

GUILD LEADER

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Deal includes parking for all part-timers:

Members to Vote on Pension Change

The Guild has negotiated an agreement under which the Journal will provide free parking to all part-time Guild members, in exchange for the Guild's acceptance of the freezing of the pension plan.

Guild members must approve this agreement before it can go into effect, and the Guild Executive Committee recommends a "yes" vote. **Voting will take place at a special membership meeting at noon Feb. 13.** During the meeting members will have chance to ask questions about the agreement.

The company, as you know, wants to stop making any new payments into the pension plan after March 31. Employees would get whatever had been accrued in their pension plan as of that date. Going forward, employees would rely on their 401K plans, and the vagaries of the stock market, for any additional retirement savings. The majority of Guild members--about 325—would be affected by the proposed changes.

The company also offered several enhancements to ease the effect of this change, and they will be especially valuable for employees within 10 years of retirement age. For others it will be loss. Each Guild member will receive, probably this week, a detailed accounting of how the changes would affect him or her. The company plans to give pension-plan participants credit for five additional years of service, make additional payments into your 401k, and increase its regular contributions to the 401k.

The Guild contract does not allow the company to change the pension plan without negotiation. In talks with the company, the Guild

leadership sought to achieve a benefit beyond the sweeteners that were already being offered, and won the parking concession, ending a hardship for 36 Guild members.

The Guild Executive Committee regrets the loss of the pension plan. It was a promise to employees that a fixed amount of money would be provided upon retirement. With the proposed changes that promise will be gone. But we recognize that this is a trend sweeping the country. Many companies have killed their pensions and walked away. Belo has offered additional payments that will be a good deal for some workers, and better than nothing for others.

The Guild recommends a "yes" vote for these reasons:

- Our contract expires at the end of this year anyway. If we reject the pension changes now, they will be at the top of the company's agenda when we enter negotiations in the fall. Belo is eager to have the pension changes adopted company-wide.
- If we reject the pension changes now, the company might not offer us the sweeteners – the five years credit and extra payments – when the issue comes up in bargaining. We might also lose the free parking for part-timers. The company is not obliged to offer these enhancements again once we turn them down.
- The free parking for part-timers is a significant benefit for the people affected; it will save part-timers an average of \$1,000 a year.
- We don't believe we can stop a national trend away from pension plans. We think we have the best deal we can get right now.