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BNA Correspondents Report 19% Pay Hikes In Four-Year Deal

Guild members in the Bureau of National Affairs Correspondents unit overwhelmingly approved a new contract that provides raises totaling more than 19 percent over four years. In balloting in early August, the vote was 15-4; the contract is retroactive to July 15 and runs to July 14, 2010.

Raises in the first three years range from 4 percent to 6.4 percent. In the last year of the contract, raises range from 4.2 percent to 6.4 percent. The higher raises go to employees on the lower end of the salary scale.

The deal also provides for a near doubling of the home-office allowance: It went from \$115 a month to \$175 a month on Aug. 1, and will rise to \$200 a month in 2009. In addition, the new contract gives the correspondents a representative on the headquarters sabbatical committee and includes the correspondents in the Guild-operated sick leave bank at the BNA home office.

The contract covers 27 employees scattered around the country. They report on state regulations and legislation affecting labor, medical, insurance, and environmental issues.

Unit Chair Andrew Ballard and Vice Chair Steve Burkholder, along with Local Representative Paul Reilly, bargained the new agreement.

Jobs With Justice Unit Wins First Guild Contract

A first contract was recently achieved at the Jobs with Justice unit, the Guild's newest unit. The contract covers 10 people.

The contract provides for across the board increases of 1.5 percent effective August 6, 3 percent January 1, 2007, and 3 percent January 1, 2008.

In addition, three employees had their jobs revalued and received raises well in excess of 1.5 percent. The contract also contains a hard-fought successor clause that will keep the collective bargaining agreement intact in the event the organization merges with another.

The unit also won jurisdiction over an employee based in India. In addition to receiving a substantial raise, she will get health insurance, retirement benefits, vacation, sick leave and all business expenses paid. The JwJ employee has been working on projects involving American companies, and JwJ had been treating her as a consultant, providing her with virtually no benefits..

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild organized the JwJ unit earlier this year. Bargaining began in July. The bargaining team consisted of Washington employees Allison Fletcher Acosta (unit chair) and Scarlet Jimenez (vice chair), and Laura McSpedon, who works in New York. Guild representatives Paul Reilly and Cet Parks led the talks.

The agreement runs from Aug. 7, 2006, to Dec. 31, 2008.

Founded in 1987, Jobs with Justice coordinates a workers'-rights effort in more than three dozen U.S. cities, connecting "labor, faith-based, community, and student organizations to work together on workplace and community social justice campaigns."

CARD CHECK The Guild is holding numerous 2006-09 membership cards for which address information was incomplete or incorrect during the first mailing. Members wondering about their new TNG-CWA cards should call 202-785-3650.

AFL-CIO Unit Heads Into Negotiations

With formal negotiations beginning Sept. 6 on a successor to an 18-month contract, the Guild unit at the AFL-CIO was digging in for what appears to be an interesting round of collective bargaining sessions.

There are three major themes to the unit's proposals, ratified in July. With the possibility of more "de-funding" and layoffs, the Guild members seek: additional job security protections; parity for part-time, "fund," and temporary employees ("PFTs"), who currently have lower levels of healthcare benefits than full-time employees and other working conditions that are inequitable; and a wage package that makes up for the concessions in the last contract.

Last year's layoffs have left the size of the bargaining unit – which for years had more than 200 Guild members – to 139. Many of the 53 employees hired since the last round of negotiations are working as "PFTs."

Unit employees are concerned about uncertainties at the federation and the potential for further cutbacks. Last year, the Teamsters, SEIU, and UFCW pulled out of the AFL-CIO; more recently the Laborers also left the fold.

The current contract expires Sept. 30.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

WBNG Membership Meeting:

Saturday, Sept. 9, 10 a.m.

Washington Guild Office

1100 15th St. NW, Ste. 350

Agenda includes discussion of the local's strategic plan.

For further information:

202-785-3650

WBNG Secretary Elected To Human Rights Panel

Sheila Lindsay (American Nurses Association unit), the Washington-Baltimore Guild's secretary since mid-2004, was elected by acclamation to a seat on The Newspaper Guild's new rank-and-file Human Rights and Equity Committee, where she serves as chair of the communications subcommittee.

G U I L D f o r u m

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Address Correction Requested