

THE GUILD Reporter

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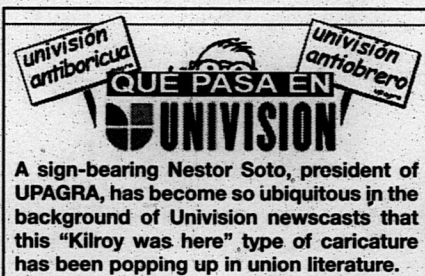
Unions challenge Univision license

Frustrated by months of unproductive contract bargaining and angered by Univision's "cultural insensitivity," UPAGRA has become a founding member of a coalition challenging the license renewal applications of two Puerto Rican television stations. The petition to deny renewal of the licenses for WLII-TV and WSUR-TV was hand-delivered Jan. 3 to the Federal Communications Commission by Carrie Biggs-Adams, TNG-CWA executive secretary of the contract committee.

The new coalition, Alianza de Artistas Puertorriqueños y Grupos Amigos, APAGA, asserts in its petition that Univision's operation of the two stations since 2002 "has not served well the communities of Puerto Rico." Among its complaints: local production of television programming has been sharply curtailed; substitution of Mexican pronunciation and idioms has resulted in broadcasting colloquial obscenities; and FCC rules regarding public access to station records have been ignored.

Most significantly, perhaps, the

group charges that Univision's corporate management style, in which Puerto Rican news coverage is directed from Miami, "has led to a lack of perspective on the issues of importance to the Puerto Rican community." Among the examples cited in the petition is the station's coverage of the summer Olympics games in Athens, at which the island's basketball team handed the



A sign-bearing Nestor Soto, president of UPAGRA, has become so ubiquitous in the background of Univision newscasts that this "Kilroy was here" type of caricature has been popping up in union literature.

U.S. squad its first defeat in 12 years—a resounding victory for Puerto Ricans, but one that WLII and WSUR covered as a loss.

On a potentially more tragic note, the petition adds, last year's coverage of the approach of Hurricane Jeanne—whose eye passed directly over Puerto Rico—was ignored in favor of extensive recaps of the hurricane damage already suffered in Florida.

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AP latest convert to 'ethics' mania

The latest example of news business preoccupation with "ethics" has been unveiled by the Associated Press, in an 11-page draft proposal that covers a lot of basic journalistic principles but which also would restrict employees' financial investments and freelance work. Among the "news values and principles" the document seeks to regulate are participation in social events and contributing to charitable causes, not just by employees but by their family members.

Violating the proposed rules, AP says, could result in dismissal or other discipline.

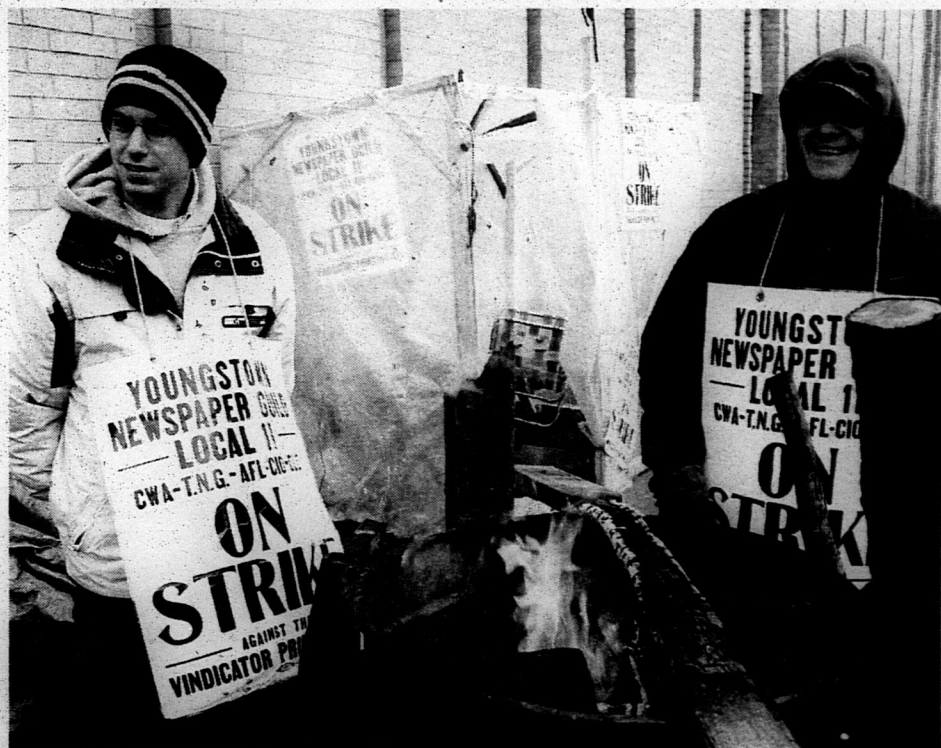
Judging by the comments of Guild-represented staffers to date, many AP employees perceive the document as being less about ethics and more about corporate

control. Concerned staffers have flooded the News Media Guild's discussion list to complain that their personal liberties are at risk, referring to the loosely constructed "review draft" as Orwellian, draconian and intrusive.

Company officials, at the wire service have said the policy will not be implemented until employees have had a chance to evaluate it. The Guild's Professional Activities Committee, elected officers and legal counsel are reviewing the document and have been seeking members' responses.

"The News Media Guild supports quality journalism and high ethical standards, but must also safeguard the rights and benefits of all staffers," explained Guild President Tony Winton.

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Vindicator sportswriters Joe Scalzo, left, and Pete Mollica warm themselves on the picket line.

Brrr, it's cold out there! But strikers hang tough

By Debora Shaulis Flora
Vice President, Youngstown Guild

When you live in northeast Ohio, the last place you want to be on a January morning is standing on a sidewalk. One day it's cold and icy. The next day, snow covers the ice. A few days later, the temperature rises enough to change the snow to rain, but the wind is still cold enough to burn your face and chap your lips.

Yet despite such travails the 171 members of Youngstown Newspaper Guild-CWA Local 34011 continue braving the elements, in a strike against The Vindicator that now is in its third month. They're more accustomed to the smell of wood smoke permeating their outerwear. Some even have learned the consequences of drying wet

gloves over a hot fire or of getting too close to a burn barrel when they're wearing disposable plastic rain ponchos.

The strike by the daily's editorial, classified advertising and circulation department members began Nov. 16. Three weeks later, on Dec. 8, they voted 99-36 to reject the company's so-called best and final offer. And, to date, only a handful of Guild-represented employees have gone back inside.

Blocking an agreement has been the company's refusal to improve an offer that includes negligible wage increases (after four years of freezes); higher health-care premiums (for a plan with fewer benefits than the one offered to management and non-union workers—with lower deductibles); elimina-

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'First lady' to keynote Thomas to address banquet; Broun deadline looms

The newspaper industry's first lady—as Helen Thomas often is described—has agreed to be the keynote speaker at TNG-CWA's fourth annual Freedom Award Fund Banquet. Thomas, who for 57 years was White House correspondent for United Press International, currently works as a syndicated columnist for Hearst Newspapers.

The Freedom Award banquet will be held earlier than usual this year—March 30, at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill—to avoid a conflict with the Guild sector conference in May. Its signature award recognizes a body of work that exemplifies cartoonist Herbert Block's devotion to free speech and assembly, but the banquet also presents the annual Heywood Broun and David S. Barr awards.

Deadline for postmarked entries in the Broun and Barr awards is the last Friday in January of each year, or Jan. 28. A detailed description of entry procedures

may be seen on the web, at www.newsguild.org.

Established in 1941 to honor the Guild's founding spirit and first president, the Heywood Broun Award memorializes a columnist who championed society's underdogs and the disadvantaged. Entries are judged by a panel of journalistic peers who seek to recognize work that helps to right wrongs, especially social ills. Last year's winner was the reporting team of Christine Willmsen and Maureen O'Hagan of the Seattle Times, for their series, "Coaches Who Prey." The award includes a \$5,000 cash prize.

Chairing the Broun jury panel this year will be Larkie Gildersleeve, who retired in late 2002 as the Guild's director of research, information and technology. A former organizer for the American Federation of Teachers and an administrative officer of the Northern California Newspaper Guild, Gildersleeve

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Locals' help sought for demographics snapshot

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

Happy New Year! One of our New Year's resolutions should be to strengthen the labor movement and to maintain the momentum we generated during the recent presidential elections. Strengthening the movement means, among other things, a conscious effort to be more inclusive—and one way to do that is to make human rights a part of everything we do. In that spirit, I'm inaugurating what I hope will be a regular column in the Guild Reporter.

Human rights are not issues of special interest—they're a vital and important component of our struggle. Many of the issues we face as working families and union members are human rights issues. At this year's New Local Officers Seminar, for example, we will hold a workshop on the Family Medical Leave Act, which some Capitol Hill sources say will be targeted by the Republican-led Congress this session for further restrictions.

Another area of human rights concern is the continuing growth of media conglomerates, which narrows the editorial voice and adversely affects staffing and news coverage of minorities. I recently attended UNITY 2004, the largest convention of minority journalists in American history, where this issue was explored by a panel that included FCC Commissioner Michael Copps, TNG-CWA President Linda Foley and Juan Gonzalez, a past president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. The management side

was represented by Tribune Corp. and Gannett.

As an outgrowth of this event, we are working with the minority journalism associations and various constituency groups on ways of increasing diversity of news content and coverage. We'll provide a progress report and involve Guild members in this project at our sector conference this spring.

One of the recommendations the Guild already has approved to revamp our human rights program is to get a snapshot of our membership demographics. We recently sent a survey to all U.S. locals asking for a breakdown of the local leadership. We also distributed a study, prepared by the Knight Foundation, providing a demographic breakdown of newspapers in each local's area.

Locals that have not yet returned the survey will be given an opportunity to complete it over the telephone or via e-mail. Once we've combined this information with other data we are gathering, we'll be working with the CWA research department to determine where we excel and where we need to improve. We'll also be in a position to approach managers at individual papers to discuss how they stand on hiring and retention.

The Canadian Media Guild recently commissioned a survey of its membership, as reported in the Nov. 19 Guild Reporter. Some of the results were surprising, to say the least, and indicate that human rights issues are concerns on both sides of the border.

I will be writing this column periodically and welcome your input. Let me know what is going

on in your local. Do you have a Human Rights Coordinator (more than a third of our locals now do)? Is there a subject you think we should be focusing on? E-mail me at dthomas@cwa-union.org or call me at 202-434-1262.

Finally, in an effort to help us all be more cognizant of how language can adversely shape perceptions or perpetuate stereotypes, I'll be regularly listing problem words and phrases under the heading "Sticks and stones." This isn't just a matter of being "politically correct," but of being sensitive to the feelings and concerns of others. Your contributions to this effort will be appreciated, so please send me examples that you've found troublesome.

STICKS AND STONES

Bias, Discrimination: Bias is a state of mind, a predisposition or prejudice toward an object, person or view. Discrimination is an action that springs from that state of mind; the unfair treatment of a person or group based on prejudice or bias.

China Doll: A figurine, usually porcelain; but, when used metaphorically or as a comparison, the implied image of female submission demeans women of Chinese heritage.

Arab-Americans: U.S. citizens and permanent residents who trace their ancestry to or who emigrated from Arabic-speaking places in southwestern Asia and northern Africa, a region known as the Middle East. Not all people in this region are Arabs. Most Arab-Americans were born in the United States.

A first RFA contract—at last

After nearly 15 months of bargaining, the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild and Radio Free Asia reached agreement on an initial contract just before Christmas. A

ratification vote Jan. 11 affirmed the deal by a margin of 61% yes.

The three-year contract, covering about 125 employees, will be retroactive to last Oct. 1 and will restructure the "broadcaster" job classification effective Oct. 1 of this year. Most of those covered by the contract are broadcasters.

Restructuring will compress the seven current broadcaster grades into three, increasing the starting salary for a broadcaster by nearly 16%. The lowest level broadcaster will have a starting annual salary of \$43,000 (compared to the current \$37,148) and a top of \$51,389. The middle level will start at \$49,895 and top out at \$59,629. The top level will start at \$54,884 and end at \$65,591.

Under the restructuring, no broadcaster can be moved to a lower salary. Most will receive raises of at least 3% this October, and some will get raises well in excess of that. Anyone not receiving at least a 3% pay raise will be eligible for a one-time performance-based lump-sum payment of 3% of salary.

All employees will receive a

3.5% pay increase next January. Subsequent raises will be tied to federal government increases.

Other highlights include a Guild shop; a more generous retirement plan; layoff protections; guaranteed vacations and holidays; just cause for discipline; guaranteed severance, and a grievance and arbitration process.

"This new contract is the result of the strong support of the members in the language services, but especially due to the hard work and dedication of the rank-and-file bargaining team," said local rep Paul Reilly, who led the team. Team members included Karma Zurkhang, Liu Hong and Poly Sam.

RFA broadcasts in nine languages to China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma, North Korea and Tibet. It is funded by Congress but is set up as a private non-profit corporation.

Eric Geist, TNG-CWA director of field operations, led the organizing drive that ended in 2003 with employees voting for Guild representation by better than a 2-to-1 margin.

Guild briefs . . .

Denver approves raises for 4 years

Guild Members at the Denver Newspaper Agency voted 287-6 on Dec. 21 to accept a wage package for the four-year balance of the current contract. The deal includes a 2.75% wage increase retroactive to last January; 3% raises at the end of this month and next year; and a 3.25% increase in January of 2007. The contract also includes a \$358.80 one-time lump-sum payment to each full-time employee's 401(k) account (\$179.40 for part-timers), with new accounts opened for employees who don't already have them. Guild members at the Denver Post approved the same raises by a vote of 72-3, but with the increases kicking in at the end of September of each year. In addition, contributions to the Guild International Pension Plan will be increased by 85 cents per week, to \$5.85 per week, retroactive to this past Oct. 3; with further increases of 60 cents per week this October, 65 cents October of 2006 and 40 cents in October, 2007.

Gannett to honor Detroit contract

A letter from David Karapetian, vice president of human resources at Gannett, has assured the Detroit Guild that the company will honor its contract at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Gannett's purchase of the newspaper's parent company, HomeTown Communications Network, was announced in December, just a few months after a three-year contract had been negotiated following two years without an agreement.

Providence looks to reduce dues

Members of the Providence Newspaper Guild were to vote Jan. 18, after the Guild Reporter had gone to press, on a proposal to reduce their dues for a trial period of one year, from 1.8% of pay to 1.7%. Not that this will produce a windfall for anyone: if the measure passes, as seems likely, Guild members making \$1,200 a week will take home an extra \$62 a year. Still, said President John Hill, "we figured even though it's not a lot, if we don't need it, there's no need to take it from you."

UPAGRA gains

Workers at EFE News in Puerto Rico voted 7-0 on Dec. 21, with two challenged ballots, to be represented by UPAGRA, TNG-CWA Local 33225.

Massillon contract extended 3 years

A three-year contract extension, offered by management just as bargaining was about to begin at The Independent in

Massillon, Ohio, has been accepted by Guild-represented employees at the paper. The no-concessions extension includes 3% wage increases (with a \$15 weekly minimum) each year for 3 years, plus a \$100 signing bonus.

Canadian Guild increases staff

The Canadian Media Guild is expanding its staff, hiring Karen Wirsig as its new, full-time communications coordinator. The position had been filled on a part-time basis by Keith Maskell, who now is able to work full-time as a staff representative. The Guild also is hiring a new representative, to be based in Vancouver; staffer Gabi Durocher is moving from Winnipeg to Ottawa; and the office staff is being supplemented.

Former president starts retiree blog

Harry Liggett, president of Local 7 in Akron in the early 1970s, has started a web log for retired and former Beacon Journal Guild employees. Liggett started the blog last July and writes that it has had more than 100 posts (the blog counter is stuck on 52) and has had more than a thousand visitors. Check it out at www.bjretirees.blogspot.com.

Three locals elect

Michael Cabanatuan has won reelection as president of the Northern California Media Guild, overcoming a challenge from Chloe Osmer, while Wolf Thurmeier beat out Gabriel Gonzalez in the race for vice chair of the San Francisco Chronicle unit. Other officers were elected without opposition, including Doug Cuthbertson as executive officer, Sean Holstege as vice president, George Powell as treasurer and Carrie Kirby as secretary.

Nyssa Rogers has been reelected president of the Pacific Northwest Guild without opposition, while Steve Miletich beat out Kery Murakami in the race for the vice president's seat. Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe and Jane Hadley were unopposed in their bids to be secretary and treasurer, respectively. Lynne Dennis has been elected to a second term as president of the San Jose Guild, where she'll serve with Becky Bartindale, vice president, and Griff Palmer, secretary-treasurer.

Amber prevails

Arnold Amber, director of TNG Canada-CWA and a producer at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., won a three-way race against Joe Hill and Terry Walker for the presidency of the CBC Branch of the Canadian Media Guild. Nationwide voting was conducted by telephone Dec. 8 and 9.

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Angst-ridden labor at the crossroads

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

With the national elections receding in the rear-view mirror and a resurgent Bush administration ramping up its anti-union campaign (see page 4), the soul-searching within organized labor is reaching fever pitch.

Triggered to a considerable extent last year by a group of five (down to four because of a merger) international unions calling themselves the New Unity Partnership, the debate over how organized labor can reverse its 50-year decline has spilled over into a new AFL-CIO web site; has generated a growing number of proposals from other unions, central labor councils and individuals; and has become the dominant agenda item at top-level union leadership meetings. The CWA's executive board, for example, was meeting in Palm Springs, California for just this reason as the Guild Reporter went to press, as will the AFL-CIO's executive council March 1-3 in Las Vegas.

All the talking and debating is leading up to the AFL-CIO national convention in late July, when the federation will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Federation president John Sweeney, who says he will run for reelection, has promised that convention delegates will be presented with a comprehensive set of proposals for revamping the labor movement, based on the current debate.

The relatively sudden flurry of activity has been sparked by a no-longer deniable realization that unions are dying—and rah-rah rhetoric notwithstanding, nothing labor has done in the past decade has reversed the

trend. Only 8.2% of the non-public sector workforce is unionized today, down more than 75% from a mid-'50s peak and the lowest level of unionization in a century. Ironically, Sweeney and his running mates, Richard Trumka and Linda Chavez-Thompson, pushed aside the old AFL-CIO leadership in 1995 by arguing that it wasn't doing enough to stem labor's losses.

A decade later, the New Unity Partnership is playing essentially the same role. Its most public face has been that of Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union, who in mid-November released a 10-point plan called "Unite to Win" that forcefully argues for an extensive remodeling of the House of Labor. Among its more controversial prescriptions: forced mergers of unions; assigning unions to specific industries, which would then be off-limits to other unions; and rebating half of their AFL-CIO dues to unions—like SEIU—that commit 20% of their revenues by 2010 to organizing.

The situation is so dire, Stern has argued, that if the AFL-CIO does not adopt something resembling the "Unite to Win" program, his union—the federation's largest affiliate, claiming 1.6 million members—will pull out. The Carpenters, one of the SEIU's partners in the New Unity Partnership, already did so four years ago. And one of the top officials in another Partnership union, the merged UNITE-HERE, has been mentioned prominently as a possible challenger for Sweeney's job in July, although no public declarations have been made.

Other unions, however, have objected to Stern's "take it or leave it" approach, with

Guild members who want to familiarize themselves with the issues at hand may want to visit the following web sites:

www.unitetowin.org—Andy Stern's web site, in which he presents the SEIU's reorganization plans; includes a running commentary and a limited number of other proposals.

www.aflcio.org/aboutaflcio/ourfuture/index.cfm—The AFL-CIO's belated but more comprehensive response, this site presents a growing number of position papers and solicits union members' comments, which can be read online. Slow loading, perhaps because of inadequate server space, so patience is needed.

www.labormotes.org/nupdiscussion/index.html—A collection of articles and papers—from Labor Notes, the mainstream media and union sources—in response to the New Unity Partnership proposals; dates back to 2003.

www.ilcaonline.org—The ILCA web site addresses many of the same issues but often from a labor communications perspective; see especially the section in the left-hand column, "Proposals for Changing the Labor Media."

the Machinists balancing Stern's threat by saying they will leave if the AFL-CIO does adopt the "Unite to Win" program. The Teamsters have tried to split the difference, suggesting that instead of forcing smaller unions to merge into bigger ones, the AFL-CIO could entice them to do so with dues rebates. Meanwhile, the Teamsters added, a 50% dues rebate for internationals that spend 10% of their revenues on organizing sounds about right—which, as it happens, matches what the Teamsters are spending.

All this may amount to little more than a shuffling of deck chairs. Indeed, it's reasonable to ask if the problem as it's being defined—shrinking union "density"—is instead a symptom of a deeper malaise. If the working class isn't beating down the doors to join the union movement, is that because the "movement" part of the equation has become a secret? Perhaps even non-existent?

One reading of the "Unite to Win" proposal is that it's long on business school

rhetoric and remarkably short on social vision or democratic values. This is a top-down formulation that views union members as dispassionately as any corporation trying to wring more "efficiency" out of its workforce, but a recruiting tool for new members it's not.

Shortcomings aside, at least the Stern gang's prodding has galvanized the AFL-CIO into an unprecedented and public soul-searching—one that should engage all union members (see box above) who share a concern for organized labor's survival. Some CWA locals and districts have started airing the issues raised by "Unite to Win"—District 1 recently had a standing-room-only conference on the subject, attended by officers of locals throughout the Northeast—and the tempo is certain to increase over the next six months.

Union members have an opportunity they haven't had in decades to make themselves heard—and to reclaim their movement.

Thomas' career started in 1943

Continued from page 1

joined the national staff in late 1995 and as a certified ergonomist was especially active in computer-user health issues.

The Freedom Award was established in 2000 in memory of Herbert Block, a Washington Post political cartoonist—better known simply as Herblock—who was a Guild member for 67 years. Underwritten by Block's bequest to the Guild, the Freedom Award was presented last year to TomPaine.com for being "a consistent voice of reason and democratic discourse at a time of increased political attacks on civil liberties."

Also presented at the annual banquet are two David S. Barr

scholarships, named after a former Guild general counsel, that recognize one high school and one college student for journalistic achievement on issues of social justice.

The banquet at which these honors are bestowed has grown into a highly anticipated affair, both for its celebrity status and its brevity: the evening always concludes by 9:30 p.m., thanks to a strict limit on speechifying. It also marks the only social event in the nation's capital that mingles labor leaders and high-level journalists. Both CWA President Morton Bahr and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney offered brief remarks last year, for example, while news icon Walter Cronkite recounted the Guild's early years from a personal perspective and Bill Moyers delivered the keynote address.

This year's keynote will be offered by no less notable a journalistic legend. Frequently referred to as "The First Lady of the Press" for her longevity and because she has covered every president since John Kennedy, former White House bureau chief Helen Thomas made a career of breaking through barriers for women reporters.

Born in Winchester, Kentucky



Helen Thomas

and raised in Detroit, Thomas graduated from Wayne State University to become a copy girl on the Washington Daily News. She joined UPI in 1943, writing radio news, but found her niche in Nov. 1960, when she began covering president-elect Kennedy. She was the only woman print journalist to travel with Richard Nixon to China on his breakthrough trip in 1972, and has traveled around the world several times with every president since.

Cited by The World Almanac as one of the "25 Most Influential Women in America," Thomas also has written three books, the latest being, "Thanks for the Memories Mr. President: Wit and Wisdom from the Front Row at the White House."

AP chases ethics

Continued from page 1

Protecting those rights apparently is not a major concern of the ethics proposal. Each rereading of the proposal's ambiguous wording produces more "wiggle room" for potential abuse by managers, observed Alan Sayre of New Orleans, who chairs the local's professionalism panel "This is a 'control freak' policy that will invade those areas of our lives that—until now—have been none of the company's business," he wrote.

Several staffers have written that the proposal isn't about ethics as much as it opens the door for micro-managing employees' lives and infringing on their civil rights.

"Journalists shouldn't have to become hermits to cover the news," asserted Jay Jorden, an executive committee member. "But under the proposal, contributing to or volunteering for organizations that 'may' take political stands—the list is long—would expose a staffer to sanctions."

"AP knows labor unions oppose legislative rollbacks in overtime and health and safety rights and protections," he added. "No policy should curb employee rights to support those efforts."

Local officials agreed that parts of the policy are entirely unobjectionable and were bargained over during the last contract negotiations. Other sections, however, raise numerous red flags.

For example, the company recently told Guild representatives that it may reassign employees if the activities of a family member

cause a conflict. Among those "conflicts," as outlined in the ethics proposal: no employee should cover a company or industry in which a family member has stock holdings, and no employee should cover a political story if a family member is working for a political organization that is the subject of the article.

Local officials say the language detailing these problems is vague and likely would be interpreted in expansive fashion to abuse some staffers.

Some staffers said their family members were off-limits to AP. Others pointed out that religious organizations take political stands, often on the death penalty, abortion rights and other issues. They also complained of proposed restrictions on freelancing.

The Guild told AP it will not negotiate over terms that conflict with existing contract provisions.

"Oppose this with all your energy and use that opposition to sign up new members," wrote retiree Gary Garrison, a veteran of 34 years as Harlingen, Texas, correspondent and Dallas staffer.

Winton warned that attempts by AP managers to meet directly with Guild-covered employees to discuss the proposal may violate federal labor regulations and urged staffers to contact the NMG office. "This kind of 'direct dealing' robs you and your union of negotiating power," he warned.

The full AP proposal may be read under the "professional committee" section of the Guild's web site, at www.newsmediaguild.org.

The Newspaper Guild
International



For information
about your benefits,
contact Scott Bush,
assistant to the trustees:

1-800-893-3558
scott@news-guild.org

News round-up

IRS letter gives 'misleading' advice

A Nov. 30 letter from the Internal Revenue Service, sent to many labor organizations throughout the U.S., is "misleading" and should be ignored, according to CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling. The letter "reminds" union locals that under section 162 (e) of the Internal Revenue Code, they are required to notify their members that they may not deduct a portion of their dues as business expenses. Easterling said that labor organizations are exempt from the notice requirement under long-standing IRS precedent, and added that the AFL-CIO's outside tax counsel has spoken to the IRS, which has agreed "to look into sending a corrective letter."

Another study questions phone safety

A new study funded largely by the European Union has found that radio waves from mobile phones harm body cells and damage DNA in laboratory conditions. Conducted by 12 research groups in seven European countries, the study did not prove that mobile phones are a risk to health but concluded that more research is needed to determine if the same effects can be found in non-laboratory conditions. The \$100 billion-a-year mobile phone industry has consistently maintained that there is no conclusive evidence of harmful effects from the use of such phones.

Ohio politicians present upturned palms

The Republican-dominated legislature of Ohio, the state that last year raised fresh questions about the integrity of election balloting, has approved a bill in special session that quadruples the maximum amount that corporations may contribute to political candidates or campaigns. At the same time, the bill restricts how unions and their members can participate in electoral politics. Tim Burga, Ohio AFL-CIO legislative director, testified before the bill passed that of the \$90 million spent on Ohio elections in 2002, just 3% came from unions, with the balance coming from "wealthy individuals, political parties and such big industries as banking, real estate, insurance, manufacturing and health care."

Federal court says no to CWA logo

A federal appeals court has shot down a BellSouth Corp. policy that required its workers to wear uniforms that bore both the Bell South and CWA logos. The ruling overturned a 2001 National Labor Relations Board decision upholding the policy, which had been negotiated by CWA as part of its 1995 contract with the company. The following year, two BellSouth service technicians who were not CWA members filed a complaint objecting to being required to wear union insignia.

NLRB green-lights employer threats . . .

The National Labor Relations Board has added another to its growing string of anti-union decisions, in a ruling that opens the door for employers to further threaten workers who want to unionize. On a partisan 3-2 vote in December, the board said a company threat to close a plant if the employees vote to unionize isn't illegal unless a union can prove the threat was "widely disseminated." The decision reverses a decades-old recognition that such threats invariably will make the rounds, intimidating employees into voting against a union for fear they'll lose their jobs.

. . . capping year of rejecting workers

The NLRB ruling on closure threats caps a year in which the board reversed an earlier decision, deciding that teaching assistants can't unionize; abolished a right it previously had given to non-union workers to be accompanied by a colleague when facing a disciplinary meeting with management; made it more difficult for temporary workers to unionize; and gave employers greater latitude to impose lock-outs in labor disputes. These and other decisions have led to charges that the NLRB has lost sight of its purpose, which is to defend the integrity of collective bargaining as rational policy. "Workers who stand up for themselves are in double jeopardy—attacked by their employer and abandoned by the very agency created to protect them," former Rep. David Bonior, now chair of American Rights at Work, told Press Associates Inc.

2004 second deadliest for media staff

More news media staff were killed worldwide in 2004 than in any year since 1994, according to the International News Safety Institute. The conformed death toll of 117 journalists and support staff, including drivers and translators, included 42 deaths in Iraq—all but six of them Iraqis practicing "free" news gathering for the first time. After Iraq, the deadliest places for journalists were the Philippines, with 12 dead, India (8), Mexico, Brazil and Bangladesh (5 each), Nepal and Russia (4 each), Colombia and Sri Lanka (3 each), and Nicaragua, Peru, Palestine and Romania (2 each).

CanWest extends influence into U.S.

Canada's new ambassador to the U.S. is Frank McKenna—who in addition to being a former three-term premier of New Brunswick is chairman of CanWest Global and serves on the boards of eight other corporations. He also has had business ties with the Bush family.

New rule: bosses can act against but not for union

U pending decades of precedent, a partisan majority of the National Labor Relations Board has concluded that pro-union conduct by a supervisor is enough to invalidate a union representation vote.

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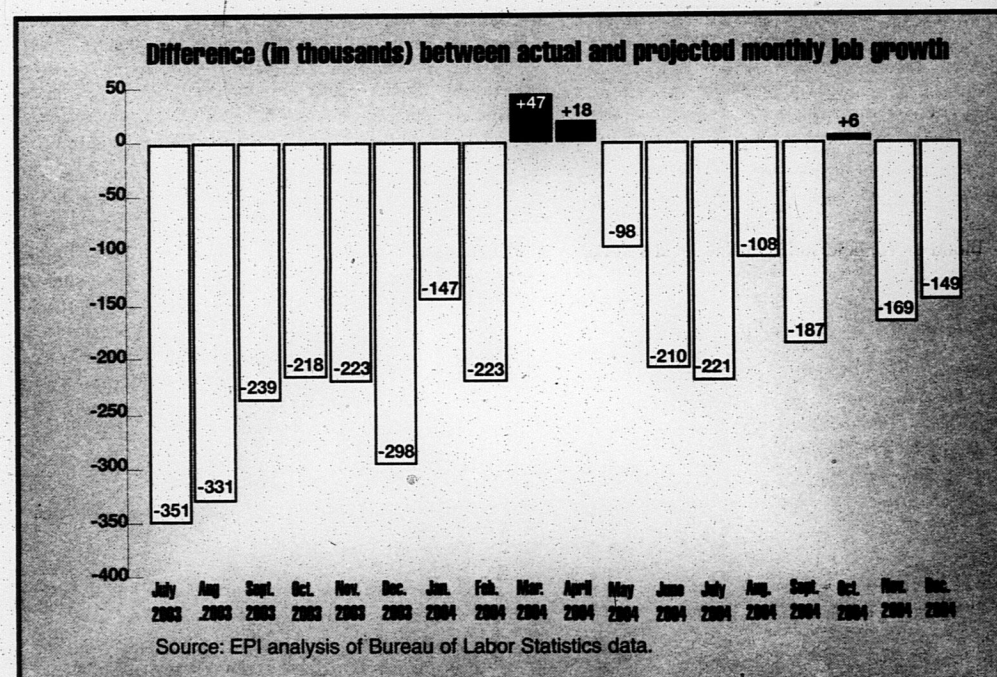
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Still struggling on job front

Despite White House representations that its 2003 tax cut package was intended to stimulate job growth, by year-end 2004 it was clear that the economy is generating significantly fewer jobs than the White House had projected would be created *without* the tax cuts.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, payrolls increased in December by a mere 157,000 jobs. The good news is that this marks the first year since 1999 that employment has increased in every month of the year. The bad news is that it signals one of the slowest economic recoveries on record.

Indeed, the Economic Policy Institute calculates that growth in payroll employment in 2004 was 1.7%, significantly below the average annual growth rate of 2.8% at this point in the economic cycle. In real numbers, that translates into 1.4 million fewer jobs created than has been the case historically.

The irony is that this anemic growth has come despite a massive tax cut package that disproportionately benefited the wealthy, but which was promoted as the "Jobs and Growth Plan." The president's economic staff, the Council of Economic Advisors, projected that the economic stimulus provided by the cuts would create 5.5 million jobs by the end of 2004, or an average of 306,000 new jobs each month.

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Moreover, the economic recovery is markedly uneven from one part of the country to another. Twenty-nine states still have fewer jobs and 39 states have higher unemployment rates than before the start of the recession, in March 2001, according to an EPI analysis. The EPI also found that in every state except Alaska, Hawaii and Wyoming, the number of new jobs is not keeping pace with working-age population growth, let alone catching up to pre-recession job levels.

News round-up

IRS letter gives 'misleading' advice

A Nov. 30 letter from the Internal Revenue Service, sent to many labor organizations throughout the U.S., is "misleading" and should be ignored, according to CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling. The letter "reminds" union locals that under section 162 (e) of the Internal Revenue Code, they are required to notify their members that they may not deduct a portion of their dues as business expenses. Easterling said that labor organizations are exempt from the notice requirement under long-standing IRS precedent, and added that the AFL-CIO's outside tax counsel has spoken to the IRS, which has agreed "to look into sending a corrective letter."

Another study questions phone safety

A new study funded largely by the European Union has found that radio waves from mobile phones harm body cells and damage DNA in laboratory conditions. Conducted by 12 research groups in seven European countries, the study did not prove that mobile phones are a risk to health but concluded that more research is needed to determine if the same effects can be found in non-laboratory conditions. The \$100 billion-a-year mobile phone industry has consistently maintained that there is no conclusive evidence of harmful effects from the use of such phones.

Ohio politicians present upturned palms

The Republican-dominated legislature of Ohio, the state that last year raised fresh questions about the integrity of election balloting, has approved a bill in special session that quadruples the maximum amount that corporations may contribute to political candidates or campaigns. At the same time, the bill restricts how unions and their members can participate in electoral politics. Tim Burga, Ohio AFL-CIO legislative director, testified before the bill passed that of the \$90 million spent on Ohio elections in 2002, just 3% came from unions, with the balance coming from "wealthy individuals, political parties and such big industries as banking, real estate, insurance, manufacturing and health care."

Federal court says no to CWA logo

A federal appeals court has shot down a BellSouth Corp. policy that required its workers to wear uniforms that bore both the Bell South and CWA logos. The ruling overturned a 2001 National Labor Relations Board decision upholding the policy, which had been negotiated by CWA as part of its 1995 contract with the company. The following year, two BellSouth service technicians who were not CWA members filed a complaint objecting to being required to wear union insignia.

NLRB green-lights employer threats . . .

The National Labor Relations Board has added another to its growing string of anti-union decisions, in a ruling that opens the door for employers to further threaten workers who want to unionize. On a partisan 3-2 vote in December, the board said a company threat to close a plant if the employees vote to unionize isn't illegal unless a union can prove the threat was "widely disseminated." The decision reverses a decades-old recognition that such threats invariably will make the rounds, intimidating employees into voting against a union for fear they'll lose their jobs.

. . . capping year of rejecting workers

The NLRB ruling on closure threats caps a year in which the board reversed an earlier decision, deciding that teaching assistants can't unionize; abolished a right it previously had given to non-union workers to be accompanied by a colleague when facing a disciplinary meeting with management; made it more difficult for temporary workers to unionize; and gave employers greater latitude to impose lock-outs in labor disputes. These and other decisions have led to charges that the NLRB has lost sight of its purpose, which is to defend the integrity of collective bargaining as national policy. "Workers who stand up for themselves are in double jeopardy—attacked by their employer and abandoned by the very agency created to protect them," former Rep. David Bonior, now chair of American Rights at Work, told Press Associates Inc.

2004 second deadliest for media staff

More news media staff were killed worldwide in 2004 than in any year since 1994, according to the International News Safety Institute. The confirmed death toll of 117 journalists and support staff, including drivers and translators, included 42 deaths in Iraq—all but six of them Iraqis practicing "free" news gathering for the first time. After Iraq, the deadliest places for journalists were the Philippines, with 12 dead, India (8), Mexico, Brazil and Bangladesh (5 each), Nepal and Russia (4 each), Colombia and Sri Lanka (3 each), and Nicaragua, Peru, Palestine and Romania (2 each).

CanWest extends influence into U.S.

Canada's new ambassador to the U.S. is Frank McKenna—who in addition to being a former three-term premier of New Brunswick is chairman of CanWest Global and serves on the boards of eight other corporations. He also has had business ties with the Bush family.

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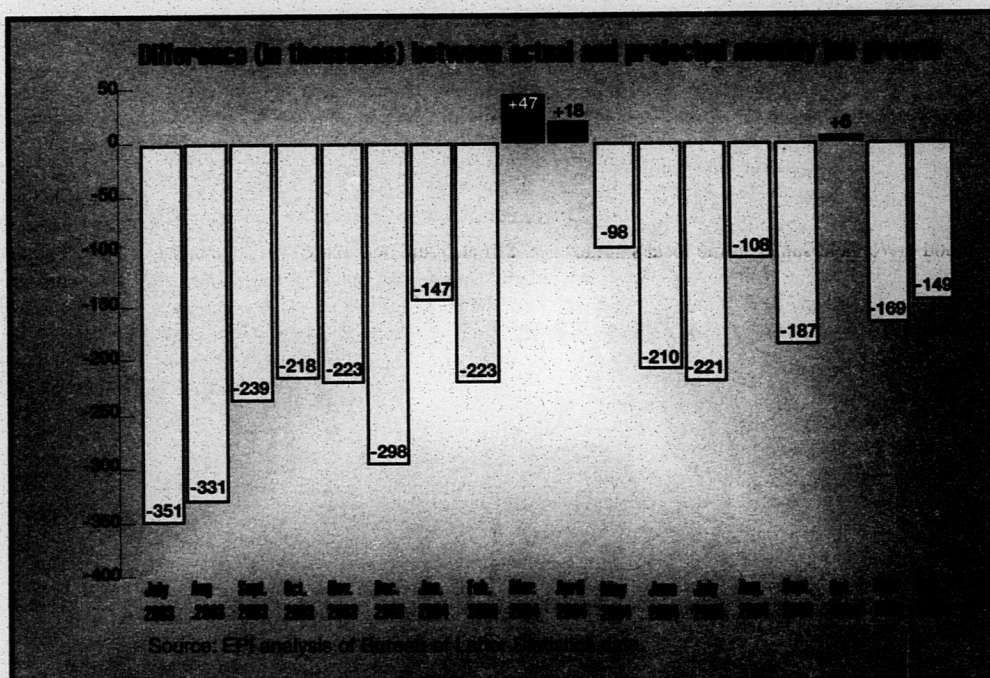
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Youngstown strikers in for the long haul

Continued from page 1

tion of overtime rights in the (understaffed) circulation department; and elimination of company cars in the circulation department (while requiring those members to acquire more costly commercial auto insurance at their own expense).

So the members are walking—and when they're not walking they're writing or editing stories, taking photos, selling ads or delivering the weekly strike paper, *The Valley Voice*. The first issue was published Nov. 19, and it and all its successors may be seen online at www.valleyvoiceonline.com.

Walking is definitely less fun.

Bill Sullivan calls picket duty "the worst assignment" in his 23 years at *The Vindicator*. Sully, as he's known around the newsroom, is a part-time sports reporter who covers high school events, minor league baseball and more. At age 53, he's belonged to only one union in his life—The Newspaper Guild.

"I didn't see it coming," he said of the strike. "It always seemed like we went [down to the] last minute. We got things done. We work on a deadline every day." Now, he reminds himself that "my job has been transferred from the newsroom to outside. I'll just wait for the impasse to move. I don't know what else I can do right now to get the two sides to meet on common ground."

It's not the weather that bothers Sullivan on the picket line. "I don't mind the cold," he said. "I do okay with the wind. The boredom is killing me. I want to work. I want to produce something."

One outlet for that urge has been for Sullivan to contribute stories to *The Valley Voice*. Another was to team up with reporter Maraline Kubik to coordinate a Red Cross blood drive, held Jan. 7 in the local's strike headquarters. "It [gave] us a chance to show that we are part of the community and we want to help the community," he explained.

An increasingly familiar sight in the community is reporter Steven Siff and his well-behaved dog, Molly, who wears a custom-made, cloth "on strike" sign that protects her from the cold.

Siff, 32, has worked at *The Vindicator* for nearly five years, four of those in a bureau and in competition with another daily paper. Coping with a newspaper strike depends on one's point of view, he said. "I worship at the high church of journalism that dictates journalists should always identify themselves with the working class," Siff explained. "But if you don't, I think it probably does make it difficult to accept our situation."

Teamsters settle

One group that is no longer on the picket line is Teamsters Local 473 of Cleveland, which represents mail-room workers at *The Vindicator*. Local 473 was 14 months beyond expiration of its last contract when the Guild's strike began. The Teamsters joined the strike Nov. 18.

Facing various pressures—including lower strike benefits than provided by TNG-CWA, no help in maintaining health insurance, continued collection of union dues and concerns about job security—the Teamsters voted Jan. 9 to accept a one-year contract that will expire Jan. 31, 2006. In lieu of raises, each Teamster will receive \$2,000 in bonuses, half upon signing, the other half in June. The Teamsters also have agreed for the first time to pay toward the cost of health insurance. The amount will be 15% of the monthly premium.

The Teamsters were scheduled to return to their jobs Jan. 10.

"The Guild made a pledge to the Teamsters that if we settled first, we would not go back to work until the Teamsters settled," said Anthony S. Markota, Local 34011 president. "We had hoped they would reciprocate. Unfortunately, that didn't occur. We understand why they decided to go back to work. We respect their decision, and we wish them well."

At press time, no new contract talks with the Guild had been scheduled.

Siff also said he is more interested in solidarity than in particular contract issues. "I trust the local leaders to get the best deal they can," he said. "It's about unity and standing up for ourselves. We've been taking it on the nose for year after year." He's bothered by the company's "failure to recognize that we're making sacrifices. . . . They attempt to take more."

Asked if this is a particularly bad time to be on strike, Siff believes there's some truth to that. The public is apathetic toward labor issues today compared with a decade ago. "Union ideology has peaked. Right-to-work ideology is ascendant," he said. Strikes are less warlike, picketing more ritualized.

As for what keeps him going during the strike, "I feel like I'm still plying my trade," said Siff, who is a co-editor of *The Valley*

Voice. "It would be very different if I weren't [writing]. I certainly have more sense of a cause, for a cause I believe in. I'm as directed as I was at *The Vindicator*. It's the same sort of work, and it's kind of fun and exciting."

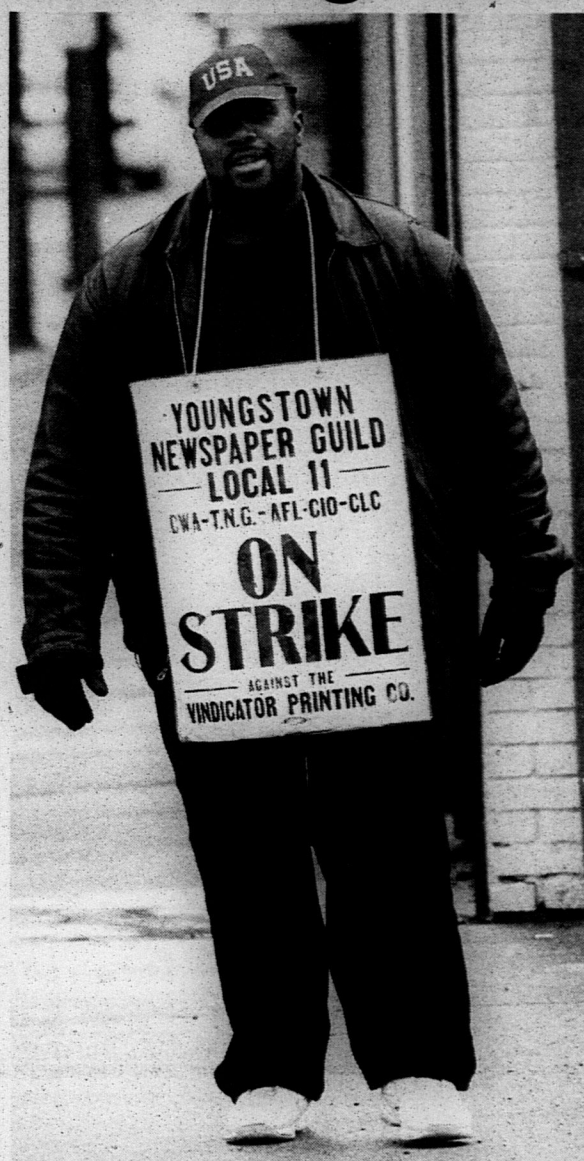
Being prepared for a strike means "don't run up your credit card," said Siff, who is single. "Don't buy more house than you can afford." He also remembers the advice of one of his liberal-minded graduate school professors: Always have enough money in the bank so you can walk out of work on a moral issue.

Siff also noted that some of the staunchest strikers in Local 34011 are those with great financial hardships—"single parents who live from paycheck to paycheck and have been very strong and shown solidarity," he said.

Heather Lambert, 29, fits that description. A part-time employee in *The Vindicator's* circulation department who delivers newspapers in bulk, Lambert is a full-time student at a technical college in nearby Niles and hopes to complete a paralegal program in 2006. She'd never been a union

member before she was hired, last April, and although she'd heard rumors of a possible strike last fall, "I'm used to things always working out, so I didn't put much into it."

Ironically, because TNG-CWA strike benefits are the same for full and part-time employees, Lambert says she's better off financially while on strike than she was on the job. And since more than half of the Youngstown Guild's members earn less than \$9 per hour at work, strike benefits of \$300 a week are not significantly less even for them.



Striking reporter John Goodwin walks the picket line.

That's why Lambert is faithful about picket duty: "For me to act like it's a pain . . . would be crazy," she concedes.

Still, Lambert adds, the money isn't enough to turn her into a professional striker. Picket duty is "not fun," and she looks forward to the end of the strike and being "back more on schedule. I took the job because it fit my school hours. Now, life is more hectic. I have an 8-year-old son, I'm four months pregnant, I'm a single mom. Picketing, going to school—it takes up a lot of time."

What's ahead for sector conference

2005 is an election year for The Newspaper Guild-CWA. All Guild international offices will be up for election at the sector conference, scheduled for May 5-8 in Victoria, British Columbia.

The sector conference also will see a continuation of the convergence/workgroup process that began last January in Baltimore, concluding some business while opening new discussions. The Guild's executive council will submit reports for adoption or action, on collective bargaining; the Guild's image; political activity; chain coordination; and involving Guild members.

New discussions will be started on three major issues—organizing strategies, human rights and mobilizing—with an examination of successes and failures in these areas. All Guild members can participate through the union's on-line forum (www.newsguild.org/members). Criticism is welcome and expected, as are constructive new ideas for strengthening the Guild.

There also will be workshops and discussions on offshoring of skilled jobs and on the rights and responsibilities of journalists (possibly in conjunction with AFTRA), including the rising proliferation of ethics codes.

The Official Call for the Victoria 2005 Sector Conference will be mailed to locals soon.

Univision license challenged

Continued from page 1

WLII, based in San Juan, is Puerto Rico's largest television station and is owned by Raycom Media of Montgomery, Alabama; Ponce-based WSUR is a repeater station. Until Raycom entered into a local marketing agreement with Univision three years ago, labor relations at the two stations were cordial and programming was heavily localized.

But all that changed abruptly when the Los Angeles-based conglomerate took over, say officials at UPAGRA, the Puerto Rico Newspaper Guild. "Instead of producing shows (telenovelas, game shows, children's shows and others) in their studios, Univision is bringing in programs from Mexico, Venezuela and Miami," wrote the local's executive secretary, Angel Báez, in a declaration attached to the FCC petition. "With the mas-

sive reduction in the work for television workers (both technical and actors) this adversely affects the economy of Puerto Rico."

It also inevitably introduces questions of cultural imperialism on an island long known for its fierce sense of identity. The most notable example is Univision's attempt to homogenize the Spanish language, which from an economic perspective means using the Spanish dialect with the widest following. Unfortunately, Mexican or Chicano Spanish causes linguistic pratfalls in Puerto Rico—where, for example, the Mexican word "bicho," meaning insect or bug, is the slang term for penis.

Reducing the number of locally produced programs from approximately 50 a week to three not only means loss of jobs, the petition asserts, but has trashed community standards. "These programs devalue

human dignity, making fun of human misery for the purpose of gaining ratings," complained Luis Enrique Romero, a former vice president of the Actors Guild of Puerto Rico, another APAGA member. "We need television which raises up our people and our culture, not tears it down."

The petition, while urging that the two stations' licenses not be renewed, requests that the FCC hold license renewal hearings in Puerto Rico to give local residents an opportunity to present their views. "The cultural and linguistic implications of the situation are best understood in Puerto Rico," notes the petition—to which is appended a 15-page scholarly exhibit, entirely in Spanish, titled: "Nueva frontera en 'Imperialismo Cultural': El caso de Univision en Puerto Rico." Even an Anglo can understand that.

The more things change . . .

History does have an annoying way of repeating itself—annoying, because battles that were fought a long time ago have to be revisited, time and again. That seems so wasteful.

Seventy years ago, when the Guild was just scraping itself together, one of the publishers' favorite weapons was to assert that no true professional would belong to a union. Union membership, they asserted, would vanquish reportorial objectivity, turn journalists into capitalist-hating saboteurs and jeopardize the republic.

Seventy years later, the claim that reporters and editors must divorce themselves from all aspects of civic life has stormed back. Much of this assault has targeted political behavior, but it was only to be expected that eventually it would encompass economic independence, too.

And so it was, just 10 days before Christmas, that Terry Stanton, managing editor of Hedge World (a publication dedicated not to English gardens but to high-stakes financial manipulation), lobbed a big, fat 1930s slur into the Romenesko web log (found at www.poynter.org). The good news? Several Romenesko readers fired right back, including some Guild members, making the kinds of points that would have brought a knowing smile from Heywood Broun—and which every Guild member should retain for the next such attack.

Stanton's calumny, below, is followed by the various replies:

John Parker's letter about newspaper strikebreakers and loss of objectivity is rather striking in its failure to see just the other side of its point.

I've always felt that unions for journalists are a rather odd thing. Few other similar categories of employees are unionized, and I've always thought it rather bothersome to hear journalists involved in labor disputes decry the evil, penny-pinching ways of the companies that employ them. From these folks I find it hard to expect balanced coverage of corporate and labor-management issues.

I know it's a generalization, but joining a union does seem to engender a hostility toward business in a lot of people. Participation in Guild activities often seems awfully similar to the kind of overt political stuff that newsmen are supposed to avoid.

Terry Stanton makes a good point, but ignores a fundamental reality. In the general sense we're talking about, newspaper owners tend to advance their corporate and advertiser interests; employees tend to advance their own interests. (Amid all this, of course, are those praise-worthy stalwarts who do what they are supposed to do: fair-minded managers and employees who don't let any of their personal views invade their obligation to the public.)

The playing field in this general sense, however, isn't equal. If newspaper owners favor anti-union coverage, they have all the power to enforce their view, fire those who challenge them and keep the issue out of the public sphere. Even with the internet and its hyped-up miraculous ability to give voice to the voiceless, employees cannot match that power.

Imagine if pro-union reporters tried to skew coverage in favor of "workers' rights." It wouldn't, and shouldn't, run. But it's OK, supposedly, if newspaper owners blatantly engage in efforts to undermine unions? Would you be so willing to propose that this is a tit-for-tat situation if pro-union newspaper owners paid reporters to walk the picket lines at the Vindicator?

Bottom line: Newspaper owners have far more power than their employees. Their resulting decisions have far more impact on the craft of journalism. If you don't acknowledge this fundamental, factual imbalance, you're crossing the line from honest discussion to ideology.

—John Parker

Terry Stanton feels that "unions for journalists are a rather odd thing." I find it even "odder" that beginning journalists must work for nothing or for peanuts, in "internships" that thrive in an industry where unions are scarce or weak.

Unions prevent publisher greed from getting in the way of good journalism. They are indeed "odd"—far too odd.

—Gary Weiss

Terry Stanton's letter on journalists belonging to unions displays his own bias, lack of knowledge and muddled thinking.

Contrary to his claim, many workers in jobs similar to journalists belong to unions, notably television and radio workers in unions like AFTRA, NABET and IBEW; the Screen Writers Guild and the unions representing school teachers and college professors.

Stanton writes, "I've always thought it rather bothersome to hear journalists involved in labor disputes decry the evil, penny-pinching ways of the companies that employ them. From these folks I find it hard to expect balanced coverage of corporate and labor-management issues."

So that means we can count on journalists who are not in the union (i.e., management editors and union exempts) to provide balanced coverage? By what standard would one conclude that those aligned with management are any more, or less, trustworthy than union members?

And why does Mr. Stanton single out unions?

Few reporters are landlords, but does the fact that some of us are, or have been, mean one cannot expect from us fair coverage of real estate issues? Or should we only trust renters? Or owners of their domicile? Or homeless journalists?

What about writing about schools, child health and taxes? Do we trust the journalists who are parents or those without children?

Maybe the work should speak for itself—and unsupported suspicions of bias ought to be swept into the dust bin of history. And Mr. Stanton should ponder the underlying assumptions of his own letter.

Joining a union makes solid economic sense, as even Professor Leo Troy, long the best known academic critic of unions, acknowledged when I interviewed him for a 1997 article:

Over all, union workers are paid about 20% more than nonunion workers, and their fringe benefits are typically worth two to four times as much, economists with a wide array of views have found. The financial advantage is even greater for workers with little formal education and training and for women, blacks and Hispanic workers.

Moreover, 85% of union members have health insurance, compared with 57% of nonunion workers, said Barry Bluestone, a labor-friendly economics professor at the University of Massachusetts.

The conclusion draws no argument even from Prof. Leo Troy of Rutgers University, who is widely known in academic circles and among union leaders for his hostility to organized labor. "From a standpoint of wages and fringe benefits," Professor Troy said, "the answer is yes, you are better off in

a union."

His objections to unions concern how they reduce profits for owners and distort investment decisions in ways that slow the overall growth of the economy—not how they affect workers who bargain collectively. Professor Troy points out that he belongs to a union himself—the American Association of University Professors.

As managing editor of Hedge World magazine, one expects that Mr. Stanton has a solid grasp of economic self interest. Perhaps the question he should ask is whether journalists who do not belong to unions are economic fools and, by his standard, cannot be trusted to provide balanced coverage on any economic issue since they have failed to act in what even the vociferous union critic Leo Troy says is their own best economic interest.

—David Cay Johnston

If Mr. Stanton were to take a job that paid him less than \$9 an hour, as have a number of people who work for the Youngstown Vindicator, perhaps he would come to understand why a journalist would join a union.

—Sarah Collins, copy editor, Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram

Welcome, Terry Stanton, to the big list of management people who just can't "get" why some cranky, ungrateful journo—at the alleged risk of soiling the altar of objectivity—insist on standing up for themselves by belonging to that most antiquated of workplace throwbacks, a labor union.

Actually, joining a union doesn't engender hostility toward business at all. It probably does engender hostility toward those special dullards at the helms of various monopolistic, corporate-groupthink media conglomerates who go home and slap the family pooch if the profit margin slips below 27% on a given day. (To borrow your own terminology, I've always seen this "odd" compulsion to put big profit so far above small community service as a truly "bothersome" thing.)

But you're probably right: In the interest of staying fair and balanced, the handful of remaining unionized journo clearly ought to assemble in the nearest Big Labor office and disband, lest they feel tempted to engage in more "overtly political" subversive activities, such as fighting to secure decent wages, working conditions, health care and due process in an industry that often chews people up and spits them out.

As to union members' objectivity in reporting labor issues: Please. Show me a publication whose management still sees fit to actually cover labor issues as a beat, and we'll talk about it.

—Ron C. Judd, Seattle Times columnist and union member

Far from pushing journalists toward bias, labor unions help provide what reporters and editors need most, a measure of independence to do their work. The protections of a union contract make it possible for journalists to speak frankly within their organizations without fear they will be fired for disagreeing with their bosses or for pursuing sacred cow stories or approaching their subjects in unconventional ways. They also provide what any worker needs, whether she or he be a bricklayer or a college professor: high standard working conditions of adequate pay and benefits, so they can make careers out of some of the most important work performed in America.

Terry Stanton's premise that belonging

to a union prejudices a journalist's view of business makes no more sense than saying going to church makes him or her more (or less, depending on the sermon) warm towards religion, or that shopping in a supermarket changes an editor's or writer's outlook on farming.

Labor unions provide a unique way for workers of any station or profession to talk with their managers, and when collective bargaining works well, the resulting contract provides a playbook in which all parties understand how the workplace operates, avoiding time- and energy-wasting disputes when they are making up the rules as they go along.

In my 35 years at the Providence Journal in Rhode Island—some of them spent as a business writer—there were periods of uncomfortable strain between the Guild and the newspaper, including an outright strike and a long standoff that amounted to one. But the overall contribution of the union was to create a place where journalism was practiced at a high level, where great reporters and editors could invest in long careers. Personally, when I covered business or labor, I didn't feel automatically inclined toward one side or another, although my union experience gave me greater insight into the mechanics of labor-management disputes the few times I wrote about them.

Unions are a utility in our society, just like banks, stock brokerages, hospitals, schools, or the United Way. They exist to solve problems, and are inherently neither good nor bad. But like all of our institutions, they reflect their leadership, their constituencies, their power or lack of it and the unique details of the particular controversies in which they are involved. In my own career, the contributions of an effective, principled union helped make it possible for me to be an effective, principled journalist.

—Brian C. Jones, freelance writer

You want to talk about odd? How about Mr. Stanton's letter, which posits that journalists are not entitled to the basic rights of any other American worker?

He says he's always thought it "rather bothersome" that journalists "decry the evil, penny-pinching ways of the companies that employ them." I guess that means that, because someone is a journalist, he/she must remain mute if a company fails to provide decent benefits, or fires people indiscriminately, or just plain treats workers badly: "You are a journalist, you have forfeited your rights as an employee. Shut up!"

Mr. Stanton says "joining a union does seem to engender a hostility toward business in a lot of people." Yes, a generalization, and a worthless one. I've joined unions at two different papers, both papers have treated me very well, and I have no hostility toward them, or any business. A third, non-union, paper also treated me well. But if I'm suddenly treated unfairly, I reserve and expect the right to protest, union or no.

I really don't see what's odd about that.

—Tom Jackman

After reading Terry Stanton's letter on journalists belonging to unions, I can't help but wonder whether he also believes that all nonwhite journalists should not cover racial issues. Maybe he thinks the only truly "balanced" position to speak from is that of the status quo, which is hardly neutral or balanced in our racially and economically stratified society.

—Kevin Dolan, Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



LOOKING AHEAD

Let's promote our own agenda

By Linda Foley, President

"The first duty of a newspaper is to stay alive. And the most important single fact about any newspaper is that it differs from the next newspaper and is owned by a different man, or group of men. This fact (the fact of difference) transcends a newspaper's greatness, a newspaper's honesty, a newspaper's liveliness, or any other quality. The health of the country deteriorates every time a newspaper dies of strangulation or is wiped out in a mercy killing. The solemn fact . . . is not that we lose a conservative paper, or an ancient paper, or an honest paper, or a funny paper, but that we lose a paper—one voice in the choir."

—E.B. White in "The Second Tree from the Corner," Harper & Brothers (New York), page 163; as quoted in *The Guild Reporter* Jan. 14, 1955

Historically, social movements that have become successful catalysts for change must move from merely thwarting someone else's agenda to promoting one of their own. So it is with today's media reform movement.

Over the last two years, the loose coalition of consumer, labor, public interest and just plain media reformers (including The Newspaper Guild-CWA) has been able to halt media deregulators in their tracks. Just two years ago, media conglomerates were poised to begin a tidal wave of media mergers at the local and national level that would have made the industry's prior moves toward consolidation look like a few puddles on the sidewalk.

But now, as 2005 begins, the moguls' deregulation strategy is in disarray, and the public is not in the mood to let them grow their media empires with the gusto they would like. A federal appeals court has turned back the Federal Communications Commission's attempt to relax media ownership rules, and Capitol Hill legislators from both parties repeatedly have voted to curb further media consolidation.

But the Telecommunications Act is up for Congressional review in the coming months, and a pro-business Congress could give media conglomerates another opportunity to revitalize their efforts to reduce or eliminate competition in the so-called "marketplace of ideas."

Our side is gearing up, too. The Newspaper Guild-CWA and other media reform advocates have taken the first step toward setting our own legislative agenda for shaping U.S. media policy, drafting a

Bill of Media Rights we hope will become the basis for policy and legislation that will promote diversity, reward competition and respect the public interest. In the near future, we will solicit other organizations and individuals to sign on to these principles.

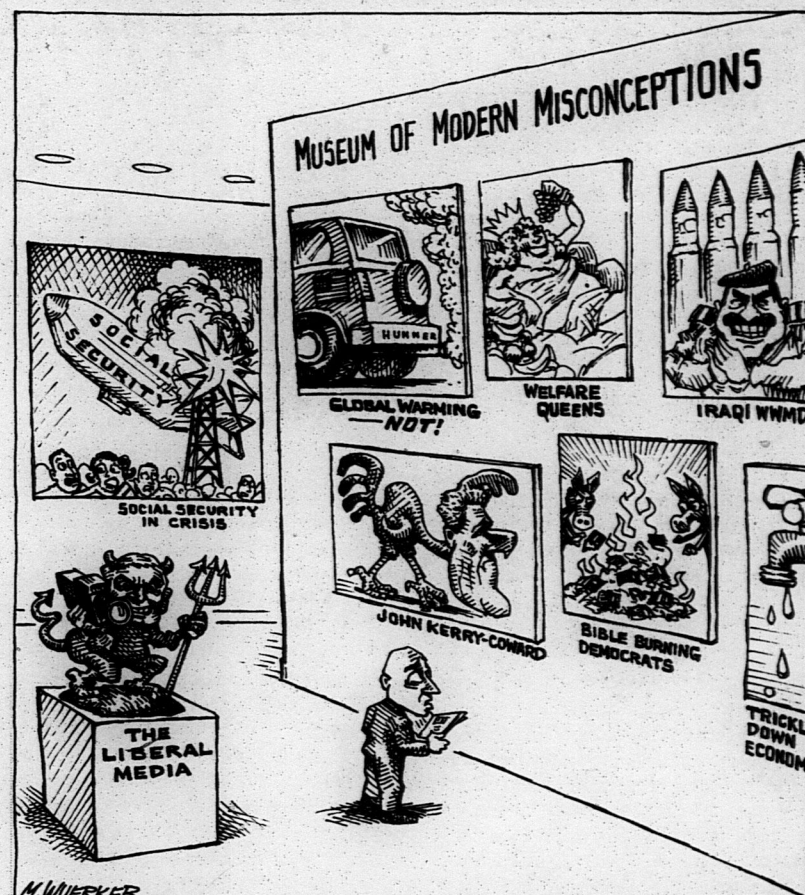
In the meantime, I'd like to know what Guild members think about them. After all, many of you work for these companies, and nearly all of you are in the forefront of the struggle to preserve democratic values. E-mail me with your thoughts and ideas at lfoley@cwa-union.org.

Bill of Media Rights

I. Media That Provide "An Uninhibited Marketplace of Ideas"

The American public has a right to:

- Journalism that fully informs the public, acts as a government watchdog, and protects journalists who dissent from their employers.
- Newspapers, television and radio stations, cable and satellite systems, and broadcast and cable networks operated by multiple, diverse, and independent owners employing a diverse workforce.
- Radio and television programming produced by independent creators that is original, challenging, controversial, and diverse.
- Programming, stories, and speech produced by communities and citizens.
- Internet service provided by multiple, independent providers who offer access to the entire internet over a broadband connection, with freedom to attach within the home any device to the net connection and run any application.



• Public broadcasting insulated from political and commercial interests that is well-funded and especially serves communities underserved by privately-owned broadcasters.

• Regulatory policies emphasizing media education and citizen empowerment, not government censorship, as the best ways to avoid unwanted content.

II. Media That Use The Public's Airwaves To Serve The Public Interest

The American public has a right to:

- Electoral and civic, children's, educational, independently produced, local and community programming, as well as programming that serves Americans with disabilities and underserved communities.
- Media that reflect the presence and voices of people of color, women, immigrants, Americans with disabilities, and other communities often underrepresented.
- Maximum access and opportunity to use the public airwaves and spectrum.
- Meaningful participation in govern-

ment media policy, including disclosure of the ways broadcasters comply with their public interest obligations, ascertain their community's needs, and create programming to serve those needs.

III. Media That Reflect And Respond To Their Local Communities

The American public has a right to:

- Television and radio stations that are locally owned and operated, reflective of and responsible to the diverse communities they serve, and able to respond quickly to local emergencies.
- Well-funded local public access channels and community radio, including low-power FM radio stations.
- Universal, affordable internet access for news, education, and government information, so that all citizens can better participate in our democracy and culture.
- Frequent, rigorous license and franchise renewal processes for local broadcasters and cable operators that meaningfully include the public.

LETTERS

To the Editor,

To many of us in Northeast Ohio, Jack Hagan has been the living embodiment of The Newspaper Guild. So it is with some sadness that this letter marks his retirement.

Jack has a bone-deep commitment to the labor movement. In his 30 years at The Plain Dealer, he has been fearless in confronting management about a wrong, and tireless in fighting for his Guild brothers and sisters. Jack was an early champion of diversity in the workplace, and the example he set for me and others will last lifetimes. And he did it all with a deep well of humor and grace.

Those who know Jack won't be surprised that he spent some of his final month in the newspaper industry on picket lines in Youngstown and in Green Township, Ohio. Nor will they be surprised that the room could not contain the hundreds who attended his retirement party.

Many new Guild activists met Jack at the Convergence II workshop in Baltimore a year ago. Consider yourself blessed. You won't see his like again anytime soon.

—Scott Stephens

TNG/CWA Region 3 Vice President

To the Editor,

I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated your thoughtful piece about media chill (*Guild Reporter*, Dec. 17). The one good thing that seems to be emerging from the accumulation of attacks on journalists in North America is that people like you are rightly asserting that it is time for renewed debate on the role journalists play in society.

The article is obviously based on solid research and analysis. And I was pleased to be quoted. However, I wanted to clarify the description of developments in my case. They have been misreported elsewhere, so I

can see how it happened.

To clarify: the Ontario Superior Court ruling was on the unconstitutionality of the sealing orders on the search warrants. We are still in court seeking to have the search warrants quashed as unconstitutional, as well as Section 4 of the Security of Information Act. And the RCMP documents were released by the public inquiry into the Maher Arar affair, not as a result of the ruling in my case.

As of mid-December, we have a court date for arguments next October. Yes, October. So this will be hanging over my head for some time to come. Meantime, thank you again for your efforts to provoke an important discussion.

—Juliet O'Neill

Ottawa Newspaper Guild

To the Editor,

Your mission statement says, "The mem-

bers of this union expect The Guild Reporter to inform, motivate and challenge its readers." Well, I feel challenged by most everything I read in the Reporter.

For instance, in the text accompanying the photo of Mariane Pearl (*Guild Reporter*, Dec. 17), I strongly object to the wording, "Pearl, a Wall Street Journal reporter, was murdered in Pakistan in 2002 by religious extremists." Should it not have read, "Pearl, a Wall Street Journal reporter, was beheaded in Pakistan in 2002 by Islamic fundamentalists?"

Why must you be politically correct when everyone knows who was responsible for, as well as the bloody circumstances of, his death? I cannot help but wonder if this is just a manifestation of anti-religious bias and you used this as an opportunity to malign all religions.

—Therese Hagerty

Philadelphia Newspaper Guild (retired)

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: Feb. 4.)

Retiring Guilder looks back—and ahead

As TNG-CWA begins its 72nd year, another wave of old-timers is exiting stage left, heading into retirement after decades of Guild service. Among them: Frank Sweeney, who despite officially retiring last July after 37 years as a reporter and editor at the San Jose Mercury News, is currently on the committee negotiating a contract extension at that paper.

Sweeney's decades of union service include becoming the local's vice president in 1975, president in 1980, a member of the Executive Committee in 1981 and secretary treasurer in 1982. Sweeney also served on seven Guild bargaining committees at the Mercury News and one bargaining committee at the Monterey Peninsula Herald, and he was a delegate to 16 Guild conventions and sector conferences, two CWA conventions and approximately 60 Western District Council meetings.

The local's Representative Assembly took note Dec. 12, adopting a resolution to praise his service. "During 36 years of San Jose Newspaper Guild leadership, Frank Sweeney has been a brilliant bargaining strategist, a virtuoso secretary-treasurer, an inspiring mentor to aspiring Guild activists, a compassionate leader, a wise and steady hand and a universally respected trade unionist," it observed. Enumerating many more of Sweeney's accomplishments than those listed above, the resolution expressed thanks for "Frank's intelligence, compassion, integrity and unyielding commitment to the welfare of working women and men and their families."

In the belief that all Guild members might benefit from such experience, The Guild Reporter asked Sweeney for some parting thoughts he'd be willing to share with the entire TNG-CWA membership.

By Frank Sweeney
San Jose Newspaper Guild

Our challenges have evolved dramatically since 1967 when, as a beginning newspaper reporter, I became a member of the Guild, an organization not even whispered about in journalism school.

I was pleasantly surprised that the first step in my career would pay \$105 a week at the San Jose Mercury—far more than the beginning scales I had heard of and read about in college. A vow of poverty wasn't necessary to become a journalist; those at the top scale made \$200 a week—for that time an astounding \$10,400 a year.

I quickly learned it was not management largesse that provided this bounty. It was the people who made the San Jose Newspaper Guild into an organization of power, and the benefits such power brings. We were still reaping the rewards of a long but successful strike in 1959. Today, the top scale at the San Jose Mercury News is \$1,180 a week, which I do not get because I retired last July.

But over the past quarter century, despite improvements we achieved in wages and



Frank Sweeney

benefits and the elimination of discrimination against women in newsrooms, the Guild has increasingly found itself defending its hard-fought gains against employers who want to roll back the clock for all but themselves.

The appetite of newspaper corporations for take-backs has grown to an insatiable level of greed. No longer are corporate leaders satisfied with tremendous profit margins. They want outrageous returns to meet the dictates of Wall Street, for it is the payoff of rising stock prices, not achieving great journalism, that lines their pockets.

Guild members today are faced with anti-union law firms, the bottom feeders of industry hired by media conglomerates to break unions or at least bring meaningful contract negotiations to impasse. All the while these parasites milk the employers for all they can get.

We must bargain with corporations that sign union contracts and then, unveiling their real ethics and character, ignore those agreements, forcing unions into protracted arbitrations and onto legal battlefields. Even worse, we are faced with asset sales, in which the chains gobble up newspapers and through loopholes in the law abrogate union contracts.

We are plagued with greedy health care providers who drive costs through the roof to jack up their profits. We are faced with insurers who do nothing but pass on ever-increasing bills to employers. And our employers have no courage to stand up to increasing health care costs, but instead attempt to shove those costs down the



Sweeney, at left, relates a story at his retirement party that gets an appreciative laugh from Luther Jackson, executive officer of the San Jose Guild.

throats of their workers.

The litany goes on and on. It's enough to make your blood boil.

Now we are in an economic tailslide without visible light at the end of the tunnel. We are saddled with an anti-labor, anti-people Republican majority in the House and Senate and an arrogant president who does by fiat and whim of regulation what he cannot pass through Congress. This is a gloomy picture, for sure—but as the late Jose Stell, a longtime colleague, close friend and Guild activist, once said, "Some day, this will end."

I hope. But it will take more than hope.

My generation of Guild leaders fought to preserve the rights and benefits achieved by those who came before us, and to build on those accomplishments. Now a new generation of Guild leaders must carry on the fight, but in different ways and new tactics. Singing "Solidarity Forever" won't get the job done. There are no easy answers—if I had a simple solution, I would not keep it a secret. Still, there are actions that labor's leaders and its working men and women must continue to take that could be called "back to the basics."

We must continue to organize the unorganized—a task to which we often pay lip service while we are distracted defending the turf we have already won. More members mean more power to blunt the force of the other side.

We must set the agenda, not let employers set it for us. That means we do more than react to attacks on labor law and Social Security. That means we launch new ideas,

initiatives, new programs to benefit all working men and women, such as universal health care, true freedom to form unions, and a host of other social and economic justice issues. We must use our imagination. Force them to respond to us. But make no mistake about our motives: the Guild is about people, not profits.

We must develop new, younger Guild leadership as the gray-hairs like me leave the scene.

Most importantly, we cannot do this alone. One of the smartest things the Guild ever did was to join the Communications Workers of America. In numbers, there is strength and organization. Don't ever forget it. But we must go further in solidarity.

In San Jose, in the San Francisco Bay Area, our Conference of Newspaper Unions is a model for the inter-union solidarity that should be in force at any newspaper where there is more than one union. We work together to achieve good contracts, protect our members and keep the publishers on edge. Despite their efforts, Bay Area newspapers have been unable to drive wedges among our unions.

We also need to build alliances with those in our communities, including labor unions outside the newspaper industry, interfaith groups, community organizations and local politicians and civic leaders. Help them, and they will help us in time of need.

We have our work cut out for us. It's time to keep going. We can't afford to get left behind.

THE GUILD Reporter

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DAYBOOK

Deadline for submitting Broun,
Barr awards entries, Jan. 28;
see contest rules at
www.newsguild.org

Great Lakes, Midwest councils,
Feb. 5-6, Chicago

New Local Officers' Seminar,
Feb. 18-21, Meany Center, MD

New England District Council,
Feb. 26-27, Providence, RI

Knight Ridder Council meeting,
March 4-5, Akron, Ohio

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

Freedom Award Banquet,
March 30, Washington, DC

Western District Council,
May 5, Victoria, BC

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

CWA Safety-Health Conference,
June 1-3, Baltimore

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

Services are held for Daniel de Souza, 33, first president of the Washington Guild, who was killed in an automobile accident en route to New Jersey with a car full of toys for the families of reporters striking the Newark Ledger. . . . Heywood Broun marries the former Connie Madison, widow of actor Ray Dooley, in an unannounced ceremony Jan. 9. . . . Guild executive secretary Jonathan Eddy seeks to resign from the Newspaper Industrial Board, following a White House decision that NIB decisions may not be appealed to the National Labor Relations Board.

Fifty years ago this month:

Rabbi Israel Goldstein, of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York, brands "right-to-work" laws in 17 states as immoral, undemocratic and fraudulent under Jewish law. . . . Reacting swiftly to news that The Globe and Mail of Toronto has been put up for sale, the Toronto Guild launches an organizing drive that achieves a substantial Guild majority "almost within a matter of hours." . . . Mass. Rep. Thomas Lane introduces a bill calling for issuance of a Heywood Broun commemorative stamp.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

More than 300 workers jam a New York conference on VDT safety, with scores more turned away for lack of room, attesting to the frustrations and concerns surrounding the new computer technology. . . . The NLRB rules employers may not terminate disability benefits for workers who are on sick leave when a strike begins. . . . The average minimum wage for beginning reporters under Guild contracts is \$246 a week.

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