



30 at 32-1/3*

April 29, 2011

At the risk of this looking like a vanity publication, I want to take a few minutes of your time to put my Guild career here at the Sun to rest. After 28 years as a Guild leader, activist and, some might say, trouble-maker, I want to acknowledge some of the people who have touched my life and share with you some of my fondest memories. We as Guild members at the Sun have much to be proud of for what's been accomplished. While admitting we haven't always achieved our goals and recognizing there are still challenges ahead, I leave you with words of encouragement to continue to stand up for your rights in the workplace --- stand up for your co-workers' rights, too.

First, let me say that there's great risk in what I'm about to do. Oh, I don't mean leaving The Sun, where I have worked in features and then on the news copy desk for all those years. No, what I'm about to do is mention some folks who deserve gold stars; the risk is neglecting to name a key player.

One of those people still works here --- **Angie Kuhl**, the current unit chair. Angie has all the qualities you want in a Guild leader: caring, smart, no-nonsense, tough, respected by top managers with whom she has to deal. To top it off, she has a crazy sense of humor --- most vital of all.

Bill Salganik and **Joan Jacobson**, both former unit chairs remain generous in their willingness to help the Sunpapers Unit. Some of you might recall Joan as a mobilizer working in that role even after she left the Sun. Bill, of course, still represents the Guild on the creditors committee in the Tribune bankruptcy case.

And, in no particular order: **Cliff Meyers**, a former ad salesman and a unit chair, who taught me most of what I needed to know about how the advertising department worked. You can't say Cliff without mentioning his soft-spoken wife **Cathy**. ... The not-so-soft-spoken **Josie Swagger** comes to mind next, a payroll clerk and strong Guild supporter. If something made Cathy or Josie angry, you sure would hear about it. ... Former AME **Gil Watson** --- I learned how to defend people in grievances sitting across from him, a major skill for a Guild leader, and for that I am grateful. ... **Amy Davis**, mobilizer and steward extraordinaire. ... **Marshall Murphy**, a machinist who represented folks at Sun Park. He called me "Mother" --- not sure he didn't mean Muh-thah. ... The late **John Banach**, a vice president for labor relations and a complete gentleman. ... **Virginia Sykes**, a cafeteria worker, the unit chair of her unit. In her last job at the Sun, where she was a non-guard receptionist at the lobby's front desk, she was on a first-name basis with everyone. ... I'm told **Mike Littwin** and John Eisenberg, sports columnists, had a choice response for their boss when he assumed they would work during a strike in 1987. Not then members, they quickly joined. ... **Jim Burger**, the Mar-Com photographer and commercial vice chair, knew everyone in the building, and probably still does. **Eileen Canzian**, a former unit chair, who's timely lunch saved the plan to end two-tier wages. **Ann Ward**, a steward on the copy desk, who had new employees signed up for the Guild before their backsides even hit their chair for the first time. ... **Kasey Jones**, another copy desk steward, who led a conga line through the newsroom to demonstrate during 1996 bargaining how much copy editors need rest breaks. **Tanika White** and **Lynn Anderson**, two young reporters who stepped up as leaders just as another round of buyouts was eliminating dozens more employees (remember the black folding chairs lined up in front of the Sun with pink slips attached to them?) ... **Regina Lentz**, a steward in circulation, worked hard for her beleaguered co-workers.

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A boss once accused me of caring more about my work with the Guild than with my work for the Sun. And, while I think some of my best work for the Sun WAS my work for the Guild in trying to get and defend decent and fair contracts to keep the workforce at least grunted, I didn't agree with him. Nevertheless, some of my fondest memories of my time here has involved Guild activity.

Here are a few:

1. Cafeteria boycott: At the end of May 1989, the Sun hired a new firm to run the cafeteria. This put several people out of work, all members of a Guild Canteen unit. When the new firm wouldn't hire these workers, the Guild led a boycott of the cafeteria. People from around the building refused to buy food. After bargaining for months, we got the last four workers, including Virginia Sykes, hired by the Sun.

2. Stopping the train: When we went on strike the night of June 8, 1987, some of us were picketing along Centre Street. A train was approaching (along track no longer in place) delivering paper or ink for the presses still at Calvert Street. The administrative officer, Sandi Polaski, said if we got to the intersection with our picket signs, the train wouldn't cross. We did. The train backed up and went away.

3. Having labor board rule that Sun publisher couldn't bully the Guild by trying to intimidate its leaders: In the early 2000s, the Sun's advertising department reorganized itself into teams of salespeople, sales assistants, designers. In bulletins, the Guild pointed out some problems with the team approach, called Solar. Bill Salganik and I were called into the publisher's office and told, among other things, never to use the word "Solar " in bulletins again. The Guild filed a charge with the labor board which ruled the Sun had violated federal labor law and had to post language that it wouldn't threaten the Guild again.

4. Balloons: In 1987, one year after Times-Mirror bought the Sun, the Guild learned the board of directors would meet in Baltimore and tour the building. We decided to greet them with a flier, but also with messages all over the building to demonstrate the Guild's presence. We considered stickers but realized Sun managers might get angry if we slapped stickers all over brand new furniture. But we could put the stickers on balloons. Hundreds of balloons. When the morning Sun managing editor saw the balloons, he tore them down, stomped into his office where he could be heard bursting them. At the Sun, balloons and the Guild are forever linked.

5. "What about the babies?": In the early '90s, the Guild directed money from its total benefit package to cover half the cost of health insurance for part-timers (the employee would pick up the other half). For a number of reasons we ended up with a whopping bill. At a meeting, several members suggested ending the program. Then Regina Lentz, a shop steward in circulation, blurted out "What about the babies?" meaning the young children, often in single-parent households, who were covered by this insurance. Her question settled the issue. We found ways to pay the bill.

6. The airplane over Camden Yards: During 2003 bargaining, the Chicago Cubs were playing the Orioles at Camden Yards. Angie Kuhl arranged to have a plane fly over the stadium with our message streaming out behind it. Some of us watched the plane make wide loops over the city from the parking garage roof.

7. A little shut-eye: Jon Morgan, on the Guild's bargaining committee in 1990, pushed a chair near a window of the hotel where we were bargaining, wrapped himself in a drape and tried to take a nap.

*Purists might say I should have waited another year to make it 33 1/3. But the extension of the contract included language bringing the final web workers into Guild jurisdiction --- something we'd been seeking since 1996 with victories through every step of labor board proceedings, but defeat at the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals.

With the web workers in jurisdiction, my work here is done.

In solidarity,