

# CONVENTION 2001

## THE ONTARIO SCENARIO



Cartoonists at the Magnotta Winery on Thursday, June 28

### AAEC & ACEC Get Together in Toronto for Speakers, Sightseeing & Shop-Talk

by DAVE ASTOR

**D**ozens of creators temporarily left their jobs to attend the AAEC convention in Toronto, where they heard about a rash of job cuts that in some cases may be permanent.

Approximately a half-dozen of the 150 or so editorial cartoonists in the United States have lost their posts during the past few weeks. [See pages 10-11]

"Never before has our profession been so threatened," said AAEC President David Horsey of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

While the scope of recent job reductions is unusual, the number of full-time positions has shrunk for years as more papers use syndicated rather than local cartoons to save money and/or to avoid stirring controversy with some readers, advertisers, and politicians.

Dick Locher — speaking on a convention panel about "navigating the climax of your career" — said cartoonists trying to keep their jobs should strive to have a good relationship with their editors, offer to do extra work (such as illustrating letters to the editor), and attempt to get syndicated. *The Chicago Tribune/TMS* creator noted that an editor "might be reluctant to can you" if the paper's name is seen around the nation.

But a couple of audience members said cartoonists can lose their jobs no matter what they do. Indeed, several recently dropped cartoonists, including Steve Kelley of the *San Diego Union Tribune* and Bill Schorr of the *New York Daily News*, were syndicated. Copley News Service let Kelley go, but United Feature Syndicate is still distributing Schorr.

Locher's co-panelists were

meeting host Andy Donato and Hy Rosen — two other cartoonists who've also fared better than many of their peers. Donato accepted a buyout from *The Toronto Sun* seven years ago, but still does cartoons for the paper as a contract free-lancer. Rosen retired from the Albany, N.Y., *Times Union*, but continues to draw cartoons for it while also painting and sculpting. He said the "name recognition" he built at the paper has helped him get commissions to do statues.

#### Ralph Nader On the Media and Cartoons

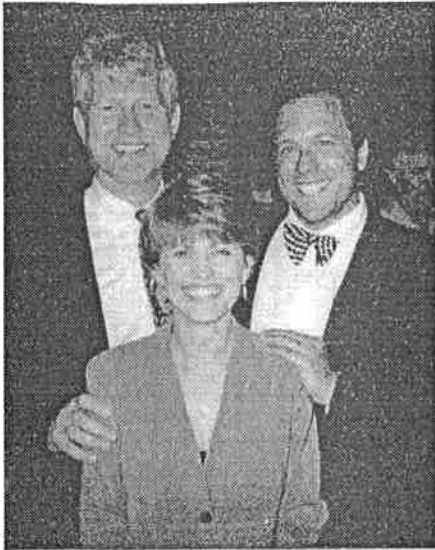
Someone with lots of name recognition is Ralph Nader, who talked to AAECers about media coverage of his recent Green Party presidential campaign. He noted that he's been blamed for swinging the election to George W. Bush, but said Al Gore has himself to blame. Nader mentioned, among other things, that Gore lost his home state of Tennessee and performed poorly in the televised presidential debates.

Speaking of the debates, Nader said third-party candidates have little chance to reach "tens of millions" of voters if they're not allowed to participate.

He added that the Democratic and Republican parties aren't far apart: "Their similarities tower over the differences they're willing to fight over. They've become one corporate party with two heads wearing different makeup."

Nader also said he'd like to see more cartoons about globalization. "I know how difficult they must be to draw," he said. "But I hope you find a way to visualize it for people. If an issue is important, it can be conveyed and made interesting by the media."

The consumer advocate said globalization needs to be addressed because it harms average citizens — noting that multinational corpo-



**Officers and, perhaps, gentlemen: President David Horsey, president-elect Scott Stantis and V.P. Ann Telnaes at the Saturday banquet; Mark Fiore, Ted Rall, Mike Ritter and J.P. Trostle enjoying an Ontario heat wave**

rations can ride roughshod over a country's environmental and safety regulations, and eliminate well-paying jobs in one country and hire low-wage workers in another. He added that "supra-governmental" bodies such as the World Trade Organization meet in secret, with no press allowed.

The speaker said few journalists or members of Congress bother to peruse the full text of trade agreements, which include "anti-

democratic" clauses. "The press reads summaries and memos," Nader observed.

#### Conversation About Globalization

Before Nader spoke, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Evelyn Iritani moderated a globalization session that "will help us in our cartoons in the days to come," said Horsey.

One panelist, former Canadian Finance Minister Mike Wilson, supports free trade between his country and the United States. "This has been very good for Canada," he said, noting, for instance, that Canada's exports to the States are growing slightly faster than imports from its neighbor.

But Ed Broadbent, former leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, said he's troubled by various aspects of globalization — including a rise in foreign takeovers of Canadian firms and a clause in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that allows multinational corporations to sue governments. "I want [the private sector] to be the servant of society, not the master of society," he said.

Wilson countered that this clause is necessary to protect corporate investment that brings "technological know-how" and jobs to countries. But Deborah Bourque, national vice president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers,

said many of these jobs are low-paying and temporary.

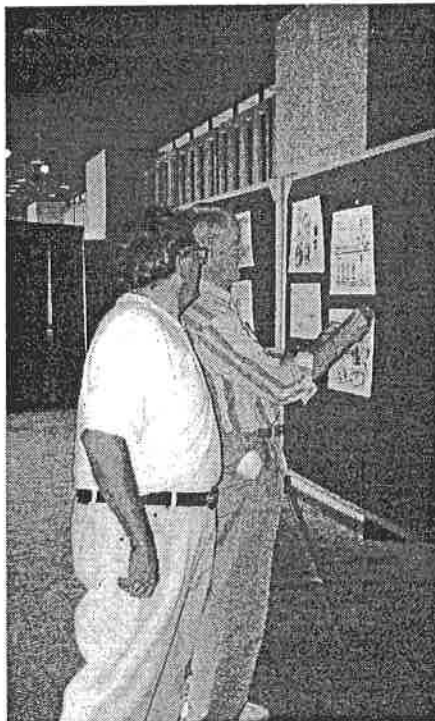
#### Anti-Smoking Advocate

In another session, Alan Blum said there have been many anti-smoking cartoons during the past decade as public disgust with tobacco has grown. The director of the University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society showed examples from his collection of 1,250 such cartoons — including one, by Rex Babin of *The Sacramento Bee*, picturing Washington's Capitol Building as a big cigarette lighter.

Blum said ridicule is an important weapon in the fight against smoking. "These guys [the tobacco industry] need to be laughed at," he commented.

#### Hearing From "Hardball"

AAECers also heard from Chris Matthews, the *San Francisco Chronicle*/Newspaper Enterprise Association columnist who hosts MSNBC's *Hardball* show. He said Bush doesn't speak enough to the media and Americans in general, and that it's good for talk-show hosts to have a writing background because it gives them "discipline" and the ability to "think things through. ... I don't think you should be allowed on television unless you can write."



**Host Andy Donato with Dick Locher at the cartoon exhibit**