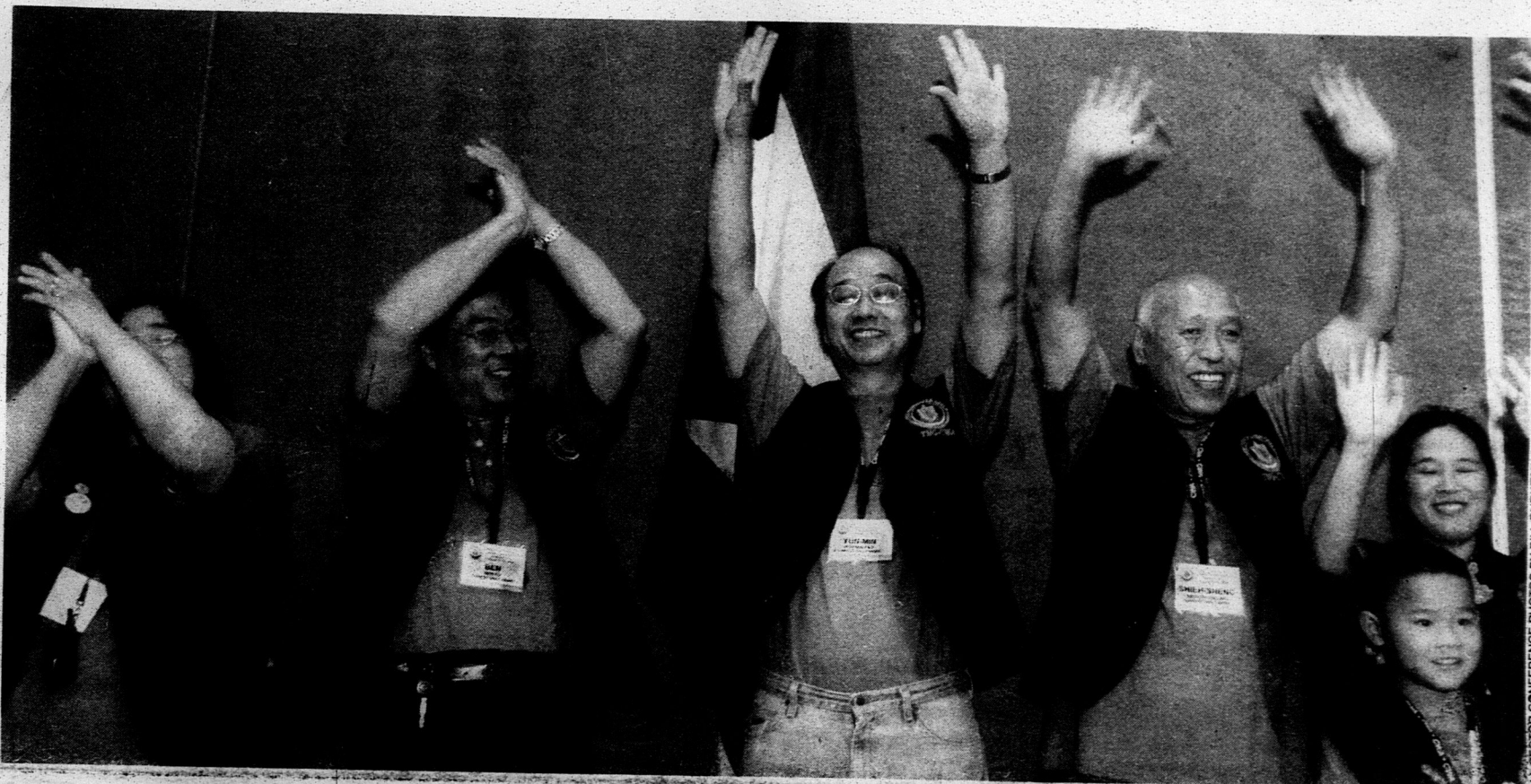


THE GUILD Reporter

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ALL SECTOR CONFERENCE PHOTOS BY BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Employees of the Chinese Daily News and family members respond to sustained standing ovation.

After 69 years, Guild still has clear mandate

Convention delegates respond to leaner, meaner industry with outrage, planning

If any one moment captured the essence of the TNG-CWA sector conference, held Aug. 27-28 in Anaheim, California, it was the standing ovation that wouldn't quit that greeted a delegation from the Chinese Daily News.

As a representative group of the Chinese workers filed into the Hilton ballroom, the scores of delegates started clapping, then rose to their feet and continued applauding in a thunderous cadence. The beat went on and on, minute after minute, as the workers filed onto the stage and turned to face their supporters, then broke into broad smiles and finally threw up their hands and started swaying to the rhythm. It was, observed TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer, the longest standing ovation at a Guild gathering that anyone could remember.

The Chinese Daily News for years has refused to recognize the validity of a federally-supervised election in which its employees voted for Guild representation. "1,259 days since the Chinese Daily News Workers voted for a union. Still waiting!" announced a large sign flanking the conference stage, in vivid display of how embattled many newspaper workers feel these days. As TNG-CWA President Linda Foley observed in her opening remarks, the industry's employers have never been bigger and more anti-union, while the public has succumbed to a "dangerous willingness" to allow the government to curtail its freedoms for the sake of greater security, further jeopardizing a free press.

"While we're getting pounded, our employers are getting much, much richer," she added. Then, setting the tone for the days ahead, Foley turned to the subject of the Chinese Daily News and exclaimed: "That is an outrage! And we need to get more people outraged about it!"

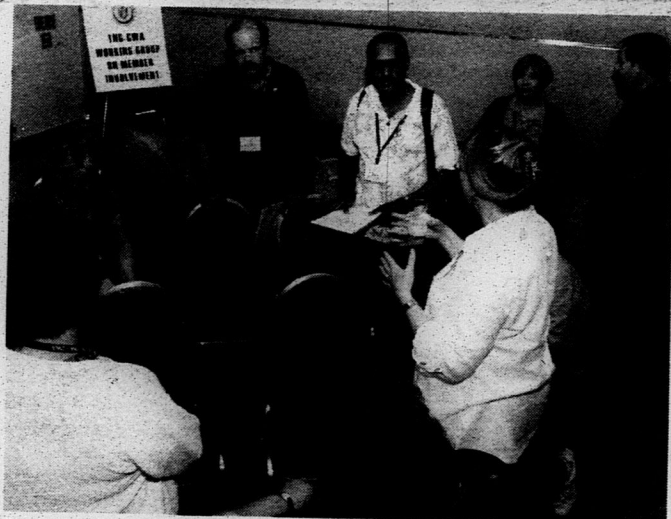
Other Guild leaders echoed the emotion and the need for a concerted response. "We are in an industry that is under siege, and we must fight back," declared Arnold Amber, director of TNG-Canada. Lunzer, noting that the era in which unions were accepted as speaking on behalf of employees is over, nevertheless asserted that the loss of credibility by a profit-obsessed newspaper industry has thrust the Guild into a leadership position by default. The union needs to capitalize on that shift, he added, urging TNG-CWA to set itself a goal of representing 50% of the newspaper industry by 2050.

"We're strong enough, we're fit to serve and, gosh darn it, people like us," he added with a grin, adapting a line from the television show Saturday Night Live.

Translating such sentiments into action became a task for the delegates, who spent most of their time hashing out the details of resolutions and workgroup recommendations. Ten resolutions submitted prior to the conference, with an 11th introduced on the floor (see pages 3-5 for full texts), all passed either unanimously or with only minor opposition. Also approved was a series of constitutional amendments that for the first time opens Guild membership to freelancers (see page 3).

The more far-reaching portion of the delegates' work, however, occurred in off-the-record meetings with the five workgroups that evolved out of Convergence II. (See page 7 for Chairperson Carol Rothman's overview of Convergence II.) Although a summary of the workgroups' chief recommendations was published in the August Guild Reporter, conference delegates received a far more comprehensive and illustrated report on the workgroups' activities and each spent several hours Friday afternoon discussing one group's recommendations in greater detail. A breakout session

Continued on page 2



Delegates break into groups to give instant feedback to work groups.

Guild joins legal battle on sources

The Newspaper Guild-CWA has joined several dozen news and journalists' organizations supporting a growing number of reporters threatened with heavy fines or jail time for refusing to reveal confidential sources.

Reporters from several news organizations have been subpoenaed recently to reveal sources they promised to keep confidential. The cases in which their testimony is being demanded include the outing of Valerie Plame as a CIA agent, the Wen Ho Lee investigation and stories regarding the former mayor of Providence, R.I.

In response, the Guild has joined in a friend-of-the-court

motion and is soliciting signatures on a statement supporting the reporters. Leaders of more than 40 groups sponsoring the petition drive, including the American Society of Newspaper Editors, SPJ, AFTRA and the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press, are aiming to get more than 10,000 U.S. journalists to sign on before presenting the statement to appropriate federal authorities.

Various delegates at the TNG sector conference pledged approximately 2,000 petition signatures. The petition, which states in part that the signers "support the reporters in current federal court

Continued on page 2



Holding their Guild Service Award—split between two recipients this year—are Henry Holcomb of the Philadelphia and Darlene Meyer of the Washington-Baltimore locals. Looking on (l to r) are judges Lesley Phillips, Percy Hatfield and Lucy Witeck, all TNG-CWA vice presidents.

Guild affirms mandate

Continued from page 1

Saturday gave delegates an opportunity to circulate among all five groups and offer instant feedback.

Final workgroup recommendations are to be completed by Oct. 4 and submitted to the TNG Executive Council, which will use them to develop policy recommendations to be brought to the sector conference in Victoria, next May.

A sense of impending change also was palpable at the CWA Convention, held Aug. 30-31, not least because President Morton Bahr announced—to the visible shock of many—that he will not seek reelection at next year's convention. Bahr, now in his late '70s, has led CWA since 1985 and is only the third president in the union's 66-year history. An executive committee meeting immediately after the convention endorsed Bahr's recommendation that Executive Vice President Larry Cohen be the next president. Cohen, Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling and District 4 Vice President Jeffrey Rechenbach, seeking Cohen's current position, said they will run as a unity slate in 2005.

Although Bahr stressed during the convention that the union's budget "is the tightest I've ever seen," delegates overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to hold conventions less frequently in order to save money. A committee report recommending triennial conventions included an estimate that such events cost \$5 million in national and local expenses, but even a last-minute amendment to hold mini-conventions in the second and third years was insufficient to overcome suspicions that the proposal would reduce CWA's democratic governance.

All other resolutions passed unanimously or with only scattered opposition, led off by an endorsement of John Kerry for president that elicited a nearly ritual abstention speech from TNG Vice President Peter Szekely. "If readers think we have a political point of view, they won't believe what we say," he said, explaining "why it's in the interest of journalists to stay out of politics." As he spoke, a sea of "CWA for Kerry" signs slowly emerged across the convention floor.

Guild joins legal battle

Continued from page 1

proceedings who are refusing to testify about their confidential sources," may be signed online, at: www.rcfp.org/standup.

The amicus brief, in which TNG-CWA is one of nearly a score of intervenors, seeks to quash several federal subpoenas. Although there is no federal shield law, the brief argues for the existence of a federal common-law reporter's privilege that should be applied in the Valerie Plame case.

The brief was initially sealed, in keeping with the secrecy surrounding the case. While the court subsequently agreed to unseal the motion, it did not rule before the Guild Reporter went to press on whether to accept the intervenors.

Other notable resolutions included a demand that the U.S. pull its troops out of Iraq, aligning the CWA with a growing number of other unions, including AFSCME, SEIU and the Postal Workers. Other resolutions support the Employee Free Choice Act, oppose the Central America Free Trade Act, support civil marriage and promote Cingular as the wireless service of choice for union members, slamming Verizon as "the Wal-Mart of wireless."

The convention also approved one set of constitutional amendments, integrating the flight attendants' union into CWA, but rejected a second constitutional resolution that would have made it easier for the executive board to place a local in receivership.

In other business, the CWA's 2004 Newsletter Awards were dominated by the Albany Newspaper Guild's newsletter, The Guild, which won six prizes altogether—including the prestigious Oscar Jager Journalism Award. Edited by Michael McNessor, the Guild also won first place for general excellence and first place for human interest features, together with some lesser prizes, and was lauded as "a newsletter that is first-rate in every respect."

Changing of the guard

Several staff changes at TNG-CWA headquarters were announced as the Guild Reporter was going to press; more details will be provided in the October issue.

Staff rep Leo Ducharme, a Guild employee for 31 years, said he will retire in October.

Helen Coleman, who started with the Guild in 1971 and became the first administrator of the International Pension Fund in 1977, will retire at the end of this month. She will be succeeded by Scott Bush, currently the TNG-CWA webmaster.

Guild briefs . . .

AP lays off temps in belt-tightening

Citing financial pressures, the Associated Press laid off approximately two-dozen temporary editorial employees in mid-August. The wire service blamed the layoffs in part on the costs of moving its headquarters, but also on costs associated with the Iraq war, the Olympics and the election—on the costs, in other words, of delivering its core product. The layoffs follow other cost-cutting moves that have included cutbacks in the use of photo stringers and subscriptions.

APTN techs ratify their first contract

Members of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) technical unit in Canada have overwhelmingly ratified a first collective agreement. The three-year contract, covering approximately 25 Guild members, was achieved with the assistance of a federal mediation officer and provides for wage increases ranging from 10.5% to more than 34% over the life of the agreement. It also entitles employees to overtime after 35 hours in a week, requires just cause for termination and establishes seniority for layoffs and recall.

Hudson News ok's 3-year extension

Guild members at the Hudson News in New York voted 87-0 to accept a three-year contract extension that provides wage increases of approximately 9%. In addition, Guild-covered employees who have worked for Hudson News more than seven years will receive a bonus equal to a week's salary, with smaller bonuses for less tenured workers. The bonuses settle an arbitration case filed when Hudson News didn't pay bonuses last Christmas.

Guild DC activist arrested in protest

Vowing that "injustice of any kind must be struck down," a labor delegation blocked the doors of the Sudanese embassy in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 28, resulting in four arrests, including that of Rick Ehrmann, a Guild activist in the Washington-Baltimore local. The arrests followed an hour-long demonstration against the genocide in Sudan's Darfur province, in which as many as 50,000 people have died. Nearly a million farmers and their families have been forced out of their villages by militias armed by the Sudanese government.

CBC web filter hinders research

In its zeal to protect employees from potentially "offensive" web sites, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has

installed software that Guild members say hinders them in doing their work. The blocking software, called Websense, is designed "to restrict access to offensive sites such as those containing illegal, pornographic or racist material and those that promote hatred or violence." Like other such packages, however, Websense also blocks legitimate online research, prompting a request by the Canadian Media Guild for talks with senior management.

CBC wants to use more freelancers

Contract negotiations between the Canadian Media Guild and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have hit a rough spot over a CBC proposal to expand its use of temporary workers and freelancers. The Guild believes the corporation already has significant flexibility in the way it hires and deploys staff and views the proposal as an attempt to create a disposable workforce. Further talks were scheduled for the week of Sept. 13.

Denver local seeks agreed-on retro

Because the Denver Guild and the Denver Newspaper Agency have been bargaining over wage increases for 2004 and 2005 for nearly a year, employees of the Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News have gone a pretty long time without raises. Now Guild leaders are asking: why wait to pay the minimum increase both sides have already accepted? "The union and the agency agree that all employees will receive a 2.75% wage increase retroactive to January 25, 2004. That is not in dispute," the Guild announced. "We have requested that the Agency pay out this increase to employees without further delay. It's the right thing to do." Final resolution of the dispute is awaiting an arbitrator's decision, but although the Guild had anticipated that a three-day hearing would be held this fall, the agency rejected all of the dates proposed by the arbitrator due to scheduling conflicts. A hearing is expected to start Jan. 11.

Reuters: standby pay required

An arbitrator has ruled that Reuters must pay three Washington-based journalists \$8 an hour in "standby/on call" pay for the months they were assigned to the Pentagon's press pool, where they could have been flown into a war zone at any time on four hours' notice. Reuters had argued that giving the reporters four hours' notice for overseas deployment was so generous they didn't qualify for standby pay, typically used when employees are called to work on short notice—but for relatively short periods.

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Constitution amended to admit freelancers

When push came to shove, the most contentious issue at last year's sector conference produced this year's longest resolution but nary a word of dissent when reported onto the conference floor. The final vote, while not unanimous, elicited only a scattered handful of "nays."

With that mild overture, TNG-CWA reversed decades of history by agreeing to open its ranks to freelancers. But in some ways the decision merely reflected a belated recognition that the fight for full-time jobs in the newspaper industry has been lost, at least partially, to publishers advocating workforce "flexibility." As TNG President Linda Foley argued last year, the Guild has to follow the jobs—and a growing number of newspaper

jobs are being outsourced, to freelancers, contract employees and other non-traditional kinds of workers.

Last year's freelancer proposal was shelved by conference delegates who complained they hadn't had enough time to study it, as well as in response to concerns that several issues hadn't been adequately addressed. But instead of burying the initiative, Guild leaders used the intervening 12 months to hash out problems in local and district council meetings. Indeed, the New York Guild, which last year was most vocal in speaking against the proposal, adopted its own freelancer initiative several months before the sector conference.

The resolution offered to delegates this

year opened with the assertion that it is Guild policy "to encourage union solidarity and to advance the economic interests and working conditions amongst all media and communication workers, regardless of whether those workers are in a traditional employment relationship or whether they enjoy the statutory rights of collective bargaining." To advance that goal, the resolution added, the Guild should offer full membership "to those who actively perform work of the type described in the Constitution, but outside a traditional employment relationship, or without the legal right to collective bargaining."

The constitutional amendments proposed by the resolution and adopted by conference delegates achieve this goal by creating two mechanisms. Either a local may create an appropriate unit for freelance members—as New York already has—or the TNG Executive Council may seek a CWA charter for a new local that would be created specifically for organizing freelancers. Such a "local" could have a nationwide charter, as the News Media and Canadian Media guilds have already established.

Should the executive council decide to seek such a charter, it would have to give 60 days' notice to all affected locals so they could raise objections or lay claim to the freelancers in their jurisdictions.

Freelancers' dues under the adopted changes will be no less than the CWA rate for members who don't enjoy collective bargaining rights, currently two times the U.S. minimum wage, or \$10.30 a month. Freelancers will not be permitted to vote on collective bargaining issues—including contract ratifications, grievance settlements and

strike votes—but otherwise will have all the rights of any other Guild member.

And, as is true with other Guild applicants, each local has the power to determine the eligibility of anyone applying for Guild membership and the authority to deny membership to anyone actively working against the interests of the local, the Guild or CWA. Locals also are required to adopt reasonable bylaws provisions to verify that freelancers remain actively employed in constitutionally-qualifying work and thus remain eligible for continued Guild membership.

Resolution #10: California dreamin'

No gray skies here—for 2 1/2 days the Anaheim Hilton was the happiest place on Earth.

Newspaper Guild-CWA sector conference delegates not only were productive in fulfilling the responsibility of their locals, but they also heeded the call of President Linda Foley to "have fun."

And who was responsible for helping to make it happen?

In another sparkling example of convergence it was the CWA Local 9400 Southern California Media Guild led by President Micheal Hartigan, Vice President Vicki Di Paolo, and CWA District 9 Vice President Tony Bixler.

Refreshed, renewed and energized, delegates can go back home fit to serve, and ready to face management with the rallying cry, "Bring it on!"

Thank you, Southern California. Dreamin' of Victoria!

Resolution #7: Removing an obstacle to organizing freelancers

Freelancers' main interest in joining a union is to gain access to a discounted health insurance plan.

It is probably beyond the capability of Locals, by themselves, to develop such a plan. The insurance companies just don't see the value in dealing with small groups. Perhaps if we had more freelancers signed up, the insurers would be more interested, but the freelancers aren't interested unless we can offer insurance.

If the ambitious Freelance membership program approved by delegates at this Sector Conference is to have a reasonable chance of success, we believe it is imperative that TNG/CWA step in to provide a program of discounted health insurance coverage for freelance members as other unions have already done.

Therefore, TNG/CWA shall make every effort to develop, as soon as possible, a program of discount health insurance coverage to be made available for purchase by freelance workers who become members of the Guild.

It is important to make clear that the freelancers would pay 100 % of the cost of their coverage. The only cost we would anticipate that TNG/CWA would have to pick up would be the minimal clerical costs associated with certifying membership. The insurance company would probably pay for the printing of brochures and forms.

Tighter budget, investment losses pinch TNG

Fiscal belt-tightening is the order of the day, conference delegates learned, following the finance and administration committee's review of the Guild's annual financial report. But getting to the bottom line wasn't an easy task.

The first hurdle in balancing the books, Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer told The Guild Reporter, always is that of reconciling TNG and CWA bookkeeping entries that vary because of differences in how the two unions are structured. While the Guild retained its executive council after the merger, for example, other affiliates—such as the former ITU—abolished theirs. Similarly, annual expense reports filed by Guild representatives on average are more than twice as large as those filed by CWA reps because they travel more, reflecting differences in the way the telecom and newspaper industries are structured.

One example of the negotiations that go on between the two unions, Lunzer said, occurred when the two unions came up with wildly different estimates of how much dues income TNG locals provided to CWA: \$5.2 million by Lunzer's calculations, \$3.5 million by CWA's. After reviewing Lunzer's numbers, the CWA raised its estimate to \$4.5 million.

On the debit side of the ledger, Lunzer reported that for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, TNG-CWA spent \$2,460,016, or \$20,221 more than the \$2,439,795 that had been budgeted for the period. This represented an expenditure of slightly less than 1% over budget, including \$38,470 over budget for full-time staff expenses and \$20,030 under budget for part-time salaries and expenses.

Balances in the Guild's specialized funds are mostly down from a year ago. These include:

- The Segregated Fund, which was established from the Guild's remaining assets after the CWA merger and which is not

replenished, had a balance as of July 31 of \$80,688, down roughly \$50,000 in the past year. Lunzer estimates about \$15,000 of that will be recovered from the sale of Guild haberdashery, which was underwritten by the fund. The balance of fund expenditures included two donations of \$5,000 each, to Free Press and to Workers Independent News Service, and spending on information technology, including equipment and web page costs.

- The Irving Leuchter Fund, which pays for participation in the Harvard Trade Union program, had \$9,180 at the end of the fiscal year. This is a slight increase over a year ago, partly due to interest income and donations but also because no scholarships were awarded in the past year.

- The Barr Account, which funds the Barr scholarships, totals \$729, down about \$400 from last year.

- The Anti-Discrimination Fund has a balance of \$38,528.

- The Guild's Mobilization and Defense Fund had \$2,438,594 as of June 30, down \$570,790 from last year due to a combination of outlays and a slump in the bond market. Fund expenditures in the past year included approximately \$130,000 in mobilization costs to the Minnesota, Washington-Baltimore, Pacific Northwest, Toledo, Montreal and News Media locals. The fund also disbursed \$5,000 to Alberta for first contract expenses at the Medicine Hat Shopper, as well as approximately \$5,000 to Peterborough for strike expenses not covered by the CWA Member

Relief Fund. Additional requests are pending from Puerto Rico and Memphis, although some of these costs may be covered by the CWA Defense Fund.

While an upswing in the bond market

Crunch time

	2004-2005 Submitted	2004-2005 Approved	2003-2004 Actual
FT Salaries		\$1,366,493	\$1,350,202
Clerical Salaries		312,746	311,753
FT Expenses	\$411,500	300,020	315,490
PT Sal. & Exp.	92,000	60,480	55,570
Sup. & Print.	157,500	73,500	125,177
Postage-Freight	137,500	69,300	99,163
Rental & Maint.	18,413	13,360	17,825
Contract Services	19,100	3,300	12,670
Electronic Comm.		17,280	20,909
Rent		91,419	142,308
All Other	23,000	8,312	8,951
TOTALS:		\$2,316,210	\$2,460,016

The crunch is on. Belt-tightening by CWA is being felt throughout the union, as reflected in the budget numbers above. While salaries, communications and rent are contractually determined, all other line items have been budgeted at levels significantly below Guild requests—and in virtually all cases for less than in the last fiscal year.

yielded \$40,000 in gains in August, recent market gyrations have prompted the TNG Executive Council to review its investment policy. Most of the fund is invested in government bonds, which are the most risk-free investment possible, but every asset carries some level of interest rate and market risk; a more sophisticated investment strategy would rely on asset diversification to offset losses in one asset class with gains in another. The executive council is now considering how best to diversify the fund's portfolio.

Lunzer added that the executive council also will seek advice from district councils regarding the manner in which locals remit strike pay issued by the Guild Mobilization

and Defense Fund in the first two weeks of a strike. The Guild currently makes individual strikers responsible for the repayments, with payment of a final check from the CWA Members Relief Fund contingent on repayment of the first week's advance from TNG. But this approach is unacceptable to CWA, which views the TNG advance as an improper attachment on the Members Relief Fund.

"We either need to make locals accept the burden through signing a promissory note guaranteeing repayment, or stop the practice of making these payments available," Lunzer said.

Included in the financial report was a membership census, prepared by the CWA membership department, showing a Guild membership in July of 32,628. That represents an increase of 1,342 over the 31,286 reported a year earlier. By Guild region, the membership is:

- Canada East—6,975;
- Canada West—626;
- Region One (East Coast)—4,555;
- Region Two (South)—3,305;
- Region Three (Great Lakes)—2,716;
- Region Four (West)—4,677;
- Region Five (New York and IAPE locals)—5,946;
- Region Six (Midwest)—2,910;
- News Media members (918) are not included in the above totals, but vote based on where they work.

The breakdown by CWA District is: D1—17,311; D2—2,173; D3—1,132; D4—2,764; D6—620; D7—3,611; D9—3,427; D13—1,908.

Resolution #8: In memoriam

The Newspaper Guild and the CWA family lost more than a leader and a great friend with the death of John Belcarz last Oct. 20.

We also lost a man of compassion, conviction and unparalleled understanding. John worked on Guild business until only a few days before his death.

John, 51, was a problem-solver who worked well with people of all convictions. A leader who first rose from the ranks of the circulation department, John's leadership style flowed from his innate sense of fairness.

His concerns for justice, his righteousness and his passion for human rights made him a fierce defender, not only of communications workers, but also of the fundamental right of the public to be informed.

His commitment, his determination and his vast knowledge have helped advance labor relations in the communications sector, and the freedom of the press.

John Belcarz was the glue that held his local together, that helped make TNG Canada as strong as it is today. He had a smile that could light up a room and a personality that spread warmth and good cheer to those who shared the room with him.

He fought for what he believed in and he never gave up. Never.

[The resolution then lists the names of several dozen Guild members and retirees who died in the past year.]



Alex Blanco, of the New York local, listens as John Shostrum, also from New York, makes a point during debate.

Unnumbered resolution on outsourcing

Very occasionally, sector delegates offer a resolution from the floor—as in this case, following a successful request by Lise Lareau, president of the Canadian Media Guild, that the conference rules be suspended. The motion passed unanimously:

“Motion to direct the SEC to develop a program for the Victoria conference which will include an action plan to deal with outsourcing and offshoring through a campaign of:

- public education/lobbying
- collective bargaining
- legislation.”

Resolution #4: Burdensome recordkeeping

New Regulations from the U.S. Department of Labor require union locals with over \$250,000 in annual income to prepare and file detailed financial reports that will do nothing to inform union members on how their dues money is being used.

The new “LM-2” serves only to burden union locals with the time and expense of unnecessary record keeping.

It is this type of burdensome regulation that anti-labor forces would denounce if applied to businesses.

Resolved:

The 2004 Newspaper Guild Sector Conference:

1. Calls on the U.S. Congress to rescind the Department of Labor's revised LM2 regulations; and
2. Directs TNG-CWA officers and staff to join with its CWA sisters and brothers to overturn this burdensome and needless regulation.

Resolution #6: Ensure annual sector conferences

The CWA is considering a change to Triennial conventions. In the event such a change is approved, we believe it is necessary to ensure that the Guild will continue to hold a Sector Conference on an annual basis.

Therefore, TNG/CWA hereby reaffirms its commitment to holding annual Sector Conferences, even if the CWA changes its schedule of annual Conventions. In the event of such a change by CWA, the 2005 TNG/CWA Sector Conference shall consider any Constitutional changes that are needed to maintain annual Sector Conferences.



Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer and President Linda Foley, taking care of conference business.

Resolution #3: Stop Media Concentration

In the past year we have witnessed attempts by the business-dominated U.S. Federal Communications Commission to permit an increased concentration of media properties in the hands of a few corporate owners.

It was only action by the Third Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals that halted the rules permitting increased concentration of media properties from taking effect. Now the battle has returned to the FCC.

Media concentration serves only to stifle the free exchange of ideas at a time when there is a vital need for a variety of views and opinions in the marketplace of ideas. This concentration also hurts the business community by driving up the price of advertising

that can be charged by newly expanded media monopolies.

Media Concentration is bad for Journalism and bad for the economy.

Resolved:

The 2004 Newspaper Guild Sector Conference:

1. Calls on the U.S. Federal Communications Commission to hold full public hearings on its media ownership rules.
2. Calls on the U.S. Congress to monitor the FCC's oversight of media concentration; and
3. Directs TNG-CWA officers and staff to continue working to limit concentration of media ownership.

Resolution #2: Protecting OT

Within the past week, regulations from the U.S. Department of Labor took effect stripping many workers of their rights to overtime pay. This change rolls back a century of labor gains that ensured workers not only fair pay, but time with their families.

Resolved:

The 2004 Newspaper Guild Sector Conference:

1. Calls on the U.S. Congress to use its powers to restore overtime protections for those workers who lost them as a result of the new U.S. Department of Labor regulations.
2. Directs TNG-CWA officers and staff to work in support of this legislation.
3. Calls on TNG-CWA locals and members to work with the AFL-CIO and other groups to work to restore overtime protections.



Minnesota delegates Bill Weyandt, Ann Wilhelmy (center) and Lynda Hanner share a table with the Philadelphia delegation.



IAPE's delegation included Karin Mitchell, Bob Sweeney (center) and Steve Yount.

Resolution #1: The Employee Free Choice Act

Too often when workers try to get a voice on the job by forming a union, employers respond with intimidation, harassment and retaliation. And federal law fails to address this injustice.

One has only to look at the violations of law and delay of justice at the Chinese Daily News to see the need for quick recognition of unions and remedies for attacks on union activists.

The right to form a union is derivative of the U.S. 1st Amendment's right of association. To deny this right also threatens other "1st Freedoms" that the press depend on: Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Speech.

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), S. 1925 and H.R. 3619, would ensure that when a majority of employees in a workplace decide to form a union, they can do so without the debilitating obstacles employers now use to block their workers' free choice.

The Employee Free Choice Act will:

- Allow employees to freely choose whether to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.

- Provide mediation and arbitration for first contract disputes.

- Establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first contract negotiations.

This legislation is also needed to protect existing use of card-check recognition from attack by a National Labor Relations Board hostile to labor unions.

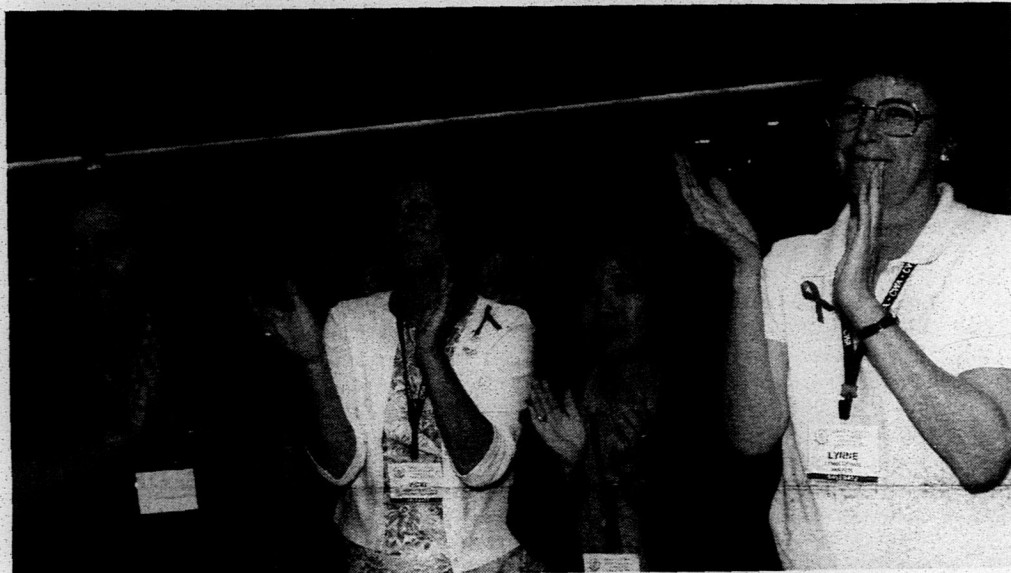
Resolved:

The 2004 Newspaper Guild Sector Conference:

1. Calls on the U.S. Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act; and

2. Directs TNG-CWA officers and staff to work in support of this legislation.

3. Calls on TNG-CWA locals and members to contact members of Congress to support this legislation.



Joining in a sustained standing ovation for workers at the Chinese Daily News, whose struggle framed support for the Employee Free Choice Act, are (l to r), Michael Leidemann of Hawaii; Vicki DiPaolo, Southern California; TNG-CWA Vice President Lucy Wittek, Hawaii; and Lynne Dennis, San Jose.

Resolution #5: Visas for foreign reporters

The Newspaper Guild has had a long and distinguished record of standing up for the rights, notably freedom of the press, not just of its own members, but of journalists everywhere.

Now, due to stepped-up enforcement of a law regarding visas for foreign reporters entering the United States, those rights, at least for that group, are threatened. And there are potential retaliatory consequences for U.S. journalists abroad.

Earlier this year, Elena Lappin, a reporter for The Manchester Guardian, was detained at Los Angeles International Airport. She was then manacled and transported to a holding cell, where she was confined by federal immigration agents. After 26 hours total, in detention, she was deported, even though she was a permanent U.S. resident.

More importantly, Lappin was at least the 13th journalist deported under provisions of the 1952 act, which requires a special "I-Visa" for foreign nationals who visit the United States for professional journalistic reasons, and which limits their time in this country. The act was revived by the 2001 USA Patriot Act, passed in an ill-considered rush after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Detentions and deportations of journalists are contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. And they invite retaliation, as other nations may detain or take even more severe measures against U.S. reporters, broadcasters and writers who travel abroad.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors has formally protested these tactics in letters to Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Homeland Security Thomas Ridge.

Citing Lappin's story, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-

Calif.), who has introduced legislation on the issue, wrote her colleagues on July 14 that: "If you think interrogations, body searches, handcuffing, and detention of members of the foreign press only happens in other countries, think again."

Meanwhile, there is nothing in the law that would prevent a journalist in the United States on an I-Visa from working as a strikebreaker at Guild employers such as Reuters or Agence France Press. Other types of business and work visas contain prohibitions against scabbing.

Delegates to the sector conference of The Newspaper Guild-CWA firmly believe in the unfettered right of all reporters, regardless of nationality, to gather and convey information to the public. We also believe that non-U.S. journalists should not be used to replace U.S. journalists who are on strike.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

- (1) The Newspaper Guild-CWA file a strong and formal protest against detentions and deportations of journalists by U.S. border personnel, with both the departments of State and Homeland Security.

- (2) The Newspaper Guild-CWA lobby for repeal of discriminatory restrictions on reporters entering the United States as well as lobby for laws that bar employers from using non-U.S. journalists as strikebreakers.

- (3) The Newspaper Guild support efforts to remove the U.S. visa restrictions on journalists from the so-called "27 friendly countries" and demand that they be treated like other business travelers, allowed to enter the United States unimpeded for 90 days so long as they are legally barred from being employed as strikebreakers.

Resolution #9: UNIVISION

For years UPAGRA has had a good bargaining relationship with the television employers in the Island of Puerto Rico. However since the appearance in 2001 of Univisión to the Puerto Rican market, the relationship has gone downhill.

Grievances go unresolved, arbitrations (and related expenses) have gone way up, and the labor-management relationship has deteriorated not only at Teleonce but with all the other employers in this industry in the Island. Univisión has advertised full page ads in local newspapers disparaging UPAGRA and the unionized workforce among the community, affecting our relationship with other employers in Puerto Rico.

Univisión is attempting to reduce the amount of product made in the Island, requests the right to bring work to Puerto Rico without it being done by UPAGRA and their Guild members, and to be able to send Guild represented reporters to assignments elsewhere without a Guild represented technical crew.

The cultural impact of Univisión's actions has come to the attention of the Legislature of Puerto Rico and investigatory hearings are now being held.

UPAGRA members unanimously approved a strike vote, to protect their wages, continue securing hours and working conditions and ratify a new contract that preserves their right to their jobs.

Resolved:

The 2004 Newspaper Guild Sector Conference:

1. Request Univisión to bargain in good faith.

2. Applauds the efforts of the Legislature of Puerto Rico to require Univisión to respect the special culture and nature of Puerto Rican society.

3. Directs TNG and CWA officers and staff to support the fight of the UPAGRA and Guild members at Univisión, in their struggle to retain their contract and their right to do their jobs.

4. Joins UPAGRA in saying: "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!" The people united will never be defeated!

If Univisión does not come to reasonable terms with UPAGRA, the loss of the good Union-employer relationship that had prevailed will adversely and seriously affect all parties involved.

Resolucion #9: UNIVISIÓN

Durante muchos años UPAGRA ha tenido una buena relación de negociaciones con los canales de televisión en la Isla de Puerto Rico.

Sin embargo, desde la llegada de Univisión en el año 2001 al mercado puertorriqueño, esta relación ha hido cuesta abajo.

Las querellas no se resuelven, han aumentado los arbitrajes (y por consiguiente los costos relacionados) y la relación obrero-patronal se ha deteriorado, no sólo ha ocurrido con Univisión sino también con otros patronos en la industria de la televisión en la Isla. Univisión ha publicado anuncios a páginas completa en periódicos locales difamando a UPAGRA y a la fuerza laboral sindicalizada ante la comunidad. Esto ha afectado nuestra relación con otros patronos Puerto Rico.

Univisión ha reducido la cantidad de producciones hechas en la Isla, solicita el derecho de traer producciones a Puerto Rico que sin que se realice por UPAGRA y sus miembros. Y intentan enviar reporteros afiliados al Guild para que realicen asignaciones en otras partes sin estar acompañados por un equipo técnico representado por el Guild.

El impacto cultural de los acciones de Univisión ha llegado a la atención de la Legislatura de Puerto Rico y vistas están citadas.

Los afiliados de UPAGRA aprobaron unánimemente un voto de huelga para proteger sus salarios, tener la habilidad de enviar a reporteros representados por UPAGRA y ratificar un nuevo contrato que preserve el derecho a sus puestos de trabajo.

Se ha resuelto:

La conferencia sectorial del Newspaper Guild del año 2004:

1. Exige que Univisión negocie de buena fe.

2. Aplauda los esfuerzos de la Legislatura de Puerto Rico, para lograr que Univisión respete la cultura y el carácter de la sociedad puertorriqueña.

3. Requiere que los oficiales y empleados de la TNG y CWA apoyen la lucha de UPAGRA y los afiliados del Guild que trabajan en Univisión en su lucha para conservar su contrato y sus derechos a trabajar.

4. Se une a UPAGRA diciendo "El pueblo, unido, jamás será vencido."

Si Univisión no llega a un acuerdo razonable con UPAGRA, se perderá la buena relación obrero-patronal que ha prevalecido hasta ahora, afectará negativa y gravemente todos los partes envueltas.

News round-up

Overtime woes? Ask a lawyer for help

A new resource, called "Ask a Lawyer," has been unveiled by AFL-CIO affiliate Working America to help workers understand the new overtime regulations that took effect Aug. 23. The website, which can be visited at www.workingamerica.org, walks visitors through a series of questions about their job, geographic location, duties and other factors that could determine overtime pay eligibility; specific queries can then be addressed to attorney Baldwin Robertson.

Health care insurance slip-slidin' away

The percentage of workers with job-based health insurance has dropped from 70.1% in 1987 to 64.2% in 2002, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute. The drop was even bigger for workers in firms with more than 500 workers. The institute said several factors contributed to the fall, including the rising cost of health care benefits; workers moving from manufacturing to service-sector jobs; the increased use of part-time, temporary, contract and contingent workers; and the lack of union representation. Meanwhile, the employee share of health care costs among companies that still provide such coverage has soared.

Weak labor market takes economic toll

Household income and poverty data for 2003, released Aug. 26 by the U.S. Census Bureau, confirmed that the weak labor market continued taking a toll on family incomes, as it had in 2001 and in 2002. Three statistics were especially notable:

- Despite a macroeconomic recovery, median household income did not rise in 2003. (The decline from \$43,381 to \$43,318 is statistically insignificant.) However, median household income, in 2003 dollars, was down 3.4% from 2000 (from \$44,853 in 2000 to \$43,318 in 2003).
- The gap between high- and low-income households has widened throughout the 2000 to 2003 period. The ratio of the incomes at the 95th percentile to those at the 10th percentile rose to 14.63, up from 14.12 in 2002 and 13.72 in 2000.
- The largest income declines were among the lowest income households, dropping an average of 2.2% from 2002 to 2003 in the bottom fifth of households, boosting the poverty rate to 12.5% from 12.1%.

Offshore estimates hiked, CEOs benefit

Forrester Research, according to a report in the Los Angeles Times, has raised its estimate of the number of jobs that will be outsourced by the end of 2005 by nearly 50%, to 830,000 from 558,000. Over the longer term, Celent Communications, a consulting firm, calculates that 2.3 million financial jobs are at risk. Researchers at UC Berkeley think that as many as 14 million jobs of all types are vulnerable. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Institute for Policy Studies reports that CEOs at companies who outsource the most jobs get rewarded with bigger paychecks: average CEO compensation at the 50 firms outsourcing the most service jobs increased by 46% in 2003, compared with a 9% average increase for all CEOs at the 365 large companies surveyed by the institute and by United for a Fair Economy.

AFL-CIO files suit over disclosure rule

The AFL-CIO is continuing its battle against new rules, issued by Labor Secretary Elaine Chao and taking effect July 1, requiring unions to file greatly more detailed annual reports about their financial activities. A brief filed June 29 with the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., argues that Chao exceeded her authority under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, which already required unions to prepare annual statements similar to those filed by corporations and non-profit organizations. The new rules require detailed listings of all expenditures of more than \$5,000, as well as aggregated disbursements of more than \$5,000 to any one individual. Oral argument has been scheduled for Dec. 8. [See Resolution #4, adopted by the sector conference, on page 4.]

Investors take a shine to newspapers

Newspaper publishers continue whacking at payrolls in an effort to boost profit margins, suggesting the industry is on the financial ropes. But don't tell that to investors. According to the July/August issue of trade journal *Presstime*, "several factors make newspapers especially attractive right now to equity firms." The article quotes one newspaper brokerage official as observing that such firms "believe they are buying in at the bottom of the [revenue] cycle," and quotes another as claiming newspaper companies enjoy "defensible market positions and strong cash-flow characteristics."

Canadian unions take in more women

The face of organized labor in Canada is increasingly female, reports Statistics Canada, with women now accounting for 48% of all unionized employees, up from just 12% in 1977. Union membership in Canada last year was slightly more than 4 million, which is an all-time high in absolute numbers and an increase of more than 40% since 1977. In relative terms, however, overall union density has declined from its peak, which it hit in 1987, at 34.2% of the workforce, and for the past decade has hovered around 30%. Still, that's an improvement over the U.S., where union density has slipped year after year and now is below 12%.

AFL-CIO blasts NLRB in harshest language

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates Inc.

The three-person GOP majority on the National Labor Relations Board has "perverted" the agency, transforming it into "a dangerous enemy of workers' rights," the AFL-CIO has charged.

In one of the most bitter blasts it has ever leveled at a bureaucracy created in 1935 explicitly to safeguard workers' rights, the federation's executive council, meeting August 11 in Chicago, called the NLRB guilty of an "assault (on) workers' rights."

Unions have criticized the board in the past for moving too slowly and for a management-oriented tilt. Scholars attribute much of the problem and delays to the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin Acts, pushed by the GOP in the 1940s and 1950s, and to the negligible penalties faced by companies that ignore the law. But this statement was more pointed, alleging that the Bush-appointed NLRB majority has compiled "a long list of offenses against workers' rights." Among them:

- The board's June 15 party-line decision to consider the legality of immediate challenges to card-check certification of unions. Unions now use card-check to get around the slow NLRB processes and management delays—and around provisions that restrict union, but not management, access to workers.

But the board, for 42 years, has said that once it certifies the union as the workers' representative, the union has a year—after all appeals are exhausted—to bargain for a contract before the union's legitimacy can be challenged. After that year, dissenters can push for a decertification election. The Bush GOP majority, at the request of the anti-worker National Right to Work Committee, asked for briefs on killing that one-year grace period, called a "recognition bar," the AFL-CIO said.

"The Republican majority on the Bush NLRB seems intent on undermining voluntary recognition (card-check) agreements and the important rights they protect," the executive council added.

- The Bush-named majority decided on June 30

that even after a 4-1/2-year organizing campaign dominated by "egregious violations" of workers' rights by a San Francisco legal services company, "its only punishment should be a cease-and-desist notice to the company." The case involved bicycle couriers, trying to organize with Longshore and Warehouse Local 6, who were illegally fired, threatened with firing, made to sign "independent contractor" pacts—placing themselves outside labor law—and offered bribes to turn against ILWU, the council said.

- By a 3-2 margin, the Bush board let a clinic fire 22 striking nurses because their union missed a mandatory strike deadline by four hours. Under federal law, nursing unions must give employers 10 days' notice of intent to strike and specify a time. The union did so, but delayed the start of the strike by four hours. Letting the clinic fire the nurses "ignored specific language" by Congress in 1974 that "said it was not Congress' intention the union be required to commence a strike at the precise time specified in the notice," the council said.

- When California passed a law last year saying no company taking state funds may use that money for or against organizing campaigns, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce challenged it in federal court. Bush's NLRB majority sided with the chamber, which won. "Instead of devoting scarce staff time and resources to the mission of upholding workers' rights, the board used them to throw its weight behind the perverse argument that state legislatures lack authority to protect taxpayers' dollars from unintended uses" in anti-union campaigns and labor law-breaking, the AFL-CIO said.

- The GOP majority reversed a Clinton-era NLRB decision and said private university teaching assistants and research assistants are not "employees" under labor law, and therefore not organizable. "This violates common sense and is yet another nail in the coffin of American workers' human rights," the federation declared, describing the TAs—who work for low stipends, with no health insurance and no tenure—"an easily exploited labor pool."

The NLRB had no comment on the federation's critique.

Wealth inequality tops Project Censored's list

One of the biggest arguments that TNG-CWA and its allies have advanced against relaxing media ownership rules is the claim that media consolidation narrows the news "lens"—that fewer news outlets mean less diversity in news coverage. Indeed, because media oligarchies concentrate wealth and political power, they may be expected to conserve the status quo and support rather than challenge conventional wisdom.

Among those monitoring this tendency has been Project Censored, a juried evaluation coordinated by Sonoma State University that each year solicits examples of important stories that received inadequate coverage in the national press. Although not censored in the technical sense—no government agency was involved—these stories in the jury's judgment were largely ignored or underplayed despite major public policy implications.

This year's top 10 censored picks, announced in August, include:

- 1. A near doubling of wealth inequality in the United States over the past 30 years, straining the democratic social fabric. Not only does the U.S. now have the most unbalanced wealth distribution of any industrialized country, with the top 5% of all households owning nearly 60% of everything, but the nation's tax system increasingly has middle class wage earners providing relief to the wealthy investing class.

- 2. Attorney General John Ashcroft's legal attack on the Alien Tort Claims Act, a 215-year-old law that has been used to extract compensation from foreign profiteers—such as Swiss banks profiting from con-

centration camp workers—as well as from former dictators in Latin America, the Philippines, Indonesia and elsewhere. Ashcroft is seeking to overturn the act on the grounds that it threatens "important foreign policy interests" in the war on terrorism.

- 3. The Bush administration's manipulation of scientific data to advance questionable policy initiatives on such issues as global warming, the effects of hydraulic fracturing on groundwater, and air quality in lower Manhattan following the destruction of the World Trade Center.

- 4. Continued use of depleted-uranium weapons in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, with government authorities minimizing health concerns raised by U.S. troops and indigenous civilian populations.

- 5. The wholesale giveaway of natural resources, described by former Sierra Club President Adam Werbach as "an affirmative action program for corporate polluters."

- 6. Widespread opportunities for vote tampering in the upcoming presidential election due to a hodgepodge of voting systems across the country—some of which are merely antiquated, others that are vulnerable to hackers and other manipulation.

- 7. An aggressive neo-conservative campaign to stack the federal judiciary with right-wingers.

- 8. Corporate control over Dick Cheney's energy task force.

- 9. A RICO lawsuit against the U.S. government, brought by a 9/11 widow.

- 10. The federally-supported rebirth of the nuclear power industry.

For more details, visit www.projectcensored.org.



LOOKING AHEAD

Convergence II: mapping the future

By Carol Rothman, TNG-CWA Chairperson

On a snowy January weekend in Baltimore, Guild activists, officers and staff came together at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies for Convergence II: A Strategic Forum. We weren't snowed in, but even when the sun is shining you're stuck in that place. This time, though, I think the atmosphere was conducive to a successful meeting.

The call to the summit said we would review the union's strategic approach to the challenges we currently face in bargaining and organizing. We sought Guild leaders who understand the challenges we face at the bargaining table and in organizing drives, leaders who would share their experiences and ideas. Our goal was not only to find ways to solve our current problems, but to develop ideas for overcoming future obstacles.

The process was lively, informative and engaging. And I guess you wouldn't be surprised to hear that Guild participants were not shy in expressing their opinions, in both the small group discussions and plenary sessions.

Convergence II established five working groups to address topics the conference participants agreed needed ongoing development and work, including chain coordination; promoting the Guild image; political participation; collective bargaining; and membership involvement.

Each working group left Baltimore armed with the contributions of the conference participants. Each was charged with researching its chosen topic, assembling a report, and making appropriate recommendations to the executive council. Action on those recommendations will take place at the sector conference in Victoria next May.

You have seen the results of their work so far in the reports that were compiled and e-mailed to you in advance of this meeting. Each group is at a different point in its progress, but all are well on the way toward completing the work assigned to them.

There has been some discussion whether Convergence II was the appropriate name for this endeavor. And that begs the question: What was Convergence I?

The first convergence forum took place in the fall of 1995 in Washington, D.C. The Guild had just voted to merge with the CWA, and "convergence" was the hot topic in the communications industry.

During Convergence I, we shared Guild experiences as TNG members and staff served as panelists in a program sponsored jointly with the CWA. We hoped to learn from the interaction with our new CWA colleagues. And, we connected with CWA local members and district staffers in the various discussion groups.

For most of us, that forum was our first taste of cooperation with CWA at the local and international level. It reaffirmed our overwhelming decision to merge, and it set the stage for our immersion in our new parent union.

This year's Convergence repeated some

of that essence of collaboration between TNG and CWA, in terms of process. But, in content, I think the participants viewed convergence on many different levels.

We wanted to highlight the effects that the industry convergence—something we started discussing almost ten years ago—still has on our collective bargaining and organizing. We hoped to secure the help we need to maintain a fair playing field at the table, and on the street, through our ongoing convergence with CWA, the ultimate resource.

And, we aspired to create a new convergence—a convergence of opinion—on how our own members and the community at large view us, The Newspaper Guild.

Let me touch on something that I felt was pivotal to the success of that first session of Convergence II. One presentation struck me personally as a most important contribution to the program. It was the description of a Canadian Media Guild conference, "Not Born Yesterday," by Kathy Viner and Arnold Amber.

The CMG conference was a weekend-long seminar for newer members, that is, members under 30. The newer members set the agenda and the local hoped to tune into their feelings about the union and how they were interacting with it. Convergence II attendees applauded this concept. Some have already tried it, and I expect we will see it replicated throughout the Guild.

While we are incorporating new ideas, I hope we don't lose sight of two vital TNG initiatives for the newer crowd that already exist. The first is the New Local Officers Seminar, which must be the most highly acclaimed and longest running program in our repertoire. This is a weekend program jam-packed with everything you always wanted to know about The Newspaper Guild but were afraid to ask.

Of course, new local officers aren't always newer members, or under 30, but we should incorporate the Not Born Yesterday concept into the agenda. Turning the tables and finding out everything the under-30s know or want to know about TNG would go a long way toward securing their investment in our future.

The second initiative is the David S. Barr Scholarship Award, in honor of the Guild's long-time international counsel. At the Freedom Award Fund Banquet each year, scholarships are presented to a high school and a college journalist who focus on issues of social justice.

There is no better opportunity to capture the attention of prospective members. Before the thought of the ripe old age of 30 has even crossed their minds, and before they decide if there are benefits to union activism, plant the Guild seed and cultivate a ready-made Guild member.

Each year, participation in this competition is growing. But, I want you to make sure that you are doing what you can to encourage interest in this scholarship program in your local area. How much easier our organizing campaigns or membership drives would go if the audience was pumped and primed with the Guild message!

Determining the outcome of Convergence II is now in your hands as delegates. I hope you will make the most of your time at this sector conference to further the goals of each and every one of the working groups. And, when you leave here, I hope you leave determined to accomplish those goals in bargaining, organizing, mobilizing and all of the day-to-day activities of your locals.

Adapted from remarks given at the TNG-CWA sector conference August 27.

State of America argues for regime change

By Mark Gruenberg
Editor, Press Associates Inc.

The state of working America in late 2004 is not good—and the election this fall represents a crossroads that will determine whether that condition improves or gets even worse.

That's the conclusion we draw from the most recent overview by the Economic Policy Institute, a 420-page study aptly named, "The State of Working America." Published every other year, the most recent analysis was released Labor Day and paints a bleak picture of what's happened to working families since the end of the last economic boom, in late 2000. It's not a pretty picture.

The numbers include unemployment that's up more than a third, from a low of 4%—once thought unattainable—to 5.4% in August; real incomes that have declined by \$1,500 per family since 2000; no new job creation until last fall; and huge increases in worker productivity, but with 85% of those gains going into corporate executives' compensation, not workers' paychecks.

Meanwhile, according to other reports published in late August, the number of people living in poverty jumped by a million in the past year, the number of uninsured

increased by more than that, the number of children in poverty is nearly one in five and real income has stagnated in three-fourths of the country. In the remaining quarter, the South, it actually declined.

That's the economy the GOP regime has presided over for the past three years. And, says EPI President Larry Mishel, a top economist, the GOP's tax cuts for the rich have had something to do with that dismal record.

Although Mishel and his colleagues haven't said how much the tax cuts for the rich—combined with other Bush policies—led to or worsened the slump, he did observe that the GOP's policies have been remarkably ineffective in dealing with the persistent labor slack that has driven unemployment up, kept it up and driven compensation—for all but the richest—down.

The administration pushed the tax cuts for the wealthy by claiming they would create jobs and growth. But the tax cuts did not do that. Indeed, Mishel contends, any growth since November, 2001—the official end of the recession, though not the end of the jobless slump—is due primarily to low interest rates set by the Federal Reserve Board and to increased defense spending, including spending to fight the war on terror.

The tax cuts? They raised gross domestic

product by 0.1%, Mishel says. But here's the real rub. As the economy hemorrhaged jobs and incomes stagnated or fell, another type of tax cut would have helped a lot more.

Mishel, quoting a study that can be seen, at www.economy.com, reports that tax cuts targeted to low- and moderate-income people would have created two million more jobs at half the cost of the Bush cuts.

Two million jobs happens to be just about the number of people—2,066,000—who joined the jobless rolls after former Texas Governor George W. Bush occupied the Oval Office.

Instead, Bush's tax cuts helped push revenues down sharply over three years. Individual income tax receipts were \$794 billion in 2003, \$210 billion lower than in 2000. Corporate tax receipts dropped from \$207 billion in 2000 to \$132 billion last year, a loss of one-third, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.

CBO also didn't say how much of the revenue loss was due to the Bush recession and how much to the Bush tax cuts. But that's not the point. Here's another analysis—not CBO's and not EPI's, but ours: for half the cost of the Bush tax cuts, targeted at workers instead of the rich, the number of lost jobs would have been a fraction of the

two million that disappeared.

Mishel and his colleagues won't say it, but we will: the Bush tax cuts not only were skewed to the rich, but they made a bad situation—the recession that started on his watch and that, as far as workers are concerned, is still going on—even worse. For that, the Bush regime deserves the blame for the present sad state of working America.

LETTER

To the Editor,

The latest TNG-CWA sector conference was the first in recent memory where there was no discussion of diversity. Why not?

The Unity convention, with more than 7,000 in attendance, provided ample evidence that there are many highly qualified journalists of color who are seeking jobs. Yet, even ASNE admits that most major papers have slipped from the inadequate diversity levels that they had attained in the past decade.

The Guild was born more than 70 years ago with a courageous commitment to human rights, despite the nation's official tolerance of racial discrimination. Now, as the country's population changes rapidly, failure to keep that commitment as a fundamental purpose of the union would doom the Guild to obsolescence.

—Dick Peery, President, Northeast Ohio

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.

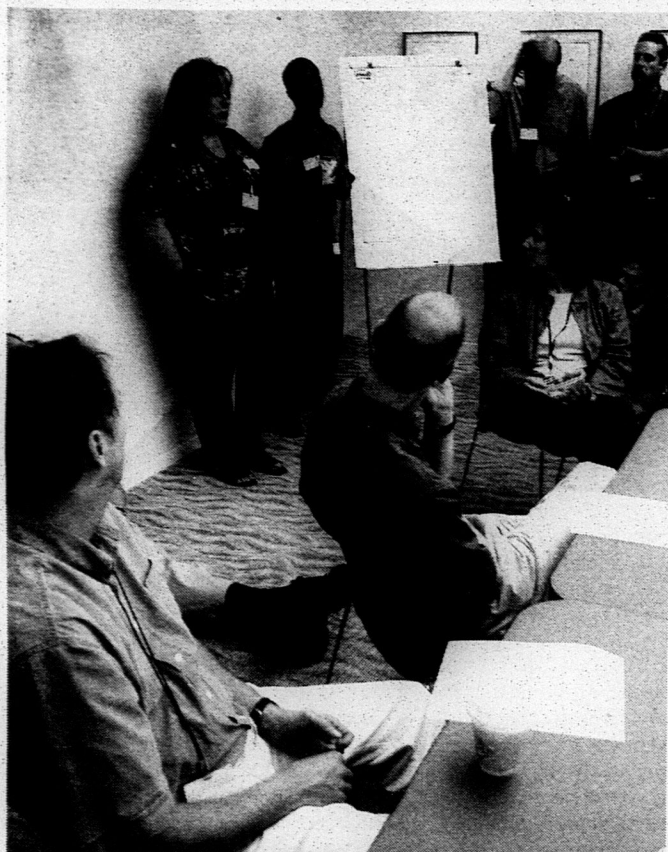
"Guild Reporter content will be of interest to the

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: Oct. 15.)



Akron Guild members Paula Schleis and Andale Gross, standing at left, describe their bargaining situation to Guild members in Cleveland just minutes before Plain Dealer managers kicked them out.

ROLLI DREUSS/NORTHEAST OHIO GUILD

Guild officer disciplined for mobilizing activities

For years, Guild officers at The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, Ohio, have used the company's email system to communicate with members about meetings, benefit changes and other workplace issues. It also was not uncommon for the Guild to hold meetings on company premises.

Now both of those well-established practices are under attack by Plain Dealer management.

On June 2, management threatened long-time Plain Dealer Unit Chair Scott Stephens with "discipline up to and including discharge" for sending an email urging members to sign a petition for support for Guild members at the Akron Beacon-Journal. Beacon-Journal employees were then embroiled in tough contract talks, with strike talk in the air.

Stephens was told he had violated the company's email and no-solicitation policies, even though the Plain Dealer's email system has been used for years for every imaginable purpose: selling baseball tickets, hawking Girl Scout cookies, announcing free movie tickets from the advertising department, soliciting the name of a good plumber or selling a car.

Stephens, who also is the TNG-CWA Region 3 vice president to the Sector Executive Council, received an additional threat for listing his work email address on Guild web site.

Members were outraged by the threats. Long-time Guild activist Dave Davis, an award-winning Plain Dealer investigative reporter, distributed copies of the

threatening letter and called on members to condemn the action.

Six days later, management instructed security personnel to break up a peaceful, noon-time meeting at which Guild members were receiving an update on the Akron talks from two Beacon-Journal employees. The Guild had reserved the room several weeks in advance of the meeting.

Although management acknowledged the reservation, it said the reservation had been made "in error." The company routinely makes its meeting rooms available for groups such as Weight Watchers.

"There is no way to interpret these actions other than as a direct attack on this union and as personal harassment of me," Stephens said.

The attacks on the Plain Dealer unit, whose 10-year contract expires in 2006, prompted the Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild to file a charge of unfair labor practices with the National Labor Relations Board. The charge states that the company's email system is an integral part of the editorial department "work area" and that the company's policy is "overbroad and unlawful." It also argues that the employer's unilateral implementation of the policy constitutes a failure to bargain.

Mark Davis, the local's executive secretary, said a second, separate charge relating to the aborted meeting was to be filed shortly after Labor Day. The board has the option of consolidating the two charges.

The dark side of 'me-too' provisions

When economic times are good, smaller locals can benefit by riding the coattails of a larger neighbor via "me-too" contract provisions. But the downside of such relationships is on display on the West Coast, where upheavals in the health care plan administered by the Northern California Media Guild are spilling over into San Jose.

Guild-covered employees of the San Francisco Chronicle receive their health benefits through a joint trust fund overseen by Guild and Chronicle management representatives. The program is administered by the Guild, which divides the employer's contributions among three basic categories: wages, pensions and health care.

But an unexpected combination of escalating health care costs, a reduction in full-time staff and an increase in early retirees—whose health benefits also are covered by

the trust—has drained the fund, which is teetering on insolvency. Based on an analysis by an independent consulting firm that the program would run a deficit of \$128,000 a month unless cost-saving measures were implemented, the local suspended a general pay increase that was due in July and started raising the health care premium costs paid by retirees.

But while the Northern California Guild struggles to achieve financial equilibrium at the Chronicle, its troubles are rippling south because of a contract provision that the Mercury News must provide the same health care coverage to its employees. The "me-too" provision has long been viewed by San Jose union leaders as an exceptionally strategic gain, and was likewise supported by the management team, which maintained it through many contract renewals.

"Tying our fortunes to a historically larger

union local and larger paper has yielded exceptional benefits for Guild members and their families over the last three decades," explained Luther Jackson, the local's administrative officer, in a recent statement.

"While employees at other firms have seen higher costs and a steady erosion of coverage over the years, Mercury News members have enjoyed fully paid premiums, comprehensive service, good health care choices and coverage for dependents."

Now that costs are exceeding revenues, however, the effects of being tied to San Francisco have boomeranged. The San Jose contract permits—but doesn't require—management to impose the same benefit cuts and cost shifting as are adopted in San Francisco—and at this point, warns Jackson, eligible early retirees can expect to be hit with the entire health care premium as of Jan. 1, 2005, up from only a 10% share

today. Retirees in San Francisco, who formerly paid 25% of the premium, had their share increased to 50% July 1 and are slated to pay 100% as of Oct. 1.

Moreover, Jackson adds, active employees also may incur additional health care costs over the next several months, depending on further developments in San Francisco.

A select advisory committee has been created in San Jose to research ways of responding to the situation, and will be consulting experts from around the country. It also plans to hold meetings with Guild members and retirees ahead of the next round of contract talks, which may come sooner rather than later. Although the current contract doesn't expire until June, 2006, the Mercury News has proposed early bargaining, especially regarding health care.

The local is considering the request.

THE GUILD Reporter

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

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

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DAYBOOK

Million Worker March of unions
protesting the war in Iraq,
Oct. 17, Washington, DC

CMG Biennial Convention,
Oct. 22-24, Ottawa

Western District Council,
Oct. 23-24, Hawaii

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

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

Deadline for submitting Broun,
Barr awards entries, Jan. 28

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

Freedom Award Banquet,
March 30, Washington, DC

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

CWA Annual Convention,
Aug. 29-31, Chicago

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago:

The National Recovery Administration calculates that the average newsroom employee is working 41.2 hours a week, for which he or she is getting paid \$34.32. . . . The Guild's national headquarters moves from 55 West 42nd Street to 49 West 45th Street, Manhattan, doubling its office space from one room. . . . Ongoing problems with tardy dues payments prompt a stern Guild Reporter editorial, which notes that "payment of dues must precede performance by the Guild."

Fifty years ago this month:

The Guild strike against the Wilkes-Barre dailies reaches its sixth month marked by new highs in size and circulation of Valley News, the strike paper. . . . F.M. Flynn, general manager of the New York Daily News, anticipates Howell Raines by half-a-century by telling an educators' convention that Guild policies and contracts "all point toward further development of mediocrity." . . . In response to a convention resolution, the Guild's district councils are urged to promote political action.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

A survey of the top four offices in 36 Guild locals finds that just over two-thirds—67.5%—are held by men; 3% of the top officers are minority group members. . . . The Montreal Star closes abruptly, throwing 1,000 people—including more than 500 Guild members—out of work. . . . The NLRB rejects a charge that the Citizens' Voice, a Guild strike paper in Wilkes-Barre, was being established as a permanent competitor to the struck Times Leader. The strike is nearly a year old.

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