

G U I L D f o r u m



Local 32035

Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild

March 10, 2006

BNA Unit Gains Flexibility, Wins Raises Topping 4% Per Year

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild unit at the Bureau of National Affairs overwhelmingly ratified a four-year contract that gives the WBNG-represented workers annual wage increases that average more than 4 percent a year, a new provision on flexible work arrangements, and a sharp increase in transportation subsidies.

The March 9 vote on the new agreement was 181 in favor and just 11 against. The previous contract had expired Feb. 28.

The new deal calls for wage increases slightly lower than in the first year of the just-expired three-year contract. But the new agreement has larger raises during the third and fourth years. The first raise is effective March 1.

The provision on flexible work arrangements (FWA), such as telecommuting and compressed workweeks, was something the Guild had worked especially hard for. Under the new language, managers cannot unreasonably deny a FWA request. And it also guarantees the right to grieve and arbitrate a denial or revocation if the employee and the Guild deem it to be improper. BNA management had sought to exempt FWA disputes from the grievance and arbitration process.

The agreement provides that employees in their probationary period of a new job at BNA may take part in an FWA. Employees new to BNA, will not be allowed to participate in a FWA during probation.

The new contract gives a solid boost to transportation subsidies. Starting in July, the parking subsidy grows 11.5 percent, from \$58.33 to \$65 a month. Guild-represented workers taking public transportation will be given \$75 per month toward their costs – a nearly 30 percent increase over



With two weeks remaining on the old contract, more than 100 Guild members took part in a Valentine's Day rally at BNA headquarters.

the \$700 per year under the old contract.

Employees may switch between the public transportation benefit and the Parking Reimbursement Account twice a year, on January 1 and July 1. Employees also may reallocate their contribution under the public transportation benefit twice a year.

In another contract adjustment, BNA management will supply the Guild with employee information electronically instead of in paper form.

The Guild did agree to eliminate one of three health insurance options (MD IPA) and agreed to an increase in co-pays for the Kaiser HMO. In return, participants in the most popular plan, Aetna, will have enhanced preventive-care benefits. All the changes take effect Jan. 1, 2007. The vast majority of employees are in the Aetna plan. BNA employees still will have no monthly premiums.

The new BNA contract expires Feb. 28, 2010.

President's Perspective

We don't know quite how it would work – or whether it would work. But the Guild's effort to create a "worker-friendly" acquisition for some of the Knight Ridder newspapers represents a promising and creative approach by labor for coping with the realities of our changing economy.

Like other publishers, Knight Ridder – one of the country's largest newspaper chains – has been trying to cut its way to prosperity. It hasn't worked. Last fall, some of its largest investors, particularly an investment firm called Private Capital Management, successfully pressured the company to put itself up for sale.

The Newspaper Guild represents workers at nine of Knight Ridder's papers – the *Akron Beacon Journal*, the *Duluth News Tribune*, the *Grand Forks Herald*, the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, the *Monterey County Herald*, the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*. Those papers, according to the Guild, have a combined employment of 7,000 and a combined daily circulation of 1.3 million.

The potential sale is scary for employees and for the industry. While Knight Ridder could be bought by another chain, a more troubling scenario is a sale to a non-publishing corporate-raider type who could milk the newspapers even more aggressively. Another disturbing possibility is a purchase by an ideologically-driven investor seeking to shape the news more to his personal taste.

Rather than wait for something bad to happen and then protest or litigate, The Newspaper Guild and its Knight Ridder locals tried to get ahead of the curve. The Guild hired two investment advisors and then, in February, announced that it had lined up a "worker-friendly" investment firm, the Yucaipa Companies, with enough capital to buy the nine Guild papers.

Knight Ridder has said it is not looking to sell off papers one at a time or in groups – it wants to sell the whole company. The Guild and its investment team have been meeting with potential buyers to work out a collaborative arrangement. There's a good chance the primary buyer won't want to keep the whole company, either for business reasons or because some of the properties create anti-trust problems.

This creates the potential for the Guild-affiliated group to buy some or all of the nine Guild papers. Yucaipa would put up the money initially, but there would be the possibility to convert the papers to some form of employee ownership structure.

The Guild-affiliated group's Web site offers details: www.valueplusmedia.com. And the Guild itself has set up www.knightridderwatch.org, which provides frequently-asked questions about the potential deal.

Employee ownership isn't a guarantee of prosperity or of model journalism; the papers still have to be viable as businesses. However the Knight Ridder sale turns out, the Guild has made contacts and developed tools that could be useful in the future.

– *Bill Salganik*

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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.

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OFFICIAL NOTICE

WBNG Membership Meeting:
Front Page, Guild Service Awards

Monday, March 27
CenterStage (Lobby)
700 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore

*A reception honoring award winners
will begin at 6:30 p.m. The awards
ceremonies begin at 7:30.*

For further information:
202-785-3650

Front Page, Guild Service Awards

Workers at the *Baltimore Sun* captured the two grand prizes in the annual Front Page Awards judging conducted by the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild.

Robert Little won the Bill Pryor Memorial Grand Prize for Writing for “Modern Combat Lacking In Old Medical Supply.” Little’s work also won him the Front Page’s Morton Mintz Award for Investigative Reporting.

Andre F. Chung, also of the *Sun*, won the Bill Pryor Memorial Grand Prize for Photography for “On Their Own,” which also took first prize in the Picture Story category.

All Front Page winners are to be honored at a reception Monday, March 27, at CenterStage, 700 N. Calvert St., in Baltimore, the first time since 1992 that the awards ceremony is being held in Charm City. A reception begins at 6:30 p.m., with the awards being conferred at 7:30 p.m. Emcee for the evening will be Laura Lippman, a former Guild member at the *Sun* and currently a successful mystery novelist best known for her “Tess Monaghan” series.

Judges of this year’s Front Page competition chose not to confer a grand prize in design, although individual winners were selected in three design categories. The winners:

Bernie Harrison Memorial Award for Commentary: Mark Gruenberg (At-Large) for “Washington Window: All You Need Is The White Sheets.” Honorable mentions went to Gruenberg for “The Dying Social Contract,” and to Susan Reimer (*Sun*) for “The Deconstruction Of Harriet Miers Is Filled With Sexism.”

Criticism: Michael Sragow (*Sun*) for “For Drama’s Sake, A Boxer’s Integrity Is KO’d.” Honorable mention to J. Wynn Rousuck (*Sun*) for “August Wilson’s Plays Sang His Song To The World.”

Feature Writing: Stephanie Shapiro (*Sun*) for “Making A Case For Marriage.” Honorable mention to: Susan Levine (*Washington Post*) for “A Spirit The Waves Couldn’t Break,” Jonathan Pitts (*Sun*) for “Taking Ownership” and for “Not Quite Nirvana,” and J. Wynn Rousuck (*Sun*) for “A Call To Arms.”

Headline Writing: Honorable mention to Evika Pontarelli Compart (Agence France-Presse) for “Mr. Tambourine Man, Play A Song For Me: Bob Dylan Turns DJ.”

International Reporting: Honorable mention to Mark Gruenberg (At-Large) for “Catholic Labor Specialists: John Paul’s Pro-Worker Policies to Stay, But Proof Will Be On The Ground.”

Morton Mintz Award for Investigative Reporting: Robert Little (*Sun*) for “Modern Combat Lacking In Old Medical Supply.” Honorable mention to Fred Schulte, (*Sun*) for “Disregarding The Symptoms.”

Frank C. Porter Memorial Award for Labor and Business Reporting: Sarah Kaufman (*Post*) for “Going Toe-To-Toe: A Ballerina Charges The Washington Ballet Fired Her For Her Union Activities.” Honorable mention to Mark Gruenberg (At-Large) for “House Of Labor Splinters” series, and to S. Mitra Kalita (*Post*) for “Immigrant Wives’ Visa Status Keeps Them Out Of Workplace.”

Local News Reporting: Jamie Smith Hopkins (*Sun*) for “Real Estate’s Rising Tide” series.

National News Reporting: Mark Gruenberg (At-Large) for “John Roberts” (general coverage).

Non-Daily Specialized and Technical Reporting: John H. Sullivan (Bureau of National Affairs) for “BLS Plan To Drop Data On Women From Payroll Survey Creates

‘Firestorm’.” Honorable mention to Tripp Baltz (BNA Correspondents) for “Cost Of Compliance With Consumer Data Breach Disclosure Adds Up, Say Those Who Favor National Prescription Law, Standard Of Harm Threshold.”

Sports Reporting: Kevin Van Valkenburg and Mike Klingaman (*Sun*) for “A Flat Note.”

Unit Publication: Rich Bronson (BNA), *Behind The Dome*, Vol. 1, No. 3. Honorable mention to Bronson for *Behind The Dome*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Feature Photography: Karl Merton Ferron (*Sun*) for “Fire Hydrant.” Honorable mention to Mark Gail (*Post*) for “Flag Day,” and Christopher T. Assaf (*Sun*) for “Big Kiss.”

Local News Photography: Amy Davis (*Sun*) for “Police Round Up The Unusual Suspects.” Honorable mention to Doug Kapustin (*Sun*) for “Winter Weather Returns,” and Lloyd Fox (*Sun*) for “Son Bids A Soldier Farewell” and for “Fatal Fire.”

Picture Story: Andre F. Chung (*Sun*) for “On Their Own.” Honorable mention to John Makely (*Sun*) for “A Leap Of Faith.”

Portrait Photography: Chiaki Kawajiri (*Sun*) for “Violence.”

Sports Photography: Mark Gail (*Post*) for “Rising Stars Spring Into Action.” Honorable mention to Gail for “Glenelg Wins, Earns Date With Century,” Karl Merton Ferron (*Sun*) for “An Off-Speed Pitch,” and John McDonnell (*Post*) for “Winning Run.”

News Graphics Design: Lamont W. Harvey (*Sun*) for “Rebuilding Rail History.” Honorable mention to Anthony De Feo (Catholic News Service) for “Conclave Overview.”

Guild Service Awards

In addition to honoring Front Page Award winners, ceremonies also will recognize Guild Service Award winners, as decided by members of WBNG’s Executive Council.

The trio of **Amy Lampkin**, **Deborah Weinstock**, and **Ed Feigen**, all from the AFL-CIO, will share this year’s Dan de Souza Memorial Award for Member of the

Year; **Cassandra Shieh**, of Catholic News Service, was named winner of the Nadine Grinder Memorial Award for Shop Steward of the Year; **John Small**, of the Bureau of National Affairs, was chosen Unit Officer of the Year; **Rick Powell**, of UNITE HERE Local 25, was declared Organizer of the Year; and **Monique McKoy**, of the *Sun*, was picked as Customer Service Professional of the Year.

NEW AND RETURNING

GUILD MEMBERS

AFL-CIO: David Carpio, Tiffany Lynn Heath, John Small, Kate Snyder, Eileen R. Toback, Amy Young, Ramiro Zacarias.

Agence France-Press: Glenn Chapman, Agnes Smith.

American Nurses Association: Marian Condon, Daniel Charles Etzel, Yesenia Flores, Cydni B. Thebert.

Baltimore Sun: Hubert A. Braithwaite III, Corey Bullock, Mary E. Daniels, Nicole Fuller, Corey Harris, Nia-Malika Henderson, Andrew Kinch, Laura McCandish, Heather Sigle, Chris Stringfield, Sarah J. Stoemer, Timothy Thew, Erica N. Trusty.

Bureau of National Affairs: Christopher Boege, Ellen Byerrum, Michael E. Eagle, Nahid Fadaeina, Christopher Grier, Ann-Marie Hutchinson, Louis C. Labrecque, Marvin McCants, Elizabeth Mohre, Naveen Parmar, Adam Snider, Erin Trompeter, Patricia Ware.

CASA of Maryland: Manuel A. Acevedo, Christina Bock, Francisca Cartagena, Yecenia Castillo, Candelaria Flores, Lorena L. Fuentes, Jose Garcia, Irene Jallo, Elena Negrete, Frederic Ngongang, Rigoberto Sanchez, Elio Trabal.

Montgomery County Council of Supporting Services Employees (SEIU 500): Michael Wilson.

Research Associates of America (formerly Food & Allied Service Trades): Steve Paterno.

Radio Free Asia: Zaw Moe Kyaw, Metta C. Vorachack.

Solidarity Center: Lorraine Clewer, Leela Mulukutla.

UFCW: Laura Tatum, Matthew Young.

UNITE-HERE: Magle Boatwright, Barbara A. Dyer, Jayson Harrison, Linda A. Martin, Peggy L. Mason, Joshua Neiderman, Richard Powell, Jr., Olga C. Young, Sofia Zapata.

Washington Post: Jennifer Y. Brown, Maria Lopez, Delbert Q. Wilber III.

Now Open for Business: Newly Redesigned www.wbng.org!

Get on your computer pronto and take a look at the redesigned Web site of the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild. www.wbng.org has almost everything you need to know as a member of your bargaining unit, and as a member of our local, our union, and our movement. And anything that's missing, let us know – we can add it!

Each bargaining unit will now have its own Web page. Check the left side of the home page for your unit. Look throughout the site for a livelier presentation and sharper colors. We're adding to our member-photo collection; if you have any digital photos

you'd like to contribute, contact Patrice Franklin at tricenet@netzero.net. We prefer JPEG files with a 300 bmp resolution. By the way, many thanks are due to Patrice, who works in our American Nurses Association unit, for the redesign, and to the Communication Committee, headed by WBNG Secretary Sheila Lindsay, for shepherding the effort through to completion.

You'll find new sources for the latest news from the local and its units, links to our parent unions (The Newspaper Guild and the Communications Workers of America), plus, as always, our handy electronic con-

tracts database and how to reach local and unit leaders. Despite all these new features, there's still one left to go: a new logo for the local. The WBNG Executive Council has authorized a contest open to all members to submit a design to take the place of the newspaper-reading fellow currently on the home page.

There's a \$75 gift certificate to Best Buy for the winner. Take your best crack at designing a logo for our local and submit it electronically to Patrice Franklin at the e-mail address listed above. Entry deadline is April 15!

Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild
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Address Correction Requested