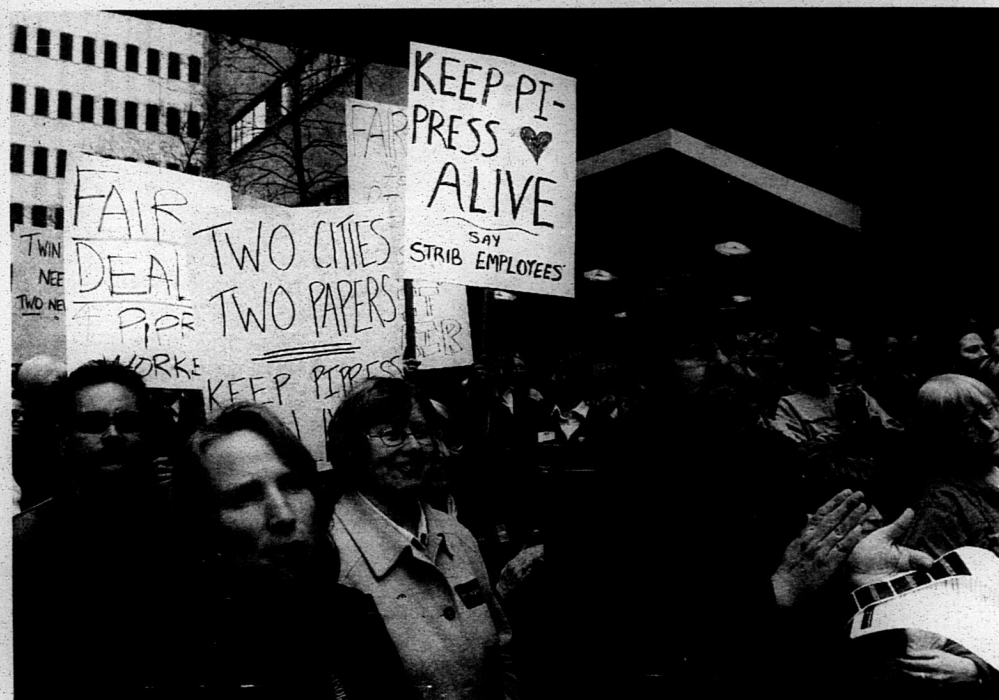


THE GUILD Reporter

April 14, 2006

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 73, Number 4

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Chris Coleman, mayor of St. Paul, tells demonstrators that the Pioneer Press is "as important to St. Paul as the Mississippi River." Among those who turned out, at left, are (l to r, front row) Ruben Rosario, Mary Divine, Katy Hubbard, Kevin Harter and Phyllis Schuster.

Coming out swinging!

Yucaipa muscles its way into McClatchy bidding as Guild members rally

By John Welsh
Minnesota Newspaper Guild.

More than 350 people rallied April 6 outside the St. Paul Pioneer Press to show their support for Minnesota's oldest newspaper as McClatchy Co. prepares to sell it.

"The Pioneer Press is as important to St. Paul as the Mississippi River," said St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, whose brother and step-mother once worked at the Pioneer Press. Keeping a paper strong in St. Paul is critical to the community, he said, and the community is closely watching how McClatchy handles the sale.

"If someone comes in here just to make money on the paper, if someone comes in here and doesn't treat all of you with respect, then it doesn't matter if there's a sign up there that says St. Paul paper, because the St. Paul paper won't be what it's always been," he said.

Also speaking at the rally—which was sponsored by the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/Typographical Union—was Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch. He said his office will watch any sale that would undercut the Pioneer Press' ability to compete with the Star Tribune, which is owned by McClatchy.

Rally participants sported stickers for a recently launched web site—www.savethepioneerpress.com—that aims to encourage community members to sup-

port a worker-friendly company's bid to buy the Pioneer Press and 11 other newspapers.

"Minnesota's capital city deserves a strong and vital newspaper that is dedicated to covering the local governments, neighborhoods and people of the east metro," said Scott Carlson, chairman of the Pioneer Press unit of the Minnesota Guild. "Some possible buyers would weaken the paper simply to squeeze out increasing profits, and that would seriously hinder the paper's ability to serve the community."

The rally generated strong support from the local labor community. A large contingent arrived from the Star Tribune, with fellow Guild members sporting signs that said the Twin Cities is best served when it has two vibrant, competing newspapers. Also represented were United Food and Commercial Workers, Service Employees, Teamsters, GCIU, CWA and AFSCME.

Other speakers included Bernie Hesse, organizer for the UFCW; Bernie Lunzer, secretary-treasurer of TNG-CWA; Steve Hunter, secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota AFL-CIO; Shar Knutson, president of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Council; Linda McDonnell, executive director of the Minnesota Media Collaborative/Urban Journalism Workshop; Randy Furst, union activist and Star Tribune reporter; Matt Peiken, Pioneer Press reporter and Larry Millett, author and retired Pioneer Press reporter.

Despite initially being frozen out of McClatchy's auction, a TNG-CWA-backed bid by Yucaipa Cos. was submitted by the March 28 deadline—and apparently was the only offer for all 12 of the newspapers McClatchy is unloading from its pending merger with Knight Ridder. Following the submission, a somewhat grudging McClatchy agreed finally to disclose financial details it had withheld from Yucaipa so it can refine its offer.

Earlier dismissed by most industry observers as a long shot, Yucaipa's bid gained traction with the March 22 announcement that Robert Hall, former publisher of the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News—both on the block—was joining its team. More weight was added to the bid April 11 when James M. Naughton, former executive editor at the Inquirer and past president of the Poynter Institute, also agreed to serve as a Yucaipa advisor.

Although Yucaipa has not disclosed how much it put on the table, a spokeswoman characterized its bid as "very strong;" press reports have speculated it is upwards of \$2 billion. But while no other buyers have emerged for all 12 papers, several bids have

been made for individual newspapers and for strategic clusters. The balance McClatchy now must strike is between selling the newspapers individually, in hopes of getting a bigger aggregate return—an approach eschewed by Knight Ridder when it put itself up for sale late last year—and selling the entire package at one go, with fewer headaches and avoiding the potential problem of being stuck with a few orphans no one wants.

Adding to the pressure for a quick resolution is McClatchy's stock price, which has slid 10% since its announced merger with Knight Ridder. Both Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's have downgraded McClatchy's credit rating since the announcement.

At press time, McClatchy was not saying how it would proceed, nor were most potential bidders disclosing which newspapers they were after or how much they were offering.

Most prominent among the other bidders is MediaNews, which reportedly wants the two Philadelphia newspapers, the three in northern California—San Jose Mercury News, Monterey Herald and Contra Costa Times—and the

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Who owns the York papers?

In a corporate version of the old shell game, in which an unwary mark has to figure out which of three cups conceals a pea, the 80 or so members of the York Newspaper Guild are trying to suss out who owns the city's three newspapers.

Turns out maybe all three are owned by the same party.

The question of who really owns the York Daily Record, the York Dispatch and the York Sunday News is relevant to the Guild because it's been in contract negotiations with the Daily Record for the past nine months, and because its contract at the York Dispatch will expire in October. Meanwhile, nearly a score of Sunday News employees were relocated from the

York Dispatch to the Daily Record two years ago, where they work under the Dispatch contract alongside Record employees whose contract offer significantly better wages and terms of employment.

The question of who really owns the three newspapers also should be of interest to the U.S. Department of Justice, since the Dispatch and the Daily Record operate under a federally sanctioned joint operating agreement that wasn't set to expire until 2090. JOAs are a legal way of circumventing laws that prohibit collusion and restraint of trade, ostensibly on behalf of maintaining a diversity of editorial voices in a community. Such diversity, however,

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Yucaipa bids for all 12

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For an avowedly private sort who shuns the media spotlight, Yucaipa principal Ron Burkle has been getting more than his share of headlines lately. As reported in gleeful detail by the New York Daily News, Burkle appears to have been the target of an attempted extortion by a writer for rival New York Post.

Following a year of embarrassing but false items in the Post's gossip section, Burkle allegedly was contacted by staffer Jared Paul Stern, who suggested that perhaps there was a way to avoid such ignominy.

In a first of two meetings in his Manhattan loft, Burkle asked Stern what he wanted. "Um, \$100,000 to get going and then you could get it to me on a month-to-month, maybe like \$10,000," the Daily News quoted Stern as responding.

How did the Daily News learn what Stern said? The same way the U.S. attorney's office and the FBI did: from secret video taping that Burkle had set up ahead of time.

Moral of the story: stupid people don't become billionaires. They write gossip columns.

St. Paul Pioneer Press, American Community Newspapers, Forum Communications and Lee Enterprises all are said to be interested in the newspapers McClatchy is selling in the upper midwest. Gannett, although frequently mentioned as a possible bidder, is not known to have made an offer for any of the papers, but its CEO told Wall Street analysts March 23 he is "taking a look" at some of the newspapers.

One potential bidder who has taken himself out of the running is Tony Ridder, chairman of Knight Ridder, who had professed to be "stunned" that McClatchy would unload 12 of Knight Ridder's 32 newspapers. Although Ridder started raising money to bid on the three California papers, his lawyers and investment bankers reportedly talked him out of it.

While the corporate dance unfolds, TNG-CWA members at the various affected papers have been drumming up support within their communities. Because of the Guild's belief that a vigorous free press is essential to a fully functioning democracy, a substantial portion of such efforts is aimed at politicians. In St. Paul, for example, former Pioneer Press reporters and editors wrote to elected officials requesting that they pass resolutions supporting the paper. "There are several potential buyers with a history of severely reducing news staffs and replacing substantive local coverage with reporting on crime and entertainment," the letter explained.

Indeed, TNG-CWA gained the support of several California politicians in urging Sacramento-based McClatchy to provide the financial information

that Yucaipa is now getting. For example, state controller Steve Westly called on McClatchy to give fair consideration to the Yucaipa offer and noted that the proposal "has considerable support in the communities served by these newspapers and from prominent leaders in the news industry."

In San Jose, more than a thousand community supporters—including a broad spectrum of political, business and academic leaders—have signed a statement urging whoever buys the Mercury News "to preserve its excellence and learn of our community's expectations for its daily newspaper."

And in Akron, home of the Knight family's Beacon-Journal, the Summit County Council weighed in March 27 with a resolution specifically endorsing the Yucaipa bid as the best chance for creating "a place where employees want to work and invest and thereby protecting the legacy of John S. Knight in Akron." The next day, a rally supporting the newspaper's journalistic tradition included the city's mayor, the president of the city council and numerous other politicians.

Virtually all of the affected TNG-CWA locals have held public rallies, and unionized employees at three of the newspapers—in Monterey, San Jose and St. Paul—have created websites to keep the public informed of developments and as mobilizing tools. See:

- savetheherald.com
- savethemerc.com
- savethepioneerpress.com

The Minnesota Guild has authorized its Pioneer Press members to spend up to \$18,000 to promote the Yucaipa bid and another \$24,000 for lost time devoted to lobbying efforts.

Guild briefs . . .

Kingston workers endorse strike

TNG Canada members working at the Osprey-owned Kingston Whig-Standard gave overwhelming support for a strike in a vote held March 26. The Kingston Typographical Union has never struck the paper before, but management is seeking numerous changes in working conditions, including an unrestricted right to use freelancers. The paper's newsroom staff has conducted a byline strike since Feb. 15.

Chicago Guild seeks new unit

The Chicago Newspaper Guild is seeking voluntary recognition for approximately 18 people in the advertising department at the Waukegan News-Sun, where it already represents the editorial department. The Waukegan News-Sun is part of the Sun-Times Newsgroup, which is owned by Hollinger.

More Globe cuts not ruled out

New York Times chief Arthur Sulzberger Jr. has refused to rule out further cutbacks at the Times-owned Boston Globe. In town for a two-day review of the paper, Sulzberger reportedly told department heads March 28 it will be up to Globe management to decide whether to add to last year's elimination of 130 jobs. Sulzberger did not talk with Guild leaders, despite their request for a meeting.

Canadians lose exec council rep

Jan Ravensbergen, who became president of the Montreal Guild in October 2003 after the sudden death of John Belcarz, has resigned both that post and his position as Canada East Vice President. "It was time," he explained, when asked what prompted the move. He is succeeded in Montreal by Michele Carle, former first vice president. The balance of his term on the TNG-CWA executive council will be filled by election after the next sector conference, in July.

Cincinnati leader takes a buyout

Bob Driehaus, president of the Cincinnati Newspaper Guild, has taken a buyout from the Cincinnati Post and therefore has resigned his leadership position. The local's new president is Luke Saladin, a five- or six-year veteran at The Post who has served on the local's executive committee for a couple of years.

Rochester talks to get mediator
Gannett Co. Inc., the parent company of the Democrat and

Chronicle, has agreed to have a federal mediator attend upcoming bargaining sessions with the Newspaper Guild of Rochester, which represents about 100 local newsroom employees who have been working without a contract since 1992. "We're appreciative that the company has agreed to the involvement of a mediator at the bargaining table," said Steve Orr, Guild president and Democrat and Chronicle reporter. "We hope this presence will help us come to agreement on some of the issues that have been unresolved for years."

Moncton elects new president

Following ratification of a new, five-year contract with the Moncton Times & Transcript, the 31 members of the Moncton Typographical Union elected Dwayne Tingley as their new president. Also elected were Heather Fiske and Craig Babstock as vice-presidents, Greg Agnew as treasurer and Alan Cochrane as secretary.

New leadership starts with ULP

The newly-elected leadership of the fledgling bargaining unit at Alliance Atlantis Communications has its work cut out for it: among its top priorities is pursuing a complaint of unfair labor practices against the company for punishing employees who supported representation by the Canadian Media Guild. The company announced last month that its non-unionized employees would receive annual salary increases and bonuses, but that it didn't want to "prejudice" contract talks by giving increases to union members.

New York book policy challenged

What does it take to be an author? For New York Times reporters, the answer is still up in the air, despite a recent memo aimed at "setting the record straight." Local President Barry Lipton said the memo goes beyond the terms of the union's 2002 agreement by requiring that Times editors be told in advance of a book project, even if the topic is off the reporter's beat. A grievance has been filed.

Webber dies, 67

Phil Webber, a photographer at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and a member of the Pacific Northwest Guild's executive board, died in late March of complications from emphysema nearly 48 years after first joining the union. Webber also worked on staff at the Seattle Union Record during the 49-day newspaper strike of 2000. He was 67.

CONTRACT ROUND-UP

Significant gains at Factiva

Agreement on at least three TNG-CWA contracts was reached over the past several weeks.

The settlements include a tentative agreement between IAPE, TNG-CWA Local 1096, and Factiva, with ratification balloting to conclude by the end of this month. The three-year contract includes wage increases of 3.5% retroactive to Jan.

1, plus 3.5% next year and 3.25% in 2008. In addition, unit members will receive a guaranteed 0.5% revenue-sharing payment this year, plus 0.5% for year-over-year revenue growth at Factiva of at least 6% in 2007 and 6.25% in 2008.

The compensatory wage increase also comes on top of an increase in all wage scales equivalent to 75% of the compensatory increase each year. The new contract also drops a previously existing cap that limited compensatory increases for employees paid more than \$114,556 a year.

Other details of the Factiva contract include overtime to be paid in 15-minute increments after seven hours a day; a shift differential of \$81 a week for nights and \$69 a week for evenings; stand-by pay of \$145 a week or \$24 a day and \$36 on weekend days or holidays; and a one-week increase across the board for vacations, starting with three weeks for new hires and topping out at six weeks for those with 15 or more years' service.

Pueblo Chieftain

Just as they have for the past six or more years, members of the Pueblo Newspaper Guild have ratified a new one-year contract. The concession-free agreement includes a 3% raise effective last month; a one-day increase in bereavement

leave for out-of-state travel; procedures for cell-phone reimbursement; and creation of a joint committee to study pension plan upgrades.

Not included in the settlement is a successors and assigns clause, which is of particular interest to the local because the Pueblo Chieftain has been willed to a foundation whose sole purpose is to sell it within five years. The local was successful, however, in having the 82-year-old publisher agree to look at employee purchase options over the next year.

Staff union, ANA

Members of the Washington-Baltimore Guild unit representing the staff of the American Nurses Association ratified, 58-to-1, a three-year contract that includes annual wage increases of 3% and a 1% ratification bonus. The association also accepted the union's proposal, with slight modification, for sharing equally the increased costs of health insurance premiums.

Contract improvements also include the addition of birthdays as paid holidays; easier access by employees to their personnel files; an increase in tuition reimbursement to \$4,000 from \$3,500; and an increase in pay differentials for employees on call to \$300 a month or \$30 a day.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The Guild Reporter (ISSN: 00175404) (CPC # 1469371) is issued monthly, generally at four-week intervals, at 501 Third St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Periodicals postage paid in Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.

Postmaster: Send address changes or requests to stop delivery to: The Guild Reporter, c/o Grace Corner, Communications Workers of America, 501 Third St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Address changes and requests to stop delivery also can be sent by e-mail to: duesinfo@cwa-union.org.

Subscription: \$20 a year in U.S. and Canada, \$30 a year overseas. Send subscription orders to: Tina Harrison, TNG-CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
Single copies: \$1.50

Toledo unions blast Tenn. law firm

The make-no-bones-about-it union-busting law firm of King & Ballow took it in the shorts April 10, as several hundred union members turned out in front of the Toledo Blade to decry its bargaining tactics. Cries of "Send them home to Tennessee" erupted from the crowd, which also broke into a reworked version of "Louie Louie" that urged the Blade's owners to send the law firm packing.

Prominently mentioned and displayed at the rally was a letter to Blade employees from Rep. Marcy Kaptur, commending their "continued efforts to achieve a new contract with the Blade." Noting that union members "have been a strong force in achieving the Blade's Pulitzer Prize-winning status," Kaptur added: "In my mind, there can be no substitute for locally owned, community minded reporting and inquiry that is relentless in its pursuit of the truth."

The emphasis on localism comes at a crucial time, as the

Block family—owner of the Blade and the Pittsburgh Post Gazette—has decided to take a hard line at both papers by hiring King & Ballow as its bargaining representative. Following a three-year wage freeze in its last contract, the Blade is now demanding pay cuts of at least 19%, plus significantly higher out-of-pocket payments for health care, limitless subcontracting and the loss of seniority rights.

Most troubling, say Toledo Guild leaders, is King & Ballow's attempt to impose a "management rights" clause that would make the rest of the contract meaningless. The clause is so sweeping that when Guild negotiators asked what management couldn't do if it were approved, the reply from the King & Ballow representative was: "I don't know what we couldn't do. If I knew what [we] couldn't do, I'd put it in there."

Although the Blade has never had such a clause before, it now is seeking the sole and exclusive rights to "determine the existence



Ron Garcia, president of the Toledo Council of Newspaper Unions, addresses the April 10 rally.

or nonexistence of the facts which are the basis of a management decision" and to establish all work "policies, practices and procedures." It also wants the unilateral freedom to set work hours; to transfer, promote or demote employees; and to create "rules governing the conduct of employees within the plant and for the maintenance of discipline."

There is a lot more of the same—enough to convince the Guild's bargaining committee that the real issue in these talks isn't money, it's "the desire of the Blocks and their managers to do what they want, when they want, how they want, with regard for nothing."

Or as the King & Ballow representative told the committee: "I knew that 20 years ago, that the kinds of contracts you had here were not contracts that should have been signed here."

Manchester Guild brushes up image

By Mark Hayward
Manchester Newspaper Guild

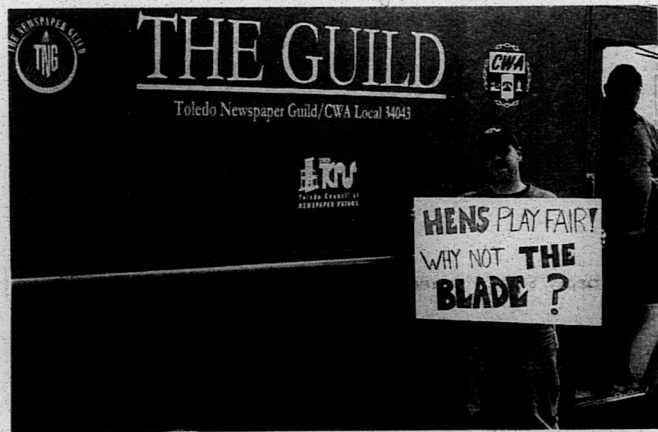
Third-floor walls in the living room, bathroom and kitchen at the Manchester Emergency Housing shelter received a fresh coat of paint this winter, thanks to members of the Manchester Newspaper Guild. Several Guild members volunteered their free time to paint portions of the private, non-profit shelter, which provides lodging and food to homeless families in Manchester, N.H.

The volunteer work represents an effort by the Manchester Guild to increase its visibility in the community. It also helps to build bridges between the local and other neighborhood, service and community organizations. "A lot of people read The New Hampshire Union Leader, but they just don't know about the Guild," said Donna

Ridener, the local's secretary. "By doing volunteer work, we hope to get our faces out there and build a positive image for our union."

The painting, the local's first project, was well received by shelter personnel. "The newly painted living room, kitchen and bathroom look great," said shelter director Jeff Michelsen. "These cosmetic improvements are a low-cost way to improve the environment and promote a sense of well-being among the unfortunate people we assist."

Meanwhile, the Manchester Newspaper Guild is taking steps to become involved in other efforts. Opportunities under discussion include staffing a telethon for New Hampshire Public Television, a union-sponsored blood drive, participation in a spring clean-up program for senior homeowners, and sponsorship of a Little League baseball team.



Steve Murphy, holding sign, and retiree Jim "Murph" Gregory help roll out the Toledo Guild's new "Mobile Mobilizer" April 6 at opening day for the Toledo Mud Hens.

Community group fights arbitration in Seattle JOA

The long-running divorce proceedings in which the Seattle Times wants to cut its ties to the Post-Intelligencer may be about to get fast-tracked—if, that is, a Washington Superior Court judge is willing to shut out a third, community-represented group.

The Times has sought for several years to end its joint operating agreement with the Hearst-owned Post-Intelligencer, citing a provision of the JOA agreement that permits it to do so after posting three consecutive years of operating losses. But Hearst has challenged the Times' accounting, pushing the dispute into Judge Greg Canova's courtroom. There, the Committee for a Two-Newspaper Town, whose membership includes local politicians, readers and Guild members, succeeded in joining the proceedings nearly three years ago on behalf of the public interest.

Now the Times and its Hearst-owned rival are attempting to sidestep the committee by moving their dispute to binding arbitration. The move, representatives of the two newspapers have said, would enable them to obtain a final decision about the JOA and its possible dissolution by the end of May, 2007. But switching to arbitration requires Canova to first halt courtroom proceedings—and the committee has petitioned him not to allow that.

In a 12-page motion filed with the court April 5, the committee argued that it is on an equal footing with the Times and Post-Intelligencer and has "an equal right to pursue litigation in this forum." Allowing the two newspapers to take their dispute to

arbitration without committee involvement would leave "no way to undo the damage to (the committee), and therefore to the community at large."

The two newspapers have said they would never consent to the committee participating in an arbitration of their dispute, citing confidentiality of "sensitive business and financial information" as one reason why they're trying to move the dispute out of court. But committee members say the two companies are also seeking arbitration as a quick way of resolving the impasse. If Canova grants the committee's petition, they predict the Times and Hearst will negotiate an acceptable compromise with the committee that would permit the arbitration to proceed with Canova's blessing.

A speedy resolution is of indisputable benefit to the Times, which insists the Post-Intelligencer will continue to bleed it dry as long as the two are yoked together through the JOA. At the end of March it released new financial figures to reflect continued losses for 2005, adding to a tide of red ink that has flowed unabated since 2000.

What surprised some observers was Hearst's apparently abrupt decision to go along with the arbitration, after years of gamely fending off every attempt by the Times to go its own way. But Roger Oglesby, publisher of the Post-Intelligencer, told employees in a memo that going the speedier arbitration route would bring "a measure of certainty to a situation that has generated a lot of confusion and anxiety" for both employees and readers.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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Active local of 1,000+ members seeks top staff person. Applicants must have experience in negotiating labor contracts, handling grievances and arbitrations. Organizing experience preferred.

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News round-up

CWA throws support to anti-war march

The CWA Executive Board has voiced its support for a major anti-war demonstration April 29 in New York. District 1 Vice President Chris Shelton told board members that several CWA locals in New York and New Jersey are active in organizing the demonstration. "A majority of Americans now agree that it's time to pull our troops out of Iraq, and we need to amplify that message to our political leaders," he said. Vice President Brooks Sunkett noted that CWA called for winding down troop levels in a convention resolution as early as September 2004. "We are tremendously proud of the men and women of our armed forces, including many in our CWA family, who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan," he observed. "But it's now clear that the best way to support our troops and their families is to bring the troops home and out of harm's way."

Pension double-standard on full view

A new AFL-CIO website, www.paywatch.org, for the first time reveals the top 25 pension packages of 2005 as well as a comprehensive database of brand-new CEO pay figures. While a growing number of often-profitable companies have replaced their workers' traditional defined-benefit pension plans with more risky defined-contribution plans, such as 401(k)s, many CEOs are receiving "supplemental executive retirement pensions" that are based on the traditional defined-benefit formula of years of service multiplied by final annual pay. Only 21% of private sector workers today—but 72% of union workers—are covered by such plans, compared with 69% of Fortune 1000 CEOs.

Knee-capping high tech workers

Just as the high tech industry began recovering from the economic recession ushered in by the Bush administration, Congress was being lobbied by Microsoft and other major employers for a nine-fold increase in the number of skilled professional "guest workers" allowed into the U.S. The proposed increase in the controversial H-1b visa program, to 600,000 from the current 65,000 cap, came on the heels of a report by TNG-CWA local WashTech that Microsoft's wages have stagnated for several years; if a real skill shortage existed, WashTech pointed out, pay would be increasing. Although the Senate compromised on a cap of 115,000, the AFL-CIO and CWA are in the House backing the Defend the American Dream Act, sponsored by Rep. Bill Pascrell of New Jersey. The act, while given scant chance of passage, would preserve the 65,000 cap, add reporting requirements for employers and add a provision requiring that H-1b visa holders be paid prevailing wages.

Harper dips into Bush play-book

TNG Canada, which represents media workers at the CBC and newspapers in many parts of the country, has condemned Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his "undemocratic" and "frightening" attempts to limit journalists' access to cabinet ministers. The strong denunciation followed Harper's unannounced meeting in late March of the full federal cabinet, the first such closed-door session in recent memory. Harper defended the move by saying cabinet meetings—at which the government makes major policy decisions—are private and Canadians do not have the right to know when they are held.

Commerce first, defense maybe later

Stalinist Nikita Khrushchev famously quipped before the U.N. that "Capitalists will sell the ropes to hang themselves." Now it appears that Wal-Mart is out to prove him right. According to a report delivered to Congress by the AFL-CIO, "Unchecked: How Wal-Mart Uses Its Might to Block Port Security," the world's largest retailer has used its clout in the Retail Industry Leaders Association to scuttle port security measures that might cut into its record profits. In the last few years Wal-Mart has opposed the introduction of anti-terrorist "smart containers" and electronic seals for cargo containers, opposed independent and regular inspections of supply-chain security practices around the world and opposed new container-handling fees to pay for improved port security.

Course for union contract negotiators

TNG-CWA members and local staffers preparing for contract negotiations may be interested in a week-long course offered by the National Labor College, "Negotiating and Writing Contract Language," starting June 4. Participants will be taught the "how-tos" of defining and analyzing issues, developing proposals and writing actual contract language; the course also will examine particular areas of contract language in more detail. Registration is possible at www.georgegeany.org/html/cue_registration.html.

U.N. inquiries sought in slayings

An April 7 letter from TNG-CWA President Linda Foley and Thomas R. Carpenter, national director of legislative affairs for AFTRA, urges U.N. ambassador John Bolton to support calls for "all governments of the world to honor their obligation to investigate" the growing number of media worker deaths around the world. Last year, they noted, approximately 150 journalists and media staff were killed.

CWA told GOP vulnerable, but Dems lack an agenda

By Mark Gruenberg
Staff Writer, Press Associates, Inc.

President George W. Bush's popularity has sunk to levels not seen since just before Richard Nixon was ousted from the White House, and congressional Republicans aren't far above him. But the Democrats are in no position to take advantage of their foes' weakness, pollster Celinda Lake told CWA leaders March 12, because voters believe the Democrats don't stand for anything.

Lake's gloom-and-doom message was delivered at the opening session of the CWA's annual political/legislative conference, held over a four-day span in Washington, D.C. "Voters view both parties as distasteful," she added. "There is no clear Democratic alternative in voters' minds."

CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling agreed, adding that the union will push the Democrats to build a platform that voters can embrace. "People are sick and tired of leaders giving them the shaft and of being lied to," Easterling, a Democratic National Committee member, declared in her address the same day. If the Democrats don't, "We'll have to push them into the right strategy."

Democratic National Chairman Howard Dean tried to answer Lake's findings the next day, outlining the Democratic Party's message heading into this fall's elections. Among the points he stressed were honesty in government, "telling the truth to our citizens and our soldiers before sending them off to war," keeping jobs in the U.S., retirement security, full funding for education and a health care system that covers everyone.

Even though Lake's poll showed the delegates that the Republicans still retain an edge in voter trust on fighting terrorism (54%-37%) and on the war in Iraq (48%-45%), Dean said Democrats will battle against Bush and the GOP on those issues, too.

Citing the now-dead deal that saw the Bush administration approve a \$6.8 billion sale of terminals at six U.S. ports to the United Arab Emirates-owned Dubai Ports World, Dean noted that the Bush administration has spent \$20 billion on airport security since

the 2001 terrorist attacks but only \$631 million on port security. (See related Wal-Mart item at left.)

And its proposed budget for the year starting Oct. 1, he adds, cuts security funds for "first responders"—police, fire fighters and emergency medical technicians—by 23%. "We're less secure now than before 9-11," Dean said, referring to the terror attacks. "It's been five years, and they're weak on security. Osama Bin Laden is still running around somewhere. North Korea has nuclear weapons and Iran is closer day by day to doing so."

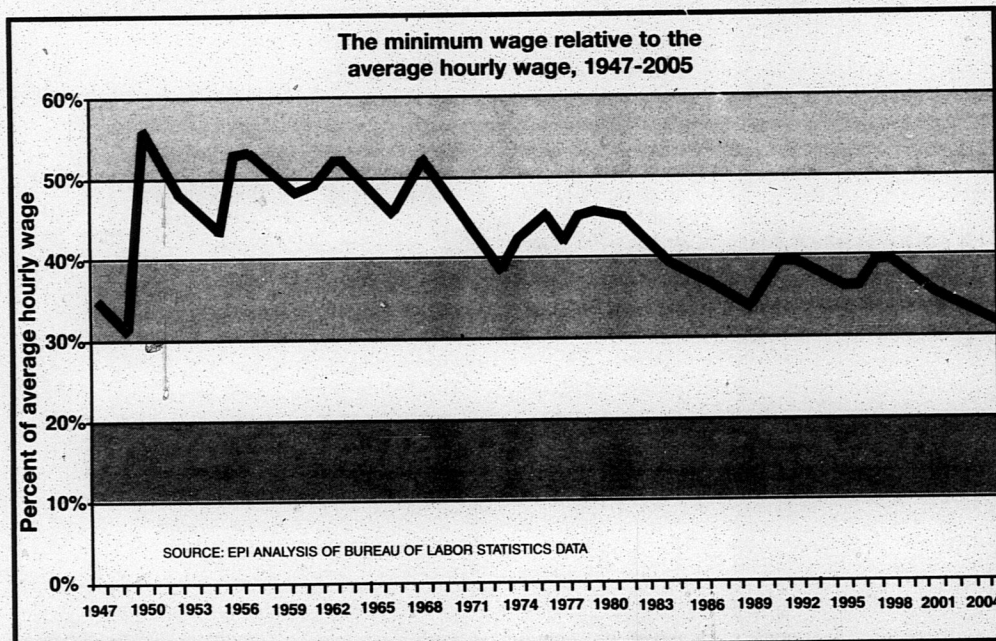
But while Lake said Democrats win with voters on the issues, she also warned the crowd that issues are not the whole story. After all, she pointed out, polls showed voters in 2004 agreed with the Democrats on the issues, too—but they lost the White House to Bush, anyway. "It's not issues," she warned. "We need to articulate a vision."

On the issue that voters called the most important—the Iraq war—a majority now agrees that "we should have stayed out." But voters are split on what to do now that we're there. Of those surveyed, 38% favor withdrawal but on a set timetable, 27% favor immediate withdrawal and 23% favor keeping present troop levels.

In a conference spiked with plans to register and get out the vote this fall, Lake also warned that taking back the GOP-run Congress in 2006 would be largely a matter of turnout. While the Democrats have a 13-point lead among all those questioned in terms of whom voters would like to see running Congress, the lead falls to six points among likely voters, she noted.

Moreover, she added, when asked whether they voted in 2004, key Democratic constituencies such as poor women (65%), young people (53%) and Hispanic voters (56%) trailed far behind the key GOP constituency of born-again Christians (83%).

Easterling added one other reason to get out the vote this fall. "King George is acting not as an executor of democracy, but more like the ruler of a totalitarian state," she noted, just days before Bush reiterated his policy of pre-emptive war. "This is a government of, by and for big business—and they seek nothing less than the total destruction of the labor movement."



Minimum wage at 59-year low

White House supporters frequently express surprise that public attitudes about the economy are tepid, at best, if not downright pessimistic. But for anyone not in the nation's top 20% of wage earners, there's no mystery: job growth has been anemic, while the fastest-growing jobs are those that offer the lowest compensation. What's to like?

One marker for the growing economic inequality is the federal minimum wage, which anchors the low end of the income spectrum and which hasn't been increased since 1997. Stuck at \$5.15 an hour, the purchasing power of the minimum wage has eroded year by year because of inflation and in real dollars is the lowest it has been since the Fair Labor Standards Act

was amended, in 1947.

One way to gauge the minimum wage is to compare it with the average hourly wage—which, as measured in inflation adjusted dollars, peaked in 1978. Even that yardstick, however, shows how negligibly the minimum wage has become: as graphed above, the minimum wage has declined from a peak of 56% of the average wage in 1950 to 32% last year.

A House bill to raise the minimum wage to \$7.25 in three steps over a period of two years would benefit an estimated 7.3 million workers, including 1.8 million parents. Because Republican opponents have managed to block all such efforts in recent years, a growing number of states are enacting their own minimums.



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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POSITION PAPER:

Preserve sectors, extend process

In 1995, the members of The Newspaper Guild, faced with many challenges in the media industry, took a bold and courageous step that would position their union to face the future in an ever burgeoning Information Age. We voted to merge with the Communications Workers of America.

Since 1997, when our merger took effect, both the CWA and its TNG sector have benefited from that merger. We have worked to build a union that recognizes both the need for common power and solidarity and the need for identity and diversity.

However, in 2006 we find ourselves faced with a new set of challenges and concerns. We are facing an unprecedented attack by powerful forces that would dismantle our contracts and our very right to bargain collectively. At the same time, the ranks of our membership have been thinned in the name of corporate efficiencies, globalization, outsourcing, technological change and many other factors outside of our immediate control.

In that spirit, TNG-CWA has welcomed and encouraged the Ready for the Future discussion. This document is the product of a process that began in October with TNG's Executive Council and has continued at TNG-CWA District Council meetings in the fall and winter, at the TNG-Canada Representative Council and in TNG-CWA locals. This document incorporates common elements of those discussions.

The discussions have been productive and have forced us to think about how we use our power—finite as it may be—to deal with the challenges we face. **That's why we believe CWA must continue the RFF process beyond July 2006.** The problems we face are too complicated and the ideas are too numerous for us to reach a consensus about our collective future in such a short time through our democratic processes.

If there is one universally accepted starting point for structural changes in CWA and in the TNG sector, it's this: **Our merger agreement must be honored.** It was examined, debated and ratified by the members of the Guild. It was approved by the CWA Executive Board and the CWA convention. It is a promise we made to each other, and we keep our promises.

In at least two places, the merger agreement clearly states, "TNG-CWA shall not be dissolved nor shall its authority, jurisdiction, functions or bylaws be changed or impeded without its consent." In other words, the right and responsibility to change TNG-CWA belong to TNG-CWA and its members.

Nevertheless, TNG-CWA recognizes the need to discuss structural changes and knows that TNG members will have an important role in that discussion. In fact, the TNG-CWA merger agreement contains some vision for how sectors and districts could better work together. Article III, Section 3 (a) of the merger agreement states: "The Councils on Convergence shall seek to bring together the various CWA sectors involved in communications/information industries with the goal of eventually developing a single voice and a unified approach to issues as members of the CWA."

We believe that industry sectors like ours are best able to coordinate collective bargaining and organizing. Districts are most conducive to political work, education and mobilization. Working out what is the best combined structure for CWA that will capture the strengths of each model will take time.

The short time frame has limited the number of Ready for the Future discussions held in local unions. The process of educating local leaders about the kinds of issues that must be addressed in and of itself has taken many months. In order for this "big

conversation" to have real meaning, it must reach all CWA locals and stewards. Many (but not all) TNG-CWA locals used the window of opportunity afforded by passage of the RFF resolution to discuss and propose some ideas about the future. Locals must be encouraged to continue those discussions. Locals that have not focused on this dialog must make plans to do so.

The process by which we are able to achieve real change that will benefit our members and strengthen their power and ability to bargain collectively must involve long-term planning and careful discussion. Consensus on decisions of this import cannot be reached in a few months. In that spirit, we offer the following recommendations.

(NOTE: The Guild has divided its recommendations into two sections. The first section addresses our ideas for union-wide changes; the second section deals with changes the Guild can make internally to build its strength and bargaining power. In each area, we offer a broad-based goal and some specific steps that can be taken to help achieve that goal.)

Part One: Recommendations for Changes in CWA Structure and Policies

1. Goal: Improve use of the union's existing resources

- Create *Strategic Industry Funds* by combining the Members' Relief Fund and Defense Fund and using a designated portion of the combined fund's income to finance strategic industry campaigns and organizing campaigns. One such fund would be a Media and High Tech Fund available to TNG-CWA and the other media sectors.

- *Improve the union's communications*, including its multiple web sites, and coordinate content among headquarters, districts and sectors.

2. Goal: Restructure administrative units

- Establish a process whereby CWA districts and sectors can be restructured to better represent our members and deliver services. All districts and sectors should be involved. The restructuring process should extend over several years, perhaps until 2011.
- Encourage and plan for *increased cooperation and coordination of staff*.

- *Share field staff* (sectors with districts, districts with sectors, sectors with each other) where it makes sense.

- Create *common headquarters committees* for communications and collective bargaining that cut across all sectors.

3. Goal: Create incentives for merging locals

- Develop a *list of criteria* to measure the effectiveness of locals, acknowledging that size isn't always a determining factor in viability.

- Establish *financial incentives for local mergers*.

- Create *administrative units for servicing* that leave locals intact.

- *No locals should be forced to merge.*

4. Goal: Increase the union's diversity at all levels

- Explore ways to *expand the CWA Executive Board* to make it more diverse and include members who are not necessarily vice presidents. Such new executive board members, for example, could include occupational group leaders, other leaders involved in collective bargaining and organizing for large groups of CWA members and representatives of locals who would bring racial, ethnic and

gender balance to the Board.

- Develop a programmatic approach to *reaching out to younger workers* to encourage union participation and leadership, similar to the Guild's "Next Generation" initiative.

5. Goal: Restructure TNG Canada

- Establish *Canada as its own administrative unit or "District."*

- Support TNG Canada's attempt to *create a truly international union* with appropriate representation on the CWA Executive Board.

6. Goal: Increase efficiency of meetings and conferences

- Hold *CWA convention in conjunction with legislative conference* in non-election years.

- Move to *biennial convention schedule*.

- Direct CWA Executive Board to identify ways to *consolidate meetings*.

7. Goal: Increase participation by TNG in district activities and services

- TNG locals should *attend and participate in their appropriate District meetings*. TNG-CWA officers will work to encourage such participation.

- *District meetings and activities* should include TNG-CWA issues.

Part Two: Recommendations for Changes in the Guild Sector

Since its merger with CWA in 1997, the Guild has worked on the national and local level to improve our efforts in each of the areas delineated by the CWA Triangle: Organizing, Political/Community Action, and Bargaining/Representation. We've made great strides in each of those three areas but realize there is still much room for improvement.

The recommendations that follow are aimed at helping the Guild improve its internal systems and procedures, based on the principles of the CWA Triangle.

A. Organizing

1. Goal: Improve integration into the Organizing Program for TNG-CWA Sector Representatives

- Invite TNG Staff Reps. with organizing responsibilities to the *District organizing retreats and staff meetings* where the organizing program or plan will be discussed.

- *Inform the Guild's Administrative Assistant* about District retreats and meetings where the organizing program or plan will be discussed with staff.

- *Include Guild staff* in district organizing reports and mailings. The Guild's administrative assistant will keep TNG SEC members apprised of organizing activity in their regions.

2. Goal: Increase the awareness of Guild bargaining units by CWA district leadership and other locals

- *District staff should work more closely with the Guild staff* to avoid handing off the organizing responsibilities to the Guild and a local.

- Make the Guild Sector an *integral part of the CWA Organizing Program*; we could get non-Guild Sector locals to consider more Guild organizing locations and encourage Guild locals to work more closely with NABET and PPMW Sector locals.

3. Goal: Increase coordination and cooperation among sectors and districts:

- Guild Administrative Assistant should be at *AA Organizing meeting*.

- Have *regularly scheduled meetings with the Sectors and the CWA Organizing Director*.

- *Clarify the process for getting money* for legal costs in organizing campaigns.

- Encourage *collaboration with NABET and PPMWS Sector leaders/staff* to better apply the union's resources in organizing at common employers and locations.

4. Goal: Utilize trained Guild organizers in various campaigns throughout the union, regardless of industry

- Create *internships* for Guild organizers.
- Put those trained *Guild interns on the list for CWA organizers* to call upon for assisting in campaigns both in Guild-represented industries and in other industries.

- Budget for necessary travel expense for *volunteer Guild organizers*.

B. Collective Bargaining and Representation

1. Goal: Better coordination between CWA units

- Encourage *collaboration with NABET and PPMWS Sector leaders/staff* to better apply the union's resources in bargaining at common employers and locations.

2. Goal: Increase support for local bargaining efforts

- Develop a *"collective bargaining toolbox"* that will provide local leaders with an array of resources to improve their bargaining efforts.

- Expand *collective bargaining training opportunities* at both the novice and advanced levels.

- Offer training to help locals create and maintain *effective mobilizing systems*.

3. Goal: Increase coordination among locals with common corporate owners

- Develop and support a framework for creating and sustaining *effective chain caucuses or employer councils*.

- Compile and distribute *corporate profile information*.

4. Goal: Increase diversity in Guild leadership

- Establish a *TNG Equity Committee*, consisting of representatives of each of the TNG-CWA district councils from among delegates to the TNG-CWA sector conference.

C. Political and Community Action

1. Goal: Enhance members' involvement in the union's legislative and political initiatives

- Guild locals should join *CWA state councils*, which work on legislative and political issues in each state.

- Develop *payment arrangements for COPE* such as bank drafts and credit card payments that do not rely on payroll deduction.

- Encourage Guild locals to *develop policies that support political activity* on issues related to our industries and workplaces while continuing to protect members who have conflicts of interest.

- Continue *local efforts to increase voter registration and voter participation*.

Submitted by the Executive Council of The Newspaper Guild-CWA, April 7, 2006.

Carol Rothman, International Chair
Linda Foley, President

Bernie Lunzer, Secretary-Treasurer

Arnold Amber, Director, TNG-Canada

VP Donna Marks, Local 31246

VP Connie Knox, Local 32035

VP Scott Stephens, Local 34001

VP Lucy Witeck, Local 39117

VP Peter Szekely, Local 31003

VP Karolynn DeLuca, Local 37002

VP Scott Edmonds, Local 30213

LOOKING AHEAD

Everything looks sunnier in spring

By Linda Foley, President



What a difference a few months can make. Back in December, the weather was as cold and dreary as it had been all year, and the impending sale of Knight Ridder was casting a pall over the holiday season for Guild members and several thousand other employees who worked at the 32 newspapers in play. It was just before Christmas when the Guild announced it would attempt to lead an employee-buyout of the unionized Knight Ridder newspapers.

Since that announcement, nothing has been the same.

When CEO Tony Ridder declared last fall that the company bearing his family's name would be up for sale, the talk was all about doom and gloom for the newspaper industry. Speculation was rampant that these once proud and journalistically superior newspapers likely would be consolidated, slashed and in some cases just closed down. Even after McClatchy Newspapers emerged as the winning bidder for Knight Ridder, its immediate announcement that it would try to sell

off 12 of the most established properties brought further hand wringing about the fate of the 12 "orphans" created by the transaction. The future of the industry—and those 12 papers in particular—seemed pretty bleak.

Today, as the sun stays out longer and the temperature rises, there is a decidedly warmer tone to the coverage of this story. Every day, more potential bidders seem to express a desire to own one or more of the newspapers that McClatchy wants to shed. Current published analyses speculate not about how deep the cuts will be, but instead about how high the bids will go. Public officials and citizens in the affected communities are abuzz about the importance of preserving and supporting their newspapers.

Instead of waiting for the ax to fall, employees of the 12 papers are rallying around their future. No longer are they simply spectators on the sidelines of their own collective fate; they are players changing the dynamics that determine who will own the company that employs them.

There's another important element in this new burst of energy. For the first time in years, these newspaper workers are not merely entries on the cost side of a corporate balance sheet. Yucaipa Cos., the multi-billion dollar equity fund that is backing the



employees' bid, has shown through its considerable investment in this venture that it believes employees are valuable assets. Very valuable assets.

Suddenly and remarkably (thanks to Yucaipa), the employees at the 12 Knight Ridder newspapers are the front-runners in a very competitive auction to own their employers. Throw in an almost weekly dose of news coverage—and even a little spice about Yucaipa's founder, Ron Burkle, exposing an attempt by Rupert Murdoch's New York Post to blackmail him and perhaps a few other celebrities—and it has become downright exciting. Nothing like the serious, rather dour legal defense we were preparing in the dead of winter in order to salvage our collective bargaining agreements.

But it's not over, and the prospects for success, though brighter, are anything but certain. There are powerful forces in this industry who would rather kill it than let the people who work for them participate in their ownership game. Still, whether or not Yucaipa succeeds in winning the bid for some or all of the 12 Knight Ridder "cast offs," the commitment of this worker-friendly equity company and the commitment of Guild members to their newspapers and to each other are a sure sign there must be a future for the newspaper industry, even in this new-fangled digital age.

The collective dedication of our members to their work and to their union is stronger than it's ever been. That alone should give us all hope that this industry's future will be a sunny one.

Thirty-six good years out of 39 ain't bad

By Adolphe Bernotas
News Media Guild.

March 29, 2006

Friends, colleagues, brethren and sisthrens! Tonight was my last day at AP.

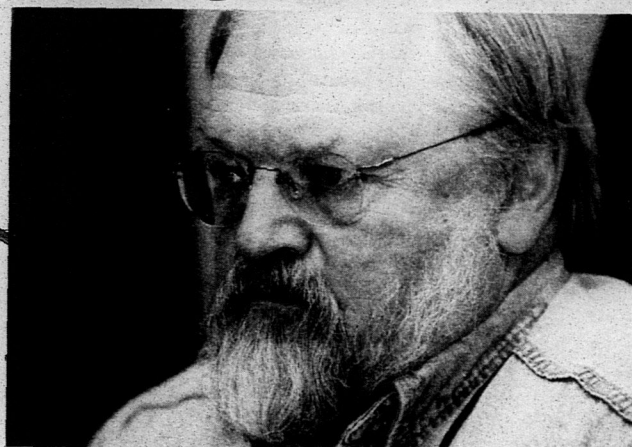
Had to fight back my mischief gene all day. For years I fantasized that on the last day I would write a piece under the byline "C.O. Jones, Associated Press Writer," do a 1st Ld-Writethru TIGHTENS to LOOSEN, then a 2nd Ld-Writethru LOOSENS to TIGHTEN. But my guardian angel protected me and I shut off the lights and left the building, fantasy unrealized.

Thirty-nine years ago, Mort Rosenblum and I were talking in the lobby of the building where we lived in Greenwich Village. Mort worked at AP; I worked at the Jersey Journal; Mort suggested I apply at AP.

I reminded him of this recently and he, tongue-in-cheek, apologized for "ruining your life."

Not really, of course. I wouldn't change my trip through AP, except for the last three years or so, when the "new AP" began to disassemble The Associated Press.

My plan when I joined AP in Concord was to put my language aptitude to use and work overseas. But the longer I stayed in New Hampshire the more I decided it was my home. AP encouraged me to pursue "promotions" but I wouldn't, and in the days before "quality of life" was on AP management's horizon, I was marked as a suspicious person because I valued where I lived and how I lived and my job more than "career."



Had a great time in New Hampshire, though. Went through lots of stories, including 10 presidential primaries. Tried to guide new staffers through the delicious intricacies, inconsistencies and contradictions of English. And I got involved in Guild leadership, which has given me equal satisfaction.

Volunteer Guild work can be thankless: negotiating against a not-so-enlightened, not-so-kind-and-gentle employer; listening to complaints of colleagues who blame the union when it's the company, not the Guild, that screws them; trying to get nonmembers to become honorable and honest people by joining the union and paying their fair share.

Biggest disappointment? Before the Guild challenged AP's hiring practices, the company essentially was run and staffed by white guys. The union sued the company before the EEOC, and when AP wouldn't budge, the

union went to federal court. AP literally settled as we headed into the courthouse. Thus, the Guild opened AP management and staff to women and people of color—yet, unless there's been a recent drastic change, white guys join the union in greater percentages than do minorities and women. The union

needs to deal with this reality and better educate new hires.

But every now and then a Guild goon's soul gets nourishment—when you save somebody's job, get a 20-year holdout to join the union or after a 1-year battle get domestic partner benefits into the contract. Once, at an AP 25th anniversary dinner, Sam Maull approached: "Bernotas, I want to talk to you!" Here comes the bitching, I thought. But I was wrong, because Sam offered me his hand and said: "I just want to thank you for all the work you've done for all of us." Similarly, during the hot Shoptalk exchanges in the recent negotiations, kind words about my union work by people like Tom Raum and others who "get it" have made the tsuris and agita worth it.

Through the News Media Guild I represented The Newspaper Guild at International

Federation of Journalists workshops. Had the honor of promoting western-style journalism and unionism to fellow reporters and editors in post-Cold War countries—Romania, Bosnia, Croatia, Mongolia and Lithuania—including my hometown, Kaunas.

I don't regret leaving the "new AP," but I will miss the colleagues, including some outstanding managers, and friends I made around the country and the globe. Although I leave AP, I remain active in the News Media Guild, trying to build a retirees' unit that will come in handy for those left behind. The retirees will help in future contract talks on picket lines, leafleting, phone calls, etc. because things will get worse before they get better and AP will keep eating its children (as it has in the shameful Chris Graff, Trenton and other massacres).

What will I do in retirement? I'll clean up my room. I know the value of a good chorus and may audition for Gilbert and Sullivan productions, something AP work schedules have made difficult. I'll devote more time to Opera New Hampshire, on whose board I sit. I may update my book on bicycling in New Hampshire. Marguerite and I have rented an RV to start checking out this beautiful country that adopted me in 1952, when I got here at age 11.

And if you're anywhere near New Hampshire on June 24, come to our house to celebrate my retirement, fifth wedding anniversary and postponed annual birthday bash. Let me know at Kaunas@aol.com if you can make it.

My best to all (and sign up the nonmembers!).

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: May 12.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Sticks and stones and words all hurt

By Debbie Thomas
TNG-CWA Human Rights Director

The recent controversy over U.S. immigration policy brings with it renewed attention to the linguistic minefields associated with the subject. The National Association of Hispanic Journalists, for example, has called on the media to "use accurate terminology" in their coverage of immigration and to avoid dehumanizing undocumented immigrants.

The Asian American Journalist Association, in supporting the NAHJ, warns: "Any reference to 'illegals' or 'illegal aliens' can heighten xenophobia (a hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything foreign or strange), skew public debate on immigration issues, and put the lives and well-being of all non-U.S. citizens (undocumented and documented) in this country at risk by suggesting they are criminals and do not belong in the U.S."

The National Association of Black Journalists, meanwhile, reminds the news media that accuracy in language use is a vital component of journalistic fairness and credibility.

We seem to have such a problem in this country with name-calling. We will never be able to get our arms around the bigger issues if can't exercise thought and concern about the things we say and write. Remember the childhood rhyme, "Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me?" The rhyme is wrong.

In my opinion, those issues covered by equal employment laws—race, color, religion, sex, etc.—are extremely important in our fight for human and civil rights. But there are other areas that warrant our concern. For example, because we constantly receive calls about the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), I thought I would use this month's column to sketch out the who, what, where and why of the act.

The FMLA was designed to help families balance the competing demands of

workplace and family. Prior to its establishment, the United States was one of only a few industrialized nations that did not provide job-protected parental leave.

The FMLA requires that all employers of 50 or more employees must provide 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons: birth or adoption of a child, care for immediate family members with a serious health condition or the employee's own serious medical incapacitation. The 50-employee threshold includes full-time and part-time workers as well as those on leave.

The right to use FMLA for the birth or adoption of a child applies to both the mother and the father. If the leave is used to care for a family member, that person need not live in the same household but must be a spouse, parent or child; in-laws, aunts and uncles and same-sex partners or domestic partners do not qualify.

An employee who has worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months may take the leave. Employers may place someone in the vacated position but cannot terminate the employee on leave; however, a returning employee may be placed in a different but comparable position with equal compensation.

The act also provides for reduced work schedules and absences for multiple treatments. There are several good books that provide more details about the FMLA; please contact me if you want references, at dthomas@cwa-union.org.

2025: mark your calendar or enter the date in your Blackberry. That's the latest deadline set by the American Society of Newspaper Editors for newsroom staffs to reflect the composition of their communities. No sense in rushing these things.

I'm always open to suggestions, and indeed, encourage your input for this column. If there is any particular topic about which you would like more information, or if you have comments or criticisms regarding past columns, please let me know.

Mechem, New York activist, dead at 85

By Joy Cook and Betsy Wade
Newspaper Guild of New York (ret.)

Rose Mary Mechem Gordon, 85, a journalist, labor activist and leader in the Newspaper Guild of New York, died in Seattle April 2 of pulmonary complications. She was a senior reporter for Sports Illustrated magazine, where she worked for 27 years until retiring in 1983.

While at Time Inc. she steadily recruited new Guild members and helped expand the unit's jurisdiction. She also served as the Time unit's chairperson from 1977 to 1979, and on the New York local's executive board from 1977 to 1982.

Mechem joined the fledgling Sports Illustrated on June 21, 1956, helping topple the gender barrier. She was chief researcher and reporter on environmental stories and exposés of college athletic recruiting; her byline often appeared in a universe of male names. Dispatched suddenly to a lacrosse tournament, she typically read up on the game en route and filed an informed story. Thereafter she was the magazine's authority on what was then an esoteric game.

She played a major role in a watershed for TNG in 1979, when the Boston convention, fearing for the lives of journalists overseas, quashed a Guild program using U.S. financing to help anti-Communist unions in Latin America. The convention halted a project begun by then-president Charles A. Perlik with funds from the American Institute for Free Labor Development, an organization almost wholly underwritten by the Agency for International Development. The delegates, largely persuaded by copious documentation gathered by Mechem, decided it was too dangerous for a union representing reporters and correspondents to sponsor people who were in effect government agents.

This was the second chapter in the battle. A dozen years earlier, in 1967, after press reports showed the Guild had accepted money from "conduits"—foundations covertly sponsored by the CIA—Mechem was New York's clarion voice in successful

efforts to sever these ties.

At the time of her retirement, Sports Illustrated's publisher Robert L. Miller hailed Mechem as a "highly valued staffer" and a "tough negotiator" for the union.

A native of Wichita, Kansas, Mechem attended Washburn University in Topeka and earned a theater arts degree at the Pasadena Playhouse. After World War II she spent a year with a troupe in Europe entertaining occupation troops. A fragile-looking redhead, she acted for a few years in New York and in summer stock, where she met her husband, the actor Douglas Gordon, and they began a lifetime of rank-and-file trade-union work.

Mechem was a long-time member of the Socialist Workers Party and was chair of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in the early 'Sixties. She helped lead anti-war efforts in the Vietnam era, first through the New York Media Project, a group of communications professionals, and then helping organize the 1969 Moratorium Day and petitions to President Nixon from workers at Time Inc., Newsweek, McGraw-Hill, Doubleday & Co., CBS, ABC, The Wall Street Journal and The New Yorker.

She was a feminist and an active supporter of the women's rights movement, both at Time Inc. and nationally. She was a charter member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and a member of the national Journalism & Women Symposium. When New York activists climbed up into yellow buses for marches and protests in Washington, they could count on finding Rose Mary in place, jackknifed into two seats in the back, eye shade on, resting for the next battle over the ERA, civil rights, jobs and justice, human rights.

In retirement, the Gordons returned to his boyhood home on Mercer Island, Washington, where they were founding members of the Labor Party, Seattle chapter. Mechem continued writing, and studied music at the University of Washington.

She is survived by her husband; three brothers, James, Kirke and Richard; and by 17 nieces and nephews.



Rose Mary Mechem

THE GUILD Reporter

Official publication of
The Newspaper Guild-CWA (AFL-CIO, CLC)
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(See box on page 2 for address or other subscription changes or cancellations.)

Volume 73, Number 4

April 14, 2006

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Printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co.

DAYBOOK

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

Have a calendar item you
want listed? E-mail it to
azipser@cwa-union.org.

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

Heywood Broun is convicted of resisting an officer in the ongoing labor strife at the Wisconsin News, as the Hearst-owned daily imposes a lock-out and the members of at least 19 unions join the Guild picket line. . . . U.S. Senator Lewis B. Schwellenbach denounces William Randolph Hearst for cutting Depression-era salaries as much as 60% while boasting that he'd never failed to pay dividends. . . . 600 New Yorkers pay tribute to Broun in the first of a series of annual dinners honoring persons "who have rendered distinguished service against war and fascism."

Fifty years ago this month:

The New York Guild decides to make an all-out effort to win both a pension plan and a 30-hour workweek for employees within its jurisdiction, which includes seven New York dailies. . . . Editor & Publisher reports that newspapers showed higher percentage gains in incomes than in expenses in 1955, for the first time in nine years. . . . Living standards outpace Guild wages, according to an AFL-CIO analysis.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

After more than 41 months of talks, the Guild and the International Typographical Union officially terminate their attempts at a merger. . . . The New York Guild sets an April 29 strike deadline in contract talks with the New York Times, the Daily News and the New York Post. . . . Rupert Murdoch, affirming that the profits from his other U.S. publications are more than enough to sustain his losses at the New York Post, predicts he'll bleed the Daily News to death within five years.

Vol. 73

Iss. 5

MAY 19

2006