals court pending a trial in a lawsuit challenging all the rules changes.

Why you're not feeling the 'recovery'

Judging by the financial pages, happy days are here again, with the Dow pushing through 10,000 for the first time in three years, the unemployment rate down a smidgen and inflation still prostrate.

But at the risk of seeming Scrooge-like, it's worth noting yet again that aggregated economic figures have little—and sometimes nothing—to say about individual well-being. If you're scratching your head in bafflement over the latest feel-good statistics, wondering why your invitation to the party hasn't arrived, consider the two graphs at right and below, courtesy of the Economic Policy Institute.

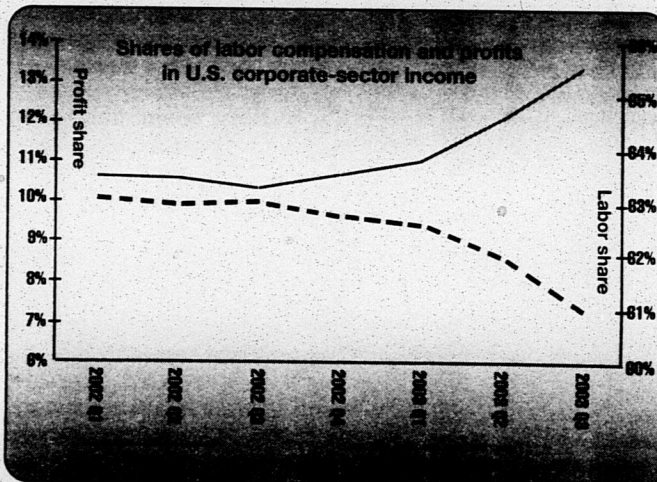
Although the Commerce Department reported that gross domestic product grew by an extraordinary 8.2% in the third quarter of this year, the fruits of that growth have been distributed



in extremely unbalanced fashion. The top graph, for example, tracks the distribution of income growth in the U.S. corporate sector over

the first seven quarters of recovery following the last nine recessions; while labor's share averaged 61% in previous recoveries and was never lower than 55%, in the current recovery such compensation has accounted for only 29% of total income growth.

The graph at left, meanwhile, tracks income distribution quarter by quarter during the current recovery. The trend? The more "recovery" we have, the more divergence there is between corporate profits and labor compensation. That's great if your income derives largely from financial investments, but if you're a wage earner it means recovery is financially not meaningful. Indeed, if you're being hit with higher health care costs, it could mean you're actually moving in reverse.



News round-up

It's official: AFA now part of CWA

Members of the Association of Flight Attendants voted 57% in favor of a merger with the CWA, effective Dec. 31. Forty-seven percent of AFA's 36,000 flight attendants voted. AFA began as the Air Line Stewardesses Association in 1945 and was affiliated with the Air Line Pilots Association from 1960 until 1973, when the modern AFA was born. While still the largest flight attendants' union in the world, AFA has lost more than 10,000 members over the past two years, following a massive restructuring of the airline industry after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

AFL-CIO sues Chao over new regs

The AFL-CIO has filed a lawsuit against Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, complaining that in issuing a new regulation that requires detailed financial reporting by large unions she acted in a way that was "arbitrary, capricious and in excess of her statutory authority." The rule, effective Jan. 1, requires national, regional and local unions with an income of more than \$250,000 to itemize all expenses and receipts of more than \$5,000 and to detail the finances of related trusts. Labor Department officials say they're simply updating forms that haven't been changed in more than 40 years and that the changes will cost about \$80 million to implement; the lawsuit contends the new rule "imposes massive new reporting requirements" that place "an enormous, unjustified burden on unions" and will cost well over \$700 million.

Tote up one more Bush deficit: jobs

Although the Bush tax cuts were promoted as an economic stimulus package—with a promise that 306,000 new jobs would be created each month starting this past June—job growth remains stubbornly stunted. Only 57,000 new jobs were created in November, down from 137,000 the previous month, boosting the White House job deficit thus far to 1.25 million; 150,000 new jobs per month are needed just to keep up with population growth. The U.S. jobless rate, meanwhile, remained unchanged in November, at 5.9%.

Child labor making a comeback

Unions brought us the 40-hour work week and an end to such medieval practices as child labor—so perhaps it's not surprising that as right-wing zealots attack one, they attack the other. What may be surprising is the locale: in British Columbia, where the "Liberal" Party-controlled government is implementing regulations that allow children as young as 12 to work full-time at any occupation under provincial jurisdiction, no matter how dangerous, with the consent of one parent. The new rules allow 12-year-olds to work up to 35 hours a week when not in school and up to four hours a day and 20 hours a week when school is in session.

More income means profits, not jobs

While newspaper executives—with the notable exception of Dow Jones—are cautiously predicting a rosier 2004, don't look for much of the increased wealth to trickle down to the hoi polloi. Judging by the pattern established in the last post-recession period, higher profits are more likely to benefit shareholders rather than employees. Consider these numbers, compiled by the Poynter Institute, for the nine-year period ending in 2000: Newspaper advertising revenues, up 60%; operating profit margins nearly double, to 26.6% from 14%; actual profits up 200%. Growth in full-time professional news-editorial staff? About 5%.

INSI laments newspaper 'dark ages'

The International News Safety Institute, created early this year with TNG-CWA as a founding member, held its first annual general meeting Nov. 5 in Budapest. Formed to promote safe practices for journalists in combat zones, INSI and its directors lamented a general reluctance by newspaper managements to support their work. Chris Cramer of CNN, for instance, observed that print "remained in the dark ages" on matters of personal safety, according to meeting minutes. More recently, both the Boston Globe and CBS News have become INSI members.

Time to apply for Beirne scholarships

Applications for Joe Beirne Foundation Scholarships, for which all CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren are eligible, are being accepted—but only online—until March 31, 2004. Thirty scholarships of up to \$3,000 each will be awarded, and winners will receive a second-year award of an equal amount upon completing a satisfactory academic first year. Details and applications are at: cwa-union.org/members/beirne/index.asp.

Need to track hard-money sources?

Just in time for election season, a new web-based resource provides detailed comparisons of federal campaign contributions broken down by zip code. "The Color of Money," released by Public Campaign, the Fannie Lou Hamer Project and the William C. Velasquez Institute, is at www.colorofmoney.org.

Congress slips home without doing its job

There once was a time—and it wasn't so very long ago—that virtually the entire federal government shuddered to a halt if Congress and the White House couldn't agree on a budget. But that was then and this is now, a time of fiscal giddiness when the federal budget and trade deficits are locked in a near-trillion-dollar embrace.

So it was that Congress decamped from the shores of the Potomac last week, more than two months into the new fiscal year, without agreeing on hundreds of billion of dollars in federal spending. Although the House passed a pork-riddled omnibus appropriations bill, the Senate refused to play along; now the whole thing is on hold until everyone comes back Jan. 20, for the State of the Union address.

The presumably temporary stalemate is a good news-bad news story for organized labor. Aside from the fiscal irresponsibility it underscores, the lack of agreement means a second consecutive year in which federal unemployment benefits have not been extended into the holiday season. The 13-week federal benefit kicks in for those who exhaust the customary 26 weeks of state unemployment, but must be renewed periodically. When the federal program was approved last March, unemployment was 5.7%; now it's 5.9%.

More than two million workers face the loss of all unemployment benefits by the middle of next year; an estimated 90,000 a week will be running out of benefits by the end of this month. Meanwhile, the unemployment compensation fund is flush with \$20 billion; an extension would cost \$900 million per month.

The good news is that by bottling up the omnibus bill, Senate Democrats have bought some time in the fight to preserve overtime pay. Although the House and Senate both voted earlier this year to for-

bid the Department of Labor from implementing new overtime rules, the ban was attached to different appropriations bills. And when the department's funding—now rolled into the omnibus appropriations measure—ended up in conference committee, White House veto threats and arm-twisting by the House Republican leadership shot it down.

By organized labor's estimates, more than 8 million workers will lose their overtime protection if the omnibus bill is approved in its present form. A campaign to preserve overtime protection may be accessed at www.saveovertimepay.org.

Separately, the omnibus bill also contains a House provision that allows the FCC to change its media ownership rules. Although both the House and the Senate initially demanded that the FCC keep its 35% audience cap on network ownership of television stations—compared with a new 45% cap the FCC approved in June—the House changed its mind after President Bush threatened to veto the entire omnibus measure and agreed to a 39% limit.

The higher cap, curiously described in some news accounts as a "compromise," means CBS and Fox—which already exceed the 35% limit—would not have to sell any of their stations, while NBC and ABC will be free to expand their holdings. Moreover, the new legislative language permits broadcast networks to exceed the higher limits for two years without penalty.

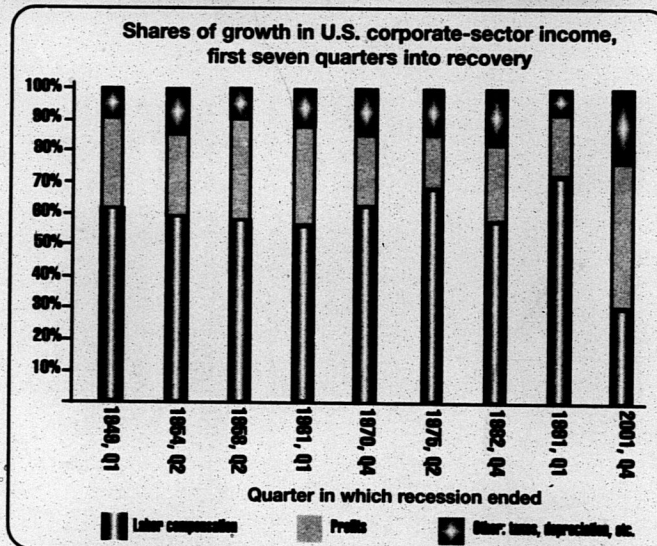
Nothing in the omnibus bill, however, challenges the FCC's other rule changes, which include lifting the ban on cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations in the same market. Implementation of all FCC rule changes has been suspended, however, by a federal appeals court pending a trial in a lawsuit challenging all the rules changes.

Why you're not feeling the 'recovery'

Judging by the financial pages, happy days are here again, with the Dow pushing through 10,000 for the first time in three years, the unemployment rate down a smidgen and inflation still prostrate.

But at the risk of seeming Scrooge-like, it's worth noting yet again that aggregated economic figures have little—and sometimes nothing—to say about individual well-being. If you're scratching your head in bafflement over the latest feel-good statistics, wondering why your invitation to the party hasn't arrived, consider the two graphs at right and below, courtesy of the Economic Policy Institute.

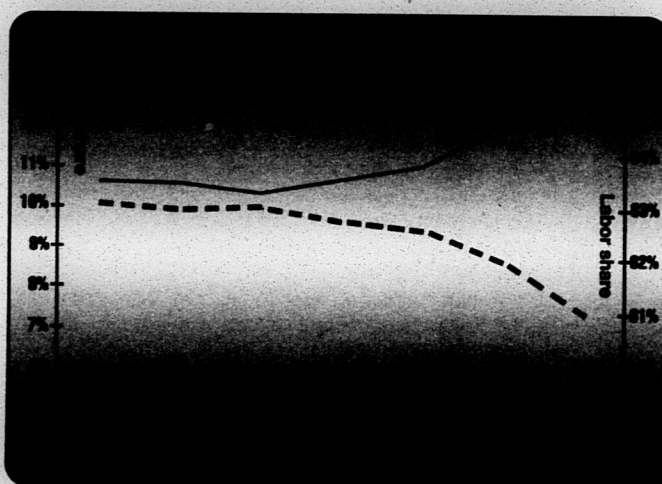
Although the Commerce Department reported that gross domestic product grew by an extraordinary 8.2% in the third quarter of this year, the fruits of that growth have been distributed



in extremely unbalanced fashion. The top graph, for example, tracks the distribution of income growth in the U.S. corporate sector over

the first seven quarters of recovery following the last nine recessions: while labor's share averaged 61% in previous recoveries and was never lower than 55%, in the current recovery such compensation has accounted for only 29% of total income growth.

The graph at left, meanwhile, tracks income distribution quarter by quarter during the current recovery. The trend? The more "recovery" we have, the more divergence there is between corporate profits and labor compensation. That's great if your income derives largely from financial investments, but if you're a wage earner it means recovery is financially not meaningful. Indeed, if you're being hit with higher health care costs, it could mean you're actually moving in reverse.



Welcome to Miami—now go home!

In a faint echo of the 1968 police riot outside the Democratic national convention in Chicago, Miami police responded to upwards of 20,000 protesters with widespread police beatings, arrests and indiscriminate tear-gassing. The AFL-CIO and other organizations have responded with requests for official investigations and say they are preparing lawsuits against the city and its police department.

A series of demonstrations was held Nov. 18-22 to protest the Free Trade Area of the Americas, a U.S.-backed proposal to remove essentially all capital goods trade barriers in the western hemisphere. Trade ministers from 34 countries were meeting in Miami to develop the proposal, which has been criticized for ignoring workers' rights and environmental protection.

"We have to define patriotism to include a corporate commitment to American jobs," explained Larry Cohen at a simultaneous anti-FTAA rally in Cleveland. Noting the loss of 185,000 jobs in Ohio over the past two years because of offshoring, Cohen added: "First it was manufacturing, now customer service and IT in a race to the bottom based on the cheapest pay and lowest standards. Now is the time to turn this around with a national campaign for fair trade."

But demonstrators in Miami were met by an overwhelming militarized response, including 2,500 police officers from 40 jurisdictions backed by armored vehicles, water cannon and helicopters.

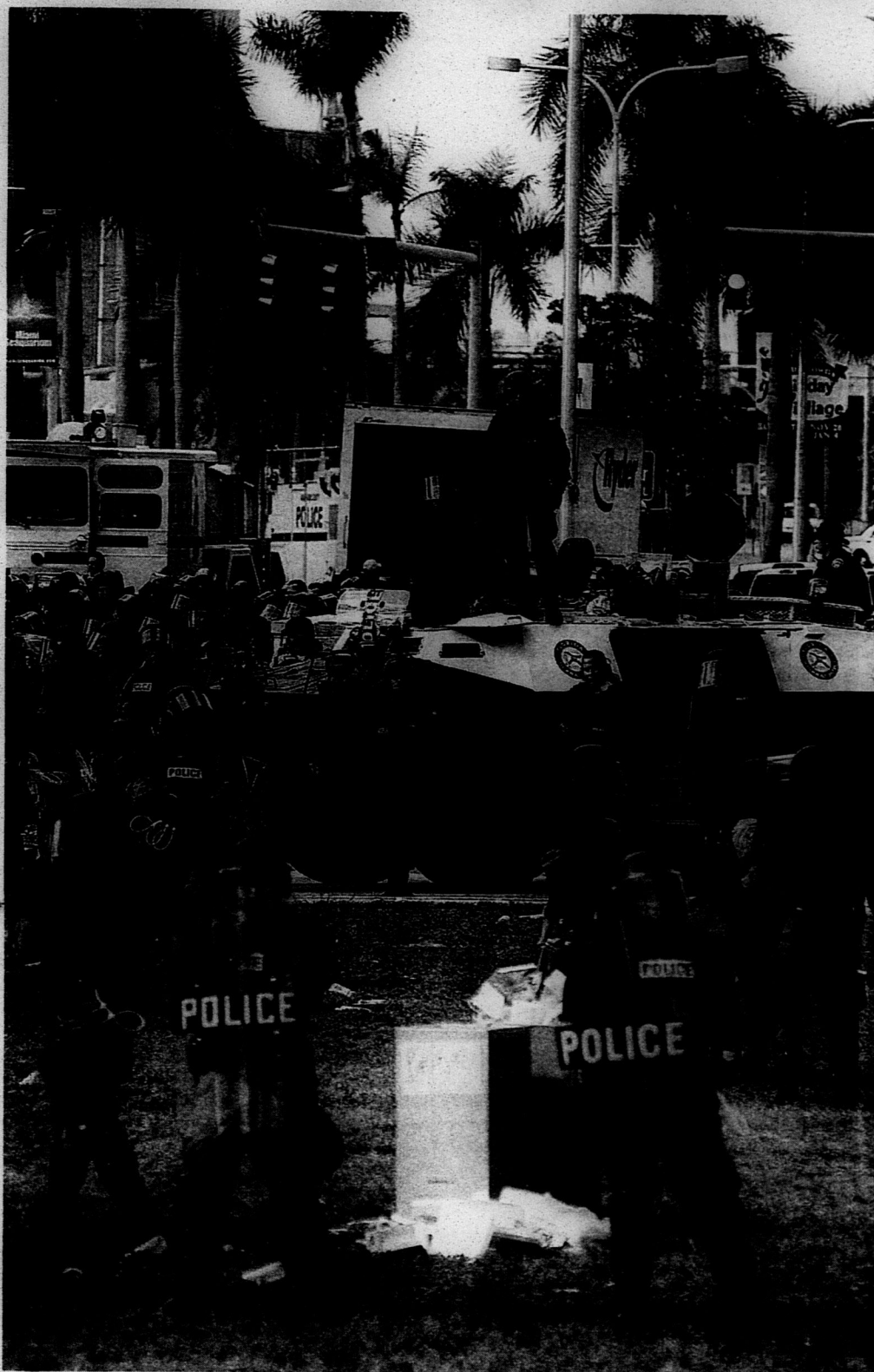
When a smattering of protesters threw objects or fired slingshots at the massed force, police responded with a barrage of tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper-spray balls, swung batons and zapped protesters willy-nilly with stun guns.

More than 250 protesters were arrested, including 50 holding a peaceful solidarity rally outside the Miami-Dade jail. More than 100 protesters were treated for injuries and 12 were hospitalized, including one Latino demonstrator in intensive care from a baton beating.

"They blocked access to the rally and march, deployed tanks and scores of officers in front of the entrance [to the stadium], denied access to water and signs, and pointed guns and verbally abused those seeking assistance," charged AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "Americans' civil liberties took a one-two punch in Miami."

The labor federation has requested the U.S. Justice Department and the state of Florida to conduct separate, independent investigations of "massive and unwarranted repression of constitutional rights and civil liberties" in Miami. A letter from the United Steelworkers of America to congressional leaders criticized the use of \$8.5 million in federal funds—originally earmarked for Iraq—for underwriting the Miami police action, referring to the overwrought response as "homeland repression."

The American Civil Liberties Union said it will be filing lawsuits over the police actions, as did several labor organizations.



Two common sights in Miami during the FTAA protests included an overwhelming paramilitary police presence, above; and often arbitrary arrests

of peaceful protesters, left, despite permits and weeks of pre-demonstration negotiations to establish protest guidelines.



Dec. 10 protesters seek freedom to form unions

Continued from page 1

the Chinese Daily News and other "low-road" employers who have obstructed their workers' attempts to unionize.

Most rallies featured support from prominent politicians and stories from workers who had been attacked. For example, Evelyn Thomas, a UNITE member who is among dozens of workers striking the Washington, D.C., area's Sterling Laundry, told more than a thousand demonstrators outside the U.S. Labor Department that Sterling's owner "fired people, laid them off and said that before a union comes in at Sterling, he would sell it or burn it down."

The gist of Thomas' story was retold nationwide, as a parade of workers described being harassed, fired and mistreated while campaigning for unions—all in defiance of

both U.S. labor law and the human rights declaration. But as Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) reminded the crowd in Washington, U.S. labor law is weak and has been further undermined by an anti-labor Bush administration.

"We're sending a message that we want this administration to stop being the most anti-worker, anti-union administration since the passage of the declaration" of human rights, Kennedy thundered. "If we have economic justice and social justice in this country, it is because of American workers—and make no mistake about it."

Numerous speakers advocated legislation to strengthen U.S. labor law that was introduced recently by Kennedy and by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.). Modeled on a measure crafted by the late Sen. Paul Wellstone

(D-Minn.), the bill legalizes card-check recognition of unions, outlaws employer-run "captive audience" meetings, mandates arbitration when labor and management cannot agree on a first contract, and increases fines and company repayments for labor law-breaking.

The Bush administration had no official response to the marches. The White House proclaimed Dec. 10 "Human Rights Day" and said the U.S. is bringing democracy to nations worldwide, but didn't mention the U.S. itself.

The Washington rally included chants of "Chao must go!" referring to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, and featured mass singing of "This Land Is Your Land" that included pro-worker verses radio censors wouldn't air when Woody Guthrie wrote them. Speakers in other cities repeatedly stressed the suffering endured by workers

trying to organize and promised a day of reckoning at the polls next year. Other sizeable rallies were held in Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Seattle, Portland, Miami and Memphis.

American Rights at Work board chairman David Bonior said each candle in the San Francisco vigil was accompanied by a name of a worker illegally fired for unionization efforts. The AFL-CIO says 20,000 workers are fired or otherwise penalized each year for trying to form a union.

Teamsters President James Hoffa told an Atlanta rally of 1,500 that the Bush administration had made its strategy all too clear. "We will remember in November—and we will vote accordingly," he assured his audience. "It's a struggle we will win."

Is Iraq a dress-rehearsal for U.S.?

Administration shows its true colors, enforces Saddam's ban on unions

[The capture of Saddam Hussein gave U.S. forces a badly needed morale boost in Iraq and resulted in an orgy of congratulatory press coverage. For all the ink and video, however, we have yet to see a serious examination of the war's effect on Iraqi workers or of U.S. efforts to reshape Iraq's economy in its own image—an image, as the Dec. 10 demonstrations underscored, that has no room for labor unions.]

Freelance photojournalist David Bacon recently returned from a two-week tour of Iraq and has written several articles on what he saw. More recently, he filed the following report.]

Story and photos by David Bacon
Northern California Media Guild

U.S. occupation forces in Iraq escalated their efforts to paralyze Iraq's new labor unions with a series of arrests the weekend of Dec. 6.

A convoy of 10 humvees and personnel carriers descended on the old headquarters building of the Transport and Communications Workers union, in Baghdad's central bus station, which has been used since June as the office of the Iraqi Workers Federation of Trade Unions. Twenty soldiers jumped out, stormed into the building, put handcuffs on eight members of the federation's executive board, and took them into detention.

"They gave no reason at all, despite being asked over and over," said federation spokesperson Abdullah Muhsin. Soldiers painted out the name of the federation on the front of the building with black paint. Because the new Iraqi unions lack basic resources like office furniture and machines, there was little to confiscate in the building. "But we did have a few files, and they took those," Muhsin added. Ironically, the office walls had posters condemning terrorism, which soldiers tore down in the raid.

Although the eight were released the fol-

lowing day, there was no explanation from the Coalition Provisional Authority for the detentions.

The bus station raid followed the detention of two other trade union leaders on Nov. 23, including Qasim Hadi, general secretary of the Union of the Unemployed, and Adil Salih, another leader of the organization. Hadi has been arrested twice before by occupation troops, for leading demonstrations of unemployed workers demanding unemployment benefits and jobs. In the latest raid, CPA troops said they'd found two guns in the union's office, which was only permitted to have one. Hadi explained that the organization has been the subject of threats and fatwas by Iraqi religious parties and needs weapons for self-defense, since US troops are unable or unwilling to provide security.

The two were released after being detained for a day.

Both union groups have been organizing Iraqi workers for months. The Iraqi Workers Federation of Trade Unions held a convention in Baghdad last June, at which it established unions in 12 industries. The Unemployed Union belongs to the Workers Unions and Councils group, which has been organizing since last summer.

The wave of Iraqi union organizing is a product of desperate economic conditions. As many as seven million people, according to the Union of the Unemployed—70% of the workforce—have no jobs, go hungry, and even are homeless. Although Congress appropriated \$87 billion for reconstruction, Dr. Nuri Jafer, the deputy minister of Labor and Social Affairs, admits he can find "no country willing to fund our plans" for a minimal system of unemployment benefits.

Reconstruction is invisible in Baghdad. Work may be proceeding on pipelines and ports for oil exports, but huge piles of war rubble lie untouched in city streets.

Instead, U.S. funding in Iraq pays for an overwhelming military presence and the transformation of the Iraqi economy. Both



Muhsen Mull Ali, a retired longshoreman, was imprisoned twice for union activity.

are intended to make the country attractive to foreign investors. In an Oct. 8 phone press conference, Thomas Foley, CPA director for private sector development, announced a list of the first Iraqi state enterprises to be sold off, including cement and fertilizer plants, phosphate and sulfur mines, pharmaceutical factories and the country's airline. Earlier, on Sept. 19, the CPA published Order No. 39, which permits 100% foreign ownership of businesses—except for the oil industry—and allows the transfer of profits outside the country.

Iraqi workers view the possible privatization of their workplaces with dread, fearing the sell-off will bring massive layoffs. The manager of the Al Daura oil refinery, Dathar Al-Kashab, predicted that with privatization "I'll have to fire 1,500 [of the refinery's 3,000] workers. In America, when a company lays people off, there's unemployment insurance and they won't die from hunger. If I dismiss employees now, I'm killing them and their families."

At the refinery, as in most factories, those with jobs work 11- and 13-hour shifts for a salary of \$60 a month. They have no safety shoes, goggles, masks or other protective gear. The Iraqi Workers Federation of Trade Unions helped the refinery's workers organize a union and elect its leaders, and has done the same in other industries. In Basra, workers have formed a central labor council and have mounted protest demonstrations. The Workers Unions and Councils group has helped workers elect committees in the State Leather Industry plant, the largest shoe factory in the Middle East, and the Mamoun Vegetable Oil enterprise, among others.

But whenever these new unions try to talk with the plant managers, they're told that a law decreed by Saddam Hussein in 1987 forbids workers in state-owned enterprises (where the majority of Iraqis work) from forming unions. The CPA, perhaps sadonically, is still enforcing this law. And a

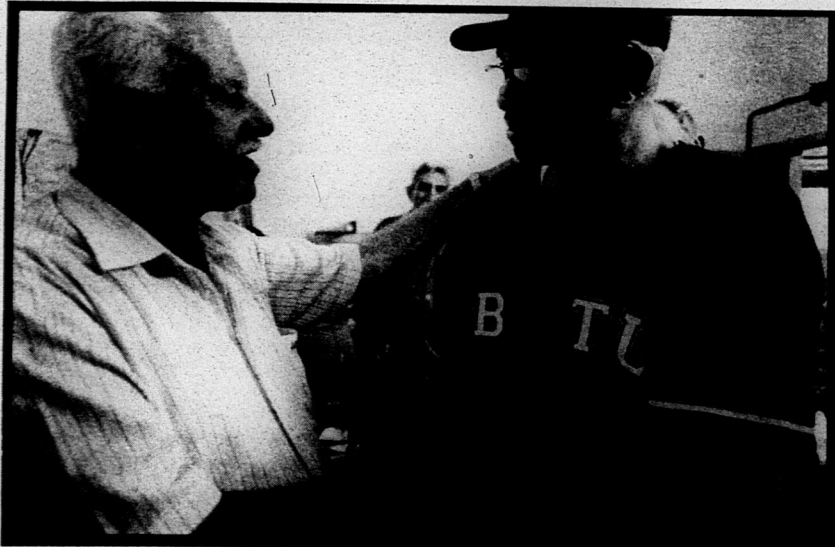
June 6 CPA order threatens that anyone who "incites civil disorder" will be detained as a prisoner of war under the Geneva Convention. The recent arrests are the latest examples of the occupation authorities' effort to suppress unions.

Such incidents and policies expose the occupation's underlying economic purpose, which is the privatization of Iraq's largest enterprises. Meanwhile, as the authorities continue to harass and suppress unions, weekly international conferences in Washington and London parade the list of assets for sale. At one recent such meeting, for example, ExxonMobil, Delta Airlines and the American Hospital Group all expressed interest in some of the wares on display. Since unions would only interfere with cost-cutting layoffs by new foreign owners, banning unions and arresting their leaders makes sale properties more attractive.

In an additional step to make investment attractive, the CPA has been holding down Iraqi wages. The \$60 a month paid most employees remains unchanged from Saddam Hussein's regime, but the bonuses, profit-sharing and food and housing subsidies that supplemented that wage were ended when the occupation began. The result has been a drastic cut in income.

Iraq's new labor movement is determined to stop the sell-off of worksites, the loss of jobs, and the prohibition of unions and strikes. Jassim Mashkoul, the IFTU's director for internal communications, lamented that "at the beginning, we thought our situation might get better, since we got rid of Saddam Hussein. But it hasn't improved." According to another federation leader, Muhsen Mull Ali, who spent two long stints in prison for organizing unions, "our responsibility is to oppose privatization as much as possible, and fight for the welfare of our workers."

But to the Bush administration and the occupation authority, such activities are a crime.



Subhi Al-Mashadani, general secretary of the Workers Democratic Trade Union Federation, greets Clarence Thomas, past secretary-treasurer of San Francisco Longshore Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

Guild petitions Indonesia for journalists' release

A petition to the Indonesian embassy in Washington, D.C., demanding the release of journalists Ersa Siregar and Fery Santoro, was to be delivered by TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer on Dec. 18, as The Guild Reporter was going to press. Similar petitions were to be presented simultaneously at Indonesian embassies worldwide by other affiliates of the International Federation of Journalists.

Reporter Ersa and cameraman Fery were abducted June 29 while on assignment in Aceh, Indonesia, by the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, or Free Aceh Movement (GAM). IFJ, however, maintains that it is the Indonesian government that has kept the two journalists hostage by refusing access to human rights groups seeking to secure the journalists' release, as negotiated by IFJ and GAM in August. The pair's physical condi-

tion, IFJ added, has grown "dire" during six months of captivity.

"The Government of Indonesia must immediately act to allow the release of these journalists," the IFJ declared. "The government's delay in facilitating these journalists' release is inexcusable and inexplicable."

IFJ representatives were to attempt to meet Dec. 18 with Indonesian government representatives in Brussels, Canberra,

Bangkok, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Washington, the Hague, Tokyo and London. In addition, the federation has written to the U.N., UNESCO and the International Committee of the Red Cross calling on international action to highlight the situation.

Indonesia declared a military state of emergency in Aceh on May 19, following the breakdown of peace talks in Tokyo between GAM and the government.

LOOKING AHEAD

Free Choice Act restores freedom

By Linda Foley, President

I hope Dec. 10, 2003, was just the beginning. I hope the protests and demonstrations by thousands of U.S. workers in support of labor law reform was the start of something big and something global.

The AFL-CIO picked Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, to highlight the fact that U.S. labor law not only doesn't protect workers who want to organize unions, in many cases it facilitates employers' efforts to block them. The Guild Reporter and other publications that regularly cover the labor movement have been replete with examples of how the National Labor Relations Act has failed the workers it's supposed to protect.

"We like to think that workers are free to join a union," Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy has said. "But too often that basic aspect of freedom is denied in our modern society because hard-line corporate managers succeed in denying a fair choice by workers."

On Nov. 21, Kennedy and California Rep. George Miller, both Democrats, introduced the Employee Free Choice Act (S. 1925 and H.R. 3619). Their legislation would allow workers to form unions by signing a majority of cards authorizing representation (what we call "card-check recognition"); provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes; and establish stiff penalties for employers who violate employees' rights to support union organizing and first-contract bargaining.

How would such legislation affect American workplaces? To get an idea, look no farther than news regularly reported in The Guild Reporter. Compare, for example, the short time frame and paltry list of unfair labor practices associated with any Guild organizing drive among media workers in Canada with those conducted under similar circumstances in the United States. Union recognition in Canada usually culminates within a few weeks of a substantial showing of interest by the workers, versus the months required in the U.S. After that, agreement on an initial contract comes within months in Canada, instead of taking years—and sometimes never—to reach a first accord in the U.S.

That's because Canadian labor laws—at the federal level as well as in most provinces—provide for mediation and binding arbitration if a newly formed union and employer can't reach agreement on an initial collective bargaining agreement. Labor laws across Canada also provide workers with protections and employer-free mechanisms to form unions, including card check recognition in many jurisdictions.

You won't find Guild Reporter accounts about battles in Canada such as the 10 years of first-contract bargaining in Worcester, Mass., or two years' struggle just to get the Chinese Daily News to recognize that its workers voted for union representation.

I have no doubt that Canadian corporations are just as greedy as their American counterparts, and likely just as ruthless. (Remember Conrad Black?) The difference is that Canadian labor laws attempt to level the collective bargaining playing field by protecting workers when they are most vul-

nerable and least powerful—when their union is in its nascent stages of formation.

And Canadians aren't alone in that regard. Other developed nations, including those in the European Union, have similar or even better laws protecting workers' rights to organize.

That's where globalization comes in. As it stands now, American corporations can use free global trade to achieve lower costs for goods and services, resulting in higher profits that create greater wealth. Workers in countries with strong unions can demand and receive a bigger share of the profits from their employers. But in the U.S., distribution of wealth and profits remains virtually at the sole discretion of the CEOs and other bosses who run corporations.

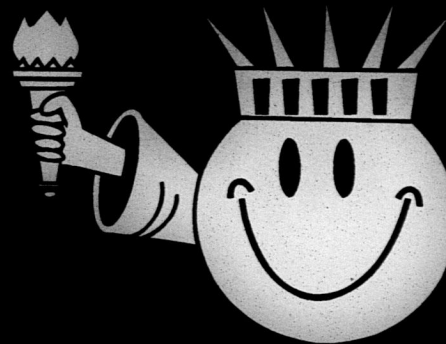
In countries where unions have clout, workers have the power both to impede exportation of their work to cheaper labor markets and to leverage a greater share of the profits that result from such cost savings. With just roughly 9% of the U.S. private sector workforce organized into unions, the ability of American workers to influence where work is done or how profits are divided up is almost negligible.

A shopping trip to WalMart or any "big box" store in America demonstrates how extensively U.S. manufacturers have capitalized on unfettered access to cheaper labor markets. Just try to find a shoe or a pair of pants or a toy that wasn't made in China, Guatemala, Malaysia or other country where substandard wage rates are exploited to reduce the cost of goods sold in the U.S.

The free-trading cycle of exploitation by American corporations will continue until workers in the U.S. gain enough power to stop it on the front end—and, just as important, to recapture some of the windfall profits on the back end. It won't stop until American workers are truly free to choose to organize unions and free to exercise their rights to collective bargaining without employer interference.

Because U.S. corporations are among the world's most powerful, its unions must be, too. That will go a long way toward advancing human rights all around the world.

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LOOKING ASKANCE

Santayana remembered

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

One problem with clichés is that people lose sight of their underlying truths. We massage all meaning out of an insight through mindless repetition.

Prompting this observation is my realization that the Newspaper Guild is marking its 70th anniversary, which seemed to call for a revision in the "From the Morgue" item on page 8. I don't know how many Guild members actually read this feature, but the truth is that I started it five years ago because it gave me an excuse to peruse our yellowed back issues of The Guild Reporter. The exercise almost invariably has been illuminating.

Now that we've reached a nicely round number, "From the Morgue" can peer back to the Guild's first baby steps—and see how highly politicized it was. The U.S. was in crisis, of course, and the young union's leaders recognized that in addition to organizing themselves they had to have political clout. So even as the angst-riddled American Newspaper Guild wrestled with identity issues—professional association? industrial union? craft union?—its leaders were making plans to lobby in Washington.

Fast forward seven decades, and if American newspaper workers are not in as dire a position as they were during the Great Depression, they're nevertheless in a bind.

Headcount continues trending downward, wages are virtually stagnant and health care costs are eating into living standards at a quickening pace. Ongoing industry consolidation and corporatization would be challenge enough for any union response, but add the anti-labor climate now permeating Washington and the courts and it's clear there's a monumental task confronting us.

Against that backdrop, I'm still confounded by a letter to the editor in last month's issue which—among numerous complaints—contended that claims of efforts to make unions disappear are "nonsense." In the writer's view, "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."

We have no desire to alienate potential union members, of course. But more worrisome to me is the realization that apparently some *existing* union members are oblivious—despite reams of news, statistics and only occasional opinion-mongering—to the very real, ongoing attack on organized labor that we're enduring.

Santayana had it right in his now clichéd comment on those who forget their history. But so was Lenin, who more obscurely observed: "History is a cruel stepmother, and when it retaliates, it stops at nothing."

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I was greatly saddened when I read my Guild Reporter and learned of the death of Don Kummer. I came to know Don through the meetings of The Knight Ridder Council of Unions. The Pressmen's loss was definitely the Guild's gain. He was an exceptional man and a fine Guild member. His passing will be mourned by many, not just in Detroit, but throughout the entire Guild. I will remember him fondly.

—Jean Malik, Retired
Philadelphia Newspaper
Guild

To the Editor,

I received your Nov. 21 issue on Dec. 13, and this is old news

by now, but the job Ted Koppel did covering the last Dems forum was appalling. He must be senile for asking such personal questions in a manner that was intrusive and off the wall. The beleaguered candidates had the forbearance to restrain from clobbering him. I should mention that the candidates ought to be seated, not the interviewers. It must be uncomfortable standing the entire time.

—Jennifer Curry,
ex-ITU member,
San Francisco

To the Editor,

A former member of The Newspaper Guild is running for president, but I wonder how many of us are aware of it. The

campaign of Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) has been all but overlooked by the mainstream press—he's called "unelectable."

But Rep. Kucinich is the only candidate in the Democratic primary who wholeheartedly advocates labor-friendly positions (universal health care with a single-payer plan, full social security benefits at age 65, withdrawal from NAFTA and the World Trade Organization, reversal of the tax cuts favoring the wealthy, repeal of the Patriot Act) and has taken action to promote these stances. He led the Congressional vote against Bush's resolution on going to war in Iraq. He's a co-sponsor with John Conyers of the U.S.

National Health Insurance Act, and has brought a lawsuit against President Bush re: the Patriot Act. The AFL-CIO rates his lifetime pro-union votes at 98%. He held hearings on Capitol Hill on what the media wasn't revealing about the war on Iraq.

Dennis Kucinich joined the Guild as a copyboy at the Cleveland Plain Dealer, then joined AFTRA while working at TV8 in Cleveland and is currently a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. For his proposals on education, the environment and the Roe v. Wade ruling, see www.kucinich.us.

—Joan Bazar,
San Jose Newspaper Guild

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: Jan. 16.) 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.

Four more locals settle contracts

Four more Guild locals have either reached tentative agreements or ratified new contracts, notably including the Alameda Newspaper Group in northern California, where talks had been especially contentious. Agreements also were reached at the Duluth News Tribune and at the Toledo Blade, and Guild-represented employees of the Long Beach Press-Telegram have voted 44-4 to ratify a 42-month contract.

The ANG agreement, negotiated by the Northern California Media Workers Guild over two-and-a-half years, includes total wage increases of 10.5% over the next 42 months and covers approximately 162 editorial employees in five locations. Most important, said local rep Erin Poh, was the elimination of "merit" pay. "Your wages will be based on your tenure at ANG, not on a subjective system of performance evaluations" that had undermined employee morale for years, she told unit members.

Other significant changes include grouping all employees into three classifications with different minimum starting wages, with a low of \$500 a week and a high of \$625. Top minimums in the same three groups, reached after six years, will be \$600 a week in the lowest classification and \$775 a week in the highest.

Other improvements include the addition

of one holiday; an increase of bereavement leave to five days from three if out-of-state travel is required; a five-day rollover of unused sick leave from one year to the next; and extension of health and welfare benefits to domestic partners.

In Toledo, Guild members approved a jointly-bargained economic package and a separately negotiated unit contract, the latter by unanimous vote. "For bargaining that we knew was going to be concessionary, it wasn't too bad of a deal," commented a bargaining committee member.

In the joint economic bargaining, the biggest hits were a three-year wage freeze and higher health insurance deductibles. The company did, however, agree to cover higher insurance costs over the next three years, except for a possible \$5 premium increase by members in 2005.

In unit bargaining, the local successfully blocked several onerous company demands, including two-tier wage scales, advertising commission sales and cuts in severance. The unit did agree to implement a two-year apprenticeship program in the newsroom, with a limit of 10 apprentices allowed, based on a percentage of the reporting staff. On the plus side, the local added sexual preference to the contract's non-discrimination language, as well as new language regarding

flexible hours scheduling.

The contract approved by Guild-represented employees of The Long-Beach Press Telegram awards a 3% increase in base pay rates at ratification, with additional 3% increases on each anniversary for the next three years. It also increases the base pay rate for several clerk classifications and increases the night differential by 10%, to \$3.30 per shift worked between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Other gains include a "me too" clause for additional holidays given to non-bargaining unit employees; expanding a personal leave provision to include labor meetings and conventions; and a provision requiring the Guild be notified of job openings. The contract also incorporates a new code of ethics, patterned on one at The Los Angeles Times.

Finally, a tentative agreement has been reached between the Lake Superior Newspaper Guild and the Duluth News Tribune after 13 months of bargaining. The four-year contract includes across-the-board increases of 2.5% on ratification, 2.5% in January, 2005, and 3% in each of the subsequent two Januaries. In addition, customer service field reps would receive a raise of 50 cents an hour on ratification as well as a 50-cent increase in wage scales.

On health care, the tentative agreement caps employee premium costs at 22% for

single and 30% for family coverage, but gives Guild members access to dental coverage at the same 20% of premium costs paid by management, down from 50%.

Other changes include a provision that allows the company to hire up to seven commission-only sales reps during 2004; a second provision limits the number of commission-only sales staff to no more than the number of salaried staff for the life of the contract. The agreement also ensures that television or radio appearances will be voluntary; ensures that multi-media employees will be given appropriate training; and allows the newspaper's staff to review for accuracy any material adapted for television or radio.

Beaten back were company demands to eliminate seniority for lay-off purposes, to eliminate the top one or two wage scales in every job classification and to institute "merit" raises.

"While the agreement doesn't contain all we wanted, the Guild's bargaining team recommends its passage without reservations," announced a message to local members, who were expected to vote on the contract in late December. "It's an agreement we can live with for the next four years, and it's far better than what we would have received if we hadn't all stood together."

Providence votes on tentative deal

Marking a possible end to nearly four years of battling with Belo management, the executive committee of the Providence Newspaper Guild voted 9-1 to submit a tentative contract agreement for a membership vote. Secret balloting was to take place Dec. 19, when this issue of The Guild Reporter was at the printer.

In addition to membership approval, the agreement needs ratification by the National Labor Relations Board because it includes an out-of-court settlement of 27 unfair labor practice convictions. Local members rejected a company proposal in June that required the convictions to be expunged. Under the current offer, the convictions would stand but the Guild and NLRB have to

agree to set aside the remedies ordered by the judge who heard the complaints.

Local President John Hill said that the agreement made progress in three key areas—wages, parking and pensions—while falling short in attaining the Guild's goals on health care. "Despite its shortcomings, this contract proposal is a huge achievement for the Guild," Hill said. "Let's remember where this started: the company was demanding unilateral control over our health benefits, and then tried to do the same with our wages."

"The resources of a powerful, wealthy company were dedicated to wiping us out," he added. "They thought it would be easy to crush the Guild. Instead, we stood strong and they faded completely."

Indeed, in recent months the

local had markedly stepped up its campaign to highlight the company's intransigent bargaining posture. A mass rally Nov. 6, which unexpectedly veered into the Journal newsroom, was described by Rhode Island historians as the city's largest act of civil disobedience in more than a decade. A 10-day radio advertising blitz in early December took the newspaper to task for its growing list of labor law violations—and for the news blackout it had imposed on its own labor woes.

Although the proposed settlement means Guild members would receive less back pay than had been ordered by the judge, "we would get it sooner—and for sure," reasoned a Guild flyer outlining the settlement. Other remedies, meanwhile—such as returning reporter Karen Ziner to the day shift—would remain in effect.

Details of the proposed eight-year contract, retroactive to Jan. 2000, include:

- Although Belo did not move off its proposed raises of 0% for 2000 and 2002, 3% for 2001 and 6% for 2003, it sweetened the pot by offering a \$1,000 signing bonus for employees working 22.5 hours a week or more and \$500 for others. "On average, Guild members will receive 73% of the back raises they would have received if they had been given the same raises as nonunion workers," the flyer explained.

- An annual floor of 1.5% in raises remains, but with a new guarantee that cumulative wage increases over the last four years of the contract will be at least 8%.

- Guild members would continue paying 15% of their health care premiums over the life of the contract; other Belo employees pay 25%. But the new contract

eliminates a Blue Cross plan and removes a cap on how fast premiums can rise.

Other provisions would provide free parking for most employees; more money for second-year interns; use of some sick days for illness in the immediate family; an increase in car allowances and life insurance coverage; and a specific listing of employees not eligible for overtime.

And in a possible look toward the next contract talks, the tentative agreement strengthens union security provisions by requiring—even after the contract has expired—that the company continue dues check-off; and that it compel new hires to pay union dues. Moreover, the company has agreed to allow grievances to be taken to arbitration after the contract expires.

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

Vol. 1, No. 2 of The Guild Reporter "national edition" rolls off the press Dec. 8. The lead article is headlined, "Guild Idea Spreads As Delegations Face Toward Washington." . . . Twenty-one Guild locals have already sprung up around the nation, with dues-paying members in Boston, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Duluth, New York, Philadelphia, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Tulsa. . . . The Guild's first national convention, held Dec. 15 in Washington, D.C., is addressed by General Hugh S. Johnson, head of the National Recovery Administration. His message, after asking if there is a newspaper guild in the nation's capital: "Well, you ought to have one. That's the way you are going to get things—organize!"

Fifty years ago this month:

A Gallup poll shows increasing public support for organized labor, with 75% of respondents generally approving of unions and 18% generally disapproving. . . . The U.S. Supreme Court rules that derogatory statements about an employer published during a strike—and not directly related to strike issues—are grounds for dismissal for "disloyalty" under the Taft-Hartley law. . . . An ice-pick wielding robber ties up and gags four Guild members in the Chicago Newspaper Guild office, making off with \$35.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Guild leaders engage in marathon bargaining with the Washington Star in an attempt to avert a threatened shut-down of the paper. . . . A proposed merger of the Guild and ITU runs into "major differences" over the new union's officers and governance.

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

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DAYBOOK

Convergence 2 Strategic Forum,
Jan. 23-25, Baltimore

Deadline for Broun, Barr award
entries, Jan. 30 (postmark)

New Local Officers' Seminar,
Feb. 13-16, Meany Center

CWA Legislative Conference,
March 28-31, Washington, DC

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

Freedom Award banquet,
May 19, Washington, DC

2004 UNITY Convention,
Aug. 4-8, Washington, DC

CWA Annual Convention,
Aug. 30-31, Anaheim, CA