

THE GUILD Reporter

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Freelancer use heats up in NY

As the Guild steadily moves toward a dramatic change in its attitude toward freelancers, a showdown between the New York Times and freelance photographers has been heating up. And the Newspaper Guild of New York, which in the past has voiced the most reservations about admitting freelancers into TNG-CWA, has pivoted 180 degrees by announcing creation of a new freelancer unit.

The New York Guild action, approved unanimously by its executive board at its March meeting, anticipates by several months an expected amendment to the TNG-CWA constitution authorizing such units. The new unit will admit eligible freelancers—regardless of where they live—who work for any New York-area media outlets with Guild representation. The extensive list includes The New York Times, Newsweek, The Nation, Reuters America and Time Warner.

Local President Barry Lipton said his administrative committee is still working out such details as dues and areas of representation, as well as a package of benefits it hopes to offer new freelance members. But both he and Secretary-Treasurer William O'Meara, Lipton added, believe the executive council decision "shows that our original goal was to make sure this important issue is being handled the best way possible."

The decision comes against an ironic backdrop, as an attempt by The New York Times to impose a new contract on its freelance photographers has drawn mounting resistance. Although presented with a cover letter that assures photographers "its terms reflect the fair consideration of your needs as well as those of the paper," the new contract is a unilaterally drafted, "take-it-or-leave-it" document that gives far more benefits to the Times than to its freelancers.

Continued on page 2

Organizing drive on at Bloomberg

The Bloomberg news service, whose hordes of young employees stuff financial news into every imaginable medium—print, radio, TV and, of course, the company's trademark "Bloombergs"—has long had a reputation as a digital-age sweatshop.

Hours are long, workspaces close and crowded, the pace relentless. Drinks and snacks are free, the better to keep employees chained to their computer terminals. Matt Winkler, who runs the news operation, is renowned for a mercurial and sometimes abusive temperament.

But at one time, at least, much of this was tolerated because of the perks. Revenue-sharing "certificates" were awarded to employees who reached hire-date anniversaries—and the rewards were significant. Office attire was blue-jeans casual, the workplace atmosphere—barring Winkler's tirades—egalitarian and collegial. The company throbbed with the kind of "can-do" optimism that permeated Silicon Valley start-ups, its upstart

workers joyfully out to trounce long-established rivals Reuters and Dow Jones.

Fast-forward a decade or so and Bloomberg is one of a handful of companies that dominate the market for desk-top financial news and information. Founder Michael Bloomberg has leveraged his wealth into becoming mayor of New York City. And Bloomberg the employer has become—well, just another big company trying to wring ever more work out of its employees. The sweatshop is in overdrive.

No surprise, then, that the company also has become the target of a renewed organizing drive by the New York Guild, which has shown its interest in the past but is now redoubling its efforts. Meeting with groups of Bloomberg employees in New York and out of town and operating a phone bank that calls Bloomberg employees at home, the local has been taking the workforce pulse and pushing the idea that unions provide a work-

Continued on page 2

JUSTICE FOR JOURNALISTS KILLED IN IRAQ!



Aidan White, chief of the International Federation of Journalists, gestures (above) during an April 8 march in front of the U.S. embassy in Brussels. Below, he hands a letter of protest to Mike Fitz-

patrick, political director of the U.S. embassy. Journalist groups in various capitals held demonstrations marking the first anniversary of the "friendly fire" incident at the Palestine Hotel.



PHOTOS BY VIRGINIA MAYO ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rumsfeld pressed on 'friendly fire' deaths

Journalists' and human rights groups worldwide demonstrated and delivered petitions and letters of protest April 8, commemorating the one-year anniversary of the deaths of two journalists in Baghdad.

Taras Protsiuk of Reuters and José Couso of Telecinco were killed when a U.S. tank shelled the Palestine Hotel, widely recognized as the temporary home of approximately 150 foreign journalists covering the Iraqi invasion. Although the Pentagon said the tank was returning fire from the hotel, reporters on the scene—without exception—denied any shots had been fired from the premises.

At least five additional journalists have been killed in three more "friendly fire" incidents initiated by

U.S. troops, including Tareq Ayoub, killed in an air strike on Al-Jazeera offices in Baghdad; British ITN reporter Terry Lloyd, who was killed in a fire fight near Basra and whose colleagues, Fred Nérac and Hussein Osman, are still missing and presumed dead; and the point-blank shooting death of Reuters cameraman Mazen Dana. Questions also are being raised, by the International Federation of Journalists and other groups, of the killing last month of two Al-Arabya media staffers, Ali Abdel Aziz and Ali al-Khatib.

"But it is the attack upon the Palestine Hotel, a shameful incident made worse by U.S. misinformation circulated after the event, that has caused widespread anger and come to symbolize the notion of

Continued on page 2

Inside this issue



Riding the job-search caravan page 5

Just what do ethics codes protect? . . . page 6

Politics still haunt the Guild page 7

'Friendly fire' protests

Continued from page 1

impunity that characterizes official treatment of journalists in Iraq," an IFJ statement observed. "To this day there has been no satisfactory explanation about why that attack took place. The U.S. authorities have issued a whitewash report clearing their military of any responsibility—but they steadfastly refuse to make the report public."

More than 6,000 American media workers signed petitions, developed by TNG-CWA in conjunction with the IFJ, calling on the Pentagon to release the full report. Similar petitions, signed by thousands of additional media workers worldwide, were delivered to U.S. embassies in London, Madrid, Brussels and other world capitals.

A letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, signed by TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, as well as IFJ General Secretary Aidan White and Alexandra Arriaga, director of government relations for Amnesty

International, USA, further pressed the issue. Calling for an independent inquiry into the various deaths, the letter urges him "to develop protocols to ensure the safety of war correspondents."

"Reporters, camera operators and others who cover war zones must be reasonably secure that the U.S. military is doing everything possible to ensure their safety," the letter writers observed. "On behalf of the petition's signers and media workers around the world, we request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these important concerns."

Copies of the letter were sent to members of the House and Senate armed services committees. As of April 21, Rumsfeld had not responded.

An IFJ report detailing U.S. failures to properly investigate incidents in which journalists are killed, "Justice Denied on the Road to Baghdad," is available from the federation. Contact IFJ press officer Robert Shaw, at robert.shaw@ifj.org.

Organizing on at Bloomberg

Continued from page 1

place voice. A new web site, www.ourbloomberg.com, asks visitors if they'd like a say in future bureau closings, pay, healthcare coverage and "new iterations of pervasive micromanagement"—a subject that will resonate for virtually any Bloomberg employee.

For those who do, the site provides a Guild membership form, that can be downloaded in PDF or text formats. Once enough forms have been returned, the local will seek voluntary recognition from Bloomberg or, failing that, request a National Labor Relations Board election.

Then the fun—in the form of contract bargaining—would begin.

As suggested by the new web site, in a statement signed by "employees working to bring the Guild to Bloomberg," the old sweat-shop days have become parades by comparison. At one time the workforce had few management layers, no one had formal titles, reporters and editors were trusted and compensation grew with workload.

"No more," the web site adds, noting that in its success Bloomberg has grown more, not less, demanding of its employees. "Matt Winkler asked Princeton employees in January to compare priorities between their families and homes—and their jobs," the statement discloses. "If your personal life comes first, you shouldn't

work for Bloomberg, Matt said."

Several attempts have been made to impose mandatory 10-hour workdays. Even the most institutionalized personal time is no longer sacrosanct, with Winkler reportedly trying to assign work to a staffer on vacation. And instead of having managers communicate the most recent cost-cutting moves, employees are sent to human resource employees "who themselves aren't fully informed" about the "efficiency steps" being taken. Bloomberg employees trace

such workplace deterioration to Michael Bloomberg's mayoral victory in 2002, when he surrendered control of the company to avoid conflicts of interest. But that simply allowed a different kind of conflict to arise. "These are dedicated employees who care deeply about their company and the quality of its services," noted New York Guild President Barry Lipton. "They simply want to ensure that they are treated with dignity and compensated as the professionals they are. That's where we come in."

Freelancers resist NY Times contract

Continued from page 1

Leading the list of photographers' grievances is a requirement that they sign over their copyrights, giving the Times all future revenue from reuse and syndication of photos. But there are numerous other problems with the agreement. "This contract is clearly unfair to photographers," observes an analysis prepared by the American Society of Media Photographers. "While it falls just short of seizing all rights... it is ASP's opinion that signing this contract and contracts like this is detrimental to your personal interests and will also adversely affect the industry."

Nearly 250 photographers signed a letter to Times management March 31, requesting a meeting to

negotiate better terms. The April 6 response from managing editor William E. Schmidt announced the newspaper would "not be able to accommodate your request for a meeting," but added that the contract "is clear, concise and fair."

Photographers who refuse to sign the non-negotiated contract have been locked out of assignments since April 1, but freelancers continue trying to exert pressure on the company. A sample letter of protest, prepared by the Advertising Photographers of America, is at www.apanational.org/nytimes/

Correction

The Feb. 27 issue of The Guild Reporter, in a page 6 article about new union reporting rules, mistakenly referred to "the 1959 GOP-written Taft-Hartley Act."

The Taft-Hartley Act, otherwise known as the Labor-Management Relations Act, was passed by a Republican Congress over Democratic President Harry Truman's veto in 1947. Drafted largely by business lobbyists, its many labor-unfriendly provisions included the requirement that unions file financial reports with the Labor Dept.

The Landrum-Griffin Act, officially known as the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, was passed in 1959, also by a Republican Congress. The act increased the severity of many Taft-Hartley provisions and included a requirement that unions file annual reports.

Guild briefs . . .

Chinese workers to get their day!

It's been several years coming, but the National Labor Relations Board finally has scheduled a trial in a score of unfair labor practices filed by TNG-CWA against the Chinese Daily News. Set for July 19 in Los Angeles, the trial before an administrative law judge will hear complaints dating back to June 25, 2001, including threats, economic reprisals and workplace abuse of Guild activists.

Brattleboro firing heads for trial

Also on the docket: a May 25 NLRB trial over last year's firing of Eesha Williams by the Brattleboro Daily Reformer as he was leading a unionization campaign.

Chairman's raise fuels DJ anger

More unrest is roiling Dow Jones, where nearly 100 Guild members picketed the blue chip company's New York headquarters April 7 to protest its continued insistence on a wage freeze and higher health care costs for employees. Fueling their displeasure was news that chairman Peter Kann got a 58% increase in cash compensation last year over 2002. A week later, the company reported higher revenues, operating profit and ad lineage in the first quarter—and said it was raising subscription prices.

Cantonese radio to stay on the air

Under mounting Congressional pressure, the chair of the Broadcasting Board of Governors of Radio Free Asia has announced that the Cantonese broadcasts will not be discontinued. The announcement followed a series of meetings between Guild representatives and several lawmakers, including Virginia Republican Congressman Frank Wolf, who chairs the House subcommittee that oversees the board. The jobs of two of the recently organized unit's most active members would have been on the line if the Cantonese broadcasts were eliminated.

Hard line taken in Akron bargaining

Knight Ridder continues taking a hard line at its Akron Beacon Journal, where contract bargaining is entering its 10th month. Among its continued demands: institution of a "merit pay" system, elimination of language requiring employee consent to job transfers and elimination of language restricting use of correspondents. The Guild has asked that the two sides seek help from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Hearst appealing Seattle decision

Hearst Corp., owner of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, asked the state Supreme Court April 19 to reverse a month-old appeals court decision that paves the way for the Seattle Times to dissolve their joint operating agreement. The appeals court ruled that the Times could include strike-related losses when calculating its financial rationale for bowing out of the contract. Hearst, which argued the contract specifically prohibits such calculations, says the Post-Intelligencer wouldn't survive a JOA split.

Meter running for writing retiree

Wally Wakefield, the 73-year-old retired school teacher who was told by the Minnesota Supreme Court last year that he would have to reveal his sources for a newspaper article he'd written, is sticking by his guns—at a cost of \$200 a day in fines that started earlier this month. Wakefield's saga has been chronicled by The Guild Reporter several times, not least because he's being ordered to reveal confidential sources in a defamation trial in which neither he nor the newspaper in which his article was published are being sued. The fines are to continue until the trial begins, July 19.

Scholastic staff: four more years

The Scholastic Unit of The Newspaper Guild of New York ratified, 34-1, a four-year extension of its contract that calls for 3% increases in June of each year. The contract also prohibits the exclusion of Guild members from merit increases, includes four new jobs and classifies eight long unfilled positions as "dark."

Recent deaths

Jose Stell, a former president of the San Jose Guild and the first recipient of its Frank Sauliere Award, died recently at the age of 77. A member of the local executive committee for nearly two decades, he was president of the Guild's Western District Council for five consecutive terms, was a delegate to more than a dozen Guild conventions and was picket captain during the local's only strike, in 1959. Stell joined the Mercury News as a reporter in 1958 and served the paper until his retirement in 1988, maintaining his Guild membership until his death.

Rosemary Poplar, a Kenosha News copy editor for six years before cancer forced her retirement in 2001, has died at the age of 63. An editor at several midwestern papers, she also was a Guild officer, according to a note from her husband.

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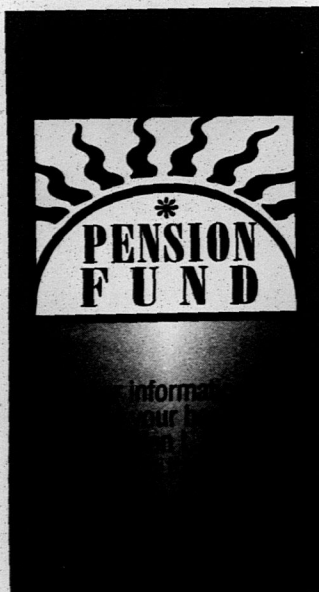
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Newsrooms: a (slightly) darker shade of pale

The half-full glass, reported April 20 by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, is that newsroom diversity at U.S. daily newspapers increased by nearly half a percentage point in 2003, resulting in a workforce that is 12.94% minority.

The half-empty glass, alas, is that minorities now account for 31.7% of the overall U.S. population. And the year-over-year change in newsroom minority staffing is still short of the growth rate needed to meet ASNE's goal of reaching parity with the general population by 2025.

Moreover, the growth in minority recruitment is coming in a shrinking industry, with the overall number of newsroom professionals declining by about 500 journalists last year. Indeed, it's fair to say minority representation wouldn't have grown at all if U.S.

newsrooms hadn't lost an estimated 2,000 full-time journalists—mostly white men—since 2000.

Slim as these gains may be, they do represent an improvement since ASNE's first census, in 1978, when it disclosed that minorities made up only 3.95% of the total newsroom workforce. And a finding that the number of minority interns last year increased to 852, to 32.2% of the total from 30.6%, raised hopes that the long-term trend favors increased diversity.

Other highlights of the newsroom census may be seen online at www.asne.org, including the following items:

- 373 daily newspapers still have no minorities on staff, the same number as last year.

- Minorities account for 10.5% of all newsroom supervisors; conversely, 20% of all minority staffers are supervisors.

Planning started for human rights caucus

Now that locals are selecting delegates for the TNG-CWA sector conference in Anaheim, Aug. 26-28, local human rights coordinators and those interested in the human rights caucus need to throw their hats in the ring if they want their voices heard this summer. In most cases, that means getting their names on local ballots.

The primary mission of the human rights caucus, which met for the first time last year, is to assess TNG's progress in meeting the union's diversity goals. The caucus also sets intermediate objectives and projects for the coming year to help meet the goals.

This year's major project is the Guild's participation in conven-

tions' hosted by UNITY, which comprises the four ethnic minority journalist groups, and by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association. In addition to staffing booths at both events, the caucus will be distributing a new TNG brochure.

Staff representatives Debbie Thomas and Linda Cearley, who work with locals on human rights issues, currently are designing a workshop for the sector conference.

Thirty-four U.S. locals and one Canadian local have named their human rights coordinators. Members of locals without an HRC or who want more information about the program should contact Debbie at dthomas@cwa-union.org or Linda at lcearley@cwa-union.org.

San Jose scores big on pensions

In a resounding victory for both Mercury News retirees and current employees, an arbitrator has ruled that the paper violated its contract with the San Jose Newspaper Guild when it refused to pay a 5.75% pension benefit increase retroactive to January 1, 2002. As a result, approximately 400 retirees and beneficiaries will receive retroactive increases and improvements in their monthly checks going forward.

The decision also increases the current \$1,000 monthly benefit cap to as much as \$1,300 for members with more than 15 years of Guild-credited service. The additional basic pension benefit is also increased, from \$7.50 to \$8.25 for each year of service. This increase will apply to all current employees who have at least five years of

Guild service when they leave the Mercury News.

What does all this mean in real dollars? The local estimates that prior to the ruling, an employee with \$900,000 in earnings over 25 years (an annual average of \$36,000) could have retired at age 55 with \$1,187.50 in monthly benefits. Now the same employee would receive \$1,326.25 a month.

The Guild filed its grievance last year, after the Mercury News refused to follow a contractual requirement that the paper match pension benefits set by a union-management trust overseeing pensions for Guild-represented employees at the San Francisco Chronicle. Arguments were heard on two days, in July and October, and both sides filed legal briefs in November.



Andy Morrison, Mike Sallah, Mitch Weiss, John Robinson Block and Joe Mahr, vainly trying to hide his glass of bubbly behind Lillian Covarrubias,

president of the Toledo Guild, celebrate the Toledo Blade's first Pulitzer Prize as Block, the Blade's publisher, shows off his Guild membership card.

Guild members rack up journalism awards

Five members of The Newspaper Guild-CWA won 2004 Pulitzer Prizes for outstanding journalism, reporting on a scandalous lack of attention to worker safety, the horrors of Vietnam and now the tragedies in Iraq. Sixteen other Guild members were Pulitzer finalists.

The winners were New York Times reporter David Barstow, of the Newspaper Guild of New York; Toledo Blade reporters Michael Sallah, Mitch Weiss and Joe Mahr, of the Toledo Guild; and Washington Post war correspondent Anthony Shadid, of the Washington-Baltimore Guild.

Barstow, together with non-Guild member Lowell Bergman, was honored in the public service category for their work on two three-part series, "Dangerous Business" and "When Workers Die." The stories exposed safety violations in American factories that contributed to workers' deaths and injuries, and looked at employers' virtual immunity from consequences for violating safety rules.

The Toledo Blade trio won their newspaper's first Pulitzer, for investigative reporting, for a series of articles documenting the Vietnam War atrocities committed by Tiger Force, an elite Army unit that killed dozens of unarmed civilians, and possibly many more. Working on a tip from a former Army colonel, they unearthed more than 1,000 classified documents and interviewed former Tiger Force soldiers who had carried their secrets for decades.

Shadid, who speaks fluent Arabic and was shot

and wounded two years ago while covering the West Bank, won in the international reporting category for coverage of Iraq. The Pulitzer judges hailed his "extraordinary ability to capture, at personal peril, the voices and emotions of Iraqis" before, during and since the American invasion. Among his stories, he interviewed a father in Thuluya, Iraq, who had been forced by villagers to kill his son, whom they suspected of spying for the Americans.



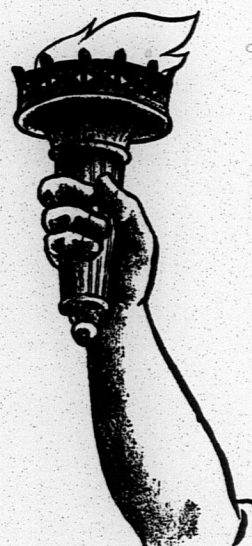
Willmsen



O'Hagan

Among the Guild's Pulitzer finalists were Broun Award winners Christine Willmsen and Maureen O'Hagan, in the public service category that was won by Barstow. Willmsen and O'Hagan also were recognized by the Scripps Howard Foundation in its annual National Journalism Awards competition for the same series that captured the Broun Award, "Coaches Who Prey." The Seattle Times reporters were to be awarded the foundation's public service reporting prize at a dinner April 23 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The Broun Award will be presented May 19 at the Freedom Award Banquet.



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

News round-up

Overtime rule changes in flux

Feeling political heat over its proposed changes in federal overtime laws, the U.S. Labor Dept. announced some revisions—most notably lifting from \$65,000 to \$100,000 the annual salary cap for overtime pay eligibility—as *The Guild Reporter* was going to press. But other changes were being disclosed more slowly, and critics such as Rep. George Miller (D-CA) charged that the new rules will still cut overtime pay for “far more people” than the administration will admit. Meanwhile, other jurisdictions are taking matters into their own hands. Illinois, for example, has enacted a law banning state enforcement of all the changes except those benefiting low-wage workers.

Unemployment rate, job formation up

The nation's unemployment rate rose to 5.7% in March from 5.6%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which translated into 8.352 million people looking for work. And the number of long-term jobless—those whose unemployment benefits have run out—climbed to 23.4% of all unemployed workers, a doubling since Bush took office. The higher unemployment rate came despite an increase of 308,000 jobs in March 2004—a 0.24% gain—signaling that some discouraged workers have resumed their search for jobs. Despite the slight uptick, the Bush administration's labor market record remains the worst since the Hoover administration. One hopeful sign: the number of classified help-wanted ads is growing.

A rising tide can swamp moored boats

A rising tide apparently does not lift all boats, as evidenced by a new study from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. Its title pretty much says it all: “The Unprecedented Rising Tide of Corporate Profits and the Simultaneous Ebbing of Labor Compensation—Gainers and Losers from the National Economic Recovery in 2002 and 2003.” As lead author Andrew Sum elaborated, the study found that while labor historically received about 65% of national income and corporate profits got 15% to 18%, in the current recovery profits are getting 41% and labor—including all forms of employee compensation, from wages, benefits and salaries to the percentage of payroll taxes paid by employers—is getting 38%.

Lonely at the top—but plush, too

One group of wage earners that has proven impervious to economic ups and downs comprises top corporate executives, who last year pumped up their pay by an average 16%. The median base salary and bonuses paid to chief executives grew to \$2,029,500 from \$1,750,000 in 2002, according to a Reuters study of 345 of the Standard & Poor's 500 companies. One source of that largesse, it turns out, was Uncle Sam: According to a Wall Street Journal analysis of General Accounting Office documents, 60% of U.S. corporations didn't pay a penny in federal taxes during the boom years of 1996-2000. And by 2003, GAO records show corporate tax receipts had fallen to just 7.4% of all federal revenue, the second lowest level since the mid-depression year 1934.

Tax auditors a vanishing breed

While some of the decline in corporate tax payments presumably is legal, there's no way to know how much. As reported this month by David Cay Johnston, author of “Perfectly Legal,” new Internal Revenue Service data show that tax enforcement has fallen steadily under President Bush, with fewer audits, fewer penalties, fewer prosecutions and virtually no effort to prosecute corporate tax crimes. The audit rate for the 11,200 largest corporations, which pay nearly all corporate income taxes, has fallen by almost half over the last decade, as has the audit rate for unincorporated businesses. Moreover, separate data from the Justice Department show a long downward trend in federal tax prosecutions, to 483 in 2003 from 1,431 in 1981.

Every good boy deserves favor

Finally, it's worth noting that among the most notable beneficiaries of the tax cuts pushed through by the current administration are ... the Bushes and Cheneys. According to returns released this month by the White House, Bush and his wife, Laura, paid \$227,490 in federal income taxes for their \$822,126 in adjusted gross income for 2003, compared with the \$268,719 they paid on \$856,056 of income in 2002. Cheney and his wife owed \$253,067 in 2003 federal taxes, down from \$341,114 the previous year.

WashPost mailers turning up the heat

The mailers and helpers who package *The Washington Post* for delivery, members of CWA Local 14201, demonstrated March 24 at The Post-sponsored FOSE show, a technology exhibition for government technology professionals. The mailers and helpers have been working without a contract for almost a year. A key issue blocking contract agreement is pay equity for utility mailers—85% of whom are black or Latino—who do the same work as journeymen but receive less than half the journey rate. CWA has urged activists to phone Post publisher Bo Jones at 202-334-7141 or e-mail him at jonesb@washpost.com.

Class war deplored by one of its big winners

One of the most successful investors in the U.S., Warren Buffett, is warning that the U.S. already is embroiled in a class war—and that everyone will be worse off because of it.

Opening the CWA's legislative conference in Washington, D.C. on March 28, Executive Vice President Larry Cohen quoted Buffett as saying: “There is class war in the United States, and my class is winning.” Buffett, owner of Berkshire Hathaway, is worth more than \$15 billion.

Buffett wasn't bragging, Cohen noted, but was speaking out of concern about the impact of a class war. “The White House and their allies will try to persuade us that we are safer and stronger and that social issues, not economic issues, are the real ones that divide us,” Cohen warned the union's legislative and political activists.

“We should not need Warren Buffett to remind us of our own interests. But if U.S. politics have become so extreme that he is joining with us, concerned about longer term consequences of the politics of greed, this should remind us of how much work we have to do,” Cohen declared.

Conference delegates lobbied on several key

issues, including offshoring of telecommunications, computer and—now—newspaper jobs, enhancing collective bargaining rights and fighting “contracting out” of services.

“Not only do we lose jobs when services are contracted out, but more often than not it is the end of any real rights for workers, as the contracting begins a downward spiral that ends either in the U.S. or Asia with workers that have no real organizing rights and a fraction of the pay and benefits,” Cohen said.

He added that CWA must push Congress and the states for laws to “in some way limit the ‘race to the bottom,’ as U.S. employers silently execute their own workers, now by exporting high tech and customer service jobs as well as manufacturing” jobs.

But ultimately, the fight against class war will be won at the ballot box, Cohen warned. He charged the delegates to go home and convince their colleagues, co-workers and the rest of the country of the importance of this fall's election.

“The challenge is to convince our own members and families that our political education and action is critical if the interests of working families are to matter,” he said.—*Press Associates, Inc.*

GOP kills minimum wage hike

Senate Republicans again killed Democratic plans to raise the minimum wage and restore federal jobless aid, both of which are key issues for low-income and unemployed workers.

Noting that joblessness had ticked up to 5.7% and that almost a fourth of the jobless have exhausted their unemployment benefits, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) tried to reinstate the jobless benefits and extend them through September 30. Separately, Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Thomas Daschle (D-S.D.) proposed raising the minimum wage, now \$5.15 per hour, to \$7 per hour in three stages over the next two years.

The Democrats tried to attach both plans to a bill renewing the nation's welfare programs, calling a minimum wage hike one of the best anti-poverty measures available. But the GOP tried to send the welfare bill back to the Senate Finance Committee, thus automatically torpedoing any chance the minimum wage hike or jobless benefits plan could be added.

In response, Democrats launched a filibuster which the GOP was unable to halt, thus killing the welfare bill, the minimum wage hike and the jobless benefits extension.

Democrats were unrepentant, however. “People at the minimum wage have been stuck there for seven years,” Boxer said. She challenged senators to “try and live on \$10,800 a year,” the amount a full-time minimum wage worker earns.

Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) said the relative decrease in the minimum wage since the last hike “contributed to a doubling of poverty.” The \$10,800 yearly earnings figure “is \$4,500 below the poverty line. . . . Even this modest increase would only raise the annual salary of families to about \$14,000.”

But raising the minimum wage “has nothing to do with welfare,” retorted Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), explaining why he objected to pairing the concepts—although thousands of former welfare recipients toil in minimum wage jobs.—*Press Associates, Inc.*

‘In-sourcing’ no cure for losses

With the growing loss of jobs to overseas markets producing a political backlash, “free trade” advocates have started responding with claims that offshoring losses must be balanced against the gains caused by “in-sourcing.”

In this view, foreign investment in the U.S. creates jobs which offset the jobs shipped to other countries paying lower wages. But such claims, while superficially plausible, don't appear substantiated by actual job numbers.

According to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute, U.S. companies owned by foreign multinationals in 1991 employed 4.74 million workers. Over the next decade, the foreign multinationals acquired additional U.S. companies employing 4.1 million workers. They also established U.S.-based companies employing another 274,000 workers.

If no jobs had been lost, the number of U.S. jobs in foreign-owned companies in 2001 would have been 9.15 million. Instead, 2001 employment at foreign-owned companies was 6.37 million, indicating a net loss of 2.78 million U.S. jobs through import displacement, sales losses, productivity increases or divestiture.

“Foreign-owned companies are indeed employing



millions of Americans,” the EPI analysis observes, “but the evidence suggests that they have destroyed more jobs than they created in recent years.”

Unlike U.S. exporting of jobs overseas to take advantage of cheap labor, foreign investment in the U.S. often is made simply to gain access to U.S. marketing and distribution systems. Such motives do not create production jobs but do exacerbate trade imbalances, as reflected in another EPI analysis underscoring the surging trade deficit among foreign-owned companies in the U.S. “Thus,” the analysts conclude, “both the job and trade statistics refute the argument that insourcing represents a counterweight to the negative effect of offshoring on U.S. jobs and trade.”

Bush hobos, in search of jobs

WashTech members Charlie Seaman and Myra Bronstein were among 51 jobless Americans traveling on an AFL-CIO-sponsored bus tour designed to spotlight the current jobless recovery. The "Show Us the Jobs" tour left St. Louis March 24 and meandered across eight states before ending up in Washington, D.C. on March 31.

Seaman, 55, was laid off from Georgia Pacific due to downsizing. Bronstein, 40, had worked at an IT job at WatchMark corporation in Washington for two years when her entire department was informed they would be laid off—after they had trained their Indian replacements. Here are excerpts from their journals:

From: Myra Bronstein

Thursday, March 25, 2004

The Bush Administration will be the first since that of Herbert Hoover to finish its term with fewer jobs than when it took office.

We commemorated this dubious achievement with a covert "op" to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library & Museum. Of course, the Hoover-Bush comparison is unwelcome to many. It's now simply impolite in America to tell the truth about George W. Bush and his policies, so we were uninvited and unwelcome guests at the library. We had no illusions about that. Stealth and speed were called for to do what we were about to do. I was psyched!

We moved quickly—as quickly, at least, as two busloads of people can move. Our mission objective: for all 51 bus riders to pose in front of the library holding a huge banner that read, "Show Us the Jobs," the theme of our bus tour.

It took about two minutes for the Iowa State Highway Patrol and a forest ranger to show up. . . .

All along the way, bus riders shared their experiences with members of the communities where we stopped. We met Stacy in Des Moines, who told us about her frustration of being a parent who, if she could even find a job, would have to pay as much for day care as she earned. Nikki, another young mother, can't afford to pay for day care, either, so she has to take her baby everywhere with her. The baby fussed and cried through much of our group discussion.

Later, back on the road, one of the bus riders named Scott described what life is like as a single father with a nine-year-old son. Scott, who is from Montana, said he struggles to support his son by working at low-wage jobs, unable to find anything better despite the fact that he has a college degree.

"My son has to worry about things like the fridge getting empty, the cupboards getting empty, the electric bill getting paid—things a nine-year-old boy shouldn't have to worry about," Scott said.

"I can't afford to send my son to college," he added. "And he's smart, smarter than me. I just feel like the world's gonna miss out on a brilliant mind."

Brenda, the bus rider from Maryland, is a young mother who expressed her anguish at being unable to buy her teenage daughter a prom dress. Brenda was a highway construction worker until she was laid off last September. Weeks later, her husband was laid off from the fabrication shop where he worked. Now they can't even pay the utility bills. Their property taxes on the home they just purchased are delinquent. She said they likely will face foreclosure soon.

At our breakfast meeting, the moderator had asked Brenda how stress had affected her family relationships.

"My husband and I fight like cats and dogs," she said.

"But is that new?" the moderator joked.

"Yeah," said Brenda. "Before, we worked so much we didn't have time to fight."

From: Charlie Seaman

Thursday, March 25, 2004

When I was laid off in February of 2003, I didn't know that offshoring was affecting U. S. workers in such large numbers. When I realized what was going on, I was alarmed. Alarmed for myself. Alarmed for my kids. Alarmed for the whole country. I started to communicate with groups that combat offshoring, such as WashTech and Rescue American Jobs. I started to research who was sending jobs overseas and who wasn't. I started www.OnShoreAlternatives.com as a way to help Americans choose not to buy goods and services from companies who are firing American workers and sending their jobs overseas. I became more and more involved, more concerned about the lack of response from our elected officials, more angry about our American officials helping to move jobs overseas.

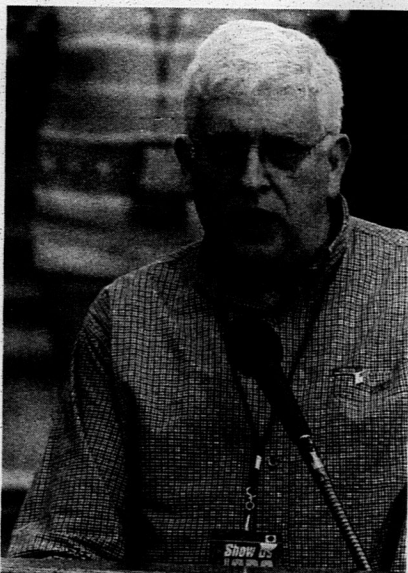
So this bus tour is a way we can help to inform people all over the country—people who might not otherwise pay attention, people who trust our elected officials to know what is the right thing to do, people who are afraid to speak out, people who are too devastated by their losses of job and livelihood, home, car, future to know that something can be done—to see the only way to fix this country is to do it ourselves. . . .

The greatest sight on the trip to the hotel was not the Gateway Arch. It was the Show Us the Jobs buses wrapped with giant red, yellow and blue Show Us the Jobs logos. It was really neat to see our homes away from home for the next week—and how great they look. Seeing them made the trip real. We will definitely attract attention wherever we go, traveling in these two huge moving billboards.

From: Myra Bronstein

Sunday, March 28, 2004

Will Americans have to cross the Rio



Charlie Seaman, on the stump.



Myra Bronstein on the bus, chatting with unidentified co-rider.

Grande to get jobs? That was one of the questions asked by a member of the Greenville, Mich., community when the AFL-CIO "Show Us the Jobs" bus tour stopped here today. The event was attended by hundreds of distraught workers who were about to be laid off at the Greenville Electrolux plant, which manufactures refrigerators. Soon the company will close the plant here in Michigan and move to Mexico. Union and government officials tried unsuccessfully to keep the company from joining the stampede of companies who want to take advantage of cheap foreign labor in countries like Mexico. Electrolux executives explained that they (their Greenville plant) were profitable, but wanted to be more profitable.

Corporate greed knows no boundaries.

Electrolux is an appliance manufacturer that employed 2,700 Greenville-area workers. Members of entire families have worked here, spanning decades and generations. They employ 187 married couples. They employ the grandparents and mother of a 15-year-old girl named Ember. Her father worked for a supplier of the company, so their closing is costing him his job, too.

Ember is a freshman in high school who has lived in Greenville her entire life. Until recently, she had friends, including a boyfriend, clothes, food, and a roof over her head. . . . Her former friends and boyfriend ridicule and ostracize her for wearing the same clothes to school day after day, and for being unable to afford the usual activities of a girl her age. Her family, all of whom have spent their entire lives in Michigan, plan to move to Florida, where her grandfather thinks he might be able to get a job selling time shares.

Ember asked me to deliver a message to George W. Bush:

"This is just crap, and nobody deserves this. Thanks to (you), we don't even have the money to get food and clothes, and I'm losing all of my friends, and we might need to leave. (You) need to get a brain."

I'd be more than happy to deliver that message.

From: Charlie Seaman

Monday, March 29, 2004

At 10 p.m. we are all singing. On the bus we are all family. It seems as if we've known each other all our lives. We're welcomed in town after town with handshakes and smiles from complete strangers who somehow feel like part of this family.

Earlier today I sat at a table and was interviewed by high school journalism students. I was asked questions about their future: what things might be like in ten years, how they should plan for college, what we think they can expect next year, how we feel about losing our jobs and not

finding new ones.

Three of the students, girls just a couple of years older than my own daughter, asked me questions about what it is like to not have a job, not be able to provide for her the way my parents provided for me. The very idea of having this conversation made me feel sorrow at the uncertainty of their futures. They should be able to look forward to exciting, happy lives. I promised them I would not give up this fight, and I advised them to get involved now so they would have the knowledge and judgment to choose good leaders when they become old enough to vote.

I urged them to go see their mayor or representative in Congress. I told them to ask why these people voted not to extend unemployment benefits. I told them to ask why minimum wage is lower than a living wage. Work for our democracy, I told them. Work to get it back. Don't just assume that things will get better.

Later, we went to a town hall meeting in Manitowoc, with over 300 people attending. Mayor Kevin Crawford spoke about Mirro Aluminum offshoring 800 jobs to Mexico, giving Manitowoc the second highest unemployment rate in Wisconsin.

"Did Manitowoc's people do something wrong?" he asked.

The mayor added, "There is no free market. There is a market that responds to the rules we make."

Later, during a panel discussion, Edgar Moore, a bus tour member from Nebraska, said he's seen "a level of hopelessness I haven't seen before . . . (with) workers being beaten down." He noted that the United States is the only industrialized country that does not have national health insurance.

Professor Richard Hoerthe of Lakeshore Technical College and leader on the Dislocated Worker Task Force, said, "Twenty years ago, people were losing jobs because of cyclical economic problems. Now they are being laid off because their jobs have gone somewhere else. What can they train for? The technical colleges don't know."

Texas bus rider Craig Miller, who is unemployed, said, "Health insurance is one of the biggest things on everybody's mind. My youngest son ruptured his spleen in an accident at school, and now I have \$40,000 in medical bills I don't know how I will pay. People can only find jobs that pay minimum wage. I drove as far as Dallas looking for a job. There were none."

Florida bus rider Pat Flunk may have summed it up best.

"Companies are not (just) laying us off. They're not firing us. Companies are throwing away workers like used up pencils and paper."

We need to fix that.

What do ethics codes really protect?

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

This is what all of the misplaced gnashing of teeth about journalistic "ethics" has brought us: "Could you hold publication of the letter I sent you?" asked a reader in a recent e-mail. "I think I'm required to get clearance from management, if you can believe that."

Let me point out that the letter in question is not the kind most editors would want to rush into print, since it chastized me for something I had written. None of us is eager to encourage public floggings, deserved or otherwise.

Let me also concede that the letter writer might not be believable—that in fact, management at his Guild-represented workplace might not give a damn if he writes a letter in response to an article in his union newspaper. Or if it does care, that no good union member should give a damn about management's concerns: this is *our* union, isn't it?

But there you have it, nonetheless: a unionized journalist whose voice on internal union affairs has been silenced—not because of what he might say, but because he might say it in a non-authorized forum. Welcome to the increasingly sterile world of so-called journalistic "ethics."

It is a jarringly incongruent world, no matter from what angle you view it. The New York Times put its imprimatur on the subject at the beginning of last year, in a 155-paragraph document characterized in a New Yorker article as envisioning "journalists as a priestly class that must remain unsullied by the squalid affairs of ordinary men and women." Mere months later, the San Francisco Chronicle gave the heave-ho to a high-tech reporter for having the temerity to express his political convictions by joining in anti-war protests.

Reaction from the journalistic fraternity to these excesses has been remarkably subdued, presumably because they were framed as issues of ethics and not as corporate attempts at mind-control. How, after all, can one argue against loftier ethics? Yet as the Times and Chronicle and their amen chorus have nattered on about real, perceived, potential, spousal, familial, inferential and other conflicts of interest, the dirty linen of corrupt journalistic practices has been piling up in the corners. The list is numbingly familiar: Jayson Blair and Stephen Glass and Jack Kelley, of course, but reporters in half-a-dozen states have been canned in recent months for plagiarism and making up stuff, and even the venerable Jimmy Breslin has

been rapped for recycling questionable quotes from an interview a dozen years ago.

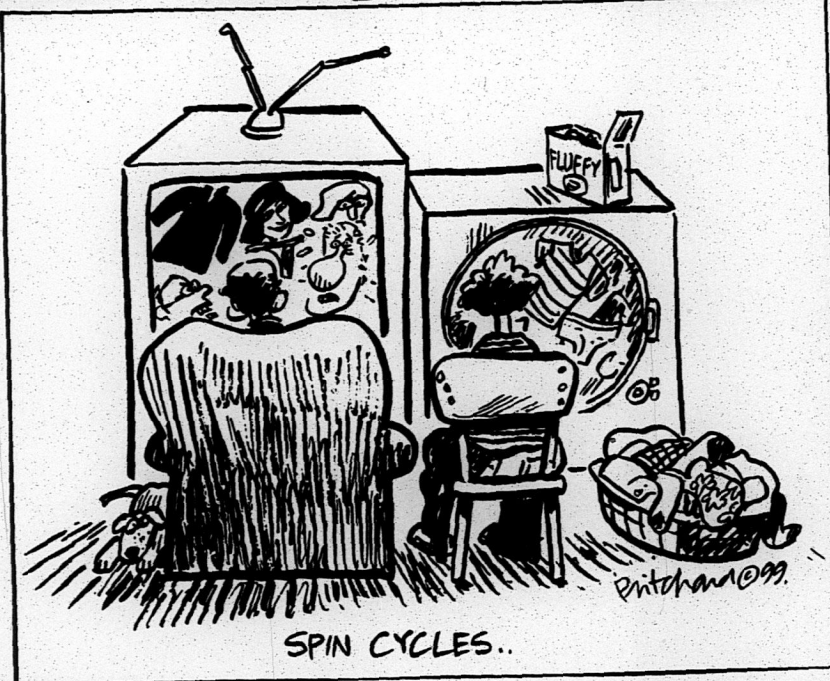
Which is to say, all the buzz about ethics reminds me of those fundamentalist preachers who obsess about sins of the flesh—because, it turns out, it is the sins of the flesh that obsess them. The more talk, the more sin. Instead of accomplishing their stated objectives, the ethics codes are stripping conscientious journalists of anything resembling a private life while leaving the real problems to fester.

One way to understand what's going on is to look at a study (send a note to: wilkinsl@missouri.edu) by Lee Wilkins and Bonnie Brennen, at the University of Missouri, comparing journalism ethics codes of different eras—including both the New York Times code and the much more concise code adopted by the American Newspaper Guild in 1934. Titled "Conflicted Interests, Contested Terrain," the study observes that high-minded objectives notwithstanding, "the language of codes is not transparent, innocent or neutral; codes are framed by specific ideological, political and social influences that exert preferences, pressures and constraints."

The 70-year-old Guild code of ethics—as well as the even older code promulgated by the American Society for Newspaper Editors—was written in a straightforward manner "that clearly delineated the public interest and the journalists' duty." While conflict of interest dominates today's codes in excruciating detail, the earlier codes recognized it more broadly as journalism that violated the public—not corporate—interest. Publicity, for example, was seen as antithetical to news, with the Guild code specifically condemning "publicity in the news columns in the guise of news matter."

The Guild code repeatedly stressed journalists' social responsibility, insisting that reporters respect the rights of individuals and groups by crafting fair, factual reports. It also suggested Guild members should actively intercede with editors and publishers "to curb the suppression of legitimate news concerning 'privileged' persons or groups" and warned against attempts to "curry favor."

By comparison, Wilkins and Brennen write, the primary emphasis of the New York Times code of ethics is on behavior that reflects badly on the employer, rather than on behavior that tramples the public interest. Taken to its logical conclusion, the code therefore focuses not just on conflicts of interest, but on *perceptions* of conflict—even though, as the analogy about fundamentalists suggests, chasing after percep-



tions frequently means legitimizing neurotic obsessions that say more about the observer than the observed.

Conflicts of interest, however, are hardly the only measure of professional journalism. As Wilkins and Brennen also note, citing the Wen Ho Lee case as one example, "there are other elements that influence the integrity of the news reports—for example accuracy and tough-minded evaluation of both sources and the information that they provide—that are not mentioned in the code."

Deception in newsgathering is not on the Times code's list of concerns, although the Society of Professional Journalists devotes an entire chapter to the subject in its code. Similarly, while SPJ's code devotes a chapter to privacy, the Times acknowledges it in a single sentence: "We do not inquire pointlessly into someone's personal life."

As such analysis suggests, publisher-driven ethics codes are more preoccupied with corporate success than with professional integrity. Wilkins and Brennen observe that publishers' codes "point to one of the fault lines in the profession: the tension between economic goals and the traditional view of journalism as a public service." All the fences and boundaries newspapers are using to hem in their intellectual property, barring journalists from expressing any thought that hasn't been processed first by the corporate machine, ultimately are grounded not in some grand vision of unbiased democratic

discourse but in "the economic health of the parent corporation," a concern that acquires "moral weight."

In the final analysis, such codes are not ethical because they're one-sided. Patrick Lee Plaisance, writing last summer in the newsletter of the AEJMC Media Ethics Division, observed that ethical behavior "by definition strives to respect the claims of every stakeholder." Publishers or editors who ask union representatives to respond to a comprehensive "ethics" proposal, offered with all the solemnity of Moses descending from the mount, are not respecting any claims but their own. Under those circumstances, the agenda has been not only defined but sanctified; the only room for quibbling is over the particulars. Venial sin or mortal? Either way, it's sin nonetheless. . . .

Our readers—a slowly shrinking pool—are stakeholders, and they're not fools: whether they can articulate their discomfort, they know they're being fed more and more empty calories marketed as "fair" and "objective" news. So the readers just drift away.

Journalists also are stakeholders, and they too need to assert their claims—to independence of thought, freedom of expression, a personal life—or see them forfeit. Maybe then I wouldn't get panicked e-mails from Guild members, worrying that by criticizing something I had written they might get in trouble with their supervisors. How crazy is that?

Notice given of annual per capita dues increase

Official notice has been delivered to all TNG-CWA locals that the TNG-CWA per capita on May dues, payable by locals to TNG-CWA on or before June 15, 2004, will be \$18.26. Combined with the 50-cent CWA Defense Fund payment, the total amount due from locals per member, per month will be \$18.76 for U.S. locals. Canadian locals will pay 67 cents to the CWA Defense Fund monthly for a total of \$18.93 (50 cent exchange rate for April, 2004).

The CWA Defense Fund payment of 50 cents U.S. per member, per month, is payable on the following classifications: (1) regular full-time; (7) regular less-than-full-time; (5) at-large full-time; (H) at-large less-than-full-time; (8) paid leave full; (F) agency fee full-time; and, (G) agency fee less-than-full-time.

The increase in the annual per capita rate is 25 cents per month from the previous rate of \$18.01, which has been in effect since May 1, 2003. The per capita payable on behalf of employed members whose

dues are less than \$18.26 per month is \$7.30 (\$7.80 U.S. and \$7.97 CDN with the CWA Defense Fund payment). By operation of the per capita formula in the Constitution, the increase in the average top reporter minimum in Guild contracts with daily newspapers is translated into a percentage increase in the monthly per capita payable by locals to TNG-CWA.

The per capita rate was adjusted in April 2002 to add funding to the TNG-CWA Mobilization and Defense Fund (MDF) pursuant to Article 18, Section 7(a) of the TNG-CWA Constitution:

Effective April 1 2002, the above per capita tax shall increase to 1.997% (.01997), the increase to be deposited into the Guild Mobilization and Defense Fund. A local may act to meet this per capita obligation to the Guild Mobilization and Defense Fund by increasing dues or by paying it out of existing local funds.

This rate stays the same as last year, with fifty-three cents per member per month

being deposited into the TNG-CWA MDF.

The average top reporter minimum in Guild contracts with daily newspapers on April 1, 2004, was \$914.19—an increase of \$12.76, or 1.42% over the \$901.43 average top minimum on the same date a year ago. The 25-cent per month increase in the per capita rate, from \$18.01 to \$18.26, is an increase of 1.39%. The formula for computing the monthly per capita requires averaging of top reporter minimums in all contracts with newspapers published at least five days per week. On April 1 of this year, there were 97 such contracts.

Guild statistics show that TNG-CWA locals have 97 daily newspaper contracts with top reporter minimums at or above \$500 a week. The number at or above \$600 is 95; of these, 86 are \$700 or over, 66 are over \$800, 47 are over \$900, 31 are \$1,000 or over, 19 are \$1,100 or more and 7 are \$1,200 or more.

TNG-CWA Constitution provides that per capitas payable on behalf of regular

members employed full time, and other employees covered by a TNG-CWA contract which requires them to pay an agency, or similar fee equivalent to dues shall be recalculated each year in April. The formula is described in Article XVIII, Section 7.

TNG has computed the average top reporter minimum by adding these minimums in 97 separate contracts with newspapers published at least five days a week, using only those amounts which are actually being paid on April 1, 2004.

The \$914.19 was multiplied by .01997, producing a figure of \$18.2565 which, rounded up to the next cent, produces \$18.26, 25 cents over the present per capita of \$18.01.

The per capita payable on behalf of regular members employed full time and persons paying agency fees becomes \$18.26 per month, plus 50 cents for the CWA Defense Fund for a total of \$18.76 for U.S. locals. Canadian locals will pay 67 cents to the CWA Defense Fund monthly, for a total of \$18.93 (50 cent exchange rate for Apr. 2004).



LOOKING AHEAD

Politics: Guild's enduring crisis

By Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer

About a month from now, an important discussion about political activity will take place in Washington, D.C. at the Holiday Inn on Capitol Hill. Four of the Guild's seven district councils (and officers of a fifth) will be meeting, and one of the questions they'll address has been asked since the Guild's inception: "With roughly half of our members practicing journalism, what role can—or should—we play in politics?"

That question has been forced on us with increasing urgency in recent years by a growing number of issues that seem to demand our involvement: substantial loosening of media ownership restrictions in the U.S. and Canada, allowing unprecedented media concentration. Rewriting of overtime rules that date back 70 years, possibly eliminating the 40-hour week for many of our members. A substantial number of journalists killed by "friendly fire" in current wars. The Guild already is in the middle of these issues, and has acquired strong support for its positions. But the January leaders' forum in Baltimore mandated that we examine our role in such matters more broadly.

The issue of political activism has a long history in the Guild because of the kind of work we do. Heywood Broun, the Guild's founder, raised some eyebrows when—still as president of the Guild—he ran for Congress (he lost). Charles Perlik Jr., long-

time president of the Guild, drew fire for getting the Guild's executive committee to back McGovern, in the '70s. Recognizing our unique identity and potential conflicts of interest, CWA agreed at our merger that the Guild president—who also is a CWA vice-president—could abstain on political campaign endorsements, as Linda Foley did recently in CWA's endorsement of John Kerry.

But those attending our January meeting felt we need to confront this matter more squarely. There was talk of establishing a new type of COPE (Committee on Political Education) within the Guild that would be active on issues but not campaigns, in the hope that our journalists would find this a more balanced compromise between professional ethics and civic responsibility. (Indeed, the Minnesota Guild already is conducting an internal discussion on just such a policy.) It's also clear, with half of our members working on the commercial side, that there should be a "green light" for political activity by these folks.

When I was a local leader, I tried to get an editorial page in the local's newsletter that would take positions on issues and, possibly, on campaigns. My goal was to get voluntary contributions, similar to COPE's, and have those who contributed write editorials and pay for the page. The way I saw it, if



publishers of commercial newspapers can have editorial pages, why not Guild locals? Unfortunately, I couldn't get anyone else to see it that way and the proposal died.

But all these years later the issues that inspired my thoughts remain, and if anything loom larger. And I still think the Guild has to find and walk that line that allows for personal activity by any of our members where there is no specific conflict of interest with their work. If a food writer wants to be involved in a campaign on a personal level, I see no problem with that; does a quiche taste different if its cook is perceived to have a conservative or liberal bias?

We need to pick and choose our battles,

getting involved only in those that affect our members. Still, I'm troubled by the many new ethics policies that seem to go too far in limiting all of our newsroom members. Recently, for example, one of our companies has broken new ground by seeking to impose ethics policies across the entire organization, including the commercial side. None of our members should be forced to give up outside activities that do not conflict with work, and the Guild as a whole needs to be out front on issues that affect all of our members.

This new dialogue should help make all of us more comfortable with the directions we take.

Fighting for control of the microphone

[Each year the CWA hosts a legislative conference in Washington D.C. that has at least two aims: introducing labor-friendly politicians to union activists, and sending a flood of lobbyists up to Capitol Hill. Among those addressing the union this year was U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey, of New York, who spoke March 30. The following is excerpted from his speech.]

Nobody knows better than you the dangers posed by the new media ownership rules that Chairman Mike Powell rammed through the Federal Communications Commission last June, without public comment and in spite of massive opposition. The media consolidation that you all have witnessed personally will only worsen. Broadcasters and newspapers will be able to merge, national TV networks will be able to expand, and independent local TV stations will be lost. All of this will come at the expense of your jobs and our democracy.

This is not a new phenomenon. The consolidation of the media began nearly two decades ago, under the Reagan Administration, with the elimination of the Fairness Doctrine. Republicans in Congress have carried on that tradition. Had it not been for President Clinton's opposition, we may well have lost all of our media ownership protections in the 1996 Telecommunications Act. Instead, only a few were eliminated; many more were weakened.

But if the Powell Rules are allowed to go into effect, matters will become much worse. In the largest metropolitan areas one company will be allowed to own three television stations, eight radio stations, the daily

newspaper—even if it is the only daily newspaper—the cable system, the all-news channel on that cable system and the internet news sites associated with each of those enterprises. Over 80% of U.S. markets where TV mergers are permitted will qualify as highly concentrated, according to the antitrust market definitions contained in the Department of Justice's merger guidelines.

The cross-media ownership that is permitted would reduce the number of independent daily news sources in many markets to a level 20 times above the threshold used by the Department of Justice to trigger antitrust investigations in other industries. In one-newspaper towns and cities, the new cross-media ownership regulations would permit one company to have a 90% market share of the newspaper circulation, one-third of the TV audience, and one-third of the radio audience.

All across the country, newsroom staffs are being slashed and reporters are barred from writing stories that are contrary to their parent company's bottom line. Despite the uproar surrounding the Powell rules, it took most media companies months before they'd allow any reporting on the topic, if they did so at all, and in most cases it was brief and buried.

The weakening of media protections, and subsequent consolidation of the media industry, has allowed companies to ignore their obligations to serve the public interest and severely reduced localism, diversity and competition in today's media. The current state of today's media threatens the ability of our democracy to function because it does not allow for the "widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and

antagonistic sources" and shrinks the marketplace of ideas.

That is why today I will introduce a bill in Congress that will restore fairness in broadcasting, reduce media concentration, ensure that broadcasters meet their public interest requirements, and promote diversity, localism, and competition in American media.

In addition to striking down the FCC's June 2nd rules and reinstating the old ones, my bill will set into law the practices that had arisen from the directives of the Communications Act of 1934 and the Supreme Court, but which have been gradually discontinued over the past two decades.

My bill will make the Fairness Doctrine a law. That is, broadcast licensees will be required to afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance. This measure reestablishes the rules and policies that were in place prior to the Reagan Administration's elimination of the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, and gives the doctrine a legislative mandate, rather than leaving it to a whim of a particular administration. Broadcast licensees will also be required to file publicly available reports on how they are serving the public interest.

The bill will roll back to 35% the portion of the national audience that a single party may reach through broadcast television ownership. You will recall that the FCC tried to raise this to 45%. Congress was prepared to reject this increase when a partisan backroom deal was struck setting the limit at 39% and leaving loopholes that will allow that limit to be violated with impunity. My bill will also prevent any single entity from owning more than 5% of the total number of

AM and FM broadcast radio stations nationally, in addition to setting reasonable limits on the percentage of radio stations one company can control in a single market.

Through this legislation, I also seek to eliminate the FCC practices that have allowed the public interest to be ignored. The biennial review process, the vehicle through which the FCC has enacted its most egregious changes, will be eliminated. Moreover, the commission will be required to report to Congress on how its media ownership regulations promote localism, competition, diversity, children's programming, small and local broadcasters, and technological advancement. To prevent a repeat of the shameful process in which the FCC implemented last year's rules changes, my bill will also require increased opportunity for public input on any media ownership rule changes.

This legislation will also require broadcast licensees to report how they are serving the public interest and it will break up the monopolization of programming production and distribution.

Media companies are businesses, and it is natural that the bottom line would be a business's primary motivation. But they are different from other businesses in that they are central to the health of our democracy. Without the information distributed by media companies, our democracy could not exist. That was true when our country was founded and it remains so today. Undue media concentration raises the barriers to market entry, reducing diverse and independent sources of information. Voices that need to be heard are silenced. This must not be allowed to stand.

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: May 14.) 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.

Concessions avert threatened strike

It took seven months of negotiating, a unanimous strike mandate and a 40-1 rejection of the company's original offer—followed by three revisions—but TNG Local 636 finally reached an agreement with The Times & Transcript, the Irving family-owned, English-language daily in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Representing 37 employees in the paper's news room, mailing room and press room, the local voted 24 to 12 to accept the company's offer March 17. The vote came on the negotiating committee's recommendation, which was reached despite the concerns of mailing room representative Bill Godbout over the elimination of a jurisdiction clause. Loss of the clause ultimately will lead to the elimination of two of the four remaining journeyman mailing-room positions.

Unfortunately, the larger picture is even more serious, said union president Rod Allen. Because the union also has agreed to the introduction of two new, lower-paid job classifications, work currently performed by press men will be done in the future by employees paid at half their scale. The only bright spot was the acceptance of new language that protects the seven press men still on the job.

Allen said the company was forced to back off from a proposal to create yet another new job classification, this time in the news room, of "page assemblers." These proposed employees, who also would have drawn roughly half the journeyman pay rate, would have been assigned the same work as journeyman paginators, who traditionally have been regarded as editors.

Despite that small victory, the union clearly lost ground in this round of negotiations, Allen conceded.

"Believe me, we considered an action as the only way to get this company to back away from what we see as its fundamental position, which we believe is to cut pay for all new unionized workers in half," he said. "Obviously we didn't feel ready to strike this time, but this is a very short contract and if they come back at us with proposals for more new classifications we'll have to take a tougher stand."

"After many years of consistently eroding away the crafts working at our paper," he added, "the local is now dominated by news room employees. And frankly, they're wondering what they're going to hear next."

But as it stands, the local did not emerge from bargaining without its own victories. The original company proposal called for a two-year contract with a 2% wage increase each year. The final offer added three months to the contract, now expiring at the end of September, 2005, with a 2.5% increase in the final 15 months. The previous contract expired at the end of June, 2003.

The union also managed to temporarily hold off a company move—already achieved at the company's other dailies, in Fredericton and Saint John—to increase the number of years required to increase vacation entitlement. Union members won't be subject to the new schedule until a month before the new contract expires.

"At least a few more union members will qualify for their next week of vacation on the old schedule," said Allen, who also said union members saw some marginal improvements in mileage and equipment allowances in this agreement.

The local also made considerable strides in improving the severance package for 12 unionized members of the newspaper's for-

'Stinging rebuke of the Irvings'

A reporter whose grievance arbitration exposed "outrageous" and "sinister" management conduct at the Irving-owned Moncton Times & Transcript has departed the paper after winning a financial settlement.

Dave Francis, who in December was awarded both aggravated and punitive damages for harassment and mental suffering, was also compensated for the short- and long-term benefits denied him after he took sick leave from the New Brunswick daily in the fall of 2001. (See January 23, 2004 Guild Reporter.)

As part of the deal the Irving family, which has a near-monopoly on newspapers in the province, agreed to forgo a judicial review of the arbitrator's ruling. In turn, Francis dropped a civil lawsuit against Canada Life, the company's insurer, which had refused to pay his long-term benefits.

The arbitrator's ruling, which union officials called a "stinging rebuke of the Irvings," stands as a public record of how the powerful industrialist family deals with workers who don't meekly submit to the company's authority.

TNG Canada/CWA Rep David Esposti said a "window of opportunity" to achieve a settlement for Francis arose during the seven months of contract talks that produced an agreement the local decided to accept.

"I see the settlement as a victory for the little guy even though, of course, the settlement stipulates it is in no way an admission of wrongdoing," said Francis. "I hope my actions will help others if they must fight similar battles of their own. Nobody, regardless of their wealth or power, has the right to inflict damage on others—not even the Irvings or the people they hire."

mer composing room, who grieved a company action three years ago to eliminate the department and replace workers with non-union "ad assemblers" for roughly half the journeyman rate.

Also, as part of this negotiation, the union and the company achieved a settlement for the departure of former union president and reporter Dave Francis, who went to arbitration after going out on sick leave more than two years ago. (See sidebar.)

But most significant, in Allen's view, was the local's significant progress in a less tangible area—progress he believes will

serve members well in the future.

"Two years ago, some monthly meetings were attended by as few as a dozen members, but over the past seven months the turn-out has been between 90% and 100%," he explained. "Our members are now alert to what they perceive to be the long-term goals of the employer, and from now on I expect we will be more vigilant."

The Times & Transcript is a division of Brunswick News Inc. which in turn operates under the umbrella of J.D. Irving Ltd., owned by the province's powerful Irving family.

Greatly expanded CMG at bargaining table

When collective bargaining agreements for all three Canadian Media Guild units at the Canadian Broadcasting Company expired at midnight March 31, they triggered something unprecedented: contract negotiations that for the first time will pull together all the working conditions, wages and benefits of more than 6,000 CBC employees into one document.

The company-wide agreement follows last year's "one big union" campaign, in which Guild members and members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers

union voted which of the two labor organizations should represent all of the CBC's unionized employees. At the same time, the new agreement will collapse three separate bargaining units at the Guild into one.

"The challenges are significant," acknowledged local President Lise Lareau in contemplating the size of the task ahead of her bargaining team. "Meeting them will require patience, imagination and intelligence, but we look forward to a process that marks the start of a new era at CBC."

Negotiations were to begin as The Guild Reporter went to press, following creation of

a 10-member bargaining committee. After an initial meeting with CBC representatives in mid-April, local leaders were expecting negotiations to occur over 12 days in May and June.

Although the complexities of consolidating the various units and unions have delayed the kind of planning that usually precedes bargaining—the Canadian Media Guild now is by far the biggest TNG-CWA local—various interest committees from across the CBC have been created to advise the bargaining committee on workplace and job-related issues. In addition, a bargaining

survey was distributed recently to all members via e-mail and hard copy to further help the bargaining team establish its priorities.

Moreover, a major conference in Ottawa the first weekend of April, drawing more than 140 delegates from all bargaining units and areas of the country, debated several key bargaining issues—as well as the Canadian Media Guild's future political structure.

The terms of all existing collective agreements remain in place and will be effective until a new agreement is negotiated or until the parties have reached a legal strike/lockout position.

THE GUILD Reporter

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

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DAYBOOK

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

May Day, commemorating
Haymarket massacre, May 1

Freedom Award banquet,
May 19, Washington, DC

Multi-District Council Meeting,
May 21-23, Washington, DC

Western District Council,
May 21-23, Bakersfield, CA

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

TNG Sector Conference,
Aug. 26-28, Anaheim, CA

CWA Annual Minority Caucus,
Aug. 26-29, Anaheim, CA

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

CWA Bargaining Institute,
Sept. 26-30, Silver Spring, MD

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

The San Francisco Guild is organized, "after months of quiet negotiation" . . . Publishers in New York City challenge the New York Guild's collective bargaining authority, questioning whether the local has sufficient support among employees. . . . The Philadelphia Guild, citing the growing workload undertaken entirely by volunteers, begins pushing for employment of a national executive secretary.

Fifty years ago this month:

As a Guild strike against the Wilkes-Barre (Pa.) Publishing Company enters a third week, local members launch the strike paper Valley News and quickly sell out the first day's press run of 25,000. . . . A federal appeals court holds that the Houston Chronicle did not violate labor law when it dismissed all of its city circulation district managers as they were unionizing with the Guild, then rehired 49 of them on so-called "independent" contracts. . . . Bill Bade, former Guild organizing director and Guild Reporter editor, dies while working as executive secretary for the Twin Cities local.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Robert M. Crocker, the Guild's secretary-treasurer for the past 10 years, dies of cancer at 61. . . . The first four beneficiaries of the Guild's pension fund begin drawing benefits. . . . After-tax profits for the nation's newspapers and news magazines soar 25.4% in 1979 over 1978, or more than half-again as much as the 16% increase posted by U.S. industry overall. . . . South Africa admits it put \$11.5 million into a secret Swiss bank account in a covert attempt to buy the Washington Star.

Vol. 71

Iss. 5

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2004