

THE GUILD Reporter

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The Labor Day parade in Toledo was "basically a two-and-a-half hour rolling pep rally for a boycott," according to a spokesman for the Toledo Council of Newspaper Unions.

Toledo Blade unsheathed

Locks out 200, prompting boycott

Perhaps no Labor Day parade in the U.S. this year had a sharper edge than Toledo's, where thousands lined the streets with an identical, angry message: "Boycott the Blade!"

Few American cities have as large an organized labor presence as Toledo, which played a pivotal role in unionizing the auto industry. So when the Blade played a high-stakes gambit in late August by locking out five of its unions, ostensibly in an effort to galvanize stalled contract talks, it instead provoked an uproar of protest. And coming just days before the annual labor observance, the Blade's action could not have been more ill-timed.

"It was one great, big, giant hug," said Larry Vellequette, a Guild member and chief

spokesman for the Toledo Council of Newspaper Unions, of the crowds that poured out in support of the locked-out employees. The Blade's own workforce turned out in record numbers, too, with upwards of 400 t-shirted council members—compared with a few dozen in most years—stepping out, placards and banners in hand.

Meanwhile, the council already had launched a long-threatened advertising boycott and had submitted thousands of subscription cancellation cards. When the Blade refused to accept the cards, union members notified the subscribers individually and asked them to cancel directly. More than 10,000 have done so, Vellequette said, adding, "Toledo has really come through."

Continued on page 5



Knight Ridder died, but the bodies keep falling

Knight Ridder officially bit the dust June 26, when shareholders approved its sale to McClatchy. But empires are not dissolved painlessly, and the death of this one continues to reverberate.

Perhaps most shocking was the decision of David Black, new owner of the Akron Beacon Journal—once crown jewel of the Knight newspaper chain—to show the door to a quarter of all newsroom employees. The announcement means that a news operation that had 197 employees as recently as 1999 will be limping within weeks with approximately 110.

Black, a Canadian, was viewed as a bit of a hero in Hawaii five years ago, when he rescued the Honolulu Star-Bulletin and explained, "I don't have to make much—a dollar would do." But times apparently have changed. Although the Beacon-Journal remains profitable, it's making only half as much as it did just four years ago—when its profit margin apparently was in the vicinity of 24%—and advertising revenue has continued to decline.

Black affects a lack of concern about his ax wielding, channeling Donald Rumsfeld in

late August when he told Reuters, "I don't really believe that the quality of a newsroom is a direct function of body count in the newsroom." But Beacon Journal employees quickly picked up on a companion thought, in which Black complained about the allegedly wasteful activity he'd seen: desk-top tents sprouted throughout the newsroom earlier this week, announcing "No Coffee," "No Chatting" and "No Fun Allowed."

Guild members at the paper, represented by the Northeast Ohio Guild, had a dry run at this in 2001, when Knight Ridder laid off seven newsroom staffers, and many of the same responses have kicked in this time: job banks, financial counseling, fund-raising for the unemployed. But the size of the cuts is so much larger this time—39 people—and the ranks of those left behind so much thinner that there's a sense this isn't just a staffing change: it's a seismic shift in the Beacon Journal's identity, and not for the best.

How everything will shake out won't be known until Oct. 21, the last day of layoffs—in this round, at least, although others have been hinted—and the deadline for voluntary resignations. As of this week 13 employees

had read the writing on the wall and volunteered to leave, according to Stephanie Warsmith, the unit's secretary-treasurer. Each voluntary resignation reduces the lay-off list by one. Meanwhile, cuts in other non-Guild departments are expected soon, with rumors flying that in some cases they may slash even more deeply.

Separately, a lawsuit challenging MediaNews' acquisition of the San Jose Mercury News, Monterey Herald and Contra Costa Times was fast-tracked by a federal judge in San Francisco, who set a trial date of Feb. 26.

Central to businessman Clint Reilly's complaints is an investment by Hearst Corp. that enabled MediaNews to purchase the three Bay Area dailies—even though Hearst owns the San Francisco Chronicle, the only

sizeable competing newspaper in the region. Hearst and MediaNews have minimized Reilly's concerns, claiming their dealings are at arms' length. But declarations filed as part of the lawsuit now suggest those arms are stunted, at best.

Although Hearst's stake in MediaNews is in the form of "tracking stock" that excludes its participation in management of the Bay Area operations, a previously unnoticed provision of the deal allows Hearst to convert the tracking stock "into ordinary MediaNews Group common stock" under certain conditions.

Or as summarized by law professor Stephen Barnett in a Contra Costa Times article, "This is a triumph of fancy lawyering" that "might not survive the light of day."

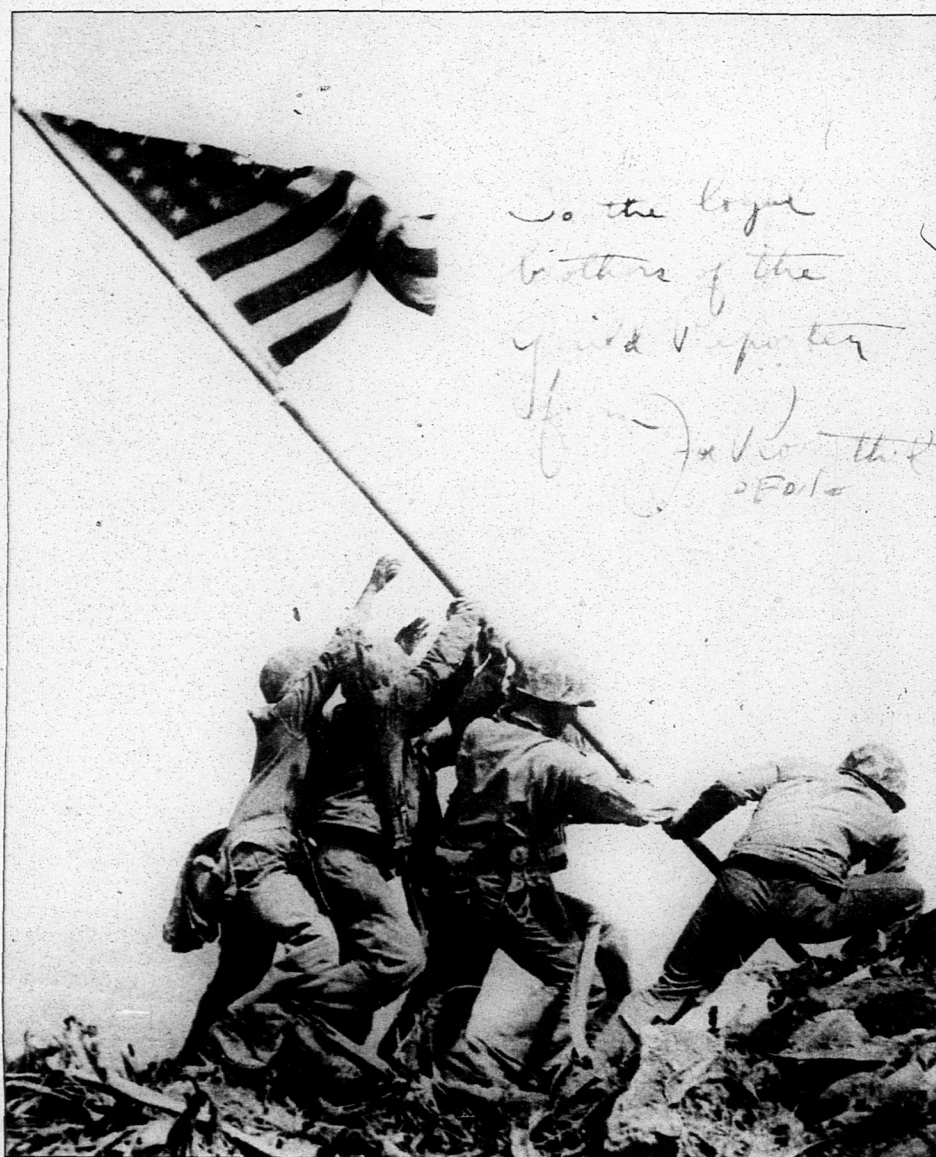
Inside this issue



Zinser pouts, walks out of Hilo talks page 3

Canada watches high-stakes freedom-of-press trial ... page 4

In management, but still pulling for the Guild page 6



R.I.P.

Joe Rosenthal, whose iconic photo of the World War II flag raising on Iwo Jima earned him the Pulitzer Prize, died Aug. 20 at the age of 94. His career stats included a distinguished 35-year career that ended when he retired from the San

Francisco Chronicle in 1981, a term as president of the San Francisco-Oakland Newspaper Guild in 1951, and several leadership positions in Bay Area journalistic groups. He is survived by a son, Joe, and daughter, Anne. A signed print of the photo hangs on the wall of The Guild Reporter office.

Boston to vote on contract

The Boston Guild and the Boston Globe reached a tentative contract agreement Sept. 11, reflecting what one local spokesman described as "extremely difficult economic times in which revenue appears to be severely depressed." Translation: all wage increases in the four-year pact are tied to specific year-over-year rev-

enue increases, although the proposal includes a wage re-opener in the fourth year.

A membership vote is expected in mid October.

Agreement was reached after the local took to the airwaves with an aggressive radio ad blasting the New York Times Co., which owns the Globe, as "greedy." The ad blasted the Times for "pushing an unfair contract," an accusation fueled most notably by the company's efforts to freeze its contributions to the health-insurance fund at current levels for the next four years—which, by the local's estimates, would have hit employees with a \$900 monthly bill for family health care premiums.

The proposed contract includes the company's agreement to pay an additional \$483,000 into the health fund over the term of the agreement, plus an ongoing increase of \$200,000 annually in 2010 and thereafter. Union members also will have the option of voting whether to divert any wage increases in 2007 and 2008 to the fund, which would include the company's FICA savings from the diversion.

The wage package is struc-

tured as follows:

- Jan. 1, 2007, a \$600 lump sum plus a weekly wage increase of \$7.50 if revenues for the first 11 months of 2006 at least match revenues for the same period in 2005. Guild leaders do not expect this to happen.

- July 1, 2007, a weekly wage increase of \$8 if revenues for the first five months of the year at least match revenues for the same period in 2006; this will increase to \$15.50 a week if the January increase had not kicked in.

- Jan. 1, 2008, a weekly bump of \$9 if 11-month revenues hold or increase.

- July 1, 2008, an \$8.50 increase based on five-month comparisons.

In addition, full-time active employees will receive \$500 bonuses if 2007 revenue exceeds 2005 revenue by at least \$50 million; and \$500 bonuses if 2008 revenue exceeds 2005 revenue by at least \$50 million.

Other contract features include an increase in cap on the mileage rate to 50 cents; and an increase in the cap on the pre-tax medical reimbursement fund to \$5,000 annually.

Guild briefs . . .

State AG gives MediaNews a pass

California Attorney General Bill Lockyer, following the feds' lead, has concluded that the MediaNews purchase of the San Jose Mercury News and Contra Costa Times poses no substantial threat to competition for news and advertising in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is, however, conducting a "preliminary review" of Hearst's involvement in MediaNews' acquisition of the Monterey County Herald and St. Paul Pioneer Press. Hearst, which owns the San Francisco Chronicle, swapped the two papers for an equity stake in MediaNews' non-Bay Area holdings.

tion merges with another, and won jurisdiction over an India-based employee who had been treated as a consultant, with virtually no benefits.

BNA unit okays 19% over 4 years

Guild members in the Bureau of National Affairs Correspondents unit voted 15-4 to approve a new contract that provides raises totaling more than 19% over four years. The contract, which runs to July 14, 2010 and covers 27 employees scattered around the U.S., also provides for a near doubling of the home-office allowance, from \$115 a month to \$175 a month immediately and to \$200 a month in 2009.

ProJo not looking at Belo layoffs

Although Belo was expected to announce at press time that more than 100 Dallas News newsroom employees are taking a buyout, similar reductions are not expected at its Providence Journal. John Hill, president of the Providence Newspaper Guild, told a local publication recently that publisher Howard Sutton has assured him there are no plans to cut newsroom jobs. On the other hand, he added, there is a growing concern that attrition will produce the same results: four of the newspaper's eight statewide bureaus have disappeared in the past decade, threatening the Journal's claim to be "the newspaper that covers Rhode Island."

Tea and crumpets will not be served

As if classified ad sales employees didn't have enough to worry about, what with outsourcing, arbitrary quotas and threadbare compensation plans, they often have to deal with supervisors who make Nurse Ratchet look laid back. Case in point: the Dow Jones operation in Irving, Texas, where employees who spend all day on the telephone are required to wear "professional business attire." Translation: suits or slacks, shirt and tie for men; dress or skirt with blouse or sweater for women. IAPE, TNG-CWA Local 1096, has filed a grievance.

Jobs with Justice gets first contract

A first contract has been negotiated by the newest unit of the Washington-Baltimore Guild, covering 10 employees of Jobs with Justice. The agreement, which runs through the end of 2008, includes raises of 1.5% and 3% each Jan. 1, 2007 and Jan. 1, 2008, as well as an upgrading of three positions and commensurate wage increases. The contract also contains a hard-fought successor clause that will keep the collective bargaining agreement intact in the event the organiza-

Boston on-line moves in-house

Reversing recent history, the Boston Guild is about to add 37 members—thanks to a decision by the Globe to move its boston.com operation in-house. The change, which requires a local ratification vote amending the contract, will result in pay increases for all of the new members.

Proceedings now on CWA website

Proceedings from the 2006 CWA convention will not be printed and mailed to locals, as in the past, but have been posted in a password-protected web site. Any Guild member wishing to review the proceedings should obtain the web site address, user name and password from his or hers local's officers, or from TNG-CWA headquarters.

Montreal loses another president

Just four months after taking over the leadership of the Montreal Guild, following the sudden resignation of President Jan Ravensbergen, Michele Carle has followed suit, citing personal reasons. The local's first vice-president, Mona Leroux, has stepped into the breach. Vacancies on the executive were to be discussed at the general membership meeting that was scheduled for Sept. 16.

Really briefly . . .

A majority of union-eligible Market Watch employees in San Francisco have signed union representation cards, joining their Dow Jones co-workers in Washington, D.C., Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles. . . . The Portland (Maine) Guild's first administrative officer, Michael Sylvester, has resigned to become a full-time organizer with the Maine State Employees Association. . . . TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Lunzer is featured prominently in the September issue of Editor & Publisher—or, rather, his hair is.

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Seattle TA treads water for 2 years

A tentative agreement on a two-year contract at the Seattle Times with no wage increases was going to a membership vote at presstime. Leaders at the Pacific Northwest Guild conceded the proposal had deeply divided the union's nine-member negotiating committee, which presented it to local members with a "very reluctant 'yes' recommendation."

Contract talks at the Times have been complicated by its attempts to end a joint operating agreement with the Hearst-owned Post-Intelligencer, with the Times seeking to exercise an escape clause that can be triggered after three consecutive years of losses. The Times has now claimed such losses for every year since 2000, confirmed by a review of its finances by a CWA economist. (See related story below.)

The JOA's fate reportedly is to be decided by an arbitrator, who is to issue his decision by next May, although a separate legal proceeding in state court may affect the outcome. An end to JOA uncertainty would mean less economic confusion in 2008, when Guild leaders hope they'll be able to negotiate a better deal. Meanwhile, however, they face resentment from Times employees because

unit members at the rival Post-Intelligencer recently won a minimum wage increase of \$20 a week this year and \$25 in 2007.

The Times' previous, six-year contract expired in July.

The negotiating team's frustration with management, expressed in several public pronouncements, was palpable. "We got very little in return for all the 'goodwill' extended to the company by the Guild over the past six years," one such message disclosed. "All the pleas and speeches in the world left us in the same place we started: facing a company determined to extract yet another concession from its employees."

In addition to the wage freeze, the proposed contract restores a management rights clause that the Times said had been accidentally deleted by clerical error from the final version of the contract approved in 2000. Separately, the company refused to expand advance notice of layoffs to seven weeks from the current four—a provision of increasing importance given the newspaper's uncertain prospects—although it softened its position by agreeing "in good faith" to provide more notice when "business considerations" make it possible to do so.

Seattle's problems ripple out to Maine

Having already sold some of its Seattle real estate to offset its newspaper losses, the Seattle Times Company may soon need to look further afield for a fresh cash infusion. One possible candidate: the three Maine newspapers it bought just eight years ago from Guy Gannett Publishing, including two—the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram and the Waterville-based Morning Sentinel—that are Guild represented.

Speculation at the Portland Newspaper Guild that the Maine properties are being readied for sale is prompted, in part, by the dispiriting arc of the new ownership. Privately held Seattle Times Corp. is controlled primarily by the Blethen family, whose forebears came from Maine. When it bought the Guy Gannett holdings the purchase was trumpeted as a return to the family's publishing roots, and there was much talk of pumping up revenues and increasing editorial quality.

Instead, circulation has declined and

the Press-Herald has been hit with repeated layoffs. Meanwhile, protracted contract negotiations at the Morning Sentinel (as well as at the CWA-represented Kennebec Journal) have foundered in large part over management insistence on broad outsourcing provisions that eventually could eviscerate the union. Moreover, company negotiators have advised the Press Herald unit to expect the same when its contracts expire—next May, ironically, or just when the Seattle Times expects to resolve its JOA dispute.

Although company negotiators insist their demand is simply a search for greater "flexibility," some local leaders wonder if it's indicative of a broader agenda. As John Richardson, a Guild lawyer who also serves as Speaker of the Maine House, told a local alternative weekly, The Portland Phoenix, the decidedly anti-union approach to bargaining could be an effort "to make the papers as presentable as possible for a future sale."

JRC exiting region?

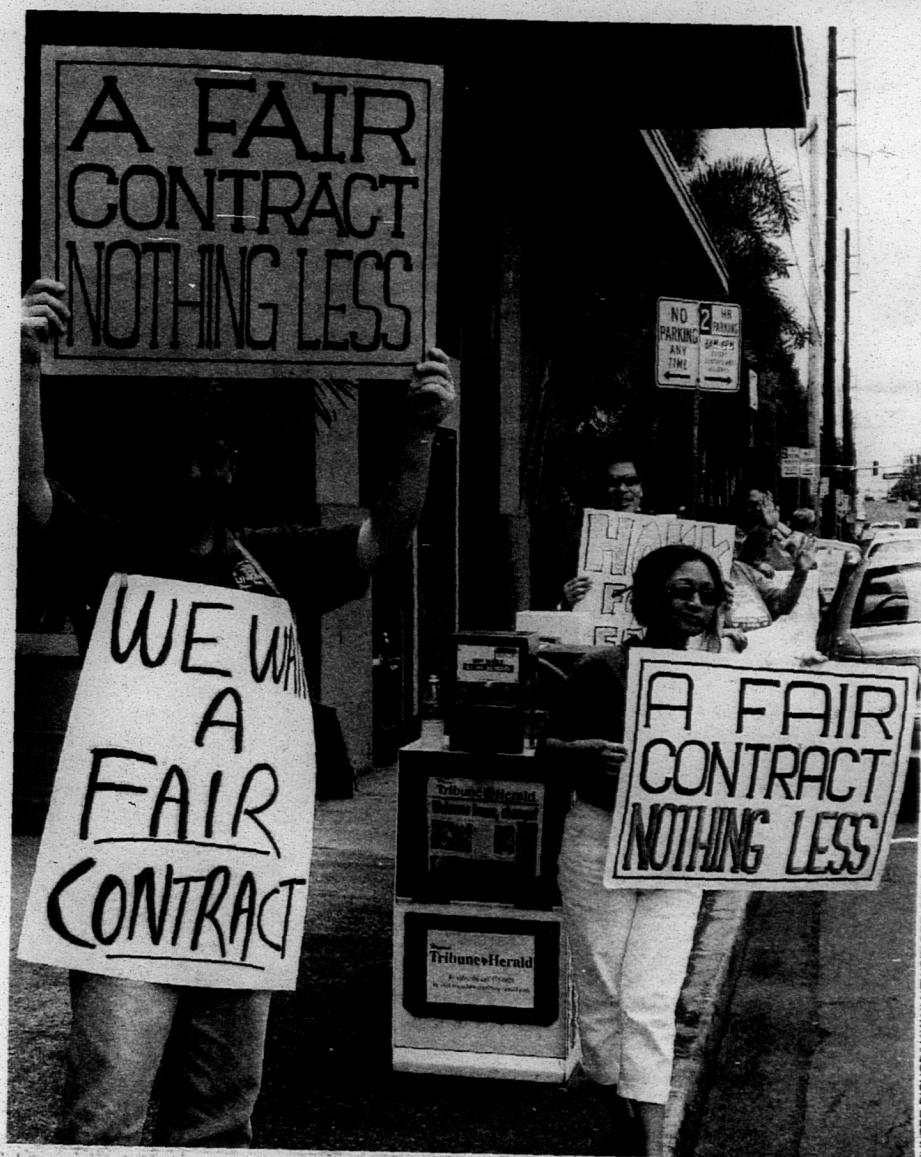
Less than a month after GateHouse Media announced it was still in the market for more acquisitions—this after dropping \$410 million in spring to buy an extensive string of small dailies and weeklies ringing Boston—Journal Register Co. said it wants to sell its five dailies and 21 other publications in southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The juxtaposition produced instant speculation about the most likely buyer.

Among the JRC newspapers offered for sale are several with Guild contracts, including the Herald News of Fall River, Mass.; and The Call of Woonsocket and The Times of Pawtucket,

both in Rhode Island.

Journal Register currently owns 27 small dailies and 366 other publications in an area stretching from Michigan east to New England, but seems to be consolidating its holdings in response to a steadily sinking stock price. Profits at its New England properties outside Connecticut underperformed the rest of the chain by 20%, according to press reports quoting CEO Robert Jelenic.

GateHouse Media was known as Liberty Group before it was bought last year by a New York hedge fund, which changed its name in May while embarking on an acquisition spree.



Reporter Jason Armstrong, left, and advertising sales rep Kelly Staszko join other Guild members and friends—including a candidate for the state legislature in this fall's elections—in an information picket Aug. 23 in front of the Hawaii Tribune-Herald building.

Hilo talks stumble as Zinser leads walk-out

By Hunter Bishop
Hawaii Newspaper Guild

Talks between the Hawaii Newspaper Guild and (Hilo) Hawaii Tribune-Herald came to an abrupt halt on the second of two days of scheduled bargaining over a new contract on Aug. 22 and 23, when the newspaper's negotiating team and its attorney, Michael Zinser, walked out while the Guild was preparing a detailed counterproposal over lunch.

The newspaper team speciously claimed the Guild was being "disrespectful" by being late in returning from the break, even though Guild rep Mike Burrell had asked the federal mediator to inform Zinser that the Guild team was on its way.

No one expected much to come of these talks, but until recently the company always hitched its horse to the plow to make it look like new ground might be broken. But after caucusing for nearly three hours at the end of the first day of bargaining, then another 45 minutes at the start of the second, the company had nothing new to offer, leaving the unmistakable impression that it is uninterested even in going through the motions of collective bargaining.

Union-busting proposals that have changed little since the beginning of the process are now being slapped with "final offer" in an apparent attempt to declare impasse and impose them as workplace conditions. Profitability is not at issue, because the newspaper admits it makes money; the issue is the union, which the company wants to emasculate or, better yet, simply eradicate.

We will not allow either of those outcomes without a fight. The Hawaii Tribune-Herald is a

success today due to the hard work and dedication of its union workers over many years.

Yet Hawaii Tribune-Herald workers still have not received a pay raise since January 2002, and the company continues to insist on proposals in a new contract that would reduce pay and benefits, eliminate workers' rights, and allow the company to replace Guild workers with non-union employees.

Currently, the Guild has 11 grievances filed against the company, ranging from the firing of a union leader for doing his job to the reprimanding of a reporter for loaning a tape recorder to another union member to use in a meeting with management. But the process of choosing arbitrators has skidded to a halt, since one of the three designated in the currently extended contract won't take any more cases. The company has insisted on adding a third arbitrator, while the union wants to get started on the cases without delay and has agreed to choose from the remaining two.

On Saturday, Aug. 26, Guild members continued collecting signatures on subscription cancellation pledges at "Hawaii Island's Celebration of Labor," a statewide pre-Labor Day event in Hilo. We also are informing advertisers of the dire turn taken at the table by the company and what it could mean for the local economy, are continuing informational picketing and leafleting, conducting mobilization activities in the workplace, and planning specific actions in the event management attempts to impose conditions in the workplace.

Talks with the company are scheduled again on Oct. 12 and 13 in Hilo. While we continue to hope for the best, the events of recent bargaining sessions now have us diligently preparing for the worst.

News round-up

Just another cost of doing business

Sociologists agree that the law acts as a deterrent only when there is a reasonable expectation that wrong-doers will be apprehended and that punishment will be swift and certain. Which may explain why labor law is broken. The National Labor Relations Board last month got BMW of San Francisco to agree to pay \$4.4 million to about 200 current and former employees for improperly declaring an impasse during contract negotiations—in 1989. That works out to about \$1,300 per employee per year since the law was broken.

Something to think about, indeed

The commoditization of news—replacing stories that include analysis, perspective and context with “information”—is taking its next logical step. Starting this past March, Thomson Financial has been using computers to generate some earnings stories and is so pleased with the results it wants to expand the practice. As usually occurs with such developments, a Thomson spokesman was quick to explain that assigning work to computers rather than humans was “not about cost but about delivering information to our customers at a speed at which they can make an almost immediate trading decision.” Indeed, he added, the change “means we can free-up reporters so they have more time to think.”

Call the feds before touching that dial

The First Amendment right to give and receive information took another hit recently with the arrest and unsealing of a criminal complaint charging a Staten Island resident with conspiring to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The complaint alleges that Javed Iqbal, through a Brooklyn-based company called HDTV Ltd., provided his New York-area customers with satellite broadcasts of al Manar, a television station owned or operated by Hizballah. The Department of Treasury named al Manar a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” in March, criminalizing any business transactions with the station.

Save water, shower with a friend

It's said that one of capitalism's great virtues is its knack for unlocking ingenuity. So it was at bankrupt Northwest Airlines, which took pity on its AFA-CWA-represented employees—whose starting wages have been downsized to \$16,000 a year—by publishing a little guidebook for the unexpectedly penurious. The 101 Great Depression-flavored “tips” included renting out a room (assuming you have a room to rent), shopping in thrift stores and using old newspapers for cat litter. The most priceless piece of advice? Tip number 46, “Don't be shy about pulling something you like out of the trash.” The booklets, initially distributed in layoff packages, were yanked when they popped up on the internet.

There's a reason they're called 'pros'

Private 401(k) retirement-savings plans—the kind more employers are adopting in place of traditional pension plans—have consistently underperformed the traditional plans by one percentage point a year, according to a recent Boston College report. Individual retirement accounts fared even more poorly, a result that financial advisers say supports the notion that most people aren't as good at investing as pension plan professionals. Although 1% a year doesn't sound like much, over a 40-year span it would net a retiring worker 20% less.

Medical costs, no surprise, are on a tear

Medical costs increased three times as fast as wages last year, according to a Census Bureau report, and the number of Americans without health insurance has climbed every year since George W. Bush took office. The average expense of providing medical care for a family of four rose 9.6%, to \$13,382 this year, according to a survey by the Seattle-based Milliman consulting group.

The subject takes a verb: downsized

Because any movement needs an institutional base to survive, one way to defeat it is to undermine that foundation. So it is that the labor movement took another hit earlier this month, when Indiana University announced a proposal to downsize its labor studies program from six campuses to two. The move comes as many of the country's 50 labor studies programs are being hit with budget cuts—or worse: the program at Ohio State University was recently dismantled. As one critic of the Indiana proposal noted, “The real question is whether workers are going to be subjects or objects in the labor market.”

What would Jack London say? (see p. 7)

First employers came after the rat; now they're trying to clean up our language. The United Steelworkers earlier this month filed an unfair labor practice complaint on behalf of a non-union employee who was fired, in part, for calling replacement workers “scabs.” The incident occurred at the Nuclear Fuel Services facility in Erwin, Tennessee, where 370 USW members have been on strike for more than three months. After salaried worker Kim Gordon referred to replacement workers as “scabs,” the company wrote in an Aug. 17 termination letter that such language “is derogatory and demonstrates your intent to intimidate and harass employees who have been hired to replace the striking union employees.”

Case tests limits of government secrecy

Canadian reporter faces 14 years in prison

A high-stakes battle between a government obsessed with secrecy and a free press, with potential consequences for a reporter far graver than anything seen in the U.S. in recent memory, entered its final stages in recent weeks. Yet presumably because the conflict is unraveling in Canada, U.S. media have shown not a scintilla of interest.

On the hot seat is Juliet O'Neill, a Guild member and reporter for the Ottawa Citizen who by all accounts has an enviable professional reputation. But if the Crown prevails, she could face criminal charges and up to 14 years in prison for reporting a story that relied in part on a leaked government document.

Published in late 2003, O'Neill's story described the travails of a Canadian citizen, Maher Arar, who was intercepted by U.S. authorities while returning home from abroad and deported to Syria as part of the so-called “rendition” program. The article related Arar's claims of torture and, citing a “security source” and the leaked document, what he supposedly divulged as a result.

The government's response was to raid O'Neill's home and office on January 21, 2004, confiscating her computers, notes and other work materials while grilling her about her information source. Everything supposedly was sealed pending the Citizen's legal challenge to the subpoena, which finally was heard in August.

At issue is Section 4 of the Security of Information Act, which the government cited in obtaining the search warrants used at O'Neill's home and office. The section makes it a criminal offense to give or receive “any secret official code word, password, sketch, plan, model, article, note, document or infor-

mation” without authorization, but has no definition of “official” or “secret official” information. As a result, argued O'Neill's lawyer, David Paciocco, the government essentially can go after anyone who receives any government information except through officially authorized channels.

Indeed, Paciocco added, the leaked document was described by other government documents as “disclosable” and “unclassified.”

In requesting the search warrants, however, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police told a justice of the peace that they were dealing with a serious threat to national security. Not only wasn't that the case, Paciocco argued, but the justice was never told by the RCMP of possible freedom of the press issues that should be weighed. “The law requires that balancing be done. If you don't give the information, and it could possibly have affected the warrants, the warrants must be quashed,” he concluded.

Whether Superior Court Justice Lynn Ratushny agrees won't be known until later this fall—but if she does, the Crown already has asked that she retain the sealed material for 30 days while it prepares new warrant applications. On the other hand, a ruling in the opposite direction would open O'Neill to Section 4 criminal penalties.

The bigger question, meanwhile, is whether Ratushny will rule that Section 4 is an unconstitutional restraint on freedom of the press and freedom of speech. Failure to strike down the section, the Writers' Union of Canada has declared, “will limit Canadians' freedom of expression, help to create a culture of secrecy and have a distinct chilling effect on reporters and other writers.”

World Bank makes it clear: worker protection must go

By Mark Gruenberg
Editor, Press Associates Inc.

The latest edition of the World Bank's top development book, “Doing Business,” explicitly encourages countries to dump worker protections and follow the lead of those nations that have none at all, according to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. A scathing critique of the book, by Peter Bakvis, of ICFTU's Washington office, adds that as a result, workers worldwide are being harmed.

“The 2007 edition of Doing Business, prepared by the bank's private sector development department, has declared the Marshall Islands to be the world's ‘Best Performer’ for its almost total absence of labor regulation, displacing last year's champion, Palau,” Bakvis wrote.

“Both . . . are tiny Pacific island nations that have no labor code. . . . The World Bank's online Doing Business database has given top ranking for labor market regulations to these countries because, among other exemplary features, both allow workers to be forced to work up to 24 hours per day and up to seven days per week and require no vacations or advance notice for dismissal.”

Doing Business urges other nations to follow that lead, according to ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder. Among other things, it gives nations high marks for a working day of a minimum of 12 hours, a 66-hour week, no protections for part-time workers—most of them women—and for how easily employers may dump union contracts.

“The World Bank should get its message straight,” Ryder added. “If the bank truly believes the International Labour Organization's core labor standards are good for development”—as it has said elsewhere—“it can't turn around and praise countries that don't respect the core standards as the world's ‘Best Performer.’”

The ILO's core labor standards include the right to

organize, freedom from job discrimination and outlawing abusive child labor. The World Bank's decision to ignore the standards is important because when it loans money to developing or financially shaky countries, it often requires they change labor standards and social programs. In the past, the bank has ordered nations to make it easier to fire workers, ban unions and abolish social programs.

Doing Business further promotes such goals, ICFTU said. Among the examples it cites:

- “South Africa scores particularly high in difficulty of hiring and dismissal procedures” as compared, for example, to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development average, ICFTU said. Doing Business “recommended, among other proposals relating to labor matters, ‘further streamlining dismissal procedures to make a significant dent in unemployment,’” including repeal of affirmative action laws. The laws were enacted specifically to counteract years of white-ruled apartheid.

- ICFTU also noted that even though Romania recently passed pro-business labor laws that make firing and discipline of workers easier, Doing Business and the bank's own staffers shrugged them off. “Staff expressed reservations about the adequacy of these measures and urged the authorities to further amend labor market legislation,” ICFTU said.

- “Because Bolivia's ‘difficulty of hiring index,’ as calculated by Doing Business, was higher than the South American average,” the bank proposed that firms in Bolivian free trade zones “should be ‘exempted from some of the more burdensome provisions of the labor code,’” ICFTU noted. Bolivian industrialists claim the code “harmed investment and growth.”

“An interesting feature of the Bolivian case is that the bank team acknowledged the bank had no idea as to whether the ‘burdensome provisions’ that it suggested eliminating actually harmed investment and growth,” ICFTU said. The bank studied Bolivia before its voters elected pro-worker President Evo Morales earlier this year.

Steroid-packin' feds switch to shotgun

Federal prosecutors who started out wanting to know who leaked grand jury testimony about athletes using steroids now want more—much more. According to attorneys for the San Francisco Chronicle, a government “fishing expedition” is demanding that the paper identify the confidential sources for hundreds of stories about the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, source of the drugs at the center of a doping scandal.

The two reporters who relied in part on leaked grand jury testimony for their articles, Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams, were ordered by a federal judge Aug. 15 to identify their source. They have appealed to the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and on Sept. 5 learned that prosecutors will not seek to have them imprisoned while the appeal is determined. Both

sides agreed to seek an expedited hearing.

But the U.S. attorney's office, which had been demanding any documents that would identify the leaker of grand jury transcripts, last month broadened its search to include any documents that might identify confidential sources for all of the Chronicle's BALCO-related articles, even those unrelated to grand jury transcripts. The Chronicle's lawyers say the newspaper has published approximately 450 such articles, about a third of them by Fainaru-Wada and Williams.

The U.S. district judge who ruled against the reporters concluded that neither the U.S. Constitution nor federal law allows journalists to protect confidential sources from a grand jury. The duo's failed motion to quash the subpoena argued that neither reporter had committed a crime and that the government was placing an undue burden on the First Amendment.

More newspaper jobs going overseas

The trickling of newspaper jobs overseas, already a steady stream in other industries, quickened with the late-August announcement at various Tribune Co. newspapers that customer service calls henceforth will be fielded in the Philippines.

Similarly worded memos to numerous Tribune newspapers, including the Guild-represented Baltimore Sun, asserted that the offshoring will “meet the needs of our readers and advertisers while improving our operations.” The move is part of a cost-cutting program that includes centralization of numerous editorial, circulation and advertising functions across the 11-newspaper chain.

Picking up the work will be APAC Customer Service, a company headquartered in Deerfield, Ill. that staffs call centers in the U.S. and overseas. Its Philippines center has been used by the Los Angeles Times since 1998. The switch will result in approx-

imately 250 Tribune employees losing their jobs, about half of them full-timers, but some reportedly will be reassigned to other work.

A memo from John Patinella, the Sun's general manager, said no current employees at that newspaper will be laid-off as a result of the transition. “We hope to use such things as attrition, job transfers and voluntary buyouts to obtain the appropriate staffing levels for the work that will remain here in Baltimore,” he wrote.

On a related note, CWA, Jobs with Justice and several union coalitions in India are cooperating on a joint study of the impact of offshored U.S. call center jobs on that country. The analysis, to be released during Customer Service Week—the first week of October—will examine the effects the transferred jobs have had on Indian workers and on their working conditions.

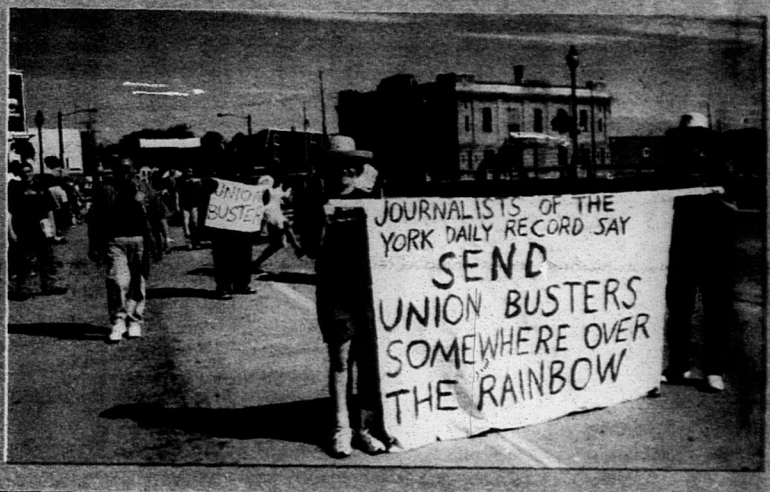


MELISSA NELSON/PHILADELPHIA NEWSPAPER GUILD

Walking the talk

Participation in Labor Day parades waxes and wanes, but turnout at this year's march in Philadelphia reportedly broke all recent records—due, in large part, to full-page ads in the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News placed by the Philadelphia Guild. Members of the local likewise turned out in force, most wearing T-shirts that expanded on their newspapers' most recent tag line, “Bringing home the News”—a reference to the purchase of both papers by a consortium of local businessmen.

In York, meanwhile, where the Guild and MediaNews have the same relationship as the Titanic and an iceberg (we'll let you decide which is which), the local's parade entry had a “Wizard of Oz” theme that included a somewhat hirsute “Dorothy” chasing union-busting flying monkeys down the street. The high concept won the judges' vote for third place, which in turn won the York Guild a rare—and undoubtedly grudging—mention in the York Daily Record.



Lockout creates curious role reversal

Continued from page 1

More than 100 advertisers have likewise pulled out of the Blade, Vellequette added, including some with annual spending in the \$500,000 range. The ad boycott has been so successful that the newspaper has been giving away space: in one case, for example, it offered free full-page ads for four consecutive days to an appliance dealer if he'd continue advertising.

More recently, the council of unions has broadened the boycott by leafletting customers of businesses that continue to advertise, targeting a different business each day.

Negotiations between the Blade and seven of its eight unions (one settled in July), representing approximately 600 workers, have gone nowhere since the contracts expired in March. Although money has been a central issue, with the newspaper demanding severe wage cuts and other financial givebacks, an even more significant roadblock to agreement has been company insistence on a sweeping “management rights” clause and its attempts to gut union security provisions.

Following a failed mediation attempt by a unique Toledo institution, the Labor-Management-Citizens Committee, the Blade apparently decided to play hardball in a big way. On Aug. 20 it locked out nine engravers in a Teamsters local who make printing plates, triggering the ad and subscriber boycotts the next day. A Blade edito-

rial two days after the lockout—apparently in response to the boycotts—told readers that the company “considers a lockout to be the management equivalent of a strike by labor, and we believe it to be a legitimate tool in collective bargaining.”

Strikes and lockouts usually signify a breakdown in collective bargaining, not a different phase of it. But the Blade demonstrated its fondness for this new “tool” by locking out a second union Aug. 23—a nine-member paper-handlers unit—then three more unions, of mailers, drivers and printers, on Aug. 27.

The serial lockouts have left just a Teamsters local of pressmen and the Guild on the job, plus the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local that settled two months ago. But with the Toledo Guild representing more than half of the Blade's unionized employees, including reporters, photographers, copy editors, advertising sales staff and circulation workers, approximately 400 union members are still working.

Publishing a newspaper from which a third of the workforce has been barred has had its surreal moments. The managing editor, projects editor and the director of finance all have pulled shifts in the mailroom, on top of their regular duties. Although Blade officials have boasted how few temporary workers they've had to hire, in an obvious effort to demonstrate that they've been over-staffed, production runs have been erratic—including

one memorable 32-hour mailroom marathon—and distribution has been snarled.

Guild members, meanwhile, are in the curious position of sometimes working against themselves. This has been nowhere more evident than among ad sales reps, who are trying to sell space even as their union and the rest of the council are urging advertisers to honor the boycott.

The selective lockout also carries a risk of pitting locked-out union members against those still working, but the Blade signalled its intentions so far in advance that union council members had time to work out a coordinated response. All agreed that non-locked-out union members would stay on the job, and picketing by the locked-out workers always leaves at least one building entrance free so no one has to cross a picket line.

Because they've been locked out and are not on strike, the idled Blade employees are eligible for unemployment insurance in addition to their unions' financial support. Unfortunately, Ohio law requires a determination hearing for all unemployment applications, even when uncontested by the employer—and with only one hearing officer for the entire state, the first determination hearing won't be held until Oct. 3. The union council is looking for contributions to help those who aren't getting pay checks; help can be offered at www.stoptheblade.com.

Having dropped the biggest bomb in its

arsenal with scant effect, the Blade has been resorting to the kind of public tactics employers disdain when unions use them, usually in an effort to mobilize favorable public opinion. Most notably, a full-page ad headlined “The Truth” tried to put the company in a favorable light by displaying employees' wage scales and benefits packages—all won in past contract negotiations—to show how “generous” it has been. The ad ran Sept. 4, a day before the Labor Day parade, where the large turnout in effect repudiated the self-serving message.

The union council has responded with its own media campaign, via 15 local billboards and a series of 60-second radio spots. Additional pressure has been applied by the filing of two charges of unfair labor practices with the National Labor Relations Board.

The problem now confronting Blade management is the one facing U.S. troops in Iraq: no clear exit strategy. Although management, steered down this path by its attorneys from the union-loathing firm of King & Ballow, has been claiming it simply is trying to pressure the unions to get serious about bargaining, its own bargaining posture has been uncompromising. “Meeting if they're not going to move doesn't do any good,” Vellequette pointed out, adding that the local has waited weeks in vain for a response to a 16-point information request regarding the company's management rights proposal.

Never forget where you came from

By Stephanie Salter
Terre Haute Tribune-Star

Tomorrow marks a huge change for me: the first Labor Day of my adult working life that I will pass as a non-union member of America's labor force.

To say I have mixed feelings about this is like saying United Airlines' pension system has undergone a bit of a change over the past few years. It's quite an understatement. (For those who don't know, most of the retirement funds of United's 122,000 employees disappeared last year when the company was allowed to default on its \$9.8 billion pension plan.)

Since joining a magazine writer's guild in 1972 at Sports Illustrated, I have always been a card-carrying, dues-paying union gal and darned proud of it. Belonging to a labor union has been almost as much a part of my identity as being a journalist.

Before the high-fiving begins among those of you who believe unions are the scourge of American business, let me rain on your Labor Day parade. I did not leave

Local 34046 of the Newspaper Guild in a disillusioned fit of pique. I got promoted.

The folks I've always thought of as "management" made me an offer I couldn't refuse. Now I'm "management." And a terrific new reporter has taken over the union slot I used to occupy. . . .

Despite my new management position, I suspect I will stay a junkie for union news and follow the health—and illnesses—of organized labor for the rest of my life.

My heart is a union heart. My head remembers why unions ever formed and grew in this country. The hopeful spirit in me believes unions will find a way to adjust to the complex demands of 21st-Century capitalism and reclaim their role as worker advocates and protectors.

Don't misunderstand: I have never subscribed to the credo, "My union, right or wrong." With 34 years of union meetings and an awful strike in San Francisco in 1994, I know labor leaders are like all leaders: many are good, some are a disaster.

I've seen my union do some stupid things and some brilliant things. (Just like

management.) Most recently, here at the Tribune-Star, I saw both my union and my management work together in impressive civility to hammer out a contract with which we all could live.

Yes, we still have fights, but I like to think that the way the two sides found common ground during the negotiation process affirms that it can be done.

In 1955, about 35% of America's total workforce belonged to labor unions. Today, that percentage has shrunk to 12.5%. Among non-government workers, unions represent only about 8%.

A lot of people see the decrease as evidence that labor unions are no longer needed. I'm not one of them, especially not when I consider figures such as these:

- In six months, the U.S. auto industry cut 70,000 jobs.

- In July, 113,000 new U.S. jobs were created—and 250,000 jobs were lost.

- From 1990 to 2003, about 290,000 workers won jobs with foreign-owned companies in the United States. During the same time, nearly 3.4 million U.S. jobs were elim-

inated or sent back to the home operations of those foreign companies.

- Approximately 7.3 million Americans still work for the minimum wage—unchanged at \$5.15 for the past nine years. If the minimum wage had stayed proportionally even with the rise in pay for chief executive officers, those 7.3 million folks would be earning \$23.03 an hour.

- During the current presidential administration, 3 million U.S. manufacturing jobs have been lost.

- Only one in five working Americans still has a traditional subsidized pension plan.

- According to census figures released this week, a record 46.6 million Americans did not have medical insurance coverage in 2005.

No, the need for worker advocates has not died out, so I plan to stay a fan of unions even from my new place in the corporate mix. Besides, once you learn the words to "Solidarity Forever," it's hard to get them out of your head.

Excerpted with the writer's permission from a column first published Sept. 3.

Unions: because work is not a democracy

By Thom Hartmann

Most of us don't think about workplace rights. We assume that because we live in America, we have all the rights we need.

There are no constitutional protections in the workplace. Most people are at-will employees, which means they can be hired or fired at will. Federal law protects you from being fired because of race, age, gender, or disability, but it doesn't protect you from being fired for saying that the boss is overworking you or the company's actions are immoral. You can't say that sort of thing in the workplace because the workplace is not a democracy.

Why does that matter?

If you can't talk freely about your working conditions, you can't negotiate changes to those conditions. If you're afraid the boss will fire you if you complain about overtime, you have no way to prevent your boss from requiring you to work extra hours.

We have a democracy in this country because the founders realized that they could not change the king of England's lousy taxation system unless they had representation in government. Democracy gives us the power to create a society that matches our

needs. Democracy in the workplace allows us to negotiate the conditions of our work. It ensures that honest working people . . . can be middle class without having to work 60 hours per week.

According to Thea M. Lee, assistant director of public policy for the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), for there to be democracy in the workplace, workers must have fundamental rights. These rights include freedom of association—which means the right to organize and bargain collectively—and prohibitions on child labor, forced labor and discrimination in employment.

You may think that we have all of these rights now. We don't. U.S. workers have almost no right to organize. Every 23 minutes in the United States, a worker is either fired or harassed for trying to unionize. Our president goes around the world, talking about the importance of bringing democracy. We loved Lech Walesa and his union movement in Poland. But today, if the middle class is to survive, we need a Lech Walesa in the United States—or at least some honest education about our own country's labor history. . . .

Today America is regressing. Middle-class

income has stopped growing. The net worth of those who earn less than \$150,000 per year (which includes everybody from the working poor to the highest end of the most well-off of the middle class) is down by 0.6%.

The problem isn't the economy. Corporations are making more money than ever. The real income of people whose net worth exceeds \$100 million is doubling.

What's happening is simple: The rich are getting richer and the entire spectrum of the middle class is disappearing.

We can easily trace this decline to Reagan's first public declaration of war on the middle class when he went after the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981. He broke the back of the air-traffic controllers' union and began the practice of using the Department of Labor—traditionally the ally of workers—against organized labor and working people.

Reagan liked to say he was against "big government." What he really meant was that he was against Roosevelt's New Deal. He was against Social Security, the minimum wage, free college education (he ended that in California as its governor), and programs like the WPA. He believed in the discredited concept of "trickle-down" economics—the

theory that if you create a corporatocracy, the rich will nobly spend some of their money to help the rest of us. The American people don't need handouts. Our workers just want to be paid a living wage for a fair day's work. We can't count on the corporatocracy to give us what we earn, so we need a strong labor movement to give us the power to negotiate our wages and benefits. Ultimately, it's all about power.

Workplaces are not democracies—in the United States they're run more like kingdoms. Employers have the power to hire and fire, to raise or lower wages, to change working conditions and job responsibilities, and to change hours and times and places. Workers have only the power to work or to not work (known as a strike). The strike—a tool that can effectively be used only by organized labor—is the only means by which workers can address the extreme imbalance of power in the workplace. And because organized labor is a democracy—leadership is elected and strike decisions and contracts are voted on—unions bring more democracy to America.

Excerpted from "Screwed: The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class," recently released by Berrett Koehler Publishers.

What did you do in the class war, daddy?

By Greg Palast

Some years from now, in an economic refugee relocation "Enterprise Zone," your kids will ask you, "What did you do in the Class War, Daddy?"

The trick of class war is not to let the victims know they're under attack. That's how, little by little, the owners of the planet take away what little we have.

For the first time since the Labor Department began measuring how the American pie is sliced, those in the top fifth of the wealth scale are gobbling up over half (50.4%) of our nation's annual income.

We don't even get to lick the plates. While 15.9% of us don't have health insurance (a record, Mr. President!), even those of us who have it, don't have it: we're spending 36% more per family out of pocket on medical costs since the new regime took power in Washington. If you've actually tried to collect from your insurance company, you know what I mean.

But if you think I have nothing nice to say about George W. Bush, let me report that the U.S.A. now has more millionaires than ever—7.4 million! And over the past decade, the number of billionaires has more than tripled, 341 of them!

If that doesn't make you feel like you're missing out, this should: You, Mr. Median, are earning, after inflation, a little less than you earned when Richard Nixon reigned. Median household income—and most of us are "median"—is down. Way down.

Since the Bush Putsch in 2000, median income has fallen 5.9%. Mr. Bush and friends are offering us an "ownership" society, but he didn't mention who already owns it. The richest fifth of America owns 83% of all shares in the stock market. But even that's a bit misleading because most of that, 53% of all the stock, is owned by just one percent of American households.

And what does the Wealthy One Percent want? Answer: more wealth. Where will they get it? As with a tube of toothpaste,

they're squeezing it from the bottom. Median paychecks have gone down by 5.9% during the current regime, but Americans in the bottom fifth have seen their incomes sliced by 20%.

At the other end, CEO pay at the Fortune 500 has bloated by 51% during the first four years of the Bush regime, to an average of \$8.1 million per annum.

So who's winning? Let's take a peek at the Class War body count.

When Reagan took power in 1980, the One Percent possessed 33% of America's wealth as measured by capital income. By 2006, the One Percent has swallowed over half of all America's assets, from sea to shining sea. One hundred fifty million Americans altogether own less than 3% of all private assets.

Yes, American middle-class house values are up, but we're blowing that gain to stay alive. As explained by Edward Wolff, the New York University expert on income, "The middle class is mortgaging itself to

death." As a result of mortgaging our new equity, 60% of all households have seen a decline in net worth.

Is America getting poorer? No, just its people, We the Median. In fact, we are producing an astonishing amount of new wealth in the USA. We are a lean, mean production machine. Output per worker in Bush-America zoomed by 15% over four years through 2004. Problem is, although worker productivity keeps rising, the producers are getting less and less of it.

The gap between what we produce and what we get is widening like an alligator's jaw. The more you work, the less you get. It used to be that as the economic pie got bigger, everyone's slice got bigger, too. No more. The One Percent have swallowed your share before you can get your fork in.

Palast is the author of "Armed Madhouse: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Class War," just released from Penguin/Dutton, from which this is adapted.



LOOKING AHEAD

More is less if fewer benefit

By Linda Foley, President

Pardon the cliché: It's a chicken-and-egg thing, but it relates to a bread-and-butter issue.

Those of us who experience the benefits of working under a union contract like to brag about how much more money we make than our poorer colleagues who don't have a voice at work.

It's indisputable that having a union nearly always means bringing home more money in your paycheck. The power of collective bargaining results in a bigger share of a company's earnings going to its workers. It's one reason we join unions. It's one reason so many employers fight against unions in their workplaces.

As the general wage-gap, or "premium," widens between "we-who-are-union" and "those-who-are-not," our advocates use the growing chasm as evidence of the labor movement's success. We point to this wage differential as a reason for unions' continued economic importance, despite our shrinking share of the U.S. workforce.

While we should be proud and appreciative of the fact that union representation causes our own compensation to rise, the wage gap between the 8% of us working for U.S. companies who belong to unions and the 92% percent who do the same work for non-union firms is not a reason to toast the labor movement's success. It might be cause for celebration if wages overall were rising, or if union density (the percentage of union members in the total workforce) were growing. They aren't.

Instead, both real wages and union membership are declining, and in this economic environment, the growing gap between union wages and those of non-union workers actually may contain the seeds of organized labor's demise. Consider that in 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the 12.5% of hourly wage earners who were unionized (including government workers) made approximately 21% more than their non-union hourly wage counterparts. In 1997, the earliest year for which these statistics were available, the BLS reported that the 14.1% unionized hourly workforce made about 17% more than their non-union coworkers.

If you were to plot those trends on a graph, the line representing the union-nonunion wage gap would be going up, while the line representing union density would be going down. What's more, instead of pushing lower wages up to meet higher union wage rates, the growing union-nonunion wage premium may be causing overall wages to drop.

An Aug. 28 article in the New York

Times by Steven Greenhouse and David Leonhardt reported that hourly wages for Americans have declined 2% since 2003. They cited weaker unions and more expensive health care as two main causes. "Together, these forces have caused a growing share of the economy to go to companies instead of workers' paychecks," the article said. Greenhouse and Leonhardt noted that wages and salaries now make up the lowest share of our nation's gross domestic product since 1947, while corporate profits are at their highest share of GDP since 1960. It's no coincidence that union density also is at its lowest point since 1947.

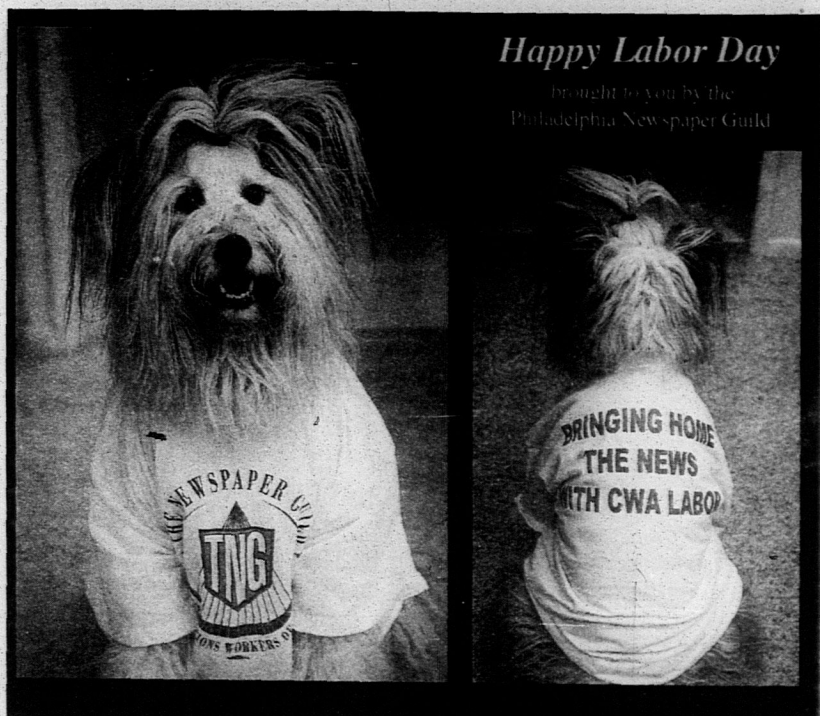
It wasn't always thus. Back when unions represented one-third or more of the U.S. workforce, the gap between union and nonunion wages forced all wages to go up, thus narrowing the gap. Profits, as much as wages, were adjusted to compensate for fluctuations in the market and economy. Even today, in countries with high rates of unionization, the gap between union and nonunion wages is much smaller than in the U.S. and wages overall are rising, not declining as they are here. Corporate profits in these countries are much more modest as well.

Connect the dots. Today's unionized workers in the U.S. can maintain higher wage rates in their workplaces through collective bargaining but can't—because of their reduced presence in the workforce as a whole—bring overall wage rates up. This exacerbates the low-wage "advantage" for employers who have nonunion workforces and therefore creates even more incentive for employers to fight unionization. Meanwhile, a withered labor movement can't muster the political clout necessary to fight effectively for all workers, so legal protections such as minimum wage, hours and overtime regulations and pension safeguards also falter, accelerating the downward compensation trend.

No wonder profit margins are soaring.

Those of us lucky enough to have union representation have but one choice. We must focus our energy, not just on our own contract negotiations but also on ways to expand the power of collective bargaining to the millions of American workers who don't have it. We have to focus the collective clout we still have on spreading the power of collective bargaining throughout the labor force. Electing Congressional representatives this November who will vote to enact the Employee Free Choice Act would be an important step in that direction.

It's not enough for us to feather our own nests while so many unorganized workers are getting plucked.



SHARON GEOROSKI KIMMEL/PHILADELPHIA GUILD, MODELED BY KATSI

Happy Labor Day

brought to you by the Philadelphia Newspaper Guild

LOOKING ASKANCE

In praise of 'scab'

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

It long has been a favorite tactic of the extreme right to lambaste the left for its attention to language. Progressives' insistence on using gender-neutral formulations ("flight attendant" instead of "stewardess," "firefighter" instead of "fireman"), or fretting about subliminally racist constructions ("black-hearted," "white lie") routinely is derided as precious or pernicious: either the semantically sensitive are neurotically thin-skinned or they're the thought police.

But by making an issue of political correctness and mocking the left, the neanderthal right has obfuscated its own jockeying for language control. The issue isn't whether progressives are obsessive about word choice, because in fact conservatives are just as eager to shape the lexicon. The real issue is who will gain the upper hand in the battle to control the language with which we frame political and social discourse.

In this struggle, each side attempts to gain acceptance of its own formulations—and just as diligently attempts to turn public opinion against the other's. A notable example of the former is the Bush administration's success immediately after 9/11 in reviving "homeland," a largely neglected word that for many left-leaning Americans carried an uncomfortable echo of fascist Germany. (Ironically, now that "homeland" has grown common enough to shed many of its pejorative overtones, the Bush administration has started redefining "fascism" by linking it to Islam, a move that may be viewed as a preemptive linguistic strike.)

What brings all this to mind is a brief item on page 4 that reports on the firing of a worker by a Nuclear Fuel Services facility in Tennessee, where the United Steelworkers have been on strike for more than three months. The non-union employee's offense was to describe "replacement workers"—the company's sanitized term of choice—as "scabs," a word that Nuclear Fuel Services asserts is "derogatory."

No argument there, although one may wonder about the state of workplace democracy (yes, yes, an oxymoron) when a derogatory statement becomes grounds for firing. But the company didn't stop there: use of the word "scabs," it explained, was indicative of "an intent to try to intimidate and harass." Or to put it another way, simply calling someone a scab opens a window on one's soul and there reveals a felonious impulse. Best to exorcise the demon before it manifests itself, in what amounts to a different kind of preemptive strike.

Such over-reaction to a word says a great deal about the frantic state of the reacting party, but it attests also to the enormous power of language—something to which Guild members should be especially sensitive. It also provides all the more reason to protect words that have special power within the labor movement, and "scab" certainly qualifies.

But just what is a scab? Clarence Darrow explained it succinctly when he wrote that a scab "is a man who goes in to take the place of his fellow man who is working for better conditions." Scabs, he added, have "always been ready to take the benefits that flow from organized labor and never been willing to fight to obtain them"—a parasitism that prompted Eugene Debs to observe, "A scab in labor unions is the same as a traitor to his country."

But the unrivaled master at defining a scab was Jack London, a portion of whose classic description is excerpted here:

"After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, He had some awful stuff left with which he made a scab. A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a waterlogged brain, and a combination backbone made of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts, he carries a tumor of rotten principles. . . . Judas Iscariot was a gentleman compared to a scab. For betraying his master he had the character to hang himself—the scab hasn't. . . . There is nothing lower than a scab."

Now *that's* a word worth saving.

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: October 6.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Katrina may have been a harbinger

By Debbie Thomas
TNG-CWA Human Rights Director

A year after hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast, I thought I'd take a look back (like everyone else) and see how we as a country and as an industry have fared since. In doing so I came across a recent study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, titled "The Women of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast: Disadvantages and Key Assets for Recovery, Part II. Gender, Race and Class in the Labor Market" which confirmed some of my apprehensions.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, cited in the study, the unemployment rate in July 2006 among returned evacuees was 4.2%—compared with 23% among those who had not returned to their homes. A U.S. Census Bureau survey confirms that the New Orleans metro area has become more affluent and more white/less black, as poorer people have been unable to return.

These developments have had a disproportionate impact on low-income women, who were a hard-working part of the region before the storms and an integral part of its economy. In New Orleans, 45.5% of poor women worked, as did 46.8% of poor women in Biloxi-Pascagoula, compared with the national average of 41.4%—and despite lower wages.

"Working poor women in this region, despite working harder than those in other parts of the country, were generally even more poorly compensated," remarked Avis Jones-DeWeever, program director and co-author of the report. But with more women than men leaving the region after the storms, they'll have to be offered "better opportunities for good jobs, along with child care and schools for the children," to be enticed into returning, she added.

Not much chance of that, though.

Indeed, judging by the recently published results of the AFL-CIO's annual Ask a Working Women survey, the impoverished women of New Orleans are hardly alone in their needs.

First on the respondents' list of concerns is affordable health care, cited by 97% of the 26,000 women who took the on-line survey this past summer. Such concern crosses all ages and races and across all levels of education. Right behind it is anxiety over the cost of living, cited by 95%.

We're (I participated in the survey) concerned about retirement and whether we'll have enough to live on. We're worried about the cost of higher education, even if we don't have school-age children, because of the growing importance of continuing our own educations. As for those who do have school-age children, will they even be able to afford a higher education? An article I just read described something called "enrollment management," which manipulates tuition costs not to help the neediest students but to create a student population that will enhance a college's prestige and rank. So much for extending a helping hand to those who really need it.

But these issues are not just about women, for they affect all of us. And while it's appropriate to ensure that the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast is fair and equitable, we need to ensure that it's not just the Gulf Coast educational system that is fixed, but that all children in our society get proper schooling. The good jobs that must return to New Orleans must be available to anyone in this country who wants to work—jobs that pay fair and equal pay for equal work, jobs that come with health insurance and paid medical leave, jobs that provide dependable pensions for when workers can no longer work.

These are the things that made this country great and still entice others to come here.

Hold the presses!

Arbitrator reverses sexist hiring decision

Janice Contant became a rare creature recently, when she started her new job as apprentice pressman at the Red Deer Advocate. Not only is she the first woman press operator at the central Alberta daily, but she's one of only a handful in North America.

Unfortunately, it required an arbitrator's ruling for her to attain that status.

Following hearings that dragged out over two years, arbitrator Timothy J. Christian ruled that the newspaper's publisher was wrong to have rejected Contant for the position by citing her alleged poor attitude. The publisher had formed that opinion based on an assessment by Contant's supervisor, who had bullied and harassed her in the workplace, and had exercised poor judgment in relying solely upon that supervisor's evaluation to make his hiring decision, Christian wrote.

Because Contant and a male colleague had been judged equally qualified, the job should have gone to Contant as the candidate with more seniority, as stipulated in the union's contract. The arbitrator therefore ordered that she get back wages starting Nov. 5, 2003.

While the victory might be dismissed as a yawn in the ages-old struggle for gender equality, the testimony and evidence provided during eight days of hearings suggest the age-old struggle over workplace sexism is far from over.

When Contant, after three years as a paper handler, applied for a position of apprentice

pressman in late 2003, she was warned by a mailroom supervisor that women would never be hired to work in the pressroom. And, indeed, when the job went to a male colleague, production manager Derek Olinek told her it went to the man because he was considered more physically capable of doing the work.

Not only was that not factually true—Contant had grown up with four brothers on a farm and was accustomed to hard manual labor—but it violated both the collective agreement and Canada's human rights law. Which may explain why, at the very end of the arbitration, publisher Fred Gorman contradicted prior testimony by declaring instead that he had rejected Contant because of her allegedly poor attitude. Physical ability had nothing to do with it, he insisted.

But Gorman also acknowledged, under cross-examination, that he had been advised by the company's attorney that it would be illegal to reject a job applicant on the grounds of physical size or limitations. As a result, the arbitrator concluded, "Mr. Gorman had to review the paper trail and come up with a legally acceptable, alternative, reason for refusing to appoint the grievor"—a reason that was therefore "suspect."

[For a more extensive report on Contant's arbitration, reported by Deb Richmond, visit www.tngcanada.org.]

NEWSDOKU

Newsdoku rules are the same as in Sudoku. Fill in the grid at right so that every horizontal row, every vertical column and every 3x3 box contains the letters W-O-R-K-U-N-I-T-Y without repeating any. There is only one solution to the puzzle, based on reasoning and logic.

Entries postmarked no later than Oct. 16 may be mailed to: The Guild Reporter, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001; one winner will be chosen at random from correct entries and will receive some kind of prize. The answer to this puzzle will be published in the October issue; the winner will be named in the November issue.

The winner of July's Newsdoku was Kerry McGinn of Spokane, WA, who will receive a copy of the just released "The Man Time Forgot: A Tale of Genius, Betrayal, and the Creation of Time Magazine," by Isaiah Wilner.

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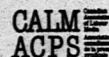
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DAYBOOK

TNG Canada Rep. Council,
Sept. 30-Oct. 1, Ottawa

Western District Council,
Oct. 20-22, Long Beach, CA

Tri-Council Meeting,
Oct. 27-29, New York City

Great Lakes District Council,
Nov. 3-5, Dayton, Ohio

Midwest District Council,
Nov. 11-12, Denver, CO

New England District Council,
Nov. 18-19, Portland, Maine

O	E	R	B	W	L	A	S	N
S	L	W	N	E	A	R	O	B
A	B	N	S	O	R	W	E	L
R	A	E	L	S	O	B	N	W
L	S	O	W	B	N	E	R	A
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B	R	S	E	N	W	L	A	O
N	O	L	R	A	B	S	W	E
E	W	A	O	L	S	N	B	R

AUGUST NEWSDOKU SOLVED

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

A seven-month-long strike against the Hearst-owned Wisconsin News ends with full reinstatement of the strikers and a guaranteed five-day, 40-hour week, while a strike against the Hearst-owned Seattle Post-Intelligencer enters a second month. . . . The International Executive Board announces a new policy of supporting future strikes through assessments on locals. . . . Eight Guild locals express opposition to an upcoming referendum to affiliate with the CIO.

Fifty years ago this month:

Guild president Joseph Collis writes that the union has had more strike votes in the past six weeks than "in any comparable period in the Guild's history." . . . The AFL-CIO Dept. of Research warns against a trend toward longer contracts, noting that they can be "dangerously restrictive" if economic conditions change abruptly and that agreements for more than one year "have been favored mostly by management." . . . The U.S. Supreme Court affirms an NLRB ruling that an employer relying on economic reasons for refusing a wage increase may be compelled to provide "some sort of proof of its accuracy."

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The Guild donates \$25,000 to a fund established by the AFL-CIO to aid striking air traffic controllers. . . . At least 275 Guild members from 15 U.S. locals join in the massive Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington, a challenge to the Reagan agenda that draws an estimated 400,000 protesters.

Vol. 73

Iss. 10

OCT 13

2006