

# THE GUILD Reporter

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Bill O'Meara, secretary-treasurer of the New York Guild, leads protesters outside the New York Times.

## Guild rallies nationally to protest jailing, push for federal shield law

Guild locals across the United States rallied July 6 in defense of two reporters threatened with jail and to show their support for a proposed federal shield law. The mass demonstration, including silent vigils in newsrooms and pickets outside federal courthouses, reached across traditional divisions to include non-union members and was supported by several newspaper publishers.

Hours after the show of journalistic solidarity, New York Times reporter Judith Miller was jailed for persisting in her refusal to identify off-the-record sources in the White House. Time magazine reporter Matthew Cooper escaped a similar fate by announcing that his source—subsequently identified as Karl Rove—had rescinded his demand for confidentiality. Rove's move followed a controversial decision by Time chief Norman Pearlstine to honor a federal subpoena for Cooper's notes and internal memos, including e-mails.

In allowing herself to be jailed, Miller emerged as a most unlikely champion of journalistic principles. Her assertive reporting on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, much of it based on off-the-



Star Tribune reporter and longtime Guild activist Randy Furst as interviewee instead of interviewer.

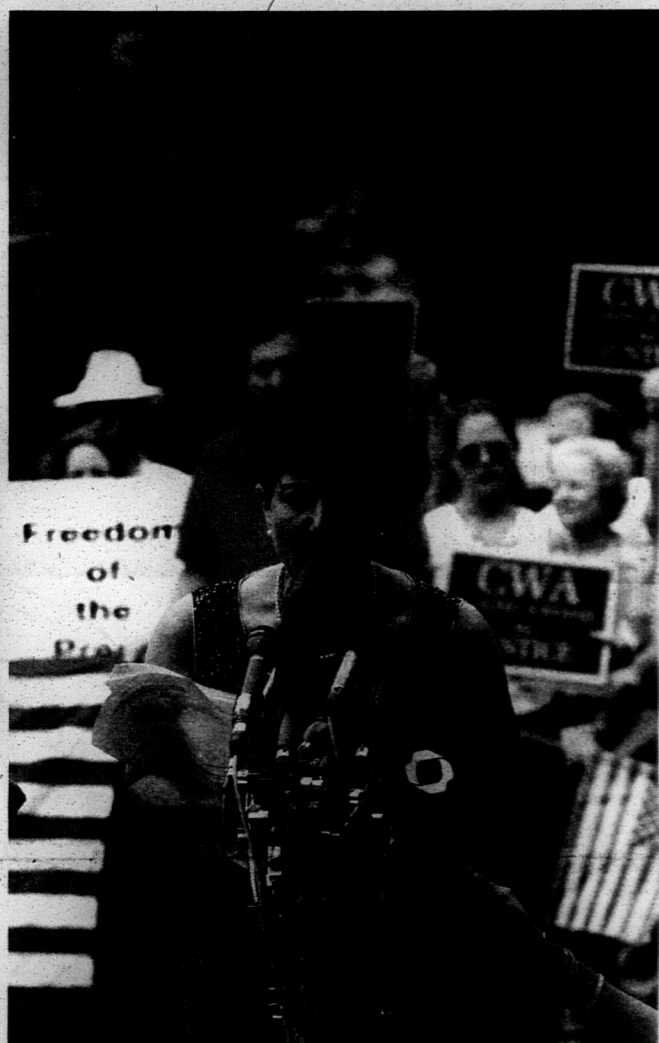
record, subsequently discredited sources, was widely blamed for helping the Bush administration launch an unprovoked war. Ironically, it was a contemporaneous struggle over the truth of Iraq's weapons programs—during which a U.S. ambassador's wife was

outed as a covert CIA agent—that resulted in the chain of events leading to Miller's imprisonment.

But regardless of their political leanings, the overwhelming majority of TNG-CWA members rallied behind Miller in defense of the broader principle she was serving: that reporters should not be compelled to disclose confidential sources, because such reportorial privilege serves as a check on government corruption and wrongdoing. Indeed, the value of creating a safe outlet for whistleblowers is so widely understood that 49 states and the District of Columbia have shield laws of one kind or another—but no such law exists at the federal level. And it is a federal prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald, who has been seeking the source of White House leaks.

Although the July 6 demonstrations were called on short notice, locals from one end of the country to the other responded. A score of protesters marched outside the federal courthouse in Eugene, Oregon, capturing television coverage that was supplemented by a separate interview with the local's president, Karen McCowan. Several editors at the Baltimore Sun joined their unionized colleagues in the

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TNG-CWA President Linda Foley details the need for a federal shield law at the U.S. courthouse where Judith Miller was sentenced.

## NLRB nullifies election result Orders new vote at Chinese paper

Four years after employees of the Chinese Daily News in Monterey Park, Cal., voted 78-63 for TNG-CWA representation, a skeletal National Labor Relations Board has rewarded their faith in the democratic process by ordering that a new election be held.

The split June 30 decision, signed by two of the board's three members (there are two board vacancies), sets aside the March 19, 2001 election results on the grounds of "supervisory taint." First discovered by the board last December, in a case known as Harborside Healthcare, the new doctrine holds that solicitation of

union authorization cards by a supervisor—even after the employer has made known his opposition to the union—is inherently coercive and therefore sufficient to taint election results.

At the Chinese Daily News, NLRB members Robert Battista and Peter Schaumber reasoned, eight Chinese Daily News employees had been given union authorization cards by a supervisor, Ching Shan Lin, and therefore might have been influenced by Lin when casting their secret ballots, too. And while the union had prevailed by a margin of 15, there were seven challenged ballots.

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# CBC strike vote held

The 5,000 Guild-represented employees of the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. were voting July 13-14, as The Guild Reporter was going to press, on strike authorization for its leadership. The vote follows more than a year of contract negotiations that have foundered on the company's insistence that it be allowed to outsource work.

A Canadian Media Guild memo asked its members to "send a strong message to CBC management that you back your Guild bargaining committee against the company's regressive positions." Those positions are summarized in a bargaining bulletin, headlined "3 big lies," that takes the CBC to task for attempting to create a two-tiered workforce of permanent and temporary employees. Although the Guild is not opposed to hiring employees under individual contracts, the bulletin emphasizes, "Our position is and always has been: permanent people for permanent work."

A successful strike vote would set the stage for a walkout as early as mid-August, following three days' notice from the union. The strike option was triggered in May, when the CBC requested that a conciliator enter the talks.

Other major issues that have frustrated an agreement, the Guild has said, include company efforts to average overtime over four weeks and its attempt to shorten its "turnaround" time—the period between shifts—to eight hours for all employees; most employees currently have a 12-hour turnaround. Both proposals are part of the company's pursuit of greater

"flexibility," a management buzzword that means freedom from contractual restraints.

Those constraints, however, are there to prevent abuse of employees. Averaging overtime over four weeks, for example, "defeats the purpose of overtime, which is to discourage management from routinely scheduling or assigning extra hours of work," the Guild memo points out.

But the broadcaster's push for more freedom to hire contract employees is the biggest threat to Guild members and would "turn the clock back a quarter-century," the local points out. "Any time you create a two-tier structure for employees, where one group has fewer rights and benefits than the other, both types of employees suffer."

Job stress among CBC employees has been a growing theme in contract negotiations. Approximately 3,000 jobs have been eliminated at the broadcaster over the past 15 years, resulting in fewer people working longer hours at a growing array of tasks. The inevitable consequence, as reflected in Guild surveys, is that "many people are stressed, overworked and in need of time to regenerate."

Sick leave for both short- and long-term disability is on the rise, for example, with more than 40% of long-term claims at the corporation made for "non-psychotic mental disorders"—a jargon-filled way of describing stress and burnout. But as the stalled contract negotiations indicate, CBC management is pushing for an even more destabilizing work environment, one long on "flexibility" but short on predictability.

# Health switch prompts grassroots byline strike

Guild-represented employees at The Patriot Ledger in Quincy, Mass., held a one-day byline strike June 22 to protest management's unilateral decision to change health plans without bargaining.

TNG-CWA Local 31247, also known as The Patriot Ledger Newsroom Association, has a contractual guarantee to the level of health insurance benefits in effect when the contract was signed. Although management maintains that the new plan's benefits are "equivalent," co-pays have been doubled and tripled, some services are inferior and the provider was changed, forcing some members to change doctors.

The health insurance policy is a corporate plan affecting all of Enterprise NewsMedia's proper-

ties, which also include the Enterprise of Brockton and a group of non-union weeklies in southeastern Massachusetts. All three Guild locals involved—including the Brockton and Quincy guilds—are vigorously protesting the company's decision with coordinated mobilization and legal efforts.

The byline strike at The Patriot Ledger was organized by reporters Rick Collins and Karen Eschbacher, who quietly buttonholed colleagues to gauge interest and quickly tapped into a deep pool of resentment. The only reservation they heard was a concern that a byline strike have wide support and not be limited to a handful who could be singled out as rabble-rousers. That fear proved unfounded, as the strike drew 100% participation.

One assurance of the strike's

success was a letter to the publisher, Kirk Davis, signed by all participants, describing why the bylines were being withheld. Delivered to Davis and all senior editors a day in advance of the strike, the letter explained it was "meant to convey our discontent with [Davis'] intention to move forward on a health insurance plan that flagrantly violates the contract we negotiated with the company in good faith."

"We feel that this situation is unfortunate but that the company has left us with no other choice since it has failed to negotiate productively with our union leaders," the letter added. "We hope you reconsider implementing an equivalent plan that does not shift health care costs to employees via increased office co-pays and prescription co-pays, and that honors the terms of our contract."

Local President Gary J. Matta said the byline strike was an unprecedented grassroots action. "Never before in my long tenure as president have I seen an outpouring of unsolicited support for any issue, including contract negotiations," he said. "The membership sees the health insurance issue as merely the first step by the publisher to erode a legally binding contract."

The byline strike did prompt the company to modify its new plan, but the improvements are too little too late—and still unilaterally implemented, Matta added, making arbitration and a complaint to the National Labor Relations Board all but inevitable. But the worst part of the whole affair, he added, was the company's willingness to lose its employees' respect and good will for a total corporate savings of only \$56,446.

# Guild briefs . . .

## Still more Reuters jobs move to India

More Guild-represented editorial work at Reuters is to be sent offshore, with the Bangalore office to begin producing earnings tables for all U.S. companies "as of the next earnings period," according to a management letter sent to the New York Guild. The letter also advises Guild officers that Reuters "plans to move all production of text stories about companies based solely on electronic material" to the new Indian facility.

## If 6 make a star, 7 for a Pulitzer?

Management attitudes at The Wall Street Journal, which is planning to go to six-day-a-week publication from the current five, were embarrassingly on display recently. Asked what the expanded schedule would mean for the newsroom, publisher Karen Elliott House assured the New York Times that employees wouldn't be required to work a six-day week—than added, "But any of the real stars of the Journal work a six-day week now." "People are furious," said one reporter. "It's demoralizing."

## Arbitrator sought in wage reopener

After two months of stalling by management at the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, the Canadian Media Guild has asked an arbitrator to settle salary re-negotiations with the network. The current contract has a wage reopener in the third year, but after two bargaining sessions the Guild concluded management—which has yet to submit a final offer—is unwilling to reach an agreement. The Guild is seeking a 3.5% increase in all steps of the salary scales.

## Five Guild jobs cut at Newsweek

Newsweek's already-lean staff took another hit last month, with the elimination of five Guild-represented jobs. The magazine's last involuntary staff cut affecting a Guild-covered employee came three years ago, when the company closed its Atlanta bureau.

## Cincinnati Post signals closure

Reporters and editors at the Cincinnati Post have been offered an early retirement deal by owner E.W. Scripps Co. as it prepares for an end to its joint operating agreement with the Gannett-owned Enquirer. Gannett has said it will not renew the JOA when the current deal—created in 1977—expires Dec. 31, 2007. Industry observers have been predicting Scripps will close the Post, whose circulation has declined to less than 40,000 from 188,000, at that time.

## Representation sought for techs

The Canadian Media Guild has filed an application with the Canada Industrial Relations Board to represent about 100 technical employees at Alliance Atlantis Broadcasting, based in Toronto. The workers are responsible for programming some of the most-watched specialty channels in Canada, including BBC Canada, Showcase and HGTV.

## Washington hires new admin officer

The Washington-Baltimore Guild has a new administrative officer, following Lori Calderone's resignation last month. Cet Parks, who joined WBNG as a local rep in January, 2000, has represented employees at the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun as well as such non-newspaper units as the AFL-CIO and the Solidarity Center. Previously, he worked for more than 15 years as an international field rep and organizer with the Teamsters, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the Laborers' International Union.



Cet Parks

## Guild officer wins business award

Theo Francis, a Wall Street Journal reporter and director of IAPE, TNG-CWA Local 1096, teamed up with Ellen E. Schultz to capture the Loeb Award for beat writing, for "The Short Life of 'Lifetime' Health-Care Benefits." The Loeb awards, recognizing the best of business, financial and economic journalism, were presented at a June 27 banquet in New York City.

## Boston local elects Totten president

The Boston Newspaper Guild elected Dan Totten president in an election held June 9, 2005. Former BNG president Steve Richards defeated Mark Anastas for Vice President in the only contested race. Patrice Sneyd, Jenna Russell, Mary Corbett, Scott Steeves and Carl Younger were re-elected to the executive committee.

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## Push is on for federal shield law

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newsroom for two minutes of silence that claimed nearly 100% participation. In Los Angeles, approximately 30 union and non-union journalists leafleted outside the U.S. courthouse, pausing at noon for two minutes of silence and capturing local TV coverage.

More than 100 people participated in a vigil in front of the federal building in Dayton, Ohio, another 150 turned out in Minneapolis and 30 or so marched in Cleveland. Staffers in the newsrooms of the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News stood for two minutes of silence at noon, while Guild members and four AFA-CWA members handed out flyers in front of the Denver federal courthouse.

Vigils also were held in Honolulu, Knoxville and Kingston, New York. Employees in Reuters and Dow Jones offices and bureaus participated, and despite heavy rain a couple of Boston stalwarts leafleted in front of the federal courthouse overlooking the harbor. New York and Washington, D.C. saw major events.

Support also came from abroad. "On behalf of the SNJ-CGT (National Union of Journalists-General Confederation of Labor) French union, we want to extend our full support for the fight you are leading for the protection of journalists' sources," wrote Michel Diard, the union's general secretary, in an e-mail to the Guild. "Our union has referred this matter to the U.S. Embassy in France to convey the emotion of French journalists in the wake of the imprisonment of our sister of



Media scrum: journalists recording and photographing journalists' representatives addressing journalistic issues.

the New York Times."

Joining their French colleagues were the Swedish Union of Journalists and the European Federation of Journalists. "We applaud and support your statements in court where you expressed that 'If journalists cannot be trusted to guarantee confidentiality, then journalists cannot function and there cannot be a free press,'" Arne König, an officer in both organizations, wrote to Miller in an e-mail copied to the Guild.

"Your case is our case, as we can face the same problem," he added. "We guarantee you that we will do our utmost to strengthen confidentiality to protect sources in our work within EU."

Work on a federal shield law is

already well under way, with bipartisan legislation introduced in the House by Reps. Mike Pence (R-Ind.) and Rick Boucher (D-Va.) and in the Senate by Richard Lugar (R-Ind.). A strategy meeting June 30, led by the Reporters Committee for a Free Press and attended by five CWA and Guild representatives, including TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer, heard that the need for such a law was apparent even before Miller was jailed. Attorney Kurt Wimmer, who specializes in media law, said more subpoenas were issued to reporters in the past three months than in the previous year, reflecting a growing sense among prosecutors that if the New York Times can't protect its

employees, other newspapers will be even more vulnerable.

But while Miller's imprisonment has increased political pressure for passage of a federal shield law, the remaining obstacles are significant. Any legislation of this sort has to be approved by both judiciary committees, whose members include a significant number of former prosecutors and judges who look askance at attempts to restrict prosecutorial access to information. Heightened concerns about national security make such restrictions even more problematic, as does a growing, internet-driven uncertainty over defining who qualifies as a journalist.

Lobbying for a shield law also troubles many First Amendment

advocates, who believe such efforts implicitly concede that the Bill of Rights doesn't support their position regarding reporters' privilege. "We shouldn't have to be here," Wimmer agreed, in discussing the situation June 30. "But given what's been happening, I think this is what we have to do to get some protection."

Meanwhile, Guild members who want to show their support for Miller can go to [www.rcfp.org](http://www.rcfp.org) and sign the following statement: "I support the decision of Judith Miller to refuse to disclose her confidential sources. Journalists are not above the law, but must be independent and free from government control if they are to effectively serve as government watchdogs."

## NLRB decision shows labor law is broken

*Continued from page 1*

"We assume that the 7 challenged voters were eligible to vote, and that they would have voted in favor of the objecting [management] party," the two board members wrote, reducing the margin to 78-70—or enough to be tilted in the opposite direction if four or more of the presumptively coerced employees had been free to vote their minds.

Too speculative? No problem: the determined duo offered an alternative, even more brazen hypothetical to justify their decision, in which "we start with the assumption that the eight employees exposed to improper interference voted 'yes' and would have voted 'no' absent the interference. That would change the election result to 70-71."

Translation: heads we win, tails you lose.

In addition to grounding their decision in questionable assumptions, the two board members apparently were untroubled by their rewriting of the rules after the fact. A decision that Lin should be classified as a supervisor, for example, wasn't made until long after the authorization cards had been distributed. And prior to the Harborside decision, reached only seven months ago, Lin's classification was in any case moot: NLRB law held that supervisory solicitation was not objectionable where "nothing in the words, deeds or atmosphere of a supervisor's request for authorization cards contains the seeds of potential reprisal,

punishment or intimidation."

But as the board's dissenting member, Wilma Liebman, observed in her minority opinion, by allowing the process to drag on for four years the majority had provided itself with the opportunity "to apply its new approach retroactively." Consistent with her dissent in the Harborside decision, she added, "I would follow the traditional approach and find here that Lin's participation in the solicitation of cards from employees in his department would not reasonably have tended to coerce these employees into voting for the Union." As she dryly noted, "It is clear that the Employer openly opposed the Union."

Indeed, the Chinese Daily News has been found guilty of dozens of unfair labor practices, has publicly sworn it will spend a million dollars if necessary to keep the union out and has become widely cited in human rights literature as a leading example of an anti-union campaign.

Ironically, the NLRB issued its decision only days after publication of a highly critical analysis of U.S. labor law by American Rights at Work, a non-partisan, non-profit organization working to promote workplace democracy. "Free and Fair? How Labor Law Fails U.S. Democratic Election Standards" was written by Gordon Lafer, currently an associate professor at the University of

Oregon, and proceeds from the observation that federal labor law was written "as a means of introducing the principles of U.S. democracy into the workplace."

Yet union representation elections share only one feature—secret ballots—associated with free and fair elections, Lafer concludes. Indeed, he adds, any nation trying to conduct an election using U.S. labor law as a model would be swiftly condemned for engaging in a sham exercise:

• Democracy requires that competing interests have equal access to voters. But under election law, an employer is not required to provide a list of employees eligible for unionization until seven days after the union provides authorization cards from at least 30% of the workforce. And the list is required to include only employees' addresses, not their telephone numbers or e-mail addresses.

Moreover, management is free to campaign against the union at any time and in any part of the workplace while barring union representatives from the premises. Employees, meanwhile, can campaign only on break time and in break areas, presumably under the noses of hostile supervisors. "The notion that union supporters should simply drive around, hoping to find workers at home who would welcome unannounced visitors, is unrealistic," Lafer contends.

• Democracy requires unfettered debate

and a guarantee of free speech, but under labor law employers may require workers to meet with supervisors one-on-one. "In these meetings, the same person who controls an individual's schedule, assigns job duties, approves vacation requests, grants raises or promotions, and has the power to terminate employees 'at will,' now conveys in the strongest possible terms the arguments for why employees should oppose unionization."

Employers also are permitted to require employees to attend mass anti-union meetings. There is no requirement that employees be allowed to speak at such meetings, and union supporters may be required to attend on the condition that they not ask questions or venture opinions—and may be legally terminated for doing so.

• Perhaps the most significant weakness of labor law, however, is its failure to ensure that procedural challenges do not delay implementation of the voters' will—a shortcoming driven home most poignantly by the Chinese Daily News experience. As Lafer presciently notes, "when the outcome of a union election is challenged by an employer, the union is barred from taking office for as long as it takes to resolve the complaints."

"During all this time," he adds, "the workplace is governed as if employees voted against unionization, no matter what the polls may have shown."



## News round-up

### Presses still cranking out money

The latest U.S. newspaper figures suggest that those presses are still printing money. The bad news is that advertising linage in May was down 1.2% compared to the same month a year earlier, while circulation revenue—a proxy measure for circulation itself—was down 1.9%. The “good” news, however, was that ROP ad revenue was up 3.1% over the same year. Translation: although advertisers are buying less ad space—presumably in part because newspapers are attracting fewer eyeballs—publishers are successfully charging even higher ad rates.

### Lawsuit: McClatchy skewed circulation

Add McClatchy to the small but growing string of publishers accused of artificially pumping up their circulation numbers. A federal lawsuit filed in Minneapolis by four advertisers alleges the Star Tribune required distributors to dump unsold papers and inaccurately reported returns so it could charge higher ad prices. McClatchy denies the charges, and skeptics note that one of the plaintiffs was sued by the Star Tribune in April for not paying more than \$60,000 for newspapers it had received for distribution. Still, news of the lawsuit, coupled with a more general stagnation of circulation growth at the company, knocked McClatchy stock down to a 52-week low.

### Court rules strike was not an act of God

The latest round in the battle between The Seattle Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer was awarded to the former, when the Washington State Supreme Court ruled 9-0 that the Times could claim operating losses in 2000 and 2001 toward the three consecutive years of red ink it needs to force a change—or termination—of the two papers’ joint operating agreement. The Hearst-owned P-I had contested the calculation because the losses were caused in part by a seven-week strike at the Times, which Hearst claimed fell under the agreement’s “act of God” exemption. The Times, meanwhile, says it has lost money in each of the past five years.

### Public doesn’t like us—or each other

The latest survey sponsored by the Pew Research Center finds overwhelming dissatisfaction with news organizations, with Republicans increasingly viewing the press as excessively critical of the U.S. while a growing number of Democrats say they believe the press has been too soft on the Bush administration. Those conclusions reflect a broader finding of the survey that Americans are becoming increasingly polarized in their political, ideological and cultural views. Radio listeners were among the most polarized news consumers, the survey found, while newspaper readers were the least.

### Google searches: no more surprises?

Proving that even the internet is not immune to the distortions caused by too much centralized control, the Google search engine has filed for a patent that could severely disrupt how information is presented. The patent, which ostensibly seeks to improve the quality of search results, is for an algorithm that would measure several new criteria before delivering results, including how long a news source has been in existence, the number of stories it publishes, the credibility of the source, its average story length, the number of its stories with bylines, the size of its staff and the amount of web traffic to its site. The expanded screen would mean the virtual death of small, upstart operations while enshrining the status quo.

### New labor reporting rules in effect

New, much stricter reporting rules for union officers, union employees and any union member who gets “anything of value” from an employer of that union’s members or from a vendor or supplier to the union are now in effect. Calendar-year 2004 transactions were to be reported by July 15 of this year on the Labor Department’s form LM-30 and will be due in April each year hereafter. Although the rules exempt reporting of small or sporadic “gifts of insubstantial value, unrelated to the recipient’s status” in the union, any item or service worth more than \$25 must be claimed.

### Really briefly . . .

Canadian convention delegates should start planning ahead: the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security says that no one will be allowed to enter the U.S. without a passport after the end of next year. . . . 63% of U.S. corporations responding to a survey by an e-mail security vendor said they either employ or intend to employ staff to read and control outbound e-mail. . . . Despite some recent publicity about the hidden costs of off-shoring jobs, IBM plans to add 14,000 employees in India this year alone—even as it lays off 13,000 in Europe and the U.S. . . . The Health Care Accountability Act, introduced June 22, would make public the extent to which large corporations—think Wal-Mart—shift employee health care costs onto taxpayers; approximately 30 states are considering similar legislation. . . . Still searching for ways to put lipstick on a pig, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is proceeding with plans to add the salaries of managers and other top executives to its monthly payroll survey, thereby skewing averages upward.

## San Francisco contract talks still inching ahead

Collective bargaining between the San Francisco Chronicle and several of its unions continued as contracts expired at midnight, June 30, with Guild officials saying no strike vote had been scheduled. The Northern California Media Guild is the largest of the Hearst-owned newspaper’s unions, representing approximately 870 editorial, advertising, marketing, circulation and customer service employees.

A Guild bargaining bulletin dated July 7 said committee members were seeking management clarification of its proposed restructuring of some pay classifications, but added few other details. “There has been no agreement [on an overall pay proposal] yet, pending clarification of several questions, and formulation of any counterproposal from the Guild,” the bulletin added. “We are also dealing on a daily basis with a number of other proposed changes to the agreement.”

Separately, the National Labor Relations Board has charged the pressmen’s local, affiliated with the Graphic Communications Conference of the Teamsters, with refusing to negotiate. The NLRB complaint, a response to charges filed May 26 by the newspaper, has been set for a hearing Aug. 3 before an administrative law judge.

The pressmen have denied bargaining in bad faith, claiming they had met for bargaining talks with the

company three times. A company spokeswoman, while not denying that the meetings had occurred, characterized them as “talks” and not as genuine “negotiating sessions.” The press men held a noon rally and demonstration July 11 to present their side of the issue.

A tentative agreement was reached July 1 between the Chronicle and a local representing seven building engineers, and a separate tentative agreement reportedly has been reached with a vendors’ local representing 24 independent contractors selling the paper at kiosks. Still in talks are the mailers, representing 350 employees, and the typographers, representing 30.

A collateral effect of the talks is that they have derailed early negotiations at the San Jose Mercury News, whose health and pension fund is tied to the Chronicle’s in a “me-too” provision. Although the San Jose contracts don’t expire until the end of next June, management at the Knight Ridder newspaper asked last year for early talks on a limited number of issues. The company said then it hoped to wrap up negotiations by the end of 2004.

Instead, reported Frank Sweeney, a member of the bargaining committee, “After a flurry of meetings late last year and into the first part of this year, talks have ground to a halt.” Since February, only one bargaining session has been held in San Jose.

## After 9 months, Vindicator strike one for record books

In 1964, Guild members struck the Vindicator in Youngstown, Ohio for more than eight long months. Now they’re on the verge of outdoing themselves, closing in on the nine-month mark in a war of attrition with no end in sight.

The last formal bargaining session between the two sides was in March; an informal session with a federal mediator May 31 lasted three hours without any reported progress. But the number of scabs has increased only slightly, to 21, while more than 150 others remain on strike and show little loss of resolve.

Management, meanwhile, is tightening its belt. The security force it hired last winter is no longer housed in local motels but must now make do with more spartan quarters in the plant itself, sleeping on rented furniture and showering in the press room. And Youngstown Newspaper Guild officials say the Newhouse-supplied strikebreakers seem to have evaporated, replaced by college kids looking for summer work.

The result is a low-intensity form of warfare, with the most visible skirmishes occurring over Guild attempts to leaflet customers of businesses still advertising in the Vindicator. A company complaint to the National Labor Relations Board, in which it contended that the union’s leafletting was threatening advertisers, was rebuffed by the regional NLRB director in early June. Citing several Supreme Court decisions, the

director concluded that labor law does not prohibit peaceful handbilling “even when the handbilling urges a total consumer boycott of neutral secondary businesses.” The decision cheered Guild members, with local officials saying they would now expand their efforts.

Meanwhile, a July editorial in the local’s strike paper, the weekly Valley Voice, thanked contributors to its Adopt-A-Striker program for striking members. “With the most recent offer we received, 100 active members have benefited from this program,” it reported—a telling rebuttal to early naysayers who doubted the idea would gain any significant support.

Instead, pledges of \$100 per month per striker have emerged from as far afield as Georgia, Boston, Oregon and Canada, while local donors have accounted for nearly half of all contributions. The skeptics “are the same folks who predict the death of the union movement, expect workers to stop complaining about workplace conditions and consider the stress of strikes as a self-inflicted wound,” the thank-you editorial observed.

“Anyone who has ever been on strike, or had to live without a paycheck for any reason, certainly can appreciate unexpected help, especially from strangers who easily could have overlooked a conflict that didn’t affect their livelihoods.”

## Memphis is heating up

Summer is never a cool proposition in Memphis, but this year the heat is getting cranked up higher than usual at the Commercial Appeal. Members of the Memphis Newspaper Guild, whose contract expired January, 2004, and who haven’t received a pay increase since a year before that, have been getting plenty steamed. Now it’s becoming evident that Guild supporters have been targeted in a series of layoffs, ratcheting up the pressure.

Since layoffs started last November, eight members of the union’s bargaining team have been dismissed from their jobs, including two members of the executive committee. One, Lester Goldsmith, had been rated by his supervisor as the number two employee in a department of 16 people. The latest blow came June 27, when management laid off two employees on the copy desk with a total of 25 years’ experience—shortly after hiring three new people.

But the Guild has not been without friends. Following a meeting June 23 with publisher John

Wilcox, a group of faith and community leaders advised its constituents that “we did not feel that our concerns were adequately addressed” and urged that they e-mail Wilcox to complain about “patterns of gender and racial discrimination” in the newspaper’s pay practices. Among the most contentious issues in contract negotiations has been management’s effort to abolish the current pay scale and replace it with a “merit” system.

How much community pressure resulted from this and other initiatives is unknown, but on July 7 a surprise announcement from Wilcox said he was resigning at the end of this month to become the new publisher of The Examiner in San Francisco, owned by Denver-based billionaire Philip Anschutz. Wilcox has been at the Commercial Appeal since 2000 and had been a career E.W.Scripps employee for two decades.

The Guild “looks forward to this change on the management side as an opportunity for a ‘new covenant’ in the process of contract bargaining,” a wry Mark Watson, the local’s president, told a reporter.



# AFL-CIO approaches crossroad

## 'Change to Win' coalition appears poised to split, create rival federation

By Mark Gruenberg  
Press Associates, Inc.

In an anticipated key move in the struggle over the future of the AFL-CIO, two of its largest unions—the Service Employees and the United Food and Commercial Workers—have voted to leave if their plans for drastic changes in the federation are rebuffed at the AFL-CIO convention this month. Two other major unions, the Teamsters and UNITE HERE, may follow.

Meanwhile, all four unions plus the Laborers joined a compact June 15 they call the "Change to Win" coalition. They were joined two weeks later by the Carpenters, who quit the AFL-CIO four years ago over complaints that the federation was not devoting enough of its resources to organizing. Coalition members have pledged themselves to work jointly on organizing in core industries, to support each other's campaigns and to work with each other—and

other unions—on political action.

If the four unions actually do leave the federation after the convention, to be held July 25-28 in Chicago, they will take with them more than 4 million of the AFL-CIO's 13 million dues-paying members. The Carpenters claim another 550,000 members. But the dissident presidents—Andy Stern of SEIU, Bruce Raynor of UNITE HERE, James Hoffa of the Teamsters and Joe Hansen of UFCW—say a departure would not be about numbers as much as their apparently irreconcilable differences over labor's direction.

"We're talking about organizing core industries. They're talking about organizing 'a hot shop,'" Hansen said of the federation's present leaders. Added Hoffa: "Their idea is to spend more money on politics, but the last election was not lost because of money, but because of other reasons."

The AFL-CIO's executive committee and its executive council, seeking to avoid a

complete schism, have approved a budget for the fiscal year that started July 1 that increases funding for both organizing and year-round political activism. But the change in financial emphasis has to be approved at the convention, and the Change to Win coalition insists it still skimps on organizing.

"There has to be a commitment to belly up and ante up, with an obligation of significant resources" for organizing, insisted Laborers President Terry O'Sullivan, who still hasn't indicated if he will join the exodus if the other coalition partners leave.

The majority AFL-CIO leaders' plan adds more money for political lobbying than the Change to Win coalition finds acceptable, with a special emphasis on passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. But it also establishes a \$22.5 million strategic organizing fund to establish and promote joint organizing campaigns, while lowering labor constitutional barriers to such drives. And it

includes "an accelerated initiative to help more unions increase their capacity to organize, especially outside the deeply flawed National Labor Relations Board (elections) process."

The total budget is \$126 million over two years.

An additional last-minute wrinkle was added to the mix July 5 by Harry Kelber, a veteran labor journalist and outspoken critic of the current AFL-CIO leadership. Kelber announced he is a candidate for a seat on the 51-member Executive Council, which he said "guarantees that an election will take place, with a printed ballot and secret voting." (See related item, page 6.)

AFL-CIO elections typically are rubber-stamp affairs. "I shall try to smoke out at least some council incumbents to come out of their hiding to debate me on labor's future in the presence of convention delegates," Kelber promised. "If they want to be re-elected, let them earn it."

## 3 more shooting deaths renew sense of outrage

The body count of journalists killed by U.S. troops in Iraq went up by three over the past month, prompting a renewed call by TNG-CWA, the International Federation of Journalists and other journalists' groups for a full investigation of such deaths.

Knight Ridder correspondent Yasser Salihee was shot, apparently by a U.S. sniper, June 24 in Baghdad. Within a week two television journalists, Maha Ibrahim and Ahmed Wael Bakri, also were killed. Ibrahim was a news editor with a local television station and was on her way to work when she was shot by U.S. troops, who had come under attack. Bakri, a program director for al-Sharqiya television, was shot when he apparently failed to pull over as a U.S. convoy passed in the area.

In a July 11 letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, TNG-CWA President Linda Foley and Thomas Carpenter, National Director of News and Broadcasting for the American Federation of Television and Radio Actors, cited the three casualties in calling again for an independent investigation.

"This brings the number of journalists killed in incidents involving U.S. forces to 17," the letter pointed out. "And although scores more journalists have been killed by insurgents and others in Iraq, we continue to be concerned about the high number of journalist casualties attributable to actions by U.S. forces."

"The Pentagon's support for independent inquiries into these incidents will go a long way toward ending any speculation about the intention or motivation of U.S. troops toward these victims," the letter added.

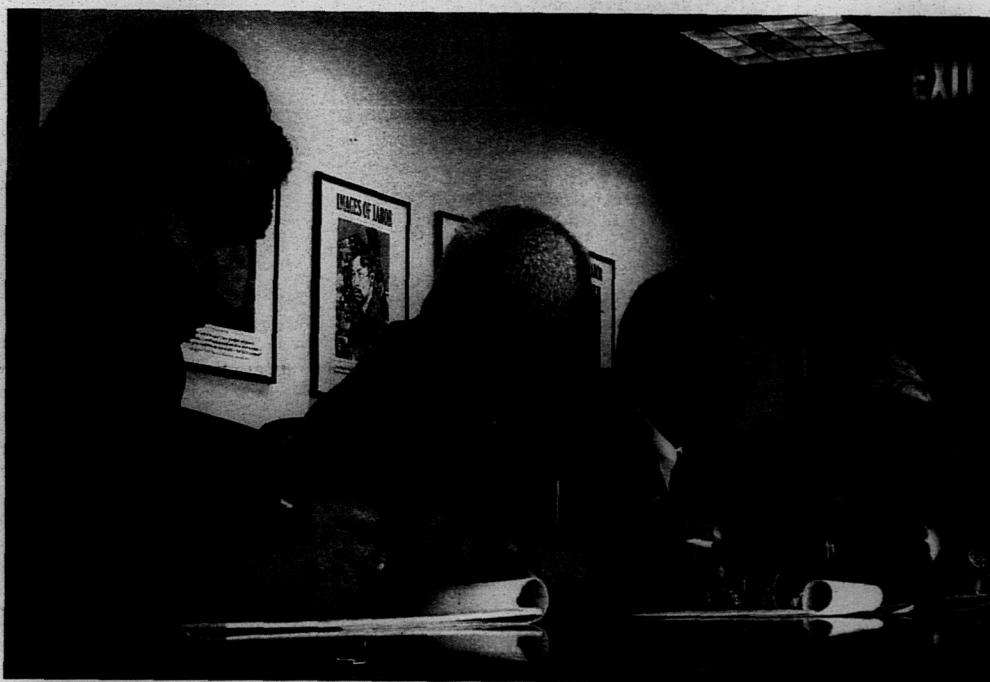
Similar requests for indepen-

dent inquiries have been ignored in the past, prompting claims that U.S. troops are trigger happy and that the military has become unaccountable for its actions. "There are many questions raised by these cases," said Aidan White, general secretary of the IFJ. "We expect the United States to produce credible and exhaustive reports on all of these deaths—that's the least the family, friends and colleagues of the victims expect."

The three shooting deaths came the same week the June issue of The Guild Reporter went to press; a front-page story in that issue described a venomous right-wing campaign to discredit Foley for her comments about such incidents. Ironically, the story also observed that as western journalists become so intimidated by such behavior that they pull out, their Iraqi and other Arabic surrogates become more at risk.

That was also the week Steve Weissman, whose four-part investigation of the apparent targeting of journalists in Iraq won recognition earlier this year from Project Censored, wrote a follow-up piece summarizing his conclusions. Although many reporters believed they were being purposely targeted in Iraq, he observed, the truth was more complicated—and more systemic.

"As far as anyone has yet proved, no U.S. commanding officer ever ordered a subordinate to fire on journalists as such," he wrote. "How, then, did the U.S. military end up killing journalists? It started with a simple decision: the Pentagon's rejection of responsibility for the lives of journalists who choose to work independently rather than embed themselves in a British or American military unit."



Iraqi union reps meet with CWA leaders during their June national tour, organized by U.S. Labor Against

the War. At extreme left is Falah Alwan, of the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions.

## Iraqi labor leaders seek U.S. union support for withdrawal

Hosted by American union members opposed to the invasion of Iraq, a delegation of Iraqi union leaders toured the U.S. for 17 days in June to provide a generally unreported view of labor conditions in their country.

Meeting in Washington with lawmakers and leaders of the AFL-CIO, the CWA and the Service Employees, the Iraqi contingent described the provisional authority's anti-union policies and called for a withdrawal of all foreign troops. "The occupation was to manipulate and control the Iraqi economy in the interests of the American government. We will oppose it all the way," said Falad Abboud Umara, general secretary of the Basra-based General Union of Oil Employees.

"In the Iraqi labor movement, we made it clear that change through war will produce complex issues and not bring democracy. In our own way, we have proposed alternatives," added Adnan A. Rashed, executive officer of the Union of Mechanics, Printing and Metals Workers, who did most of the speaking for the group.

"We expect you" in the U.S. "to put pressure on your own government, added to what we are doing, to get rid of the occupation forces," Rashed added.

Among the conditions fostered by the occupation, according to the Iraqi delegation:

- Unemployment as high as 70% and steep wage

and benefit cuts imposed by the provisional authority. "The strongest weapon of the employers is to threaten workers" on the job with replacement by the unemployed "because there are so many of them willing to work for low wages," explained Falah Alwan, President of the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions.

- Retention of Saddam Hussein's 1987 labor law, which bars organizing and unionization in the public sector—which includes most of the Iraqi economy, notably the oil industry.

- Strikes and other job actions by workers angered by cuts in pay, corruption by managers and cuts in federal subsidies to Iraqi workers and families.

- Assassination of labor leaders and activists, plus destruction of union offices. U.S. troops account for most of the destruction, they said, while the assassinations are the work of Ba'athist, pro-Hussein insurgents. All the unions oppose the insurgency and want a secular, free Iraq.

- An interim government that is "based on sectarian divisions," with labor "deliberately marginalized" and excluded from the talks, Alwan said. "We believe the progressive members in Iraqi society are strong and capable of creating an alternative in facing both the terrorists and the right wing," he added—before conceding that the Iraqi labor movement is handicapped to some extent by in-fighting.—Press Associates, Inc.



# A couple of old war-horses remind us what we should be seeking in labor's future . . .

By Andy Zipser  
Editor, The Guild Reporter

As the captains of organized labor set sail on what appears to be a collision course with each other, their impact in Chicago later this month promises to reverberate throughout the U.S. labor movement for some considerable time to come. The dissidents argue that a significantly greater share of union resources must be expended on organizing, so as to reverse the unabated erosion of labor's ranks. The defenders of the established order, while agreeing that more organizing is needed, maintain that labor must step up its political activism, too—that without a significant change in the political climate, all the organizing in the world won't overcome the stacked deck known as the National Labor Relations Board.

In such differences, we're told, are revolutions born.

Yet one remarkable and little noted aspect of this impending confrontation is just how removed it is from the daily lives of virtually everyone who might be affected. There are 13 million union members affiliated with the AFL-CIO, perhaps 16 million union members in the U.S. all told. Yet the so-called "debate" about labor's future has been confined to no more than a few hundred union members, of whom only several score have anything resembling a decisive voice. What do millions of dues-paying union members think about the grand issues of the day? How would they resolve the organizing/political action conundrum if given a choice?

The answer, alas, will never be known—and that in itself underscores the missing element in today's tussling. Although a few unions (CWA among them) lay claim to democratic impulses, much of organized labor still operates on feudal principles, its baronies and duchies vying for control under the troubled gaze of a monarch too weak to impose discipline. The idea that mere commoners might have something to contribute, much less that the future of organized labor is dependent on active, informed involvement by the rank and file, remains a distinctly foreign concept within the AFL-CIO and most of its affiliates.

Against that backdrop, then, it can be a bracing tonic to dip into the memories and thoughts of two of organized labor's most venerable survivors, Harry Kelber and Herman Benson. Although well-advanced in years—Kelber is 91, Benson a year younger—both have been life-long union activists, both have made themselves disagreeable to the union movement's authoritarians, both continue to think and write clearly and incisively, and both have been unabashed champions of union democracy in a meaningful sense. No surprise, then, that both men frequently are marginalized, disparaged by defenders of the status quo as well-meaning but out of touch with modern reality.

Reading these two books might dispel such facile notions.

"Rebels, Reformers and Racketeers: How Insurgents Transformed The Labor Movement" is the more recent work, published this April after several years of false steps and frustrated opportunities, and purports to tell Benson's personal story: How "a young man, beginning as a Marxist radical socialist became a leading advocate of democracy in unions, for the defense of the

rights of all."

In fact, however, Benson is not nearly as comfortable talking about himself as is Kelber, and so "Rebels" devotes more of its coverage to those rare dissidents who occasionally challenge the squalid—and sometimes crooked—bureaucracies that too many unions devolve into. It also is a spirited defense of a piece of federal legislation that many labor leaders detest, the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, not least because of its financial and other public reporting requirements. But the LMRDA also attempts to protect individual union members'

## Rebels, Reformers, and Racketeers



rights of free speech and due process, to assure fair and democratic election of union officers and to protect union locals from the imposition of unfair and repressive trusteeships.

That the LMRDA is a flawed piece of legislation is evidenced by the frequency with which the activists crash and burn. "Some were beaten, lost their jobs. A few were killed. I know about them because I worked with many of them, told their stories, and tried to help them defend their rights in their unions and in the courts," Benson writes. "Only a few were successful, and few of their efforts led to permanently organized oppositions."

Benson's involvement with this fringe element was stimulated, in part, by a three-year Senate investigation of union racketeering known as the McClellan Commission. As the roll call of mobster-influenced and otherwise corrupt unions expanded to include some of the biggest and most influential names in labor, issues of union democracy that Benson had been mulling as editor of a left-wing tabloid called Labor Action gained more urgency.

"The more I thought about it, the more one big question continued to nag at me," he writes. "The future of democracy in society, I was convinced, depended upon the working class. But if this working class cannot defend democracy within its own class institutions, within its own unions, how can it be a dependable force to defend democracy in society?"

The McClellan hearings ended in 1958 amid public avowals by the AFL-CIO that it

**Rebels, Reformers and Racketeers: How Insurgents Transformed The Labor Movement**, by Herman Benson, 1st Books, 2005. 241 pp. May be obtained by contacting the AUD office in New York, at 718-564-1114, [info@uniondemocracy.org](mailto:info@uniondemocracy.org)

**My 60 Years as a Labor Activist: The Life Story of an Incurable Radical Who Never Stopped Fighting for Working People**, by Harry Kelber, A.G. Publishing, 1996. 283 pp. May be obtained by contacting Kelber at 718-858-7728, [hkelber@igc.org](mailto:hkelber@igc.org)

would clean house and its assertions that rank-and-file involvement was key to successful reform. But once the spotlight turned away, and following adoption of the LMRDA, "the AFL-CIO crusade against racketeers simply evaporated."

Benson's course, however, was set. In 1960 he began publishing Union Democracy in Action, a "one-man-band newsletter" intended "to break the story of the lonely union reformer." Forty-two issues later he became convinced that publicizing such cases wasn't enough: the lonely union reformers needed legal advice and moral support and a community of activists to legitimize their efforts. Enter the Association for Union Democracy, an organization that had been chartered in 1969 but had lain essentially dormant.

Today Benson is in his 33rd year at AUD, now publishing Union Democracy Review, but this time as titular head of an organization that has backed numerous activists fighting for more of a voice in their own unions. And as "Rebels" makes clear, Benson continues to wrestle with questions that seem to have escaped notice in the current AFL-CIO power struggle. For example, he writes, when John Sweeney and his cohorts preach about organizing the unorganized, they "seek that aim by rhetoric, by lectures and classes, by teach-ins, by advertising, by devising clever slogans, by union-sponsored credit cards, by every gadget and gimmick of public relations. They look everywhere except to what is most effective: the free independent

unassailable labor credentials and convictions and an infectious zest for mixing it up with anyone who opposes him, friend or foe. The result is an entertaining journey through the decades that would be no less informative, if somewhat more pleasant, if the author were a tad more restrained.

Guild members attending last year's CWA convention may remember Kelber's name, if not his face: his was one of several appeals from a CWA executive decision, in Kelber's case seeking reinstatement to a New York-based typographer's local after a lengthy non-payment of dues. Kelber wasn't at the convention to argue his case, and his appeal was voted down; but it's noteworthy that CWA President Morton Bahr prefaced his comments by observing that Kelber had been instrumental in getting him back into college to earn his bachelor's. Kelber has that effect on people, pushing them forward with one hand while slapping them down with the other for some slight, real or imagined.

"My 60 Years as a Labor Activist" captures some of that sense, too—and soon could be retitled to add a decade. Published in 1996, it follows Kelber from the Great Depression, when he edited two weekly labor papers, through the 1995 AFL-CIO convention, when he ran for vice president, "the first and only independent candidate in 30 years." This month he's repeating the feat (see related story, page 5).

Much of the book's value is in its unsentimental and unflinching look at a turbulent period in American history. But aside from its historical value, "My 60 Years" offers an experienced analysis of why the U.S. labor movement is on the ropes today, and what it

might take to get it back into the fight. Not surprisingly, Kelber is in this regard quite in tune with Benson. Once labor leaders get ensconced in their positions, he observes, "they get used to the prestige and perquisites of power and a more affluent lifestyle . . . [and] are reluctant to give them up. Inevitably, they develop a proprietary attitude toward the organization. They rate loyalty to themselves, even more important than competence, as the prime qualification in selecting their staff. Their staffs, in turn, make sure that their bosses are not upstaged by any potential challengers, especially those who come forward with new ideas that might be welcomed by the membership."

Where Benson places more emphasis on grassroots activism, Kelber makes no bones about his belief that "it takes strong leaders to build democratic unions"—but adds that there has to be a mechanism, like term limits, to prevent the stagnation that now afflicts many unions. Ultimately, he adds, labor's "supreme task" is to "challenge Corporate America head on, both on the economic battlefield and in the political arena." And to accomplish that, the AFL-CIO "must go beyond its rhetorical blasts"—a statement that echoes Benson's complaint about the federation's apparent belief that it can change reality by talking it to death.

Any debate about labor's future would be greatly enriched with the addition of these two voices.

## From the Great Depression To The New Century

My 60 Years as a Labor Activist

By Harry Kelber

The Life Story of an Incurable Radical Who Never Stopped Fighting For Working People

democratic activity of union members inside their own unions."

Where Benson devotes most of his book to the struggles of numerous other individuals, Kelber's literary foray is more egocentric—and that isn't all bad. Notwithstanding an outsized self-regard and a waspish quality edging his later perceptions, Kelber has



## RANK AND FILE

# Forsaking freedom for sake of freedom

*Editor's note: TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, whose comments usually fill this space, said she couldn't write more eloquently about the events of July 6 than Connie Schultz already had for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Schultz was awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for commentary; her column is reprinted by permission of the Plain Dealer.*

By Connie Schultz  
Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild

Wednesday, journalists as diverse as the communities they cover left behind their differences and their deadlines to march in unison for the public's right to know what goes on in our government.

Forgive me this moment of pride, but the terrain of mainstream journalism has been parched and bitter lately, a land ravaged by the willful misdeeds of some of our own and the downpour of vitriol from the Bush administration.

Wednesday, I found an oasis, and it was a wellspring of our own making. I drank in deep.

Here in Cleveland, 30 members of The Newspaper Guild rallied in front of the federal courthouse because two reporters were facing jail time. We carried signs reading, "Protect the Public's Right to Know." For a while, we wore red crepe paper tied across our mouths, but then we eventually worked up the nerve to start yelling "Free the Press!"

We were emboldened, perhaps, by the certainty that fellow Newspaper Guild members were doing the same thing at the same

time all around the country.

We knew journalists planned to march on federal courthouses in Boston, Chicago and Dayton. They promised to rally in Philadelphia, too, and in New York, Memphis and St. Paul.

Now, understand, newspaper reporters aren't normally the screaming type, and most would rather sink into the earth than generate their own publicity. But these are times most of us never thought we'd see. Two fellow Guild members were facing serious prison stays for doing their jobs.

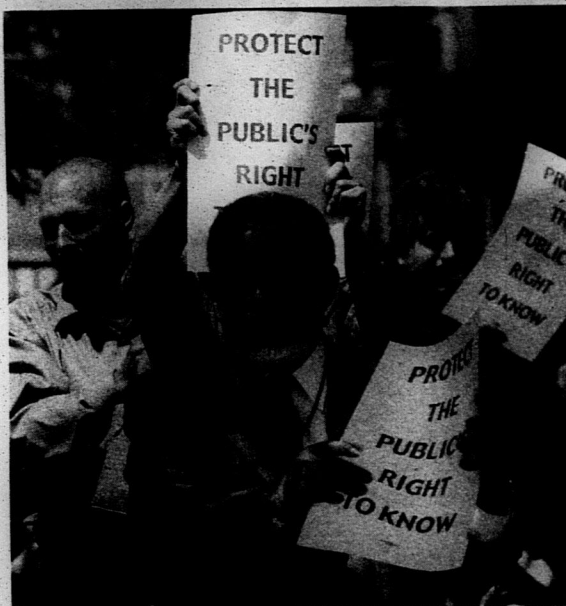
And so, after two minutes of silence standing at our desks, we marched.

As I write this on deadline, I still don't know the final fates of reporters Judith Miller of The New York Times and Matthew Cooper of Time, who refused to identify sources regarding the disclosure of a CIA agent's identity.

What I do know is that the United States Supreme Court refused even to hear their case, and so their appeals were all used up. That was all I needed to know to show up in front of that courthouse.

To be honest, I would have loved to have seen more of my colleagues there. Work kept some away, but I fear the plague of complacency has taken hold, too. Journalists my age or older were used to the public's support for our right to ask the questions they can't ask themselves. We never saw this one coming, and too many of us still don't want to believe the day has arrived.

I was heartened that so many of our young reporters showed up to march, including several interns. Their careers in this honorable profession are just beginning, but



Mark Naymik, Richard Peery and John Kuehner, all of the Plain Dealer, rally July 6 in front of the Carl B. Stokes Federal Courthouse in Cleveland.

storm clouds loom over their horizon. They may never have what I could take for granted even at their age — guaranteed confidentiality of sources, editors who stood by me no matter what the threat. How, I wonder, will we convince them to stay?

At Wednesday's protest, I would have welcomed our critics, those in the alternative media and in the community, who regularly deride mainstream journalists as being nothing but drones for corporate greed. But they were nowhere to be seen.

Where are the protesters who rant about stolen elections and voter fraud? Where are all those angry letter-writers forever accusing us of parroting the administration? Surely, they understand what is at stake if two reporters—mainstream journalists, both of them—go to prison for protecting their sources.

Wait.

This e-mail alert just popped up on my screen: The Associated Press is reporting that Matthew Cooper cited a direct personal communication from his source freeing him from their deal of confidentiality. Judith Miller continues to refuse to cooperate.

Wait again. Editor & Publisher just reported that Miller is going to

jail. For how long we don't yet know.

No matter what happens, I do know this:

Yesterday, I joined my fellow journalists to protest what the government is trying to do to all of us. For the first time that any of us here could remember, we were gathered, not in self-interest, but in protest for the public we serve.

For that, we must thank Judith Miller and Matthew Cooper.

Wherever they are.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### To The Editor,

In the June 17th edition, in a story about the status of bargaining between the San Francisco Chronicle and the Newspaper Guild of Northern California, there was a reference that publisher Frank Vega—in his previous job in Detroit—was known "for his role in breaking that city's bitter newspaper strike."

I take strong exception to that conclusion. It gives the false impression that the unions involved in the Detroit strike/lock-out were defeated and lost their right to represent employees at the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News.

The Detroit strike/lockout ended only after the Detroit newspapers negotiated new collective bargaining agreements with the Newspaper Guild of Detroit, Pressmen Local 13-N, Teamsters Local 372, Detroit Typographical Local 18 and Teamsters Local 2040. Those contracts were renewed in 2003 and are in place until 2007.

Under Vega's administration, the 5.5-year labor dispute cost Gannett and Knight Ridder an estimated \$300 million as well as one third of their paid circulation. The combined Sunday paper, which sold 1.1 million copies prior to the strike, now limps along at 682,000. The weekday Free Press fell from 525,000 to slightly more than 347,000, while the weekday Detroit News fell from 354,000 to today's 218,840.

What is harder to quantify is the significant loss of public goodwill and prestige that these papers suffered under Vega's watch. During his tenure, Vega himself narrowly avoided going to prison in an insider stock scandal that resulted in felony convictions of

several Gannett executives.

In short, the only thing that Vega "broke" was an opportunity to grow a business instead of diminishing it.

—Lou Mieczko, President,  
Detroit Newspaper Guild

### To the Editor,

It is obvious to me that Linda Foley's hatred of George Bush is what ultimately got her in trouble with her comments. She went overboard by blasting the military along with the President. You wrote a FAIR piece on this, although I am sure that while she got a lot of HATE mail, there are also good UNION members like me who think she went overboard. Let's remember that the majority of journalists who are killed are done so by terrorists: Remember Daniel Pearl?

—Mick Timmons,  
Circulation District Manager,  
Minnesota Newspaper Guild

### To the Editor,

I read with alarm your story about the onslaught of vicious attacks on TNG-CWA President Linda Foley.

To me, the criticisms against Linda are baseless and without merit. She was simply doing what she has always done so well, standing up for all of us in demanding greater accountability for the deaths of 14 of our colleagues in the Iraq War. I hope she continues to do so. The ugly tenor of the e-mails and phone calls you described seems sadly typical of the bitterness that characterizes most political discussions these days.

However, I was also dismayed at the tan-

gent your story took when you compared the attacks on Linda with stories about University of Colorado Professor Ward Churchill. To suggest that Churchill is simply a "poster child" for a conservative disinformation campaign is, at best, simplistic and misleading. It glosses over the fact that many of the "hundreds" of stories written about Churchill have been legitimate straight-forward news stories.

These stories have explored and shed light on serious subjects, such as allegations of plagiarism, Churchill's claims to Native American ancestry and the broader issues of tenure and academic freedom. Loyal Guild members wrote many of these stories, not members of a lunatic right-wing fringe.

What's more, your story is inaccurate on a key point. The Churchill story did not break in January because "the extreme right wing stumbled across an essay that Churchill had written." The story broke because an enterprising young journalism student at Hamilton College was bright and resourceful enough to find Churchill's essay on the internet and report on it in his campus newspaper. The Associated Press soon picked up the story, and the rest of us went to work covering a bona fide news story.

Yes, conservative bloggers were quick to pick up the controversy and amplify it, and yes, the "shouting heads" on 24-hour cable followed suit. I was stunned to see the number of websites that posted my first Churchill story the very next day. But please don't lump Linda and Churchill into the same category of victimized "truth purveyor." The comparison is flawed and harmful to a great

union president.

And don't lose sight of the fact that at the heart of the Churchill controversy is a legitimate news story, one that deserves the coverage we have given it and will continue to provide.

—John Ensslin, Shop Steward,  
Denver Newspaper Guild/ Rocky  
Mountain News unit

### To the Editor,

Even though I've retired, I'm delighted to have been able to sign the national shield law petition and dash off a note.

In the '80s, I was the last editor of feed/back, the California Journalism Review, and one cover I designed (but had an artist very effectively execute) was of an enormous hand and gavel cracking to pieces a shield held up by a reporter smaller than the hand and gavel. If memory serves correctly, this was after California had added a shield law into the state constitution and it was being blithely ignored by authorities and the judiciary.

Always very pro-union, I too observed the time of silence today, July 6, in support of my former colleagues and out of respect for Miller and Cooper and their tenacity in the face of legal coercion, especially Miller, who I don't believe would reveal her source(s) even with their permission.

I was glad to have had this opportunity to do what little I could on Miller's, Cooper's and all reporters' behalf, still sisters and brothers in my heart.

—Shannon Bryony, Northern California  
and San Jose Newspaper Guilds (retired)

The mission of The Guild Reporter, approved May, 2004 by the TNG-CWA Executive Council, is as follows:

"As stated in the TNG-CWA Constitution, 'It shall be the duty of The Guild Reporter to promote in every legitimate way the policies of TNG-CWA.' The Guild Reporter belongs to the rank-and-file membership of TNG-CWA.

"Guild Reporter content will be of interest to the members,

and its first priority will be current news affecting the locals. The members of this union expect The Guild Reporter to inform, motivate and challenge its readers.

"To maintain its journalistic integrity and traditions, The Guild Reporter must never become a personal political platform or be misused for internal political purposes by the elected leadership of TNG-CWA."

By TNG Convention action, letters to the editor shall be limited to 200 words and shall avoid libel and subjects detrimental to the Guild. Members subjected to personal attack shall be given opportunity to reply in the same issue, but publication of either attack or reply shall not be delayed longer than one issue.

Deadline for letters and articles: Friday before publication. (Next deadline: August 5.)



## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

## Commencement should be colorful

By Debbie Thomas  
Human Rights Director

I recently attended commencement exercises at the National Labor College, where two friends were receiving their master's degrees. Larry Smoot, a former Guild employee, now works in the CWA's legislative department. Betsy Regan, president of our Brockton local, also was chosen as the graduate student representative for her class.

Betsy's speech gave me pause. "We will leave here armed with our education and knowledge so that we may bring unity, justice and strength to the workplace," she said—prompting me to wonder: who is this army? Is it really prepared for battle? Will we ever win the war?

Well, that all depends.

According to the college's website, more than 800 of its students have earned Bachelor of Arts degrees since 1997; that includes me, a member of the class of 2001. But as I watched this year's 107 graduates march in, I was struck by how few females and visible minorities participated in the procession. Perhaps 10% of the class was female, with minorities comprising no more than a sprinkling, while the overwhelming majority was older, white and male. As I recalled my own experience, I remembered it was much the same.

I spoke about my observations with college spokesman Matt Losak. He and Dean Sue Shurman subsequently sent me a statistical breakdown of the college's graduates to date: 78% white, 13% Hispanic and 6% African-American; 24% women and 76% male.

Are we being inclusive or exclusive?

In January, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that men were more likely than women and blacks were more likely than any other racial group to be union members.

Specifically, in 2004 the union membership rate was 13.8% for men and 11.1% for women, although the gap has

narrowed considerably since 1983, when the unionization rate for men was 10 percentage points higher than the rate for women. The bad news? This narrowing occurred because the union membership rate for men declined more rapidly than the rate for women.

Blacks, meanwhile, were more likely (15.1%) to be union members than whites (12.2%), Asians (11.4%), or Hispanics or Latinos (10.1%). Among age groups, union membership rates were highest among workers 45 to 54 years old (17.0%) and were lowest among those ages 16 to 24 (4.7%).

This National Labor College program is a fantastic learning opportunity for all union members and is tailored specifically to meet working people's needs. Credit is awarded for life experience, for example, recognizing skills and knowledge acquired on the job and in other non-academic settings. And the program itself requires just one week of on-campus class time for each course, with the balance of the work done at home and on-line.

But the range of union members taking advantage of this opportunity is far more limited than the potential student population. Has word of this unique program filtered down to the rank and file of the labor movement? Let's spread the word. As the nature of our work keeps changing because of technology, outsourcing and other developments, education is key to everyone's survival.

For more information, check out the school's website, [www.geomeany.org](http://www.geomeany.org), or call 1-800-462-4237. Or contact me for a personal testimonial, at 202-434-1262 or [dthomas@cwa-union.org](mailto:dthomas@cwa-union.org).

Oh, and one more thing: let's all send our congratulations to CWA President Morty Bahr and CLUW past president Gloria Johnson, each of whom received an honorary degree at the same ceremony.

## STICKS AND STONES

**Bigot:** Person obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices.

## Changes mean stronger finances, greater stress

Buffed by the internet and other technological changes, the membership cooperative known as Associated Press is reinventing itself—and kicking up a dust storm of uncertainty in the process.

Ironically, the restructuring comes as the wire service comes off a year of growing profitability, with revenue growth in 2004 surpassing 6%, according to CWA analyst Sumanta Ray. "The AP is making big strides in improving its bottom-line performance," Ray said, observing that its core operating income soared 300%—to \$36 million from \$12 million—after one-time losses from unprofitable acquisitions were excluded.

The strong revenue growth more than offset a 2.8% increase in expenses, indicating that AP's fiscal trends are "very healthy," Ray said. Indeed, salaries and labor costs decreased as a percentage of total sales, reflecting a continued growth in labor efficiency, even as general overhead ate up a larger proportion of sales dollars.

Yet despite those gains, labor may be getting primed for even more cuts as AP chief executive Tom Curley continues shaking up the operation. His restructuring of global operations already has resulted in more than

a dozen forced retirements or departures of seasoned journalists overseas, prompting charges of age discrimination and at least a couple of lawsuits. Domestically, meanwhile, surviving employees are being forced to cope with a greater variety of tasks and greatly increased time pressure.

A new breaking-news headline service was introduced last month, as was a multimedia investigative team, and a multimedia package aimed at young adults is promised for later this year. But the most worrisome development is an internet-based system called eAP that will label all stories, photos, graphics, videos and sound clips with identifying codes to enable the wire service to know who's using what.

The worry, say officials at the News Media Guild, is that eAP will become a ratings system to determine staffing and pay levels, and may even become factored into decisions to close a bureau or end a beat. Some AP members, meanwhile, contend that eAP will lead to a change in billing practices that would penalize members using AP material in multiple formats.

One possible response: a Napster-style file sharing system to bypass AP altogether.

## Canadian Labor Congress lines up on media issues

As outsized as it is within TNG-CWA, TNG-Canada is a pretty small player within the overall Canadian labor movement. But as its participation in the recent Canadian Labour Congress convention proved once again, size isn't everything.

Though small in size, TNG Canada reports it succeeded in shining the spotlight on several media matters and won valuable support for its position on various issues. Guild members distributed 3,000 flyers publicizing the increasingly strained contract bargaining at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (see related story, page 2), gaining approval for a motion urging the government to increase the CBC's funding.

The Guild also forwarded to the CLC the recommendations it made in a major brief last month to a Senate committee studying media concentration. Among the concerns it cited was a possible corporate takeover of the Canadian Press/Broadcast News, a

national bilingual news service, and it urged a ban on cross-ownership of newspaper and broadcasting outlets.

The CLC approved measures on both counts, as well as a motion demanding "that the federal government maintain existing restrictions on the foreign ownership of our broadcast, cable and telecommunications companies."

In urging increased funding for the CBC, the CLC motion noted that "CBC provides the best hope of providing news and cultural programming to all Canadians that is fair and accurate and in the public interest." It also pointed out that public broadcasting "is crucial to fostering a culture of respect for diversity and democratic participation in Canada."

Also at the convention, held in mid-June in Montreal, TNG Canada Director Arnold Amber was re-elected as a vice president representing smaller unions on the CLC's executive committee.

## DAYBOOK

- 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
- Jobs with Justice Annual Mtg., Sept. 22-25, St. Louis
- New England District Council, Oct. 1-2, Manchester, NH
- CWA Online Comm. Conference, Oct. 17-18, Baltimore
- Western District Council, Oct. 29-30, Seattle

Have an event not listed here?

E-mail details to:

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## FROM THE MORGUE

## Seventy years ago this month:

U.S. publishers attempt to gain an exemption from the "Wagner labor disputes bill"—soon to become the National Labor Relations Act—by arguing it would violate their First Amendment rights. . . . The Toledo Guild initiates a school for cub reporters, enrolling seven. . . . The Madison Guild elects the managing editor of the Wisconsin State-Journal as its president—over his protests—prompting a Guild Reporter editorial to observe that the vote "smacks of company unionism."

## Fifty years ago this month:

Congressional hearings spotlight communist activities in the Guild in the late '30s, leading to the discharge of two top New York journalists and prompting a telegram from the Guild's executive vice president to clarify that the union had "eliminated all vestiges of communist influence" in 1941. . . . Heywood Hale Broun, son of the Guild's founder and first president, regales convention delegates as banquet speaker. . . . The AFL and CIO, failing to agree on a new name for their merged organization, punt away the problem by hyphenating the lot.

## Twenty-five years ago this month:

Lexington delegate Monty Foley and alternate Linda Foley celebrate their second anniversary at the Guild convention. . . . Inquiries to the American Newspaper Publishers' Assn. about possible health hazards associated with video display terminals jump four-fold in the first five months of the year. Convention delegates are told VDT usage at U.S. newspapers is doubling every year. . . . The New York Guild strikes Reuters.

## THE GUILD Reporter

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(See box on page 2 for any address changes)

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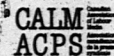
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