

THE GUILD Reporter

June 16, 2006

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 73, Number 6

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McClatchy rejects all Yucaipa bids But MediaNews acquisitions hit speed bump over antitrust concerns

In a good-news, bad-news round of announcements, all but one of the dozen newspapers McClatchy wants to unload from its acquisition of Knight Ridder now have a buyer. The bad news is that none of the bids submitted by TNG-CWA-supported Yucaipa was accepted; the good news is that none of the eight Guild-represented newspapers is going to equity investors, who would have been inclined to slash payroll—and, indeed, all the purchasers have agreed or are required to honor existing union contracts.

Separately, the previously announced sale of four Knight Ridder newspapers to MediaNews for approximately \$1 billion hit a speed bump when the Dept. of Justice on June 14 said it needs more time to review possible antitrust implications of the transac-

tions. Three of the acquisitions—the San Jose Mercury News, Monterey Herald and Contra Costa Time—would give MediaNews a near-lock on newspaper circulation in northern California, where the only substantial remaining competitor would be the Hearst-owned San Francisco Chronicle. Hearst is a partner with MediaNews in the purchase.

Six members of the California Congressional delegation requested such a review last month, posing a problem for McClatchy, which for financing and other reasons wants to dispose of 12 of the 32 newspapers it is buying from Knight Ridder almost as soon as it acquires them. But the average time to conclude a Justice Dept. review, even if it proves favorable to McClatchy, is 115 days, according to a report in the San Jose

Mercury News—which in this case means the end of August. The sale of Knight Ridder is expected immediately after the shareholders' meeting, scheduled for June 26.

A separate investigation by state Attorney General Bill Lockyer also has started, at the urging of a dozen state legislators from the San Francisco Bay Area and the city's board of supervisors. Although the state review can't prevent a transaction, the attorney general can sue if he concludes it violates antitrust law.

Meanwhile, the sale of two more of Knight Ridder's newspapers was announced May 23, when McClatchy said the Guild-represented Philadelphia Inquirer and its smaller sibling, the Daily News, would go to a group of local investors for \$515 million in cash plus assumption of \$47 million in pen-

sion liabilities. That the successful bid was made by a group of businessmen with no prior newspaper experience was widely regarded with surprise, not least because the lead investor, Brian Tierney, has a history of bullying Inquirer editors.

Two weeks later, McClatchy announced the sale of five more newspapers, most prominent among them the Akron Beacon Journal, John Knight's flagship paper before the Knight papers merged with the Ridder chain in 1974. The identity of each buyer was disclosed in a series of coordinated meetings at each paper, with Canadian publisher David Black emerging as the Beacon Journal's surprise winner. Black's only other U.S. daily is the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

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Can you hear us now?

Nearly a year into contract negotiations at the York Daily Record, members of the York Newspaper Guild have taken an increasingly public profile to dramatize

their struggle. In addition to picket lines like this one, outside the newspaper plant, members recently distributed flyers during a downtown Mother's Day festival. Meanwhile, Guild officials are waiting for a response to three charges of unfair labor practices

filed against the York paper, complaining of surface bargaining, refusal to bargain in good faith and several contract violations, including retaliatory discipline against the local's president. Contract bargaining is to resume in mid-July.

Is a second domino poised to fall?

With the dust still swirling from the Knight Ridder crack-up, yet another newspaper colossus abruptly is teetering. How—and whether—Tribune Co. weathers the challenge will have a lasting effect on the Guild-represented employees of the Baltimore Sun, which used to be part of Times Mirror.

When Private Capital Management first put Knight Ridder into play last year, dramatically underscoring the vulnerability of publicly-held newspapers to Wall Street's profit demands, Tribune was prominently mentioned as a candidate for similar treatment. And as all newspaper stock prices slid through the fall and winter, Tribune's directors began casting about for a reassuring response.

On May 30 they unveiled the result: a \$2 billion buyback of 25% of Tribune's stock, to be financed by heavy borrowing and a sale of

assets in a one-two punch that makes the company a less desirable takeover target while pumping up its stock price.

Or at least that was the plan.

Instead, the move seems to have accelerated Tribune's possible demise, not least because of an increasingly public split on the board. While eight of the 11 board members support the buyback, the three board members who represent the Chandler Trusts, which sold Times Mirror to Tribune in 2000, most vociferously do not. Indeed, a sharply worded letter June 13 from the Chandler Trusts to the board characterizes the buyback as "fundamentally flawed" and contends it "fails altogether to address the real business issues facing Tribune."

Heavily buttressed with statistics and graphs dramatizing how poorly Tribune has performed over the past three years, the letter urges

the company to spin off its 26 television stations and to promptly explore "other strategic alternatives"—including the sale of "some or all of its newspaper properties, or alternatively, the possibility of an acquisition of Tribune as a whole at an attractive premium." The demand essentially puts the company in play, with Tribune shares closing June 14 at \$31.94 a share.

While the three dissidents are a board minority, they control 12.2% of Tribune stock. The trusts also hold significant stakes in two complex partnerships with Tribune that control more than \$3.5 billion in various company assets. Meanwhile, because the stock price is bumping against the buyback's ceiling price of \$32.50, the board will be under pressure either to borrow even more money to raise the offer, or to sell off more pieces of the conglomerate than it originally contemplated.

No matter how events now unfold—and they could move with breathtaking speed—the result will be a significantly smaller Tribune, assuming it survives at all. At a minimum, according to the buyback announcement, Tribune will sell \$500 million in assets in "non-core" broadcasting and publishing assets outside its top three markets—which means the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and Newsday won't be affected, but the Sun conceivably could be. The company already has agreed to sell an Atlanta television station to Gannett for \$180 million.

How Tribune defines "non-core" is a puzzle. One asset it has said it won't sell, for example, is the Chicago Cubs, which by one analyst's reckoning could fetch \$500 million. But as the Cubs example also suggests, a break-up of Tribune could net investors significantly more than the company's current valuation. Prudential Equities Group has calculated that Tribune's individual properties—which also include 11 dailies, one radio station and a 24-hour cable news channel—could be worth a combined \$43 a share, or a third more than recent stock prices.

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News of sales greeted with guarded optimism

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which has less than half the Beacon Journal's daily circulation of 140,000.

(In yet another sign that McClatchy's buy-and-sell strategy may be too ambitious, Black announced at press time that he won't be able to take possession of the Beacon Journal before Aug. 1 because of "paperwork.")

The Beacon Journal accounted for the lion's share of the \$450 million McClatchy will get from selling the five papers, going for \$165 million. Together with the proceeds of its other sales, McClatchy will have a bit more than \$2 billion—with after-tax proceeds of approximately \$1.4 billion—to offset the \$4.5 billion in cash and stock (plus the assumption of approximately \$2 billion in debt) it is paying for all of Knight Ridder.

Also sold were the Duluth News Tribune and the Grand Forks Herald—both CWA-represented—to Forum Communications Co., based in Fargo, North Dakota, for a combined \$135 million; the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel to West Virginia-based Ogden Newspapers, for \$92.6 million; and the Aberdeen American News to Indiana-based Schurz Communications, for \$28 million. Still without a buyer at press time was the Times Leader of Wilkes-Barre, Penn.—the only newspaper on the auction block with a competitor. That competitor, ironically, is the Citizens' Voice, which was founded in 1978 by Guild members on strike against the Times Leader.

Despite the announcements, none of the sales can be completed unless 80% of Knight Ridder's shareholders approve the sale of their company to McClatchy.

The reaction of TNG-CWA members at the five unionized newspapers whose sale was announced most recently ranged from guarded to relieved, the latter often out of gratitude that the winner was so much better than an alternative. In Philadelphia, for example, one of the bids was led by Onex Corp., which reportedly planned to eliminate "half or more" of the two news staffs. And

a leading contender for the Akron daily was reported to be Advance Publications, which already owns the nearby Cleveland Plain Dealer and whose successful bid might therefore have resulted in still more uncertainty because of possible antitrust reviews.

On the other hand, most of the buyers are favorably regarded. Forum Communications owner Bill Marcil got a warm reception at the Herald when he told its employees he has never sold a newspaper, "so you'll never have to go through this again." And he was applauded for promising to rebuild staffing to former levels, before profit pressures at Knight Ridder forced layoffs, and again when he said his company would never be publicly traded. Then he delivered the same message at the News Tribune, with similar results.

"The real test will be down the line, when we see how they treat their employees," said Steve Kuchera, president of the Lake Superior Newspaper Guild, who nevertheless admitted to guarded optimism.

At the Beacon Journal, where publisher James Crutchfield delivered the news in a hastily called staff meeting June 7, the overall response was one of relief. As Crutchfield read a letter from Black apologizing for not being present, various asides prompted relaxed laughter, and even the overall lack of specifics about the transition seemed to leave most staffers unperturbed, once they were told their contract will be honored. Curiously, however, no one asked about Black's partnership with Onex in the failed Philadelphia bid.

In Philadelphia, on the other hand, the yellow flags are definitely up. A relaxed and self-deprecating Brian Tierney, who assembled the successful group of investors calling itself Philadelphia Media Holdings, by all accounts wowed a standing-room-only crowd of Inquirer and News employees the day the sale was announced. And he elicited sustained applause by reading a pledge, signed by each of the investors, promising not to interfere with editorial judgments. But it's going to take more than a few reassuring comments to overcome Tierney's history as an aggressive public relations executive for some of Philadelphia's biggest movers and shakers, including several episodes in which he allegedly bullied Inquirer editors into killing or soft-pedaling stories critical of his clients.

Most notably, Tierney is remembered for his no-holds-barred assault on Inquirer reporter Ralph Cipriano over his coverage of Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua. When an Inquirer editor had the bad judgment to explain that some of Cipriano's work hadn't been published because it wasn't "truthful"—a judgment nourished by a pugnacious Tierney working on behalf of the archdiocese—Cipriano sued the editor and the

newspaper for libel, was fired, and ultimately walked away with a cash settlement rumored to be in excess of \$3 million.

Tierney now dismisses the incident as "ancient history" and defends himself by asserting, "I believe in forceful advocacy." Indeed, his past advocacy was so forceful many observers are questioning whether Tierney will be able to abide by his non-interference pledge. Meanwhile, the group's investors also include Bruce Toll, head of the Toll Brothers homebuilding conglomerate, raising other questions about potential conflicts of interest.

On the flip side: the investment group has promised to maintain the Daily News, long rumored a candidate for the chopping block. And Amanda Bennett, editor of the Inquirer, has promised she'll be the first one out the door if the new owners violate their pledge because "there's no better way to destroy a great institution than to compromise its integrity."

The Philadelphia Guild also is taking Tierney and his fellow investors at their word—for now. "We are glad to have a buyer who has pledged to rebuild our two newspapers and new media services," Henry Holcomb, president of the local, wrote to his members the day after Tierney's bravura performance. Acknowledging the concerns that have been raised, Holcomb nevertheless related that "Tierney has assured us that this partisan advocacy was part of his previous work and that he recognizes he has new responsibilities now," so "we look forward to holding him to that promise."

Ironically, while McClatchy's purchase of Knight Ridder marks further consolidation of the newspaper industry, its distribution of a major share of its acquisitions has precisely the opposite effect. And by selling exclusively to non-publicly held companies, McClatchy also has moved a significant number of newspapers out of the grasp of Wall Street investors with outsized profitability expectations.

Correction

Debbie Thomas, in her Human Rights Watch column last month, wrote that she encountered only three other TNG-CWA members at the CWA Civil Rights and Equity Conference. Lest that give an erroneous impression, Mike Bucsko, president of the Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild, advises that Natalie Hill of his local also attended.

"It's not the first time we've sent someone from our local to the Equity Conference and it won't be the last," he added. "As Arnold Amber pointed out at our last sector conference, the Guild is woefully short on diversity among its leadership in locals and on a national level. The Pittsburgh local is committed to diversity among our ranks and we're trying to do what we can to provide opportunities and a voice for all our members."

Guild briefs . . .

Sex discrimination charges validated

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has decided there is probable cause to believe two female employees of the St. Paul Pioneer Press were the victims of sexual discrimination. The finding is in response to complaints filed in 2003 by Cara LaBrie and Robbi Pickeral, at that time the newspaper's only female sports reporters. The women further alleged that the newspaper suspended them and demoted Pickeral when they complained about unfair treatment.

Up to 170 take WashPost buyout

Approximately 70 reporters, editors, photographers and newsroom administrators have taken early retirement in the latest round of buyouts at The Washington Post. Staffers age 54 and older with 10 years of service were eligible to receive up to two years of full-time pay and benefits. Another 100 or so employees outside the newsroom also took the offer.

JOA arbitration 'under the rose'

The Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer have taken a leaf from the Bush administration and its fondness for secrecy. The two companies have agreed not to reveal anything about the arbitration now underway that will determine if the Seattle Times can pull out of their joint operating agreement: not the schedule, not the witnesses, not even the details of their claims against each other.

Osprey tensions keep escalating

A Guild-represented classified advertising employee of the Star in Sault Ste. Marie has become the latest victim of Osprey Media's outsourcing of jobs, getting the ax June 1. Meanwhile, extensive cuts in classifieds, circulation and composing at the St. Catharines Standard and the Kingston Whig-Standard have had a significant impact on collective bargaining at those two papers, with the St. Catharines local deciding to apply for conciliation. The Kingston local is already in conciliation.

Boston president now full-time post

Gearing up for contract talks that started May 30, the Boston Newspaper Guild decided to make its presidency a full-time position. The unanimous vote of the executive committee and governing board follows 18 months of research and analysis that also looked at the possibility of hiring a separate administrative officer—and interviewed 14 potential candidates.

NY Times seeks web post control

The New York Times has renewed its interest in formulating a policy on its employees' personal web pages. Management first informed the New York Guild that it wished to negotiate a similar policy more than a year ago, but didn't follow through. Now it says it wants to "establish guidelines for staff members with their own web pages and web logs... to ensure that the reputation and integrity of our journalists and of our journalism are not compromised."

2nd vote reverses WashTech gain

The on-again, off-again vote for WashTech to represent approximately 20 IT employees of Chelan County, Washington employees is definitely off, 17-1. The latest vote, May 10, follows a June 2005 election in which the group voted 10-8 in favor of WashTech, but a county challenge resulted in an order for a new election to be held.

Monterey extends contract two years

Amid the angst of new owners and changing fortunes, Guild-represented employees of the Monterey Herald—one of the Knight Ridder papers sold by McClatchy—have ratified a two-year extension of the current contract. Approval came after spirited debate, with concern expressed that wage scales have failed to keep pace with the rising cost of living. The deal is retroactive to last November and includes raises totaling 3% each year, plus continuation of the same or comparable health care coverage.

Chance of more ULPs in Hawaii

The National Labor Relations Board indicated May 31 it may file still more charges of unfair labor practices against the Hawaii Tribune-Herald. The Hawaii Newspaper Guild already has 10 formal grievances and ULPs pending against the company, some of which were to be heard June 13. But the board's regional director postponed the hearing, pending investigation of several more complaints. Meanwhile, contract negotiations at the paper were scheduled to resume June 22 after a three-month hiatus.

Arbitration win to swell local's ranks

A favorable ruling on three of five grievances filed by the Schneider Office Employees' Association, charging improper exclusion of employees from the union, means the local will gain dozens—and perhaps scores—of new members. The union has battled the company on this issue for more than 20 years.

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

Canadians battle CBC privatization

A national campaign to save the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's English TV design department and its 79 Guild-represented jobs has yielded a year-long reprieve.

In a joint communiqué to employees June 13, Richard Stursberg, executive vice-president of CBC Television, and Arnold Amber, president of the Canadian Media Guild's CBC Branch, announced that closure of the department and its related layoffs has been postponed until May 31, 2007. The sell-off of props, sets, costumes and other equipment, scheduled to begin next month, also will be delayed a year.

The delay is intended to give the Guild time to pursue alternatives, such as creation

of an employee co-operative that could compete for future business at the CBC and other broadcasters. CBC management has agreed to provide the financial information employees will need to conduct a feasibility study.

"In all my years with the Guild and the CBC, I've never before seen an agreement like this," said Amber, who also is director of TNG Canada/CWA. "The delay will benefit everyone. It will give us time to work with design employees on alternatives to keeping the service afloat, and it will give CBC shows another year of top-notch design work."

News of the breakthrough came just weeks after the Guild kicked off its "Stop the Sellout" campaign. Using tactics reminiscent of its successful campaign last year during

the CBC lockout, the union flooded Heritage Minister Bev Oda with postcards and e-mails urging her intercession, started a website and distributed postcards, flyers and buttons to enlist public support. Joining the Guild's efforts were two members of Parliament, Peggy Nash and Olivia Chow, who asked in late May that the CBC reverse its decision.

At issue was a CBC plan, announced April 20, to axe the TV design department, ostensibly as a cost-saving measure at a time of fiscal belt-tightening. But the \$1 million in projected savings would have been a minuscule portion of a \$1.6 billion annual budget, prompting Guild officials to speculate that the corporation's real motive was to free up valuable Toronto real estate for lease to

higher-paying tenants. Closing the design department also was seen as one more step toward privatizing the CBC, which has steadily reduced the amount of programming it produces in-house while buying more from the commercial sector.

In return for the year-long delay, the Guild agreed to end its Stop the Sellout campaign. "The agreement was a difficult one to reach for both parties, but management and CMG leadership believe it could mark the beginning of a new era in union-management relations at the CBC," Amber and Stursberg said in their communiqué. "CBC and CMG are working hard to improve our relationship and this agreement is an important investment in achieving this."

Biting the ad-sales hands that feed them

It is unfortunately but observably true that when newspapers start feeling economically squeezed, management tends to show the most contempt for precisely those employees it needs most. Cost-cutting in the newsroom may have gutted "the product," readers may be deserting to the internet in battalions, the old business models may not be worth a damn—so let's put the screws to the sales force!

Or that, at least, is the message conveyed at a growing number of economically challenged newspapers. Management at the Albany Times-Union, for example, gave just two days' notice earlier this year to its advertising and classified sales reps that it was transferring some of their accounts to inside salespeople—in some cases resulting in income losses of as much as \$200 a week. The Albany Guild responded with a stiff notice that shifting work from one job classification to another is a mandatory subject of bargaining and demanded that the switch be stopped immediately.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, meanwhile, has saddled its advertising salespeople with a so-called "commission" sales plan under which annual incomes can drop significantly from one year to the next even if overall sales revenue increases. That's because the "commissions" aren't a percentage of sales, as commonly understood at most newspapers, but bonuses that are paid only as the sales person hits certain goals.

And the benchmarks are moving targets: to get a bonus, sales this month have to be higher than for the same month a year earlier, regardless of any marketplace changes, such as advertisers going out of business. But the corker is that the Post-Dispatch caps earnings, so that a sales rep can't earn any more money once his or her sales exceed 145% of the sales revenue generated a year earlier.

The Pioneer Press in St. Paul, Minn., has come up with a program of so-called "performance improvement plans" that is terrorizing its sales reps. The PIPs, say Guild officials, are "used arbitrarily against workers and are creating an atmosphere of fear that has reduced many strong performers to tears, prescription medicine and psychiatric care."



Each Friday is "suck up to Symon Day" in St. Louis "because he's in charge now."

Among the problems associated with the plans are unrealistic sales targets that don't take into account territory changes, customer reassignments or business closings. Moreover, although the Mactive accounting program sometimes yields wrong information, the resulting sales goals are not adjusted.

As a result, one St. Paul ad worker, Eric Williams, recently was terminated after six years with Pioneer Press and more than 30 years of newspaper sales experience. Williams sold ads for domestic car dealerships, which have suffered through their worst business climate in decades, prompting the

local to arbitrate his discharge. The local also has filed information requests for more information about the plans and has requested that the paper suspend their use in the interim.

In upstate New York, the non-unionized folks who sell retail advertising at the Buffalo News are so angry they sent an anonymous memo to management, detailing nine separate criticisms. "It is unfortunate that we must address our complaints and concerns anonymously, for fear of retribution and the intimidation factor the News has managed to instill in all of us," the April 28 letter explained.

Claiming to represent the views of a majority of the retail advertising staff, the letter offered a detailed critique of the department's woes—starting with the company's alleged failure to hire or promote qualified supervisors and its apparent inability to control "ill-behaved managers."

Noting that sales staff income is based entirely on commissions, the letter complained about managerial arrogance that is communicated with the attitude "that we should feel fortunate to have a job, and that there is a certain status to being employed at the Buffalo News. Unfortunately," the letter added, "status does not pay our bills."

The Buffalo Newspaper Guild reports that management has taken the letter seriously, meeting several times with the retail sales staff and sales managers. But it notes also that many of the criticisms echo the complaints of Guild members who work in the classified advertising department, signalling a deeper malaise at the newspaper.

For example, the Guild's chief steward

in the classified department has been threatened twice with dismissal in the past year because she allegedly raised her voice. After the second incident, the local filed an unfair labor practice charge against the News. "It seems like they're trying to harass and intimidate people," said Tina Ouellete, the steward who was threatened.

Unfortunately, the local believes Ouellete's treatment is symptomatic of a broader attempt to intimidate the rank-and-file membership. When the company unilaterally changed vacation scheduling practices, Guild members put up protest signs that read "Unfairly Treated Worker" and "Sorry, Our Morale Is On Vacation." Management responded by removing some of the signs, prompting the Guild to produce a button with the message, "In spite of a business need?" The local also filed a second ULP over the company's refusal to negotiate vacation policy changes.

The Toledo Guild, which has been embroiled in particularly difficult contract negotiations (see related story, page 4), has been fighting similar skirmishes. Recently it settled a long-standing grievance over the Blade's refusal to pay an ad rep's earned \$5,000 bonus because she had taken maternity leave before the end of the goal period. But the local is still contesting the company's use of an outside firm to receive classified ad sales calls after normal business hours, violating the Guild's jurisdiction.

Back in St. Louis, Guild representatives have met with management to discuss the ad sales program. And while initial talks were promising, the union has turned up the heat by creating a mascot, SYMON, that mocks the company's computer-driven sales model. T-shirts with the mascot imprint have been distributed with a request that employees wear them each Friday, designated as "suck up to Symon Day."

After 72 years, Harrisburg calls it quits

Newsroom employees at the Harrisburg Patriot-News voted 63-43 against continued Guild representation, marking the end of one of the Guild's oldest locals. TNG-CWA Local 38016 was given its charter in 1934, during the Guild's first year as a national union of editorial workers.

The June 2 vote also means the Newhouse-owned paper in Pennsylvania's capitol will be totally nonunion. All of the craft unions were decertified more than 20 years ago.

The National Labor Relations Board scheduled the vote after an unknown number of employees signed a petition saying they no longer wanted the local to represent them.

In order to be valid, such petitions must be signed by at least 30% of the bargaining unit.

Although rare in the Guild, decertification petitions have been filed before, but usually after years of protracted and bitter contract negotiations. In Harrisburg, there had only been five bargaining sessions and the contract was not set to expire until June 30.

According to local leaders, management was insisting that Guild employees pay for one-third of their medical insurance premiums, while all nonunion workers at the paper would continue to enjoy premium-free insurance. The proposal, said one local activist, "was a strategic plan to scare the wits out of people, and it worked."

Another management strategy was to keep key benefits like a decent pension and a 401(k) contribution earmarked for only nonunion employees and repeatedly refusing to extend them to Guild-covered newsroom staffers. The company suggested during the campaign that some employees could get as much as another \$12,000 a year under the nonunion pension plan—although it was not willing to put that promise in writing.

Other campaign observers noted that the vote was not a simple product of company promises but, instead, went to a historic lack of active Guild involvement on the part of most employees. Most of the day-to-day work of the local was carried out by just a

few people, said those involved in the campaign, adding that there was not a widespread sense of ownership on the part of Harrisburg Guild members.

One veteran activist sent a letter to local officers after the vote, lamenting the union's loss and offering this assessment: "The Guild was weak, caused by lack of membership and weak members. I'm sure, in some cases, members decided that they were unwilling or unable to make the personal commitment to strengthen the Guild, so they felt keeping the organization was probably fruitless in the long run. Of course, now we will all experience what true weakness is when dealing with the company."

News round-up

Laborers make their defection official

The Laborers International Union of North America, claiming approximately 700,000 members in the U.S. and Canada, became the sixth union to exit the AFL-CIO over the past year. Although the decision was announced May 22, the Laborers had been signalling since last summer that they likely would join the dissident Change to Win coalition. The breakaway unions have complained that the AFL-CIO was putting too much emphasis on electoral politics and not enough on organizing.

CBTU urges labor reconciliation

Hundreds of delegates attending the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' convention in Orlando, Fla., unanimously endorsed a resolution calling on the AFL-CIO and Change To Win to reunite. Although the coalition's president, William Lucy, is national secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees union, one of the unions that stayed with the AFL-CIO, coalition members belong to both groups.

Exec pay a drag on corporate earnings

Executive pay has shot up so high it frequently comprises a significant percentage of corporate earnings. For example, reported the Los Angeles Times, the \$5.5 million that former Gateway Inc. Chief Executive Wayne R. Inouye made last year amounted to 89.4% of the company's annual earnings. Overall, the salary, bonus and stock given last year to chief executives at California's 100 largest publicly traded companies averaged 6.6% of their companies' annual earnings, for a combined \$1.32 billion, up 20% from 2004. Meanwhile, a study by a Harvard Law School professor of 1,500 publicly traded companies concludes that pay for the top managerial tier rose from 5% of profit in 1993 to 10% in 2003.

Pentagon propaganda could backfire

A review of Pentagon-financed propaganda in Iraq by Rear Adm. Scott Van Buskirk has warned that the effort could backfire, damaging American credibility, and recommends an end to military payments to Iraqi journalists in Baghdad. The review was ordered by the Pentagon after news reports of the practice, but as of press time there were no indications it had prompted an end to the practice.

Wal-Mart puts the arm on suppliers

An internal Wal-Mart memo, released by the labor-backed WakeUpWalMart.com, shows the monster retailer is pressuring its suppliers to join a Wal-Mart funded front group. Written by a key Bush campaign operative in 2004 who now works for Working Families for Wal-Mart, the memo urges the retailer's suppliers to join the organization because "Wal-Mart is under attack, and Wal-Mart and Sam's Club suppliers have the power to do something about it and help protect their business." The "working families" group is headed by Andrew Young, President Carter's former UN ambassador and a former Democratic congressman from Atlanta.

Job growth lagging as economy slows

The Labor Department reported a net gain of 75,000 jobs in May, less than half of what was expected, while revising employment gains for March and April downward by a total of 37,000 jobs. The news provided yet another sign that expensive gasoline and higher interest rates are curbing economic growth, as reflected by a 1.8% decline in factory orders in April. Approximately 150,000 new jobs a month are needed simply to keep pace with labor force growth.

Union membership a bloody calling

Approximately 1,600 union members suffered violent assaults in 2005 compared with 704 tortured, beaten or injured the previous year, according to the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Meanwhile, the number of arrests doubled to 9,000—but fewer labor activists were killed, with 115 deaths compared with 145 in 2004. The ICFTU's statistics are based on a survey of 137 countries.

FCC prepares another deregulation bid

Kevin Martin, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, is gearing up for yet another run at loosening media ownership rules. A draft proposal identifying which rules are up for revision was scheduled for the FCC's June 15 meeting, with formal proposed rules changes expected by year's end. This will mark the third round of attempted rule changes since the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was adopted, with previous efforts largely struck down by federal courts.

AFL-CIO looking for outspoken women

The AFL-CIO's biennial Ask a Working Woman survey has been kicked off and may be taken at www.aflcio.org/aaww2006. In 2004, the popular online survey generated more than 15,000 responses from union and non-union working women across the country. This year an even bigger response is being sought, with rewards to activists who get the most women to take the survey.

Holy Toledo, let's all hear it for Susannah!

There apparently is no limit to the pettiness that the Toledo Blade, influenced by the union-busting attorneys it hired, can wield against the Toledo Newspaper Guild.

Exhibit One: the unsubstantiated charge leveled by Ron Royhab, executive editor, against the Guild for supposedly sending a letter to the Pulitzer Prize committee disparaging his newspaper's highly regarded "Coingate" exposé. The anonymous letter, Royhab contended in a widely circulated statement, "was written from inside the newsroom by people, who for reasons that elude me, believe they can advance their interests in an on-going labor dispute by bringing the newspaper into disrepute."

The "labor dispute" is current contract bargaining, which suggests that Blade management has an unusually dark view of negotiations. More to the point, Royhab's inability to figure out how disparaging the Blade would advance the Guild's interests should have made him question his premise: in fact, the letter was written by reporter George Tanber, acting solely on his own, because of his

belief that the series had violated professional ethics.

On May 28, the Blade devoted more than 3,000 words detailing its investigation of the Coingate letter and of Tanber's admission May 23. Not one of those 3,000 words addressed Royhab's inflammatory and baseless charge, nor has Royhab apologized even privately for his excess.

Exhibit Two: Determined to show their pride in their colleagues' accomplishments on the Coingate series, Guild members attempted to place a congratulatory ad in the Blade. Innocuous though it was (see below), the ad was rejected.

All of which might explain the enthusiastic reception given to a little ditty introduced at the tri-council Guild meeting May 19-21, which was hosted by the Toledo local. Sung to the tune of "Oh, Susannah," it refers to the Blade's hired legal guns, the Tennessee law firm of King & Ballow:

*I come from Nashville,
Tennessee, a big stick in my hand,
I'm goin' to old To-le-do, their
contract for to end.*

It rained all night the day I left,

*the weather it was dry,
The sun so hot I froze to death,
my logic makes me cry.*

*Chorus: O Guild members,
O don't you cry for me.
I'm a million-dollar lawyer
from the state of Tennessee.*

*I told the Blocks it'd be a cinch
this contract for to break,
But now I see the union's
strong, it won't be a cake... walk.
I know you all have families
and kids who go to school,
But companies deserve a
break, to us you're just a tool.*

Chorus.

*I had a dream the other night,
when everything was still,
I dreamed I saw some Guild
members a comin' down the hill.
Well they were strong and they
were sure, and they were full of will,
I told the Blocks I had no
choice, I'd have to raise my bill.*

*Chorus: O Guild members,
O don't you cry for me.
I'm a union-busting lawyer
from the state of Tennessee.*

Thank You UAW Members for Your Support

The Toledo Newspaper Guild-CWA Local 34043

salutes the outstanding journalism
produced by its members



James Drew
Mike Wilkinson
Christopher D. Kirkpatrick
Steve Eder
Joshua Boak
Jim Tankersley



and the rest of the staff involved in The Blade's "Coingate" series, a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service and winner of the National Headliner Award. The 600 unionized men and women who write, sell, print, and distribute The Blade each day are proud of this outstanding accomplishment and proud to work for "One of America's Great Newspapers."

www.toledoguild.org

The ad that readers of the Toledo Blade didn't get to see in their hometown newspaper.

Signs of (union) life in Dayton

The Dayton Newspaper Guild isn't dead; it's merely been hibernating. Now there are signs it is stirring back to life.

First up, the resurrection of a newsletter committee, whose first issue was to be distributed as The Guild Reporter was going to press. The redesigned publication announces the start of a new mobilizing campaign, built around the theme "It's About Time." Rubber bracelets with that message have been ordered, and the local's quarterly meeting was to feature a cake emblazoned with the same theme.

Also in the works is a series of poster messages satirizing a recent Dayton Daily News campaign that promoted its own recent redesign. The Guild's messages will urge the News to "RE-invigorate your employees by taking them seriously," "RE-evaluate your relationship with the community" and other variations, leading up to the suggestion that it "RE-negotiate your contracts with your unions."

Meanwhile, a newly constituted research committee is looking for financial information about Cox Enterprises, owner of the Daily News. Although Cox is privately held, which makes such numbers relatively inaccessible, a Florida lawsuit over Cox's minority position at a Daytona paper has opened a few windows. Among Cox's contentions in its court filings: that the "average standard" newspaper industry profit margin is 28%, suggesting that its own margins must be in the same ballpark.

The contracts committee simultaneously is developing a staff morale survey, whose results it intends to contrast with a morale survey that management has been conducting. The Guild survey is worded more neutrally than the company's, providing employees with more opportunity to respond freely. The local says it will publish and distribute its survey results in their entirety—something it contends the News won't do with its findings—either late this month or in July.

Class war and generation debt: two faces of the same problem

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

The reason for the palpable air of excitement was summarized by Roger Hickey, co-director of the Campaign for America's Future. "The wheels are coming off the American conservative juggernaut," he told the standing-room-only crowd—but the left won't be able to capitalize on the rolling disaster until it comes to grips with an identity crisis dating back to the Reagan era. "We can't afford to wait until the White House changes hands" to have this debate, he added.

And so it was, on the afternoon of Feb. 23, that some of Washington D.C.'s most progressive thinkers gathered in a third-floor downtown conference room to observe a defining clash of ideologies.

On one side stood Gene Sperling, currently a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress who earned his chops as Bill Clinton's national economic adviser. Articulate and self-deprecating, Sperling was a consultant for NBC's "The West Wing," which suggests he doesn't take himself too seriously. Then again, he's also the author of the recently published "The Pro-Growth Progressive," a title implicitly deriding his opponents in the same way that the "pro-life" label demonizes abortion-rights supporters—so maybe that easy-going persona extends only so far.

On the other side stood Jeff Faux, contemporaneous author of "The Global Class War." Founder and former president of the Economic Policy Institute, whose analyses frequently are cited in The Guild Reporter, Faux averred more than a decade ago that Clinton's economic policies were a Republican trap that would only further undermine the Democratic Party. That those policies were crafted to a considerable extent by Sperling is obvious—as, many would argue, was the accuracy of Faux's glum predictions.

On one hand, a leading policy economist, someone who argues that the proper medicine for all that ails us is government policies to ameliorate the consequences of globalization, "free" trade and deindustrialization. On the other, a prominent political economist whose underlying argument is that the damn thing is broken—and forget the policy band-aids. What the patient needs is a total makeover.

Yet this ostensibly combustible mix fizzled. While Faux gamely pushed his analysis, noting the displacement of political power by market forces and the attendant destruction of the social contract, Sperling bobbed and weaved with the observation that everything is

simply more complicated than Faux was acknowledging. Of course everything is complicated, Faux responded—so much so that people like Sperling keep certain arguments from ever surfacing, dismissing them as "isolationist" or "protectionist."

"I think the problem with the debate is that there isn't enough debate," Faux observed near the end of the tepid exchange. And then, putting his finger on the very core of the problem: "In our political system, there is silence on questions of power."

THE GLOBAL CLASS WAR

As the title of Faux's book suggests, questions of power dominate his thinking. Power—who has it, how it's used and how it's opposed—is still pretty much a taboo subject in the ownership society, which rests on the illusion that personal virtue is the primary determinant of outcomes. Wealth is the reward for hard work and shrewd thinking; poverty and sickness are the 'F's on life's report card, awarded to the lazy, unimaginative and stupid. Talking about "power" in that context is facile and irresponsible, a search outside one's self for excuses for one's own failings.

But as the past couple of decades have illustrated, the ownership society doesn't grade on a curve. Or if it does, it's on an inverted bell curve, with the middle class hollowed out by forces over which it has no control and which, in many instances, it doesn't comprehend. The offshoring of jobs, corruption of the political process, erosion of labor law, disintegration of institutional authority at all levels, the shredding of the social contract—none of these or other tectonic shifts are susceptible to personal virtue.

They are, however, all the result of conscious policy choices made by people and institutions that profit from them. Those people and institutions, Faux argues, may be characterized as the "Party of Davos," referring to the annual Swiss schmooze-fest of global power brokers. The Party of Davos is neither Republican nor Demo-

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The Davos Party, in other words, comprises a distinct economic and political class that gains most when others lose. But Americans are more than uncomfortable with notions of class: they tend to disbelieve in its existence, and that disbelief has been encouraged by the Davos Party for its own benefit. "One of the most successful political strategies of our time is the reinterpretation of class as an issue of cultural and lifestyle division rather than group differences in wealth and power," Faux writes, echoing Thomas Frank's critique in "What's the Matter With Kansas?"

Having successfully cloaked its existence in plain sight, the Davos Party is free to push its agenda without serious questioning of its underlying premises. Potential challengers tend to be drawn into the Davos orbit: even John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, usually attends the annual "convention." And as Sperling and his soul-mates repeatedly insist, anyone taking issue with NAFTA, CAFTA, GATT, WTO and the rest of the acronymic stew simply doesn't appreciate how complicated it all is.

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"I look around and I see people who have borrowed more to go to college than they can repay, who can't find a good job, can't save, can't afford basic necessities like health insurance, can't make solid plans," she writes. Yet while her generation has been hung out to dry, the popular myth is one of liberation: "Once again, Americans have accepted a lack of public sup-

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But over-priced and frequently useless college degrees are only the beginning. Crushing credit-card debt, low-wage jobs, temporary gigs and internships that provide few if any "benefits," all add to the economic and psychological toll. Approximately 30% of Americans ages 19-29 consistently have no health insurance, Kamenetz reports, double the percentage of the population overall. Financially burdened, unable to establish their independence, vulnerable to illness or injury, this generation can look forward to... overwhelming national debt, generational warfare over Social Security and other "entitlements" and a complete lack of social resources.

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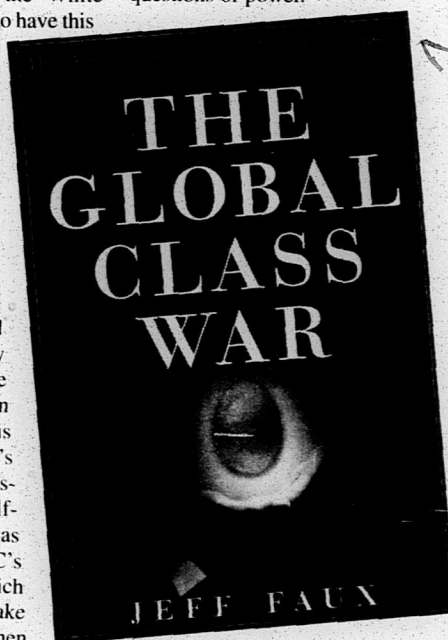
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Defying a publisher's gag order

[A growing effort by many publishers to corral the thoughts, speech and writing of their editorial staffs increasingly forces reporters to choose between blind obedience and intellectual independence. An example of such a conflict is illustrated here, in a letter by TNG-CWA member Lauri Lebo, who last year covered a controversial "intelligent design" court case in Dover, Penn.]

June 6, 2005

Scott Blanchard
Sunday Editor
York Daily Record/Sunday News
Dear Scott:

As you know, I have been invited to speak June 26 at "Evolution 2006," the conference hosted by Stony Brook University's Department of Ecology and Evolution. The conference is the joint annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE), the Society of Systematic Biologists (SSB), and the American Society of Naturalists (ASN).

I have been invited to speak solely about my writing of Dover's intelligent design trial. The speech will be directed to journalists attending the conference. The title of my speech, which I came up with, is: "Beyond 'He Said, She Said': How to Be Fair When the Debate Isn't Balanced."

I have already told conference organizers that I will not be accepting the \$250 hono-

rum for my participation. Also, organizers have not given me any instruction in what I should discuss, nor would I agree to such a stipulation.

I maintain that under the terms of Article XXIII, Section 4 of The York Dispatch contract that I am not required to obtain management permission to participate in speaking engagements. The contract clearly states that "there shall be no alteration of present practices of the Publisher as they relate to outside activity."

Under the practices at The Dispatch at the time this contract was signed, I was never required to obtain management permission for outside activity. My editor/publisher, Stan Hough, actively encouraged us to talk about our work. Over the years, I have given numerous speeches and interviews. If asked, I believe my York Dispatch editors would say that my talks enhanced coverage, providing a valuable transparency to the process, rather than hindering it.

Since that was the standing policy then, I maintain that for those still under the same contract, it remains in effect. Nonetheless, I have tried to accommodate your concerns. I have removed my connection to the newspaper from all publicity and have agreed to not mention the York Daily Record in my speech. I am in no way exploiting my connection to the publisher.

Since Poynter Institute's ethics columnist, as well as a number of other prominent journalists from across the country, do not

view this as a conflict of interest, I have to question your motivation for trying to prevent me from making this speech. I must raise the question especially in light of more blatant conflicts of interest occurring within this newsroom, ones that management is well aware of, but has chosen to ignore.

Sadly, I believe that my leadership role in the Guild's local and my activities on the bargaining committee have played a role in your decision, which is a violation of labor law and this contract.

I find it chilling that you, as individuals entrusted to uphold the First Amendment, would try to censor me in this way. As I have stated to Scott Blanchard, I believe I have a responsibility, an obligation to present this talk. I am not attending the conference to champion any one side over the other—although I find Scott's statement that I could come across as "pro-evolution" to be rather strange in light of everything we have written about in the past two years—but merely to discuss my coverage of the case.

I call your attention to this: "Editors must serve as the protector against debasement of the currency of free expression—words—resisting effort by governments, corporations, litigants, lawyers, or any other news-maker to mislead or manipulate by labeling lies as truth, war as peace."—from Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel's "The Elements of Journalism."

This is what I have tried to do. And this is what I would discuss at the forum.

Throughout the past two years, I focused my coverage on presenting the truth, as accurately and fairly to the reader as possible, by relying on everything I learned in my research in the past two years. Of course, as is the case with stories of this magnitude, much of my research was done on my own time, for which I was never compensated. I also gained much perspective from my personal life. It was my relationship with my father that I relied on to help me understand the motivations of fundamentalist Christians. I can write with authority and honest compassion about where these people are coming from. And I most vehemently disagree that somehow the York Daily Record owns this non-negotiable part of who I am.

I am proud of the work I have done in covering this story and trial. But more importantly, I believe that I, as a reporter who understands the true meaning of objectivity, have much to contribute in this important debate over the responsibility and future role of journalism.

I intend to make this speech.

If you insist in showing so little regard for my free speech rights or persist in trying to prevent me from doing this, I will be filing a grievance under Article V of my contract, and following all other legal avenues available to me. I will regard this as a union issue and will also be exercising my right to discuss this with the outside media.

Most sincerely,
Lauri Lebo

ANG casts shadow over MediaNews papers

By Robert Gammon
East Bay Express

Dean Singleton's mantra is "Local, local, local." He built his newspaper empire on small and midsize dailies weighted heavily with local news. But on April 26, when he announced his plans to become the Bay Area's dominant newspaper owner, he said "local" meant more to him than just news content. It was an essential part of his purported decentralized management style. "We let local management make all the decisions," the San Jose Mercury News quoted him as saying.

"Lean Dean," as Singleton is sometimes called because of his history of sucking the profits out of newspapers in order to buy more, promised to take a hands-off approach to two of the Bay Area's best dailies, the Mercury News and the Contra Costa Times. He vowed not to cut salaries, and said he would let "local managers" handle the Mercury News' upcoming labor negotiations. The Merc's contracts with three of its five unions, including reporters, copy editors and photographers, expire June 30.

But if Singleton keeps his word, it will mark a sharp contrast to how he has operated his existing East Bay news chain, ANG Newspapers. In my six-plus years as a reporter at ANG, both for the Daily Review in Hayward and the Oakland Tribune, Singleton's imprint on the papers was unmistakable. It's true that local managers made most of the day-to-day decisions, but if they failed to adhere to his strict policy of maximizing profits and cutting costs—they were gone. Singleton churned through four publishers in my six years there.

Labor negotiations at ANG were no less centralized. During the nearly three years I spent on the labor negotiating team representing unionized employees (I was vice chair of the ANG bargaining unit), ANG's management team was led by MediaNews vice president Jim Janiga, a close adviser to Singleton who neither worked for ANG nor

lived in Northern California. His bargaining team included three ANG managers, but he outranked them all on the MediaNews corporate ladder and he called all of the shots.

Janiga's often-caustic approach to negotiations reflected Singleton and MediaNews' anti-union sentiments. Janiga talks with a Texas drawl and can appear charming, reasonable and friendly—much like his boss, Singleton. But he also is both vengeful and bullheaded and has a volcanic temper. Above all, he's virulently anti-union. During one of our early negotiating sessions, he equated unionized reporters with the mob-connected Jimmy Hoffa of the Teamsters. Janiga made the comment with a smile—but he wasn't joking.

When I arrived in early 1998, ANG employees were on the verge of completing 12 frustrating years of trying to convince Janiga and Singleton to agree to the first union contract at the papers. When the deal was inked that summer, it was widely viewed as one of the most anti-employee pacts in the newspaper business. It called for the starting reporter's salary at the Oakland Tribune to be \$26,000 a year. Nonetheless, ANG reporters and photographers were relieved to at least have a contract. Janiga, however, quickly spoiled the upbeat mood. In a mean-spirited letter to every employee, he announced that the company was immediately ending the life insurance plan for union members—because it wasn't included in the new pact.

He did much the same thing a few years later, during the prolonged negotiations for the next contract. From the beginning of negotiations in 2001, we made it clear that one of our top priorities was gaining domestic partner benefits for employees. But Janiga immediately rejected our proposal. So in the ensuing months, we attempted to pressure him into changing his mind with the help of East Bay gay and lesbian groups. In response, Janiga and ANG management granted domestic partner benefits to all non-union employees, but continued to refuse

them to us.

It would be nearly two years before Janiga agreed to grant domestic partner benefits to union employees. From June 2001, when negotiations began, to January 2004, when we finally signed the second contract, he repeatedly employed such stalling tactics. He often said he was too busy with other MediaNews issues to meet with us, and when he did, he usually dismissed our proposals out of hand. His hardline stance angered union members, but it saved ANG a lot of money. Because of the way the first contract was written, Janiga and ANG refused to grant cost-of-living raises to union employees during the 30 months between the first contract's expiration and the signing of the new one.

The current contract, which is in effect until January 2007, is by no means a great pact, either. There are a few improvements, such as 3% annual raises (the first contract made no such guarantees). But Janiga refused to grant retroactive pay raises, and the starting annual salary for reporters is now just \$29,120.

It wasn't for lack of trying on our part. When Trib reporter Sean Holstege, then the chair of the bargaining unit, and I sat down in my backyard in early 2001 and came up with our proposal for the new pact, we borrowed heavily from the contract at Singleton's flagship paper, the Denver Post. We knew Janiga wouldn't give us everything the Post reporters had, but we hoped to convince him that the only way to spur growth at ANG, stop the constant turnover of employees, and transform the papers into good local dailies was to invest in the staff. Janiga told us bluntly that we had no business trying to tell MediaNews how to run its operations.

It's true that Alameda County cannot match Denver's population growth or its retail advertising base. It's also true that Singleton saved the Tribune from closing when he bought it in the early 1990s. But during the last two decades, he has proven over and over that his business model for

ANG was not to invest in the newspaper chain and attempt to turn it into the best one he could. Instead, he squeezed as much as was humanly possible from ANG's underpaid staff to pay off debts he took on buying newspapers elsewhere.

The resulting effects on ANG's employees and on the quality of the papers were multifaceted—and nearly all bad. The low pay—especially for the Bay Area—prompted many of the chain's best reporters to leave. Don't get me wrong: there are still several top-notch reporters, photographers and editors at ANG. But many of them feel stuck there unless they're willing to leave the Bay Area. In the past half-decade, both the Merc and the Chron have laid off more newsroom employees than they have hired.

So what does this all mean for the Merc and the CoCo Times, where reporters and photographers both are paid much better than at ANG? The big question is whether Singleton needs to siphon money from his new acquisitions to pay down more than \$1 billion in total debt that MediaNews will have after the deal has closed. If ANG serves as any kind of model, then Singleton's "local management" will spend no more money on staff than it absolutely has to; it certainly won't invest in the papers to make them better.

Singleton will probably keep his promise and not cut salaries of current employees. But the Times is nonunion, so it will be relatively easy for him to replace higher-paid reporters with lower-paid ones as the veterans leave the paper over time. If so, the results will mirror ANG. At the Merc, meanwhile, don't be surprised if Janiga leads the "local managers" in contract negotiations. And if I know Janiga, he will dig in his heels and demand that Merc be able to hire new reporters at far lower salaries.

I hope I'm wrong.

This is a slightly abbreviated version, reprinted with the permission of the East Bay Express, Cal., of an article first published May 31 in the Express.



LOOKING AHEAD

Standing still not an option

By Linda Foley, President

Our Dec. 22, 2005, press release announcing the Guild's exploration of an employee buyout of nine Knight Ridder newspapers summed it up perfectly: "Standing still is not an option."

Several weeks earlier, the media conglomerate had announced it was putting its 32-newspaper chain up for sale, sending the soon-to-be former Knight Ridder workforce on a wild, emotional ride with The Newspaper Guild-CWA riding right along side.

In the decade since we merged with the Communications Workers of America, the Guild and its members have experienced more than 100 business transactions resulting in ownership changes or restructuring of media companies across North America. But no single transaction has had the impact or reach of the dissolution of Knight Ridder, the second-largest newspaper company and second-largest Guild-represented employer in the U.S.

These last few months were a seminal moment for the newspaper industry and the Guild. The outcome and process were unpredictable (perhaps even surprising). Along the way, much was written and discussed about how the Guild and its employees will confront formidable changes posed by a poisoned political climate for journalism and by changing information technology.

In the beginning, when the equity players who control Wall Street forced Knight Ridder's break up, expectations were low that the sale of the \$4 billion-plus media company could bring a price close to what it was worth. Some speculated that a financial buyer might strip the assets for resale, or perhaps even liquidate some of the papers. Others predicted that Gannett, the only newspaper company larger than Knight Ridder, would get even bigger by gobbling up its nearest rival. Some even suggested that no one would bid.

None of that came to pass.

The hand-wringing and gloomy price forecasts started anew in March, when winning bidder McClatchy Co. announced it intended to sell off 12 of the 32 papers it had just purchased from Knight Ridder by the end of June. (The 12 papers McClatchy put on the block included eight of the original nine we initially targeted.)

No one could have predicted how it all actually played out or, even more remarkably, how the Guild's effort to mount an employee buyout affected the process all along the way. Instead of bringing little or no value, these papers collectively sold for anywhere from 9 to 11 times earnings. Instead of one company getting bigger, the newspapers that used to be Knight Ridder comprise parts of a half-dozen or so compa-

nies and partnerships—some of them brand new to the U.S. market.

The entry of Yucaipa Cos., a worker-friendly equity firm from California, as the financial backer of the employee buyout bid brought instant credibility to the Guild-sponsored effort and raised interest in the transaction overall. Yucaipa was among the first of several financial partners to recognize the value of these established, community-based newspaper businesses.

Yucaipa's serious backing of our bid put the spotlight on Knight Ridder's employees and their stake in the outcome of this deal, a factor that pretty much had been ignored. The possibility of employee ownership created a wave of excitement throughout the news industry. The Guild's Knight Ridder members mobilized across the country and involved hundreds of others who had not been involved in their union before. They reached out to their communities and found loyalty, commitment and pride in these newspapers.

The journalism world was abuzz. One former high-ranking editor told me, "We're all rooting for you, and it doesn't have anything to do with management and labor."

In the end, the fact that our effort didn't succeed in delivering employee ownership in this important transaction is disappointing. But thanks to Yucaipa, we now know it can be done. More importantly, we know how to do it.

When we started our effort in December, we had three goals: 1. To pre-

serve our contracts and the rights of our members; 2. To ensure that Knight Ridder employees got a voice in the sales process; and 3. To uphold quality journalistic traditions and standards.

Each and every new owner of these newspapers has promised to maintain the workplace status quo. Each has promised or is required to honor our collective bargaining agreements. (At the San Jose Mercury News, we are in the process of bargaining a new contract, replacing one that expires at the end of this month.) All the new owners have acknowledged the history of good journalism associated with these papers and have pledged to reinvest in them to expand their reach.

Will Rogers once said, "You've got to go out on a limb sometimes because that's where the fruit is." We—and Yucaipa—took a chance that we could mount a credible, well-financed bid so certain Knight Ridder employees could own some of the best local newspapers in the United States. We made our bid and went out on that limb. Unfortunately, someone else got to harvest the fruit before we could grab it. Next time, we'll shake the tree a little harder.

Standing still is not an option.

One former high-ranking editor told me, 'We're all rooting for you, and it doesn't have anything to do with management and labor.'

BIG BROTHER

DO YOU FEAR ME NOW?



IS LISTENING

Fair and balanced?

[Excerpted from Bill Moyers' keynote address May 18 at PBS's third annual "Showcase" gathering; the full speech is at www.pbs.org/moyers/pbsaddress.html]

I believe in "fair and balanced." I say let's be more fair than anyone else. Let's be as fair to Main Street as we are to Wall Street—to the working men and women of America as we are to the big corporations, big government, and big investors.

Let's be as fair to poor families as we are to the First Family and the Royal Family. Let's be as fair to the skeptic of official policy as we are to its spokesman, as fair to the commoner as to the celebrity, and as fair to the lived experience of ordinary people as we are to the calculated opinion of think-tank experts.

I'm for balance. Let's balance the spin with the evidence, the rhetoric with the record, and opinion with reporting. Let's balance what we're told with what we know. Where did this idea come from that politicians and ideologues define objectivity? No one knows what objectivity means.

You've heard of Irving Kristol. He's the Tony Soprano of the neocons—their godfather, one of the most influential conservatives of our time. Surprisingly, I sometimes agree with Irving Kristol. And I especially agreed with him when he said: "The commitment to so-called 'objective' and impersonal reporting is, in practice, a rationalization for 'safe' and mindless reporting. To keep a reporter's prejudices out of a story is commendable, to keep his judgment out of a story is a guarantee that truth will be emasculated."

Let's balance the view from Washington with the view from the country. I saw this letter to the editor in the paper this morning and brought it with me. The writer was joining in the debate over whether Stephen Colbert had violated decorum at the White House Correspondents' dinner in Washington recently when he satirized the President and the journalists. Other letters had pointed out that hardly anyone in the room laughed and accused Colbert of being offensive.

This writer had a different take. He wrote: "Mr. Colbert wasn't really interested in making any one in the room laugh. He was playing to the home audience on C-SPAN. Mr. Colbert views the D.C. insider 'culture' the same way most Americans do, as a cesspool of narcissism, corruption, and detachment from reality. Mr. Colbert, like most Americans, thinks that the press corps is generally spineless, complacent, and frequently complicit in government deception. The audience didn't get the jokes because they were the jokes. He hit too close to home."

We ought to hit close to home, too—no matter who's in power.

Balance? Let's balance the complaint of ideologues and their patrons in Congress and the press with the unarticulated pain and silent lament of the maid in the hotel room, the waitress in the coffee shop, and the clerk in the shopping mall—all struggling to make ends meet in an economy rigged against them. On second thought, let's give the maid, the waitress, and the clerk a voice. Let's give them a say. They deserve it. Their taxes pay for this system.

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: July 14.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Is marking 'firsts' a sign of progress?

By Debbie Thomas
TNG-CWA Human Rights Director

I recently had the opportunity to thumb through a Guild Reporter dated June 22, 1956, where I stumbled across two articles under the singular headline, "How integration worked on one newspaper staff."

The first of the two stories was written by the executive editor of the Chicago Sun-Times, Milburn Akers, who explained that his newspaper's hiring of its "first Negro" was nothing that had been planned. The applicant had the requisite education and experience, was offered a tryout and made good—end of story.

The second story was written by the Negro himself, Fletcher Martin. He related how he had come from a small town to the big city, and how unsure he was about the reception he would get as the newspaper's first and only Negro reporter.

But as I soon learned from additional research, this was only one in a series of "firsts" for Martin. During World War II he had been the first war correspondent from Louisville, Kentucky, including a stint with Gen. Douglas MacArthur's forces. And in 1947 he became the first black journalist to receive a Nieman fellowship to Harvard University, where he had the opportunity to study government, philosophy and economics.

Fast forward to 2006, and it turns out women and minorities are still racking up "firsts"—which may make you wonder how far we (haven't) come. Elizabeth Vargas is the first woman to anchor (although she was hired as a co-anchor) the ABC network evening newscast since Connie Chung; she also is the first woman of Puerto Rican heritage to reach that position. (Vargas stepped down in May to take maternity leave and will return as a 20/20 co-anchor.) Then there's Katie Couric, hired to be the sole anchor of the CBS evening newscast at an industry-leading

salary of \$15 million—another first for a woman.

Will it ever become so commonplace to see women and people of color in prominent positions that no one will think to comment on it? Or will we be bound by that old adage, "The more things change the more they stay the same?" I, for one, refuse to stop trying to make a change.

Meanwhile, being "first" isn't always desirable. CBS News cameraman Paul Douglas recently earned the unhappy distinction of being the first black journalist killed in Iraq. And the most senior African-American on staff at the Associated Press has been fired: Jeffrey A. Hastie, vice president of services and technology, says he was the victim of racial discrimination and has filed a lawsuit over his termination. His legal action may shed more light on that news service's personnel practices.

Among the claims Hastie is making is that "the number of African Americans working at AP is significantly below average compared to similar companies, such as Time Warner, the New York Times, Knight Ridder, Tribune and the Washington Post." The lawsuit further asserts that the percentage of Hispanic and Asian employees at AP "is even worse." AP of course denies the claim, but Richard Prince of Journalism's found that the company "declined to give figures on the number of journalists of color in key positions."

Just some things to think about.

Separately, I wanted to let Natalie Hill of the Pittsburgh local know I was sorry to have missed her at the Equity Conference in Philadelphia [see correction, page 2]. In the future, I'll try to set aside some time for the Guild folks to gather together

I hope to see a lot of you at the sector conference in Las Vegas, where I expect some new and exciting developments regarding diversity and human rights.

Federal judge decides reporters qualify for OT

In a ruling with nationwide implications, a federal judge in Los Angeles has ruled that reporters at the Chinese Daily News are entitled to overtime pay.

The June 7 decision, part of a 35-page order, represented a sweeping victory for employees of the Chinese-language newspaper. District Court Judge Consuelo Marshall found that the Chinese Daily News had violated state law by failing to pay employees for unused vacation time, violated state law by issuing bogus wage statements and improperly excluded bonuses and daily meal allowances when calculating overtime pay.

But the key issue Marshall addressed was the company's argument that reporters are not entitled to overtime because of Labor Dept. exemptions for "creative professionals," defined as employees whose primary duties require "invention, imagination, originality or talent in a recognized field of artistic or creative endeavor." Based on the submitted evidence, including 66 articles—"the vast majority consist[ing] of press release rewrites about community events"—Marshall concluded that invention and imagination were hardly foremost.

"The primary duty of CDN reporters

depends primarily on their intelligence, diligence, and accuracy, rather than invention, imagination and talent," he wrote, ruling that reporters indeed are eligible for overtime.

In a second order, issued the same day, Marshall found that the Chinese Daily News had improperly pressured employees into opting out of a class action lawsuit against the company. The company's response to the lawsuit "was rife with instances of coercive conduct, including threats to employees' jobs, termination of an employee supporting the litigation, [and] the posting of signs urging individuals not to tear the company apart."

Such intimidation in fact has been characteristic of the Chinese Daily News, which fought a furious—and ultimately successful—years-long campaign to reverse its employees' vote for Guild representation. Marshall's orders, said Peter Bibring, the attorney representing the workers, "recognized what the employees who spoke out have had to endure" and demonstrate "that courts won't tolerate employers who pressure workers into staying silent about unlawful employment practices."

A trial to determine damages has been scheduled for Sept. 5.

NEWSDOKU

Yes, we too have succumbed to the Sudoku craze—albeit with a twist, since we are (after all) a union of wordsmiths, not of number-crunchers.

The rules are the same as in Sudoku, but applied to letters. Fill in the grid at right so that every horizontal row, every vertical column and every 3x3 box contains the letters N-E-W-S-G-U-I-L-D without repeating any. There is only one solution to the puzzle, which is based on reasoning and logic.

Completed puzzles may be mailed to: The Guild Reporter, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001. Correct entries postmarked no later than July 17 will be thrown into a hat and one lucky winner, picked at random, will get a prize. Suggestions for

prizes also may be submitted. Complaints about the prize will be ignored.

The answer to this puzzle will be published in the July issue of The Guild Reporter.

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I		E				N	S	
N			S					
G	N							U
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W		S					D	

MIDDLING DIFFICULTY

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 6

June 16, 2006

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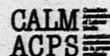
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Printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co.

DAYBOOK

"Impact Of Corporate
Priorities On
Journalistic Quality"
forum, June 29,
Capitol Hilton,
Washington D.C.

CWA Minority
Caucus, July 6-9,
Las Vegas

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

CWA Annual
Convention, July 10-
11, Las Vegas

CWA Minority
Leadership Institute,
Sept. 17-29, Silver
Spring, MD

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

Three years of debate ends, as the Guild votes 83-5 at convention to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor. Delegates also vote to increase dues 50%—to 75 cents a month—and for the first time elect a female vice president, Betty Ballantine. . . . Noting that college students represent "a potential reservoir of strike-breakers menacing the Guilds," convention delegates approve creation of associate Guild memberships. . . . With the Guild strike against the Hearst-owned Wisconsin News entering its 20th week, the newspaper's delivery boys extract a strike-threatened agreement from the publisher to compensate them for lost subscribers.

Fifty years ago this month:

President Eisenhower attends dedication of the new AFL-CIO headquarters building, across Lafayette Park from the White House. . . . An arbitrator upholds the firing of a New York Times copy editor for acknowledging that he had been a member of the Communist Party during the 1940s. . . . Guild dues-paying membership pushes beyond 28,000.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

With 432,000 employees last year, the newspaper industry has become the largest manufacturing employer in the U.S. . . . The Justice Dept. recommends that public hearings be held to determine if the Seattle Post-Intelligencer is a "failing newspaper" that qualifies for a joint operating agreement with the Seattle Times. . . . The Guild's executive officers call for "maximum" participation in the Solidarity Day demonstration Sept. 19 to protest Reaganomic attacks on social justice.

Vol. 73

Iss. 7

JUL 21

2006