



# Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild @ RFA

March 15, 2007

## **Guild, CWA Begin Lobbying to Preserve RFA Funding**

Unit Chair Karma Zurkhang and Vice Chair Liu Hong were on Capitol Hill March 12 as part of the Guild effort to reverse proposed budget cuts that would eliminate the Cantonese language service and slash the Tibetan service.

The two Guild unit officers were accompanied by Eric Geist of The Newspaper Guild-CWA and Alfonso Pollard of CWA as they met the top staff person for the House subcommittee overseeing the RFA budget. Pollard and Newspaper Guild President Linda Foley are expected to meet later with Representative Nita Lowey who chairs the subcommittee.

The Guild has learned the BBG cuts would slash the Tibetan staff by 25 percent (nine positions) and reduce the number of broadcast hours by half. The entire Cantonese staff would be eliminated.

Karma, Hong and Local Representative Paul Reilly also will lobby Congress later this month during the CWA's annual legislative conference.

### **Proposed Cuts Not Limited To Broadcasters**

In addition to cutting broadcasters, the BBG proposed budget also would force cuts elsewhere within RFA. Tech ops would lose two authorized positions, Finance one, and Research, Evaluation and Training also would lose an authorized position.

The Guild is fighting to restore all this funding because we believe even the non-Guild positions are essential for RFA to fulfill its mission.

The Guild is pushing Congress to fully fund RFA for Fiscal Year 2008 and to mandate that BBG maintain current broadcast and staffing levels at RFA. Three years ago when Guild lobbying efforts reversed the BBG's attempt to eliminate the Cantonese service, no extra funds were allocated and BBG ordered RFA to cut elsewhere.

## **Officers Re-elected Without Opposition**

All except one current Guild unit officers have been re-elected for two-year terms without opposition.

Karma Zurkhang of the Tibetan service returns as unit chair; Liu Hong of Cantonese, Ding Shulin of Mandarin and Ko Ko Aung of the Burmese service will serve terms as vice chairs. Poly Sam of the Cambodian service is currently out of the country. No one was nominated for his position, which remains vacant.

## **College Scholarships Available**

All Guild members and their family members are eligible to apply for the Joe Beirne college scholarship. CWA each year awards 30 scholarships worth \$3,000 to current college students or those entering college this fall. Details of the program are on the back of this bulletin.