

# POST GUILD UNIT

# FORUM...



The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, Local 32035, TNG-CWA

March 16, 2006

## **Guild Demands Talks Over Radio Work**

### **Employees Encouraged to Decline Commitments Pending Outcome**

The Guild has informed Washington Post management that it is asserting its right to bargain over wages for the new varieties of work entailed in the company's pending entry into radio. The demand for bargaining comes as a growing number of Guild-covered employees are being asked to "volunteer" for various shifts and responsibilities associated with the new venture, most of them with no promise of payment.

The new, technically voluntary work assignments are just the latest in a long string of extra duties that employees have been asked to take on in recent months and years, including television appearances, chats, video clips and blogs. Payments for these activities, if any, have differed unfairly from person to person and circumstance to circumstance. But because the companies that have benefited from the added work – mostly MSNBC and WPNI – are independent of The Washington Post newspaper (increasingly less so in the case of WPNI), the Guild has not been in a good position to assure just compensation. Under the terms of The Post's contract with Bonneville radio, however, it is The Post itself that is responsible for providing most affected employees with whatever compensation may be appropriate. From what the Guild has been hearing, most have been offered little or nothing.

**With only weeks to go before Post Radio is scheduled to go live, it is crucially important that employees make their call for fair compensation heard NOW – before the latest cog in the Washington Post speedup gets permanently installed.**

The Guild is not opposed to The Post's expansion into radio, and indeed supports the company's efforts to evolve in sync with the quickly changing media market. But it ought to be done right, and it ought to be done fairly. And there is still time to do that if employees do two things, IMMEDIATELY:

**First and most important, ALL employees – whether you have been asked to do radio work or not, for pay or for free – should send an e-mail RIGHT AWAY to Tina Gulland ([gullandt@washpost.com](mailto:gullandt@washpost.com)), expressing your support not only for Washington Post radio but also for fair compensation for radio work.**

**A simple sentence will do fine, such as: "I support the effort to negotiate fair compensation for radio work at The Post." Please cc the Guild so we know you have written ([rehrmann@wbng.org](mailto:rehrmann@wbng.org)).**

**If you have been asked to "volunteer," tell Tina you'd be happy to – if you would – but that you are awaiting the outcome of compensation talks before making a commitment. If you have already agreed to participate in a radio slot, let Tina know you nonetheless support the call for fair compensation. Wages are not Tina's responsibility, but she is our conduit to Post management.**

**Second, contact a Guild officer ([weissr@washpost.com](mailto:weissr@washpost.com) or [pierrer@washpost.com](mailto:pierrer@washpost.com) , for example) and share what you think a reasonable amount of compensation might be for some of the commitments that are currently being asked of reporters – such as early morning and weekend spots of varying lengths. We hope bargaining will begin within the next few days.**

**OVER**

Washington Post management has made a contractual commitment to Bonneville to provide enough newsroom employees to fill up much of The Post's 14-hour daily programming. **Radio ads that are already airing promise listeners access to "hundreds of Post reporters, editors and columnists."** Yet Post managers have told us – the people the company is counting on to fill that air time – that our participation is "voluntary." This is wordplay – an appeal to our loyalty to journalism and perhaps to our vanity -- to avoid paying for the professional talent they have already promised to sell.

**Everybody here wants The Post to thrive. But unless Post employees demand fairness, we will all PAY for The Post's success instead of sharing in its ongoing growth.**

**Share your thoughts with the Guild and send your e-mail to Tina today. Let's help The Post grow – TOGETHER!**

Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, [www.wbng.org](http://www.wbng.org), 202-785-3650