THE GUILD
Reporter

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Court scuttles FFC media rules

One more roadblock in the rush toward media consolidation was thrown up June 24, when the Philadelphia-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit quashed a deregulation package adopted by the Federal Communications Commission a year earlier. The decision stays the FCC from implementing the new rules, which among other changes would have allowed cross-ownership of television stations and newspapers in single markets.

Adopted by a politically split FCC last June, with the two Democrat commissioners outvoted by the three Republicans, the new rules were pushed by chairman Michael Powell despite widespread public and political opposition. More than 2 million postcards, e-mails and other messages opposing the changes were sent to the FCC, many expressing concern that greater media consolidation would further undermine democratic discourse.

"The court's ruling recognizes that the FCC did not give enough consideration to the views of the American public or media workers before it tried to implement big media's deregulatory agenda," declared TNG-CWA President Linda Foley. Other media union leaders made similar observations, with John Connolly, president of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, lauding the court for blocking a consolidation trend in which "the public suffers, democracy suffers and workers suffer."

The lawsuit challenging the new rules was filed last September by a consortium of plaintiffs led by the Prometheus Radio Project. But the court's 2-1 decision is hardly the last chapter in the matter: the ruling simply puts the ball back in the FCC's court, with the commission told it should use more "reasoned analysis" in making rule changes. Moreover, the court said, the FCC is within its rights in lifting the ban on newspaper-television cross-ownership—it simply needs a better justification before doing so.

The ruling also does not affect a change that increased—to 39% from 35%—the maximum national television audience reach of any single company. That change, which in essence gave a free pass to several companies that had violated the 35% limit by buying too many television stations, was attached to a 2004 spending bill and signed into law this past January.

Still, the decision does create some breathing room for TNG-CWA and its allies. Indeed, the FCC's Democratic commissioners, Jonathan Adelstein and Michael Copps, have called for a renewed series of FCC hearings across the country "to gain a better understanding of the impact of media concentration on our communities," and several have already been scheduled. A petition campaign demanding that the FCC schedule hearings in every state has been started by Free Press, a non-profit organization that may be visited on-line at *freepress.net*.

Under the tropic sun

Decked out in sun glasses and a straw hat at left front, TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer is all but unrecognizable as he pounds the pavement in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lunzer was braving the mid-June sun to show his support for UPAGRA, the Guild local that has been in unproductive contract negotiations with Univision for more than 18 months. UPAGRA's president, Néstor Soto, is at right with a microphone in hand.

Until two years ago, the union's wall-to-wall unit of approximately 300 employees at Channel 11 had a long history of good contracts and equable labor relations. All that changed in 2002, however, when Univision added the station to its portfolio of some three-dozen Spanish-language stations around the U.S. Employees of three Univision stations—in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago—are represented by NABET; at another two stations, in New York and New Jersey, they're represented by IBEW. All other Univision stations are non-union—and the company apparently likes it that way.

Working out of its broadcasting hub in Miami, Univision is attempting to repackage programming across its chain to minimize costs. It also has brought non-union crews to Puerto Rico from the mainland, which in addition to raising outsourcing and work jurisdiction issues for the union, triggers strong passions about Puerto Rican sovereignty.

Guild acquires first college unit

University president's declaration, 'This is not a democracy,' tips the balance

By Mike Bucsko, President
Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild

History was made in late June in a National Labor Relations Board hearing room in Pittsburgh, when votes were counted and the Newspaper Guild was successful in its first representative election of a college unit.

The organization of 67 faculty—64 full-time professors, a librarian and two lab associates—at Point Park University also marked the first time a unit of full-time college faculty voted to join the Communications Workers of America.

The successful vote, following a defeat of the university's legal challenge, was one of only a handful since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1980 *Yeshiva* case threw cold water on unionization at private colleges, according to Pat Shaw, a labor lawyer with the American Association of University Professors in Washington, D.C.

Although the Point Park vote—a combination of manual and mail balloting—was completed June 9, counting of the ballots was delayed while the NLRB considered the university's appeal of the regional director's April 27 decision that enabled the election to occur. Region 6 Director Gerald Kobell, in rejecting the university's position, had determined that the Point Park University faculty was eligible for collective bargaining and therefore could vote for union representation.

Kobell's decision came nearly a year after the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh began its organizing campaign with the Point Park faculty. Last May, the Pittsburgh local met for the first time with the college organizing committee in a meeting arranged by Marge Krueger, administrative assistant to CWA District 13 Vice President Vincent J. Maisano, who is based out of a suburban Pittsburgh office.

The Guild was picked by CWA partly because the independent nature of its members melded well with the similar nature of college professors, said Bill Breslove, president of Point Park's faculty assembly, who led the organizing campaign for the faculty.

"We found the union that was the right fit," Breslove said.

The Pittsburgh local also represents 250 editorial employees at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and 30 advertising, circulation and editorial employees at The Valley Independent in Monessen, Pa.

The local filed a petition with the NLRB in October to represent 68 full-time Point Park University faculty (the board later reduced the number by one). The petition was challenged immediately by the university administration, which contended the faculty was not eligible for collective bargaining, based on a 1980 U.S. Supreme Court case, *NLRB v. Yeshiva University*.

In the *Yeshiva* case, the private New York college contended its fulltime faculty members were managerial and supervisory and therefore ineligible for collective bargaining because they did not meet the definition of "employees" under the National Labor Relations Act. The high court, in a 5-4 ruling, held the faculty was managerial, but did not rule on the supervisory issue.

The *Yeshiva* decision effectively stymied the organization of faculty at private colleges and universities. Since then, there have been more failures than successes by

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TNG, CWA off to Anaheim

The seventh sector conference and 69th convening of The Newspaper Guild-CWA will occur Aug. 27-28 at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel in Anaheim, California. The 66th annual convention of the Communications Workers of America will follow, Aug. 30 and 31, at the Anaheim Convention Center.

The Guild's executive council will meet prior to the conference, at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, August 25. Other scheduled events are as follows:

• Conference registration will start Thursday, Aug. 26 at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

• A Council of Councils meeting (for those interested in how district councils conduct business) will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday.

• An orientation session for new delegates will start at 6 p.m., followed by an informal reception from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

• Late registration will run from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. Friday; no registration will be accepted after 8 a.m.

The conference will start promptly at 9 a.m. Friday, and will run until 5 p.m. Saturday.

The five working groups established at the spring convergence council in Baltimore will meet during the conference, and all delegates will be urged to participate in one of the discussions. The five groups are: Guild image; member involvement; political participation; collective bargaining; and chain coordination. Each group will give a verbal report on the conference floor.

Delegates also will be asked to designate a committee preference—choosing among Finance and Administration, Structure and Policy or Resolutions—on credential forms supplied to locals prior to the conference.

Copies of any resolutions requiring conference action must be received at the TNG-CWA national office, marked to the attention of Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer, by Aug. 12. Aug. 12 also is the deadline for credentials to be received at TNG-CWA headquarters.

Reservations at the Anaheim Hilton may be made on-line at *www.cwa-secy-treas.org* or by calling the Anaheim Visitors and Convention Bureau at (714) 765-8868. Other official convention hotels are the Coast Anaheim and Disney Paradise Pier. If calling the convention bureau, Guild members must mention they are part of the CWA convention to get the convention discount. The cut-off date for reservations is Aug. 7.

Delegate representation at the sector conference is governed by articles V, VI, VII and VIII of the TNG-CWA Constitution; and by Article VIII, Section 4 (b) of the CWA Constitution. These articles provide that local representation shall be on "the basis of the average number of members on which dues were paid or collected by the International for the twelve (12) months ending the fifth month preceding that in which the Convention begins its session."

Generally speaking, each local is entitled to one vote for the first 50 monthly per capitas or major fraction thereof; one vote for the second 50 per capitas or major fraction thereof; and one vote for each 100 additional per capitas thereafter. For locals chartered after March 1, 2003 , the average will be computed for the months beginning with the first full month of chartered existence and ending with Feb. 29, 2004.

Delegate credentials will be issued in duplicate for each delegate and alternate and must be signed by at least two officers of the local. One copy of the credential should be given to the delegate or alternate; the other copy must be sent to TNG-CWA headquarters by Thursday, Aug. 12, together with a $75 registration fee per person.

Separate documentation will be required for the CWA convention.

College profs join TNG fold

Continued from page 1

unions. Generally, each organizing effort has been determined on a case-by-case basis.

The key issue is whether faculty members have effective input and decision-making roles in the college's academic life. The Supreme Court in the *Yeshiva* case determined the faculty's control over academic affairs was absolute.

Point Park University's legal challenge to the Guild's petition relied on the *Yeshiva* standard, as well as a host of subsequent cases. But in each instance, the NLRB regional director rejected the university's arguments, citing evidence presented during 22 days of testimony between November and January.

Perhaps the most damaging evidence, cited repeatedly throughout Kobell's 108-page ruling, was a comment by Point Park University President Katherine Henderson during a faculty assembly meeting in February, 2003, when she was asked about the administration's imposition of policies in disregard of faculty concerns.

"When questioned about certain of these unilateral actions, Henderson's statement to the faculty was that participatory management meant only that she had to listen to what the faculty said, but not that she had to do what they said," Kobell wrote. "She further stated that, 'This is not a democracy.' Based on the entire record developed in this matter, these statements reflect the reality of the relationship between the administration and the faculty."

Kobell cited instance after instance in which the administration acted in conflict with faculty recommendations and in which the faculty concerns were disregarded, from changes to student grades to a decision to withhold merit bonuses from faculty members the administration decided were handing out too many A's.

The college conducted an anti-union campaign during the five weeks between Kobell's decision and the end of voting. Mostly, the university relied on boilerplate anti-union rhetoric in e-mails from administrators to faculty in their departments—all written by an anti-labor lawyer the administration hired for the election campaign.

While the college inundated the faculty with negative e-mails, sometimes as many as three a day, the Guild countered with the judicious use of mailings to the homes of the faculty members in which we laid out our position. Eric Geist, the Guild's organizing guru, was in Pittsburgh during much of May to help in the campaign, while Pam Tronsor, District 13's organizing coordinator, assisted in her intermittent trips west from Philadelphia.

Given the Point Park University administration's track record, more legal challenges are likely as the Pittsburgh local begins the process to negotiate its first contract for the full-time faculty. But now that the Guild and CWA have their collective feet in the door, it's time to pursue higher education in earnest.

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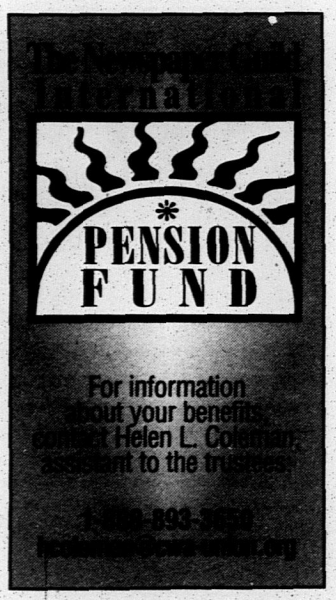

Guild briefs . . .

Olympic miscue in CBC coverage

The Canadian Media Guild has filed grievances over a refusal by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to pay the required daily expense allowance to employees covering the Olympics. The CBC plans to pay a per diem C$105, which is nearly 30% less than the C$146 rate required by the collective bargaining agreement. The CBC now claims the contractual rate is merely a guideline.

RFA off-shoring Cantonese service

Despite repeated assurances by management at Radio Free Asia that it wants to keep the Cantonese service, recent decisions suggest otherwise. Although management said June 28 that the radio service did not intend to shift positions out of Guild jurisdiction, the next day it announced that one of the Cantonese broadcaster positions would be filled by a stringer in Hong Kong and that a Hong Kong contractor would become the service's acting director.

SacBee reporter drops firing suit

Former Sacramento Bee sportswriter Jim Van Vliet has dropped his wrongful termination lawsuit against the newspaper and the Northern California Media Guild in return for a severance payment offered to him before the suit was filed. Van Vliet had claimed the company breached the collective bargaining agreement—and that the Guild had failed to defend him adequately—when he was fired last August for reporting a baseball game he did not attend.

Enough buyouts to avoid layoffs

The Tribune Co.-owned Baltimore Sun reportedly found at least 18 takers for its buyout offer—the minimum it had said it needed to avoid layoffs. The buyouts, part of a chainwide initiative to eliminate at least 200 jobs, consisted of one week's pay for every six months of employment. Meanwhile another Tribune paper, the Los Angeles Times, gave voluntary buyouts to 42 news staffers and laid off another 20.

St. Paul pulls back from Minneapolis

The St. Paul Pioneer Press, which in recent contract negotiations had already signalled it no longer viewed itself as competing against the Minneapolis Star Tribune, made it official by announcing it will reorganize its newsroom this fall—and, among other changes, will reduce its Minneapolis presence in favor of increased coverage of St. Paul's suburbs. Other changes will include eliminating the on-line staff and reassignment of the TV/media critic, the religion columnist and food staff members.

Chronicle morale goes into tailspin

Guild members at the San Francisco Chronicle report that morale is in a tailspin, with management ignoring grievances, ignoring the contract and ducking meetings with Guild representatives trying to confront various problems. Among the issues: increased use of freelancers and stringers, work assigned out of classification and reporters pressured not to put in for overtime.

Blethen spurns $50 million peace

The latest revelation in the long-running dispute between the two Seattle newspapers: that Hearst Corp. had offered Times publisher Frank Blethen more than $50 million and a larger chunk of their shared revenue if he'd stop trying to dissolve the joint operating agreement with the Post-Intelligencer. A Times spokeswoman said the offer came with too many strings attached to be acceptable.

Age, gender bias grieved in Philly

The Philadelphia Newspaper Guild continues pushing a 20-month-old age and gender discrimination grievance filed by seven female reporters at the Philadelphia Inquirer. The women, all members of the lower-paid suburban staff, had worked at the Inquirer an average of 15 years each but were not promoted into higher-paid, main staff positions two summers ago, when 90 editorial jobs were posted—and went largely to younger, less-experienced applicants from outside the paper.

Hudson contract extension sought

Negotiations to extend the New York Guild's contract with Hudson News will begin in early August, eight months before it expires. Such extensions have been negotiated frequently by the local—most recently at the New York Times and at Time Inc.—and typically are limited to just a few economic areas, including wage increases.

Obituary

Darlene Dale, wife of former Guild president Charles Dale, died of cancer July 12. The couple met on the picket line at the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, when he was an international rep, and were married shortly after that bitter dispute ended.

Triple play!

Dow Jones cliff-hanger appears near end . . .

By Tim Martell
IAPE Organizer

After more than 16 months of bargaining, one contract rejection and unprecedented rank-and-file mobilization, the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees (IAPE) TNG-CWA Local 1096 has reached what appears to be an acceptable tentative agreement with Dow Jones, publisher of The Wall Street Journal.

The new deal, recommended for acceptance by the union's bargaining committee, executive council and board of directors, was reached with the assistance of New York City-based mediator Martin Scheinman. It was actually presented to both the union and the company as a "mediator's proposal."

If accepted by IAPE members, the new contract will cover some 1,600 employees in more than 50 Dow Jones locations through January 31, 2007. Represented employees will receive minimum wage increases of 9.25% during that time frame, but for the first time also will be forced to contribute monthly premium payments for medical and dental coverage.

Full-time employees will receive $2,000 in bonuses this year and next; part-time employees will receive $1,200. Canadian employees will receive a 5% increase in all introductory scale amounts, and annual increases totaling 10.175%. Their bonuses will be paid in the equivalent of U.S. funds.

IAPE representatives began scheduling membership meetings in early July for some locations in the New York and New Jersey area to explain the contract changes contained in the tentative agreement. Because IAPE represents members in so many far-flung locations, all IAPE contract ratifications must be conducted by mail balloting. The union's election committee hopes to have all ratification ballots counted on August 9.

While hardly pleased with the final agreement, IAPE negotiators were convinced this latest agreement represented the best possible negotiated settlement.

"While this agreement does not give us everything we deserve, it represents significant improvements over what we rejected at the beginning of the year," IAPE President Virgil Hollender said. "It is also certainly better than any likely alternative"

"We pushed the company to a point beyond where it wanted to go," bargaining committee member Jim Browning explained in an e-mail to IAPE members. "It was clear from the behavior of the company lawyers, from the comments of the mediator and from the comments of some executives, that the company viewed this as a victory for us. This represents a starting point from which we can achieve more in the future."

Since the expiration of the last contract, in April of 2003, IAPE members have hung posters in their cubicles, picketed Dow Jones locations, and embarrassed company executives with newspaper advertisements and postcard campaigns. But the most overwhelming show of support from IAPE members came when they rejected a December, 2003 tentative agreement by an 84% margin. That deal called for lower bonuses and wage increases and higher health care premiums than are included in the latest deal.

"Most of us got involved in this very late in the day," said Browning, "at a point when the train already had left the station and the experts said it was too late to change anything. In fact, we changed a lot."

One of the most significant changes voting IAPE members were asked to keep in mind was the recommendation of their elected representatives, who were pushing for acceptance. IAPE's governing board had recommended rejection of the December agreement.

"This contract is going to cost us some money, we're paying more than we should for health care and that's going to put a lot of people in a bind," explained Steve Yount, an IAPE-South Brunswick, NJ location director, in an e-mail to IAPE members. "But it's better than all the alternatives, and its a damned sight better than what the company was ready to impose. I've said it before; you're going to be mad. But make sure you're mad at the right people. The company did this. We got only what we were strong enough to take."

With the exception of TNG representative Bruce Nelson and IAPE counsel Lowell Peterson, IAPE secretary-treasurer, Olivia James was the only holdover from the bargaining team that negotiated the December agreement rejected by the membership.

"It has been a long 16 months, but this experience has made us not only a closer union, but also a stronger one," James said. "I am confident we will obtain a better contract in future negotiations with the strength and unity of this union's members."

. . . Akron pulls back from threatened strike . . .

Just one day ahead of a scheduled meeting of the strike paper sub-committee, the Northwest Ohio Guild and management at the Akron Beacon-Journal reached tentative agreement on a four-year contract covering approximately 130 employees at the Knight Ridder-owned daily. The settlement followed nine hours of bargaining July 8 and a loud, spirited rally the evening of July 7, as more than 100 people gathered on High Street to support unit members.

Unit chair Stephanie Warsmith led the sign-carrying group in some high-decibel chanting. "This is our bottom line," Warsmith said at one point, lifting a large board filled with family photographs. Guild members wearing blue shirts that read "People Before Profits" also held up individual family photos to emphasize what they are fighting for.

"What you're fighting for is not just for a fair contract, but . . . to keep the tradition of good journalism here in Akron," TNG-CWA President Linda Foley told the receptive crowd. "Other people in this company, that's not their agenda. But I know that's your agenda."

And, indeed, the Guild unit succeeded in defending its contract against demands that would have eroded job security, weakened jurisdiction, imposed a discretionary pay system and eliminated premium pay for some bargaining unit positions.

The agreement followed an intensive campaign by Guild-represented workers that included, among other things, a week-long byline strike, informational picketing, community outreach, a strike vote, membership authorization to conduct advertising and circulation boycotts, creation of a popular web site and an array of creative in-plant tactics.

Key terms of the agreement include the following:

• Wage increases of 2.5% in the first year and 2% each year thereafter, with larger percentage increases in the first year for lower paid employees. Management

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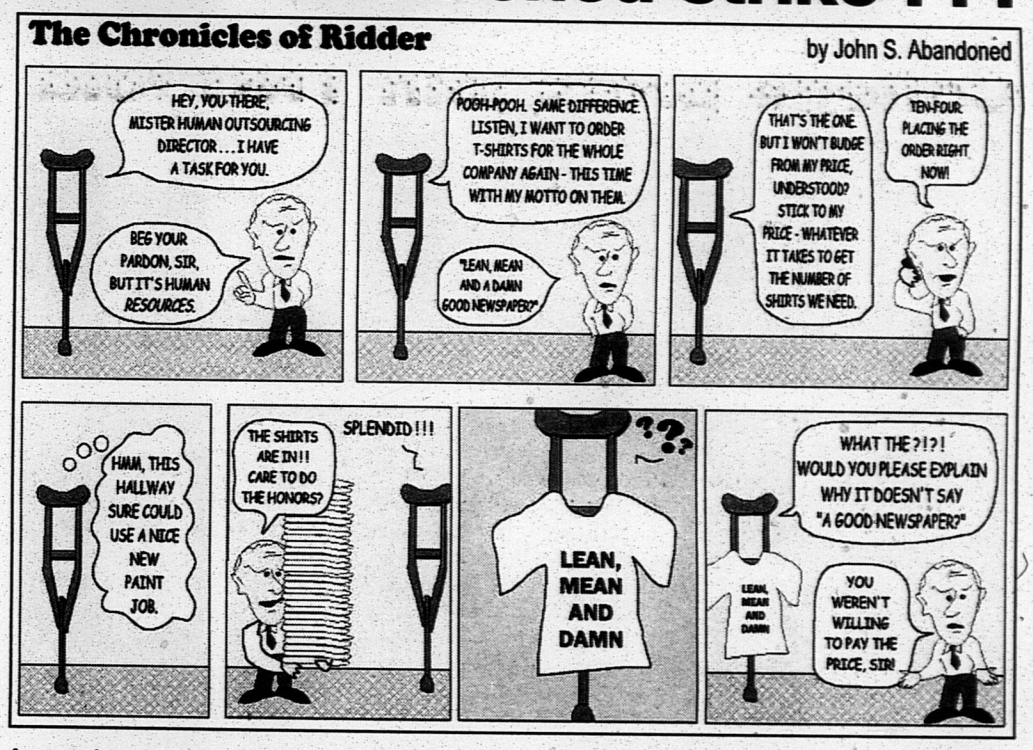

Among the mobilization tools used by the Akron unit was a series of cartoons, an example of which is shown above, poking fun at the Beacon-Journal's penny-pinching approach to bargaining.

. . . and Boston local ends 42-month stand-off

Following three-and-a-half years of tough bargaining and a mobilization campaign that included placards at Fenway Park and testimony before a workers rights board, the Boston Newspaper Guild may have a new contract at the Boston Globe.

The tenative agreement for a five-year contract was unanimously approved by the Guild's negotiating team and, if ratified, will run through Dec. 31, 2005. Copies of the proposed language were being mailed to local members as The Guild Reporter went to press, with membership meetings to discuss the details planned for the week of July 19; a ratification vote is expected on or about Aug. 5.

Guild negotiators said the pact's biggest achievement was to bring stability to the health plan, but the agreement also includes the highest flat-dollar wage increase (for 2005) since 1996 and full retroactive pay increases. The agreement also includes a compromise on changes to layoff language that gives management some of the increased "flexibility" it demanded.

Among the details:

• Pattern wage increases would apply for 2001 through 2004, with a flat-dollar increase in 2005 split into two parts, including a $12 increase in January and a $12,50 increase effective July 1. Increases for 2001 of $23 a week, and for 2002 of $19 a week, were implemented in March and November of last year, respectively. Increases for 2003 of $20 a week, and for 2004 of $21 a week, will be applied shortly after ratification. Full retroactives wage increases will be paid approximately six weeks after ratification.

• Company contributions to the Taft-Hartley Health Fund are expected to result in significantly lower weekly payroll deductions. Although exact figures have yet to be determined by the trustees of the jointly-administered plan, full-time employees with family health and dental coverage were told they could expect a reduction of about $45 to $50 a week; those with individual coverage could expect reductions roughly half that size.

• Resisting a persistent management demand, the Guild retained bumping rights for all current employees—but future hires will achieve bumping rights only after attaining five years of service. Moreover, the company gained some traction in its efforts to undercut seniority rights for layoff purposes, winning language that will apply to roughly half of the full-time employees represented by the union. The new language permits the Globe to lay-off employees out of seniority order, but only on showing that the retained employee has "special skill or superior ability."

Such a determination, Guild leaders said, would have to be based on job performance and would be subject to grievance and arbitration.

News round-up

Maybe not a *completely* free market

In an Alice-in-Wonderland inversion of philosophies and attitudes, a coalition of conservative business leaders is asking Congress to stick its nose into a company contract. Led by the National Legal and Policy Center, the group is urging Congressional Republicans to look into the contract worked out by SBC Communications and CWA on the grounds that it will result in higher bills, lock in SBC's market domination and give more power to the decidedly anti-Bush CWA. Contract provisions include wage and pension increases and a job guarantee for current workers, which apparently is more than conservative Republicans believe the collective bargaining process should achieve for mere wage earners.

Jobs picture continues to look bleak

The nation's unemployment rate was 5.6% in June—for the third straight month—and 8.248 million people were out of work, as U.S. job growth slowed sharply and job-growth estimates for May and April were revised downward. Meanwhile, most of the jobs that were being created are in low-wage categories, such as temps, janitors and in the food and beverage industry. The result has been declining real wages: since last November, wage increases have fallen behind inflation in all but one month. William A. Niskanen, former acting chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors during the Reagan administration, said it's unlikely that employees will get raises that outpace inflation over the next five to 10 years because of increased global competition, shrinking union clout and continuing slack in the labor market caused by persistent unemployment

Google censors ad urging unionization

Demonstrating once again the danger inherent in media concentration, the Google internmet search engine terminated a paid ad that had encouraged unionization of Wal-Mart. After three months of allowing the ad to run, Google decided it would no longer accept ads that contain "language that advocates against an individual, group, or organization." The language it found so objectionable, in its entirety, was as follows:

Wal-Mart Workers of MI: A union can help with job stability, safety, better pay, and benefits. *www.walmartworkersmi.net*

Employers show how solidarity works

Following a pattern established by supermarkets in southern California, nine major Los Angeles-area hotels have agreed to participate in an "offensive lock-out" if any six of the nine vote to use the tactic. The solidarity agreement was forged more than three months ago, before negotiations started with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, and announced after the group broke off the talks. HERE's contracts, covering approximately 3,000 employees, expired June 1. A similar pact requiring joint lockouts was signed by three major supermarket chains that were in contract talks with the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Sweatshops for a more secure homeland

The Department of Homeland Security, in keeping with the Bush administration's tone-deaf approach to economic issues, is allowing $30 million worth of uniforms for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents to be outsourced to Mexico. Unlike the Defense Department, which under law must ensure its uniforms and other clothing items are made in the United States, DHS has no such restrictions. The Border Patrol uniform contract was awarded to a Nashville, Tenn., company that is outsourcing the manufacturing to Mexico, and that means "American taxpayers' money may be supporting sweatshops," charged UNITE President Bruce Raynor.

More headway on living wage laws

A state district judge has rejected a business group's lawsuit seeking to overturn Santa Fe's living wage law. Approved by the Santa Fe City Council in February 2003, the law requires most businesses with 25 or more employees to pay a minimum wage of $8.50 an hour, $9.50 in January 2006 and $10.50 in January 2008. Separately, commissioners in Wayne County, Michigan, approved a living wage ordinance July 1 by a vote of 14-1. If signed, the law would require firms doing business with the county to pay a minimum hourly wage equal to the poverty level for a family of four—$9.50—with health benefits, or 125% of the poverty level, $11.80, without them.

Biggest unions demand U.S. quit Iraq

The two largest unions in the AFL-CIO, the Service Employees International and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, both voted in recent conventions for resolutions demanding a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. AFSCME delegates also voted to increase their dues in order to pump more money into politics and lobbying.

Labor laying plans for GOP convention

Union members in New York City are ramping up plans to participate in worldwide protests Aug. 29, on the eve of the Republican convention, and for a protest march against the Bush administration Sept. 1. One way to keep track of details is to visit *www.cwa1180.org*.

SEIU chief pushes for AFL-CIO reorganization

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates, Inc.

Union structures, including the AFL-CIO, are outdated and must be replaced or radically restructured, according to Service Employees President Andrew Stern. Keynoting his union's annual convention in San Francisco on June 21, Stern praised his predecessor, John Sweeney, for trying "to breathe new life into the AFL-CIO."

But Stern said Sweeney's tenure as the fed's president proves the problem is the AFL-CIO's structure, not its people. Addressing the same 4,000 delegates the next day, Sweeney did not directly reply to Stern but said he welcomed "critiques."

Since ousting then-President Thomas Donahue in 1995, Sweeney has concentrated on boosting organizing and politics even as the unionized share of the workforce has continued declining. When the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations merged in 1955, Stern noted, one of every three U.S. workers was unionized; now, one of every eight is a union member—a proportion that drops to one in 12 when government workers are excluded.

"Today, our employers have changed, our industries have changed and the world has certainly changed, but the labor movement's structure and culture sadly stayed the same," Stern told the delegates, who represent 1.4 million members. "John Sweeney has proven that the problem is not who captains the ship but that the ship was not built to navigate the storms of the modern world."

Stern called the federation "a loose trade association of 65 separate and autonomous unions instead of a strong, united organization." That looseness won't work any more, he added. "The time is long overdue that we join with our union allies and either transform the AFL-CIO or build something stronger that can really change workers' lives."

Sweeney replied that "when we're honest, we know we have to change faster and fight smarter and work even harder. Our movement needs your ideas. We need your critiques. We need your continued example and your support for every union that is working to change and organize."

Stern did not spell out details of a new structure, but together with four other international presidents—Terry O'Sullivan of the Laborers, Douglas McCarron of the Carpenters, John Wilhelm of HERE and Bruce Raynor of UNITE—has been pushing to overhaul organized labor across the board. All but the Carpenters are AFL-CIO members.

Raynor told the Washington Post that restructuring the AFL-CIO should occur after the November election, letting labor concentrate on ousting GOP White House occupant George W. Bush. But he told SEIU delegates that "we need national and international unions to deal with national and international employers." O'Sullivan told Press Associates earlier this year that any significant moves should be postponed until 2005.

Changing the AFL-CIO wasn't Stern's only proposal. He also advocated:

• Creating new "national unions" out of each of SEIU's four divisions "to build industry strength."

• Creating an "open source" union to add 1 million "affiliate members" not covered by contracts who would pay low yearly dues and participate in SEIU activist campaigns, but not vote.

• Less autonomy for locals. "Local independence that made sense in a more-localized world needs to give way to a new interdependence with new roles and responsibilities," he argued.

• Creating strong international union alliances in white-collar fields, including joint organizing. "Signs of globalization are knocking on our door," he warned.

U.S. lags third-world countries on health care

The U.S. lags far behind other nations—and not just industrial ones—in promoting work-and-family health, asserts a new study by the Harvard School of Public Health. And those deficits, in everything from child care to maintaining independence of the elderly, have long-range and large economic and social impacts, the study's leader added.

The study of work and family issues, covering 168 countries, included the following key findings:

• More than 160 countries offer paid leave to women for childbirth—some for as long as a year. Australia, an exception, offers a year of unpaid leave, while 45 nations also provide paid paternity leave. The U.S. offers 12 weeks of unpaid family leave for childbirth to women who work for larger firms—only half of working women.

• At least 96 nations mandate that workers get paid annual leave (vacation). The U.S. has no vacation mandate.

• Some 139 countries mandate paid sick leave, with 117 saying it must last at least a week. The U.S. does not.

Jody Heymann, the Harvard associate professor who directed the project, said implications of its findings are vast for workers and their families, and for society as a whole.

"Because we don't address early education, the school year and after-school time, there is an effect on our standing globally to compete," she told Press Associates. "This is a leading cause of job loss for parents, who have to give up their jobs to take care of a sick child." she added.

Heymann's study, which may be read online at *www.workingfamilies.org*, found other costs associated with the U.S. failure to integrate work and family needs, including:

• A 36% increase in job losses among lower-wage mothers when their children had health problems.

• When parents must work at night and cannot stay home evenings to take care of and work with their children, the kids are 17 times more likely to have problems in school, and 17% more likely to score poorly on standardized math tests.

The lack of home-based care for the elderly is another area where the U.S. lags behind most of the world. That also has an economic impact, Heymann said. If families care for the elderly without support, their income drops. But if older Americans who need care are instead put in nursing homes, the cost to society rises.

"There are cost savings when people can stay home enough to keep their elderly parents at home," she added.

The U.S. could start solving those problems on a policy level, Heymann said, for example by approving legislation that mandates paid maternity and paternity leave. Introduced June 17 by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), the bill also would give workers a week of paid sick leave per year.

But business interests, not surprisingly, oppose the measure. Indeed, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently sent comments to the Bush regime's White House Office of Regulatory Affairs demanding that current rules governing unpaid family and medical leave be weakened.

Another approach for solving the problems would be to devote more funds to early childhood education, where Heymann noted the U.S. lags far behind other nations in resources. "We are 91st in student-staff ratios on that, and 39th—tied with Ecuador and Suriname—on enrollment," she observed. That's even though years of evidence have shown that early childhood learning is the most vital for future educational progress, she added.

—Press Associates

All 7 Detroit units in new contracts

Guild members at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers in suburban Detroit have ratified a new three-year contract. They were joined by members of GCIU Local 13-N, who also voted to ratify at a joint membership meeting of the two locals.

The agreement means that all seven bargaining units in the Detroit Guild now are under new collective bargaining agreements.

The former contract expired two years ago, at which point the company brought in Richard Lowe of the notorious law firm of King & Ballow to head up its bargaining team. The move prompted the Guild and the GCIU to coordinate their bargaining more than in previous contracts, especially in presenting joint proposals on health care coverage.

On ratification, the agreement gave full-time employees a lump-sum payment of $1,200 and a 2.75% wage increase at the top scales. Additional increases of 2.75% will go into effect July 1 of 2005 and a year later. Guild members below top scale—less than 10% of the bargaining unit—will get a 2% raise in the first year only.

The new agreement features the same health plan (HAP) that is used by the Detroit News, Free Press and Independent Units, replacing a self-insured company plan. Monthly premiums will range from $25 for single coverage to $70 for a family and will remain unchanged for the length of contract.

Other changes include an increase in mileage reimbursement to 36 cents per mile; and changing the way vacation time is computed, from prior-year credits to current year, with members receiving one-time payments of up to four weeks' paid vacation to reflect the changed formula.

Helping propel the agreement, said local president Lou Mleczko, was TNG-CWA authorization for a strike and support for the unit's boycott actions. "After members rejected the company's 'best offer' April 4, we launched an advertising/circulation boycott that had immediate results," Mleczko said. "O&E lost a major commercial printing contract, as well as ads from several large suburban auto dealers," prompting it to return to the bargaining table and to a tentative agreement May 19.

No strike in Akron

Continued from page 3

withdrew a proposal for a discretionary pay system.

• Management withdrew a proposal to permit independent contractors to perform bargaining unit work without limitation; current contract language, with minor changes, will continue to govern the use of freelance correspondents. Negotiators reached agreement on a provision to permit expanded use of up to 10 student correspondents, who are members of the bargaining unit.

Linda Foley, at the July 7 rally in Akron.

• Effective Oct. 1, management will be able to offer its Blue-Green health insurance program, a self-insured health plan that already covers most non-union Knight Ridder employees. The employee percentage of premium cost-sharing cannot be increased for the life of the contract.

In addition, agreement also was reached on the establishment of a Taft-Hartley trust into which insurance premiums will be paid. The trust will have the ability to contract with another health insurance provider that will offer an additional plan to Guild-represented employees. The Beacon Journal must pay into the trust whatever it would otherwise contribute to the Blue-Green plan for any employee who elects to take insurance made available through the trust.

• Management secured the right to transfer new employees to other job titles, with the limitation that such transfers have to be for valid journalistic reasons and can't be unreasonable or punitive. Language was added to clarify that current employees can be transferred to a job they haven't done before for only three months out of a one- year rolling period. New employees can still be transfered at will.

• A compromise was reached on defining positions of "increased responsibility" that warrant an $89 weekly pay premium. At least nine positions will continue to qualify for the premium, as well as anyone who fills in for an excluded manager, but several other positions will no longer be eligible.

A membership ratification meeting was being scheduled as The Guild Reporter went to press.

How much merit is in merit pay?

In two words: remarkably little

Merit pay. It's thrown onto the table in just about every Guild contract negotiation. Some newspapers already have it. At those that don't, management invariably wants it. And in a few rare cases, some locals have managed to get rid of it.

Merit pay sounds innocuous enough. Even reasonable. Why shouldn't people who work harder, brighter, smarter get a little something extra for their labor? Why not, indeed—except that there's nothing in any Guild contract that prevents management from rewarding employees with bonuses or raises any time it wants.

No, what "merit pay" is really about is giving management a contractual right to give some employees less so it can give other employees more—robbing Peter to pay Paul—without forcing the company to increase its total outlay. Merit pay is nothing more than a means of cloaking management favoritism in a meritocratic mumbo-jumbo.

That's not hyperbolic. Although most Guild negotiating teams have long viewed merit pay proposals with near-reflexive suspicion, tangible evidence of the biases they engender has been documented by Rick Weiss, of the Washington-Baltimore Guild. And while the results presented below are specific to the Washington Post, it's a fair bet that the trends they describe can be found at most newspapers with "merit" pay.

Working with the Post's salary data for the three years between Dec. 1998 and Dec. 2001, Weiss found that 31% of male employees received at least one merit increase during the three-year period, compared with 25% of the female employees. But the men's merit raises were significantly higher, averaging $56 a week, compared with raises of $37 a week for the women.

The size of merit raises also was skewed by age, with both younger and older employees receiving smaller merit raises than middle-aged ones. As a result, young female employees were the least likely to get an increase: only 9% of women ages 20 to 29 received merit increases during the three years. At the other extreme, 42% of men in their 40s got at least one such raise.

But the third—and perhaps most unexpected—indicator of merit pay success is an employee's salary level: as paradoxical as it might sound, Weiss wrote, "the best way to assure yourself of getting a merit raise is to be already earning more money than your peers."

For example, none of the men or women earning less than $30,000 a year got a merit raise during the three-year period. But among the men, 20% of those earning between $50,000 and $59,000 a year got at least one merit raise, and a whopping 69% of those earning more than $100,000 got at least one such raise. The corresponding figures for women were 10% and 64%.

Moreover, those employees already making the most money got the biggest merit raises, presumably so the raise would be proportionately significant. The net effect, however, is to further increase the financial disparity between the newspaper's highest and lowest paid employees. "It's the few people who are already earning the most who are not only getting most of the awards, but who are getting the very largest awards," Weiss concludes. "That leaves the majority of employees to share the leftovers."

Percentage of men and women who got any merit pay, with average weekly increase, by age:

Age:	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
Male:	14%-$27	33%-$64	42%-$63	30%-$46	22%-$33
Female:	9%-$43	29%-$46	32%-$36	23%-$22	30%-$17

Percentages of employees who got merit raises, by sex and annual salary range:

Salary:	<$30	$30-$39.9	$40-$49.9	$50-$59.9	$60-$79.9	$80-$99.9	>$100
Male:	0%	5%	18%	20%	39%	48%	69%
Female:	0%	7%	20%	10%	39%	66%	64%

Average weekly merit increases received, by sex and annual salary range:

Male:	n/a	$17	$15	$23	$32	$50	$100
Female:	n/a	$14	$14	$30	$33	$40	$69

AP by the numbers no more

The Associated Press has agreed to rescind byline quotas in Ohio to settle a charge, filed by the News Media Guild, that the company violated federal labor law by establishing the quotas mid-contract. The Guild's Executive Committee voted June 28 to accept the settlement, in which AP agrees to rescind numeric byline and enterprise standards, as well as written warnings to two staffers.

"I'm delighted to hear that the company has given in on the byline quota issue," said Cincinnati sportswriter Joe Kay, whom other Ohio staffers credited with leading the fight against the quotas. "The union stood fast against them from the day they were imposed. This protects the jobs of every AP staffer who would be jeopardized if managers were allowed to disregard the contract."

The quotas were imposed Feb. 26 and added to the Ohio staff handbook two days later. But on June 2, in a visit to the Seattle bureau, AP President Tom Curley denied that such quotas existed.

Shortly after the quotas were imposed, the Guild filed an unfair labor practice charge accusing the AP of violating federal labor law by acting unilaterally. While the Guild was willing to discuss the issue with AP, it said job security issues were fully discussed during the last negotiations, so bargaining wasn't required. The National Labor Relations Board took affidavits from those involved.

The quotas were imposed after Guild-covered staffers in Ohio met with their managers seeking more time for enterprise. As a result, several night shifts were eliminated, including weekends, a decision that was applauded by staff. That soured quickly when AP imposed its byline quota by disciplining two staffers.

The settlement marks one of several Guild victories in the past two years, including the reinstatement of Mark Foley as a Florida photographer and Melissa Murphy to her job in AP Digital. Murphy also received full back pay.

The National Labor Relations Act requires employers to provide unions with adequate notice of any intended rules that affect terms and conditions of employment. The union then has the right to demand good faith bargaining over the subject. Negotiating mid-term during a contract is not required where contract terms exist.

General strike: labor's shining moment

By David Bacon
No. California Media Guild

Archie Brown was first a ship scaler, and then a longshoreman—a dockworker all his life. He was there when thousands of maritime workers closed the West Coast ports, from San Diego to Canada. The general strike came at the peak of the Pacific coast maritime strike—one of the longest and most bitter of the 1930s, a decade filled with labor wars. For three days in the summer of 1934, nothing moved in San Francisco.

Whenever he tried to explain what it was like, Archie always talked about how quiet it was when all the work stopped. What impressed him, and all the other veterans of the general strike, was not the contrast between the silence and the city's normal cacophony. It was the fact that they'd created three days of quiet stillness themselves, by doing nothing. It was this act of not working that gave them a sense of power, a sense they never lost.

"Without our brain and muscle, not a single wheel can turn"—this is the chorus to Solidarity Forever, the hallowed union anthem.

For Archie and his fellow wharf rats, these were not just words but a reality they experienced first-hand. The general strike taught them about power—that working people could get it, and could wield it with devastating effect, if they understood the fact that the world depends on them.

Seventy years later, as our modern labor movement struggles to regain the power it's lost, those three days shine as a beacon. They point out that the *way* workers won their power proved to be as important as what they did with it.

The maritime and general strikes were social movements that came from the bottom—from the anger and dissatisfaction of workers themselves. They were mistrustful of the old labor hierarchy that had lost the power to improve the lives of rank-and-file dockers and sailors. Once the strike got going, some old-line leaders even sought to betray them. So the first thing Archie and his coworkers did was to create a new organization: the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

Longshoremen built a union they were sure could never be hijacked from their hands. The key was one of labor's most democratic institutions, one that survives to this day—the longshore caucus. Every time the union sits down to negotiate a new contract with multibillion-dollar transportation companies, each local union in each port elects delegates to this caucus. Together, they decide what the union will demand, and choose the committee to do the talking.

The 1934 strike produced a single, coastwise agreement, in which dockworkers from San Diego to Seattle act as one. The secret of their power was combining local democracy with the ability to shut down the whole coast at one time. Today, many workers pay a terrible price when they lack the ability to act together. Just last year, for example, grocery workers successfully shut down supermarkets throughout southern California, but were defeated anyway because their employers kept stores open everywhere else, making huge profits that subsidized losses in Los Angeles and San Diego. Similarly, news workers at the Baltimore Sun were deterred from striking because the Sun's owner, Tribune Co., shipped in strike breakers from other Tribune papers.

The coastwise contract was designed to prevent this from happening in the ports. It's no accident that when the Bush administration intervened on the side of the ship owners in the 2002 longshore negotiations, its biggest threat was legal action to force the union to negotiate a different contract in each port.

The general strike and the creation of the ILWU had a ripple effect. Other workers saw dockers win a hiring hall, freeing them from the humiliating shapeup, when workers had to beg a job from a gang boss every morning. The workforce was integrated—today, black, Latino and Asian workers are the majority in big ports like San Francisco and LA, and women drive huge container cranes. People who were considered bums and derelicts in the '20s and '30s had some of the best-paying, most secure jobs in industrial America by the '50s and '60s. As a result, a wave of union organizing spread inland from the ports, a social movement inspiring everyone from clerks in department stores to farm laborers in the fields.

That movement transformed the politics of California, Oregon, Washington and especially Hawaii, where it ended the domination of five big plantation-owning families over the state's political system. Today, Hawaii still has a greater percentage of union members than any other as a result. When the Pacific rim is called the left coast, it's a tribute to the political changes sparked by the general strike.

These obviously were not changes welcomed by the shipping companies, the banks and the big newspapers who were their voice. They were terrified by the general strike, and whipped up public hysteria by claiming that communist troops were on the march from Mexico. Their real fear was more prosaic: the lords of industry didn't want to listen to anyone, and especially not to bums from the waterfront.

Forced to recognize the union, they then went after its leaders and spent two decades trying to deport Harry Bridges, the ILWU's first president, an immigrant from Australia accused of being a communist. They failed. In the 1950s, McCarthyite legislation sought to impose a ban on communists and left-wingers holding office in unions. Archie and ILWU Local 10 challenged these undemocratic laws, which were later declared unconstitutional. These were some of the first and hardest political battles that eventually ended the witch hunts of the early cold war.

Today's unions, debating what to do about the Patriot Act and the scapegoating of immigrants and political radicals, should remember this history. They might remember as well the legacy of internationalism sparked by the general strike. In the 1930s, dockworkers refused to load scrap iron bound for fascist Japan and its brutal war in China. In the 1980s, a new generation refused to unload cargo from apartheid South Africa, or coffee used to finance Ronald Reagan's illegal war in Nicaragua. And last fall the ILWU not only condemned the U.S. war in Iraq, but Local 10 leader Clarence Thomas went to Baghdad to offer help to unions there banned by the Bush-appointed occupation authority.

Unfortunately, labor can't rest on past achievements. The political machines built by radical unionists in the '30s and '40s have been strangled by subservience to politicians and parties which accept workers' votes, but scorn the political demands they make. The flexible, independent and radical politics born from the general strike need to be reinvented—to defeat George Bush in November, but also to ensure that his replacement ends the war, doesn't negotiate new free trade agreements, and spends his political capital winning national healthcare.

The ILWU, like most unions, is now an island of high wages and workplace rights surrounded by a sea of unorganized workers who have neither. A labor movement devoted mostly to defending the interests of its own members will soon disappear. But if it inspires the tens of millions of working people outside its ranks by building a social movement defending their interests, not just with words but with actions, they will join as surely as did Archie and the workers of 1934, electrified and transformed by the general strike.

Cronkite recalls the Guild's early years

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went at that hour of the morning. And I'm sure it was the bus line. He'd go home. You can't trust a guy who goes home after work at that time of the morning. [Laughter.]

But he was on the way home, and here came our bulletin that the Germans had crossed the border, were going into Poland. So I shouted out the window, from our third-floor bureau in the Kansas City Journal Post building. I shouted, "Hey, Frank, Frank, Frank. The Germans have gone into Poland."

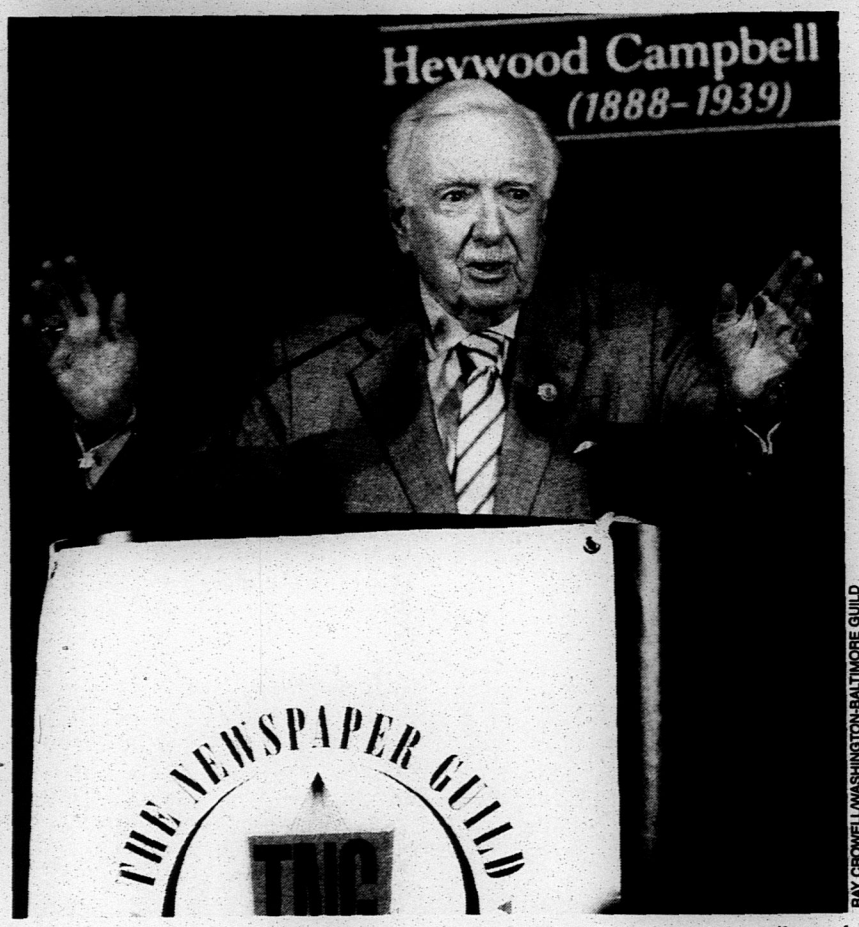
And Frank, who wore a hat—none of us owned a hat—he turned around, and he looked up to the window and said, "I'm sure you can take care of it, old boy." [Laughter.]

Darn right I could take care of it, but I was all alone. I needed help, and he walked off. . . .

Oh, I can tell you one little story about that meeting, voting to strike against the United Press. The meeting was held in Columbus, Ohio. I was in the Kansas City Bureau, but they took up a collection, all nine members of the United Press Guild in Kansas City—the nine. The other fellow didn't contribute. [Laughter.]

They contributed for the bus fare that got me to Columbus, and there we had a fairly good representation of eastern and midwestern Guild chapters. The West Coast was far too far away in those days for anybody to be able to afford to come to Columbus, Ohio. But anyway, they elected me the chairman of the meeting, and I was delighted to preside.

I really thought very seriously that this might absolutely end my career at the United



RAY CROWELL/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Press, such was the wall that management had built against any incursions from the Guild. I got back to Kansas City. We threatened the strike. We had voted the strike, and that mere thought of a strike so intimidated the management that they—I would not say collapsed, by any means—but they gave us just a little bit more a week. But it was enough to be a success in those early days of the Guild, and we were very proud of what we did.

Now, I went back to Kansas City expecting to be fired, and instead my career just happened to work out well, including being a war profiteer. We young people—young newspaper people and press service people who were selected by our organizations to be war correspondents—were given a pass, as far as the draft was concerned, and away we went to war with the opportunity to do byline writing like we had never had from Kansas City or any other local organization.

Years and years later, I was in the company of Hugh Bailey, the president of United Press. This was after I came back from overseas. I'd been a few years after the war there in the Nuremberg Trials, and then I was the bureau chief in Moscow. I was the bureau chief because I was the only one there. [Laughter.]

But at any rate, I came home, and apparently I'd done enough work and I'd been gone for long enough that Hugh Bailey, the president of United Press, called me into his office and was patting me on the back. And he was saying, "You know"—and this is the way they kept young people. He said, "You know, you're going to be the president of this organization someday."

And I had the temerity to say, "Mr. Bailey, sir, that's despite the fact that I voted a strike against UP?" [Laughter.]

"*You're* the one who did that?"

So I went to CBS right away.

LOOKING AHEAD

'Back with my own folks, my own people'

[Excerpts of the remarks made by Walter Cronkite at the Freedom Award Fund banquet on May 19.]

Oh, boy. Back with my own folks, my own people.

You know, Linda [Foley] just gave me a pin, a Newspaper Guild pin. And I want to tell you that I pinned it on my lapel, but you've been in my hearts since 1933. [Applause.]

In fact, I live coincidences with Heywood Broun. In 1933, the year he founded the Guild, was the year that I graduated from high school. And I want to tell you—I know this will be very hard for you to believe—that as a high school graduate in 1933, I already was conscious of The Newspaper Guild.

I graduated from a high school that had a very good journalism course, very rare in high schools in those early days. But we had an enlightened teacher, a retired editor from the Houston Press who had sold the idea to the Houston School District of having journalism classes for high school students. And, as such, he was my first mentor, and he inculcated in me right away the idea that some fellow columnist in New York, a sportswriter and a drama critic in New York, had this idea for a newspaper union.

And I want to say that in Houston, Texas, in 1933, I wouldn't say the idea of any intellectual being the member of a union was entirely accepted at all. The whole idea of joining a union, that was something that the blacks belonged to, except they didn't use the word "blacks," of course.

But immediately to me there was a vision of this organization inculcated by this former city editor of a Houston paper. I never really questioned his background, but I suspect that he was not a Southerner. [Laughter.]

He had quite liberal ideas, and obviously he was sneaking them out in the Houston public school system. If they'd caught him, he'd have been out immediately. But I had this benefit, and I began to understand the Guild movement while I was still in high school.

Now, to complete the coincidences of my life, as it were, with Heywood Broun. The year he died, 1939, was the year I was the chairman of the committee that voted the first strike ever voted against the United Press. [Applause.]

There was absolutely very little linkage with Heywood Broun at that immediate point. However, I had admired him for all of those years in which I had become involved in Guild activity at the United Press.

And I was very proud to say that our very important bureau in Kansas City, we were I think the first bureau of the United Press, certainly any of the larger bureaus, to go 100%—well, not quite 100%—about 95% Guild. We had one jerk who didn't quite understand. [Applause.]

He was an effetist. [Laughter.]

These were the hardest people for us to approach. As the older of you know, the greatest challenge we had was the effetists. They were those who believed that somehow or another, reporting and writing for a newspaper was a lofty sort of job. We were above the common citizenry.

And we had one character like that in the United Press Bureau in Kansas City, but we took care of him—we just didn't speak to him for a while. [Laughter.]

We used to hide things in his locker—ugly things. [Laughter.]

And he finally gave up.

I've got to tell you something about that guy, though, that you never know in life. That fellow was not only an effetist as far as union participation was concerned, but he was something of a dandy. He dressed better than any of the rest of us. He was one of the few people who in those days even wore a tie and a jacket to work. Hardly any of the rest of us ever managed to buy a jacket. That's why we were particularly ready for The Guild, of course. We wanted to buy a jacket every once in a while. [Applause.]

But this chap, I'll tell you what kind of a guy he was. I was in Kansas City the night that the Germans moved into Poland. That night, I was on the overnight desk, overnight editor. He was a night editor. He got off at 4 a.m. I took over at noon and was sole boss by 4 a.m. when we went to the p.m. wire.

But he would leave a little early, and he was walking out of the building, walking down toward the bus line or wherever he

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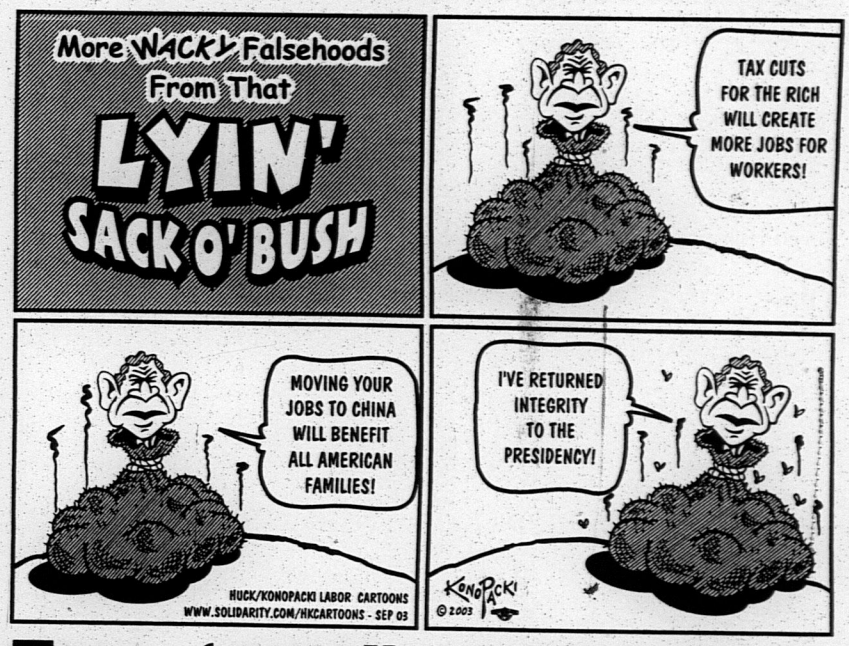

Even 'good' newspapers fawn before government

By Diana Barahona
CFI-BACI/TNG

The Los Angeles Times has a lot to be proud of. I appreciate the integrity it showed by investigating and reporting on Arnold Schwarzenegger's abuse of women, as well as dozens of other stories. But when it comes to U.S. foreign policy, the editorial board seems to be stuck in the past. John S. Carroll only joined the Times in April, 2000, but he continues a long tradition among editors of uncritically accepting the political ideology of the U.S. government.

In the months leading up to the invasion of Iraq, Times reporters did an excellent job of reporting on the WMDs that weren't. But the editorial pages were full of the usual pro-war pundits, equally balanced by liberals who had their doubts. I'm not sure why the editors felt they had to be balanced regarding a clear-cut crime against the peace. There are some things you hope educated people would agree are wrong, such as torture, mass-murder and invading another country. But these things are still open for debate in the editorial pages of American dailies.

At the same time, while Times editorial writers had an opportunity to stand up for international law and justice, they chose instead to hide behind the skirts of public opinion, as in the Jan. 26, 2003 editorial that observed, "Going to war without the strong support of the American people would bring disaster." Two days later, after the State of the Union, they decided it was safer to sit it out entirely and just watch: "Bush built a foundation Tuesday, but he left a lot of hammering, sawing and nailing to be done by Powell."

Editorial boards display the most bias when it comes to revolutions in Latin America. They strongly condemn Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez, as they condemned Daniel Ortega, for alleged anti-democratic actions and human rights violations, while turning a blind eye to U.S. involvement in terrorist attacks on these countries. Just this May, Venezuelan forces surprised 150 Colombian paramilitaries who had been hired to assassinate and decapitate President Chavez. They were on the farm of opposition leader Robert Alonso, who is on the payroll of the U.S.

This was just the latest in a long string of assassination attempts against Latin leaders, but the U.S. newspapers are silent. They seem to agree with the State Department's position that only the U.S. is sovereign and has the right to throw off the yoke of tyranny and create its own form of government.

One hundred years after Marx helpfully pointed out that imperialism was the inevitable outgrowth of capitalism, newspaper editors still fail to question the government's pretexts for waging war: protecting U.S. interests, saving the world from communism, fighting the war on drugs, humanitarian intervention and fighting terrorism. John Carroll has lived through enough wars by now to put two and two together. This time around, however, millions of average Americans did get it. Without any help from the editorial boards, they knew that Bush and Cheney just wanted to get Iraq's oil.

It's easy to lay the blame for the ills of the corporate media on Fox and Clear Channel, as Carroll did to some degree in the lecture he delivered at the University of Oregon [Guild Reporter, May 21], but if we accept the premise that the system of for-profit media serves our society best, and the media that carry O'Reilly make a profit, then we need either to stop complaining or to start questioning the for-profit premise. (And lest the papers get too complacent, it wasn't Rupert Murdoch who put Judith Miller's pseudo-journalism on the front page of the New York Times.)

Finally, it must be remembered that the L.A. Times editorialized in favor of last year's FCC rule changes that are hastening the media consolidation of the past several decades. So although the Times remains a first-rate newspaper, its editors are complicit in the problems that result overall from letting a handful of corporations own most of the media.

[The CFI-BACI/TNG is the California Federation of Interpreters-Bay Area Interpreters Association; Barahona, a member, lives in Long Beach, Cal.]

LETTERS

To the Editor,

I wonder if anyone at CWA noticed that CIGNA, the administrator of the union's employees 401K plan, was the HMO noted in the Supreme Court case that was brought by working families whose rights were systematically ignored when they had their medical claims rejected. Those folks in India, now well trained in the English word "no," sure know how to take a hard line for their great American "outsourcing" companies.

This is the same great American company that deducted more than 50% of a retiree's 401K required monthly distribution. When the amount was questioned, the benefits manager's explanation was that this was a "service fee agreed to by the directors of the plan."

It seems to me that organized labor is being highly hypocritical in complaining about exploitative companies, like CIGNA, while continuing to help swell their coffers.

—Harry McCormick, retired TNG International Rep.; Atlanta ,GA

The mission of The Guild Reporter, approved May, 2004 by the TNG-CWA Executive Council, is as follows:

"As stated in the TNG-CWA Constitution, 'It shall be the duty of The Guild Reporter to promote in every legitimate way the policies of TNG-CWA.' The Guild Reporter belongs to the rank-and-file membership of TNG-CWA.

"Guild Reporter content will be of interest to the members, and its first priority will be current news affecting the locals. The members of this union expect The Guild Reporter to inform, motivate and challenge its readers.

"To maintain its journalistic integrity and traditions, The Guild Reporter must never become a personal political platform or be misused for internal political purposes by the elected leadership of TNG-CWA."

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: August 6.)

NEXPO* message: less is more

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Given the nature of who attends and exhibits at trade shows, perhaps a certain, um . . . mercenary quality is only to be expected. Still, the bluntness with which some people view newspapers—a medium others insist is essential for democracy to flourish—can be breathtaking.

"It's really a data business and an information business—it hasn't been a newspaper business in quite a while," explained John Wilhelm, a senior software specialist at Brainworks Software.

"Technology is the only way you're going to survive as an information and news company," added Mark Morneau, Gannett's vice president for information technology, commenting on the continued erosion of newspaper readership.

How can newspapers be more profitable? "Tear down the wall between the advertising group and the editorial group, because as soon as you do that you have the opportunity to make money," counseled Ron Frank, vice president of product development for Atex Media Command.

These and similar sentiments were broadcast repeatedly, widely and without observable challenge at NEXPO 2004, the newspaper industry's annual celebration of big iron, electronic efficiency and a view of human beings as technological hurdles. Held at the new convention center in Washington, D.C., the June 19-22 event was markedly more upbeat than in recent years, following an industry turn-around that began last year and apparently is gaining momentum.

Capital spending is up sharply, according to the Newspaper Association of America's annual survey, with respondents projecting a 74% increase in 2004 over 2003—an average outlay of $32,095 per thousand circulation. Roughly a third of total spending is for new presses, or "big iron," with another fifth going for plant expansion and modernization. Meanwhile, although lower in absolute dollar terms, spending on external telecommunications systems—internet access, satellite systems and so forth—is booming and will more than triple last year's outlays. The projections "strongly suggest that the watch-and-wait attitude of the last three years is ending," a NEXPO publication observed.

The result was an explosion of trade show interest. Overall attendance was up approximately 20%, while roughly a quarter of the exhibitors were first-timers. Some, like Quark, were back after boycotting the last few shows—although Quark also was goaded by increased competition from Adobe—and the overall mood was much more business-like, with fewer gifts and less hype used to attract attention.

Hyping some of the technology on display would have been superfluous, at any rate, in the "coals to Newcastle" sense. Computer-to-plate technology, for instance, which once simply meant eliminating the intermediate, film-making step, now is going digital: CTP is evolving into CTPress, which images plates directly on the press. Once it's widely implemented, CTPress will finish off the last lingering bit of the typesetter's craft.

At the front end, meanwhile, metadata "tagging" of everything that goes into a computer—headlines, bylines, ads. photo and other art, story copy, key words and on and on—with extensible mark-up language, or XML (successor to the more widely known HTML), is hastening every type of covergence. XML not only permits export of digitized information to different media in appropriate formats—newspapers, the internet, pagers, PDAs—but facilitates content sharing among different newspapers within a chain, each of which can automatically reformat it so it looks unique to that publication. Voila, instant localization of a centralized product.

Or consider an emerging technology, radio frequency identification, which Cox Newspapers and others are exploring as a means of better figuring out what readers want. Although still too expensive for mass use, RFID "tags" are envisioned as some day allowing a publisher to track the movement of individual newspapers as they progress from printing plant to retailer to reader. If the tags don't come down in price sufficiently, a possible alternative is radio ink, which was developed by the defense department.

Yet beneath the up-beat atmosphere and gee-whiz technology, an underlying NEXPO theme continues to be that newspapers are a dead end: who can get excited about dead trees? So in addition to updates on the latest developments in e-ink and polymer papers, none of which are commercially viable now but which some day will usher in an age of reusable newspaper "displays" that can be rolled up into pen-sized holders, much attention was paid to the newspaper frontiers of Europe and India.

And the message from overseas is: less is more.

One kind of "less," disclosed a panel at the first of two general sessions, is the conversion of broadsheets into tabloids, a phenomenon that is taking the continent—and Great Britain—by storm. Torry Pedersen, editor-in-chief of Norway's VG Multimedia, explained the impetus for the change by observing that his 13-year-old son won't even open a broadsheet because it's too big. "I think American newspapers give their readers too much," he added, anticipating objections about smaller news holes.

The bigger problem with converting to tabloids, added Stig Nordqvist, technology director for the Swedish Newspaper Publishers' Association, is that "we've spent years selling ads by millimeter rather than impact"—and smaller pages mean smaller ads, which mean less revenue. Ergo, a new paradigm has to be sold to advertisers. As U.S. consultant Ed Baron pointed out, nobody tries to charge more for television commercials that will be seen on a 40-inch screen than those seen on a 15-inch one.

Another "less" promoted by the panel: in addition to making the product smaller, make the stories shorter. Although Red Eye and similar "youth-oriented" tabs have been rolled out in the U.S., nothing on this side of the Atlantic compares with the quick-read tab "Metro," launched by the Daily Mail in London, now claiming a circulation of one million. Or with "Speed," launched in India, which not only restricts story size to 200 words but sets them in a larger font. And why stop there? Nordqvist said he foresees a time soon when newspapers will be reduced even further, to comic-book size, facilitating one-handed reading.

On the whole, then, the NEXPO forecast is for ever speedier delivery of less news — in print—but with more data pumped into newsroom computers. The trick, warned AMC's Ron Frank, "is not to be forced to grow your staff" in the process.

NEXPO is a trademarked name for the annual trade show put on by the Newspaper Association of America. We realize this is explained within the article, but last year when we used NEXPO in a headline we got a stiff letter from the NAA expressing concern that readers might not understand that NEXPO is a trademark and not just a generic name for trade shows. NEXPO is not just any old trade show, just like Kleenex isn't just any old tissue—got that?

Newspaper wages edge up marginally in 2004

Just because newspaper capital spending is growing by leaps and bounds (see story above) doesn't mean we'll see similar investment in human capital. Indeed, judging by the latest salary figures from the Newspaper Industry Compensation Survey, compiled annually by the Inland Press Association, reporters and other line staff will be lucky to keep pace with even modest inflation.

Based on reports from 375 daily newspapers, compensation increased an average of 3.01% across 85 newspaper occupations from 2003 to 2004. But those statistics are skewed by outsized increases among more highly paid positions: general managers, for example, averaged a 5.3% increase in base pay (and 11.6% in total pay), top advertising executives gained 4.3%, top financial executives gained 5% and managing editors recorded a 5.8% increase in "total direct pay."

Total direct pay includes base pay plus incentives, which generally aren't available except at the highest executive levels. Moreover, incentives frequently are based on improved profitability, which can be enhanced by keeping wages depressed. So publishers, for example, received only a 2.5% increase in base pay in 2004—but a 9.8% increase overall.

Entry-level reporters, meanwhile, are being paid 2.1% more than they were in 2003, while experienced reporters are getting 2.8% more. Graphic artists, on the other hand, saw salaries decline 5.7%, on average—a reverse the study argued could be "at least partially explained" by job churn, with higher paid incumbents leaving and being replaced by lower-salaried new hires.

More specific survey results, unfortunately, are not disclosed except to study participants. The 2004 survey is the 17th conducted by Inland and its co-sponsors.

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DAYBOOK

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

Western District Council, Oct. 23-24, Hawaii

Safety and Health Conference, Oct. 24-27, Baltimore, MD

Great Lakes District Council, Nov. 6-7, Detroit, MI

CWA Legislative-Political Conf., March 6-9, Washington, DC

TNG Sector Conference, May 5-8, 2005, Victoria, BC

CWA Annual Convention, Aug. 29-31, 2005, Chicago

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago:

The Guild's annual convention calls on all journalists to refuse "by distortion and suppression to create political, economic, industrial and military wars." . . . An attempt by the Washington Star to avoid hiring additional photographers by giving cameras to reporters is rebuffed by the union. . . . The National Bureau of Economic Research reports that the printing and publishing industry has the highest profitability of any U.S. manufacturing industry.

Fifty years ago this month:

The firing of United Press staffer Theodore S. Polumbaum, who refused to answer questions from the House un-American activities committee about his political beliefs and associations, is overturned by an arbitrator. . . . The Guild strike against the two Wilkes-Barre dailies grinds into a fourth month, as the publishers boycott negotiations. . . . Two bills that would permit liquidation of labor unions by fiat of the Subversive Activities Control Board appear doomed, as the CIO, the AFL and the ACLU mount a vigorous battle for their defeat.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

In a dramatic late-night session, the Guild convention reverses a 12-year-old policy and bans Guild use of government funds for international trade union activities. The decision terminates a Guild program in Latin America that had been funded with a $100,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, funneled through the AFL-CIO. . . . After more than three years, the Guild wins a contract at the Washington Post.

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