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Local 32035

Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild

Jan. 7, 2008

CNS, UFCW Units Win New Deals

Two Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild units closed out negotiations on collective bargaining agreements as 2007 drew to an end.

Guild members at **Catholic News Service** in December ratified a new two-year contract that calls for annual salary increases of 3.25 percent. The agreement covers 16 workers at CNS.

The contract that took effect Jan. 1 includes upgrades for two employees, which boosts their salaries by 6 percent in 2008.

Under the new agreement CNS members will pay the same health insurance premiums as employees of the Bishops' conference, except for those with family coverage. Those Guild-represented employees will pay 75 percent of the conference-employee premium.

The negotiations for this contract took just six bargaining sessions spread over six weeks. The previous two-year contract was concluded late in 2006, after eleven months of bargaining and multiple Guild rallies.

The Guild rank-and-file bargaining team consisted of Unit Chair Mary Esslinger, Mark Pattison, and Regina Linskey, along with Local Representative Paul Reilly, who was the chief bargainer.

Closing out a nearly three-month process, the Guild contract for employees at **United Food and Commercial Workers** International Union headquarters was finalized and signed on Nov. 29. The three-year agreement covers about 70 Guild members.

The previous contract – also a three-year deal – expired Oct. 6, but was extended 30 days. Continued negotiations led to a tentative agreement on Oct. 26, and the contract was ratified on Nov. 1 by a vote of 46 to 18 (72 percent in favor).

Highlights include a 2.5-percent scale increase in 2008, 2009, and 2010, along with a 2 percent lump-sum bonus paid in January each year. For off-scale employees, the increase will be 1.5 percent each year, with a 2.5 percent bonus paid each January.

Among other features of the new contract are a 401(k)-match increase from \$600 to \$1,200; an extra week of vacation for those with one-to-10 years of employment; an additional personal day each year for exempt employees; student loan reimbursements of \$2,000 for employees hired before Oct. 7, 2005 and a \$400 tuition-reimbursement increase; and an improved parking policy.

Local Administrative Officer Cet Parks was the lead negotiator of a team that included UFCW Unit Chair Andre Roberson, unit members Shannon Harris, Annie Kim, Brian O'Konski, Seth Payer, and Tyler Shannon, and Guild staffer Tiffany Harris.

Bargaining formally began on Sept. 10, with the Guild building its proposals largely from the results of an online survey in which more than two-thirds of the union members participated.

The Guild has represented the UFCW headquarters professional and support staff employees since 1999. The international union represents 1.3 million workers in retail trades food processing, health care, insurance, and garment manufacturing.

Top Spots at TNG Contested; Election Set for Spring

Newspaper Guild President Linda Foley is being challenged for the union's top spot by Bernie Lunzer, TNG's secretary-treasurer. This is the first contest for the TNG presidency since Foley was elected in 1996.

Formal nominations won't be made until the TNG Sector Conference in late February, but the two have been campaigning since early October. The election period will be established during the conference, and is expected to take place between April 24 and May 8. (The results will be certified on May 19.)

Each presidential candidate has set up a Web site: Lunzer's is <http://astrongerguild.org>. His "party ticket" includes Connie Knox, former WBNG president, who is running for the TNG international chairperson position.

Foley's team includes WBNG Treasurer Sheila Lindsay, who is a candidate for TNG South Region vice president. The Foley Web site is www.teamguild.org.

(See www.newsguild.org for TNG campaign updates.)

Guild Contract at Radio Free Asia Extended an Additional Month

WBNG and Radio Free Asia management agreed late in December to a second extension of the contract that was set to expire Sept. 30.

That contract, WBNG's first at the unit of more than 100 members, was initially extended to the end of December while Congress and the White House wrangled over appropriations.

Shortly after the Guild and RFA management signed off on the latest extension (one month), a bill was passed. President Bush then signed an appropriation measure that gives RFA about \$35 million for the next fiscal year, which should fully fund current operations.

Founded in 1996, Radio Free Asia broadcasts in nine languages to China, Tibet,

Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and North Korea. RFA Guild members also produce and feed audio-stream broadcasts to the Internet.

Leading up to the vote on appropriations, RFA's governing board, the Broadcasting Board Governors (BBG), made a budget request that proposed eliminating the Cantonese-language service and slashing the service to Tibet. The House and Senate rejected the proposals, thanks in large part to the efforts of Guild members in the two services.

The BBG, the independent federal agency responsible for government-sponsored, non-military, international broadcasting also oversees the budgets of Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Radio and TV Marti.

The latest extension between the Guild and RFA continues all terms of the contract set to expire September 30, 2007. After the first extension was agreed to, RFA management said that if non-Guild employees got an across-the-board pay increase, Guild employees would get the same raise.

One non-economic issue still unresolved is the discipline procedure. The Guild has proposed language that would ensure employees get union representation throughout the discipline process. Negotiations on all issues, including wages and other economic items such as health insurance and severance pay, began anew in January.

The Radio Free Asia bargaining unit was organized in 2003. The first Guild contract, signed in December 2004, was reached after nearly 15 months of bargaining.

United American Nurses Unit Bargains 1-Year Extension

Guild members at United American Nurses in December approved a one-year extension to their 32-month agreement.

The UAN contract provides for a 4 percent raise in 2008 and the creation of a labor-management committee to address the current health-insurance plan. The new contract expires at the end of the year.

Through organizing, collective bargaining, and legislative work, the UAN unit services a national union of more than 100,000 direct-care nurses (R.N.'s) in state nurses associations nationwide.

The extension agreement was worked out in part because both sides wanted to address the organization's uncertain future. UAN's president, Cheryl L. Johnson, who had forged the affiliation with the

AFL-CIO in July 2001, passed away in October. Johnson was the first and only president of UAN, which was formed in 1999.

"Cheryl was a guiding force in the founding and creation of the UAN as the national union for staff nurses," said UAN Vice President Ann Converso, who is serving the remainder of the Johnson's term, with an election set for March.

Among the issues in the upcoming election is whether UAN should renew its affiliation agreement with the American Nurses Association (ANA).

The UAN unit has 15 Guild members working in communications, research, lobbying, and organizing. Most are in the headquarters office in Washington, which is shared with the ANA.

Sun Unit to Hold Officers' Election

Nominations for the top five officer positions at the Baltimore Sun unit will be presented at a Guild meeting at 4 p.m. on Jan. 24.

Sun employees have been protected by Guild contracts since 1949. After the Washington Post and BNA, the newspaper is WBNG's third-largest employer, with about 400 members on its payroll.

In addition to a unit chairperson, the

Sun unit has four vice chairs: Editorial, Commercial, Sun Park/"Building," and Bureaus. All WBNG members in good standing at the newspaper are eligible for office.

The meeting will be in the Guild's Baltimore office, next door to the Sun at 415 St. Paul Place.

Guild members seeking further information should contact their shop stewards.

Papering 'The Wire'

Although no current Sun staffers are given speaking parts in the final season of "The Wire," HBO's down-and-dirty look at crime and justice in Baltimore, all of the former Sun people behind and on the scene of the cable TV series are one-time Guild members. The show's creator, David Simon, spoke at a rally during bargaining in 2003. Simon's wife, and former Sun reporter Laura Lippman, has hosted the Front Page Awards. For a review of the show, visit the link at www.wbng.org, which will take you to a story by Guild member David Zurawik, the newspaper's TV critic.

Entries Sought for Annual Front Page, Guild Service Awards

With 2008 upon us, it's time to take a good look back to 2007 and enter our best work in the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild's annual Front Page Awards.

If you're covered by a WBNG contract – or were at the time that you did your best work – you can enter. Don't count on your supervisors or managers to enter your work; you've got to do it yourself. But all entries are free.

You can enter as many categories as you like (judges may move entries around). And you can enter as many as three pieces in a single category. You cannot, however, enter the same piece in two categories.

And did we say all entries are free?

Guild members who win in individual categories will then be eligible for one of three grand prizes offered each year: The Bill Pryor Memorial Grand Prize for Writing, the Bill Pryor Memorial Grand Prize for Photography, and the John Albano Memorial Grand Prize for Design. Each grand-prize winner gets \$250. A separate Front Page Award for Customer Service Professional of the Year, which requires a nomination letter, nets a winner a \$100 check.

Because the workers represented in our local do so many different kinds of work, the Front Page categories are designed to be broad enough for virtually everybody to find at least one category where their work would qualify. Take a look at the categories at the bottom of the page to determine where your best work best fits. Then enter! Although original clippings are preferred, "electronic-print versions" will be accepted.

The entry deadline is Friday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m. Mail your entries to WBNG, 1100 15th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20005, or drop them off in person.

Judging will take place later this winter. The Front Page Awards ceremony will be held in Baltimore this spring at a date and site to be determined.

If you have questions about the Front Page Awards, contact Mark Gruenberg (202-898-4825, press_associates@yahoo.com) or Mark Pattison (202-541-3263, mpattison@catholicnews.com).

Meanwhile, go to www.wbng.org for a downloadable Front Page Awards entry form that you can print over and over (and over) again!

Guild Service Awards

While the Front Page Awards honors the best of the work we do for our employers on the clock, the Guild Service Awards recognize the best work our members do on behalf of the international Newspaper Guild, WBNG, the WBNG bargaining units, or union members in general, off the clock.

Guild Service Awards honorees will be feted during the Front Page Awards ceremony. But the winner won't be honored unless you nominate them.

There are several categories from which you can choose to nominate a Guild activist or leader. Think about the service your fellow Guild members have done for you and others, and write a short nomination letter detailing their achievements.

A panel to be appointed by WBNG president Bill Salganik will select the winners based on your nominating letters. The same deadline conditions for the Front Page Awards apply to the Guild Service Awards: Friday, Feb. 1 by 5 p.m. (The same address and contacts apply, too.) Here are the Guild Service Award categories, and the cash awards for each:

- Dan de Souza Memorial Award – **Guild Member of the Year** (\$250)
- Nadine Grinder Memorial Award – **Shop Steward of the Year** (\$150)
- Herb Block **Community Service** Award (\$100)
- **Unit Officer of the Year** (\$100)
- **Organizer of the Year** (\$100)
- "Build the Guild" Award – **Bargaining Unit of the Year** (\$100)



Front Page Award Categories

WRITING

Morton Mintz Award
for Investigative Reporting
Bernie Harrison Memorial Award
for Commentary
Frank C. Porter Memorial Award
for Labor and Business Reporting
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

CUSTOMER SERVICE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Collective Bargaining Update – 25 WBNG Units

Working for America Institute	July 1, 2002 to Dec. 31, 2006
Radio Free Asia	Oct. 1, 2004 to Jan. 31, 2008
National Labor College	April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2008
United Way of America	May 1, 2005 to April 30, 2008
American Rights at Work	July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2008
MCCSSE (SEIU Local 500)	July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2008
CASA de Maryland	Oct. 14, 2005 to June 30, 2008
Washington Post	Nov. 8, 2005 to Nov. 7, 2008
United American Nurses	March 24, 2005 to Dec. 31, 2008
Jobs With Justice	Aug. 7, 2006 to Dec. 31, 2008
Agence France-Presse	Jan. 1, 2007 to Dec. 31, 2008
E-L & Associates	Jan. 1, 2007 to Dec. 31, 2008
American Nurses Association	Feb. 15, 2006 to Feb. 14, 2009
AFL-CIO	Oct. 1, 2006 to March 31, 2009
Solidarity Center	Sept. 26, 2006 to Sept. 25, 2009
International Labor Communications Association	Nov. 1, 2006 to Oct. 31, 2009
Research Associates of America	Jan. 1, 2006 to Dec. 31, 2009
Catholic News Service	Jan. 1, 2008 to Dec. 31, 2009
BNA (Bureau of National Affairs)	March 1, 2006 to Feb. 28, 2010
Dept. for Prof. Employees, AFL-CIO	July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2010
BNA Correspondents	July 15, 2006 to July 14, 2010
United Food and Commercial Workers	Oct. 7, 2007 to Oct. 6, 2010
American Postal Workers Union	May 21, 2007 to Nov. 20, 2010
Kaiser Coalition	April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2011
Baltimore Sun	June 25, 2007 to June 24, 2011

OFFICIAL NOTICE

WBNG Membership Meeting
Wednesday, Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m.

Washington Guild Office: 1150 15th St. NW, Suite 350

Agenda includes reports on bargaining and organizing, and appearances by WBNG members Connie Knox and Sheila Lindsay, who are running for elective offices on The Newspaper Guild Executive Council.

For further information: 202-785-3650

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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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Address Correction Requested