

Bulletin...



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



Chicago Tribune

A Seat at the Table: Guild Named to Creditors' Committee in Trib Bankruptcy

The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild-CWA was named as one of nine members of the creditors' committee in the bankruptcy filing by Tribune Co. The relatively unusual inclusion of a union on a creditors' committee follows the Guild's success in securing Tribune's commitment to pay promised severance and health care benefits to Guild-represented employees at the Baltimore Sun who recently accepted company buy-outs. The payments were threatened by Tribune's filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization. Severance payments and health benefits were cut off for Tribune employees who were not covered by union contracts.

A creditors' committee monitors a reorganization under the bankruptcy laws, and can participate in developing a plan for the company to get out of bankruptcy. The committee can hire its own lawyers, accountants and other professionals, and costs are paid by the company that is reorganizing.

"A creditors' committee is an integral part of the Chapter 11 bankruptcy process and can play a major role in shaping the Chapter 11 case, particularly in negotiating, or even proposing a plan of reorganization for the debtor. It has the right to be heard on any issue in the Chapter 11 case," according to an online article by the law firm Wiley Rein. "We're extremely happy that we'll now be in a position to watch out for our members' best interests," said Cet Parks, Guild executive officer. "And we're appreciative that Tribune will honor its commitments to the several dozen employees who accepted severance packages after years of dedicated service to the Sun." Bernie Lunzer, president of The Newspaper Guild-CWA, "Our ability to get a seat on the committee ensures that the voice of Tribune Company's workers will get heard in the proceedings."

Members of the creditors' committee include major banks and suppliers, including JPMorgan Chase Bank, Merrill Lynch Capital Corp., Deutsche Bank Trust, Warner Bros. Television, Vertis and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Co. Robert Paul, of Zwerdling, Paul, Kahn & Wolly, and Bill Salganik, president of the local, will represent the Guild on the committee.

Guild Meeting!

As we all know, these are turbulent times. Find out more about what is coming up and what the Guild is doing. Come to the next **Guild membership meeting February 3rd anytime between 12 pm-2 pm.** If you only have a short time that is fine, just come by for 20-30 minutes to get caught up. We'll have beverages and cookies.

Notice of Nominations. At the meeting nominations will be taken for the following Post Guild Unit Positions: Co-Chair, Commercial, Co-Chair News, Vice Chair Commercial Day, Vice Chair Commercial Night, Vice Chair News Day, Secretary, Two Delegates to WBNG Executive Council.

The Guild offices are next door to the Post, at 1100 15th St, Suite 350.

Guild Negotiates Buyouts in First-Ever Layoffs At the Washington Post

For the first time in Post history, the Guild has received notice of "economy dismissals" (layoffs) of eight employees: six from the Community Advertising Unit, one from Advertising Preprints, and one from Marketing Research. At the same time, the Post has offered these employees the option of a very limited "window plan" (buyout). Under the contract provisions, the Guild is negotiating with the Post over the terms of the buyout. Under our contract, economy dismissals or layoffs must be based on seniority.

What's the Latest on Post.com?

As the Post moves forward with the integration of print and internet operations, we have in place a process for advance notification of significant changes. These include meetings with management to discuss and act upon changes as they occur, and pre-bargaining meetings to attempt to resolve major issues, such as integration and Guild coverage for web workers. The Guild has been meeting with the Post on small scale integration experiments, such as one that will be implemented shortly in Sports, where several WPNI staffers will work side by side with our members in the newsroom.

Some have asked what is happening at other newspaper online integrations. The NY Guild recently ratified their New York Times digital contract which included pay parity with the newspaper, training programs for Web Producer, Web Designer and Video Journalist job categories, and making digital employees eligible to participate in the Time's Distinguished Journalism Program.