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'We have to think big'

Stressing leadership, sector conference adopts ambitious program

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the vote to merge with CWA and the 60th anniversary of their host local, delegates to the TNG-CWA sector conference were urged to "take risks" and reclaim a leadership position within the news industry. They responded with a wide-ranging set of proposals designed to reinvigorate the union, started a sometimes pointed debate about adopting a newspaper code of ethics, and expressed confidence in the Guild's current leadership by returning to office all those seeking fresh three-year terms.

Held May 5-7 in Victoria, BC, the sector conference was the Guild's 70th convocation and came as both the newspaper industry and organized labor are in crisis (see related stories at right and on page 3). The problems, ticked off in turn by each speaker during the opening plenary, include a gradual erosion of contract provisions, stagnant union membership, union locals that are "not as bold as they should be," a reactive labor movement that finds itself "chasing change," a preoccupation with union structure instead of the labor movement and eroding newspaper circulation.

"We have to take a leadership role in this industry to save it," said TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, stressing the importance of reaching out to non-Guild members. "We have to think big. We have to take risks, because risk brings rewards." Her theme was echoed by Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer, who lamented, "There are people in the industry who don't even know we exist." Both officers emphasized the need for more strategic planning and more mobilization of Guild members.

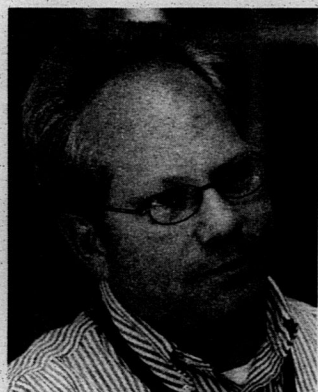
A slightly different take was offered by TNG-Canada Director Arnold Amber, who observed that the Guild is too often preoccupied with intellectualism and needs more heart. "We need spirit as well as logistics," Amber declared, calling for more vision of what unions are and more passion in translating that vision into reality.

A substantial portion of the conference was spent in executive session to discuss Guild adoption

More pictures and all adopted resolutions are on pages 4-5; committee reports will be published in the June Guild Reporter.

of the union's own code of ethics. A proposed draft, drawing on similar codes adopted by journalists' groups around the globe—as well as one debated by the Guild during its formative years—was prepared by TNG-CWA's executive council as a starting point for discussion.

"We need to take back the debate about ethics that we started," Foley said in the plenary, reminding delegates that the Guild was created in large part to "uphold the standards of the profession," as detailed in the union's constitution. Instead, she added, newspaper owners and publishers have co-opted the process by issuing codes of conduct that are really more about enhancing their prop-

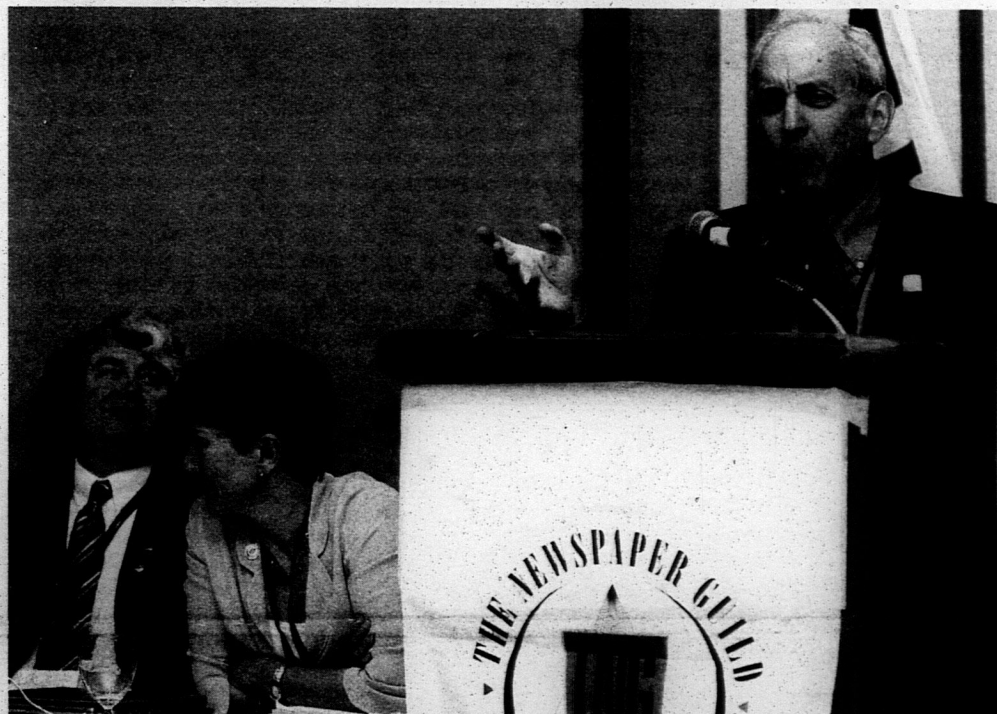


Mike Bucsko of Pittsburgh, winner of the Guild Service Award.

erty rights than about professional ethics or serving the public.

Hours of closed-door debate ended with a unanimously adopted resolution supporting development of a code of ethical principles, and with a call for volunteers to join a drafting committee. Foley also said two sets of proposals for such a statement, one for editorial and one for the commercial side, will be posted on the "members-only" portion of the union website in an effort to broaden the discussion to the rest of the Guild. She also urged the district councils to take up the issue, and said the executive

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"There is no democracy anywhere in the world that doesn't include democracy in the workplace," Larry Cohen, CWA's executive vice president, tells Guild delegates as Linda Foley and Bernie Lunzer listen.

First casualties of AFL-CIO revamp: 90+ Guild members

In a preemptive move, the AFL-CIO has said it is eliminating 167 of its 420 jobs, creating 61 new positions, combining several departments and deep-sixing its monthly magazine, *America@Work*. The changes were announced three months ahead of a quadrennial convention at which any final decisions on restructuring the federation were to be made.

Although final numbers won't be available until the dust clears, the shuffle is expected to affect more than 90 TNG-CWA members, only some of whom might qualify for the new positions. "They're restructuring themselves—and getting rid of us," observed Lori Calderone, administrative officer of the Washington-Baltimore Guild.

The upheaval comes amid increasingly rancorous wrangling among top U.S. labor leaders over how best to reverse the continued erosion of union membership as a percentage of the work force. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and a majority of the federation's affiliated members—including CWA—are emphasizing increased political activity, contending that union organizing efforts are undercut by weak labor laws and even weaker enforcement. A vocal minority has countered, however, that unions won't have enough political leverage to make any significant changes until they increase their numbers via a greater emphasis on organizing.

Although a final decision on how to balance these and other priorities won't be made until late July, at the AFL-CIO convention in Chicago, the Sweeney administration has stolen a march on its adversaries by moving ahead with its plans. The sudden changes have further charged an already electric atmosphere, with firefighters' President Harold Schaitberger angrily resigning as chair of the federation's public affairs commit-

tee over being blindsided by the announcement. The opposition unions, meanwhile, demanded that the AFL-CIO remove the names of many of their members from its political contact rolls.

Sweeney, on the other, has referred to his opponents as "selfish and destructive" and has resurrected an old union shibboleth by claiming their disagreements have "provided comfort to those outside the movement." Indeed, although the current debate has caused some salivating among labor's traditional opponents, it's worth remembering that Sweeney himself was elected president as the first insurgent candidate in AFL-CIO history because of widespread alarm over the ongoing loss of union representation.

Most prominent among Sweeney's adversaries are Andrew Stern, president of the Service Employees; UNITE HERE presidents Bruce Raynor and John Wilhelm; Terrence O'Sullivan, president of the Laborers; and Teamsters President James Hoffa. Wilhelm's name has surfaced repeatedly as a possible challenger for Sweeney's job at this year's convention, but he has yet to declare his candidacy and apparently is holding his fire pending more support. The unions in open rebellion against Sweeney can claim less than 40% of the federation's membership, but others leaning their way include the United Auto Workers and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

(The Teamsters, ironically, provided Sweeney with the margin of victory he needed in 1995.)

A sketchy blueprint of the Sweeney camp's agenda, "Winning for Working Families," has been posted on the federation's web site, www.aflcio.org. The document doesn't detail internal restructuring changes, but does call for increasing the AFL-CIO organizing

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Delegates 'think big'

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council will review the progress made at its next meeting, in August.

The bulk of the conference's remaining work was taken up in committees, many of them continuing the work that grew out of the Convergence II meeting in early 2004. The full committee reports will be published in the June Guild Reporter, but the main action items were as follows:

- That TNG-CWA commission, "as soon as practicable," a survey to measure member and non-member attitudes toward the union and its effectiveness;

- That TNG-CWA expand training for collective bargaining, including creation of a week-long program at the advanced level, and that it create a collective bargaining "toolbox" of resources and materials that will be posted on the members-only website;

- That the executive council develop a plan for identifying and organizing major non-unionized newspapers, and that it distribute the plan to district councils and the Canadian Representative Council for feedback ahead of next year's sector conference;

- That TNG-CWA renew its commitment to human rights and diversity, starting by reestablishing the executive council's human rights committee and by requiring each local to comply with the TNG-CWA constitutional provi-



Donna Marks of Quincy, elected Region 1 Vice President

sion that it name a human rights coordinator;

- That the executive council and President Foley work with CWA to ensure the rules about strike pay are fair and do not place "an unwelcome, awkward and unnecessary burden" on striking members.

Despite the broad sweep of these and other resolutions (see pages 4-5), conference delegates affirmed their confidence in the current TNG-CWA leadership by reelecting by acclamation all incumbents seeking new terms. Two new vice presidents will join the board nonetheless, as Percy Hatfield confirmed his retirement as vice president for eastern Canada; and District 1 Vice President Lesley Phillips unexpectedly announced she had accepted a

buy-out from the Boston Herald and is taking early retirement.

Jan Ravensbergen, president of the Montreal Newspaper Guild, was the only nominee for Hatfield's slot; Donna Marks, president of the Quincy Newspaper Guild, was the only nominee to succeed Phillips.

The conference also bestowed its highest honor, the Guild Service Award, on an abashed Mike Bucsko, president of the Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild. Nominated in apparently successful secrecy by his local's executive committee, Bucsko stood speechless in front of a microphone before finally getting out, "I really feel uncomfortable accepting something for doing something that needed to be done."

Among the things that needed doing: organizing the faculty at Point Park University, implementing a comprehensive steward program that recruited 20 new Guild leaders, launching a web site, gaining a prominent role in the unity council and securing full contract coverage for part-time workers.

Delegates also pledged approximately \$17,000 in local contributions to the striking Youngstown Guild and kicked in another \$1,500 or so in personal cash. The Providence Newspaper Guild placed its bid to host the next stand-alone sector conference, in 2008, while a separate bid was promised by Mark Pattison, secretary-treasurer of the Southern District Council, on behalf of a yet-to-be-named southern local.



Jan Ravensbergen of Montreal, elected Canada East Vice President.

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Turmoil at AFL-CIO

Continued from page 1

fund by \$10 million, to \$22.5 million, with up to two-thirds of that rebated to unions that commit 30% or more of their revenues to organizing. But that increase is about a fifth of what the dissident unions demanded. Moreover, the dissidents wanted a 10% threshold to trigger the rebates.

The Sweeney plan also would kick in another \$7.5 million for political mobilizing, raising that budget line to \$30 million. Funding both increases will be the announced layoffs and departmental changes, which include eliminating the international affairs department; merging the political and field mobilization departments; and combining the legislative, policy and occupational safety departments into a new govern-

ment affairs department.

Dumping America@Work, a glossy confection that was published 10 times a year, eliminates the AFL-CIO's only publication. The magazine is to be replaced by "issues toolkits" and online resources.

Who gets to keep what jobs, meanwhile, won't be resolved for as long as a year, as more senior laid-off employees exercise contractual rights to "bump" less senior ones from positions for which they're qualified. Further complicating the process: job descriptions for 61 new positions have yet to be written. The Guild is in discussions with the AFL-CIO over its proposal that buy-outs be offered to senior staffers who are within three years of retirement, at an estimated cost of \$3 million.

Guild briefs . . .

CWA researcher confirms red ink

A top financial researcher for CWA, given access to financial records at the San Francisco Chronicle for the past three years, says he found no evidence to contradict company claims of deep and ongoing operating losses. The Hearst-owned paper has been citing such losses in support of its demands for deep concessions in current contract negotiations, but Guild leaders note that the complete picture is more nuanced because Hearst can use the Chronicle's losses to offset taxes at its more profitable properties.

CMG protests rush to conciliator

The Canadian Media Guild, noting that numerous contract issues hadn't even been discussed yet, has protested a request by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the federal government to appoint a conciliator. Once a conciliator is appointed, the two parties have 60 days in which to negotiate a contract, followed by a 21-day "cooling-off period" if they fail, after which either a strike or lock-out can be implemented on 72-hours' notice.

Boston local OKs buy-out at Herald

Guild-represented employees of the Boston Herald approved a contract that includes a buy-out package that could cut up to 35 of the newspaper's 145 union positions. Among those accepting the offer, which was offered to all union staffers with five or more years of service, was Lesley Phillips, president of the Greater Boston Newspaper Guild. Those continuing with the paper will get raises totaling 14.86% over a 67-month period.

Interpreters stage one-day walk-out

More than a hundred interpreters employed by San Francisco Bay area courts stayed home May 3, in a one-day protest of unfair labor practices and the courts' refusal to arbitrate disputes—as required by law. Meanwhile, the interpreters won an arbitration victory elsewhere in California, worth tens of thousands of dollars in back pay, ordering courts to reinstate mileage reimbursements.

Workplace survey raises concerns

Despite numerous concerns voiced by Guild representatives, Consumers Union has issued a questionnaire asking Guild members to evaluate each others' job performance in such areas as courtesy, helpfulness, knowledge of topic and "overall." Guild leaders reminded their

members that their contract forbids them from "ratting each other out" to the company and repeated company assurances that participation in the survey is completely voluntary.

O'Neill wins press freedom award

Juliet O'Neill, the Ottawa Citizen reporter whose home and office were raided by Canadian police last year after she reported on their investigation of Syrian-born Maher Arar, has been presented with the National Press Club of Canada's annual World Press Freedom Award. The prize honors the Canadian journalist or media worker who has made the most significant contribution to press freedom the previous year and includes \$2,000, a National Press Club trophy and a certificate of honor.

Western council elects officers

Adele Berlinski of the Eugene Newspaper Guild has been re-elected president of the Western District Council. Also elected were Dennis Uyeno of San Jose and Lucy Witeck of Honolulu as 1st and 2nd vice presidents, respectively and Steve Swenson of Bakersfield was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Very briefly . . .

The Canadian Media Guild is seeking official certification as the union for 80 workers at Toronto 1, a television station owned by Quebecor. . . . Techs at the Associated Press have voted by a 4-1 margin to merge their Guild local with the News Media Guild, which had already approved the move. . . .

Members of IAPE, TNG-CWA Local 1096, rejected a proposed dues increase for a second time in recent years and were warned that the local now faces "urgent cost cutting" to cope with budget deficits. . . .

An arbitration hearing into the suspensions of two St. Paul Pioneer Press investigative reporters for attending a Bruce Springsteen concert recessed until June 6, following two days of testimony April 7 and 8. . . . The Boston Newspaper Guild is researching the feasibility of hiring an administrative officer, the local's first in recent history. . . . Management at the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News has requested an early start to contract negotiations, saying it wants to reach an agreement by Aug. 31—nearly a full year before the current contract expires. . . . Profits at the Buffalo News tumbled 24% last year, which could overshadow upcoming contract talks with the Buffalo Newspaper Guild—if not for the fact that even with that slump the Warren Buffet-owned paper still boasted a 23.7% operating margin. The industry-wide margin was 22.9%.

2,000 swarm media reform conference

By Eesha Williams

Staff Reporter, Northeast Public Radio, Albany

More than 2,000 people swarmed the sold-out National Conference for Media Reform, held May 13-15 in St. Louis, where they heard a broad spectrum of notables push for change. Among the speakers: two of the five federal communications commissioners, members of Congress, comedian and talk radio host Al Franken and Guild President Linda Foley.

A wide variety of reforms were proposed at the conference. Some examples:

- Enact legislation to stop the widespread practice of television news programs airing government-produced videos as news.
- Encourage the growth of "low-power FM" radio stations.
- Pass legislation to guarantee that all Americans have affordable access to high-speed internet.
- Pressure media companies to provide their news departments with enough funding to hire fact checkers in an effort to prevent "more Jayson Blairs."
- Reinstate the Federal Communications

Commission's "fairness doctrine," a rule it abolished in 1987 requiring broadcasters to give equal time to all points of view in coverage of public debates. Representatives Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) recently sponsored a bill to reinstate the rule.

The first National Conference for Media Reform was held in late 2003 in Madison, Wisconsin, and also was attended by about 2,000 people. Both were run by Free Press, a non-profit organization founded by professor Robert McChesney and writer John Nichols.

Foley moderated a panel, "Media Workers and Media Reform," which featured workers from Los Angeles, Detroit, and Puerto Rico describing the challenges facing union organizers at media companies. Foley said there are few recent examples of reporters forming a union where there was none before and then winning a strong first contract. One successful example was the Guild's organizing drive at Radio Free Asia, Foley said—but on the other side of the ledger, Guild success in organizing reporters at a newspaper chain in suburban St. Louis

was not enough to persuade the owners to sign a contract.

"The labor laws are so broken that there is nothing you can do to force them to agree to a first contract," she explained, urging audience support for the Employee Free Choice Act (see page 6).

Award-winning journalist Bill Moyers used his conference speech to slam Kenneth Tomlinson, chair of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, whom he compared at one point—unfavorably—to Richard Nixon. "I simply never imagined that any CPB chairman, Democrat or Republican, would cross the line from resisting White House pressure to carrying it out for the White House," Moyers said. "That's what Kenneth Tomlinson has been doing."

Moyers said he had sent a letter to Tomlinson proposing an hour-long program on PBS devoted to debating the goals of public broadcasting. A Free Press spokesman said some 50,000 people have signed a petition calling on Tomlinson to resign.

Perhaps the most rousing speech of the weekend was delivered by Vermont Congressman Bernie Sanders before a

standing-room only crowd that broke in with frequent applause. "Corporate control of the media means the media is pro-corporate," he said. "My concern about corporate media is not just the bias in their coverage, though that is important. What's more important is what the corporate media does not cover. Our country has among the lowest voter turnout of any country on earth. . . ."

"One of the reasons is that the corporate media essentially ignores the reality of tens of millions of working Americans," Sanders added. "The most important issue facing our nation today is the collapse of the middle class. The average American worker is working longer hours for lower wages today than 30 years ago. . . . People are working incredibly long hours, they come home, turn on the television or the radio, and there is virtually no reflection of that reality. They say, 'Gee, I must be the only person experiencing this. It's not a political issue, it's a personal issue. It's my fault.' So they don't vote."

Many of the speeches from the St. Louis conference can be seen and heard at www.freepress.net.

Ohio hi-jinks updated

In at least one skirmish in the otherwise stalemated Youngstown, Ohio labor war, the Guild-struck Vindicator has emerged the clear loser: it backed the wrong horse in the city's Democratic mayoral primary.

Five of the party's seven candidates honored the Youngstown Newspaper Guild's picket line, declining invitations to meet with the newspaper's editorial board. That prompted a broadside on the Vindicator's editorial page, which bemoaned the no-show candidates' lack of "intestinal fortitude" and which, in an apparent fit of pique, endorsed incumbent police chief Bob Bush.

The clear winner May 3 was state senator Robert Hagan, who told a political forum two weeks before the election that anyone who crosses a picket line isn't a "true Democrat."

Elsewhere, tempers in town are getting hotter. When Guild members started passing out leaflets and copies of the strike newspaper, The Valley Voice, in front of a Lincoln Mercury dealer that is still advertising in the Vindicator, employees using remote controls started honking the horns of multiple vehicles in an effort to drive the leafletters away. Instead, observed leafletter Peter Milliken,

"they may actually have helped our cause by repelling potential customers and drawing attention to our cause."

Separately, the city prosecutor has decided not to file criminal charges against a Vindicator management secretary who was caught stealing union lawn signs, but the Guild is pursuing unfair labor charges in the matter. The secretary reportedly is no longer working for the newspaper.

The Vindicator, on the other hand, has filed theft charges against an 83-year-old retired trucker for allegedly removing four copies of the newspaper from a vending box despite paying for only one. The retiree, who has failing hearing and eyesight, said the edition was so thin that day he didn't realize he was picking up more than one.

Proving that it can come up with money when it wants to, the Vindicator paid a \$200 reward to a Laundromat employee who blew the whistle in the case.

Meanwhile, The Valley Voice reports that journalism professors in the state are advising their students against taking summer internships at the Vindicator as long as the labor dispute continues.

AP sacks Guild activist

The abrupt firing this past February of a veteran Associated Press reporter and union activist has resulted in a News Media Guild audit of thousands of Texas timesheet records.

Dallas AP reporter Jay Jorden, a member of the local's executive committee and representative assembly, was fired Feb. 15 over claims that he had filed late timesheets for periods when he was on Guild leave, which is normally unpaid. But the wire service did not explain why it failed to make wage deductions as properly indicated by Jorden, instead arguing that its accounting errors are the employee's responsibility to detect and correct.

Although Jorden promptly offered to repay any wage overpayment, AP has yet to provide a full accounting of what it claims is due.

In preparing to arbitrate Jorden's case, the local is reviewing timesheets filed by all Guild-covered employees at the Dallas AP bureau dating back to 2000. Union officials say they have found a pattern of AP record-keeping irregularities, including apparent alteration of submitted work sheets to avoid

paying earned overtime. Such alterations violate the contract and raise serious questions under federal and Texas overtime regulations.

The review is seeking to establish whether errors or alterations on employee timesheets resulted in underpayments to staff.

Meanwhile, the wire service unveiled a new attack on Jorden by suddenly questioning his off-work activity in a cave exploration and science group. The company now claims that Jorden's work as the unpaid public relations chair for the non-profit National Speleological Society—a position he's held since 1979—violated an undefined conflict of interest standard. Guild officials say AP managers knew about Jorden's activities for years and never suggested they were somehow inappropriate for an AP employee.

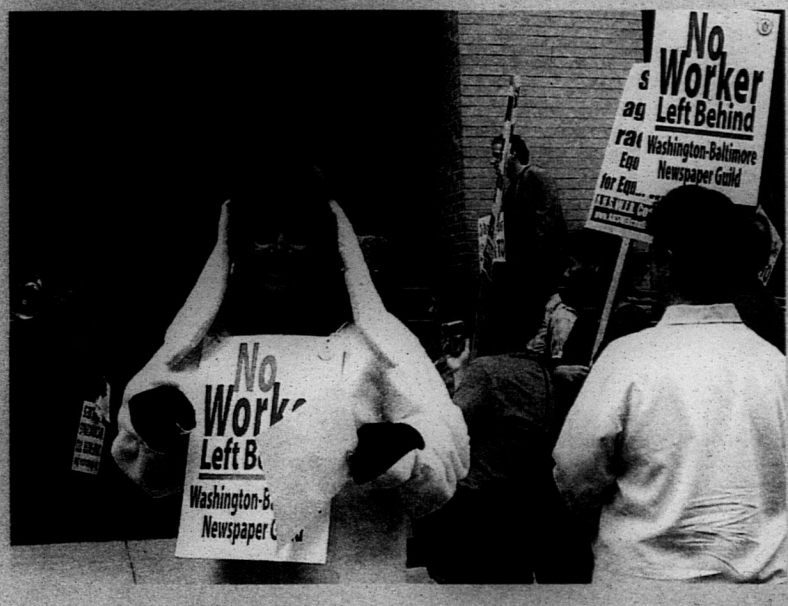
In attacking Jorden, the AP is going after a Guild leader who has spent decades working on behalf of his fellow employees. From photographer safety to protection against terrorist attacks, Jorden led the way in making sure AP journalists have the training and equipment to do their jobs safely and productively.



BOB DRIEHAUS/CINCINNATI NEWSPAPER GUILD

Bringing the fight home

Shareholders of two newspaper companies were greeted by Guild protesters in recent weeks. Above, Terence Griffin of CWA Local 4401, disguised as an evergreen tree, gives unidentified E.W. Scripps shareholders a copy of a Guild letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission protesting the company's characterization of labor relations at the Memphis Commercial Appeal; the company's bargaining demands include an attempt to abolish the "evergreen clause." Below, Guild pickets—led by Ned the News Hound, a caricature of the Post's mascot—await Washington Post shareholders arriving for their annual meeting. The Post has refused to change a two-tiered wage system for its mailers, with the lower, predominantly African-American tier making less than half of what is paid to the upper tier for doing the same work.



MONICA HOGAN, CWA DISTRICT 2

Resolutions of principle . . .

Protecting Sources and the Public's Right to Know

An unprecedented number of journalists have recently been cited for contempt in federal court for refusing to disclose the identity of sources to whom they had promised confidentiality or anonymity. Law enforcement agencies increasingly have resorted to threats of legal action or criminal sanction against journalists who are reporting news and information for the public good. Increasingly, journalists risk fine and imprisonment for refusing to testify about their sources. At present, there are more than two dozen cases where the U.S. government has demanded that journalists reveal information they have gathered or the identity of their sources.

In February, the U.S. Appellate Court for the District of Columbia Circuit unanimously rejected two reporters' arguments that they should not be imprisoned for refusing to identify their sources in the Valerie Plame investigation. The ruling denied an appeal from Judith Miller of The New York Times and Matthew Cooper of Time magazine, who were ordered jailed last fall for up to 18 months for refusing to disclose sources that leaked to them the identity of CIA Agent Valerie Plame.

In November, 2003, Juliet O'Neill, a reporter for the Ottawa Citizen, wrote a story that described the calamity that befell Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian deported to Damascus. Two months later, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police raided her home and the Citizen's offices, confiscating notebooks, files, computer hard dri-

ves, CDs, photo albums and whatever else struck their fancy—while arguing that they couldn't disclose the full reasons for the raids because of national security concerns.

An Ontario Superior Court ruled last fall that the raids had violated constitutional guarantees of a free press and open courts, forcing the release of more than a thousand secret documents the Mounties had used to justify their actions. But the raid has left a mark. Reporters have an ethical duty to protect their confidential sources, and to protect the information they acquire in the course of their investigations. If journalists were to abandon this obligation, sources who fear reprisal would be afraid to reveal what they know, and valuable information about government conduct would not reach the public.

Currently, 31 states, and the District of Columbia have shield laws to protect reporters' privilege. While the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees "freedom of the press and other media of communication" it does not explicitly contain rights for journalists who protect their news sources. Federal shield laws are critically important to reporters, as well as the public good.

The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America condemns the willingness of law enforcement agencies to go after reporters and their news sources. This trend has a chilling impact upon the free press that serves as a cornerstone to any democratic society. The Guild supports current efforts to pass national reporter shield laws in the U.S. and Canada. Protecting the use of confidential sources is integral to a journalist's ability to report the news.

Propaganda, Not News

News reports have revealed that the U.S. Department of Education used \$240,000 of taxpayers' money to hire a columnist and journalist, to promote the controversial "No Child Left Behind Act" to his readers, viewers and colleagues in the media. That "journalist," Armstrong Williams, accepted the money and in turn promoted President Bush's initiative in his columns and on his talk show. In none of these instances, did Williams reveal that he had received monetary payments from the government in exchange for his endorsement of the Administration's policies.

Unfortunately, the Armstrong Williams scandal is not an isolated incident. Last year, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that the Department of Health and Human Services violated two federal laws by producing misleading prescription drug propaganda videos. These videos, which touted Medicare's new drug benefits, were designed to look like news reports from independent journalists but were, in

fact, mere government propaganda. More recently, the GAO announced that the Office of National Drug Control Policy had used taxpayer dollars to produce similar propaganda videos, designed to masquerade as independent news. Both agencies distributed the videos to media companies, which in some cases aired them without telling viewers that they were watching government-sponsored propaganda.

This practice undermines ethical standards in government, as well as long-established standards of professionalism in journalism. The expenditure of taxpayer dollars in this manner is plainly outside the law. Congress has prohibited the expenditure of government money for purposes of propaganda, or for lobbying on behalf of government-funded programs.

The Newspaper Guild-CWA condemns these practices and their negative impact on working Americans who pay taxes in order to fund important programs and services, not government propaganda masquerading as news.

Tell Telus

The Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) has been fighting for a revised collective bargaining agreement for almost five years.

Telus Corporation has threatened a full-fledged lockout of its more than 13,000 employees in British Columbia, Alberta and other Canadian provinces. A "Lockout Lite" has already been imposed on those employees through the erasure of key con-

tact provisions such as grievance procedure and scheduling.

Telus continues to pursue a collective bargaining strategy designed to erode workers' salaries and rights.

The Newspaper Guild Sector Conference condemns these tactics and insists that Telus bargain immediately and honorably.

The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America urges its members to support the TWU's Another Wrong Number campaign.

Resolutions of thanks . . .

Morty Bahr

Ten years ago, when Guild members voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with the Communications Workers of America, we knew we were joining forces with a union that would make us stronger. What we didn't realize at the time was we also joined a family, a family that would come to embrace the Guild, its traditions and its members as if we had been born into it.

Now as The Newspaper Guild prepares to enter another decade in its CWA home, the leader who brought us into his union is leaving us. President Morton Bahr is retiring.

Ten years ago, we chose our merger partner carefully and deliberately. We examined every aspect of the CWA: its Constitution, its policies, its history and its structure. But, ultimately, what made the choice a good one came down to a vision for the Guild and for what the Guild and CWA could build together. That vision came from Morty Bahr.

He saw possibilities for us that even we couldn't conceive in 1995. He welcomed us with open arms into the CWA, a union he had just guided through a massive restructuring in its core telecommunications industry. He embraced the Guild and all we stood for.

Dina Beaumont

The greatest contributions to the trade union movement come not just from elected leaders but also from those who work tirelessly solving the small and large problems that are the grist of labor relations.

Dina Beaumont, a former telephone operator who rose through the elected ranks of CWA to become executive assistant to its president, has been the union's chief problem-solver. She has spent countless hours working on issues as diverse as settling a massive telephone company strike to finding a way to help a member who's been fired for union activity.

During our 10-year affiliation and merger with CWA, The Newspaper Guild has encountered a few bumps on the road to

Since the Guild joined Morty Bahr's union, we have organized nearly 5,000 new members. Our locals are stronger, and our members are more involved in their union. Our ability to deliver contracts has been strengthened. Respect for the Guild in the news industry has grown. Our Canadian members have a unique bi-national union structure that recognizes the border separating our countries but also relies on the collective strength that straddles it.

Morty Bahr encouraged the CWA to embrace the Guild. And his example emboldened the Guild to reinvent itself as a sector of the CWA.

As Morty retires, the CWA and its Guild sector are stronger, smarter and more powerful than when we started this partnership. We are proud to be members of his union, the CWA, and prouder still to be his friends.

Guild founder and journalist Heywood Brown once said, "Brotherhood is not just a Bible word. Out of comradeship can come and will come the happy life for all." Our comradeship with Morty Bahr has indeed meant a happy life for our union and all its members.

The Newspaper Guild-CWA sends its best wishes on his retirement and thanks to our leader and friend, President Morton Bahr.

integration into our parent union. Dina Beaumont made sure those bumps never became impediments to our ability to serve our members.

Her door always has been open to the Guild. She has been our critic and our champion, but she always has shown a keen interest in our members and the work they do.

Dina Beaumont will retire this year. The eventual success of the Guild's merger with CWA will remain a testament to her abilities and her commitment to our sector and our union.

The Newspaper Guild-CWA is profoundly grateful to Dina Beaumont for her work on our behalf. We will miss her wise counsel and friendship. But we will never forget how she helped us become an effective CWA sector.

In Memoriam

When Harry S. Culver retired as International Chairperson in 1987, he had filled that post longer than anyone else since the Guild's founding, 54 years earlier. But his 10 years as chairperson were only fitting, because Harry was the very embodiment of that rare combination of journalist and unionist both.

Born in Chickasha, Oklahoma and raised primarily by his aunt and uncle, Harry graduated high school as valedictorian, flew 33 combat missions over Germany, then completed a master's in journalism and was awarded the Sigma Delta Chi award for Outstanding Senior in Journalism. He then went to work for United Press International for the next 35 years, racking up numerous journalistic prizes and eventual election to the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

But Harry's demonstrated courage and intelligence also brought him to the attention of his co-workers, who rewarded him by electing him to a variety of Wire Service Guild offices, including president, secretary-treasurer and convention delegate. By 1969 he was ready to step onto the national stage, coordinating a strike against Associated Press—and then he did it all over again in 1974, this time by leading a strike against his own employer. The first strike earned him the Guild Service Award, in 1970.

At about this same time Harry moved into TNG's national leadership, first by chairing Charles Perlik's election committees the first two times he won the Guild's presiden-

cy, then by getting elected vice president in 1973 and 1975, and finally as international chairperson in 1977. Nor was his service in that position merely ceremonial. He served for six of those years on a committee that tried to create a merger with the typographers, served on the executive committee of the International Federation of Journalists and coordinated a TNG voter registration drive to try to defeat Ronald Reagan's second term.

Harry Culver was, in other words, the very epitome of the concerned and involved journalist-unionist, a man who excelled at his chosen craft but who nevertheless found the time and energy to fight for the betterment of his co-workers. His professional accomplishments were recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists in 1998, who presented him with its Lifetime Achievement Award. His contributions as a trade unionist were recognized by the Guild throughout his many years of service, and are here saluted one final, grateful time.

Harry S. Culver died this past Feb. 13 at the age of 82.

The Newspaper Guild-CWA also acknowledges the contributions of Jim Young, a lifelong trade unionist who died March 20 after a lifetime of service that included 23 years devoted to the Vancouver New Westminister Newspaper Guild. In addition to several terms as local president, Jim filled one term as International Vice President of the American Newspaper Guild. He also served four terms on the Burnaby, BC city council.

O' Victoria!

Your glorious gardens, your salty seashores! And there's no hotel we'd rather be stuck inside than the Empress.

When it comes to hospitality the Canadians take a back seat to no one. From sea to shining sea, Canada embodies a rare blend of history, tradition and a certain arrogance that Canadians can do it better. And this time they have, eh!

While Canada was beating the U.S. 3-1 in the obscure sport of hockey, the

Canadians again were kicking ass in showing us how to run a hospitality suite.

Salmon! Alberta beef! Victoria crèmes! We love this island paradise, the food, and especially our brothers and sisters at Victoria-Vancouver Island Local 30223 with its President Chris Carolan, Vice President Gary Alberts, Treasurer Pat Crealy, Secretary Bob Rowlands, and all of those members who so energetically contributed to this successful conference.

We thank you, eh?

Resolutions calling for action . . .

Time For Action

In order to be an effective voice for our members, The Newspaper Guild-CWA must engage in policy debates that extend far beyond the bargaining table.

The CWA demonstrates the interconnection of union building in a triangle whose legs are representation, organizing and political/community action. If any of the three legs is missing or weak, the triangle collapses.

For too long, the Guild, whose membership includes substantial numbers of news reporters and other journalists, has shied away from full engagement in political debate, even when the issues being debated have a direct impact on our members and their work.

Recently, practical considerations and harsh partisan political realities have pushed the Guild and its members in the United States to enter the public policy arena. Issues such as media ownership, access to government information, the right to protect news sources, overtime protections and the right to organize are examples of political debates in which the Guild has become fully engaged both at the national and local levels.

As we go forward in this highly charged political climate, TNG-CWA must develop a policy for legislative and political action at the national level that includes programs to

create membership activism around topics related to First Amendment issues, media consolidation, outsourcing and media workers' rights. TNG should continue to distribute credible information on U.S. political candidates and issues affecting union and employee rights.

TNG-CWA urges Guild locals to develop and adopt guidelines that encourage political activism by them and their members. Members' preferences should be considered in terms of what is considered acceptable political interaction between the local and members of the community at-large.

TNG-CWA urges U.S. locals to institute COPE programs wherever possible and promote COPE as a blind political trust that acts on behalf of anyone who feels constrained or otherwise prohibited from engaging in on-the-record political activity.

In the U.S., TNG-CWA and locals should promote voter registration campaigns within their memberships and their communities. Locals and individuals should be encouraged to develop and conduct their own voter registration drives or participate in efforts conducted by state and local labor councils.

In addition, TNG-CWA should send reminder notices to locals about voter registration deadlines as well as mail updated voter rosters to locals on a regular basis. TNG should make TNG union staff available to assist with voter registration campaigns.



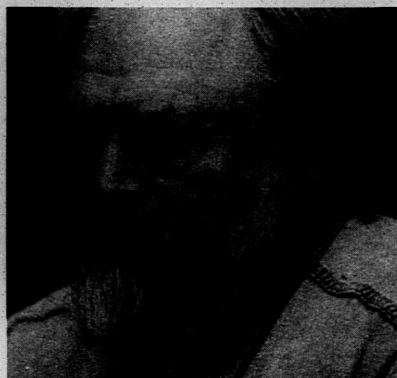
Leading the charge: President Linda Foley, flanked (l to r) by AFTRA representative Tom Carpenter; Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer; International Chairperson Carol Rothman; CWA Executive Vice President Larry Cohen; and TNG-Canada Director Arnold Amber.



Swan song: attending their last sector conference as TNG-CWA vice presidents are Lesley Phillips of Boston and Percy Hatfield of Windsor, Ontario.



More than 150 delegates represent 46 locals at the May sector conference.



Two extremes: Asha Taylor of New York, one of the youngest delegates, and Adolphe Bernotas of the News Media Guild, who has attended sector conferences since 1972.

The Next Generation

Workplaces and union memberships are changing entities.

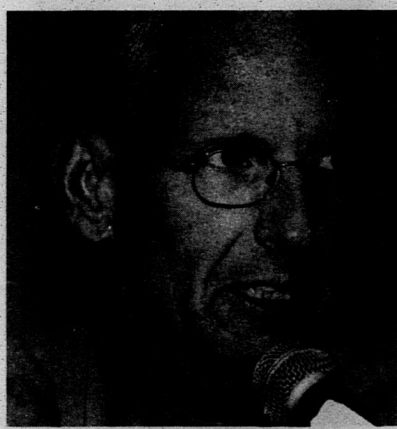
The next generation of workers may not be aware of the benefits of unions.

The next generation of union activists is likely to have additional concerns.

The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America will form "The Next Generation" committee to explore and better represent the interests of younger workers.

The committee will explore things such as, but not limited to:

- "The Next Generation" policy;
- Improved outreach to younger people inside and outside the union;
- Promotion of the TNG-CWA mentorship program;
- Striving to show relevance and inspire the next generation.



Ramrod: overseeing the whole shindig is Chris Carolan, president of the host local, the Victoria-Vancouver Island Guild.

Transformation of media

Society benefits from the part newspapers play. We are neutral watchdogs, full-time citizens with a unique ability to keep an eye on government and corporate power.

Our industry is undergoing a technology-induced transformation, which will affect our employers' revenue and role. Despite the Guild's concern that some publishers demand too much profit at the expense of quality, we also recognize that advertising and circulation revenue is what pays for reporting, photography and editing. This transformation and its impact on society and employees is far too important an issue to leave solely to publishers and owners.

Media professionals and academics are considering the issue in think tanks and on Web sites, but it is scattered and unfocused discussion. It is important that employees of media operations have a voice as the industry moves forward into the future.

Be it resolved that TNG-CWA expand its work in media reform by providing a forum for focused discussion of these issues. The forum shall exist through Web- or e-mail based discussions with active staff or volunteer moderation. The moderators will be responsible, though the task may be akin to herding cats, to guide the forum through

productive discussions. The forum shall monitor experiments in the industry and present serious proposals. The forum shall consider the impact on small newspapers, major metropolitan newspapers, news magazines, broadcasters, news services and digital operations. The forum shall consider not only methods of content delivery, but ways to generate revenue through advertising subscriptions or other means. The forum shall also explore ways to ensure that current employees can continuously upgrade their skills and cross-train so that their expertise and experience in their fields are not lost as employers look for employees with specialized technical abilities.

TNG-CWA shall also encourage locals to discuss these issues with business managers and publishers at our local papers, to provide ideas and feedback.

The goal of the forum is to provide a complementary voice to publishers and owners in the ongoing discussions of the future. The forum will provide intelligent options for news organizations of all sizes to survive and thrive in the ongoing transformation.

The forum should provide a report on interim discussions to the 206 and 2007 Sector Conferences and a final report to the 2008 Sector Conference.

Employee Ownership of Media Outlets

The product of the newspaper is more than ink on paper. We sell information, gathered and packaged by use of our time and talent. The transformation of media will render the importance of ownership of the printing press and delivery trucks less important.

The Guild believes that profit margins for corporations should be secondary to our ability to do our job competently, efficiently and effectively, and with adequate compensation.

The Guild believes that employee ownership of media is a desirable end. The

recent sale of the Pulitzer chain, including the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, was an opportunity. The fact that employees did not successfully purchase the paper should not discourage us, but should prompt us to ensure that the next group of employees faced with this opportunity has a better chance of success.

Be it resolved that TNG-CWA shall investigate ways to support creation of employee-owned news organizations. This may include providing financial, legal, or other support for attempts to purchase a newspaper or other media outlet. At a minimum, TNG-CWA shall create a guide so that locals or employee groups have an immediate knowledge base to assist in their efforts.

News round-up

Political decisions affect job quality

The availability of jobs isn't simply a result of marketplace forces—and federal, state and local telecommunications regulations and tax policies are destroying the best jobs by giving an advantage to cable television and wireless companies, according to a report by the Economic Policy Institute. Cable and wireless companies generally pay lower wages and are half as likely to be unionized as long-established carriers, contends the study, "Racing to the Bottom: How Antiquated Public Policy Is Destroying the Best Jobs in Telecommunications." The analysis may be read at www.epinet.org. Another example of how government policy decisions affect job quality: the Central American Free Trade Agreement, claim TNG-CWA local WashTech and two other white-collar unions, would accelerate the off-shoring of U.S. high-tech jobs.

Violence against reporters on the rise

World-wide sit-ins, human-chain demonstrations and a U.N. conference May 3 marked the 15th annual World Press Freedom Day, as media advocacy groups charged that 2004 was the most deadly year for journalists in recent memory. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists listed the Philippines, Iraq, Colombia, Bangladesh and Russia as the five deadliest spots for journalists over the past five years. Police violence against Iraqi journalists has grown so extreme that the Iraqi Association to Defend Journalists has been formed to combat arrests, beatings and confiscation of cameras and other equipment.

Too sick to work? That's what you think

Latest target for those trying to shred the social safety net? The Family and Medical Leave Act, which the Bush administration is reviewing amid unsubstantiated business complaints of abuse. Although the act permits only *unpaid* leave of up to 12 weeks a year for employees who have to handle their own or a family member's serious illness—a provision that is especially important to 59 million working Americans whose employers don't provide paid sick leave—corporate interests insist they need a stricter definition of serious illness because the act is costing them \$21 billion a year in replacement labor and lost productivity.

Another caution about cell phone use

Yet another caution about cell phone use is being provided by a Swedish study that found rural users are three times more likely than city callers to suffer from brain tumors. The findings, based on a sample of 1,400 patients between the ages of 20 and 80, apparently are the result of a process called adaptive power control, which boosts power output when base stations are more distant—as much as 10 times higher than levels found in cities. Nevertheless, researchers added, the absolute numbers in the study are small and definitive conclusions should await further large-scale studies.

Arts and education for union activists

Union organizers, activists and artists will join forces June 19-21 at the concurrent eight annual Conference on Creative Organizing and the 27th annual Great Labor Arts Exchange, both held at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. For more information, visit www.laborheritage.org or call Peter Jones at 202-974-8040. Separately, the United Association of Labor Educators is taking applications for its four regional summer institutes for women: July 6-10 at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon; July 28-31 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; July 29-Aug. 2 at the Arlington Resort Hotel and Spa in Hot Springs, Arkansas; and Aug. 7-12 at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. For more information, visit the UALE web site at www.ualc.org.

Really briefly . . .

Newspaper circulation is still slipping, down 1.9% daily and 2.5% Sundays over the past six months when compared to the same period a year earlier. . . . How's that again? The April 25 issue of *Forbes* advised readers to short *Knight Ridder* stock because of sluggish department store advertising; the May 23 issue listed *Knight Ridder* as an attractive buy because of its high dividends and "ample free cash flow." . . . The federal government has agreed not to challenge a request by reporters Judith Miller and Matthew Cooper for a stay of their jail sentences, pending their appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court; the two refused to disclose their sources in the Valerie Plame case. . . . *Dow Jones* shareholders approved a measure that permits the controlling Bancroft family to sell off part of its holdings without triggering a provision that would have ended a two-tiered stock structure. . . . The U.S. Dept. of Justice has decided to end a two-year anti-trust investigation of the *Seattle Times*, explaining it didn't find enough evidence that the newspaper "engaged in improper conduct that is likely to lead to monopolization" of the market. . . . The highest paid U.S. newspaper execs in 2004 were at *Gannett*, according to Banc of America Securities, followed by those at *The New York Times Co.* . . . An attempt by Canada's New Democratic Party to ban the use of replacement workers was defeated by an unusual coalition of Liberal and Conservative lawmakers.

By dumping pension plan, United declares class war

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

First employers began shifting an ever-larger share of health care costs to their workers, more than off-setting their increasingly meager wage increases. Now they've opened a second front: they're going after pensions.

Defined benefit pensions—the old-fashioned kind that guaranteed a certain amount of income—have been under pressure ever since the corporate world took a shine to individually-funded 401(k)s.

But union members view themselves as having just as much of a financial stake in a traditional pension fund as in a 401(k); company funding for such plans usually is in lieu of higher wage increases. Instead of taking the money now, unions negotiate pensions through which they'll receive the money later.

Now such calculations have been upended, following a bankruptcy court ruling May 10 that paves the way for the largest pension default in corporate history. At stake are four pension funds covering more than 134,000 United Airlines workers and retirees, including the CWA-affiliated Association of Flight Attendants.

Although the federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp. is supposed to insure such funds, the insurance program has been hit by so many defaults it's swung from being overfunded by \$10 billion a few years ago to being underfunded by more than \$23 billion today—and the gap keeps growing. The prognosis is that the PBGC eventually will require a massive taxpayer bailout, of a magnitude and for reasons similar to the rescue plan required two decades ago for the federal program that insures bank deposits.

Moreover, although the PBGC will assume responsibility for United's pension fund, it will not honor the fund's benefit levels. Because the federal program caps individual payments, much like unemployment insurance pays less than average salaries, the airline's employees can expect to lose between 20% and 50% of the value of their pensions.

All this is coming in an industry that apparently is exempt from the usual disciplines of the marketplace. Although the airline business is so saturated with competitors that it collectively lost \$30 billion since 2000, instead of being put out of their misery its weakest players are allowed all kinds of contortions to stay in business. Those contortions include a selective ability to honor some contractual obligations—airport terminal rights, aircraft leases—while trashing others, typically those involving labor.

When airlines as large as United are allowed to play this game, smaller competitors are encouraged—indeed, one could argue they have a fiduciary duty to stockholders—to follow suit. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that Delta, Northwest and Continental are all rumored to be joining the queue; and what is true of airlines is infecting other industries as well, notably mining, steel and autos. Eventually the contagion will ripple through every corner of the economy, just as it has with the shift in health costs.

Two markers attest to the degree to which these developments are shaping into a class struggle. The first is United's contention that its unions are legally prohibited from striking over this court-sanctioned theft because their contracts are otherwise still in place.

The second is the apparently unassailable ability of corporate executives to continue enriching themselves even as they run their businesses into the ground. United for a Fair Economy, a labor-friendly think tank, has estimated that executives of corporations with \$131 billion in unfunded pension liabilities paid themselves a combined \$352 million last year. United's former chief executive, Glenn Tilton, got the airline to establish a special, bankruptcy-protected \$4.5 million trust just for him last year—a mere three months before the airline went broke.

The only silver lining for growing numbers of U.S. workers is Social Security—oops, almost forgot. That's where the Bush administration has launched yet another front in this undeclared war.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Labor renews campaign for Employee Free Choice Act

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates Inc.

Flanked by workers harassed or fired for trying to form unions, labor leaders and key lawmakers reintroduced the Employee Free Choice Act on April 19. The measure, unveiled at a Capitol Hill press conference, would outlaw "captive audience" meetings, increase penalties for labor law-breaking and order binding arbitration when unions and management cannot agree on a first contract.

The EFCA also would legalize card-check recognition of unions, short-circuiting a delay-ridden National Labor Relations Board elections process that businesses have learned to turn to their advantage.

Introduced by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.)—top Democrats on committees dealing with worker issues—the bill has bipartisan support led by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pa.). It's modeled on a bill written by the late Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.).

Sweeney warned that each lawmaker's stand on EFCA will be a key factor influencing labor's support in coming elections. "I cannot think of any greater barometer to judge an elected leader's commitment to workers' rights than whether or not they will stand with workers on this fundamental human right," he explained.

"America's workers want to form unions. They know unions bring better wages, benefits and a voice on the job. But workers are under attack by employers—like Wal-Mart—that break the rules and intimidate or even fire employees who say they want a union."

Backers of the legislation again advanced data illustrating the intimidation, threats and illegal actions workers face when they try to organize—data most of

the public still does not know:

- More than 20,000 workers were fired illegally or discriminated against in 2004 because of their union activity.
- One-fourth of private employers fire workers—again, illegally—during organizing drives.
- More than three-fourths of all firms require their workers to sit through anti-union "captive audience" meetings, often under threat of discipline or firing of those who refuse or protest.
- Half of employers threaten to shut down if employees join together to form a union. The NLRB's GOP majority recently voted that such threats could sometimes be legal.
- Even after the workers vote to unionize, one-third of their employers never negotiate a first contract.

"This legislation is about social justice and economic progress," Kennedy declared. "Too often, rights of workers are ignored and abused. Right now, hundreds of politicians are talking about freedom. That's what this is all about."

Miller picked up on that theme, citing a 2000 Human Rights Watch report that documented weak U.S. labor law and lack of enforcement, among other abuses. He also tied it into the present Bush administration's crusade for democracy.

"This is not a report about human rights abuses in Iran, or Honduras or China," he said of the data backing EFCA. "At a time when our government is going to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to spread democracy around the world, how about a little freedom right here in the United States?"

The EFCA garnered more than 200 cosponsors in the GOP-run 435-member House last year, but did not get a hearing. It starts 2005 with 119 House backers, including seven Republicans.



LOOKING AHEAD

Did your local meet the dare?

By Carol Rothman, International Chairperson

[Excerpted from opening remarks at the TNG-CWA sector conference.]

Personally, and as an officer, I was most influenced by a challenge that was presented at last year's meeting. The theme of involving younger members debuted at Convergence II and struck a chord with me. It resounded at the sector conference, and I was curious to see how locals responded to it.

Speaking for a caucus of younger delegates who met at the last sector conference, Joe Hill of the Canadian Media Guild urged every local to elect a delegate under the age of 35 to represent them here in Victoria. I went back to look at the proceedings, and found he actually "double dog-dared" every local.

I'm interested in seeing how successful the locals were in meeting that challenge. So let's do a little soul searching. And—why stop at delegates? This goal should permeate all of our union activity.

Did your local elect a delegate or alternate who is under 35 as a representative to this sector conference? If you fell short of that goal, start thinking now how you can make it a reality before the next meeting.

Has your local elected people who are under 35 to serve on your executive board or representative assembly? If not, seek them out so you can fill this void in the make-up of your local leadership.

Did you mentor activists or recruit mobilizers in your local who are under 35? There's no reason to fall short of this goal at such a basic level of Guild involvement.

I'm sure many locals here can answer one or all of these questions with a resounding "Yes." Take pride if you did, but don't stop there. If you're not quite there yet, set

your sights on hitting at least one of these targets before next year's meeting.

How is our record on this count as an international union?

The percentage of participants in the New Local Officers Seminar is always tipped toward the younger side of the scale. This weekend training session serves as our intro for new talents into the world of the Guild. It continually brings rave reviews from participants.

On the whole, I think our executive council and international staff are younger than they have been in years. And we are promoting, as part of the agenda, the "Next Generation" meeting that will take place at the conclusion of business today.

On the job, as well as within our union, the Guild has consistently worked toward the inclusion of members representative of all segments of society. Age should be handled no differently.

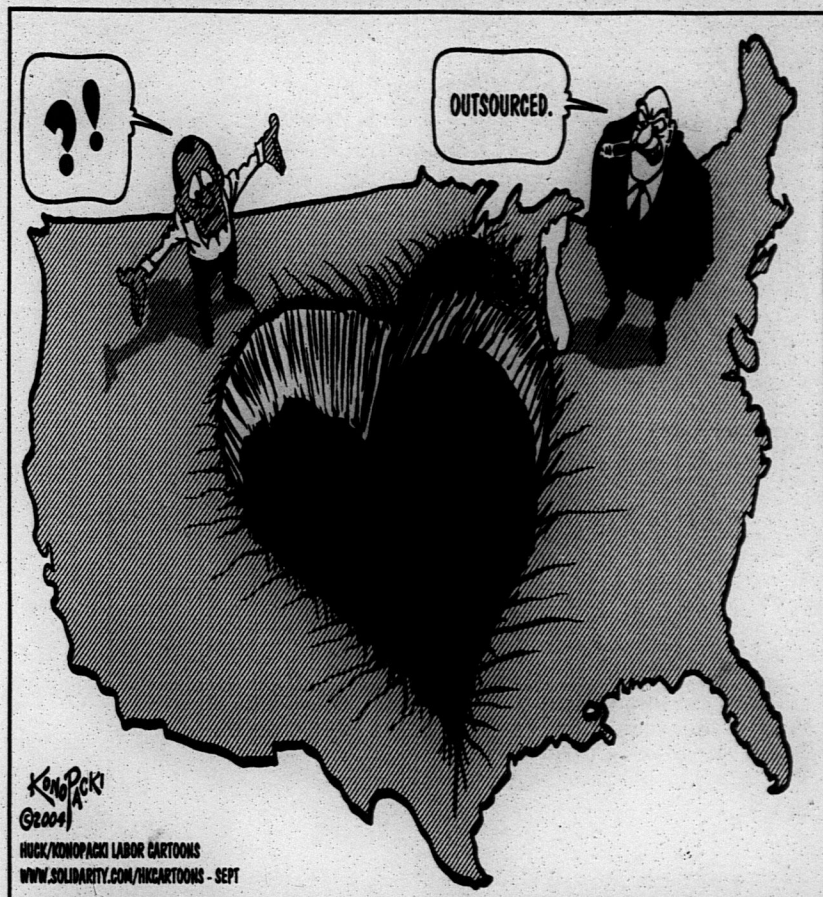
I'm not much of a sports person, but I'd like to characterize the age disparity we are addressing in terms of a sports analogy: the Dynasty vs. the Dreamers. This year fans in Philadelphia cheered the Eagles on to the Super Bowl. It had been a long, dry patch since our last opportunity.

(Unfortunately, the outcome wasn't quite what we expected—I'm still on the hook to Guild members in a certain district council.)

Over and over, in the days leading up to that fateful game—and even more in the days following it—we heard about the dynasty of the New England Patriots. The Eagles were described as "the Dreamers," challenging the Patriots' "Dynasty."

Well, Guild locals and the international must accept what the fans in Philadelphia know to be true. No dynasty lasts forever.

The dreamers will be back.



LETTER

To the Editor,

I'm a reporter at the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram. Management here has instituted an outrageous new policy, and we are asking Guild reporters around the country to help us kill it.

Sources who read our paper on the internet are now invited to fill out an on-line "accuracy survey." The survey allows people who have been interviewed to grade the fairness and accuracy of the story, as well as their interaction with the newspaper. The survey is sent to the editor.

We believe these on-line job reviews could have a chilling effect on reporters, causing them to be less aggressive when reporting and writing stories. Also, we think

our editor, Jeannine Guttman, is sending a public message that she lacks confidence in her reporters' professionalism.

Moreover, reporters only learned of the policy after Guttman had announced it to readers in her column.

We are asking that reporters around the country fill out the form and tell our editor what they think of it. The form can be found by clicking the "Fill out the accuracy survey" link found at the bottom of any of our stories on our web edition, which can be found at: www.pressherald.com.

In solidarity,

—Tom Bell, Vice President,
Local 128, Portland, ME

Union activism is part of the story, too

By Jonathan Ment

Acting President, Kingston Newspaper Guild

The death of a union activist got me thinking recently. As a general assignments reporter based in Kingston, N.Y., I cover mostly business, which at our paper includes retail and real estate, employment, earnings, industry and more. From time to time we all write obits, cover the courts and drop in on the local police. I've covered school boards and town boards and tree harvests for wooden boards.

I also am active in our union, the Kingston Newspaper Guild. That creates a fine line for me to walk, between bargaining sessions, grievance sessions and meetings with managers on one hand, and covering the unions in our area—the organizing efforts, strikes and occasional scandals—on the other.

April 7 was to be filled with a bit of the usual: a story for taxpayers reminding them of the approaching deadline, an item on an upcoming job fair, a new store opening. But en route to that opening, news happened:

fire trucks and state police, flashing lights and plastic yellow tape at a railroad crossing about 10 miles from the opening and the office.

I got what I could at the scene, confirming IDs and picking up a bit of detail and comments from the neighbors, fire chief and railroad rep. I then headed to the store opening, and after returning to the office placed a round of calls about the accident. By midday, more details began emerging.

As director of maintenance and plant operations at a local community college, Joseph Budik, 64, was loved. He'd been there 17 years. The college president told me how Budik walked the campus with a sense of ownership, like a beat-cop checking on its well-being.

He told me how Budik did the work of two men, coming in early and leaving late. It would take two employees to replace him. (I doubt he earned a double salary, and as a department head he would have been exempt from overtime.)

The photo the college provided to the

Daily Freeman showed Budik awarding a union scholarship to a student from a ceremony a year earlier. I spoke briefly with a member of the professional staff union's executive board and learned Budik had been its president for at least 10 years. No one ever ran against him. He had taken on every job, either for the college or the union, that nobody else would touch.

Budik did this with a sense of humor, I was told. An easy-going, accessible nature and Scotty-like engineer-ability were among his hallmarks. He was a volunteer for the union, like me and so many others.

His co-worker questioned whether any of this mattered; I replied it was important to him, so it's important to the story about him. "Spoken like a true union man," she replied.

I thanked her, told her briefly what I do in Kingston when I'm not writing news, and started thinking.

Would any of Budik's union activity make it past the copy desk?

Would it be trivialized?

Would it be treated any differently than if

this gentleman had been a lifelong fundraiser for the United Way, an active member of his church or a scout leader?

If so, why?

The president of the college wasn't afraid or ashamed of Budik's activism—at least not that I could tell.

Budik's coworkers respected and appreciated the work he did for the union—at least that was the impression I got.

The public deserved to know that this was an important part of the man's life. It was news. Whether or not my newspaper's readers got to hear about it, it enriched my life and so I wanted to share the news.

The next day, in a rare move for me, I read our front page. My story led the paper, as I knew a fatality would, and the union elements were intact.

There were no words of criticism, critique or compliment from anyone on staff in or out of The Newspaper Guild—and that's fine.

The news was delivered and Budik's story was told—in its entirety.

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: June 10.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Not a rubber stamp

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

The Newspaper Guild sector recently held its annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia. If you were there, you know how much business was conducted. If you were not, let me tell you what you missed.

Each Guild conference includes the work of several committees, such as finance, resolutions and credentials. The diversity committee was chaired this year by Asha Taylor of the Amsterdam News, New York, and its primary mission was to review a series of recommendations from the Guild's executive council. The committee agreed on the importance of keeping the Director of Human Rights informed on discrimination cases—but that's where the agreement stopped.

Instead, the diversity committee changed or added to every one of the executive council's recommendations. One especially controversial addition, prompted by a concern that off-shoring of jobs is prompting a xenophobic reaction, was a statement that Guild members should guard against discriminatory language and actions in all union campaigns. Some committee members felt the subject would be better addressed in an out-sourcing workshop, scheduled the next day, and worried that the proposed language implied that some Guild members are racist.

Most committee members, on the other hand, felt the issue was an appropriate one for the committee, and eventually language was crafted that everyone found acceptable. But the spirited discussion preceding the compromise convinced me the committee was anything but a rubber stamp, giving our members an opportunity to have a real impact on Guild policy-making.

Separately, a diversity workshop featured standing room only as participants addressed multiple topics. Attendees wanted to know how we could elicit more Guild participation from minority members, with a rousing discussion exploring such subjects as how best to develop materials and instructions for acquainting high school and college minority students with the values of unionism and encouraging their par-

ticipation in unions once they enter the workforce.

The workshop also discussed recent figures from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, which reported that while overall newsroom staffing is dropping, minority numbers are increasing. Despite a 4% staff decline last year, there was a net increase of 365 Asians, 259 Latinos, 46 Native Americans and 34 African-Americans. But while the minority numbers are bucking the overall trend, minorities are still enormously under-represented in newsrooms.

The workshop also tackled the subject of hostile work environments, distributing handouts on Canadian national policy regarding psychological harassment. A separate committee is being formed to develop a Guild bargaining policy covering not only sexual harassment but bullying and the adversarial relationship that many workers have to endure. If you are interested in becoming a committee member, please let me know. In addition, if you would like to help develop a brochure for recruiting minority participation, I will welcome your input.

Finally, a meeting of younger Guild members—described by some Guild veterans as “the whippersnappers”—was held to discuss their issues and how to better promote leadership development in the next generation.

If there are issues that you want discussed, whether at ongoing committee meetings or district councils, please share them. We can't address your needs unless we know what they are.

STICKS AND STONES

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Not a rubber stamp

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

The Newspaper Guild sector recently held its annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia. If you were there, you know how much business was conducted. If you were not, let me tell you what you missed.

Each Guild conference includes the work of several committees, such as finance, resolutions and credentials. The diversity committee was chaired this year by Asha Taylor of the Amsterdam News, New York, and its primary mission was to review a series of recommendations from the Guild's executive council. The committee agreed on the importance of keeping the Director of Human Rights informed on discrimination cases—but that's where the agreement stopped.

Instead, the diversity committee changed or added to every one of the executive council's recommendations. One especially controversial addition, prompted by a concern that off-shoring of jobs is prompting a xenophobic reaction, was a statement that Guild members should guard against discriminatory language and actions in all union campaigns. Some committee members felt the subject would be better addressed in an out-sourcing workshop, scheduled the next day, and worried that the proposed language implied that some Guild members are racist.

Most committee members, on the other hand, felt the issue was an appropriate one for the committee, and eventually language was crafted that everyone found acceptable. But the spirited discussion preceding the compromise convinced me the committee was anything but a rubber stamp, giving our members an opportunity to have a real impact on Guild policy-making.

Separately, a diversity workshop featured standing room only as participants addressed multiple topics. Attendees wanted to know how we could elicit more Guild participation from minority members, with a rousing discussion exploring such subjects as how best to develop materials and instructions for acquainting high school and college minority students with the values of unionism and encouraging their par-

ticipation in unions once they enter the workforce.

The workshop also discussed recent figures from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, which reported that while overall newsroom staffing is dropping, minority numbers are increasing. Despite a 4% staff decline last year, there was a net increase of 365 Asians, 259 Latinos, 46 Native Americans and 34 African-Americans. But while the minority numbers are bucking the overall trend, minorities are still enormously under-represented in newsrooms.

The workshop also tackled the subject of hostile work environments, distributing handouts on Canadian national policy regarding psychological harassment. A separate committee is being formed to develop a Guild bargaining policy covering not only sexual harassment but bullying and the adversarial relationship that many workers have to endure. If you are interested in becoming a committee member, please let me know. In addition, if you would like to help develop a brochure for recruiting minority participation, I will welcome your input.

Finally, a meeting of younger Guild members—described by some Guild veterans as “the whippersnappers”—was held to discuss their issues and how to better promote leadership development in the next generation.

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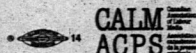
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