

## Split over money, benefits and job security slowing EFE talks

Disagreement over wage and benefit cuts and job security language have produced drawn-out negotiations between the Guild and EFE News Service.

The contract covering EFE's dozens of U.S. workers expired in 2010, but the terms remain in force. Talks have continued, on and off, for about a year. Madrid-based EFE has proposed pay cuts, plus reducing its employee health-care costs by 15 percent. The taxpayer-supported company says it faces dire cutbacks due to Spain's debt crisis. EFE rejected NMG's last revised wage proposal.

The Guild says EFE's U.S. staff has already sacrificed, with no wage increase since 2008. Union bargainers will propose their own health care cost-savings plan soon.

NMG has been pressing EFE to commit to a job security provision that it won't tolerate discrimination by race, age, creed, sex, national origin, sexual preference and other groups. But EFE's



EFE activist Teresa Bousza, who assisted with bargaining, at the third presidential debate in Boca Raton, Fla.

bargainers have rejected a Guild proposal that addressed concerns the company raised over how workers' discrimination complaints would be handled. NMG's compromise would allow either filing a complaint with a state or federal agency or using internal arbitration, with an independent umpire issuing final, binding decisions. That's a standard feature in U.S. news organization contracts.

EFE opposes having cases heard by neutral umpires with enforcement power, and says it doesn't discriminate.

Among other pending issues, EFE wants no limits on how many interns prepare news. NMG insists interns cannot take work from Guild-covered employees.

The two sides also have discussed expenses, leaves of absence, sick leave and other issues. Meanwhile, the Guild has suggested many initiatives that could boost EFE's profitability in the U.S., one of its prime markets.

## NMG officers to prepare bargaining strategy

Bargaining strategy will be the hot topic when the News Media Guild's senior officers hold their annual winter meeting in February.

The seven Executive Committee members and administrator Kevin Keane will discuss plans for mobilizing staff around the country and negotiating a new contract for about 1,150 AP editorial and technical unit employees.

The officers will start the process of assembling a bargaining team, selecting a mobilizer, scheduling training for mobilizers around the country, surveying members on bargaining priorities and lining up consultants on issues such as benefits.

Guild officers began developing initial tactics during the summer meeting of the Executive Committee and the 16-member Representative Assembly, the Guild's legislative body, last August.

The Guild already has ratcheted up efforts to keep union-covered staffers better informed on key issues and on the union's work enforcing our contracts, through more frequent posts to our

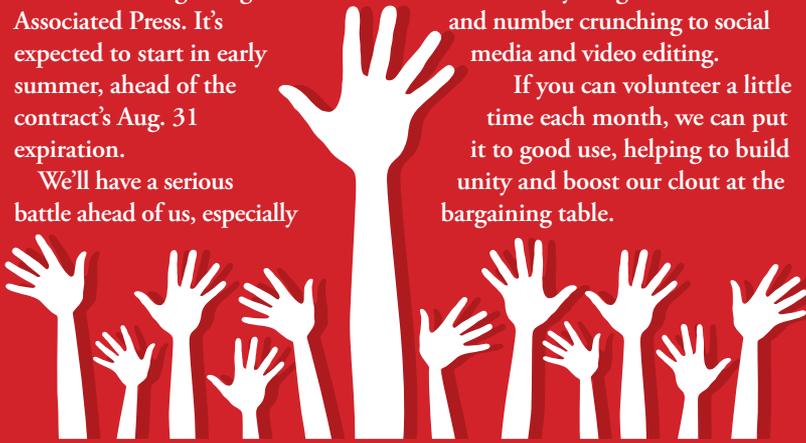
### Volunteers needed

NMG officers and activists will soon begin planning strategy and making other preparations for contract bargaining with The Associated Press. It's expected to start in early summer, ahead of the contract's Aug. 31 expiration.

We'll have a serious battle ahead of us, especially

on economic issues such as salary and health plan costs. So we'd like some help from our huge pool of staffers skilled at everything from research and number crunching to social media and video editing.

If you can volunteer a little time each month, we can put it to good use, helping to build unity and boost our clout at the bargaining table.



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website and our pages on Twitter, @NMGAP, and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/supportAPworkers](http://www.facebook.com/supportAPworkers). The Guild also is planning a drive to get more people signed up for our Shoptalk discussion

group, and we will soon be starting a new recruiting campaign to boost our team's clout at the bargaining table.

At the August meeting in Washington, the Representative Assembly

unanimously passed this year's budget for Guild operations.

The \$1,020,960 budget, for the fiscal year running through next September, covers staff salaries, office expenses, grievance and legal expenses, money set aside for bargaining and other items.

The new budget is up \$45,681, or 4.7 percent, from the allocation for the 2011-12 fiscal year, which the union ended slightly under budget due to tight cost controls. That included renegotiating the lease on the Guild's office, which reduced rent by 21 percent.

The EC and RA officers also discussed the increasing staff workload, outsourcing of some photography work long done by union-covered staff and AP requiring some solo correspondents and technicians to work from home — issues that likely will be discussed during bargaining.

The RA re-elected Minneapolis newsman Steve Karnowski, the Midwest representative, as its chairman. Northeast Representative Mary Esch, a newswoman in Albany, was re-elected as vice-chairman.

### Guild presses 'unreasonable' job duties case

▶ *The News Media Guild has filed a grievance to protect a newsman whose job security is threatened by imposition of new, unreasonable duties, a contract violation.*

After a dozen years with The Associated Press, this Interactives Department newsman was assigned "developer" job duties instead of graphics work in 2011.

Previously, his supervisor repeatedly praised the newsman, writing that he had "a lot of potential" in an e-mail with his 2010 evaluation. Months earlier, the supervisor endorsed him for a Gramling Award, calling his desire to learn new skills "inspiring."

But within weeks of being required to perform developer duties, the staffer was told he was unsuited for the job and should go elsewhere.

NMG's contract prohibits requiring

staffers to perform unreasonable job duties. An AP policy bars suspending or disciplining employees who can't perform new job duties for which they're not trained.

Yet the newsman was expected to meet developer position requirements, including:

- Expertise in contemporary web design
- Fluency in HTML, CSS, XML and Javascript
- Familiarity with tablet/mobile development, web APIs and "visualization" technology,
- Ability to integrate data, audio and video into "interactive experiences."

"It's alarming that AP feels a newsperson could be disciplined for not performing those job duties," said NMG President Martha Waggoner.

Instead of giving the Interactives newsman hands-on instruction, the AP told him to buy the book, "Learn to Program." He had to read several chapters at home each week, take tests and submit them to his supervisor for grading.

The newsman then received some e-mails about his lack of developer skills and an appraisal with an "unacceptable" rating. That's rarely used: Less than 1 percent of employees evaluated each year get an unacceptable rating.



From left: Jason Dearen, Haven Daly, Paul Elias, Terry Chea, Louise Chu and Garance Burke were among the members who joined Guild recruiting coordinator AJ Connelly, center, to talk shop in San Francisco.

## Recruiting on the road

*AP Business News shop steward Eileen "AJ" Connelly's three-month recruiting project for the Guild last year took her from Spokane to Atlanta, from Boston to Los Angeles, and to more than a dozen other cities. She reports:*

I had the privilege of meeting with about 100 Guild members and more than 40 non-members. I came away amazingly impressed with the dedication our colleagues demonstrate every day.

I did a lot of talking, but even more listening. I heard similar concerns and worries from my union brothers and sisters throughout the country. We're all working harder than ever, trying to maintain the report with thinner staffs. And we're all worried about what's ahead for the company.

We have many loyal Guild members who are doing everything possible to support our union. Many non-members I spoke with also said they support our goals, and quite a few mobilized during the last negotiations. Some even still have t-shirts on their chairs or buttons on their bulletin boards. However, their support often wasn't enough to get them to sign a union card and pay dues.

I also learned that we work alongside a good number of people who have misconceptions about what the Guild stands for, what we can do and how important it is for us to stick together. Not a few think they're better off on their own — at least until problems arise.

With the help of many, we signed up about 25 new members as a result of the project. That was short of our goal, but a good start on expanding our membership.

I finished the project with the conviction that it's essential to the Guild's survival to make it clear to members and non-members why our union is valuable, and to increase communication among all our colleagues. We've had some important, job-saving victories in the past year that we haven't talked about enough. And we have some significant challenges ahead that we must be prepared to address in smart, forward-thinking ways.

It's vital to remember that the "union" isn't the office in New York or the officers scattered in bureaus around the country. It's us. Each of us as members must make an effort to talk with our colleagues and convince those who have held out to join.

It's also vital to engage our members old and young in some strategizing about what comes next. We have to be prepared to meet the challenges the company and the industry are facing. It's going to take our collective creativity and dedication to keep our voice strong heading into this year's negotiations. What gives me hope is the amount of both I saw as I traveled.



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## UPI staff contract extension brings big raise

News Media Guild-represented UPI staff bargained raises of up to 15 percent and a new health insurance plan under a contract extension running through Dec. 31. Ratified last November, it kept all other terms the same.

All employees received two three-percent raises: one retroactive to their 2102 anniversary date, another on their 2013 anniversary. Staffers who took the negotiated 14-percent pay cut in 2010 will have it completely restored, through raises of 5 percent

last year, 4.5 percent starting in late November and 4.5 percent this coming November.

A new high-deductible insurance plan went into effect Jan. 1. Employees with dependent coverage, for example, have a \$4,000 deductible, with insurance kicking in after that's met. UPI makes two deposits over time into new employee health savings accounts, equaling each staffer's full deductible. Employees can deposit pre-tax dollars and roll over balances each year.

UPI now pays less of the difference between monthly premiums for single and dependent coverage, but since the new plan costs less, most employees saw premiums decline.

Single-plan employees now pay \$54.80 a month, down from \$107.90; those on employee-spouse plans pay \$307.20 a month, down from \$388.50, and those on an employee-and-children plan pay \$262.80 a month, down from \$291.30. Those with family coverage pay slightly more, \$515.60 a month, up from \$496.30.



Steve Karnowski, chair of the News Media Guild's Representative Assembly, Associated Press staffer Patrick Condon and Tony Kennedy, reporter for the Star Tribune, get ready to cut the cake at a fall party welcoming AP staffers to new digs in the Star Tribune building.

## NMG NOTEBOOK

### Longtime NMG officer, steward Margasak retires

Washington shop steward Larry Margasak, a legendary Guild recruiter and organizer, retired on Jan. 31 after 47 years at the AP.

Margasak has long been a fixture on Capitol Hill, covering Congressional debates and political intrigues, most recently the delay in approving Hurricane Sandy aid and the handling of information after the fatal attack on the Benghazi consulate.

Margasak served on the Guild's Representative Assembly for three decades, including a long stretch as either chairman or vice chairman. He's united staff in departments across the Washington bureau and helped generate impressive turnout for mobilizing actions, including the huge Newseum rally during bargaining in 2011.

"Larry will be remembered as a Guild giant for his tenacity in representing the rights of his colleagues, mobilizing members around important issues and recruiting," said Guild president Martha Waggoner.

### NMG awards annual Patrick Sherlock scholarships

The Guild has awarded its annual Patrick Sherlock scholarships, chosen by lottery in November.

Two \$2,000 scholarships went to Benjamin Jennings, son of Albany newswoman Mary Esch, and Lilly Wellenbach, daughter of photographer Patricia Wellenbach of Portland, Maine. Benjamin studies computer science at College of Saint Rose in Albany. Lilly attends Williams College, working toward a liberal arts degree.

Elizabeth Josie, niece of Washington broadcast newswoman Jennifer Garske King, won the \$1,000 wild card scholarship. That goes to a Guild member's relative, friend or co-worker. Elizabeth studies wildlife biology at University of Idaho.

NMG awards three scholarships annually to Guild members in good standing. They're named for the late Patrick Sherlock, a former Guild president and AP staffer in bureaus in New York, Concord, N.H., and Portland, Maine.

### Guild aids staff impacted by Hurricane Sandy

The News Media Guild stepped up to help victims of Hurricane Sandy, which damaged homes and destroyed belongings of numerous AP employees.

NMG's executive committee voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 each to the AP Disaster Relief Fund and the CWA Disaster Relief Fund for Hurricane Sandy. In addition, some AP staffers gave time and money to help colleagues or strangers after the late-October "superstorm."

Staff members can still make tax-deductible donations to AP's fund via a link at <http://inside.ap.org>. They're matched by the company, which created the fund after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to assist staff worldwide recovering from disasters not covered by insurance or other benefits.

Mail donations for the CWA Fund to: CWA Disaster Relief-Hurricane Sandy Fund, Secretary-Treasurer's Office, 501 3rd St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Employees who suffered losses from "Superstorm" Sandy can apply for aid from the AP's fund.

Union members living in FEMA-designated disaster areas are eligible for money from CWA's fund. Members can call NMG at 212-869-9290 or write to [kkeane@newsmediaguild.org](mailto:kkeane@newsmediaguild.org) for an application.

## S.C. reporter Davenport dies after 2-year battle with cancer



**Jim Davenport**  
Worked at the AP  
for 13 years

Jim Davenport, a tenacious political reporter for The Associated Press in South Carolina and an unwavering supporter of the News Media Guild, passed away at the end of 2012 after a two-year battle with cancer.

Davenport, 54, was known for his dedication and focus on uncovering what governors and other politicians were doing for the people who elected them and how they were spending taxpayers' money.

In his 13 years at the AP, Davenport advocated for South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act, reporting on then-Gov. Mark Sanford's improper use of state aircraft

and other wrongdoing by officials. Davenport was a master at cultivating sources, and even politicians praised him for his fairness.

In October, South Carolina's Gov. Nikki Haley came to his home in Columbia to present him with the state's highest civilian honor, The Order of the Palmetto. And last March, the South Carolina Senate honored Davenport with a resolution recognizing his "distinguished service" to the state's citizens.

"The guy wrote amazing copy and got sources to talk when no one else could," colleague Meg Kinnard Hinson wrote. "He believed in the mission that is behind the work that we do.

And working with him has made us all better journalists, and better people."

"Jim was truly the heart and soul of the Guild here in South Carolina. He truly believed in the good that comes from employees having a voice in the debate," she added. "No one wore their NMG T-shirt or button, even on non-mobilization days, with more pride than Dava."

Davenport, who was married and had a daughter, urged his AP colleagues last spring in a column in WiReport to do more to support the Guild and to be grateful for the benefits it has won for staffers.

## Covering the Summer Olympics

In the end, swimmer Michael Phelps finished his Olympic career as the most-decorated athlete of all time, Gabby Douglas made history with all-round gold in gymnastics, Usain Bolt remained "the fastest man alive," and London welcomed the world to the Summer Games. AP's sportswriters were there to cover it all.

At right: Sportswriter Jimmy Golen of Boston with a member of the Queen's Grenadier Guards outside of the beach volleyball venue at Horse Guards Parade.

Far right top: Sportswriters Janie McCauley of San Francisco and Jimmy Golen of Boston in St. James Park, near the beach volleyball venue.

Far right bottom: Sportswriters Brian Mahoney of New York (l) and Tom Withers of Cleveland (center, rear) meeting some passionate basketball fans from Lithuania.



*Clockwise from upper left:*

Sportswriters Teresa Walker of Nashville and Fred Lief of the New York sports desk at the opening ceremony. The spectacle was directed by Oscar winner Danny Boyle and featured appearances by Queen Elizabeth II, Rowan Atkinson and Sir Paul McCartney.

Sportswriters Tom Withers of Cleveland (l) and Brian Mahoney of New York in front of Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament on the River Thames.

Miami sports writer Steve Wine at Wimbledon, where he witnessed Scotsman Andy Murray's gold-medal victory over Roger Federer.

Sharing some Turkish appetizers in London on the final night of the Olympics, (clockwise from left) Bernie Wilson (San Diego), Teresa Walker (Nashville), Jenna Fryer (Auto Racing), Syd Fryer, Tim Dahlberg (columnist), Donna Dahlberg, Nancy Armour (National Writer), Jim Litke (columnist), Jimmy Golen (Boston).

# A closer look at AP's new social media policy

AP's updated Social Media Policy, the company says, is designed to ensure news is balanced and staffers consider AP's right to exclusive news before tweeting.

The guidelines must be consistent with AP's Statement of News Values and Principles — the Ethics Policy, a union-negotiated agreement. It states the AP cannot impinge on employees' rights under the National Labor Relations Act, which says union-covered employees may act collectively for "mutual aid and protection."

The Social Media Policy states opinions or personal information employees disclose about themselves or colleagues may be linked to AP's name, even if staffers restrict their pages to viewing only by friends.

However, publicly voicing personal opinions about AP policies or employment conditions is protected speech under the NLRA and often happens during contract negotiations. The union does advise employees not to disparage AP's "product" because that may not be viewed as NLRA-protected speech.

The policy forbids employees from posting proprietary or confidential material. That could be stretched to cover most anything, but it cannot bar employees from

discussing jobs and working conditions.

However, the policy bars employees "from declaring their views on contentious public issues in any public forum" or taking part in "organized action in support of causes or movements."

The Guild believes that statement is too broad and potentially tramples rights under the NLRA. Employees may support other unions on strike and participate in rallies connected to being a union member. Some members covering such a rally may ask AP if they can participate. The Guild believes they can, but should contact the union first.

Some other vague statements in the policy could lead to inconsistency in how it's administered. The Guild wants it applied uniformly.

The company policy prevents managers from "friending" subordinates but lets managers accept Facebook "friend" requests initiated by subordinates. However, employees should note that friending one manager could open a window to the pages of hundreds of their colleagues who are "friends" but don't want their posts viewed by managers.

## Long history behind NMG

When the News Media Guild starts negotiating a new contract for AP employees this year, it will build on its history of advocating for staff for more than 75 years.

New York columnist Heywood Broun founded the American Newspaper Guild in 1933. AP didn't recognize ANG, though, until a 1937 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Associated Press v. N.L.R.B.* The court held that the First Amendment didn't give media employers immunity from labor laws.

The Wire Service Guild was founded in San Francisco, with AP staffer Leonard Milliman as its first president, as Local 222 of ANG, now The Newspaper Guild. It represented workers at AP, plus United Press and International News Service (which merged in 1958).

By 1995, TNG merged with the Communications Workers of America and WSG became CWA Local 31222. It was renamed the News Media Guild in 2002. Besides representing AP and UPI workers, since 2005 NMG has represented employees of Spanish language news service EFE.

## Important News

- ▶ **NMG officers strategize as talks approach**
- ▶ **UPI ratifies new contract; EFE talks drag on**
- ▶ **Recruiting project brings new members, insights**

## WiReport

News Media Guild Local 31222  
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# Why I Joined THE GUILD

By Laura Wides

I joined the News Media Guild soon after I was first hired in Los Angeles about a decade ago, right after I completed my probation period.

I'd returned to the U.S. two years before, after working as a stringer for The Associated Press in Guatemala, covering the end of that country's civil war.

Upon my return, I was told to get some local experience before AP would consider hiring me full time. So I did, and I was thrilled when the Los Angeles bureau finally hired me as a general assignment and environmental reporter.



The decision to join the Guild was an easy one. The Guild was willing to go to bat for me, so why should I expect my colleagues to foot the bill for me?

I have a lot of respect for my editors and managers, and maybe someday I'll be one. But that doesn't change the fact that much of what we take for granted in our workplace conditions was won through the hard work of our union — things like job security protections, longer vacations and same-sex partner benefits, to name a few.

Sure things have changed, but they haven't really

changed that much. I love what I get to cover, and I love working at the AP. And I feel better knowing I've got a strong union behind me.

For several years, I had the privilege of serving as shop steward in Miami, where I am the Hispanic affairs writer. I can happily say that nearly all of our eligible staff in Florida are now Guild members.

I'm also heartened that in the last couple of years, I've seen new reporters take interest in helping shape the future of the Guild.

*Editor's Note: Wides-Munoz is currently on leave on a Nieman Fellowship, studying the nexus between immigration and economics in Europe and the U.S.*