



September 5, 2007

## Mike Hill Steps Down as Unit Chair

I wanted to let everyone know that I am stepping down as Unit Chair of the Newspaper Guild here at The Sun, effective immediately. This is a bit short of the end of my second two year term that ends in January and I am sorry not to fulfill that responsibility. But, as many of you know, these last nine months have been very challenging ones for me personally. Now, with the contract signed, I need to focus my energies on myself and my family. With leaders like Angie Kuhl, Bill Salganik, Larry Carson, Tiffany Harris and Connie Knox — and a slew of others — the Sun unit remains in excellent hands.

Looking back at the last few months, I am pleased that we were able to negotiate a new contract in an atmosphere characterized by cooperation rather than confrontation. This was not easy. It took a lot of hard work by a lot of people. Its success was due to the solid backing those of us in leadership and on the negotiation committee received from the membership. The result was one of the best Guild contracts signed by any unit anywhere in the country in the last few years. Obviously it contains many provisions that we wish weren't there. If only we could have done something about his ill-advised pay-for-performance system. But I think we did our best. I don't think we could have gotten a better contract with any other tactics. So I think we can all take pride in that.

There is some news to report. The Guild and management have stood down from what would have been a major battle before the National Labor Relations Board. The Guild was seeking a Unit Clarification, which would have provided a union for baltimoresun.com employees. In the negotiated settlement, management agreed to keep several people in the Calvert St. building assigned to baltimoresun.com work in

Guild jurisdiction. Management is also withdrawing its claims for new management positions based on a recent NLRB ruling that seems to expand the definition of management. The Guild continues to believe that The Sun will thrive only if its online operations are fully integrated into the newsroom, all of us under the Guild umbrella. We hope that management will soon come to that conclusion and abandon the complex, clunky system now in place, which is designed not to produce a good website, but just to keep the union out of it.

In early September, the Guild will go before an arbitrator to seek to rescind the increase in health care costs recently passed on to Guild members hired since 1996. Management argues that the contract gives them that right because of a provision negotiated in that year's contract to put newly hired employees at management rates, but the Guild says that the contract clearly states that increases are to be limited to 4 percent a year for anyone currently working at The Sun.

I became active in the Guild for the simple reason that in my 34 years here, it is the organization that consistently acted in the best interests of this newspaper. The Guild has always understood that fighting to make the Sun a good and fair place to work is the best way to insure that this remained a great newspaper. We don't win all of these fights, but they are worth fighting to preserve this institution so important to Baltimore and Maryland and, really, to the nation. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have held this position in Guild leadership. Anything I was able to accomplish was due to your support. I urge you to get involved and continue the struggle to keep The Sun the great newspaper that we have worked so hard to make it.

*-- Michael Hill*

*We commend Mike Hill on his wonderful work as a union leader, when we think of Mike we think of Edwin H. Friedman's quote about leadership. He stated "Leadership can be thought of as a capacity to define oneself to others in a way that clarifies and expands a vision of the future." Mike's activism has cleared a vision for the future as well as maintaining and enhancing your rights as workers at the Baltimore Sun. The Guild applauds Mike in commitment and dedication to service.*

## **HELP MAKE THE SUN RISE**

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
AND CALL FOR SUN UNIT CHAIR  
NOMINATIONS  
AT THE GUILD OFFICE  
415 ST PAUL PLACE**

**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2007 FROM 5PM**

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THE WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE NEWSPAPER GUILD, LOCAL 32035, TNG-CWA  
1100 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET, NW STE 350  
WASHINGTON, DC 20005 ~ [WWW.WBNG.ORG/SUN](http://WWW.WBNG.ORG/SUN) ~ (202) 785-3650