



# THE EAGLE



LOCAL 1103

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January 2010

## **Beware of Media Consolidation**



**Business Agent  
Mark Crumm,  
Secretary Treasurer  
Doug Sheahan,  
and Vice President  
Kevin Sheil  
fight for  
laid off Members**

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can meet any national crisis." But, just who is providing the people the truth? In America, there is a passionate debate raging regarding the consolidation of media companies, the control of markets, and the distribution of the content that media companies choose to provide to people. Many scholars believe that media concentration can, and does influence thoughts, ideas and beliefs. Therefore, it is important to examine some history of media deregulation, the effects media and consolidation has on society, and just as important, to point out whom or what is influencing the media.

In the United States of America, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was created in 1934. Established as an independent governmental agency, directly responsible to congress it is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, televi-

sion, wire, satellite and cable. The FCC is directed by five Commissioners appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for 5-year terms; only three Commissioners may be members of the same political party.

Some of the older, more salient rules enacted by the FCC were ostensibly geared toward maintaining and creating diversity in the industry for the public's benefit. For instance, in 1941, the FCC enacted the "Local Radio Ownership Rule," it prevented "broadcasters from owning television stations that reach more than 35% of the nation's homes." "In 1946, the Dual Television Network Rule prohibited a major network from buying another major network. In 1970, Radio/TV Cross Ownership Restriction was enacted, prohibiting a broadcaster from owning a radio station and a television station in the same market. In 1975, the Newspaper/Broadcast Cross Ownership Prohibition was enacted which banned ownership

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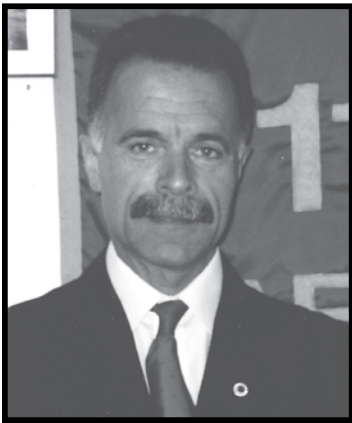
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# In My View . . .



As I stated in my opening remarks at the December General Membership Meeting we all need to be on the same page regarding our Mobilization Plan in our struggle to get our laid off members back and to stop future lay-offs.

The plan was formulated by Vice President Chris Shelton along with serious input from all the CWA District One Local Presidents and agreed to by the New Jersey and New England IBEW.

In order for the plan to work every Union Member must step up and do their part. A very important piece is the hand billing of Verizon Wireless Stores. Since mid November your Executive Board along with all the Boards statewide have been hand billing selected Verizon Stores every Saturday including Black Friday. As of this writing we are contemplating expanding this to include Friday evenings. You see you may be asking yourself why Verizon Wireless, the answer is simple, its because Wireless accounts for 68% of the Company's revenue and the last thing Ivan wants is to have us in front of his " Baby" informing our Customers how pitiful he is treating the Workers at Verizon. Your part in all of this is rather simple, pull at least 2 hours of duty a week which will have a huge impact on the outcome, if everyone gets involved.


Other parts of the Plan include us meeting with all Towns, Villages, and City Governments pointing out all the Unsafe Pole and Plant Conditions that the Company has refused to do. Another has us meeting with State Officials and the Public Service Commission on poor service by Verizon to our Customers, and lobbying in Albany on proposed Legislation that will make it virtually

impossible for Verizon to sell off parts of the Company. In addition our Retired Members have vowed to help me place Hazardous Condition Stickers on Unsafe Pole and Plant Conditions. While all of this is happening we are still urging our Chiefs to continue sending weekly O.T. Reports and any New Contracting Initiatives as we move towards the Arbitration Case regarding our Laid Off Members.

So if we all pitch in and do our part now in the end WE WILL WIN !!!!!

In Solidarity,

**Joseph A. Barca, Jr.  
President**



## THE EAGLE

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# CWA Local 1103's Executive Board nets over \$750,000.00 for Members

The executive board of CWA Local 1103 has been successful during the last year advocating on behalf of its members, and have won over \$750,000.00 in compensation, salary, and benefits for them through various grievance procedures or negotiations. This in the form of overturned terminations, wrongful suspensions, binding medical opinions, medical accommodation interventions, on the job injury awards and guidance, incidental absence payments, disability guidance, social security advice, and non-payment for hours worked.

Everyday, your local Executive Board confronts the injustices transpiring in the workplace as your Union leader, spokesperson, and advocate. While not 100% successful, your Executive Board wins

something everyday for its members. Not a day goes by, when your Local 1103 Executive Board doesn't win something for you. It can be something small, such as help for release from a work assignment, or a decrease in the number of work assignments during a holiday week. It can be writing letters of recommendation for our members to get into graduate school or to receive a loan. It can be an intervention with a supervisor to prevent a situation from escalating to violence. It can be to work out an alternative to working in an unsafe environment. It can be testifying in a court case on behalf of our members, or serving as a witness in an arbitration cases. It can be assuring that overtime policies are followed fairly. It can be assisting a

Member navigate through disability or FMLA challenges to insure benefit entitlement. It can be something big, such as successfully working with other Unions and politicians to fight against a state mandate to have our healthcare workers injected with vaccines. It can be bargaining a just contract with benefits and dignity that non-union employees do not receive. Or, it can be researching and presenting a grievance to overturn an unjust suspension or termination.

Everyday your Executive Board works and delivers results for you and your family. The \$750,000.00 proves again that it doesn't cost to be union, it pays to be union.

***Kevin Sheil***  
***Vice President***

## **Proposed Comcast-NBC Universal deal raises serious anti-trust concerns**

The proposed merger of Comcast and NBC Universal raises real anti-trust concerns. If approved by regulators, this deal would create a mega-media company, one with the market power to determine what programs get aired and how much consumers must pay to view programming in every media outlet: cable, television and especially the Internet. This mega-company would control one out of every five viewing hours in the United States.

This mega-merger clearly spotlights the dangers of media consolidation in the Internet Age.

Comcast is not only the nation's largest cable company, with 24 million customers, but it has 15 million Internet users and controls most must-have regional sports programming. If it takes on NBC Universal, it adds a major television network, 27 local televisions, cable channels including CNBC, MSNBC, Telemundo, Bravo, USA Network and more, plus Hulu, a growing stop especially for households under age 35.

This vertical integration of two very different companies - one controlling distribution and another controlling content - would give the merged company leverage over both in broadcast and network television and the market power to control pricing of content on the Internet. It clearly would threaten competition in the distribution of content and programming.

Comcast also has been cited for anti-democratic corporate governance processes. Comcast's chief executive officer has super-majority voting rights at the company, despite owning just 3 percent of stock. Comcast has been criticized by investor and public interest groups for refusing to implement the one share-one vote policy that nearly all major corporations use for shareholder decision making. If Comcast is permitted to take over NBC Universal, this same undemocratic structure could be transferred to the new mega-media company, giving one person control over the dominant source of cable, television, Internet and media programming.

Comcast also has a long history of violating workers' rights, firing workers who want union representation, refusing to bargain fairly for contracts, running aggressive campaigns to decertify unions and much more. Communications Workers of America represents about 2,000 Comcast workers and about 2,500 NBC-Universal broadcast technicians and other workers.

The Communications Workers of America urges careful and close review of this proposed merger.

Speedmatters Blog Team

Speed Matters is a project of the Communications Workers of America.

of both a newspaper and a television station in the same market" (Museum of Television and Radio 2004). The aforementioned dates just illustrate some relevant facts. Much has changed.

Landmark legislation signed into law by President Bill Clinton called The Telecommunications Act of 1996 is arguably the most controversial legislation related to the deregulation of media ownership. It has since spurred on a frenzy of consolidation within the industry. "The radio industry experiences unprecedented consolidation after the 40-station ownership cap is lifted. Clear Channel Communications owns 1200 stations, in all 50 states, reaching, according to their web site, more than 110 million listeners every week. Viacom's Infinity radio network holds more than 180 radio stations in 41 markets. Its holdings are concentrated in the 50 largest radio markets in the United States. In 1999 Infinity owned and operated six of the nations top ten radio stations" (Moyers 2004).

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 did not apply only to media companies, but also to phone companies, cable companies, internet and satellite. Companies such as Nynex became Bell Atlantic which then merged with GTE to become Verizon. The Telecommunications Act changed the rules that had prevented "Baby Bells" like Bell Atlantic and permitted them entry into the coveted long distance market. Conversely, rules that had denied long distance companies like AT&T from entering the local market, had transformed to encourage competition in those same local markets that had been off limits to them. They could now compete directly for those local customers. However, before "Baby Bells" would be able to enter into the profitable long distance market, they had to open up their networks to competitors, and comply with a stringent checklist established by the FCC. It was advertised that this would stimulate competition and lower consumer costs. The Telecommunications

Act's passage also became financially rewarding for many CEO's and corporate executives within the industry who profited by mega-mergers.

When discussing the effects of mass media consolidation and its control of people, some extol its ability to mentally organize our world for us. In short, mass media may not be successful in telling us what to think, but they are often successful in telling us what to think about. "Our evidence implies an American public with a limited memory for last month's news and a recurrent vulnerability to today's, when television news focuses on a problem, the public's priorities are altered, and altered again as television news moves on to something new" (Iyengar 1987).

"The principal reason people should care about the increasing concentration of the media has to do with inde-

pendent thinking, freedom of thought and ideas. The fewer the outlets for information, the less intellectual range for political, ideological and other thinking" (Lewis 2004). Media is a powerful medium, its influence far reaching. The power of the press in America is indeed a special one. "It sets the agenda of public discussion, and this sweeping

political power is unrestrained by any law. It determines what people will talk and think about- an authority that in other nations is reserved for tyrants, priests, parties and mandarins" ( White 1972).

It is not just local news, events or happenings which become compromised by mass media's homogenized content and consolidation; it has even breached and crossed over the thin line of public safety. On January 18, 2002 a train carrying hazardous materials at 1:30 a.m. in Minot, North Dakota, spilled 210,000 gallons of anhydrous ammonia, an incident federal regulator's called "catastrophic." Minot authorities say when they called with the warning about the toxic cloud; there was no one on the air who could



**1103 Executive Board Members including Business Agent Anthony Pugliese work to bring public attention to the layoffs**

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have made the announcement. Clear Channel communications owned six out of the seven commercial stations in Minot, which had moved local staff away from the area to address cost concerns. Senator Byron Nicholson (D-ND) cites Minot as an example of how media consolidation can negatively affect a local community.

Equal time for all citizens is another issue that has been raised and, depending on the outlet, only certain sides of the argument are presented. It would be offensive to conceive an example so insidious if it were not true. In the 1960s, the United Church of Christ earned its place in United States broadcasting history by successfully challenging the license of WLBT-TV in Jackson, Mississippi, for refusing to broadcast news and information about African Americans. There have been many unfortunate chapters in American broadcast history; this, an obvious example of another ill-fated chapter.

Business people can and do argue in favor of consolidation, and point to their “belief” that this could not possibly happen today. In fact, today there is an abundance of information not transmitted to news viewers depending on the media company’s ownership and their own political party affiliation. Some television stations even passed on the opportunity to honor American soldiers killed in military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ted Koppel, of *Nightline*, decided to honor the dead by reading their names and remind viewers that there is a cost to war not quantified by dollars only. The decision by Sinclair Broadcasting Group to pre-empt a broadcast of “*Nightline*” devoted to reciting the names of every military man and woman killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan ran into a wave of protest from viewers. One prominent veteran of the Vietnam War, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) said “Your decision to deny your viewers an opportunity to be reminded of war’s terrible costs, in all their heartbreaking detail, is a gross disservice to the public, and to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, it is, in short, sir, unpatriotic. I hope it meets with the public opprobrium it most certainly deserves.”

Even today, when you watch Faux News, they can say they’re fair and balanced, or that they’re news, but it doesn’t mean it’s true. The recent healthcare debate presented by that cable channel is a perfect example of one-sided propaganda. It’s one thing if the Republican Party or the Democratic Party engages in propaganda, that’s politics, but it is far more dangerous when a popular news media outlet that claims to be credible and independent becomes an appendage of any particular political party or

their financial backers. The non-stop barrage of snickering, ridicule, and jeering does impact the debate, and so do the daily doses of pretension and pomposity. The same insults presented today by the talking heads of Faux News will be offered tomorrow as it relates to the Employee Free Choice Act. They will mockingly disapprove, and belittle the working class and unions in general. They will offer daily doses of “evidence” of greedy GM workers who “caused” the American car market to plummet. They will argue against the Obama proposal to allow federal TSA workers to unionize, saying that it’s too dangerous to allow union workers to have such a responsibility for our safety. Shamefully, forgetting September 11, 2001. On 9-11, in New York City, every paid emergency responder that responded to the tragedy of 9-11 was a Union Member. Every Policeman, every Fireman, every 911 Dispatcher, every EMS worker, every Nurse, every one of them was Union!

Too much power has shifted to the mass media corporations that have consolidated. Last month, Comcast bought out General Electric and now—awaiting federal approval—will possibly run NBC. These corporations can produce content and have the means to deliver that information over the infrastructure they own, literally having unimpeded access into the homes of consumers. “Media corporations already enjoy a disproportionate amount of political power, for not only do they attempt to influence the public process like everyone else—with campaign contributions, free trips, lobbying- they actually control whether or not a politician’s face or voice is on the airwaves. Now that is real power” (Lewis, 2004). Research supports that mass media can alter opinions, so there ought to be equal concern that control of the pipeline and delivery of content is worthy of regulation and proper oversight. It just makes sense.

Mass media’s march toward deregulation continues because it is tethered to power and money. It is obvious that this relationship threatens our country and the average American citizen. It is the reason we must be aware of media mega-mergers, expose the lies and innuendos by the corporations with a sinister agenda, and oppose any and all efforts by multi-media companies to consolidate further. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, if people are given the truth they will respond accordingly. But, will they have the chance?

*Kevin Sheil,  
Vice President*



## The Retiree's Corner..

Happy New Year Retirees,

I hope that your holidays were everything that you wanted them to be. Here's to a safe and healthy new year!

Speaking of health, at the time of this writing, Congress has not passed a Health Care Bill. It is important to us as retirees that we keep abreast of what our representatives are supporting in this venue. Please keep in touch with the Local's tape and your e-mail. It is critical that we respond immediately when we are summoned to contact any member of Congress. We have fought too hard and sacrificed too much to lose our benefits. We need to keep those cards, telephone calls and e-mails going.

On December 8th, 2009, we held our Annual Christmas Luncheon at the wonderful Buon Amici Restaurant in White Plains, New York. We really had a great time. It was so good to see some "old" faces again. This is your luncheon. Make plans to join us next year. You won't want to miss it! Our Retired Members Chapter (RMC) is very fortunate to have so many sponsored service providers. Their donations provided the door prizes for our event. Our host also donated a gift certificate for two for lunch at the restaurant. How lucky was that winner! They get to come back for another fantastic meal. Our sponsors for this event were Fine, Olin and Anderman, LLP, Legal Advisors; Debbie and Brian from 10-15 Associates, Financial Consultants; Fenton Soliz and Ken Breen from Wells Fargo Mortgage Consultants; Progressive Foot Care and the Buon Amici Restaurant. Thank You to all of our sponsors.

In reflection, I want to take this time to express my deep appreciation to Joseph Barca, Jr., Kevin Sheil, Doug Sheahan and the entire Executive Board of CWA Local 1103. They attended our event and have been the primary supporter for our RMC. I also want to thank Patrick Welsh, President of District One CWA National Retired Members Council for his support and wisdom during this past year. Hats off to our fine CWA Local 1103 RMC officers: Vice-President, Any Pecunia, Treasurer, Ed

Christensen and Secretary Phyllis Cole-Hollis. I am proud to be on the team with them. All of our retired members are well served by these officers. A very special thank you to Steve Carney, Judy Duncker, Carol Finley, Cathy Maurelli, and Tony Massini for all they have done for our chapter this past year.

Finally, MEMBERSHIP DUES for 2010 are overdue if you have not sent it in yet. Remember, it is ONLY \$20 per year or \$55 for three years. Associates pay only \$10. Also, the LOTTERY began January 1st. Please contact Ed to order yours.

Dues should be mailed to Ed Christensen at 27 Friendship Lane, Milan, NY 12571. Checks should be made payable to "CWA 1103 RMC".

We want to keep in contact with you. Any address changes and/or other updates such as e-mail address can be referred to our secretary, Phyllis Cole-Hollis at cole-hollis@cwa1103.org. Any questions concerning membership dues or lottery can be referred to our treasurer, Ed Christensen at Christensen@cwa1103.org.

*In Solidarity,*

*Jeanette Spoor, President*

*CWA 1103 RMC - jspoor@cwa1103.org*

*Dear Everyone,*

*I cannot believe it has been two years since my retirement. My big news is that I got my new kidney on October 21st, 2009. I want to thank everyone for all their prayers and good wishes. I am happy and healthy living in Tennessee.*

*Everyone please think about organ donation, and let your family know your wishes. Out of one family's great loss and grief they gave me a new beginning and a gift that words cannot thank them enough for.*

*I receive excellent health care and everyday I thank God for my benefits and my union. I never worry about coverage or bills. It makes dealing with a major illness much easier. When you are young and healthy you don't think about these things.*

*So support you union and work hard and it will pay off down the road.*

*My best regards,  
Robert A. Federoff*



1103 Retiree's  
Annual Christmas  
Party



Retirees Eddie Maher and Lou Dimico share an old story and a laugh



Members of the Local 1103 Executive Board including President Joey Barca, Business Agents Kevin Scrobola, Mark Crumm, and Joe Mayhew pay tribute to our retirees and attend their annual Christmas Party



Everyone enjoying themselves while catching up and sharing holiday wishes



President Jeanette Spoor and Executive Board enjoy the party with friends

**Have a Drug,  
Alcohol or  
Gambling Problem ?**

**Call  
Headquarters  
939-8203 or 8204**

**Ask to be put in  
contact with  
Tom O'Halloran**



**All Information  
is Confidential**



**COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA - LOCAL 1103**

(AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.-C.L.C.)

345 WESTCHESTER AVENUE • PORT CHESTER, NY 10573



PERIODICAL

### **Tom O'Halloran: A Truthful and True Friend**

The Members of CWA Local 1103 are truly lucky. Lucky to have Tom O'Halloran in their corner! The Local 1103 Executive Board interviewed Tom about 6 years ago to be our drug and alcohol counselor, and decided then that Tom was the most qualified Member and peer who would be able to relate to and assist others. Tom was named Local 1103's counselor. It was a decision that is validated everyday. Tom is now accredited in certain types of counseling through training and schools, but it's his no non-sense style and credibility that impresses the most. Tom is there for our Members!

Recently, I had the privilege of working directly with Tom during an occasion to assist one of our Members. It was there that I witnessed what I already knew. I saw his skill, dedication, toughness, compassion, benevolence, and humanity first-hand. These virtues are important pieces which frame Tom's character. It is these attributes that allow him to be the valuable commodity he is to our local and its Members. Tom is a person who believes that this isn't the way it's supposed to be- that things should and can be different for our Member's and their families that need help. He is not afraid to face down challenges in pursuit of helping someone overcome their own.

On behalf of CWA Local 1103's Executive Board and Membership, thank you Tom for all that you do for us, each and every day. We are proud of you!

***Kevin Sheil  
Vice President***