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# Montreal local wins gag order dispute

**By Charles Shannon**  
Montréal Newspaper Guild

**T**he Montreal Newspaper Guild and The Gazette have resolved two longstanding grievances regarding freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The agreement lifts a two-year-old "gag order" imposed by the Gazette's parent chain, CanWest Global Communications, that had stifled employee criticism of an attempt by CanWest to create a national editorial policy for its newspapers.

After buying the venerable Southam

chain of 14 major Canadian dailies and 200-plus smaller publications in 2000, the Winnipeg-based company directed its big-city papers to carry identical editorials as often as three days a week. Moreover, the various editorial boards across the chain were ordered not to express opinions that would conflict with the national editorials.

The uproar was immediate. Non-CanWest newspapers and prominent individuals across Canada denounced the "national editorial" concept as bad for journalism, bad for democracy and ultimately bad for the company. The Quebec legislature

passed a unanimous resolution calling for reversal of the policy. Guild-represented journalists at The Gazette withheld bylines for two days and set up a protest website, and 77 of them signed a public manifesto opposing the company move.

Gazette management responded with a Dec. 14, 2001 "advisory" threatening serious disciplinary action against any employee who publicly questioned the good faith or motives of the company or its owners. Many Gazette employees held their tongues, knowing the gag order was being grieved, but Guild member William Marsden criti-

cized the company's actions at a public debate in which supporters of the company also took part—and was slapped with a written disciplinary warning. This, too, was grieved.

(Parenthetically, it's worth noting that throughout this period CanWest's owners were using their newspapers to vigorously defend the "national editorial" policy and lambaste their critics.)

Fast-forward two years, which is how long it took Quebec's arbitration process to begin hearing the two cases. Over that period

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# Boston Globe scored for 'hostage taking'

## Worker Rights Board takes testimony, calls treatment of employees 'unacceptable'

Members of the Massachusetts Workers' Rights Board this month came down hard on the Boston Globe, calling the company's treatment of its unionized employees—represented by the Boston Newspaper Guild—unacceptable.

forcing employees to assume dramatic cost increases each of the past three years. Weekly payroll deductions for union members have doubled in that time, with full-timers paying more than \$100 per week for family coverage and part-timers paying nearly \$150 per week.

Indeed, some of the hearing's most compelling testimony centered on health care. A part-time maintenance worker who travels one hour to work said about two-thirds of her weekly pay goes to health insurance for herself and her three children. Recently, she was out sick for two weeks; because of the Globe's inadequate sick leave for part-timers (only paid day per year for those with at least five years' service), she had to write a \$300 check to the company before returning to work. Other part-timers are on state-funded health care because they can't afford the Globe plan.

The union's health-care consultant, Bonnie Hanisch of the Boston Insurance Group, said the company's contributions have fallen to 47% of premium costs, from 61%. The membership's combined costs have increased \$500,000 over the three-year period, even as changes in health-care plans have resulted in less coverage.

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Approximately 150 people pack board hearing, top; below, Workers' Board chairman Robert Schwartz listens to testimony presented by Jennifer Doe, of Jobs with Justice, and Steve Richards, president of the Boston Newspaper Guild.

# Two Seattle reporters win Broun Award

## ***Freedom Award goes to TomPaine.com; Cronkite, Moyers to address banquet***

Christine Willmsen and Maureen O'Hagan have won the 2003 Heywood Crown Award, marking the second time in three years that reporters from the Seattle Times have received top honors in the annual competition.

In addition, online public interest journal *TomPaine.com* has been named the 2003 winner of the third annual Herbert Block Freedom Award. Both the Broun and Block awards will be presented May 19 at the Freedom Awards banquet, at which legendary television newscaster (and former Guild member)

**Walter Cronkite will offer opening remarks and journalist Bill Moyers will deliver the keynote address.**

Both the Broun and Block awards include \$5,000 cash prizes.

Created in 1941 to honor the Guild's most prominent founder, the Heywood Broun Award recognizes "individual journalistic achievement by members of the working media, particularly if it helps right a wrong or correct an injustice." It will be presented to Willmsen and O'Hagan for their four-part series, "Coaches Who Prey," which explored the largely unreported trend of male coaches

preying on female athletes and their success in escaping accountability for their predatory behavior.

"Overcoming significant reporting barriers to gain access to school records and get teenage accounts on the record, Willmsen and O'Hagan documented how it is not uncommon for coaches who have been found to have engaged in sexual misconduct to easily transfer to a new school and resume victimizing students," the judges wrote. "Willmsen and O'Hagan went beyond the alarming numbers—that 159 coaches in Washington over the last decade

had been dismissed, suspended or reprimanded for sexual misconduct—and found that far too often, school administrators failed to investigate complaints or report them to authorities.”

The judges cited the series for its depth and detail in exploring a

subject that previously had been examined only episodically, raising public awareness of the problem, providing important advice for parents and prompting school authorities to conduct background checks of coaches. The entry,

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# Progress made toward Guild membership for freelancers

A second attempt at opening Guild membership to freelancer and other "contingent" workers is making headway, following a series of district council discussions and further refinement of proposed constitutional amendments. The renewed bid follows a proposal that was tabled at last year's Guild sector conference, after several delegates questioned how freelancers would be defined and what voting rights they would acquire.

A Jan. 20 memo from TNG-CWA general counsel Barbara Camens, together with proposed new language, apparently have satisfied the original proposal's critics. Delegates to the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and New England district councils recently gave unanimous motions of support for the tweaked proposal; the Canadian Representative and Western councils had already endorsed the earlier language and therefore are believed ready to support the revisions. As a result, delegates to this summer's sector conference are expected to ratify the amendments.

As rewritten, the proposed amendments would contemplate extending Guild membership to contingent workers and others who do not enjoy collective bargaining rights under the law, but who otherwise perform the kind of work that is already described in the Guild constitution. But freelancers would have to wait until a local created an appropriately defined unit for them, or until the TNG-CWA executive council created a separate freelancer local.

The constitutional amendments would not require any local to create such a unit, in effect giving each local veto power over admitting freelancers into its

own ranks. But while the TNG-CWA executive council could create a separate local just for freelancers, it would have to give a potentially affected local 30 days' advance notice so it could "claim" them.

Responding to locals' concerns over potential mischief makers, the new rules would grant locals the authority to reject applications from freelancers actively working against Guild or CWA interests. Moreover, the rewritten rules permit continued Guild membership for unemployed freelancers for only one year, after which they make take an honorable withdrawal. The proposed amendments would permit locals to adopt reasonable bylaw provisions for monitoring employment eligibility.

Finally, the proposed amendments make it clear that freelance members cannot vote on local union matters of collective bargaining—even if they serve on a local governing body. "They have voice but no vote on grievance settlements, contract ratification or strike authorization," Camens explained in her memo.

Turning to a related matter, Camens added that questions raised about the duty of fair representation to freelancers are "largely a red herring in this context." Because freelancers by definition don't have exclusive Guild representation, no such duty of fair representation can exist.

But by including freelancers and attempting to improve their economic conditions, Camens observed, the Guild as a whole benefits. "By pressing for reasonable economic rewards for all groups, a union can prevent the most damaging scenario of all—an economic race to the bottom," she wrote.

## Workers' Board blasts Globe

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Guild president Steve Richards said some highly paid Globe managers pay a mere 1% of their salaries for health care, while some part-timers pay 60%-70% of theirs. TNG-CWA sector representative Jim Schaufenbil, who has worked closely with the Boston Guild, noted that New York Times publisher Arthur Sulzberger could have paid the entire cost of the Guild's health plan with his 2002 compensation and still have had more than \$3 million left over.

"A major concern of the Workers' Rights Board is the seeming discrepancy between the Globe's editorial positions and its current employee relations practice," the board report read. "The Board was shocked and disappointed to learn of the views of its employees given the Globe's progressive stance on many issues."

Of Guild members' testimony

While the New York Times Co. plays hardball with employees at the Boston Globe, it's not for lack of financial success. As reported by MediaChannel, the conglomerate's most recent financial report shows that "advertising is up, circulation is up, revenues are up and income is up. 'It's all up,' New York Times Company spokesperson Catherine Mathis cheerily agrees."

More than 90% of company revenues come from newspaper operations, and according to chief financial officer Len Forman, there too it was a "very good year." MediaChannel further reports. Ad revenues were up 4.2% in December compared to the same month a year earlier—all the more remarkable when one realizes ad revenues in December 2002 had shot up 16.7%.

regarding their treatment in the workplace and plummeting building-wide morale, the board said it was "disheartening to hear of the feelings of powerlessness and lack of respect by long-time employees of one of Boston's most high-profile employers."

Of management's bargaining posture, the board said, "Given the Globe's strong market position, there appears to be no motivation other than to increase profits, which can be short-sighted policies as we

have seen at other companies."

The board was chaired by Robert Schwartz, noted labor attorney and author specializing in issues of workers' rights. Other board members were Gerald Colby, president of the National Writers Union; Roxanne McKinnon, assistant coordinator of the Boston Tenants Coalition; Greeley O'Connor, chair of the Boston National Organization of Women's Economic Justice Committee; and Fausto Da Rocha, director of the Brazilian Immigrant Center.

Before the hearing, several hundred Guild members and their supporters marched in front of the Globe offices in one of the largest rallies in memory. An even larger crowd marched in front of the Globe the following week when a group of community leaders attempted to present the board's findings and meet with Globe management. Globe security initially prevented the community group and several media camera operators from entering the building, but eventually allowed the group to drop off the board report after the vocal urging of Guild members and their supporters.

The company declined invitations to attend the hearing and meet with board members before and after the findings were made public.

## Correction

Last month's Guild Reporter included a statement that the Block family has owned the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette since 1993. The assertion repeated information from a Post-Gazette news article about recent contract concessions.

In fact, reports Mike Bucsko, president of the Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild, the Blocks have owned the Post-Gazette since

1927. They bought the Pittsburgh Press from Scripps-Howard in late 1992, after a seven-month strike by unionized employees, and closed it after years of being the junior partner in a lopsided joint operating agreement.

Joe Molinero's statement that the Blocks "treated us well since they bought the newspaper" referred to the purchase of the Press.

## Guild briefs . . .

### \$9,000 in OT won by Buffalo Guild

The Buffalo Newspaper Guild has won a substantial victory in its battle against overtime abuses by the Buffalo News, which has agreed to pay more than \$9,000 owed to 10 classified and customer service employees for overtime hours worked between July 2001 and April 2003. In addition to the time-and-a-half payout, the News agreed to stop offering Guild-represented employees comp time in lieu of overtime pay.



Win Canavan

### Canavan honored by San Jose Guild

Win Canavan, president of the San Jose Newspaper Guild from late 1996 until this past December, has been awarded the Frank Rene Sauliere Award for outstanding Guild service, the local's highest honor. A Mercury News employee in the classified advertising department, Canavan was cited for her leadership in establishing the unit's mobilization system as well as her efforts to build support for the local in the broader labor and religious communities. Sauliere was a long-time San Jose Guild leader and charter member of the American Newspaper Guild who died in 1963.

### Two unit chairs get Keenan Award

Lena Williams and Oscar Hernandez, chairs of the New York Times and El Diario units of the Newspaper Guild of New York, respectively, will be the recipients of the Tom Keenan Service Award for 2004. Named after a former chair of the New York Times unit who died in 2000, the Keenan Award recognizes those who in the past year have "performed above and beyond the call of duty in service to the New York Local, and best exemplify the ideals of a true labor leader in the spirit of Tom Keenan." The award was to be presented at a special "70th Anniversary of the Guild" membership meeting and celebration March 29.

### Toledo triumphs in bogus firing

The Toledo Newspaper Guild has won a major arbitration victory with a ruling that reinstates a member with full back pay, benefits and seniority 20

months after he was fired on trumped-up charges of dishonesty. The arbitrator's opinion noted that the firing of Kevin Kipker, a regional distribution supervisor who repeatedly tried to have bad addresses purged from the company's subscriber lists, "was an example of the age-old practice of 'killing the messenger.'"

### AP techs, others in merger talks

The News Media Guild, which represents more than 1,700 editorial and non-editorial employees at the Associated Press, and TNG-CWA Local 1314, which represents more than 250 AP technicians, are in merger talks. Although the talks are still in an exploratory stage, such a merger is seen as strengthening each local's bargaining power but would have to preserve a degree of autonomy for the techs.

### Gannett tries to gut Sheboygan

Guild-represented employees of the Sheboygan Press have entered contract talks with the Gannett-owned paper attempting to gut the existing agreement. Among the company's demands: elimination of the clause that states "there will be no reductions in salaries"; introduction of split shifts; elimination of seniority for layoff purposes; and elimination of night shift differentials and of overtime pay on scheduled days off, Sundays and holidays.

### Reuters cited for 'boys' club' threat

The National Labor Relations Board has charged Reuters America with violating federal law last summer, when a New York-based editor threatened to retaliate against a Guild-represented journalist who questioned why a qualified female employee was being passed over for a promotion; the journalist, who no longer works for Reuters, said the company sometimes feels like a "boys' club." An administrative trial in the case is expected in May.

### Recent deaths

George Young, a compositor at The Sudbury Star for more than 30 years and president of the Sudbury Typographical Union from 1981 to 2000, has died of cancer. He was 63.

Also claimed by cancer was Fed Gaboury, one of the nation's most veteran labor journalists and national editor for People's Weekly World, who died in Chicago. He was 78.

Among Gaboury's memberships was the Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy, which succeeded in removing the "anti-Communist" clause from the AFL-CIO constitution.

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# Chronicle, Times discipline staff on same-sex issues

The culture wars over sexual orientation have spilled into journalists' ranks, as the New York Times fired a stringer on learning he once had been an AIDS activist, while the San Francisco Chronicle reassigned two female staffers covering same-sex unions after they got married. Both actions were explained as necessary to prevent the "appearance" of a conflict of interest.

Jay Blotcher had been stringing for the Times since 2001 but didn't get a byline until recently—at which point someone recognized it from Blotcher's work with the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP. Although Blotcher was an ACT UP spokesperson more than a decade ago, his most recent participation with the group appears to have been in 1998, when he was listed as a press release contact. None of his assignments for the Times dealt with AIDS or gay issues.

But his years-old activities apparently taint Blotcher forever. Although Times editor Susan Edgerley reportedly said there had been no complaints about Blotcher's work, she added she was "setting the bar high to protect against any appearance of conflict of interest" and therefore was upholding a prohibition on using his work in any section of the paper.

In an ironic twist, Edgerley was quoted in several news accounts as taking such a seemingly harsh position because Blotcher, as a freelancer, could not be supervised as closely as full-time employees. "My motivation is expediency as well as ethics," she was widely quoted as saying.

On the other end of the country, meanwhile, Chronicle management decided the full-time supervision of reporter Rachel Gordon and photographer Liz Mangelsdorf would not be enough to convince skeptical readers of their objectivity and integrity. So Gordon and Mangelsdorf were pulled off the same-sex beat March 11, two days

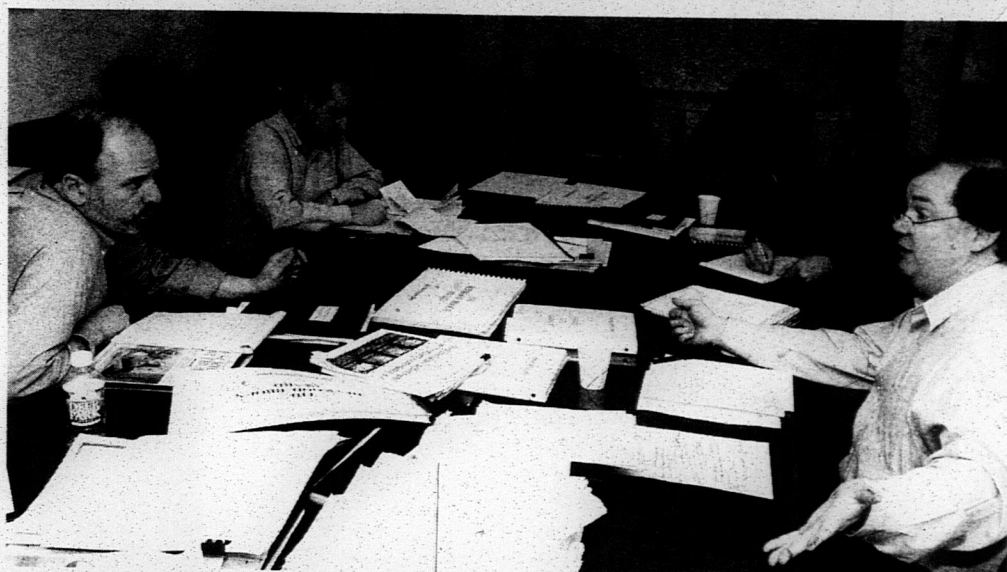
after they joined 4,000 other gay and lesbian couples getting marriage licenses.

A March 15 memo from executive editor Phil Bronstein described a series of sometimes "painful" meetings and discussions among senior editors and with the two staffers prior to the decision. Although all expressed "complete confidence in Rachel and Liz as professionals," he added, "the issue is the integrity and credibility of the paper, as well as conflict and the perception of conflict."

Not surprisingly, not everyone agrees—including Gordon and Mangelsdorf, who have disagreed with the decision. Two San Francisco supervisors, joined by community gay leaders, have called on the Chronicle to reverse its decision. "The fact that any journalist who participates in a civil benefit offered by the city and county of San Francisco, that that should somehow deny them the opportunity to do their job, I think it's fundamentally wrong," said Supervisor Bevan Dufty.

The National Lesbian and Gay Journalists' Association issued a statement expressing concern that the reassignment "is unlikely to be an isolated instance and that it could have unforeseen consequences for all NLGJA members as well as other journalists." Instead of reassigning two veteran journalists, the statement added, the Chronicle "might have been better served by following its own successful history of transparency."

Meanwhile, response by Guild members has been "mixed," reports Doug Cuthbertson, administrative officer of the Northern California Media Guild. Reaction has ranged from complete agreement with Bronstein's decision to those who feel it was "outrageous." But because neither Gordon nor Mangelsdorf has requested that a grievance be filed, Cuthbertson said, he is still collecting information while weighing possible responses.



Weighing the merit of a sea of print entries in the Heywood Broun Award competition are (l to r) Peter Gelzinis, Stephen Labaton, Susan Watson, Andrew Maykuth and Chris Hanson.

## Broun, Block winners named

*Continued from page 1*

wrote judge Chris Hanson, "struck a blow for vulnerable people. It called institutions to account for settling abuse cases quietly rather than trying to protect the next group of kids who might become victims of the same coach. By printing names of abusers, it gave parents more power to protect their kids. The package displayed thorough, energetic reporting, clear, unsensational exposition, and a courageous vision of the good a newspaper can do."

The Broun judges also gave two awards of "substantial distinction," each with a \$1,000 prize, to Los Angeles Times reporter Jill Leovy for "Mortal Wounds" and to Andrea Bernstein and Amy Eddings for their radio series, "Handshake Hotels."

*TomPaine.com* was given the nod for the Herbert Block Freedom Award in recognition of being "a consistent voice of reason and democratic discourse at a time of increased political attacks on civil liberties and a flattening of discourse in the mainstream media," according to a TNG-CWA statement. Named after a legendary Washington Post cartoonist better known as Herblock—a Guild member for 67 years—the award is given annually to a person or organization that best exemplifies Block's devotion to free speech, his compassion for the weak, his distrust of unbridled power and his defense of a vigorous free press.

In naming *TomPaine.com*, TNG-CWA praised the site for challenging conventional news-think about a wide variety of contemporary issues, including the war in Iraq, the economy, partisan politics and the culture wars. "Like its historical namesake, *TomPaine.com* promotes informed public discourse, which is essential in a democratic society," explained TNG-CWA President Linda Foley. "The group's continuing efforts to promote anti-establishment viewpoints on issues of the day are exactly what Herb Block's cartoons did for readers of the Washington Post."

The Freedom Award Fund Banquet, to be held

again at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill, also will honor David S. Barr scholarship winners. The awards are named after the Guild's long-term attorney and trusted advisor and each year recognize one high school and one college student for exceptional journalism on issues of importance to working people.

This year's high school winner of a \$500 scholarship is Annalyn Rose Censky, 17, a student at Salpointe Catholic High School in Tucson, Ariz., for her story on the injustices suffered by teenagers crossing the border illegally. The winner of the \$1,500 college scholarship is Olivia Cobiskey, a student at Columbia College in Chicago, who wrote about a non-profit center that helps Muslim families cope with the pressures of Western-style freedom.

Judging the Broun Award were Boston Herald columnist Peter Gelzinis, journalism professor Chris Hanson of the University of Maryland, New York Times reporter Stephen Labaton, Philadelphia Inquirer correspondent-at-large Andrew Maykuth, television news anchor Tracey Neale, and television reporter Julie Wright. The panel's chair was Susan Watson, a former reporter, city editor and columnist for the Detroit Free Press who was a prominent Guild leader during the Detroit newspaper strike. Watson, who won the Broun Award in 1978, currently is editor of The Detroit Teacher, newsletter for the Detroit Federation of Teachers.

This year's Broun entries, while fewer than in past years due to the competition's increased emphasis on individual effort and social ills, still posed some tough choices for the jury. "A number of entries deserved recognition, and I hope many will receive their fair share of awards in other competitions," observed Andy Maykuth. "With so many fine works to sort through, we set high standards and gave great weight to the award's mission to recognize individual work. Some strong entries from larger teams of journalists were regrettably ruled out on that basis alone."

## Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild: Local Representative Opening

WBNG is taking applications for a full-time local rep. A successful candidate will have a minimum of 3-5 years' demonstrated experience, preferably in the newspaper and information industry, in contract negotiation, representation, training, recruitment, and implementation of internal issue organizing campaigns. Excellent oral, written, and computer skills, familiarity with local union structures, NLRB/NLRB, and strong research analytical skills required. Demonstrated leadership capabilities a must. No phone calls, please.

Excellent compensation and benefits. Apply by April 9 to:

Search Committee,  
1100 15th Street, NW,  
Washington, DC 20005



## The Newspaper Guild-CWA Freedom Award Banquet

May 19, 2004, featuring opening remarks by Walter Cronkite, keynote by Bill Moyers

Guild locals are urged to make reservations now for this annual event, honoring the winners of the Heywood Broun and Herb Block Freedom awards and the David Barr scholarship winners. Guild locals may sponsor tables of 10 for \$1,500, a 25% discount from the rate being charged the general public. Guild members also may buy individual tickets, for \$80 each.

Alternatively, locals and other supporters may buy ads in the banquet souvenir program, with rates starting at \$400.

To make reservations or for more information, contact Sheara Reich at 800-546-4046 or [sreich@kamber.com](mailto:sreich@kamber.com)



# He just keeps going and going and . . .

By Carl T. Hall  
N. California Media Workers Guild

The Newspaper Guild's senior working member got his first offer to join management very early in his illustrious career—and he had the Guild to thank.

David Perlman, who recently celebrated his 85th birthday, is a longtime science writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. He was 18 years old and a student at Columbia University when he landed his first newspaper job, a summer gig at the long-gone Schenectady Sun, in the late 1930s.

Perlman had an inside track at the time because he knew the paper's managing editor, Mike Gravino, a recent Columbia graduate. Gravino also was a union supporter and ring-leader of a Guild organizing drive at the Sun, so Perlman, who had quickly become the paper's main reporter-photographer, signed a union card, too. Then Gravino got fired.

Looking around for a replacement who knew the town, the Sun's owners came to Perlman with an offer they must have thought the youngster couldn't refuse.

"They asked me if I wanted to be managing editor," Perlman recalled. "But I turned them down. I just told them I wanted to finish my degree."

Thus started one of the most distinguished careers in American science writing. Frequently lauded for his deadline reporting skills, Perlman has had more honors named for him—including journalism prizes sponsored by the American Geophysical Union and San Francisco Medical Society—than some of his colleagues have won.

He has covered every major U.S. space mission since Gemini and Apollo, watched the birth and development of biotechnology in Bay Area academic labs, helped unravel the early mysteries of the AIDS epidemic with his late Chronicle colleague, Randy Shilts.

He also has been one of the Guild's stalwarts for longer than most members have been alive. In hunting around recently for senior Guild members, The Guild Reporter was unable to find anybody with Perlman's seniority who remains active on the job. Indeed, he may be the longest-serving active member of any AFL-CIO affiliate, although the search continues. Meanwhile, Perlman

continues building on his amazing record.

"You know what they say about The Newspaper Guild: We're a union of individuals," said TNG-CWA President Linda Foley. "David Perlman's career certainly bears out that observation. His lifetime of journalistic adventure and achievement, coupled with unabated support for union principles and ideals, serves as an inspiration for all Guild members, including those who worked with him and those who have followed in his footsteps since."

Although Perlman is not one to covet elected office and rarely spends much time at meetings, Gravino was hardly the last union leader who came to count on him for support when it mattered.

**'He's earned the respect of all his colleagues, management and union, time and time again.'**

In 1968, when the Chronicle was on strike, Perlman served as a Guild picket captain. Nearly three decades later, he was voicing strong support for librarian pay upgrades in contract talks. And when the talks broke down, Perlman once again joined his Chronicle colleagues on the picket lines.

"You know he's one who will be there," said Doug Cuthbertson, executive officer of the Northern California Media Workers. "He's earned the respect of all his colleagues, management and union, time and



David Perlman, one kind of perpetual motion machine

time again."

Perlman first joined the Chronicle staff in 1940, having implored his good friend (and yet another Columbia classmate) William German to rescue him from an unsatisfying job in Bismarck, N.D. He was hired as a copy boy for Guild scale, about \$15 a week.

"No. 1, you wore a necktie," Perlman recalled. "No. 2, you sat on a bench by the city desk. And you ran errands."

The forces of war were gathering in Europe and the Pacific, but it was a good time to be a kid in the West Coast newspaper business. The serious part of the workday often was devoted to collating sheets of copy paper and carbons for the manual typewriters. Then it was out on the streets, fetching hamburgers, delivering messages, checking out rumors.

There also was a fair amount of running book for the newshounds, either to a Chinese betting parlor on Turk Street or to the Green Sheet, a full-service establishment named for the Chronicle's sports pages, conveniently located half a block from the newsroom on Fifth Street. Much time was spent at Hanno's Corner, a cultural oasis favored by Chronicle staff that qualified as an eating establishment under local ordinances by maintaining a hard-boiled egg and slice of bread behind the bar.

Perlman assumed it was bread, at any rate, although he admits he never tried it. "It was for sale, and you could order it if you wanted. But nobody ever did," he recalled.

Those times lasted just long enough for Perlman to graduate from the copyboy bench and establish himself as a talented reporter. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, he quit to enlist in the Army.

In Nov. 1945, the war over, Perlman was still in uniform and serving out his enlistment in Marseilles. He recalls sitting at a cafe during a three-day leave in Paris, reading the European edition of the New York Herald Tribune, telling himself it might be a good idea to get a job there. He spoke French, and found he had no trouble getting on—but he was still in close touch with the editors back in San Francisco, where he was guaranteed a job if he wanted one. So Perlman resolved to stay at the Herald Tribune until the Chronicle could open a planned bureau in Paris, which he figured he would run.

Instead, the Chronicle's international expansion dreams never materialized and after several years of covering post-war Europe, Perlman moved back to San Francisco with his journalist wife, the late Anne Salz Perlman.

Back at the Chronicle, Perlman gravitated to science writing in the late 1950s, driven partly by his fascination with such subjects as astronomy, cosmology and paleontology. Those remain big loves, defining a newsman whose attention for detail and deadlines is always seasoned with a schoolboy's delight at the wonders of the universe.

Nowadays, as active as he ever was, Perlman files smoothly written daily stories at a pace that qualifies him year after year as one of the most productive staffers at the paper. His only substantial break in Guild service came when he was promoted out of the union's ranks in 1977. A few misadventures with higherups soon convinced him to shake off his management rank and Perlman rejoined his fellow workers—although he did get to keep his parking privileges.

The 1977 promotion was an occasion for congratulatory words from the local union office that seemed to predict Perlman's eventual return to Guild service. "The Chronicle chose wisely," wrote Fred Fletcher, the union's administrative officer, in a memo to Perlman at the time. "I can't think of a better appointment as city editor. On the other hand some of us reporter types don't like to see such good people go wrong."

# . . . and so will she—across 2,650 miles

By Barbara Egbert  
San Jose Newspaper Guild

April will bring more than headlines and deadlines for me, as I begin six months of personal leave from the San Jose Mercury News national/foreign desk and my occasional duties as a shop steward.

My husband, Gary Chambers, and our daughter, Mary, 10, and I plan to use that time for a six-month adventure, beginning at the south end of the Pacific Crest Trail, just this side of the Mexican border. If all goes well, we will finish up in early October at the Canadian border. In between lie 2,650 miles of desert, mountains, snow fields and stream crossings.

Long-time readers of our travel section know of my family's familiarity with backpacking. The Jan. 30, 2000 section featured our experience hiking Section I of the PCT, one of the trail's more challenging portions, when Mary was not quite 6. I've also written for the Merc about hiking in Bay Area parks, Zion National Park and the Grand Canyon.

In 2001, we were among the first to backpack the entire 165 miles of the Tahoe Rim Trail. Mary was 7 then; we hiked it again last July and shaved two days off our time. Still, the Pacific Crest Trail is an order of magnitude greater than anything we've tackled as a family thus far.

The PCT ranges from the heat of the Mojave Desert to the snowfields of the High Sierra and the rain-swept forests of the northern Cascades. Hikers often have to deal with early-spring storms at the south end of the trail, deep snow in the Sierra and early-autumn snow as they race to reach the north

end before winter blows in from Canada. Water is scarce in some areas, and all too common in others. Wildlife can be pesky, from swarms of blood-thirsty mosquitoes to black bears that seem to get better at stealing food every year.

The U.S. Forest Service, which has overall responsibility for the trail, warns hikers that they also must share the landscape with rattlesnakes and mountain lions. This year, fire damage in Southern California and severe storm damage in Washington are added concerns.

We also are wrestling with how far we can reasonably walk with a 10-year-old in areas where mileage between water sources is long. Do we travel light and hope we can reach the next source before our canteens run dry? Or carry extra water, knowing the weight will not only slow us down but make us sweat more?

So, why in the world do we want to do this? For one thing, PCT through-hikers are treated to some of the most awesome scenery in the United States. The trail passes through many state and national parks, including Anza Borrego, Sequoia, Yosemite, Lassen, Castle Crags and Crater Lake. And other sections traverse beautiful areas that are hard to reach without a fairly long trek anyway.

I also love the sense of accomplishment that comes from succeeding at a physical challenge—and we will be challenged, for sure. Just look at the elevation changes: altitudes range from 180 feet above sea level at the Columbia River Gorge to 13,180 feet at Forester Pass in the southern Sierra.

But believe it or not, those few hikers who finish the entire trip typically find it hard to give up the trail and return



Barbara Egbert, perpetual motion machine No. 2

to "normal" life. Beyond that, we think we've reached the point where Mary is old enough to keep up and I'm not yet too old that I can't. (Or at least, we hope so!)

And, of course, thanks to the Guild, I know I'll have a job to return to when I've finished racking up the miles and the blisters. For information on the Pacific Crest Trail, go to [www.pcta.org](http://www.pcta.org).



# TNG Canada warns of media concentration

The threats to democratic discourse posed by media concentration, so visibly on display when CanWest Global issued its infamous gag order (see story, page 1), were further explored this month at a series of hearings conducted by a Canadian Senate committee. Testifying were TNG Canada/CWA officials, who presented the results of a poll of employees at Canadian chain newspapers, as well as members of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada.

Commissioned by the Guild and conducted over three days starting March 2, the poll surveyed 125 randomly selected, Guild-represented editorial workers at 14 newspapers owned by CanWest, Irving, Osprey, Sun Media and Transcontinental. All but one of the newspapers had been sold at least three times within the past eight years.

The survey, members of the Transport and Communications Committee were told, found that more than two-thirds of the respondents believe the quality of journalism at all chain-owned newspapers has declined over the past few years. Roughly the same percentage said their workload and stress on the job had increased during that period, while workplace morale had declined.

The decline in quality, respondents said, was caused by understaffing (86.4%), a shrinking news hole (60%) and loss of local control over editorial policy (57.6%). More than two-thirds of respondents said large chain ownership had a very or somewhat serious effect on reducing the diversity of opinions published in their papers.

Further media concentration, an

overwhelming percentage of poll respondents added, would result in continued declines in quality, further loss of public credibility and increased commercialization of news and programming.

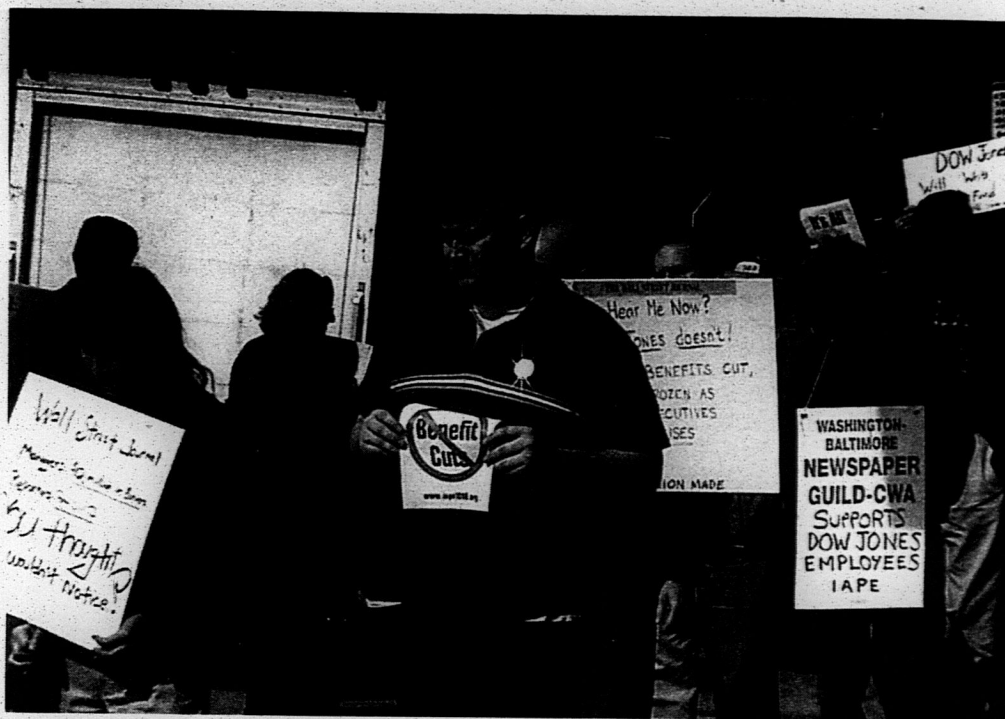
"What we have discovered," said Arnold Amber, Director of TNG Canada, "is that our members are happy to be journalists and are satisfied with their jobs, but they are very concerned about how media concentration has affected their newspapers' editorial performance."

Also testifying before the committee were Lise Lareau, president of the Canadian Media Guild; Scott Edmonds, a vice president of TNG-CWA; Lois Kirkup, president of the Ottawa Newspaper Guild; and Jan Ravensbergen, president of the Montreal Newspaper Guild. Chairing the committee was Senator Joan Fraser, a former editor-in-chief of the Montreal Gazette.

Members of the PWAC, which represents more than 500 independent professional writers, testified that increased concentration of media ownership has resulted in demands for "more work, more content and more rights—and they are paying less for it."

"To put it bluntly," said PWAC President Michael O'Reilly, "independent writers and producers in this country face economic starvation."

To further educate the public about the perils of media concentration, TNG Canada this month launched *YourMedia.ca*. The new media-watchdog web site is devoted to scrutinizing the large chains, starting with CanWest, Irving and Hollinger, but will be broadened soon to other media companies.



Dow Jones employees make news instead of merely reporting it, as IAPE members and supporters hold an information picket outside of the company's Washington, D.C. office for the first time in its history.

## March madness strikes DJ

Labor relations at Dow Jones keep heating up with the weather, as approximately 50 employees and Guild supporters picketed the Wall Street Journal bureau in Washington, D.C. to protest company demands for health care givebacks. The March 5 demonstration followed a protest three days earlier at Journal headquarters in New York City, in which approximately 100 employees with flexible start times—joined by others who came outside on their break—marched into work en masse.

The New York demonstrators carried lavender flyers proclaiming "It's March Madness at Dow Jones," signalling the start of a spring offensive some six weeks after union members resoundingly rejected a tentative contract agreement. Other actions have included 15- to 20-minute breaks taken simultaneously around the country to signal unity of purpose, and a strike research committee has been formed to further pressure the company.

The last IAPE contract with Dow Jones expired in May. Although a new three-year pact was hammered out last fall, it called for a salary freeze in 2003 and drastic cutbacks in healthcare coverage, including

first-ever employee contributions toward monthly premiums and dramatically higher deductibles and co-pays. Meanwhile, the union learned, Dow Jones executives rewarded themselves richly last year: chief executive Peter Kann's total compensation soared 58%, his wife—Karen Elliott House, the Journal's publisher—had a 32% jump and chief operating officer Rich Zannino got a 45% hike.

The contrast has enraged many long-term Journal hands, accustomed to a more genteel and collegial working environment, fanning the unprecedented strike talk. But Dow Jones management thus far seems tone deaf, describing the simultaneous nationwide breaks as "work stoppages." Referring to the delayed start of work March 2, a company statement claimed that "this sort of concerted behavior is not protected under the labor laws."

IAPE members, meanwhile, hope the company hears its employees before it's too late. "It was an incredibly powerful message to have the entire newsroom empty out for 15 minutes," observed Jim Browning, a member of the bargaining committee.

# Gag order lifted, but significance disputed

Continued from page 1

the "national editorials" had dwindled from one a week to perhaps one every six months, effectively marking the death of the idea. But in some ways the damage was already done, as a Canadian Senate committee launched a series of hearings on the issue of media concentration (see story above).

On the day the hearing on the gag order was to begin, The Gazette raised the possibility of a settlement to avoid a long, costly—and potentially embarrassing—legal procedure.

Over the next few weeks, the two sides exchanged proposals that eventually led to a set of principles that both the Guild and The Gazette could live with. These principles, they agreed, "should have governed and will govern their relations and the future employment conditions of journalists working for The Gazette." Foremost among them, from the Guild's viewpoint, is the concept that both employers and employees must serve the public trust—and that all must be free "to contribute to and participate in open public debate."

But as the Guild made clear from the start of negotiations, no deal settling the gag order grievance would be possible without a further settlement voiding the disciplinary warning to Marsden. The company agreed.

Arnold Amber, director of TNG Canada/

The following is the set of principles agreed to by the Montreal Guild and The Gazette:

- Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are crucial matters for the public, The Gazette and the journalists it employs, and are enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. All publishers must preserve and defend those rights;

- Journalists and other staff working for The Gazette recognize that they are employees of a company. Legally, they are bound by the same obligations as the employees of any other firm in any economic sector;

- Equally, the parties agree that they have an obligation to serve the public trust. In that regard, both journalists and The Gazette should work to ensure

freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Journalists must be free to produce fair, accurate and balanced coverage and analysis of the news, to contribute to the formation of editorial policy taking into account the publisher's ultimate right to determine such policy, and to contribute to and participate in open public debate;

- The parties recognize the need to respect and balance the legal obligations and rights of both journalists and The Gazette as employer. These rights include those of the owner, represented by the publisher, to run that newspaper consistent with the law, the practices of journalism and of ethics. Both owners and journalists owe obligations of prudence, diligence, honesty and fidelity to the public.

for it is entitled to these freedoms."

Jan Ravensbergen, president of the Montreal Newspaper Guild, said the settlement "reaffirms fundamental, bedrock principles and allows us to declare an end to more than two troubling years of newsroom chill."

But Gazette editor-in-chief Peter Stockland, in an interview with Canadian Press, played down the settlements. "Nobody won and nobody lost anything here," he said, expressing puzzlement at a TNG-Canada

website reference to the deals as "a stunning victory" in the battle for freedom of expression.

So it may be too early to declare a new era of peace and harmony between the Montreal Guild and Gazette management. Although an internal e-mail reaffirmed the company's commitment to adhere to the principles it agreed to, differences have already emerged in the two sides' interpretation of just how open "open public debate" should be.

Stay tuned.

## Marsden statement

After The Gazette annulled its warning against him for criticizing a now-discredited editorial policy, reporter William Marsden issued the following statement:

"This series of arbitration decisions and settlements are a complete victory for freedom of the press and the public at large.

"They serve notice to all media owners that journalists will not be silenced while owners push aside freedom of speech and freedom of the press in favour of their own political, cultural and commercial agendas.

"These decisions also serve as a warning.

"If we as journalists don't fight every attempt at censorship and thought control, this country will gradually lose its democratic freedoms."



## News round-up

### Jobless figures stubbornly high

Despite signs of renewed growth and a possible upturn, the International Labour Office reports that nearly 186 million people worldwide are seeking work, or 6.2 % of the world labor force. At the same time, the number of "working poor"—those earning a dollar a day or less—remained stable in 2003, at an estimated 550 million. The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.6% in February, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, although the number is misleadingly low because another 392,000 people dropped out of the workforce after failing to find jobs. Altogether, the BLS said, 10.3% of workers are without jobs or forced into part-time work for lack of full-time positions.

### UNITE, HERE leaders agree to merger

The executive boards of UNITE and HERE—unions representing textile workers and hotel and restaurant employees—agreed unanimously to merge the two unions. Members of both unions are to vote on the merger at a special joint convention in Chicago in July. If approved, the new union would have approximately 440,000 active members, the majority of whom are women, immigrants and minorities, and would be called UNITE HERE. As currently envisioned, UNITE President Bruce Raynor would be president and HERE President John Wilhelm—reportedly interested in running for the presidency of the AFL-CIO in 2005—would be president/hospitality industries.

### AFL-CIO seeks penalties against China

Employing a novel tactic, the AFL-CIO has petitioned the Bush administration under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to penalize China for its "brutal repression" of worker rights. Chinese labor practices give its companies an unfair competitive advantage, the federation claims, depressing wages by as much as 86% and encouraging the transfer of U.S. jobs overseas. If successful, the petition would mark the first time in the law's 30-year history that the Section 301 provision is used to pressure a foreign government into improving its labor conditions. U.S. labor leaders also are working with manufacturers on a separate trade case that accuses China's government of unfairly lowering export prices by keeping its currency weak.

### Grocery strike ends in two-tier contract

A five-month-long strike and lockout of as many as 70,000 grocery store workers in southern California has ended on a mixed note, with UFCW leaders saying they managed to limit the concessions their members were forced to accept. But the three companies—Albertsons, Kroger and Safeway—succeeded in imposing a two-tier system, with new hires paid significantly less and relegated to a separate, "basic" health plan. Current employees, meanwhile, will start paying toward health care premiums after two years and are receiving bonuses in lieu of raises. The striking and locked-out workers didn't know how the negotiations were progressing until they were over, as union leaders honored a news blackout imposed by federal mediator Peter J. Hurtgen. UFCW President Doug Dority resigned his position almost as soon as balloting for the three-year contract—approved by 86% of the voting membership—was concluded. Supermarket talks are now under way in Chicago, Washington and Baltimore.

### ULLICO turns financial corner

Financially troubled and scandal-rocked Union Labor Life Insurance Company (ULLICO) will show a projected \$8 million profit in 2004 after losing \$209 million the past two years, according to chief executive officer Terry O'Sullivan, president of the laborers union. O'Sullivan took over as CEO of the troubled insurer after several board members sold their ULLICO stock under questionable circumstances, resulting in the ouster of former CEO Robert Georgine and replacement of several board members with independent outsiders. The ensuing controversy also led to probes by former Illinois GOP Gov. James R. Thompson, an ex-federal prosecutor, and new outside independent ULLICO board member Abner Mikva, a former federal judge.

### Publishers welcome overtime changes

Still more evidence of whose interests will be served by new rules regarding overtime pay was provided to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao this month when she addressed a group of community newspaper publishers. "We've been pleased to support her in her effort," said Chip Hutcheson, publisher of The Times Leader of Princeton, Ky., as he introduced Chao to members of the National Newspaper Association. Proposed changes to white-collar overtime rules would save members money, Hutcheson explained, by eliminating overtime pay for reporters. Tonda Rush, general counsel of the National Newspaper Association, said current regulations make it too costly for small newspapers to send reporters to cover fires and other breaking news. The publishers' group thinks Chao should be allowed to finalize the regulations before a self-imposed March 31 deadline without congressional interference; to let Chao know otherwise, see the boxed "Action Item" on page 8.

# Top AFL-CIO officials view Miami police riot

By Mark Gruenberg  
Staff Writer, Press Associates, Inc.

One inch to the left, and the doctors told me I would have lost an ear. One inch to the right, and I would have lost an eye. And one inch up and I'd be dead."

So said a free-lance cameraman, shot by Miami police with a "beanbag" full of pellets during last November's peaceful—or what was supposed to be peaceful—march in Miami against the Bush-proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement. But the demonstration was anything except peaceful, thanks to unprovoked police brutality, as evidenced in two films shown at the AFL-CIO executive council meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

One of the films will be broadcast by Bill Moyers on his public television program, NOW (check local listings). The other was shot by a federation camera crew, even as Miami police physically prevented it from traveling widely despite prior agreements and conditions of the permits issued to the AFL-CIO.

The dominant imagery in both films is the same: a huge phalanx of blue-helmeted, body armor-plated, shield-wielding, individually unidentifiable Miami police firing tear gas and pellet guns while charging unarmed, peaceful protesters.

The images were stark. A woman holding a flower, kneeling and praying, swarmed and beaten by four officers. Tear-gas rifles shot repeatedly at walking marchers, including senior citizens. The cameraman—who was pro-FTAA—with blood running down his face, resulting in three hours of surgery. Mass arrests.

And Miami's police chief blaming "anarchists" and protesters for violence, while the films show that the only violence is that of the police themselves. "Look at them shootin' . . . Will you look at that!" exclaimed AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka as the video rolled. "There's more cops than people out there."

"The only thing different from Tiananmen Square is that they were using rubber bullets," replied Steel Workers President Leo Gerard, comparing the Miami police to the Chinese troops who gunned down pro-

democracy protesters in Beijing 15 years ago. Gerard was another peaceful protest leader last November.

"We brought 24 busloads of seniors, part of 'The Greatest Generation,' down to Miami, and when they (the police) did what they did, we didn't deserve that," Tony Franzetta, president of Florida's Alliance for Retired Americans chapter, told the group.

Trumka, still steaming about the police violence, testified in February before a citizens' commission—equipped with subpoena powers—that is still probing what happened. After the police presented their own "after-action review" to the panel, laying all the blame on the protesters and on the AFL-CIO by name, Trumka was so outraged he responded with a list of sharp questions for which he is still awaiting answers.

"Who decided to divert the buses from downtown Miami? When? Why?" he demanded in February. "Who decided to 'lock down' Bayfront," the AFL-CIO's major rally arena. "Who decided to cut short the permitted march route, and why?"

"Who decided to advance on peaceful protesters who had no time to disperse?" Trumka continued. "Who decided to shoot rubber bullets, tear gas and other weapons at students, retirees and workers? Who decided to use violence, and how did they make their decision? Finally, who was ultimately in charge in Miami, and who will be held responsible?"

Trumka did not say—although other speakers mentioned it at the Fort Lauderdale meeting—that \$8 million of the \$35 million the Miami police spent to arm themselves against protesters came from the Bush regime, taken from money intended for troops in Iraq.

But the last word on Miami's police violence may have been offered by a former law enforcement official. Boilermakers Vice President Othal Smith, of Nashville, Tenn., a former military police officer and prosecutor, also watched the AFL-CIO video.

"They had *carte blanche*," he said later, referring to the Miami police. "They were given orders" to fire. "Mentality like that should not be in law enforcement. What they did was inexcusable; rubber bullets can kill." Then Smith mused: "Rumsfeld, Cheney, Ashcroft. . . They believe they got orders from God."

## Fight is on for labor rights

Labor will launch a three-pronged attack to expand and strengthen the right to organize, the AFL-CIO Executive Council outlined March 10 at a meeting in Bal Harbour, Fla.

Leading the charge are Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), who recently introduced the Employee Free Choice Act. Based on legislation introduced four years ago by the late Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), the bill would mandate card-check recognition of unions, increase penalties for labor law-breaking and make it easier to get court orders against labor law-breakers during organizing and first contract drives.

"The system to facilitate organizing is so broken that of the 400,000 workers who organized with AFL-CIO unions" in 2002, "fewer than one-fifth went through National Labor Relations Board elections," explained the federation's president, John Sweeney. "Fifty years ago, more than 90% of all workers who organized did so through the NLRB."

Those 400,000 new workers' rights are so delayed that the AFL-CIO can't count them in its membership rolls. Figures released March 10 put the federation's headcount at 13,133,209 dues-paying members, down 39,439 from 2002 and 31,000 from 2001.

Besides lobbying on Capitol Hill for the Kennedy-Miller bill, the federation will enlist the help of outside groups, such as America's Rights at Work—headed by former Rep. David Bonior (D-Mich.)—for a week of nationwide demonstrations starting June 28 for the right to organize.

The second prong of the attack will be to recruit and train record numbers of organizers, both at the AFL-CIO and in individual unions. The third will be new strategic joint-union campaigns. One example of such joint campaigns, cited at the meeting, is a plan by the CWA and the Electrical Workers to jointly orga-

nize Comcast, the largest cable television provider.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council took stands on a variety of other issues before adjourning March 12, adopting 19 resolutions overall. Among them:

- Outsourcing. "Professional and technical workers . . . deserve better than to be cast aside by corporations in the global chase for more easily exploited labor," the federation asserted. Claiming the Bush administration "will do nothing to stop the offshoring tidal wave," it demanded that lawmakers "develop a coherent and comprehensive employment policy" to ban tax breaks and government procurement money for offshoring, as well as "clawback mechanisms" for firms that use public economic development dollars and then move overseas. It also demanded aid for service workers who lose their jobs to exports, or to foreign workers.

- The highway-mass transit bill. The federation endorsed the \$375 billion, 6-year bill issued by the GOP-run House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. "Every \$1 billion spent on transportation creates 47,000 jobs," it claimed. The council further said that mass transit dollars and workers' labor rights must be protected and called for greater highway and rail safety and security, including not just anti-terrorism moves but "criminal background checks of Mexican (truck) drivers hauling hazardous materials" to the U.S.

- Dumping. The federation reaffirmed its support for a trade provision, originally proposed by Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), that channels proceeds from dumping penalties to damaged U.S. industries and workers. Bush wants to repeal Byrd's law.

- Voting rights. The AFL-CIO will create "My vote, my right: Don't try to steal it again" teams in communities where voting problems could occur—as happened in Florida in 2000.—Press Associates, Inc.





## LOOKING AHEAD

# Cronkite's gold standard, tarnished

By Linda Foley, President

Walter Cronkite's office confirmed last week

that he will attend The Newspaper Guild's annual Freedom Awards Fund banquet this year. Wow.

After a reporting career that encompassed such defining moments as World War II, the Kennedy assassination, Vietnam, the lunar landing and Watergate, Cronkite left the CBS Evening News in 1981, ending 19 years at its anchor desk. In the more than two decades since he stopped breaking the day's top stories to millions of viewers, Cronkite remains—perhaps more than any other news professional—the icon of modern journalism.

For those who don't know, Cronkite began his career as a print reporter. He was an early activist in the 1940s, in what was then the fledgling American Newspaper Guild, and has remained supportive of the Guild's goals and ideals throughout his career. So it will be quite an honor to introduce him for opening remarks at our banquet in Washington on May 19.

He had a way of delivering the facts of a story with such authority and authenticity that

no one questioned them. Although we now know (and in the Guild, at least, always suspected) that he harbors some strong personal opinions about public policy issues, no one ever questioned his objectivity or his loyalty to the truth when he reported the news.

Cronkite's rich baritone and his ability to talk directly to his audience, as though he were holding forth in individual living rooms throughout the country, helped create a sense of complete trust in what he told us. His knowledge of current events and recent history—much of it gleaned as a reporter for UPI—coupled with years of journalistic experience, added to the aura of professionalism that surrounded his nightly newscasts.

Cronkite was the consummate newsmen during an era many would consider a golden age for newsmen and women. He was the "most trusted man in America" at a time when Americans trusted the news.

Unfortunately, the public's trust in the news and in today's journalists has evaporated.

Ironically, as Cronkite was accepting the Guild's invitation to speak at this year's Freedom Awards, the Pew Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism was releasing a comprehensive report on The State of the

News Media 2004 (see story, page 8). There are many sobering facts in the report, but none is sadder than the evidence it presents of an alarming decline of trust in today's news media.

According to the study, Cronkite's former employer, CBS News, has gone from nearly 85% believability in the mid-1980s to 64% in 2002. In fact, all three major U.S. broadcast networks have experienced similar dramatic declines in credibility.

And despite what I suspect is a state of denial among print journalists, the trust factor for newspapers has plummeted even more sharply. In June 1985, nearly 80% of the public trusted what it read in daily newspapers. By May 2002, less than 60% did.

Although the Pew study is careful not to generalize about the effect of various trends and factors on journalism today, there are two other findings that I believe bear directly on the reasons for this growing credibility gap.

First, media companies have consolidated their holdings of media outlets and as a group have become more diversified. In other words, more media outlets are owned by larger companies and, increasingly, by more companies for whom journalism is a less important part of their portfolio.

So, in 2004, the study reports, 22 compa-

nies now control 70% of daily newspaper circulation; just one company—Clear Channel—owns more than 1,200 radio stations; 10 companies own 30% of all television stations, reaching 85% of all TV households; and network TV owners are all "giant corporations for whom television, let alone television journalism, represents only a small part of their revenues," less than 30%.

Second, although profits for media companies are up, investment in newsgathering is down. The networks, for example, have cut the number of correspondents by one third since the 1980s. Newspapers today have 2,200 fewer full-time newsroom employees than they did in 1990—this while ad revenues rose 60% and profits jumped by 207% during the same period, according to the Pew study.

Thus, the study concludes, "many traditional media are maintaining their profitability by focusing on costs, including cutting back in their newsrooms." Journalists' workloads have increased, and space for news has decreased.

That's not exactly a strategy for building loyal audiences and readers—let alone trust. Which may explain in part why a profession once personified by Walter Cronkite is now identified with Jayson Blair.

## There's no free lunch—and no 'free' market

By Thom Hartmann

The conservative belief in "free markets" is a bit like the Catholic Church's former insistence that the Earth was at the center of the solar system: It's widely believed by those in power. Those who challenge it are branded heretics and ridiculed. And it is wrong.

In actual fact, there is no such thing as a "free market." Markets are the creation of government.

Governments provide a stable currency to make markets possible. They provide a legal infrastructure and court systems to enforce the contracts that make markets possible. They provide educated workforces through public education, and those workers show up at their places of business after traveling on public roads, rails, or airways provided by government. Businesses that use the "free market" are protected by police and fire departments provided by government, and send their communications—from phone to fax to internet—over lines that follow public rights-of-way maintained and protected by government.

Most important, the rules of the game of business are defined by government. Any sports fan can tell you that football, baseball or hockey without rules and referees would be a mess. Similarly, business without rules won't work.

Markets are a creation of government, just as corporations exist only by authorization of government. Governments set the rules of the market. And, since our government is of, by, and for We The People, those rules historically were set to maximize the public good resulting from people doing business. If you want to play the game of business, we've said in the U.S. since 1784 (when Tench Coxe got the first tariffs passed, "to protect domestic industries"), you have to play in a way that both makes you money and serves the public interest.

Which brings us to a second popular belief that needs to be punctured, the notion that the "middle class" is a product of "free markets." The middle class is not the natural result of freeing business to do whatever it wants, of "free and open markets" or of "free trade." Those policies will produce a small but powerful wealthy class, a small "middle" mercantilist class, and a huge and terrified worker class which traditionally have been called "serfs."

The middle class is a relatively new invention of liberal democracies, the direct result of governments defining the rules of the game of business. It is, quite simply, an artifact of government regulation of markets and tax laws.

The conservative mantra is "let the market decide." But because there is no market independent of government, what the conservatives are really saying is, "Stop corporations from defending workers and building a middle class, and let the corporations decide how much to pay for labor and how to trade." This is, at best, destructive to national and international economies, and at worst is destructive to democracy itself.

All of which explains why conservative economics wiped out the middle class during the period from 1880 to 1932. And why, when Reagan again began applying conservative economics, the middle class again began to vanish in America in the 1980s—a process that has dramatically picked up steam under George W. Bush.

When government sets the rules of the game of business in such a way that working people must receive a living wage; when labor has the power to organize into unions, just as capital can organize into corporations; and when domestic industries are protected from overseas competition, a middle class will emerge. When government gives up those functions, the middle class vanishes and we return to a Dickensian era of "free" market economics in which the rich get rich-



er while the working poor are kept in a constant state of fear and anxiety so the cost of their labor will always be cheap.

Today's conservatives still insist that government is the problem, not the solution. Of course, they can't explain how it was that the repeated series of huge tax cuts for the wealthy by the Herbert Hoover administration brought us the Great Depression, while raising taxes to provide for an active and interventionist government to protect the rights of labor to organize throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s led to the Golden Age of the American Middle Class. (The top tax rate in 1930 under Hoover was 25%, and even that was paid by only a fifth of wealthy Americans. Thirty years later, the top tax rate was 91%, and held at 70% until Reagan began dismantling the middle class. As the top rate dropped, so did the middle class it helped create.)

Only a return to liberal economic poli-

cies—a return to We The People again setting and enforcing the rules of the game of business—will reverse the current dangerous trend. We've done it before, with tariffs, anti-trust legislation, and worker protections, producing something never before seen in history: a strong and vibrant middle class. If the remnants of that modern middle class are to survive and grow, we must learn the lessons of the past and return to the policies that in the 1780s and the late 1930s brought this nation back from the brink of economic disaster.

Thom Hartmann is an author and nationally syndicated daily talk-show host. This column is adapted from a longer version that may be read at [www.alternet.org](http://www.alternet.org), an online project of the Independent Media Institute, which supports independent and alternative journalism.

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 pub-

lication of either attack or reply shall not be delayed longer than one issue.

Deadline: Friday before publication. (Next deadline: April 16.) Letters and articles proposed for publication may be e-

mailed to the editor at [azipser@cwa-union.org](mailto:azipser@cwa-union.org).

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



## Action items . . .

### Demanding accountability for deaths

The one-year anniversary of the U.S. shelling of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, in which two journalists were killed and several others wounded, is being marked by the International Federation of Journalists with protests and letters to American embassies around the world. The Newspaper Guild-CWA is gathering signatures on a petition, to be delivered April 8 to the Pentagon and Capitol Hill, demanding declassification of the Pentagon's internal "investigation" of the incident and a full explanation of the deaths. All media workers in the U.S. are asked to visit the web at <http://cwa-union.org/jourmopetition> to sign a petition addressed to U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and select members of Congress. Media workers outside the U.S. and non-media supporters are asked to go to <http://cwa-union.org/IFJpetition> to read and sign a separate but similar petition. Anyone wishing more information about mediaworkers' deaths in Iraq can read a full IFJ report at [www.ifj.org/default.asp?index=2328&Language=EN](http://www.ifj.org/default.asp?index=2328&Language=EN).

### Overtime battle isn't over quite yet

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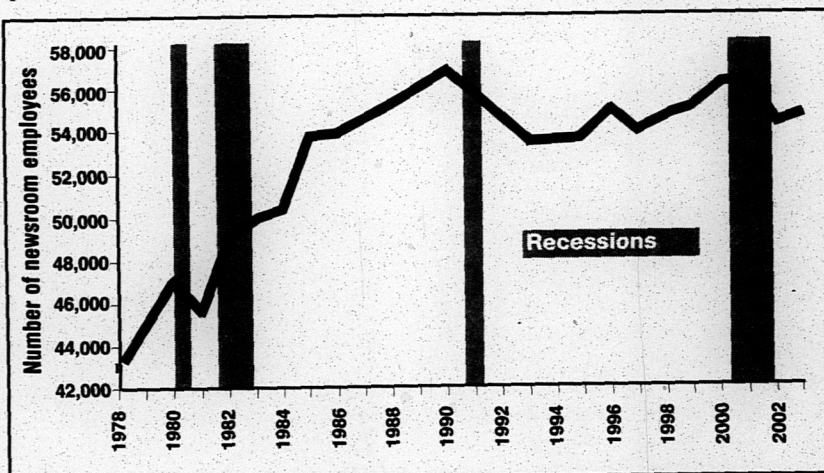
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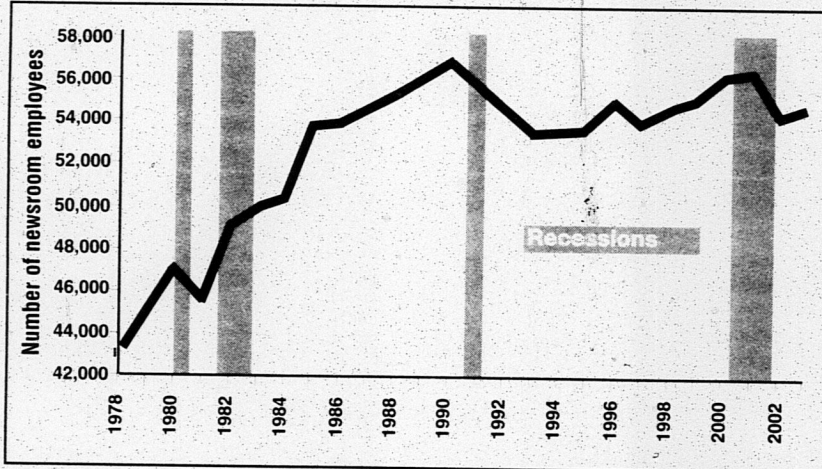
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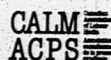
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