



## Contract Extension Offer & Membership Meeting

March 4, 2011

Sun managers invited Guild leaders to an off-the-record discussion about upcoming bargaining in mid-December. That discussion developed into more off-the-record back and forth --- with both sides going back to their leaders for discussion and input.

This is not the usual way for us to do business with the company. Typically in bargaining years, we start talking to you the members in January both in small departmental meetings and in larger membership meetings. We survey you to find out what's on your minds. We put a draft proposal together and ask you to endorse it. Then we begin bargaining with Sun representatives, typically at the start of May, and go until we have an agreement.

But this year, both sides had reasons to try to reach an early settlement of the contract if that were possible.

We think we have done this and will be presenting it at a membership meeting on **Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Ignatius hall, 2 blocks north on Calvert St.** (Signs will be posted.)

**We will ask you to vote on it.** If you agree to it, the extension would take effect on June 27. If you turn it down, we will begin preparing for full bargaining.

Here are the key points to the extension:

- It is a three-year extension of the current contract. It would go into effect June 27, 2011 with an expiration date of June 29, 2014.
- There would be a two-year wage freeze. There would be raises in the third year --- \$10/week on the scales and \$15/week per member in the pay-for-performance pool. People hired on the steps would continue to advance on the steps on their anniversary of hire, getting raises as they go up, but would experience the two-year wage freeze once they reached the top of the pay scale.
- The fee for parking in the garage at 601 N. Calvert St. would be reduced by \$10/month. This decrease will be effective the first day of the first full bi-weekly pay period following execution of the agreement. Also, there would be no increase in parking rates during the term of extension.
- Baltimore Sun Company Retirement Plan pension freeze. Pension benefits remain intact, but the benefit is frozen at current levels. Employees hired after June 24, 2011, would not be included in the pension plan.
- The company's contribution to the 401(k) would rise to 3.5% percent, up from 2.5%. This increase is effective on June 24. Each member receives this contribution even if they do not contribute from their own pay to the 401(k).
- The Guild pledges not to challenge The Sun over positions outside the bargaining unit with the National Labor Relations Board, absent significant changes in those positions for a period that begins March 11 and continues for six months from the expiration of the current contract: June 26.
- The titles Videographer and Web Designer from the commercial side of baltimoresun.com (currently held by three employees) will be included in our bargaining unit. With their inclusion, the Guild will then represent all aspects of the web operation.

**All other provisions of the contract --- including sick leave, layoff language, vacations and shift differentials remain unchanged.**

As you know, Guild locals elsewhere in the country have faced tough choices such as furloughs, cuts to their wages and layoffs out of seniority order. While the provisions in this extension are not all that we would want, they are also not all the Sun/Tribune would want.

**Because you all might have questions, Guild leaders will have Q&A sessions:**

- **Calvert St. cafeteria on Monday, March 7th at 5 p.m.**
- **Sun Park cafeteria Tuesday, March 8 at 11 a.m.**

All members are encouraged to attend and ask questions. If you can't attend one of these sessions, please contact any of the Guild leaders listed with their contact information on the back of this bulletin.

**OVER**

And, as we mentioned above, we will formally present this proposal to you the members at a membership meeting at **St. Ignatius Hall on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.** You will be able to review the comprehensive extension proposal, including all language, as handouts at the meeting.

A reminder: you must be a member to attend this meeting and to vote. If you are not a member and wish to join the Guild, we will have membership cards available at St. Ignatius on Wednesday.

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