

public affairs



THERE'S NEAR-NORMAL activity in the Detroit News city room. State Editor Burt Stoddard is in the foreground; Jack Crellin is in the rear. (All photos by David M. Shutt.)



AT THE FREE PRESS, only a teletype breaks the dull silence. Newsroom employees, unionized here, were 'locked out' along with craftsmen when the strike began Nov. 17, 1967.

Silence At The Free Press, And Staleness At The News

EDITOR'S NOTE: How is the Detroit newspaper strike, now more than 200 days old, affecting the people who work for the News and the Free Press? Three University of Michigan students — Shirley Hatchett, David Shutt and Constance Tegge — decided to find out here is their report.

The hardwood floors of the composing room at the Detroit Free Press shine with a newly varnished finish. The room stands immaculately clean and freshly painted as if it awaits monetary inspection. The machinery has been completely rewired for action but maintains its silence. Down a short hall in the city room, the normal clamor of activity is reduced to the clatter of a lone operating wire service machine which buzzes and then pauses, plunging the newsroom into an even greater stillness.

IN SHARP contrast, a few blocks away at the Detroit News, the city room is humming with near normal operation. Here, a nearly full complement of editorial employees continues its work on a four-day week during the now seven-month strike. The Free Press, which closed down a few days after the News in compliance with a publishers' agreement, "locked out" its employees, retaining only some of the department heads.

As of this writing, the Teamsters Union has accepted new contracts with the two papers. Thirteen other unions involved in the strike are presently negotiating their own contracts. While negotiations continue, reporters at the News and Free Press find themselves at the mercy of their publishers' strike policies.

Nancy Gregorik, assistant religion writer for the News, put it this way. "We don't have a lever either on management or on the unions. We can't do anything to bring this strike to an end."

DURING THE STRIKE an estimated one-half of the Free Press editorial staff worked on the now defunct interim newspaper, the Daily Express and the Daily Press. Since these papers closed down in December and January, the reporters are again out of work and forced to look for new jobs.

To the News' reporters, the strike presents problems, less obvious than the financial dilemma faced by the Free Press writers. At the News, reporters are worried about a general decline in morale and, as one reporter said, "getting stale." City Editor Jack Crellin admitted, "The staleness is there. Without the pressure of a deadline, the reporters lack incentive. What would normally take four or five hours to write is now dragged out to four or five days."

The writers are mainly occupied with what Crellin called "timeless features," some of which will be used when the paper resumes publication. The newsmen assigned to the court, city-county building and police beats are going through a continuous "dry run," covering the news as usual and writing it.

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT reporter John Peterson said, "The younger reporters don't remember the last strike; therefore, they're working harder than the veterans, not remembering that their stories will probably never see the light of day." However, he admitted that his "day begins at 9 a.m. and ends shortly thereafter." He commented that the stories he writes are mainly "features without much meat in them."

For example, he said, "I did a story about the keeper of the Detroit Zoo's ape house who claims that gorillas have been crucified by Hollywood."

VETERAN BUSINESS writer John Gill has worked through 10 months of strikes at the News, including the ones in 1955 and 1964. He claims, therefore, that it wouldn't take him long to get back in shape. Gill, who usually creates his own news ideas, said he finds it hard to get information from outside sources during the strike.

"When I call people up and tell them who I am and where I'm from, they laugh, tell me it's none of my business, and hang up," he said. "I get up in the morning and think, 'Oh Lord, what am I going to do with myself all day. I hope somebody will call up and ask a question.'"

Nancy Gregorik agreed. "You really find out who your friends are. Some people don't even bother to return phone calls." Miss Gregorik commented on the "terrible snail" that builds up during a strike. "Talk to a psychologist about what this does to your morale. There's something involved when you're not producing...you feel guilty about getting a paycheck," she said.

Vincent Klock, Free Press news editor, noted the disadvantages of his paper's strike policy. He said that since the beats are not being covered by Free Press staff members and the library not kept up, "the News will be in better shape after the strike." Klock said, however, that when the strike ends, the Free Press could begin publishing right away.



VINCENT KLOCK, news editor of the Free Press, figures the competition News "will be in better shape" when the strike ends.



NANCY GREGORIK, the News' assistant religion writer, suggests: "You ought to talk to a psychologist about what this does to morale."

3 Area Cities Can Retain Muni Courts

City councils in Livonia, Garden City and Westland will have a week after Gov. Romney signs a district court reform bill to decide whether they want to keep their municipal courts. The law allows districts that are entirely composed of one city to vote, through city council action, to keep their existing courts.

Redford Township, which will form one judicial district, will be unable to exempt itself, however, because it has a justice of the peace court, which is abolished by the new court reform and the 1963 constitution.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE between the municipal courts and the new district courts? State Rep. Richard A. Young, D-Deerborn Heights, provided an outline explanation. Young, whose district includes parts of Westland and Livonia, was a member of the Senate-House conference committee which worked out the final court plan.

Young cited these differences:

• The district judge will have jurisdiction up to \$3,000 in civil suits, whereas municipal courts are limited to up to \$1,500.

• District courts will have full-time judges whereas many municipal judges are part-timers.

• District judges will have their \$18,000 salaries paid by the state, with the district allowed to supplement it. Municipal judges' salaries, which come to about \$11,000, according to Young, would continue to come from city treasuries.

• Hearings before the district courts are a matter of record; appeals from the judge's decision must be based on the record. Municipal court hearings are not a matter of record, and appeals necessitate a complete new trial at the circuit court level.

THE DISTRICT COURT reform was brought about by the 1963 state constitution, which called for the abolition of JP courts within five years (by the end of 1968).

The State Senate gave its final approval late Thursday. Gov. Romney is expected to sign it some time this week.

For other Observerland municipalities, there is no option. They will become parts of new court districts.

Farmington city and township will form a district of their own, with the full-time judge replacing the present four part-time municipal judges and justices.

Redford will see its JP court upgraded, in effect, to a district court.

Plymouth city and township, Northville city and township and Canton Township will form a single court district with one judge.

County Deadline Extended

Candidates for the newly reorganized county boards and supervisors will have until July 2 to file their nominating petitions.

The Legislature moved the date back from the earlier date of June 18. The change was made because of the suddenness of court decisions requiring the election of new county boards. It will also give potential candidates a little more time to make up their minds about running.

Elections will be partisan. Candidates will be nominated in the Aug. 6 primary and elected at the Nov. 5 general election.

A decision last week by Atty. Gen. Frank Kelley requires members of the new boards in 1969 to give up their city or township posts.

19th Congressional District

McDonald Seeks 2nd Term

Congressman Jack McDonald (R-Mich.) announced today he will seek reelection to the 19th District.

McDonald said "much must be done in the years immediately ahead if we are to ward off disaster at home and abroad. I will do all I can to aid this effort."

McDONALD NOTED that his background in urban affairs as Supervisor of Redford Township and chairman of the board of supervisors of Wayne County had led to his appointment to a special Republican Task Force on Urban Affairs.

He has also been named co-chairman of the Task Force's subcommittee to investigate riot prevention and control.

As a member of the House Public Works Committee, he has been deeply involved in legislation that would require tightening of safety measures in construction of federal-aid highways. His bill, H.R. 11619, would provide new safeguards that would lead to material reductions in fatalities occurring when cars strike objects



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