

# **Guild Updates June 2008**

## **Guild Wins Pension Arbitration**

In an arbitration ruling received May 21, an arbitrator ruled that the Telegram & Gazette violated the Guild contract when it modified the pension formula in January 2007. The pension change significantly reduced pension benefits for employees hired after January 1, 2007. Under the arbitrator's decision the company has 90 days to restore the pension benefits. More important that the immediate case, which only affects about 20 people at this point, the decision reaffirms the Guild's position that the contract does not allow the company to make unilateral changes in benefits in key benefits without bargaining.

## **Buyouts Part 1: Seven Jobs Cuts**

Seven Guild represented employees have elected to take buyouts, six in the news departments and one in circulation. In addition, one news manager is leaving.

## **Buyouts Part 2: More Circulation Cuts & More Conflict**

The company is seeking to cut the number of circulation district managers by three more positions. As a result the buyout program is being extended to district managers with five or more years of service. (Previously an employee needed 10 years service to qualify for the buyouts. One district manager took the earlier buyout.) The effect of the new offer is to make buyouts available to nine additional district managers. In the event not enough district managers take the buyout, the company has indicated it will resort to layoffs.

During bargaining on May 20 the Guild and the company appeared to be in agreement on the new buyout program until the Guild said there was a need to bargain over the territory reassignments that resulted from the reductions in force. The Guild is seeking to allow district managers to have a say in the selection of their territories. The company says it is unwilling to give up unilateral control and would skip the buyouts and go immediately to layoffs if the Guild did not agree.

The Guild is in the process of surveying district managers regarding their options.

## **Company Planning Newsroom Reorganization**

After months of rumor and speculation, the company has begun revealing details of a planned restructuring of its news operations. Elements of the plans include earlier production schedules to ensure a 5:30 a.m. delivery of the paper and shifting staffing to put more content on the T&G web site in the morning. The company is also looking at closing at least two bureau offices and changing how several sections of the paper are staffed. The Worcester unit leadership is reviewing the company's plans and is seeking to identify member concerns.