

VANCOUVER SUN AND PROVINCE NEWSROOMS

CANWEST JOB CUTS BAD FOR B.C. AND A BLOW TO DEMOCRACY

Editing centralized in Ontario to cut debt, pay for corporate takeover, Local 2000 president says

CANWEST'S CHOPPING OF EDITING JOBS in Vancouver and moving them to Hamilton and Ottawa is something that should outrage everyone in B.C., says Local 2000 president Mike Bocking.

"The Vancouver Sun and Province newsrooms are, historically, the source of a large proportion of the information B.C. residents need to make decisions that are vital in our democracy," said Bocking. "CanWest is insulting the intelligence of every British Columbian by claiming an editor in Ontario can do the same job as someone who lives here."

CanWest has said that its goal is for about 50 per cent of pages at its daily newspapers to be laid out and edited at company-owned, non-union operations in Hamilton and Ottawa.

The company has given Local 2000 notice of reorganizations in both Pacific Newspaper Group newsrooms. Forty-one (25 in the Sun, 16 in the Province) newsroom staff have received individual letters telling them their jobs may no longer exist.

The process of moving the work to Ontario began in October with two national and two international Vancouver Sun pages sent for layout and copy editing the first week. While



Mike Bocking

the company has not said when the 50 per cent of pages goal is to be reached, the reorganization notice is supposed to be given six months in advance, according to the collective agreement.

Layout, headline writing and copy-editing are all essential elements in what "makes up the news," Bocking said.

Good quality news, debate and opinion are vital to a healthy democracy. CanWest will be offering one story, one headline and one cutline — one version of the news — to Canadians in every city where the company owns daily newspapers.

"People were justifiably upset when CanWest-owned newspapers ran company-mandated, centralized editorials across the country," said Bocking. "This is just like that, only in some ways worse, as it will be largely imperceptible to most readers."

But it is also bad business that threat-

ens the basis of our industry, he said. More and more, readers and viewers complain that the news is all the same, that they have seen, or heard, or read the same news again and again.

The growing standardization of news coverage is making everything the same, in short, boring, which is the ultimate death sentence for a news organization.

The same moves are being made at other CanWest newspapers across Canada, including the Montreal Gazette, the Ottawa Citizen, the Regina Leader-Post, the Calgary Herald and the Edmonton Journal. It also follows very large cuts in staff on the broadcast TV side of CanWest's business.

While CanWest says its motivations (and newsroom management, of course, echoes this) for moving the work to Ontario are efficiency and "freeing up resources" to do a better job of covering local news, this is just corporate spin, said Bocking.

The driving force behind cuts in news coverage is the growing corporate concentration in the media.

CanWest is not unique in this. Other companies in the U.S. and in Canada have been following the same strategy with equally poor results. Quebecor, although based in Quebec, owns the SunMedia chain across Canada and has been chopping staff at the same time as it buys more newspapers. And like CanWest, its circulation is declining as a result.

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

SCAN is the newsletter of Local 2000, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers of Canada.

Suite 400 - 475 Howe Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2B3
phone 604-408-0746
fax: 604-806-0563
email: scan@mediaunion.ca
or: cep2000@mediaunion.ca
website: www.mediaunion.ca

EDITOR

Gary Engler

UNION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mike Bocking

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Andrea MacBride

VICE-PRESIDENT

Rob Munro

VICE-PRESIDENT

Bob Osipa

VICE-PRESIDENT

John Savage

AREA COUNCIL CHAIRS

GRANVILLE SQUARE

Ian McCoan

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Lyle Dyck

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

Arnie Reilly

INTERIOR

Pat Bulmer

KENNEDY HEIGHTS

David Letson

LOWER MAINLAND

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Donna Sigurdur

CONTRIBUTORS

Brian Gibson, Mike Bocking, Rob Munro, Bob Krieger



2007 CONGRESS

Changes to compensation harmful to injured workers, delegates told

Cost savings for employers result from many cutbacks to employees

CHANGES IN WORKERS COMPENSATION introduced by the current B.C. Liberal provincial government have saved employers millions of dollars at the expense of injured workers, delegates to the 2007 Congress were told.

Local 2000's annual Congress in October was fortunate to have lawyer Sara O'Leary as the keynote speaker for the educational component on compensation issues.



Sara O'Leary

O'Leary specializes in WCB issues — even though the name has been changed to WorkSafe B.C. she refuses to abandon the traditional name.

That's due, in part, to the history of workers' compensation throughout the country.

In the old days, injured workers were out of luck, or they could sue their employers. Workers' compensation boards were set up across the country to provide no fault coverage for workers injured on the job.

The trade-off was that they gave up the right to sue employers.

That principle, she stressed, has been eroded under the Gordon Campbell Liberal government that brought in major changes in 2002.

Anyone injured after June 22, 2002 is under the new rules, which include:

- Payments are now 75% of gross pay instead of 95% of net.
- No more pensions for life. Now the cut off is at age 65.
- De-indexed pensions. They used to be tied to the Consumer Price Index but are now 1% below CPI with a maximum of 4% increase per year, meaning injured workers are losing ground each year, even at our current low rates of inflation.
- Claw back 50% of Canada Pension Plan disability pensions.
- No more loss of earnings pensions, just functional disability.
- Virtually eliminated vocational retraining.
- Virtually no payments for mental injuries.
- Does not recognize chronic pain as a barrier to work
- Eliminated the independent medical review from the appeal process

As a result of these changes, the B.C. WCB now has more money than any WCB in Canada, cutting costs by \$300 million a year (from about \$349 million a year in payments and pensions in 2000 to about \$50 million in 2006).

This has resulted in major premium cost savings for employers.

What this means to workers is that it's harder and harder to qualify for WCB payments.

After being denied, there is a difficult appeals process that, in Local 2000, we generally turn over to lawyers to handle.

So, if you are having difficulties with a WCB claim, contact your local union representative for assistance.

SCAN THIS!

Members are invited to submit articles, illustrations, letters, ideas and letters. Please send an email to: scan@mediaunion.ca

Vice-president Osipa re-elected

BOB OSIPA WAS RE-ELECTED for a three-year term as a Local 2000 vice-president, winning 804 votes to 595 for Ed Byers.

Osipa has been a Local 2000 vice-president since 1998 and before that served for many years as the president of the former GCIU Local 25, which merged with us last year.



Bob Osipa

"The turnout was great," said Osipa. "It shows that our members really care about this local."

Many thanks to the elections committee of Donna Sigurdur, Diana Campbell and Mike Irving.

Glacier bargaining on target to start in early 2008

More than 500 members work at 10 newspapers once owned by Hollinger

MOST OF LOCAL 2000'S MEMBERS in the Interior of B.C. will be hunkering down at various bargaining tables in 2008.

GlacierVentures bought the Hollinger papers in B.C. early in 2006 and a 25% share of the Okanagan newspapers (still mostly owned by David Radler) later that year.

The purchase came as many of the newspapers were in bargaining so we called for two-year agreements in order that both sides could see how things might change under the new ownership.

One major change in the last couple of years is that our members report the papers are generally bigger, with more ads, more colour and more flyers — giving the clear impression that the financial doom and gloom of the recent past has evaporated.

During the last round of bargaining some publishers cited the aggressive competition from the David Black chain as a major threat to their profitability, but

that doesn't appear to have materialized.

Workers are now in the process of selecting bargaining committees. Those committees are drafting questionnaires to send to members in early January. We hope to get some of the bargaining tables started as early as February or March, which is prior to the expiration of most of the collective agreements that run out between Dec. 31, 2007 and June 5, 2008.

In all, contracts are up at 10 newspapers employing more than 500 Local 2000 members. They include papers in Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Cranbrook, Trail, Nelson, Penticton, Kelowna, Kamloops, Prince Rupert and Prince George.

The new owners have put money into some of the papers with new computer and press equipment at some sites. One major change is the shift of the press from Nelson to an expanded facility in Cranbrook, which is expected to start publishing the West Kootenay papers early in January.

Another significant change is that long-time Cranbrook publisher and bargainer Steen Jorgensen is retiring at the end of this year, to be replaced by Brian Sims. Jorgensen is expected to do the bargaining for the Kootenay, Peace River and Prince Rupert papers.



NEWS FROM AROUND OUR LOCAL

KOREA TIMES | A new contract was ratified, by a 100 per cent vote in favour, at the end of November that sees wage increases of 0%, 4% and 4%, with flat rate increases to members currently making above the negotiated rates. Improvements were also achieved in vacations and severance pay. The Local executive voted in early December to have the contract translated into Korean since that is the language of most members.

NANAIMO DAILY NEWS | One employee was fired, resulting in a grievance that was settled to the satisfaction of all parties. Some members have moved back and forth from Nanaimo to Parksville, to work at the Oceanside Star. The union believes these jobs in Parksville are effectively part of our bargaining unit and we have therefore filed a variance to the certification.

COURIER ISLANDER | National rep Peter McQuade met with members in Campbell River to discuss the upcoming bargaining for a contract that expires at the end of March.

QUEEN'S PRINTER | A meeting between Local 2000 and CEP Local 525G members in pre press was held in an effort to avoid a jurisdiction dispute over the new CTP (computer to plate) system. A joint committee is being struck to deal with future training.

PROPRIETOR AGREEMENTS | A new standardized agreement for owner-operators has been circulated to Local executive members. If accepted this new agreement would come into effect when the current 21 proprietor agreements come up for renewal in 2008. Two shops applied and have been "grandfathered" under the new National Union label provisions, which means they will each be issued a new union label.

Black Press expands bindery

MORE THAN A DOZEN WORKERS at the Black Press Bindery in Abbotsford are in the process of relocating to Surrey.

The Abbotsford site has become too crowded so the company is relocating to the new Campbell Heights industrial subdivision at 192nd Street and 24th Avenue.

Operations have started using a new Alphaliner inserting machine that can insert flyers into specific delivery routes.

Work has begun on the Surrey paper as they work out the bugs on the new equipment.

At this time, the main problem seems to be the strapping end.

In January, all the papers printed in Abbotsford will be shipped to the Surrey plant where flyers will be inserted.

The old Alphaliner will be rebuilt and set up in the new location.

Most of the staff from Abbotsford are commuting to Surrey — car pooling to save on gas costs — and putting in some very long shifts these days.

They seem confident the bugs will soon be worked out and the machinery will do the job efficiently.

KIEGER © 2007
CEP • 2000

How many "k"s
in Musquem?



Damaging effects of concentration visible in Vancouver

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT

That is why the CEP has continued to lobby the federal government against the growing concentration of ownership in the Canadian media and why we are particularly opposed to foreign ownership of the media, something that is happening by stealth in the CanWest proposal to buy Alliance-Atlantis in partnership with Goldman Sachs, a New York-based investment bank.

We can see the damaging effects of the concentration of ownership at our own newspapers in Vancouver, where the first major cuts began in the early 1990s, as

Southam consolidated many of the major newspapers in Canada, Bocking said. It became worse when Hollinger bought Southam and cut staff to pay off the debt for that purchase. (And that's not including money stolen from the company by two of its owners).

And it has continued apace with CanWest's purchase of Hollinger newspapers in 2000, again with debt. Debt holders, whether the banks or bondholders, must be paid their interest, and so news service has been seriously cut, as a result.

It continues today with the ill-advised takeover of Alliance-Atlantis, which is saddling the company with even more debt.

Even CanWest CEO Leonard Asper conceded to the Canadian Radio and Television Commission that no Canadian bank or major pension fund would partner with them in that acquisition.

What does the Royal Bank or the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan know that the Aspers don't?

CanWest has made a "bet the company" investment strategy. Unfortunately the poker chips are employees' jobs and the editorial independence of its newspapers.

Ironically, as the company sheds more and more people, Bocking said, it has made one new hire – a new executive with the title: Vice-president – People.