

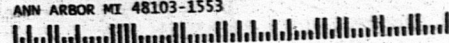
THE GUILD Reporter

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Looking away when the truth overwhelms us

By Andy Zipse
Editor, The Guild Reporter

The current state of the newspaper business recalls the poster about how it's hard to keep your mind on draining a swamp when you're up to your ass in alligators. So too for journalists, besieged as they are by layoffs, increased work loads, multi-media

ANALYSIS

expectations, increasingly absurd "ethics" standards and an assumption by a growing number of employers that anything they do, on or off the job, is fair game for corporate oversight. Small wonder, then, if the charge to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted seems increasingly quaint, or if all the rhetoric about a free press being essential to democracy sounds tinny.

Such pressures may explain the development of what Christopher Hayes, writing in the Christmas issue of *The Nation*, describes as "the credulous style" of reporting now so prevalent. Contrasted with "the paranoid style," which perceives all significant events as orchestrated by malevolent and even omnipotent forces, the credulous style takes everything at face value.

"In the credulous style political actors are acting with good intentions and in good faith," Hayes writes. "Mistakes are made, but never because of ulterior motives or undue influence... When people in power advocate strenuously for a position it is because they believe in it. When their advocacy leads to policies that create misery, it is not due to any evil intentions or greed or corruption, but rather simple human error."

Somewhat the same theme was sounded by Bill Moyers just three weeks later, in a speech to the National Conference for Media in Memphis, provocatively titled

"Life on the Plantation." Regarding the stenographic quality of much reporting today, Moyers said, "I think what's happened is not indifference or laziness or incompetence but the fact that most journalists on the plantation have so internalized conventional wisdom that they simply accept that the system is working as it should."

Certainly both these observations ring uncomfortably true, much to our discredit. But there's something more complex going on here, more profound and disturbing: we live in an age when truly life-shattering events are unfolding, their meaning so horrific that we reflexively recoil from any substantial engagement.

Consider, for example, the recent study published in *Lancet* that placed the additional number of Iraqis killed since the U.S. invaded their country at anywhere from 426,000 to 800,000. (Note to the Reflexive Right: the *Lancet* article doesn't claim the Americans killed that many, only that this is the excess death toll in Iraq as a result of a war the U.S. initiated.)

Epidemiologists and others who understand the scientific rigor that went into this study, conducted by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, give it high marks for its methodology. But its conclusions are so shocking, so out of sync with what we've been told by Washington that the mind shuts down. The results are so unacceptable that of course the study itself must not be credible. And so George Bush could stand at a press conference and state that "their methodology has been pretty well discredited" and go unchallenged over what amounts to a bare-faced lie. And the media keep repeating the administration's Iraqi

Continued on page 6



Pioneer Press workers and supporters protest job cuts and overall gutting of the news industry.

Finding their voice

Workers, readers are saying, 'Enough!'

Sometimes it seemed, in recent weeks, that the entire newspaper industry was going into the crapper—and sometimes it seemed like perhaps there was something else going on. Some kind of push-back, a rallying of the troops, and not just of a public fed up with the corporate juggernaut but of newspaper workers themselves. Imagine—journalists speaking up for themselves!

Of the bad news there seemed to be no end. In a shocker that no one saw coming, McClatchy abruptly dumped its biggest newspaper at a fire-sale price (story, page 3), but other papers also were being peddled—or not. Copley said it wants to sell a number of its holdings, including the Guild-represented *Journal Star* in Peoria. Tribune Co., which among its many media properties owns the *Baltimore Sun*, put itself on the auction block and found only wan interest—

none of it from a newspaper company (story, page 3).

More newspaper jobs went up in dust, including dozens in Philadelphia and Massachusetts (story, page 2). While those layoffs followed the historical pattern of being announced at year's end, there was growing evidence that punting employees is becoming a year-round sport. The Pioneer Press, which lost 30 workers through buyouts and layoffs late last year, sacked another nine—including eight Guild members—at the start of January without even bothering to observe its usual protocol of giving two weeks' notice.

Time Inc. announced mid-month that it is cutting 289 jobs, the vast majority in editorial. Ann S. Moore, Time's chairwoman and chief executive, explained the move as "transforming our work force and broadening our digital capabilities," which sounds like a

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Big win at Chinese News

Employees of the Chinese Daily News, battered by years of management intimidation, firings and anti-union propaganda, won a significant legal victory Jan. 10 when a federal jury awarded them more than \$2.5 million in unpaid wages. The jury concluded that the Chinese-language newspaper had violated state and federal laws by failing to pay overtime or allowing meal and rest breaks to its reporters, advertising sales staff and hourly employees.

First filed by three former reporters in 2004, the lawsuit soon gained class action status and eventually included approximately 200 employees, from delivery drivers, printers and copy editors to clerical workers. The plaintiffs charged that they routinely were required to work 10- to 12-hour days, sometimes six days a week, without overtime pay; reporters were told they had to write two to five articles daily, regardless of how much time they had to put in.

In addition to being hit with a bill for \$2,520,116, the Chinese Daily News faces possible civil penalties. The California labor code provides that failure to pay

wages is punishable by a fine of \$100 per failure per employee, with each subsequent violation punishable by a fine of \$200 per failure plus 25% of the amount unlawfully withheld.

The verdict was a welcome reversal in a years-long struggle for the newspaper's employees, whose 78-63 vote for union representation by TNG-CWA was resisted by management in a series of unsuccessful appeals. A decidedly pro-management National Labor Relations Board finally overturned the 2001 election results in 2005, retroactively applying a 2004 decision as "precedent."

That protracted process, as well as the nearly three years it took to resolve the overtime case—barring any Chinese Daily News appeals—left some principals with a decidedly bittersweet taste in victory. "Why is justice so hard to get?" former Chinese Daily News reporter Lynne Wang, who was fired after she asked for overtime, was quoted as asking in a Los Angeles Times interview. "We had to sacrifice so much."

Inside this issue



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Amid the carnage, four locals agree to new contracts

Four more TNG-CWA locals reached agreement on new contracts in recent weeks, in at least one case averting a threatened strike. But any warm feelings over finding common ground were short-lived in Boston and Philadelphia, where deep layoffs quickly followed.

The agreements include a two-year contract at Agence France-Presse that includes raises of 3.3% each year and stronger job security language; a four-year contract at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin that provides a 10.5% wage increase over the full term and improved sick leave; and a four-year pact at the Boston Globe that made a critical revision in a proposed contract that Globe staffers rejected two months earlier.

But the good news in Boston was followed within weeks by an announcement that 125 jobs were to be cut at the Globe and the nearby Worcester Telegram & Gazette, both owned by New York Times Co. Seventeen of the jobs are in the Globe newsroom, with as many as 55 more to be culled from back office and advertising departments. Heaping insult on injury, the work done by the non-newsroom laid-off employees is being outsourced to India, prompting Dan Totten, president of the Boston Newspaper Guild, to label the move as "an example of corporate greed at its worst."

Developments in Philadelphia, where the Guild unit teetered on the edge of a strike, were even more stark. Although Guild-represented employees reluctantly approved a concessionary three-year contract that their leaders called "disappointing"—or worse—the give-backs failed to prevent the lay-offs of 71 newsroom employees and an additional 34 in advertising sales at the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News. The cuts meant a 17% reduction in newsroom staff and nearly 10% in the advertising department.

[At press time, Philadelphia Guild officials were saying they had negotiated reinstatement of

nine of the laid-off newsroom employees.]

Even before the lay-offs the local had issued a resolution declaring its lack of confidence in management, referring to the new owners' "tight-fisted, slash-and-burn, anti-labor tactics" and expressing a lack of faith "in their desire to treat employees with fairness and dignity." But once the list of those losing their jobs was announced, a fresh source of anger was provided by the minority community, which observed that 10 of the 25 reporters being cut are black and 30% of all those laid off are African- or Asian-American—in a newsroom that was only 18% minority before the layoffs.

Contract specifics at each of the four locals were as follows:

- In Philadelphia, employees will get cash bonuses totaling \$1,500 over the next two years in lieu of raises. Followed by a weekly \$25 raise in 2009—but the increase may be diverted to pay for higher medical insurance premiums. In addition, sick pay will be cut to 65% of regular pay, from 100%, from the fourth day of an illness through the 40th week; steps were taken toward participation in a multi-employer pension plan; and the Guild agreed to exempt many sports, government and other specialized reporters and columnists from the seniority system.

- The contract ratified in Boston remains essentially unchanged from one rejected last fall, which allowed for wage increases in 2007 and 2008 contingent on the Globe's revenues growing year-over-year; the key difference is that the new formula includes revenue from Boston.com. Other provisions include a wage freeze for 2006 and a wage re-opener in 2009; increased "operational flexibility" in assigning work across the company's various operations; and one-time extra payments by the company into its health fund in each of the next three years.

- At the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, the Guild and two other unions agreed on contracts that include pay increases retroactive to March 1 of last year. Sick leave was enhanced to include sick pay the first day of illness up to four times, the auto mileage reimbursement rate was increased from 32 cents a mile to the IRS rate (48 cents a mile this year) and photographers will receive a \$200 a year allowance.

- Guild-represented employees of Agence France-Presse in the U.S. ratified a contract that in addition to annual raises of 3.3% includes an inflation adjustment that kicks in if the price index increases 3.5% or more, to a maximum of 6%. They also won a new health plan with lower copayments and some additional benefits; an increase in the cap on severance pay to 52 weeks, from 40, and an increase in layoff notice to 90 days from 60; and a minimum of three weeks of vacation for new employees.

Guild briefs . . .

Union e-mail on NLRB trial

The National Labor Relations Board will hear oral argument March 27 in a case raising the question of whether employees have the right to use their employer's e-mail system—or other computer-based communications—to communicate with co-workers about union matters. The potentially precedent-setting case arises from unfair labor practice charges, filed by the Eugene Newspaper Guild, challenging a Register Guard policy prohibiting use of its e-mail system "to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-job-related solicitations." The local argues that use of e-mail for union communications is protected under federal labor law.

Feeding the hand that bites

If daily newspapers are losing display advertising, it won't be for lack of trying by Guild locals. On New Year's day, for example, the Peoria Guild took out a full-page ad in the Journal Star that bannered the headline "Don't let anyone steal your newspaper." Copley Press is trying to sell the Journal Star, prompting the local—which represents slightly more than 100 employees—to warn "current and any potential future owners that we intend to preserve the high level of journalism this community deserves." A day later, the Guild local at Dow Jones took out a large ad in the New York Times under the headline, "The size of the paper isn't the only thing shrinking at the Wall Street Journal." Playing off the Journal's recent reduction in web width, the ad contends that "the quality of the paper is also in danger of shrinking" because the company's recessionary contract demands will drive away its most talented workers. IAPE, TNG-CWA Local 1096, represents more than 2,000 Dow Jones employees.

TNG Canada votes autonomy

Members of TNG Canada voted overwhelmingly late last year for creation of an autonomous Canadian region within CWA, giving it direct control over the per capita payments that previously went to CWA headquarters. Approximately 1,500 members of TNG Canada's 27 locals cast ballots in the national referendum, with more than 93% opting for the change that took effect Jan. 1.

King County Journal : 30

As foreshadowed last month, the King County Journal has been shut down by its new owner, resulting in 13 Guild-represented workers in news and circulation losing their jobs. The last edition of the Journal, Washington state's eighth largest daily, rolled off the press Jan. 21. The Journal and nine affiliated newspapers that publish only twice a month were bought by Black Press of Victoria, BC, which is increasing the publication frequency of six of the other papers to twice a week.

More concessions demanded

Despite admitting that they are making "good money" in Detroit, the News and Free Press are demanding a wage freeze and increases in employee shares of health care costs, including higher monthly premiums and co-pays. The fresh demands come after concessions and healthcare givebacks in 2003 that Lou Mieczko, president of the Detroit Guild and head of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, says saved the company that runs both papers approximately \$12 million. Although those contracts expired Jan. 14, the two sides have agreed to extend them indefinitely, subject to termination on 30 days' notice.

Canadian talks at knife edge

Negotiators for the Canadian Media Guild and APTN met Jan. 19 in Winnipeg in a last-ditch attempt to avoid a strike or lockout. The Guild's editorial members at APTN have already voted 73% in favor of strike action to back their contract demands, with across-the-board wage increases proving the most intractable issue. By law, the parties are required to give 72 hours notice of any job action; at press time, Guild members were voting on a final contract offer.

Management Diplomacy 101

Bob McKenzie, leading management's bargaining team in contract talks with the Victoria-Vancouver Island Newspaper Guild, got contract negotiations off to a swell start Jan. 8. Peering across the table at his union counterparts, CanWest Global's publisher of the Victoria Times Colonist breezily declared, "I'm not as concerned about morale as you think I should be—it's overrated."

S&P outsourcing to India, too

Outsourcing being all the rage these days, a recent announcement by Standard & Poor's of a reduction-in-force due to economic factors got close scrutiny from the New York Guild. And a good thing, too: six of the eight positions being terminated were those of industry analysts—whose work, it turned out, was being sent to Capital IQ, an Indian subsidiary S&P acquired a few years ago. As a result, new subcontracting language came into play, for the second time since the contract was ratified in late June.

Out recruiting an army

CWA President Larry Cohen swung through Knoxville, Tenn. to spread the "Stewards Army" gospel Dec. 18, meeting with approximately 300 CWA members from four locals, including the Knoxville Guild. The event, billed as an employee celebration, also drew members of Jobs with Justice, the Teamsters, UNITE HERE and other unions for a discussion on how best to build union power in a so-called "right to work" state. The Knoxville Guild and a CWA mailers local at the News Sentinel have been fending off management demands to eliminate cost-of-living increases and substitute a "merit" pay system.

Time to get that passport

With the annual Guild Sector Conference and CWA's annual convention scheduled for mid July in Toronto, union officials are urging U.S. delegates to make sure they have valid passports. New regulations taking effect this month require all Americans flying to Canada to have passports for re-entry into the U.S.; processing time to receive or renew a passport can take six to eight weeks. Delegates crossing by land or sea will not require a passport this year, but will be required to show a photo ID and either a birth certificate, naturalization certificate, Green Card or passport.

Two councils elect officers

Two district councils elected officers in the past month. In the southern district they were Marilyn Kennedy, president; Nestor Soto, vice president; Rebeca Ferrar, secretary; and Mark Pattison, treasurer. In the midwest council, Jennie Tunkieicz, president; Janet Ortega, vice president; Laurie Faliano, secretary; and Mike Ulreich, treasurer.

Two Guild leaders die

Annie S. Brown, a longtime member of the Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild's executive committee, has died of complications from lupus and Cushing's disease. She was 50. An editorial clerk at the Cleveland Plain Dealer for almost 28 years, Brown was among more than 60 editorial staffers who accepted a buyout late last year. "I always considered her a very important voice on the board," said Scott Stephens, chairman of the Guild's Plain Dealer unit.

Jeanne Gavaghan, a steward and union stalwart in the Philadelphia Guild—she met her husband at a Guild meeting and adopted a dog, subsequently named Picket, when he wandered onto the picket line during the 1977 strike—has died of lung cancer. She was 69. Working the classified ad phone lines at the Philadelphia Inquirer from 1967 until her retirement in 1999, Gavaghan served as a Guild steward for almost 20 years, was a Guild convention delegate in 1991 and, in 1993, together with her husband represented Philadelphia at the Family Leave Act conference in Harrisburg. She also worked picket lines in Philadelphia and Wilmington and was described by friends as "a real fireball."

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Santa stuffs coal into Strib stockings

McClatchy boss Gary Pruitt, who sold the St. Paul Pioneer Press last spring ostensibly to forestall antitrust complaints, turned around and sold the competing Minneapolis Star Tribune the day after Christmas.

Unlike the Pioneer Press, which was auctioned off to the highest bidder in a highly publicized sale, the Star Tribune was handed off in a process so secretive that employees didn't know it was being shopped until the deal was announced. The buyer, Avista Capital Partners, paid just \$530 million, or less than half of the \$1.2 billion McClatchy paid when it bought the Star Tribune in 1998.

The Star Tribune is the 15th largest U.S. newspaper in terms of circulation and was the largest newspaper in McClatchy's portfolio of 32 dailies. Industry analysts said the

purchase price was cheap, at 6.5 times the paper's cash flow—cash flow which Avista described as "impressive" but which Pruitt viewed as lagging the chain's other newspapers. McClatchy's profit margin for the first nine months of 2006 was 25.2%, whereas "without Minneapolis the profit margin would be higher," he explained.

Both McClatchy and Avista may have had less publicized reasons for the transaction. McClatchy reportedly will get \$160 million in tax breaks from the transaction, which it can apply toward the profits it made from sales last year of a dozen Knight Ridder newspapers. The sale also meant getting rid of yet another unionized newspaper. Avista, meanwhile, has been the subject of published speculation in the Twin Cities that it may want to sell five square blocks of

semi-prime real estate that is being eyed for a possible new football stadium.

News of the sale was greeted somberly by Strib staffers, at least 200 of whom turned out for a Guild meeting Jan. 2. Union officials assured them that the divestiture is a stock sale, which means the current contract—which is in effect until July, 2008—must be honored. But attempts to learn the future plans of Avista and of Chris Harte, a former Knight Ridder executive appointed chairman of the Star Tribune's new holding company, went unanswered, prompting Guild leaders to warn that the contract won't prevent layoffs if the new owners take that increasingly familiar route.

One silver lining was confirmed two weeks later, when management assured the local it will not challenge a contract provi-

sion that entitles Guild members to opt for dismissal pay within five days after any sale of the paper. The actual transaction date isn't expected for another few weeks. The dismissal pay provision allows Guild members with at least 26 weeks of service to receive a week's pay, plus another week's pay for every 26 weeks thereafter. But because the total severance is capped at 40 weeks' pay, Guild officials are counseling caution.

"There is a chance that Avista will offer a more generous severance package after the sale is complete in order to reduce expenses," a union advisory notes. "Other newspapers of similar size have offered severance packages capped at two years or more, not 40 weeks." Guild officials also contend the five-day decision window is too short and said they would try to negotiate more time.

Signs of rallying support for news media

Continued from page 1

nice way of describing finger amputation. Also on the chopping board were half-a-dozen bureaus, including Time magazine outposts in Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta and People magazine bureaus in Miami, Chicago and the District of Columbia.

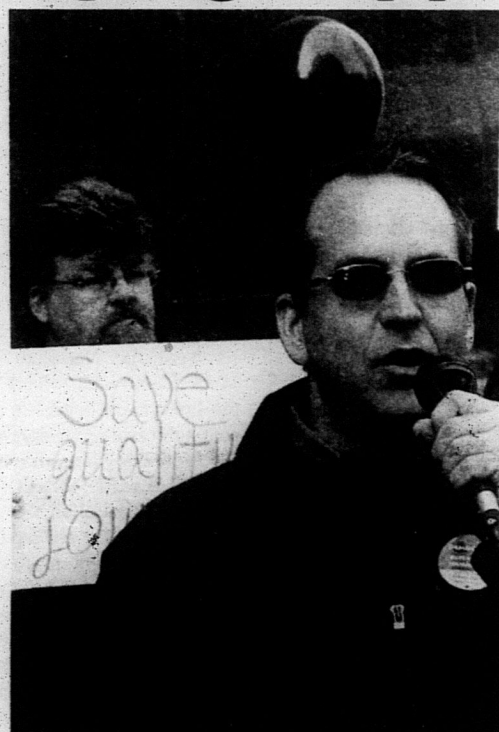
The most insidious development, however, may have been notched by the Gannett newspaper in Indianapolis, where a chain-wide initiative to transform newsrooms into "information centers" was interpreted by management as license to have newsroom employees write advertorial copy. When the local Guild objected, pointing to the traditional industry ban on newsrooms writing advertising copy, management responded with threats and accusations of union foot-dragging in the face of competitive challenges. The resulting wave of negative publicity—and contract considerations—forced management to retreat, but it wouldn't rule out the possibility that the issue will be resurrected in contract bargaining next year.

Yet amid all the assaults on job security and professional standards, there emerged a faint but stubborn note of resistance. The refusal to back down in Indianapolis was seen repeatedly across the U.S. and Canada, on a scale both large and intimate.

Most notably, more than 3,500 media works of all sorts turned up in Memphis (story, page 5) to acquaint themselves with the state of the industry and to brainstorm on how to keep it vital, relevant and free of corporate misfeasance. The importance of the event was summarized by Jim Joyce, vice president of NABET-CWA, who observed that "a basic principle of our society is that democracy is strengthened by a vibrant, independent media that includes all points of view"—including labor's, now barely audible.

News labor's voice was audible Dec. 11, however, when coast-to-coast demonstrations by Guild members at numerous newspapers drove the same point home. Whether carrying picket signs on sidewalks or merely standing at their desks for coordinated moments of silence, hundreds of newspaper employees voiced their anger and frustration at the remorseless gutting of their industry.

Columnist Doug Grow, writing in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, observed that once upon a time reporters wrote about the world from a safe distance. "But that safe



Pioneer Press reporter Brian Bonner, speaking at Dec. 11 rally, calls on management to work with employees rather than against them.

distance is gone," he added. "We've become the subject. Like Ford workers, we've become a bottom-line problem, which is quite a comedown from being members of the Fourth Estate."

The ramifications of that change were detailed by columnist Brian O'Neill of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the main speaker at a rally that got local media coverage. Recounting the loss of more than 44,000 news industry employees since 2001—40 of them in his newsroom—O'Neill explained that "the end result is the people of Pittsburgh have fewer watchdogs looking out for them. Fewer people are covering your community, your school board, your local hospital, your government and your favorite teams."

The good news is that, bit by bit, various community groups and activists are raising the alarm, sometimes with highly visible results. In Sault Ste Marie, for example, the small, 35-member Guild local has beaten back Osprey Media's outsourcing juggernaut—a success it attributes to an outpour-

ing of community support. Public response to the union's "Keep Our Newspapers Local" campaign was "overwhelming," including a city council resolution and hundreds of e-cards that local officials say tipped the balance in contract negotiations at the Sault Star. In December, Osprey finally backed off demands that would have allowed it to transfer work to its non-union sites, resulting in a speedy settlement.

Similarly, the Peoria Guild has drummed up community concern about the impending sale of the Journal Star, culminating in a Jan. 22 rally at city hall that was addressed not just by newspaper workers but by elected officials and representatives of the arts community. Noting the national trend of deep staff cuts following newspaper sales, speaker after speaker emphasized the danger that comprehensive local coverage would be sacrificed to bottom-line interests. There is "no more important institution to provide leadership and vision than an independent newspaper," Republican state Rep. David Leitch, a former Guild president, told the crowd.

Elsewhere, a citizens group in Seattle announced last month it is poised to re-enter the fray to preserve both of Seattle's daily

newspapers, currently huddling in a secret arbitration that could end up dissolving their joint operating agreement. The Committee for a Two-Newspaper Town, which became relatively inactive last May when the Pacific Northwest Guild severed its connection because of conflict-of-interest concerns, said it has hired lawyers and will be appearing before a local judge and adopting "a more aggressive public face."

And in San Francisco, where real estate investor Clint Reilly has waged what some might regard as a quixotic quest to undo the sale of former Knight Ridder newspapers to MediaNews, fresh forces recently joined the fray in the form of alternative weekly San Francisco Bay Guardian and a 30-year-old nonprofit media advocacy group, Media Alliance. Moving to intervene in the federal court case filed by Reilly, the two allies have petitioned the court to unseal records they hope will further demonstrate anti-competitive collusion between MediaNews and Hearst Corporation, owner of the competing San Francisco Chronicle—and a MediaNews partner in the acquisition.

Public involvement in newspaper issues, whether through community rallies or legal action, in itself is no guarantee that recent developments will be blocked. But it does signal a growing awareness that the current crisis is not just a matter of special-interest pleading by newspaper workers afraid of losing their jobs—that what's at stake is far more fundamental to democratic society and to its citizens. Therein lies a glimmer of hope.

Tribune auction: yawn

Suppose they held an auction and no one came? Well, almost no one: when the deadline for bidders for Tribune Co. came and went, only two offers for the whole company were on the table—and one was from the Chandler family, whose grouching about Tribune's stock price had put it in play in the first place.

Those bids were, shall we say, underwhelming. The Chandlers' offer didn't boost the share price and came with the understanding that what the family really wants is to sell the broadcast division while keeping the newspapers—many of which it had sold to Tribune just six years ago. The sales price then was \$8 billion, including debt; the Chandlers' new offer is valued at \$7.6 billion.

The other "offer," from Los Angeles billionaires Eli Broad and Ronald Burkle, was even less generous: in essence, the duo wants to pay \$500 million for a 20% stake in a company that they would load up with so much debt—almost \$11 billion—that it can pay every stockholder a special dividend of \$27 a share. Once the dust settles, they maintain, Tribune shares will still be worth \$7 apiece, providing shareholders with a combined return roughly 10% over current stock prices.

Others aren't convinced, contending that Tribune's shares in this scenario would be worth less than \$4 apiece. Tribune's board of directors, meanwhile, isn't saying anything for now while it reviews its options—which include doing nothing at all.

Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, CWA Local 32035 seeks full-time union organizer. 3-5 years experience preferred in the newspaper/information industry, organizing internal and external units, mobilizing, training, recruitment, and implementing internal issue organizing campaigns. Excellent oral, written and computer skills.

Apply to: Search Committee, WBNG, 1100 15th Street, NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20005, by February 16, 2007.

News round-up

More U.S. jobs go to India

While MediaNews has built a reputation—good, bad or indifferent, we leave to you—for clustering, sometimes the local truly is global. Latest example, according to a report in the January issue of *Newspapers & Technology*: the Denver-based company is adding the papers in its Alameda Newspaper Group to those in the Contra Costa Newspapers group that send ad production files to India for processing. The switch has cost approximately 40 jobs in the U.S. Other MediaNews properties, including the San Jose Mercury News, reportedly are evaluating a similar move.

When all else fails . . .

One sign that a company has lost its way: turning to outside consultants and focus groups to figure out what it's doing. Now Time Inc. and Dow Jones, once industry leaders because of their vision and sense of purpose, are treading this route, with potentially disastrous results. The effects at Time, which this month slashed its workforce by another 289 employees (see story, page 2) are already visible; Dow Jones, meanwhile, is still shopping around, according to a report in *Women's Wear Daily*, which duly noted that the company also is in contract negotiations with its TNG-CWA-represented employees.

California dreamin'

An administrative law judge with the National Labor Relations Board is expected to rule within the next few weeks on a petition by the Santa Barbara News-Press, which is seeking to invalidate a union representation election it claims was tainted by coercion. Meanwhile, a Feb. 26 hearing is still scheduled on four charges of unfair labor practices that the Teamsters have made against the newspaper, which garnered national attention last summer when five top editors and more than a score of other newsroom employees quit or were fired.

LA Times workers unionize

Faced with the possibility that their paper would be sold out from under them (see story, page 3), press operators at the Los Angeles Times reversed 16 years of failed organizing efforts by voting for union representation. The vote of 140-131 to join Graphic Communications Conference of the Teamsters union, while not overwhelming, marks a significant cultural change at the newspaper. Meanwhile, newsroom employees have been talking with TNG-CWA organizers.

Witness protection needed

The federal government's growing fondness for journalistic testimony in court cases unrelated to national security was on display again this month, as the U.S. Army subpoenaed journalist Sarah Olson to testify in a pre-trial hearing in the court-martial of Lt. Ehren Watada. Although it subsequently backed off its demand, Olson remains under subpoena for the full hearing in February, when the army wants her to verify Watada's explanation of why he refused orders to deploy to Iraq; Watada has not disputed Olson's report, and indeed has been outspoken in describing his decision. Also on the prosecution's witness list is journalist Dahr Jamail, who reported on Watada's very public address to the Veterans for Peace convention last August; and Guild member Gregg Kakesako, a reporter for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Get coal in your stocking?

Santa Clause was very, very good to Wall Street execs last year, even as inflation-adjusted wages for non-supervisory workers in the general workforce barely budged. According to the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, Boston, the top five Wall Street firms were expected to award an estimated \$36 billion to \$44 billion in bonuses to their 173,000 employees, an average of between \$208,000 and \$254,000. Meanwhile, although labor productivity in the nonfarm sector of the economy rose 18% between 2000 and 2006, the average wage nudged upward just 1%—or \$3.20 a week.

Labor hands across the sea

Although it's been slow coming, labor's response to capital's globalization took a significant step forward this month with an announcement by four unions in three countries of a new alliance. The pact, touted as a first step toward eventual creation of a truly international union of more than six million members, includes Amicus, the largest private sector union in Great Britain; IG-Metal, the German engineering union; and the United Steel Workers and the International Association of Machinists in the U.S. Amicus also is planning to merge with the Transport & General Workers' Union in May.

NLRB getting less business

The number of representation petitions filed with the National Labor Relations Board during fiscal year 2006 dropped 25.6% from the previous year, from 4,894 to 3,643, according to an annual report from General Counsel Ronald Meisburg. The agency conducted 94.2% of all initial elections within 56 days of the filing of the petition, up from 93.6 percent the previous fiscal year. Meanwhile, filings of unfair labor practice cases also trended downward, to 23,080 from 24,726, a 6.7% decline.

Pension ceiling announced

The federal agency that insures private pension plans, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., has announced that the maximum annual benefit in 2007 for plans it takes over will be \$49,500 for workers who wait until they're 65 to retire, a 3.9% increase over last year. Workers who retire before they hit 65 get smaller benefits.

We pay for lower taxes

A study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives concludes that Canada is falling behind other industrialized nations in a wide range of social and economic areas—and the culprit, it contends, is the Conservative government's tax cutting. Comparing high-tax Nordic countries to low-tax Anglo-American ones on 50 measures, the center found the Nordic countries faring better in 42; the U.S., it added ranks as "the most dysfunctional" country by a considerable margin.

Vacation? What's a vacation?

Americans may be deep in debt, but they're busy stockpiling another asset: as many as 574 million days of paid vacation that went unused in 2006, according to a survey by Hudson North America, a Chicago-based staffing firm. More than a third of U.S. workers don't use all their vacation days each year, the firm says, while an additional 14% haven't taken a vacation longer than one weekend and 2% haven't taken any time off at all.

Union women get a hand

The Berger-Marks Foundation, a TNG-CWA-backed enterprise promoting labor organizing among women, recently celebrated its third anniversary by unveiling www.bergemarks.org. Featuring research, organizing tips, fact sheets and inspiring stories from women organizers, the web site also includes two in-depth reports (*When Organizing Women* and *Union Organizing Among Professional Women Workers*) and links viewers to other sources of information on organizing. The foundation was created from the estates of Edna Berger, the first woman organizer for The Newspaper Guild, and her husband, songwriter Gerald Marks.

Beirne scholarships offered

Thirty college scholarships of up to \$3,000 each are again being offered by the CWA Joe Beirne Foundation, with the winners qualifying for second-year scholarships for the same amount upon satisfactory academic achievement. Applicants must be high school graduates or high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply, as well as undergraduate and graduate students returning to school. More information and application forms are available online at www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne/. The submission deadline is March 31.

Supreme Court to rule on dues use in politics

By Mark Gruenberg
Editor, Press Associates Inc.

Questions about First Amendment free-speech rights of unions and of so-called "agency fee" payers dominated arguments Jan. 10 in a Supreme Court case that could, if decided against labor, cost unions millions of dollars.

At issue was a section of a 1992 voter-passed Washington state "clean campaigns" law, later overturned by that state's Supreme Court, allowing unions to use money from agency fee payers only for collective-bargaining purposes; any other use was allowed only if the fee payers actively "opted in." In other words, observed attorney John West, arguing for the Washington Education Association, the law would bar use of fee-payers' funds for politics, lobbying, charity or any other union activities not directly related to contract bargaining and enforcement.

Arguing for precisely such limits were the National Right to Work Committee, which brought the lawsuit on behalf of five dissenting Washington state teachers, as well as Oregon Attorney General Robert McKenna and the Bush administration. Their position was that the fee-payers' First Amendment right to free speech was being violated because without such a law they must pay their fees up front, then later request a rebate of the portion used for non-collective bargaining purposes.

The Washington Education Association, on the other hand, argued that a reinstated law would violate its free speech rights—in essence, that its ability to lobby for legislation on behalf of all of the 70,000 people it represents, including the 3,500 fee payers, would be held hostage to the beliefs of its non-member fee-payers.

Agency fee-payers, numbering

approximately 1.5 million nationwide, are workers who are represented by unions but are not union members. Although the law requires them to pay the equivalent of union dues to unions that represent them, an earlier U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled that fee payers have the right to "opt out" of paying for anything other than collective bargaining expenses. Unions are required to keep a careful accounting of their various expenses so they can calculate how much of a rebate fee payers making such requests are owed.

By turning this process on its head, Washington state's law would deprive the education association, by its estimates, of between \$26 and \$70 per month from each fee payer who did not "opt in." Other unions nationwide would lose millions of dollars each year.

While association lawyer West affirmed for the court that "there is a rational basis for protecting the rights of fee payers," he added that the existing "opt-out" system provides that without creating an undue burden for the unions. The court's more conservative justices, however, weren't buying it.

"They (the state) can make it as difficult as they want to opt out," contended Samuel Alito, a Bush appointee. Added Anthony Kennedy, frequently seen as a swing vote, "The state used this mechanism to protect a First Amendment right. Why can't the state protect it even more?"

"The purpose" of the now-dead Washington state law "is to spare individuals from supporting causes of which they don't approve" added justice Antonin Scalia.

West, however, argued that banning the union from using the money, subject to the "opt-out" provision for the fee payers, shows the law "is content-discriminatory" and thus violates the free speech clause of the Bill of Rights.

AFL-CIO planning its own 'stewards army'

The AFL-CIO's unions vowed, at an organizing summit Dec. 8-9, to create a new "stewards army" of 500,000 stewards-as-organizers by 2008. The plan was presented against a backdrop of recent organizing successes—as well as a litany of the obstacles faced by organizers, including weak labor law and vicious anti-union attitudes by business and the Bush administration.

The summit also spotlighted means of overcoming such obstacles, led by passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. Every speaker, from AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney on down, labeled the act a top priority for this year.

The need for a major change is obvious. When a GOP-run

Congress passed the anti-worker Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, unions had one-third of the private workforce; today that's down to 7.8%. A 25-year decline in union representation has paralleled 25 years of wage stagnation, Sweeney added.

The summit drew hundreds of delegates to D.C. and included a mass march on Capitol Hill in support of the EFCA. CWA President Larry Cohen, who came up with the stewards' army idea almost a year ago and who is also serving as chair of the federation's organizing committee, was militant about union support of the proposed law. "No more waiting. No more whining. No more whining. We are back and we're fighting back," he declared.—Press Associates, Inc.

Conference underscores growing media worries

By Eesha Williams

More than 3,500 people—including a score or more from TNG-CWA—turned out for the third National Conference for Media Reform, held Jan. 12-14 in Memphis, or nearly twice as many as attended the last such gathering just two years ago. The huge turnout, as well as the growing roster of luminaries speaking at the event, attests to a growing public concern that the mass media on which American democracy depends are not up to the job.

Those in attendance heard from U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, two FCC commissioners from the five-member Federal Communications Commission, House telecommunications chair Edward Markey, Jesse Jackson, Jane Fonda, David Brancaccio and others. They listened to live music by the North Mississippi Allstars and the Bar-Kays. And they attended dozens of panels and workshops with the likes of TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, Pacifica Radio's Amy Goodman, Congressman Maurice Hinchey and activists from around the country.

The full-court press might have been overwhelming to some, but the feelings of many may have been captured best by Charles Martin, recently retired after a seven-year stint at the Wal-Mart in Searcy, Arkansas. "I'm in hog heaven," he said. "Sitting in Searcy I can get to feeling pretty lonely. The best thing about this conference so far was Bill Moyers's speech and realizing that there are 3,000 people who feel the same way I do."

Speakers called on Congress to encourage more local and less absentee ownership of newspapers and radio and TV stations, and to increase funding for public broadcasting. They advocated universal high-speed internet access, decrying plans by AT&T and other internet service providers to provide the fastest-loading web pages to the highest bidders. Non-profit news outlets and outlets that are funded

mostly by subscribers, not advertisers, were celebrated. Berkeley-based Pacifica Radio and the St. Petersburg Times in Florida were singled out for praise.

"American media corporations are as responsible as President Bush for the disaster we now face in Iraq," Sen. Sanders said after receiving a lengthy standing ovation. "Before the war, myself and other members of Congress held press conferences opposing the war, but you wouldn't have seen them unless you were watching the BBC or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation."

Sanders said media reform is starting to become an issue that national politicians can't avoid. In 2003, more than a million people contacted the FCC to protest its plan to weaken the rules that prevent any single person or corporation from owning every newspaper and radio and TV station in a city or town. The FCC voted 3-2 to weaken the rules anyway, but its decision was reversed by a federal appeals court. Lawyers in that case credited the massive show of public support for diversity of media ownership with making the court decision possible.

Sanders blasted mainstream media coverage of global warming for falsely claiming there is a debate among scientists over whether climate change is caused by human activity. He also said that because of thin media coverage, most Americans are unaware that every rich nation in the world except the United States has universal health insurance. Americans spend far more per person on health care than Canadians, but Americans have a shorter life expectancy.

The first National Conference for Media Reform was held in Madison, Wisconsin in 2003, the second two years later in St. Louis. All three were organized by the Northampton, Mass.-based non-profit Free Press, founded by University of Illinois professor Robert McChesney, journalist John Nichols and activist Josh Silver.

In his speech, Brancaccio cited a recent Reuters/BBC poll which

asked residents of different countries, "Is the media in your country free to report the truth?" In the U.S., 50% of respondents said "no," 30% said "yes." "The American public is starting to become very skeptical," Brancaccio said.

Markey noted that while 30% of Americans are people of color, just 3% of broadcast licenses are controlled by racial minorities. He spoke also of the recent and often one-sided battle over "net neutrality" between groups like Free Press and companies like AT&T, observing: "The phone companies have one lobbyist for each member of Congress."

The moderator of a session on media coverage of workers and unions, former New York Times reporter Jody Kolodzey, asked the several dozen people in the room to raise their hands if they were now or ever had been a member of a union. Almost everyone did.

Speaking on the panel were Foley, labor reporter and University of Mississippi professor Joe Atkins, and Greg Asbed of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which in 2005 used a national boycott of Taco Bell to win major improvements in wages and working conditions for Florida farm workers.

Asbed said his group, after discovering that the media tended to ignore or give unfavorable coverage to workers' issues, has become increasingly more sophisticated in its approach. A recent lengthy segment about Florida farm workers and the coalition on PBS's program "NOW" relied heavily on footage that was filmed by the coalition. The coalition's web site now gets some 1 million hits per month, Asbed said.

Atkins writes a column for the Clarion-Ledger, the biggest daily newspaper in Mississippi. "If I write about civil rights I get no response," he said. "If I write about labor, letters come pouring in, mostly calling me a communist." He said he is the only newspaper writer who has covered an organizing campaign by the United Auto Workers at a huge Nissan factory in Canton, Mississippi.

More than 80% of daily news-



Two unidentified participants at the media conference get a leg—or two—up on issues of media monopolies.

papers in the South are owned by corporate chains and none have labor reporters, Atkins said.

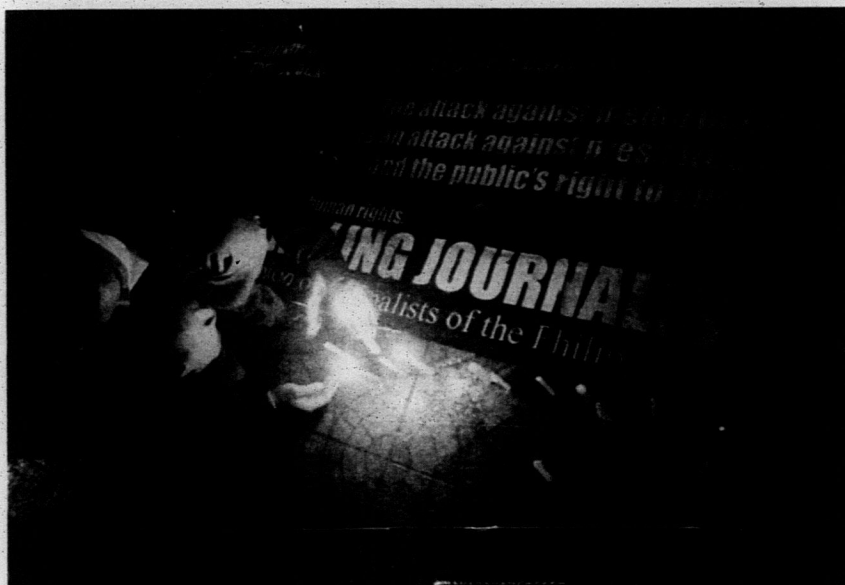
Foley picked up on that point, saying there are no labor reporters in U.S. broadcast journalism. "In the 1940s, virtually every newspaper had a labor reporter. Today, maybe half a dozen do," she added. "The business desk is now bigger than the city desk at many papers." She encouraged people in the audience to support organizing campaigns by reporters, saying reporters who belong to unions have more job security and therefore are in a better position to push their bosses to let them cover labor.

Foley also noted that the daily in Memphis, the Commercial Appeal, has failed to give its Guild-

represented workers a raise in four years. She asked, "If a newspaper treats its own workers that way, how can we expect it to cover other workers in the city objectively?"

Jane Fonda said in her speech that bosses at news outlets need to be more aware of diversity when hiring. "The media community that is overwhelmingly white is also overwhelmingly male," she said. Fonda, an actress, is co-founder of the Women's Media Center, a non-profit that pushes media companies to hire more female reporters and editors.

Williams writes for the Valley Advocate newspaper in Easthampton, Mass. and is author of Grassroots Journalism.



Journalists around the world held ceremonies in December memorializing their slain colleagues, marking a year the IFJ called "the worst ever for the killing of media staff."

UN calls for end to killing of journalists

The growing death toll of journalists and media staff, calculated by the International Federation of Journalists as hitting an all-time record of 164 in 2006, finally led to passage of a United Nations resolution at year's end. Adopted unanimously by the U.N. Security Council, the measure calls on member states to do more to protect media workers in war zones and emphasizes their responsibility for bringing to justice those who commit crimes against journalists.

Although more than 60 of the deaths occurred in Iraq, the slaying of media workers is snowballing worldwide. But U.N. Resolution 1738, introduced by Greece, received extra impetus following the slaying of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya last October. Politkovskaya's death also

resulted Dec. 12 in creation of an international commission of inquiry by the world's major press freedom groups, media employers and nine journalists' unions.

Separately, the Committee to Protect Journalists issued a report that concludes the rise in internet journalism has been accompanied by an increase in journalists imprisoned around the world. One in three jailed journalists is a blogger, online editor or web reporter.

On a related note, a Spanish judge in mid-January issued arrest warrants for three U.S. soldiers accused in the killing of Spanish TV cameraman José Couso in 2003. Couso and a Reuters cameraman, Taras Protsyuk, died when a U.S. tank fired a shell at Baghdad's Palestine Hotel despite widespread knowledge that it housed journalists.

Journalism's challenge is to see what's really important—and then to report it

Continued from page 1

casualty figures as gospel.

Or consider the repeated and ever more urgent warnings about global warming—and our continued inability or unwillingness to modify our behavior in any significant way to abort a lemming-like rush toward the abyss. Indeed, even the supposedly “liberal” National Public Radio, in an apparently misguided attempt at reportorial “balance,” featured a segment last October on the *benefits* of global warming for . . . Churchill, a town of 963 residents on the shores of Hudson Bay, to which ships now can sail four months out of the year instead of three.

We may say it's human nature to look on the bright side of seemingly intractable problems, but sheer survival dictates that we not yield to head-in-the-sand bromides. Whatever the benefits of global warming for Churchill, surely the bigger story is the relentless expansion of deserts across China, where the Gobi is expanding by more than 10,000 square kilometers every year, amid predictions that a third of all land on earth will be desert by the end of this century.

There are more examples of cataclysmic developments confronting us than can be summarized here. The point is that these are not problems that admit to easy fixes, or even to expensive ones. Rather, they require so fundamental a restructuring of our mental constructs, our lifestyles and our self-images that they become uncomfortable to contemplate. We shrink away because to come to grips with the difficulties they pose is to court helplessness. For what is the alternative? How can we meaningfully grapple with such apocalyptic scenarios?

For journalists, the dynamic described above is doubly daunting. On one hand, the press is a player, frequently feeding into and supporting public ignorance by not asking the hard questions and avoiding the “marginal” issues. More than anything else, reporters fear being taken for a ride, of being patsies for fringe science or wacko conspiracy theorists or political hatchet jobs. Reporters are supposed to be hard-eyed, skeptical, even cynical, but those qualities frequently turn out to be armor against facts, theories or ideas that step outside of conventional wisdom. While there's no risk of scorn from sticking to the status quo, those who venture too far afield get sidelined—or slapped down, hard, *a la* Gary Webb of CIA-cocaine fame.

On the other hand, reporters are victims as much as perpetrators. The forces reshaping our world and our society affect them, too. And while many journalists understand

that the “news business” is not as it once was, and to a greater or lesser degree comprehend what's happening, such understanding tends to be fragmentary. When it's not, the familiar dilemma intrudes: if we truly understand what's happening, what are we going to do about it? When the answers are too far outside our comfort zones, it's easier to avoid asking the questions that elicit them.

This avoidance is made easier by the sheer number of problems confronting us, from new technologies to fragmenting audiences to lack of diversity to media consolidation, and on and on. All are legitimate concerns, and each has a retinue of advocates pushing its agenda to the forefront. But like the blind men groping about an elephant, each can claim only a small piece of the whole, often to the unintended negation of the others—while completely missing the bigger picture.

The fundamental problem bedeviling the media these days is that journalism itself is under attack, making all those other issues subsidiary. And by “attack” I mean full-bore, head-on assaults on individuals and institutions that threaten to upend the established order by means no more nefarious than fearless reporting. Consider, for example, just some of the events that occurred within a few weeks of each other last fall and what they say about the state of journalism today:

- A British coroner ruled Oct. 13 that Terry Lloyd, a British journalist, was unlawfully slain by American forces during the Iraqi invasion. Lloyd was shot in the head by U.S. Marines firing at the civilian minivan in which he was being evacuated after he had been shot in the back by Iraqi soldiers.

- Two British former government officials are to be tried in secret in England for leaking a memo describing George Bush's discussion with Tony Blair about possibly bombing al-Jazeera, the Arabic TV network. The government sought the secret proceedings because, it argued in early October, further public disclosure of the memo's contents would be as harmful now as it was two years ago.

- According to the fifth annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index, compiled by Reporters Without Borders and released Oct. 24, the United States has tumbled to 53rd among 168 countries worldwide in its protection of press freedom. “Relations between the media and the Bush administration sharply deteriorated after the president used the pretext of ‘national security’ to regard as suspicious any journalist who questioned his ‘war on terrorism,’” the group observed. It added: “The zeal of federal courts, which, unlike those in 33 U.S. states, refuse to recognize the media's right not to reveal its sources, even threatens

journalists whose investigations have no connection at all with terrorism.”

- Among the subjects of the Reporters Without Borders' second comment are San Francisco Chronicle reporters Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams, who learned Oct. 25 that a federal appeals court will decide in March if they will be jailed for refusing to identify their sources of grand jury testimony about athletic steroid abuse. They face up to 18 months of jail time, while the Chronicle is being fined \$1,000 a day.

- Anarchist blogger Josh Wolf has been imprisoned since Aug. 1 for refusing to give police the video he shot of a San Francisco demonstration in which a police officer suffered a fractured skull and someone tried, unsuccessfully, to torch a patrol car. Some of the unreleased footage includes protesters who shed their masks to speak to Wolf with the understanding that their identities would be protected.

While high-profile initiatives to “save” journalism are top-down driven and focus on impersonal, institutional forces—Wall Street, the internet, the FCC and so on—resistance to the more fundamental attack on independent journalism is limited largely to individuals whose reward typically is to be censured. Independent voices are most vulnerable precisely because they are independent, and therefore often alone. So Linda Greenhouse, veteran Supreme Court reporter for the New York Times, was excoriated for sharing her thoughts with fellow Harvard alumni, notably for characterizing the Bush administration's “law-free zones” in Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and elsewhere. And Joe Maguire lost his job as a financial markets editor at Reuters for announcing the emperor has no clothes—in this case, by “disclosing” that Ann Coulter is a liar.

There is, in this business, a great deal of lip service given to the role of a free press and of the central importance of democratic discourse. But what's really happening is that many embattled journalists have turned away from such discourse while rationalizing their self-protective reflex as a higher form of professionalism.

The epitome of this self-deception was provided Oct. 30 by Mark Halperin, political director of ABC News, in an interview with Hugh Hewitt in which he disclosed that he has never voted in a presidential election. “I don't vote, because I think that just opens up the question of how can I say I'm being objective, and fighting for truth, if I'm making a decision about who to vote for in a presidential race?” he explained.

In that one sound-bite, Halperin

explained precisely what's wrong with journalism today.

No amount of blue-ribbon panels or foundation-funded research proposals or codes of ethics can resurrect journalism that's grounded in so vapid a concept of “objectivity” and “truth.” And no press corps dominated by such facile reasoning and shallow appreciation of human complexity is ever going to understand the truly large issues of the day. No surprise, then, that today's journalism increasingly lacks humane values or a fearless willingness to grapple with truly scary ideas and developments, taking solace instead in an increasingly rarefied concept of journalistic purity.

Admittedly, it's hard to keep lofty ideas in mind when payrolls are being whacked and newspapers are changing hands like Monopoly properties. And it's hard to bring a contrarian perspective to an issue that vested interests have coopted, putting their own institutional gloss on the subject. But good journalism—the kind of journalism we point to when asked to explain why the press deserves special protection—has always come down to individual reporters describing the world in unflinching and unvarnished terms. Everything else in the news business isn't journalism; it's business.

The Newspaper Guild was founded to give voice to individual journalists at a time—the depths of the Great Depression—when reporters were as vulnerable as they are today. Even then, the biggest challenge union organizers faced was the natural human tendency to avoid basic truths that deviate too sharply from accepted wisdom. But today's journalists live in a pressure-cooker of corporate economic threats, political brow-beating, blogger scrutiny and state-sponsored violence that in many ways make the Thirties seem comparatively halcyon.

So it's appropriate to support Guild members like Fainaru-Wada, Williams and Greenhouse—but it's also appropriate to support non-Guild reporters and editors like Josh Wolf or Joe Maguire. It's appropriate to mourn the casual killing of Terry Lloyd and dozens of other journalists—and the more deliberately targeted assaults on journalists on the “other” side. Most of all, it's appropriate always to keep individual reporters, photographers or editors in mind as the crucial enablers of the democratic discourse we must have if we're to survive.

What can we do? Use our voices. Speak out. Assert our rights as human beings to be part of the world we report on. Most of all, we can start paying attention to the stories that make a difference—the stories on which our democracy and our planet hang in the balance.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

A headline in the Dec. 8 edition reads, “Philadelphia walk-out threat over pensions.” From what I can learn, it was an empty threat, due to the equivocating of the CWA. Partly as a result of CWA not being behind us, Philadelphia Local 10 had to settle for a crappy, regressive contract that will cost members much money over its three-year term.

Prior to ratification, when I asked at an informational meeting where CWA was when we needed it, a CWA rep said that before it could “invest” in a strike it had to be sure it could win.

If that's the case, the CWA can never again green-light a strike because no one can be sure of “winning.” If this is indeed CWA policy, it is unworthy of any trade union. It would have Heywood Broun spin-

ning in his grave. You strike a) when it is forced upon you, and b) when you are being wronged by a company that is stuck on stupid and won't move.

Philly icon “Rocky” didn't go into any fight assured of victory. I expect no less of my union.

—Stu Bykofsky, Columnist,
Philadelphia Daily News

Editor's Note: The CWA Executive Board did grant the strike approval requested by the Philadelphia Guild, but a tentative settlement was reached without the local requesting a specific strike date. In explaining the constitutional requirements for a strike, a TNG/CWA representative told the local it would have to demonstrate that it had a strategy for winning—not that it would win. A complicating factor

in this case was that all the other Philadelphia unions had tentative agreements that prohibited them from lawfully refusing to cross a Guild picket line. Meanwhile, it should be noted that CWA District 13 Vice President James Short used his considerable political clout to get numerous politicians—including the governor—to intervene on behalf of the Guild. Earlier, TNG/CWA helped sponsor an advertising campaign on behalf of the local.

To the Editor,

I quote Debbie Thomas' Human Rights Watch column in the Nov. 10 Guild Reporter: “Among other initiatives, CLUW has a television ‘tell someone’ campaign explaining that cervical cancer is caused by a virus and stressing the importance of regular screen-

ing to prevent the disease.”

The women who appear in this TV presentation are stunned, claiming that they never knew this (that cervical cancer can develop from a virus). A doctor states that millions of women may not even know they have the human papilloma virus; she says the viewer should “tell someone,” and the women in the commercial vow to tell their daughters, friends and sisters.

Not once in this commercial is it mentioned that HPV, the virus, is a sexually transmitted disease. How can women warn the people they love about this virus if it isn't made clear how it is contracted?

The truth will set us free. Why can it not be made known?

—Therese Hagerty, Retiree
Philadelphia Newspaper Guild



LOOKING AHEAD

Rage, but also calm analysis

By Linda Foley, President

Veteran newsman Jimmy Breslin once said, "Rage is the only quality which has kept me, or anybody else I have ever studied, writing columns for newspapers."

It's easy to express rage about what's happening to people who work in today's news industry. It seems every time we turn around, another newspaper is sold, another media outlet is consolidated and hundreds of workers have lost their jobs. The resentment of those left behind to make these news organizations both relevant and profitable is stoked by managers who insist they do more with less.

It's infuriating that media companies did not spend their halcyon days of 20% and 30% profit margins investing in new technologies and workforce retraining for the digital age.

In his "Newsosaur" blog on New Year's Day, Alan Mutter observed that publishing stocks have lost \$13.5 billion in value (20.5% of their market capitalization) in the last two years. He blames the sell-off on "declining readership, falling revenues and rising concern over the industry's ability to respond effectively to competition from the new media." But Mutter also blames growing pressure from Wall Street for the lack of planning for the future, pointing out that industry executives have been forced to focus on expense cuts that imperil the long-term health of their media products.

"In all likelihood," Mutter writes, "news-paper companies would have performed better in the last two years, if publishers had spent more time rigging their businesses for the digital age and less time trucking with the pin-striped barbarians at their gates."

So even as we get angry and express outrage and concern about how our industry is coping with its latest crisis, we still must look to its future. The future of the news business won't just depend on how well media compa-

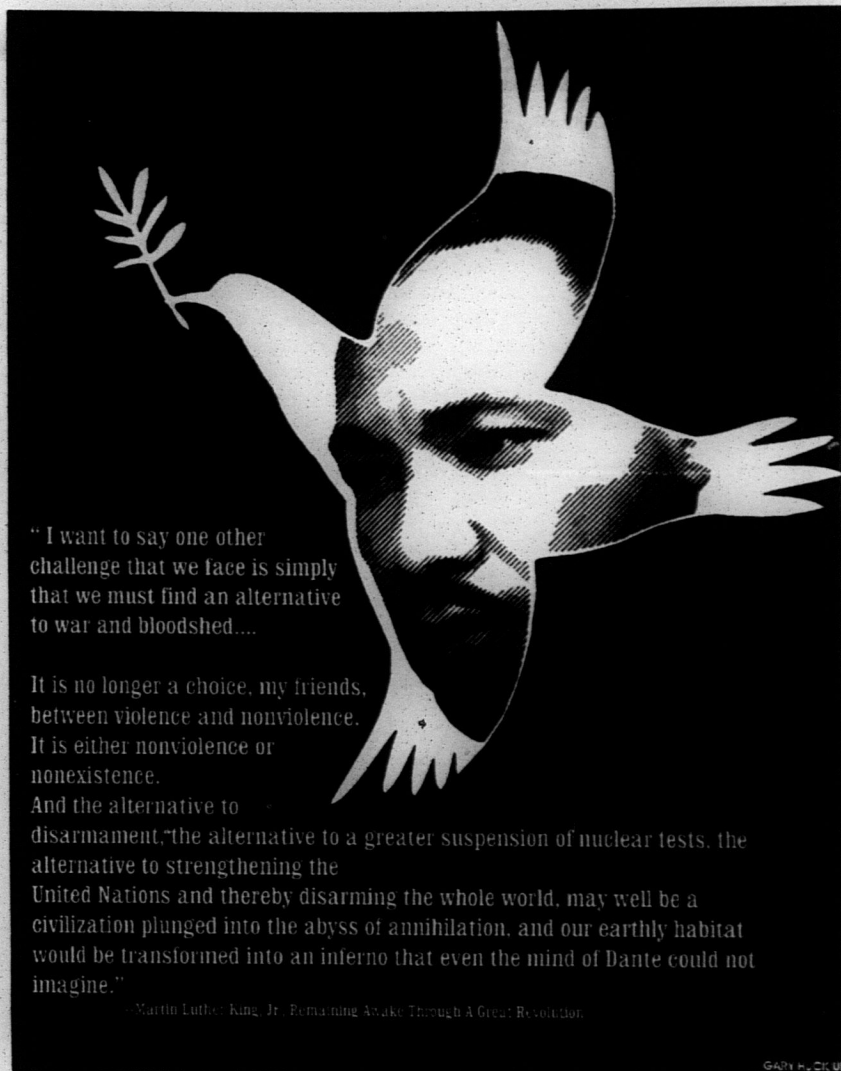
nies equip themselves to go digital. It will also depend on re-establishing the esprit de corps that once ran through the workforce and management of these organizations.

It's easy to romanticize about the "good old days," and it would be fiction to portray news organizations of the past as bastions of cooperation and coordination. However, any sense of shared purpose that once existed in this business has been shattered by the disproportionate extent to which the industry's latest woes have been shouldered by its workforce.

Nevertheless, it's in our interest to try to re-establish a worker-management relationship that will help us all face the future in this rapidly evolving media world.

The University of Maryland Phillip Merrill College of Journalism has agreed to partner with The Newspaper Guild-CWA on a project that will help Guild members and their bosses figure out what the jobs in the news industry will become. The project has four phases: a research phase, including a comprehensive survey of news industry workers both in news and commercials departments; an education and mobilization phase, during which we will use the research to engage workers about how to shape the future of their jobs; a national meeting or "summit" of rank-and-file workers, news organization executives and technical and financial analysts, at which we all discuss what our collective future may look like; and, finally, the establishment of a local and national ongoing dialogue about how we can succeed together.

We will examine key questions, such as: What will be the job of a journalist? How can we remake advertising so it produces profits online needed to support our employers and ourselves? What will happen to circulation and printing production departments? What are alternative ownership structures that can manage effective news



"I want to say one other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed...."

It is no longer a choice, my friends, between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.

And the alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation, and our earthly habitat would be transformed into an inferno that even the mind of Dante could not imagine."

Martin Luther King Jr. *Remaining Awake Through A Great Revolution*

GARY H. DE LUKE

organizations? There are many questions, and no one group of stakeholders in the news industry has the answers.

For now, we need to stay angry about how many of our members are having their lives shattered. For now, we should be outraged that our pension plans are being frozen because employers are diverting needed contributions elsewhere. For now, we must fight to keep our work protected from lower wage outsourcing and shifts to

non-union worksites. Those fights are critical to our future, too.

But when and if the dust settles, and we can again think about a future for this important news industry we all care about, then we'll need to take the lead, shake off our anger and join with our bosses to figure out where we go from here. Long-term, that focus—and not rage—will keep future Jimmy Breslins writing columns for newspapers.

Shooting the messenger is a war crime

By Amy Goodman

When you step off the elevator at the Reuters news offices in Washington, D.C., you see a large book sitting on a wooden stand. Each entry describes a Reuters journalist killed in the line of duty.

Journalists such as Taras Protsyuk. The veteran Ukrainian cameraman was killed on April 8, 2003, the day before the U.S. seized Baghdad. Protsyuk was on the balcony of the Palestine Hotel when a U.S. tank positioned itself on the al-Jumhuriyah bridge and, as people watched in horror, unleashed a round into the side of the building. The hotel was known for housing hundreds of unembedded reporters. Protsyuk was killed instantly. José Couso, a cameraman for the Spanish network Telecinco, was filming from the balcony below. He was also killed.

The difference between the responses by the mainstream media in the United States versus Europe was stunning. While in this country there was hardly a peep of protest, Spanish journalists engaged in a one-day

strike. From the elite journalists down to the technicians, they laid down their cables, cameras and pens. They refused to record the words of then-Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who joined British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush in supporting the war. When Aznar came into parliament, they piled their equipment at the front of the room and turned their backs on him. Photographers refused to take his picture and instead held up a photo of their slain colleague. At a news conference in Madrid with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Spanish reporters walked out in protest. Later, hundreds of journalists, camera people and technicians marched on the U.S. embassy in Madrid, chanting "Murderer, murderer."

About four hours before the U.S. military opened fire on the Palestine Hotel, a U.S. warplane strafed Al-Jazeera's Baghdad office. Reporter Tareq Ayyoub was on the roof. He died almost instantly.

When interviewed after his death, Ayyoub's wife, Dima, said: "Hate breeds hate. The United States said they were doing this to rout out terrorism. Who is engaged in

terrorism now?" This past summer, she sued the U.S. government.

The family of Jose Couso has also taken action. They know the names of the three U.S. servicemen who fired on the Palestine Hotel. On Dec. 5, 2006, the Spanish Supreme Court said the men could be tried in Spanish courts, opening the possibility for indictments against the U.S. soldiers.

The military response to the journalists' deaths? Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria "Torie" Clarke, who has since become a news consultant for CNN and ABC, said at the time that Baghdad "is not a safe place. They should not be there."

David Schlesinger, global managing editor of Reuters, said: "It seems in my interactions with the U.S. military—to paraphrase, basically—if you are not embedded, we cannot do anything to protect you. Journalists need to be accorded the rights under the Geneva Convention, of civilians not to be shot at willy-nilly, not to be harassed in doing their professional jobs."

The U.N. Security Council agrees. On Dec. 23, it passed a unanimous resolution

insisting on the protection of journalists in conflict zones.

More than 120 reporters and other media workers have been killed in Iraq since the invasion. In August 2003, Reuters cameraman Mazen Dana was filming outside Abu Ghraib prison when a machine-gun bullet tore through his chest. The Pentagon said the soldiers had "engaged a cameraman."

Not long before his death, Dana won the International Press Freedom Award. "We carry a gift," he said. "We film and we show the world what is going on. We are not part of the conflict." In receiving his award, Dana reflected, "Words and images are a public trust, and for this reason I will continue with my work regardless of the hardships and even if it costs me my life."

But it shouldn't have. The Pentagon should adopt the U.N. standard and send a clear message to its ranks: Shooting the messenger is a war crime that will not be tolerated.

Goodman hosts the radio news program "Democracy Now!"

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: February 16.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

On dreams—
and dreamers

By Debbie Thomas
TNG-CWA Human Rights Director

Happy New Year! It's January, and we just celebrated Martin Luther King Day, now billed as a day of service. No one wants this holiday—one we fought so hard to get—to become another excuse to lie in bed or go shopping.

I read recently that many people know very little about Dr. King other than his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. This most intelligent man and eloquent speaker was named Time Magazine's Man of The Year in 1963, was the youngest man ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and used the prize money of more than \$60,000 to further the civil rights movement. He also was an ardent union supporter, which is why he was in Memphis that tragic day in April 1968 when he was cut down.

But it's that one speech by which he is remembered most often, a speech that talks about a dream. Wouldn't Dr. King be surprised, more than 40 years later, to see where that dream has gone? The erosion of the middle class, the vast number of jobs that have been sent overseas by American corporations seeking ever higher profits, a minimum wage so low it has created a permanent underclass of working poor?

What happened to that dream in which you are judged by the content of your character, not the color of your skin? I'm certain Dr. King would be appalled at the sometimes vicious reaction immigrants have received in their quest to be free citizens of this country; the often racist remarks made even by government workers.

Shouldn't the government protect and serve? Maybe it's too busy tapping my phone. So much for a dream of "all sitting down together at the table of brotherhood."

Dr. King spoke of the faith required to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. Yet here we are again, divided by yet another war of our own making—divided not over our service men and women, who are simply doing their duty, but over our reasons for invading Iraq and what we hope to accomplish and when it is time to come home.

So much for "black boys and black girls joining hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers." The condition of our inner-city schools is as abysmal as ever, and maybe worse, with students and teachers alike stricken with a lack of motivation or promise. We are creeping as a society back into a world of separate and unequal. Many a child is being left behind.

All is not yet lost. Perhaps this new Congress will be more concerned with the needs of the average working-class American, more concerned with education and more concerned with making this a real melting pot in which we all truly are equal. Meanwhile, I am reminded of one of my favorite poems by Langston Hughes, "A Dream Deferred."

"What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore—and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?"

Unions win twice with NLRB

In separate morale-boosting moves at opposite ends of the U.S., the National Labor Relations Board has slapped newspaper managements over their dealings with unionized employees.

In Hawaii, the NLRB denied for a second time allegations by the Tribune-Herald that the Hawaii Guild has been bargaining in bad faith. The newspaper's charges were denied for the first time in late September, prompting an appeal that was rejected Dec. 8 by the board's regional director, Joseph P. Norelli.

The Tribune-Herald is owned by the Stephens Media Group and employs approximately 55 Guild members, who have been seeking a new contract since 2002.

Meanwhile, a different regional director, Frederick J. Calatrello, has charged management at the Toledo Blade with widespread labor law violations over its lockout of more than 200 production employees since last August. A trial date before an administrative law judge has been set for March 19. The locked-out employees, although not Guild members, are represented by CWA and the Teamsters.

The Blade lock-out, a strong-arm effort to wrest deep concessions from the unions in contract bargaining, shows no signs of ending but also seems unlikely to be extended to the Guild-represented newsroom and advertising departments. Interviewed by Editor & Publisher in late December, the Blade's general manager, Joe Zerbey, proclaimed that the lock-out could be maintained "forever if we had to."

While newspaper production has been bolstered by hiring as many as 90 replacement workers, the Blade's intact newsroom nevertheless is withering away. Toledo Guild spokesman Larry Vellette says a news staff that once numbered approximately 120 is down about a third, as reporters, editors and others conclude there's little future at a newspaper that's being driven into the ground.

"The attrition rate within the Guild is just phenomenal," he said. "We don't even have parties for [those who are leaving] any more, there's so many. It's sad but true."

St. Louis reporter wins decision

An arbitrator has ordered the St. Louis Post Dispatch to revoke a two-day suspension it issued to reporter Carolyn Tuft in 2005 for alleged reporting errors and to reimburse her for lost earnings. The arbitrator did let stand a written warning letter to Tuft.

The prize-winning reporter was the only person disciplined over a highly edited series about the Joyce Meyer Ministries, with management publishing a lengthy, fawning apology in response to Meyer's

complaints. The St. Louis Guild immediately filed a grievance, contending that any errors "were neither intentional or serious"—and, in fact, that three of the cited examples weren't errors at all.

Local President Jeff Gordon said the ruling sent a clear message to the newsroom, which had rallied to Tuft's defense, "that management could not take excessive and arbitrary actions against reporters and other employees who were committed to doing quality work."

NEWSDOKU

Newsdoku is played like Sudoku: just fill in the grid at right so that every horizontal row, every vertical column and every 3x3 box contains nine different letters.

However, in addition to filling in the squares, the nine letters may be used to spell one or more words that answer or describe a clue. Some letters may be used more than once. For example, if the Newsdoku letters are A-C-E-F-H-L-R-T-Y and the clue is "Watered down the NLRA," the answer is TAFT-HARTLEY ACT.

This month's clue: Although New York-based Heywood Brown is credited with founding the American Newspaper Guild, the first local chartered by the fledgling union is now known as:

Entries postmarked no later than Feb. 26 may be mailed to: The Guild Reporter, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001. If there's more than one correct set of answers, the winner will be chosen at random. The answer to this puzzle will be published in February; the winner will be named in March.

The winner of the November Newsdoku was Kerry McGinn of Spokane, Wash., who will receive a copy of "Communities Without Borders" by photojournalist David Bacon.

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MIDDLING DIFFICULTY

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DAYBOOK

New Local Officers Training,
Feb. 16-19, Meany Center, MD

Providence Guild Folies,
Feb. 23, Providence, RI

CWA Legislative-Political Conf.
March 25-28, Washington, DC

Labor's Voices III conference,
April 26-28, New York, NY

Midwest, Great Lakes, Southern
Councils, May 4-6, DC

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DECEMBER NEWSDOKU SOLVED

December's clue asked who organized the 1963 March on Washington. He was: A. PHILIP RANDOLPH

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

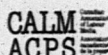
U.S. Senator Robert F. Wagner, author of the National Labor Relations Act, declares that the right of newspaper employees to organize has nothing to do with freedom of the press—the standard objection to Guild organizing from the American Newspaper Publishers Association. . . . Eleanor Roosevelt, who is writing a daily column, joins the New York Guild but announces "I don't suppose I would ever go on strike." . . . The New York Typographical Union formally agrees not to settle its strike against the North Shore Journal until management recognizes the Guild.

Fifty years ago this month:

Eighty-five Guild members lose their jobs at the Philadelphia Daily News, which says the cuts are necessary to save the paper. . . . James A. Wechsler, editor of the New York Post, says in a speech that most editors "believe that what is good news for the Republican Party is good news for their readers." His comments are largely ignored by other newspapers. . . . The Vancouver Newspaper Guild, oldest newspaper guild in Canada, votes overwhelmingly in favor of affiliating with the American Newspaper Guild.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

The Associated Press settles unfair labor practice charges by affirming that employees have a right to wear union buttons. . . . After more than 11 months on the picket line, Guild members return to work at the Terre Haute Tribune and Star under a ruling that the strike was caused by "flagrant and widespread" unfair labor practices. . . . A U.S. Justice Dept. law judge rules that a joint operating agreement in Seattle should be granted.



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