

Corgan contemplates future

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Smashing Pumpkins leader Billy Corgan says his future will be a blank after the band plays its final two concerts in Chicago this week.

"I haven't been this unstable in seven, eight years," he told the Chicago Tribune in Sunday's editions.

"The band coming to an end is a very stressful idea to me. I know it's the right thing, but I'm wondering what it means."

The band is calling it quits 13 years after mak-

ing its debut in a Chicago bar.

Corgan said he will take at least a year off to "create a little bit of space between me and what people think of me."

"I want to be sure if I play music again that I'm really confident about what I'm doing," he said.

The sold-out final shows Wednesday and Saturday are among the hottest tickets on the Internet; one posting on the band's fan-club site sought as much as \$1,000 a ticket.

The group's half-dozen albums have sold more than 22 million copies worldwide.

News union seeks injunction

■ The group claims Seattle

Times is threatening to fire striking employees.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — The Northwest Pacific Newspaper Guild on Monday asked for a federal injunction to prevent Seattle Times managers from allegedly telling striking employees they could lose their jobs if they don't come back to work.

The request, filed through the National Labor Relations Board, accuses The Times of telephoning striking workers at home and telling them they could lose their jobs to replacement workers unless they return to work. Such tactics could prolong the strike, the Guild said.

The strike by news, advertising and circulation workers at The Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer entered its seventh day Monday with no negotiations scheduled. No request for an injunction was filed against the Post-Intelligencer.

"It's time for the company to stop its dirty tricks, take down the fences and get back to the bargaining table," said Bruce Meachum, the Guild's chief negotiator.

"They're 1930s tactics in 2000 Seattle and they're just unacceptable."

Just before the strike began last Tuesday, The Times erected 8-foot chain-link fences around its properties and brought in extra security personnel.

Times President H. Mason Sizemore said Monday the accusations were probably caused by misunderstandings that occurred when The Times called striking workers last week. The Times was simply trying to inform workers of what they needed to do if they wanted to

come back to work, Sizemore said.

"Those telephone calls were not intended to intimidate anyone," he said. "We never told people that their jobs would not be available at the end of the strike."

The Times and P-I are owned by different companies and have competing newsrooms, but publish together under a joint operating agreement with advertising and circulation handled by The Times. They negotiate together with the Guild, though each paper has slightly different contracts.

Federal mediator Jeff Clark said Sunday that he plans to meet separately with both sides this week, and then decide whether to try to bring them back to the bargaining table.

Both papers have been publishing smaller editions with free distribution since the strike began. The Guild, which represents about 1,000 employees at the papers, has been publishing its own strike newspaper, the Seattle Union Record.

On Sunday, The Times asked for more police outside a Bothell printing plant, after complaining that pickets were delaying vehicles leaving the parking lot for up to two minutes each.

Bothell police said they stepped up their presence outside the plant to try to keep things calm. The union that represents press operators at the plant voted last week not to join the strike.

"There have been some pretty testy exchanges, and the frustration is building among people inside and outside," Sizemore said.

Sizemore said Sunday that no decision had been made on hiring replacements for staff reporters and photographers who walked out along with advertising, marketing and cir-

ulation personnel.

Times Executive Editor Michael R. Fancher, in a column published Sunday, likened the strike to a death in the family.

"Many staffers who left said this isn't personal," Fancher wrote. "But how can it not be? It's personal on all sides and hurtful to everyone."

Fancher's column also expressed little optimism about the strike's ending.

"I don't see any outcome of this situation that is good for journalism," he wrote.

"Anyone who thinks it will end quickly is likely to be disappointed."

Strikers were preparing Monday to publish the second print edition of the Seattle Union Record, using a new printer. The suburban Eastside Journal, which printed the first edition on Friday, decided not to continue after officials learned it was a strike paper.

The newspapers' final offers — the contracts are similar but not identical — included an hourly raise of \$3.30 over six years. The union wanted a three-year contract with \$3.25 in raises, plus matching 401(k) contributions and other improvements.

Under current agreements, minimum pay for a reporter with six years' experience is \$844.88 per week, or \$21.12 per hour.

Guild official Larry Hatfield said the strike was called primarily on behalf of non-newsroom employees who make up a majority of Guild membership.

Minimum pay for a customer-service representative is \$421 a week, he said, and top scale for a newspaper librarian is about \$636.

The Times has not been struck since a months-long walkout in 1953. The P-I's last strike was in 1936, the year the newsroom unionized.

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Liberal Party wins in Canada

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OTTAWA — Prime Minister Jean Chretien's gamble for a place in Canadian history paid off Monday as his Liberal Party appeared to have won a third straight majority in nationwide elections, according to Canadian news organizations.

The Liberals won or had solid leads in more than 160 of the races for the 301 seats in the House of Commons, more than enough seats to guarantee them a majority, according to projections by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. and the news agency Canadian Press.

The news organizations said they based their projections on official results coming across the country of 30 million people.

The results were clearest in the more heavily populated eastern Canada. Returns were still being counted in much of central and western Canada.

The result appeared to reflect that Canadians were enjoying an economic boom and looked forward to Liberal promises of \$67 billion tax cuts over five years. It also appeared that Canadians were willing to forgive Chretien, 66, for calling the election just 3 1/2 years into his second five-year term.

Monday's apparent outcome was similar to the previous vote in 1997, when the Liberals won 155 of the 301 House of Commons seats. The majority victory means Chretien will be the longest-serving leader of the world's industrial powers when President Clinton steps down in January.

It would also secure his legacy as one of only three Liberal leaders able to deliver three straight majority victories, something that even Pierre Trudeau was unable to do.

Trudeau's death in September, and the subsequent emotional outpouring that boosted Liberal support, contributed to Chretien's decision to take a chance with an early vote that could evoke a backlash from voters.

He also wanted to prevent the newly formed Canadian Alliance from gaining momentum in its efforts to consolidate conservative support, and needed to fend off moves within his own Liberal Party to make him step aside.

Failure to win a majority would likely have forced out Chretien as party leader in favor of their apparent Paul Martin, the finance minister who has much greater personal popularity.

Regardless of the outcome, no change was expected in Canada-U.S. relations.

The two countries form the world's largest two-way trade partnership, with Canada's economic growth in recent years dependent on a similar boom south of the border in the dominant U.S. economy.

Voting ran smoothly in most areas, though problems with voters lists occurred at some polling stations. In Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, election officer Bill Claire said some lists were missing entire streets or buildings.

"Whole groups of people are simply not on the list — people who have lived in Halifax and Dartmouth for 40 years and have voted in five elections," Claire said.

"Why it ended up in such a mess, I don't know." Elections Canada spokesman Hal Doran noted people left off voters lists could register at polling stations. He said the problems were about the same as other federal elections.

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