

GUILD LEADER

On the web at www.riguild.org

Volume XX, Issue 2

Providence Newspaper Guild TNG-CWA Local 31041

February 17, 2009

Waiting game continues:

What We Know, What We Don't

Guild members are anxiously waiting for information on the latest round of layoffs, fueling speculation, rumor and often fear.

So far, the Guild has been provided with minimal information. There is much we don't know – the who, when and how of layoffs.

The lack of information has fueled many rumors. None of which have been verified, and most of which are outright false.

We do know that job cuts will occur throughout the Journal, hitting Guild and non-Guild, management and rank-and-file workers.

We know that local executives have been engaged in discussions with corporate leaders in Dallas over the extent of cuts.

We know that Publisher Howard Sutton was scheduled to be in Dallas yesterday.

We know that A.H. Belo's 2008 and fourth quarter financial reports will be made public today.

We know that all the layoffs will be completed by March 6.

We speculate we will get word this week, so that employees receive two weeks notice.

The Guild and the Company have identified two contractually consistent ways to implement layoffs.

Method A: Start with the least senior people and work up. This would hit part-timers first. (Note: there are no part-timers left in the News Department)

Method B: Identify the jobs the company considers to be over staffed. The least senior person in the eliminated job could bump to a position they are "competent" to perform. The bumped employee could also bump to another

position.

If there is bumping, several standards would be used to determine "competence:"

- Has the employee previously performed the job at the Journal?

- Has the Journal trained an employee to perform the job?

- Has the employee performed the job at another company? If so, how recently?

- Does the employee have outside training in the job? If so, how recently?

- In applying these criteria it will be necessary to determine the essential functions of the job.

We also know there is a difference of opinion between the Guild and the company over whether the company can cut the pay of an employee who bumps into a lower-paid job. The contract says there can be no pay cuts unless someone voluntarily moves to a lower paid job. The Journal maintains bumping is voluntary. The Guild maintains it is involuntary. (The Guild believes a "choice" between bumping and being unemployed with minimal severance and no medical insurance is not a voluntary choice.)

We do not know if or to what extent this would be an issue, but the Guild and the Journal have discussed resolving this issue, if it occurs, with expedited arbitration.

A.H. Belo Financial Update

A conference call with Wall Street analysts and A.H. Belo executives will be simultaneously Webcast on the Company's Web site today at 1:30 p.m. at www.ahbelo.com/invest.