

THE GUILD Reporter

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No answers for slain reporters

Press groups, relatives seek independent investigations of journalist deaths in Iraq

By Diana Barahona
Northern California Media Guild

The story of Telecinco cameraman José Couso is familiar to most journalists. How, on the morning of April 8, 2003, he stood on a balcony of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, watching with other journalists and cameramen as a Third Infantry tank division exchanged fire with Iraqi forces. How, after a 35-minute lull in the battle, a tank commanded by Sgt. Shawn Gibson swung its cannon toward the hotel and, 10 minutes later, fired an incendiary shell.

And how that one shell seriously injured three journalists and killed two, including Couso and Taras Protsyuk, from Reuters.

Two years later, there still has been no official independent investigation of the incident, nor any credible explanation of why an American tank crew was given permission to target a clearly identifiable landmark housing several hundred journalists. The Pentagon's claim that the tank was returning fire has been disputed by every reporter at the hotel who has spoken out on the event.

Indeed, Couso and Protsyuk were only two of 14 media workers slain in Iraq by U.S. forces without credible explanation, prompting the International Federation of Journalists to renew its demand that the U.S. properly investigate the various incidents. The demand was given additional impetus by the recent U.S. shooting of an Italian journalist who had been taken hostage by Iraqi insurgents.

Now Couso's younger brother, Javier, also has joined the fray, touring the U.S. in recent weeks to build support for an independent probe of the Palestine Hotel shelling. On the second anniversary of his brother's death he stood in front of the White House, joined in a memorial service by TNG-CWA members and other supporters.

"The recent attack on the Italian journalist shows yet again that the U.S. military has decided that journalists are fair game in Iraq," he explained. "We believe that a full, independent investigation is long overdue into the attack which killed my brother. Then, those responsible should be brought to justice."

Both the Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists sent letters April 8 to President George Bush, calling on the administration to "heed the requests from journalists around the world for an independent investigation into the record number of deaths among media staff covering the war in Iraq." The Pentagon's report on the shelling at the Palestine Hotel, wrote TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, "has been inadequate and unconvincing, raising more questions than it resolved."

But getting those answers has been an uphill battle for the Couso family, which has had to contend not only with Pentagon stonewalling but with its own government's indifference to requests that it pressure the U.S. for an independent inquiry.

To be sure, some progress has been made. Hundreds of supporters, including many journalists, protest outside the U.S. embassy in Madrid on the eighth of each month. Spain's new president, Jose

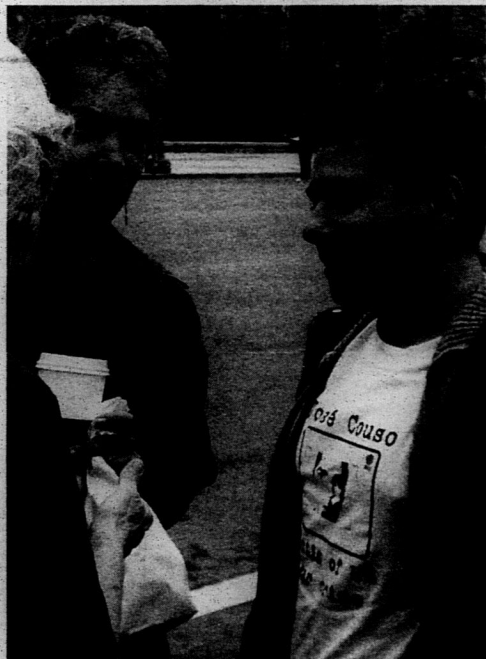
Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, granted compensation to Couso's widow under a law to help victims of terrorism and asked Secretary of State Colin Powell for an explanation for the attack. Support is building in the European Parliament behind a demand for an independent investigation. And the family has filed a war crimes complaint under the Geneva Conventions against three U.S. officers.

But when asked about Couso's slaying, President Bush reflected an official American nonchalance about the incident by responding, "I think war is a dangerous place." The Pentagon report on the shelling had more menacing overtones, observing that "The media were repeatedly cautioned that the battlefield was a dangerous place and especially so for non-embedded reporters . . . News agencies were specifically advised that DOD could provide no guarantee of safety or any sort of specific warnings when it came to their reporters in Baghdad."

The same message was delivered last month to Reuters, which has been pressing for an investigation into the abuse of three of its employees by U.S. forces,



Small memorial placed April 8 in Couso's memory in Lafayette Park, across the street from the White House.



Javier Couso talks to supporters in Washington.

including repeated beatings, torture and sexual humiliation. Despite the seriousness of these complaints, the Pentagon has never interviewed the Reuters' employees but has concluded that there is no reason to investigate further. Instead, it continues what appears to be a campaign of veiled threats.

"Of course, I reiterate my recommendation that you consider embedding your reporters with U.S. units," Lawrence Di Rita, special assistant to U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, wrote March 7 in response to the news service's request for a proper investigation. "It is an excellent opportunity to cover U.S. military activities in Iraq."

As if to make its meaning clearer, the U.S. actually attacked three media targets the morning it shelled the hotel, also bombing Al-Jazeera television—killing reporter Tareq Ayyoub—and attacking Abu Dhabi TV and its 25 trapped workers with small arms fire and a tank shell.

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Down and dirty: lawn sign swiped, ULP charges filed

Here's how wild it's getting in Youngstown, Ohio, where a strike by Guild-represented employees against the Vindicator is entering its sixth month: Melanie Wallerick, personal secretary to general manager Mark Brown and publisher Betty Jagnow, was caught red-handed swiping a pro-union sign from a striking employee's front lawn.

The signs, which proclaim "No Contract, No Vindicator," have been a popular management collector's item for some time. Hundreds have disappeared, some within hours of being placed, and last month the local complained to police about a Vindicator employee returning to the plant with stacks of the signs in his vehicle.

Now the Youngstown Guild is filing a charge of unfair labor practices over the ongoing thefts, plus a second charge claiming the Vindicator is refusing to bargain.

Such incidents suggest growing company frustration over a battle of wills that shows no sign of diminishing. The most recent meeting between the Guild and management was March 23, but lasted only an hour when the company used the occasion to present several new regressive proposals. One of the demands would have assigned unit work to managers; another would have made it easier for the company to lay off editorial employees out of seniority.

Meanwhile the Guild's most recent contract proposal was only \$45,000 apart from the company's last offer, according to Debora Shaulis Flora, the local's vice president. The company's refusal to respond with a counter, she said, suggests there's more than money at stake.

Although the family-owned company has protested it can't meet Guild demands because of operating losses for the past eight years, it has refused to open its books and has continued paying premium wages to out-of-town scabs. With the strike affecting advertising revenues—car dealers have reported getting 75% discounts to keep advertising—Guild members wondered how the supposedly broke company was generating cash.

Now they know, having learned that in addition to The Vindicator, the company owns the local NBC television affiliate, the local internet service provider, a sign-making company and various parking lots—including the one Vindicator employees pay to use while working. The company also acquired the local WB affiliate last fall.

"A lot of people didn't know about their other properties, and I think it's been real eye-opening for this community after all their poor-mouthing," said Shaulis Flora. "So we know this strike is hurting them, not only economically but because it's hurting their reputation."

Inside this issue



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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Thinking about education

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

The motto of the United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," makes me wonder what we are doing to educate others—and what we're doing to educate ourselves.

I recently took a course, sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Labor Council, that trains union activists how to speak to high school students. We were taught teaching techniques and did a mock presentation. I view this not only as a chance to increase labor's ranks, but to let students know about the role that I as a black woman play in the movement.

Perhaps there is a mentoring program at your local. In Northeast Ohio, one such program was started several years ago by Ebony Reed, a past intern at the paper who wanted to understand more about the union and her rights and responsibilities. The program is an excellent opportunity to educate our young people, who often feel disconnected from today's labor movement.

Other educational opportunities are made available by the Berger/Marks Foundation, which is named after Edna Berger, the Guild's first female staffer and wife of Gerald Marks, writer of the classic song "All of Me." Royalties from the song underwrite the foundation's activities, which have included an organizing retreat for women.

Yet another educational resource is the Guild's New Local Officers Seminar, held each Presidents' Day weekend. The three days, taught by Guild staff, acquaint local officers with our union and how to run a local. Course material includes organizing, bargaining, human rights, mobilizing and much more—just ask any past participant, who will tell you it's a really jam-packed weekend.

Then there's the Minority Leadership Institute, sponsored by CWA, our parent union—which, as it happens, is currently accepting nominations from locals for its three-week class in September; a committee chooses one candidate from each district, while the sectors share two slots. The training is

held at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. and includes such topics as the Family Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, public speaking, minorities and the CWA, minorities and politics and lots more.

Have you checked into the training offered at CWA district meetings? Or what you could learn at our own district council meetings? Our staff is available to do steward, diversity or mobilizing training if it's what you need. Let me know if you want more information on any of these programs or if you have participated in training that others might find useful.

STICKS AND STONES

Rule of Thumb: In Merrie Olde England, it was okay for a man to beat his wife as long as the stick he used was no bigger than the circumference of his thumb.

Oreo: Disparaging term for someone deemed to have shunned his or her black culture and who "acts white." Referring to the cookie, it means black on the outside but white on the inside.

Canuck: A derisive term for Canadians.

Reporters' deaths stonewalled

Continued from page 1

Now battle lines are being drawn between those who think journalists should take orders from the Pentagon, and those who believe they should be respected as stipulated under international law. Ending impunity for military personnel who fire on journalists has become Couso's personal goal.

"My brother still lives in the memory of many people and he has become a symbol of attacks on journalists," he explains. "It's a titanic struggle, but it's worth it. It can't be cheap to murder journalists. There has to be effective protection, because freedom of information is a basic of a democratic society."

Although Couso's family has been assisted by individual journalists, it feels betrayed by the headline-grabbing Reporters sans Fron-

tières (see March 11 GR), which took a high profile in the matter. While the Paris-based organization investigated some aspects of the shelling and announced its findings at a Madrid press conference, Couso's family saw the report just hours before its release and was dismayed by the conclusion: that the tank crew and its immediate superiors were "not to blame" since they "had not been properly informed by their own superiors."

The Couso's believe the RSF report does more to excuse the military than to clarify events, not least because RSF didn't talk to any journalists at the hotel—only to those embedded with the tank crews. The family repeatedly has asked RSF, which receives U.S. government grants, to withdraw from their complaint.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists conducted a more thorough investigation, verifying that "Pentagon officials, as well as commanders on the ground in Baghdad, knew that the Palestine Hotel was full of international journalists." Joel Campagna, CPJ senior program coordinator, is convinced that Sgt. Gibson was not aware of that fact when he fired the shell, but the report Campagna wrote raises several disquieting questions that challenge such a conviction—as in this passage:

"For example, how is it possible for a tank officer to observe a person or persons with binoculars, wait 10 minutes for authorization to fire, according to the tank sergeant, and, during that interval, not notice journalists with cameras and tripods located on other balconies, or the large, English-language sign reading 'Hotel Palestine'?"

What is certain is that Gibson

received permission to fire from the tank company commander, Capt. Philip Wolford, who has given contradictory versions of the incident.

Despite such inconsistencies, the CPJ is not asking for an independent investigation, but rather has called for another investigation by the Pentagon itself. Nor is it seeking prosecution of military personnel who kill journalists. Nor has the well-connected organization offered any assistance to the Couso family or helped with Javier's tour, which was organized by a loose network of independent media and peace activists.

Nonetheless, Javier said he had been received sympathetically by U.S. journalists and others, as was evidenced when he spoke in Los Angeles before a clapping audience of 1,100. "Every day, I believe more and more that the Pentagon was right when it said it attacked the Palestine Hotel, Al-Jazeera and Abu-Dhabi TV in self-defense," he said, "because it has to defend itself from journalists who tell the truth."

Correction

In describing the qualifications of the various Heywood Broun judges, the March Guild Reporter incorrectly stated that Nan Robertson's book, "The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Time," had been instrumental in changing that newspaper's sexist practices. "The Girls in the Balcony" was published in 1992, long after the events it chronicled, which principally included a lawsuit settled in 1978.

The Guild Reporter regrets its error.

Guild briefs . . .

Several score out the door in Seattle

Approximately 88 Guild-represented employees are being shown the door at The Seattle Times, some involuntarily, as the company says it continues to battle financial losses. Most of the departures are voluntary, under terms of a severance package negotiated by the Pacific Northwest Guild, but one exception is the 28 circulation call center employees whose jobs are being out-sourced to APAC Inc., in Wisconsin. Severance benefits include up to 52 weeks of pay and 18 months of COBRA, half paid by the Times, depending on length of service.

Guild members notch Pulitzers

TNG-CWA members were well-represented among this year's Pulitzer Prize honorees, including Gareth Cook of The Boston Globe for explanatory reporting; Connie Schultz of The Plain Dealer for commentary; and Deanne Fitzmaurice of the San Francisco Chronicle for feature photography. In addition, the Guild-represented staff of the Associated Press won the Pulitzer for breaking news photography. Meanwhile, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. and television station WGBH, both staffed by Guild-represented employees, were honored with Peabody awards, generally regarded as broadcast journalism's highest honor.

Charges bring company to table

Schneider Foods, which was slapped by TNG Canada with bad-faith bargaining charges in early March, has agreed to enter mediation with the 170-member Schneider Office Employees' Association. The company also has provided some of the information the union had been seeking the past six months and has modified some of its contract proposals.

AP editor triumphs in disability case

AP photo editor Diane Pleines, who is paralyzed below the waist, will get long-term disability despite an initially adverse opinion from the company's insurance provider. Pleines was on short-term disability and scheduled for specialized surgery when a traffic accident left her a paraplegic. Prudential denied her claim for long-term disability on the grounds that she was not "actively employed" at the time of the accident, prompting a vigorous Guild legal protest that reversed the decision.

Here's how the cookie crumbles

The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. has its knickers in a twist

because Canadian Media Guild members have been visiting colleagues with sweets and cards to mark the first anniversary of the local's contract expiration. The CBC responded with a stiff letter to CMG officials, demanding they cease serving "cookies and propaganda." Union officials responded with a raspberry.

Boston-area locals plan new alliance

Leaders of several Guild locals representing more than 1,500 Boston-area newspaper employees—including The Enterprise of Brockton, both Boston dailies, The Patriot Ledger and the Fall River Herald News—met March 22 to discuss the increased acquisition of non-union properties by Guild employers. Participants agreed to create an alliance that will identify short- and long-term goals for the group; a second meeting is scheduled in May.

Science magazine staff wins contract

A new four-year Guild contract with Scientific American includes across-the-board increases of 3.25% retroactive to Dec. 1, 2003 and again to Dec. 1, 2004, plus raises of 3.35% this December and 3.5% on Dec. 1, 2006. Other improvements include an increase in tuition reimbursement, to \$2,100 annually; a reduction to three years for full vesting in the pension plan; and the addition of "affectional orientation" and "marital or parental status" to the non-discrimination clause.

Hazleton unit OKs 3-year contract

The Standard Speaker advertising unit in Hazleton, Pa. has voted 10-4 to accept a three-year contract retroactive to January 1. The pact follows the basic wage pattern already established by the newsroom, printers and pressmen, with top minimum increases of \$12 in the first and second years and \$13 in the third—raises ranging between 2.2% and a little more than 4%, depending on classification. Other improvements included a contractual incentive plan for inside classified salespeople, higher mileage rates, a cell phone reimbursement plan and an increase in the company contribution to the 401(k) plan.

Vancouver leader dies at age 75

Jim Young, a lifelong trade unionist who devoted 23 years to the Vancouver New Westminister Newspaper Guild, died March 20 after a short illness. He was 75. In addition to several terms as local president, Young served a term as International Vice President of the American Newspaper Guild and four terms on the Burnaby, BC city council.

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Times workers divert raises to save health plan

In another sign of the disconnect between a recovering economy and a worsening economic squeeze for individual workers, Guild members employed by the New York Times, Times Digital and New York radio station WQXR have voted overwhelmingly to divert their 2005 pay increases into their health care fund.

New York Guild officials reported in early March that the jointly-trusted Guild-Times Benefit Fund faced a \$4 million shortfall by year's end. Although the fund was not broke, Bill O'Meara, the local's secretary-treasurer, said reserves had declined to approximately 7 months, down from 19 months a few years ago. Price Waterhouse, the fund's healthcare consultants, warned that without prompt action the reserves would soon be depleted.

Although most Guild locals negotiate health care benefits and employee contributions with their employers, who then have the responsibility of administering the plans, a relatively few plans are jointly administered. And as soaring costs have squeezed all health care plans, locals participating in jointly administered funds have found themselves on unfamiliar terrain.

The Northern California Media Guild, for example, last year had to cope with a projected monthly deficit of \$128,000. The local ended up diverting a general pay increase that had been scheduled to start in July and started raising premium costs for retirees.

Although the New York fund's trustees found approximately \$1.7 million in cost savings in recent months—including some cutbacks in retiree benefits—fund participants were told at two membership meetings in late March that there were no more rabbits in the hat. The only alternatives: drastically slash

benefits, or divert a 3% pay raise that was to go into effect March 31.

Slashing benefits, presented as Option 1 in a secret-ballot mail referendum, meant eliminating all dental, vision and life insurance coverage; eliminating all out-of-network insurance coverage; requiring higher co-pays; and capping prescription drug benefits. Option 2, which required diverting the scheduled increase on a pre-tax basis, would leave coverage virtually intact, with only a small bump in weekly contributions for dependents and some minor effects on HMO coverage.

Option 1, no surprise, got only 64 votes, while Option 2 swept in with 535, marking the first increase in employee contributions since 1989. But that doesn't mean the medicine went down smoothly. A membership meeting March 23 was described in a local bulletin as "spirited" and apparently included some grousing about the suddenness of the news.

A proposal from financial reporter David Cay Johnston to limit the pay diversion to six months while a committee of Guild members reviewed all possible options was opposed by the fund's trustees, who said requiring a second vote in six months would jeopardize the pre-tax arrangement and other payroll-based benefit calculations. But local President Barry Lipton said he would create a committee to prepare a white paper searching for further options, gaining Johnston's agreement to work with the committee.

"Given the realities of rising health care costs and the confines of the laws restricting our plan, I doubt that any more savings can be found," Lipton said. "We have been hunting for ways to save money, but if fresh eyes can find more savings we will all welcome that."



DAVID BACON/NORTHERN CALIFORNIA MEDIA GUILD

Hasta la vista, baby!

A jaunty Erin Tyson Poh, local rep for the Northern California Media Guild, whoops it up on drums April 5; accompanying her are members of the B.L.O. (Brass Liberation Orchestra), including Josh Sperry, CWA organizer of the Comcast campaign in northern California, on sax, and his twin, Raphael. Union members, seniors and community activists occupied the streets around the Ritz Carlton Hotel on San

Francisco's Nob Hill to protest proposals by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to increase nurse/patient ratios, privatize public employee pensions, institute merit pay for teachers and eliminate lunch breaks. Schwarzenegger was hosting a fundraising dinner at the hotel for corporate supporters of his plans. Two days later, apparently taking heed of such protests, Schwarzenegger shelved his proposals—for now.

Fear, loathing in Memphis

When birds fly south, we know winter is coming. When a dog lifts its leg, we know something's about to get wet. And when Michael Zinser shows up on the other side of a bargaining table, we know that a fair and equitable contract is the last thing on management's mind.

Case in point: the Scripps-owned Commercial Appeal in Memphis, whose employees have had Guild representation since 1936 and where labor-management relations have been—well, "sleepy" might describe it. This being an era in which employers view unions as fair game, however, Scripps has taken a hard line: when its Guild contract expired this past January, the company retained Zinser to lead its bargaining team. More than four months later, here's a partial list of Zinser's proposals still on the table:

- Delete language that prevents layoffs resulting from non-Guild covered employees doing bargaining unit work; delete jurisdiction language;
- Delete arbitration on whether discharge is actually for reduction in force; add new definition of just cause;
- Eliminate wage scales;
- Delete reporters' right to withhold bylines;
- Delete overtime after eight hours; delete section requiring minimum eight hours' pay when called back to work on scheduled day off; delete requirement for overtime pay when working seven or more consecutive days.

And oh, yeah—eliminate the evergreen clause.

The last is a corker, since it's the evergreen clause that keeps the lapsed contract in effect while a new contract is being negotiated. End the evergreen clause and you invite a shootout, with management free to impose virtually any working conditions it desires without having to respond to grievances or arbitrations.

Eliminating the evergreen clause is so attractive to Zinser he's decided not to wait for victory at the bargaining table. So he's also filed a lawsuit in federal court, asserting that the clause is history because the Commercial Appeal has unilaterally terminated it. Court calendars being the traffic jam they are, the case won't be heard before November.

Enter Shannon Duffy, 50, who has been hired by TNG-CWA on a temporary contract to mobilize the Memphis troops. A former machinist who worked for the AFL-CIO political department ahead of last year's national elections, Duffy says his job is two-fold: to convince Guild members the sleepy days are over, and to integrate the local into the city's broader labor

movement. Zinser, he says, has primed the pump.

"My job is to stir them up," he says of the Commercial Appeal's employees. "You need two things to do that—hope and anger—and both are in abundant supply down here."

E.W. Scripps, meanwhile, is being confronted by TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer, who in a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission challenged a statement in the company's annual filing asserting, "We consider our relationships with our employees to be generally satisfactory." Pointing to Zinser's efforts to do away with the evergreen clause, Lunzer wrote that "the expenses and actions of this notorious union buster are well outside the norm" and seriously jeopardize a previously stable relationship.

"The labor relations between these parties have been completely changed by this attack on the process," Lunzer added. The letter was sent just ahead of Scripps' annual shareholder meeting, April 14, and requested a prompt response from the regulatory agency.

Buckling up in San Francisco

Judging by the first shot fired in contract negotiations at The San Francisco Chronicle, hard times lie ahead. Management's initial proposal seeks cutbacks in sick and vacation time, changes to rules for freelancing and leaves of absence, and a new, expanded drug-testing policy.

Guild members took warning in January when the Hearst-owned paper brought in Frank Vega as its new publisher. Vega's hard-nosed approach to employees while he ran the Detroit News Agency was blamed by many Guild members for prolonging a five-year strike and lockout there, earning him the nickname Darth Vega. In an interview with trade publication Editor & Publisher in early March, Vega commented: "Do we need as many people [at the Chronicle] as we have? Clearly we do not."

To date, however, the Chronicle's bargaining team has not demanded specific job cuts or other workforce reductions. And Doug Cuthbertson, the local's executive officer, cautioned in an online posting that "initial proposals always look far worse than the final agreement."

"There will be a lot of hard bargaining between now and the conclusion of these talks," he added, in a statement with which few could argue.

THE WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE NEWSPAPER GUILD (TNG-CWA)

Wants an administrative officer with experience to bargain and defend labor contracts, guide the organizing program, manage the union and oversee the staff of the fourth largest local in CWA's Newspaper Guild sector.

The successful candidate will be an experienced labor contract negotiator, with skills in organizing and member mobilizing, leadership development, staff supervision and program management.

Must have work experience at the staff level, knowledge of and experience in labor law and new technology affecting the newspaper industry, and demonstrated ability in working with diverse groups and conditions required. Direct experience in the newspaper industry preferred.

Excellent salary and benefits.

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News round-up

Thumbs down on newspaper numbers

Just in case there were any lingering doubts about the state of the industry, the Prudential Equity Group issued a 72-page report last month asserting that circulation quantity and quality are both declining. The report analyzed the top 50 dailies in 10 circulation categories, ranking The Boston Globe and The Denver Post at the bottom of the heap, and was promptly blasted by The New York Times—which owns the Globe—as based on “flawed methodology” and replete with “material inaccuracies and errors.”

Newsroom ranks keep dwindling

As go newspaper circulation numbers, so go the numbers in the newsroom: according to the latest census by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the number of full-time journalists at daily newspapers declined 4% over the past four years, to 54,134 from 56,393 in 2001. The silver lining, such as it is, is that the percentage of minority journalists has increased over that time, to 13.42%; the cautionary note is that black journalists are showing the smallest gains. Of the 700 net gain in minority journalists, 365 are classified Asian, 259 Latino and 46 Native American—but only 34 are African-Americans. Milton Coleman, chair of the ASNE Diversity Committee, called the trend among black journalists “increasingly worrisome.”

Canada to Iran: return journalist's body

Canada has stepped up diplomatic pressure on Iran for the return of the body of journalist Zahra Kazemi, who was arrested after taking pictures outside a Tehran prison in June, 2003. Prompting the renewed interest in Kazemi's case has been the defection to Canada of Dr. Shahrām Azam, a former major in the Iranian military, who examined Kazemi four days after her arrest. According to Azam, Kazemi had been horrendously brutalized, with a broken nose and fingers, head and body bruises, ruptured ear drum, lash marks, torn-off fingernails and toenails and feet beaten blue. An Iranian court last year concluded Kazemi died after hitting her head during a fainting spell.

Neutral reporting privilege skewered

In a case with profound implications for the press's “neutral reporting privilege,” the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling that a newspaper can be forced to pay damages for accurately reporting comments made by a public official in a public forum about other public officials. The incident occurred a decade ago, when the Daily Local News in West Chester, Pa., reported that a city council meeting in Parkersburg had been disrupted when a councilman called the mayor and the council president “liars,” “queers” and “child molesters.”

Peabody awarded for Mid-East news

Although the Middle East dominates U.S. media attention, comprehensive reportage is hard to find. One exception has been Link TV's daily news show “MOSAIC: World News from the Middle East,” which provides a translated daily package of the news as seen in more than a dozen countries in the Middle East. Unedited and uncensored, the show leaves analysis to the viewer and often breaks news that the U.S. networks won't report. Now MOSAIC has won a 2004 Peabody Award, radio and television's most prestigious honor—and the first time a Peabody has been presented to a satellite-only television network. More about the show and its network—including RSS newsfeeds—can be learned at www.linktv.org.

Bringing back the fairness doctrine

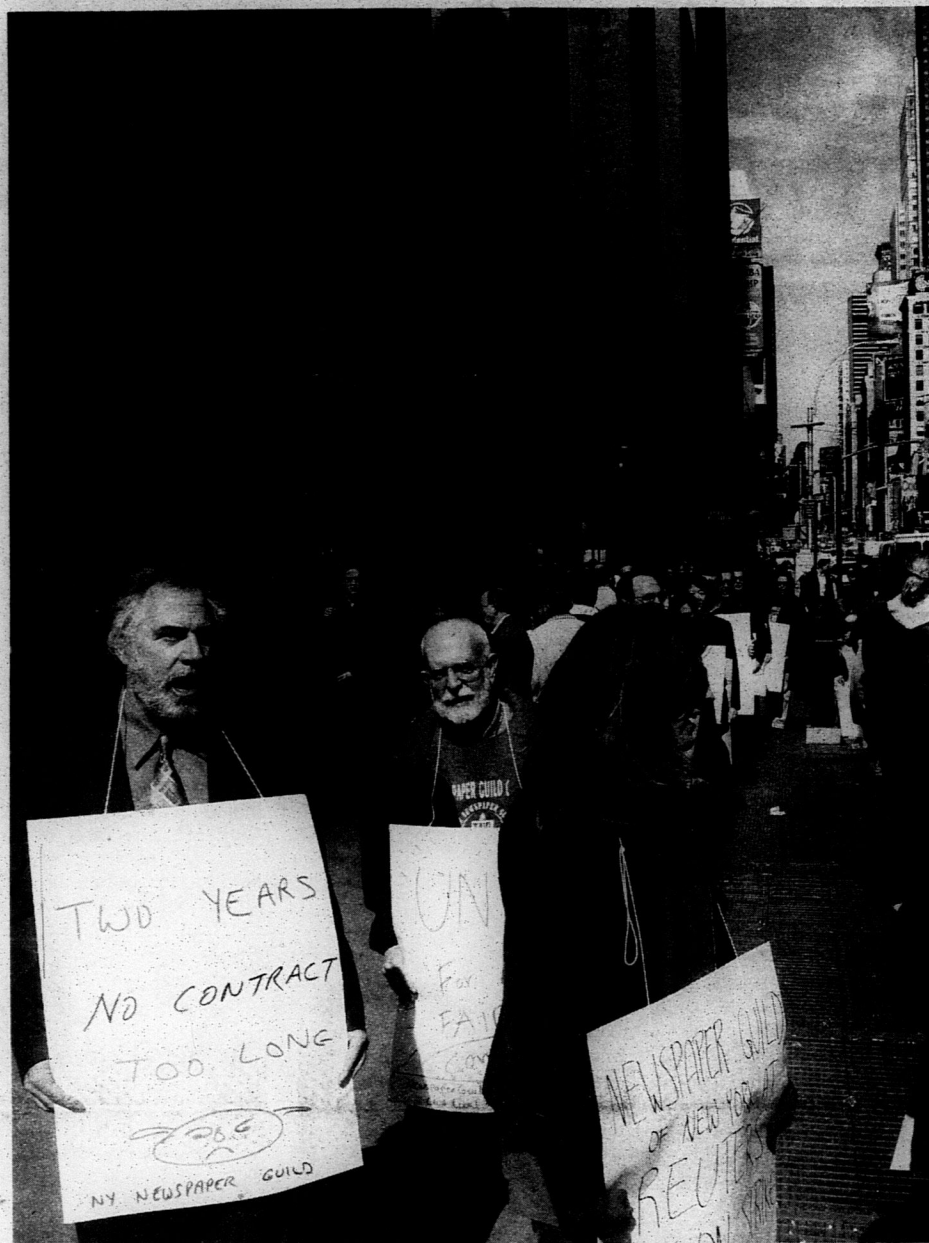
Reps. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) have introduced legislation to reinstate the Federal Communications Commission's “fairness doctrine.” The FCC abolished the doctrine, which required broadcasters to give equal time to all points of view in public controversies, in 1987, reasoning that the doctrine had resulted in less debate, not more, since no points of view were being aired. Since then the political right has overrun the airwaves, most notably on AM radio and cable television, prompting the new bill.

Online registration deadline May 9

Guild members seeking to upgrade their Photoshop skills should check out CWA/NETT Academy, the union's online technical training program. The registration deadline for the early summer semester, which starts May 23, is May 9; course offerings, which also include Dreamweaver, Fundamentals of Unix and much more, may be seen at www.unionvoice.org/ct.

Really briefly . . .

The April 11 issue of Forbes magazine has put Dow Jones CEO Peter Kann on its “management hit list” for driving the company's stock down 42% over the past five years. . . . According to a poll conducted by AOL and salary.com, reporters came in fourth on a list of “sexiest jobs,” behind fire fighters, flight attendants and CEOs. . . . Research firm Gartner is now forecasting that 30% of U.S. information technology jobs will be sent off-shore over the next decade, compared with less than 5% today.



JOHN PHILLIPS/NEW YORK GUILD

Boiling point

The signs say it all, as angry Reuters employees walk an informational picket line in Manhattan in late March. The Guild-represented workers have been working without a contract for the past two years, as the London-based news service has off-shored their jobs to southeast Asia, sought to shift more health-care costs to employees and tried to cut company pension

plan contributions by at least 26%. Despite such belt-tightening, however, management has rewarded itself with lavish bonuses, including raises last year of up to 22% for top executives plus increased stock and option grants. In addition to publicizing such inequities via their picket line, Reuters' editorial employees held a four-day byline strike March 21-24 and all Guild members are working to rule until the bargaining stalemate ends.

Montreal beats the clock

Breaking a long-standing pattern, the Montreal Newspaper Guild has reached early contract renewals covering nearly 300 of the local's members at The Gazette. The agreements were reached following an intensive week of expedited bargaining at the end of March.

The existing collective bargaining agreements, for the reader sales and service, editorial and advertising units, were to have expired June 1, 2005.

The three-year pacts include a general wage hike of 2.5% effective April 1, followed by a second 2.5% increase June 1 of next year and a 3% hike June 1, 2007. The settlement boosts the five-year-experience scale for reporters, photographers and artists, from \$1,225 a week before the renewals to \$1,325 a week during the third year.

Prior rounds of bargaining had established a pattern of negotiating as much as 18 months past expiry, with the initial wage increases taking effect only on the renewal date. In place of retroactive pay, members received signing bonuses.

The pact was approved April 3 by 86.4% of those voting in reader sales and service and by 83.3% in advertising. The 59.2% vote in the editorial unit was significantly smaller, however, with opponents citing higher wage scales and a shorter work week at two larger-circulation daily newspapers in Montreal, the

French-language La Presse and Journal de Montréal.

During the latest round of bargaining, The Gazette also agreed to reclassify six Guild members in reader sales and service as full-time employees. CanWest Global Communications Corp., The Gazette's owner, had retreated last November from a previously announced plan to centralize the paper's customer-service operations in Winnipeg. Had that plan been implemented, it could have eliminated as many as 80 Guild-represented customer-service jobs in Montreal.

Negotiators also tackled a variety of part-time issues, and were able to add language guaranteeing that “part-time hours shall be assigned in a fair and equitable manner” to all three contracts.

Separately, negotiations at another CanWest-owned paper are proceeding less amicably. Bargaining over three collective bargaining agreements at The Windsor Star was making little progress at presstime, with mediation talks scheduled for April 19-21 and both sides free to strike or lockout on April 22.

TNG Canada rep David Esposti said he was pessimistic a stand-off could be avoided, noting that management has dug in its heels over a demand that the unions agree to eliminate an early-retirement clause. Also in the talks are the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications Energy and Paperworkers union.

The Freedom Award banquet: when journalism's stars shine

They came from east and west, were liberal and conservative in their outlook, represented both labor and the media: the fourth annual Freedom Award Fund banquet, held March 30 in Washington, celebrated the very best journalistic tradition of fighting for society's underdogs

and speaking up for the voiceless.

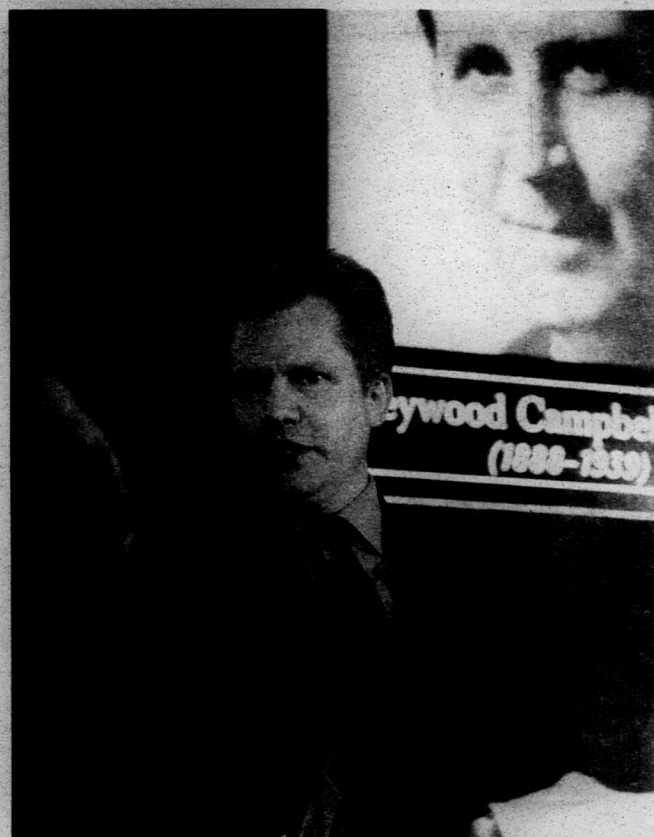
An uncharacteristically subdued Bob Edwards, now heard on XM Radio, steered the evening's proceedings as emcee. Fireworks were provided courtesy of Helen Thomas (see page 6), who reminisced about past presidents and excoriated the Bush administration for its propaganda, concluding with a plea that the press reclaim its "special role" in preserving democracy.

Publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. accepted the Herbert Block Freedom Award on behalf of the men and women of The New York Times, who more than most news staffs have been fighting government subpoenas seeking the identities of confidential sources. Sulzberger said the \$5,000 cash award would be donated to the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press.

Accepting the Broun Award was Washington Post reporter David S. Fallis, whose series on Virginia's state-assisted homes for disabled adults is the kind of reporting "that made me want to

get into this racket in the first place." Fallis edged out the ironically named Kevin Fagan, a San Francisco Chronicle reporter who received a Broun award of substantial distinction for his extensive reporting on the homeless. A second award of substantial distinction, to ABC News Prime Time, was accepted by producer Robbie Gordon, who said the \$1,000 cash prize would be donated to a veterans' group.

The winsome winners of this year's Barr scholarships, Bana Varnon and Virginia Moore, presented themselves so ably that Sulzberger announced they should send him their résumés when they are ready for the majors. Varnon, a high school student from Dayton, Texas, wowed the crowd by describing how she learned about her First Amendment rights when her principal censored an opinion column, then tried to shut down the school newspaper.



Arthur Sulzberger Jr., publisher of The New York Times, accepted the Herbert Block Freedom award on behalf of his employees.



Broun winner David S. Fallis

ALL PHOTOS BY RAY CROWELL, PAGE ONE/
WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE NEWSPAPER GUILD



Robbie Gordon of ABC News "PrimeTime," at left, discusses television journalism with the winners of the David S. Barr Awards, Virginia Moore (center) and Bana Varnon.



Winner's circle (left to right): Kevin Fagan and Robbie Gordon, winners of Broun Awards of substantial distinction; Barr college winner Virginia Moore; keynote speaker Helen Thomas; Barr high school winner Bana Varnon; Heywood Broun Award winner David Fallis; and TNG-CWA President Linda Foley.

Notice given of annual per capita dues increase

Official notice has been delivered to all TNG-CWA locals that the TNG-CWA per capita on May dues, payable by locals to TNG-CWA on or before June 15, 2005, will be \$18.63. Combined with the 50-cent CWA Defense Fund payment, the total amount due from locals per member, per month will be \$19.13 for U.S. locals. Canadian locals will pay 63 cents to the CWA Defense Fund monthly for a total of \$19.26 (50 cent exchange rate for April, 2005).

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

The increase in the annual per capita rate is 37 cents per month from the previous rate of \$18.26, which has been in effect since May 1, 2004. The per capita payable on behalf of employed members whose

dues are less than \$18.63 per month is \$7.45 (\$7.95 U.S. and \$8.08 CDN with the CWA Defense Fund payment). By operation of the per capita formula in the Constitution, the increase in the average top reporter minimum in Guild contracts with daily newspapers is translated into a percentage increase in the monthly per capita payable by locals to TNG-CWA.

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

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

This rate increases one cent, to 54 cents per member per month being deposited into

the TNG-CWA MDF.

The average top reporter minimum in Guild contracts with daily newspapers on April 1, 2005, was \$932.53—an increase of \$18.34, or 2.01% over the \$914.19 average top minimum on the same date a year ago. The 37-cent per month increase in the per capita rate, from \$18.26 to \$18.63, is an increase of 2.03%. The formula for computing the monthly per capita requires averaging of top reporter minimums in all contracts with newspapers published at least five days per week. On April 1 of this year, there were 99 such contracts.

Guild statistics show that TNG-CWA locals have 99 daily newspaper contracts with top reporter minimums at or above \$500 a week. The number at or above \$600 is 95; of these, 86 are \$700 or over, 66 are over \$800, 47 are over \$900, 31 are \$1,000 or over, 19 are \$1,100 or more and 7 are \$1,200 or more.

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

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

TNG has computed the average top reporter minimum by adding these minimums in 99 separate contracts with newspapers published at least five days a week, using only those amounts which are actually being paid on April 1, 2005.

The \$932.53 was multiplied by .01997, producing a figure of \$18.6225 which, rounded up to the next cent, produces \$18.63, 37 cents over the present per capita of \$18.26.

The per capita payable on behalf of regular members employed full time and persons paying agency fees becomes \$18.63 per month, plus 50 cents for the CWA Defense Fund for a total of \$19.13 for U.S. locals. Canadian locals will pay 63 cents to the CWA Defense Fund monthly, for a total of \$19.26 (50 cent exchange rate for Apr. 2005).

LOOKING AHEAD

First word to last, Pope spoke to us



By Linda Foley, President

I once wrote a story for my college newspaper that seems so silly now I giggle to think about it. Here's the lead: "Even though sizable earthquakes have recently shaken several parts of the world, two Northwestern professors said Monday students have no reason to tremble at the thought of one occurring in Illinois." (Phew!)

Four earthquakes in Italy, Vancouver and the former Soviet Union had killed several thousand people that month, 1,000 in Italy alone. I stretched things a little to try and make those far-flung events relevant to my Evanston, Ill., readers, but my desire to create some solidarity among the students and other human beings facing struggle was not so misplaced. Maybe that's why it made the front page (below the fold).

Pope John Paul II was a genius when it came to establishing common purpose between all people who faced struggle at one time or another in their lives. He had the ability to bring people together, energize them and ultimately inspire them to overcome their oppressors and demons. Four million people came to Rome for his funeral for one last taste of that exhilaration.

He used the word "solidarity" often in his apostolic writings. As we know, it

became the rallying cry for the free trade union movement he inspired in his native Poland, signaling the beginning of the end of totalitarianism in Eastern Europe.

John Paul's first pastoral letter, written in 1981 shortly after he became Pope, focused on the need for solidarity among workers. In that letter, which we in the American labor movement enthusiastically embraced, he noted that trade unions were less about "class" struggle and more about social justice and "struggle for the common good." (See page 7 for excerpts.)

It isn't a stretch to say that John Paul's first and last official words as Pope have special relevance for Guild members.

Ironically, his last major apostolic letter, written shortly before his illness and death, was about modern communications. In that letter (portions of which also appear on page 7), he pointed out that mass media could be a powerful force for good but must "promote justice and solidarity . . . by reporting events accurately and truthfully, analyzing situations and problems completely and providing a forum for different opinions." Unlike my youthful earthquake story, it isn't a

stretch to say that John Paul's first and last official words as Pope have special relevance for Guild members.

John Paul wrote many more letters and edicts between those two; I personally disagreed with many of them. As someone who was raised a Catholic, I also wished he had been more loquacious on some issues he chose to all but ignore, like the child



molestation scandals in the American Church. But it's hard not to marvel at John Paul's ability to turn even our mission at the Guild into something spiritual.

For John Paul II, people coming together for common purpose was the essence of spirituality. Anyone who's ever walked a picket line or marched through the streets or won an organizing drive has felt the transformational feeling brought about by the power of solidarity with others. And if we are to take his last apostolic letter to heart, he apparently

believed the job of the media and those who work at it and manage it was to promote and nurture "justice and solidarity." All of that makes me feel pretty proud of what the Guild stands for and fights for.

One more thing before you roll your eyes and retreat back into your somewhat cynical, secular nature. John Paul II wrote his apostolic letter on modern communication technology and mass media on Jan. 24, 2005—the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, the Patron Saint of Journalism.

In awe of presidency, not of the president

By Helen Thomas

I decided I wanted to be a reporter when I saw my byline in my high school newspaper. My ego swelled and I was hooked for life. The long hours and the pittance that passed for pay—even though publishers learned we would work for nothing—led Heywood Broun and others to create the Guild in the early '30s and to demand better working conditions.

It's been a great ride, and we have had our ups and downs, but I can't remember a time when the free press has been more beleaguered. We're down to one-newspaper towns, corporate ownership of newspapers and broadcast outlets which could care less about the output, only the bottom line. More than that, we who might care a bit about man's inhumanity to man are targeted by the zealous ideologues out to demonize reporters who do not fit their right-wing profile.

And then there are other problems: The administration thinks every man has his price—and is willing to pay it, to fake journalists. It also hands out prepackaged

videos, branded by one congressional agency as "covert propaganda."

Those are just some of the problems facing the press in this high tech age. As a lifetime liberal who grew up in the Great Depression and saw the suffering, I find the lack of true compassion in this administration appalling. The budget cuts in social programs, the campaign to destroy Social Security and overtime, attempts to wipe out the civil service system, keeping the minimum wage frozen, the biggest tax cuts for the richest people in the country, millions without health insurance—all testify to the social darwinism that goes back to Ronald Reagan.

Can't make it? Tough.

The 20th century was our golden era. Great reporters. Great stories and great integrity. The editors may have had only a high school education and a pint on the floor or in a drawer, but in contrast to the highly educated journalists of today they knew a news story when they saw one. And they had an unflinching respect for the truth. They also had the courage to tell it like it is, and

even convinced their bosses that the integrity of the profession depended on it. Gone are those days.

I came to Washington after college during World War II, determined to be a reporter. I got my big break as a copy "boy" on the old Washington Daily News and was paid \$17.50 a week. I thought I had arrived. I was later hired by United Press, when every young man who had a pulse and was breathing was going to war—unfortunately, that is when many women got their big break in the business.

I remember knocking on doors at the National Press Building with Liz Carpenter, the great Texas newspaperwoman who later became press secretary to Lady Bird Johnson. Always on the plump side, Liz ran out of money a couple of days before me and wired her brother, pleading, "Please send me \$200 or I'm going to have to sell my body." He wired back, "Sell it by the pound"—but he sent the money.

In the early years in Washington, I was happy to be a part of the cabal of news-

women who helped to break down the doors of the National Press Club, an all-male bastion. But it was not until 1971 that the scales



fell from their eyes and we were able to join our male colleagues as members.

I loved covering Washington, always knowing that you are only as good as your last story—our version of 15 minutes of fame. But no other profession requires you to keep learning every day. And

I learned long ago that there will be news as long as people are on this planet.

Of course, covering the White House has been the high point for me—history every day—and I'm all too aware how much presidents and their pompous staffs hate the press.

Continued on page 7

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 for letters and articles: Friday before publication. (Next deadline: May 13.)

John Paul II on media and labor

As the world turned its increasingly abbreviated attention span to Rome, to mourn the death and eulogize the life of Karol Wojtyla, the myth-making apparatus wasted no time getting into gear. John Paul II led the Roman Catholic Church through an extraordinarily turbulent time, evoking a wide-ranging series of thoughts and pronouncements. Now the propagandists are sifting through the Pope's teachings to trumpet the conventionally acceptable while burying those that might be... uncomfortable.

We've seen this before, when the force of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s economic analysis was neutered by those who found it safer to emphasize his message of brotherhood. So here, in an effort to maintain some kind of balance, are some of John Paul's thoughts of greatest relevance to Guild members, of whatever faith:

(From an apostolic letter "to those responsible for communications," dated Jan. 24, 2005; unofficial translation of the Pontifical Council)

Ours is an age of global communication in which countless moments of human existence are either spent with, or at least confronted by, the different processes of the mass media. I limit myself to mentioning the formation of personality and conscience, the interpretation and structuring of affective relationships, the coming together of the educative and formative phases, the elaboration and diffusion of cultural phenomena, and the development of social, political and economic life.

The mass media can and must promote justice and solidarity according to an organic and correct vision of human development, by reporting events accurately and truthfully, analyzing situations and problems completely, and providing a forum for different opinions. An authentically ethical approach to using the powerful communication media must be situated within the context of a mature exercise of freedom and responsibility,

founded upon the supreme criteria of truth and justice...

... The communications media must enter into the framework of organically structured rights and duties, be it from the point of view of formation and ethical responsibility, or from reference to laws and institutional codes.

The positive development of the media at the service of the common good is a responsibility of each and every one. Because of the close connections the media have with economics, politics and culture, there is required a management system capable of safeguarding the centrality and dignity of the person, the primacy of the family as the basic unit of society and the proper relationship among them.

We are faced with three fundamental options: formation, participation and dialogue.

In the first place, a vast work of formation is needed to assure that the mass media be known and used intelligently and appropriately. The new vocabulary they introduce into society modifies both learning processes and the quality of human relations, so that, without proper formation, these media run the risk of manipulating and heavily conditioning, rather than serving people. This is especially true for young people, who show a natural propensity towards technological innovations, and as such are in even greater need of education in the responsible and critical use of the media.

In the second place, I would like to recall our attention to the subject of media access, and of co-responsible participation in their administration. If the communications media are a good destined for all humanity, then ever-new means must be found—including recourse to opportune legislative measures—to make possible a true participation in their management by all. The culture of co-responsibility must be nurtured.

Finally, there cannot be forgotten the great possibilities of mass media in promoting dialogue, becoming vehicles for recipro-

cal knowledge, of solidarity and of peace. They become a powerful resource for good if used to foster understanding between peoples; a destructive "weapon" if used to foster injustice and conflicts...

(From a pastoral letter written in 1981, translated by Joseph Donders)

But above all we must remember the priority of labor over capital: labor is the cause of production; capital, or the means of production, is its mere instrument or tool. When the Bible says that humanity is to subdue the earth, it speaks about the resources of the earth, resources that can serve us only through our work. To make this work possible, people take ownership of small parts of these resources. Whatever we do by way of production, we do not create the resources; they are already there, ready to be discovered and used. Before we begin our work there is always this gift leading us to the Creator. At the beginning of humanity's work is the mystery of creation. This strengthens our conviction that human work comes before what we have begun to call capital...

A just wage is a concrete measure—and in a sense the key one—of the justice of a system. The just wage for an adult responsible for a family is one that allows the establishment of a family, its proper maintenance, and provision for the security of its future. This can take the form of a "family wage," which is a single salary given to the head of the family for that person's work, or of other measures such as family allowances or grants to mothers devoting themselves exclusively to their families.

Experience confirms that we must reevaluate the role of the mother in society, her toil and the need children have for care, love, and affection. It will profit society to make it possible for a mother—without curtailing her freedom, without psychological or practical discrimination, without handicapping her in any way whatsoever in regard

to other women—to dedicate herself to the care and education of her children. Having to abandon these tasks to take up work outside the home is wrong for society and for the family when it hinders these main goals of a mother's mission.

The labor process must be organized in a way that respects the needs of all persons and their roles in life according to their age and sex. In many societies women work in nearly every sector of life. They must be able to do so without discrimination or exclusion from jobs, and also without having to give up their specific role in family and society. Apart from wages, other social benefits should be available to the worker—medical assistance, the right to rest (at least on Sunday and during annual vacations), the right to a pension and to insurance for old age and for accidents at work, the right to working conditions that are not harmful to health or to the workers' moral integrity.

To secure these rights, the workers need the right to association in labor or trade unions. These organizations should reflect the particular character of each work or profession. In a sense these unions go back to the guilds of the Middle Ages, which organized people on the basis of their work. Modern unions differ from these guilds because they grew from the workers' struggles to protect their rights in their relation to the owners of the means of production.

History teaches us that organizations of this type are an indispensable element in social life, especially in industrialized societies. This does not mean that only industrial workers can form these associations. Every profession can use them: agricultural workers, white-collar workers, and employers. Catholic social teaching does not see unions as reflecting only a "class" structure, and even less as engaged in a "class" struggle. They are indeed engaged in the struggle for social justice, but this is a struggle for the common good, and not against others. Its aim is social justice and not the elimination of opponents.

Report truth, let chips fall where they may

Continued from page 6

No president has ever liked the press, dating back to George Washington—although I wasn't covering him. But President Kennedy said, "I'm reading it more and enjoying it less." What LBJ said is unprintable. Nixon once looked up when a pool of reporters bounced into the Cabinet Room for a picture-taking and said, "It's only coincidental that we're talking about pollution when the press walks in."

Johnson, like other presidents, had a stable of speechwriters. Soon after he became president, he asked that a certain speech be prepared. When one of the speechwriters brought him the first draft, he looked at it and said: "Voltaire, Voltaire—the people I'm going to talk to don't know who Voltaire is." He grabbed a pen, scratched out "Voltaire" and scribbled in, "As my dear old daddy used to say."

Ah, yes. I remember those days well. I remember LBJ asking Bill Moyers, his press secretary who had been a Baptist minister, to say grace at a dinner at the LBJ ranch. When Moyers bent his head to pray, Johnson commanded, "Speak up, Bill." To which Moyers replied, "I wasn't speaking to you, Mr. President."

I remember when Miss Lillian, President

Carter's mother, was interviewed by a French woman who belabored Carter's promise never to lie. Do you lie? she asked Miss Lillian. "Well, I might tell a little white lie," came the reply. What do you mean by a "little white lie," the reporter asked. Totally exasperated, Miss Lillian explained, "Do you remember when you came through that door and I told you how beautiful you looked? Well, that's a little white lie."

And I remember the days when reporters stood in awe of the presidency, but not of presidents. White House reporters seemed to go into a coma after 9-11, fearing to be called unpatriotic or un-American if they displayed

their usual skepticism at the falsehoods that were being peddled in the run-up to the "shock and awe" invasion of Iraq. It was clear that President Bush wanted this war, and he had enough willing lackeys to come up with the right answers on weapons of mass destruction and terrorist ties to sell to the masses—and to a gullible press. Even the public was wise to the weakening of our standards, complaining that we had ceased to be watchdogs and had become lapdogs.

Every day, from the sacrosanct podium in the press room, Bush or his press officers said in one breath "Sadam Hussein 9-11,"

which wasn't true—but hey, where is the outrage on the part of the American people once they were led down the garden path? Not even a whimper!

After the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy went to American University and said that America, America would never start a war. Our generation has had enough of hate and war. We want a world where the weak are secure and the strong are just.

Yes, America did start an unprovoked war. And the press remained mute. It bought the fear card, no questions asked. Thousands of Iraqis are dead and 1,500 Americans have made the ultimate sacrifice as the press fell down on the job.

There has been some resuscitation in the exposure of the outrageous treatment of suspects and prisoners. But we still have leaders who signed off on the use of torture in interrogation and never repudiated it. Where was the mainstream press? Nowhere.

At the same time, the administration has done as much as it can to keep the tragic side of the war out of sight. No coffins. No funeral services with the president in attendance. And the Pentagon keeps no record of the

Iraqi dead—they don't count, I was told.

I believe the American people have a right to know almost everything. And it is up to the press to put the pressure on an administration that would classify the color of the walls. The secrecy in this administration is all-pervading. The president becomes apoplectic over leaks, and that takes in everything they are not dishing out themselves. He treats information as his private preserve.

The press is the only institution in our society that can question a president and hold him accountable. It has not done that.

Lincoln said, let the people know the facts and the country will be safe. I believe that. Jefferson said eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Justice Brandeis said that a constant spotlight on government officials lessens the possibility of corruption—and he also said that if the government becomes a lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for the law.

My hope is that the press will remember that it has a special role to play in a democracy: to follow the truth wherever it leads us. To protect the Constitution against an administration onslaught in the name of patriotism.

And to let the chips fall where they may.

Adapted from Thomas's keynote speech March 30 at the Freedom Award banquet. See page 5 for more coverage.



Zinser can breathe sigh of relief: Cearley retires

By Janelle Hartman
CWA News

Linda Cearley, a TNG-CWA employee since 1995, has negotiated her last contract—but retiring from the Guild last month isn't likely to keep her phone from ringing next time someone needs advice about union-buster J. Michael Zinser.

Not that Cearley expected to become the resident expert on Zinser's reptilian tactics. But spending years across the bargaining table from him at The Register-Guard in Eugene, Ore., and more recently at the Commercial Appeal in Memphis (see related story, page 3), gave her priceless insight.

"She's a Zinser expert," TNG President Linda Foley said, adding that Cearley was never intimidated by the smug lawyer, who's made a career out of destroying decades-old relationships between newspaper employees and management.

Such was the case at the Eugene newspaper. Former Local 37194 President Lance Robertson said Cearley "was the Joan of Arc as far as the Eugene Guild was concerned, back in 1999 when we faced union-buster Mike Zinser for the first time."

"We would have been in deep trouble without her sitting there at the table," Robertson said. "Linda helped save us from a horrible contract that would have wiped out decades of progress made at the bargaining table. Her expertise along the way in organizing, grievances and arbitrations sent the Baker family (the paper's owners) a message that they have to play by the rules."

Cearley learned how to play hardball during her years as a journalist at the Modesto Bee, where she helped organize a Guild unit in 1975. As a copy clerk who frequently worked as a sportswriter, she was the subject of numerous grievances that ultimately upgraded her to a reporter's pay scale.

Then, after years of relative peace between management and labor, the McClatchy-owned Bee—like a lot of papers in the 1990s—decided it was going to go after the Guild. Foley said Cearley, who had served as chair of the Northern California Guild's Modesto unit and as a local vice president, prepared her colleagues well for battle, and the Guild prevailed.

"That's how she first came to our attention," Foley said. "She had a track record, and I vividly recall that I urged the board to take a hard look at her."

Foley said Cearley's toughness at the bargaining table is matched by a genuinely upbeat disposition

and a deep concern for members' needs, both individually and collectively.

"She always has had a very positive, one would almost say sunny attitude toward this work," she said. "When people are in situations where they're fearful, and jerks like Michael Zinser are making their lives difficult, you need someone who brings optimism to the situation. And Linda always has done that."

Randi Bjornstad, a member of the Eugene local's executive board who took copious notes in bargaining sessions, saw both sides of Cearley. She could "schmooze with the best of them," chatting about football, mystery novels or her beloved cats (their pictures are in her wallet), then be tough as nails the next minute.

When told in one meeting that the company considered an issue closed following the signing of the new contract, she shot back, "'You didn't bargain diddly,'" Bjornstad recalled.

Later, when the company called her position on a grievance issue "immaterial," she let them have it again: "It's material because you signed the contract, and it's in the contract... and if you don't follow it, we'll enforce it," Cearley told them.

And Cearley did so, many times. Under her guidance, the Eugene Guild filed more than a dozen unfair labor practices against the company—with a nearly 100% win-loss record.

Cearley's activities outside the Guild included being the CWA representative to the Coalition of Labor Union Women, where her writing skills and her innate ability to be both outspoken and respectful won many friends and fans, retired CLUW President Gloria Johnson said.

"She's just a wonderful person," Johnson said. "She was very much involved in our media activities, and she's positively brilliant. She contributed so much, and I hope she'll stay on in retirement."

Cearley spent so much time in Eugene that she fell in love with the place, and—with her sister, Janet, their four cats and their bookcases filled with first-edition mysteries—wound up moving from Modesto to the eco-friendly college town as her retirement approached.

Bjornstad jokes that while Eugene has much to offer, Cearley's desire to stay in a place where she spent so many long hours in fluorescent-lit rooms with the likes of Michael Zinser, "sounds suspiciously like Patty Hearst and the SLA."



Linda Cearley

TONY COTE/OTTAWA NEWSPAPER GUILD



No brush-off here

On a cold, wet and windy day, members of the Ottawa Newspaper Guild find a useful way to keep warm—with a paint brush. Plying their new tools are (clockwise from foreground) Bob Reade, Rosemary Issacs, Marie Cote and Lois Kirkup. The foursome were among 13 Guild members, friends and family members who showed up April 2 at Ottawa's Union Mission for a bit of spring cleaning, painting hallways and stairwells. The local adopted the mission as its designated charity several months ago and hopes to turn the work day into an annual event.

In addition to providing its labor, the local paid for the paint—and in return was rewarded by the shelter with a lunch of fried chicken and pasta salad. Union Mission, in existence for about a century in Ottawa's downtown core area, provides lodging to approximately 300 homeless men nightly and serves about 1,000 meals a day to the homeless and less privileged.

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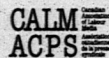
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DAYBOOK

Western District Council,
May 5, Victoria, BC

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

TNG Canada/CWA Council,
May 8-9, Victoria, BC

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

Nat'l Conf. for Media Reform,
May 13-15, St. Louis

CBTU 34th Int'l Convention,
May 25-30, Phoenix

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

AFL-CIO Convention
July 25-28, Chicago

CWA Minority Caucus Conf.
Aug. 25-28, Chicago

CWA Annual Convention,
Aug. 29-31, Chicago

CLUW 13th Biennial Convention,
Sept. 14-17, Detroit

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

A 19-week strike against the Newark Ledger, described by The Guild Reporter as "the Valley Forge of the American Newspaper Guild," ends when management agrees to arbitrate its dismissal of eight reporters and to bargain a first contract. . . . Adolph S. Ochs, publisher of The New York Times for nearly 39 years, dies suddenly at the age of 77. . . . Bill Davy, a former newspaper executive and columnist and executive secretary of the Cleveland Guild, is appointed ANG's first national organizer.

Fifty years ago this month:

The American Civil Liberties Union joins the Guild in urging United Press to rehire Theodore Polumbaum, a television news writer and Guild member fired in 1953 after refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee. . . . The Toronto local becomes the first to oppose amending the Guild Constitution to bar communists from Guild membership. . . . Lincoln University's school of journalism reports that U.S. daily newspapers employ a grand total of 21 Negroes in their news operations. That's 21 blacks at all U.S. dailies combined.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The NLRB accuses Phoenix Newspapers of firing a Guild-exempt editor because he refused to discriminate against an activist reporter. Less than a week later, the Arizona Republic fires the reporter, Bonnie Bartak. . . . Merger talks between the Guild and the International Typographic Union suffer another setback, delaying action by at least another year. . . . Worldwide complaints about VDTs prompt three-day conference in Milan.

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