

THE GUILD Reporter

February 11, 2005

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 72, Number 2

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Youngstown strikers' resolve hardens *Walkout affirmed by wider margin; 'adopt a striker' program springs up*

The battle lines in Youngstown, Ohio, hardened Feb. 7, when Guild members rejected by an even wider margin a contract offer they already had spurned in December. The 107-20 vote—compared with a 99-36 outcome two months earlier—all but assured that the strike against The Vindicator will drag into a fourth month.

No new contract talks had been scheduled at press time, with local Guild officials saying the Vindicator's general manager, Mark Brown, "refuses to be in the same room with us." A Jan. 18 meeting with a mediator, at which the local

offered several concessions, ended with a management representative asking, "What part of 'best and final' don't you understand?" said Debora Shaulis Flora, vice president of the Youngstown Newspaper Guild. The "best and final" offer was the one rejected Dec. 8, and again this month.

"I do think this vote was a great disappointment to them," Shaulis Flora added, explaining that while management didn't expect to win the vote, "I think they expected it to be a lot closer."

Management's pugnacious bargaining posture apparently dates back to last summer, when it regis-

tered the internet domain name steelvalleynews.com—nearly three months before contract talks started. The move was reported Feb. 2 by the Youngstown Business Journal, which noted that the Guild last published the Steel Valley News 40 years ago, when it struck the Vindicator for eight months.

Instead, the local has been posting its weekly strike paper at www.valleyvoiceonline.com.

Although Rep. Tim Ryan's office contacted the Guild last month to express his interest in opening lines of communication between the two sides, the

Vindicator's general manager said he would not meet Ryan if Guild representatives were present. Ryan's and Rep. Ted Strickland's staffers are still trying to create "a conversation," according to Shaulis Flora, but have been thwarted by Ryan's illness and Congressional scheduling conflicts.

With the Vindicator refusing to budge from the position it carved out more than two months ago, Guild members are ratcheting up their mobilization campaign. The Valley Voice News now features a full-page "Advertisers' Hall of Shame," listing five car dealers and a supermarket chain that con-

tinued to appear in the Vindicator despite repeated pleas that they suspend advertising until the strike ends. A subscription boycott, fueled by coupons in the Voice that readers can clip and send in, is gathering steam.

And in the first week of February, Shaulis Flora said, an "adopt a striker" program spontaneously erupted in the heavily unionized city. The first two pledges arrived Feb. 8, she noted, and the local will start beating the drums for more, with a goal of raising an extra \$100 a month per striker.

"We're going to be a lot more vocal, a lot more visible," she said.

St. Louis ESOP bid falls short

A handful of newspaper employees, including former local president Tim O'Neil, made a serious attempt in late January to buy the St. Louis Post-Dispatch through an employee stock ownership program. But although the group had lined up an initial \$800 million and was working on commitments for more, "we eventually got a pretty clear message that they weren't interested," O'Neil said.

Instead, the winning bid of \$64 a share for the Pulitzer chain of 14 dailies and 100 other publications was made by Lee Enterprises, which operates 44 generally smaller dailies in 19 states. The purchase, to be completed by May 31, will vault Lee into the top ranks of the newspaper industry, making it the fourth largest publisher by number of dailies owned and seventh largest when measured by circulation.

Several analysts said the \$1.46 billion purchase price was fair, even generous, equivalent to 13.5 times Pulitzer's operating cash flow. Newspapers last year traded at 10 to 14 times cash flow, according to the Newspaper Association of America, although the Pulitzer sale was more than three times the size of any 2004 transaction. Nonetheless, two shareholders have already filed lawsuits in Delaware, seeking class action status and claiming the sales price was "unfair and inadequate."

While Post-Dispatch employees expressed relief that Lee had emerged as the favored bidder—"We certainly appreciate the way it turned out," the Guild's new president, Jeff Gordon, told reporters—the failed ESOP was seen by its backers as the best assurance of maintaining the paper's independence. "We knew it was a long-shot, but it was significant—we had some serious stuff put together," O'Neil said.

The small group, including editors Margaret and William Freivogel and Robert Duffy, Washington bureau chief Jon Sawyer and senior financial writer David Nicklaus, got together shortly before Christmas to discuss the Pulitzer family's announced intention to sell the chain. The Milwaukee Journal and Omaha World-Herald had gone the ESOP route, they noted—why not the Post-Dispatch?

Dubbing their effort the Andes Project—the code name Joseph Pulitzer used in cables regarding the Post-Dispatch and the New York World—the group recruited the financial services of Stifel Nicolaus & Co. and started stumping for backers. But the attempt came too late: although the Andes Project informed Pulitzer of its interest Jan. 24, by then Lee was well on its way toward locking down the deal, announced just six days later.

On the plus side: Lee has said it will honor the Guild contract.



PHOTOS BY MIKE MCNESSOR/ALBANY NEWSPAPER GUILD

Reporter Kate Gurnett and copy editor Mike Jarboe, sponging off the home-show crowd.

Feeling squeezed in Albany

Lesson number one: if you want to picket outside the Pepsi Arena in Albany, no problem. Lesson number two: if you want to distribute sponges outside the Pepsi Arena, you need a permit.

Go figure.

A hundred or so Albany Newspaper Guild members and their supporters—including representatives of at least half-a-dozen other unions—handed out more than 2,000 sponges Feb. 5 before the police arrived to explain the rules. The sponges, together with a postcard explaining the Times Union's contract demands, were being distributed to people attending the 25th Annual Great Northeast Home Show, a three-day extravaganza sponsored by the Times Union.

Rather than respond to the union's claims, management pouted that the job action violated a contract

clause that prohibits picketing. The Albany police, on the other hand, said the sponges were equivalent to leaflets and therefore required a permit.

The Guild's contract with the Hearst-owned newspaper expired last August, but negotiations have bogged down over the company's insistence that employees agree to a gutting of their pension plan in exchange for a meager raise, including a 1% increase for those at top scale. Hearst also is trying to impose a higher share of health care costs on its workers, as well as eliminate

some overtime.

"We've been trying to settle our contract negotiations in-house, but it's become clear that we need to let the public know what's happening," said local President Tim O'Brien.

Contract negotiations were scheduled to resume as The Guild Reporter went to press.

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Union: diversity at work

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

We are the Union: that's what it says on one of my favorite t-shirts. The Newspaper Guild-CWA in Washington, D.C. is the international, but we as individuals are the union. What can we do to strengthen the labor and enhance our own lives?

As the saying goes, there is strength in numbers—and in today's political climate, we don't have the luxury of standing alone. I have long believed that any successful campaign, be it a strike, an information picket or other activity, depends upon the community as a whole—and as it happens, there are many labor and journalism groups that could help us, just as we can help them.

Listed here are a few groups with whom TNG-CWA is establishing relationships—and with whom you, as individuals, also can connect. Although not exhaustive, this list should give you an idea of the diversity available to us.

- **Coalition of Labor Union Women.** CLUW is America's only national organization for union women. Its members are on the front lines, empowering working women to become leaders in their unions and encouraging them to make a difference on the job—and, more importantly, in their own lives.

- **A. Philip Randolph Institute.** A national organization of black trade unionists, APRI's mission, has been to fight for racial equality and economic justice. It works with black trade unionists to serve as a bridge between labor and the black community.

- **The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.** CBTU consists of members from 77 international and national unions and has 42 chapters across the country. CBTU seeks to fulfill the dream of "those black trade unionists, both living and deceased, who have courageously and unrelentingly struggled to build a national movement

that would bring all our strengths and varied talents to bear in the unending effort to achieve economic, political and social justice for every American."

- **Pride At Work.** The AFL-CIO's newest constituency group opposes all forms of discrimination on the job and in our unions based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, religion or political views. Its goal is to create a labor movement that cherishes diversity, encourages openness, and ensures safety and dignity on the job.

- **National Association of Hispanic Journalists.** The NAHJ is dedicated to the recognition and professional advancement of Hispanics in the news industry. Established in April, 1984, NAHJ created a national voice and unified vision for all Hispanic journalists.

- **National Association of Black Journalists.** NABJ is an organization of journalists, students and media-related professionals that provides programs and services to, and advocates on behalf of, black journalists worldwide.

- **Asian-American Journalist Association.** The AAJA seeks to encourage Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders to enter the ranks of journalism. Founded in 1981 by a few Asian-American and Pacific Islander journalists who felt a need to support one another, the AAJA also works for fair and accurate coverage of both groups in the media.

- **Native American Journalists' Association.** NAJA strives to empower Native American journalists and to promote native cultures. NAJA recognizes Native Americans as distinct peoples based on tradition and culture and is committed to increasing the representation of native journalists in mainstream media. It also encourages both mainstream and tribal

media to attain the highest standards of professionalism, ethics and responsibility.

- **National Lesbian & Gay Journalist Association.** The NLGJA is an organization of journalists, online media professionals and students that works from within the journalism industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

A common thread among all these groups is their opposition to discrimination, so I encourage you to investigate them and others for yourself. The survival of this movement in part depends on growth and building bridges. Become acquainted with the religious and civic groups in your area, as well as other unions, labor councils, and AFL-CIO constituency groups. Let the world know that "We are the Union" and that we are there to help and support others, and they in turn will be there for us.

STICKS AND STONES

American Indian: Interchangeable with Native American; use proper tribal name if possible. Some words, such as wampum, warpath, powwow, tepee, squaw, etc. can be disparaging and offensive.

Queer: Originally a pejorative term for gay, now reclaimed by some gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people as a self-affirming umbrella term. Still extremely offensive when used as an epithet.

Diversity: Catch-all term to describe a condition or environment that is multiracial and multicultural; being representative or reflective of multiethnic society. Diversity is not synonymous with affirmative action, is not limited to race and is not government mandated. Your local can have a diverse membership mixing races, ages, sexes, etc.

Tickets on sale now for Freedom banquet

The fourth annual Newspaper Guild Freedom Award Fund banquet will be held Wednesday, March 30 at the Hyatt Regency Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. Rapidly becoming a signature event in a city of high-profile affairs, the banquet honors the memories of three visionary leaders who fought for social justice: Guild founder Heywood Broun, long-time Guild attorney and mentor David Barr, and Washington Post cartoonist Herbert Block, among the Guild's longest tenured members.

Proceeds from the banquet underwrite the Freedom Award, which each year is presented to an individual or organization who best exemplifies Block's ideals. The evening also features presentation of the Heywood Broun Award, which includes a plaque and a cash prize of \$5,000; and of the David S. Barr scholarships to one high

school and one college student.

This year's keynote address will be given by Helen Thomas, a White House correspondent for 57 years and currently syndicated columnist for Hearst Newspapers. Hosting the ceremonies will be news anchor Gordon Peterson, moderator and producer of "Inside Washington"; and Bob Edwards, former host of NPR's Morning Edition and now host of XMPublic Radio's "The Bob Edwards Show."

Although tables of ten cost up to \$5,000, TNG-CWA locals can sponsor a table for \$1,500 and are urged by TNG-CWA President Linda Foley to do so. Locals also can purchase ads in the souvenir book, at prices ranging between \$400 for a half page to \$2,500 for a full gold page. Individual tickets for Guild members are \$80.

For further information, call Sheara Reich, at 202-434-1269.

Guild briefs . . .

Dow Jones buy means job cuts

Following its purchase of MarketWatch Inc., an online financial news provider, Dow Jones said it would eliminate Dow Jones Business News and cut 97 jobs—including more than a dozen at its South Brunswick, N.J. campus. The Dow Jones layoffs, to be effective through a transition period ending June 30, include 11 employees represented by IAPE, TNG Local 1096, as well as two managers.

Star-Trib labor relations souring

Labor relations at the Minneapolis Star Tribune are growing increasingly more strained, as reflected in a sudden spike in grievances: whereas the Guild filed only a dozen grievances from 1995 through 2002, it has lodged 13 in just the past two years—with another two pending. What happened? Local leaders attribute the changed climate to a decision by McClatchy corporate headquarters to sideline the in-house labor relations department, which was more inclined to resolve disputes than to go to the mat. Several of the grievances are shaping up as arbitration fodder.

AP agrees to new multimedia scale

The AP and the News Media Guild have settled a three-year-old dispute by agreeing on a new job classification for multimedia reporters. "Multimedia specialist" describes an employee with multiple, overlapping job responsibilities, such as shooting and collecting video and audio, audio and video editing, news writing and reporting, web posting, etc. Staffers employed in the new classification will have a minimum base wage 15% (now \$178.25 in a Class A city) over current top newperson scale and differentials.

4th anniversary nears for Chinese

With March 19th marking the fourth anniversary of the union representation election at the Chinese Daily News, Guild leaders met Feb. 2 and 3 in southern California to plan new strategies. Discussions included reaction to a recent NLRB decision expanding the definition of supervisory taint in overturning elections and the status of an NLRB decision over unfair labor practice charge complaints, heard last summer.

SF Chronicle in early negotiations

Contract negotiations have started at the San Francisco Chronicle, where the Guild represents nearly a thousand

employees. Although the talks do not include joint bargaining with other unions at the paper, Guild officials said they will "honor the historical principles of mutual aid and solidarity" by consulting with other locals. The Guild's contract expires in July.

WashPost to staff: tell us your failings

The Washington Post, which last year set up a snitch line so employees could rat each other out, has taken that idea to the next level: now it wants reporters and editors to write self-evaluations as part of their annual review process. Hard to tell whether that's because management isn't up to the job, but the Washington-Baltimore Guild is preparing its own evaluation of such a blatant transgression of the supervisor-supervisee boundary.

Goon squad placed on boycott list

Vance International, the security firm that clubbed one Detroit newspaper striker into a coma and assaulted others, has finally made it onto the AFI-CIO's national boycott list. Ironically, the honor came not because of the company's brutal tactics in numerous labor disputes, including those at Pittston Coal and Caterpillar, but because of its efforts to stifle union representation by its own employees.

Register Guard ODs on drug policy

When the Eugene Newspaper Guild finally wrapped up an unusually long and contentious set of contract negotiations in late 2002, it agreed to a drug and alcohol policy at the Register-Guard that was summarized in a page and a half. But management's recent interpretation of that agreement tacks on an additional six pages of creative interpretation to which the Guild is objecting, including an asserted right to search employees' personal effects, encouragement for employees to report suspected drug or alcohol use by others and a requirement that prescribed medications be carried only in original containers.

Guild leader takes interfaith reins

Luther Jackson, executive officer of the San Jose Guild, has been elected chair of The Interfaith Council on Religion, Race, Economic and Social Justice. The Interfaith Council has been a major force behind Silicon Valley projects such as the San Jose living wage ordinance, the Children's Health Initiative and accountable development and affordable housing issues. Jackson has been active in the Interfaith Council since its founding, in 1997.

ADDRESS CHANGE, SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The Guild Reporter (ISSN: 00175404) (CPC # 1469371) is issued monthly, generally at four-week intervals, at 501 Third St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Periodicals postage paid in Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: The Guild Reporter, c/o Grace Corner, Communications Workers of America, 501 Third St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Address changes also can be e-mailed to: duesinfo@cwa-union.org.

Subscription: \$20 a year in U.S. and Canada, \$30 a year overseas. Send subscription orders to: Tina Harrison, TNG-CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
Single copies: \$1.50

New contracts hammered out by four locals

The Sydney Typographical Union had gotten used to battling to the brink of a strike before winning an acceptable contract at the Cape Breton Post, Nova Scotia's only daily newspaper. But the 2002 purchase of the paper by Transcontinental Media from CanWest apparently ushered in a new era.

"I was pleasantly surprised with how it went," said Dave Esposti, the TNG Canada rep who helped negotiate the local's new three-year contracts.

Local members ratified two agreements, one covering editorial, advertising, clerical and circulation employees, and one for the pressmen and delivery drivers. Both feature annual wage increases of 2.5%, 2% and 2.5% and full retroactivity to Feb. 1, 2004, when the old agreements expired. The agreements also include \$150 signing bonuses and a \$5 weekly increase in company contributions to the union-run pension plan.

For the editorial staff, Esposti said, a major gain was the inclusion of language stipulating that bylines "shall not be used over the employee's protest," a major and unsuccessful issue in the previous round of bargaining with CanWest. A second clause accepted by Transcontinental states that "substantive changes to material being submitted by an employee for publication shall be brought to the employee's attention whenever practical."

Kenosha Guild

Members of the Kenosha Newspaper Guild have ratified a three-year contract with the Kenosha News that runs through Jan. 31, 2008. The settlement includes annual raises at the top of the wage scale of 2% in the first year and 1.75% thereafter, increasing to 3% in 2006 and 2007 if newspaper circulation numbers rise.

The new contract also boosts wage scales between \$10 and \$27 a week beginning next February, and paid a \$620 signing bonus to full-time employees and \$300 to part-timers.

Informal, off-the-record talks began last August, but were complicated in November when the company unilaterally announced that employees and covered spouses would have to take a health risk assessment to keep health care coverage in 2005. A compromise eventually was worked out that makes such assessments voluntary, with two weeks' advance notice to the Guild. In addition, new contract language provides for a Guild-appointed representative to sit on an advisory committee that explores health care and insurance issues.

The editorial-only local represents 35 employees at the Kenosha News and several employees at the Labor Paper. The ratification vote Jan. 19 was unanimous, with 29 members casting ballots.

Guild President Mike Larsen said the informal approach led to both sides supporting tentative language changes before the formal sessions began, Jan. 12. Two days later, the formal sessions had wrapped up talk on wages and other economic issues.

N. California Media Guild

Members of the Northern California Media Guild have ratified three-year contracts at two McClatchy-owned newspapers, the Fresno and Modesto Bees.

Although unsuccessful in achieving their salary goals in Fresno, Guild negotiators managed to block a proposed salary cap and to keep experience-based minimums for unit members—changes the company has imposed on its non-unionized employees. Minimums were increased "substantially" over current levels, while raises range between 1.5% and 4.5% depending on salary level, with the biggest increases going to the lowest paid classifications.

Negotiations at the Modesto Bee were for a contract re-opener limited to salary minimums, the merit pool percentage and health and welfare benefits. The merit pool was established at 3% and minimum starting salaries were increased for several job classifications. The company also gained the right to change the unit's health plan, starting next year, as long as benefits and costs are equivalent to the plan offered to its non-unionized employees.

TNG Canada Local 30223

Memories of the bitter nine-week strike of 2002 prompted both sides to be more conciliatory in contract talks between the Victoria Times Colonist and its three unions, resulting in a two-year contract that Guild members ratified by a vote of 85-6. The settlement provides for a 2% increase this year and 2.5% in 2006.

Local President Chris Carolan said the joint council that forged the deal—including the Communications Energy and Paperworkers union and the Graphic Communications International Union—functioned like a "well-oiled machine." Each union bargained issues specific to its members, with observers from the other unions sitting in. The joint council then met with the company to negotiate common matters, including wage increases, duration of the contract and health and welfare benefits—a session that was wrapped up in a single day.

The speed with which an agreement was reached is a legacy of the 2002 walkout. "The last time, the company tried to gut our contract," Carolan said. This time, "both sides realized how much damage was done" and moderated their demands accordingly. The CanWest-owned newspaper still has not fully recovered, he added.



Court interpreters in southern California rally to protest stalled contract negotiations.

Rallying interpreters goose bogged-down negotiations

Sometimes it pays to kick up your heels. Following four tumultuous rallies over a three-day span in front of the San Bernardino, Vista, San Diego and Orange County court houses, the California Federation of Interpreters reported "real progress at the bargaining table."

CFI is a relatively newly organized unit of the Northern California Media Guild, representing court interpreters throughout the state. Initial contract talks have proceeded reasonably well in three of the state's four regions, but state negotiators in Region 4—Imperial, Orange, Inyo, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties—have been accused of "stonewalling."

California court interpreters have no health insurance, no sick leave, no pensions and no paid vacations. Indeed, until a recent change in state law they were banned from having union representation, reflecting a mindset that continues to undermine contract bargaining.

But the four demonstrations, union leaders say, seem to have commanded some belated attention. The San Bernardino rally drew numerous other supporters,

including the Mexican American Political Association and representatives of Senator Nell Soto and Congressman Joe Baca Sr. Attorneys from the public defender's office joined the San Diego rally, donning union buttons and handing out flyers, and more than 60 demonstrators ignored the pouring rain in Orange County to make their voices heard.

When contract talks resumed Jan. 12, CFI bargaining team members had "their first glimmer of hope that an agreement might be reachable without a major job action," according to a bargaining update. Management offered counter-proposals on four items that had been discussed at length with virtually no positive motion, and the two sides reached a tentative agreement on bulletin boards, "the first TA on any issue of substance since the negotiations began."

The kick-off bargaining session for Region 4 occurred Sept. 21.

Separately, CFI won its first arbitration in mid-January, resulting in reinstatement of a Los Angeles Superior Court interpreter with nearly 15 years' experience. The arbitrator's order included 50% back pay and no loss of seniority or benefits.

Media consolidation takes a hit both sides of border

Opponents of media concentration were given a boost in late January, when the Bush administration decided not to appeal a court decision that has blocked the Federal Communications Commission from relaxing media ownership rules. Meanwhile, a Canadian senate committee resumed its hearings on the mass media, this time in Vancouver, sometimes characterized as the country's media concentration capital.

The decision by the U.S. solicitor general not to seek Supreme Court review of the FCC case was warmly welcomed by commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein, who had unsuccessfully opposed the rule changes. "At least for today, the power of the American people triumphed over narrow corporate interests," Adelstein said. "It signals how badly the FCC failed to comply with the law."

At issue was a 2003 decision by the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals that blocked the FCC's new rules, among them a lifting of the ban on newspaper-television cross-ownership. Several media companies, anticipating the rule change, have violated the ban and now may be forced to divest some of their properties, prompting the Newspaper Association of America to file its own Supreme Court petition. Joining the NAA are Belo, Gannett and Morris Communications, while Tribune and Media General have filed their own, separate petitions.

In Canada, meanwhile, the Senate Committee on

Transport and Communications resumed hearings that began two years ago on the state of that country's media. Following issuance of an interim report last April, it took 36 half-days of testimony in Ottawa, then spent two days each this past December in Toronto and Montreal.

Starting Jan. 31 the committee held two days of hearings in Vancouver, where Winnipeg-based CanWest Global owns 100% of the area's daily newspapers and 71% of the local television news market. The result, according to testimony summarized in a published report, "has been an erosion of journalistic standards in the city, to the detriment of civic discourse and societal good."

Several witnesses referred to the downsizing of newsrooms at The Vancouver Sun and The Province, neither of which has a legislative reporter. Instead, both papers rely on reports from two reporters for the Victoria Times Colonist—also owned by CanWest. No CanWest witnesses appeared at the hearings, nor did the Vancouver papers report on them.

Ironically, even this level of media concentration is perceived as a notch above the U.S. "We border a giant that offers a vivid picture of how too much media power and wealth in the hands of too few can warp a nation's ability to know itself, to tell itself what it needs to hear in order to solve its problems, and to find its way," David Beers, founding editor of a website called The Tyee, told committee members.

Just as labor looks for renewed meaning, two books remind us what it's all about

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

The NUPsters are dead. Long live the NUPsters!—or, more precisely, the issues they raised and the questions they posed. And now, by sheer chance, arrive two books to provide the requisite life support.

The NUPsters, as they're colloquially known, are five labor unions that created the New Unity Partnership as their way of goading the AFL-CIO into paying more attention to organizing. But the NUPster program is the very antithesis of an organizing model: rather than pushing for more grass-roots activism, it advocates greater union consolidation, stronger AFL-CIO control over its affiliates and an agenda-setting style that owes more to Bismarck than to Jefferson.

But while the NUPster medicine arguably may be worse than the disease, its underlying diagnosis is undeniable: organized labor is dying.

Unions represent a smaller slice of the private workforce than at any point in the past century, and paradoxically have been in steady decline ever since the AFL and CIO merged. Nor is this simply a matter of unions having outlived their usefulness: wealth and income disparities have grown as organized labor has weakened, to an extent now rivaling the excesses of the Gilded Age and the Roaring Twenties. In the perpetual struggle between capital and labor, capital has captured all the high cards, from political hegemony to nuanced control of the cultural zeitgeist.

Well, almost all. The two exceptions are encompassed within the covers of these two books.

The first, written by labor law scholar Charles Morris, begins with the observation that law, "more than any other factor," controls American labor relations. And U.S. law, as Morris methodically establishes in *The Blue Eagle at Work*, has consistently affirmed that American workers have the right to bargain collectively with their employers through representatives of their own choosing. Period.

Not just if they win an election.

Not just if they hand in authorization cards representing a majority of workers.

All major Depression-era labor legislation affirmed this right, Morris points out, including the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932, the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 and the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. Indeed, the legal right to workplace representation extends back at least to 1918, when the National War Labor Board affirmed "the right of workers to organize in trade unions and to bargain collectively through chosen representatives." And it remains national policy to this day, unrepented and unchanged.

What has changed since 1935 is an emphasis—by unions and employers

alike—on exclusive bargaining rights within a workplace: in other words, on determining whether a specific union may claim to represent all eligible employees at a specific worksite. That's where all the contemporary wrangling about card-check and NLRB-supervised elections arises—but back in the day, says Morris, at least as many workers were represented by minority unions as by exclusive ones. Indeed, as he further notes, "when a union was not strong enough to obtain a closed shop or even full recognition, it often settled for a members-only collective agreement, for this was considered a logical step in the organizational process that would eventually lead to total employee recognition."

What the NLRA of 1935 did was to create a mechanism to determine if "total employee recognition" had been achieved, thereby extending union representation to workers who might not have wanted a union in the first place. Moreover, elections were a means of determining which union would represent all employees. They were never viewed as

resolving the question of whether employees who wanted union representation would get it; that was simply a given, explicitly affirmed in Section 7 of the NLRA. But over time, the concept of collective bargaining pluralism was forgotten. Unions discovered that they could grow much faster by winning majority recognition, and with a National Labor Relations Board that sought to facilitate rather than hinder union recognition, unions racked up an 85.5% win rate in the board's first decade of existence. Member-only minority unions slipped out of existence (although not in Europe, where they are still common), even at worksites with no union representation, despite continued affirmations of collective bargaining as U.S. policy. For example, even the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act was recommended by Sen. Robert A. Taft with the observation that the conference committee "feels, almost unanimously, that the solution of our labor problems must rest on a free economy and on free collective bargaining."

It therefore follows, Morris concludes, that employees in a workplace where there is no exclusive-majority representative never lost their right to minority-union representation; that a minority union is automatically "entitled to recognition and bargaining on behalf of its employee members"; and—here's the kicker—that "an employer who refuses such recognition or bargaining is committing an unfair labor practice." Moreover, an employer who refuses a minority union's request for recognition and bargaining on behalf of its "members only" could be legally picketed, provided such picketing disclaimed any organizational purpose.

Best of all, by asserting minority union representation, employees can claim—in Morris' view—a level of legal protection not available to union activists in typical organizing campaigns. Besides filing a ULP over the firing of a bona fide member, for

example, minority unions "should also request that an employer engage in good-faith bargaining regarding the discharge, for discharges are mandatory subjects of collective bargaining." An employer's refusal to do so only opens the door to additional charges, of course.

Although some unions already use an approach described as "the nonmajority union strategy"—CWA has been doing this at General Electric through its Work At GE program, and WashTech may be viewed as another example—the strategy is more diffuse than asserting minority union status. Presented in the form of self-help organizations that solve problems by using workers' rights to collective action, such as political lobbying, the strategy nevertheless has the long-term goal of creating a workplace environment that enhances the odds of winning a representation election. Neither WashTech nor WAGE has demanded collective bargaining on behalf of its members only—nor has any other union in recent memory.

Morris argues, however, that even without immediate prospects of winning a contract, minority unions stand to gain a great deal for their members—and, as in the 1930s and 1940s, in the process make unions more attractive to non-members. One notable example is the application of the Weingarten rule, which allows a union member facing possible disciplinary action to be accompanied by a steward; although this right was extended to non-union members several years ago, the NLRB reversed itself late last year.

More to the point, the existence of even a minority union restricts an employer's freedom to unilaterally change working conditions. Common mandatory subjects of bargaining include layoffs, recalls, work rules and discipline, sick leave, safety and health, wage rates, merit increases, incentive pay plans, vacations and vacation pay, health insurance, pension plans, hours of work. . . .

Even a union too small to apply economic leverage against an employer has tools non-unionized workers don't have, starting with its right to request relevant information. Equally as critical, Morris adds, is its right to have an outside union representative inside the workplace when grievances are being investigated or presented, conveying "a powerful pro-union message to wavering nonunion employees."

The Blue Eagle at Work: Reclaiming Democratic Rights in the American Workplace, by Charles J. Morris. Cornell University Press, 2005. 310 pp \$35 (cloth)

A Troublemaker's Handbook 2: How to Fight Back Where You Work—and Win! edited by Jane Slaughter. Labor Notes (www.labornotes.org), Detroit, 2005. 372 pp \$24 (paper)

While Morris, as befits his subject matter and training, views the law as the controlling element in labor relations, the troublemakers at Labor Notes have a different take: workplace power is developed through worker solidarity.

The law may enhance or hinder the exercise of that power. So may politicians, judges, corporate cartels, lobbyists, employer associations, union-busting consultants and a whole panoply of other groups and forces. But as *A Troublemaker's Handbook 2* argues, the only way workers develop control over their lives is by organizing themselves so they no longer have to stand alone against the economic and political forces arrayed against them.

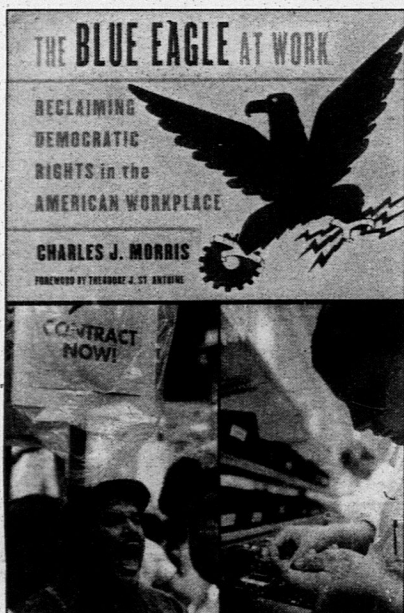
"Organizing is an attitude," explains Ellen David Friedman in an early chapter. "It's the attitude that you and your co-workers together can do something to make things better. It's the attitude that action is better than complaining. . . . If you have the attitude, you feel it necessary to respond to unfairness. You are committed to building power with your co-workers, not just talking about it. You believe in collective action, even if you're just starting to understand it."

Collective action, it goes without saying, increasingly is an exotic concept in a culture that emphasizes the virtues of solitary independence. Indeed, although American history is rooted in collective effort and mutual aid, the post-Eisenhower years—precisely the period when organized labor began its decline—have seen a growing fragmentation of society and a concomitant distaste for concerted activity. To seek the support of others is seen as weak, vaguely threatening—even un-American.

The first *Troublemaker's Handbook*, published in 1991, tackled this debilitating mindset head-on by compiling a litany of examples to the contrary. Rather than issuing a laundry list of suggestions, the original handbook and its all-new successor are built around dozens of organizing campaigns. Some worked, some failed and many simply ended up—like most human endeavors—somewhere in the middle, with both victories and defeats. But all, regardless of outcome, provide object lessons for others in similar situations, and all underscore the reward of greater human dignity that even a losing campaign bestows on its supporters.

Whereas the NUPster prescription for organizing is built on a top-down command model, with union generals marshaling their

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Carving out a political 'green zone'

Amid continued debate regarding how much political activism by Guild locals is desirable, or even possible, the Washington-Baltimore Guild has created a "green zone" of permissible behavior. The green zone guidelines were passed without opposition at a Jan. 29 membership meeting, following months of discussion. Among the proposal's supporters was Ken May, who wrote several short essays explaining his position.

By Ken May
Washington-Baltimore Guild

Over 20 years ago, I worked at Lawyers' Cooperative Publishing and was involved in an unsuccessful effort to organize the editors there. We asked the people from the union with which we were involved, the UAW, how we'd get a contract if they won the election.

They said that they had organized Prentice Hall, which resisted bargaining a contract. The UAW got the Michigan Board of Education (there are lots of auto factories and auto workers in Michigan) to tell Prentice Hall management that if it did not bargain in good faith, Michigan would not buy Prentice Hall textbooks.

There is a huge and long-running debate in the Guild about involvement in politics. Bargaining is no longer done just at the bargaining table. Political influence is a weapon that can help us win better contracts and organizing campaigns. The members of the Michigan Board of Education did not support the UAW out of the goodness of their heart, but because they needed the UAW support to remain in public life.

We don't have that political weapon in our arsenal. In my view, it would be useful if we did.

At heart I am a lawyer. Monroe Freedman, a law professor and expert in legal ethics, was once asked how he could commit civil disobedience on behalf of Cesar Chavez, since he was a lawyer sworn to uphold the law. He said, "I was a free man before I became a lawyer."

To me, what I do politically on my own time is not the employer's business. But lots of journalists have a sincere concern about conflicts of interest, that somehow if their union takes a position on something, that will compromise the person covering that candidate or issue.

That's not an unreasonable view. I think there are ways for the Guild to be politically active and accommodate those concerns, such as developing rules that reporters covering an issue or candidate will not be pressured to cover it a certain way, or to be involved in Guild efforts to support a particular issue or candidate.

But I think we have to be serious about our political involvement. To me, there's not much point in confronting the difficult issues around political involvement if we don't want to be serious about it. If all we want to do is pass some resolutions, but be

too pure, for example, to endorse candidates and give them money, we really shouldn't bother going through this debate.

For the last few months, the Washington Baltimore Guild has been involved in a discussion of whether we should be involved in politics. I've found this discussion to be especially interesting because, over the years, I have been on both sides of the issue. I have, in the past, found force in the argument that our involvement in politics would pose a conflict of interest for our journalists covering politics. And yet, on second thought...

No one objects to our taking grievances to arbitration, even though [my employer] the Bureau of National Affairs publishes "Labor Arbitration Reports," which is obviously about arbitration and is written by union members like me. From my recollection, no one objected to our filing lawsuits against the Washington Post on overtime and equal employment opportunity issues on the grounds that Post reporters cover the courts and might have to write about the judge who might hear the cases.

In the Dec. 12 Washington Post, Albert Crenshaw wrote of IBM's pension policy that "It is part of a fundamental shift in our sense of what American society owes individuals in the form of financial protection, and what individuals owe society in forms of self-reliance—a shift of a magnitude unseen since the 1930s, when it went in the opposite direction."

When I started at BNA, in 1985, BNA offered premium-free health insurance, a defined-benefit pension and retiree health insurance. I thought this unremarkable and pretty much what employers should offer their employees. Now, BNA still offers these things and is almost an amazing, and expensive, exception to the rule.

The trend away from corporations living up to their responsibilities to their employees is aided by corporation-friendly legislation, which may only get worse. For instance, there is talk of tax reform that would end the deductibility of health insurance for corporations—so if you think your employer's been trying to cut health benefits until now, if this passes you ain't seen nothing yet.

We can't limit ourselves to fighting at the bargaining table to protect a decent way of life for employees. We have to fight trends that make workers' lives miserable, and that includes in the halls of our political bodies, too.

several CWA members. (Full disclosure: I contributed the chapter on "Dealing with the Media" and proofread a chunk of the manuscript.) And as with most group collaborations, the result is richer and more diverse than any one individual could provide.

A survey of chapters and sub-chapters gives some indication of the terrain covered, from shop floor tactics, contract campaigns, strikes, corporate campaigns and inside strategies to community alliances, workers centers, reform caucuses and bringing immigrants into the movement. A chapter devoted to fighting discrimination covers such topics as contraceptive equity, defeating divide-and-conquer racism, building coalitions and

getting a local to take discrimination seriously. One on health and safety describes mapping hazards, fighting "blame the worker" programs and enforcing contract language with on-the-job actions.

There's scarcely a lawyer mentioned (although several contributed to the text) and the National Labor Relations Act has only five index references—compared with 19 for "organizing new members," 20 for "community support" or 21 for "education, union."

The kind of big-picture debate that the New Unity Partnership triggered is essential, and in fact overdue. But as the AFL-CIO gets deluged by grand plans and blueprints for success, it becomes ever more important

Guild Green Zone

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, a broad-based union of journalists, advertising sales staff, professional staff, administrative and customer service support staff, and technical professionals, recognizes the necessity for the Guild to take positions on issues which affect the economic and social well-being of our current and future members, as well as the well-being and security of our families. We also recognize that professional ethics and standards of our journalist members often require abstaining from community, civic, and partisan matters that create a conflict of interest.

Our mission to protect and enhance the well-being of our members cannot be achieved merely by bargaining and enforcing contracts. Rather, we must judiciously support the broader issues, which directly impact both our power at the table and the employer's options at the table. Further, we must support the concerted actions of other unionized workers wherever possible if the labor movement is to reach its greatest potential and bring economic and social justice to the workplace.

All of our members are free, of course, as Americans, to take their own positions and act upon them. WBNG's actions are not the actions of each individual of the union, just as a politician's actions are not the actions of each and every voter who cast a vote his way. The Local must take actions and support causes after sensitive and deliberate debate reflecting the con-

cerns of our individual members, yet must not shy away from supporting in a broader arena the very issues for which we fight at the bargaining table.

We therefore agree that:

The Executive Council of WBNG may elect to take the following actions under the following situations:

1) Inform and educate Guild members on issues that support workers.

2) Endorse, announce to members, and participate in concerted actions that support union, labor, and journalism issues locally and nationally.

3) Invite any publicly known individual to demonstrate support for any Guild contract or other campaign (after receiving approval from the unit leadership, where there is a unit).

4) With notice to membership as provided in the by-laws (15 days) and opportunity for membership approval at a membership meeting (specially called, if necessary), endorse legislation relating to issues commonly appearing at the bargaining table (i.e., health care, retirement security, living wage, etc.).

5) The Local shall not endorse any candidate for office; however, the Local may provide members with factual information on candidates' positions, and may inform members of AFL-CIO, central labor council, or other organization's email activists lists, and get-out-the-vote or similar activities in order that members may make individual decisions about participation.

Guess who's ethical?

Even as publishers dither about the ethics of their reporting staffs, a research study by two journalism professors concludes journalists have one of the highest levels of ethical reasoning of any professional group, ranking only behind seminarians, medical students and physicians.

The study, published in the autumn, 2004 issue of *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, was conducted by Renita Coleman of Louisiana State University and Lee Wilkins of the University of Missouri. Because its sample of 249 journalists was chosen to represent a cross-section of the trade and was not random, Coleman and Wilkins caution that its findings "should be considered suggestive rather than definitive."

Nonetheless, the study indicates that journalists exhibit a significantly higher level of ethical reasoning than most categories of professionals. The mean P score—a ranking index of ethical development—for journalists was 48.68, compared with 65.10 for seminarians at the high end and 20.00 for junior high school students at the low

extreme. Adults in general score 40.00, while "business professionals" clock in at 38.13.

The study found no significant differences among men and women, and—perhaps surprisingly—found that broadcast journalists on average were just as ethical as their print counterparts. But journalists who did civic journalism or investigative reporting scored significantly higher than those who didn't, and four other factors were predictive of higher scores: having a high degree of autonomy at work, "moderate religiosity," a strong internal sense of right and wrong, and viewing rules and law as less important than other factors.

"These journalists appear to have reached a level of moral development that equips them to reason well about ethical problems," the two professors wrote. Their high scores suggest "there is more to being a journalist than learning to write in inverted pyramid style. . . . Thinking like a journalist involves moral reflection, done at a level that in most instances equals or exceeds members of other learned professions."

Restoring the 'movement' in 'labor movement'

Continued from page 5

rank-and-file troops in high-profile campaigns, the Troublemaker's credo is that all union power begins on the shop floor or its knowledge-economy equivalent. That approach not only restores the "movement" part of "the labor movement," but it ultimately proves more resilient and durable than the take-it-or-leave-it passivity engendered by business unionism.

It's worth noting that the Troublemaker's Handbook practices what it preaches. Edited by Jane Slaughter, a Detroit-based writer who has worked with Labor Notes since 1979, it nevertheless showcases the writing and experiences of dozens of labor activists, including

to remember what all the hubbub is about—and it's not organizational flow charts or jurisdictional distinctions. It's about the person working at the next desk, the next machine, the next assembly line station.

Insofar as The Blue Eagle at Work is a laser, precisely targeting a forgotten aspect of labor law that workplace activists can use to their advantage, The Troublemaker's Handbook is a shotgun: up close and personal, illustrating the power inherent in a nice, tight grouping. Taken together, they counterbalance NUPster dogma by reminding us of the strength we have individually—and of how that strength can be leveraged through collective action.

News round-up

Workers, unions feeling the squeeze

A flurry of anti-labor initiatives has battered unions in the past several weeks, including the following:

- More than 180,000 workers in the Department of Homeland Security are losing collective bargaining and appeal rights, civil service pay scales and other protections. The new rules, which are being phased in, have been challenged in federal court.
- Meanwhile, the Dept. of Defense has followed DHS's lead and is developing its own new personnel system for its 700,000 civilian employees, under the guise of "management flexibility."
- Newly elected Republican governors in Indiana and Missouri have rescinded collective bargaining rights for tens of thousands of state employees. Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels cancelled union contracts covering 25,000 state workers. Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt reversed an order, issued in 2001, allowing unions to collect bargaining fees from 9,000 state workers and declared contracts covering thousands of additional state employees "not in effect."
- The National Mediation Board has reversed decades of precedent by deciding that rail unions will have to pay a fee of up to \$300 each time they file a grievance against a rail line; the railroads do not pay such fees. A 1925 federal law unique to rail and airline unions requires them to submit grievances to mediation board arbitration and severely curbs their right to strike.
- Citing reports from Bush' business backers and his campaign speeches, the AFL-CIO has warned that the White House will again try to cut overtime by pushing its comp time and flex time proposals.

Lower taxes = bigger deficits. Duh!

There are two ways to sink deeper into debt: spend more and take in less. As the U.S. piles up record budget deficits, the Bush administration has blamed the tidal wave of red ink on runaway domestic spending and the war on Iraq. But according to an analysis of figures from the Congressional Budget Office, fully 49% of the deficit is a result of the tax cuts Bush pushed through in his first term. Moreover, added the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, domestic spending increases account for just 13% of the increased spending gap. Visit www.cbpp.org for more details.

Newsprint consumption still declining

Newsprint consumption, second only to labor as publishers' highest expense, continues to decline and has dropped 16% in the U.S. between 1999 and 2004. The trend is forcing some paper makers, such as Norske Canada and Tembec Inc., to curtail production, while others, like Irving Paper Ltd., are simply getting out of the business. Prices have stagnated, despite a stronger Canadian dollar and higher energy costs.

Black's legacy: \$74 million loss in 2003

Hollinger International, owner of the Chicago Sun-Times, recently filed its first financial report in more than a year, disclosing that it lost \$74.3 million in 2003. It also restated results as far back as 1999, reducing some previously announced losses, and said it wouldn't account for 2004 until late March at the earliest. The reports follow claims last August that Conrad Black, the company's former chairman and chief executive, and his associates had enriched themselves by siphoning off more than \$400 million over seven years.

Steelworkers, PACE announce nuptials

Recent controversial calls for compelling unions to merge may be moot—they're doing it on their own, anyway. The latest marriage is that of the United Steelworkers of America and PACE—the Paper, Allied Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union—creating the largest industrial union in North America. The new union, with 850,000 active members and half that number of retirees, will be called the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied-Industrial and Service Workers International Union—provided, of course, that delegates at concurrent conventions in April give two thumbs up to the idea.

Check to see if you're EIC eligible

With income tax season at hand, part- and full-time workers raising children at home are urged to review their eligibility for the Earned Income Credit. Taxpayers with one child and family income of less than \$30,338 can get a refund of up to \$2,604; those with two or more children and family incomes less than \$34,458 can get refunds of up to \$4,300. Unsure what to do? Call the IRS help line, VITA, at 1-800-829-1040. (The IRS counsels patience because of the large volume of calls it receives.)

March 19 demonstrations shaping up

Demonstrations marking the two-year anniversary of the U.S. bombing and invasion of Iraq are being planned nationwide for March 19. Information on activities may be seen on the United for Peace and Justice web site, at www.unitedforpeace.org/events. Click on the "Events" button, in the left-hand column, then on the local event calendar; at press time, 38 events were listed for the U.S., none in Canada.

Democracy in the workplace: CWA proposals for AFL-CIO

Joining the debate over how best to restructure organized labor, the CWA executive board adopted the following statement and submitted it to the AFL-CIO on Jan. 26:

Democracy in the workplace is the basis for popular support for collective bargaining, provides the best foundation for union organizing, and should provide a framework for union infrastructure at the local and national levels as well as for the AFL-CIO. It is widely accepted that there is a collective bargaining crisis in the US driven by the worst management repression of workplace rights in any democracy. CWA believes that active union members are the best and only hope for reversing this, and that unions must invest much more in mobilizing our members.

The AFL-CIO can and must reinforce workplace mobilization of our 12 million union members as the only likely method to reverse the decline in collective bargaining and organizing rights. We must keep in mind that nothing the AFL-CIO does to restructure itself will change the anti-union character of corporate America's conduct. But the mobilization of 12 million union members can raise the cost of that behavior and point the way to a better and more democratic America. The renewal of the labor movement must be led by union stewards and local officers deepening their participation with, and governance of, CLCs and the political endorsements and decisions which affect the communities in which they live.

1. Collective Bargaining and Organizing Rights.

Collective bargaining density is much lower in the U.S. than in any other industrial democracy. This is the reality that unites us, now more than ever. The AFL-CIO has done its best work in this area, including 245 congressional co-sponsors for the Employee Free Choice Act, and significant support for Jobs with Justice and American Rights at Work. We must continue to rally the legislative supporters and, more importantly, mobilize our own members like never before to fight for effective collective bargaining in both the private and public sectors. Jobs with Justice, the national network of community-labor coalitions, has a 17 year track record of waging successful local campaigns to defend workers rights, through direct action on the job and in the community. Labor should make a renewed financial and organizational commitment to building Jobs with Justice local groups, plus support American Rights At Work in its parallel efforts to improve the understanding and climate for organizing and bargaining.

2. United Collective Bargaining.

Bargaining outcomes are influenced by at least four factors—the employer, occupation, industry, and community involved. The weight of each factor can shift in both organizing and bargaining, depending on the circumstances. Building labor unity in bargaining has always been a challenge. It was an issue when collective bargaining density was at 8% in 1930, when it reached 35% in 1950 and stands today at 12%. The work of creating unity between locals, national unions, or different occupational groups is essential and never-ending—no matter how we are structured. But the ability of workers to self organize and build their own unions—either through our organizations or by creating new ones—must be the cornerstone of any labor reform effort. Established AFL-CIO union organizing programs should be designed to enhance or build effective collective bargaining.

3. Unions As Effective Workplace Organizations.

Union democracy is not a slogan, it must be a reality in everything we do. Unions work best when they are organized from the workplace up not the top down. Leadership must reflect the diversity of our membership including younger members at all levels of leadership. Strengthening the role of stewards and workplace mobilizers continues to be critical for effective collective bargaining, organizing, and political action. In fact, without effective stewards, there is little likelihood that we will be successful in any area. We need to continue to develop and promote leadership from

our own members.

4. Strike Benefits. In every democracy with vital unions, effective strikes are critical to support collective bargaining. With proper funding we could guarantee that all strikers receive at least \$200 per week. Strike insurance could be funded from AFL-CIO per capita with rebates for unions that can fund their own benefits at this level.

5. Central Labor Councils. If we are serious about motivating more active participation by members, we must increase their participation at all levels of our unions. Labor councils remain the best way to mobilize for political and legislative action.

6. Political Unity. Political unity is at least as important as industrial unity. Our stewards and local officers agree on most political questions, but all too often—at some other level of one or more unions—there is interference with a democratic endorsement process. We need to set much clearer standards for endorsements by a super-majority of union members and then prevent national unions from opportunistically supporting a different candidate, which wastes resources and undermines a united effort.

7. Global Unions at International Corporations.

There have been great examples of global unity going back for decades. Today, there are global union networks active in telecom including virtual committees using the internet, websites and multi-lingual conference calls. Similar cross-border union networking goes on within multi-national food, auto and service sector firms. The AFL-CIO should actively encourage such cross-border union networking at multinational employers. We should especially look for opportunities to work across the Canadian border with our Canadian colleagues.

8. Social Action. What we stand for is important if we are to energize our members and allies. The U.S. spends twice as much on health care as any other industrial democracy with the lowest level of health care access. Retirement security and now Social Security are threatened by schemes to turn pensions into investment accounts rather than income protection plans. These are two critical issues where a united labor movement can make a difference. The AFL-CIO should mobilize a summit of our allies from the 2004 elections to develop a joint strategy. The AFL-CIO should also support media diversity as a vehicle for social change on these issues and all others.

9. Merging National Unions. In the past 10 years, about 50 national unions have merged voluntarily. This trend will undoubtedly continue. The issue is how mergers can change union workplaces, lead to more active stewards and greater member involvement, and create more effective organizing, collective bargaining and political action. Mergers must be voluntary and with demonstrated member support.

10. Focus AFL-CIO Resources. We should continue to narrow and sharpen the focus of the federation in two primary areas: politics and legislation, and support of collective bargaining. Per capita payments to the federation should be based on those functions and programs we want the AFL-CIO to perform, not an arbitrary reduction.

Summarizing action points from the above, the AFL-CIO should:

- Recognize that organizing is the responsibility of the national unions. However, the federation should continue to support the Organizing Institute as a tool for the use of the affiliates.
- Link support for any specific union organizing or political campaign to the affiliates' significant participation and mobilization in the Voice @ Work national campaign to restore collective bargaining and organizing rights.
- Encourage multi-union bargaining and organizing.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Seeking answers as labor declines

By Linda Foley, President

If you've been paying attention at all, you know that the American labor movement is in trouble. Global economics and draconian anti-worker policies have decimated the ranks of traditional union members. Labor laws masquerading as protection for workers who want to organize actually undermine their rights more than nurture them.

The result is a declining share of work-force representation by unions in the United States. The latest figures show 7.9% of U.S. workers in the private sector currently belong to unions, down from about 35% in the 1950s. (When the public sector is factored in, today's union density jumps to a "whopping" 12.5%.) Yet, survey after survey show a majority of U.S. workers, given the chance, would vote for union representation in their workplaces.

The harsh reality of being unable to fulfill this pent-up demand for union representation has caused the AFL-CIO, the federation whose affiliates comprise the vast majority of U.S. trade unions, to engage in a self-analytical debate about its future. The hope is that by restructuring and redirecting resources, the AFL-CIO somehow will be able to stem this anti-worker tide and restore a firm foundation to the American trade union movement.

The public debate began when a group of five unions formed a rather loose organization called the New Unity Partnership. Led by Andy Stern, the president of the Service Employees International Union—the AFL-CIO's largest affiliate, with more than a million members—NUP has demanded radical changes in the AFL-CIO's structure and priorities. Stern, under the auspices of the NUP, has published a manifesto titled "Unite to Win," in which he lays out his vision for what an effective labor federation must do to confront the challenges of the 21st century.

It's interesting to note that shortly after "Unite to Win" was circulated, NUP disbanded. Its leaders claimed they had accomplished their goal just by sparking the debate about the labor movement's future. The debate was indeed sparked, and it is now a hot, all-consuming controversy among union leaders throughout the country.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has invited all who are interested in the future of trade unionism to weigh in. A website (www.aflcio.org/aboutaflcio/ourfuture/index.cfm) has been established to collect

thoughts and ideas, which the AFL-CIO executive council will review and discuss at its meeting in early March.

The Guild's parent union, the Communications Workers of America, led by President Morty Bahr and Executive Vice President Larry Cohen, has come up with its own proposal. Bahr solicited ideas from activists and leaders from across the union. Then, at a meeting in early January, members of the CWA Executive Board, including yours truly, developed a 10-point plan to restore Democracy in the Workplace. (The complete CWA proposal appears on page 6.)

Though not as radical or controversial as some of Stern's ideas—for example, he would have the AFL-CIO mandate that smaller unions merge with larger ones—our plan would focus the AFL-CIO's resources and attention on two key components of effective trade unionism: the right to organize and workplace mobilization.

Until U.S. labor laws are fixed, no amount of union restructuring or consolidation will turn things around. Workers must be free to organize unions of their choosing without fear, intimidation or other undue influence by their bosses. Passing the Employee Free Choice Act, or other legislation like it, is crucial to ensuring unions' survival in 21st century America.

Likewise, once chosen by workers, unions must be allowed to function as effective representatives in the workplace. Organizing a union won't produce gains for workers unless the workers can collectively wield enough power to conduct successful bargaining. Real efforts must be made to strengthen the roles of union stewards, mobilizers and worksite leaders.

Solidarity and unity need to be more than slogans, industrially as well as politically. Coalitions across communities, industries and even globally are necessary to win today's struggles.

In CWA, we have learned that active members who have mobilized at their worksites are our union's most powerful force. Transformation of the American labor movement won't begin at the national headquarters of the AFL-CIO. It will begin where the real power lies—at thousands of worksites where millions of union members work and pay dues so their collective power can deliver better individual lives for them and their families.

decision of the other affiliates.

- The cost of financing our political work should be part of the regular per capita. All special or voluntary assessments should be eliminated.

- Establish national strike insurance for all federation unions as outlined above.

- Encourage affiliates to study more flexible union structures in order to attract into unions professional, technical and administrative workers who may never enjoy collective bargaining.

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.

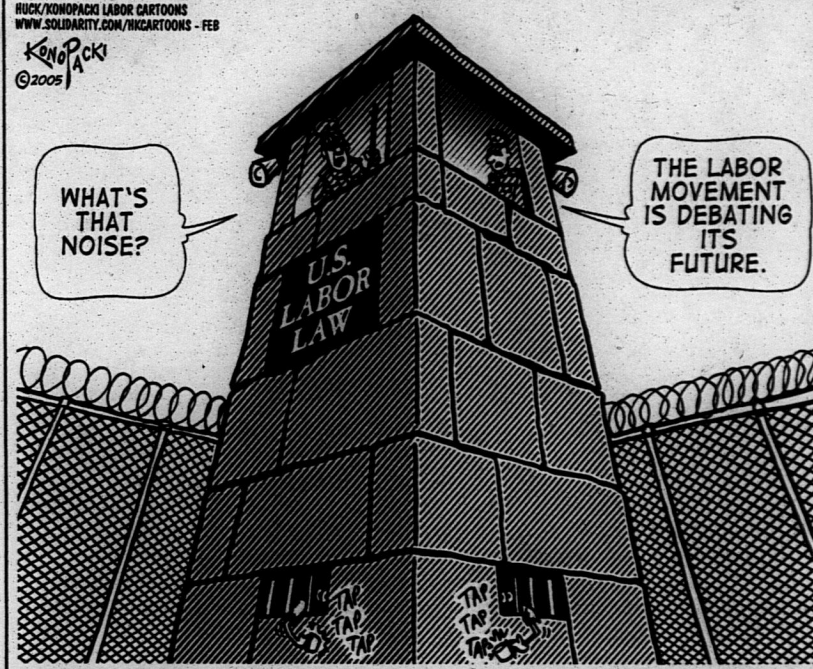
"Guild Reporter content will be of interest to the

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."

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In progressive Canada, labor under attack, too

By James Clancy, President, Nat'l Union of Public and General Employees

The rights of workers to bargain collectively, to strike when necessary and to finance activities by the check-off of dues are the cornerstones of the Canadian labour movement. These rights are deeply embedded in our democracy. When governments interfere in collective bargaining by infringing on any of these established rights, they undermine democracy. . . .

Unfortunately, the progress workers have made has been steadily eroding the past two decades. Governments are increasingly interfering with free collective bargaining by legislating workers back to work and unilaterally dictating the terms of work. And the Rand Formula, which dates back to 1946 and forms the basis of all trade unionism, is under a renewed attack.

This attack on workers' rights is part of an international trend, a global assault that is steadily expanding the rights of corporations at the expense of workers and unions. Corporations and corporate-friendly governments are relentlessly rolling back the wages and benefits for workers. . . .

A soon-to-be published study shows that there has been more "labour" legislation passed in the last 22 years than in the previous 100 years. Unfortunately, almost all of these laws have been anti-labour.

The federal government alone has used its legislative authority 15 times during this period to legislate employees back to work

or to suspend the right to strike. Meanwhile, the provinces have intervened on 85 occasions for similar reasons. On 27 other occasions, provincial labour laws have been amended to restrict the ability of unions to organize or to permit greater government or employer interference in bargaining or internal union matters.

This assault has now reached a point where business groups, lobbyists and media elites are taking aim at the very heart of trade unionism in Canada, the Rand Formula. Established in 1946 by Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand following a 100-day strike at the Ford Motor Company, the Rand Formula recognizes that all employees in a workplace enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining, and therefore have an obligation to contribute financially to the collective good by paying union dues.

No one is forced to join a union, but neither are they entitled to get a free ride on the backs of union members. At the same time, the Rand Formula imposes responsibilities on employees and unions.

The Rand Formula has stood the test of time. By treating workers fairly and maintaining a fair balance with employers, the Rand Formula has played a critical role in every improvement in wages, benefits, pensions and other rights that workers have won for more than half a century. . . . All are being seriously threatened, and all of us who care are being called upon to recognize what is happening and redouble our efforts to fight back.

LETTER

To the Editor,

The New York Times had exactly one paragraph in its January 12 edition about state workers in Missouri losing their collective bargaining rights. Meanwhile, The Times had about 12 column inches or more in that same edition on the recent "Wife Swapping" TV show.

That shows its priorities.

As a union activist, I am utterly aghast at the lack of interest in working people in the

national media. We are rapidly headed toward the "Wal-Martization" of the American worker, we are losing collective bargaining rights, living wages, pensions, job security, a "secure" Social Security system and the gap between the rich and poor continues to grow, etc., and no one in the major media outlets seems to give a damn.

—Jeff Waggoner, Research Dept.

NYS Public Employees Fed., AFL-CIO
Member, Steelworkers Local 9265

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: March 4.)

Of mounted cops and union clichés

Jack Hagan, a past president of the Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild, left the Cleveland Plain Dealer at the end of 2004 to widespread praise from co-workers. His many union duties included chairing the Plain Dealer unit and serving for many years on the local's executive board, as well as attending numerous Guild conventions as a delegate and representing the local at district council meetings. Hagan admits to being 54, lives in Lakewood, Ohio, and at The Guild Reporter's urging submitted the following parting thoughts:

By Jack Hagan

Nearly 30 years ago, I walked into the newsroom at The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, Ohio to take a job as a copy aide and within a few days was approached by two reporters who kindly but firmly asked if I would join the union. Unionism wasn't new to me. I had already belonged to the United Steel Workers when I worked at a mill just outside of Youngstown when I got out of high school.

So when the reporters approached me, I didn't hesitate to sign the card. You couldn't very well have grown up in Youngstown, Ohio in the 1950s and 1960s and not know about unions. Nearly every job available to me when I graduated was a union job. I could have worked for several different big steel companies, for any number of unionized railroads or at the General Motors plant in nearby Lordstown and joined the United Auto Workers.

Needless to say, a high school graduate faces a much different working climate today. Having a union job back then meant you made a good wage, had decent benefits and job security. Having a union job still means the same thing today.

The problem, of course, is that there aren't that many union jobs out there anymore. I consider myself to have been among the fortunate. I've been protected by a union for nearly all of my working life. After I became a reporter at the paper, I became more involved in the union and saw first hand the work it was doing on behalf of the employees. In addition to getting wage increases and improving our benefits, the union became the conscience of the paper. I saw the commitment the union had to diversity and how it concerned itself as much with workers in our lower classifications as it did on behalf of reporters and editors in

our top classifications. I saw union members come together and raise collective voices to fight for a colleague. During my years at the paper I walked my share of picket lines, but not all were over wage and benefit disputes. We took to the streets for informational picketing, sometimes to support a reporter we felt was not backed by management, or to let the public know that outside pressure—rather than sound journalism—had influenced the paper's judgment.

In other words, the Guild stood by its members. It sounds simple, almost a union cliché. But it's true. I recall the time I was unit chairperson at the paper and we were passing the hat for a suspended Guild member when another member approached me, handed me \$200 toward the effort and made me pledge never to say where the money came from. And I remember the many times our members saw past an immediate infraction and sensed the larger issue while rallying around a disciplined employee.

At the bargaining table, we formed an alliance with the other unions at the plant and worked through our own differences to build a formidable unity council to jointly bargain our contracts. That should be the goal of every unit in the Guild.

Throughout my later years in Guild activity and in Guild leadership positions, I became increasingly aware that you fight directly with the management that runs your newspaper but you should not be ignorant of outside forces that influence bargaining issues. Bad national health-care policies make getting adequate benefits more and more difficult. Pension policies out of Washington directly affect our own pension plan. And who doesn't worry about the make-up of the labor relations board before filing an unfair labor practice charge? To sit idly by while the forces around you garner strength is to prepare for group slaughter.

So what lies ahead for the next generation of newspaper workers? No one can say for sure, but certainly the picture is not bright. Mergers are creating larger conglomerates whose interest in the bottom line far exceeds their interest in taking care of their workers. And new workers are coming to the field with cynical, if not hostile, views of unions.

Most never worked at a union job and in many cases neither have their parents. Few know about the history of the union movement or understand its relevance in today's world. The Guild must renew its long-stand-



Hagan gets bussed by his mother, who had some words you don't usually hear a mother say to her son in a video his family and friends put together.

ing commitment to develop enterprising campaigns that better showcase the union advantage.

There's a picture that hangs on the wall of our union hall that shows several local Guild members being roughed-up by mounted police during a strike. Police on horseback were trying to break up a picket line formed in front of the building. The pickets held

their own in the crush of horses, and the public became so outraged at the sight that police officers on horseback were thereafter prohibited by local ordinance from patrolling union picket lines.

That incident took place just a few years before I came to work at the paper. But its image, captured in that photo, stayed with me until the day I left late last year. I never forgot the work that had been done by those who preceded me. I think of it now as I wonder what we are leaving to those who are coming into our ranks today.

But we have no time for despair. The Guild is a remarkable organization with a rich history, and there is no reason why it cannot thrive in this next century.

Employees today face a clever, well-schooled management that is bent on picking pockets and pleading the poor mouth. Future Guild leaders need to be prepared to confront these corporate bellyachers while fighting against complacency among our own members in the workplace. New workers should be paired with more experienced, union-savvy employees who can act as union Big Brothers and Big Sisters, lending a helping hand while explaining the benefits of Guild membership. Remember: the facts are on our side. Things are better with a union.

Today's assaults on unions are no less menacing than what my colleagues faced 30 years ago on that picket line. The question is, do we have the resolve to fight off the horses of the 21st century?



Several hundred people turned out to give Hagan a big send-off at a party Dec. 14 at Massimo da Milano, in Cleveland. The Plain Dealer reporter retired after 29.5 years.

THE GUILD Reporter

Official publication of
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FEBRUARY 11, 2005

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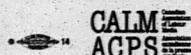
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DAYBOOK

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

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

Mid-Atlantic District Council,
Feb. 26-27, New York City

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

CWA Nat'l Women's Conference
April 14-17, Seattle

Western District Council,
May 5, Victoria, BC

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

Nat'l Customer Service Conf.
May 11-14, Cranford, NJ

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

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

Guild members for the first time deal with technology-related layoffs, as the Cleveland News discharges 14 staffers to make room for more wire photos—just six weeks after the publisher won agreement on a new contract by promising there would be no layoffs. . . . Heywood Broun lambastes the National Recovery Act on the fourth and last day of hearings in Washington, D.C., describing American publishers as “an invisible government under which we writhe.” . . . Guild locals and letter writers to the Guild Reporter debate the merits of affiliating with the AF of L.

Fifty years ago this month:

The Guild's governing board sends all locals a draft of proposed constitutional changes that would bar communists from Guild membership. . . . A 27-year-old Anthony Lewis wins the Heywood Broun Award. . . . The Brooklyn Eagle, in the fifth week of a strike by Guild members, admits it has strike insurance that “guaranteed returns of several thousands of dollars a day for a period of 13 to 14 weeks,” delaying a settlement.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

A request by the Cleveland Guild to rename itself the Northern Ohio Guild is deferred until the Akron, Toledo and Youngstown guilds have a chance to weigh in. . . . The Washington-Baltimore Guild votes its 84-member representative assembly out of existence, replacing it with a 20-member executive council. . . . Merger talks with the ITU continue to dominate meetings of the Guild's executive board, but optimism that a vote can be taken this year is waning.

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