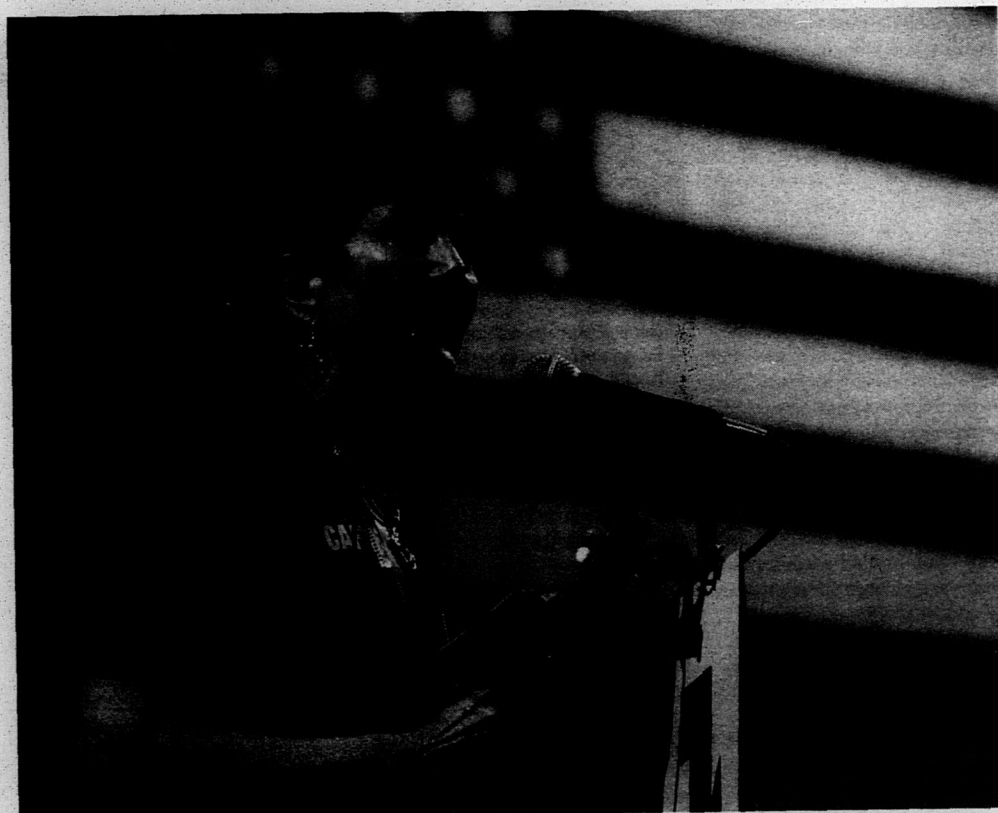


THE GUILD Reporter

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TNG-CWA President Linda Foley addresses the AFL-CIO convention, citing the Chinese Daily News as a prime example of how badly labor law in the U.S. is broken.

AFL-CIO splinters on 50th anniversary

The AFL-CIO's golden anniversary came with divorce papers, as four of its biggest affiliates boycotted the federation's quadrennial convention July 25-28 in Chicago. The Service Employees International Union and the Teamsters took an additional step, declaring they were pulling out of the federation altogether, and were joined in disaffiliation a week later by the United Food and Commercial Workers.

The fourth union spurning what was supposed to be the federation's 50th anniversary celebration, Unite Here, also was expected to disaffiliate but had not done so as the Guild Reporter went to press. Together with the United Farm Workers, the Laborers and the Carpenters, the four maverick unions have created a competing umbrella group calling itself the Change to Win

Coalition. The CWC said it would hold a founding convention next month in Cincinnati.

In splitting from the AFL-CIO, the dissident unions have peeled away approximately a third of the federation's membership and a nearly proportional share of its \$96 million in annual dues. Just how the sudden income shortfall will be digested remains uncertain: although AFL-CIO delegates approved a constitutional amendment boosting dues by 12 cents per member per month (including making permanent a temporary 8 cent levy that had been targeted for political action), that still won't be enough to cover projected spending.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka said the budget will be reworked, but the constitutional

Continued on page 5



CWA Executive Vice President Larry Cohen, at left, was elected to the AFL-CIO executive board; behind him at right is CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling.

Youngstown votes to end strike, 50-41

After 261 days on a picket line that proved remarkably leak-proof, striking employees of the Youngstown Vindicator approved a three-year contract that gives them their first raises in five years.

The 50-41 vote Aug. 3 by members of the Youngstown Newspaper Guild came just a week after they rejected, 85-17, a company ultimatum that they return to work or lose their jobs to permanent replacements. Instead, union members stepped up pressure on the publication's advertisers, prompting two big accounts to notify the newspaper they would suspend their business until the contract dispute was resolved.

Meanwhile, TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer and international rep Jay Schmitz joined the negotiations, bringing a fresh perspective to battle-hardened positions. The upshot, following company acceptance of modifications in layoff language, was a heated two-hour debate that ended

in the narrowly decided vote.

"The real heroes of this strike were the Guild members who spent 261 days on the picket line," said the local's president, Anthony Markota, while recounting the seasonal extremes of a cold winter and brutally hot summer. Indeed, of approximately 180 reporters, photographers, editors, page designers and classified and circulation employees who walked off the job Nov. 16, only 24 crossed the picket line, with most of the defections occurring in the last couple of months. Another dozen or so strikers have moved on to new jobs elsewhere.

The Vindicator strike was the newspaper's first in 40 years but surpassed that walkout, which was five days shorter. Unlike the 1964-65 strike, however, the Vindicator this time managed to keep publishing with the assistance of strike-breakers supplied by other newspapers, notably including the Newhouse chain.

Continued on page 3

'Terrible' contract reluctantly okayed by Chronicle staff

Confronted by a pugnacious publisher and by evidence that the San Francisco Chronicle has been hemorrhaging money, the newspaper's Guild-represented employees accepted a five-year contract whose broad concessions include loss of 120 jobs and reduced wages.

"It's a terrible contract, but given the economic situation and the game of hardball management played, it is the best option," said Michael Cabanatuan, president of the Northern California Media Guild, after the July 27 vote. The vote was 574-119 to accept the package, representing a 78% turnout.

The Chronicle, purchased by Hearst nearly five years ago, lost at least \$60 million last year and

reportedly was running even deeper losses this year. But while Guild members were prepared to make some concessions after CWA financial analyst Bob Patrician confirmed the newspaper's claims, the company's decision early this year to hire Frank Vega as publisher signalled its intent to push for much more.

True to form, Vega—who ramrodded management's response to the Detroit newspaper strike a decade ago—quickly ramped up preparations for a lengthy lockout. A 17-page internal memo to all exempt staff, leaked to a local alternative paper, outlined preparations for a work stoppage that included bail assistance procedures

"I don't want to sound too omi-

Continued on page 5

Inside this issue



California interpreters victorious page 2

Detroit papers shuffle owners page 3

What does labor need? A vision page 6

Victorious interpreters win first Cal. contracts

For court interpreters in California, Bastille Day has a special meaning: at the stroke of midnight, explained Silvia Barden, the state "finally acknowledged that court interpreters have the same rights and privileges as all other workers and signed the first labor agreement ever with interpreters in the history of the state."

Barden, president of the California Federation of Interpreters, a unit of the Northern California Media Guild, added that until the last hour of marathon bargaining no one was certain an agreement was possible. But the package that both sides finally accepted July 14, covering at least 215 full-time interpreters in Region 1—including Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties—marked the end of more than a decade's struggle for professional recognition.

The ratification vote, held just three days later, endorsed the three-year pact by a decidedly lopsided 124-3 decision. A subsequent agency-shop election passed almost as handily, 225-30.

Two weeks after the District 1 agreement, approximately 200 court interpreters in Region 4—including San Diego, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties—struck a similar deal. The two agreements mean that almost two-thirds of California's interpreters are now covered by collective bargaining agreements. Bargaining continues in Region 2, which includes 15 counties in the San Francisco Bay area, where a mediator entered the talks in early August fol-

lowing a four-day strike; and in Region 3.

The ratified contract in Region 1 gives full-time employees their first-ever guarantee of a 40-hour workweek plus a full benefits package, including such basics as vacation, sick leave, pensions and health care. Although it does not include raises in the first year, the second and third years include a wage reopener.

The Region 4 contract includes 3% wage increases each year and full benefits for anyone working more than 20 hours a week, as well as an agency shop agreement that precluded the kind of special election held in Region 1.

The biggest sticking point in reaching agreement in Region 1 was over part-timers, with the deadlock finally broken when the courts agreed to change part-timers' status from "as-needed" employees to regular employees with set schedules and a pro-rated benefits package. In Region 4, meanwhile, the biggest hurdle was the courts' insistence that they had no money for raises.

Breaking the logjam in Region 1 sent a wave of jubilation through the interpreters' ranks. "Some of us have worked for more than 10 years to see this happen," an exhausted but exultant Barden said. "Soldiering on in spite of scorn, condemnation and fierce, fierce opposition from management and benighted colleagues, the California Federation of Interpreters has achieved what so many thought was impossible."

Canadians approve strike

Guild-represented employees of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation sent a clear signal in mid-July, with 87.3% voting to give their bargaining committee strike authority. But CBC management displayed a tin ear, returning to the bargaining table with a "comprehensive" proposal that was little more than a reshuffle of language already rejected by the Canadian Media Guild.

Voting on the strike mandate was held July 8-14, with two-thirds of all eligible members casting a ballot—a turnout that encouraged CMG officials because many employees were already on vacation. "We want to use this strong mandate in the weeks ahead to get a deal at the table and we're prepared to work around the clock to do so," said CBC branch president Arnold Amber.

But those hopes were dashed Aug. 4, when the CBC offered a

package characterized by the union as "neither comprehensive nor a proposal." Among its worst features: "offensive" language that "despite claims to the contrary" would give the company "the power to make virtually every future hire a contract employee."

Other CBC proposals would take away overtime, substantially reduce turnaround provisions and eliminate severance pay. Although the two sides have reached agreement on a relatively small number of issues, including medical benefits, leaves and part-time employees, Guild officials say that management persists in treating negotiations "as an exercise in take-aways."

Moreover, the local observes, the CBC has continued to violate Canadian labor laws by direct dealing with employees, e-mailing to every Guild member a package of proposals never presented at the table as well as language that the bargaining committee had already rejected.

Now that a strike authorization

vote has been held, a 21-day cooling-off period was scheduled to expire Aug. 14, after this issue of The Guild Reporter had gone to press. After Aug. 14, either party can call a job action—strike or lockout—with 72 hours' notice.

The Canadian Ministry of Labor has appointed a second conciliator, Arnie Powers, to assist in the talks. He joins Jennifer Webster, who has been working with the two parties since June. CMG has said it plans to bargain continuously at least until Aug. 14, but warned that management's tactics "put the future of public broadcasting in Canada at risk."

It's the details, stupid

How many "last, best and final" contract offers can there be? Judging by the Reuters example, at least seven—and counting.

That's how many versions the company had presented to the New York Guild as of the end of July, each accompanied by a demand that the offer be put to an immediate vote or else. But in each case, as Guild officials questioned missing details or vague language, the latest best offer had to be replaced by another, and then another.

The oversights have not been negligible: some of the actual language was diametrically opposed to the company's contract summary, deep-sixing company contributions to the 401(k) plan, for example. So the revised final offers keep coming, but it looks like fall before a vote on a definitive proposal.

Guild briefs . . .



Members of the Hudson County Newspaper Guild present \$5,000 they raised for a newly established scholarship fund memorializing longtime board member and former local president Peter R. Weiss, political writer for The Jersey Journal. From left, Weiss's widow, Margaret Schmidt; local delegate Angela Daidone; (at top) local secretary Michael Conte; local president Ron Leir; New Jersey City University professor Bruce Chadwick, who helped create the scholarship; and John Nevin, NCJU vice president for university advancement

NY Times workers juggle cutbacks

In response to a decision by the New York Times to slash 60 jobs under New York Guild jurisdiction, 32 local members have accepted a voluntary separation package, while 28 others have said they want another job at the paper. Management has accepted Guild recommendations for reassigning at least 20 employees, with eight being promoted into jobs that pay more than their current wages. If efforts to find jobs for the remaining eight targeted employees are unsuccessful, they will be eligible to receive an enhanced separation agreement.

change might mean for them. Now they think they know: in response to complaints from a TV evangelist about two stories by investigative reporter Carolyn Tufts, generally acknowledged as one of the newspaper's best, editor Ellen Soeteber and managing editor Arnie Robbins suspended Tuft for a week and published a 577-word "apology" that they first cleared with the offended evangelist. Among the nits they picked: that Tuft had characterized the evangelist's \$900,000 annual salary as "hefty." A newsroom petition has protested the action, and the St. Louis Guild has filed a grievance.

This is your Life—and your contract

When Time Inc. resurrected Life last October, it advertised it as the return of "one of America's most iconic magazines." But when the New York Guild asserted that Life employees are covered by its contract, which for decades has included Life magazine, Time suddenly insisted this was a new Life. Now an arbitrator has weighed in, declaring that Time can't have it both ways—and agreeing that Life is Life, contract and all.

Local's manager pleads not guilty

Jeri H. Russell, former office manager of the St. Louis Newspaper Guild, entered a plea of not guilty at her arraignment in federal court on a misdemeanor charge of making a false entry in the local's annual financial report. The report is required to be filed with the secretary of labor. If convicted, she could face up to a year in jail, a \$10,000 fine, or both.

The firing squad, St. Louis-style

When Pulitzer sold the St. Louis Post Dispatch to Lee Enterprises earlier this year, newsroom types wondered what the ownership

Postcards urged to support Miller

Guild members seeking to show their support for jailed New York Times reporter Judith Miller are being asked to send postcards to: Attn: Judith Miller, Inmate No. 45570083, Alexandria Detention Center, 2001 Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22314

Jendretzky named to deputy position

The News Media Guild has appointed Karl Jendretzky, a 22-year Associated Press veteran and former president of TNG-CWA Local 1314, as the union's deputy administrator. The new position was authorized in a referendum earlier this year, when the local representing AP's technology workers merged with AP's editorial employees. Jendretzky, 47, will report to NMG Administrator Kevin Keane and the union's elected officers.

New local officers elected in Boston

The Newspaper Guild of Greater Boston has elected new officers, including Brian Whelan as president, Bill McMurray as vice president, Tom Mashberg as secretary and Greg Sullivan as treasurer.

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The Newspaper Guild International

PENSION FUND

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

1-888-893-3650
sbush@cwa-union.org

Newspapers trading like baseball cards

In an unexpected and tightly choreographed series of swaps reminiscent of a closely contested game of Monopoly, Knight Ridder, Gannett and MediaNews Group have swapped ownership of six newspapers in four states to consolidate or improve their holdings.

The early August series of trade will have its biggest impact in Detroit, where Knight Ridder gave up its ownership of the Free Press to Gannett, while Gannett transferred its ownership of the Detroit News to Dean Singleton's MediaNews. A parallel change in the joint operating agreement between the two papers changes it into a limited partnership, with Gannett as the majority partner.

In addition to acquiring the more dominant paper in town, Gannett will increase its share of profits from the previous 50-50 split to an undisclosed percentage it has confirmed is considerably more than 70%. It also will become sole publisher of Detroit's Sunday newspaper, while the Free Press and News each will produce their own Saturday newspapers instead of the current combined edition.

The News, meanwhile, will convert from afternoon to morning publication, in direct competition with the Free Press.

Lou Mleczo, president of the Detroit Newspaper Guild, said he has been notified by both Gannett and Media News that they will honor the existing Guild contracts, which expire Jan. 14, 2007, "so that was good news for our local." But it remains unclear, he added, whether the swaps can proceed without justice department approval, despite the companies' insistence that no approval is needed.

The U.S. Justice Dept. had to sign off on the original JOA, which was requested in 1986, only six weeks after Gannett acquired the Detroit News. But the recently announced deal involves more

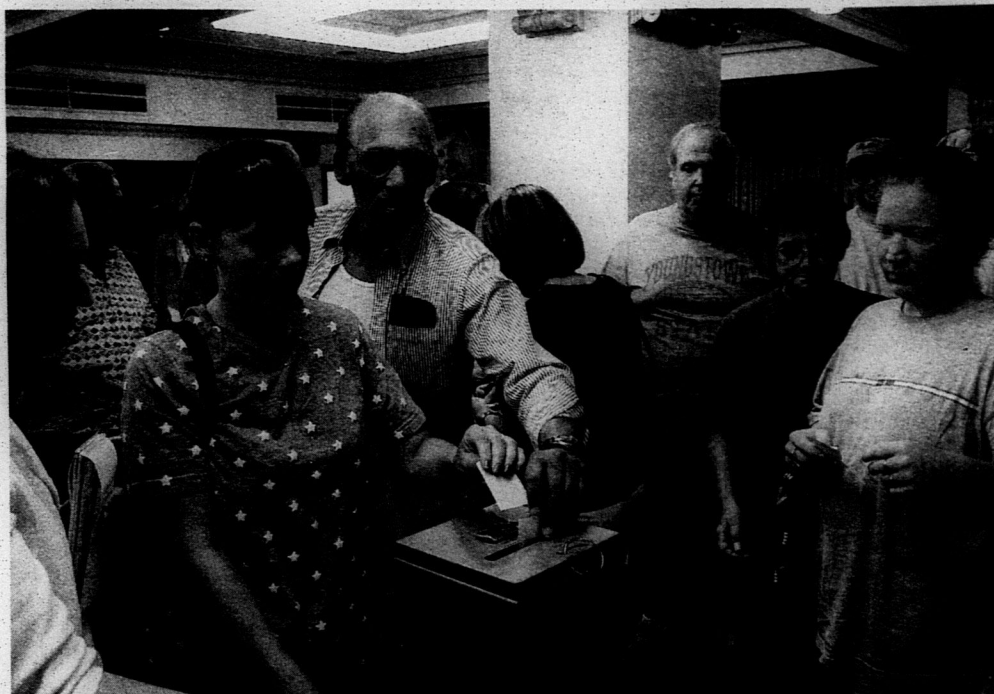
than an ownership change, Mleczo added: it rewrites several significant aspects of the JOA, notably reducing its lifespan by 64 years. In addition, he said, ending the joint publication of a Sunday edition is "very troubling" and appears to undercut the rationale for joint operating agreements, which is to preserve a multiplicity of editorial voices.

On a positive note, the secrecy shrouding the three publishers' plans before their announcement, together with a belated realization that the only loyalty publishers of chain newspapers have is to their bottom lines, has stimulated renewed interest in Guild membership. "Dozens and dozens" of News and Free Press staffers jammed the local's informal meeting room at the Anchor Bar following the Aug. 3 announcement, Mleczo said, with at least half-a-dozen non-members requesting membership cards.

While Guild attorneys review the JOA implications of the swaps, Knight Ridder is expanding its position in the Pacific northwest, where it is taking ownership from Gannett of the Idaho Statesman and two newspapers in Washington, The Olympian and The Bellingham Herald. Ironically, although Knight Ridder said it was departing Detroit because it didn't like sharing control with another entity, it remains a 49.5% shareholder in the Seattle Times.

Rounding out the exchanges, Knight Ridder is giving Gannett the Tallahassee Democrat in Florida plus an undisclosed amount of cash. Gannett already has a strong Florida presence, including three other newspapers and three television stations.

The terms of the deal with privately-held MediaNews were not disclosed. Although Singleton has a reputation for slashing payroll when he buys a new paper, he told News employees he has "no plans to cut anything," Mleczo said.



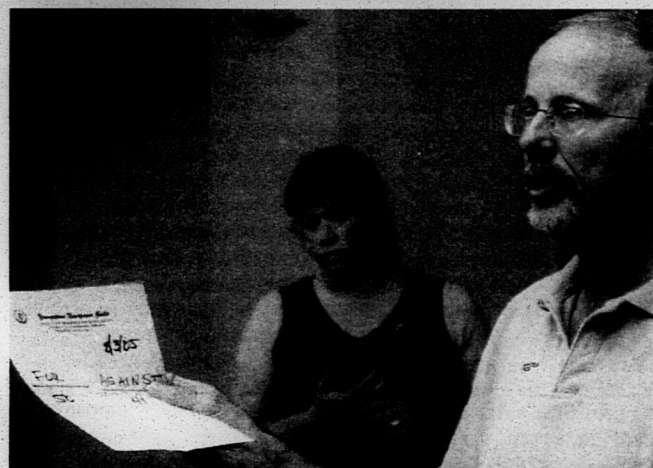
Youngstown Guild members cast ballots in vote that ended their nine-month strike.

9-month strike at an end

Continued from page 1

The contract to which the local finally assented includes the following:

- raises totaling 45 to 63 cents an hour—or roughly 4%—over the life of the three-year agreement;
- a total signing bonus of \$600 per employee, payable in the first and second years of the contract;
- a minimum four-month waiver of contributions toward health insurance premiums, or until management employees begin similar contributions;
- establishment of a pre-tax flex-spend plan for health care;
- continued use of company vehicles by circulation department employees, with use of personal vehicles on company business governed by safety factors, cargo weight limits and mileage reimbursement;
- establishment of a joint Guild-management workplace committee that will meet bi-weekly;
- reinstatement of bonus pay for Guild members who work in management jobs for two or more



Local President Tony Markota holds up vote tally; Vice President Deb Shaulis is in the background.

consecutive days.

Despite the agreement, the two sides needed an additional couple of days to hammer out a back-to-work settlement. The Vindicator has eliminated some jobs and reorganized its outside circulation and editorial departments, resulting in new assignments and possible layoffs; as a result, some employees could expect delays of up to three weeks before they were recalled.

In addition to non-retaliatory language, the agreement requires the Guild to withdraw unresolved grievances and arbitrations that were filed before the strike started

and to cease publication of its strike newspaper, the Valley Voice. The union also agreed to make "every effort" to remove its lawn signs, and TNG-CWA agreed to spend \$65,000 in 2005 to support the newspaper's marketing and advertising campaigns to rebuild its circulation and advertising base.

The largest stumbling block now facing union members may be having to work side-by-side with the relative handful of those who broke ranks by crossing the picket line. But Markota was optimistic, observing, "We're professionals, and we'll act accordingly."

Administrative Coordinator

The Boston Newspaper Guild is seeking its first Administrative Coordinator. This is a 24-hour/week position. Applicant must have excellent communication, organizational, writing and conflict-resolution skills. Experience in labor law, bargaining and grievance handling. Knowledge of the newspaper industry a plus. Benefits, salary negotiable. No phone calls please. Send resume by September 30 to:

The Boston Newspaper Guild
Attention: Administrative Coordinator Hiring Committee
645 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02122

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Two units reach agreements

Three full days of "speed bargaining" in early July had the desired outcome for employees of the Canton Repository, who ratified a new three-year contract that takes effect Sept. 6 except for a first-year wage increase of 3%, which kicked in Aug. 7. Subsequent 3% increases will take effect in September of 2006 and 2007.

The unit, part of the Northeast Ohio Guild, also won upgrades for advertising artists and mail room employees, and added a new job classification for new media advertising sales reps. And it won greater scheduling flexibility with two provisions, one allowing employees to take up to 10 vacation days in one-day increments and a second allowing employees to work a four-day schedule of 10-hour days. Both provisions require prior supervisory approval.

The agreement also includes a new 90-day time limit on filing grievances, revising former contract language that simply required filing "with due dispatch." However, the deadline does include exceptions for errors in salary adjustments or the application of night differential, as well as holiday, military

service, sick leave or vacation allowances.

Separately, the Monessen unit of the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh, representing 25 editorial, advertising, circulation and maintenance employees of the Valley Independent, approved a four-year contract July 27. The new pact doubles the company's pension contribution from the last contract and provides wage increases of 3% and 2.5% in alternating years.

The agreement also includes a new commission sales structure for the advertising department, increases the mileage reimbursement and adds a day to the unit's funeral leave policy. Meanwhile, the Guild beat back several onerous company proposals, including a no strike/no lockout clause, reductions in sick leave and severance pay and a wage freeze.

Although the union did agree to a management rights clause, the final version was a much diluted version of the original proposal, which would have allowed the company to subcontract and transfer work, discontinue departments and cease operations. Those sections were eliminated, with the Guild preserving its right to file grievances over violations of the clause.

News round-up

Breaker 1-9, break, break!

Despite growing blog hysteria, a Forrester Research survey of more than 68,000 households has found that of those Americans who go online, fewer than 2% read blogs once a week or more. And while more than 30% of American households now have broadband connections, a similar proportion still have no internet access at all. The small blog numbers compare with 70% of Americans who watch ABC and the 65% who read their local paper.

Knight Ridder, WashPost downgrades

A day before Knight Ridder turned life for Detroit's journalists upside down, the Fitch Ratings service lowered its outlook on the company to negative from stable. Fitch said it made the change because of Knight Ridder's increased debt, as share buybacks accelerated, as well as continued pressure on operating margins. Separately, Washington Post stock was downgraded to "neutral" from "buy" by Merrill Lynch, which cited its disappointing second-quarter results. Analyst Lauren Rich Fine lowered her 2005 earnings forecast by 6.6% and her 2006 estimate by 7.4%.

Justice Dept. rejects shield law

Congress currently is taking its summer "recess"—everyone else gets a summer vacation—but before it left town the Justice Dept. weighed in on a proposed national shield law for journalists: "Bad public policy," it testified, contending such a law would threaten national security. The proposal has a provision allowing the government to compel testimony when national security is threatened, prompting bill sponsor Sen. Christopher Dodd to conclude Justice officials "are making a judgment that this is good politics for them to be opposed."

U.S. 28th of 30 in union density

All that recent talk about low union density wasn't just spin: the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development recently ranked the United States 28th in union density among its 30 members. Thirty-four percent of workers belong to unions in the average OECD country, compared with 12.5% in the U.S.; meanwhile, the average percentage of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements in the OECD countries was 60%, compared with 14% in the U.S.

'Evergreen' means exactly that

While union-busting attorney Michael Zinsler is suing to nullify the evergreen clause in the Memphis Newspaper Guild contract, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit has ruled that a similar clause requires a Wisconsin-based telephone company to arbitrate disputes with employees who were fired and disciplined during contract negotiations. "Allowing an agreement to persist is the point of an evergreen clause," wrote Judge Frank H. Easterbrook, turning back a company claim that renegotiating a contract was the same as "terminating" the lapsed agreement.

Faith-based reality trumps facts, again

If it sometimes seems that Congress is operating in the dark, that might be because the executive branch works overtime to keep discomfiting facts out of public view. For much of the debate over the Central American Free Trade Agreement, for example, the Labor Department sat on the findings of a report it had commissioned that buttressed organized labor's concerns about the region's labor practices. When the International Labor Rights Fund found that CAFTA countries squelched union activities, allowed poor working conditions and failed to protect workers' rights, the Labor Department ordered the report removed from a web site and took back paper copies that had been handed out at a conference.

Economies outpace job growth

Despite 5% economic growth globally in 2004, the International Labor Organization reports that employment worldwide improved only slightly, with year-over-year unemployment decreasing for only the second time in the past decade. But global employment increased a mere 1.7%, which the ILO called "disappointing" when contrasted with the more robust economic growth rate. Employment as a share of the working-age population stayed virtually unchanged, at 61.8%.

'Wal-Mart: The Whole Truth' available

A 15-part series exposing abuses of workers, consumers and communities by retail behemoth Wal-Mart is now available to unionists nationwide. "Wal-Mart: The Whole Truth," published by the St. Louis Labor Tribune earlier this year, used company documents, the internet and other sources to document its below-market wages and lack of health care, its stealth expansion philosophy and destruction of community jobs, its forced government/taxpayer subsidies for workers' health care and its treatment of women as "second-class citizens" and "trained monkeys." The booklets are \$3.50 each from the Labor Tribune, 505 South Ewing, St. Louis, Mo., 63103.

Think internet is censor-proof? Better think again.

As the mass media increasingly are consolidated and homogenized by corporate interests, one thought has given free-thinkers solace: At least we have the internet.

Well, maybe not. Two separate incidents in the past month suggest the internet is no more immune to censorship than any other communications medium—and that as with print or broadcast, the company that controls the pipeline can control what goes into it.

Guild member David Swanson, currently working on a campaign at www.afterdowningstreet.org, was organizing events around the underreported British memo when he noticed "that everyone working on this campaign was having strange e-mail problems. Some people would get e-mails and some wouldn't, or they'd receive some but not others."

The erratic e-mail service played havoc with organizing, especially in coordinating teleconference calls and other scheduled activities. But what Swanson and his co-workers didn't know was that their internet provider, Comcast, had been blocking delivery of any e-mail with www.afterdowningstreet.org in the text—including every e-mail from Swanson himself.

When Swanson finally realized what was happening and traced the problem to Comcast, the company blamed the intercepts on its spam filter provider, Symantec. Symantec, in turn, explained it had imposed the block in response to 46,000 complaints about e-mails from Swanson's group, although it wouldn't allow Swanson to see any of them.

"There's simply no possible way that we've accidentally annoyed 46,000 random people with stray e-mails and mistyped addresses," Swanson says. "We'd only been around for a month and a half, and we hadn't spammed anyone—in fact, during the course of trying to resolve the problem, Comcast assured us that they

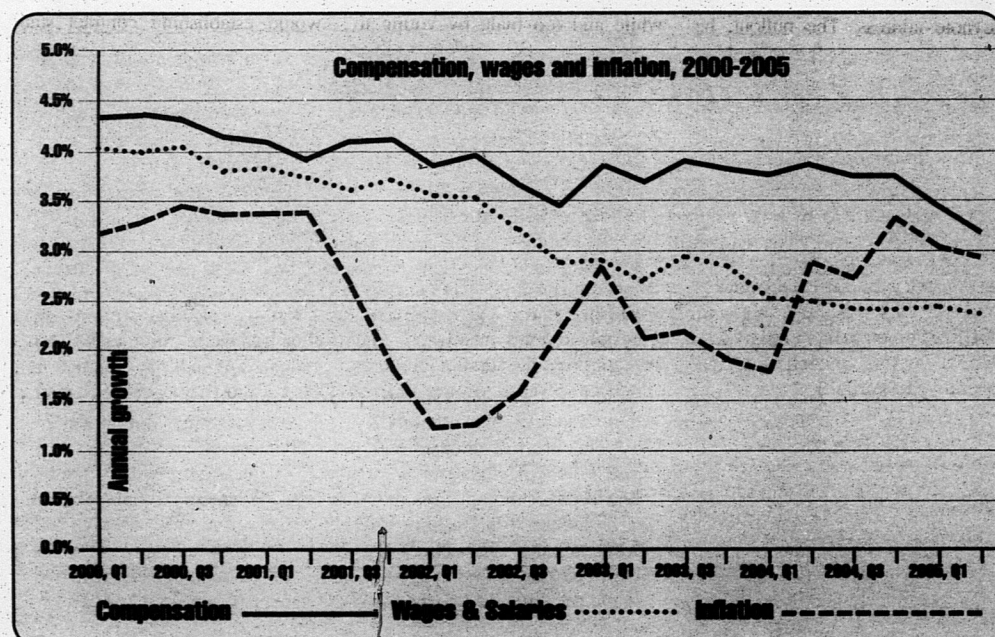
knew we hadn't spammed anyone."

Symantec did lift the block, once Swanson complained, but apparently there is nothing to prevent a recurrence—with no safeguards, and without the knowledge of those involved. "This means that anyone who wants to stifle public and quasi-private discussion of a topic can quite easily do so by generating numerous spam complaints," Swanson frets. "The victims of the complaints will not be notified, made aware of the accusations against them or provided with an opportunity to defend themselves. And if the complaints prove bogus, there will be absolutely no penalty for having made them."

Almost simultaneously, British Columbia-based Telus blocked its internet subscribers from accessing three web sites created by the Telecommunications Workers Union. The TWU went on strike July 21, following nearly five years of acrimonious contract talks that have gone nowhere.

Telus claimed it blocked access to the sites because they suggested workers jam the company switchboard with phone calls and posted pictures of company employees crossing the picket line. Union officials countered that their free speech rights were being violated and that the company was breaking the law "with impunity."

As it turned out, that wasn't all: because Telus blocked the union's web sites by cutting off all access to a Florida-based server that hosts them, it also barred its one million subscribers from an additional 766 web sites that have no relation to the union. Academic and legal observers pointed out that Telus' action is inconsistent with laws exempting internet providers from legal liability for the content of messages sent over their networks, raising the possibility of federal intervention.



Jobs recover, but not wages

It took 50 months, but the U.S. finally has regained the jobs it had when the Bush recession began, in March 2001—sort of. Because when you parse the numbers, as the Economic Policy Institute has, you learn that the private sector still has 1.2 million fewer non-defense-related jobs than it had four years ago.

War, it turns out, really is good for business.

Still, the announcement Aug. 5 that 207,000 new jobs were created in July—even as unemployment held steady at 5%—means the economy is able to absorb the 150,000 or so new workers entering the job market each month. The July figure brings this year's average monthly growth rate to 191,000, which by historical measures is not robust but at least conforms with Federal Reserve assessments that the job market is "gradually improving."

But recovery also has been uneven, as suggested by the rise in defense-related employment; information services, for example, continues to lag the rest of the labor market, with a disproportionate impact on

CWA and TNG members. And as seen in the graph above, derived from EPI data, growth in total compensation—all pay plus benefits—is just barely outpacing inflation. Growth in cash income, meanwhile, fell behind the rate of inflation a year ago and has shown no signs of reversing its comparative decline.

The bottom line is that, on average, the American standard of living is slipping even as hiring is up. Classic economic theory dictates that increased demand for workers should put upward pressure on wages, but the length of the job recession and the selective nature of this recovery has distorted the expected response. And while another six months of employment gains might translate into a rebound in wages, rising inflation suggests the Fed will continue raising interest rates which, in turn, will dampen economic expansion.

If oil prices continue rising and higher interest rates burst the housing bubble, odds are that wage growth will continue to be soft.

Splintered AFL-CIO soldiers on

Adopts first-ever anti-war resolution, promotes own diversity

Continued from page 1

amendment also allows the federation's general board to institute further dues increases by a two-thirds vote if needed. Failure to pull in more revenue could result in additional lay-offs of Guild-represented employees, but hiking dues runs the risk of prompting still more defections—and a further worsening of the financial situation.

Although the SEIU and Teamsters had signalled their disaffection before the convention started, a last-ditch attempt to head off a split was spearheaded by CWA President Morton Bahr and by the presidents of the American Federation of Government Employees and of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers. The failed compromise would have set up a nine-month structured process for resolving leadership differences over the proper balance between organizing and political action, followed by a special convention next summer devoted solely to revamping the federation.

But the effort to bridge differences came too late. Instead, tempers flared as the full import of what was happening sank in. "Pulling out . . . dishonors the founders and members of my union," declared AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, a former SEIU president, in his keynote address. The pullout, he added, was "a tragedy for working people" because "a divided labor movement hurts the hopes of working families."

(Ironically, because the president of the AFL-CIO must be a member of a federation-affiliated union, SEIU's withdrawal left Sweeney momentarily a man without a country. But Sweeney quickly asserted his membership in OPEIU, a union comprising mostly clerical workers which he'd joined several years earlier.)

Once the defectors' dust had settled, convention delegates did get down to business. As expected, they re-elected Sweeney and Trumka, as well as Vice President Linda Chavez-Thomson, to four-year terms. They also responded to growing criticism that the federation's leadership is too old, too



CWA vice president Brooks Sunkett cites his Vietnam War experience to support resolution demanding U.S. withdrawal from Iraq.

white and too male by voting to require the AFL-CIO Executive Council and other governing bodies, as well as state federations and central labor councils, to develop diversity goals and plans to achieve them by the 2009 convention.

Delegates also cast a jaundiced eye on their own composition, approving a policy that every union delegation in 2009 "shall generally reflect the racial and gender diversity of that union's members." And they approved the addition of representatives of each of the federation's six minority constituency groups to the federation's general board—which, it should be noted, meets only rarely.

Delegates also responded to many of the concerns the disaffiliating unions had raised. For example, they approved creation of "industry coordinating committees" that

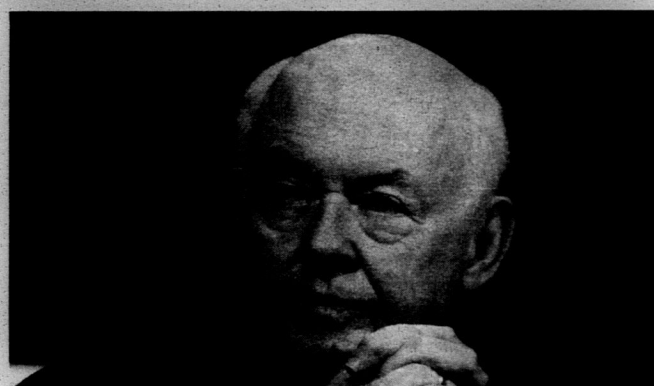
would establishing contract standards and strategic organizing plans on an industry-by-industry basis, as well as joint political and legislative programs. All AFL-CIO unions in a particular industry will be required to participate in the appropriate committee and will be bound by its organizing plans.

Delegates also changed core rules about "raiding," allowing a union to organize workers who already belong to a union that's undercutting industry contract standards. And they approved creation of a blue ribbon commission, to report back next February with recommendations on how to encourage union mergers.

But the convention's most notable action may have been its overwhelming support of a resolution urging "rapid" withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq—the first time in history that the AFL-CIO broke with the U.S. government over a foreign war.

The unprecedented action, nurtured for two years by U.S. Labor Against the War, built on 18 resolutions submitted by individual unions, labor councils and state federation. The federation's executive council prepared its own resolution, calling for ending the occupation "as soon as possible," but was forced to substitute the more rigorous language when delegates asserted themselves.

CWA Vice President and Vietnam veteran Brooks Sunkett led the charge, recalling how "lies were told to me then and lies are told to me now." Scolding Bush's fanning of "war hysteria," he added, "As the organized voice for working people, we have the responsibility to stand with Iraq's labor movement and bring the troops home now."



AFL-CIO President John Sweeney surveys the convention floor.

Chronicle contract

Continued from page 1

nous a tone, but this is serious stuff," Vega wrote. "We intend to publish and distribute The Chronicle no matter what."

Pressed against the wall, Chronicle staffers accepted a broad range of concessions, including some that go beyond monetary givebacks. Among them:

- Pay cuts of up to 44% for approximately two of every five union members. The cuts will be eased with a series of transition payments, calculated as the amount of monthly pay lost times years of service times three.

- A wage freeze for all other employees until the end of the year, followed by across-the-board increases of between 1.15% and 2.08% each Jan. 1 and July 1 through the beginning of 2010. Wage increases over the life of the contract will total 11%.

- Buyout offers, not to exceed two years' pay, to reduce headcount by 120 employees.

- A loss of one week of paid vacation, half of annual sick days and the right to a six-month sabbatical leave after five years.

- Loss of jurisdiction over approximately 45 jobs, which have been reclassified as exempt management.

- Elimination of the evergreen clause and of the right to respect picket lines of other unions without disciplinary retaliation.

On a positive note, the company agreed to a special one-time payment of \$2.3 million into the health and welfare trust, which is expected to cover anticipated cost increases for the next two years. It also will make five annual payments of \$1 million each into the pension plan to compensate for job reductions and removal of jobs from Guild jurisdiction.

Although TNG-CWA represents the majority of Chronicle employees, three other unions were still in contract negotiations at press time.



Teamsters President James Hoffa Jr. explains why he pulled his union out of the AFL-CIO as SEIU President Andy Stern looks on.

What is labor lacking? Vision.

History shows that radical ideas have the power needed for change

By David Bacon
Northern California Media Guild

For forty years, AFL-CIO leaders George Meany and Lane Kirkland saw unorganized workers as a threat—when they saw them at all. They drove left-wing activists out of unions and threw the message of solidarity onto the scrap heap. Labor's dinosaurs treated unions as a business, representing members in exchange for dues while ignoring the needs of workers as a whole.

But this proved to be a failing strategy, resulting a decade ago in new leaders being thrust into office in reaction to a crisis of falling union density, weakened political power and a generation of angry labor activists demanding a fresh direction. The 10 years since have yielded important union gains, with big efforts made to organize strawberry workers in Watsonville, California, asbestos workers in New York and New Jersey, poultry and meatpacking workers in the South and healthcare workers throughout the country. Yet for all that, in only one year was the pace of organizing fast enough to keep union density from falling.

It's important for unions to start an honest discussion of why the gains have been so limited and what political direction would be best for U.S. workers. While the current debate over structure makes important points, there are deeper issues that need to be resolved. Almost all proposals in the current debate put the issue of stopping the slide in members and power—the problem of organizing—at center stage. This is not a bad place for discussion to start, as long as it takes a deeper look at why this is such a hard area for unions to make progress.

While the percentage of organized workers has declined every year for the past decade, unions have made important progress in finding alternative strategic ideas to the old business unionism of Meany and Kirkland. If these ideas are developed and extended, they provide an important base for making unions stronger and embedding them more deeply in working-class communities. But the AFL-CIO has a huge job. Raising the percentage of organized workers in the United States from just 10% to 11% would mean organizing more than a million people. Only a social movement can organize people on this scale.

In addition to examining structural reforms that can make unions more effective

and concentrate their power, the labor movement needs a program that can inspire people to organize on their own, one which is unafraid to put forward radical demands and which rejects the constant argument that any proposal that can't get through Congress next year is not worth fighting for.

As much as people need a raise, the promise of one is not enough to inspire them to face the certain dangers they know too well await them. Working families need the promise of a better world. Over and over, for more than a century, workers have shown that they will struggle for the future of their children and their communities, even when their own future seems in doubt. But only a new, radical social vision can inspire the wave of commitment, idealism and activity necessary to rebuild the labor movement.

A new, more radical political program runs counter to the prevailing wisdom of our times, which holds the profit motive sacred and believes that market forces solve all social problems. If labor's leaders move in this direction, they won't get invited for coffee with the president, or included in meetings of the Democratic Leadership Council.

At the beginning of the cold war, the AFL-CIO built its headquarters right down the street from the White House, eloquent testimony to the desire of its old leaders for respectability in the eyes of the political elite. That dream may be difficult for some to give up. But labor can't speak convincingly to the working poor without, at the same time, directly opposing the common economic understanding shared by Republicans and many Democrats. The labor movement needs political independence.

To organize by the millions, workers have to make hard decisions, putting their jobs on the line for the sake of their future. Unions of past decades won the loyalty of working people when joining one was even more dangerous and illegal than it is today. Labor's left wing then proposed an alternative social vision, arguing that society could be organized to ensure social and economic justice for all people. While some workers believed that change could be made within the capitalist system and others argued for replacing it, they were united by the idea that working people could gain enough political power to end poverty, unemployment, racism and discrimination. The poor will not be always with us, they declared.

Today, our biggest problem is finding similar ways for unions to affect workers'

consciousness—the way people think. A new commitment to organizing can't be simply a matter of more money and organizers, or more intelligent and innovative tactics, as necessary as these things are. During the periods in our history when unions grew by qualitative leaps, their activity relied on workers organizing themselves, not just acting as troops in campaigns masterminded by paid staff.

For workers to act this way today, they would have to have a much clearer sense of their own interests and a vision that large-scale social change is possible. Does the labor movement present such a vision of a more just society, capable of inspiring workers to struggle and sacrifice? Labor's radical vision of decades ago made it a stronger movement. Losing it in the red scares of the 1950s deprived most unions of their ability to inspire. It's no accident that the years of McCarthyism marked the point when the percentage of union members began to decline.

Our history should tell us that radical ideas have always had a transformative power, especially the idea that while you might not live to see a new world, your children might—if you fight for it. In the 1930s and 40s, these ideas were propagated within unions by left-wing political organizations. A general radical culture reinforced them. Today, most unions no longer have this left presence. Can the labor movement itself fulfill this role? At the very least, unions need

a large core of activists at all levels who are unafraid of radical ideas of social justice, and who can link them to immediate economic bread-and-butter issues.

And since good ideas are worthless unless they reach people, the labor movement has to be able to communicate that vision to workers outside its own ranks. In an era when many unions have discontinued their own publications, or turned them into preening, self-congratulatory magazines, they need exactly the opposite.

This is a critical moment in labor history, in which a national debate and discussion can have real-life consequences for the future. It can provide a powerful impetus to organizing an anti-Bush coalition in the short term, and a more profound political realignment in the longer term.

The present period is not unlike the 1920s, which were also filled with company unions, the violence of strikebreakers, and a lack of legal rights for workers. A decade later, those obstacles were swept away. An upsurge of millions in the 1930s, radicalized by the depression and left-wing activism, forced corporate acceptance of labor for the first time in the country's history.

The current changes taking place in U.S. unions may be the beginning of something as large and profound. If they are, then the obstacles unions face today can become historical relics as quickly as did those of an earlier era.

Debunking the debate over alleged 'free' trade

By David Sirota
Working for Change

A friend of mine today regurgitated one of the saddest, most devious, yet most oft-repeated arguments for corporate-written trade deals: they lower prices for goods in America. He said "the fact that we can buy white cotton t-shirts three for \$5 is a direct result of [free] trade." Then, challenging opponents of these "free" trade deals, he asked: "Do people really want all of our prices to go up at the Wal-Mart?"

This is a classic "when did you stop being a criminal?" question; the entire premise is dishonest.

Prices on many goods *do* go down because of corporate-written trade deals, as the "free"-trade-pushing corporate media are so happy to brag about. But so do wages, health care benefits, union rights, pensions, environmental standards and all the rest of the economic standards that contribute to an ordinary American's quality of life.

When you pass trade deals that have no labor/human rights/environmental protections, you force Americans to compete with workers in other countries that have none of these standards. That puts a downward pressure on Americans' quality of life (wages, health care, pensions, etc.), as Americans sacrifice their basic quality of life in an endless race to the bottom. No savings on your next batch of t-shirts is going to make up for that.

That's why trying to make a debate over "free" trade into a debate over whether we want or don't want lower prices is so dishonest: it doesn't tell the whole story.

The reason that Corporate America tries to distort the "free" trade debate in this way is because it avoids the aspect of "free" trade Corporate America doesn't want to talk about. And the tactics often work, because

lower prices are more tangible to the public than the bigger and more important consequences of "free" trade.

It is much easier to envision the benefits of cheaper t-shirts at Wal-Mart than it is to imagine the downside of getting paid less wages/benefits for the next 40 years, especially when you consider people's understandable two-pronged defense mechanism of denial: we don't want to admit the lower wages/benefits will come with lower prices (too-good-to-be-true denial) and we'd like to believe lower wages/benefits in general won't mean lower wages/benefits for us specifically (it-won't-happen-to-me denial).

But all you have to do is look at how Americans' wages have stagnated, health care/pension benefits have been cut, and how many previously better-paid Wal-Mart workers are on low-income government assistance to know that such denials are not rooted in reality. Likewise, all it takes is a little guts to make this case effectively because Americans already know, deep down, that it's true—they are just waiting for someone to speak truth to economic power.

Thus, when we debate trade and economic policy in general, let's reject the silly argument that it is a debate between low prices on one side and high prices on the other. The actual choice is between lower prices on one side, and lower wages, health care benefits, pensions and environmental standards on the other. It is a debate about saving \$2 on t-shirts at Wal-Mart vs. some combination of making thousands of dollars less per year, maybe losing your job, seeing your health care/retirements benefits eliminated or reduced, and watching your community get polluted.

Sirota is a fellow at the American Progress Action Fund, a progressive advocacy organization in Washington, D.C.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor,

As a union organizer and labor activist, I've been associated with TNG on-and-off for 25 years: as a member, of the board, of the General Press Unit in the Chicago Guild, as an organizer for IAPE, and most recently as a steward for the field organizers of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU), represented by the Bay Area local. I've never been prouder of the Guild than I was when I read the June issue of the Guild Reporter. Linda Foley showed not only the courage to talk publicly about the assault on journalists and trade unionists, but also the tenacity to defend our rights against a right-wing onslaught. Thanks and congratulations for helping to educate the public about the realities facing journalists who do their jobs by telling the truth, despite efforts to make news media into government p.r. outlets.

In solidarity,

—Paul Bigman, Seattle

To the Editor,

Thank you for the commentary by Presi-

dent Linda Foley, in which she stated she had just been re-elected and was not resigning, and for her forthright response to the attacks on her—and therefore on us, the union—from those beneath contempt and beyond redemption. They prove once again the truth of GB Shaw's observation that "Patriotism is the last resort of a scoundrel."

I am angered and disgusted by the attacks in many ways: As a union member; as a former reporter; as a former freelance journalist working in war zones and under a military dictatorship; in the course of which I was imprisoned under a death sentence, beaten and tortured, exiled from my adoptive country and had my family threatened with death. But all that's in the remote past, unlike the current relentless campaign at all levels to undermine the foundations of this country in which I am privileged to live.

In complete solidarity and great respect,

—George Roth,

The Translators and Interpreters Guild,
TNG-CWA Local 32100

LOOKING AHEAD

At our peak, we blew it

By Linda Foley,
President

While in Chicago last month for the AFL-CIO convention, I hooked up with a college friend whom I hadn't seen for more than 25 years. That brief "blast from my past" amid the turmoil that was the AFL-CIO's 50th anniversary, got me thinking about how we might view the events of this summer 25 years hence.

In 1977, journalism was a craft held in high regard, and journalists themselves were heralded as heroes who kept corrupt government officials, crime bosses and corporate greed in check. Movies starring Hollywood icons like Robert Redford romanticized the way news reporters "spoke truth to power." Newspapers were revered for their accuracy and thoroughness. News shows like "60 Minutes" were among the highest-rated programs on television. You could scan the FM and AM radio dials anytime during the day and find a chorus of newscasts and current affairs shows. CNN had just begun experimenting with 24-hour news on cable.

At the same time, more than a quarter of the U.S. workforce belonged to unions.

Manufacturing jobs were plentiful and provided better wages and benefits than those in any other sector of the economy. The AFL-CIO arguably was the most powerful political force in the country. The labor federation and its affiliates had just come through a successful decade of growth and prestige.

Today, all that has changed. Journalism as an honorable profession is nearly in tatters. The general public's regard for journalists themselves has plummeted. Newspapers are struggling, even though most of them operate in local markets that are virtual monopolies. TV news shows, or what's left of them, focus most of their airtime on celebrity journalism or what some have called "the pedophile of the month." Radio news has become an oxymoron, and CNN and its clones spend as much time gabbing about the news as they do reporting it.

As I write this, Judy Miller, a reporter for the New York Times, sits in a jail cell. She was ordered there by a federal judge who wanted her to reveal the identity of a confidential source for a story she never wrote. That same judge ordered Time-Warner, CNN's parent company, to turn over a Time magazine reporter's confidential notes and correspondence. Time-Warner complied—a

response that seemed so remotely unlikely in 1977 I would have staked my entire nascent journalistic career on its not happening.

Meanwhile, less than 13% of U.S. workers belong to unions. Manufacturing jobs have dried up by the millions, devastating domestic production of goods like steel and clothing. In real dollars, today's American workforce receives less compensation and fewer benefits than it did three decades ago. Basic health care, pensions and even Social Security are threatened.

The once-mighty AFL-CIO is splintering. Stymied by labor laws that no longer work for workers and instead give anti-union employers the upper hand, today's unions cannot begin to recruit enough new members in the service and retail sectors to keep pace with their shrunken ranks in manufacturing. The AFL-CIO unions could not pull enough votes to win the 2004 presidential election, even though their members voted in such numbers that they comprised 25% of those voting, more than double the percentage of union members in the adult population of the country.

I hate the cliché "We live in interesting times," because whenever someone says that, it means things aren't going well. However, I

must ask: when times weren't so "interesting" and we had more power to affect change, did we squander our time at the top?

After all, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, media companies—riding a wave of public confidence and popularity—began an unprecedented rash of mergers and acquisitions. News became more of a commodity and less of a public service. Policies that promoted public discourse, like the Fairness Doctrine and equal-time laws, were sacrificed in the name of efficiency and cost-savings. As media companies got bigger, journalism's credibility gap with the public widened.

As for unions, their rapid growth throughout the 1970s produced another gap, the one between union bureaucracies and their members in the workplace. In 1978, the AFL-CIO, at the peak of its political power, attempted to pass sweeping labor law reform that would have ensured the rights of workers to form and join unions of their own choosing. The effort failed.

Why? Because unions and their members were complacent about where things stood at the time and weren't interested or mobilized enough to agitate for change.

With today's reality, neither a free trade union movement nor a free press will survive unless we convince our fellow citizens to support us. Those who believe both freedoms are vital to the survival of our democracy must stand up, unite and fight for these First Amendment rights. In these times, complacency is not an option.

Dissidents are the least of labor's woes

By Brian Klesh
TNG-CWA Intern

When I first walked into the 50th anniversary convention of the AFL-CIO, I was stopped and checked for credentials three times. Why? The only reason I could figure out was that I didn't look like anyone else in the room: at 20, I was a good quarter-century younger than almost every other person in a hall of several hundred executives, delegates, media representatives and guests.

The event had been billed as an opportunity for open discussion and debate among all the leaders of the federation's unions, but in reality it was more a rally of the like-minded. In that respect it was vastly similar to a glitzy modern presidential convention, with an elaborate stage from which one union-friendly speaker after another essentially preached to the choir. The conclusion was the ceremonial nominations of the executive leadership. Blue "Sweeney Solidarity Team" t-shirts were so abundant that President John Sweeney himself stuck out only because he wore a suit instead.

Very few of the resolutions and constitutional amendments encountered any resistance. It was not until the third day that anyone stood in opposition to a proposal, and even then only a word or phrase was disputed.

So why, if it was all for show, was there a convention at all?

I spent quite a while trying to answer that question, and I've concluded that besides the backroom meetings in which real business got done, the convention was held as a large and necessary rally for a group desperately in need of unity.

Especially now, at a time when the labor movement is under increased pressure from politicians and Wal-Mart-like companies, an

event at which union members can hear the encouragement of their leaders and each other is much like a married couple restating its vows. It makes for a celebratory holiday that inspires everyone, from the smallest local chapters to Sweeney himself. When Rev. Jessie Jackson leads an audience of hundreds in chanting "Keep hope alive," or when Barack Obama proclaims, "If we stand together, we rise together!" it is nearly impossible not to feel a sense of empowerment.

But in the midst of all these rousing speeches, a very different and less uplifting event was unfolding at a nearby press conference. As two of the AFL-CIO's largest unions declared they were leaving the fold, labor's future seemed suddenly much less certain. From the perspective of a labor newcomer, this bold but childish action seemed to occur at the most inappropriate moment.

Whereas unity appears to be labor's single greatest strength, the members of the AFL-CIO were rising to an anthem of "Solidarity Forever" while simultaneously saying farewell to nearly three million of their own. What Andy Stern and his Change to Win Coalition chose to ignore is that the only reason the AFL-CIO was able to celebrate its 50th anniversary was because of its long tradition of working out differences internally. There may well be virtue in realigning unions so they're not competing for the same workers, and obviously organizing must be a priority; but unions were founded on the principle that workers should be free to assemble in whatever manner suits them, not that they be "assigned" to one collective pool or another.

So I wasn't surprised that the AFL-CIO responded in overwhelmingly negative fashion to the disaffiliation announcement. "It's a grievous insult and it is a tragedy to working people," Sweeney declared.



Brian Klesh, in white shirt at right, surrounded by placard-waving CWA members.

The likely result of all this turmoil will be an organizing competition, as both camps try to prove their approach is superior to the other's by attracting new members while fending off retaliatory raids. But as I looked around the convention hall, wondering where the delegates of my generation were sitting (they weren't), it was clear to me that labor's civil war will only exacerbate the tragic disengagement of future generations.

What will motivate the next generation—my generation—of workers to begin paying dues to a splintering federation when joining might alienate fellow unionists on the other side? The word "union" itself was once synonymous with "coalition," a group of like-minded, motivated workers forming a collective voice. But while Abraham Lincoln's observation that "a house divided against itself cannot stand" was quoted

repeatedly at the convention, I saw few signs that it was being taken to heart.

Whereas the Change to Win Coalition threatens the AFL-CIO today, 30 years from now it won't be a splinter group that threatens the federation's very existence: it will be today's failure to recruit young workers. When the AFL-CIO celebrated turning 50 this year, the crowd should have included hundreds of workers who weren't conceived until long after the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations decided to get hitched. It didn't, but that absence was less noted than the grandstanding departure of a couple of older white men intent on playing by their own rules.

Klesh, a junior at Northwestern University majoring in political science, worked as a TNG-CWA intern this summer.

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: September 2.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Not all Chicago action was at the convention

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

While the AFL-CIO convention and the disaffiliation of two of its biggest unions garnered more media attention than labor usually gets in an entire year, there was much more going on in Chicago that all union members should know about. Among the most notable: the National Summit on Diversity in Our Union Movement, held the weekend immediately prior to the federation's blow-out.

Drawing more than 800 delegates, the summit was convened by Labor Coalition for Community Action, an umbrella organization for what are known as the AFL-CIO's constituency groups. The groups are the federation's attempt to acknowledge that more than 60% of all union members are people often described as "minorities," including women, people of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers. Its six members are the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Pride at Work.

The coalition was formed in 2003 and played a major role in last year's elections, sponsoring 23 town hall meetings in 14 states. In Jackson, Mississippi, 4,000 people attended one of its panel discussions. Coalition members also conducted voter registration and education in 41 cities and made 82,000 calls to Asian and Pacific Islander homes.

More recently, this past February it joined the AFL-CIO in sponsoring a reception to honor newly elected members of the 109th Congress. It was an active participant in the coalition to save Social Security, held town hall meetings in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Detroit on diversity in the labor movement, and, as already mentioned, convened the national summit on diversity.

The agenda for the two-day meeting was packed, including such topics as

diversity in the union movement, diversity in organizing and political action and building leadership that reflects our diversity. A plethora of speakers included Bill Lucy, president of CBTU; Pat Friend, president of Flight Attendants-CWA; Larry Cohen, executive vice president of CWA; Kent Wong, director of the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education; Ida Castro, former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Linda Chavez-Thompson, AFL-CIO executive vice president; and John Sweeny, AFL-CIO president.

Brother Sweeny spoke on diversity in the labor movement. He pledged that at the next AFL-CIO convention, delegations would reflect the racial and gender diversity of the affiliates they represented—including young people—or they would not be seated. He acknowledged that we are "not even close to where we should be" in achieving fairness for minorities and women, and noted that "55% of all new organized workers are female, and union campaigns are more likely to succeed if the work force is mostly female and the leader is a woman."

Although many summit delegates were not delegates to the main convention, their efforts paid off: an amendment to promote greater racial and gender diversity in the federation's governing body was passed, with six additional slots on the executive committee set aside for the leaders of the six constituency groups.

In short, progress is being made—but power is never given freely, and the way for us to get it is to get involved. Work with the labor councils in your area; join one of the constituency groups. As Linda Chavez-Thompson said, "This movement belongs to all of us."

STICKS AND STONES

When speaking about disabilities:

- Speak of the person first, and then the disability;
- An illness is a disease, a disability is a condition;
- Do not refer to people by their missing part, e.g. "amputee."

Big Brother wears a corporate face

The assault on journalists' civil rights was challenged by the News Media Guild last month, even as the York (Pa.) Daily Record presented a contract proposal that would make criticism of the company a fireable offense. Meanwhile, the National Labor Relations Board—the federal agency charged with protecting workers' rights—has ruled that a company may legally direct its employees not to "fraternize on duty or off duty, date, or become overly friendly with the client's employees or with co-employees."

Responding to a months-long effort by the Associated Press to implement a so-called "ethics" policy, the News Media Guild told the wire service its proposed restrictions on stock ownership by staff, freedom of expression and regulation of staffer's families are too sweeping and must be changed. Although AP recently revised a policy it first presented last November, incorporating some of the changes the Guild had sought, the latest draft seeks additional restrictions on "expression of opinion" by employees.

And although the company initially said the ethics policy would apply only to "news production" employees and not to union-represented technicians, clerical workers and other non-editorial personnel, it now says it is rethinking its position and may extend some provisions to its entire workforce.

"We share many of AP's goals," noted NMG President Tony Winton, "but we also believe that employees and their families should not be subjected to sweeping, vague restrictions in their personal lives in matters far removed from AP's business." He noted that the contract already allows the company to discipline staffers for "just cause," a standard that historically has allowed the employer to discipline breaches of journalistic standards.

Keep Your Opinions to Yourself

While the Guild and AP plan further ethics code discussions in September, management at the York Daily Record apparently hews to the dictum that if its employees have nothing good to say about the company they shouldn't say anything at all. When contract negotiations began July 18, it presented a long list of prohibited activities that include "disparagement of the company whether this occurs on or off-company property."

The company demand was unusual

enough to draw the attention of the trade magazine Editor & Publisher, which quoted unit chair Lauri Lebo as saying "People are horrified. I actually shrieked when I read it." The Daily Record is owned by Dean Singleton's MediaNews Group, which acquired it last year in a swap for the York Dispatch; employees of both papers are members of the York Newspaper Guild.

Contract bargaining was seen as contentious even without the disparagement clause, if only because Singleton has hired the notorious union-busting firm of King & Ballow to represent his side of the table. Indeed, management's proposal includes no raises, elimination of night differential, reductions in bereavement leave, vacations and sick days, a longer work-week and trimming of overtime.

But shutting up employees seems foremost on the company's mind. Also on the table: a prohibition on web logs without company permission or that "may reveal the employee's personal opinion."

In Fact, Keep Your Self to Yourself

Intrusive as such demands are, they reflect a far broader attempt by U.S. corporations to control every aspect of their employees' lives. The latest case in point: a June NLRB decision that a non-fraternization policy adopted by Guardsmark, a security firm, was lawful because workers would likely interpret the rule as simply a ban on dating, which has some acceptance as a measure to prevent workplace sexual harassment.

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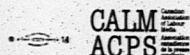
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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Not all Chicago action was at the convention

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

While the AFL-CIO convention and the disaffiliation of two of its biggest unions garnered more media attention than labor usually gets in an entire year, there was much more going on in Chicago that all union members should know about. Among the most notable: the National Summit on Diversity in Our Union Movement, held the weekend immediately prior to the federation's blow-out.

Drawing more than 800 delegates, the summit was convened by Labor Coalition for Community Action, an umbrella organization for what are known as the AFL-CIO's constituency groups. The groups are the federation's attempt to acknowledge that more than 60% of all union members are people often described as "minorities," including women, people of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers. Its six members are the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Pride at Work.

The coalition was formed in 2003 and played a major role in last year's elections, sponsoring 23 town hall meetings in 14 states. In Jackson, Mississippi, 4,000 people attended one of its panel discussions. Coalition members also conducted voter registration and education in 41 cities and made 82,000 calls to Asian and Pacific Islander homes.

More recently, this past February it joined the AFL-CIO in sponsoring a reception to honor newly elected members of the 109th Congress. It was an active participant in the coalition to save Social Security, held town hall meetings in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Detroit on diversity in the labor movement, and, as already mentioned, convened the national summit on diversity.

The agenda for the two-day meeting was packed, including such topics as

diversity in the union movement, diversity in organizing and political action and building leadership that reflects our diversity. A plethora of speakers included Bill Lucy, president of CBTU; Pat Friend, president of Flight Attendants-CWA; Larry Cohen, executive vice president of CWA; Kent Wong, director of the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education; Ida Castro, former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Linda Chavez-Thompson, AFL-CIO executive vice president; and John Sweeny, AFL-CIO president.

Brother Sweeny spoke on diversity in the labor movement. He pledged that at the next AFL-CIO convention, delegations would reflect the racial and gender diversity of the affiliates they represented—including young people—or they would not be seated. He acknowledged that we are "not even close to where we should be" in achieving fairness for minorities and women, and noted that "55% of all new organized workers are female, and union campaigns are more likely to succeed if the work force is mostly female and the leader is a woman."

Although many summit delegates were not delegates to the main convention, their efforts paid off: an amendment to promote greater racial and gender diversity in the federation's governing body was passed, with six additional slots on the executive committee set aside for the leaders of the six constituency groups.

In short, progress is being made—but power is never given freely, and the way for us to get it is to get involved. Work with the labor councils in your area; join one of the constituency groups. As Linda Chavez-Thompson said, "This movement belongs to all of us."

STICKS AND STONES

When speaking about disabilities:

- Speak of the person first, and then the disability;
- An illness is a disease, a disability is a condition;
- Do not refer to people by their missing part, e.g. "amputee."

Big Brother wears a corporate face

The assault on journalists' civil rights was challenged by the News Media Guild last month, even as the York (Pa.) Daily Record presented a contract proposal that would make criticism of the company a fireable offense. Meanwhile, the National Labor Relations Board—the federal agency charged with protecting workers' rights—has ruled that a company may legally direct its employees not to "fraternize on duty or off duty, date, or become overly friendly with the client's employees or with co-employees."

Responding to a months-long effort by the Associated Press to implement a so-called "ethics" policy, the News Media Guild told the wire service its proposed restrictions on stock ownership by staff, freedom of expression and regulation of staffer's families are too sweeping and must be changed. Although AP recently revised a policy it first presented last November, incorporating some of the changes the Guild had sought, the latest draft seeks additional restrictions on "expression of opinion" by employees.

And although the company initially said the ethics policy would apply only to "news production" employees and not to union-represented technicians, clerical workers and other non-editorial personnel, it now says it is rethinking its position and may extend some provisions to its entire workforce.

"We share many of AP's goals," noted NMG President Tony Winton, "but we also believe that employees and their families should not be subjected to sweeping, vague restrictions in their personal lives in matters far removed from AP's business." He noted that the contract already allows the company to discipline staffers for "just cause," a standard that historically has allowed the employer to discipline breaches of journalistic standards.

Keep Your Opinions to Yourself

While the Guild and AP plan further ethics code discussions in September, management at the York Daily Record apparently hews to the dictum that if its employees have nothing good to say about the company they shouldn't say anything at all. When contract negotiations began July 18, it presented a long list of prohibited activities that include "disparagement of the company whether this occurs on or off company property."

The company demand was unusual

enough to draw the attention of the trade magazine Editor & Publisher, which quoted unit chair Lauri Lebo as saying "People are horrified. I actually shrieked when I read it." The Daily Record is owned by Dean Singleton's MediaNews Group, which acquired it last year in a swap for the York Dispatch; employees of both papers are members of the York Newspaper Guild.

Contract bargaining was seen as contentious even without the disparagement clause, if only because Singleton has hired the notorious union-busting firm of King & Ballow to represent his side of the table. Indeed, management's proposal includes no raises, elimination of night differential, reductions in bereavement leave, vacations and sick days, a longer work-week and trimming of overtime.

But shutting up employees seems foremost on the company's mind. Also on the table: a prohibition on web logs without company permission or that "may reveal the employee's personal opinion."

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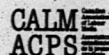
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