

POST GUILD UNIT

FORUM...



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

March 27, 2008

Guild Concludes Buyout Bargaining Wins Financial and Eligibility Improvements

The Guild on Wednesday concluded bargaining with Post management over the terms of the company's proposed buyout after winning improvements in the financial terms of the offer and increasing the number of employees eligible to take it.

Guild negotiators pressed hard to rectify the grossly unfair eligibility rules proposed by The Post. The Post plan made virtually everyone in the newsroom who is at least 50 years old and has five years of service eligible for the buyout, while restricting eligibility to just a few people in the commercial departments and none at all in advertising sales where many employees have dedicated their lives to The Post for three decades and more.

Ultimately, the Guild was able to add employees in the Advertising Preprint department – the result, in part, of employees in that department attending some of the bargaining sessions to make the case for why the company could save money by including them and restructuring the way their current work is done.

The Post did not shift its unfair stance on advertising sales employees. Nor did it change its exclusion of employees who work on the National Weekly edition and the Los Angeles Times – Washington Post news service, who Post managers claimed were not technically part of the newsroom. Under the terms of our labor contract, the Guild has limited bargaining rights over the terms of a buyout compared to the rights it has during formal contract bargaining. In mid-contract buyout bargaining, the Guild has a window of 10 days to negotiate with Post management. After that, management is free to proceed with the buyout after including any improvements negotiated during the 10 days.

Nonetheless, in addition to getting the administrative staff associate and general staff associate included from Advertising Preprints, the Guild succeeded in changing the buyout terms so that part-timers in news and commercial departments who are eligible for the buyout but were initially not eligible for retiree health insurance will now get that insurance if they worked full-time hours during all of 2007.

On the financial front, the Guild won an increase in the pre-Age 65 Annual Supplement that comes along with the pension until retirees hit their 65th birthday, to \$4,000 a year from the \$3,500 initially proposed by Post management. The Guild also won an increase in the Cash Pension Supplement, which gets paid out annually for life to retirees in addition to their pension. The Post had initially proposed \$210 for each year of service per year, and stuck to that figure until the last day of bargaining when it acquiesced to the Guild's call to raise it to \$225. For a 30-year veteran, that means the annual supplement will amount to \$6,750 instead of \$6,300.

The Guild also proposed, and won, an agreement that The Post will provide free financial and health insurance counseling for anyone taking the buyout who wants it. The Post also agreed to a Guild proposal that will allow employees who take the buyout to donate unused vacation days to employees on approved medical leave who have used up their own sick and vacation leave. Post negotiators rejected a Guild proposal that would have allowed employees taking the buyout to also donate unused sick leave to those in need. (*over*)

Post managers said they intend to get personalized buyout proposals to eligible employees by March 31 or April 1. Each employee's package will spell out what that employee would get from the buyout. From that point, employees will have 45 days to make a decision. They will also have a seven day period after that to change their mind.

A special note to Advertising Operations Production Creative Artists, Advertising Operations Desktop Publishers and Senior Computer Operators/Computer Operators:

The buyout plan calls for allowing only a limited number of employees in these classifications to take the buyout (three, four and three, respectively), The Post has said it may allow more, if more apply. So if you want to take the buyout, you should fill out the forms even if you think you are not one of the most senior three or four people in the department.

Important: Some employees have already been called into their managers' offices for "friendly chats" about what those employees' plans are. Remember, the buyout is **voluntary**. Yes, the company has some leeway to change employees' responsibilities, and it can be helpful to know if changes are afoot as you decide what to do. But The Post cannot discriminate against classes of employees – say, employees who are 50 years old or older with at least five years of service. It is interesting that to date, at least, the Guild is unaware of any employees who are NOT eligible for the buyout being asked by their managers what their future plans are, or being told that they may soon have to take some unsavory job change. If you are eligible and this happens to you, contact the Guild or any of the officers or reps listed below.

-- Rick Weiss and Allan Lengel

The Guild is there for you. Are you there for the Guild?

To join the Guild or for further information, please contact any of the following members or Guild representatives:

Darlene Meyer	334-7007	JoAnn Goslin	334-7217
Rick Weiss	334-5514	Stephen Richardson	334-7730
Ann Marie Ditchey	334-5744	Sandi Randall	334-6938
Andreia Douglas	334-6353	David Robie	334-4313
Robert Pierre	334-5607	Craig Hall	(202) 306-6507
Dita Smith	334-7517	Rick Ehrmann	(202) 785-3650 ext 14
Alan Lengel	334-5556	Joe Kahraman	(202) 785-3650 ext 16
Chris Schoppa	334-6954		