

UPPNET News

Official Publication of the Union Producers and Programmers Network

Spring 1997

Promoting production and use of tv and radio shows pertinent to the cause of organized labor and working people

UPPNET Welcomes New National Executive Board Members and New President

The Union Producers and Programmers Network has had a few changes, following our constitutionally-mandated election of officers in the fall of 1996.

Fred Carroll, our founding, and outgoing President, had requested to step down from those duties, while still remaining active. (Fred's thoughts on this juncture are included below.) Thanks, Fred, for your years of hard work.

The UPPNET National Executive Board unanimously elected as our new President Howard Kling, who is with the University of Minnesota Labor Education Services. Howard has been a member of the UPPNET National Steering Committee for many years, had co-organized the successful LaborTECH conference in 1994 in Minneapolis, and has produced award-winning labor videos. His article on the AFL-CIO's new Broadcast Division appears on this newsletter's first page. Thank you Howard for taking on your new duties.

The new Executive Board members, as well as the old ones who are staying on, are listed on page two, and some of them have submitted articles for this issue. New members, welcome aboard.

Lastly, our previous *UPPNET News* editor-cum-Treasurer, Jay Johnson at the University of Arkansas Labor Education Program, has had to resign those duties, for administrative reasons independent of UPPNET. Steering Committee member Larry Duncan (*Labor Beat*, Chicago) will be the new editor, and John Veen, (*Valley Labor Forum*, Fresno) is our new Treasurer.

So with combining some of the old and some of the new, we might say that we're putting out UPPNET version 2.0. (But please don't write us for the software.)

Outgoing President Fred Carroll's Remarks Consider This:

Anyone who has raised children, been in a relationship, is a parent, or has parents can understand this: There may come a time when it is glaringly obvious that you need to let go.

Lately, I have been considering UPPNET's future.

It's time for me to let go.

Now I don't mean "let go" like "get rid of", nor am I leaving in advance of some cataclysmic event. I've been a good president. I am not under indictment. UPPNET is not being sued because of me or anyone else. I mean "let go" like an opportunity; an act that poses a question for the organization – the answering of which will make an enormous difference for the future.

In this case, UPPNET's future.

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The New Broadcast Division at the AFL-CIO

by Howard Kling, President UPPNET

Since the election of John Sweeney, Rich Trumka and Linda Chavez-Thompson to the leadership of the AFL-CIO, the operation and structure of many federation functions and departments have been overhauled. In many areas, the changes have somewhat institutionalized the stated goals of the new leadership, putting more structural emphasis on organizing, coalition building, communication with members, and altering the image of organized labor. Public campaigns during the past year or so have given a face to these changes. Many of us who are involved in producing or programming labor media watched and participated in varying degrees, wondering what was happening with the old Labor Institute for Public Affairs, continuing to raise questions and expectations concerning the TV and radio activities of the federation. Would there be a change at the top in terms of media priorities, style and strategy?

Part of the answer became obvious. Certainly few of us could have missed the increased profile of national officers in the mainstream media. And there's a welcome change in the AFL's style of discourse as well, one which openly acknowledges the rank and file worker in the equation of issues, ideas and power. To many throughout the labor movement this represented a new wind. Organized labor was back on the map. This was in no small way due to the reordering of structure, priorities and mission given to the disparate information and communications offices of the national AFL-CIO.

Communications has been consolidated for the purpose of greater efficiency and to concentrate more resources and focus on an organizing and issues oriented agenda. The Labor Institute of Public Affairs, which had existed since the late 70's, was dissolved, as were the departments of Information, and Publications and Outreach. Each had existed as separate units, pursuing objectives independently. In their place, the federation created one unit, the Department of Public Affairs, and placed it under the direction of Denise Mitchell, former Director of Public Affairs for SEIU. "The mission of the new Public Affairs Department is clearly to support and gain a higher profile for AFL-CIO programs and projects," stated Rich Foster in

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**Visit our UPPNET Web Site,
now under construction:**

<http://www.mtn.org/~jsee/uppnet.html>

(Fred Carroll, continued from p. 1)

In 1988, with 20 other activists, I helped found UPPNET. In eight years we became great friends committed to common goals and achieved a great deal for us and for labor. To have taken this journey with them has been a part of my life I have truly cherished. In concert with other organizations UPPNET has lobbied Congress, sponsored conventions, been repudiated and re-accepted by the AFL-CIO, largely settled any misgivings union members had about union volunteers producing TV shows and expanded and deepened the technological awareness of our movement.

Not bad.

The future holds the possibility that in time, if we continue to be needed, and with the proper guidance and funding, UPPNET will take its place with the UCLEA (University & College Labor Education Association) and ILCA (International Labor Communications Association).

The future holds the possibility of our being able to widely and effectively distribute the radio and TV programming of labor's media producers for extensive general use – having labor's many voices heard many places – and preserved for as yet unborn eyes and ears.

Not bad.

This future will be realized without me as UPPNET's president.

My own circumstances dictate that I concentrate my efforts and time elsewhere. My job has changed radically, the demands on my time have grown enormously and I now have a 13 year-old daughter that can stare me directly in the eye – and I'm 6'1"! I postponed this decision, ignored it, denied and escaped it whenever I could. What needs doing is glaringly obvious to me.

But you should know that I also consider this an enormous opportunity for UPPNET, my own feelings aside. We'll see if this organization has "legs", see what its new leadership can provide, see if we can fulfill on our future. I'm going to get out of the way because I have to, and because I want to see this organization go where I can't take it.

Also not bad.

(Broadcast Division continued from p. 1)

a telephone interview. Foster is the Director of the Broadcast Division of Public Affairs, more or less the successor to LIPA. Under the reorganization, Broadcast is now one of several communications subunits of a department that also includes Publications, Media Outreach and a small speech writing unit. "Under Denise, the work of communications has overall been much more tightly focused on a coordinated agenda," said Foster.

This is apparently reflected in both the type of activity and the method of carrying it out. Video producers and technicians work much more closely with field representatives to provide media support for campaigns, projects and initiatives. Foster continued that, "In the broadcast division in particular, we have changed the way we operate as compared with LIPA. We are faster moving, more action oriented and tend to emphasize projects with quick turn-around, tied to key issues. In the past there tended to be a lot of activity around tangential projects and much less coordination with field actions and activities."

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UPPNET National Executive Board

President: Howard Kling, producer *Minnesota at Work*, 612-624-5020

Secy-Treas: John Veen, producer *Valley Labor Forum*, Fresno, 209-442-8206

Vice Presidents:

Judy Ansel, producer *Heartland Labor Forum*
Lee's Summit, MO, 816-765-9996

Carl Bryant, producer *Letter Carriers Today TV 214*,
San Francisco, 415-885-0375

Leo Canty, producer *First Tuesday*, Connecticut,
860-257-9782

Fred Carroll, former pres. UPPNET, producer *Lifestyles of All the Rest of Us*, Los Angeles, 310-395-9977

Larry Duncan, co-producer *Labor Beat*, Chicago,
312-226-3330

Simin Farkhondeh, producer/director *Labor at the Crossroads*, New York, 212-966-4248, x216

Bill Fiore, producer *Bay to Borders*, Northern California,
415-871-3550

Julius Fisher, producer *working TV*, Vancouver, Canada,
604-253-6222

Ken Nash, Co-producer *Building Bridges: Your Community and Labor Report*, WBAI Radio, New York,
212-815-1699

John See, 612-624-5020, producer, *Minnesota at Work*,
612-624-6039

Steve Zeltzer, producer *Labor on The Job*,
San Francisco, 415-641-4440

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labr.upynet@conf.igc.apc.org

web site: <http://www.mtn.org/~jsee/upynet.html>

UPPNET News editor: Larry Duncan

Do You Know Someone Who Ought To Be Getting This Newsletter?

Dear UPPNET: I know someone who is either thinking about producing/programming pro-labor tv or radio, or who is seriously concerned about the absence of labor's message in the media. She/He ought to be getting your newsletter. Please mail next issue to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Union or Org. _____

Position, if any: _____

Phone no: _____

e-mail: _____

Mail this coupon to: UPPNET, c/o Labor Ed. Services,
Univ. of Minnesota, 437 Mgmt & Econ Bld.,
271 19th Ave. South Minneapolis, MN 55455

Coping with Canadian Cable Company Cuts to Community Access

by Julius Fisher, Vancouver

On November 19, 1996 in British Columbia, Rogers cable closed 5 of its 11 community access facilities and laid off 20 staff across its greater Vancouver cable system. Several volunteer-produced programs will be cut from the broadcast schedule. Remaining programs will find it even more difficult to find already scarce edit, ENG camera and studio time. For *working TV*, the weekly half hour labour show I have produced with Rogers facilities since May 1993, the cuts make it impossible to continue. We had to cut the cable company umbilical cord.

Rogers is Canada's largest cable company. It has been providing cable TV and community access in Vancouver for 27 years, but Vancouver wasn't singled out. Rogers made similar and simultaneous cuts to community access across the country. Company spokespeople claimed that it had to become more competitive in a newly de-regulated market. They pointed to competition for newly licensed Direct Broadcast satellites and from telephone companies which soon would be supplying residential customers with TV signals. And they claimed the company had been borrowing heavily for new cable tv technology including fibre optic cable, 2-way capability and digital technology. Nonetheless, in a meeting to explain the cuts with angry community access producers, company spokespeople ignored, refused and deflected persistent calls to "open the books."

The *working TV* programs I produce range from minimalist single camera talking heads productions, to expensive 4 camera mobile shoots or highly edited magazine programs. Since we began, we have worked consciously to avoid the "talking heads and potted ferns in a studio" format that instantly denotes "community cable" to channel surfers. In our best years, we have enjoyed \$100,000/year+ budgets from unions in British Columbia, Canada's most highly unionized province. We used these resources, coupled with free community access production facilities, to deliberately "push the envelope" of labour cable television programming. But even with these resources I found myself doing the midnight shift at least twice a week to find edit time for our weekly schedule. The cutbacks at Rogers cable made it imperative for *working TV* to cut the community channel umbilical cord.

Just this week I took delivery of a Media 100 digital editing system, with a Betacam record deck. Fortunately, after nearly 2 decades as a transit worker and labour activist, I had a home to mortgage. *working TV* already has its own Sony digital and Hi-8 camcorders. We are now relatively self-sufficient, but rely on Rogers cable for Betacam cameras, studio facilities, and most importantly, for our regular weekly broadcast "windows" (1 show a week with 2 repeats). We have resolved the cutback crisis by becoming, in part at least, a small business.

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Valley Labor Forum

by John Veen, Fresno, California

Valley Labor Forum (VLF), still in the development stage, will offer "Union News and Views, Valleywide – Nationwide." Our Valley is the great San Joaquin, the central heartland of California—a huge expanse of flat land, megafarms, foothills, smog, 100-plus-degree summers, high unemployment and conservative business interests. It's also home to the United Farm Workers, and is organized by hundreds of other affiliated and independent unions.

"Union News and Views" has a ring to it, but we are also promising to cover "grassroots politics and social justice activism."

Our format, in a nutshell, will be: local news and interviews wrapped around "canned" segments, unless we have enough locally produced stuff to run the full half hour.

That's a very boring nutshell, so let me try again: VLF will go where no local trade unionist has gone before: through the air and into Fresno's kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms, bashing bosses, exposing injustice and dazzling the masses with our "undiluted working class perspective."

Our project has been adopted by the Media Committee of the Fresno Area Coalition of Organized Labor (COOL). COOL is a very important project in its own right, created to link AFL-CIO unions with independent locals and various worker-friendly organizations. We meet once a month to break bread, talk politics and strategize around common causes.

Our program will air on either our local cable "Community Programming" channel or on one of our peripheral channels that is low budget but reaches both cable and non-cable homes.

Our local cable company does not have any legal obligation to provide free, on-demand "public access" programming slots. At least that's what they tell me. Apparently they have a contract with the City of Fresno that gives them complete control. If they don't like a program for any reason, they don't have to air it. It's their station! I'm guessing they feel bound only by PR concerns and potential community meddling around contract-renewal time—in ten years! But they also have something called "leased access." For about \$45 per half hour we can use a slot somewhere on the cable dial and do with it what we will, short of obscene programming (damn!).

The "peripheral" channel does a lot of home shopping, religious and some crackpot shows (constitutionalism, Angel Tarot Cards...), and I'm not sure how good the signal is. But I'm told we could get twice the exposure. And they reduced the price from \$450 per half hour to \$250 (funding is an issue I won't bore you with, except to say: send money now).

Labor Beat (Chicago), the Labor Institute (New York), the *Labor Video Project* (San Francisco) and the Harry Bridges Institute (San Francisco) have all sent us programs we plan to use.

We are currently working on set design and getting our local segments lined up: "Worker's Health and Safety," "Know Your Rights," etc.

We will hopefully air weekly and we'll read up-to-date labor news—local, state, national and international.

Wish us luck! Advice is welcome. Write John Veen, 1205 E. Barstow, Fresno, CA, 93710, or call 209-226-2078. E-mail c/o my wife (please make the subject "For John Veen"): vickie_veen@csufresno.edu.

What's New With Labor X?

by Simin Farkhondeh, New York City

After years dreaming of providing a class in which union members may learn the production and post-production of video, this year the dream has become reality. Working out the logistics of the Worker Video Training Program (WVTP) has taken some time and has been complicated, if not at times frustrating; however, getting ready for the first pilot of the *Labor At the Crossroads (Labor X)* Worker Video Training Program has also been very exciting.

A generous grant from the office of Borough Manhattan President Ruth Messinger made possible the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment. After several setbacks and equipment confusion were overcome, the program was started on Saturday, September 7, and fifteen wonderful union members/students participated in the first class. Coincidentally, the New York City Labor Day Parade was scheduled for Saturday the 7th and the students had their first camera and interview exercise at the parade, where they videotaped and interviewed participants about what "labor" and "unionism" meant to them.

Throughout the first semester of this one-year long course in documentary video production, the students will learn camera techniques, sound work, and editing, and will be exposed to a variety of documentaries made by video-makers such as George Stoney, Tami Gold, and others in the field.

In the second semester students will be introduced to studio production and will be certified at Manhattan Neighborhood Network, Manhattan's public access TV station, where they will be trained in TV studio production. We also received a sizable grant from Manhattan Neighborhood Network, allowing WVTP students to produce short segments for broadcast on the public access channel. Students will graduate from WVTP in 1997 with the knowledge of portable and studio camera production.

Of the fifteen students registered for the course, we have union representation from Local 1199 Hospital Workers, UNITE, CWA and DC 1707. The value of the Worker Video Training Program for unions is manifold. The unions that sent their staff of educators or organizers to the class understand the importance of the use of media in the struggle to organize and promote social change. Over thirty students called us and expressed interest in the program. Unfortunately for them this year we can only accommodate fifteen students; hopefully in the second year we may be able to expand the class.

Labor at the Crossroads' new video: "Workfare, Welfare Nightmare." Welfare recipients who are forced to work for their monthly checks, but who do not enjoy the benefits that other workers enjoy for performing the same tasks. Interviews with W.E.P. workers/organizers Sandra White and Brenda Stewart. Also labor leaders from Local 420 Hospital Workers, TWU organizer from Urban Justice Center, Francis Fox Piven, author of *Regulating the Poor*, hosted by Janine Jackson (FAIR). Call 212-966-4248, ext. 217. Web site: www.ashp.cuny.edu

Four Conventions

by Larry Duncan, Chicago

In 1995-96, *Labor Beat* covered four conventions: The AFL-CIO Convention, the SEIU International Convention, the Labor Party Founding Convention, and Democrats in Chicago. What was it like covering four conventions, from the point of view of labor journalism/videography?

The leadership fight between Sweeney and Donahue was the main event for the AFL-CIO Convention in New York City. But the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting at which the campaign officially began was at the Drake Hotel in Chicago two months earlier. This gave us the opportunity to get access to both the candidates at press conferences, to ask questions, and get closeups. At the national convention in New York, rank-and-file labor video producers were denied press credentials for the convention floor.

Our video about the period leading up to the Convention, "The Fight For Leadership", explored the background issues of whether the new leadership would support labor battles like the War Zone in Decatur, Illinois. What we did produce at the Convention itself, "Dan Lane and Friends and AFL-CIO Convention", hinted that help was coming for the locked-out Staley workers. That never happened, it turns out, and therefore the video on Dan Lane at the convention is misleading.

The SEIU International Convention story started to creep up on us in February of 1996. At that time some members of SEIU 25 contacted *Labor Beat* to help them videotape a demonstration of Local 25 members, including officers, who were planning to protest the questionable firing of an Executive Vice President by Local 25 then-president Eugene Moats. Internal union politics is always a hot potato, but the story we had been following for years about Moats indicated strongly that something was rotten in Local 25. (It's now in receivership, and the International is investigating whether Moats had "wrongly spent" about \$100,000, and is seeking punitive damages of \$1 million.)

Internal politics in SEIU on the International level began to spill out onto the pages of the *New York Times*, all of this about two months before the International's convention taking place in Chicago, again a lucky break.

SEIU President Richard Cordtz, who filled the position vacated by John Sweeney since the AFL-CIO convention, was now facing a challenge from within his own staff: Andy Stern. Gus Bivona, the \$450,000/year SEIU local chief from New York, was backing Cordtz, and Moats in Chicago was in the Bivona-Cordtz camp.

A skirmish was shaping up roughly along the lines of top-heavy business unionism vs. union democracy and rank-and-file activism. It was in the mainstream media, and damned if we weren't going to cover this robust, democratic debate!

There were two seasoned camera people for the SEIU convention when it began: Paul Donahue and Steve Dalber, who were on the floor getting that important B-roll, and in the halls rounding up the interviews. They shot in Hi-8 and S-VHS.

In addition, we put a narrator in front of the camera: Hilary Diamond. Rather than editing all of this in our usual cinema verite style, the didactic narration got us through this complicated story.

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(*Four Conventions, continued from p. 4*)

The video "SEIU-The Search for the Future" covers convention highlights, in the context of changes in the AFL-CIO and the upsurge in rank-and-file activism in the movement against top-down status-quo unionism.

The Labor Party Convention in June was another logistical problem like the AFL-CIO Convention in New York. We would have to function in a city away from our base, with bare-bones support and equipment.

But there were things on the plus side too: The crew (myself and Hilary Diamond) were both Labor Party at-large delegates, and therefore had access to the convention floor. We were fairly up-to-speed on the key issues at the convention and on who were the players to interview.

Our equipment was one Hi-8 camera, and one camera person—me. Hilary would line up and do the interviews. One piece of hardware that was very useful was a set of Radio Shack walkie-talkie headsets. This freed me up to cover events on the convention floor, while Hilary located interviewees. Once she found them, she radioed me, and we all met at a pre-designated location to do the interview in a quiet area.

With Hilary quickly writing the narration, the video "Labor Party Convention '96" was done in early August, clearing the decks for us to focus on the next task: the DNC Convention.

For the Democratic Party Convention, *Labor Beat* enjoyed the advantage of two forward positions, just three blocks from the United Center and on the boundary of the barricades. In addition to our old *Labor Beat* office on Ashland and Monroe, three blocks south we had just opened our new *Labor Beat* extension office, at the Chicago Workers School in Teamster City on Ashland and Van Buren. We donated the *Labor Beat* "south" location over to CounterMedia during the convention, so they could set up a newsroom for alternative media activists. The old office was used for equipment hand-offs and storage, and the CounterMedia newsroom for up-to-the-minute information sources.

Paul Donahue (*Labor Beat*) got press passes, so we had access to the United Center as well as the counter-convention activities. Donahue and Steve Dalber (who is a still-camera veteran of the 1968 Chicago Convention born again into video) found at the United Center a Fellini-esque world of political kitsch that in editing was placed in contrast with the reality-oriented world of the Living Wage Campaign actions outside of the Convention. The finishing touch was Marty Conlisk, a IBEW 134 member, in front of the camera. We followed Marty through a series of vignettes wherein his deadpan observations become a foil to the ambient surrealism. The piece, "In the Land of the Lesser Evil" was 14 minutes long.

Covering these four conventions provided four different windows into an enormous historical process: the political awakening of the U.S. labor movement seen at different important conventions within the space of 12 months. And *Labor Beat* got a lot of experience covering conventions with the grassroots outlay of a nano-budget and small-format cameras.

Tapes are available for \$25.00 from *Labor Beat*, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607. 312-226-3330. Email: lduncan@igc.apc.org web site: <http://www.cs.uchicago.edu/cpsr/lb>

(*Broadcast Division, continued from p. 2*)

Not surprisingly, this has meant some traditional work buying radio and TV time in targeted areas, overseeing the production of spots and by a PR firm, and arranging distribution of video support material. What's new is that these are directly tied to real campaigns by other Federation departments. Interestingly, for Broadcast there was a significant amount of time spent mounting events like the Labor Town Hall, figuring out lighting, sound, staging and space arrangement, and identifying speakers. During the past year, this has been one of their major functions, serving America Needs a Raise, the minimum wage campaign, Union Summer and the Labor '96 electoral campaign. In general there has been a purposeful effort to set up a variety of methods for gaining member input. Out of the limelight, they have also supported focus group sessions, helped identify issues and member attitudes and even created a 1-800 number for feedback during the minimum wage campaign. This development serves to underscore the character of the new priorities. The intention is also to create more of a two-way street in which membership feedback and opinion are sought after and considered important. It also points to a significant shift in approach to media that has already found its way into the very few videos produced from Washington under the new leadership.

I first saw the video compilation of the Labor Town Hall Forums at the inaugural meeting of Central Bodies last Spring in Denver. I was pleasantly surprised that there was no narrator telling me what I was supposed to think. Instead the audience was treated to the very articulate and sometimes passionate words of a wide variety of men and women giving testimony to the state of the working class in the U.S. Perhaps the material dictated the style in this case, but Foster claims it was no accident. "We are the members – that's what we always say." Foster went on, "Our approach is definitely less institutional and more focused on giving voice to the membership. So far as possible we try to let the members do the talking." I thought the "Union Summer" video was similar in character as well, though this was apparently not directly produced by AFL-CIO Public Affairs/Broadcast. I was told that soon we can expect to see a video to encourage union leaders to do more organizing, to create more motivation to organize. This will be part of a 30 million dollar AFL-CIO campaign to jump start organizing this year.

So I think it's safe to say that the priorities have been set and that we'll be seeing these same kinds of activities in the future. What's a lot less certain is the resolution of a number of other issues related to the media policies of the Federation. Foster told me that the Public Affairs Department was inundated with suggestions and ideas following the election of new leadership. This in and of itself pointed to the overdue need for the AFL-CIO to rethink its approach to radio and TV and its relationship with locals, rank and filers, and labor media activists around the country. I certainly don't know what all the suggestions were, but I wouldn't be surprised that many of these ideas were also interlinked with resonant concerns in the areas of union solidarity, strike support, electoral politics and allegiances, international activities, race and gender issues and the like.

(*Continued on p. 8*)

SF Labor Council Opposes TCI-SF Deal

San Francisco Labor Council Calls For Rejection of TCI Franchise Agreement

by Steve Zeltzer, San Francisco

With 3 labor tv shows on San Francisco's community access station, the San Francisco Labor Council representing 80,000 workers has taken a strong stand against the TCI illegal takeover of the Viacom operation.

TCI before they took over the franchise promised there would be no layoffs but nearly immediately after taking over they fired over 35 people. Their representative also lied to the SF Board Hearings when they said these workers did not deal with customers and were exposed when the fired workers at the hearing stood up and said they helped install equipment in apartments.

The labor shows on San Francisco cable television include *Labor On The Job* produced by the Labor Video Project, *Bay To Borders* by UFCW 101 and the National Association of Letter Carriers Local 214 show called *Letter Carriers Today TV-214*.

The SF Labor Council resolution follows:

December 19, 1996

*The Honorable Barbara Kaufman,
President & Members Board of Supervisors
401 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102*

Dear President Kaufman And Members,

On Monday, December 16, 1996, the delegates assembled at the San Francisco Labor Council voted overwhelmingly to ask the members of the San Francisco Board Of Supervisors to vote to reject the proposed cable franchise agreement with TCI.

The proposed franchise agreement with TCI fall short of what other cities have achieved for their citizens. Portland's contract with TCI, for example, calls for TCI to pay three percent of gross revenues for support of PEG access. This is in addition to a five percent franchise fee. New York's 13 year franchise with Time Warner calls for a 3.2 million dollars in capital outlay to support public access programs only, and a \$3 (rising to \$3.50 with 60 percent penetration) per subscriber payment to support public access. Further payments of \$1.8 million for support of educational and governmental programming, and \$7.8 million to support a civic "institutional network" are called out in the franchise – all in addition to the five percent franchise fee – and passed through to the subscribers.

San Francisco (The City That Knows How) must not accept third-rate treatment by TCI. We are confident an objective review would prove that TCI is not held in high esteem by many of the cities with whom it has franchise agreements. We respectfully suggest the Board of Supervisors conduct a review of TCI's relations with Alameda and

(Vancouver, continued from p. 3)

We are still operated by a legally registered non-profit society, but will now have to charge commercial rates for some of the work we do.

In Canada we continue to redefine the parameters of labour tv. The Vision TV network "Canada's Faith Channel") recently purchased 10 working TV programs for broadcast from coast to coast in February and March. In 1995 they bought 1 show. In 1996 they bought 4. Unless something elsewhere in Canada, this will be the third year in a row in which working TV produces the only national broadcasts of non-dramatic labour television programming in Canada. In spite of the Rogers cable cutbacks, the combination of our own resources with those of the cable company make it possible to get labour on television across the country.

Today, *working TV's* biggest challenge has nothing to do with the cable company cuts nor with a lack of broadcaster opportunities. Rather, it appears to be regional chauvinism and prejudice within the Canadian labour movement. We might be the only people getting award winning labour programming broadcast on TV, both locally and nationally. But we are from the west coast, on the "other side of the Rockies". Worse yet it seems, we are based in community access TV and are proud of it. As a result, we have been stymied in our attempts to get funding from the national leadership of Canadian unions - most of which are based in Toronto, in Eastern or "central" Canada. These same national organizations spend bags of money on videos from commercial producers - which usually end up on a shelf after a few screenings at poorly attended meetings - but simply stop returning my calls when I mention "community cable" broadcast.

Julius_Fisher@bc.sympatico.ca

Santa Clara Counties; Boulder, Colorado and Mogantown, North Carolina. The purpose of such a review would simply be to confirm the existence of problems with TCI.

Because of TCI's apparent problems and difficulties with other cities around the country and the inadequate funding being provided for San Francisco PEG stations, the San Francisco Labor Council asks you to vote "no" on the proposed franchise agreement with TCI. We also suggest the City Attorney shepherd negotiations with TCI before any agreement is finalized. Failure to do so could bring about extra costs and frustrations for San Francisco citizens.

*Sincerely
Walter Johnson
Secretary-Treasurer*

Please contact the members of the SF Board of Supervisors and call for a no vote. For further information you can write to:

*The Labor Video Project at Email lvpsf@labornet.org,
UFCW 101 at UFCW101@labornet.org,
NALCA214 at (415)621-0214*

Please Post Your Views and Support on this issue to The Union Producers And Programmers Conference at LaborNet-IGC. You can write to the UPPNET conference at: labr.uppnet@conf.igc.apc.org

The Mondavi Fiasco, KQED, PBS & Labor

by Steve Zeltzer, San Francisco

The political propaganda drive to privatize public broadcasting in the U.S. has now led to a bitter struggle and scandal at KQED, the major PBS station in the Bay Area.

KQED, which is the only major PBS station in the country to have an elected board of directors, has been in great financial crisis despite its large budget of \$36 million. Part of the reason for the large deficit has been a management that spent \$18 million for a new building it did not need and could not afford.

What has also taken place at KQED as well as other PBS stations is that programming decisions are now being made on the basis of what revenue and funding can be gotten. While only doing minimal public affairs programming of an hour a week on television, KQED produces food shows funded by food and food supply companies and dog shows funded by dog food and dog supply companies. It has become the laughing stock of serious programmers at PBS.

KQED has at the same time refused to program shows funded directly by labor. When I first brought my documentary "Halfway To Hell, The Workers And Unions That Built The Golden Gate Bridge", I was told that it could not be programmed because I was taking money directly from unions for the production.

The marketing department at KQED is now pitching shows based on getting funding from private corporations and capitalists.

The most recent result of this organization was the plan to have a documentary that "celebrated the life of Robert Mondavi" as part of the American Masters' series on PBS. Mary Bitterman, CEO of KQED, had been brought in to replace former CEO Tony Tiano who had been a leader in commercializing PBS with marketing and product deals tied to programs.

Bitterman and the KQED TV head Kevin Harris pitched their proposal to the board and said it would be an "independent" documentary. What they failed to point out was that the initial funder for research and development the "The American Center For Wine, Food And The Arts" and this foundation was almost a wholly funded operation of the Mondavi winery with Mondavi former staffers on the board and a start-up \$4 million from Mondavi himself.

Only because there is an elected board of KQED and one of the board member elected candidates Sasha Futran raised the issue did this become a major issue. It was later discovered that Mondavi and his winery had conceived and approved the project then sought to cover this up by funding it through Mondavi's foundation.

Mondavi gave KQED \$50,000 for the initial research and development with another \$150,000 dependent on whether the project was "consistent with the center's mission and objectives."

As a result of the extensive public exposure in the Bay Area as well as national articles in *Current* (A PBS funded

newsletter) the station management was forced to seriously justify the whole fiasco.

In fact, at one of the Media Policy Committee meetings, the board's labor representative San Mateo Central Labor Council Secretary Treasurer Shelly Kessler asked if the "documentary would include the situation of the farmworkers" in Napa Valley. Neither the KQED management or the film maker were prepared to answer this and many other questions about the "objectivity of the project". At the same meeting author and former UC journalism dean Ben Bagdikian, Peter Sussman, president of the Society of Professional Journalists of Northern California and Norman Solomon, media author and critic from FAIR, all pointed out that this was a clear case of a violation of journalist ethics.

The board later passed a statement supporting this project only with the opposition of KQED board members and media activists Henry Kroll and Sasha Futran.

The lessons of this for labor and labor communicators should be clear. The logic of the privatization of public broadcasting is the destruction of any independent programming that is not tied to corporate bosses.

This is not to say the PBS has served the labor community. The national managers of PBS have refused to program any labor show on TV or NPR despite helping to fund numerous business and conservative programs. PBS has refused to fund serious documentaries on the effects of leveraged buy-outs, contracting out and privatization. The NewsHour program's fare is mostly government bureaucrats and corporate bosses while ignoring labor struggles from Decatur to Detroit. We should not be surprised when ADM and GE are the major funders of many news and information programs on PBS that many issues will not be covered.

The only regular PBS show on labor *We Do The Work* is not programmed by PBS nationally and is itself threatened economically.

We Do The Work Executive Producer Patrice O'Neil was even corralled into attending these KQED hearings to support management because they are one of the presenting PBS station of a new series that they are preparing.

Patrice O'Neil declared that the atmosphere for funding was "very cold".

One lesson of this is the need to demand that there be independent national funding for PBS. There should be a tax on all transfers of tv, radio and cable properties and this funding should go directly for programming on PBS.

At the same time the monopolization of the media and its influence of PBS is everywhere to be found. PBS's last convention included proposals for joint marketing and development plans with Turner – now Time-Warner – and, according to *Current*, plans are afoot to auction off to the commercial programmers PBS national programming on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Labor must begin to play a strong role in defending public broadcasting by education its members about its importance and demanding that all the PBS stations have elected boards of directors instead of seating only corporate funders and their lawyers.

The AFL-CIO should consider convening a national conference on labor and the media, censorship and the threat to democracy, and seek to build a national campaign for equal treatment and serious labor programming on PBS. We should expect no less.

(Broadcast Division, continued from p. 5)

Basically the cadre of grass roots producers of union media programming have desired a better relationship with the AFL-CIO and more evidence from D.C. that the programs created are appreciated, used and promoted. Some, like our program in Minnesota, have enjoyed the support of a forward-looking State Federation. But far too many in other areas have had to do battle with local affiliates, sometimes their own unions, in order to put the issues and agenda of labor in the public eye. For some of the time there seemed to be no help or moral support from LIPA but rather evidence of a lingering suspicion that these independent labor producers were politically, practically and ideologically dangerous. In recent years UPPNET and the AFL-CIO have enjoyed a much more cooperative relationship, co-sponsoring LaborTECH 1994 and sharing information more readily. But it could be much better. If the priorities of the new Federation truly seek to embrace the voice of the members, then perhaps it's time to throw the door open to grassroots labor media producers. Sure, there are all kinds of points of view and methods of production driving the programs made out here. Democracy is a messy thing. But there isn't one producer I know of who doesn't have a passion to see the labor movement grow stronger, to see working people's lives improve instead of deteriorate, to see organized labor seize its role as the spokesperson for all injured, oppressed and exploited members of our society.

Indeed there are some encouraging signs. The Broadcast Division has assigned Susan Palmer to create a data base of labor radio and television shows being made around the country. The intention is to become a national clearing house for labor media with updates of show titles, flash advisories, and the like, eventually also working out a way to facilitate the sharing of ideas and material. The current list can be accessed by computer through the AFL-CIO's LaborNET service. This looks like support and encouragement to me. I'd like to see this data base shared perhaps with Labor NET, S.F. and through other means so that it is more readily accessible. But it is a very welcome development that implies recognition and cooperation. It would be nice to see all these producers encouraged to submit programs to the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) Broadcast Film and Video Awards competition. Winners are honored at the biannual Convention that coincides with the AFL-CIO national convention. There are some details to work out in that suggestion, but it would be great if this became a real showcase of the best programs. But much more could be done.

Many of us would like to see more of a labor media movement. That's what UPPNET is all about. One of the ways we have tried to facilitate this is through the LaborTECH conferences. But to do them right, these things

are expensive and labor intensive to organize. And so their consistency has been spotty, which undermines the idea of movement. The AFL-CIO could help a lot if it wanted to, while still being a partner. And there are additionally plenty of independent film and video producers around the country who don't consistently focus on labor issues, but who sometimes do, and with whom a dialogue and relationship could be built in the interest of facilitating the emergence of a labor-centered media movement. Exciting things happen when you get people together.

Rich Foster said that the suggestions received were definitely being taken seriously. Public Affairs intends to take a good look at them all, now that the first year is over. As for one idea, though – the creation of a national labor cable channel – there doesn't seem to be much hope. "It comes up a lot, really, and has been looked at a number of times. But it's just so expensive in terms of both the technical requirements and the volume of programming that at this point we don't think it is practical." Of course many, including Steve Zeltzer of Labor Video Project in San Francisco, maintain that this is just a matter of Federation priorities. As for regionalizing Broadcast Division activities, producing mainstream media programming, creating materials for K-12 education, or other suggestions, the jury is still out.

Clearly the new direction and priorities of the Department of Public Affairs has helped the national AFL-CIO act more like an organization, complete with spokespersons, ideas, constituency, coordination and even energy. Other than reserving judgment on the outcome of the Labor '96 project, the first year has been fairly successful. And as far as the image business is concerned, the image is getting better, including more attention to diversity and making the worker the face of the AFL-CIO. But will the Federation do more to support grassroots, independent labor video, to embrace alternative ideas and styles, to help network, to help develop a media movement and to take lesson from novel approaches out in the field? The answer remains to be seen. Either way, UPPNET and its member producers and programmers will certainly continue to do what we do and do it well.

CORRECTION: In the last issue of *UPPNET News* an article's headline which said "Labor Party Adopts Media Resolutions at Founding Convention in Ohio" should have read "Labor Party Media Caucus Adopts Media Resolutions at Founding Convention in Ohio" The caucus' resolution was not brought to the floor of the Labor Party Convention. The caucus resolution, quoted in the article, is accurate as stands.



Union Producers and Programmers Network

UPPNET would like to thank Michael Straeter, UFCW 1442, for his generous support of the *UPPNET Newsletter*

UPPNET News

Official Publication of the Union Producers and Proarrangers Network

Summer 1997

Promoting production and use of tv and radio shows pertinent to the cause of organized labor and working people



Photo Daymon Hartley

Peaceful picketers are attacked by Sterling Heights police at the north printing plant in that city.

Detroit & Watsonville Show The Need for National Labor Media

by Steve Zeltzer, *Labor Video Project*, San Francisco and Larry Duncan, *Labor Beat*, Chicago

The AFL-CIO has embarked on a series of weeklong 30-second and 60-second radio and tv spot attacks on Republicans and some Democrats for supporting "corporate welfare". [See page 4 this issue. - Editor]

The one week run, which will cost \$700,000, is part of the new media campaign of the Sweeney/Trumka/Chavez-Thomson game plan. This also comes on the heels of the \$35 million that was spent on political "education" ads last year. But is labor getting all the bang for its buck?

Although the Republicans squealed about these ads, they have not helped build a national momentum for labor. They have softened up the Republicans for the Democrats. This however has been completely lost in the past months with the ongoing revelations of the money corruption of Clinton and the Democratic party. Every international corporate crook and anti-labor regime like Suharto has had a friend in the Clinton administration with the right contribution.

In fact what is clearly lacking is the use of these large funds to build a serious labor communication network on cable and even national radio.

For \$3 million the AFL-CIO could be developing a 24 hour labor cable channel of programming for many of the internationals that make up the AFL-CIO. They could be running regular labor history, education and health and safety programs. They could also be running programs from the dozens of labor tv shows around the country.

This is no pipe dream. *Free Speech TV*, based in Boulder, Colorado, has demonstrated the feasibility of a
(Continued on p. 2)

Nine Big Detroit Radio Stations Refuse to Air Union Ads

By Robert Ourlian, *Detroit Journal* Staff Writer
(Robert Ourlian is a locked-out *Detroit News* reporter and a member of a Newspaper Guild bargaining committee.)

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 1997 *Detroit Journal* – Unions representing locked-out Detroit newspaper workers tried to buy airtime from 10 of metro Detroit's biggest radio stations last week, but their pro-worker message was turned down by nine.

Ads began running Wednesday on only one station: WXYT-AM. They feature U.S. Rep. John Conyers, D-Detroit, and Detroit City Council President Maryann Mahaffey reminding the community that newspaper workers are still not back on the job.

The nine who rejected the Mahaffey and Conyers ads are WJR-AM, WWJ-AM, WNIC-FM, WOMC-FM, WJLB-FM, WMXD-FM, WRIF-FM, WWWW-FM and WKQI-FM. Many have accepted ads from the newspapers.

"Basically, they are brothers-in-arms with the newspapers, and you and I are on the other side," said Bradley Perseke, media director of the Washington ad agency that developed and placed the ads.

"It's a matter of intimidation; they got squeezed by the Detroit newspapers," he said.

The radio stations did not return calls for comment on Thursday and Friday. Perseke said one station manager had reservations about accepting ads certain to anger the Detroit newspapers, but none gave substantive reasons for turning down the ads.

Some said they did not want to "touch" the issue of 2,000 newspaper workers battling to regain their jobs. Perseke noted most of the stations reap windfalls in ad spending by Detroit Newspapers.

The union ads feature Mahaffey and Conyers saying that the newspapers are trying to cover up the issue of the locked-out workers and urging the public to continue supporting them.

"Two thousands workers have taken the bold step of offering to return to work, only to be locked out by the companies," said Conyers in one spot. "Now that's plain wrong and we can do something about it."

Lou Mleczo, president of the Newspaper Guild of Detroit, said the rejection of the ads reflects the way in which media outlets have become "corporate brethren."

"We are asking our attorneys to begin the process of filing complaints with the Federal Communications Commission against the licenses of these radio stations," Mleczo said. "We aren't going to let this go by unnoticed."

(Continued on p. 3)

(Continued from p. 1)

national cable-tv presence on a very modest budget. *FStv*'s weekly 4-hour cable-tv slot airs progressive issues, including labor, and is seen now in some 69 cities around the country with a potential audience of 7 million. With a paid staff of 11, its annual budget, according to *FStv* operations manager Michelle Bauer, is only \$500,000, a figure that the AFL-CIO could comfortably handle.

The AFL-CIO could also, for a small part of a \$3 million budget, have a weekly labor radio show on Pacifica or another national network. A weekly 30 minute or 1 hour labor radio show could begin to reach millions of workers around the country who are looking for an alternative voice from the corporate mainstream.

Finally, we should look at the two national actions the AFL-CIO is endorsing. These are the national labor march for the strawberry workers on April 13, 1997 in Watsonville and the national days of action for the Detroit strikers on June 20 and 21. Where is the national advertising campaigns for these actions? We know that Detroit radio bosses are preventing the AFL-CIO from even running ads for the Detroit newspaper workers, but why not launch a national campaign against censorship by these media robber barons?

If a national trend does develop where corporate-owned radio and tv stations refuse to sell unions air time (as in Detroit), the AFL-CIO must prepare now for their own independent electronic media.

The AFL-CIO must prepare now for their own independent electronic media.

We should not have to rely on corporate-controlled media to get our issues out. Both of the national actions in Watsonville and Detroit could be broadcast by satellite throughout the country and could be screened at cable stations as well as taped for later playback at union and labor council meetings around the country. This would be an important first step in breaking the media blockade, but it requires a new labor communications strategy that does not simply rely on buying ads on commercial radio and TV.

This also takes organization and planning, but it could become part of developing a national education focus on the issues facing organized labor.

Finally, we need to focus all of labor's efforts. One plan might be to have a national solidarity day one day a month, to be publicized as broadly as possible using all of labor's electronic media resources, present and future.

On that day every unionist would focus on that one union busting company and seek to let them know how they feel. This could mean calling and faxing all the 800#'s of a company like Gannett, Marriott or Columbia/HCA. This national mobilization of labor and a focus of all of labor's attention on one target a month, combined with a new media strategy, could go a long way toward re-energizing labor and using the tremendous power of labor to beat these union busters.

If you have a story about labor and the media, e-mail it to Editor at: uppnet@labornet.org

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Do You Know Someone Who Ought To Be Getting This Newsletter?

Dear UPPNET: I know someone who is either thinking about producing/programming pro-labor tv or radio, or who is seriously concerned about the absence of labor's message in the media. She/He ought to be getting your newsletter. Please mail next issue to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Union or Org. _____

Position, if any: _____

Phone no: _____

e-mail: _____

Mail this coupon to: UPPNET, c/o Labor Ed. Services,
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271 19th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Video on Worldwide Solidarity Day for Liverpool Dockworkers

by Larry Duncan, *Labor Beat*, Chicago

UPPNET has produced a new video "All For One" (21 min.) which is about the global labor solidarity day for the locked-out Liverpool dockworkers. Their dispute has been going on now for about a year and a half, and international support has steadily grown, to the point where dockworkers in major ports around the world on January 20 held actions on their behalf.

UPPNET decided that covering this global event would not only create solidarity for the Liverpool dockers, but be a good way of demonstrating that rank-and-file labor video is at a point where international actions could be documented easily and quickly. With the help of Steve Zeltzer, I set about finding labor videographers around the world who would be able to videotape actions in their cities on Jan. 20.

A great deal of the project depended upon Liverpool, and Greg Dropkin there provided a tremendous amount of help, not only in getting interesting action footage and critical interviews, but in logging ahead of time hours of footage, and e-mailing these logs to the designated editor (myself) in Chicago. Greg put us in touch with videographer Jan Anders Hansson in Stockholm, and Steve contacted Akira Matsubara in Tokyo. All their footage was mailed to Chicago, including Labor Video Project's coverage of ILWU West Coast actions.

Scenes included: Liverpool cranes occupied to bring operations to a halt; the port of Stockholm at a standstill and interview with representative of the Swedish Dockers Union; protest at the Ooi port (Tokyo) and interview with President of Tokyo Docker's Union Council; the ILWU protest at the British Consulate in San Francisco as part of work stoppages in West Coast US ports.

"All For One: The World-Wide Solidarity Day for Liverpool Dockers" demonstrates global solidarity against deregulation in docking, and labor's international resistance to privatization. Proceeds go to Liverpool dockers. It can be ordered for \$23 (which includes mailing) by:

- 1) sending a check for \$23 made out to UPPNET
- 2) mailing to:

Labor Video Project
PO Box 425584
San Francisco, CA 94142

The web site for the locked-out dockworkers is:
www.gn.apc.org/labournet/docks/index.html



New OPEU Cable Show in Oregon

By Wes Brain, *Action TV*, Ashland, OR

SEIU 503 (OPEU – Oregon Public Employees Union) is exploring and "producing" labor videos. OPEU District Four Productions' show, "Unions: Power for People Who Work" has taped six videos since August, '96. These have included three about Oregon ballot issues: The first, about two Jackson County Tax Levies, was followed by two that highlighted Oregon State initiatives which were on the general November '96 ballot. "Measure #36 – the initiative to raise the minimum wage" & "Measure #47 a tax limitation law" were two successful productions. Additional shows have been "Public Employee Unions", "Stand Up For Education", and "Client Employed Providers" (CEP's). The CEP show highlights 9,000 home care workers in Oregon who are currently being organized by OPEU.

Labor videos are a great organizing tool for unions. OPEU's shows use both volunteer crew & talent, are shot in the studio at Southern Oregon State College (Ashland, OR), and are broadcasted on public access television in Ashland and in Coos Bay, Oregon. "The media out there just doesn't give labor a very big voice", says producer Wes Brain. "The public access tv alternative is a way to get out the truth about working people. Although our initial productions are fledgling, we believe very strongly in their potential."

A video camera and accessories have just been ordered for OPEU District Four Productions. "This will enable us to get out of the studio and get away from those talking heads & potted plants kinds of shows", says Brain. With a union as active as the Oregon Public Employees Union there are many opportunities for "Action TV". The new video camera will get immediate use. OPEU will be joining other laborists, environmentalists, and human rights activists in Watsonville, California on April 13th to support the "Strawberry Workers March For Fairness". The new video camera will be there! Contact: brain@mind.net

(Continued from p. 1)

...[Ad agency media director Perseke added:] "A station has a public and moral obligation because it holds a public license. But the management of these stations has joined with the management of the newspapers to stifle this segment of the community."

He noted that stations clamor for business from other clients of his agency, such as the UAW, which spends heavily during pre-Labor Day periods.

In fact, stations oriented to African-American listeners, such as WJLB, protest if they are not included in advertising packages. But he said in this instance every attempt to include all market segments was met with rejection.

At WNIC, station officials "did not want to touch the issue," Perseke said. WOMC station officials at first said they had no airtime available, but later said they had available airtime but not for the union ads. WJLB officials said they don't allow labor issues on the air.

WJR station officials balked because one ad calls for a boycott of the newspapers. But when unions submitted a new tape omitting the call for a boycott, WJR officials still refused the ad.

"That was their only objection and we took it out," Perseke said. "They still wouldn't take it and wouldn't say why."

Unpaid Staff Ruled B' Unit at WBAI-Radio

By Ken Nash, co-Prod. *Building Bridges*, New York City

In a decision date February 12, 1997, the NLRB for Region 2 ruled on the matter of whether Unpaid Staff at WBAI-Radio can be members of the collective bargaining unit. The Pacifica Network had initiated the challenge to the integrity of the BAI unit which had constituted the BAI Chapter of UE Local 404 for years. In a 15 page decision Daniel Silverstein, Regional Director of the NLRB said that "Monetary compensation does not appear to be an indicium of an employee...Based on evidence of common supervision, integration of work and the contact among employees, I have concluded that the unpaid staff and paid staff share a strong community of interest...Accordingly, the unpaid staff should remain in the existing unit."

I have concluded that the unpaid staff and paid staff share a strong community of interest.

— Daniel Silverstein, Regional Director of the NLRB

WBAI has about 20 paid staff (full and part-time) and over 200 unpaid staff who produce and engineer a large percentage of the programs at WBAI. Their exclusion from the bargaining unit would create a large pool of workers outside the unit doing the same work as paid workers. Pacifica says that it wants to professionalize its broadcasting. But WBAI is the most successful of the Pacifica Stations. It is constantly experimenting with new mixes of paid and unpaid staff as well as local and nationally initiated programming. Many of the leading broadcasters started out and many remain unpaid staff. While there is always controversy over programming decisions, these rest ultimately at a management level. It is not the union's decision to use or lose unpaid staff – it is management's. Once management decides to use unpaid staff they should have rights - union rights.

Management's other reason for seeking to exclude unpaid staff from the bargaining unit is that it is best for the paid staff. A press release by Pacifica dated 2/18/97 stated "Pacifica initiated this ruling in order to clarify the membership of the collective bargaining unit. Pacifica's case is based on its belief that 190 people who do not make a living at WBAI should not be bargaining for the wages and working conditions of the approximately 30 people who do." So Pacifica says it is doing this to help the paid staff. One would think that there were no paid staff issues involved. But a recent firing by management circumvented all due process provisions of the contract. Paid and unpaid staff recently demonstrated over the management practice of splitting full time jobs into part time to get around paying for health benefits. One clause in the contract offered by management prohibits the union from picketing or demon-

strating during the life of the agreement on contractual issues. Pacifica is progressive on the outside, but internally they're trying to mimic the bosses.

Pacifica and WBAI are invaluable resources in the struggle. At a time when all energy is needed to build a stronger alternative media, money and time are being expended in a fight that shouldn't be happening. And it continues. Pacifica is appealing the NLRB decision and is refusing to bargain on unpaid staff issues in negotiations. The union would never do this nor could it since the unpaid staff are part of the unit as confirmed by the ruling. WBAI management continues its divide and conquer strategy by advising the paid staff that contest to the Management appeal will just continue to hold up raises for the paid staff. And so the union is filing an unfair labor practice suit against Pacifica.

You can keep up with the fight at WBAI by contacting the union's web site: www.interport.net/~rpmartin/union

Pacifica wide issues can be accessed at the free pacifica site: <http://192.41.24.49/radio4al/freepacifica>

Contact: knash@igc.org

A Look At The AFL-CIO Advertisements

from *New York Times*, April 2, 1997

The AFL-CIO has introduced 30- and 60-second radio and television advertisements in the districts of 19 House Republicans and Democrats.

PRODUCER: Axelrod & Associates

ON THE SCREEN: The spot opens with a color shot of an attractive young woman standing with her son in front of his school. Black-and-white images of a rundown school are then interwoven with scenes of the woman driving her son to school. Then come pictures of an abandoned factory and a citation from the tax code that labor leaders say allows federal money to be used to transfer jobs overseas. The boy reappears, running a stick along a metal fence. The screen then shows the mother walking with her son, and flashes the House member's office telephone number, urging viewers to call.

SCRIPT: "My son's school is literally falling apart. Plaster's falling from the ceiling — it's just not safe. Millions of kids go to school each day in buildings that are aging, crumbling, even unsafe. But instead of spending our money to fix America's schools, Washington gives it away in special breaks, including one that actually rewards corporations for moving jobs overseas.

Call Congressman (name). Tell him to protect our kids, not special interests. Let's make the right choice for working families."



Conference Information

LaborTECH '97: Communication Tools for the 21st Century

Written by LaborTECH

This year we are seeing historic developments for labor nationally and internationally. The Liverpool Dockers launched a call for an International Strike on January 20, 1997. This day of solidarity was built by the launching of the Docker's Charter on a World Wide WEB Page. The Korean Worker's use of General Strike WEB Page on the Internet gained instantaneous global labor solidarity which has been instrumental in protecting and defending their struggle.

The first **LaborTECH** Conference was held in 1990 in San Francisco with the prime goal of strengthening/bringing labor into the high-tech arena. A coalition of labor activists and union communicators came together for 3 days offering and participating in workshops with vision, reality and functionality for the labor movement. This year we will strive to show, share and experience the cutting edge of technological tools of 1997 and join in with the current primary goal of labor today — ORGANIZING!

Preliminary Workshop List

- World Wide Organizing on the Internet
- Labor Struggles On Line
- Labor Communities On Line Today
- Internal Organizing using Computer Technology
- Labor Newspapers On Line
- Labor Communications in Developing Countries
- Labor, The Internet and Democracy
- Organizing Youth & Modern Tech
- Labor Video & Organizing
- Labor Radio
- Editing & Digital Video Technologies
- Multimedia Labor Education
- Community Access/Labor TV/PBS
- Privatization, The Internet & Cable TV
- The Future of Labor & Telecommunications

Sponsors: The core organizers of **LaborTECH** are LaborNet/IGC (Institute for Global Communications), the Union Producers and Programmers Network (UPPNET) and the Labor Studies Program of San Francisco State University.

Housing Accommodations The **LaborTECH** Conference on the weekend of July 11th is being held in conjunction with the annual Labor Festival '97, a San Francisco labor cultural arts festival, and the UPPNET National Conference. Hotels will be arranged for ease of participation to all events and in a central San Francisco location.



Communication Tools for the 21st Century

July 11, 12, 13, 1997
Conference Center
San Francisco State University
San Francisco, CA

The '97 LaborTECH Conference is endorsed by
San Francisco Labor Council

San Francisco Coalition of Labor Union Women

San Francisco State Labor Studies Program

SF City College Labor Studies Program

SF City College Computer Science Department

Laney College, Labor Studies Program

Institute for Global Communication

CISTUR – Committee In Solidarity with International
Trade Union Rights

Union Producers & Programmers Network

California Faculty Association, SFSU

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e-mail: labortech@labornet.org

www.labornet.org/labortech/

or visit the labortech conference on IGC

Please contact the organizers of the conference for papers or presentations of your successful use of on-line technology at your union.

Please contact the organizers of the **LaborTECH** conference so that you can receive registration form, and final brochure with workshop schedule, speakers, cost, and accommodation information.

Cost of 2 days attendance including optional evening programs \$125.00



When Coverage of Media Power Gets Hazy

By Norman Solomon / Creators Syndicate

Some people claim that large news outlets in the United States refuse to acknowledge the dangers of centralized media ownership. But that's not quite true.

Just the other day, a prominent *New York Times* article warned that "the lines between information and business are becoming increasingly blurred." The news story was blunt: "The concentration of power in the hands of a relative few – along with the linking of big money, big media and government power – has raised searching questions."

The newspaper reported that "critics say some media barons are out to protect their business interests and unfairly influence people."

Could it be that *The New York Times* is allowing its reporters to cover – without fear or favor – the massive consolidation of media control in this country?

Well, not exactly. The article quoted above was about news media in *Russia*.

Realists should not expect the *Times* to raise "searching questions" about its own inordinate power, which continues to grow.

In 1993, the New York Times Co. bought one of the nation's few independent big-city dailies left, *The Boston Globe*. Now the company is greatly expanding daily delivery of the *Times* to newsstands and doorsteps all over the United States.

While some media firms rack up huge profits, others are merging or folding. The result is a dwindling number of media authorities who decide what news and opinions can reach the general public.

Broadcasters would pay dearly to get those airwaves...estimates put their value at \$20-\$50 billion."

— *The Wall Street Journal*

Fresh technologies might provide more space for media diversity. For instance, we've heard a lot lately about digital "high definition" television. But the federal government is giving away digital frequencies to corporate broadcasters.

In theory, the conventional airwaves – and the new digital frequencies – belong to the American public. In practice, these resources are in the pockets of those who could be described as "a relative few."

On March 17 – the day after publication of its alarming news story about media autocracy in Russia – the *Times* ran an editorial blithely endorsing the trend toward media autocracy here at home.

The *Times* encouraged the Federal Communications Commission to shower the broadcasting industry with free digital licenses. Meanwhile, a front-page *Wall Street Journal* report likened the digital TV spectrum to a "triple-layered banana split Uncle Sam is about to give the nation's broadcasters."

The *Journal* noted that "broadcasters would pay dearly to get those airwaves if they had to; estimates put their value at \$20 billion to \$50 billion. But the government is just days away from handing them over free of charge – and is asking for nothing in return."

Such transactions give new meaning to the term "the free market."

These giveaways are enriching outfits like the New York Times Co., a firm with annual revenues of \$2.6 billion – and broadcast holdings that include several TV stations.

Adulation of "the free market" may be the closest thing to an official religion in this country. But, as usual with blind faith, the dominant theology gets lots of backing from profiteers.

These days, media worship of "the free market" is profuse and never-ending. If you own the pulpits, you have quite a lot of say about what's preached – and assumed – on a daily basis. And heretics can rarely get a few words in edgewise.

That has been the case this month in media accounts of efforts to merge two office-supply chains. Many news stories echoed the full-page ads by Staples and Office Depot touting the benefits of a single super chain.

The Center for Study of Responsive Law analyzed the reporting in four key newspapers – *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*. The center found heavy reliance on statements from Staples and Office Depot, "even though the claims made by these parties to the merger ... were often wholly unsubstantiated."

What's more, "when they sought 'independent' comment, the major newspapers turned overwhelmingly to Wall Street analysts, many of whom have major financial stakes in the merger." Consumer advocates and specialists in anti-trust law got short shrift.

In this merger-friendly atmosphere, what are the chances that big national news outlets will really scrutinize the anti-democratic effects of media consolidation in the United States? Somewhere between slim and zero.

It's far more likely that critical coverage of this disturbing U.S. media trend will appear in Russian newspapers.

Visit our UPPNET Web Site,
now under construction:
<http://www.mtn.org/~jsee/uppnet.html>

UPPNET would like to thank Michael Straeter, UFCW 1442,
for his generous support of the UPPNET Newsletter

The logo for UPPNET, featuring the letters 'U', 'P', 'P', and 'N' in a large, bold, stylized font, with 'E' and 'T' in a smaller font to the right.

Union Producers and Programmers Network

UPPNET News

Official Publication of the Union Producers and Programmers Network

Fall 1997

Promoting production and use of tv and radio shows pertinent to the cause of organized labor and working people

Editorial on Labor Media

Let's Discuss This for Crying Out Loud

by Howard Kling, Pres. UPPNET

Raise your hands if you think public relations and commercial spot buys should be the only media strategy of organized labor. Thank you. OK. Now raise your hands if you think building more independent labor media and communications capabilities is the way to go. OK. Raise your hands if you think labor should find ways to challenge capital's nearly total domination of mass information and communications. OK. Thanks. I think there's room for discussion.

I've got a confession to make. I created a bunch of commercials for a few unions earlier in my media career. The locals involved paid a gazillion dollars to get them on TV a few special times a year. I don't know anybody that ever saw the things at 6 and 11, though plenty of people must have. They were pretty good, really. I know there are lots of union commercials out there. I guess they kinda work, after all politicians use the technique. They certainly seem harmless enough. And they're fun to do. Expensive though. See, I'm easy.

On the other hand, we do a rather inexpensive weekly labor cable show that gets all around the state of Minnesota. And we create videos for other venues as well; and web pages. We're members of IATSE. I have no idea how many workers watch our program on Channel 6; or how many anybodies watch it for that matter. But, I do know that we get phone calls from state officials, and legislators and the governor's office and business leaders and tycoons all wanting a certain program or complaining about a certain program or wanting us fired or whatever. And union folks I run into mention a show every now and then. And a neighbor I don't know very well thought a program we did about a transit strike was the best coverage he'd seen.

I also know that we use other union producer's stuff, like *Labor Beat* in Chicago. That's some of what UPPNET is all about. I'd say the labor movement is pretty lucky to have independent labor video and radio programs and production units dotted around the U.S. There are all kinds of advantages. And possibilities.

But back to reality. The Broadcast folks at the AFL-CIO told me that they received lots and lots of valuable 1-800 calls as a result of the commercial spots they ran during the elections.

So they work. And their public relations with the mass media has worked pretty well so far as well; look at all the coverage. And if organizers do their job well and PR is handled right, the mainstream media will cover the story and workers and unions won't have to figure out how to get the message out themselves (sort of like *Field of Dreams*, or was it *Wayne's World*?) And it is important that the union message be tightly controlled from the top so that it is coherent and consistent. Quality control is important as well. Beautiful

Labor Media Resolutions for AFL-CIO Convention

In September, 1997 the AFL-CIO will be holding its national convention in Pittsburgh. We would like to see these resolutions [continued on last page] or resolutions like them brought to the floor at the September convention.

Resolution On National Labor Cable Channel & Radio Channel

WHEREAS, the need of the AFL-CIO to have a regular programming of labor news and information is critical for our own members as well as educating the public about our issues and,

WHEREAS, the corporate controlled media and telecommunication companies have through monopoly control blocked out and censored stories and issues of labor and working people and,

WHEREAS, in the Detroit newspaper strike, the AFL-CIO was prevented from purchasing advertising on Detroit area radio stations to publicize the issues in this critical struggle and,

WHEREAS, the monopolization of the media industry by such companies as GE, Disney, ABC, Time-Warner, the News Corporation, Gannett, Knight-Ridder and others threatens not only labor but democratic rights for all people in the United States and,

WHEREAS, the censorship of labor's story is not only the case on commercial broadcasting systems but also on the PBS system which is now being threatened with privatization and is more and more driven by product-based programming and,

WHEREAS, labor cannot rely only on advertising on the commercial networks and,

WHEREAS, each International within the AFL-CIO should have the right to have regular programming on a

(Continued on last page)

images and perfect video are preferred to the ragged stuff found on union public access shows. Not the right image for labor. Like Mr. Jefferson's Report says, "image" is the key if you want your message to fly. And image is our business, said the PR spider.

You know, I get excited about beautiful lighting and a great interview and the perfect shot and terrific editing too. I've produced and edited feature films that were purchased by big bad Disney Corporation. I know about this stuff. A lot of it is about money. But you only have to tune into some of the popular network shows like *Cops* to realize that this discussion is a minefield of contradictions. For the AFL to embrace the beautyboys imagespeak and use it against their own out in the field is really sad.

The pattern developing in AFL-CIO media policy relies heavily if not exclusively on embracing the world of corpo-

(Continued on p. 3)



Nathan Godfried (L), author of WCFL: Chicago's Voice of Labor 1926-1978, is interviewed about his new book by Wayne Heimbach, producer of Labor Express, Chicago's latter-day labor radio show.

Book Review

WCFL: Chicago's Voice of Labor, 1926-78

by Nathan Godfried, University of Illinois Press, 1997

At midnight on March 21st, 1976 WCFL, one of Chicago's big time rock-and-roll radio stations, played an hour of the sounds of soothing ocean waves as a transition from the station's rock-and-roll era to beautiful music. Within two years the station was sold by the Chicago Federation of Labor to Amway Corporation, thus ending labor's premier experiment in owning and operating a mass media outlet whose goals varied from establishing a national network of progressive labor radio stations to using the station as a cash cow.

The history of WCFL, as told in Nathan Godfried's well researched and well presented book, gives us a sense of the hopes and aspirations not only of the station but of the Chicago Fed as well. We also see the business aspects of unionism specifically with the Chicago Fed, but more generally in the union movement as a whole.

The story of WCFL begins with the Chicago Federation of Labor's interest in progressive political activity after World War I. CFL President John Fitzpatrick's advocacy of independent political activity and a Cook County Labor Party gave him the incentive to develop an interest in mass media and in radio. This concern with politics and media was shared by CFL Secretary Ed Nockels who became the main advocate and organizer within the Chicago Fed and Chicago's labor community until his death in 1937.

By the founding of WCFL in 1926 much of the politics of Chicago's labor movement had changed and, while Fitzpatrick and Nockels might have continued to be seen as independent and therefore loose cannons on some issues by elements of the Chicago and national labor movement, their outlook and perspective became closer to mainstream labor with the passage of time. For the radio station this meant inspiration from the more radical post-World War I days came to fruition at a more conservative time. Notwithstanding the very real difficulties of finance and organization faced by WCFL as described by Godfried, this conflict in orientation made the station a difficult project for the Chicago Fed.

Fitzpatrick and Nockels' original hope of making the station Chicago's "Voice of Labor", the station's identifying tag, ran into the reality of developing programming that would appeal to a mass audience. Much of the "sound" of the station

was similar to Chicago's other superstations of the time with music, sports and humor being the staple of WCFL. Specific labor oriented programs were always broadcast, especially in the 1920s and early 1930s and many of the more popular shows were given a labor twist, such as the children's daily variety program, the Junior Federation Club, which was co-sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union and the Chicago Board of Education. These labor programs were often successful (the Junior Federation Club received 40,000 letters from Chicago children in the fall of 1930) but they were the exception on the station.

This need to develop a mass audience came not only from the politics of the CFL's desire to reach a large number of workers but also from the imperative of being able to sell the station to advertisers and justify the station to the government regulatory agencies which were often not pleased to give valuable air space to the labor movement.

Originally conceived as a listener-sponsored station with a small dues tax on the Fed's union members, it soon became clear that the unions were not interested in continuing to pay for the upkeep of WCFL. Much of Nockels work as soul and spirit of WCFL was in keeping the station financially solvent, sometimes by getting union sponsorship for specific programs, more and more often by getting sponsors who were looking for an audience.

Protecting the station from the government wolf at the door was no less of a task than developing funding for the station. Continually challenged by the corporate networks, WCFL had to prove its right to the airwaves. It had to prove it could deliver programming to a mass audience – just as the corporate networks did. One aspect of the increasingly obvious contradiction between the hope of the CFL to build a grassroots radio station and the economic imperative for audience was the discussion the CFL entered into with archenemy NBC in the late-1930s. With NBC, the CFL could find a distribution network for WCFL; with an increasingly conservative Chicago Federation of Labor, NBC hoped to find a strong station for its own programming.

Although this relationship did not move beyond the discussion stage, it did show the distance the CFL had traveled from its original intention of being a progressive media voice for labor. This point can be emphasized if we know that at the same time the CFL was talking with NBC, it was also refusing air time to the newly organized CIO which was forced to buy time on a spot basis on other stations for its own shows. As the Chicago Fed became more closely linked with the national American Federation of Labor, it paralleled the AF of L's hostility to the challenge the new industrial organizing was presenting to established labor.

WCFL had a long ride as an important attempt of labor to have its own voice on the airwaves. Fighting the political and economic realities of its time, the station, as well as the CFL itself, lost its way as a vehicle for a progressive labor movement. Nathan Godfried has given us a good story and he ends his book with a challenge to those of us trying to use our own media as a voice of labor: our efforts must be dependent on the varied cultures of our working class communities. When our efforts cease responding to the movements of working people and their needs, we will more easily succumb to the obstacles placed in our way by corporate society and its media.

- Wayne Heimbach

For information on ordering this book, contact Stephanie Smith at University of Illinois Press (217) 244-4689, e-mail: s-smith5@uiuc.edu.

The Potential for a National Labor Media Network



Editorial (continued from p. 1)

rate media. There doesn't seem to be much room for being critical of the conglomerates any more, either in style or substance. Not even PBS. There also doesn't seem to be much room for being involved with grass roots labor media, either. For Pete's sake, you can't even get a media list from them anymore. D.C.'s reasoning starts with the observation that all the money that was spent on labor television during the reign of LIPA did little to help the labor movement. Media fiddled while labor burned out and lost millions of members. Who can argue with that. Public Affairs feels it needs to go in a different direction. OK, but, didn't LIPA back off from grass roots media all by itself? Didn't they instead do all those expensive commercials not so back when that didn't really work? If so, then how is this new direction a different dir. . . but . . .

But I guess I'm still easy. There are some positive changes like coordinating commercial buys with organizing activities and so on, and I can see value in a variety of approaches. Spots and public relations handling of leaders are useful tactics, no doubt about it. But shouldn't there be some perspective, some caution, some recognition of the big picture tagging along with this activity? Shouldn't we worry about the fact that the corporate media can shut us out any time they like? As in: did the Detroit solidarity rally really happen in medi-aland? There's a PR success. As in: could the striking union members in Detroit buy spot time and ad space to run their own local announcements? As in: will *Out At Work* by Tami Gold appear on PBS? No. Whoops.

How do we confront this unless we develop our own independent media further and get in the face of those who silence the stories of working people and labor instead of giving in to their gameplan. What's the long view? Problems in paradise.

Then there is the point of view that the very existence of the TV box creates alienated and isolated individuals, destroys community, and substitutes a powerful, fictitious, ideologically motivated image of ourselves and our neighborhood that keeps people from acting in their own better interests. I agree with the notion of challenging our passive, isolating culture and think we should be cautious about the physical and struc-

tural realities of mass media as we create our own vollies in the media war.

The danger is that the very rules of engagement constrain the cultural and ideological expression of one side in the confrontation — our side? TV is alienating. We need community. Now what? If that's too extreme, it's certainly not so extreme to wonder whether the exclusive way to go is a total capitulation to the most superficial, the most alienating, the most symbolically greedy form of capitalist media, the commercial spot and its comrade, PR. Are unions just one more commodity straight from the electronic bazaar to be consumed by the public: take Rogaine for thinning hair and Union for thinning wallets? Or are unions part of a movement that thrives at its heart from a value system that resists the commodification of everything that moves and doesn't move. Our humanness is insulted by crass commodification. Do we want public relations? Or do we want information, interaction, transformation, and solidarity? Do we want to be handled, or should we just handle it ourselves?

Of course this is not a new debate, just a missing one. Somewhere in there is the stuff of a great renewed discussion that is just not happening, a discussion we in the labor movement ought to be having while we are in the process of reinventing and reinvigorating organizing and union building. It is almost as important as the debate over organizing styles, and business unionism vs. organizing unionism itself, and should similarly be taken seriously. The cultural and media context within which organizing takes place is crucial.

Clearly I'm for the debate because I think the current national priorities could use a little adjustment. The end product I'd hope for would be a better thought-out media and cultural strategy that is informed by an understanding of how both content and form influence people's way of seeing and thinking, a plan that recognizes the special nature and advantages of this huge collection of workers voices we call organized labor. It doesn't have to come down to whether we should ever do commercials, or whether we should never gain

(continued on p. 7)

Interview

Mike Konapacki Talks About His Labor Cartoon Animations

Mike Konapacki, of the labor cartoon team of Huck and Konapacki, has been cartooning for about 20 years. H&K are probably the best-known labor cartoonists in the U.S. Recently, Mike Konapacki has produced labor cartoon animation. *UPPNET Newsletter's* Larry Duncan conducts this interview.

L.D.: You've been successful as a labor cartoonist for some twenty years.

Konapacki: I started drawing cartoons for a strike newspaper in Madison in 1978, and Gary Huck was working for the Racine labor paper, so we started Huck-Konapacki Cartoons in 1983.

L.D.: You've been using a traditional technology which is, I guess, about 30,000 years old if we start from cave drawings.

Konapacki: Yea, except drawing with crayon on paper, that was at the turn of the century with photo engraving. You didn't have to have a block of stone and a big company to print cartoons. You could take a black crayon and draw on a piece of newsprint and you could have a political cartoon printed. That's how the Wobbly cartoons became so prolific because before that Thomas Nast had to engrave everything on a stone, drawn backwards.

L.D.: What set of circumstances led you to getting into cartoon animation?

Konapacki: Computers. A friend of mine and I once tried to do some film animation. You had to send the film away someplace to have it developed. But if you wanted to do a pencil test you had to wait a month before you got the film back to see where you made all your mistakes. So computers changed all that. You don't need film anymore. You could do it all on a desktop. And with all this animation software and with paint programs like Photoshop and with scanners you can do all this digitally.

L.D.: Can you tell us about your new demo tape with cartoon animation?

Konapacki: Well, a couple of years ago I was working for a labor lawyer, a guy named Ed Garvey. And he was adept in computer and video equipment. So he started a video studio. Right now his studio does political commercials for candidates, and industrials, and videotapes for labor unions and so on. So I started experimenting with just using some drawings in a video format. The tape that I sent out was really very early stuff. *Mouseconsin* was done in 1993 or '92 I think. And all that was a slide show. We were trying to see if we could put digital drawings into videotape and would it work. In the meantime, I took a couple of classes at the local tech school on a program called MacroMedia Director, which is an animation program. Then I stated thinking 'Why not animate my labor cartoons?' and 'Why couldn't they be animated in full color?' Then the Web came along, and I found that I could animate a couple of cartoons and put them on a website, so that way I could experiment and teach myself how to do this animation, and have a place to show it. But there are a lot of labor video producers, and I thought, well nobody is using

animated political cartoons in their videos. Now that this technology exists, that's what I want to try. I want to see if I can provide something like that. As the labor press gradually shrinks, more and more communicators are using video, and so for a cartoonist it just seems logical that we evolve. It used to be the International Labor Press Association, and now, because there's video and audio and radio, it's the International Labor Communications Association. So as a labor cartoonist, I felt that it only makes sense to keep the art of labor cartooning current, and try to adapt it to the new technologies that people are using to communicate. We want to be able provide labor cartoons for the world wide web and we also want to be able to provide them for video.

L.D.: In the demo tape you have two samples of 30 second spots dealing with a political campaign. Then you have *Mouseconsin*, which is about 5 minutes. In *Mouseconsin* how much time, how many scenes were done, what kind of a project was that for you?

Konapacki: Well, again, *Mouseconsin* really wasn't an animated cartoon, it's really more of a slide show. The characters don't move, it's really a series of different pictures. We were commissioned by some political activists, and they had some money, and I did it in about a week. Unfortunately, I think in some ways it looks like that. But what the demo tape does is show an evolution of the kinds of things I've been teaching myself. So I first started out doing the slide show, and then the other stuff are really considered web animation.

L.D.: It's like animation on Saturday morning cartoons. It's not a full-blown frame-by-frame animation like Disney, with 3,000 underpaid animators in Taiwan working on it.

Konapacki: Just one underpaid animator in Madison. But the reason I did that tape is not to provide anything on the tape for use, it was just to get people thinking: 'Hey, maybe we could put some animated cartoons on our videos'.

And so I wanted the tape to show it's possible.

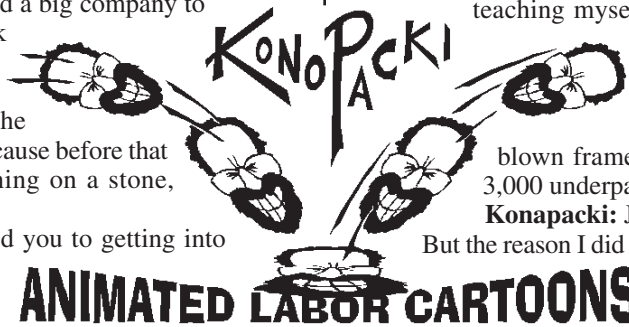
L.D.: When I do *cinema verité* videos, I feel that often I'm locked into the surface appearance of visual reality, and am prevented from getting too far into imaginative treatment of the subject or into abstraction. But with cartoons, for example, you can even present graphics, pie charts, and so on as animations that are visually interesting, entertaining.

Konapacki: That's all part of it. Also, the labor movement needs to become part of popular culture. Why aren't there labor comic books? Why aren't there labor comedy shows?

L.D.: Why isn't there a labor cable tv channel nationally?

Konapacki: Yes. If you had a national labor tv channel you wouldn't have John Sweeney and Richard Trumka sitting at a table doing talking heads all day long. You'd have to have something in it. So what would you have? You'd have maybe labor films, a half-hour comedy show, even an animated kid's show. Everything that's on commercial television could be adapted to a labor channel. Because that's what people grew up with. There's no reason that the labor movement couldn't do it.

The point I'd really like to make is that this stuff should become more and more available. I was talking with Patrice O'Neil at *We Do The Work*, and was trying to get her to think that they produce the kind of shows you might see on a labor tv channel. Why couldn't they have animated political cartoons? I don't know anybody who has animated political cartoons. I don't see them on tv. You see a lot of animation, but



Konopacki (continued from p. 4)

you don't see animated political cartoons. I sent the tape out to her and the members of her board just to say 'What if you could have animated political cartoons on your show?'

You have to almost hold people's hand and say this is what you can do, then actually show them this is what can be done. Because people really can't conceptualize it. We did a comic book on the World Bank that was commissioned by a labor secretariat in Europe and we showed it around to people at the AFL-CIO and they all said 'Well, that's really neat' but really didn't take the next step and say, 'Well, how can we use popular culture in the same way?'

L.D.: They didn't get the hint.

Konopacki: I don't know what you have to do. Finally, the CWA got it, and they commissioned Alec Dubro, who's with the Writers Union, and me to do a full, four-color comic book on Murphy Brown does her FYI show on the Sprint workers at *La Connecion Familiar*. It was the Spanish-language telemarketing firm that Sprint had in San Francisco. Eight days before they were going to vote whether they were going to have the CWA, Sprint shut this place down and fired 177 workers because they didn't want them unionized. So we did a 4-page full color comic book on that story. And if you get *America@Work*, the AFL-CIO magazine, they're going to insert it in the next issue. Again, our point was, we can do this stuff, so why doesn't the labor movement use it? I was talking with Richard Bensinger at the Organizing Institute to see if he would commission a 16-page comic book on organizing on why you should join the union.

L.D.: What kind of new toys would you like to have in developing computer animation?

Konopacki: I'd like to have all this stuff at home. I take it now over to the video studio where they have an Avid and where they all the editing and sweetening. They have a recording studio, character voices, lay music on top of all this stuff. Technically I use MacroMedia Director and Premiere and Photoshop. So the software is there to create 2-D animation. And all you have to do then is just convert it to videotape. Premiere is a pretty good editing program, but when you go up to the Avid, which is this monster Macintosh with all this memory, you can do some really good fine tuning. Since everything is digital now, and non-linear it makes it that much more accessible.

Right now I'm working on a 30-second animation called "Bill Clinton's Free Trade Fast Track". It's going to be a full-screen animation.

L.D.: Would that be available as a PSA for public access?

Konopacki: Yea. That's my intention. The other thing, instead of doing the three-minute cartoons like people are used to, we're doing basically what are almost commercials because they're 30 seconds spots. And in order to fit into a labor video show you want to have something short and sweet that's self-contained, just like a commercial. I've got a second one on China's most favored nation status. If I can get these two done and on tape and send out to people, and if it becomes something that people are interested in, I'm going to try to provide at least one a month if I can find the time to do it.

For more information: Mike Konopacki, PO Box 1217,
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<http://artcon.rutgers.edu/cwac/hkcartoons>

Seoul International LaborMedia '97

An historic conference on Labor Media is scheduled for November 10, 1997 in Seoul, South Korea. The conference takes place following the great upsurge of the Korean labor movement in the General Strikes this last year (see interview).

Where: Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea

When: Mon. Nov. 10 - Wed. Nov. 12

Fee: Registration Fee: a) \$150 (accommodations for 3 nights with all meals and copies of all papers); b) \$100 (accommodations for 2 nights with 2 days meals and copies of all papers); c) Sponsor Fees: \$1,500 (including the above and all sponsoring organizations will be fully credited in all conference publication and media-coverage.)

Sponsors: Labor News Productions (LNP), Task Group for Labor Information (TGLI), Social Information Networking Group (SING), Solidarity for Democracy and Progress (SDP), Korea Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

Contact: Seoul International LaborMedia '97 Committee

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Session Descriptions: "Labor movement and the media: workers, information technology and solidarity" • "Globalization, information and the labor movement" • "Information, changing of workplace and policy of labor movement"

Workshops: "LaborNet and organizing the labor movement" • "Development and spread of new media" • "Labor video movement and organizing workers" • "Final debate"

Presentations will be from trade unions, labor media movement organizations, and workers' education organizations.

There will also be an International Labor Video Festival.

Scenes from last winter's General Strike movement in South Korea, headed up by the



KCTU, one of the sponsors of LaborMedia '97 in Seoul.

Interview with South Korean Labor Media Activist

Paul Field interviewed Myoung-Joon Kim, film critic, political activist, Chief Producer of *Labor News Productions* and adviser to the Social Information Networking Group

P. F.: What role did *Labor News Productions* perform in the recent general strike ?

Myoung-Joon: During this strike, that symbolically represented workers' fightback against neo-liberalism, technologies that usually serve capitalist ideologies were used by activists for the empowerment of working people. Electronic communication and video were widely and effectively

(continued on p. 6)

'97 LaborTECH Points To Use of Technology

by Steve Zeltzer

Over 150 labor video, computer and media communicators came together from around the world for the 1997 LaborTECH conference held at San Francisco State University on July 11, 12 & 13.

Panelists reported on internet use for union democracy and solidarity. Daymon Hartley, a Detroit newspaper striker, reported on how he used the internet to mobilize for *Action! Motown '97*. Mark Hannibell, an American Airlines Pilot who helped establish a web page called APA Pilots Defending The Profession, told how the union prepared to fight AA and how he used the network to inform members of a proposed contract that would have made major concessions. The pilots using their network were able to get the deal voted down and also put in new leadership. Chris Bailey from Labournet UK had helped established the Docker's web page which was used to help build an international dockers strike on Jan. 20, 1997.

There were workshops on a host of issues from developing labor tv shows on cable and how to finance them as well as on line labor communities on the internet.

A panel on privatization of the internet reported that TCI and other media companies are dominating every aspect of broadcasting from the internet, cable television and PBS.

One of the hottest debates was the labor communication and NAFTA and GATT panel. Jim Catterson, an information officer with the ICEM in Brussels, noted that the implementation of GATT and other trade agreements are a direct threat to labor rights internationally.

Judith Barrish, Communications Director of The California Federation of Labor, pointed out that the effort to expand NAFTA throughout the hemisphere is opposed by more and more unions. Ed Rosario, president of the SF chapter of Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, announced a conference on November 14-16 in San Francisco of unionists from throughout the Western Hemisphere to organize against NAFTA and privatizations. A web page is also being set up to provide a report from each and every country that will have representatives on how these trade agreements have effected their members and the country as a whole.

Myoung Joon Kim from the Korean Labor Video Production discussed video and the internet in South Korea [see interview on p. 5]

Onder Ozdemir, from the Turkish trade union federation DISK, said the struggle against privatization in Turkey had been helped by his ability to get information about anti-privatization fights around the world.

Ken Hamide, an organizer of Face Intel and a group of workers from Microsoft, reported on how the computer industry contracts out their work and seeks to isolate workers from each other through subcontracting. Hamide also reported on the racism at Intel where many of the technologists are immigrants yet when pictures are taken of the developers, they are white executives with the company.

Conference reports would be available on video and on the web. There was also discussion of a future LaborTECH meeting and where it might be held and there was general agreement that it had provided an important vehicle to network and build stronger labor communication links.

Myoung-Joon Kim (continued from p. 5)

employed. LNP made two video reports on the strike, both immediately distributed throughout the nation using the network of democratic unions. Our newsreels combined reportage, analysis, local reports by each region, speeches by workers and citizens and music videos. Actual footage of struggle, that never appeared on mainstream TV, was captured by many un-named camera-persons. Working people used these videos as tools for information and discussion. They were also screened in other countries such as USA, Japan, Germany, France, Brazil and England. In addition, the videos were immediately placed on the Internet strike Home Page run by SING (<http://kpd.sing-kr.org/strike/main.html>) and were seen by a large foreign audience.

P. F.: How does the state in South Korea attempt to control the flow of information ?

Myoung-Joon: Under the current laws, any person who is in the business of producing Korean movies or of importing foreign movies must register with the head of the Ministry of Culture and Sports or face two years imprisonment. They must also be a corporate entity in possession of capital in excess of a standard amount determined by Presidential Order, and must deposit that amount with a bank. Before a movie is shown in theatres it must be submitted to and approved by the Public Performances Ethics Committee. Any person who fails to gain approval but still shows the movies in public can be imprisoned for two years

Similarly, anyone who produces or imports video products for sale, distribution, lending or supply for viewing and listening must also receive approval from the Public Performance Ethics Committee beforehand, and failure to do so can result in three years imprisonment. Currently, the police are investigating LNP on the basis of the video law. They want to attack us using the notorious national security law, but it's not easy for them to make use of this so they may make use of the video law instead.

When it comes to Internet and electronic communications, censorship is rather subtle, because this medium is new and its technology makes it difficult to censor. But some of the people who wrote in the electronic bulletin board have been arrested by the police using the national security law. Also, the government has formed a censorship committee on electronic communication.

P. F.: You are an adviser to the Social Information Networking Group (SING) that produced the excellent general strike Internet website. Can you describe in more detail the contribution made by such groups?

Myoung-Joon: The Telecommunication Taskgroup for General Strike (TTGS) was made up of volunteers from many progressive communication groups, including SING. TTGS transferred urgent reports on the spot and regularly published news through the bulletin board system and the Internet. It used a mailing list to communicate between groups and individuals in Korea and all over the world, and constructed a WWW Home Page, that played a great role in arousing worldwide support. There was also the Black ribbon and Signature Campaign on the bulletin board and the Internet to protest against the amended labor law. TTGS also prepared on-line discussions about the amendments between leaders of the governing party and the trade unions.

P. F.: As a long-standing political activist, how do you assess the balance of class forces since the January general strike?

Myoung-Joon Kim (continued from p. 6)

Myoung-Joon: Thanks to the general strike, the political power of the workers has become stronger than ever. But, as there is no political representation, such as a workers party, labor party, or any other progressive or left party, workers lack any institutionalised political power and are simply left with a rather big national union and a collection of very small political groups who want to form a party. So, in the near future, especially during the presidential election in December, Korean progressive activists and workers must form some kind of political organizing structure which will lead to the formation of a party. There are some arguments about strategy but all agree we need our own political representation and can never rely on the existing conservative parties.

P. F.: What are the priorities and challenges facing the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions in the future?

Myoung-Joon: In my personal opinion, the priorities are: 1. establishing political representation for labor; 2. strengthening internal democratic structures of the unions to involve rank and file workers in decision-making; 3. developing a counter-strategy against new management policies based on increased competition and globalization; 4. organizing the millions of non-union factory workers; 5. developing solidarity with foreign trade unions – indispensable at this time of globalization.

In order to achieve these priorities, a modern communication strategy must play a key role.

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Editorial (continued from p. 3)

PR advise when entering the minefield of the commercial media. Such absolutes are not very practical and give up a lot for some fairly academic principles. The media debate ought to be about how we understand such behaviors, about priorities and context and a vision that goes well beyond expediencies. Let's reexamine the nature of the labor movement itself and the character of labor media in all its facets? Is there anything unique, even precious, about it?

The resulting strategy I'd like to see would include more, not less, support for independent labor media. I don't think it would be at all crazy if the AFL sought to reinvent the project of developing localized labor media throughout its domain. Every state or region or area should have what Minnesota has, at the very least. Or what Missouri has. It's practical. It works. A larger network of producers and production facilities with slots on the dial in more communities would be very cool. How could state feds and central bodies be the vehicles, or, like ours, how could university labor centers be utilized? How could Public Affairs help with networking and sharing footage and radio segments and the like? There could be a plan. In the longer run, how could this kind of multiplied activity result in enough programming to warrant a national labor cable channel to compete with all those right wing stations?

One more point. I would hope that we haven't made such a pact with the PR devil that our responsibility to challenge the undemocratic nature of the whole shebang has been silenced. Shouldn't labor be at the forefront of pointing out the biases of the networks, the dangers in the concentration of media ownership, the corporatization of PBS, the continual erosion of alternate voices in the phony pundit battles, the actual censorship of working people's voices?

I'm just gearing up for the debate. It'll happen, won't it? Let's discuss this for crying out loud!

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Do You Know Someone Who Should Be Getting This Newsletter?

Dear UPPNET: I know someone who is either thinking about producing/programming pro-labor tv or radio, or who is seriously concerned about the absence of labor's message in the media. She/He ought to be getting your newsletter. Please mail next issue to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Union or Org. _____

Position, if any: _____

Phone no: _____ e-mail: _____

Mail this coupon to: UPPNET, c/o Labor Ed. Services, Univ. of Minnesota, 437 Mgmt & Econ Bld., 271 19th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Resolution on Detroit Radio Stations

WHEREAS the radio airways are meant for public use and are not the sovereign private property of any corporation to operate above all law or regulation; and

WHEREAS the locked-out unions in the Detroit newspaper strike produced a radio spot with a pro-union message and approached nine Detroit-area radio stations with the offer to commercially purchase air time; and

WHEREAS stations WJR-AM, WWJ-AM, WNIC-FM, WOMC-FM, WJLB-FM, WMXD-FM, WRIF-FM, WWWF-FM and WKQI-FM refused to sell air time to the unions who produced this spot and refused to serve the unions in the same way they would serve any other commercial customer buying air time; and

WHEREAS the radio spot, which featured Detroit City Council President Maryann Mahaffey and U.S. Representative John Conyers asking potential listeners to continue supporting the locked-out newspaper workers, was neither objectionable according to community standards, nor obscene, nor technically substandard; and

WHEREAS the above listed Detroit-area radio stations gave no credible explanation for refusing to sell the unions air time for this announcement; and

WHEREAS this act of the radio stations was clearly due to their desire to act as "Corporate Brethren" to The Free Press, Detroit News and Gannet/Knight-Ridder, and to unjustly and unlawfully deny the unions their access to commercially purchased airtime;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AFL-CIO condemn this act of the above listed radio stations; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the AFL-CIO call upon the Federal Communications Commission to investigate as to whether the licenses of these radio stations should be revoked.

Labor Channel Resolution (continued from p. 1)

national labor cable and radio show that will be under their control and,

WHEREAS, there are now cable programs on history, religion, science fiction, news, music, shopping, the courts and many other areas and,

WHEREAS, the development of independent labor media and communications is not a secondary issue but of critical importance if we are to get our voices out on a regular basis to the majority of people in the United States,

THEREFORE, The AFL-CIO officers and Executive Council are directed to establish a 24 hour labor cable chan-



Resolution on PBS

WHEREAS, organized labor and working people need to have programming about their lives on the Public Broadcasting System and,

WHEREAS, PBS has censored *Out At Work*, a documentary about critical issues facing lesbians and gay men on the job and,

WHEREAS, the reason given was that the documentary violated the "network's underwriting guidelines" which accept corporate and foundation funding while rejecting trade union funding of documentaries and other programs and,

WHEREAS, the producers of the documentary *Fight In The Fields* about the struggle of Cesar Chavez and the UFWA were also told they could not take trade union funding or they would not be programmed on the PBS carriage and,

WHEREAS, labor has no regular weekly program on PBS television or on National Public Radio both of which receive funding from Federal dollars,

THEREFORE, be it resolved that The AFL-CIO protests the censoring of labor film and video documentaries such as *Out At Work* by PBS and also protests the double standard of funding by PBS which excludes union funding while accepting corporate funding and encouraging the further privatization of PBS and,

The AFL-CIO calls on the US Congress to change the policies of discrimination against labor programming and will conduct an education campaign among the membership of the AFL-CIO to protest these policies and,

The AFL-CIO demands that PBS establish a regular weekly labor television show broadcast on the PBS carriage and the AFL-CIO also demands that NPR establish a weekly labor radio show that deals with issues facing all working people.

FURTHERMORE, The AFL-CIO will send a copy of this protest to every PBS station in the country as well as every Congress person.

nel broadcast by satellite and 24 hour radio channel broadcast by satellite that will offer programming from all the Internationals of the AFL-CIO as well as programming from state and labor council organizations if they are interested and will also program labor history, health and safety issues as well as other programs that concern the issues of working people and,

FURTHERMORE, the establishment of these independent telecommunication channels will take a priority over the expenditures of funds for AFL-CIO television commercials on the private television and cable networks in the United States.

And finally, the AFL-CIO will establish a Media and Telecommunications Department that will work with all internationals, state and local labor federations and locals in supporting labor media in the United States as well as defending labor rights in the media and working to build local, regional and national support for the programming of the labor cable channel on all cable stations in the United States.

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