

THE GUILD Reporter

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McClatchy wins KR bid, puts 8 Guild papers up for auction

The first half of the Knight Ridder drama closed March 13, as the company announced that McClatchy Co. had submitted the top bid for the chain and its 32 daily newspapers. But that news was followed immediately by McClatchy's revelation that it will sell a dozen of its new acquisitions, including eight of the nine Guild-represented dailies.

While McClatchy's decision torpedoed Knight Ridder's resolve to keep the chain intact—company chairman Tony Ridder said he was “stunned” by the proposed divestitures—it also breathed life into TNG-CWA's acquisition bid. “While we have been focused on the TNG-CWA unionized papers, our team will consider the entire package of 12 papers,” said President Linda Foley.

The only Guild-represented paper that McClatchy said it will retain is the Lexington Herald Leader; it also said it would keep

Knight-Ridder's 49.5% stake in the unionized Seattle Times, where majority owner Frank Blethen has been trying to terminate a joint operating agreement with the Hearst-owned Post-Intelligencer (see story, page 3).

The eight Guild papers now up for sale include Philadelphia's Inquirer and Daily News and the San Jose Mercury News, Akron Beacon Journal, Grand Forks Herald, Monterey Herald, Duluth News Tribune and St. Paul Pioneer Press. Also on the block are the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, Aberdeen American News, Fort Wayne News-Sentinel and Contra Costa Times.

Even after dumping the dozen papers it doesn't want, McClatchy's purchase—technically a merger, according to documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission—will increase its stable to 32 dailies and will vault it from 10th to second largest U.S. newspaper chain, with an esti-

mated \$2.83 billion in annual revenue. And while the combined circulation of the newspapers it wants to unload equals McClatchy's current 1.4 million, the newspapers it is retaining will add another 1.9 million.

McClatchy's most surprising choice may have been its decision not to keep Knight Ridder's flagship paper in San Jose. The Mercury News, together with the nearby Monterey Herald and Contra Costa Times, could have been clustered with McClatchy's Bees in Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto and two other newspapers it already owns in the region. Instead, speculation mounted that the MediaNews chain—which had kicked the tires at several large Knight Ridder properties, including the Mercury News—might now enter the fray. Although MediaNews apparently did not bid for all of Knight Ridder, the three California publications would mesh well with its

Alameda Newspaper Group, which has five newspapers ringing the Bay Area.

The thought that MediaNews—better known for slashing payroll than for its journalistic aspirations—might be writing their paychecks has galvanized interest in TNG-CWA's proposal among members of the San Jose Guild. “I would have said two weeks ago that it was pie in the sky,” Dennis Uneyo, unit chair at the Mercury News, told freelance writer Michael Stoll. “I wouldn't say it's 50-50 yet, but it's a lot more likely.”

TNG-CWA, saying it wants to buy at least the eight Guild-represented Knight Ridder papers, has retained financial advisors, formed an umbrella corporation known as ValuePlus Media and has acquired significant financial backing from Yucaipa Cos., a private investment firm managed by billionaire investor Ron Burkle. The union's plan

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Post-Dispatch unit chair Rich Hughes walks an information picket line at KWQC following the Lee shareholders' meeting.



Jeff Gordon, president of the St. Louis Newspaper Guild.

L.A. Times duo wins Broun nod

Matt Lait and Scott Glover, reporters for the Los Angeles Times, are the winners of the 2005 Heywood Broun Award for “A Case of Doubt”—their review of a 20-year-old murder case that was so painstaking it forced the prosecutor in the case to question the evidence he had used. Runners-up in the annual competition were Chris Adams and Alison Young, in Knight Ridder's Washington bureau, and Sasha Aslanian and Mike Edgerly of American Radio Works and Minnesota Public Radio in the broadcast division, which was judged separately.

Named after the Guild's primary founder and first president, the Broun Award will be presented at the annual Newspaper Guild-CWA Freedom Award Fund banquet, scheduled for May 3, World Press Freedom Day. The event also will present the Herbert Block Freedom Award to the International Federation of Journalists Safety Fund; and will present the David S. Barr Award to Shahar Smooha, a student journalist at Columbia University, and to Sarah A. Halper, a student at the A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Serving as keynote speaker at the awards banquet will be Harold Meyerson, editor-at-large for The American Prospect and columnist for The Washington Post. Shashi Tharoor, United Nations under-secretary-general for communications and public information, will be a special guest, and radio host Bob Edwards will serve as master of ceremonies.

The Broun Award-winning entry, a 9,000-word account that took up the cause of convicted murderer Bruce Lisker, took nine months to research and included dozens of interviews and thousands of pages of police and court records. But Adams and Young also staged a reenactment of the murder scene that disproved a key prosecution contention, and turned up lost physical evidence that directly undercut the prosecution's explanation for Lisker's motive. Indeed, their work was so compelling that five of the 12 jurors who had found Lisker guilty said they would not have voted to convict if they had been aware of the facts presented by Adams and Young—and when Lisker was granted a rare evidentiary hearing on the basis of their work, the man who had prosecuted

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Road trip!

‘Red-headed stepchildren’ drop in on Lee

Two-dozen or so Guild members in St. Louis got a bleary start to their day March 1, boarding a chartered bus at 2:30 a.m. for the 270-mile ride to Davenport, Iowa. So when shareholders of Lee Enterprises arrived for their annual stockholders' meeting later that morning, they were welcomed with leaflets asking, “Is the St. Louis Post-Dispatch the Lee Family's Red-Headed Stepchild?”

Prompting the demonstration was a series of gaffes following Lee's acquisition of the formerly Pulitzer-owned Post-Dispatch last year. As the leaflets noted, Lee “was caught flat-footed” Jan. 1 when it became responsible for administering various employee benefits programs. “Benefits cards, enrollments into healthcare programs, flex spending accounts and all of the things that employees need to take care of their families were delayed,” according to the leaflets.

Moreover, “matters were made worse when these employees tried to contact human resources here in Davenport,” when “some workers were left on hold for as long as 45 minutes.” Complaints about the lengthy holds were met with blanket denials.

The complaints provided an ironic counterpoint to the message delivered at the meeting by Lee chair-

woman and chief executive Mary Junck, who praised the acquisition that made Lee the fourth largest U.S. newspaper company. “The more we've seen, the more we've liked Pulitzer, and we're even more excited today about our newspapers than we were even a year ago,” she told shareholders.

Despite the explicit criticism posed by the St. Louis protesters, who sat silently through the meeting, Junck praised their activism and on at least three occasions remarked on their presence. And she directed an apparently nonplussed Terry Egger, publisher of the Post-Dispatch, to meet with the Guild contingent, resulting in a spirited 45-minute exchange after the shareholders had adjourned.

“Egger did not bring his A game that day,” said Shannon Duffy, the St. Louis Guild's business representative, observing that the publisher “looked and acted pretty uncomfortable” about being put on the spot. In addition to questioning the breakdown in benefits, Guild members criticized staffing levels that have fallen so low that copy editors no longer proof-read the Post-Dispatch most days.

The group also leafletted television station KWQC and the Quad City Times before returning to St. Louis.

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TNG: long shot no more

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includes seeking enough capital from each newspaper's employees—Guild and non-Guild alike—to create a type of employee stock ownership plan known as a Subchapter S Corporation.

While MediaNews and other names—including that of Tony Ridder himself—have surfaced as potential bidders, selling its properties to ValuePlus Media would give McClatchy significant tax advantages.

Meanwhile, although the McClatchy bid has been reported as a done deal, in fact there still is time for surprises. The merger must be approved by a minimum of two-thirds of Knight Ridder's shareholders—and as many as 80% if an independent panel of experts, still not named at press time, concludes that the winning bidder won't serve its readers "with the same degree of journalistic excellence, integrity and independence" as Knight Ridder. The annual shareholders' meeting, initially scheduled for April 18, has been postponed and is unlikely before May.

McClatchy, by most accounts, won't have any problem clearing the journalistic excellence hurdle for the papers it retains. The question the review panel may have to consider is whether spinning off 44% of Knight Ridder to buyers with lower journalistic standards taints the overall acquisition—and whether McClatchy, as a condition of the sale, should be required to apply the same standard of "excellence, integrity and independence" to its buyers.

As if in anticipation of just such a scenario, Guild members at the Mercury News have adopted a state-

ment of beliefs that they've circulated to the community "We worry that new owners would adopt what one Wall Street analyst termed a 'scorched earth' policy to make quick profits from the acquisition," the statement notes, adding:

"We are guided by the belief that a vibrant daily newspaper is indispensable to the health, harmony and prosperity of a community. Our commitment to excellence in journalism remains strong. . . . We ask readers, leaders and advertisers in Silicon Valley to insist that prospective buyers meet the community's high expectations and the Mercury News' longstanding commitment to quality journalism."

Employees of the papers remaining in the McClatchy fold have at least one thing for which can be thankful: they're unlikely to endure a second forced sale of their employer. Unlike Knight Ridder or Tribune, but like the New York Times, Washington Post and Dow Jones, McClatchy has two classes of stock, with voting control retained by the founding family. This is not an unmitigated blessing—families can be just as rapacious as Wall Street investment firms—but at least there's room for something other than bottom line considerations.

One final note: Private Capital Management, whose outsized stake in Knight Ridder gave it enough leverage to force the sale, owns an even bigger share of McClatchy's publicly traded shares. In that sense the sale amounts to little more than shifting money from one pocket to another in the same pair of pants—but from PCM's perspective, the pants may fit better.

Industry still in turmoil

The sale of Knight Ridder was viewed by many analysts as a referendum on the newspaper industry overall, with a high sales price supposedly reflecting continued investor faith—and vice versa. The equivocal result, alas, reflected only a continuing turmoil.

McClatchy's successful bid, initially clocked in at \$67.25 a share, was comfortably in the middle of the \$65-\$70 a share range most analysts were giving as a minimum acceptable purchase price. Even so, long-time industry followers like John Morton, noting that the purchase price on a prorated basis was significantly less than Lee had paid for Pulitzer only a year ago, complained that McClatchy got a steal.

Worse, the \$67.25 sticker is a moving target, because more than a third of McClatchy's bid consists of its own stock—and as McClatchy's stock goes down, as it did the day of the announcement, so does the value of the sale

overall.

But the idea that the sale of Knight Ridder can serve as a bellwether for anything is overblown, anyway. The fact is that portfolio managers pay much more attention to newspaper revenues and earnings than to sales prices, and both earnings and revenue haven't been anything to get Wall Street's pulse pounding. As Morton himself observed in the Feb. 20 issue of his newsletter, 2005 was "a year to forget," with revenue from newspaper operations rising just 4% over the previous year—and operating income, thanks largely to higher newsprint prices, dropping 4.6% for the year.

The annual "State of the American News Media" report from the Project for Excellence in Journalism, released March 13, went a step further by declaring that while 2004 had been a bad year for newspapers, "2005 was about three times worse" in many respects. Indeed, it added, the financial squeeze had gotten so great that "the decades-long battle

at the top between idealists and accountants is now over. The idealists have lost. The troubles of 2005, especially in print, dealt a further blow to this fight for journalism in the public interest."

That, too, may be overblown. But as the report makes clear, the industry's attempts to maintain profit margins by cutting payroll—3,800 jobs, or about 7% of the total, excised since 2000—has had an inevitable affect on how and how well papers cover the news. "The new paradox of journalism is more outlets are covering fewer stories," the report notes, alluding to the proliferation of online and cable news sources.

"As the number of news outlets grows, generally the audience of each one shrinks, and news organizations cut back on resources. Yet they still have to cover the big stories. Thus on most major events, we have more reporters, but fewer stories are being covered generally."

Nor has such hollowing-out finished. The Washington Post has announced another near-10% cut in newsroom staff (see story, page 4). Chicago Sun-Times owner Hollinger International announced in January that it will eliminate approximately 10% of its workforce, and continued cuts at Tribune's Newsday reportedly have left the beat system in tatters and reporters in an uproar.

For all that, however, newspapers remain printing presses for money, which is part of the reason McClatchy could absorb another company more than twice its size: with a chain-wide profit-margin of 23% (compared with an industry-wide average of 20%), McClatchy can expect to pay down acquisition-incurred debt—it has secured commitments for \$3.75 billion in loans for the purchase—within just a few years.

Guild briefs . . .

BNA unit ratifies four-year contract

Guild members of the Bureau of National Affairs unit have ratified a new, four-year contract with annual wage increases that range from 2.25% to 6%, with the highest increases going to those at the low end of a four-band wage scale. The agreement also sharply increases transportation subsidies, in anticipation of BNA's relocation to northern Virginia from Washington, D.C., and includes a new provision for flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and compressed workweeks.

20 more buyouts at Detroit News

The Detroit News offered up to 20 newsroom buyouts as it eliminated its Neighborhood News sections. The cuts followed layoffs and buyouts of at least 25 Teamsters by the Detroit Newspaper Partnership, which manages business operations at The News and the Detroit Free Press, and the termination of 48 pressroom and newsprint union employees last October.

CBC permatemps get lockout reward

At least 50 temporary employees have been awarded permanent positions at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. since the end of a lockout last October, in compliance with a contract provision that was among the issues fueling the dispute. The provision requires that "temporary" employees who have been in the same job in the same place for 18 continuous months will be converted to permanent status. The CBC is reviewing other cases and more conversions to permanent status are expected.

Michigan Catholic staffers win 4%

Guild members at the Michigan Catholic have unanimously ratified a new 18-month contract that provides 4% across-the-board wage increases and preserves existing health care and retirement benefits. The new contract also features substantially higher minimum base pay for ad sales staff with the elimination of mandatory commission rates.

S&P insisting on stock 'hold' period

Management at Standard & Poor's remains at loggerheads with the New York Guild, hamstringing contract bargaining with its demand that employees not sell stock within 45 days of purchase except at a loss. Although S&P claimed a 45-day hold is an industry standard, Guild officials say that when challenged it produced a list of

companies that had varying degrees of "holds" or none at all. A unit meeting was scheduled for March 20 to discuss the issue.

Giving Dow Jones a 13-cent tweak

Dow Jones employees were supposed to get a 3.5% wage increase in their Feb. 16 paychecks, so when the company announced it would have to delay the increase until March 2, IAPE TNG-CWA Local 1096 requested that the company pay interest on the overdue amount. Dow Jones demurred—so IAPE President Steve Yount handed his members small strips of yellow paper to which he had taped a dime and three pennies. The money came out of his own pocket, Yount explained, underscoring the company's miserliness, and was calculated by applying a 4% annual interest rate to the average raise of \$42.36 per week, prorated over the two-week delay.

Reuters workers ratify—at long last!

Ending three years of negotiations that ranged from tedious to tumultuous, Guild-represented employees of Reuters have ratified a new contract, 196-41. The contract includes compounded pay raises of more than 18% and runs through Feb. 28, 2009.

Shuffling in slow motion in Hawaii

Contract talks between approximately 50 members of the Hawaii Newspaper Guild and the Hawaii Tribune-Herald are proceeding as one might expect when management is represented by Tennessee lawyer Michael Zinser: like molasses. Despite the best efforts of a federal mediator, Zinser has refused to move off a demand for a "management rights" proposal that would gut most contract protection. Nor has he been in any rush to schedule talks: although the last bargaining session was held Jan. 26-27, the next won't roll around until March 27. The last contract expired three years ago.

Really briefly . . .

Add another local to the TNG-CWA roster, as CWA charts the new Manitoba Media Guild, CWA Local 30500. . . . Lou Gelfand ended several decades at the Minneapolis Star Tribune last year, but retirement apparently didn't end his affection for the Guild: he donated \$5,000 to the Twin Cities local. . . . Having beaten back a Guild organizing drive, the Eagle-Tribune in Massachusetts has been retaliating against union supporters by shipping them off to satellite bureaus or assigning them to night shifts.

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The Newspaper Guild International



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

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

Tensions grow over Osprey outsourcing

Publisher threatens legal action over sympathy byline strike

TING-Canada members held information pickets at four Osprey Media dailies, and the Kingston Whig-Standard threatened legal action over a byline strike, as tensions continued to mount over the newspaper chain's planned outsourcing of more than 100 jobs.

The information pickets were held simultaneously at the Osprey dailies in Sault Ste. Marie, St. Catharines, Sudbury and North Bay and were followed, just two days later, by a fresh round of layoffs. At stake are jobs in classified ad, subscription and reader services departments that are being transferred from the chain's unionized newspapers to non-union operations staffed by poorly paid part-time workers who receive no benefits. The chain is also shifting prepress/composing room jobs from unionized to non-unionized plants.

A first round of layoffs last fall in Kingston and St. Catharines was followed earlier this year with notice of impending cuts at the other three locations. TNG-Canada responded by kicking off a "Keep Our Newspapers Local" campaign Feb. 15, throwing up information pickets of 20 to as many as 100 participants apiece. Two days later, the St. Catharines Standard countered by laying off four long-term employees in its circulation department and 10 in its composing room, which it moved to the non-unionized Welland Tribune.

"We are devastated," said Brenda Halden, president of the St. Catharines local, which has lost 22 jobs in just three months and now has only eight surviving Guild members. "This is outright union busting!"

An arbitration hearing over the St. Catharines layoffs was held March 7.

Meanwhile, reporters at the Kingston Whig-Standard, who launched a byline strike Feb. 15 in support of the "Keep Our Newspapers Local" campaign, have been threatened with legal action. A Feb. 27 letter to local president Debbie Newton from publisher Fred

Laflamme accused the union of "disseminating false and misleading information" and contended that "the newsroom employees are participating in an illegal strike" by withholding bylines and photo credits.

"We are currently obtaining advice on our legal options," Laflamme huffed.

The Kingston local's contract stipulates that Guild members may withhold bylines and photo credits whenever and for whatever reason they choose. In addition to supporting their threatened co-workers, the byline strike was launched to warn management off "waging war on working conditions" in the newsroom, according to one local official. The Whig recently opened contract renewal talks with proposals that would allow unfettered use of freelancers.

Contract negotiations at the Whig were scheduled to resume March 22. Dave Wilson, the TNG Canada staff rep who has been assisting the local, characterized the two sides as "miles apart."

The Osprey chain is a fledgling, created in 2001 when Michael Sifton bought 29 newspapers from Conrad Black's Hollinger empire; another 30 were purchased in 2003 from CanWest Global. But Sifton, a fourth-generation newspaper owner, is no neophyte. A 2003 profile in the *Ryerson Review of Journalism* observed that his father instilled in him a paternalistic management style and quoted him as saying, "We worked very hard to keep (the family business) nonunion."

Responding to the recent protests without acknowledging them, Sifton issued a memo contending that employees have to adapt to change. "We must look for ways to do things differently within the business in order to keep the business financially strong," he wrote.

Five days later, on Feb. 21, Osprey announced fourth-quarter profits of \$7.7 million—a 28% increase over the \$6 million reported for the same period a year earlier.



Elaine Della-Mattia, vice-president of the Sault Ste. Marie Typographical Union, leads members in

an information picket at the Sault Star that protested outsourcing of local newspaper jobs.

It's quiet in Seattle—and that may be a good thing

The long silence out of Seattle over a once-fractious dispute between the Seattle Times and the Post-Intelligencer has prompted growing speculation that the two sides may be negotiating a settlement. At stake is a joint operating agreement that the Times has said it wants to end because of continuing financial losses.

Years of highly publicized claims and charges came to such an abrupt end last summer that according to a recent Times story, the King County Superior Court clerk's office had the case marked closed. The mistake was fixed, but neither the Times nor the P-I have disclosed what's actually going on.

The Times first tried to end the JOA in 2003, citing a provision in the agreement that permits either partner to end the relationship after three consecutive years of losses. The Hearst-owned P-I challenged the Times' accounting, claiming that losses incurred because of a TNG-CWA strike could not be factored into two of the three years in question—an argument Hearst lost in the state supreme court last June.

But even before the court ruled, the Times kept reporting still more losses, for 2003 and 2004. And although it has not yet disclosed its 2005 results, most observers are speculating that last year also finished in the red—for the sixth year in a row.

Meanwhile, an 18-month countdown toward dissolution of the JOA presumably was triggered last September, when the Times issued an official "loss notice" for the years 2002, 2003 and 2004, entirely avoiding the two years affected by the strike. Hearst has disputed the 2002 accounting, claiming the Times deliberately overspent that year to push itself into the red, but has not sought a court ruling on its contention.

If the clock were running, the JOA would expire March 29 of next year. It was therefore with palpable relief last month that the Post-Intelligencer reported a Times executive had said the countdown is not being observed. The executive, on the other hand, apparently would not characterize any discussions between the two papers, fueling speculation that settlement talks are under way.

Univision faces investigation

Contract negotiations between UPAGRA and Univision remain stalled, despite two decisions by the National Labor Relations Board denying company claims that the union had been bargaining in bad faith.

In addition to filing refusal-to-bargain charges with the NLRB, the TNG-CWA local has gained agreement from the Puerto Rico House of Representatives that it will "investigate the significant impact . . . of the increase in importation of canned programming [by Univision] and the negative impact of all this on the culture of our country and the work of our artists and technicians." Investigative hearings began March 8, with testimony to be provided by members of UPAGRA, the Actors' Guild and APAGA, the Alliance of Artists and Support Groups.

The legislature passed a similar resolution in 2004, but the hearings it authorized then were blocked by Univision lobbyists, who were less successful in derailing the current inquiry. APAGA, meanwhile, has

continued publicizing the decreasing amount of Puerto Rican-produced programming and the resulting displacement of the island's artists and technicians. A forum titled "The Media in the Middle of Globalization" has been scheduled for April 26.

Separately, UPAGRA is in the midst of negotiating three other contracts, at El Vocero, Accurate Printers and the news service EFE. The talks at EFE have been especially difficult, with only six sessions held since bargaining began last August and with UPAGRA leaders describing the company's attitude as "arrogant." Following the Feb. 22 session, however, EFE announced it was replacing its chief spokesperson and would move future talks from her law office to a presumably more neutral location.

The local also reports that a three-year-old organizing drive at Channel 6, WIPR Television, which has been contested by the Service Employees union, will be resolved by an election within the next few weeks.



Linda Richardson, president of the Sault Ste. Marie local, listens as Tony Martin, recently re-elected NDP Member of Parliament, expresses his support for picketing Guild members.

News round-up

More AFL-CIO defections . . .

In a further shakeout from last year's schism within the AFL-CIO, six unions—the Laborers, Operating Engineers, Carpenters, Teamsters, Bricklayers and Iron Workers—left the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department on March 1 and established their own federation, the National Construction Association. The Laborers officially are still part of the larger AFL-CIO, but President Terence O'Sullivan said "it is only a matter of when, not if" the union leaves to become a full partner in the rival Change to Win coalition.

. . . as other unions pull together

The largest teachers' union in the U.S., the National Education Association, has given permission to its local affiliates to join the AFL-CIO if they wish—but the change is "absolutely not" a prelude to a merger at the national level, added NEA President Reg Weaver. NEA's 2.8 million members rejected a merger with the 1.3-million-member American Federation of Teachers in 1998. Separately, nurses from eight AFL-CIO unions—including CWA—have banded together in an umbrella group called RNs Working Together to better coordinate their organizing efforts and contract bargaining strategies. A similar industry coordinating committee, with TNG-CWA participation, is being formed among arts, entertainment and media unions.

INSI training benefits 500+ journalists

The International News Safety Institute reports that in its first two years it has provided basic safety training to 512 journalists and support staff in 11 countries. The free courses, funded with donations from the international donor community, teach journalists how to better protect themselves in hostile environments and include basic first aid, how to avoid becoming a target, self-sufficiency, conflict management, dealing with hostile crowds and authorities, ballistic awareness and reaction to gunfire, checkpoints, abduction, mines and unexploded ordinance. Five of the training courses have been held in Iraq, currently the world's worst killing ground for news media staff, where 104 journalists and support staff have died in the past three years. More details about the INSI program may be seen at www.newssafety.com.

Mexican journalists protest libel tactic

Mexican journalists have signed a declaration protesting a "wave" of libel lawsuits they say is being used to intimidate reporters. A Mexican watchdog group, the Center of Journalism and Public Ethics, said 3,001 journalists from 27 states have signed a "Declaration against the Violence against Journalists and for the Freedom of Expression of Mexico" in reaction to several prominent journalists being detained on libel charges.

Decade's delay pays off for employer

The four-year ordeal of workers at the Chinese Daily News was extraordinary—but far from setting a record. That dubious honor may belong to the employees of the Cogburn Health Center in Mobile, Alabama, who first tried to get their union recognized in 1996. It took five years—during which six union supporters were fired and others were harassed and brow-beaten—before the National Labor Relations Board ordered the nursing home to begin contract bargaining. Instead, Cogburn went to court claiming that too much time had elapsed for a bargaining order to be legitimate—and sure enough, earlier this year the court agreed, sending everyone back to square one after a decade of employer delays.

Guild consultant working with IBEW

The union representing Hoover Co. employees in Stark County, Iowa, has turned to the same consultant as TNG-CWA to preserve jobs. Local 1985 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has retained Christopher Mackin of Ownership Associates to prepare a proposal enabling employees to buy the floor-care manufacturer in partnership with a "worker friendly" equity firm. Mackin is working with TNG-CWA on the Knight Ridder sale.

AFL-CIO wades into the blogosphere

AFL-CIO Now, a comprehensive news and opinion blog, was launched by the federation Feb. 21. The blog provides news on worker organizing and political efforts, health care, the economy, jobs, retirement security and other issues and is updated several times daily. It also is featuring guest bloggers writing about issues and events relevant to working families. The site can be accessed at www.aflcio.org/blog.

Photogs now accepting grant requests

The American Society of Media Photographers is accepting grant proposal applications until May 15 for summer 2006 funding. Grant amounts vary depending upon need, but typically do not exceed \$1,500 and are not awarded to individual artists, but rather to university seminars, non-profit educational and arts organizations and community education programs. Application forms, lists of past grant recipients, grant guidelines and other information may be seen at www.asmp.org/foundation.

WashPost cuts 80 as it expands to new media

Just three weeks after TNG-CWA members at the Washington Post publicly fretted that the newspaper is asking fewer employees to provide more content for a greater variety of media, the company said it will cut at least 80 more newsroom jobs through attrition and buyouts. Although the announcement means the Post will attempt to avoid layoffs, the approximately 10% reduction in force means significantly more work for the survivors.

A major concern for the Washington-Baltimore Guild, unit co-chair Rick Weiss told Editor & Publisher, "is that the fewer of us there are, the harder it is to accomplish the core mission of reporting and writing the tough accountability story. It is going to have a negative impact on the quantity and quality of journalism we can do."

The buyout offers are expected to be similar to those made in 2004 that resulted in 55 newsroom staffers leaving. Management reportedly also is discussing travel cutbacks and how to reduce spending in foreign bureaus.

The reductions are coming as the Post is moving more aggressively into other media but relying on

existing staff to provide the additional material. "Life in the Washington Post newsroom is changing fast," observed a Feb. 17 leaflet from the local. "It started with reporters being 'asked' to provide Web versions of stories with early and frequent updates. More recently, foreign reporters and others have been 'asked' to take time-consuming video clips as well as photos. The call for online 'chats' grows louder all the time. And hey, can you do a blog?"

Now the newspaper is adding a broadcast component, dubbed "Radio Free Washington Post" by the local "because that is the cost to the Washington Post for much of the labor—our labor—that will fuel this latest venture." Told their members would have to help fill 14 hours of airtime a day, Guild representatives quickly demanded details about the Post's programming plans and a proposed payment scheme.

As with its other multi-media ventures, however, it appears the Post expects employees to volunteer their time—although when asked if such volunteerism will be taken into consideration when merit pay is allocated, radio projects director Tina Gulland replied, "Absolutely."

WashTech gets fresh ammo

The anonymous delivery of confidential Microsoft pay data to WashTech, TNG-CWA Local 37083, has reinvigorated its efforts to unionize the software giant's workforce.

The internal documents show Microsoft salaries have at best nudged only slightly higher over the past two years, even as a flurry of high-level engineers has defected recently to younger technology corporations. Driving the discontent has been not just stagnant wages, but a performance review system that ranks employees on a bell curve, guaranteeing that a certain percentage will be rated miserably.

As one software writer bitterly told WashTech, "After all, Microsoft wants only people who exceed expectations."

The confidential records, including details about pay scales, merit raises and stock awards, were mailed to WashTech President Marcus Courtney, who said it provides his local with fresh traction in an organizing campaign expected to last several years. Salaries gained additional importance after the high-tech bub-

ble burst, devaluing the stock options companies like Microsoft used to attract talent. By 2003 the company phased out options altogether and limited its stock awards more than it had.

According to its internal data, showing compensation guidelines for fiscal 2004 and 2006, salaries would remain unchanged in the lowest eight of 21 salary categories and increase by less than 3% in most of the others. Meanwhile, a survey by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers showed median base salaries in the computer industry rising about 6.7% between 2004 and 2005—but falling approximately 2% in the Microsoft-dominated Seattle area.

Microsoft's performance evaluation system has long provoked anger, including lawsuits charging racial and gender bias that resulted in some cosmetic changes. But how employees are ranked is still decided behind closed doors, where the outcome "depends almost entirely on who your lead is, how hard they fight, and what you're working on," a 10-year Microsoft veteran told WashTech.

Ready for the future? Not so fast, say district councils

How do you design a better union? Judging by TNG-CWA discussions on the "Ready for the Future" resolution adopted at last year's CWA convention, s-l-o-w-l-y.

Alarmed at recommendations within CWA for merging or eliminating sectors like The Newspaper Guild, and balking at an apparent rush toward making such decisions, three TNG-CWA district councils have endorsed resolutions trying to apply the brakes. The following resolution was passed unanimously by the Middle Atlantic and Southern district councils March 3-4 and by the New England District Council Feb. 26:

We believe the strength of the CWA and its sectors is based on the fact it is a membership-driven organization that operates democratically. Any fundamental change involving the structure of our union must respect these principles. Failure to do so can only result in division amongst our membership and fragmentation of our union.

To ensure that this does not happen and that our union stays whole, the [various district councils] of The Newspaper Guild-CWA call on the CWA to:

- Continue to respect the integrity of sector merger agreements.

- Table until the 2007 convention those provisions of Resolution One (Ready for the Future) that would affect existing merger agreements, and the sectors, districts and locals affected by them, to permit more thorough and informed discussion

of specific proposals in advance of voting in them.

We support steps to reform CWA's financial practices and to reallocate resources that do not infringe on merger agreements and the integrity of sectors, locals and districts.

In addition, the New England District Council unanimously passed the following resolution:

Resolved: We encourage TNG-CWA districts to use their attorneys to review the TNG-CWA merger agreement to establish the rights of locals in the event the merger agreement is violated.

The Middle Atlantic and Southern councils, meanwhile, took a slightly different tack by unanimously passing the following:

As CWA continues its process of re-imagining its future, we urge TNG locals to participate in the dialogue. The discussion should focus not just on changes in structure, but also on developing new strategies to protect and advance the interests of our members and to reach out to the unorganized.

The Middle Atlantic and Southern district councils passed one more resolution, this one "marking the retirement of a long-time friend":

Resolved: with fewer words than his 39 years of service to the AP, the Middle Atlantic and Southern District Councils of The Newspaper Guild-CWA hereby salute Adolphe Bernotas for his passionate, humorous and wise contributions to our union.

Anti free-press offensive grows

The White House-led effort to muzzle the press while stepping up its own propaganda efforts has been turned up a notch, most notably in a series of initiatives targeting journalists and their possible government sources.

As reported by the Washington Post, the effort includes several FBI probes, a polygraph investigation inside the CIA and a warning from the Justice Dept. that reporters could be prosecuted under espionage laws. The campaign apparently is in response to news accounts of secret CIA prisons and warrantless domestic spying, the latter disclosure deplored by President Bush as "a shameful act" that was "helping the enemy."

Administration attempts to chill aggressive reporting have included threats of prosecuting reporters under the 1917 Espionage Act, a statute that paved the way for some of the most egregious abuses of civil liberties during and shortly after World War I.

Meanwhile, a Pentagon program of secretly planting American-written news stories in the Iraqi press will continue unchecked. The ranking U.S. Army general in Iraq said an internal review had concluded the military is not violating the law with such deceptions overseas, although a similar effort in the U.S. would be illegal. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has defended the campaign with a "fighting fire with fire" analogy, contending it is an effective tool for countering disinformation campaigns by Iraqi insurgents.

While a military-led propaganda campaign might not fly in the U.S., the Government Accountability Office reported in mid-February that government agencies had spent more than \$1.5 billion in

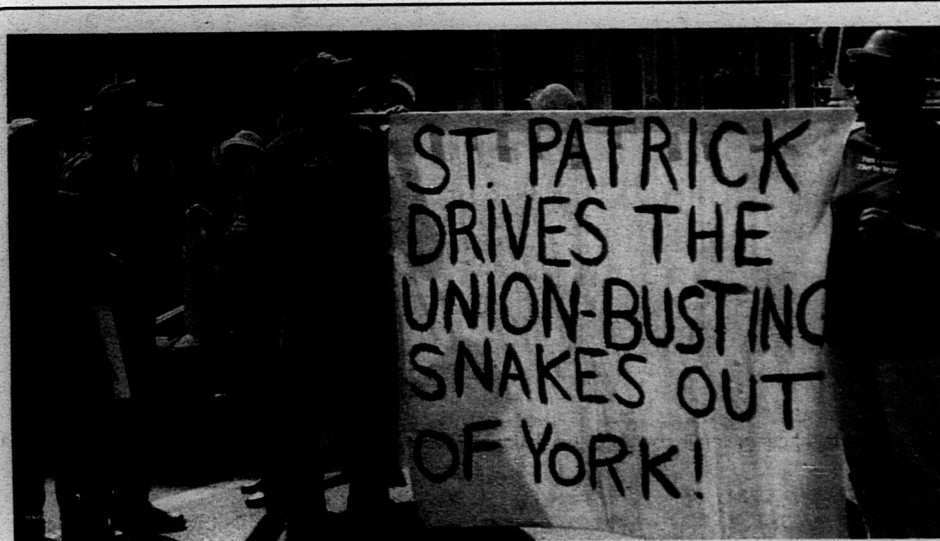
two-and-a-half years on public relations and advertising contracts—\$1.1 billion of that by the Pentagon. Much of the military spending was to pump up recruitment, but the sheer volume of ad buys alarmed various media reform groups.

"When elected public servants use taxpayer dollars to manipulate or deceive the very people whose consent they require for their legitimacy, our public servants then become our masters," Sanho Tree, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, told OneWorld.net. The institute and others pointed out that the GAO report only scratched the surface, because it looked at only some federal agencies and didn't include all kinds of PR spending.

The Bush administration's obsession with controlling information was explained by Rumsfeld in a Feb. 17 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, as reported by Robert Parry for Consortium News. "We are fighting a battle where the survival of our free way of life is at stake and the center of gravity of that struggle is not simply on the battlefield overseas; it's a test of wills, and it will be won or lost with our publics, and with the publics of other nations," Rumsfeld said.

"We'll need to do all we can to attract supporters to our efforts," he added, "and to correct the lies that are being told which so damage our country, and which are repeated and repeated and repeated."

"Let there be no doubt, the longer it takes to put a strategic communication framework into place, the more we can be certain that the vacuum will be filled by the enemy and by news informers that most assuredly will not paint an accurate picture of what is actually taking place."



The snakes might have been driven out of Ireland, but apparently York could use St. Patty's help.

They're kickin' up their heels in York

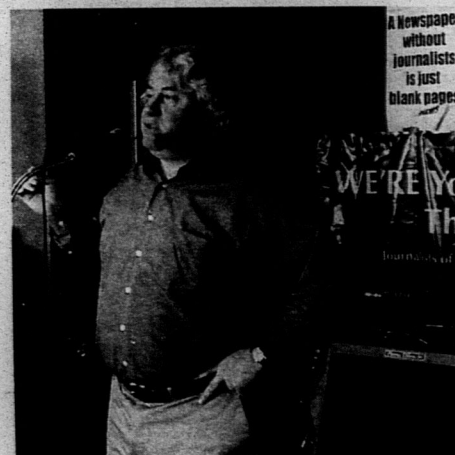
What's a birthday without a celebration? And who better to throw a party for the York Daily Record, which on Feb. 26 turned 210, than the newspaper's own employees?

Of course, the cake may have tasted a little bittersweet, given the MediaNews-owned newspaper's union-busting approach to contract negotiations: after hiring Tennessee lawyer James P. Thompson for its side of the table, management has cancelled most scheduled sessions, won't meet again until April 5 and won't sit down with a federal mediator.

And it's possible the newspaper's publisher, editor and managing editor ignored their invitations because they were miffed at the York City Council, which passed a resolution supporting the York Newspaper Guild members. Indeed, three of



Although management spurned its party invitations, thoughtful Guild members had a second cake shipped to the newspaper plant.



TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer showed up to pa-a-a-ty at the birthday bash.

the council members turned out for speeches and other celebratory noises in Center Square, despite a chilling wind and 20-degree temperature.

But not to worry. The local has lots of other celebrations in the works, including a St. Patrick's Day parade on March 11 that featured lots of riffs on the theme of "driving out the snakes." And we hear the local may be planning a "just practicing" exercise for, appropriately enough, April Fool's Day. Have to wonder what else lies in store, what with Passover starting April 13, Holocaust Remembrance Day falling on April 25 and May Day just a week later. . . .

Judges stress importance of editorial support

Continued from page 1

Lisker testified to doubting whether Lisker was guilty.

"A Case of Doubt," wrote the Broun judges, "combined indefatigable reporting with graceful writing to produce an almost seamless narrative about a wrongly incarcerated man. Tales of innocent men in prison are not new, but this story about a 20-year-old murder case was unique from its inception, in part because the reporters did the investigative work that should have been done by the police and prosecutors."

"The judges were particularly impressed with the reporters' willingness to endure a colossal amount of drudgery in their pursuit of the story," the statement added. "Their strong commitment to the notion that justice must be served clearly drove their work."

Running a close second in the judges' deliberations was a package of stories by Knight Ridder reporters Adams and Young that examined how well the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs has fulfilled its



Pausing briefly during their deliberations over Broun Award entries are this year's judges, (l to r) Connie Schultz, Rem Rieder, Neil Macdonald, Bill Raspberry and Larry Hatfield, who chaired.

obligations to American soldiers streaming home from Iraq. Their exhaustively detailed conclusion? Badly.

"Discharged and Dishonored," the Broun judges observed, "is an exemplary example of what can happen when journalists refuse to take no for an answer. Repeatedly, these reporters refused to surrender in the face of considerable obstacles, doggedly unearthing the many ways American war veterans have

been shortchanged, sometimes abandoned, by the government that is supposed to care for them."

"Subsequent actions by the Veterans Administration and Congress offer considerable hope that the series will have a lasting impact on how veterans are treated," they added.

The Broun panel, consisting of renowned journalists Neil Macdonald, Bill Raspberry, Rem Rieder and Connie Schultz, and

chaired by retired TNG-CWA vice president Larry Hatfield, also issued a plea on behalf of the kind of high-stakes journalism that the Broun Award recognizes. "The judges want to emphasize the importance of newspapers, large and small, providing the necessary institutional support that produces the exemplary journalism submitted for this competition," they wrote. "In this era of shrinking budgets and newspaper space, there

remains no substitute for allowing reporters the time and resources to pursue the big public service stories that only journalists can tell."

The broadcast entries were judged by Washington-area broadcast journalists Anee Raulerson and Julie Wright. The winning submission, disclosing the widespread presence of 3M's former Scotchgard chemicals in Minnesota's environment, was cited as a "compelling story" that followed up with a "demand for accountability" by a major regional employer.

The Barr Awards honor David Barr, the Guild's long-term attorney and mentor. The winning college entry, detailing Smootha's journey to Jordan to vote in the first democratic election for the Iraqi parliament, was described by the judges as well written and engaging and on a subject "close to David's heart."

The winning high school entry described efforts by the West Palm Beach school system to block access to websites on gay human rights and abortion.

So who needs a union, anyway?

By Shannon Bryony

Here it is, the breathtaking expanse of lawn and fountain and beautiful glass building. This is where you're going to work, because—finally—you've made it!

No more sweatshop suburban chain, churning out five newspapers a night littered with typos, bad grammar, photos that don't fit and headlines that contradict their stories. No more working the slot on a desk that never has enough time to give stories final reads and repairs before shooting them to the back shop, where printers assemble pages by working from layout sheets and photos sent up hours earlier by the news editor.

Yes, you've made it. This newspaper that has hired you brings in only the best, the most talented, those with the undeniable potential to succeed. Life now will be much easier. No more feuding with co-workers, trying to meet the impossible demands of ill-trained or even stupid editors. This is a home of professionals, journalists who, like you, climbed out of a pit of mediocrity and into the Big Time. There's nothing more you could ask for in your career—unless, of course, it's to be promoted to management.

There's only one problem: here you'll be under union jurisdiction.

The rotten little chain you previously worked for made enough money to hire a cadre of brilliant lawyers who made sure no union got a toehold. Oh, they were devious, and even underhanded, but sometimes one must fight fire with fire, and the only people who got burnt were editorial staffers who wanted the union's "protection." Why would any good employee need to be "protected"? Do your work and the only "protection" you'll need will show up in your regular performance reviews.

Beyond those glass double doors lies your future in journalism, and you know what it is. Praise. Permanence. Promotion. And it feels good, good, except for the little tremor of uncertainty that comes when you think about the union. You don't get promoted if you get into bed with the union—that's what Dad said. Well, your parents and professors and your editors at the last place also said you don't need to have anything to do with the union if you don't want to, other than pay its piddly dues, so ignore it.

In you go. Your identification is checked, the guard makes a call, and here comes the smiling assistant national/Washington desk editor you liked so much during your inter-

view to escort you into the newsroom. What professionalism!

But after leading you to the copy desk, he abandons you to find a seat (it seems everyone who works on the desk is already here, and all the seats are taken) and a drawer where you can stash your briefcase, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, today's edition of this paper, your month-week-day planner, your coffee mug and all the other items you've brought to impress your new colleagues. For now you'll keep a low profile, of course, but only as long as it takes for you to figure out how things are done so you can start suggesting how they can be done better. Still, it does seem a bit odd to be left at the desk without an introduction. The other copy editors don't even notice you.

Finally, an older man—not too many of those around, come to think of it—looks up and asks if you're Georgia's replacement.

What? You wonder who Georgia is. Is? Was?

The man tells you his name, says he's the slot, directs you to a desk to one side and tells you to familiarize yourself with the packet of materials left for you, including the editing system, which you'll find very sophisticated compared to the hunk of junk you've had to use on your last job.

The second day on the job you let the desk's shop steward know how you feel about the union and she told you about Georgia. So you replaced an old-timer. If she'd been up to par, she wouldn't have lost her job, right? The steward declared that the paper likes to dump anyone over 40 whenever it can, which is why everyone seems so young. Youngsters can be started at first-year scale, saving lots of money compared to what the contract requires the company to pay long-term employees. And while the contract provides job protection, there are ways to convince the old-timers they'd be happier elsewhere: their work is attacked, editors treat them rudely, their suggestions are ignored. Eventually, the humiliations become too great.

It's something all the papers in the chain do, the steward added. And while the union is fighting the practice, it's so ingrained the members feel a lot like Sisyphus and his stone. She glared when you asked who Sisyphus is.

When you asked how the slot's kept his job, because he's obviously at least 50, she gave you a withering look and turned away.

Then she stopped, told you she was obliged to inform you there was a member meeting at the union office the next morning at 11, and you told her that's about the time you usually wake up and so couldn't possibly make it. Her scowl was truly amazing to see.

You've passed your probation! Some of the other copy editors have become more amiable, although not all, and the slot is as taciturn as ever. You heard he and Georgia were, well, friends, but you think he's just worried he'll get the ax next. Not because he's old, of course, but because managers treat him with kid gloves. Does he know something about them they're afraid he'll tell? What's his protection?

He doesn't like you, that's clear. Everyone knows by now that you're a hard-core anti-unionist. You won't put in for overtime, as others do, because management doesn't like it. You give more to United Way than any others on the desk, as they grumble about preferring to give to charities of their own choice. But you respect your editors, and even if they're sometimes wrong, why embarrass them?

Like that moronic woman, the one who's universally disliked, especially by the editors. She's 40 if she's a day, the next oldest on the desk. If anyone ever gets hounded out of here, she's the most likely candidate.

She points out errors, even those made by editors, regardless of how angry that makes them. She's neither pro- nor anti-union because, she says, she doesn't like groups of any kind. She goes outside to smoke every half hour, wears fedoras, dresses like Keith Richards one day and a Las Vegas tart the next.

Her days are numbered.

It's happened to you! It can't, but it has!

A year has passed, you haven't been promoted and have wondered why, and now you've found out. And the news has to come from the one and only person it shouldn't, that woman, the old one. That garish, gaudy one takes you aside, and with her reeking, smoky breath has a long talk at you—not with you, because she doesn't let you get a word in edgewise.

She skewers you for what she calls "your ass-kissing ways," your "excessive self-absorption and adoration," and insults every other trait you treasure in yourself as virtuous, useful, helpful, contributing to the excellence of the paper and, most of all, your

career. She says she personally loathes people like you, but wrong is wrong. And while the editors have been after her for three years to leave, and she has been fighting them inch by inch with the union's help, the editors now are also coming after you—and who in the union cares how that's going to turn out?

You are stunned. Why? You ask. Money, she says. And your greedy ambition would pole-axe an ox. Editors may be stupid, but oxen they are not. Everyone knows you've been going after the assistant national/Washington editor's job.

You could be the most wonderful thing to hit this paper since the quake—though you aren't—but if you were you'd be doomed just as much. The assistant national/Washington editor is losing the "assistant" part of the title, and he doesn't want an "assistant" to help him. Besides, he knows how you've been kissing up to get his job, and he's got the higher-ups' okay to oust you—out of spite for your ambition. It's politics. And ones like you are a dime a dozen.

Stupefied, you say you don't deserve anything bad because you are better than the assistant national/Washington editor. She says that's part of the problem, but when you simmer and suck up and shout it from the rooftops, you have to expect trouble.

You don't know what's going to happen, but you ask her—feeling an unfamiliar tremor of humility, tinged by fear—what you should do. She says to go have some coffee. You think she's crazy and walk off, but later that afternoon you see the managing editor's secretary put a notice on the bulletin board announcing the assistant editor's promotion. Nothing about his boss. Nothing about you. But your terminal is flashing a message requesting that you stop in to see the managing editor ASAP.

Instead, you reluctantly message the woman who just fileted you and agree to that cup of coffee. When the two of you step into the cafeteria, the slot and the shop steward who spoke to you the second day on the job are sitting at a table. They stand up and each hold out a hand.

"Welcome aboard," they say. You look at the woman you've hated. You look at the two union officials. You hold out your hand.

And you begin to cry.

Bryony, a retired member of the San Jose Newspaper Guild, was a copy editor at the San Jose Mercury News, San Francisco Chronicle and San Francisco Examiner.

Lame anti-union ads—or newspaper subsidies?

By Fred Glass,
Calif. Federation of Teachers

The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and Los Angeles Times recently ran the same full-page ad. Featuring an image of a locked factory gate, it proclaimed that responsibility for American industrial jobs and businesses bleeding overseas belonged to "union leaders," and invited readers to go to a website to learn more about the bad things unions do.

I'd like to congratulate Richard Berman, who came up with the concept. Not every PR consultant can convince his backers to come up with a quarter of a million dollars to run an ad for one day in four newspapers. And using a cheap, recycled image from a quarter century ago is what we call cost-effective.

But his thriftiness clearly extends also to the anti-union website the ad extolled, since in a 90-second spot check I came up with about a dozen factual errors, starting with consistently calling the AFL-CIO a "union,"

which is like calling the Chamber of Commerce a "business." Or listing Sandra Feldman, who has been dead for five months, as president of the national AFT.

Of course, Mr. Berman is no stranger to such work. He has been delivering campaigns every bit as good as this one for his clients for years. As noted in news stories, he has represented the big tobacco lobby against anti-smoking efforts, claiming there is a "lack of evidence that second-hand smoke causes cancer;" the alcohol industry in fighting against Mothers Against Drunk Driving's effort to hold the line on blood-alcohol levels; and cheap bosses in fighting increases to minimum wage laws, to mention a few.

But the remarkable thing about Berman's accomplishment this time is that he convinced anti-union types to light a match to their money on these ads, instead of investing in something proven—something like, say, lawyer fees for weathering the years of litigation that come with illegally firing union activists during an organizing campaign. Sure, that takes longer, but it's guar-

anteed; by the time the workers get their jobs back, it's years down the road and the organizing campaign is long dead.

These ads? They're feel-good for members of the Right-to-Work committee. I'm sorry, not one worker will be convinced about how evil unions are this way. So thank you, Mr. Berman. You have taken money that might otherwise have done some real damage and deposited it directly into the bank accounts of the newspaper publishing industry. I'm sure its shareholders are joined by pro-union workers everywhere in feeling grateful.

I'd like to pass around some more thanks: to the newspapers, for serving the public interest by running the ad; to the anonymous but undoubtedly well-heeled backers of the ad, for going with a cheap thrill instead of the real thing; and to Congress, because the ad demonstrates that freedom of speech for rich people and corporations still exists, and given provisions in the Patriot Act restricting and eroding freedom of speech, that wasn't necessarily a done deal.

Let me conclude by making a pitch to

Mr. Berman's clients. Look, that's a lot of money you just spent. I will accept one half of what you just paid to Mr. Berman if you pay me for coming up with equally effective anti-union ads. (I want to be modest here. I could have said, "much more effective.") Here are just a few of my ideas:

- Radio spots blaming "union leaders" for causing global warming (if it exists, which it doesn't);

- Print ads blaming "union leaders" for ordering over 40% of Wal-Mart workers to accept public assistance, because otherwise they don't make ends meet on the corporation's miserly wages;

- TV spots blaming "union leaders" for the setbacks the United States has suffered in the Iraq War (if we've had setbacks, which we haven't).

If you spend your money on these ideas, I guarantee they will be every bit as effective as Mr. Berman's; and you'll once again be able to associate "union leaders" with bad stuff for one second in the minds of millions of people.



LOOKING AHEAD

Time to weigh in on our future

By Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer

Dear Guild Activist: I want you to know how thankful I've been for your work in helping our fellow members. By believing in, and fighting for fairness at your workplace, you continue to ensure the survival of our union. Your efforts are the very cornerstone of our union.

There are some thoughts I'd like to share that you might find helpful.

Don't give up hope. It's easy to fall into cynicism and despair right now. Yes, many of our contracts are under assault. Management teams seemingly everywhere have decided to try and weaken our union. Why? I guess because they think they can. They have convinced themselves that if they have total control in the workplace they'll make money more easily. We're told that democracy is a fundamental value in society—but when we demand it through our union, we're made to feel we've done something wrong. Just remember that there have been other times like this. Our contracts did not always exist, and if we stay focused we can rebuild them and our union. We know that having a say in our workplaces is a good thing, for management as well as for us.

A critical dialogue is taking place at the center of our union. Unfortunately, the discussion is being rushed to completion by this year's convention. Many of our members have only recently realized the importance of the discussion and its implications. Called "Resolution One" at last year's CWA convention and now referred to by its title, "Ready for the Future," this discussion is intended to examine how the union supports the work you do at the local level, so you can get better contracts and bring more people into the union. It is occurring because of the attack we're under, but also because our parent union has brought together so many different types of workers from different

industries. Now we need to determine how best to structure the union.

The differences of opinion in how we go forward are substantial. The original CWA was organized in geographic districts around the regional Bell operating companies that were formed in the early '80s. There are eight CWA districts, although there soon will be only three surviving major telecom providers. The CWA's merger partners, meanwhile, came into the larger union as national and international sectors that span the districts. Some are large, like the IUE, which is primarily in manufacturing; others are mid-size; like the Guild and the AFA, which represents flight attendants; and some are smaller, like NABET, which represents broadcast technicians and talent, and the Print Sector (the former Typographical Union).

It's not surprising that with such different backgrounds and structures, those talking about change have very different points of view. The merger partners came in like we did, with merger agreements that spell out how we will continue to operate. This was done because the CWA Executive Board recognized the value added by the Guild and other merger partners to the larger union. Because all of these formerly independent unions made substantial changes in merging into CWA, they have not been inclined to see their sectors change.

Notwithstanding that history, however, some CWA activists have proposed combining sectors and having them serviced by district staff. It won't surprise you to read that money is at the core of this discussion, as the union struggles to allocate a finite amount of resources. And while I believe that everyone thinks he or she has the best interests of the union at heart, that doesn't mean everyone agrees on outcomes. A core part of the discussion right now revolves around possibly clim-



inating or combining some of the smaller sectors and/or districts. The CWA is currently about one-half telecom and one-half non-telecom.

Because the Ready for the Future dialogue began vaguely, and because its original time-line called for decisions to be made by this summer, we are nearing a critical moment without precedent in the modern CWA. The CWA's executive board appears divided over how to go forward.

Please know that we have argued for more time (see story on page 4) and that as a local activist you can weigh in on this, too. In fact, the importance of local activists to this discussion is vital. If decisions are made too quickly, with minimal educated input from local activists, the outcome could be extraordinarily disruptive to CWA unity.

If quick consolidations are forced, even possibly of small locals, the outcome will not be positive. There probably are good ways to reshape the union, but it will take time to get agreement on that. This change should be voluntary and well thought out. It probably will require reshaping the districts as well as the sectors, but merger agreements must be honored—which means negotiated compromise will be the order of the day. If changes

are made in the Guild's or others' merger agreements, you and all the affected members should have the right to vote on that change. Indeed, we have argued that such a vote is a procedural necessity.

At the end of the day, change should strengthen the democracy of the union. It's important that as we look at reshaping the union's business practices we don't forget that its democratic underpinnings are critical to our success. We cannot fall into the top-down arrogance that many of our employers have adopted. I report to you, as an activist in the union, that now is the time as never before to be involved in the discussion of what our union can and should be. We can continue getting better contracts. We can organize new members and create democratic, successful workplaces. We must do this together, and we must always respect that in the end, supporting your work in your workplace with your members is really what this is all about.

Thanks for listening, but please speak out now as these critical issues affecting your future are being discussed. And make certain your local is represented at this year's CWA convention, where these and other changes will be debated.

Harvard gave answers—and raised questions

Kathy David, secretary of the St. Louis Newspaper Guild, was this year's winner of the Irving Leuchter Memorial Scholarship. She recently returned from the Harvard Trade Union Program, where for six weeks she rubbed elbows with union activists from the U.S., Canada, Australia and Vietnam, and filed the following report:

By Kathy David,
St. Louis Newspaper Guild.

Attending the Harvard Trade Union Program was for me as much a foray into the belly of the beast as it was about gaining knowledge. From my perspective, the purpose of a Harvard alumnus is to bust unions, take money from workers and line his or her own pockets. I wanted to know what our future captains of industry are being taught and what countermeasures we can employ to protect our middle-class paychecks.

I got answers—although not quite the ones I expected—but also more questions. Yes, Harvard Business School covers the

various lawsuits filed against Wal-Mart, but whatever broader lesson that teaches about workplace ethics doesn't survive graduation. I'm told the students' moral concerns evaporate as soon as they go to work in a corrupt business environment.

In hopes of finding out how we can defend ourselves against business school grads, I listened, learned and brought back tools for our toolbox—practical tools, such as methods for evaluating, organizing, mobilizing and negotiating. For example, if anyone from Harvard (or any other university) tells you he or she has a definitive answer to any problem, listen with a healthy skepticism.

There is no one right answer, and there is likely to be disagreement over the nature of the problem itself. Witness the current schism between AFL-CIO and Change to Win, in which disagreement over organizing has created a rift. Shouldn't organizing be a common concern, not a point of contention? Shouldn't workers themselves decide what they expect from union representation and what they're willing to do to get it? Are we, organized labor,

listening to what our current and potential members have to say about unions?

Conversely, are we in organized labor effectively speaking our message to the public? With the decline in union density, most people form impressions about the labor movement from what they read or see on TV. Following HTUP, I'm more aware of the missing voice of labor in the mainstream media on issues such as mine safety and the proposed Dubai ports deal. We in the Newspaper Guild are the media. Do we seek out the missing voice for a quote or statement when we're covering a story? I'd like to believe we do because we know the dangers of one-sided coverage. Is it possible that union representatives aren't prepared to make statements?

Another concept I started thinking about as a result of my six weeks at Harvard involves our economic power in the form of pensions and 401(k)s. The money going into these funds is ours, and yet fund managers may invest in ways injurious to the labor movement. We can exercise our power by

staging stockholder actions (shameless plug: visit www.stlouisguild.org for more on my local's field trip to the Lee Enterprises stockholder meeting) and through employee stock option purchases. I was so proud when our class discussion centered on the Guild's proposal to buy some of the Knight Ridder papers. Our Guild is exploring one option by which workers can control their own destiny.

Finally, our interaction with workers from other countries was especially enlightening for me. With anti-union bias in our governments, erosion of wages and benefits, privatization of public services and increasingly unfettered capital mobility in the private sector, we all quickly saw that we're all fighting the same battles. That, to me, is the most crucial lesson of the Harvard Trade Union Program: We're all workers and we're all in this together. We should get to know each other and be willing to extend a hand to help one another.

Now it's time we write our own destiny within the American labor movement. I have faith that we'll do just fine.

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: April 7.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

U.S. falls short on UN standard

By Debbie Thomas
TNG-CWA Human Rights Director

I've just read the most recent International Labor Organization report on core labor standards in the United States. The news is startling. The U.S. has ratified only two of eight core conventions and still has not ratified the core convention on the right to organize and collective bargaining.

We have inadequate protection against anti-union discrimination. Our rights to bargain collectively and to strike are in serious trouble. The U.S. has not ratified the core convention on equal pay, nor the convention on discrimination. The U.S. has ratified the core convention on child labor but has not ratified the convention on minimum working age, so child labor remains a problem in the U.S. agricultural industry. The list goes on.

It's embarrassing to read a report that underscores so many of our shortcomings—a report that will be read in Geneva later this month to the World Trade Organization. When most other industrialized countries—including Iraq—have already ratified many of these policies, you have to wonder what our problem is. We need to be more active and more politically involved to make the necessary changes.

The Guild Reporter received an anonymous telephoned complaint about an article in the February issue that described the Broun Award judges. The caller observed that the only one of the five thumbnail biographies providing any family information was for the lone female judge, Connie Schultz.

The information in the bios was provided by each judge's employer, but the caller nevertheless raised some provocative questions. Was Schultz's spouse mentioned because he's a congressman, or because she is as proud of her family life as of her work? Are any of the male judges married? We certainly can't tell by their bios.

I doubt I'll lose any sleep over this, but it does warrant a thought or two. So you tell me: was this an instance of gender bias? What criteria should we use to make sure everyone is treated equally?

Mark your calendars and make your reservations: the convention season will be here before you know it. Check out the human rights page on our website (www.newsguild.com) for information on all the minority journalist conventions.

Fast approaching is the CWA Civil Rights and Equity Conference, scheduled this year for April 27-30 in Philadelphia. A Guild-sponsored panel discussion on minorities and the media will be held a day earlier, on April 26. I think this is one of the best conferences that CWA does—but I'm biased on the subject. Come out and join us.

Gordon Parks, the photographer-journalist, filmmaker and writer, died at the age of 93. While racism was still overt in this country, Parks worked for Vogue magazine in the 40's and became the first African-American staff photographer for Life Magazine in the 50's. In 1969 he also became the first African-American to produce and direct a major Hollywood film, "The Learning Tree."

From the morgue . . .



Although only 29 Guild members strike the Wisconsin News, nearly 2,000 trade unionists and other supporters join them in throwing up a mass picket line and parading through Milwaukee streets.

70 years ago:

The strike against Hearst's Wisconsin News in Milwaukee becomes a pivotal test of the fledgling American Newspaper Guild, as 29 members brave sub-zero temperatures, driving snow, agent provocateurs and club-swinging police attacks on their picket lines. But Guild President Heywood Broun visits the line periodically, getting arrested March 21, and other labor unions turn out sympathizers by the hundreds, bolstering spirits and pushing the walkout into a second month. . . . The Guild nationwide reports a total membership of 5,244. . . . Two editorial staffers of New York newspapers are hospitalized with tuberculosis.



A jarring note is sounded by supportive members of musicians' union.

50 years ago:

Two of the three Vancouver newspaper locals holding charters

from the Canadian Congress of Labor take steps toward affiliating with the Guild. . . . The Guild relocates its national office from New York to Washington, D.C. . . . The Lima, Ohio local acquires the first Guild contract ever signed by Santa Ana, Cal.-based Freedom Newspapers, Inc.

25 years ago:

The Reagan administration fires Dr. Anthony Robbins, director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health, just four days after the U.S. Chamber of Commerce accuses him of having a "radical antibusiness posture." . . . NIOSH concludes, on the basis of tests performed on video display terminals at the San Francisco and Oakland dailies, that VDT users are not at risk of radiation exposure. . . . Walter Cronkite retires after nearly 20 years as anchor of the CBS Evening News.



Attesting to Milwaukee's ethnic diversity, pickets carry the message home to a Polish neighborhood in a torchlight parade.

DAYBOOK

Western District Council,
April 1-2, San Francisco

CWA Customer Service Conf.,
April 19-22, Houston

CWA Civil Rights, Equity Conf.,
April 27-30, Philadelphia

CMG biennial convention,
April 28-30, Calgary

Freedom Awards Banquet,
May 3, Washington, DC

Midwest, Great Lakes, Southern
Councils, May 19-21, Toledo

TNG-CWA Sector Conference,
July 7-8, Las Vegas

CWA 68th Annual Convention,
July 10-11, Las Vegas

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501 Third Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001-2797
Telephone: (202) 434-7177 FAX: (202) 434-1472
E-mail: azipser@cwa-union.org

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