

G U I L D forum



Local 32035

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild

March 5, 2004

Guild Grieves Sun's Christmas Holiday Layoff

When The Baltimore Sun, owned by the Chicago media giant Tribune, escorted seven employees from the work place on the Friday before Christmas, 2003, it once again revealed a gap in its corporate values—compassion and fair play.

Not for theft, fraud, insubordination, or poor performance were these employees—some with 30 years of service—tossed out minutes after arriving for work that Friday morn.

No, these employees—whose total annual salary was something less than \$200,000-- were laid off. The Sun paid them one month's pay, thereby allowing them to say to the Guild that they got the one-month's notice required by the contract—and said 'so long'. Tribune's revenues last year hovered around \$5.5 billion.

The Sun acted, unconcerned with the humiliation felt by the employees who were essentially being "perp walked" out; The Sun acted, unconcerned with basic fairness or the meaning of contract language.

The contract language on layoffs hasn't changed since the last layoff, when the Guild received notice that The Sun was contemplating a layoff, and when the Guild and Sun met to discuss the specifics of the layoff *before* the layoff. Specifics such as hashing out whether or not a single seniority list is required for full- and part-timers; such a detail matters when an employer is concerned with properly conducting a layoff based on contract language, not on whim. Specifics such as seeking employees willing to voluntarily take layoff, and the severance that goes with it, so as to spare involuntary termination. Specifics like job sharing, alternative work schedules, retraining, all actions that avoid the economic pain that ripples through a family, and a community, with layoffs.

Refusing to engage in a meeting before acting, The Sun perp-walked part-timers who had seniority over full timers out of the building.

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Guild Membership Meeting March 20, 2004

10:00 a.m-Noon

Baltimore Guild Office

415 St. Paul Place

Baltimore, MD

Agenda:

**Nominations and elections
for vacant at-large council seats**

**Your Rights at Work: Protecting the
Union's Gains**

Refreshments Provided!

Directions, page 3

Executive Council At-Large Vacancies to be Filled at March 20th Meeting

Three At-Large positions on the WBNG Executive Council will be filled through nominations and balloting at the March 20th membership meeting, to be held at the Baltimore Guild office. Pursuant to WBNG by-laws, Article V, section 9, nominations for the vacancies will be taken at the meeting, and members in good standing in attendance will fill the vacancies by secret ballot.

Any WBNG member in good standing is eligible to be nominated. The Executive Council meets monthly, and is charged with providing general oversight to the local, including budget and programmatic review.

Guild Calendar

- **March 15** Steward Training, Baltimore (email cparks@wbng.org for information)
- **March 20** Membership Meeting 10:00 a.m., Baltimore Guild Office
- **April 12** Guild Service and Front Page Awards, 6:30 p.m, AFL-CIO 815 16th St., NW, DC
- **May 19** TNG Freedom Awards, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bill Moyers, Keynote, 434-1477 for information
- **May 22** Membership Meeting/ multi-council meeting of TNG Locals, Hyatt Regency Hotel
(mpattison@catholicnews.com for information)

President's Perspective

Bill Salganik, WBNG President

I want to recognize and thank Connie Knox.

Connie has just completed two decades of continuous leadership in the Washington Baltimore Guild and the Sun unit — including 12 years as local president and six as unit chair or co-chair at the Sun.

The longevity is impressive enough, but, more even more significantly, Connie has consistently been our conscience — always reminding us of what the goals of the labor movement are and of what we need to do to achieve them. She's always been a good judge of when to compromise, and of when compromise is unthinkable.

She's steered the local through a number of difficult periods. She's worked steadfastly to build bridges between different units and factions, to be an efficient steward of the members' dues money, and to identify and develop the next generation of leaders.

In the Sun unit, she's steadfastly faced down an increasingly aggressive employer, including leading us through bargaining with a corporation determined to intimidate its workers. Through it, she's remained a calm presence, and we turn to her daily for knowledge and wisdom.

Although she didn't choose to seek yet another term in unit or local office, she remains a vice president on The Newspaper Guild's sector Executive Council. There, she's been active on the finance and collective bargaining committees, including helping lead an updating of the Guild's bargaining program and model contract.

The Guild is a legacy. People have worked for 70 years to build it into an organization that gives us an effective voice in the workplace, for better working conditions and for quality journalism. Connie is — and continues to be — one of those builders.

Guild Grieves Sun's Layoffs

continued

After the perp walk, The Sun met with the Guild. Learning that the Guild had hard evidence that the layoff violated the contract, it recalled the part-timers, promoted an employee into management who, because of low seniority, otherwise would have been laid off, and laid off the other full time worker in the job title. Before calling it a day, The Sun reached into another department and laid off a full-time worker, telling her that she was being laid off because the Guild made them bring back the part timers. An award winning employee, whose performance all acknowledged to be exemplary, was rewarded for her high performance by being escorted from the workplace like a criminal.

The union has grieved all the actions.

"Light for All" shines as well on the damage The Sun's harsh management style does to workers, families, and communities. And to its reputation, as well.

Guild Service and Front Page Awards

April 12, 2004

AFL-CIO, 815 16th St., NW, DC

Reception 6:30 p.m.

Awards Ceremony 7:15 p.m.

Join Us in Honoring Guild Talent!

GUILD forum... March 5, 2004

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We Remember Our Friend and Guild Member, Bill Lee

William (Bill) Lee III, a Guild stalwart since arriving at The Washington Post in 1967, died at Providence Hospital Feb. 19th of heart and lung failure at age 60. He had been hospitalized since March 2003.

Bill ("Baldy") began at the Post as an \$80-a-week messenger in the Publications Department, which later became the Advertising Operations Department, where he rose from junior clerk to senior clerk and then to staff associate. He served on several Guild contract negotiation committees, including the one that reached an agreement in the late 1980s after four years of Post management stonewalling. He served on WBNG's Executive Council, and was active in recruiting new members at the newspaper. Bill will be greatly missed.

Born in Petersburg, Va., he attended Virginia State University and Howard University. A memorial service was held on March 6 at the James M. Wilkerson Funeral Establishment in Petersburg.

WBNG Wins Comp Time Arbitration

Arbitrator strikes down APWU limitations

On January 28, 2004 an arbitrator rule that the American Postal Workers Union must pay compensatory time for employees who travel on the weekend on behalf of the APWU. The APWU tried to establish that it had a long-standing practice of not compensating APWU employees for weekend travel. The Guild contract required comp time for employees who perform weekend work. When the APWU failed to credit comp time for a unit member who traveled on the weekend, the Guild filed a grievance immediately. After being denied by APWU management, the case was moved to binding arbitration.

After hearing the facts of the case for two days the arbitrator was faced with "...determining if the (APWU) policy regarding weekend work was understood, accepted and mutual." The arbitrator ruled in favor of the Guild by stating, "...the matter was raised by the APWU, but the manner in which it was raised did not amount to a statement of policy, it appears to be more of a statement of preference." Thus, the arbitrator ruled for the Guild, that the contract language prevailed over the APWU "preference." Guild contracts seek to assure that all Guild unit members are paid for work actually performed. While many employees wishfully seek to appear loyal and supportive by not claiming the hours worked beyond the standard work week, many employers respond in time when bargaining compensation at the contract table or in reviewing performance and leave issues.

Mobilizing Carries the Day

by Mark Pattison

What if you stumbled upon an issue affecting your unit that will be decided, probably once and for all, in just a month? What if you found an issue that affects not only your members, but free-riders and managers too? And, once you found that issue, what could you do about it?

The short answer: Plenty. Nearly 40 local activists found how to energize and educate their members while rallying them around issues that touch them in the workplace at a daylong Feb. 28 seminar, "Building Union Power: Mobilizing in the Workplace," held at the Maritime Institute south of Baltimore.

Rank-and-file leaders Amy Davis (Baltimore Sun) and Byron Charlton (AFL-CIO) offered perspectives in tandem with WBNG administrative officer Lori Calderone and local representative Cet Parks on building the foundation for an effective workplace mobilizing structure and using that structure to communicate effectively.

TNG-CWA field representatives Jim Schaufenbil, who assisted in Sun mobilization around last year's contract talks, and Marian Needham helped put it all together by not only identifying issues in our workplaces that resonate among members, but helping participants define the goals and the methods available to achieve those goals.

Guild leaders and activists from seven units took part in what was universally considered a successful program. How will you know if the success took hold? When you see more Guild leaders in your unit, talking up more issues, asking you more questions, and getting you more involved in your union.

Black History Month

"A Good Press is a Diverse Press"

The Guild's BNA unit held a series of cultural and educational events during February, honoring black Americans contributions to our society.

Several hundred employees attended the scheduled events, which included performances by violinist mber Raycurt Johnson, author Jonathan Luckett, exhibits by painter and poet Victor Ehikhamenor, and performances by other BNA employees and their children. The events also featured a display of African-American Achievements throughout American History.

The celebration culminated in a panel discussion on "African-American's and the Media" and "The Media and the African-American Community", featuring Reverend Graylan Hagler, Minister at Plymouth Congregational Church, Richard Prince, columnist at the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, Frederick Watson, Jr., photographer for Ebony and Jet Magazines and Karen James Cody, BNA Communications Director.

The panel reflected Reverend Hagler's statement that "A good press is a diverse press", and discussed with participants the challenge of reporting black Americans' concerns and views from the vantage point of a largely white corporate owned press, the importance of the labor movement in working for equal opportunity in work and pay in the newspaper industry.

**REGISTER
TO
VOTE!
ELECTION DAY IS
NOVEMBER 2, 2004.
EXERCISE YOUR CIVIC VOICE.**

Directions to Baltimore Guild Office, 415 St Paul Place

From DC area:

Take the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (Rt.295) north to Baltimore. The Parkway empties into Russell St. Continue on Russell St. for a few blocks until you get to Pratt St. Make a right turn onto Pratt St. Continue on Pratt St. for seven blocks until you get to Calvert St. Make a left turn onto Calvert St. Continue for twelve blocks on Calvert St. Turn left on Franklin. Park anywhere, or proceed to St. Paul, at top of hill; turn left, and park anywhere (meters are running, quarters only).