

THE GUILD Reporter

September 14, 2007

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 74, Number 9

#BXNBRNS 0907
(C)
PERIODICALS ACQUISITIONS
PROQUEST INFO AND LEARNING
300 N ZEEB RD # 1346
ANN ARBOR MI 48103-1553
|||||



Court interpreters in southern California step out to protest lack of step increases in wage scales.

LA court interpreters strike for wage scale

More than 400 court interpreters hit the streets in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties Sept. 5, in a long-predicted job action over the counties' refusal to approve salary steps in a new contract. The striking workers, represented by the California Federation of Interpreters, a unit of the Northern California Media Workers Guild, are the only county employees without salary steps, which pay higher salaries to more experienced workers.

"As we have said time and again, at this point it's not a matter of money—it's a matter of fairness," explained federation president Silvia Barden. "What are we, second-class citizens? The red-haired stepchildren of the courts? We are an integral part of the justice system and we demand respect and equal treatment."

Getting respectful treatment has been a long uphill slog for the interpreters, who had to win a change in California state law a few years ago before they could unionize. Their first contracts, negotiated in 2004 and 2005, provided many interpreters with their first regular paychecks—until then they were hired as freelancers—and their first benefits packages, including health insurance and paid vacations.

But a certain plantation mentality still persists among some court administrators, say federation members, resulting in gridlock over something as

commonplace as salary steps. As a result, the federation said more than 90% of its members were honoring the picket lines, creating a scramble inside the region's courthouses.

As one of the country's most ethnically diverse regions, southern California has an exceptionally high demand for interpreters. The state constitution requires that non-English speakers charged with a crime have access to court-appointed interpreters, which means the courts need facility in dozens of languages, from Spanish to Vietnamese, Russian, Mandarin and Armenian. Yet even as Los Angeles has a shortage of 20 to 40 interpreters a day, said a federation representative, court wages are half or less of those paid by other employers.

Court response to the strike has been to draft anyone on payroll with foreign language skills, said Barden, from clerks to bailiffs. "We have been told that in one arraignment court in the Criminal Courts Building, an attorney has been using custodians to interpret for him," she added. Court administrators also reportedly were paying out-of-town scabs \$500 a day plus expenses to cross the picket line.

Meanwhile, other labor organizations in the area have lent their support to the interpreters, with the Los Angeles Federation of Labor and the Teamsters Joint Council officially sanctioning the strike.

Kirkup seeks Int'l Chair nod

Lois Kirkup, TNG-CWA regional vice president for eastern Canada, has declared her candidacy for TNG-CWA Chairperson. She will be running on a ticket with TNG-CWA President Linda Foley, who is seeking reelection, and Scott Stephens, vice president for region 3, who is seeking the secretary-treasurer post.

"The next few years are going to be the most difficult we have seen in a long time and the members need strong leadership to make sure we survive," Kirkup said, adding, "I know I can help in our journey."

An online editor at the Ottawa Citizen, Kirkup was



Lois Kirkup

elected president of the Ottawa Newspaper Guild in 1999 after stints as secretary and vice president. She also served on TNG Canada-CWA's executive board, as a member-at-large and later as secretary, and was elected to the TNG-CWA executive council in July, 2006.

"Scott Stephens and I are thrilled that Lois Kirkup has decided to run for TNG-CWA chairperson," Foley said. "She brings a fresh perspective on today's media to our team. With Lois as chairperson, the Guild's leadership will reflect the truly bi-national composition of our union."

Kirkup will be opposed at the polls by Connie Knox, currently vice president for region 2. The incumbent chair, Carol Rothman, will be running for secretary-treasurer, while the current secretary-treasurer, Bernie Lunzer, will oppose Foley. Nominations will be made at the sector conference in February.



Postal rate hike hits labor press

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Earlier this year, as sketchy details about a proposed postal increase began leaking out to the public, a sense of panic swept the offices of many small-circulation publishers. The basic formula had been designed by the industry's biggest heavy-weight, Time Warner. The details were so complicated that the U.S. Postal Service would need several months to design the necessary software. The country's small publishers would get hit like a ton of bricks.

And so it came to pass.

The July bill for mailing the Guild Reporter was 26.6% higher than June's. Indeed, postage is now so expensive that mailing the paper costs more than printing it. Similar increases are threatening all publications without a substantial advertising base—including many union publications—with severe cutbacks in frequency or

page count, and some may be eliminated altogether.

Although all publications are paying more for postage, those hit hardest have relatively small circulation but far-ranging distribution, which means they can't take advantage of discounts offered to mass marketers, such as bundling by zip code or drop-shipping to regional mailing centers.

For example, CWA Local 1180 in New York City produces a bi-monthly tabloid, *Communiqué*, for approximately 15,500 city employees and retirees. Perhaps 60% of its distribution is within the city—but the other 40% is broadcast throughout the U.S., to all the places that retirees seek out. The bottom line? A 35% jump in postage.

"I expect that one of the questions we'll have to grapple with is whether we can continue mailing to our retirees, since that's where the bulk of the increased costs are," said editor Esther Kaplan.

Continued on page 2

Inside this issue



A return to minority unions? page 3

When the FBI went after the Guild page 5

Homesteading the blogosphere page 6

Rate hike slams labor press

Continued from page 1

The International Musician, a 36-40 page magazine with circulation of about 100,000, produced by the American Federation of Musicians, was slapped with a 27% increase. Like the Guild Reporter, it too is mailed throughout the United States and Canada.

Publications with less than national distribution fared better, albeit still with double-digit increases. The Communicator, a glossy magazine of about 70,000 circulation produced by a New York-based AFT affiliate, the Public Employees Federation, estimates its increased cost at about 21%. For the Labor Paper, a tabloid with 80% of its circulation within Kenosha and Racine counties in southern Wisconsin, the increase was approximately 15%. For the Union Advocate, a tabloid circulated almost entirely in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, 12.5%.

Generally speaking, the bigger the circulation the less of an increase, at least percentage-wise. USW@Work, a 36-page Steelworkers publication with more than a million circulation, took an 8.3% bump; Teamster magazine, with 1.7 million in circulation, reports an increase of approximately 7%. But even comparatively small increases on large volumes quickly add up. At the Teamsters, the increase will add up to a \$100,000 annual bite just for the magazine, says union spokesman Per Bernstein, while the increased cost of all of its mail will be roughly tripled.

The St. Louis-South Illinois Labor Tribune, which has a much smaller circulation of 90,000 but which comes out weekly, is looking at \$80,000 a year in higher postal costs, forcing an increase in subscription rates—and the hope that the higher rates won't be offset by non-renewals. "This rate increase is absolutely ludicrous, to put all the weight on the little guys," complains publisher Ed Finkelstein.

With many unions having drastically pared their publication fre-

quency even before the increase, some were not clear even in late August just how much of a hit they would have to absorb. The CWA News, for example, in recent years has gone from monthly to seven-times-a-year publication—and

referring to a 20% increase. Still, he added, "an increase of that magnitude could really make a difference."

Antoinette Follett, managing editor of the International Musician, echoed a widespread resignation when she observed, "The post office tells you, 'this is the price,' and where else are you going to go?" But AFM comptroller Lorraine Bartlett offered a sobering contrast. "There's a possibility we may be looking at some point at going to every other month," down from the current monthly production cycle, she said.

Others are looking to switch from periodical mailing permits to non-profit ones—but that can require a drastic format change. To get a substantial savings on a non-profit mailing permit, publications must be folded no larger than the maximum letter size, which is 11.5" x 6.125". (Larger pieces can be mailed at the non-profit rate for flats, but that's more expensive than even the higher periodical rate.) Because most existing publications can't be folded that small due to mechanical limitations (tabloid pages are too big, magazines have too many pages, many presses can't make the desired folds), unions and district councils trying to go this route have to do a complete design overhaul.

But that's just what the Metro Detroit Labor News, which used to be a tabloid, is doing every other issue: converting to an 8" x 12" page, which it folds in half and mails at the non-profit rate. (Its other four issues each year are being printed as before and mailed at the higher periodical rate.) The American Federation of Government Employees likewise has chopped its publication size in half, for the same reason, and it seems almost certain others will follow suit—especially as the enormity of the price increase sinks in.



For many labor periodicals already operating on a shoestring, the postal rate hike amounts to a gag on publication.

because it mailed its July-August issue before the increase kicked in, won't get the bad news until its September issue goes out. At other unions, the news simply hasn't had time to percolate through the bureaucracy, with several editors and communications directors reporting that they know they got slammed, but not by how much.

The bigger question is how various publications are responding to a sometimes crippling cost. Many say they are in a wait-and-see mode, looking for more data—and leadership reaction—before they start formulating strategies. "I don't know that we're doing anything differently because of it," said Jim Spellane, communications director for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,

Labor editor dies

Longtime union journalist, activist and organizer William Moody, noted for his social activism and for his quality-content and visually interesting labor publications in a career that spanned more than 50 years, died Aug. 9 in Silver Spring, Md. He was 90.

A southern Indiana native, Moody started his union career in 1941 as a field organizer for a strike that won the 40-hour week for New York City department store workers. He turned to publicity and communications, playing a key role in solidifying Philadelphia labor support for the legendary United Electrical Workers Local 107 strike against Westinghouse in 1955-1956.

Moody also worked for the United Retail and Department Store Union, the National Maritime Union, the Transport Workers, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, the Office and Professional Employees, the Distributive Workers, the International Mailers, and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees.

Turning to printing and graphics, Moody joined the Amalgamated Lithographers of America and stayed with it through a series of union mergers until its final home, the Graphic Communications International Union. Moody's last post was as communications director of GCIU and editor of the Graphic Communicator, which he turned into a showcase publication of interesting articles and outstanding art.

Moody received more than two dozen awards from the International Labor Communications Association, among other organizations. In addition to working for the Graphic Communicator, he was a labor journalist for the Union Tabloid, the Graphic Arts Unionist, The Hotel and Club Voice and other publications.

Moody's two marriages ended in divorce and his special female companion died in 2005. Survivors include two daughters and their husbands, a son and his wife, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. —PAI

Guild briefs . . .

Portland whacks 40-year veteran

The Portland Press Herald and Maine Sunday Telegram laid off eight employees Aug. 17, citing a 25% plunge in revenues and a 16% drop in daily circulation over the past three years. Those laid off included a Guild member with nearly 40 years of service to the company; none were offered buy-outs in lieu of layoffs. Contract negotiations, meanwhile, reportedly are at a "virtual standstill" as both sides prepare for a legal battle before the National Labor Relations Board. The Portland Newspaper Guild now has eight grievances at the arbitration stage.

Detroit roundelay of contract talks

Guild members voted 47-5 to ratify a new three-year contract with JRC-owned Independent Newspapers, publishers of the Mt. Clemens Macomb Daily and the Royal Oak Daily Tribune. Following the Aug. 26 vote, the Detroit local turned its attention to contract bargaining with the Gannett-owned Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, which employ 40 Guild-represented editorial employees. And talks were scheduled to begin this month on behalf of 10 editorial and business office employees at the Michigan Catholic.

Zinser's dance card too full

The trial over 13 complaints filed by the National Labor Relations Board against the Hawaii Tribune-Herald has receded even further into the future, this time rescheduled for Oct. 23. The postponement was sought by the newspaper's lawyer, Michael L. Zinser, who's been too busy defending the Santa Barbara (Calif.) News-Press against similar union-busting charges to fly out to the islands.

North of border, it's now CWA/SCA

TNG Canada became just another chapter in Guild history Sept. 4, as the organization completed its name change to CWAISCA Canada. "When you call our national office in Ottawa, you will hear the new identification," Director Arnold Amber announced, adding that the union also has adopted a new logo. SCA stands for Syndicat des Communications d'Amérique (Union of Communications of America). "These words vary from the English but were selected to allow us to have a unique French-language acronym in Canada," Amber explained.

Buffalo ratifies contract extension

In balloting on Aug. 21, Buffalo Guild members ratified a tenta-

tive agreement on a three-year contract extension by a vote of 159-6. The extension, negotiated a full year before the existing contract expires by limiting talks to just a handful of issues, was propelled by a Guild cost-controlling proposal for restructuring health care coverage.

Pittsburgh's loss, Minnesota's gain

Mike Bucsko, Pittsburgh Guild president since November 2000, resigned Sept. 15 to become executive officer of the Minnesota Newspaper Guild Typographical Union. He replaces Darren Carroll, a TNG sector representative who had been on loan to the local as its acting executive officer since last November. A Pittsburgh membership meeting Sept. 6 nominated board member R.J. Hufnagel to fill Bucsko's unexpired term and to fill the new term that begins Nov. 1. Bucsko was a Pittsburgh Guild officer for 15 years and previously served as secretary, grievance chair and unit chair.

SHOW US THE MONEY



Dow Jones management's current contract proposal will result in a \$7,300 inflation-adjusted payout for the average LAPE member.

IAPE members greet new boss

Mired in contract negotiations with Dow Jones for the past year, TNG-CWA Local 1096 members (IAPE) greeted their new owner with large posters featuring his Wall Street Journal-style portrait and the headline, "Show Us the Money." While Rupert Murdoch is spending more than \$5 billion for the company, the union says the best offer it has received will cost each member, on average, \$7,300.

Dayton Guild files 2nd labor charge

The Dayton Newspaper Guild has filed a second complaint of unfair labor practices against the Dayton Daily News, over the company's retaliation against two employees who complained to the union that they had been denied vacation rights. In a related part of the complaint, the Guild also is charging the company with denying night differential pay to copy editors on the universal desk who were transferred to the paper from other Cox properties, in yet another example of industry "clustering."

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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

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

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

Canada: Publications mail agreement No. 40032108

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6

Subscribers: Address changes and delivery stops may be e-mailed to: duesinfo@cwa-union.org.

Subscription: \$20 a year in U.S. and Canada, \$30 a year overseas. Send subscription orders to:

Jay West, TNG-CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Single copies: \$1.50

Minority unions: one answer to 'clustering'

As MediaNews launched a new anti-union initiative in recent weeks, diluting Guild-represented shops in northern California by consolidating them with non-unionized ones, the National Labor Relations Board was presented with a petition in an unrelated case that could have a direct effect on the newspaper company's strategy. The Aug. 14 petition argues that employers have a legal duty to recognize minority unions—unions that represent less than a majority of a workforce.

Filed by the United Steelworkers as lead plaintiff and by six other major unions, including CWA, the petition asks the NLRB to issue a rule requiring employers "to bargain collectively with a labor organization that represents less than an employee-majority with regard to the employees who are its members, but not for any other employees." In other words, the results of such bargaining would apply only to employees who are members of the union, even though the union represents only a minority of the workforce. Non-unionized employees would remain free to negotiate their terms of employment individually.

Minority unions are common throughout much of the industrialized world, and in many European workplaces several different unions may vie to represent workers. Minority unions also were common in the

See page 7 for related commentary.

U.S. in the 1930s and '40s, but as employers grudgingly came to accept that unions were here to stay, they more frequently preferred to deal with just one labor representative—and unions preferred to have unchallenged jurisdiction within a workplace. Representation elections became the rule, not to determine if a workforce would be unionized but to find out which union could rightfully claim exclusive bargaining rights.

But now that organized labor is enfeebled, many employers have concluded the time is ripe to stamp out unions altogether. One pressure point has been the traditional, NLRB-overseen election, with corporate interests using intimidation, firings and unrelenting legal challenges to block recognition of majority representation. Union attempts to side-step the farce through card-check, to be recognized either voluntarily or by force of law through the Employee Free Choice Act, have been blocked politically and through a barrage of public propaganda.

The battle to date, however, has been waged by unions trying to maintain majority representation. The Steelworkers' petition, on the other hand, signals a willingness to settle for a piece of the pie instead of waging an all-or-nothing war to the death. The case

it makes is elegantly simple and straightforward, if obscured by time and disuse.

The National Labor Relations Act and all subsequent federal labor law—notably the Taft Hartley and Landrum-Griffin acts, both of which curtailed union power—emphasize that it is "the policy of the United States" to encourage "the practice and procedure of collective bargaining." Indeed, Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act explicitly states that employees "shall have the right . . . to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing."

When that language was adopted, minority unions were perceived by organized labor as an intermediate step toward majority status: if a minority union were successful in strengthening workplace conditions for its members, more employees in the same workplace would join so they could enjoy the same benefits—and, eventually, a union might achieve majority status, giving it exclusive bargaining rights. One measure of the prevalence of minority unions—and of how "flexible" employers can be at twisting an argument in whichever direction best suits their needs—was the employer lobby's fight against exclusive representation with the argument that this would deny the rights of minority unions. "In that context," the petition wryly observes, "employers expressly defended the right of minority-unions to

engage in collective bargaining."

These days, of course, employers are not rushing to defend collective bargaining of any sort; if minority unions were preferable to majority ones, dealing with workers one-on-one is better yet. Business leaders understood all too well, as David Brody wrote in *New Labor Forum* a couple of years ago, that "self-organization and employer coercion were inversely related: insofar as the boundaries of self-organization contracted, the scope for employer coercion expanded."

But as the Steelworkers petition makes clear, there is nothing that gives employers the legal right to refuse to bargain with a minority union—and when they do, the NLRB has an obligation to defend national policy by charging them with unfair labor practices. And while it's questionable whether a board weighted with ideologues committed to one side of the labor-management dynamic, rather than to the process itself, can engage the issue impartially, at least the petition raises the issue in an intellectually rigorous fashion—one that makes the argument hard to dismiss outright.

It also should give pause to MediaNews as it seeks to disenfranchise members of the Northern California Guild—not by challenging their choice of bargaining representatives, but by playing management games that mock labor law guarantees.

Lawsuit targets MediaNews JOA

An antitrust lawsuit filed by the U.S. Justice Dept. against the owners of the Charleston (WV) Gazette and the Charleston Daily Mail has wider implications that could affect TNG-CWA units in York, Penn. The lawsuit is challenging a 2004 transaction in which the Gazette's owner acquired all of the Daily Mail's assets, essentially terminating a joint operating agreement without Justice Dept. review.

JOAs are a government sanctioned exemption from anti-trust laws under the Newspaper Preservation Act, adopted as an effort to maintain diverse editorial voices in a community. By combining assets, the lawsuit charges, the

deal violates the JOA premise by consolidating control over both papers, eliminating competition.

The Daily Mail was owned by MediaNews. MediaNews also owns the York Dispatch, which had a joint operating agreement with the York Daily Record. At the same time it was selling the Daily Mail to its JOA partner in West Virginia, MediaNews was buying the York Daily Record in a mirror transaction, also without prior review by the Justice Dept.

TNG-CWA has petitioned for friend-of-the-court status in the Charleston case and hopes to submit a brief next month. It also has contested the York transaction and filed unfair labor practice charges.

What lies ahead for news workers?

News industry experts will join employers, media workers, advertising professionals and academics at the University of Maryland Oct. 26 and the morning of Oct. 27 to discuss the future of jobs in the news industry.

The conference will be held at the university's Inn and Conference Center, at 3501 University Blvd. East in Adelphi, Md. The conference-discounted rate of \$159 per night, plus taxes, may be obtained by calling 1-800-675-6137 no later than Oct. 4 and mentioning the "Future of News" conference.

(A limited number of rooms has been reserved, available on a first-come, first-served basis. Conference participants told no more rooms are available should contact Malinka Franklin at mfranklin@cwa-union.org.)

There is a \$50 registration fee

for the conference itself, which includes two breakfasts and one lunch. Checks should be made payable to The University of Maryland and sent to Malinka Franklin at The Newspaper Guild-CWA; registration also can be paid on site.

The conference, following welcoming remarks by Tom Kunkel, dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the university, will begin with a presentation and discussion of the survey that Guild members have been taking in recent months.

Subsequent panels, using the survey results as a springboard, will discuss the evolution of jobs in the news industry, the tools and resources news workers will need and the economic forces shaping further developments. Breakout sessions Saturday morning will explore the issues raised Friday.



Stepping out on Labor Day

Among Guild locals nationwide and in Canada that celebrated Labor Day was Buffalo, above, where the local contingent was led by its president, Pat Gormley, at right, and Randy Rodda hoisting an

identifying banner. Below, the York local prepares to join its area parade with a Scooby-Doo theme, protesting MediaNews' union-busting approach to contract talks. See related story at left.



News round-up

NLRB finds a card-check to its liking

The National Labor Relations Board finally has a card check campaign it really, really likes—but it has to do with decertifying a union, not recognizing one. In an Aug. 10 decision, the NLRB upheld a decision by Shaw's Supermarkets in Massachusetts to withdraw recognition of the United Food and Commercial Workers as collective bargaining agent for 1,600 of its employees, who were in the fourth year of a five-year contract. Shaw's decision, preempting 40 years of labor law precedent, was based on its determination that a majority of the workers had signed a decertification petition—but before a decertification election could be held.

Census: health coverage declines . . .

The U.S. Census Bureau released several sets of statistics Aug. 28 that suggest the economy is failing a growing number of Americans. Most notably, the number of those Americans without health insurance jumped 5% from 2005 to 2006, to 47 million from 44.8 million. A major contributor to the trend, according to David Johnson, chief of the Census Bureau's Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, is a steady decline in access to private health insurance, including employer-provided coverage.

. . . as incomes fail to rebound

Simultaneously, the census bureau reported that while the median household saw its income grow 0.7% between 2005 and 2006, that income remained 2.0% lower than in 2000, before the last recession. Moreover, any growth in family income has gone to the very top of the income distribution ladder, with families in the top fifth seeing a 1% increase in income since 2000 while those in the bottom fifth saw theirs fall by 4.5%. With median earnings falling three years in a row, any increase in income has been the result of more work, not higher wages.

Health care AFL-CIO's top priority

As if in response to the census bureau report, the AFL-CIO has declared universal health care to be the centerpiece of its 2008 election drive, ahead of such other worker causes as the Employee Free Choice Act. Borrowing a CWA concept, the federation said it will "build an army of 1 million activists" to lobby for health care, drawing from state feds, local and international unions, central labor councils and Working America, the AFL-CIO affiliate for people who cannot join unions. The federation also plans to file proxy proposals urging companies to back more expansive health care for their employees and to publicly support its goal of universal coverage by 2009. Among its leading targets: companies—like Verizon—that share directors with pharmaceutical company boards.

Easterling announces retirement

CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling, who briefly was the highest-ranking woman in the history of organized labor, will retire at the next CWA convention. Easterling rose from being a telephone operator and officer of CWA Local 4302 to secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO for a brief period in the mid-'90s, before the Sweeney insurgency made a clean sweep of the federation's top officers. She then resumed her secretary-treasurer position within CWA, embracing various campaigns promoting equal opportunity for women and minorities within the union.—PAI

SEC asks how CEO pay is determined

The Securities and Exchange Commission has sent approximately 300 letters to companies requesting more details on executive pay, reviving a debate about how corporate salaries are disclosed to investors. Although company filings have become more informative about how much executives are paid, "What's less clear is why they are paid that amount," an SEC spokesman explained. Among the requests: Explain why the chief executive's pay was "significantly higher" than the rest of the company's highest-paid executives. Identify the companies your company uses to benchmark executive pay. Provide an analysis of how you arrived at and why you paid each particular level and form of compensation for 2006.

U.S. workers world's most productive

Meanwhile, as U.S. chief executives make out like bandits, one in three workers in the world is either unemployed or earns less than the equivalent of \$2 a day, according to the annual labor market report of the International Labor Organization. Released on Labor Day, the report shows 195.7 million people are unemployed and nearly 1.3 billion earn less than \$2 a day; one-third of the working-age population worldwide is not participating in labor markets at all. On the other hand, the ILO also reports that Americans work longer hours than their counterparts in Europe and most other rich nations, and get more done per hour than everyone but the Norwegians. As a result, on average Americans produce a world-leading \$63,885 of wealth per worker per year. Ireland comes in second at \$55,986, followed by Luxembourg at \$55,641, Belgium at \$55,235 and France at \$54,609.

Job losses a warning

Economic alarm bells sounded Sept. 7 with the unexpected announcement that the U.S. economy had shed 4,000 jobs in August—a relatively trifling number in itself, yet the first employment decline since 2003. The job loss was all the more shocking because analysts had predicted a job gain of 100,000, and because employment growth was revised downward for June and July by a combined 81,000 jobs.

All of which might be explained away as a statistical blip, were it not for the still-unfolding crescendo of bad news arising from the housing industry. As it is, the new numbers prompted Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com, to tell the New York Times: "If the economy is not headed toward recession, it is very close to one."

Indeed, Dean Baker, of the Center for Economic Policy and Research, pointed out in his blog that throughout the 1980s and '90s there were only three months in which employment fell that did not come at the beginning or end of a recession—and in two of those months, large nationwide strikes accounted for the dip. "In short," he observed, "it is an extremely unusual event for jobs to decline in the middle of a period of healthy growth."

Meanwhile, revised July and June figures, also reported by the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed a bit less than 70,000 new jobs were created each month. By comparison, average

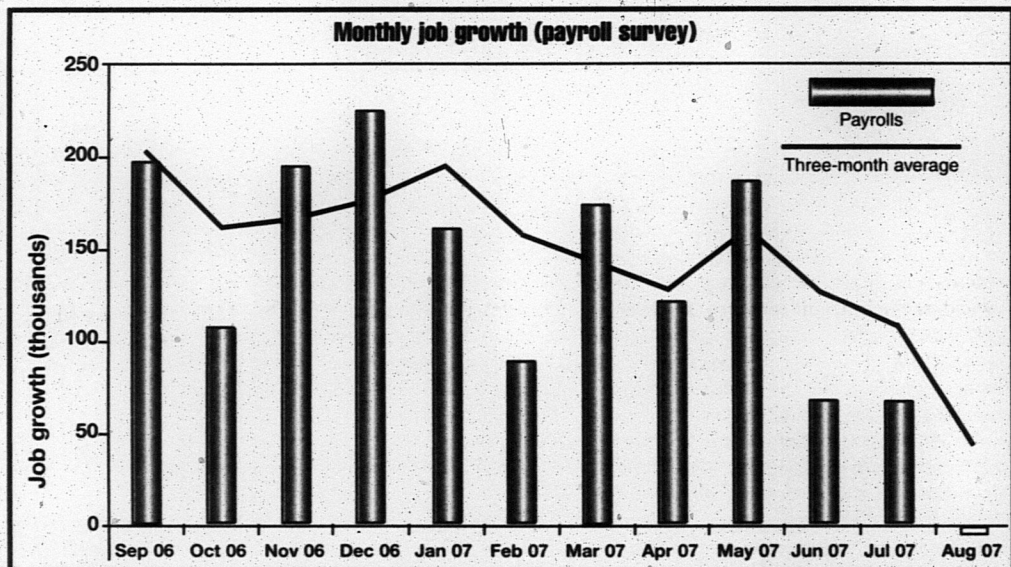
monthly job growth in 2005 and 2006 was 200,000.

As might be expected, the housing industry—suffering from a collapse of a speculative bubble that still has at least a year in which to unwind—showed the biggest job losses, in construction, mortgage banking and related areas. But other early indicators of economic weakness included a continued erosion of jobs in the temporary help sector, down 13,000 in August and off 63,000 for the year. Loss of temp jobs often presages layoffs among permanent workers.

While unemployment remained at 4.6%, analysts discounted the number as meaningful because it does not reflect how many workers have dropped out of the labor force. "When jobs become harder to find, people tend to become discouraged," explained Heather Boushey, an economist at the Center for Economic and Policy Research. The more comprehensive labor force participation rate, she added, fell to 65.8% in August from 66.1% in July. Or to put it another way: the number of people neither working nor looking for work rose by almost 600,000 in August.

Yet another indicator of employment weakness, the number of workers employed part-time only because they can't find full-time work, has been trending upward since early 2006 and rose by 213,000 in August, to 4.5 million.

The news spooked stock markets, which interpreted the reversal as foreshadowing weakened corporate profits, and revived speculation of interest rate cuts.



A first: Santa Fe businesses back a living wage increase

By Mark Gruenberg
Editor, Press Associates Inc.

Here's a first: The Santa Fe, N.M., city council is scheduled to vote on a second citywide living wage ordinance, pushed by unions and community groups—this time with business support. Even the Chamber of Commerce and the local restaurant association, past foes of the living wage, have signed on.

The new ordinance, which the council will vote on by the end of October, would raise Santa Fe's present living wage—\$8.50 hourly since June 24, 2004—to a dollar an hour starting January 1. More importantly, it would be extended to all city enterprises, public and private; the current law exempts private businesses employing fewer than 25 people, thus leaving 40% of city residents not covered. The new living wage also will contain a cost-of-living increase starting in January 2009.

Business backing for the increase was secured when supporters agreed not to push for a \$10.50 minimum, as they originally planned.

"The wage is, and has been, supported by almost all the unions in New Mexico. Particularly helpful in the last five years were the New Mexico Federation of Labor, AFSCME Local 3999 and New Mexico Council 18, the New Mexico Building Trades, the Communications Workers and National Education Association-New Mexico," Morty Simon, campaign coordinator for an umbrella organization called the

Living Wage network, wrote in an e-mail.

AFSCME contributed to the effort by funding a film about the advantages of a living wage. And the local campaign brought in Barbara Ehrenreich, author of "Nickel and Dimed," to speak at a fundraiser that netted \$25,000; IATSE sponsored a film competition about poverty in Santa Fe, open to all students, before she came. Mayor David Coss, a former CWA organizer and president of Santa Fe's CWA local, declared Ehrenreich's book a "must read" for the city for two months beforehand.

"We also had a number of people of faith that were 'driving forces' behind this movement, including a number from the Catholic Church who really helped in many crucial ways, the New Mexico Conference of Churches, and the local Jewish temple," Simon added.

Businesses signed on, he said, due to their "history of underestimating what we were able to accomplish"—which is to say, they worried about the planned \$10.50 an hour figure.

"We listed any business that voluntarily paid the living wage before it came into effect and which voluntarily paid it afterward if they had under 25 employees and therefore did not need to pay it," Simon added. "To our surprise, the Sam's Club raised their rate so that we would put them on the website. The local Wal-Mart did not. Neither has been involved, as far as we know, in the opposition, which mostly came from the Restaurant Association, which is now on board."

Remember when reporters were a political force? Remember *labor* reporters? No . . . ?

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

As an early campaign season illuminates issues of enormous consequence to anyone who works for a living—health care, the right to union representation, job outsourcing, and on and on—the Guild has yet to resolve the political ambivalence that keeps it on the sidelines. Political action may be the third leg of the CWA “triangle,” but many Guild members regard such involvement as apostasy, a repudiation of journalism’s holy calling.

So it’s altogether appropriate that two books are emerging just now to explore the complexities of that view, for good and ill. One looks ahead, masterfully analyzing how the labor movement has been maneuvered to the edge of extinction—and how its only hope of survival depends on labor “finding its voice and making it heard” to be politically effective. The other looks back, to the founding of the Guild and its critical embrace of direct political action—action so successful it made the union a leading target of McCarthyism, but without which it’s questionable whether the Guild would have emerged at all.

Indeed, as *Dark Days in the Newsroom* indirectly makes clear, Guild founder Heywood Broun would have been confounded by contemporary hair-splitting over the question of where to draw the line between a journalist’s professional identity and his personal one. Today’s monopolistic publishers have no compunction about wielding their media empires to advance their own political and economic interests, even as their newsrooms scramble for an appearance of ideological purity by banning such minutiae as bumper stickers, campaign contributions or concert attendance—never mind meaningful political involvement. Contrast that not only with the Guild’s

early lobbying for federal minimum wage and maximum hour controls on the newspaper industry, but with Broun’s decision to run for Congress—and as a socialist!—while still writing his column for the New York Telegram. Indeed, the Telegram promoted his independence in full-page ads proclaiming, “He Writes and Does as He Pleases.”

Yet in some ways it was Broun’s good fortune to die young, before the nation had plunged into its fully-fevered extirpation of anything tinged even a little red.

Although the House Un-American Activities Committee was already operating in the late 1930’s in a reactionary attempt to embarrass Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, it did not gain any significant traction until after the end of World War II, when the American labor movement was pushed into purging all communists and their sympathizers. There’s no telling how deftly Broun, who died in 1939, would have been able to ward off the storm with his fabled affability and quick wit. What is certain, as Alwood illustrates, is that the Guild was a primary FBI target because of its success in organizing newsrooms—a success driven by the energy and

Dark Days in the Newsroom: McCarthyism Aimed at the Press, by Edward Alwood. Temple University Press, 2007. 201 pp, \$22.95 (paper)
State of the Unions: How Labor Can Strengthen the Middle Class, Improve Our Economy, and Regain Political Influence, by Philip Dine. McGraw-Hill, 2007. 276 pp, \$27.95 (cloth)

ideological commitment of the Guild’s leftists. And without someone of Broun’s stature to serve as a bulwark, the union was splintered so badly that one could argue it is still coping with the after-effects.

That there was a significant communist presence in the Guild is unquestioned, although precisely what that means is more open to dispute. Most were simply ideologically motivated, although a small handful appear to have had direct ties to Moscow. But as Alwood also underscores, FBI director Herbert Hoover’s antipathy to the Guild was not based on a fear that Moscow was influencing U.S. news coverage, which could have been defended as a reasonable apprehension; indeed, there was never any attempt to make such a case, nor was there any evidence that such had occurred. It was simply the politics of the thing that gnawed at Hoover, and increasingly at the country, and it was the politics that ended up eviscerating the Guild.

So, for example, Congressional hearings in 1947 looked at possible communist involvement in Guild strikes at the Philadelphia Record and the Camden Courier-Post. “Early witnesses soft-peddled Communist influence in the guild,” Alwood writes, “but the following month guild president Milton Murray appeared before the committee and dropped a bombshell. ‘There are Communists in the American Newspaper Guild,’ he told the committee. ‘I can be certain that in our New York local, the executive vice president Jack Ryan, is a Communist . . . and in our Los Angeles local, the executive secretary, William Brodie, is a Communist.’”

And with that, the Guild started down the same slippery slope as was traversed by more widely publicized Hollywood witnesses, and with the same results: peremptory firings, black lists, lost careers and ruined lives.

As fascinating a historical look as *Dark Days in the Newsroom* provides, Alwood’s contention is that this isn’t just a closed chapter. Indeed, he argues, because the lessons of the McCarthy era weren’t learned—if anything, they seem to have been shoveled into an obscure corner—the same mistakes have been revisited all over again in a newly reactionary era and a new war against a different ideological foe.

Fifty and more years ago, individual protests of a newsman’s freedom of speech and expression were batted down—by the Guild as well as by Congress and the public—as less important than national security. In that respect, Alwood contends, there is nothing new.

The world Edward Alwood describes is light years distant from the one surveyed by Philip Dine, unheralded labor reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. For if there’s one thing Dine has learned after two decades of trying to extract information out of labor’s tight-lipped ranks, it’s that unions and the media have cooperated in making organized labor all but invisible to most Americans. Or as he summarizes at one point, “Labor’s complicity in the muzzling of the American working class amounts to self-inflicted damage that unions can ill afford, particularly in today’s wired world.”

The marginalization of organized labor in the mainstream media is no secret. Virtually the only coverage of unions one can expect is of picket lines and corruption, or of such broad developments as the dwindling percentage of unionized workers or the splintering of the AFL-CIO. In other words, what the public gets is either a story of how it’s being inconvenienced by striking workers or of how unions are irrelevant anachronisms riddled with graft and self-dealing—or, more commonly, there’s no story at all, as though unions were an offshoot of the Masons or some other secret club.

Hand-in-hand with this marginalization is the near-extinction of labor reporters themselves, with Dine one of only a handful of survivors still working the beat. The equation is straightforward: no labor reporters, no labor news. But there’s a seldom appreciated corollary of this: no labor reporters also means a loss of objective insight for the labor movement itself. It’s not just that the public doesn’t get to learn about unions: it’s that unions don’t get to learn about themselves.

This point is poignantly, if inadvertently, driven home by *State of the Unions*, of which it can be said: this truly is a unique book. For Dine is not just a reporter, and not just a labor reporter, but a guy who truly believes in unions, loves unions, mourns the loss of promise that unions have come to represent. Forget the cockamamie approach that convinces too many journalists to equate ignorance with objectivity and aloofness with purity of purpose: Dine embraces his subjects with passion, but that doesn’t mean he doesn’t see them clearly. He’s a pro. And just as importantly, he’s deeply knowledgeable about his field of interest.

The result is an insightful, anecdote-laced book that has as its underlying message just this one point: the biggest task confronting organized labor is not more organizing or better politicking, but simply that of learning how to communicate. “As simple and even mundane as that may sound,” Dine writes, “few things would mark more of a radical shift for labor—or have a bigger impact—than if it figured out what it wants to say and how to get it across in a way that resonates within the general population. Labor’s most overriding dilemma, the one touching every aspect of its problems, may

be the fact that its voice is not heard.”

If the mass media have stopped paying attention to unions except in extreme circumstances, unions have likewise done a first-rate job of fading into the woodwork. Not only have most unions deemphasized communication with their own

members, but organized labor as a whole views the mass media as the enemy, making itself inaccessible or downright hostile in response to inquiries. But that approach, as Dine points out, simply plays into a vicious cycle confirming newsroom views of union leaders as thugs or dictators, resulting in adverse coverage that confirms union leaders in their belief that the media are out to “get them,” and on and on.

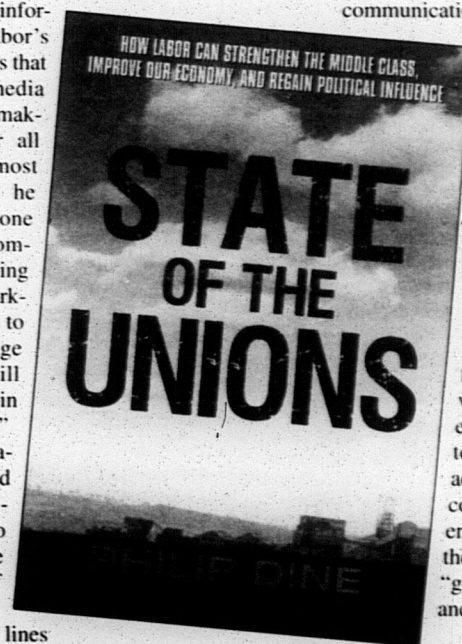
That it doesn’t have to be that way—

indeed, that union rank-and-file members can make compelling copy when encouraged to do so—is amply illustrated by Dine’s recounting of the Delta Pride strike in the Mississippi delta, the Siberia of U.S. unionism. The mostly black, mostly female, mostly uneducated workers won that strike by putting a human face on their boycott. They got their stories out, and the stories—not union pronouncements or a corporate campaign or hardball bargaining tactics—broke the logjam.

But that almost didn’t happen, Dine adds, and indeed, having an effective communications plan is a “radical departure” for most unions. “Labor leaders generally suspicious of journalists and highly protective of the union’s message had to relinquish those concerns and take the risk of not only allowing but encouraging unfettered media access to the campaign,” he writes. The result, however, was that “one heard little of the union strike talk of specific contractual items, and much about dehumanizing work conditions, oppressive poverty that had lasted over generations, and the need to stand up to the powerful. . . . The union’s transformation of the strike into a quasi-spiritual undertaking . . . was critical to broadening support for the workers.”

There’s much more here that today’s union leaders should absorb, yet underlying Dine’s professed hopefulness that it’s not too late for organized labor to correct its course is a deeper, pessimistic streak. “Finding its voice and making it heard is arguably the overriding challenge facing trade unions—a challenge they won’t solve unless they first recognize their culpability in the matter,” he observes. “Doing so is a prerequisite to taking steps to remedy the situation, but it’s unlikely to happen any time soon—in part because this kind of discussion is something that labor just about never has.”

To Dine’s credit, *State of the Unions* is an attempt to jump-start that discussion; the pity is that there are so very few people in a position to amplify his message to ensure it’s heard. It takes a labor reporter with chops and savvy to make the case Dine has, and these days they’re even more rare than labor unions.



Remember when reporters were a political force? Remember *labor* reporters? No . . . ?

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

As an early campaign season illuminates issues of enormous consequence to anyone who works for a living—health care, the right to union representation, job outsourcing, and on and on—the Guild has yet to resolve the political ambivalence that keeps it on the sidelines. Political action may be the third leg of the CWA “triangle,” but many Guild members regard such involvement as apostasy, a repudiation of journalism’s holy calling.

So, it’s altogether appropriate that two books are emerging just now to explore the complexities of that view, for good and ill. One looks ahead, masterfully analyzing how the labor movement has been maneuvered to the edge of extinction—and how its only hope of survival depends on labor “finding its voice and making it heard,” to be politically effective. The other looks back, to the founding of the Guild and its critical embrace of direct political action—action so successful it made the union a leading target of “McCarthyism,” but without which it’s questionable whether the Guild would have emerged at all.

Indeed, as *Dark Days in the Newsroom* indirectly makes clear, Guild founder Heywood Broun would have been confounded by contemporary hair-splitting over the question of where to draw the line between a journalist’s professional identity and his personal one. Today’s monopolistic publishers have no compunction about wielding their media empires to advance their own political and economic interests, even as their newsrooms scramble for an appearance of ideological purity by banning such minutiae as bumper stickers, campaign contributions or concert attendance—never mind meaningful political involvement.

Contrast that not only with the Guild’s early lobbying for federal minimum wage and maximum hour controls on the newspaper industry, but with Broun’s decision to run for Congress—and as a socialist!—while still writing his column for the New York Telegram. Indeed, the Telegram promoted his independence in full-page ads proclaiming, “He Writes and Does as He Pleases.”

Yet in some ways it was Broun’s good fortune to die young, before the nation had plunged into its fully-fevered extirpation of anything tinged even a little red.

Although the House Un-American Activities Committee was already operating in the late 1930’s in a reactionary attempt to embarrass Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, it did not gain any significant traction until after the end of World War II, when the American labor movement was pushed into purging all communists and their sympathizers. There’s no telling how deftly Broun, who died in 1939, would have been able to ward off the storm with his fabled affability and quick wit. What is certain, as Alwood illustrates, is that the Guild was a primary FBI target because of its success in organizing newsrooms—a success driven by the energy and

Dark Days in the Newsroom: McCarthyism Aimed at the Press, by Edward Alwood. Temple University Press, 2007. 201 pp. \$22.95 (paper)

State of the Unions: How Labor Can Strengthen the Middle Class, Improve Our Economy, and Regain Political Influence, by Philip Dine. McGraw-Hill, 2007. 276 pp. \$27.95 (cloth)

ideological commitment of the Guild’s leftists. And without someone of Broun’s stature to serve as a bulwark, the union was splintered so badly that one could argue it is still coping with the after-effects.

That there was a significant communist presence in the Guild is unquestioned, although precisely what that means is more open to dispute. Most were simply ideologically motivated, although a small handful appear to have had direct ties to Moscow. But as Alwood also underscores, FBI director Herbert Hoover’s antipathy to the Guild was not based on a fear that Moscow was influencing U.S. news coverage, which could have been defended as a reasonable apprehension; indeed, there was never any attempt to make such a case, nor was there any evidence that such had occurred. It was simply the politics of the thing that gnawed at Hoover, and increasingly at the country, and it was the politics that ended up eviscerating the Guild.

So, for example, Congressional hearings in 1947 looked at possible communist involvement in Guild strikes at the Philadelphia Record and the Camden Courier-Post. “Early witnesses soft-peddled Communist influence in the guild,” Alwood writes, “but the following month guild president Milton Murray appeared before the committee and dropped a bombshell. ‘There are Communists in the American Newspaper Guild,’ he told the committee. ‘I can be certain that in our New York local, the executive vice president Jack Ryan, is a Communist . . . and in our Los Angeles local, the executive secretary, William Brodie, is a Communist.’”

And with that, the Guild started down the same slippery slope as was traversed by more widely publicized Hollywood witnesses, and with the same results: peremptory firings, black lists, lost careers and ruined lives.

As fascinating a historical look as *Dark Days in the Newsroom* provides, Alwood’s contention is that this isn’t just a closed chapter. Indeed, he argues, because the lessons of the McCarthy era weren’t learned—if anything, they seem to have been shoveled into an obscure corner—the same mistakes have been revisited all over again in a newly reactionary era and a new war against a different ideological foe.

Fifty and more years ago, individual protests of a newsman’s freedom of speech and expression were batted down—by the Guild as well as by Congress and the public—as less important than national security. In that respect, Alwood contends, there is nothing new.

The world Edward Alwood describes is light years distant from the one surveyed by Philip Dine, unheralded labor reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. For if there’s one thing Dine has learned after two decades of trying to extract information out of labor’s tight-lipped ranks, it’s that unions and the media have cooperated in making organized labor all but invisible to most Americans. Or as he summarizes at one point, “Labor’s complicity in the muzzling of the American working class amounts to self-inflicted damage that unions can ill afford, particularly in today’s wired world.”

The marginalization of organized labor in the mainstream media is no secret. Virtually the only coverage of unions one can expect is of picket lines and corruption, or of such broad developments as the dwindling percentage of unionized workers or the splintering of the AFL-CIO. In other words, what the public gets is either a story of how it’s being inconvenienced by striking workers or of how unions are irrelevant anachronisms riddled with graft and self-dealing—or, more commonly, there’s no story at all, as though unions were an offshoot of the Masons or some other secret club.

Hand-in-hand with this marginalization is the near-extinction of labor reporters themselves, with Dine one of only a handful of survivors still working the beat. The equation is straightforward: no labor reporters, no labor news. But there’s a seldom appreciated corollary of this: no labor reporters also means a loss of objective insight for the labor movement itself. It’s not just that the public doesn’t get to learn about unions; it’s that unions don’t get to learn about themselves.

This point is poignantly, if inadvertently, driven home by *State of the Unions*, of which it can be said: this truly is a unique book. For Dine is not just a reporter, and not just a labor reporter, but a guy who truly believes in unions, loves unions, mourns the loss of promise that unions have come to represent. Forget the cockamamie approach that convinces too many journalists to equate ignorance with objectivity and aloofness with purity of purpose; Dine embraces his subjects with passion, but that doesn’t mean he doesn’t see them clearly. He’s a pro. And just as importantly, he’s deeply knowledgeable about his field of interest.

The result is an insightful, anecdote-laced book that has as its underlying message just this one point: the biggest task confronting organized labor is not more organizing or better politicking, but simply that of learning how to communicate. “As simple and even mundane as that may sound,” Dine writes, “few things would mark more of a radical shift for labor—or have a bigger impact—than if it figured out what it wants to say and how to get it across in a way that resonates within the general population. Labor’s most overriding dilemma, the one touching every aspect of its problems, may

be the fact that its voice is not heard.”

If the mass media have stopped paying attention to unions except in extreme circumstances, unions have likewise done a first-rate job of fading into the woodwork. Not only have most unions deemphasized communication with their own

members, but organized labor as a whole views the mass media as the enemy, making itself inaccessible or downright hostile in response to inquiries. But that approach, as Dine points out, simply plays into a vicious cycle confirming newsroom views of union leaders as thugs or dictators, resulting in adverse coverage that confirms union leaders in their belief that the media are out to “get them,” and on and on.

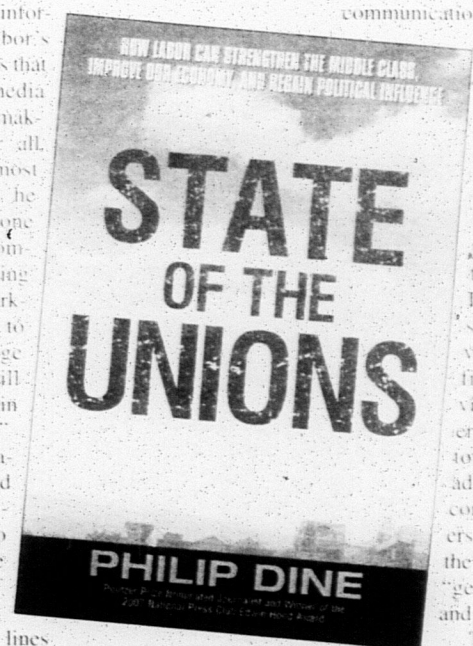
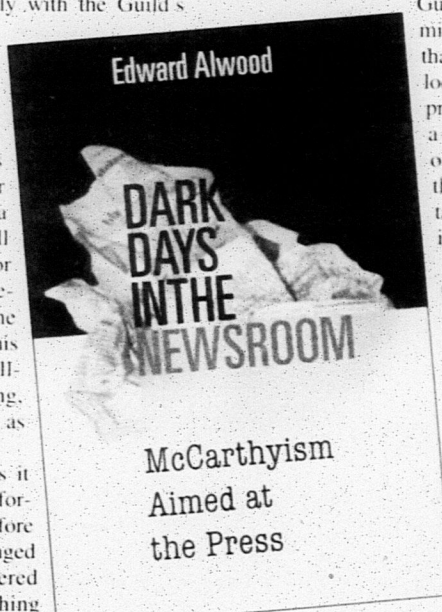
That it doesn’t have to be that way—

indeed, that union rank-and-file members can make compelling copy when encouraged to do so—is amply illustrated by Dine’s recounting of the Delta Pride strike in the Mississippi delta; the Siberia of U.S. unionism. The mostly black, mostly female, mostly uneducated workers won that strike by putting a human face on their boycott. They got their stories out, and the stories—not union pronouncements or a corporate campaign or hardball bargaining tactics—broke the logjam.

But that almost didn’t happen, Dine adds, and indeed, having an effective communications plan is a “radical departure” for most unions. “Labor leaders generally suspicious of journalists and highly protective of the union’s message had to relinquish those concerns and take the risk of not only allowing but encouraging unfettered media access to the campaign,” he writes. The result, however, was that “one heard little of the union strike talk of specific contractual items, and much about dehumanizing work conditions, oppressive poverty that had lasted over generations, and the need to stand up to the powerful. . . . The union’s transformation of the strike into a quasi-spiritual undertaking . . . was critical to broadening support for the workers.”

There’s much more here that today’s union leaders should absorb, yet underlying Dine’s professed hopefulness that it’s not too late for organized labor to correct its course is a deeper, pessimistic streak. “Finding its voice and making it heard is arguably the overriding challenge facing trade unions—a challenge they won’t solve unless they first recognize their culpability in the matter,” he observes. “Doing so is prerequisite to taking steps to remedy the situation, but it’s unlikely to happen any time soon—in part because this kind of discussion is something that labor just about never has.”

To Dine’s credit, *State of the Unions* is an attempt to jump-start that discussion; the pity is that there are so very few people in a position to amplify his message to ensure it’s heard. It takes a labor reporter with chops and savvy to make the case Dine has, and these days they’re even more rare than labor unions.



Homesteading in cyberspace

Not that the Guild would ever rush into anything as newfangled as the internet, but ever so slowly, bit by bit, the union is getting wired. TNG-CWA's Extra! Extra!, after a choppy start, is now refreshed daily with links to stories (www.newsguild.org) about the newspaper industry and organized labor. At least a dozen locals maintain web sites that they update regularly, and as many more do so less consistently. And e-mail has become an indispensable tool for mobilizing members, from numerous petition drives to drumming up participation in the survey on the future of news jobs that's being compiled at the University of Maryland.

The latest development has been a homesteading of the blogosphere by various locals and individuals. Less structured than a formal web site, the chatty and sometimes highly personal blogs often strike a note of intimacy that puts a human face on the union—yet sometimes also display finely crafted and evocative writing. Guild blogs are being used to inform (stpaulguild.com, mkeguild.blogspot.com, prnwguild.org/blog) organize (tribunememployeeatalk.blogspot.com, www.pantagraphunion.org) or just comment on matters of interest (thenutgraph.blogspot.com). Some surge, then apparently peter out, (heraldnewsnews.blogspot.com) while others, like The Paper Trail, plug along year after year. Almost all are a good read.

On this page are a couple of the more interesting or informative items currently on display. But you should take a visit and see for yourself. . . .

Drugs, sex and . . . pensions: one out of three ain't too bad

[Posted by Gene Achziger, of the Pacific Northwest Guild.]

This is a report on drugs, sex and debauchery at the 2007 Newspaper Guild Sector Conference and Communications Workers of America Convention in Toronto, Canada in July.

It isn't really, but if I'd said this is about the Pension Protection Act of 2006, you'd have already tuned out. But please don't. It ain't sexy, but rule changes that go into effect Jan. 1, 2008 could drastically affect your future retirement.

Because many major employers dumped their pension responsibilities on the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, the system was about to break. The PBGC is a government-created independent agency that guarantees employees' pensions in the event their employers go bankrupt or out of business. Unfortunately, some companies, like airlines, found a way to stay in business specifically by dumping their pensions. This influx threatened PBGC's stability.

So Congress tightened the funding rules for single-employer pension plans (those most likely to go under). The new pension law also provides incentives to encourage multi-employer plans to switch to defined contribution plans, of which the most common are 401(k) plans.

Both The Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer maintain the soon-to-be-discouraged single-employer plans. In the P-I's case there is potential for a double whammy because the plan is under-funded and will incur even tougher funding requirements and mandated benefit restrictions.

The end result for both companies will be more cost volatility and variability. And I think they will come after us to change our plans when contract negotiations open up

next spring. Change offers both potential and risk, and we'll need to be on guard to maximize the potential and minimize the risk.

Both companies now offer defined-contribution plans, which guarantee a set amount of money payable monthly upon retirement until death. When many of these plans were established, life expectancy after retirement

under a defined-benefit plan.

The companies often offer a "match" to their employees' 401(k) contributions. The match is often equal to the amount they contribute to existing defined-benefit plans. The match sounds inviting when accompanied by tales of huge money-making potential—but it isn't.

Here's why.

Risk. You have just as much chance of making bad decisions with your retirement nest egg as you do making good ones. Most of us are not financial wizards. Potentially, you could end up in the poor house in your dotage.

Obligation. Companies shed any long-term responsibility for your sustainability after your money-earning potential has expired.

Cost-savings. Companies know that a number of employees (for a multitude of reasons) cannot or will not contribute enough to their 401(k) plans to earn the employer match. This saves the company money. So instead of having an annual payment into its employees' defined-benefit plan (say \$100,000), the company probably will only have to pay maybe half that because the employees don't or can't make their contribution.

To head off conversions of defined-benefit to defined-contribution plans there was much talk in Toronto as to how we can work with our employers to stabilize both our current defined-benefit plans and the employers' costs. One solution is multi-employer plans, which more widely spread the risk of maintaining defined-benefit plans. The emphasis of the Toronto discussions was on creating win-win situations, but it's going to take a lot of work to convince both our members and employers that the long-term benefits vastly outweigh any short-term gains.

What the companies are really doing is shifting the risk from the employer to the employee.

at age 65 was about five years. It's now 30 years and many employers are trying to rid themselves of such long-term obligations.

They are doing this by convincing their employees to accept such defined contribution plans as a 401(k). Under defined-contribution plans, the company's obligation stops at contributing to your retirement savings rather than sustaining your retirement income. When the money is gone, it's gone and workers are left to guess—and worry—about how long the money will last. Will workers find their bank accounts empty at the very time they are vulnerable to the ravages of old age?

What the companies are really doing is shifting the risk from the employer to the employee. And they try to sell these plans by telling employees that by accepting the risk, individual employees will have the potential to make more money if we invest that money ourselves. It almost sounds alluring, until you read the statistics.

The reality is that an overwhelming majority of us lack either the time or knowledge to maximize those funds. We wind up with less money and more headaches than

What James Preyor's death should teach us

Posted by Lou Grieco, president of the Dayton Guild; James Preyor was an editorial assistant and 15-year employee of the Dayton Daily News. His death was ruled to be the result of hypertension and heart disease.

Two months have passed since the death of our friend and brother, James Preyor. We have grieved the loss of a good man who was kind to everyone in the newsroom. We have celebrated his life.

Now it's time to soberly assess his death, and the circumstances that led to it, because there are lessons there for all of us about how company policies that sometimes seem abstract can have real consequences. They can even cost us a dear friend.

Here are the basic facts of James' death:

- In the last days of his life, James Preyor complained of severe headaches.
- On Memorial Day, James called a co-worker with good news: he had won some money playing the Ohio Lottery. He said his plan was to buy the medication he needed but could not afford.
- Two days later, James died at home. He was far too young. He was 46.

As most of you probably remember, James suffered a stroke in 2004. At that time he was paying for health insurance through the company. But as a part-timer, he was only offered the HMO option, the most expensive of Cox Ohio's two health plans. The HMO plan is so expensive, in fact, that the vast majority of Dayton Daily News full-time employees chose the other, cheaper option.



Under the company's policy, James paid for half of the cost of the weekly premiums and the company paid the rest. But when he needed that coverage most, he was penalized for using it.

That's because the company only pays for its share of the premiums when a part-time employee works a minimum number of hours a week. Part-timers get no sick leave, so when they get sick they're on their own. They don't earn any money when they're too sick to work. And if they don't work

enough hours, they get stuck for the full bill for their health insurance.

Yes, you read that correctly. When James got sick enough to need his insurance the most—he was critically ill and off work several weeks—he not only did not collect a pay check, but the company also stuck him with the full bill for his weekly premium.

There are no words to describe the unfairness of this policy. Most of us entered journalism to fight this type of extreme injustice.

The Guild raised money to help James

after the 2004 stroke. So did some company managers—though they were acting on their own. The company itself did nothing. But the crisis passed, James came back to work and life continued for three more years.

Here's what we now know of James' death, based on reports filed by the Dayton Police Department and the Montgomery County coroner's office and from conversations with his family and close friends:

• Despite his stroke and his uncontrolled hypertension, James had no prescription medications at his home and had not seen a physician in years.

• He had been taking over-the-counter medications because he could not afford prescriptions.

• At the time of his death, he could not afford medical insurance.

This is disgraceful.

We are clearly in a time of benefits raiding, during which the company justifies swiping paid vacation and PA days from employees who don't have union protection. Of course, no one can show us that the company is hurting. In fact, all available evidence shows that the company is still highly profitable.

When justifying policy, company officials will try to point to the big picture—citing how much it does for so many employees—to avoid the fine details one sees when one isolates a single tragedy. We have an obligation to James Preyor, one of those tragedies, to not only honor his life but to remember his death, and to rectify the dreadful policy decisions that helped cause it.

Why do we think we need to be certified?

Organizing and collective bargaining are basic human rights. They don't need government approval.

By Roy J. Adams

Roughly seven of 10 Canadian workers are unable to collectively negotiate their conditions of work. There are many reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs, including employer opposition to collective bargaining and inadequacies in our labour policy network. But one important reason for the representation gap has gone generally unrecognized. The language that we use to talk about labour relations, and the imagery embedded in that language, have put us in a prison of our own construction.

In fact, all Canadian workers have a constitutional right to organize, to select leaders of their own choosing, to develop a program to advance their interests, to make representations to their employers and, should the results prove unsatisfactory, they have a right to organize action designed to compel the employer to change position.

[But] the term "unionize" in Canada has come to mean the establishment of a government-mandated collective bargaining arrangement. Anything short of that is considered to be something other than a "union." One very ironic aspect of this situation is that a union in this conception cannot come into being except through a governmental process.

Throughout much of the world, unions have tenaciously insisted on their freedom from government. Indeed, the word "free" in the title of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the world's largest union organization until a recent merger with the World Confederation of Labour, meant freedom from the government. In Canada, however, we have created a language and imagery in which a union cannot exist without a government certificate.

Surveys indicate that roughly 40% of unorganized workers would like to be represented by a certified bargaining agent. They can't get that done, however, in part because of technical aspects of the system and in part because of the way we think about the system. To be certified by the state, more than a

majority of workers in appropriate bargaining units must indicate their support for that option. But only four of 10 unorganized workers want that option. If those workers were evenly spread across the economy, none of them could get their wish because certification requires majority support. In each appropriate unit they would be outvoted six to four.

We think of union organizing as something that unions do with respect to the unorganized. But the right to organize and bargain collectively is an individual human right, one that all workers possess simply as a function of their humanity. If I work in a non-union retail store, I don't have to wait for UFCW Canada or the Service Employees International Union to show up to organize me. Along with my co-workers, I have a right to organize myself.

As citizens, people are organizing groups every day to influence city hall or the provincial or federal government or some government agency. They don't have to go to the government to get certified. The same is true in industry. Any group of employees can get together to influence their conditions of work. They can, if they want, go to an existing union for help, but they don't have to. They can, if they want, certify an exclusive agent, but they don't have to.

Our language makes it appear that nothing can be done unless a majority of our colleagues can be won over. Not so. Just like any group of concerned citizens, any group of employees have a human and constitutional right to get together and work out a strategy to convince their employer to improve their conditions, strengthen their job security, correct inequities, refrain from tampering with the pension plan, or whatever other issue might be of concern. Short of certification, they have a right to at least try to work out with their employer a tailor-made bargaining arrangement.

Some unionists believe that these rights are not of much value. They fear that without strong government backing, mandatory bargaining in good faith and the protected right to strike, they will not be able to nego-



tiate meaningfully. But with some imagination a lot could be accomplished even without those supports.

For example, police in the United States are, in many states, not provided with any public support for collective bargaining. Indeed, after a police strike in Boston in 1919 resulted in riots, discouragement of police unionism became the rule and police unions are outlawed in many jurisdictions. Police, however, did not simply buckle under. They formed "benevolent associations" and other organizations with innocuous names and, through them, lobbied government and developed a range of pressure tactics, such as the "blue flu." Without the help of labour legislation, but using imagination, police associations across the U.S. have been able to develop quite effective organizations.

The labour relations language and imagery that has wended its way into our psyche is a huge aid to the union-avoiding enterprise. As things now stand, "unorganized" employers simply assume, without challenge, that they have no responsibility to negotiate with their employees unless confronted with a certified bargaining agent. Our way of thinking about union organizing as something that existing unions do allows employers to characterize unionization as something alien to the enterprise. To be organized, many employers argue, is to allow a "third party" to divide a unified

workplace society.

Even if no illegality is involved, this characterization sends a signal to employees that to organize is to piss off the boss. Since most employees want to keep on the boss's good side under most circumstances, this imagery is an effective barrier to the exercise of a fundamental human right. In short, this entire body of thought is an effective defence of an authoritarian enterprise governance system that is a dead-weight on our aspiration to be a democratic society.

The exclusion of seven of 10 workers from having any meaningful say about their conditions of employment—conditions that are critical to their well-being—is offensive to our notions of democracy and human dignity. Having no control over key areas of their lives, workers without collective representation are being treated as little better than chattel. Even where the masters are relatively benevolent, we still need to put an end to "wage slavery." We need to make independent workplace representation for all workers, through either formal or informal means, our goal.

Condensed, with the author's permission, from the April/May issue of Our Times, Canada's independent labor magazine (www.ourtimes.ca). Adams is a professor of industrial relations at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

I'm really astounded that you could point to productivity gains as a friend of working people, especially coming from a news industry that is using this to beat its workforce to a pulp. If you measure news content in productivity terms, it is more than hours of labor per unit of output. Unit of output for journalism is both column inches and weight of content. Free content abounds, and in fact it's the battle cry of publishers, replacing "Free Press!"

It goes beyond our industry, however. In a closed system, employers' disincentive to invest and expand might be a primary result of productivity losses. But in a "free trade" system, productivity gains are the disincentive to invest in both workforce quantity and product quality. The double meaning of "cheap" thrives. Jobs are exported en masse and productivity as output per labor hour soars. U.S. economies are wrecked and there is zero accountability on the part of corporations that states or nation-states

can't or won't keep under control.

The key is to produce a fair trade system that allows people abroad who rightly aspire to a higher standard of living to get there without putting the economic wrecking ball to communities and homes in the U.S. In newsbiz, we not only have to work to get people to understand how their individual fortunes are afloat in a hostile corporate environment, but we also have to insist that the product being polluted in the name of "productivity" not be allowed to suffocate.

—Bob Datz, Brimfield, MA

Editor's note: the writer is responding to an article in the August 17 Guild Reporter, which included the following statement: "Growth in productivity... is key to increasing standards of living."

To the Editor,

An open letter to Linda Foley and Bernie Lunzer, candidates for president of the

Newspaper Guild: How do you intend to save the Newspaper Guild?

Your contest for the presidency of the Newspaper Guild is not a popularity, a personality or even a political trial. Instead it is, or should be, a match of which one of you can best preserve and enhance the jobs and the people who are the first and best defense of our constitutional system.

The news business—from press to internet, from camera to screen, from words to images—is riding a wave that is changing and sometimes breaking lives and public institutions. We need more than slogans, more than mindless task forces, more than the psychobabble of consultants. We need inspiration and perspiration.

In Long Beach, Ca., the Press-Telegram has been reduced from a staff of 220 to 90 with only 11 reporters left and wages cut by \$70 a week since 1997.

The Wall Street Journal in New York has been swallowed by Rupert Murdoch.

The Los Angeles Times is shrinking, along with the Chicago Tribune.

Knight-Ridder has been dismembered, with its pieces swallowed by NewsMedia of Denver and McClatchy.

NewsMedia now owns every daily newspaper in the San Francisco Bay area except the San Francisco Chronicle, which is owned by Hearst, which in turn is a part owner of several NewsMedia properties. NewsMedia has disenfranchised its Bay Area Guild members.

And so it goes, not only among the print media but also radio and television news.

Where is the Newspaper Guild? What is it doing? These are the questions you need to answer, and No Other Questions.

So, candidates: what are you doing and what will you do? Specifically, how will you do it?

—Gil Bailey, past president of the San Jose, Los Angeles and Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild locals

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: Oct. 12.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Hard work alone won't overcome Jim Crow legacy

By Carl Younger
Boston Guild

There has been a lot of controversy regarding the state of minorities in America.

Large groups of blacks, Latinos and Asians have been isolated in inner-city areas with little hope of accessing the American dream. Many of us have heard time and time again statements like, "My father or grandfather came to this country with nothing and with effort worked his way up to success." Hard work is admirable, but let's not forget that U.S. laws and the courts assisted some in attaining great wealth even as they relegated others to abject poverty.

For example, the Supreme Court in 1883 allowed individuals to discriminate against minorities (U.S. v. Cruikshank) by asserting that the "equal protection under the law" provisions of the 14th Amendment applied only to state governments. That was soon followed by the "separate but equal" ruling in Plessey v. Ferguson that provided the legal foundation for segregation.

Numerous Jim Crow laws subsequently separated blacks from whites in public transportation, morgues, prisons, hospitals, sports, and even prohibited them from playing checkers with each other. Other laws even limited when blacks were allowed on the streets, severely restricting black Americans' abilities to get a fair deal in the labor force. Most of these laws were in effect until 1964.

The GI bill of 1944, which helped American veterans by offering financial assistance for

housing and education, was undercut for blacks by rampant housing discrimination; most white colleges, meanwhile, simply didn't accept black students.

Many trade unions did not accept blacks into their organizations, regardless of education, until the late 60's. Because most construction jobs were accessible only to union workers, skilled black tradesmen were forced to accept starvation wages in the few jobs that were available.

A 1936 amendment to federal welfare laws forced parents in impoverished households to choose between keeping the family together or separating so the children could qualify for assistance. This accelerated the incidence of fatherless households in our urban communities.

This is just a short list of events that kept black Americans from realizing the American dream. And with little wealth accumulating from one generation to the next, each generation had to start at the bottom all over again—in many cases, only to have the bottom pulled out from under its feet. To acknowledge this history doesn't detract one bit from the many families whose grandparents came to this country with nothing and then pulled themselves up by their bootstraps—but with opportunities that many minorities could only dream about.

[Where has the Guild been on these issues? The constitution it adopted in 1935 stipulated that no one would be barred from membership "by reason of age, sex, race, national origin, religious or political conviction or anything he writes for publication."—Editor]

Telegraph shaped how the news is presented

Donald Ritchie, author and associate historian of the United States Senate for more than three decades, spoke on media technologies and how they shape news coverage at the Association of Educators of Journalism and Mass Communications conference in mid-August. His opening remarks follow:

The internet as a medium for news reporting is still in its founding stage, and we can only imagine how it will develop over the long run, or what its intended and unintended consequences might be. A past technology, however, offers some historical clues about its trajectory.

Now as obsolete as smoke signals, the telegraph provided the first means of electronic communications and facilitated the news industry for a century and a half. Beyond providing speed, the telegraph changed the way news was reported and the definition of legitimate news reporting.

It was on May 24, 1844, at the U.S. Capitol, that Samuel F.B. Morse first publicly demonstrated that his telegraph would work over long distances. With the help of a congressional appropriation, he had strung wires along the railroad tracks between Washington and Baltimore. On that day, a young woman handed him a message he had not seen before: "What Hath God Wrought." The message went over the wires to Baltimore and returned to prove that the telegraph and Morse code had worked. One of the first messages from Baltimore was: "What is the news from Washington?" News stories flowed back and forth and newspapers in Baltimore and Washington became the first to print telegraphic dispatches.

In a few years, a consortium of newspapers had founded the Associated Press and had stationed a correspondent permanently in Washington. When the Civil War began, and the Union Army did poorly at first, the War Department censored telegraphic news reports from the capital. Somehow, the AP escaped most of this censorship.

When Congress investigated, in 1862, the AP reporter testified that his business was simply to telegraph facts, not to comment on them, because his reports went to papers of all political hues. Rather than express opinion, he had to "be truthful and impartial," which made his dispatches "dry matters of fact and detail." The reporter's testimony served as one of the first definitions of objective news reporting. In addition, the cost of telegraphing shortened the word count on news stories and forced reporters to summarize their stories in their lead paragraphs.

After lobbyists invaded the congressional press

galleries during the Gilded Age, the leaders of the Washington press corps banded together and drew up a set of rules defining who should be issued a press pass. By 1880, both houses of Congress had adopted rules that limited admission to the press gallery to those who filed stories for a daily newspaper via telegraph. As intended, these rules ousted the lobbyists, but they also barred women reporters, who filed social news by letter rather than the more expensive telegraph, and African-Americans reporters, since the black press then consisted entirely of weekly papers. Later in the twentieth century, the same rules kept magazine and radio reporters out of the press gallery. They finally persuaded Congress to create a separate Periodical Press Gallery and Radio Gallery (now the Radio-TV Gallery), which set their own definitions of legitimate news reporting.

As late as the 1980s, reporters in the press galleries were still typing stories and shouting "Copy!" A runner would whisk the text to a nearby telegraph operator, who would telegraph it back to the reporter's paper. Downstairs, in the lobbies behind the Senate and House chambers, members would gather around large wooden boxes that held teletype machines. The "telex" constantly typed out telegraph dispatches with breaking news.

By 1990, faxes, email and computers had banished the telegraph and telex entirely from the Capitol. The AP and other wire services survived the demise of the wire and adapted their reporting to digital electronics. Today's reporters, most of whom have never seen a telegraph outside a museum, send stories from their laptops from wireless committee rooms.

Reporting via telegraph is no longer a requirement for a press pass, but the congressional press galleries, along with the White House and executive departments, continue to grapple with how to sort out professional reporters from the amateurs and advocacy groups that apply. Bloggers especially have stretched the old definitions and posed problems for those who determine accreditation.

Internet reporting is redefining the news business as dramatically as the telegraph once did. News stories are now being filed in installments and posted online as they develop rather than waiting for set deadlines. The length and presentation of reports are being shaped to conform to the reading habits of those who surf the net. Eventually, internet reporters will be fully integrated within the press corps and will redefine the requirements for press accreditation to fit their mirror image. Until, that is, some other communications medium emerges to supplant them.

The telegraph resulted in the pyramid-style approach to news stories and a 'dry' style of reporting. What effect will the internet have?

DAYBOOK

CLUW Biennial Convention
Oct. 10-13, Las Vegas.

Western District Council
Oct. 20-21, Eugene, OR

TNG Exec Council Meeting
Oct. 24-25, Washington, DC

Forum on the Future of News Industry Jobs
Oct. 26-27, U. of Maryland

Great Lakes, Midwest, and Southern District Councils
Nov. 9-11, Chicago

New England District Council
Dec. 1, Manchester, NH

New Local Officers Seminar
Jan. 18-21, Silver Spring, MD

Broun Award entry deadline
Jan. 25 (postmark)

Guild Sector Conference
Feb. 27-March 2, Providence

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

By overwhelming majority, Guild members ratify a decision by convention delegates to affiliate with the newly formed CIO. Eight other convention decisions also are affirmed, with only a resolution condemning fascism in Spain reversed, by a narrow margin. . . . Frustrated by three years of unresolved contract negotiations, 305 Guild members working for the Brooklyn Eagle launch the biggest strike in the union's short history. . . . AF of L President William Green announces plans to organize dual newspaper unions, to compete with the Guild.

Fifty years ago this month:

William Proxmire, a former Guild activist and reporter for the Madison Capitol Times, wins the U.S. Senate seat that had been held by Joseph McCarthy. . . . The Wall Street Journal reports on the growing use of tiny recorders in labor negotiations, with microphones hidden in tie clasps or lapel buttons. . . . The New York Guild grapples with its findings of "a pattern of [racial] discrimination" at some local publications.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Forty-four publishers and their family members make it onto the Forbes 400 list of wealthiest U.S. individuals. . . . The Buffalo Courier Express publishes its final edition, throwing 370 Guild members out of work. . . . The Seattle Times and the Post-Intelligencer appeal a U.S. District Court ruling that the U.S. attorney general had erred in approving their joint operating agreement:

THE GUILD Reporter

Official publication of
The Newspaper Guild-CWA (AFL-CIO, CLC)
501 Third Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001-2797
Telephone: (202) 434-7177 FAX: (202) 434-1472
E-mail: azipsen@cwa-union.org

(See box on page 2 for address or other subscription changes or cancellations.)

Volume 74, Number 9

September 14, 2007

President: LINDA K. FOLEY
Secretary-Treasurer: BERNIE LUNZER
TNG-CWA Chairperson: CAROL D. ROTHMAN

Regional Vice Presidents:
Region 1—Donna Marks
Region 2—Connie Knox
Region 3—Scott Stephens
Region 4—Lucille Wittek
Region 5—Deborah Zabarenko
Region 6—Karolynn DeLuca
Canada East—Lois Kirkup
Canada West—Scott Edmonds

TNG-CWA Coordinator:
Malinka Franklin

Executive Secretary,
Contract Committee:
Carrie Biggs-Adams

Editor: Andy Zipser
Director, Contract Admin:
Kathleen Mulvey Brennan
Staff Representatives:
Michael R. Burrell,
Darren Carroll,
Marian V. Needham,
Jim Schaulenbil,
Jay Schmitz,
Melissa Nelson

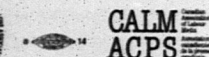
Administrative Staff:
Dominique Edmondson,
Tina Harrison, Kristin DeNeau,
Jeremiah West

Administrative Director:
Eric D. Geist
Membership Coordinator:
Bruce R. Nelson

CWA/SCA Canada
Director:
Arnold Amber

Staff Representatives:
David Esposti, David Wilson,
Dan Zeidler

Administrative Staff:
Marjolaine Botsford,
Joanne Scheel



Printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co.

Vol. 74

Iss. 10

OCT 19

2007