

THE GUILD Reporter

*****5-DIGIT 48103
(C) S246 P7
NATIONAL ARCHIVE PUBLISHING COMPANY
300 N ZEEB RD # 998
ANN ARBOR MI 48103-1553

July 18, 2008

A Publication of The Newspaper Guild and The Communications Workers of America • Volume 75, Number 7

BANG: You win. BANG: You're outta here. Bang! You fight!

By Josh Richman
Secretary, BANG-EB bargaining unit

We won a historic victory; we were immediately besieged; and we're moving forward anyway. On June 13, editorial workers at the Bay Area News Group-East Bay—formed by the August 2007 merger of the Contra Costa Times and its affiliated papers with the former ANG Newspapers—voted to be represented by the Newspaper Guild. It had been a tough campaign, but in the end enough of us realized that standing together

and speaking with one voice is the best way to protect ourselves, our products, our readers and our industry.

Two weeks later, even before we'd elected officers, the other shoe dropped.

Management informed the Guild on June 27 that 29 BANG-EB bargaining unit employees would be laid off effective July 11, a 13% reduction in our workforce. That same day, about a dozen non-bargaining-

unit editorial managers and workers were pushed out the door, some after decades of service. [Editor's note: At press time, the Northern California Media Guild had filed unfair labor charges against BANG-EB management, accusing the company of selecting employees for layoffs in retaliation for their union support.]

Recognizing that the company and the industry are in dire financial straits, we immediately went to the table not only to try to mitigate the damage and negotiate some help for the soon-to-be-unemployed, but also to determine whether management, in the absence of a contract, had formulated the layoff list fairly and consistently.

Our answer came as the list was revealed July 2 and we saw organizing committee co-chairwoman and award-winning Contra Costa Times reporter Sara Steffens—our “Norma Rae,” who’d helped bring the Walnut Creek newsroom into the fold—among about 20 known union supporters targeted for termination.

This, just one week after she and organizing committee co-chairmen Karl Fischer (a West County Times reporter) and Michael Manekin (a San Mateo County Times reporter) had received a standing ovation at the Communications Workers of America’s 70th Annual Convention in Las Vegas for their tireless efforts in recent months. And, just two days after she spoke on behalf of our new unit at a large labor rally in downtown Oakland.

Even workers who’d opposed union representation were appalled by the news.

By then, Sara had spent many long

Continued on page 3



BANG-EB's new co-chair and her new gavel.

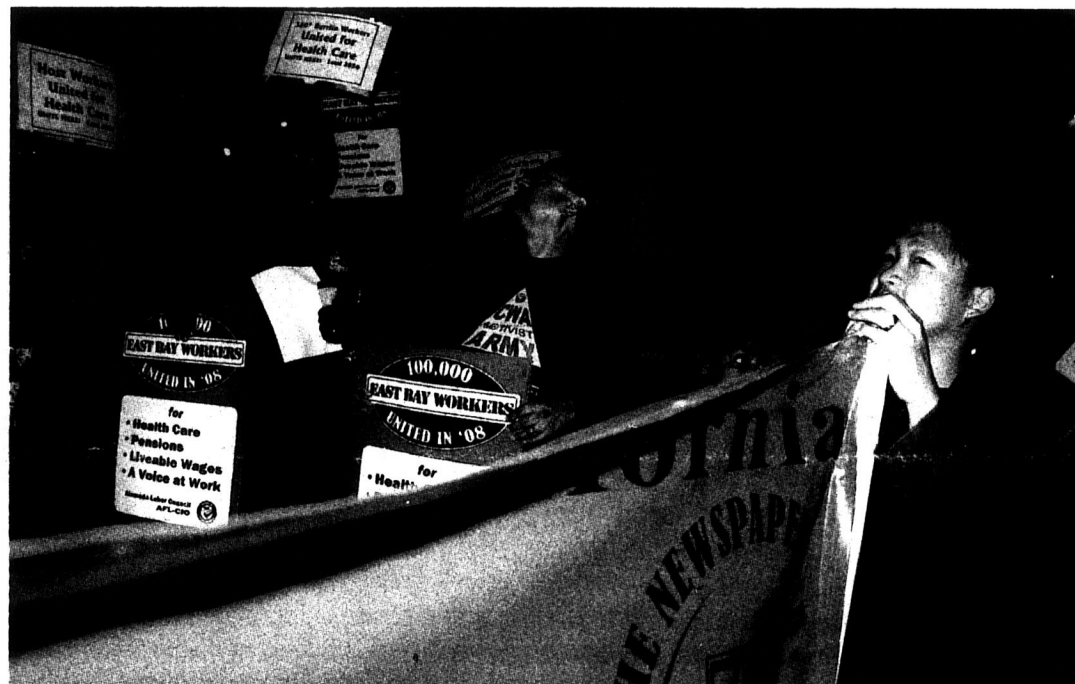
There once was a union maid...

By Sara Steffens
Vice chair, BANG-EB bargaining unit

One night last week, as my husband was giving our 2-year-old her usual bedtime bath, I succumbed to the impulse to stretch flat on the cool tiles of our bathroom floor, staring at the ceiling.

I couldn't stop thinking about the proposed layoff list that I knew was on its way: Whose names would appear? Friends? Cubicle mates? Fellow organizers? Would the list skew toward newcomers? People near retirement? Worst of all, just a few days after certification of our union, with no contract and not even a chance

Continued on page 3



Demonstrating a new-found militancy by Guild members in the East Bay, Dennis Uyeno holds one end of banner at a June 30 labor demonstration in downtown Oakland. The demonstration was held to support 50,000 workers in several unions currently in contract negotiations, including university service workers, airport food servers, healthcare workers, port workers—and reporters.

Guild's equity group breaks new ground

By Scott Stephens
Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild

The TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee returned to the city of its birth this summer and staged the union's first-ever equity conference.

The daylong gathering, which took place at the Las Vegas Hilton before the start of this year's CWA convention, attracted more than 50 Guild activists. They were exposed to a wide-ranging menu of topics related to equity and diversity

issues in the workplace, the union and the community. Issues included the future of jobs in the industry, the impact of economics on equity-seeking groups, the effect of technology on diversity and reaching out to young people.

The event took eight months to plan and was conceived and carried out by the committee, a rank-and-file panel established at the 2006 Sector Conference in Las Vegas. Its mission: to increase participation by equity-seeking groups at all levels of the union.

“Diversity is everyone’s job,”



Participating in the conference are (l to r) Vernon Clarke, Nicole Brewster and Tara Weber.

said committee member Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe, of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild. “It’s part of what we all do as a union.”

The conference marked the first time the Guild has held a large-scale event around diversity and human rights issues. Activists expressed confidence it represented a turning point. “There was a time

in the Guild when we were not pushing this issue forward,” said TNG President Bernie Lunzer.

The day began with remarks from the four people holding diversity seats on the CWA Executive Board, all of whom were seeking reelection.

That was followed by a sobering statistical analysis by C. Jef-

frey Waddoups, an economics professor at the University of Nevada. Waddoups said union membership in the U.S. now stands where it did 80 years ago, on the eve of the Great Depression. He documented how the demise of union membership has paralleled a radical redistribution of wealth that has put

Continued on page 3

Inside this issue



Saxberg wins East Canada race page 2

Guilders do the darnedest stuff . . pages 4-5

Mixed reviews for AP changes page 6

Saxberg wins post

The suspense generated by Canada East's prolonged balloting for a TNG-CWA vice presidency is over, following certification of the closest election in this year's various contests.

Meeting at Guild headquarters June 30, after all other members of the TNG-CWA executive committee had been sworn in at the CWA convention, the Sector Election and Referendum Committee certified 451 votes for Barbara Saxberg vs. 405 for Darren Pittman.

Although all other Guild election returns were certified in May, the Canada East results were inconclusive because five locals with enough voters to affect the outcome had failed to hold an election. As a result, the SERC directly oversaw

balloting in those locals in June.

Turnout among all 21 locals voting for the Canada East candidates was even lower than in the election overall, at 19% compared with a Guild-wide turnout of 23%. But that statistic was skewed by the outsized presence of the Canadian Media Guild, Saxberg's home local, whose members overwhelmingly didn't vote. By comparison, the 20 other locals in Canada East had a 55% turnout, with most voters in those locals opting for Pittman.

Still, even with lower turnout the Canadian Media Guild's sheer size gave Saxberg the edge she needed, a margin of 215 votes. The final tally: 52.6% Saxberg, 47.4% Pittman.

Canada East results by local

Local #	Name	Saxberg	Pittman
30378	Brantford	1	4
30213	CMG East	259	44
30664	Fredericton	0	15
30391	Guelph	1	2
30130	Halifax	2	53
30139	IUE CWA 80400	0	24
30204	Kingston, Ont.	34	3
30636	Moncton	0	7
30111	Montreal	29	12
30241	North Bay	7	2
30232	Northern Ontario	7	2
30205	Ottawa	49	71
30248	Peterborough	5	7
30085	Saint John	0	32
30746	Sault Ste. Marie	8	22
30009	Schneider	33	14
30416	St. Catharines	3	1
30846	Sudbury	1	1
30460	Sydney	1	47
30044	Thunder Bay	1	0
30553	Windsor	10	42
Totals:		451	405

Service award to Ortiz

This year's Charles B. Dale Service Award honoree is Brandon Ortiz, president of the Lexington Guild, who was awarded the distinction "for his outstanding work in revitalizing and mobilizing his local, the home local of former Guild president Linda Foley."

In nominating Ortiz for the honor, the local's vice president wrote that prior to his involvement, many local members, "some of whom had worked at the paper for more than a decade, were not even aware we had a union." But as the awards committee observed, "Through his hard work, imagination and obvious talent for mobilization, Ortiz has managed to turn that around."

With Ortiz leading the way over the past two years, the open-shop newsroom unit has climbed from membership in single digits and is approaching 50%, has negotiated a decent contract, raised public awareness "and clearly rattled management . . . with their new strength and ability to mobilize the community," the committee wrote.

Ortiz also built an organized steward structure, created a direct debit program for dues collection and is beginning a campaign to merge his local with CWA Local 3372 to place it on a stronger financial footing.

Ortiz's efforts "serve as a model for all Guild members of what can be accomplished by hard work, dedication and imagination," the committee concluded. "It also shows how new members can bring new energy to our organization."

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 Melané 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: duesmloforms@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

Guild briefs . . .

Rochester ends 15-year duel

Fifteen years into a bargaining standoff that resulted last year in an impasse and posted conditions, the Rochester Guild reached a tentative contract agreement with the Gannett-owned Democrat & Chronicle. Negotiations had resumed recently, after management announced plans to freeze its defined benefit pension plan and shift to a 401(k) plan instead. "It wasn't what we'd wanted," local president Steve Orr said of the agreement, "but we felt it was better to have a contract with so-so job protections in it than to have no contract with no protections." A membership vote by the 90-member local was being scheduled at press time.

TA reached in Monterey

The San Jose Guild and the Monterey Herald have reached tentative agreement on a new, three-year contract that includes annual pay increases of 1%, plus a 1% annual allocation to the merit pool. The agreement also adds an employer match to the current 401(k) plan and a new severance benefit for laid-off employees. Health insurance premium sharing will remain unchanged this year, but will increase for singles in 2009. A vote on the agreement was being scheduled at press time.

Pantagraph election sought

The St. Louis Newspaper Guild on July 1 notified the National Labor Relations Board that it has sufficient authorization cards to qualify for a representation election in the operations department of the Bloomington Pantagraph. At press time, a hearing was to be scheduled to define the bargaining unit and to set an election date, which usually occurs within 42 days of the filing. Separately, the local announced it had received card check recognition for three workers at St. Louis Jobs with Justice. St. Louis JWWJ is also reorganizing as a state-wide coalition and will soon open two to four more offices in Missouri.

Arbitrator nixes pension revise

An arbitrator has agreed with the Providence Guild that the Telegram & Gazette violated the contract when it unilaterally modified its pension formula in January 2007. The change significantly reduced pension benefits for employees hired after that date; the ruling requires management to restore full benefits by mid-August.

ULP tests Memphis layoffs

The Memphis Newspaper Guild Local 33091 has filed a National Labor Relations Board charge against The Commercial Appeal over its most recent lay-offs. The complaint followed a bargaining session June 10, at which Guild representatives asked for more talks before layoffs were initiated and were assured the company had not decided who would be laid off. Two days later, before the next bargaining session, 30 people were escorted out of the building with no insurance beyond the end of the month, no severance pay beyond accrued pension benefits, and no bumping or additional re-employment rights.

Plain Dealer cuts protested

More than 60 members of the Cleveland Plain Dealer unit of the Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild carried black balloons and marched around the newspaper building June 20 to protest wage cuts imposed on three part-time members. The three employees—a reporter, a photographer and a clerk—with combined experience of nearly 60 years, were told a week earlier by the Newhouse-owned paper that their hours would be reduced 25%-50%. The cut in hours also means they will have to pay more out of pocket for health care. The local is investigating whether the reduction of hours constitutes a contract violation.

Ongoing stalemate in Hawaii

The latest round of negotiations between the Gannett-owned Honolulu Advertiser and its unionized workers ended after more than a week of talks without significant progress, despite the par-

ticipation of a federal mediator. Company officials continued to insist that employees pay more—up to 20%—for their health care benefits, while union negotiators maintained they would not agree to lower benefits. During the talks with the mediator, which did not produce any face-to-face company-union meetings, management said it needed more money from employees to offset declining revenue—even though that very same day Gannett officials were presenting a much rosier picture to investors.

S&P turning 26 jobs into 15

In an effort to garner additional savings—while adding "pennies" to its bottom line—S&P said July 3 it will subcontract work currently performed by 26 of its lowest-tier wage earners. The workers, in S&P's mailroom, maintenance facilities and audiovisual departments, are supposed to get first crack at being rehired by the outside company to which the work is being outsourced, but none of the employees is guaranteed a job and projections are that the headcount will be reduced to 15. Moreover, S&P would not disclose any wage or benefit proposals for most of the jobs.

NY health fund still declining

The financial reserves of the jointly administered health care fund at the New York Times continue to decline and are down to \$3.2 million, from \$4.5 million at the end of last year. But despite two years of meetings between the New York Guild and Times management, Guild leaders say there has been no progress toward a solution because the company apparently views the talks as an opportunity to extract numerous contract concessions, including a significant reduction in overtime payments, the elimination of two weeks advance scheduling and changes in the pension plan. With the two sides deadlocked, the dispute now goes to an independent arbitrator, a process that could take several months and will further deplete fund assets.

Same-sex coverage won

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette has agreed to a Guild proposal making health care and other benefits available to Guild members' same-sex partners and their children. The Guild thus far is the only unit at the all-union Post-Gazette with same-sex coverage.

Dueling newsletters win big

The Albany and San Jose locals are separated by a continent, but when it comes to producing a newsletter they're cheek by jowl. Both Albany's The Guilder and San Jose's Guild News racked up honors in the 2008 CWA newsletter competition, with The Guilder taking first place for general excellence and the Guild News taking second in Category 1 (locals with fewer than 500 members). Moreover, in competing with all CWA locals, The Guilder received an honorable mention for best front page, an honorable mention for best human interest feature and second place for best original photo; while the Guild News took second place for best news story and third place for best human interest feature. The only other Guild publication to be honored was The Union Reader, published by the Manchester Guild, which won honorable mention for best news story.

Courtney exits WashTech . . .

Marcus Courtney, president and one of the founders of WashTech, has taken a new job with UNI Global Union. Succeeding him as WashTech president is Les French, the local's executive vice president and a leader in the AT&T bargaining unit.

. . . as Portland loses Betit

C.J. Betit, the Portland Guild's administrative officer, resigned July 7 to take a job with the Maine State Employees Association. The local said Betit will remain as a special advisor to the Guild on sale-related issues. Guild President Kathy Munroe was named interim administrative officer, with Vice President Tom Bell filling the role of president. The local's regular elections are scheduled for November.

There once was a union maid. . .

Continued from page 1

to elect our unit leaders yet, how could we help those who would soon lose their jobs?

My husband—who shouldered far more than his share of childcare and housework while I was busy organizing this year—had a question of his own.

"If you lose your job," he asked, "was the union stuff still worth it?"

I didn't even have to think about my answer. I just said, "Yes. Of course."

It was easy to be certain back then. I won't lie: The last week has been hard on me. I've lost sleep. My emotions have swung wildly: Shock. Anger. Sadness. Disbelief. And anger all over again. After all my years here, the hard work, the big stories, the little stories, the side projects, the things I didn't have to do but did anyway—after all that, this is what I get?

Right now, 28 coworkers throughout the Bay Area News Group-East Bay know just how I feel.

So it's fair to ask again: With my own job on the chopping block, was the union stuff still worth it?

Yes. Yes. A hundred times yes. And I'd do it again, every bit of it.

What we accomplished has not been undone. Our union isn't going anywhere.

As those of us on the organizing committee have so often said: The Guild is not one person. It's all of us, working together, to advance our shared interests.

Our managers can't take that away. Dean Singleton can't take it away. Even the ever-worsening finances of the newspaper industry can't take that away.

So here is my plea to all of you: Don't give it away in fear. Stand up. Work together. Build our union. Stay engaged as those you choose struggle to win a contract. Help them along, and vote on the proposal they bring back to you. A contract matters. This single powerful document will protect all of us the next time hard times roll around, guard each of us against arbitrary choices, unfair decisions, the chance of being retaliated or discriminated against.

Much has changed in our newsrooms over the past months, very little of it for the better. But I still believe what I wrote back in December: The Guild can be part of the solution. We can sit around and mourn the demise of our industry. Or we can stand up and fight for our little corner of the world, for ourselves and our co-workers and the communities that depend on what we do. Without a union, we have nothing. Together, we have a voice.

Months ago, a fellow organizer described a union as a family. Today I see more than ever how that's true. Family makes us stronger, shapes who we are, provides a fall-back in the toughest of times.

I may be packing up my desk, but I am sticking with the Guild.

Layoffs should be made for sound business reasons. No one should feel targeted or discriminated against, and the Guild continues working to ensure that economics were the sole motivation for this latest round of cuts.

I can't predict what will happen next—but one way or another, I intend to return to the newsroom. In the meantime, I plan to continue doing exactly what I have been over the past six months: Building the newsroom union of BANG-East Bay and fighting for our first contract.

The Guild has a special program to help newsroom employees laid off for the wrong reasons. I may even end up as a Guild employee—and I have to admit, I do find that satisfying. If someone was looking to get me to shut up already—I hate to tell them, but I think they just handed me a megaphone.

I have seen firsthand how the Newspaper Guild takes care of its own: me, and all the others who have sought help in the aftermath of this proposed layoff. And someday, when you need them, your Guild, your coworkers, will be there for you, too. All you need to do is invest a little time and belief to keep our union strong.

And yes, a hundred times yes, it will be worth it, for all of us.

Bang!

Continued from page 1

hours at the bargaining table fighting for our workers. And she was back at the table the very next day, unbowed, professional and inspirational. With her help, we saved the jobs of two people on the layoff list whom the company agreed to swap with volunteers.

So, at our inaugural unit meeting July 9 in Oakland we elected Sara as our new unit's chairwoman—something we might well have done anyway, but which we now mean as a clear message to management that we will not be cowed by its heavy-handed tactics. Fischer was elected as the unit's vice chairman, and yours truly, an Oakland Tribune reporter, as the unit's secretary.

As we pulled together a comprehensive July 10 workshop for those being laid off, we consulted with our legal counsel about filing an unfair labor practice charge to challenge the legality of the layoffs. So long as that charge is pending, we consider Sara's termination to be illegal and retaliatory, and she will remain our chief.

Meanwhile, we are moving forward with plans to heal the divisions found during our organizing drive. We're installing shop stewards. We've already asked management for dates to begin our contract negotiations, surveyed our membership's bargaining priorities and begun assembling a bargaining team.

We've had to say tearful goodbyes with longtime colleagues and friends, but we can and will win a contract with meaningful workplace protections. And we will prevail against a company that seems bent on balancing its books solely on the backs of workers, without a clear strategy for maintaining quality or a workable business model going forward.

We have been enormously gratified by an outpouring of support both local—from our Guild colleagues at the San Jose Mercury News and San Francisco Chronicle, as well as the Alameda County Labor Council and other Bay Area entities—and national, from Guild and CWA peers nationwide. Please keep it coming—we'll need all the support and help we can get as we continue along our high road to a brighter future.

For more news on our efforts, see www.onebigbang.org.

Layoffs hurting equity goals

Continued from page 1

more and more money into the pockets of the very richest citizens.

"The very top is getting the lion's share of the new productivity growth," Waddoups said, adding that equity-seeking groups are, historically, the most affected by the change.

Equally grim was Liza Gross' take on the future of industry jobs. Gross, managing editor for presentation and operations at the Miami Herald, arrived in Las Vegas fresh from a round of layoffs at her paper. "I've had to tell people this week that they were losing their jobs," Gross said. "It's been a very, very rough week."

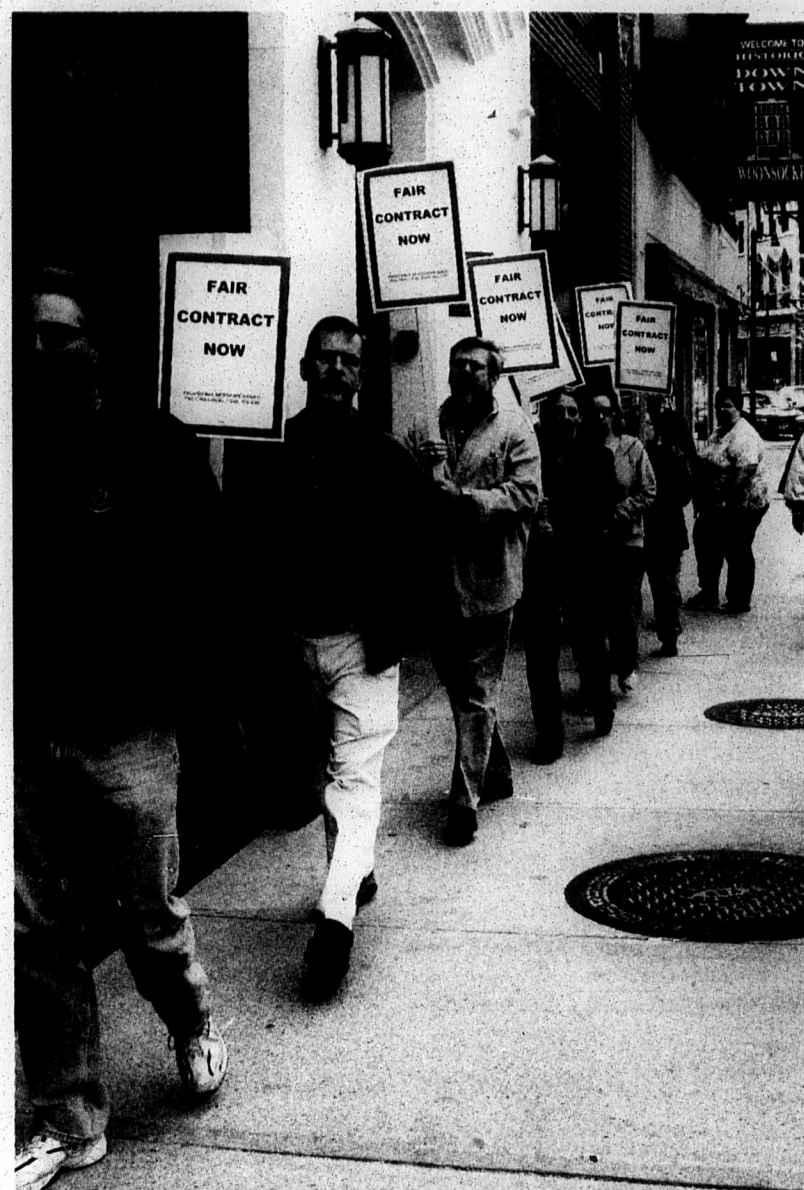
Gross said newspapers need to adapt to changing times and realize that the traditional delivery system of news is obsolete. She said journalists need to develop new skills to survive—but she also acknowledged that the industry was "abysmally short" of realizing diversity goals, and admitted it's unlikely the picture will improve in the face of layoffs.

"This is not a stable environment we find ourselves in right now," she said.

Creating some grounds for optimism, however, is the development of emerging technologies that could give greater job access to people with disabilities and members of other equity-seeking groups.

Inclusion should mean more than simply accessibility to technology, said Laurie McArthur, director of the Adaptive Technology Resources Centre at the University of Toronto. "People with disabilities should be producers, and not just consumers, of information," she said.

Saron Ghebressellassie, 21, a member of the Canadian Federation of Students and a student at Ryerson University in Toronto, reminded the conference that many of the world's greatest movements—from civil rights to anti-war—were led by young people. But students are less likely to belong to labor unions and more likely to work at low-paying jobs, she added—prompting committee chairman Michael D'Souza, of the Canadian Media Guild, to observe that it's vital for Guild members to reach out to



NONEJAN MCFARLANE / PROVIDENCE GUILD

Protesting a sick idea

A mid-May noon rally outside the Woonsocket Call protests the company's wage and health care contract proposals, which would cover employees of both the Woonsocket Call and Pawtucket Times. While the company is seeking to knock the wage scale below current rates, its proposed medical plan would require employees to absorb any medical premium increases while significantly hiking their out-of-pocket medical expenses. The Providence Guild, which represents employees at the two papers, refers to these as "phantom benefits."

new members when they join the bargaining unit.

Conference participants ended the day by meeting in small groups and coming up with ideas to take back to their locals. Those ideas ranged from establishing speakers' bureaus to making web sites accessible to sight-impaired members.

While committee members said they wouldn't rule out having another conference in the future, their ultimate goal is to diversify the Guild to a point where their work is no longer necessary. "My hope for the committee is that it will become extinct in a few years," said committee member Randy Gilliam of the Newspaper Guild of New York.

Chicago Local 34071 is seeking candidates for the position of executive director. Applicants should have experience in contract negotiations and enforcement and management of a small office staff. Newspaper experience is preferable.

Send applications no later than Aug. 13 to:

Mike Ulreich
Chicago Newspaper Guild
36 S. Wabash, Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60603

or contact Mike at michaelulreich@hotmail.com
or (312) 659-0178

Two-wheeling Down Under: no worries, mate!

By Dennis Uyeno
San Jose Newspaper Guild

I've been home two months, yet the memories of New Zealand are still fresh in my mind.

This was my first overseas bicycle tour and longest time ever away from home. It was a thrilling and fun experience—the thrills coming from an evil invention called the traffic circle and trusting my folding travel bike (BikeFriday) to see me through all the unknown trials ahead. Despite a doubting trip leader, both the rider and bike proved up to the task.

I joined a small ragtag band of 15 seasoned travelers, all from the western United States except for one Aussie named John, for a three-week tour of New Zealand's South Island. Included in the group were several who'd biked across the United States (one woman four times), a retired employee of Hewlett Packard who's made bike touring his new life's work, and several who've climbed far-flung mountain peaks in the Alps, Himalayas, Alaska and Kilimanjaro in Africa.

The trip was led by grizzled cycle tour veteran Wayne Martin, a retired bus driver and jack of all trades who enjoys having fun. He's best known for being one of the founders 30 years ago of a grueling Sierra ride first named the Markleeville Death Ride, now known as the Tour of the California Alps. Wayne now runs a company called No Mints on Your Pillow Tours. He provides route planning, campground reservations and detailed information on points of interest, activities and things to watch out for.

Beyond that, we were all "on our own." He'd planned the tour to start in the city of Christchurch and finish in Queenstown three weeks and some 1,000 miles later. Along the way, we were treated to spectacular scenery, lots of friendly locals and a wonderful time. New Zealanders are gracious and outgoing people and their country is beautiful, clean and mostly unspoiled.

Wayne scheduled days off to go exploring in Christchurch, the New Zealand Alps, Dunedin, the Catlands, Invercargill, and Milford Sound. He also gave us options for accommodations, from tent camping and cabins to motels and hotels. New Zealand has expensive hotel accommodations but is well set up for budget travelers, with excellent camping and hostels in central locations at moderate prices. Every campground (called holiday parks) has full kitchen, bathroom/shower, TV lounge and Internet access. Many have cabins with linens for rent as well.

Most towns have wonderful eating and drinking establishments to delight one's palate every night.

We averaged 60-70 miles on ride days in varied terrain, sometimes hilly to downright steep climbing. We were given maps with directions plus notes on where to find the best rest/lunch stops as well as points of interest along the way.

Then everyone was turned loose and on their own. Many chose to ride together, socializing and "sharing their pain," while others were "off the front," speeding to the day's destination. I generally chose to go slow, stop often and sample the native fare widely.



Uyeno on a boat in Milford Sound, a spectacularly scenic fjord that more often than not conceals its beauty behind a veil of clouds and rain.

My riding partner for most of the tour was Bill, a retired United Airlines pilot my age from Anchorage. He's a marathon runner and mountain climber, but also good on a bicycle. One day out of a little town called Ranfurly, we took a wrong turn and ended up 40 miles in the wrong direction. His comment: "Christ, we just turned what was supposed to be an easy day into a hard day!" I didn't tell him but I'd wanted to ride a century (100 miles) sometime during the tour, so that was the day I did, but it came at poor Bill's expense. I didn't feel too bad because as a former pilot, he should have figured out we were lost much sooner than he did. I am easily distracted and get lost often myself. I'm famous for it.

At home, none of my friends follows me or believes a word I say about a ride's route.

Along the way, I saw a 40-pound albino chick for the first time (Dunedin), visited the Cadbury chocolate factory (also Dunedin); made my first wild penguin encounter (Catlands), visited the shrine of Burt Munro, of world's fastest Indian motorcycle fame (Invercargill), and rode by bike to Land's End in New Zealand's most southerly city of Bluff, where there's a road sign with directions and distances to Antarctica, Chile, Patagonia, South Africa, etc. I boated on Milford Sound, one of the rainiest places on Earth with more than 260 inches a year.

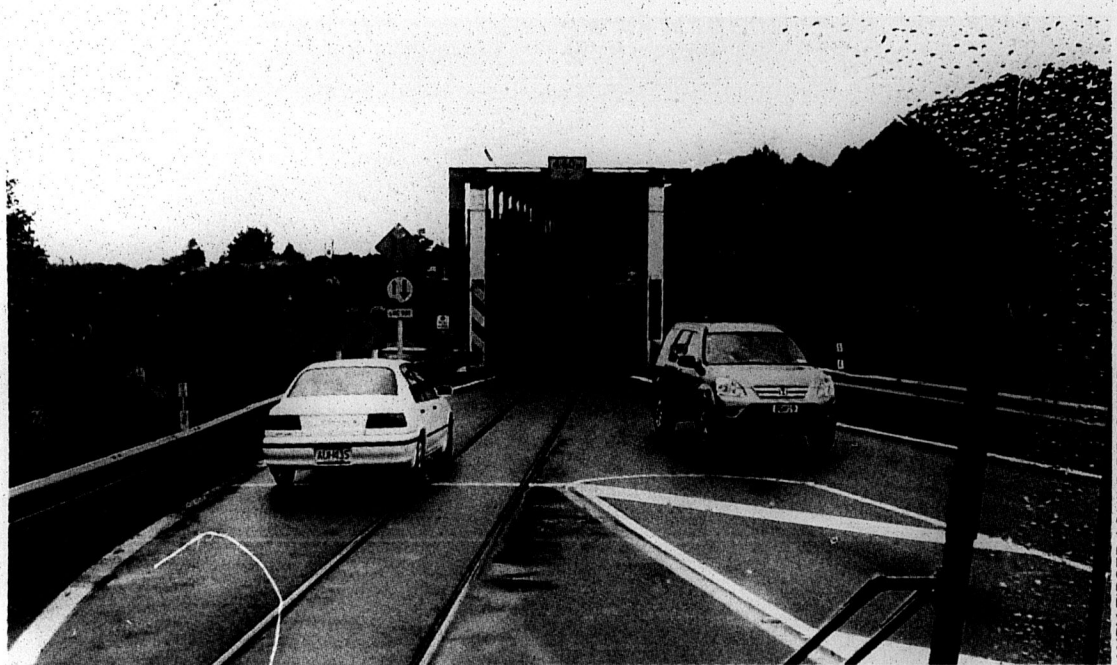
Some of the riders on this tour were older and slow but made up for this by being

in great shape and being resourceful and self-reliant. We were lucky that one of our tour member's spouse volunteered to drive a rental van so we didn't have to carry our gear on our bikes (that's called being "self-contained").

The trip leader preferred that everyone would have logged around 1,000 cycle training miles for the year by the time the tour started. I was one of four or five in the group who'd attained the desired training miles. If you're planning an adventure like this, it is wise to put in the time to get in shape. Trying to get in shape during the tour means you're going to have some bad days when you should be having fun. Sixty to 70 miles a day may sound like a lot, but when you're in shape it's just four or five hours of riding at the average tour pace of 15 mph, leaving lots of time for exploring, photography, sightseeing, eating and just having fun.

Besides traffic circles, the only other bad thing about New Zealand is that everyone drives on the "wrong" side of the road. Pedestrians outside crosswalks have no rights in New Zealand, and foreign tourists get hit crossing streets looking in the wrong direction. Other than that, New Zealand is a wonderful and affordable vacation destination. Plane fare is the biggest expense, so once you're there, stay a spell and enjoy it, mate.

First published in *The Guild News*, the San Jose Guild's newsletter.



Among the peculiarities of travel in New Zealand are the South Island's one-lane bridges that serve two-way auto traffic—as well as the occasional train.

No help for Hermit Kingdom

When Shirley Smith, a nine-year Associated Press veteran, was selected as just one of seven U.S. journalists for a fellowship to North and South Korea, she anticipated that management might see it as an opportunity to showcase the accomplishments of one of its journalists. But that didn't exactly happen.

It was, after all, Smith's own initiative in researching and applying for the fellowship that won her the honor. But she was required to go on her own time, and AP also told her there was no budget for business cards, a quintessential feature of any professional meeting in most Asian cultures.

The 18-day exchange program, which included seven Korean journalists visiting the U.S., is sponsored by the East-West Center and the Korea Press Foundation and supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. The Americans traveled first to Seoul, Kyungju and Ulsan for meetings with high-level government, political, business

and cultural leaders, netting Smith a fistful of "great contacts" for future stories.

But the program also took the small group into the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone and beyond it to North Korea, which remains almost entirely closed to foreigners and which maintains tight control over its few visitors. "These are places even most journalists don't see," Smith said, adding: "Seeing North Korea in person, especially in contrast to vibrant South Korea, brings home many things we take for granted."

Although Smith said she was not fearful while in Gaesung, North Korea, she was aware of being watched at all times and no civilian North Koreans were present when her small group was given a tour of a tourist "folk village"—behind closed wooden gates.

Not long after Smith completed her fellowship, a 53-year-old woman was shot dead by a North Korean soldier. The tourist, walking on a beach, had wandered too far afield from her resort.



Smith at restored "folk village" in Gaesung, under the gaze of the ever-vigilant state.

Breaking a leg—the union way

By Tom Joyce
York Newspaper Guild

On my first day at the Great Labor Arts Exchange, an older gentleman approached me and shook my hand warmly, saying he was always happy to meet a member of The Newspaper Guild.

Back in the 1930s, he said, he'd stood with Newspaper Guild founder Heywood Broun on picket lines. He'd be happy to talk to me about it later.

As I watched him walk off, my jaw dangling very close to the floor, I was already glad I'd come.

I was there on the recommendation of my friend, Carrie Biggs Adams. Back in 2006, I won the Guild Service Award and some scholarship money I could put toward union education.

During an extended mobilization campaign at the York Daily Record in York, Pa., I'd written some satirical songs and staged some skits for public demonstrations. Carrie suggested this would be right up my alley, and promised me I'd have a blast.

So I headed down to the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md., from June 22 to 24.

There, I found a group of dedicated people keeping union protest art alive and vital, carrying on a tradition going back to the days of Woody Guthrie and Paul Robeson. This year, as it turned out, was the GLAE's 30th.

Peter Jones is the former director of the Labor Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit made up of a core group of Arts Exchange supporters who coordinate the annual event. Jones said it started with a course at the National Labor College on music in labor activism. Many people would end up taking that course repeatedly, because they enjoyed meeting others who shared their enthusiasm for mixing arts with activism.

Over time, the class evolved into an extended hybrid of arts festival and training



Union thespians (l to r) Larry Johnson, Robert Moore, Camilo Viveiros, Graciela Lopez and Tom Joyce embark on a journey down the Yellow Brick Road.

seminar, where anyone interested can perform, exchange ideas or just sit back and enjoy the sounds and spectacle. Jones said it typically brings in 65 to 85 people.

It expanded over the years. I took part in a separate but complementary seminar called the Conference on Creative Organizing, now in its 11th year. The emphasis there was on using different techniques specifically for organizing drives and mobilization campaigns.

The GLAE brings in many different types of artists and performers, including musicians, sculptors, painters, poets—even an honest-to-God circus clown who helped run my seminar.

And it included plenty of people like me, with no particular artistic training. I and nine

others spent three days learning such topics as the basics of street theater, and how to craft those giant puppets you see in news photos of protests.

The whole thing culminates with a show featuring some amazingly talented performers. Our group put on a Wizard-of-Oz-themed comedy skit. And yes, I had a blast.

I got to meet some fascinating people, too. The older gentleman turned out to be 91-year-old Julius Margolin, who's been involved with labor activism since the 1930s.

I also met 20-year-old Graciela Lopez. She's originally from New Mexico, but is now attending American University in Washington, D.C. She's active in the Student-Farmworker Alliance, and said she's been

campaigning for workers' rights since she was 17.

I tried not to wince visibly as I reflected that I'd spent most of my 17th year playing air guitar to Iron Maiden.

At the end of every day, many of the participants would head over to the college's lounge to socialize or join in the continuing music sessions.

On one of those nights, I had a chance to speak at length with Julius. He told me about the days on the picket lines during 1930s newspaper strikes, when owners were trying to bust the unions.

He wasn't a member of The Newspaper Guild. But in those days, unions would stand on each others' picket lines because they knew they had to stick together if they were going to survive.

I just had to ask him one question. At my paper, we're coming up on three grueling years of contract negotiations

with MediaNews Group. Repeatedly, their negotiators have told us that the current economy gives them no choice but to slash our pay and benefits, and gut our union rights.

They've implied that we're simply being unreasonable by refusing to accept that. Did newspaper owners say the same thing in the 1930s?

Julius was laughing before I'd even finished asking the question. Yes, he heard the same claims in the 1930s, and many times in the ensuing decades.

"They made all kinds of excuses," he said. "We all knew it was a lot of crap."

I hope that in the future, union supporters will be around to carry on that message. Based on my experiences in Silver Spring, I have few worries about that.

When Spam is more than an Idle passion

By Samantha Bennett
Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild

On the wall in my living room is a small display box with a glass front. Inside is a can of Spam. But it's no ordinary tin of highly processed meat. The label is defaced with a thick black squiggle, a looping, unintelligible scrawl. If a visitor is worthy, I will translate, because there are only two people on the planet who know for sure what that scribble is: an autograph. And what it says: Eric Idle.

For fans of Monty Python, this is a kind of holy grail.

How did I come to possess this trophy? Partly with the help of one of my Guild brothers.

A few years ago, Eric Idle and his song-writing partner John du Prez were touring with an evening of musical comedy, and they stopped for a one-night stand at one of the fine concert halls in Pittsburgh, where I work for the Post-Gazette. I've been a Monty Python fan since I was in elementary school, staying up late to watch "Monty Python's Flying Circus" on PBS. I've seen all the movies. My only regret was that they split up as a team before I was in high school.

(The Beatles broke up when I was 4. I miss all the good stuff.)

But here at last was a chance to see one of my idols—the Idle one—live, in the flesh, on stage. I scored a ticket and prepared to leave right from work on the big evening. I was going to have to hurry, because

I'd have only a half-hour or so to hoof it over to the theater.

Hearing how excited I was, one of the local news editors suggested

I try to get Idle's autograph. And not just on a program or a book or my boob. On something really appropriate.

Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam—Lovely Spam! Wonderful Spam!

It was a brilliant idea, but I had very little time to get my hands on the necessary supplies. I launched myself through the streets of downtown Pittsburgh, which, like many urban downtowns, lacks a

supermarket. Where the hell was I going to get a can of Spam?

Oh thank heaven for 7-11.

The people who hang around an urban 7-11 after dark...

well, there's a whole other column in that. They looked a bit startled when a well-dressed blonde burst in, hunted frantically among the shelves for a few moments and finally bustled up to the counter with a single can of meat and a Sharpie.

That was the first and, I hope, last time I have ever settled myself in a plush seat in an ornate concert hall with pot-roasted ham concealed about my person.

After the show, Idle appeared at a table in the lobby for a signing. There were a lot of warnings that he absolutely would not autograph anything but the merchandise on sale nearby: CDs, DVDs, T-shirts and the like. I looked over the goods as I stood in line, but I didn't see anything I particularly wanted. What I had brought was so much better. Would he really turn me down after all this waiting?

Magnificent Spam! Superlative Spam!

At last, I got to the table, greeted Eric Idle and shook his hand.

"This is a strange request," I said, "but it's probably not the first time..." I reached in my bag "... that someone has asked you to sign one of these. Would you please?"

And he said he would. And he did.

I have seen him perform since, last summer in Toronto, where he and his cousin, the principal conductor of the symphony there, debuted Idle and du Prez's new oratorio, "Not the Messiah (He's a Very Naughty Boy)," based on "Monty Python's Life of Brian." I carried no edibles to that one.

In a preview interview, Idle told the Toronto Star how he keeps his privacy when he stays in hotels:

"I register under the name Mick Jagger. I find this stops the Eric Idle groupies from pestering me with demands for disappointing sex."

Interesting. Hadn't thought of asking for that. But an autographed can of Spam lasts longer.



Industry news

Sinking into a wine-dark sea...

Just when you thought the newspaper business couldn't sink any lower—economically, that is—Wall Street demonstrated just how short-sighted you were. The shares of seven newspaper companies all plunged to record-setting lows in one day, July 11, with some continuing to slide the following week. Journal Register stock was trading—when anyone showed the bad judgment to buy some—at 13 cents a share, or scarcely more than the cover price of a comic book, before the age of graphic novels. But even the big players were hurting, with Gannett hitting its lowest share price since 1990, Lee scraping by at a share price it hasn't seen since 1980 and McClatchy shares plunging 33% in less than two weeks. Even mighty News Corp. couldn't stay above the fray, with a Lehman Bros. analyst citing its newspaper exposure as a reason for downgrading its stock.

Debt-holders should be nervous, too

Credit-rating agencies, no surprise, were as punishing on the bond side as the stock market was toward equities, pounding newspaper companies deeper into junk bond territory. Standard & Poor's knocked down McClatchy to BB- from B+, on expectations that revenue and cash flow will have "meaningful declines" in coming months, and slashed MediaNews to CCC, a level suggesting that a default seems all too likely. As if to underscore the fragile nature of all those IOUs, Star Tribune Co. "declined"—in the diplomatic language of a Star Tribune story on the subject—to make a quarterly interest payment due June 30 to holders of \$96 million in second-tier debt.

Publishers meet challenges head-on

Faced with dwindling investor confidence, advertising support and reader interest, newspaper publishers vowed to bolster their products by investing in more training, bringing staffs back to full strength, seeking employee input—ha-ha! Only kidding! What they did instead was announce yet another round of layoffs and buyouts, by some calculations totaling nearly 1,000 jobs. Among the carnage at Guild-represented papers: upwards of 130 at the Boston Herald, due to a decision to outsource its printing; 150 at the two Detroit dailies; 100 more at the Baltimore Sun, including 55 to 60 in the newsroom; approximately 130 at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel by year's end; and 17 more at the San Jose Mercury News, raising its casualty rate to 63% of peak employment, back in 2000. The Boston Globe, meanwhile, floated a trial balloon—promptly shot down by the Guild—for a 10% pay cut.

Squeezed by rising paper costs...

One of the two biggest operating costs for newspapers is newsprint—and the stuff just keeps getting more expensive. Despite cutting pages, trimming web width and printing on lighter stock, publishers' best efforts to keep newsprint costs under control have been stymied by a 26% price increase since October, to a 12-year high of \$700 a metric ton. Ironically, the increase is the result of supplier consolidation—a pump that was primed by some newspaper companies unloading their pulp mills because they were money-losers.

... 'papers' find ways to do without

The partnership that owns the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News is exploring the idea of sharing the two newsrooms' editorial functions to cut costs. ... The Cleveland Plain Dealer is cutting an average of 32 pages per week, eliminating four weekly stand-alone sections and going from two daily pages of commentary to one. ... The Baltimore Sun said it will eliminate its daily business section at the end of this month, replacing it with two pages a day folded into the main section.

One consolation: we're not alone

The U.S. job market continues to weaken, as payroll contracted in June for the sixth straight month while weekly paychecks for most workers over the past year were up only 2.8%, well below the growth of inflation. The number of jobs in America is down 438,000 since it peaked last December, an average loss of 73,000 a month, and 8.5 million workers were unemployed in June, up from 7 million a year earlier. The economy, meanwhile, also isn't too hot: industrial output is plunging, producer prices are soaring and the housing industry continues to worsen. According to Federal Reserve reports, industrial output fell another 2% in May after plunging 7% in April. But consumer prices keep climbing. As of May, gasoline prices had increased 15.5% over the previous year and food and beverage prices were up 4.9%.

Help coming for Mexican journalists

Meeting June 9 with representatives of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Mexican President Felipe Calderón pledged to support legislation that would federalize crimes against freedom of expression. The commitment marked a significant step toward protecting Mexican journalists, who face an unprecedented wave of violence, and was the culmination of years of CPJ advocacy to raise the prosecution of journalist murders from the state to the federal level.

AP's new regional hubs drawing mixed reviews

By Martha Waggoner
News Media Guild

The first of four regional hubs planned by The Associated Press is up and running, and the comments to the News Media Guild indicate the main promise of that desk—more reporting time—isn't universal among the 13 states in the South region.

"I am still waiting for the 'more time for reporting' thing to happen," one staffer wrote. "So far we have much, much less than when I started with AP."

But those who are getting more writing time are happy with the result. One staffer said he feels "less pressure to churn out routine stuff to keep the members happy. The South editors I've worked with have seemed happy to allow an extra day or two to develop an idea into a good story, rather than demanding something immediately that might be only half-formed or not as good as it could be."

Associated Press President Tom Curley confirmed last November that the company would move some editing functions to regional hubs. The first, in Atlanta, began its "soft" start in early May, when North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama began filing through the desk; it now is a 24/7 operation that handles most stories beyond their earliest stage and broadcast duties from each of the 13 South desk states, except in the morning.

Although the AP had said a second hub for the Northeast region would be set up in Philadelphia in June, the start of that desk has been delayed, likely to the end of this year. Two other two hubs are expected in 2009, although AP has had a hard time deciding where to put the central U.S. desk, further delaying the western desk.

Responding to members' confusion and anxiety after the hub concept was unveiled—particularly because AP's human resources department was slow to share information, much of which conflicted with local managers' comments—Guild leaders held conference calls for employees in the 13 Southern region states to address their concerns. Yet anxiety is still running high, in part because many members believe their duties eventually will disappear.

"I think it's likely that by next spring many of these functions (that the staffer handles) will no longer exist," one person wrote. "I intend to stay on the job beyond that time, but only if there's something suitable for me to do."

Among the problems that staffers mentioned, either publicly on the Guild's listserv or privately to the Guild, are: news editors who aren't comfortable with stories being sent straight to South instead of to them;

While members of the News Media Guild struggle with AP's structural changes internally, the wire service's external relationships are equally strained.

A greater focus on "new media" has alienated some of the AP's newspaper members, who feel increasingly like step-children even as many say a new AP pricing plan costs them more while delivering less useful copy.

At least two groups of AP's newspaper clients have created alternative cooperatives, notably including a consortium of the eight largest newspapers in Ohio. Dow Jones, meanwhile, said its news wires won't renew their partnership with AP and instead have struck a deal with Agence France-Presse.

Ironically, although AP is owned by newspapers, newspapers now account for only 27% of its revenues, down from more than 50% in the mid-Eighties. Most revenue now comes from non-members or associate members.

difficulties with the handoff of stories when shifts change in the bureaus and on the South desk; and stories that once moved at longer lengths now moving at a shorter word count.

"This is a new thing, and everyone is eager to make it work," a staffer wrote. "I know that's where some of the overzealousness is coming from. But things have to change, or respected veteran journalists are going to become so miserable they leave."

Another staffer reported of instances when "significant impact stories of national interest have been killed by South desk. The set-up has taken power completely away from the bureaus, bureau editors and beat reporters who have earned the right to be considered good judges of what makes news."

From the perspective of those working the breaking news supervisor shifts, one such supervisor wrote that the shift requires 18 APNewsNow—the early version of a story, or the only version of less important stories—along with a budget-length pickup and whatever spot news breaks. "It's been less than two weeks since we've been doing things this way, and I believe I will get into a groove and things won't seem so hectic," he wrote.

The Guild also received many positive comments.

"It has far exceeded my expectations," wrote one staffer, who said he liked the concept of a regional desk but originally was dubious it would work. The editors, he said, "get on important stories expeditiously and they've been very easy to work with."

CWA convention backs Obama

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates, Inc.

Saying the 2008 election offers "the best chance in a generation" for pro-worker change, CWA President Larry Cohen led his convention's 2,500 delegates in endorsement by acclamation of Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama.

In his June 23 keynote address to the delegates, meeting in Las Vegas, Cohen pledged CWA would work all-out to elect Obama and more pro-worker lawmakers, especially in its joint political alliance with the Steel Workers, the Auto Workers and the Professional and Technical Engineers in selected states.

The object of the drive, he said, would be two-fold: to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, which is designed to help level the playing field between workers and bosses in organizing and bargaining, and to enact comprehensive affordable universal health care "and take that issue off the bargaining table." CWA would target those issues in 121 selected congressional districts nationwide, he added.

CWA's endorsement of Obama came just ahead of the AFL-CIO's, released June 26. CWA previously had been neutral on the subject, as its members split virtually evenly between Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Speaking by a video hookup from a campaign stop, Obama thanked the union for its backing and sounded a theme of positive change for workers and their families. He split his speech between blasting the GOP and

promising pro-worker change.

"The stakes could not be higher. Families are feeling like the American dream is slipping further and further out of reach," he said. "Folks are working harder for less. The cost of everything from a tank of gas to a bag of groceries, from health care to college tuition, is going up and up and up. It's getting harder to save and harder to retire."

Obama also told the delegates that President George W. Bush's administration "hasn't been fighting for you—they've actually tried to stop you from fighting for yourselves. This is the most anti-labor administration in our memory."

Cohen pledged CWA's support for the Democratic candidate and exhorted delegates to motivate members. He noted that in the past there has been internal resistance to activism and declared—given the stakes in the election—that non-activism must end.

"Too often, our own members want results but not struggle, viewing the union more as a vending machine where you put your dues in and instead of candy, out comes a contract," Cohen declared. "We don't offer candy, but we do offer the best chance to change things together, now and for the future, the best chance to make a difference in the face of incredible odds. And our time is now."

In other business, delegates elected Cohen to a new three-year term and elected Executive Vice President Jeff Rechenbach to succeed retiring Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling. District 7 Vice President Annie Hill succeeded Rechenbach.



LOOKING AHEAD

Surprise! We're the grownups!

By Bernie Lunzer, President

Last year, we began a process to ensure that good journalism can continue in the digital age. The discussion then was about acquiring new skills, understanding the web and continuing to make the transition into new media. But in the current economic environment, will there be time to make that transition? The pace of layoffs and buyouts has been staggering, and unacceptable. It is not a business plan for any business that hopes to be around in a few years.

Clearly the web has presented substantial challenges to many of our employers. But the current panic primarily involves newspapers that have taken on too much debt because of the owners' unrealistic expectations of continued high profits. Bad deals—based on greed and speculation—were made, and they're hastening a destructive downward cycle.

As workers in the industry, we should be demanding a say in our future. If cuts need to be made, the quid pro quo should be a voice—a chance to talk about new business models, even new ownership models.

The Guild led the way in pursuing employee stock-ownership plans. How sad that the only ESOP to come to fruition has been the disastrous one forced on non-union employees at the Tribune Co. under Sam Zell. We need to pursue cooperative models, non-profit models and any approach that can fund legitimate, quality news enterprises. As of right now, the markets and the current crop of owners have failed us.

We still believe there is money to be made by gathering, creating and distributing good journalism—and not just by hijacking other people's work and revenue, as Google does. Our "brands" still have credibility, and we need to explore ways to make them work.

Rather than discarding workers at an alarming pace, the industry should be working with front-line employees to understand how best to market and create quality products. Instead, workers are treated as a liability, just another cost item. We have to watch

as, time and time again, some of the best and brightest are shown the door, even if by "choice." As the products become shells of their former selves, no one is fooled. A redesigned newspaper that contains less is just less.

But we got into this business—and are part of this union—because we believed we were part of something genuine and important. We need to develop strategies for survival that our locals can use to ensure that our employers continue to provide quality news content and good-paying jobs. And we need to work with those employers to make this happen.

We need to talk about strategies that allow for transformation of work, different distribution methods, alternative ownership, union awareness and coordinated organizing—all with the goal of gaining greater representation within media workplaces while maintaining quality content and jobs. To do this, we need to achieve joint committees that allow our members to discuss all these matters, including the business model itself, with employers.

We're committed to sponsoring a conference among union leaders as to how we do this. We'll reach out to industry analysts and observers to get the hard facts. We'll look at our successes, like the contracts in which we've gained training programs that give our members needed skills.

But we need to push into areas that we've always relegated to management. For too long, we've assumed that someone was in charge. Now we know the future is unclear, and there's no guarantee anyone else but us will protect quality news and good jobs.

We anticipate an early-winter meeting and will announce the details soon. We're also looking for Guild members to be part of an "alternative-ownership strategies" committee. Lastly, we're always seeking your ideas on better communication within the Guild. You can send your thoughts directly to me at blunzer@cwa-union.org.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Your June 20 edition contained a cartoon of a flag-draped casket with the caption "Flag Lapel Pin." I have never landed in a combat zone. However, I am an honorably discharged veteran of the military. The cartoonist Konopacki is either completely ignorant of the meaning of a flag-draped casket or is outright mocking it. I find both to be despicable.

Perhaps the cartoonist Konopacki has never stood on the sidewalk in his town or a neighboring community and watched the funeral of a "flag pin" going by. The families of these brave troops will never fully recover from their loss.

It is one thing to portray a flag-draped casket as a symbol of the reality of war. It is another thing entirely to portray it as a lapel pin.

Disgraceful. The Guild Reporter should be ashamed.

—Mark Anastas, Boston Globe

Mike Konopacki responds: One of the most inane campaign issues of this election year is whether a politician should wear a flag lapel pin. Perhaps if politicians wore flag-draped casket pins it would remind voters that there is a war going on.

Instead, to keep the war out of the public eye, the Bush administration has clamped down on pictures of flag-draped caskets. A recent story in the Washington Post reported that Gina Gray, the former public affairs director of Arlington National Cemetery, was fired for allowing family-approved press access to funerals.

As a cartoonist, my job is to create images that provoke thought. As the anti-imperialist journalist Finley Peter Dunne said, "The job of the newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." An even more appropriate quote comes from Boston's own Howard Zinn: "There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people."



© CALM/080640

LOOKING ASKANCE

Now the hard work begins — for all of us

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Hard though it is for me to fathom, this issue of The Guild Reporter completes my tenth year as editor. It also marks the beginning of a new Guild administration, including a new president, a new secretary-treasurer and a new international chair, plus an executive board made up 50% of newcomers.

Doors open, doors close.

As I wrote before the election, the choice confronting Guild members was essentially one of leadership style, of choosing between a top-down administrative philosophy vs. one that stresses a grassroots approach. What made the choice difficult is that Guild members knew what they were getting with a top-down style, because it was already in place; the bottoms-up variation was more promise than reality, more a statement of intentions than a track record of accomplishments. And as I observed, those who opted for the latter should be prepared to shoulder its burden: grassroots organizations require grassroots involvement. Without that commitment, it won't take long for a top-down leadership structure to emerge. Politics abhors a vacuum.

So now it's time to see if those who voted for the Stronger Guild ticket will step up to the plate. I hope they do, not necessarily because I think the grassroots model is "better" (although I do) but because I don't think we have an option. It's pretty clear our industry is in too critical a condition for just a handful of Guild leaders to cope with it. When the patient codes you want the whole crash-cart team on the scene, not just a lonesome paramedic.

But what does "grassroots involvement" mean? How does it differ from the way most Guild members have interacted with the union to date?

Mostly it means taking ownership. Of taking the time to understand how the insti-

tution works (and how it doesn't), who the players are and what challenges we face. It means stepping out of the comfort zone that exists when we entrust others to take care of business for us. It means asking the same kinds of questions and seeking the same kind of information that we all ask and seek when we think about buying a car or a house, or of having kids or changing jobs.

It's the difference between consuming and acting, and it's not something our expert-mediated culture—which encourages learned helplessness rather than self-reliance—tends to foster. So we've got to push ourselves, out of a sense of panic or anger or determined hopefulness. Whatever it takes.

Ten years after I stepped into this job, I can proudly assert that you are reading an extraordinary issue of the Guild Reporter: virtually every article in these pages is by-lined, and not by me. Guild members have written about themselves, about developments at work, about political and union issues—about the things that make us the Guild and not the steelworkers or the Chamber of Commerce or a health food coop. I believe that diversity of input makes for a better read, and I think it makes for a stronger union.

I don't know that this level of membership involvement will be sustained, but I know that it *can* be, just so long as Guild members remember that the union belongs to them. *Is* them. That ownership extends to all aspects of what we do, including this publication—and, indeed, such ownership is made explicit in the box below, with the statement that "The Guild Reporter belongs to the rank-and-file membership of TNG-CWA."

So this is a start. I hope it continues. And I hope that you, dear reader, understand that it will do so when you take the initiative and take ownership, of both the Guild and the Guild Reporter.

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: August 8.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

All work means no play — and no time for news

By Carl Younger
Boston Newspaper Guild

Improvements in productivity can be achieved in many ways, from new technology and better training methods to new ways of using current technology. But one of the oldest ways to increase productivity has always been to make people work harder and longer without paying them more, and that's been a major push for corporate America for more than two decades.

The economic strategy of the Republican neo-conservatives has been to create an environment in which workers are in a constant state of insecurity about their jobs, thus motivating them to work harder and longer hours with no more—and sometimes less—compensation.

This strategy has been successful to a large degree. But it also has had an adverse effect on our economy generally—because there is a relationship between hours worked and leisure time—and for us in the newspaper business specifically, because newspapers are in the entertainment business. And entertainment requires having customers with enough leisure time to avail themselves of your product.

Increase work hours beyond a point of equilibrium, through mandatory overtime or reduced compensation—forcing workers to work multiple jobs to stay even—and other activities will be reduced or eliminated.

When it comes to entertainment, Americans have many choices: spending time with friends, family and loved ones, watching television, listening to radio, accessing computers or reading books,

newspapers or magazines, just for starters. But with an ever larger workload, Americans each day must prioritize their other activities in the ever-shrinking time available to them.

For example, a traditional picture of American life has been for each family to eat breakfast together, usually with one or more of the adults reading a newspaper over ham and eggs. Through such exposure, children eventually acquired the same newspaper-reading habit. But fewer and fewer families have the time for such rituals, as many workers are forced to work earlier hours.

These days, most families require both parents to work to bring in enough money to pay the bills. Many family breadwinners have to work multiple jobs just to keep even. Women who were once major con-

tributors to newspaper circulation are now working outside the home for just as many hours (if not more) as men.

Ironically, corporations have turned the U.S. into the country with the least leisure time among all developed countries, decreasing the time their customers have to consume their products.

From my vantage point in the newspaper industry, I see our market share eroding as time constraints compound our losses to competing technologies, such as radio, television and computers. When time is short, time-consuming activities like reading are usually the hardest hit.

Barring a change in current economic policies, demand for in-depth products like newspapers will continue to suffer. And, thus, corporate strategies will be partly responsible for corporate destruction.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Awestruck on attending first CWA convention

By R.J. Hufnagel
Pittsburgh Newspaper Guild

It was 10 minutes from the start of my very first CWA convention, and there was a problem: The Newspaper Guild lanyard I had worn at a Human Rights committee event the previous day was hopelessly tangled with the CWA lanyard I needed for entry onto the convention floor.

As I started to unravel the mess, it was hard to miss the symbolism: The Guild and CWA, two great unions under one umbrella, are completely intertwined but still very different. After about five minutes of serious untangling work, I was on my way to discover just how different they were.

First of all, the numbers: The sheer number of people on the floor of the CWA convention was staggering. I imagine anyone who hasn't attended one would be stunned, as I was, just by the volume of faces in the convention hall. According to the CWA, there were approximately 2,500 delegates, alternates and guests in attendance. I have been to Major

League Baseball games with similar crowds. And the number of leaders on the dais seemed to outnumber the entire attendance of some of our intimate Guild-only conferences. My first thought was: "How do they manage to keep control of such a large and diverse group for three days?"

I quickly discovered the answer: Organization. I'd never seen anything so large managed quite as efficiently. There were separate microphones for the "Yea" and "Nay" camps on resolutions, a third for motions, a fourth for questions. Even the introductions and national anthems seemed choreographed down to the minute. This was a far cry, I thought, from the relative intimacy and spontaneity of our Newspaper Guild conferences, where the faces are all familiar, the schedules are only suggestions and the microphones are almost unnecessary. This gathering was a true production, with music piped in for the various ceremonies, politicians joining us via closed-circuit television, and computer-aided speech-making devices.

The trouble with that setup, though, as effective as it is in maintaining order, is that it seems to leave little room for anyone or anything that isn't part of the preconceived course of events. And that type of setup can be difficult and intimidating for anyone to penetrate, particularly for a "newbie" like me.

Don't get me wrong: With a crowd that size, such an arrangement probably is a necessary evil. And the CWA has gone a long way recently toward making its leadership more open and more diverse. The addition of the four at-large diversity seats on the union's board (including the Guild's "favorite son," Néstor Soto), as well as the implementation of Resolution #1 (CWA's "Ready for the Future" agenda), have been big steps in that direction over the past few years.

Still, the job of preparing and strengthening us for the future is far from done. If the CWA is seeking a diversity of voices, why not add a "next generation" representative to the board (even a non-voting seat)? Such an addition would give the panel a fresh perspective and remind our leaders what it feels like to be new to the union and to the workplace. As one of those relative "newbies," I couldn't help but wonder how many folks on the dais in Las Vegas even remembered what it was like to be in my shoes. This is just a guess, of course, but I would say the answer was very few.

At our Guild gatherings, unlike those of the larger union, we steer clear of national politics (for the most part), but there's always plenty of talk about the future of an industry in trouble. At the 2008

CWA Convention, there was plenty of talk about a nation (and a world) in even deeper trouble. The best way to address these problems, from a union perspective, is to ensure that we continue to grow and remain strong for today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

And while those problems—the turmoil in our industry and in the larger world—are daunting, and can be discouraging for even the most optimistic soul, one stroll around a convention floor packed with so many people who are passionate about finding ways to solve them filled me with hope. If each of these 2,500 faces represented hundreds more in their locals who shared their commitment, that meant we had hundreds of thousands of people throughout North America committed to changing the world for the better.

That same stroll around the convention floor also taught me that, while we in the Guild are a small piece of this massive CWA puzzle, we are a vitally important one as well. The youth, energy and diversity on display among the

Newspaper Guild delegation should serve as an example to the rest of CWA. As a next generation member, I was proud to see so many of my younger colleagues taking active roles in their locals. If every union under the CWA umbrella had the diversity of voices displayed in the Guild delegation, and if every union embraced the "next gen" as we have, I think we'd have a CWA in which the leadership of the union truly was representative of its members.

Of course, we have a long way to go. But we are off to a good start.

As I learned at the Guild's Human Rights and Equity conference that preceded the convention, our strength as a union lies in our differences.

And as I learned looking around at the massive delegation on the CWA convention floor, there is strength in numbers.

If our unions are to grow stronger for the next generation, we must realize that these two ideas can and should coexist. In fact, they must be, like the Guild and the CWA, very different but still completely intertwined.

THE GUILD Reporter

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

Volume 75, Number 7

July 18, 2008

President: **BERNIE LUNZER**
Secretary-Treasurer: **CAROL D. ROTHMAN**
TNG-CWA Chairperson: **CONNIE KNOX**

Regional Vice Presidents:

Region 1—Donna Marks
Region 2—Sheila Lindsay
Region 3—Lillian Covarrubias
Region 4—Michael Cabanatuan
Region 5—Deborah Zabarenko
Region 6—Karolynn DeLuca
Canada East—Barbara Saxberg
Canada West—Scott Edmonds

Director, Contract Admin:
Kathleen Mulvey Brennan

Editor: Andy Zipse

Staff Representatives:
Michael R. Burrell,
Darren Carroll,
Marian V. Needham,
Bruce R. Nelson,
Jim Schaufelbil,
Jay Schmitz

TNG-CWA Coordinator:
Malinka Franklin

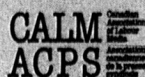
Executive Secretary,

Contract Committee:
Melissa Nelson

Administrative Director:
Eric D. Geist

Administrative Staff:
Dominique Edmondson,
Tina Harrison,
Jeremiah West,
Pat Wright-Smith

(Articles may be reproduced freely in any non-profit publication, providing source is credited.)



Printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co.

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

The AFL continues battling the breakaway CIO—of which the Guild is a member—by chartering a company union at the Hearst plant in Chicago . . . Three Guild leaders at the Citizen-News in Hollywood are jailed after refusing police orders to stop distributing strike leaflets. The strike, now in its third month, was called when the paper fired a group of Guild leaders on the eve of a scheduled contract signing. . . The Milwaukee Journal fires an 18-year employee—coincidentally a Guild activist—because she married, and “married women’s place should be in the home.”

Fifty years ago this month:

A 38-day strike of Guild members at the Philadelphia Inquirer ends with the newspaper’s acceptance of job-security language already negotiated with the Daily News. . . With all their contracts set to expire Oct. 31, Guild units at New York’s “big seven” dailies unanimously vote to hold city-wide joint negotiations, starting in early August. . . The Int’l Federation of Journalists learns that in order to gain accreditation in Lebanon, a journalist must show he has a secondary education, sound morality “and solvency.”

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Delegates to the Guild’s 50th annual convention vote 96% in favor of a merger with the Int’l Typographical Union. . . A Congressional resolution congratulates the Guild on its golden anniversary. . . South African publishers refuse to bargain with that country’s newspaper union after it drops its national registration so it can admit blacks.

DAYBOOK

Democratic Nat’l Convention,
Aug. 25-28, Denver

CWA Customer Service Conf.,
Sept. 11-13, New Orleans

Great Lakes, Midwest councils,
Nov. 15-16, Detroit