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Unofficial results favor Lunzer But Lindsay beats Winton for VP slot, Canada East results uncertain

By Andy Zipser
Editor, The Guild Reporter

Unofficial results from the TNG-CWA election at press time showed the slate led by Bernie Lunzer defeating incumbent TNG-CWA President Linda Foley and her top two running mates by at least a 10-point margin. The sole exception was the race for Region 2 vice president, in which Foley ally Sheila Lindsay defeated Tony Winton by an unofficial count of 659 to 353.

A fifth race, in which non-aligned candidates Barbara Saxberg and Darren Pittman were vying for Canada East vice president, was leaning strongly toward Saxberg. Because many Canadian locals would not provide preliminary results, however, the outcome in this race was less certain.

Official results were being certified by the Sector and Election Referendum Committee as the Guild Reporter went to press and weren't available for publication. But unofficial tallies, provided by locals home to 27,491 eligible voters, showed 3,630 votes for Lunzer vs. 2,737 votes for Foley, for

an overall Guild-wide turnout of 23%.

Lunzer's top two running mates on the Stronger Guild ticket performed even more strongly, with Carol Rothman beating Scott Stephens for the secretary-treasurer post, 3,824 to 2,357; and Connie Knox beating Lois Kirkup for international chair, 3,870 to 2,227. The Foley-led slate ran under the Team Guild banner.

All these tallies will increase once the SERC certifies the full count. But with fewer than 900 eligible voters unaccounted for, a significant change in the outcome was unlikely. Moreover, two of the largest locals that didn't provide unofficial tallies—Southern California, with 114 members, and Peterborough, with 121—confirmed turnouts of around 10%, and most other non-reporting locals were expected to record similarly low interest.

Somewhat complicating the picture, although without known material effect on the outcome, was the failure of at least four small locals to conduct balloting. The SERC directly supervised the election in the York Guild after a member complained of not

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Apparent president-elect Bernie Lunzer . . .



. . . and defeated incumbent Linda Foley

Organizing takes off with one big BANG

By Carl Hall
Northern California Media Guild

Organizers at the Bay Area News Group-East Bay petitioned for a new Guild unit on May 2 after gathering signed union cards from a solid super-majority of newsroom workers. The petition was filed with the Oakland region of the National Labor Relations Board and moves the "One Big BANG: One Guild Universe" campaign light years closer to an historic representation vote.

BANG-EB owner MediaNews Group, which wiped away the former ANG Newspapers unit of the Guild last year through an organizational restructuring, now faces the prospect of negotiating with one of the most potent clusters of organized journalists anywhere in the country. About 240 union-eligible employees work for BANG-EB in a collection of newspapers and websites led by the Contra Costa Times and Oakland Tribune.

The organizing drive began in earnest last fall and picked up

momentum in spring. In recent weeks, as cards circulated, employees gathered for lunchtime card-signings that had a feeling of celebration—even though everyone realized the organizing still faced many hurdles before a new Guild unit could be recognized.

Besides filing the petition, organizers sent a letter to BANG-EB management, emphasizing the Guild's interest in forming a cordial and productive relationship for the sake of all parties. "We all know that the industry is shifting quickly and dramatically, and at the moment it's not a particularly hospitable place for journalists," the organizers wrote. "We strongly believe that journalists facing such conditions must become more active participants in shaping their publications, and above all they must stand together."

Memos from senior company managers underscored the Guild's insistence that no one confuse signing a union card with mere interest in having an election to decide whether to unionize. Instead, the management and



Gathered before the NLRB regional offices in Oakland, members of the BANG-EB organizing committee prepare to file a petition for a representation

election. Shown, left to right, are Carl Hall, Karl Fischer, Paul Rosynsky and Sara Steffens; a fifth committee member, D. Ross Cameron, took the picture.

Guild showed remarkable agreement in e-mails and website postings, telling employees that signing a card meant a desire to have a union.

Many employees were proud to state that in no uncertain terms—particularly former employees of the ANG newspapers, who have been members of the Guild for decades. In Oakland, Tribune vet-

erans joined recent hires in a virtually unanimous show of support for the surging Guild movement in a banquet room at Francesco's restaurant. Similar scenes played out in Fremont, Hayward and San Mateo.

"I have to admit, signing a union card wasn't half as thrilling as seeing friends and colleagues in my shop, every single one of

them, put their own convictions to paper with a signature," said Michael Manekin, a San Mateo County Times reporter who serves as co-chair of the BANG-EB organizing committee.

"Not a year has passed since management took away our union with ANG, but we're bouncing back to form an even larger union

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Remembering Carmichael and the teachable moment

By Bruce Nelson
Membership Coordinator

Everything I know about collective bargaining I learned from John Carmichael. I was a Pioneer Press reporter when I met him, a career I left just so I could follow in his footsteps. Yet, this teacher and mentor extraordinaire never looked much like central casting's version of a Zen Master. His socks didn't always match and sometimes neither did his shoes. He was famous for walking into a meeting with the wrong file and he only occasionally remembered where he parked his car.

Many a foolish adversary mistook this persona as a sign of weakness. It was not. It was John's way of ignoring the irrelevant and focusing singularly on the goal at hand. Still, if Marlon Brando's character, Terry Malloy in "On the Waterfront," had been your only exposure to organized labor, John's appearance might have disappointed you.

John Carmichael rarely conducted a formal training session for Guild leaders, yet I've never known a better teacher. That's because his classroom was always with him. John taught every step of the way, through every bargaining session, every grievance meeting, every phone call. He could see a teachable moment a mile away, ready to stop the action when it came. He delighted at the chance to turn an ordinary meeting into a collective bargaining laboratory, helping us dissect every move and thereby understand a little more about the process. For example:

We were three days from a strike deadline at the Pioneer Press. A dozen Guild members sat on one side of a long conference table, all of us in various advanced stages of deep agitation. Management's committee faced us down from the other side of that table, indulging in neither a smile nor a compound sentence. In no time at all, the company negotiators let us know that their position had not changed on any of the issues. John calmly nodded his head while the rest of us stared straight ahead at the

John Edward Carmichael, executive secretary of the Twin Cities Newspaper Guild for 31 years, died April 19 at the age of 85. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou; sons, David and Patrick Sean; and by three grandchildren and two sisters.

Prior to coming to Minnesota, Carmichael was an international representative for the Guild and president of the New Orleans Guild local. At his first Twin Cities executive board meeting, in July, 1955, he spoke of building a "second echelon" of local leadership—and then spent three decades doing exactly that. He also pioneered in the area of worker participation, a system he helped bargain into the Minneapolis and St. Paul contracts that gave the Guild a voice in such matters as interviewing finalist candidates for managing editor and deciding the newspapers' focus.

He also introduced medical, life insurance and pension plans in the two cities, was a founder of the Twin City Area Labor Management Council and team-taught labor relations with Star and Tribune managers at two universities. But he also shepherded local units through three successful strikes, in 1957-58, in 1962 and in 1980.



"Very well," John said, "then I will."

He cleared his throat, the verbal equivalent of a pitcher winding up on the mound. The managers exchanged nervous glances but didn't say a word. Then the pitch:

"Fuck off," John told them, his face resting in a gentle smile that shared not a single congruity with his speech.

Those poor managers sat there in a state of frozen animation, their eyes bulging out of their sockets while a redness slowly filled their cheeks. They didn't know whether to laugh or walk out in anger. So they did nothing.

"Well, that's all for now," John said. "We'll get back to you later."

The teacher and his pupil returned to the full committee and gave a slightly exaggerated report of the expletives just hurled at a stunned and dumbstruck management team. The room filled immediately with applause, high-fives and arm pumping. When we quieted down, John was ready to continue his Socratic lesson.

"So," he asked, "what do you want to do now?"

There was no answer to his question and so he continued. "We just told them to 'fuck off' and we aren't any closer to a settlement. In fact, we may well be further away than we were before we gave them that message. So what do we now?"

We spent the rest of the day trying to answer that question. The next day we made some moves and the company made some moves and the same thing happened the day after that and, well, there we were, minutes before our strike deadline, shaking hands on a new contract. Those of us on the committee, however, got a lot more out of those negotiations than a contract. Thanks to John, we left that experience much wiser about collective bargaining.

We learned that it is—first and foremost—a process, one propelled by power and that the success of its practitioners depends directly on how well they build and use power to create and resolve conflict and also on how well they tune into and respect the process.

Oh, and we all learned one more important lesson, just by watching John: never take yourself too seriously. The process isn't there to massage your ego—it's there to serve our members.

managers' neckties, contemplating the length of the strangulation process.

"We understand and respect your position," John told the company's team. "We don't like it, but we understand it and respect it."

We took a break then and the Guild committee filed into a separate room for a private strategy session, known in the parlance of negotiations as a "caucus." Some of us kicked chairs while others paced in anger. The angriest among us turned to John and asked, "Why do you have to be so civil with them? Why can't we just tell them to fuck off right now?"

The rest of us applauded and waited for John to answer our question. Instead of answering, however, John just smiled and nodded his head. Then he walked slowly to the suggestion's author, placed a gentle hand on his shoulder. "Okay," he said. "Let's go do that right now."

John and his student left the caucus, walked back into the conference room and took their seats across from the company's negotiators.

"There is something we need to communicate to you immediately," John told a somewhat startled management committee. Then he leaned over and whispered into his student's ear.

"Do you want to tell them, or should I?" asked John.

Amazing what fear does to a man. Only minutes ago, this guy was conceptually ready to lob a Molotov cocktail. Now he was slinking so far down in his chair that he had become almost perpendicular to the bargaining table.

"Noooooo," he whimpered in a barely audible whisper. "I don't want to tell them."

Guild briefs . . .

Judges name Barr winners

This year's winners of the Barr Award, named after former Guild attorney David Barr, are Sophie Cox of Henry W. Grady High School in Georgia and Titania Kumeh of San Francisco State University. Cox's entry, "Briarcliff Summit faces funding setbacks, complaints," delved into the difficulties faced by the residents of a low-income housing community in Atlanta. Kumeh won the college division for her article, "Pass it on: Toxic waste moved from area to area," which investigated illegal dumping by a power plant of toxic waste that sickened area residents. The judges also awarded an honorable mention to Erin Rosa of Metro State College of Denver.

Boston Herald reporter honored

Boston Herald crime reporter Guild member Laurel J. Sweet, a crime reporter for the Boston Herald, received the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance's Journalism Award for her "unwavering commitment" to ensuring the voices of victims are heard. Sweet dedicated the award to the late Jerry Dewan, a New York firefighter from Boston she'd hoped to interview about his efforts at Ground Zero following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. She never got the chance, and Dewan's remains weren't unearthed until three months later.

Dow Jones joins offshoring trend

Dow Jones announced it will eliminate approximately 110 IT positions—including up to 90 Guild members—starting next month as it offshores the work to HCL Technologies. Based in India, HCL advertises itself as a company that "works behind the scenes." Most staff reductions won't occur until September, with some jobs lingering until August, 2009. In the interim, Dow Jones said, it intends "to treat all those affected by this change with proper dignity and respect."

Canadians vote in four new leaders

Four new members have been elected to three-year terms on the executive of CWA/SCA Canada. They include Mona Leroux, president of the Montreal Newspaper Guild, as secretary, and new at-large members Michael d'Souza, director of human rights for the CBC branch of the Canadian Media Guild; Debbie Newton, president of the Kingston Typographical Union; and Darren Pittman, president of the Halifax

Typographical Union. Continuing officers include Arnold Amber, Martin O'Hanlon, Gord Holder, Art Lacroix, Lise Lareau and Luis Rufo.

Poster children for Twin Cities local

The four employees of the Northland Poster Collective early this month became the newest unit of the Minnesota Guild/Typographical Union, signing an initial two-year contract retroactive to April 1. Northland produces a vast range of multilingual progressive, labor and environmental materials, including posters about the Iraq occupation, global warming and fair trade. Its work can be seen at www.northlandposter.com.

Former local president dies

John "Jack" Lemmon, 80, a president of the Washington Newspaper Guild in the early 1960s, died of a heart attack April 11. He was 80. A veteran journalist at the Washington Star and The Washington Post, Lemmon became only the third editor to succeed H.L. Mencken at the Baltimore Evening Sun, retiring in 1991, four years before Times-Mirror closed the paper. He also served as columnist Mary McGrory's assistant during the famed Army-McCarthy hearings, and was night managing editor at the Washington Post during a turbulent decade that included the Pentagon Papers controversy, Watergate and a pressman's strike. In the late 1970s, he led the team that organized The Post's changeover to a computerized system.

Black journalist pioneer dies

Luther P. Jackson Jr., the first African American professor at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and one of the first black journalists at the old Newark Evening News and at the Washington Post, died in the Bronx, N.Y., on Tuesday at age 83. He was the father of Luther P. Jackson III, executive officer of the San Jose Newspaper Guild.

Please excuse our oversight!

Because of a glitch in CWA membership record-keeping, the April issue of the Guild Reporter failed to acknowledge the Guild membership of a sixth Pulitzer Prize winner. Steve Fainaru of The Washington Post was awarded the Pulitzer for international reporting, for his coverage of Iraq-related security and Blackwater. The Guild Reporter regrets the oversight.

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Varying turnout was *the* deciding factor

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receiving a ballot, resulting in delayed certification of the full election results, originally scheduled for May 12. But no one in the other three non-voting locals protested, leaving both TNG-CWA and the SERC in the dark until the nationwide election had been completed.

Heidi Ruckno, president of the small (31 members) Wilkes-Barre local, said the election had “skipped my mind” at a time when she and her co-workers were fixated on the Pennsylvania primary. Also a no-show was the 11-member Hudson County local, whose president, Ron Leir, wrote simply: “We failed to get out the mandated election notices in time to our members.” And North Bay’s new president, Dave Dale—representing 88 members—reportedly told Guild rep David Wilson that he had received election materials in the mail but “just chucked the thing.”

Lunzer’s political campaign also reported that Scranton, with 27 members, apparently did not hold an election, and there was a slim possibility that other locals might also have been delinquent. Seventeen locals—including those listed above—were notified that their ballots had not been received by the May 7 deadline, but at least four were known to have voted and their results were believed to be in the mail. Virtually all of the locals whose ballots were still being awaited

have fewer than 60 members.

If any one factor determined the election outcome, it was turnout, with locals supporting Lunzer turning out in large numbers while those supporting Foley showing less interest. So although Foley captured most of the Guild’s very largest locals, their consistently low turnout gave her disproportionately few votes. Meanwhile, greater election interest among medium-sized locals—which apparently responded to Stronger Guild criticisms that Foley hadn’t paid enough attention to their needs—significantly favored Lunzer.

More specifically, Foley won four of the five largest Guild locals, often by significant margins, while Lunzer won four of the next five largest locals. The four biggest locals that went for Foley gave her a total of 894 votes—but have a combined membership of 9,595 and had an overall voter turnout of only 12.6%. The next five-local cohort, on the other hand, had a 28.6% turnout among the four that went for Lunzer, giving him 706 votes despite having a combined membership of only 3,504.

In all, the Guild Reporter compiled unofficial tallies for 59 locals, with 35 throwing the majority of their votes to Lunzer and 23 to Foley, while one was tied. When ranked by turnout, six of the top 10—led by Sheboygan, where 11 of 12 members voted, for a 91.7% turnout—went for Lunzer, giv-

ing him a total of 583 votes to Foley’s 159. The four top-voting locals that sided with Foley gave her 76 votes to Lunzer’s 19.

At the other end of the spectrum, the 10 locals with the lowest turnout—led by the Canadian Media Guild, in which only 7.6% of 4,641 members voted—went for Foley 7-3 and chipped in 644 votes, compared with 219 for Lunzer. But Lunzer picked up an additional 301 votes from the three low-turnout locals he carried, compared with Foley’s 146.

Turnout also was a factor in the race for Region 2 vice president, who is elected by the members of six locals, just three of any great size. But Winton’s home local, the News Media Guild had a turnout of only 17.7% of its 1,074 members—compared with the 27.2% turnout in Lindsay’s home local, Washington-Baltimore, which has 1,824 members. Meanwhile the region’s third large local, Puerto Rico, had a 66.6% turnout of its 604 members and went for Lindsay more than 2-1, clinching her win by a final (unofficial) tally of 659-353.

Low voter turnout vexed several local leaders. Turnout in San Jose was “dismal,” said the local’s administrative director, Suzanne Arnaud. But, she explained, “Everyone is so absorbed in their jobs and worrying about the next layoff at the Mercury News that it’s hard to get anyone to do anything

Guild-related.”

Nigel Sones, business agent for the 121 members of the Peterborough local, declined to provide an unofficial tally to the Guild Reporter, marking a cultural difference between traditional Guild locals and the former Typographical Union locals that now make up much of the TNG-CWA landscape in Canada. But he also noted that turnout in his local was extraordinarily low by historical standards—in the 10% range—“to the point I’d call it an embarrassment.”

“A lot of the old guard is gone,” Sones said, and those members “never would dream of missing a vote—they’d see it as a responsibility.” On the other hand, he added, he’d heard from a lot of his members “who had no idea who these people are” running for office.

Low voter turnout also galled Darren Pittman, president of the Halifax local and one of two candidates for Canada East vice president, who said he was disappointed that his own local couldn’t muster more than a 40% turnout—but then got “really bummed out” when he saw the low Canadian Media Guild response. “Some people just couldn’t be bothered,” he complained, despite strenuous efforts to get out the vote.

“One of our main objectives, whichever team wins, has got to be to turn that around” and get more members involved in the union, he added.

Moving light years closer toward joining Guild

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with our colleagues at the Contra Costa Times,” he said. “I’ve been inspired to see my colleagues rebound from the disappointment with even more support for the Guild.”

In one of the most significant displays of union solidarity, Contra Costa Times employees staked out a pizzeria in Walnut Creek to sign cards. The Walnut Creek newsroom is the largest in the BANG-EB chain and one of the worksites that had not been part of the Guild unit prior to the August 2007 restructuring by MediaNews, a Denver-based news chain headed by Dean Singleton.

(That restructuring combined the editorial operations of the ANG Newspapers with those of the Contra Costa Times and affiliates, creating a 13-newspaper, two-website entity known as BANG-EB. Notably, MediaNews left the San Jose Mercury News out of the shuffle, since adding those Guild members to the overall pool would have tipped the balance the other way.)

Every sector of the workforce has joined in the organizing drive, led by Karl Fischer, a crime reporter in Richmond; Sara Steffens, who covers poverty and social services in Walnut Creek; and Manekin, the San Mateo County Times reporter, representing the only West Bay operating site in the BANG-EB cluster. The campaign itself is a collaborative of the Northern California Media Workers and the San Jose Guild, backed by TNG-CWA.



Oakland Tribune staff writers and photographers gather at a card-signing luncheon April 2 at Francesco's restaurant in Oakland, Calif.

Meanwhile, members of the Bay Area labor movement have begun assisting with the effort, in particular Sharon Cornu, head of the Alameda Central Labor Council. She and her staff met in March with leaders of the Guild campaign, laying the groundwork for a community-outreach effort. And when Guild members created subscription-pledge cards, nearly 1,000 of the cards were distributed at the annual dinner meeting of the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

Organizers described the outreach this way, in a promotional flyer: “We want our company to prosper. We also want our man-

agement to know that its best customers—like its best employees—are UNION SUPPORTERS!”

Visible activism by the Guild was met by a series of “Straight Talk” e-mail bulletins from senior company managers. Organizing committee members have used both online tools—discussion groups, e-mail lists and web sites—and personal meetings to collaboratively develop and disseminate their responses to the company’s disinformation campaign.

Much of the organizing committee’s focus has been on the need to maintain editorial quality in the midst of rampant corporate cost-cutting throughout the news

industry. That this goal has resonated for BANG-EB employees is evident in a series of public testimonials on the campaign’s website, onebigbang.org.

Christine Morente, a reporter in San Mateo, wrote one of the site’s more personal—and powerful—statements, recalling her years of preparation for a career in journalism, then adding: “Our professors warned us that landing jobs after graduation would be difficult as more and more newspapers were ‘freezing’ positions. But I’m stubborn and didn’t want four years of honing my craft to be a waste of time and money. . . .

“I love what I do,” she added.

“I support and trust the Guild because it is fighting to save our industry. Because of the union, I can’t help but be optimistic.”

Or as organizing committee co-chair Sara Steffens put it: “I believe our union will become a platform to promote the values we share as journalists, the ones that don’t always come to the forefront for profit-seeking owners. We need to be the voice for quality, for putting journalism first. We need to be the ones to point out that in the long run, good journalism is good business, be it online or in print.

“Here’s the thing: without the union, we have nothing. Together, we have a voice.”

Chicago Local 34071 is seeking candidates for the position of executive director. Applicants should have experience in contract negotiations and enforcement and management of a small office staff. Newspaper experience is preferable. Send applications c/o Mike Ulreich, Chicago Newspaper Guild, 36 S. Wabash, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60603; or e-mail Mike at michaelulreich@hotmail.com

