

THE GUILD Reporter

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Knight Ridder sale may rely on payroll cuts

The first deadline for potential bidders to show some interest in acquiring Knight Ridder has rolled around, and—surprise! The supposedly moribund newspaper industry, subject of reams of premature obituaries, apparently still can turn a few heads.

While the next step—when Knight Ridder invites closer scrutiny of its financials—may dampen what is at best a cautious ardor, “indications of interest” reportedly have been expressed by three other newspaper chains and by several private equity firms, either separately or jointly. The newspaper suitors supposedly include both Gannett and McClatchy, with MediaNews also nosing around.

Yet Wall Street’s response to the reports, despite early speculation that perhaps there would be no bidders at all, amounted to a barely perceptible shrug. Although share prices typically spike upward when a company is in play, Knight

Ridder’s shares nudged up less than 3% and still remain firmly within the trading range that prompted demands for a sale in the first place. Given the lukewarm response, it’s reasonable to ask what’s driving the interest shown thus far: what are potential bidders looking at?

One set of answers is provided in an analysis of Knight Ridder by Morgan Stanley, which was hired by the newspaper chain to dress it up for the marketplace. And a fine tating up it has been. Dated Nov. 29, the Morgan Stanley research report concludes “there is room for solid accretion to a potential buyer of the company.” Even a leveraged buyout, which incurs debt, “can generate close to 20% returns.”

The catch? Knight Ridder’s buyer would have to cut costs between \$150 million to as much as \$350 million, an amount the analysts describe as the “scorched earth” scenario. And a major portion

Continued on page 2

Cult of denial batters press

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Speaking at the National Conference for Media Reform earlier this year, TNG-CWA President Linda Foley triggered a wave of right-wing condemnation by deploring the killing of journalists in Iraq, many by U.S. forces. She used the word “targeted,” which raised temperatures, and she took the U.S. government to task for shirking its responsibility to investigate such deaths, raising temperatures even more.

The resulting invective, muddled with profanity, sloganeering and loathing for the media, obscured any meaningful concerns. And yet . . . and yet, a certain naïveté could be discerned, a child-like unwillingness by the trash-talkers to believe anything bad about the government.

Not our government.

If U.S. troops indeed had killed a dozen or more reporters, photographers and other news workers—and even that hard fact was not universally accepted—there must have been extenuating circumstances. People die in wars. Other countries—and terrorists, certainly—may place little value on human life, but this is the United States and we don’t do such things. To read a deeper malevolence into such unfortunate but inevitable events smacks of treason.

Yet in the months since the conference, two evolving trends demonstrate how widely this reflexive response missed the mark. One is the increased nakedness of the cult of denial that got us into the Iraqi quagmire in the first place; the other is a quickening drumbeat of disclosures revealing

Continued on page 4

ANALYSIS



TNG-CWA President Linda Foley holds her CWA sign aloft Dec. 8 in front of the White House.

Union movement Labor shakes off the blues to mobilize

By Mark Gruenberg
Staff Writer, Press Associates Inc.

Chanting, waving pro-worker signs and clamoring for justice, thousands of workers and their allies descended upon the White House Dec. 8, demanding President George W. Bush and the Republican-run Congress support U.S. workers’ rights.

Organized by the AFL-CIO, the demonstrators paraded three blocks from federation headquarters to Lafayette Park, where they established a large double picket line outside the presidential mansion’s north fence.

The White House march was one of 70-plus events nationwide and worldwide the week of Dec. 3-10, organized to demand recognition of the

right to organize and to urge passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The demonstrations were keyed to the Dec. 10, 1948 signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which among other freedoms stipulates the right to form unions.

“The right to organize has been destroyed. Right-wing politicians cut back the law to nothing, and corporations trample on our freedom like it’s their personal doormat,” AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Chavez-Thompson told a pre-march rally.

The week’s rallies, candlelight vigils and marches drew more than 60,000 people, the AFL-CIO estimated, with U.S. events occurring as far west as Honolulu and as far east as Brewer, Maine.

Continued on page 5



The coast-to-coast demonstrations included members of CWA Local 9400 at an Oakland rally.

Inside this issue



Terre Haute: old wine, new bottle. . . . page 3

MediaNews Grinch steals Christmas. . . page 6

Guild members making a splash page 8

DAVID BACON/NORTHERN CALIFORNIA MEDIA GUILD

Scorched earth at KR?

Continued from page 1

of those cuts would come from axing upwards of another 887 employees on top of the cuts the chain already has made. The scorched-earth scenario also envisions the outright termination of the Philadelphia Daily News, which all by itself would save \$45 million.

Presumably, one could argue that even more money could be "saved" by cutting more employees or by shutting additional newspapers. So how did the Morgan Stanley analysts decide where to draw the line? Ironically, by comparing Knight Ridder's costs to the company they singled out as the "industry leader"—not the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal, nor even McClatchy, but

Gannett.

Gannett may have limited journalistic cred, but it does boast operating margins for the past year that are nearly 50% higher than Knight Ridder's. And as the analysts explain, "The detailed breakdown of the costs for each shows a relatively simple reason for this: Gannett's work force is much less expensive than Knight Ridder's." Moreover, it's clear to Morgan Stanley that the primary reason for this difference is the higher rate of unionization at Knight Ridder, which "reports that 28% of the company's total FTE's [full-time equivalents] (18,000 at year end, 2004) were unionized versus 13% for Gannett."

If Knight Ridder's labor costs were proportionately the same as

Gannett's, the analysts argue, the company would realize another \$212 million in annual profits.

Although Morgan Stanley's cost-saving prescription is company-wide, a separate section examines revenue and profits per newspaper and concludes it's the major metros in the chain that are dragging it down—and therefore its employees might be first on the chopping block. While Knight Ridder's 20-some-odd regional newspapers have an estimated operating margin of 26.4%, the nine majors (not including the recently divested Detroit Free Press) are notably less efficient, with an estimated operating margin of 16.8%. And the worst of the worst are the two Philadelphia newspapers, followed by the San Jose Mercury News and the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

"For instance," the analysts wrote, "by our estimation, Knight Ridder earns less than [sic] \$50 million in Philadelphia on almost \$520 million in revenues. San Jose, slowly recovering from collapse of the tech bubble, currently earns less than \$22 million, by our estimation, on \$235 million in revenues." The Pioneer Press, meanwhile, gets a bye of sorts because it "operates in a very competitive market with McClatchy's Minneapolis Star Tribune."

None of this number-crunching is predictive of what will happen in the months ahead, since any decisions will depend greatly on who—if anyone—emerges as a successful bidder. But large corporate mergers invariably are followed by some kind of belt-tightening, if only to service the debt needed to buy a multi-billion dollar property. The question at that point will be how tightly the belt gets cinched.

Until an answer is forthcoming, however, the uncertainties induce a certain amount of corporate paralysis. Accordingly, management in Philadelphia on Nov. 29 shelved early contract renewal talks with the Guild. Negotiations had been started well in advance of the current contract's expiration next Aug. 31, in hopes of reaching a less pressured agreement, but the "uncertainty" of a possible sale forced the postponement, according to a management memo.

Although some efforts have been made within recent weeks to derail a possible sale, thus far there are few indications any are gaining traction. Most notably, a high-powered group of Knight Ridder alumni wrote an open letter criticizing the sales talk and suggesting it may nominate its own slate of directors at the company's annual meeting in May. "Knight Ridder is not merely another public company. It is a public trust" the 60 reporters and editors wrote. "It must balance corporate profitability with civic purpose."

Knight Ridder spokesman Polk Laffoon responded by labeling the letter "a fine gesture" before adding: "Unfortunately, the reality is that more than 90% of Knight Ridder shares are institutionally held."

No cost too small to escape notice

Chicken Little would be proud: the sky might not be falling, but the barnyard is in an uproar nonetheless.

Anticipating the worst at every turn, newspapers are cutting costs left and right. Jobs, of course, are among the most prominent targets—but as panic wells ever higher, no expense is too trivial to go unnoticed.

The New York Times, for example, is yanking the plug on the 15% discount it offered employees purchasing company stock. The cost of this largesse in 2005, which has to be reported in the company's annual financial statements, was \$5.6 million—little more than chump change for a company with 2004 revenues of \$3.3 billion. Of course, future savings will be considerably less, given the 30% plunge in the company's stock price over the past 12 months.

Newsprint is another major expense that must be husbanded with care before its profligate use bankrupts a company. How else to explain the recent memo from William Nangle, executive editor of the Times of Northwest Indiana, lamenting that the length of staff-

written stories has been "creeping to the long side." As a result, "I am again instructing the copy desk to trim stories," Nangle wrote, advising that "routine stories need be no longer than 6-8 inches."

Thankfully, exceptions will be made for "in-depth" stories: those "should be within the 10-12 range."

Meanwhile, the Akron Beacon Journal—a Knight Ridder newspaper that once used to win Pulitzer Prizes—is asking reporters to share pens and notepads because it stopped buying fresh office supplies at the beginning of December. That's actually a softening of a more blanket edict that had included the photo department—until the photographers pointed out that without batteries and paper, both of which had run out, there wouldn't be any local pictures gracing the newspaper's pages.

In a poignant coda to all the hacking and slashing, the online advocacy group MoveOn.org gathered 45,000 signatures on a petition opposing job cuts at Tribune Co. and tried to deliver them to company executives at a media conference in New York. When company chairman Dennis FitzSimons refused to accept the boxed document, a MoveOn.org activist asked him if he wouldn't "meet" with his customers? "No," FitzSimons replied, before walking away.

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The Newspaper Guild International



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

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Guild briefs . . .

St. Paul retirees win arbitration

The St. Paul Pioneer Press must allow early retirees to enroll in the same health plans as employees, according to an arbitrator who has upheld a Minnesota Guild grievance. The grievance challenged a Knight Ridder directive that early retirees could no longer enroll in employee plans and had to enroll in a corporate plan, despite contract provisions and past practice that prohibited the company from forcing early retirees off the employee plans.

Minnesota votes for incumbents

A slate of candidates arguing that the Minnesota Newspaper Guild needs "new blood" was rebuffed by members, who apparently agreed with incumbent president Ann Wilhelmy that "this is not a time for change." Wilhelmy overcame Randy Furst's bid, while editorial vice president Margaret Zack outpolled challenger David Chanen and acting secretary Bill Weyandt made it official by beating Judy Arginteanu.

U.S., Europe join hands in AP LINK

Union activists from the Associated Press in Europe and the U.S. have joined forces with the European Federation of Journalists to create the Associated Press Labour International Network, or AP LINK. AP LINK's aim is to promote professional journalism and to advance the labor interests of the wire service company's workers on both sides of the Atlantic. Its first project will be an internet-based network to collect facts and compare working and professional conditions for AP workers. AP LINK also has identified as its top issue an AP-proposed "ethics" policy that would impose unacceptable restrictions on staff.

Guild challenges CBC outsourcing

Representatives of the Canadian Media Guild are questioning plans by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. to outsource archive sales, reportedly to a business unit of the British Broadcasting System. Such work currently is done by CBC employees in Toronto. Although management said during the recent lockout that it had no plans to outsource, its objective now is to implement any change by next summer.

Alliance Atlantis workers vote CMG

Employees of the operations department of Alliance Atlantis Communications have voted 47-41 for representation by the Canadian Media Guild. The 100-person unit includes master control staff, closed captioning

editors, presentation editors, librarians, art directors, visual effects artists and others at one of Canada's last remaining non-union media companies.

IAPE has new leaders, dues

Following withdrawal of challenges by two losing incumbent candidates, TNG-CWA Local 1096, IAPE, has sworn in new top officers. The recent election also approved a dues increase, after two defeats in recent years. Serving as the local's new president is Steve Yount; Tom Lauricella and Dawn Kopecki were elected vice president and secretary, respectively. Treasurer Olivia James was unopposed for reelection.

Dow Jones to cut retiree benefits

A hint of things to come for IAPE-represented employees of Dow Jones was provided Dec. 7 in a company announcement of far-ranging changes in benefits for anyone not protected by a contract. Among them: an end to retiree health benefits for new hires after Jan. 1, and elimination of prescription drug coverage starting in 2007 for Medicare-eligible employees retiring after March 31, 2006.

SF Chronicle sticks it to its workers

Despite overwhelming ratification of a concessionary contract, Guild-represented employees of the San Francisco Chronicle have been getting hammered by a mean-spirited management. Now the Northern California Media Guild has filed two grievances protesting a company decision to arbitrarily change the rules of its buyout offer, resulting in involuntary dismissals and selective acceptance of applications.

Memphis Appeal offers buyouts

Add the Memphis Commercial Appeal to the growing roster of newspapers looking to trim payroll: the paper is offering buyouts to about 170 employees in hopes of reducing staff by mid-January. Workers 50 and older with at least 15 years on the paper are being offered financial incentives for early retirement, although details have not been disclosed.

Southern District elects '06 officers

Marilyn Kennedy of Memphis, president of the Southern District Council since 1999, was reelected to another one-year term at the council's fall meeting. Also elected were Nestor Soto of Puerto Rico, vice president; Mark Watson of Memphis, secretary; and Mark Pattison, Washington-Baltimore, as treasurer.

CONTRACT ROUND-UP:**Health care dominates, wage increases slight**

Several TNG-CWA locals negotiated new contracts in recent weeks—although not always to their liking—while others continued to slug it out with corporate managers spooked by slumping prices for newspaper stocks, an uncertain advertising outlook and, most tellingly, a continued escalation of health care costs.

A tentative three-year settlement at the Buffalo News was achieved after Guild members ramped up a mobilization campaign that included a sign-bearing march of 100 employees throughout the plant. The contract retains employer-paid health care while raising wages about 2% per year, as well as adding a pay upgrade for outside classified ad reps and a new incentive plan for customer service employees handling classified ads.

Full-time employees will be paid a \$425 signing bonus, while part-timers will get \$300. A membership ratification date had not been set at press time.

Also reaching tentative agreement on a contract were Guild-represented employees of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, who were scheduled to vote on the deal as The Guild Reporter went to press. The details were so unfavorable, however, that the bargaining and executive committees stressed they were only reluctantly "recommending that members vote 'yes' on a package that falls short of our goals on the biggest points."

One of the biggest disappointments in the four-year package is a

stingy wage increase of only 1.5% each January, retroactive to the beginning of this year, and a discretionary pay pool of 1% each year—with the 2005 portion to be paid as a lump-sum bonus rather than as a wage increase. But minimum wage scales also will rise, by 2% in each of the first two years and 2.5% in the latter two.

The news is more mixed regarding health care. A company effort to eliminate all contractual guarantees was rebuffed, and the current 83%-17% split in premium payments will be maintained through the end of March. But after that the premium split will become considerably more complicated, as employees are moved to an eight-tier system ranging from a 79%-21% split for single employees who don't smoke to 74%-26% for family coverage of an employee who smokes. Moreover, the premium split will change over subsequent years, although the maximum employee share will be capped at 35% for smokers' family members.

Elsewhere, Guild contract negotiations with the Bureau of National Affairs got off to a fast start at the end of November and within a week reached a lengthy series of tentative agreements that cover nearly half the contract—including a first negotiated provision, for sick bays, regarding BNA's relocation in 2007 from Washington, D.C. to northern Virginia.

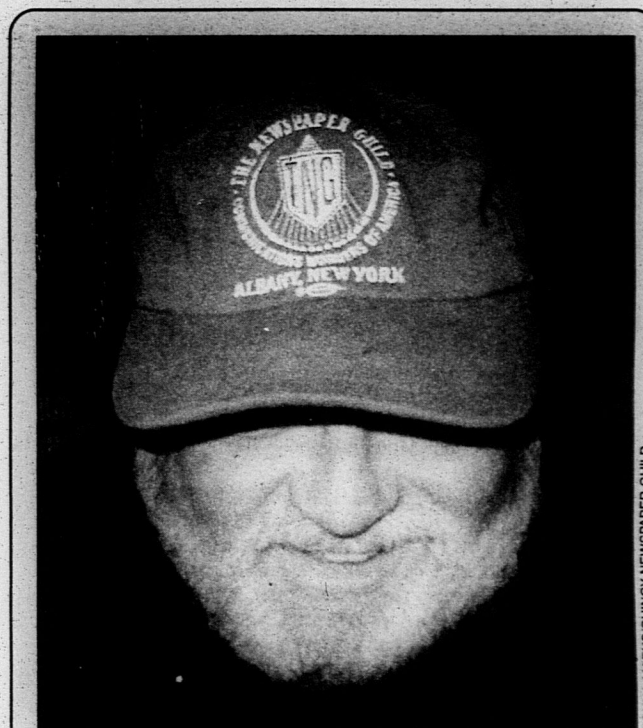
As usual, however, the heavy lifting still remained ahead, includ-

ing wages, health insurance and transportation subsidies.

Health care demands kicked off contract bargaining at the Patriot-News in Pennsylvania, where management hit members of the Harrisburg Newspaper Guild with a proposal that they pick up a third of their health insurance premiums—even as the newspaper's non-unionized employees would continue to receive free health care. The cost to Guild members would range from \$141.14 a month for single employees to \$356.64 a month for family coverage, prompting local President David DeKok to observe that the demand was "a non-starter."

Interestingly, a representative of the Newhouse-owned paper acknowledged that the demand was not being made for economic reasons, but because of past disagreements between the Guild and management that had fostered a difficult working environment. "Editorial employees work hard," he conceded. "But there have been a number of instances over the years where our efforts to streamline the process were challenged by the Guild."

Meanwhile, in Canada—where socialized medicine removes health care as a contract issue—a year-long union-busting campaign by Schneider Foods in Kitchener, Ont., yielded a retrograde contract for white-collar employees. Despite the bargaining committee's call for rejection of an incomplete final offer from the company, dispirited members of the Schneider



DONNA MARKS/QUINCY NEWSPAPER GUILD

Guild Santa?

Nah... more like TNG-CWA staff rep Jim Schaufenbil, sporting a bit of Albany Guild haberdashery at the recent CWA District 1 meeting. Albany is among several Guild locals that negotiated new contracts heading into the holiday season.

Office Employees' Association approved the regressive offer by the slender margin of 32-30.

Only 40% of the local's members voted, with a similar number voting with their feet instead: local President Arthur Lacroix said Guild membership has dropped to 135 from 170, with departments like information technology losing a third of their employees "and most of those left now actively looking for other jobs or counting the weeks to retirement."

The unit's fortunes took a nose-dive in early 2004, when Maple

Leaf Foods acquired Schneider and transferred sales and marketing employees to Mississauga, Ont. The contract then in force expired Oct. 31, 2004, and both sides were in an "open" position—free to strike or lockout—after conciliation failed this past March.

Setbacks in the three-year agreement include an end to overtime pay for employees on pagers providing technical and other after-hours support; and an end to the company underwriting one day a week of the local president's time to work on union business.

In Terre Haute, old wine in a new bottle

By Jay Schmitz
TNG-CWA Staff Representative

In voting Dec. 2 to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement, the members of the Terre Haute Newspaper Guild capped an unusual bargaining process from which other locals might draw inspiration—if they can develop similar circumstances.

Among the unusual elements: that the company's negotiators seemed genuinely concerned in hearing and addressing Guild concerns. That bargaining wrapped up in a relatively short four months. Most of all, that bargaining was conducted the way it's supposed to be.

The 54-1 vote represented 70% of the Tribune-Star bargaining unit, the highest this local has seen in at least 10 years, thanks largely to the leadership of the bargaining committee: local president Becky Igo; vice president Pat Comer; secretary Kim Wilkerson and treasurer Barb Alvey. But the outcome also was foreshadowed months earlier by the naming of a new publisher, David Thornberry, who signalled a refreshing respect for the Guild by working with Igo to resolve several issues before they blossomed into grievances.

With that encouraging experience in mind, the bargaining committee approached Thornberry to suggest taking an interest-based approach to negotiations, and ultimately we agreed on a variation: we met with the company three times initially, just to talk philosophically about general issues

of concern to both sides. Both sides were up front about what they wanted and what they needed to achieve. No proposals were laid out, and the meetings were considered "off-the-record."

Once we went on the record and started trading proposals, we found that the initial meetings had laid the groundwork very well. We were able to tailor our proposals in such a way that the company rejected very few of them, and vice versa. The result was an agreement within four months, compared with the previous two rounds of bargaining that went eight and 15 months beyond expiration before reaching agreements.

The Guild committee had to deal with a big concessionary issue: the company wanted the local to agree to merge into the corporate insurance plan, which meant higher deductibles and out-of-pocket costs, though the coverage was comparable otherwise. But because this was so important to the company, the committee saw an opportunity for making significant gains in other areas, including:

- Pay increases of \$11.55 retroactive to Aug. 16, \$12.25 next August and \$14 a year after that. These increases were applied to all of the steps in the scales, which had been frozen since 1999. A flat-rate increase gave the higher classifications a fairly decent pay increase but the lower pay classifications a much larger boost than they would have gotten from a percentage raise. Improving the lower pay scales was a stated goal of the committee going into bargaining.

- The company will hold the employees' share of insurance premium costs at 2005 levels for both 2006 and 2007. Employees will have to pay their share of any premium increases in 2008, but only of the difference from 2007.

- Full-timers get an additional personal day, up to four from three. Part-timers who average 24 hours per week over a six-month period are eligible for a personal day; previously, they had to work an average of 32 hours per week to get the personal day.

- Part-timers will be paid 100% of the full-time hourly rate for the employee's classification and experience level after a 90-day probationary period; during the probationary period the company may pay no less than 75% of the hourly rate. Previously, it took up to three years for a part-timer to reach parity.

- The Guild's jurisdictional claim to internet-related work was solidified with the establishment of a web developer classification and pay scale.

- Funeral leave provisions now include up to four days' leave for the death of a "cohabitant" in an employee's home, regardless of family relationship.

- In addition to already-good language relating to reporter privilege, the company agreed it will abide by the Indiana Shield Law or a stronger federal law if one kicks in. This is largely symbolic, since compliance is required by the law, but gives us additional grievance avenues in the event of a dispute involving an employee who wishes to maintain the anonymity of a source or other jour-

nalist integrity issue.

Besides insurance, one other concession by the local was in regard to outside ad sales representatives' pay. The publisher wanted to improve the current commission program but said he couldn't do that unless the sales reps agreed to a freeze of their base wages at the old pay rates.

A side letter gives the company until January 2007 to try the new program. If a third or more of the employees express dissatisfaction at that time with the new incentives and commission plans, the Guild and the company will review the program. If they cannot agree by the end of that month to continue the new commission structure, the program sunsets and the sales reps' base pay rates will rise to the level they would have been if they had received the same raises as other employees.

The bargaining committee and the company met jointly with the ad reps and discussed this proposal before any written agreement was reached. It was the consensus of the reps that they would be willing to give the plan a try if there was some kind of escape clause included.

We'll have to see whether this is a one-time-only situation or the beginning of a more productive relationship between Guild-represented employees and Tribune-Star management. At the very least, though, the Terre Haute members had an opportunity to enjoy the bargaining process as it was meant to be—give and take and honest negotiations geared toward giving both sides some benefit.

News round-up

Union election numbers down in 2005

Although unions had a higher batting average in representation elections held the first half of this year compared with 2004, they still ended up organizing fewer workers. According to federal data analyzed by the Bureau of National Affairs, unions won 704 of 1,140 representation elections (61.8%) held the first six months of 2005, compared with 701 of 1,212 (57.8%) in the first six months of 2004—but because the number of eligible voters in those elections decreased from 86,700 in 2004 to 71,225 in 2005, approximately 24% fewer workers won union representation. The good news? There were only 185 decertification elections in the same period this year, down from 219 in the same period in 2004—and the union win rate increased to 35.7% from 29.7%.

Card check, neutrality a big plus

Demonstrating the advantages of card-check and neutrality agreements for workers who otherwise must endure corporate threats and propaganda campaigns during organizing campaigns, CWA has gained representation rights for approximately 14,000 Cingular Wireless employees since its agreement with the company took effect July 1. Card check and neutrality are prominent features of the Employee Free Choice Act, which organized labor has been promoting for two years.

Labor Dept. steps up audit pace

The Labor Department has stepped up its auditing pace of labor unions, according to BNA, which reports that the total number of such audits in fiscal year 2005 was 599, or more than double the 288 recorded in 1998, 195 in 2000 and 250 in 2003. While BNA found only two audits that warned of possible criminal charges and 11 that gave clean bills of health, the vast majority fretted about minor recordkeeping infractions, such as failure to properly account for T-shirts distributed to union members.

Another fox enters the hen house

In keeping with his cynical view of government, George Bush announced Nov. 16 he will nominate Peter N. Kirsanow to fill one of two vacant seats on the five-member National Labor Relations Board. Kirsanow is a Cleveland attorney who represents management in labor cases and in the mid-'90s championed anti-union legislation in California. More recently, he waged a five-month legal battle to claim a seat on the Civil Rights Commission, to which he was named by Bush before his predecessor's term had expired.

More education but lower wages

That one-step-forward, two-steps-back phenomenon is not unique to the U.S. The Canadian Labor Congress reports that even though younger workers today are better educated than those of 30 years ago, they are paid less in inflation-adjusted currency than their parents' generation at that age. Men ages 15 to 25 are earning 25% less than their peers a generation ago, while women in the same age range are earning 20% less—even as the participation rate in post-secondary education has climbed from one in five to one in three. Forty-five percent of young workers who are employed full-time are being paid less than a poverty income.

Beirne scholarships offered again

The CWA Joe Beirne Foundation is again offering 30 partial college scholarships of up to \$3,000 each, with winners receiving second-year scholarships for the same amount, contingent upon satisfactory academic achievement. Eligibility is limited to CWA and TNG-CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren, including the dependents of retired, laid off or deceased members. Applicants must be high school graduates or high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply, as well as undergraduate and graduate students returning to school. Applications are available solely online and must be submitted no later than March 31: www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne.

Really briefly . . .

Locals negotiating contracts with mileage provisions should note that the IRS reimbursement rate for business travel kicks up Jan. 1, to 44.5 cents a mile. That compares with 40.5 cents for most of 2005, although high gas prices bumped the rate to 48.5 cents for the last four months of the year. . . . "The Source: Newspapers By the Numbers," a handy statistical survey of the industry compiled annually by the Newspaper Association of America, is available online at www.naa.org/the_source. . . . Both the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Dept. have signalled they will not challenge the acquisition of Village Voice Media by New Times, creating a chain of 17 so-called "alternative" weeklies. . . . One segment of the economy that's undeniably booming is the temporary staffing industry, which set record numbers the third quarter, employing an average of 2.8 million temporary and contract workers a day. . . . The AFL-CIO has expanded its online corporate tracker, at www.workingamerica.org/jobtracker, to include company-specific information about off-shoring, health and safety violations and CEO salaries.

Cult of denial: Dead reporters, propaganda, subversion

Continued from page 1

just how cynically the administration views the press. Journalists may think of themselves as working in the service of the First Amendment, but there's no mistaking that the White House has a much more jaundiced and utilitarian view of the media.

The cult of denial has been more on display with each passing month, starting with a now-familiar litany: there was no connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda, Iraq had no connection to 9-11, there were no weapons of mass destruction, U.S. troops were not greeted as liberators, the mission—however you define it—has not been accomplished. But as the war drags on, the dissonance between what we do and what we claim to believe has become a siren wail of despair, requiring an ever greater deadening of our moral reflex. Four years after 9-11, the home of the free and the brave has secret overseas prisons, embraces arch concepts like "rendition" and "disappears" people who may—or may not—be its enemies, just like those third-world dictatorships we used to read about.

But the most stark example of how far we've fallen because of our steadfast refusal to think the worst (of ourselves; never of "the other") is our response to the U.S. use of torture. The uptick of national horror over the disclosures at Abu Ghraib has long diminished, and with no fresh pictures to stoke passions the cult of denial has had ample opportunity to recast reality. The claims of torture were simply overblown. Besides, important issues of national security are at stake. We're in a war in which the other side will stop at nothing, as witness suicide—pardon, homicide—bombers blowing themselves into the afterlife. If the U.S. has to resort to tactics that squishy liberals find discomfiting, perhaps they'll have second thoughts after the next terrorist attack on the homeland.

The depravity of such facile logic is played mercilessly by Anthony Lewis in the Christmas (!) issue of *The Nation*, in which he reminds us that the torture we have sanctioned consists of far more than our abuse of the English language in search of acceptable euphemisms. Nor are water-boarding, sleep deprivation, extreme physical stress and abject degradation—all of which, if inflicted on U.S. soldiers, would evoke howls of protest—the worst of it. As Lewis notes, 44 prisoners have died in U.S. custody in this war, 21 of them officially classified as homicides. Death has come through suffocation, beatings, drowning and hypothermia. Yet even in the most egregious homicides there have been no charges brought, no U.S. soldiers or CIA agents held accountable, no public explanation of what transpired.

These things apparently just happen.

"When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 and proceeded to carry out their savagery," Lewis wrote, "many in the outside world asked how this could have happened in the land of Goethe and Beethoven. Would the people of other societies as readily accept tyranny? . . . Hannah Arendt and many others have stripped us, since then, of confidence that people will resist evil in times of fear."

The cult of denial, as Lewis suggests in noting the lack of public outrage after the Abu Ghraib pictures faded from memory, flourishes in the absence of sustained media attention. And the current administration, in preventing the release of any more torture photographs or videotapes, has demonstrated from day one that it views the mass media more as a threat to its ambitions than as a legitimate means by which the governed can oversee those who govern. News that advances the White House agenda is to be encouraged, anything else is to be squelched. Embed reporters with the troops in Iraq, where they can be guided; ban photos of the war dead returning to the U.S.; don't attend military funerals.

Yet manipulating images is one thing; faking the news or impersonating the news-gatherers takes the exercise to a whole new level. And the most extreme option, of physically eliminating those who cannot be controlled, is not beyond the capacity of those who view journalists as footsoldiers in an apocalyptic war of ideologies. An administration that can rationalize and excuse the torture of potential combatants, even

to the point of murder, can't be expected to flinch at trampling on a few constitutional protections, even at the risk of relatively negligible collateral damage.

Evidence of administration contempt for the media has been accumulating for some time, from the sordid granting of White House press credentials to a gay escort to secretly paying columnists to boost administration policies. But that was relatively tame stuff.

More alarming has been a recent spate of stories—few receiving sustained mass media attention—describing a much more aggressive effort to control public perception. The most recent issue of *Rolling Stone* includes a blockbuster piece by James Bamford, "The Man Who Sold the War," that describes White House privatization of government propaganda through its hiring of the Rendon Group. Consisting primarily of John Walter Rendon and a couple of family members, the Rendon Group is credited with successfully "selling" the weapons-of-mass-destruction ploy that plunged the U.S. into war by promoting Iraqi exiles who lied through their teeth.

Hiring Rendon was in keeping with a shift in military thinking away from the Cold War view that power comes from superior weapons systems, Bamford wrote. Quoting from an unidentified congressional report, he added: "Instead, the Pentagon now believes that 'combat power can be enhanced by communications networks and technologies that control access to, and directly manipulate, information. As a result, information is now both a tool and a target of warfare.'"

Implicitly, that includes information off the battlefield as well as on, thereby fundamentally changing the role played by information gatherers and dispensers—at least from the Pentagon's perspective. Reporters are now viewed as combatants, as are those opposing them. "I am not a national-security strategist or a military tactician," Bamford quotes Rendon as telling U.S. Air Force Academy cadets in a 1996 speech. "I am a politician, a person who uses communication to meet public-policy or corporate-policy objectives. In fact, I am an information warrior and a perception manager."

Mere weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks, Pentagon officials created the Office of Strategic Influence to produce covert disinformation and plant false news stories—an operation that ostensibly was shut down after its existence was leaked, provoking a public outcry. At about the same time, however, Rendon undertook a massive "media mapping" campaign of the Al-Jazeera television network. The assignment's objective: to provide a detailed content analysis, identify the biases of specific journalists "and potentially obtain an understanding of their allegiances, including the possibility of specific relationships and sponsorships," Bamford wrote.

As he further explained, "The secret targeting of foreign journalists may have had a sinister purpose. Among the missions proposed for the Pentagon's Office of Strategic Influence was one to 'coerce' foreign journalists and plant false information overseas. Secret briefing papers also said the office should find ways to 'punish' those who convey the 'wrong message.'"

The *Esquire* piece underscores the administration's twin preoccupations, of finding ways to subvert and shape mainstream media generally—and of silencing Al-Jazeera specifically.

The former strategy was put on display most dramatically by the *Los Angeles Times*, followed in short order by the *New York Times*, in their recent reports on the U.S. "Information Operations Task Force." The Baghdad-based task force pays Iraqi newspapers to publish stories, prepared by American "information operations" troops, that promote U.S. interests under such headlines as "Iraqis Insist on Living Despite Terrorism" and "More Money Goes to Iraq's Development." But unlike more overt propaganda efforts, such as the Pentagon Channel or the Voice of America, this is a stealth operation, with stories written anonymously to create the impression that they are being reported for Iraqis by Iraqis.

Helping the military in this effort has been another

Continued on page 5

Cult of denial

Continued from page 4

inside-the-Beltway private contractor, the ironically named Lincoln Group, which also has been padding the incomes of Iraqi journalists who write stories to its liking. Leaving no cynical turn uncovered, the subterfuge has been occurring against a backdrop of the U.S. State Department training Iraqi reporters in basic journalism skills and Western media ethics, including one workshop titled "The Role of Press in a Democratic Society."

But while the administration has played the Iraqi and U.S. press, it has had a notable lack of success in influencing Al-Jazeera, which it accuses of airing such un-American reports as actual footage of real combat deaths. As a result, administration officials regularly level rhetorical blasts at the Qatar-based network, while their military counterparts do the same thing more literally: bombing Al-Jazeera's office in Afghanistan in 2001, shelling the Basra hotel in which Al-Jazeera's journalists were the only guests in 2003, killing the news service's Baghdad correspondent, Tasreq Ayoub, a few days later and imprisoning several Al-Jazeera reporters, some of whom say they were tortured.

Small wonder, then, that when Britain's Daily Mirror reported in late November that George Bush had suggested to Prime Minister Tony Blair that they bomb Al-Jazeera's international headquarters, quite a few people—and not just at Al-Jazeera—took the threat seriously. While White House press secretary Scott McClellan brushed aside inquiries about the report, based on a leaked top-secret government memo, as too "outlandish and inconceivable" to merit a response, the British government has refused to clarify matters by declassifying and releasing the full memo—and, indeed, has threatened reporters with the Official Secrets Act if any more of it is published. But no official has denied that the suggestion was made.

What's noteworthy is that Bush's reported tantrum came in mid-April this year, as U.S. forces were bombing Fallujah so savagely some commentators drew comparisons to Guernica. While Al-Jazeera was reporting from inside the city of widespread civilian casualties—and of being deliberately targeted itself—an American military spokesman was declaring that news programs "showing Americans intentionally killing women and children are not legitimate news sources. That is propaganda, and that is lies."

But in fact it was the military that was lying, most notably in denying that it had used a napalm-like chemical, white phosphorus, affectionately known by the troops as "Willie Pete." After film clips of bodies burned to the bone by the phosphorus were aired, the Pentagon reversed itself and admitted it had used phosphorus, after all, but only against insurgents, not civilians—a claim that's impossible to verify in a guerrilla conflict. Local medical authorities

in Fallujah, meanwhile, estimated casualties at 600 dead, many of them women, children and asserted noncombatants.

Nothing in this recitation amounts to a "smoking gun," the incontrovertible piece of evidence that many on the extreme right insist must be presented to "prove" that the White House has "targeted" journalists. And, indeed, such a smoking gun may not exist.

Yet as recent revelations make clear, the demand for a smoking gun is beside the point. The facts speak for themselves. Whether it's a policy, an attitude, a framework or a set of perceptions, the result is dead reporters, disinformation, propaganda, an insular government and a deadening of U.S. society's moral engagement with the world.

Indeed, the results are so stark and so alarming that the surprise is that most media organizations have failed to rise up in protest. Reuters, whose employees have been killed in disproportionate numbers, has lodged numerous protests to little avail. Demands by TNG-CWA and the International Federation of Journalists for independent investigations of various slayings have received equally short shrift, as have similar requests from the Committee to Protect Journalists. But the major U.S. media companies have been largely silent, as have various other professional journalistic associations, further playing into the cult of denial.

More recently, the IFJ—of which TNG-CWA is a member—responded to the news of the Information Operations Task Force by calling on the U.S. to immediately cancel all such projects. By engaging in such deception, it charged, the U.S. is guilty of "operating a cynical campaign of double standards" in Iraq and of compromising the very values it claims to be promoting in the region.

The IFJ and the International News Safety Institute also have drafted a United Nations resolution authorizing the Secretary General to assess members' compliance with international laws regarding protection of civilians in armed conflicts. Although the proposal does not single out the U.S., one key recommendation calls for governments that persistently refuse to track down the killers of journalists to be reported to the International Criminal Court.

Given the Bush administration's equally contemptuous disregard of the U.N. and for international courts, the resolution appears to have a short shelf life. But until news corporations and professional journalistic organizations wake up to the realization that they're in the cross-hairs every time they fail to toe the administration line, it appears to be the only show in town. Meanwhile, the violence—to people, to journalism and to democratic discourse—will continue. And as it does, the cult of denial will grow ever stronger and, paradoxically, ever more naked.

Restore Rights Workers

Jobs lost and poverty are going up. Job cuts threaten the livelihood of an entire human right in collecting.

Workers included the freedom to form unions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Labor Organization's Convention 87. The U.S. has signed both but has not ratified them. The U.S. has also signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right to form unions. The U.S. has not ratified this treaty either.

They would join a coalition of workers' efforts to join together to work to protect the right of workers' freedom to form human rights union.

UNITED STUDENTS AGAINST SWEATSHOPS

Restore Rights Workers

PROTECT MY RETIREMENT

BILL BURKE/WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE GUILD

Demonstrators on Dec. 8 came from both genders and all races and walks of life.

Unions moving again

Continued from page 1

Participants came from a broad spectrum of organizations outside the AFL-CIO, including the independent National Education Association—the nation's largest union—and several unions in the rival Change to Win federation. Also joining in were the Coalition for Labor Union Women, Jobs With Justice and the United States Student Association.

A petition with more than 100,000 names, demanding Bush recognize workers' rights and stop efforts to disenfranchise more than 800,000 federal workers, was delivered by march leaders to the White House gates but refused by Secret Service agents. It then was carried back to the AFL-CIO's headquarters, where it was faxed—with all the names—to the White House.

Noting that the U.S. is a signatory to the declaration of human rights, demonstration organizers called lawmakers' attention to a report this year from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The report concludes that U.S. workers' right to organize is endangered by too-weak penalties for violators and "a judicial system too ineffective to deter them" from illegally intimidating, harassing and firing workers who demand their rights.

Among the remedies labor has been seeking is the Employee Free Choice Act, which has 41 Senate sponsors in the Senate and 205 in the House (218 would be required for passage), including seven representatives and one senator from the congressional GOP majority. The act would ban so-called "captive audience" meetings, in which supervisors harangue workers against joining unions, would require card-check recognition and would mandate arbitration for first-contract negotiations if the two sides can't agree. Penalties for

labor-law breaking, now so low they elicit little more than a shrug, also would be bolstered.

In Washington, the marchers also concentrated on Bush's union-busting initiatives, including attempts to eliminate collective bargaining rights for 700,000 civilian Defense Department workers. John Gage, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, warned that denial of workers' rights for federal employees would lead to denial of workers' rights for all. "If it happens to us, state and local government workers will be next. And if it happens to them, major private industries will be next," he added.

Providing moral support for the demonstrators was an open letter, signed by 11 Nobel Peace Prize winners and reprinted as full-page ads in the Washington Post and New York Times, expressing grave concern "about the state of workers' rights in many countries." In addition to singling out Burma, China, Zimbabwe, Belarus, Colombia, Ukraine and Bosnia-Herzegovina as countries that abuse workers' rights, the letter lambasted "the wealthiest nation in the world" for its failure to "adequately protect workers' rights to form unions and bargain collectively."

The letter called upon all signatories of the universal declaration to abide by its provisions "and, at long last, truly protect and defend workers' rights, including the right to form unions and bargain collectively." Among those who signed the letter were former president Jimmy Carter, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu—and, ironically, Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa, once lionized by Ronald Reagan for his leadership of the Polish trade union in opposition to that country's communist government.

What's the matter with labor?

If unions are so great, why don't more people belong to them? Could be because employers have grown more brazen about using legal and illegal tactics to thwart organizing campaigns, as described in statistical detail in a study released Dec. 6.

Commissioned by American Rights at Work, a nonprofit advocacy organization, and conducted by the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois, the 35-page report summarizes a survey of 62 organizing drives in the Chicago metropolitan area in 2002. Among the report's findings:

- 30% of employers fired pro-union workers;
- 49% threatened to close a worksite when workers attempted to organize;
- 51% used bribery or favoritism to coerce employees into opposing unions;

- 82% hired union-busting consultants;
- 91% forced employees to attend one-on-one anti-union meetings with supervisors.

In addition to reviewing the 62 campaigns, researchers reviewed data from the National Labor Relations Board on all organizing campaigns conducted by unions among previously unorganized workers in the Chicago region. They also did case studies of 25 of the campaigns, interviewing union organizers, workers and NLRB officials.

"Our research clearly shows that firings, bribes and threats are pervasive and that these actions greatly impede workers' ability to form unions," concluded report co-author Nik Theodore. As a result, the study recommends several changes in labor law, including elections held immediately after unions file their petitions or card-check recognition when a majority have signed the petitions.

Why corporations are winning, workers losing

By Thomas I. Palley,
Special to Press Associates, Inc.

Domestic political economy historically has been constructed around the divide between capital and labor, with firms and workers at odds over the division of the economic pie. Within this construction, labor usually is represented as a monolithic interest.

Yet the reality is that labor has always suffered internal divisions. Globalization sharpens these divisions, which helps explain why corporations have been winning and workers losing.

The issue of whether workers win from globalization is particularly pertinent to U.S. workers now, as U.S. and world trade negotiators are scheduled to meet in Hong Kong in mid-December. Workers' interests are far from their agenda.

A core problem for labor is that workers are also consumers, thereby creating a divide between the desire for higher wages and a desire for lower prices. Historically, this identity split has been exploited to divide union and non-union workers. Globalization amplifies the worker-consumer identity split through its promise of lower prices, a problem that is exemplified

in the debate over Wal-Mart.

This problem is worsened by the fact that globalization impacts the U.S. economy unevenly, hitting some sectors first and others later. The process can be understood in terms of the hands of a clock, with the apparel sector at 1 o'clock, the textile sector at 2 o'clock, steel at 3 o'clock, autos at 6, and so on.

Workers in the apparel sector were the first to be impacted, but all other workers were rewarded with price reductions. When the process picked off textile workers at 2 o'clock, workers from 3 o'clock onward got price cuts—as did the apparel workers at 1 o'clock, or at least those that still had jobs. Each time the clock hands move, the impacted workers are isolated but all others benefit. So as globalization moves around the clock, labor is perennially divided.

Manufacturing was first to experience this process, but technological innovations associated with the internet are putting service and knowledge workers on the firing line, too. Even retail workers are vulnerable, as shown by the viability of the Amazon.com business model.

Public sector wages also are indirectly in play, since declining wages mean declining tax revenues. The problem is that at each moment in time workers are divided, with

the majority made slightly better off while the few are much worse off.

Globalization also divides capital, creating a new division between bigger internationalized firms and smaller firms that remain nationally centered. This has been brought into sharp focus with the debate over the trade deficit and the over-valued dollar.

In previous decades, manufacturing as a whole opposed trade deficits and an over-valued dollar because of the adverse impact of increased imports. The one major business sector exception to that opposition was retailing, which benefited from cheap imports. However, the spread of multinational production and outsourcing has divided manufacturing into two camps.

In one camp are larger businesses that have gone global and benefit from cheap imports. In the other are smaller businesses that remain nationally centered in terms of sales, production and input sourcing. This division opens the possibility of a new alliance between labor and those manufacturers and businesses that remain nationally based. This is a potentially potent alliance, since in the U.S. there are approximately 7 million enterprises with sales of less than \$10 million each, versus 200,000 with sales greater than \$10 million. Such an alliance

will always be unstable, however, since traditional labor-capital conflict over income distribution can always reassert itself.

Solidarity has always been key to the political and economic advance of working families, and it is key to mastering the politics of globalization. Developing a coherent story about the economics of globalization around which working families can coalesce is a key ingredient for solidarity. So, too, is understanding how globalization divides labor. Such understandings can help counter deep cultural proclivities to individualism, as well as other historic divides such as racism.

However, as if this were not difficult enough, globalization creates additional challenges. National political solutions that worked in the past are not adequate to the task of controlling international competition. That means the solidarity bar must be further raised, calling for international solidarity that supports new forms of international economic regulation.

Palley is former chief economist of the AFL-CIO and former chief economist of the U.S.-China Commission, a congressionally created panel that monitors U.S.-China trade and economic relations.

The MediaNews Grinch who stole Christmas

By Tom Joyce
York Newspaper Guild

Every Who in York County liked Christmas a lot. But the Grinch, who owned the hometown paper, did NOT!

The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season! Now please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.

His paper was one of the best in the nation,
And in the past year had increased circulation.
With sports, entertainment, great photos and news,
All this and still more did it bring to the Whos.
It was earning a profit, and lots of awards.
And the sour, stingy Grinch got to reap the rewards.
But what drove him berserk, and then still more berserker,
Was the thought of him sharing that wealth with his workers!

With a glance at those workers, and a sour, grinchy frown,
He thought of the holidays coming around.
They'll be buying kids presents, he snarled with a sneer.
And be visiting families for holiday cheer!
"And to fund the whole thing they'll be wanting fair pay!"
That's one thing he hated, **FAIR PAY! PAY! PAY!**
Fair pay was a thing that he must keep at bay!
Then he got an idea! An awful idea!
THE GRINCH GOT A WONDERFUL, AWFUL IDEA!

I know just what to do! said the Grinch with great bluster.
Ill bring in some lawyers, professional union busters!

The Grinch chuckled deeply while hatching his plot.

The lawyers'll get 'em, and leave 'em with squat!

So the Grinch and his lawyers, with gusto and ardor,

Started taking the things that his people worked hard for.

Sick leave! Vacation time!

And still more outrageous,

The Grinch and his lawyers

tried freezing their wages!

And the worst part of all, a

big double-whammy,

As he hurt all the workers,

he hurt all their families!

The Grinch he then laughed, with a dry raspy wheezin'.

They'll work with no contract this holiday season!

"They're just finding out! I know what they'll do!"

"Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,

"Then my workers will all sing the 'No-Contract Blues'!"

"That's a noise," grinned the Grinch, "That I simply must hear!"
So he paused. And the Grinch put a hand to his ear . . .

SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? The happy ending where the Grinch has a change of heart and decides to treat his workers right? Sorry. Only you can make that happen.

MediaNews Group, a Denver-based corporation notorious for its union-busting tactics, has taken over the York Daily Record and Sunday News and is trying to railroad its workers in the latest round of negotiations. The York Daily Record, in one form or another, has been the hometown newspaper around here since the 18th century.

Please help! What you can do:

- Call publisher Fred Uffelman and ask him to intervene in the talks: (717) 771-2000.

- Write a letter to the editor supporting the journalists who bring you the news and who deserve a fair contract:

Letters to the Editor,

York Daily Record

122 S. George Street

York, Pa. 17405-7122

or letters@ydr.com

- Go to our website, yorkguild.org, send an e-mail and learn more about us and our fight.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

I very much enjoyed the story about the Hawaii Tribune-Herald. I can tell the paper has no regard for talent since it has fired such an able writer.

I do wish that the Guild website were not always so hostile to Republicans, being that I am one, as well as an active member of our Newspaper Guild. It is a gross stereotype to label all Republicans anti-union and simply silly to treat our president as the incarnation of evil.

Surely I'm not the only wild-eyed, frothing-at-the-mouth, conservative, evangelical, Christian Republican in the entire ranks of labor activists, though you would think so from the way I hear some fellow Guild and union members talk. If you're a conservative who wants to be active in labor you'd better grow a thick skin, since you will be insulted by people who consider themselves the soul of "tolerance."

—Barbara Bradley,
Memphis Newspaper Guild

To the Editor,

On Friday, Dec. 2, the Minneapolis Star

and Tribune (my former employer) had an article about the outsourcing of their circulation department customer service call center (I was once responsible for the Customer Service Center, which, in my day, took over a million calls from customers each year).

The article said that it wasn't about saving money but about moving this function to a company whose "core competency" was customer service.

Oh, please.

The core competency of the Star Tribune Circulation Customer Service Center is customer service. Does anyone really think they can improve service by farming that role out to an organization who does not share your vision, values, and purpose? To an organization that does not know your company, your market, your staff? I don't believe it for a second.

I worked at the Star Tribune for 18 years, my dad for 42 years before me. I've consulted in three markets around the country for the past dozen years. I've never known better providers of customer service than newspaper circulation people. I've never known employees who worked harder or gone

more out of their way to serve the customer. To take that work away from these people and to say you are giving it to a company whose "core competency" is customer service, is an insult to them and to all who came before them.

It is always "about the money." Let's be honest about it.

I operated at the Star Tribune by the maxim: "We will tell you what we know when we know it. We will never be dishonest or mislead you." A current employee told me how her boss lies to her outright and commented that it is hard to be dedicated when there is no trust.

My sympathy and best wishes to those who lost their jobs. They did get a two-week notice right before Christmas.

No wonder the newspaper industry is in decline.

—Tom Heuerman, former member,
Minnesota Newspaper Guild

To the Editor,

In response to Human Rights Director Debbie Thomas and her Oct. 21 column, let me say first that at age 61, I am definitely a

"codger." But to meet my definition of political correctness, I should in the same breath also be identified as a "cranky curmudgeon."

Now let me say to Debbie Thomas, Political Correctness Director, "Get a grip!"

My dictionary, Webster's New World (Simon and Schuster, 1988) defines "refugee" as "a person who flees from home or country to seek refuge elsewhere . . ."

As to "gyp" being derived from Gypsy, you'd have to be a linguistic scholar to know it—and that etymology is not even a certainty. My dictionary says it is an Americanism, which is a bit odd, since the word was invented in America, where there are hardly any "gypsies" to provide alleged role models for the word. (And how dare Ms. Thomas call them Gypsies when we all know they are the Sinti and Roma?)

Finally, in regard to "illegal aliens," Ms. Thomas needs to do more than get a grip. She needs to get a copy of the law. If non-citizens enter the United States through non-legal means, they are illegal aliens.

—Rod Thompson,
Hilo, Hawaii



LOOKING AHEAD

Our rights are being attacked

By Linda Foley, President

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

—Article 23, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, December 10, 1948.

Now there's something you can clip and put on your refrigerator to think about whenever you reach for the milk or the bologna.

As much as modern American political leaders like to tout "our freedoms," they rarely, if ever, mention economic freedom in the same reverential way that they speak about "political freedom."

Former First Lady and first U.N. Ambassador Eleanor Roosevelt was a public figure who did understand that without economic freedom, there can be no true democracy. When she helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, she made sure that ideal was captured in the document.

Mrs. Roosevelt was a dues-paying Newspaper Guild member for more than 25 years. She wrote a newspaper column for United Features Syndicate called "My Day," in which she discussed many of the ideas embodied in the U.N. declaration of rights, as well as other enlightened opinions. I dare say few Guild members—many of them accomplished and noted for their written works—could lay claim to have authored as important and enduring a document as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Roosevelt's own county, which she held up as a model for the values enunciated in the declaration, has fallen woefully short in its quest to fulfill her vision. Since 1948, the United States as a nation has made little progress toward economic equality. The gap between rich and poor is wider than at any time during our history, and more people live in poverty than at any time in our history. Jobs with dignity and good remuneration are scarce and available almost exclusively to those who can afford an expensive education or cultivate the social connections to garner them. Nearly every "social protection" that could be a hedge against an unjust or inadequate income has been dismantled.

And as Mrs. Roosevelt's own union would point out, the right to "form and join trade unions" is being quietly obliterated by abuse of the very laws and enforcement mechanisms put in place to preserve it. Thousands of union members throughout the United States demonstrated in the days leading up to Dec. 10 this year in order to underscore that point.

Unfortunately, Article 23 isn't the only section of the Declaration of Human Rights flouted by the United States. Consider Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." George Bush has threatened to veto a defense bill if it reaffirms that value for our troops fighting in Iraq.

Or Article 10, which says anyone charged with a crime is "entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing." There are hundreds of detainees incarcerated in the name of the War on Terror who don't even know what charges have been levied against them, let alone have any expectation of a fair and public hearing.

Article 9 says, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile." Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently has been squirming her way through press



Eleanor Roosevelt receives first prize in the 1949 Geist Foundation awards competition, administered by the Newspaper Guild of New York, for her column "My Day." Presenting the award is Herbert Bayard Swope; between them is third-prize winner Seymour Marks, of the Long Island Press.

conferences across Europe to defend the U.S. on that score.

According to Article 12: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy..." The about-to-be-renewed USA Patriot Act will put an end to the sacrosanct right of privacy for a long time to come.

In short, the list of violations of the basic human rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is staggering. But if the latest public opinion polls are any indication, Americans may be starting to crawl out of their post-9/11 "hear-no-evil" cocoons that muted much of the outrage that should have been in full public array over these arbitrary, anti-democratic, and in some cases inhumane policies of the Bush

administration.

It's up to the press to connect the dots and explain why these are not just isolated incidents of a zealous government going over the line. They add up to a disturbing pattern of human rights abuse, which in the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have "resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind."

I think Americans are better people than that. Even if they do take their milk, bologna and refrigerators for granted. Come 2006, they can begin to prove me right by voting their collective conscience.

(To read the complete Universal Declaration of Human Rights, go to www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)

ORGANIZE! . . . A Statement by HEYWOOD BROWN

[Seventy years ago this month, a fragile new union of newspaper employees teetered on the edge of extinction. Founded just a year earlier, the American Newspaper Guild had scored some early successes but then entered a long spell of counterattacks and reverses. Broke and besieged on all sides, the union's chances of survival seemed extraordinarily slim.

The Guild Reporter responded by publishing a boxed, front-page exhortation from Guild founder Heywood Brown. Today, as the Knight Ridder newspaper chain inches toward a possible breakup and another wave of layoffs ripples through the nation's newsrooms, Brown's comments are just as timely.]

The Guild is about to launch its biggest drive for fresh strength, to raise itself to a higher level of effectiveness. Under a plan just adopted by the National Executive Board, we are to create a defense

fund, tighten our internal organization and make a determined campaign for membership.

The publishers themselves have dramatized the need for this effort. With their genius for the unnecessary affront, they are taking away the five-day week, the one boon that, in these years of wreckage, newspaper men and women have prized most highly. The publishers have not enough concern for the well-being of their employees, not enough thought for the unemployed millions, not even enough enlightened selfishness to bear that small sacrifice. They stand it peaceably where we are strong; where they think it safe they are ending it by bulletin board edict.

They doubtless think their move is a good gamble. In the old days it would have been. If they won, fine; if they lost, they would be no worse off than before. But in the old days they could ignore their staff's

wishes. What could an isolated bunch of romantics do? Today the romantics are not isolated. The Guild is here. Newspapermen now know that a gain in one place makes a similar gain that much easier everywhere; that a loss anywhere sets the whole Guild back.

Men and women outside will see that. They will realize today, as never before, that improvements will come not out of generosity of the publishers, but by themselves working together, inside the Guild.

There is our cue. We have in our hands the means to turn back this reactionary drive of the publishers and make every step they take count in our favor. They are spreading disillusionment. This is our moment to bring in thousands of newspaper men and women still outside; to solidify our ranks; to build for defense. On all counts this campaign is our move. It is the old story: the best defense is an attack. It will make the publishers loath

to provide fresh ammunition for us; it will put us in a stronger position in which both to protect and advance ourselves in the future.

I urge every Guild and every Guild member to begin on this campaign at once. Details of committee nominations will be sent out as rapidly as possible. But the groundwork can be laid now. Every Guild can start choosing its committees, checking records to see where repairs are needed, determining where organizational work will add the most effective strength, preparing to swell the defense fund.

We are menaced now; we must defend ourselves now. The membership campaign is the first answer. Let every one start it now. Enroll every possible person! Help build new Guilds where there are none! In the face of this threat of the publishers—for the sake of the gains we have won and those we are to win—let this be the watchword:

ORGANIZE!

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: January 13.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Past year had a few setbacks . . .

By Debbie Thomas
Human Rights Director

No matter what this time of year means to you, and regardless of whether you're celebrating Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah or the winter solstice, 2005 is about to end. Year's end is a traditional time to assess what went right, what went wrong, what we should change and what should remain. Did you accomplish anything? What were the negatives and what were the positives?

Earlier this year, I discussed a study by the American Society of Newspaper Editors on increases of minorities and women in the newsroom. More recent reports bring no surprises: the newsroom is still mostly white and mostly male.

Knight Ridder's imminent demise has prompted some backward steps. The chain's Nuevo Mundo, a free daily published established in 1996 that had won more than 60,000 readers, was deemed unprofitable and closed. Efforts to find a buyer for the Viet Mercury failed, so that was closed, too. And Knight Ridder put its diversity program on hold, including a one-year internship program, a minority internship program and a minority scholarship program. So much for the corporate motto, "Diversity—no excuses."

Elsewhere, ABC-TV took a step forward by naming Elizabeth Vargas as co-anchor of World News Tonight. But Washingtonian Magazine took a big step backward in listing the 50 best and most influential journalists in the nation's capital—and including only two people of color, Eugene Robin-

son and Michael Wilbon, both of the Washington Post.

Hampton University, a historically black institution, also backslid—this time over free speech issues—by disciplining students who distributed flyers against the war without getting the school's permission. On a positive note, at least the discipline consisted of community service.

Another questionable note: whites account for about half of the nation's missing children but are featured in a majority of the stories on the issue. And let's not forget Associated Press's efforts at union-busting in Mexico, despite a 37-year history of collective bargaining agreements.

Not even paradise is without problems. In Hawaii, Anglo managers at the Tribune Herald imported from the mainland refer to the locals as "lazy and stupid."

In short, it's been quite a year—but we can't allow the setbacks to get us down. Let's continue striving for human rights for all. Remember, human rights are as large a part of collective bargaining as organizing or mobilizing.

Meanwhile, Happy New Year!

STICKS AND STONES

Bimbo: Highly offensive term referring to women.

High yellow: Objectionable term when referring to lighter-colored African-American persons. Avoid any description of skin color or degrees of color. Also avoid *mulatto* and *half-breed*.

Chico: A first name inappropriately applied to an entire group: Mexicans. Also, *Julio* and *Pancho*.

Guild people making news

The winner of the 2006 Irving Leuchter Memorial Scholarship is **Tretha Kathryn David** (at right), secretary of the St. Louis Newspaper Guild. David, who usually goes by "Kathy," works in classified advertising at the St. Louis Post Dispatch. She applied for the six-week fellowship at the Harvard University Trade Union Program, she wrote, so she can learn about "corporate strategies, so that we're proactive and not reactive" as union members.

At least two Guild members are recently published authors. **Chuck Laszewski**, reporter for the St. Paul Pioneer Press, has written "Rock and Roll Radical" about Dean Reed, a singing and acting superstar of the 1960s and '70s whose body was fished out of a lake behind the Iron Curtain in 1986. **Clarke Canfield**, a member of the News Media Guild out of Portland, Maine, has written a book about the New York Yankees—from a Red Sox fan's point of view. No surprise, then, that the book has a rather caustic title: "Those Damned Yankees: The Not-So-Great History of Baseball's Evil Empire."

Frank Valentine (below), who joined the Denver Newspaper Guild in 1936 and labored at the



Kathy David, framed by pieces of the Berlin Wall in Fulton, Missouri.

Denver Post for 52 years, celebrated another milestone Nov. 29: he became a centenarian. Valentine retired in 1972 but remains in touch with former co-workers at the Post's in-house print shop, including **Bill Burden** and **Mike Burrell**.

Finally, TNG-CWA members who are still inhibited about pick-

ing up a picket sign can take heart from **Chris Gang** of the Memphis Newspaper Guild. When Chris recently signed up for a cell phone family plan at Radio Shack, her daughter's phone got bad reception and would terminate calls mid-conversation. A replacement phone from the same store had the same problems, but when Chris returned for a third visit "the remedy they suggested was sending it off for repairs that would take three weeks," which she found unacceptable. The only alternative: shell out \$200 for a different model.

Undeterred, Chris went next door to a Dollar Tree, bought a magic marker and a sheet of poster board, and wrote in big letters: "R.S. refuses to right defective cell phone." It took only 20 minutes of marching up and down, with customers occasionally pausing to chat and offer encouragement, before a clerk came out "and asked me to come in and talk. They swapped the phone with another model from the same manufacturer. It seems to be working."

Score another point for direct action!



Frank Valentine, wearing a birthday crown, with retired Guild member Bill Burden (center) and TNG-CWA staff rep Mike Burrell.

DAYBOOK

TNG-CWA Executive Board,
Jan. 11-13, Washington, DC

Deadline for Broun, Barr
nominations: Jan. 27

Great Lakes District Council,
Jan. 27-29, Pittsburgh

Midwest District Council,
Feb. 10-12, Twin Cities, MN

New Local Officers Seminar,
Feb. 17-20, Silver Spring, MD

New England District Council,
Feb. 25-26, Providence

Mid-Atlantic, Southern Councils,
March 3-5, Memphis

Celebration of Liberty dinner,
March 4, Memphis

CWA Leg.-Political Conference,
March 12-15, Washington, DC

Knight Ridder Council,
March 17-19, San Jose

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

With publishers nationwide restoring six-day workweeks, the Guild's executive board vows to double union membership and to raise \$25,000, earmarking 80% for a defense fund. . . . The former national president of Sigma Delta Chi denies that the journalistic fraternity is seeking to displace the Guild as a non-collegiate professional organization. . . . Herbert Moore, president of Transradio News Service, predicts that newspapers are doomed and will be replaced by "a truly modern news service to the public, geared for the breathless speed of the twentieth century."

Fifty years ago this month:

The merger of the AFL and CIO, joining in their first constitutional convention, in New York City, is hailed in the Guild Reporter as creating "the largest, most powerful alliance of free trade unionists in the world." . . . Nearly 40 subpoenaed witnesses are paraded behind closed doors as the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee resumes its investigation of "communistic influence" in the press. . . . 800 Guild members are idled in Detroit as 116 stereotypers strike the city's three newspapers

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Members of the Guild and two other unions return to work at the York (Pa.) Daily Record, ending a 15-day lockout, minutes after a company deadline to permanently close the paper if they did not agree to its contract proposals. . . . Doug Cuthbertson is elected executive officer of the San Francisco-Oakland Guild. . . . The San Francisco Newspaper Printing Co. settles EEOC charges of sex, race and national origin discrimination.

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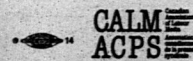
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