

G U I L D forum



Local 32035

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild

January 22, 2004

Probe of Union's Strengths, Weaknesses, Continues at February 7 Guild Membership Meeting

Sector, Convention Delegate Nominations Also Open

The Guild's February membership meeting will take care of union business, including the nomination of delegates to the 2004 conventions of our labor parents, TNG and CWA; we'll also will take a critical look at the Guild's long term plans for strengthening workers' rights in the belly of 21st century corporate media beasts. If it feels like the same old subject, it is. Guild leadership and unit members will continue to explore development of the union's industry message, bargaining and organizing strategies, corporate campaigns, and every other imaginable option for holding our own and turning the tide with aggressive media giants.

February's meeting will include a report on TNG's January Strategic Planning Conference—where a constructive self critical view of TNG and its locals will undoubtedly reveal real strengths as well as weaknesses. One only has to look at union membership in the newspaper industry (and most others, for that matter) to realize we need to do some real soul searching if we're going to turn the tide, and in some units even hold steady. Your ideas do matter. Come join your union brothers and sisters for a couple hours critical thinking on one of the most important parts of our lives—the workplace.

Nominations Open for TNG Sector Conference, CWA Convention Delegates

Nominations are open for WBNG delegates to the 2004 TNG Sector Conference and the CWA convention. The TNG Sector Conference is August 26, 27, and 28, and the CWA convention is August 29, 30, and 31, both in beautiful Anaheim, California.

By Executive Council action, the Guild will send four delegates to the TNG Sector Conference. The two top vote getters will also represent the Guild at the CWA convention.

You may submit names for nomination in person or through another attendee at the February 7, 2004 membership meeting. Guild members will be informed of the election schedule following the close of nominations.

Guild Membership Meeting

February 7, 2004

10:00 a.m-Noon

1100 15th St., NW

Suite 350

Washington, DC

Agenda:

Nominations for delegates to TNG Sector Conference and CWA Convention

Report and Discussion: TNG's Strategic Planning

Refreshments Provided!

Scholarship Deadlines for 2004

- **Heywood Broun Award - Jan. 30.**
- **David Barr Award - Jan. 30.**
- **Union Plus Scholarships - Jan. 31.**
- **CWA Joe Beirne Foundation 2004-2005 Scholarships - March 31.**
- **Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism - May 31.**

For detailed information and applications, see www.wbng.org.

WANTED: UNION MESSAGE

Ever hear of "AFLAC"? Chances are you have--it's the quirky national insurance company that embedded its name in your head through those catchy duck commercials. Makes you wonder how it is that more people know what AFLAC is than what a union is! It's all in the message, right?

WBNG is looking for your ideas for a union message for the newspaper industry--one that helps folks think union when they hear it--and link union to a better life. Short, to the point, catchy.

Send your ideas by February 29 to local32035@wbng.org. Put "union message" in the subject line, and be sure to tell us who you are and how to reach you. We'll print all entries, and ask Guild members which they like best, and award the winner something special!

WBNG Members Support California

Strikers

In a tangible demonstration of worker solidarity, WBNG Guild members reached into their pockets during the holiday season and contributed nearly \$3,000 to UFCW strikers in California. Over 70,000 grocery store workers remain on strike against their corporate owners, Safeway/Vons, Krogers, and Albertsons. The biggest sticking point remains a major shift in health care costs to workers—the owners want reduce funding to the union health plan so drastically that by the end of the contract a newly hired worker will receive \$6,000 less in employer paid health benefits than current employees. Shortly thereafter, with just normal turnover, all workers covered by the contract will effectively have been stripped of meaningful health benefits. This approach, in which the employer tries to get the union to “eat its young” guts affordable benefits within just a single contract term.

“Cooperative collective bargaining between employers and unionized employees...has been the largest and most successful anti-poverty program in postwar America. It has enabled tens of millions of workers to earn decent wages and health benefits, to send their children to college, and to retire with dignity”, wrote John Logan, an industrial relations professor at the London School of Economics, in a commentary on the strike in the Charleston-Gazette (WVA) on November 14. The strike has received wide-spread attention as workers fight off the “Wal-Martization” of America.

Collective bargaining is under shock-and-awe attack in the United States, as employers aggressively pursue union-free environments in which to slash labor costs, in part by reducing health care and pension benefits in the interests of profits. In 2002, Krogers posted \$1.2 billion in profits.

US labor law permits employers to bring in permanent replacements when workers strike over wages and benefits, making the United States one of the few democratic countries to allow this aggressively anti-worker tactic. As workers’ —regardless of their industry—lose their collective bargaining power, all working Americans will lose economic power, vaporizing the very gains that created the middle class, so corporations can rake in mega-profits.

The strike continues. For more information, go to UFCW.org, and continue to show your support—don’t shop at Safeway. Area Giants, Shoppers Food Warehouse, and Magruders are all union shops unaffected by the strike.

THANK-YOU, GUILD MEMBERS!

Thank-you to our members for their contributions to the UFCW Strike Hardship Fund: Tom Edmondson, Bill Salganik, Carole Steele, Marjorie Friedman, Mark Pattison, Darlene Meyer, Doug Meyer, Steven Hendrickson, Joey Hipolito, Maria Antonelli, Ellen McKinney, Amri Joyner, Brian O’Konski, Yvonne Syphax, Jack Weberski, Ellen Newton, Barbara Gilbert-Chen, Lori Calderone, Paul Reilly, Susan Carhart, Kathleen Carroll, Reza Namdar, Leslie Fleet, Shawn Pickrell, Cynthia College, Robyn Robbins, Michael Wilson, Priscilla Fay, Margaret O’connor, Michelle Clemmens, Faye Hubbard, Sarah Springer, Elise Bryant, Yvonne Scruggs, Ruby Tyson, Julie Mendez, Julia Offiong, Bob Reynolds, and Katherine Sciacchitano. And thank-you to anyone who’s made a contribution since our December campaign! In unity, there *is* strength!

The **Guild Forum** is published by the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, 1100 15th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20005-1707. Tel.: 202-785-3650

Web Site: www.wbng.org
WBNG is Local 35 of The Newspaper Guild; Local 32035 of the Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO, CLC. WBNG is solely responsible for **Guild Forum** content. **Next content deadline: March 1, 2004.**

LOCAL 35 OFFICERS

President: Bill Salganik

Salganik@comcast.net

Vice President: J. Darlene Meyer
dmeyer@wbng.org

Secretary: Bonnita Spikes

BonnitaSpikes@seiu1199e-DC.org

Treasurer: Mark Pattison

Mpattison@catholicnews.com

WBNG STAFF

Lori Calderone, Administrative Officer
lcalderone@wbng.org

Rick Ehrmann, Local Representative
rehrmann@wbng.org

Cet Parks, Local Representative
cparks@wbng.org

Paul Reilly, Local Representative
preilly@wbng.org

Calvin Zon, Local Representative
czon@wbng.org

Nancy Banks, Office Manager
nbanks@wbng.org

Elsie Thull, Bookkeeper
ethull@wbng.org

CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Pattison, Paul Reilly, Peter Perl, Bob Levey, Lori Calderone

Radio Free Asia Bargaining

Progresses

Tentative agreements on Guild shop, along with a grievance and arbitration procedure have been reached as bargaining for an initial contract with Radio Free Asia continues.

The Guild and RFA management have had ten meetings since bargaining began last year. Bargaining resumes in January following a break for the holidays.

The tentative agreements on Guild shop and grievance and arbitration were part of a package that included agreements on management rights, no strike/no lockout and a discipline procedure.

Other areas where there have been agreements include dues check off, nondiscrimination and employee integrity protections.

The contract would cover 125 employees, most of whom are journalists.

GUILD SERVICE AND FRONT PAGE AWARDS ENTRIES AND NOMINATIONS OPEN

Three new awards and restoration of cash prizes for major awards will mark WBNG's Guild Service and Front Page Awards this year. The date and location of the awards ceremony will be announced in February.

New awards will be given for Customer Service Professional of the Year, for International Reporting and for Cartoons and Guild Unit of the Year. That will expand the number of awards to 33.

Deadline for entries is February 20, 2004 and entries may be mailed, delivered or hand carried to the Guild office.

Here's the prize payout for winning entries:

Bill Pryor Memorial Grand Prize for Writing	\$250
Bill Pryor Memorial Grand Prize for Photography	\$250
John Albano Memorial Grand Prize for Art	\$250
Dan de Souza Memorial Award for Guild Member of the Year	\$250
Nadine Grinder Memorial Award for Shop Steward of the Year	\$150
Unit Officer of the Year	\$100
Organizer of the Year	\$100

In addition, new categories have been added to the Guild Service Awards and Front Page Awards roster:

Customer Service Professional of the Year
Bargaining Unit of the Year
Distinguished Editorial Cartooning
Distinguished International Reporting
Distinguished Web Site Design

All entries must be received no later than the close of business **Friday, February 20**. You can deliver them in person, or mail them to: Front Page Awards, Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, 1100 15th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20005. If you have questions or desire more information, call either of the Front Page Awards Committee's co-chairs, Mark Gruenberg (202-898-4825, markgruenberg53@hotmail.com) or Mark Pattison (202-541-3263, mpattison@catholicnews.com).

Guild Service and Front Page Awards

WRITING

Morton Mintz Award for Investigative Reporting
Bernie Harrison Memorial Award for Commentary
Frank C. Porter Memorial Award for Labor and Business Reporting
Distinguished Non-Bylined Story
Criticism
Feature Writing
Headline Writing
International News Reporting
Local News Reporting
National News Reporting
Non-Daily Specialized Technical Reporting
Public Service Reporting
Sports Reporting
Unit Publication

PHOTOGRAPHY

Black & White Photography
Feature Photography
Local News Photography
National News Photography
Picture Story
Portrait Photography
Sports Photography

ART

Advertising Design
Editorial Cartooning
Illustration Design
Labor Promotional Campaign
Marketing and Promotion Design
News Graphics Design
Web Site Design

AWARDS REQUIRING A NOMINATION LETTER DETAILING MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Member of the Year
Shop Steward of the Year
Unit Officer of the Year
Organizer of the Year
Customer Service Professional of the Year
Herb Block Award for Community Service
Guild Bargaining Unit of the Year—Unit Most Successfully Meeting Build the Guild Program Goals

They built this union

Farewell: Post Guild Veterans Take Buyout

By Peter Perl

We join in wishing a warm and hearty—although sad—farewell to the 43 loyal Guild members who are among the 69 veteran Post employees in Guild-covered jobs who are taking advantage of the company’s buy-out.

We are happy that our colleagues will be able to benefit from a generous offer that will bring them added security in the next phase of their lives. We particularly want to recognize and applaud some former Guild officers and stalwart unionists who have helped keep the Guild going over the years, among them, former unit chairs **Bob Levey** and **Eugene Meyer**, and longtime officers and all-around spark-plugs and activists: **Claudia Levy, Vernon Henery, Bob Asher, Linda Wheeler, Henry Allen, Ed Walsh, Dan Morgan, and Chris Swerda.**

We will be marking the departures of all our Guild colleagues at a party later this year. But meanwhile, we should remember that it took strong bargaining by the Guild to win pension improvements for *all of us* in the last negotiations. And it was the Guild that raised to a higher profile the issue of the Post’s dramatically over-funded pension plan. The Post agreed not only to the new across-the-board improvements, but has now moved to finally use the overfunding for a beneficial purpose for those who were able to take advantage of the buy-out.

For those of us who remain, we must take note that nearly two-thirds of our departing veteran colleagues had the integrity and wisdom to support the Guild. This loss of membership means that we all have to redouble our efforts in our “open shop” workplace to persuade our younger colleagues that joining the Guild is in their own best interests. It is the only way to assure the best work life for all of us, and not just a chosen few. (Watch for our upcoming bulletins on Post “Merit Pay” data.)

Meanwhile, let’s all join in wishing the best to our other Guild colleagues who will be moving on, including:

In Commercial—**Carolyn Scott, Cherry Daniels, William Ehmer, Johnness Lundgren, Diane Seeger, Douglas Dozier, Edward “Smitty” Smith, Victor Lyong, and Ronald Lattanzio.**

In News: **Bill Raspberry, Abigail Trafford, Michael Dirda, William Stewart, John Oravets, Don Phillips, Ronalie Peterson, Peter Harris, Julie Dear, Patricia Rogers, Chuck Allen, Kim Klein, Bart Barnes, Mason McAllister, Mary McGrory, Helen Dewar, Kathy Sawyer, Frank Johnston, Ray Lustig, Ken Denlinger, Bill Gildea, Ben Forgey, Rita Kempley, and Dukette Rutherford.**

“A Place to Have a Life” A Post Member’s Appreciation of the Union

I’m one of the Buyout Babies. I leave The Washington Post after more than 36 years, with a heavy heart.

But it’s not as heavy as it might be, because my decision and my path were made possible by a great organization, The Newspaper Guild. I’ve been a member since my first day at The Post.

Management didn’t offer that boatload of buyout bucks out of sheer love. The money came from our pension fund. Yes, “our.” Local 35 of TNG negotiated the fund into existence more than 30 years ago.

I know. I was there when it happened.

When extra millions became available (thank you, Wall Street), they sent a message more forcefully than I ever could.

This union works. It provides for its members. Its contracts produce real benefits. And the biggest, loudest message: You are better off if you’re a member than you’d ever be if you rely on the tender mercies of the seventh floor.

The Newspaper Guild has made The Washington Post a place to have a life as well as a career. I could never have owned a house, raised a family or provided for my old age without the contracts that this union negotiated.

When I needed \$50,000 worth of medical care in 1997, I could never have counted on getting it or paying for it without the protections and provisions in “that little booklet.”

When I worked on national holidays, the Guild saw to it that I received extra pay.

When my mother died, I got a day of bereavement leave, with pay. It didn’t fall from a tree. The Guild assured it for me.

You would have to go a long way to find an organization that’s more democratic, more fair or more effective. I’m proud to have been a member.

If you don’t belong, I urge you to sign a card, today. It’s your union. It’s your future. Some day, it may be your buyout, too.

Bob Levey
Metro Columnist
The Washington Post
Guild member since 1967