

THE GUILD Reporter

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Guild President Charles A. Perlik, Jr. at right, confers with his counterparts, Joe Bingel of the ITU (left) and Kenneth J. Brown of the GCIU, at the 1981 AFL-CIO convention. The three unions were the pillars of organized labor in the newspaper industry at its peak.

'30' for Perlik Longest-serving president championed human rights

Charles A. Perlik Jr., who for more than three decades led the Newspaper Guild as one of its two top officers—including a record-setting 18 years as president—died Sept. 17 of pulmonary failure. He was 84.

Breaking into the newspaper business as a copy boy for the International News Service, Perlik was a Guild member from almost his first day on the job. And despite a solid journalistic grounding that included bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from Medill and a Sigma Delta Chi award as 1950's outstanding graduate student, it was the Guild that pulled him ever more tightly into its embrace. Perlik married Guild (Marion "Marnie" Ford, his wife of 60 years, was a shop steward), earned a Guild paycheck (appointed an international rep in 1952) and eventually came to personify the Guild as no one had since the days of Heywood Broun.

In 1955, teaming up with William J. Farson, he won a contested election for TNG secretary-treasurer, holding the post until

Farson retired 14 years later. Perlik then won the first of nine elections as TNG president, twice roundly defeating opponents and running without opposition thereafter, until he stepped down at the age of 64.

Leading the Guild during what may have been the newspaper industry's peak years, Perlik widened the Guild's horizons both internally and externally—and not without controversy. Internally, the union intensified its commitment to human rights, creating the post of human rights coordinator, and holding a women's conference in 1970, followed by a conference for minorities a year later. The union also established its pension fund in 1976, launched an occupational safety and health program and created an educational department.

Externally, the Guild solidified its Canadian identity—driven, in large part, by Perlik's years as an international rep, when he was assigned principally to Canada. As a result, Canadian Guild membership expanded by 50% during his presidency.

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To newspapers' secular woes, add global crash

Newspapers, already suffering from *fin de siècle* anxieties thanks to the internet, now get to endure the stresses of what's being described as the worst financial downturn since the Great Depression. Or as industry blogger Ken Doctor put it, "Think of it a triple whammy for an industry used to declaring itself the victim of a perfect storm."

As if the loss of readers weren't enough to assure a hemorrhaging of advertiser dollars, the global credit squeeze and consequent rising unemployment and plunge in retail sales have further choked off ad spending. The Newspaper Association of America has forecast an 11.5% decline in total advertising revenue for the year, to \$40.1 billion, the largest drop since the NAA began tracking sales 58 years ago. Moreover, it predicted ad revenues would slide another 5.5% in 2009, although given the unprecedented nature of today's crisis that may prove little more than whistling past the graveyard.

Worse yet, the growth in online advertising has shifted into reverse for newspaper web sites, down 2.4% for the second quarter compared to the same period a year earlier—the first reported year-over-year decline since the NAA's first such report, in 2003.

The credit rating service Standard & Poors, meanwhile, said it expects newspaper revenue and cash flow to drop "at rates that accelerate each quarter," blaming the slump on a "dramatic" pullback in advertising that it forecasts won't turn around until late next year. Five of the nine newspaper companies S&P tracks are now rated at a level that signals "a near-term liquidity threat," and even stalwart Gannett Co. was put on credit watch for additional downgrades.

The cascading financial meltdown hit newspapers especially hard in September, as it did virtually all sectors of the economy. Media General, for example, reported that advertising sales in its publishing unit plunged 23% in just that one month. Other newspaper companies were scheduled to release their most recent results as the Guild Reporter was going to press but were unlikely to be significantly different.

Squeezed by crushing, acquisition-fueled debt, major newspaper publishers have started welshing on their commitments while continuing to trim expenses, most notably by dumping even more employees. Avista-owned Star Tribune in Minneapolis simply skipped a \$9 million quarterly debt payment, as did the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Daily News, both owned by a local investor group. McClatchy Co., meanwhile, renegotiated its debt terms to avoid default, agreeing in the process to pay higher interest rates and put up more collateral. Other newspaper companies dicker with lenders include Morris Publishing, Freedom Communications and Journal Register.

Layoffs and buyouts, meanwhile, continued with-

out let-up. Over the past month, eight newsroom employees were excised at the Duluth News Tribune in its second round of layoffs this year, this time including the managing editor, a 19-year veteran. Twenty-two employees, representing 11% of the workforce, were dropped at the Lexington Herald-Leader, also comprising a second round of payroll cuts this year. The Cleveland Plain Dealer wants 38 newsroom employees to take a voluntary layoff by Nov. 20. A lay-off announcement is expected at the Pittsburgh

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Khanh Weinberg, during her newspapering days.

The painful road back to gainful employment

By Khanh Weinberg

Let's be honest. For those who've ever worked for a newspaper, there is no high quite like seeing an article you wrote, or a headline you designed, gracing the front page. The first time your baby smiled? A close runner-up.

My life as a newspaper reporter ended July 2007, when I was laid off from the San Jose Mercury News. It was devastating. I had been a reporter for 13 years, the last eight at the Merc. I hadn't lost just a job, I had lost my identity. The phone call terminating my career

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Montreal teeters on edge

Teetering on the brink of a possible strike or lockout, two Canadian Guild locals have taken divergent paths. Despite 83% support for a walkout, members of the Ottawa Guild accepted the Citizen's "best and final" contract offer Sept. 21 in a 124-39 vote. But at press time the three Guild units at the Montreal Gazette were veering ever closer toward a strike, following a near-unanimous strike vote Sept. 28 among sales and editorial workers.

Both newspapers are owned by CanWest, and both remain profitable.

Gazette employees launched a work-to-rule campaign at the start of October to protest management's stonewalling in negotiations for a contract to replace

the one that expired June 1. The editorial unit also undertook a byline strike, its first since a landmark ruling by a Quebec labor tribunal five years ago over a byline strike that protested CanWest's plans to run identical "national editorials" throughout the chain. The board affirmed that reporters, photographers and other content providers have an "absolute right" over use of their bylines and credit lines except for analyses, columns and opinion pieces.

Gazette management, meanwhile, appeared to be bracing for a strike or lockout by seeking to line up scab replacements at a local college journalism department. The move would violate Quebec's labor

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San Jose, Bay Area locals seek merger

Two of the Guild's West Coast locals appear headed for a merger, following approval by the San Jose and Northern California Media Workers representative assemblies. Membership votes at both locals were scheduled at press time.

The expected outcome, to take effect Jan. 1, will be creation of one of TNG's largest locals, representing approximately 2,600 members of bargaining units throughout the state. Many work for the sprawling MediaNews empire, which now owns virtually all the daily newspapers in the Bay Area, as well as in San Jose and Monterey. Others are employed at the Hearst-owned San Francisco Chronicle and the McClatchy Bees in Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto, and still others are union staffers and court interpreters.

"A merger makes a lot of sense. We already work together closely, we represent people working for the same employers and we have common interests," said Michael Cabanatuan, president of the Bay Area local. "Whether or not 'clustering' makes sense for newspapers, joining forces makes sense for us."

Assuming the marriage is approved, issues of staffing and office location are to be deter-

mined by a transition team made up of Cabanatuan, San Jose President Sylvia Ulloa and Doug Cuthbertson, executive officer of the larger local.

Luther Jackson, executive officer of the San Jose local, announced he will resign at the end of January but strongly supported the merger. "A larger local with more members will put more workers, and more finances, behind us in our efforts to negotiate fair contracts and protect union members," he explained.

The new entity, to be named the California Media Workers Guild, will retain Northern California's local number, 39521, and will maintain its headquarters at the Guild-owned building in San Francisco. Cabanatuan is to continue as president through the end of his current three-year term, while Ulloa will become a vice president, as will the San Jose and Monterey unit chairs.

Additional merger terms include a four-year transition period, during which each local will keep its own pre-merger assets and liabilities. Either local can nullify the arrangement during this period upon giving 120-day notice. Once the transition period is completed, all assets are to be merged.

Battling CanWest

Continued from page 1

code and drew a harsh rebuke from j-school director Mike Gasher, who warned students that scabbing could hurt their careers and the school's reputation.

The Gazette has six Guild units, with approximately 180 employees represented by the three units currently in contract negotiations. Although the union reports progress on most fronts, including wage increases and vacation time, the deal-breaker has been CanWest's refusal to sign a contract that includes union jurisdiction language. Forty-five employees in the Reader Sales and Service depart-

ment were laid off in June when their jobs were transferred to a call center in Winnipeg, and the local is grieving the transfer of other work—including page layout and business office duties—to non-unionized CanWest facilities.

"We think it will lead to more and more work being done outside of Quebec, which will lead to more layoffs and buyouts," Irwin Block, the local's vice president, told a local blogger. Moreover, he added, "loss of control and editing means that our values and ways of expressing ourselves in Montreal will not be reflected by editors in Ottawa, Hamilton or Winnipeg."

Two days of conciliation were scheduled for Oct. 20 and 21, as the Guild Reporter was going to press.

Members of the Ottawa Guild, meanwhile, took a threatened lockout to heart in approving a five-year contract that provides annual salary increases of 2.5% in the first and last years and 2% increases in the interim years. Inflation in Canada currently is running at 3.4%. "I'm disappointed with the outcome, because I believe our members were afraid to reject the offer," said Lois Kirkup, the local's president. "They thought they would be locked out and they would never work at the Citizen again."

Publisher Jim Orban signalled the company's intentions in a letter two days before the vote, warning that a labor dispute "could last a long time" because "some 400 of us who do not belong to the Guild will continue to publish and distribute the Citizen, both in print and online."

Guild briefs . . .

Pekin is newest Guild unit

Employees of the Pekin Daily Times in Illinois voted 24-7 for Guild representation in an Oct. 6 election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board. The 37-member unit is part of the St. Louis Newspaper Guild; the Pekin Daily Times is part of the Gatehouse Media newspaper chain.

Seniority ignored by Star . . .

Contending that the Indianapolis Star ignored seniority provisions in its Guild contract in laying off 23 employees Aug. 19, the Indianapolis Guild is seeking arbitration over the dismissal of five newsroom workers. The local also chided management for refusing to ask for volunteers. "In August, and in virtually every meeting we have had with management, the Guild implored the company to explore the idea of 'volunteers' for the impending layoffs," a union release explained. "We know of coworkers who are interested in an early exit, and who wanted to spare other employees who are earlier in their careers and want to stay."

. . . and by Post-Dispatch

The St. Louis Guild is pursuing a grievance that it expects to take to arbitration over the dismissal of two reporters and two copy editors by the Post-Dispatch without regard to the contract's seniority provisions. The dismissals, among 17 layoffs announced Sept. 26, came a day after "early and expedited" bargaining over a new contract came to an abrupt end when management "raised the possibility of layoffs in an attempt to scare the Guild into accepting a bad deal," said the local's administrative officer, Shannon Duffy.

Leuchter deadline Nov. 1

Applications are being accepted for the Guild's annual Irving Leuchter Memorial Scholarship, which each year underwrites a 6-week residential seminar for union members at Harvard University. The Harvard Trade Union program provides training related to the executive and administrative responsibilities of union officers as well as their community role as trade unionists. The next seminar will start January 12; the deadline for applications, (www.newsguild.org/TUP2009brochure.pdf) is November 1.

Setting priorities, part I:

More evidence, if any were needed, of newspaper management's often dim view of sales employees comes from Albany, New York, where the Guild and Times Union management have been locked in tough contract negotiations. That didn't dissuade management from disciplining Stacy Wood, one of the union's bargaining team members, for not selling enough online ads and new business—even though she hit more than 100% of her total sales goal. And even though Wood had been at the bargaining table for much of the month. "We've never had a bargaining committee member disciplined while we negotiate because they didn't sell ads while they bargained," complained Tim O'Brien, the local president, adding that the union is exploring all legal options on how to proceed.

WashPost contract extended

The contract between the Washington Post and its Guild-represented employees has been extended by six months, to next May, following a month of off-the-record talks and a membership ratification vote Oct. 8. Local leaders sought the extension in order to preserve job security provisions during an economically turbulent time.

2nd verse, same as the first

Members of the Manchester Newspaper Guild held an emergency membership meeting Oct. 6 to reconsider a Sept. 23 vote that had rejected a Union Leader proposal to change the way vacation time is calculated and paid. But the result—following "much spirited and civil debate"—remained the same, as the proposal got shot down, 51-38. Company officials responded that the rejection will lead to layoffs, but were unable to say how many or when.

It takes trust to build trust

This month's NextGen column, on page 8, extols efforts at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. to build a more cooperative relationship between management and labor. Maybe the CBC could have a chat with management at the Seattle Times, which has rebuffed attempts by the Pacific Northwest Guild to form a labor-management committee. "Labor-relations director Chris Biencourt said he was suspicious about the intent of the proposal, and what can you say about that?" reports the local's president, Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe. "When one party says, 'Let's build a relationship on trust and cooperation' and the other party says, 'We don't trust you,' that conversation is kind of over, isn't it?"

Setting priorities, part II:

Despite news reports that Dean Singleton was touring the San Diego Tribune-Union as a prospective buyer, the over-leveraged company he leads was telling Guild representatives at the bargaining table that its financial future is too uncertain to give raises at the Long Beach Press-Telegram. And when the Southern California Media Guild's bargaining team reminded company spokesman Jim Janiga of the \$1.5 million party MediaNews threw for Democratic convention delegates, Janiga reportedly grunted, fell silent, then declared, "I have nowhere to go"—before rejecting a proposed 0.5% merit pay increase proposed by the Guild.

NLRB tosses Zinser charge

The National Labor Relations Board has dismissed an unfair labor practice charge against the St. Louis Newspaper Guild that had been filed by the Bloomington Pantagraph and its attorney, L. Michael Zinser. The complaint, in response to a Guild petition for a representation election at the Pantagraph, claimed that the union had "coerced" workers into signing authorization cards.

Circling the wagons in Detroit

The Detroit Guild is researching the legality of a decision by the Detroit Media Partnership—which also oversees the joint business functions of the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press—to relocate reporters, editors and administrative staff from the Livonia-based Observer & Eccentric Newspapers to the company's downtown Detroit offices. The move, defended as a cost-cutting measure, will affect up to 50 employees at the suburban chain's dozen newspapers. Lou Mleczo, president of the Guild local, questioned whether the move violates provisions of the Newspaper Preservation Act.

Milwaukee leaders picked

In their first contested board election in several years, members of the Milwaukee Guild elected three new executive board members and confirmed changes in top leadership following the departure of former president Amy Rinard, who took a buyout. Greg Pearson moved up from 1st vice president to become the local's new president; Sonya Jongsma Knauss, former 2nd vice president, succeeded Pearson; Karen Samelson moved up from secretary to succeed Knauss; and Jan Uebelherr, who had been an at-large board member, succeeded Samelson.

Recent deaths:

Bernard Casserly, retired publisher of The Catholic Bulletin and past president of the Twin Cities Newspaper Guild, died Sept. 18 at the age of 91. A reporter for the Minneapolis Star for nine years, Casserly became the editor of the Catholic Bulletin in 1957 and in 1965 invited the Guild to organize his staff. He subsequently agreed to accept the Guild's model contract. Honored numerous times for his editorial writing and investigative reporting, Casserly wrote columns about senior issues when he retired after 25 years, and his Love-65 columns were syndicated internationally.

Daniel C. Regan, husband of Guild rep Betsy Regan, died Oct. 3 after a period of failing health; he was 63. A self-employed building contractor, Regan was an avid sailor and member of two yacht clubs.

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East coast to west, Blethen to get a rest

The Blethen family, owners of a group of Maine newspapers on one end of the continent and of the Seattle Times on the other, appears to be on the verge of finding a respite from its financial woes. In Maine, that means finding a buyer ahead of a possible debt default. In Seattle, it means a tentative contract agreement with the Pacific Northwest Guild.

The Seattle agreement, headed for a Guild ratification vote at press time, was reached Oct. 16 after an inauspicious start to negotiations. Included is a wage increase of 6% over two years, to be instituted in steps of 1.5% every six months starting Dec. 1. The contract's most significant change is in health care premiums, which are to go from a single composite rate to a tiered rate for an employee only, employee plus spouse, employee plus child or employee plus family.

Guild members insuring only themselves will pay 15% of the premium; those claiming dependents will pay 30% in 2009 and will have additional adjustments thereafter.

"Some employees will pay considerably less for coverage under the new system, while others will pay more," acknowledged Liz Brown, the local's administrative officer. Still, the agreement comes against a backdrop of continuing financial distress at the paper, with management warning Guild officials that they should expect another round of layoffs in January; nearly 200 jobs have been cut at the Seattle Times just in the past year.

In Maine, meanwhile, the Blethen family's seven-month effort to find a buyer for the Portland Press Herald, Kennebec Journal and Morning Sentinel may be near success. Blogger Al Diamon quoted "two informed sources" as saying that Maine Media

Investments is close to wrapping up a deal, perhaps as soon as the end of this month. Maine Media Investments is the group that had an exclusive negotiating agreement with the Blethen family earlier this year, and was favorably received by Guild members.

Tom Bell, president of the Portland Guild, confirmed for Diamon that the Guild has been negotiating possible contract changes with the investment group to reduce its operating costs. "We're still talking with them and things are proceeding well," Bell said.

A Maine Media Investments purchase would be a considerable improvement over another potential buyer to emerge last month, the Irving family of New Brunswick. The Irvings are to the Blethens what Rupert Murdoch is to Robert Jelenic: immensely wealthy, with a Forbes-estimated family wealth of \$5.5 billion, and a reputation for

business ruthlessness and anti-union animus. In addition to owning the Brunswick News, the family owns both of the province's other two English-language dailies, a score of English and French weeklies and various other publications, radio stations and web sites—in addition to an estimated 300 other businesses that include oil, food, forestry products, trucking and ship-building.

A delegation of approximately 10 executives representing the Irvings toured the Portland Press Herald in early September, but since then little more has been heard about the family's interest.

Separately, the Portland Guild and Blethen Maine Newspapers have agreed to meet with an arbitrator before a scheduled January 13 hearing if a hearing officer can be found. At issue is whether a buyer would be legally required to honor the Guild contract.

Changes for Guild Reporter

Hampered by rising postal rates and seeking to expand and improve its on-line communications, the TNG-CWA executive board has voted to reduce the frequency of print publication of the Guild Reporter to six times a year. The board also voted to make a web-based version of the newspaper available in the alternating months, as well as during the months in which the Guild Reporter is mailed out.

Although the Guild's constitution requires that the Guild Reporter "shall be published at least 12 times a year, and at least once a month," Guild attorney Barbara Camens advised the board that an internet posting would be a "reasonable" interpretation of the provision. Less clear is how the union will meet a constitutional mandate that the Reporter "shall be distributed to all members," as well as retirees and agency fee payers, including those without internet access.

The executive board authorized its communications committee to oversee a redesign of both the Guild Reporter in its print form and of the website, setting a target date of January for the Reporter's makeover. In keeping with that schedule, the board approved a motion that calls for skipping the December print issue and substituting the online version that month.

The motion also states that the board or its committee will seek input on both redesigns from local leaders before turning to professional designers, with "decisions about the final appearance of both the GR and the website" left up to the communications committee to expedite results.

The new web site also is projected to include video, with content to be provided by Guild members.

Committee members include Scott Edmonds, Karolynn DeLucca and Donna Marks, and TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer Carol Rothman. The costs of redesigning both media are to be paid from the savings achieved by not printing and mailing six issues a year.

Communications Workers of America
www.cwavotes.org



The Issues at a Glance

Obama

McCain

Economy

Proposes a middle-class tax credit of \$500 per worker or \$1,000 per working family to help stimulate the economy, would roll back Bush tax cuts for people earning more than \$250,000.

Proposes \$10 billion in relief to states to help them retain programs hard-hit by the economic downturn.

Proposes a \$10 billion fund to help families avoid home foreclosure.

Would continue Bush tax cuts, including those for the richest 1 percent.

Would cut corporate income tax rate by 10 percent, returning \$4 billion a year to oil companies.

Proposes that some home mortgage holders in danger of foreclosure, who can prove creditworthiness, can apply for a new FHA-guaranteed home loan.

Workers' Rights

Voted for the Employee Free Choice Act; has promised to fight for it and sign into law as president.

Will push for a ban on permanent striker replacement.

Opposes the Employee Free Choice.

Voted to allow permanent striker replacement and for national "right-to-work" law, which failed to pass.

Health Care

Would not tax workers for their employer-paid health care benefits.

Supports reform leading to affordable, universal health care.

Health care goals call for guaranteed eligibility; no rejection for age, illness or prior conditions.

Would have workers pay income tax on their employer-paid health benefits.

Tax credit of up to \$5,000 per family to purchase private health insurance.

Insurance companies could continue to reject people for coverage for any reason.

Jobs/Trade

In trade agreements, would require labor and environmental standards from trading partners.

Calling for major investment in clean energy and green manufacturing, as well investment in rebuilding infrastructure to spur job growth.

Supports CWA's plan for universal, affordable broadband access (Speed Matters) to create jobs and boost the economy.

Supports unrestricted free trade, including pending Colombia trade deal; does not call for worker or environmental standards.

Believes lowering corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent will promote investment and job creation.

Supports more training programs for displaced workers by overhauling unemployment insurance system.

Retirement Security

Opposed Bush plan to partially privatize Social Security.

Proposes shoring up the system with Social Security payroll tax increase for people earning more than \$250,000 a year.

Would eliminate payment of income taxes by seniors making less than \$50,000.

Voted for Bush plan for partial privatization of Social Security, continues to advocate privatization.

Has voted for, and continues to favor, raising Social Security eligibility age to 68.

Would consider cutting Social Security cost of living increases.

News briefs

Offshoring results in pulled ads

Auto dealer Dave Sinclair—whose television commercials encourage viewers to “buy American”—put his money where his mouth is: he pulled his advertising from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch following that newspaper’s outsourcing of typesetting jobs to India. Sinclair told the Riverfront Times that he had canceled a month’s worth of advertising, worth \$25,000 to \$30,000, to protest the continued shipping of U.S. jobs overseas. The newspaper’s typesetters are members of CWA Local 6300.

Europe seeks journalist protection

The International News Safety Institute is urging European and other governments to comply with the terms of a media resolution adopted Oct. 3 by the parliament of the Council of Europe. A key clause of Resolution 1636, one of 27 “basic principles” urged on member states, declares that “Journalists must be protected against physical threats or attacks because of their work.” INSI has documented the deaths of 1,000 media workers over the decade ending in 2006, most of whom were murdered in peacetime in their own countries. In nearly nine out of 10 cases, no one was brought to justice.

ACLU wins battle for Abu Ghraib pix

After nearly five years of fighting between the federal government and the American Civil Liberties Union over images of torture at Iraq’s Abu Ghraib prison, a federal appeals court ruled Sept. 22 that the photos must be made available to the public. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a 2006 district court order dismissing the government’s arguments that privacy rights of the soldiers and detainees in the images would be violated and agreed that any potential damage caused by the release of the photos was “far too speculative” to justify withholding them. The ACLU requested the images in Oct. 2003.

Jobs axed at accelerating rate . . .

U.S. employers chopped 159,000 workers from their payrolls in September—the nation’s biggest monthly job loss in five years—marking an accelerating contraction for the ninth straight month. The U.S. has now shed a total of 760,000 jobs in 2008, with a prognosis for even worse losses in coming months as the recession deepens. Unemployment held steady in September, at 6.1%, but only because a large number of discouraged job-seekers quit looking for work and left the labor pool. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reported last month that approximately 3.6 million workers were displaced between Jan. 2005 and Dec. 2007 from jobs they had held for at least three years.

. . . but not everyone is feeling pain

Although John McCain made sneering reference during the presidential debates to “class warfare,” it’s hard to ignore the class divide now paralyzing the U.S. Example: over the past five years, the top executives at five of the financial giants at the center of Wall Street’s current meltdown took home \$2.1 billion in compensation, according to calculations by San Diego State economist David DeBoskey. Some 57 different individual executives shared in that pot, including Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, who pocketed \$82 million over three years as the CEO at Goldman Sachs. The most generous of the five high-finance giants was the now defunct Lehman Brothers, whose top five officers were paid a combined \$743 million from 2003 through 2007.

Green energy touted for economy

One way to resuscitate the economy, according to a campaign launched by the BlueGreen Alliance of unions—including CWA—and environmental groups, is to invest \$100 billion in green technology to create 2 million jobs over the next two years—four times as many jobs as the same dollars would create in the oil industry. Those numbers were generated by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, which extrapolated the job results if the U.S. were to provide \$50 billion for tax credits to aid business and homeowners to retrofit buildings, plus investing in renewable-energy systems; and \$46 billion in direct government spending on retrofitting public buildings, expanding mass transit, freight rail and smart electrical-grid systems, and investing in renewable energy.

Thinking of retiring? Think again.

Wall Street’s meltdown has evaporated a significant chunk of U.S. retirement savings, with the Urban Institute calculating a loss of \$1.6 trillion—18.3% of their value—over the past 12 months. The Congressional Budget Office puts the figure even higher, at \$2 trillion over the past 15 months. And the Employee Benefit Research Institute reports that average losses for 401(k) participants have ranged from 7.2% to 11.2% this calendar year alone. The losses disproportionately affect baby boomers, who have less time before retirement for their portfolios to recover. Meanwhile, the other major source of post-retirement savings—home equity—also has been pummeled, with the average home price falling 3.9% from January 2007 to May 2008, according to the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight. In 20 select metropolitan areas, prices fell 16.7% over the same period and are likely to continue falling through late 2009.

Big props for York!

By Tom Joyce
York Newspaper Guild

Here at the York Daily Record/York Sunday News in York County, Pa., we’ve been trying to get a decent contract out of Media-News Group for more than three years. In that time, we’ve done just about everything imaginable to convey the message that we won’t be ignored.

We’ve marched in parades and held rallies and pickets. We’ve rented billboards, purchased radio ads and appeared on television. We’ve distributed thousands of fliers and collected thousands of petition signatures. We’ve contacted local politicians and testified before federal officials. We’ve staged street theater, posted online videos and even recorded songs.

Recently, however, we did something for the very first time. We bought an ad in our own paper.

Prompting this action was one of those surreal moments that have occurred all too frequently since MediaNews Group acquired us in 2004.

One afternoon in late September, our managing editor walked to the center of our newsroom and asked for our attention. He wanted to make an announcement. We had won a bunch of awards from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association. We’re consistently one of the top award-winners in our state, so that was nothing new.

This time, however, was extra special. Among the awards was the G. Richard Dew Journalistic Service Award, the most prestigious award in Pennsylvania. Significantly, it goes to the entire newsroom staff. Our editor complimented us on the fine work we’d done to

GREAT JOB
Union Journalists!

Continuations Workers of America congratulates the journalists of The Newspaper Guild-CWA Local 38218 on their recent awards from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association. We're proud of the quality work that our union brothers and sisters at the York Daily Record, York Sunday News and the York Dispatch provide for the people of York County every day.

THE YORK DAILY RECORD
The G. Richard Dew Journalistic Service Award, PNA's most prestigious honor for outstanding journalism
Newspaper of the Year-Division II
First Place:
General & Departmental News Coverage
Best Use of Photography
Second Place:
Diversity

THE YORK DISPATCH
Newspaper of the Year-Division III
First Place:
Newswriting Excellence
Best Use of Photography
Second Place:
Diversity

Well Done, Everyone!

make that award possible.

That evening, I received an e-mail from our national union rep. When I opened it, I stared for a moment in disbelief.

The company had already proposed cuts that would amount to thousands of dollars a year for our members, as well as provisions that would make it a lot harder to maintain a union here—and that was after the National Labor Relations Board issued a decision that MediaNews was bargaining in bad faith.

Now the company was telling us—by e-mail, mind you, and not even at the table—that its latest proposal was to remove a cost-of-living increase from the table. Bottom line: our wages would be frozen for three years.

What was this? Just hours ago, hadn't we heard what a great job we're doing?

Well, our members are doing a great job. Indeed, York Guild members who work at the competing York Dispatch had also won a bunch of awards, and we soon agreed that it would be a good idea to publicly congratulate all this fine work. That's

when we decided to take out a quarter-page ad, and soon enough we were assured by TNG that we'd get national backing to cover the cost.

So I walked across our building into the mysterious, unexplored country of the advertising department, where I found gracious and talented help in designing the ad that ran Sunday, Oct. 12. And, by an amazing coincidence, the company took out a full-page ad that same day to also express its pride in the PNA awards.

Hey, maybe they really are proud of us. If so, we'll continue to help them find better ways to show it.

The painful road back to gainful employment

Continued from page 1

was short and professional—as was the exit interview, when I relinquished the company badge and with it all news-gathering privileges.

I was fortunate; I didn't have to rush back into the workforce to do . . . what? I could take time to ponder, “Now what?” I took six months, collected unemployment, assessed my life. I gardened, saw the Grand Canyon, watched the entire seven seasons of “The West Wing” on DVD.

When I found myself wandering midday, in faded purple sweatpants, down grocery aisles looking for dinner ideas, depression set in. It was time to get a job. The voice didn't come from my head. It was my husband.

Just one sign of how utterly unprepared I was to be pink-slipped? I had to call friends to e-mail me stories I had written that were stored in the Mercury News' electronic library.

Then I started sending out résumés. A lot of résumés. I knew I didn't want to commute more than 30 miles, so my searches were restricted to Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. I started with colleges and universities, checking for openings in communications fields: public information, media relations, and yes . . . even marketing. I applied with high-tech firms and non-profits, private and public sector, schools and book publishers.

I looked for any kind of work that involved writing. The truth is, I thought a decade-long career as a news reporter would be an easy sell. I discovered—disappointingly, depressingly—it wasn't.

I selected places, and causes, for which I felt I could be proud working. I landed an interview with a small boutique marketing firm that boasted big-name high-tech clients. Asked back for a second interview with the company's founder, I was feeling pretty optimistic. Alas, just like that, they lost a contract and weren't ready to hire. So they told me.

In total, I must have sent résumés to 50 or so places over a two-month period. (“Your job now is to find a job,” the husband-voice would say each morning.) Only a dozen or so of the companies I applied to I would

have been truly interested in working for. The majority of employers I solicited ignored me or sent me automated responses from HR. A handful invited me in for interviews. PR and marketing firms like to say that their industry requires a different set of skills that journalists aren't trained in. No doubt that's true.

But here's another truth. If you are a good reporter, you are by nature curious, “get” things quickly, and what you don't get, you know how to do a little research to get. Reporters, on average, are smart and learn fast. Those qualities serve us well in many non-journalism settings. A colleague, who transitioned from the Mercury News to work in the communications department at an Ivy League university, told me the biggest challenge wasn't learning new skills; it was learning a new culture.

But some skills definitely come in handy in today's market. For news people who would like to transition to a different communications field, I encourage acquiring the following skills: learn to design on Microsoft Publisher, prepare a PowerPoint presentation and make a video for YouTube. Last but not least, make sure your résumés pop. Ask friends and colleagues to share their résumés; mix and match formats that reflect your style.

In May, I landed a job with Service Employees International Union, Local 521, as a communications specialist. These days I write press releases, invite the media to rallies, produce content for our newsletters and web site. Because I'm making a video about our membership, I'm traveling to places like Monterey and the Central Valley to interview members at work. Sometimes, it feels just like the old days.

But it's clearly not. I am engaged in advocacy work. Lucky for me, it's advocacy I believe in. Do I miss my life as a reporter? Almost every day. Would I go back to a newspaper where staffing has so diminished that news from Richmond to San Ramon now constitute “local” news? No way.

I'm having too much fun.

Reprinted from the current issue of Guildnews, publication of the San Jose Guild.

Perlik's legacy was one of activism

Continued from page 1

And Perlik also involved the Guild in some of the most pressing social and political issues of the day, leading by example as well as through advocacy leadership. He participated in the 1963 march on Washington, for example, and marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Birmingham and Selma. He and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue spent a night in a D.C. jail for picketing the South African embassy to protest apartheid.

Perlik also served as chairman of the board of the council on Hemispheric Affairs, with which the Guild inaugurated an annual report on press freedom in Latin America, and was named by the AFL-CIO to head a committee it created to aid employees left jobless when the Nicaraguan govern-

ment closed La Prensa.

Much of Perlik's political activism ignited Guild support, as he testified numerous times on Capitol Hill on such issues as reporter privilege, newspaper monopolies and VDT safety and health. Under his leadership, Guild conventions abandoned a previous reluctance to take political stands, declaring opposition to the Vietnam War and U.S. military intervention in Central America and support for a nuclear freeze. The peak of Guild political activity may have been reached in 1977, when the union designated a full-time—if temporary—representative to mobilize support for labor law reform.

But such political activism also became more controversial in an age when journalists began to regard themselves more as "pro-



Charles A. Perlik Jr.

fessionals" and less as working stiffs. And political activism also carries the risk of putting one's bets on the wrong horse. Perlik's founding and leadership of the

Inter-American Federation of Working Newspapermen's Organizations, for example, cast a shadow over the Guild when it was accused of being funded by the Central Intelligence Agency, forcing its dissolution.

Most notably, Perlik drew fire for his very public endorsement of George McGovern for president in 1972, as well as his campaigning on behalf of Walter Mondale in the Democratic primaries in 1983, drawing complaints that his high profile was compromising reporters' claims to objectivity and impartiality.

By the time Perlik retired, in 1987, the Guild was under increasing pressure from union-busting forces set in motion by Ronald Reagan, on one hand, and by the newspaper industry's remorseless corporatization and increased con-

centration on the other. "We think it's bad for America and bad for our members to see so many newspapers fall into the hands of so few people," he told a reporter for the trade journal *Editor & Publisher* in his final months as president.

In retirement, Perlik remained active among a broad range of organizations, including the Unitarian Universalist Church, the National Little League and the Democratic Party. He also traveled extensively, especially by motor home, and in recent years had been living in a retirement community in the Washington, D.C. suburbs. He is survived by his wife, Marion; sons, Paul and Stephen; and daughter, Leslie Perlik Thomas.

A memorial service honoring Perlik, held Oct. 15, included the singing of both "America, the Beautiful" and "Solidarity Forever."

Perlik in the newsroom

By Murray Seeger

The newsroom of the Buffalo Evening News was an odd place in 1951, when I arrived fresh out of the University of Iowa. First, the staff—all white and nearly all male—wore ties and jackets as they worked. Copy editors wore tan cotton jackets, supplied by a laundry service, over their shirts and ties. Desks were cleared and typewriter wells closed at the end of the day.

No one smoked, at least after 9 a.m. That gave the air conditioning an hour to clear the air before the autocratic managing editor, A. H. Kirchhofer, took his desk in the southwestern corner of the office.

This was a six-day-a-week afternoon paper that made so much money it did not carry tobacco or liquor ads. While Kirchhofer was a martinet enforcing the publisher's unique no-smoking rules, he had a loose view of political ethics: he had been a Washington correspondent who took time off to do public relations for Herbert Hoover and the Republican National Committee.

Still, Kirchhofer was a strong advocate for professional journalism education and recruited staff primarily from Michigan, Columbia and Northwestern, where Charles A. Perlik, Jr., earned a master's degree. AHK, as he was colloquially known, lowered standards slightly to bring me in from Iowa because I was a "local," from suburban Hamburg.

Chuck joined the News in 1950, after working for the old International News Service (Hearst) and United Press (Scripps-Howard) in Chicago, where he and his wife, Marion, were active in the Newspaper Guild. In Buffalo, he covered labor and plunged quickly into a leadership role with the Buffalo local.

Perlik signed me up immediately after I entered the newsroom as a "summer replacement" in 1951. But I was easy: I was already a member of a Lackawanna local of the

Steelworkers.

The social atmosphere at the News was fine, but the working atmosphere was difficult. The editors were sticklers for full names with middle initials and exact street addresses. After a tense afternoon, when the city editor had brilliantly deployed reporters to a major police story that broke on deadline, he was blistered by AHK for setting a "bad example" by smoking a cigarette under his desk.

The managing editor was similarly intent on enforcing the Guild contract. He personally conducted grievance sessions that seemed to be held every Friday afternoon. When the Guild committee pointed out that I had completed my three months' summer tenure, AHK extended my probation another six months but also gave me a raise from \$40 to \$45, the journeyman's entry wage.

Chuck got a fast lesson in tough negotiating at the News. Somehow, he carried that load and worked as a hard-nosed reporter. He also initiated the campaign that organized the staff of our competitor, the Courier-Express, a mile north on Main Street. Family-owned like the News, the Courier-Express was a lazy outfit that had the morning and Sunday markets to itself.

Chuck became president of the local in 1953, while working to improve conditions at the Courier-Express. With that taste of organizing, Chuck left the News in 1957 to become an international representative and set his sights on taking the Guild flag across the border, into Canada.

In 1952, with a bellyful of the News' editing style, I moved to Cleveland and joined Local 1. I kept in touch with Chuck until I moved overseas, re-connecting when I became information director at the AFL-CIO and he was the harried president of the ANG. I will always remember that he set a standard as a strong union leader who never forgot what he learned in the newsroom.

So long, boss — again

By Harry L. McCormick
Past President, Federation of Guild Reps

Working for The Newspaper Guild, for the staff, was more than just a tough job; it required the constant juggling of family responsibilities with Guild commitment. No one was more sensitive to that than President Chuck Perlik. Coming up "through the ranks," as he did, and as a new president, he uniquely understood the need to humanize the work we did for the institution. He pulled us together into a surrogate family that provided us with the support we needed during those difficult times away from home. His insight made a tough job eminently more doable. An important result for the Guild was the stemming of the constant turnover that existed then, particularly on the field staff.

His gruff exterior masked the many thoughtful ways he brought us together. He understood how important the family concept was to the Guild, and he lived it, as the entire staff and spouses invaded his home annually for drinks and dinner during weekend staff meetings. We all basked in the comfort of his unheralded private, individualized attention from time to time. He knew just when it was needed and just how to apply it. Although it could be fiery at first, it was not unusual for it to occur after a perceived staffer's misstep. As a result of his wisdom, our family responsibilities at home could be handled, and the Guild family's commitment caused the institution to thrive. Chuck's leadership was the glue that held us together as an enthusiastic and effective force. Happily, in retrospect, without side-stepping the

tough issues, we won much more than we lost.

On the eve of President Perlik's retirement our staff union (FGR) presented the following tribute. The sentiments it expresses are even more appropriate and heart-felt today than they were then.

SO LONG, BOSS

Not always—in fact, seldom—do the working stiffs feel compelled to utter more than a perfunctory "lots of luck" on the occasion of the boss's retirement.

This is one of those rare occasions.

As Guild employees, we in the Federation of Guild Representatives have known Chuck Perlik as a leader more than a boss, as a source of inspiration rather than intimidation, as a compassionate mentor rather than an antagonistic detractor.

Chuck started his career as a member of the staff and as a leader of its earliest attempts to negotiate with the Guild, and the years that followed he seldom forgot how things look from down under. He was an adversary at the bargaining table, ever mindful of the Guild's interests but ever aware of the staff's problems. He was tough, always, but more, he was fair.

Much will be said this week about what Chuck has meant to the Guild. We join with all our hearts, in every syllable of those sentiments, but to us, whose work and whose lives have been formed by his leadership, he meant something more.

We will miss that something, grievously. We will miss the ups and downs, the smile and the scowl, the compliment and the growl. We will miss this uncommon man.

So long, boss.

Economic meltdown adding to newspapers' woes

Continued from page 1

Post-Gazette any day now. And in yet another round of blood-letting at the Lee-owned St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 20 more were axed. All are Guild shops.

The Herald-Leader layoffs were part of a broader set of chain-wide reductions announced by McClatchy in mid-September, when it said it was reducing its overall workforce by 10%. But in Lexington it ran into an unexpected buzzsaw of criticism, as the Guild blasted corporate management for its high-handed—and high-flying—ways.

"As McClatchy was making its employees bleed to pay off crushing debt incurred by corporate decisions, McClatchy executives were jet-setting in luxury," the Guild unit—now part of CWA Local 3372—charged in a release that included a copy of the corporate jet's flight records. Over a period of less than four months earlier this year, the corporate jet was flown 30 times—on several occasions for less than 20 minutes.

"We find it deeply disturbing that the company looked to push loyal employees into the unemployment line before it forced its over-

paid executives to sit in an hour or two of traffic," the statement added, noting that chief executive Gary Pruitt had been awarded an \$800,000 performance bonus even as McClatchy stock was tanking.

While McClatchy may be expected to shrug off such criticism, a more lethal weapon has been aimed at Tribune Co.—or, more precisely, at putative owner Sam "the grave dancer" Zell—over his cavalier treatment of employees. A group of half-a-dozen past and present Los Angeles Times employees—including a couple of Pulitzer Prize

winners—filed suit in mid-September, claiming various violations of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and seeking class action status for all Tribune employees who were dragged, willy-nilly, into funding Zell's acquisition through their pension plan.

Zell, as may be expected, has dismissed the litigation as "frivolous and unfounded," but nevertheless now will have to explain in court how his wheeling and dealing met his fiduciary obligations under ERISA. "We think the whole deal from the beginning was a bad

deal," Dan Neil, one of the plaintiffs, told Crain's. "He took a company worth \$8.2 billion and bought it for \$315 million and saddled the company with \$13 billion in debt."

But Zell is named in only two of the complaint's eight counts, with additional charges leveled against Tribune's past and present directors and various pension plan trustees. Among the remedies the lawsuit seeks is for the court to remove Zell and his various appointees and to give employees—who ostensibly "own" the company through a stock option plan—some say over its future.

'There's not a single good reason for any union member to vote against Barack Obama. There's only a bad reason. . . .'

Although AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka addressed the Steelworkers at their annual convention nearly three months ago, his remarks continue circulating widely, both because of their passion and because he directly confronted—as few others have—the racism overshadowing Barack Obama's campaign. A condensed version follows; the complete speech is at: aflcio.org/mediacenter/prspmt/sp07012008.cfm

By Richard Trumka
Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO.

We've all heard that phrase that the middle-class is being squeezed. Well, I disagree with that: we're not being squeezed. We are being crushed.

Let me just share a few numbers with you. Today, income inequality—the gulf between the rich and the rest of us—is at a level we haven't seen since the '70s. I'm not talking about the 1970s, I'm talking about the 1870s.

For those of you who are labor history buffs, let me put it this way: income inequality is greater today than it was before the Homestead strike.

Another number: in 1928, the top 1% of earners in this country took home 21.1% of all income. That's the all-time high. Well, as of 2006, the most recent year for which we have numbers, that top 1% is grabbing 20.3% of all income!

Right now, if you looked at America's gross domestic product on a per capita basis, you'd see that we're up there with countries like Switzerland and Sweden. But if you measure income inequality, we're neck and neck with Mali and Sri Lanka. We even see it in terms of life expectancy. Today, the U.S. not only wouldn't make the top 10 list—we wouldn't even make the top 40!

But you know something? If you're a trade unionist, you don't need to hear a bunch of statistics to know what's happening in this country. We see the casualties every single day. Go to Birmingham, Alabama. Or Gary, Indiana. Or Milwaukee. Cleveland. LA. Or my hometown of NMACOLIN, Pennsylvania.

We see high school grads who can't afford to move out of their parents' houses and can't afford community college. They're working dead-end jobs at Circuit City and breaking their backs working minimum wage jobs at nursing homes. They're not statistics—these are people we know.

We see men and women who've spent their entire working lives doing exactly what they were supposed to. Working hard. Bringing home a paycheck. Trying to put a little aside for their kids. Paying their mortgage. Hoping that, maybe someday, they could retire and move to Florida.

What do they do when the company tanks? Or packs up and leaves? What are they supposed to do for health insurance if they're too young for Medicare? How are they supposed to get by when the pensions they were counting on are worth pennies on the dollar?

These aren't statistics—these are people we know. People we grew up with. They lost their savings. They're living on credit cards. They're maybe three or four paychecks from being homeless. And we listen to what's happening to them and we think, "Man, there but for the grace of God go I."

Working people angry? Hell, yes we are. And you know something? We ought to be, because everything I just got through talking about—none of it had to happen. The only reason it did is because we've had leaders in this country, Republicans and Democrats, whose economic agendas are based on the same assumption: the disproven, discredited notion that policies that generate corporate profits somehow translate into shared prosperity.

The truth is, they don't. The truth is that what's good for Wall Street is a nightmare for the rest of us living back on Main Street.

Just think of it: We're living in a country with more than \$13 trillion a year in income. American workers have never been more productive. Corporate profits are surging. But even though our productivity surged by almost 20% from 2000 through 2006, and even though Americans are working longer hours than workers in any other developed country, workers' wages have been flat—or even falling—since 2003.

This wasn't some fluke of nature. It was the direct result of a set of economic policies that go back to the Reagan administration, were passed on to Bush One, carried on by Bill Clinton and taken to new heights by the Bush / Cheney regime. It was a bipartisan strategy for economic disaster.

One way to think of it is like we're riding in the backseat of a car barreling down a hill with four old, bald, non-union tires.

One of the tires is called globalization: NAFTA, CAFTA, PNTR for China. Unfair trade deals that force women and men here to compete with the most impoverished and exploited workers in the world. The outcome? Millions of good, union manufacturing jobs lost—and more bargaining power for employers.

The second tire is small government, selling off public services to corporations with one hand, and giving tax breaks to the rich with the other. Brothers and sisters, privatization has never been about getting big government off our backs; it's about helping corporate America pick our pockets!

Third tire? Price stability. Sounds good, but what it means are policies that focus exclusively on inflation and ignore the federal government's responsibility—and I'm talking about a legal responsibility—to help create jobs. How many folks here know that the Federal Reserve Board, by law, is supposed to work for a full-employment economy? Don't feel bad if you don't, because nobody in Congress seems to, either.

The last tire is marked "labor market flexibility." Any time we hear the words "labor" and "flexibility" used in the same sentence, we ought to sit up and take notice. Over the last 25 years, "labor market flexibility" has become shorthand for robbing workers of pensions, health care—and, oh yeah, our right to organize.

Brothers and sisters, labor market flexibility is about one thing only: it isn't about helping companies be more competitive, it's about making unions weaker. And I will tell you one other thing: that stops the day the Employee Free Choice Act is signed! . . .

There's a question that's stumped all the commentators and columnists and consultants in Washington, D.C., who are asking how Barack Obama is going to win the votes of workers in states like Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

How can he do it? Some folks have said

that he needs a special strategy to reach out to blue-collar workers. That he's got to talk more about God, because a lot of us care about religion—and more about hunting because, for some of us, hunting is a religion.

But at the end of the day, what people are going to need to hear is that when it comes to protecting jobs, when it comes to protecting pensions, when it comes to health care, child care, pay equity for women, Social Security, Medicare, seeing to it that people can afford to go to college and buy a home—and restoring the right to collective bargaining—Barack Obama has always, always been on our side.

This is a guy who's voted with labor 98% of the time!

Now, contrast that with John McCain.

What kind of man is John McCain? Let me read you a quote. Listen to what he said. This was on April 23rd in Youngstown, Ohio: "The biggest problem is not so much

"Well, I just don't trust him."

Why is that?

Her voice dropped just a bit:

"Because he's black."

I said, "Look around. NMACOLIN's a dying town. There're no jobs here. Kids are moving away because there's no future here. And here's a man, Barack Obama, who's going to fight for people like us, and you won't vote for him because of the color of his skin. My God, it's 2008!"

Brothers and sisters, we can't tap dance around the fact that there are a lot of white folks out there just like that woman. A lot of them are good union people; they just can't get past this idea that there's something wrong with voting for a black man.

Well, those of us who know better can't afford to look the other way.

I'm not one for quoting dead philosophers, but back in the 1700s, Edmund Burke said: "All that is necessary for evil to tri-



Trumka, renowned for his fiery delivery, addresses the CWA convention in 2000.

umph is for good people to do nothing."

Well, there's no evil that's inflicted more pain and more suffering than racism—and it's something we in the labor movement have a special responsibility to challenge. It's our special responsibility because we know, better than anyone else, how racism is used to divide working people.

We've seen how companies set worker against worker—how they throw whites a few extra crumbs off the table—and how it's black and Latino workers who get the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs.

But we've seen something else, too. We've seen that when we cross that color line and stand together no one can keep us down. That's why the CIO was created. That's why industrial unions were the first to stand up against lynching and segregation. That's why, outside of the military, the labor movement—imperfect as we are—is the most integrated institution in American life.

I don't think we should be out there pointing fingers in peoples' faces and calling them racist. Instead, we need to educate them that if they care about holding on to their jobs, their health care, their pensions, and their homes, if they care about creating good jobs with clean energy, child care, pay equity for women workers, there's only going to be one candidate on the ballot this fall who's on their side. Only one candidate who's going to stand up for their families. Only one candidate who's earned their votes . . . and his name is Barack Obama!

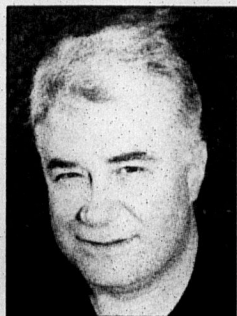
Well, why's that?

"Because he's a Muslim."

I told her, "That's not true—he's as much a Christian as you and me."

Then she shook her head and said, "He won't wear an American flag pin."

I said, "C'mon, he wears one plenty of times. He just says it takes more than wearing a flag to be patriotic."



LOOKING AHEAD

Steering clear of endorsement

By Bernie Lunzer, President

Delegates to the 1972 Newspaper Guild Convention broke historical precedent when, at the urging of President Chuck Perlik, Jr., they authorized the international executive board to endorse a presidential candidate. The IEB subsequently endorsed George McGovern, and a few years later Perlik succeeded in getting the convention itself to endorse Walter Mondale. Although Perlik argued that it was time for the Guild to break with its "moss-draped tradition" of staying aloof from the rough and tumble of electoral politics, both endorsements caused great controversy within our union.

When we merged with CWA, a union we knew to be very active politically, we wrote a clause in the merger agreement that stated: "It is recognized that the CWA Executive Board traditionally makes an endorsement for President of the United States. Such endorsements are offered by CWA as a strong suggestion of the best candidate for a specific office. It is understood that no member of CWA is under any constitutional or bylaw requirement to vote for or support such candidate. Further, the TNG-CWA Sector President, acting as a member of the CWA Executive Board, may abstain from voting on such an endorsement."

Since merger, TNG-CWA has stayed away from endorsements. When endorsements have been made at CWA Conventions, a Guild delegate has always explained to the convention that many in the Guild must abstain from endorsements because our members cover the elections and could get in trouble with their employers.

Beyond that, I don't see much value in the Guild endorsing candidates and I support not doing it. I think we can educate our members on the issues important to union members and their families, and they'll make the right choice.

Still, Guild leaders and members have been politically active in support of issues affecting our members (just as publishers pursue their agenda politically). We have promoted a National Shield Law, opposed

media consolidation and asked politicians to help us save papers and get contracts. This activity has not generated controversy.

Truth be told, the vast majority of our members should have the right to be politically active. We should protect those who choose to be active, as much as we protect those who cannot be active. In the absence of a direct conflict of interest by a particular member, there should be no issue.

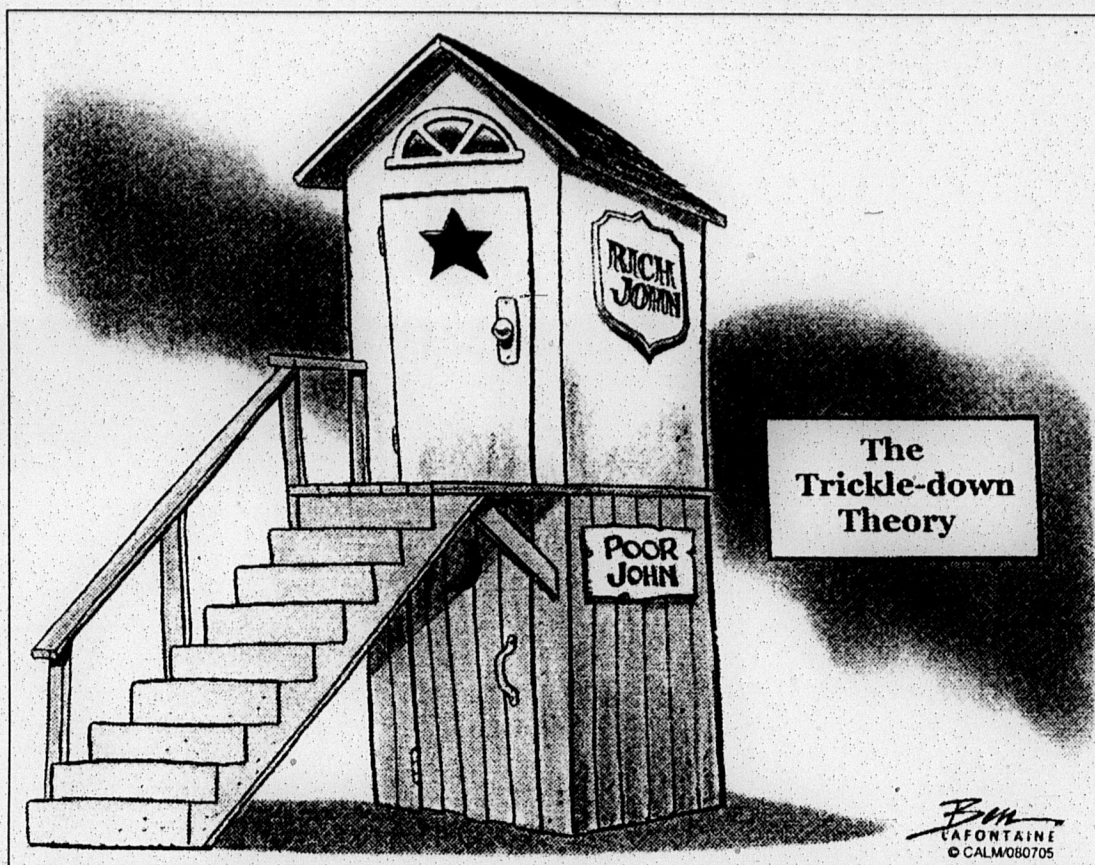
We've worked hard with our members to promote the Employee Free Choice Act, which allows employees to sign a card stating they want a union. To be clear, the next step involves either the employer recognizing a union through card check (when a majority of employees have signed) or the employees deciding to proceed with a secret-ballot election.

Current labor law, which only allows for a secret-ballot election, is tilted toward management. When faced with an organizing campaign, employers oppose the union with a vengeance. They hold captive audience meetings, wear anti-union slogans and, in about one in three campaigns, fire union activists. This is not hypothetical—it's happening right now in two Guild organizing campaigns. It's a miracle that any unions are formed under these punitive circumstances.

It wasn't always this way. When the Wagner Act was passed during the Great Depression, it encouraged collective bargaining and employers were expected to stay neutral on whether their employees chose to organize. But the law has been changed, and anti-union behavior on the part of employers has become standard. And that's too bad, because polls show that large numbers of workers would choose a union if they could.

In this climate, it is especially galling to see these George McGovern ads opposing the Employee Free Choice Act. It's sad to see someone manipulated by shell groups created by the Chamber of Commerce and other anti-union groups.

Knowing then what we know now, I'm sure the Guild wouldn't have endorsed him.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

It's great news that charges against journalists arrested at the RNC in St. Paul have been dropped, but we should all remain concerned that police agencies continue to purposely use the tactic of arresting or harassing journalists during fluid on-the-street situations. The charges are almost always dismissed later, as was the case of those arrested (including me) at the DNC in Los Angeles in 2000. The tactic is all about police wanting to get reporters/photogs out of their hair until the dust settles. It's also an effort to intimidate the press corps to keep its distance during any other demonstrations that may be scheduled during a convention week.

Police agencies should be pressed to eliminate this strategy and to train their officers, in cooperation with local news organizations, in the proper way to deal with credentialed reporters/photogs when street situations arise.

Also, at every opportunity, the Guild and various professional journalists' organizations should remind the public of both its right to know and of the millions of its tax-dollars that inevitably get spent on settlements in the wake of wrongful arrests and injury to journalists.

—Brian Bland, AP Radio (retired),
Santa Monica, Calif.

To the Editor:

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Chuck Perlik, a friend and colleague. Even though we had our differences over the years, Chuck never held any animosity against his brothers or sisters and worked with them even when they didn't see eye to eye. He remained a formidable leader who built a strong union, and his knowledge and expertise were invaluable.

Chuck was widely respected within the union movement and continued to provide strong leadership from the top down. He never wavered on any issue he believed was right for the international or the locals.

I remember meeting Chuck at my first convention, in Toronto in 1979. As treasurer of the Vancouver Newspaper Guild, I took the time to thank him for keeping the cheques flowing into our defense fund during the bitter strike in 1978-1979. If it were not for Chuck, we would have probably capitulated and signed a deal too soon. Moreover, Chuck also persuaded me to go back to my local to win over our members to pay more union dues into our local defense fund, and our executive was successful in implementing such a plan.

Our condolence to his family for the loss of their loved one.

—Doug Louth, former IEB member,
Melbourne, Australia

The fight for independent media is never over

By Lise Lareau

President, Canadian Media Guild

The behaviour of broadcasters organizing our recent federal election debate is only a very recent example of how the fight for a truly independent—and yes, ballsy—media is one that is never over. The networks appeared to exclude the Green Party from the debate at the behest of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and NDP leader Jack Layton, and only after the politicians reversed their highly unpopular positions did the broadcasters follow suit.

The two political parties took most of the public criticism, but there's no question that if the broadcasters had stood up strong for principles of democracy and simple fairness, the Green Party would have been in the debate from the beginning.

We know that standing up to the powerful is not easy. Ask Jocelyne Richer of the

Canadian Press.

In August, Quebec Sports Minister Michelle Courchesne walked into the Canadian Press newsroom in Quebec City and publicly harassed Richer in front of her colleagues for using an unflattering (but accurate) quote of Courchesne in a story.

Guild members in Quebec were rightly outraged and condemned the attempted silencing of a colleague. And management at the Canadian Press filed a formal complaint. Good for them. We need more action like this.

It's true that reporters asking challenging questions or telling difficult truths have always been subject to intimidation.

But now the pressure is coming down on entire news organizations, and from very powerful folks indeed. John Cruikshank, publisher of CBC News, was quoted in The Toronto Star earlier this month as saying Doug Finley, the conservative party's director of political operations and campaign

manager, "was in my face in a big way" regarding a complaint about CBC parliamentary reporter Krista Erickson late last year.

Moreover, Finley's strong-arm tactics appear to have worked. The CBC went public a short time after Finley's complaint with an open response, avowing that it had found wrongdoing on the reporter's part and announcing that she had been reassigned. Not only is it highly unusual for an employer to send out a press release about its private dealings with an employee, but the CBC's public display fed the impression that the governing party gets its way with news organizations.

When we (media workers, media unions, media managers) don't stand up to intimidation, we are all more vulnerable, particularly during heated political times like these.

Police can get carried away in this climate, and very little is done when they do. South of the border, an Associated Press photographer and three people from the U.S.

independent radio program, Democracy Now, were arrested outside the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. Other independent journalists were pepper-sprayed and reportedly held at gunpoint during "pre-emptive" raids. An ABC news producer was arrested outside the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

At the end of the day, it's up to all of us to push back. This is one distinct advantage of a unionized environment: it gives us the ability to work as a group to fight significant issues involving our craft. The union is a constant reminder that you're not in this alone. I urge Guild members everywhere to notify their colleagues, their union representatives and managers if they feel intimidated by anyone in the course of doing their work. You can also write to me directly at lise@cmg.ca. The more we all know about this issue, the easier it is for us to fight for a truly independent media together.

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 all copy: Wednesday before publication. (Next deadline: November 12.)

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Each of us can be a change agent: vote!

By Randy Gillingham
New York Guild

This year's presidential race is all about change—"change you can believe in," or so the slogans go. But Americans deserve more than slogans and catchy phrases. As unemployment numbers continue rising and the credit crisis starts to affect Americans of all income brackets, it's important for voters to look at the issues and solutions offered by each candidate.

While this election will be historical for the diversity of its candidates, it should also be remembered for the sheer number of Americans registering to vote. This election has garnered the interest of many who previously had little interest in voting, due largely to the lack of appeal of the candidates running for office. Many segments of the population, such as young first-time voters, minorities, immigrants and those outside of the mainstream population, often failed to vote because they felt the candidates and their platforms held little relevance to their lives.

Who were those old guys running for president of the United States, and what did they have in common with the average American? Whether the candidate was a peanut farmer from Georgia, an actor from California, a saxophone player from Arkansas or a Texas oilman, various segments of the American population saw voting as a waste of time and came to believe that their vote wasn't important, that it would have little effect on the election's outcome.

Fast forward to 2008. The cry for change has resonated throughout America. This contest, between a young, articulate African-American from Chicago who has taken an unconventional path to the U.S. Senate and a self-described maverick senior senator from Arizona, caused Americans to shake off their complacency. People started believing they finally have a real choice—until a rising tide of attack ads threatened to turn the campaign into a business-as-usual political show.

With each candidate portraying himself as the agent of change, how can we make a clear choice?

The answer is that we must not be swayed by the sideshow.

We've all received the emails that link one candidate to terrorists in the Middle East, portray another as a warmonger, and question the competency of a supposedly bikini-clad, gun-toting running mate. Sorry, but anyone whose voting behavior is determined by e-mail chain letters, "campy" magazine covers or a Saturday Night Live skit should sit this one out.

Change can be found in the ability of voters to look beyond the stereotypes and prejudices and reject the "isms"—racism, sexism and ageism—in determining how to vote. We must all tune out the pundits, look beyond the poll numbers and take the time to do our own research, because so much is at stake in this election.

I, for one, am thrilled at the enthusiasm of high school students, grandmothers, grocery store clerks and fellow church parishioners as they discuss the upcoming presidential race and argue the merits of one candidate over another. I cannot remember a time when people actually watched presidential debates, and I even know of someone who actually held a debate party—how cool was that? Suddenly, signs portraying allegiance to a particular candidate are even appearing on front lawns in New York City, of all places, and I have been stopped on the street numerous times and asked if I was registered to vote.

This, to me, is real change. Changes in attitudes by the American people, and the belief that we can bring about change by participating in this election process. No more exceptions, no more politics as usual, no more excuses. Let's not have long lines, antiquated voting machines or hanging chads determine the outcome of this year's presidential election.

Each one of us can be an agent for real change. It's simple: Vote.

THE NEXT GENERATION

At CBC, getting to 'yes' on a desert isle

By Brendan Elliott
Chair, Next Generation Committee

At one point during the last round of marathon negotiations between the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's management team and the union, the lead negotiator for the managers told us she would never ask us to trust her. Those comments were made almost four years ago, and I still remember them as if they were said yesterday.

But they weren't said yesterday—and that's a good thing, because we're back into a new round of bargaining. And the whole point of this round of bargaining is that trust between the two sides is paramount to reaching a new deal.

I'm a newish union member, and my first exposure to negotiations found me in what could best be described as adversarial bargaining for a year and a half. It eventually resulted in the union being locked out and on the street in the fall of 2005. Clearly, the "don't trust me approach" did not work. And things went from bad to worse once the 5,000 unionized employees went back to work.

This time around, with a March 31, 2009 contract expiry on the horizon, both union and management leaders realized a better way had to be found. Seasoned negotiators would call it interest-based bargaining, and to a degree that's what it is. But past attempts at interest-based bargaining at CBC failed primarily because of a lack of trust, so this time there are some unique differences in how we're approaching the table. Many industrial relations experts are watching with interest, wondering how we might repair the damage.

For starters, both sides are parking their collective histories at the door, and are actively blue-skying the possibilities. Optimism is not a trait commonly found around the negotiation table at CBC. But it is this time.

I can see the cynics rolling their eyes at this—but seriously, folks, it's working. Why? Because it goes beyond the words expressed in meetings or written on paper. Leaders on both sides have created an environment conducive to trust.

The most frustrating thing last time, from a union perspective, was that the managers at the bargaining table were not the decision-makers. That meant they had to go back to their managers and try to provide context and meaning for the union's proposals. This time, CBC's vice-presidents are at the table. They are explaining why they need certain things, and

we are explaining why our members need things. And the best part is that both sides "get" the other side. Whether we'll agree is a different story, but at least both sides have a better understanding of each other—and with understanding come solutions.

It also helps that we've kidnapped these VPs and transported them to a desert island for our peace talks. OK, so it's not really a desert island, and we didn't really kidnap them, but we have been camping out at a no-frills suburban hotel far from office distractions. The VPs stay overnight in the same hotel as the union folks, and we are all forced to eat breakfast and lunch together. The goal is to get to know the people on the other side of the table.

For both sides, this arrangement offers an opportunity to see that people vilified during the lock-out are actually quite similar to themselves. We even plan one group social night a week; last week we all hopped into cabs and went to a nearby pool hall to watch the first game of the brand new hockey season (on CBC, I might add).

This kind of bonding during the last round of negotiations would have been unfathomable, but both sides have come to recognize there has to be a better way. And as a newbie to the process, I am hopeful this is the way to move forward with future rounds of negotiations.

Don't get me wrong—I'm not wearing rose-coloured glasses here. I do recognize there will be tough battles before we get a deal. But at least right now we are building a foundation that should hold us together when the winds blow rough and the skeptics start shouting from the mountains.

The key here is trust. It's something the other side wasn't looking for the last time. But it's something integral to the process this time, because if we don't have the trust to try some new things and to have faith in the other side's integrity, we'll be back to the old ways of shoving paper across the table at each other and fortifying our camps.

I for one don't want to see that happen. I'm having too much fun looking at a new way of building our relationship and finding solutions.

Every month in this space a different member of the TNG Next Generation group explores an issue relevant to union activists. For more information on the NextGen movement, e-mail committee chair Brendan Elliott at jrn1st@gmail.com

THE GUILD Reporter

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DAYBOOK

Canadian Rep. Council,
Oct. 24-25, Kingston, Ont.

New England District Council,
Nov. 1, Quincy, Mass.

Mid-Atlantic, Southern councils,
Nov. 8-9, Albany, NY

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

Customer Service Professionals
Conference (rescheduled
from Sept. due to hurricanes)
Dec. 7-9, New Orleans

Deadline for Broun, Barr entries,
January 30 postmark

TNG-CWA Sector Conference,
June 18-19, Washington, DC

CWA Annual Convention,
June 22-23, Washington, DC

CWA Legislative-Political Conf.
June 24-26, Washington, DC

FROM THE MORGUE

Seventy years ago this month:

A front-page article in the Guild Reporter takes AFL President William Green, "America's most repudiated man," to task for opposing the National Labor Relations Act, which legitimizes the rival CIO. . . . Wilkes-Barre's four newspapers shut down, three days after the Guild calls a strike in the wake of collapsed contract negotiations. . . . A Guild delegation, led by Heywood Broun, meets with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to urge more WPA employment to absorb jobless newspaper workers. . . . The CIO News claims a circulation of 600,000.

Fifty years ago this month:

An AFL-CIO study concludes that excessive profits, rather than higher labor costs, are responsible for the current rise in inflation. . . . Members of the Victoria Newspaper Guild vote to affiliate with the American Newspaper Guild. . . . Six states put so-called "right-to-work" initiatives on their fall ballots, prompting strong push-back from organized labor and record-setting voter registration in Ohio and California. . . . Mediation fails in a four-week Guild strike against a Pittsburgh chain of weeklies.

Twenty-five years ago this month:

Deadline settlements avert Guild strikes at the Minneapolis and San Francisco dailies. . . . The AFL-CIO endorses Walter Mondale for president, the first time it has ever backed a candidate in advance of the primaries. . . . A study of VDT workers by the Guild and the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine finds a statistically significant higher rate of health problems.