



# The Frontier Reporter

Fall Edition 2023

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## An emotional day as Buffalo News presses run for the last time on Sept. 30

*By Mark Sommer* – A desk with cake, pizza and wings couldn’t salve the wounds of 120 union pressmen, paper handlers and engravers working their last day as copies of The Buffalo News printed in Buffalo rolled off the presses for the last time on Sept. 30.

Mark Hanover, whose 34-year career as a graphic designer, engraver, and finally, plate maker ended that Saturday, said it was an emotional day for some employees who were members of eight labor unions.

“It was kind of bittersweet,” said Hanover, a Buffalo Newspaper Guild shop steward and one of two production members in the local to lose their jobs. “Some of the people in Prepress were in tears. Jessica Sherman, the Prepress supervisor, was pretty upset because she put her life into that place.”

More than a dozen Newspaper Guild members and supporters were outside the Scott Street presses throughout the day, offering words of encouragement and thanks as the production workers began their last shift or stepped out of the building having completed their last.

Hanover’s shift, which used to end at 3 a.m., finished at 6:30 p.m. that day, a result of successively earlier deadlines in past weeks as The News geared up to meet new press times. The change was necessitated by Lee Enterprises’ decision to print the paper on The Plain Dealer presses in Cleveland starting Oct. 1.

Uncertainty over the loss of union jobs was readily apparent that day, Hanover said.

“Some people were nervous because they didn’t know what they could do from there,” he said. “I was ok with it because I was 64 and close to retirement anyway.”

The layoffs included an additional 10 non-union jobs, believed to be supervisory.

Guild President Jon Harris asked Managing Editor Margaret Kenny in advance if Guild members could go inside the building. She told Harris she had been advised against it.

Lee Enterprises also had a security guard in the parking lot seen taking pictures of union members.

“I wish they would have let some of us in to say goodbye to more people,” Harris said.



*Guild members show up on the last day of local printing of The Buffalo News with thank-you signs and several cases of beer for those working their last day.*

“I didn’t think it was right not to let you guys in,” Hanover said. “That was bullshit. You were every bit a part of what made us a paper.”

Harris was disappointed, though not surprised, by the paper’s minimal coverage of the landmark occasion the next day -- a sole photo by Guild photographer Derek Gee in the left-hand corner of

the City/Region cover, with a QR code to see more photos online.

“We should be transparent with our readers who pay a good amount of money to wake up with us,” Harris said.

Guild leaders Mike McAndrew and Scott Scanlon arrived later in the day to drop off three cases of beer to John Fletch, president of the Mailers Union. Buffalo Brewing Company donated one case.

“It was overwhelmingly sad and just so deeply frustrating, because we know the print product is something the community wants and has served as a livelihood for so many people,” said Guild photographer Libby March. “It was genuinely a poignant afternoon for me.”

A tweet put out by the Guild thanking production workers for their service was seen on X, formerly Twitter, by more than 80,000 people, according to Aaron Besecker, mobilization vice president.

The public seems keenly aware The News is no longer printed in Buffalo, even if ownership prefers not to draw attention to it.

The nearly non-existent next-day coverage of Bills and Sabres games alone makes that hard to ignore.

“Every single day that I talk to people about this I still hear, why is Lee publishing in Cleveland?” McAndrew said.

Guild members stood in front of the old Buffalo News building to mark the last day of the press run. Also there to offer support were Guild alum Bill Flynn, retired city editor, and Chris Fritton, who made posters to commemorate the date and thank production workers, which were given to them.

The unions affected by the layoffs were Buffalo Newspaper Guild-CWA Local 31026; International Association of Machinists 220 CWA District 1; Buffalo Mailers Local 81; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 41; Teamsters New York, Local 2NY; International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 17; International Association of Machinists, Local 330; and Graphic Communications International Union, Local 261.

## Preparations underway for next year’s contract negotiations

*By Sandra Tan* – It’s that time again, and so much is at stake. The Guild is preparing for primary contract negotiations with the company for the second time since Lee Enterprises purchased The Buffalo News. Negotiations are expected to begin within the first couple of months of next year.

We are proud to maintain a contract that has enabled Guild members to build a career here at The Buffalo News, with benefits, wages and working conditions that we have fought hard to protect over the years.

Our contract expires at the end of July, but the collective bargaining agreement includes language that typically has us bargaining within the first few months of the year. That is in our best interests since we will need a long runway to negotiate the best possible deal and mobilize our membership and the community, if necessary.

Before that, however, we need to assemble our negotiating team and begin the process of considering proposals to make to the company and anticipate proposals we could receive. That takes planning, research and conversation.

We ask every member to consider how they can play a role. If you have an interest in serving on the bargaining team – a group that will play a key role in the protection of our workplace, working

conditions, wages and benefits – please contact President Jon Harris ASAP. No prior experience is necessary, just a serious commitment to serve.

We will also be seeking members to join our Mobilization Committee, whose job it will be to engage our members and the broader community when we face unreasonable corporate proposals.

No one who joins the bargaining team or its subcommittees, and does Guild work during work time, will face any loss of pay. The Guild will reimburse the company for your time.

The last time we bargained, the company came to us with more than two dozen proposals aimed at attacking almost everything that matters to us.

Thanks to hard work by the bargaining team and staunch support from our members, we beat back many terrible proposals, safeguarded key pillars of our contract, and secured major gains in digital jurisdiction. We need to be just as committed this time around to develop new proposals that will make our news organization a place where our members can continue to build rewarding careers.

Our union has always been a powerful force in protecting our work and our news organization. We intend to keep it that way. With your help, we will.



## Major Guild happenings since Spring/Summer Edition

- **July 2023** – In keeping with previously announced plans to move printing to Cleveland by Oct. 1, The Buffalo News files a state-mandated WARN notice with the state Labor Department regarding the

elimination of about 130 jobs, including about 118 workers represented by eight different labor unions, including two Guild Prepress members.

- **August 2023** – The Guild also negotiates an enhanced severance deal for two Prepress members, who will receive weekly pay, benefits and 401(k) contributions through Sept. 30, 2024, and then severance, a retention bonus and a health reimbursement account after that, among other terms. Executive Committee commits to continuing to support two Pittsburgh News Guild strikers through the end of the year.
- **September 2023** – The Buffalo News prints its last edition on its downtown printing presses on Sept. 30. Guild members stood outside with thank-you signs to support those who were reporting for their last day of work.



*John Domres Jr., owner of Buffalo Brewing Co., stands with Guild members Trey Wydysz and Scott Scanlon after donating a case of beer for the Guild to give to the Buffalo News Mailers Union as a thank you for their years of work on the last day of the local press run.*

- **October 2023** – The Buffalo News printing operation moves to Cleveland, three hours west, on Oct. 1. Newsroom story deadlines move to mid-afternoon on weekdays and earlier on weekends to accommodate the transportation of the paper back to Buffalo. Executive Committee agrees to merge treasurer and secretary positions and have a single secretary treasurer.
- **November 2023** – Guild provides written and in-person open enrollment assistance to members. Also follows up with the company regarding continued failure to pay cell phone reimbursements to 19 Guild members.

## Comings & Goings from The Buffalo News/Hamburg Sun

### Comings

Debadrita Sur/Editorial  
Michael Bialas/Editorial  
Myisha Harris/District Manager - PT  
Justin Sondel/Hamburg Sun

### Goings

Lou Michel/Editorial  
Caitlin Dewey/Editorial  
Mark Hanover/Prepress  
Ted Wasko/Prepress  
Grant Ashley/Intern  
AJ Franklin/Intern

Johanna Sommer/Intern  
Cole Bambini/Intern  
Joshua Thermidor/Intern  
William Karr/Intern  
Lauren Larsen/Intern  
Sean Bermingham/Intern  
Alva Hill/Accounting  
Jennifer Przybylak/Accounting  
John Harzynski/District Manager - PT  
George Reeser/District Manager - PT  
Richard Noblett/District Manager - PT  
Jasmine Blear/District Manager - PT

## Upcoming meetings

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Dec. 11. The Guild holiday party will be held Dec. 14. More meeting dates will be scheduled in the new year. For an updated meeting schedule, visit: [buffaloguild.org](http://buffaloguild.org)

# Meeting minutes

Meeting minutes in the Frontier Reporter are abridged. To view full minutes, visit [buffaloguild.org](http://buffaloguild.org), select "Meeting Minutes" tab and enter the password. If you need the password, email [aaron.besecker@gmail.com](mailto:aaron.besecker@gmail.com)

## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: June 13, 2023

(Meeting was originally scheduled June 12; Was postponed until June 13)

Present: Vice President Mobilization and Communication Aaron Besecker, Inside Circulation Steward Melissa Burrowes, Editorial Delegate Mike Harrington, President Jon Harris, Treasurer Alva Hill, District Manager Co-Steward Jason Kremblas, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Editorial Alternate Delegate Rachel Lenzi, Secretary Mike McAndrew, Editorial Delegate David Robinson, Editorial Delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial Alternate Delegate Mark Sommer, Past-President Sandra Tan, Vice President Contract Administration Steve Watson, District Manager Co-Steward Rick Wiorkowski, Editorial Delegate Trey Wydysh.

Absent: District Manager Co-Steward Erik Bridenbaker, Typographical Steward Mark Hanover, Editorial Alternate Delegate Libby March.

5:34 p.m. Harris called the meeting to order.

Approval of minutes of the May 8, 2023 Executive Committee meeting

Motion by Tan; Second by Wydysh; Approved.

### President's Report - Jon Harris

Since the last meeting, we've been awaiting further details regarding the various outsourcing plans the company has made, including production being moved to Cleveland and the outsourcing of ABC by the end of August. An earlier outsourcing of the design desk should be complete by the end of the week.

While we await news on that front, we within the last month had a successful gathering in Buffalo where our Andrew Galarneau cooked for a group of 15 to 20 Guild members and their families.

And within the newsroom, I had an initial meeting with Sheila Rayam and Margaret Kenny about the office environment and workplace culture and I plan to follow up on that soon. They both seemed receptive and hopefully open to collaborating on some ideas.

The Buffalo News also is one of five news organizations participating in the American Press Institute's Table Stakes program. One of the program's goals is for the newsroom to develop a plan to reach audiences we haven't before.

In some other notes, the Guild has been notified that the Department of Labor is conducting an audit of us, which Kim Leiser said is pretty common and will involve verifying information on our labor organization's annual report. We'll have a meeting with them on June 28.

In good news, we're hiring a general assignment reporter, which is now listed, and we have seven interns who started last Monday.

We've also finalized a new five-year contract with Delft Printing, one of the print shops where we represent two employees. This deal adds a successorship clause, gives those employees severance language, sets minimum starting wages that keep pace with state changes in minimum wage and allows new employees to have a 401(k) plan.

We also had a Guild member who had his Hyundai stolen from one of the surface parking lots at Larkin last evening. Kim and I are both following up with the company to see what can be done about this, because it's not the first incident.

### Mobilization Report - Aaron Besecker

Andrew Galarneau hosted a souvlaki dinner for members.

Tan: Unions of Lee Enterprises are organizing all papers across the chain to do job action or have media news conference to raise awareness about what's going on at Lee papers. Many of Lee Enterprises' smaller papers are going to 3 days a week.

Discussion on Lee Enterprises plans to shift production of The Buffalo News to Cleveland.

Harris: Our understanding is the mailers are negotiating with the company. They are the largest affected union. We heard they might have a tentative agreement. We're trying to set up another meeting with them and the other unions.

In good news, I've heard from some employers, including CCL Label in Buffalo, that are interested in hiring whomever might be displaced if and when production gets outsourced. So I'm hopeful we can help them organize a job fair of some kind.

Leiser: Pressmen are the second biggest group of workers affected. It's the pressmen, paper handlers and engravers. They have been in negotiations for a deal.

Harris: The company will have to file a WARN notice pretty soon if they want to outsource the printing by October.

Kim: We know the company wants to talk with us to negotiate the outsourcing of the two Guild members in prepress affected by the shift of production.

### Grievance Committee - Steve Watson

We've closed or are close to closing many of the grievances.

On payroll and health care benefits, a lot of those issues have been worked out. We're not hearing as much from members. If anyone has a problem with health or dental insurance or a bill, please let us know.

We filed a March 14 grievance over The News trying to fix everything in payroll and improper amounts taken out of some members' paychecks. We are working on that and getting people the right amount of money in their checks.

We had an Issue with district managers' schedules.

Leiser: It's half-fixed. They still don't have schedules posted two weeks in advance. We're still working on that.

Watson: A few issues I've raised. There is a maximum number of articles that the editor of the Hamburg Sun can write. It is a maximum of 3. He wrote 8. That editor is no longer with the Hamburg Sun, but they are looking to fill that position. The last full-time reporter there has left. That is part of the problem.

On another issue, a few stories made it into print in The News about the Buffalo Bandits that were not written by Guild members. I was glad they had Guild members covering the lacrosse championship.

Customer Service grievance and Classified Ad grievances were rejected by management.

Harris: We need to sit down and talk about what we want to resolve these grievances.

Tan expressed concern that the Classified Ad grievance was filed in November 2022, and it is still not resolved.

### Old Business:

Design Desk outsourcing:

Harris: Design desk outsourcing is underway: Page design at the Lee Design Center started last Monday, June 5, and will fully transition by the end of this week. Margaret Kenny's email to all of us Sunday indicated Gusto will be the last section to move to the Design Center and that will happen this week. I heard the first few days of the transition were a little bumpy, but haven't heard much other than that.

Several Executive Committee members expressed concern that the print edition looks terrible and there are very few photos in it.

Scanlon: Deadlines are tighter now. Pretty much by 6 p.m. they want every story into digital. The design centers need everything by 7 p.m. they don't want to change anything after 7 unless we're going to be sued.

#### **New Business:**

Hiring:

Harris: We had seven interns start for 10-week terms last Monday, June 5. That's three in metro and one each in photo, features, sports and on the digital desk. The Guild took them to lunch last Wednesday and all of them are signed up for the Guild and has authorized paycheck deductions for dues.

News Reunion Party

Leiser: Barbara and Roger Durant, former employees of news, organize a News reunion party every summer for current and former News employees. They are seeking to have the Guild send out a notice to current and former employees.

Besecker will send out a notice.

Delft Printing contract:

Tan: A new 5-year contract was negotiated. It's the best deal of all the independent print shops that we negotiated.

Next Meeting:

Motion by McAndrew to cancel the July executive committee meeting. Seconded by Scanlon. Approved.

Motion by Watson to reschedule the July general membership meeting to Aug. 16. McAndrew seconded. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m. Next meeting is Monday, Aug. 14.

#### **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: Aug. 14, 2023**

Present: Vice President Mobilization and Communication Aaron Besecker, District Manager Co-Steward Erik Bridenbaker, Inside Circulation Steward Melissa Burrowes, Editorial Delegate Mike Harrington, President Jon Harris, Treasurer Alva Hill, District Manager Co-Steward Jason Kremblas, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Editorial Alternate Delegate Libby March, Secretary Mike McAndrew, Editorial Delegate David Robinson, Editorial Delegate Scott Scanlon, Editorial Alternate Delegate Mark Sommer, Past-President Sandra Tan, Vice President Contract Administration Steve Watson, District Manager Co-Steward Rick Wiorkowski, Editorial Delegate Trey Wydysh.

Excused: Typographical Steward Mark Hanover, Editorial Alternate Delegate Rachel Lenzi.

Call to Order by Harris at 5:37 p.m.

Approval of minutes from June 13, 2023 Executive Committee meeting. Motion by Scanlon. Seconded by Watson.

Motion by Tan to amend minutes by deleting one clause and to approve amended minutes. Seconded by Besecker.

Motion to amend minutes approved, minutes approved.

#### **President's Report - Jon Harris**

Just wanted to say that I found last month's NewsGuild conference in St. Louis pretty useful on a lot of fronts, from all the people I met, to the ideas I took away from it.

Inside the newsroom, we obviously recently learned our new deadlines – some of which are earlier than expected – and we continue to move toward the planned printing of the paper in Cleveland on Oct. 1.

#### **Mobilization Report - Aaron Besecker**

Besecker: The Labor Day parade is coming up, 3 weeks from today. We need to try to get people to participate. I will be working and cannot be there. Since our last meeting, I sent out 12 emails and 4 texts. Thirty-nine people are on the Guild group text list.

Tan: The Frontier Reporter is out.

Watson: We had a happy hour social at Food Truck Tuesday in Larkinsville.

Leiser: The parade is on Labor Day. 11 a.m. lineup, parade at 12, cookout at 1 p.m.

#### **Grievance Committee Report - Steve Watson**

Watson: Most of the grievances that have taken up a lot of time since January – health and payroll issues – most of those are calming down. Most are cleared up or are being cleared up, with some issues related to holiday pay for Jan. 1.

There are some other issues: A photo here and there that shouldn't have gotten into print. Scanlon flagged a submitted photo that should have run as a head shot. We're still seeing promotions of sports betting on The News' Twitter account. It's been grieved. They say they will try to address it. We still see examples of it on Twitter and our website.

Scanlon: I think the sports betting will ramp up. That's what happened last year.

Leiser: We've asked Lee to label these sports betting promos as sponsored content on the News' website. We've had multiple meetings about it with management.

Watson: We have two grievances related to outsourcing – Customer Service and Classified Advertising. One was filed by Scanlon late last year. I filed the Customer Service grievance early this year. We discussed it briefly with Lee VP Astrid Garcia and Buffalo News HR Director Tammy Turnbull earlier this year. They asked for time to review the proposal. Turnbull said they will have a response by the end of this week.

Leiser: Regarding the Classified Advertising outsourcing grievance, we agreed in past contract negotiations to let them outsource those jobs to a company not affiliated with Berkshire Hathaway or The Buffalo News. That applies to Lee as their successor. Lee outsourced the classified advertising work to one of their affiliate companies.

#### **Old Business:**

Pittsburgh striker support:

Harris: We have to provide an update on our support of those on strike at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. As a reminder, in February, we approved participating in the adopt-a-striker program, agreeing to adopt two strikers at a cost of \$200 each for a period of 13 weeks. Because of an honest mistake on our end, we have continued those payments to date, when 13 weeks actually would have been up on May 14. It's obviously an unfortunate mistake and honestly something that just slipped through the cracks with everything else going on. Though I can think of much worse mistakes than supporting striking journalists fighting against a bad newspaper owner. So we have to do two things: First, I'm asking for retroactive support of the payments after May 14, since I don't think we're going to ask for that money back from two guys who have been on strike since last October.

And we also need to talk about whether we want to continue support any longer.



Tan: How much have we paid out to Pittsburgh?

Leiser: For the adopt-a-striker, we paid out \$11,400. We have another \$800 in payments scheduled in this week's check run. It's come out of our checking account. We also made a \$5,000 contribution to the Pittsburgh strike fund at the start of the strike. And we did a Santa Claus thing for \$500 in December to benefit the strikers.

Leiser: They passed the hat at the TNG Sector Conference in St. Louis.

Our total contributions to the Pittsburgh strike are \$16,344 to date. We donated \$500 to the Fort Worth strike. It would cost us another \$8,000 to support two Pittsburgh strikers through the end of the year at \$200 a week each.

Tan: Motion to approve retroactively payments to Pittsburgh adopt-a-striker that we made since May 14. Seconded by Sommer. Approved.

Tan: Motion to support two Pittsburgh strikers through the end of the year at a total cost of \$400 per week. Second by McAndrew. Approved

### **New Business:**

Prepress outsourcing agreement:

Harris: You all probably saw our flyer last Thursday that we have reached an agreement with the company for the outsourcing of prepress as part of the larger shift of print production to Cleveland. We wish that work was staying here, but I think we got them a good agreement – weekly pay, benefits and 401(k) contributions through Sept. 30, 2024, and then severance, a retention bonus and a health reimbursement account after that, among other terms. And our two guys last week ratified the agreement.

Support for Bruce Nelson Scholarship:

Harris: At last month's NewsGuild conference, Ken Crowe, the head of the Albany Guild, presented a resolution honoring Bruce R. Nelson, who died Jan. 10. He started his career as a reporter and was a NewsGuild staff representative for three decades. He was a dues-paying union member for more than 50 years, including on two different occasions with our friends in Albany. And during his time with the NewsGuild, he was known for, among other things, playing a big role in a training program for newly elected officers at Guild locals.

So with that, his family has committed \$10,000 to start the Bruce Nelson Collective Bargaining Scholarship, which will train NewsGuild leaders on collective bargaining through the Cornell Industrial and Labor Relations school. Many locals pledged support during the NewsGuild conference, and we pledged \$500 toward this scholarship, pending the support of you all on the executive committee. So we're asking for your support.

Besecker: Motion to approve \$500 donation to the Bruce Nelson Collective Bargaining Scholarship. Seconded by Scanlon. Approved.

Guild Picnic:

Harris: It's about that time of year again. As a reminder, last year's Guild picnic was held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, at Como Lake Park in Lancaster, and resident chef Andrew Galarneau manned the grill while many others brought side dishes and beverages. Andrew has told me he wants to help again, so just want to start a discussion on what we think we should do in terms of a date and venue?

Consensus reached to hold Guild Fall Festival on Saturday, Sept. 23.

Dept. of Labor Audit:

Harris: The Department of Labor concluded its audit of the Guild. We met with them Friday.

Leiser: We got dinged for some record-keeping issues. The biggest thing was that our LM report has been filed incorrectly

by our accountant. We didn't report that members were paid by the Guild for lost time. We need to do that. We should keep a copy of the minutes approved, a copy of the officer stipend schedule. Officers need to better account for lost time.

Harris: We're waiting on the letter from DOL. There's no fine or penalty. They want you to adopt best practices before they audit you again.

Leiser: We'll make the changes we have to. By mid-October we'll be getting our ducks in a row to make sure the report is up to snuff.

Formation of committees to get more member involvement:

Harris: This also is an influence of last month's NewsGuild conference. On my train ride to the airport and the plane ride home, I thought it'd be a good idea to form some committees to get more people in our union involved beyond the core group. I propose forming the following committees:

Workplace culture committee. Thinking of ways to improve that and working with Sheila Rayam and Margaret Kenny to get those things implemented.

A community support committee. Getting us involved in more community activities like the Niagara River bank cleanup that we do every year.

Expansion committee. Our membership is shrinking and we're very dependent on one industry. I'd like to explore whether there's any way for us to make inroads in the nonprofit community around here.

Tan: As the TNG Region 3 vice president, there is an international solidarity committee the TNG is forming. An outreach with journalism organizations overseas.

Tan also asked if the Buffalo Guild is willing to contribute some money to a Gofundme to help the Guild members at the Maui News who are covering the wildfire deaths even though many of the journalists were forced to evacuate their homes.

Leiser: We sent food to Pittsburgh after the Tree of Life shooting. We sent food to Uvalde after the mass shooting there.

Tan: The gofundme for Maui Guild journalists would cover food, shelter, personal protective gear.

Tan: Move to donate \$200 to gofundme to support Guild workers at Maui News workers. Approved.

New deadlines for print:

Sommer: I assume at the upcoming General Membership meeting we will hear a lot from members about the new deadlines for the print edition.

Harris: A reporter deadline meeting is scheduled tomorrow with Rayam.

Guild Treasurer Alva Hill:

Harris: I wanted to thank Alva Hill for her time as treasurer. This is her last Executive Committee meeting. Her job was outsourced. This may be her last meeting. Alva always has an optimistic attitude which is nice to be around.

Hill: I appreciate everyone's support. And all the lovely messages you sent me.

Harris: Adjourned meeting at 7:33 p.m.

### **General Membership Meeting: Aug. 16, 2023**

President's report - Jon Harris

Harris: So it's been about 4 months since our last general membership meeting, which happened way back on April 12.

I think we all know this has been the year when Lee Enterprises has really started to pull resources out of Buffalo.

Many of the outsourcing plans have been in the works since long before this year, but this is the year that they're executing on those plans.

Consider that before our next general membership meeting – scheduled for Oct. 11 – we will have seen the outsourcing of our Design Desk; Accounting, Bookkeeping and Credit Department and, of course, we'll be 10 days into printing in Cleveland, which for all of us means we'll have 10 days worth of angry subscriber calls, because they can't reach anybody in the Philippines.

The printing outsourcing remains on track for Oct. 1, which will put two of our members in Prepress out of work. Kim Leiser and I recently negotiated an agreement with the company for that outsourcing, which we believe is a solid deal that gives our affected guys a good runway, though we wish they were sticking around.

I want to make a few points about things we're working on and things that are a little more optimistic than all the doom and gloom we've experienced this year.

For one, our union continues to support those Guilds going through a rough time. We have adopted two strikers in Pittsburgh since February, sending them financial support that we will continue through the end of this year. And the Executive Committee just this week approved sending \$200 to members of the Pacific Media Workers at The Maui News, who are providing much-needed local coverage of the disaster there.

These moves all establish goodwill with the larger NewsGuild and local unions, which we may need to call on for support in the future, perhaps as early as next year.

Locally, I want to bring members together more, both inside and outside of work. And we have a couple ways we're doing that.

First, Labor Day is coming up quick. And that means it is time for the annual Buffalo Central Labor Council AFL-CIO Labor Day parade, which we march in. The parade is Monday, Sept. 4, and lineup starts at 11 a.m., parade is at noon and cookout at 1 p.m.

We're going to send around a series of sign-up sheets – if you're willing to participate in the parade, please sign up for that and feel free to bring your family members if you wish. More details to come.

Next, we're a little late this year on the Guild picnic, so we're tentatively planning to have a Guild fall festival/fall picnic on Saturday, Sept. 23. So please mark your calendars for that.

And last, we've decided to form a few committees to help get more Guild members involved.

I just want to say that this is not my union, it's not Kim's union, or Sandy's or Steve's or Aaron's. It's all of ours, and we have a role to play in ensuring it stays strong. We all have skills to share and things we may want to do, so that's the idea behind these committees, with sign-up sheets also coming around on that.

So we came up with four committees, and I hope you'll consider signing up for one.

- 1) Workplace culture committee
- 2) Community support committee
- 3) Social activities committee
- 4) Expansion committee

Tan says as Region 3 vice president of the News Guild, she is an Executive Committee member of the International News Guild. It is forming a global solidarity committee for the international to deepen global ties. The NewsGuild is looking for volunteers to serve on it.

Mobilization report – VP Aaron Besecker

Grievance Committee report – VP Steve Watson

Watson provided an update on the status of grievances over the Lee Enterprises rollout of payroll and health insurance changes. Most of those related issues are almost resolved. Let him know if you have an issue.

There are two grievances related to the outsourcing of customer service and classified advertising. The News management rejected both grievances. We believe they are contract violations. There is a possibility the Guild will take the company to arbitration.

### **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: Aug. 24, 2023**

Attendance:

Present: Vice President Mobilization and Communication Aaron Besecker, Editorial Delegate Mike Harrington, President Jon Harris, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Editorial Alternate Delegate Libby March, Secretary Mike McAndrew, Past-President Sandra Tan, Vice President Contract Administration Steve Watson, District Manager Co-Steward Rick Wiorkowski, Editorial Delegate Trey Wydysz.

Absent: District Manager Co-Steward Erik Bridenbaker, Inside Circulation Steward Melissa Burrowes, Treasurer Alva Hill, District Manager Co-Steward Jason Kremblas, Editorial Delegate David Robinson, Editorial Delegate Scott Scanlon,

Excused: Typographical Steward Mark Hanover, Editorial Alternate Delegate Rachel Lenzi, Editorial Alternate Delegate Mark Sommer.

Call to Order by Harris at 5:35 p.m.

### **New business:**

CWA's Eugene J. Mays Scholarship Golf Tournament

Harris: The golf tournament is Sept. 8, 2023. We sponsored it for \$200 in the past. Tan motion to contribute \$200 to Eugene J. Mays Scholarship Golf Tournament. Second by Besecker. Motion approved.

The News' proposal to settle grievances

Harris: The News management offered us a proposed settlement for our Classified Advertising and Customer Service outsourcing grievances.

Leiser: They presented to us on Tuesday a proposal. They proposed as a settlement to create another Group B full-time clerk position in the Inside Circulation Department. That person would do what Group Bs do but could also take customer retention calls and do IT work. It would be shared jurisdiction. It would increase our Guild members in that department to 5 full-time.

Leiser: A total of 30 Guild members were affected by the outsourcing of the two departments. 18 were in Classified Advertising, 12 in Customer Service. The Guild filed its classified grievance in December after Lee Enterprises contracted with a company affiliated with Lee Enterprises to perform that work in violation of the Guild's contract. The customer service grievance was filed at the beginning of 2023 after Lee Enterprises outsourced that work to a company in the Philippines in violation of the Guild contract, which said the work could only be done by a company based in the U.S.

Multiple executive committee members expressed negative views about The News' settlement offer.

A discussion followed on how arbitration works, the costs, and potential outcomes.

The committee directed the Guild's officers to meet with News management again regarding their proposed settlement.

### **Old Business:**

Labor Day parade:

Harris: Seven Guild members signed up to march in the Labor Day parade on the sign-up sheets passed out at the General Membership meeting.

New committees:

Harris: Eight people have signed up to be on the workplace culture committee. Three signed up to be on the social activities committee, and it could use a few more people.

Guild Picnic:

Tan: Motion to spend up to \$500 to cover the cost of the Guild Fall Festival Picnic. Second by Wydysh. Approved.

Guild night at Bisons game:

McAndrew: The Guild can buy 20 or more tickets to the Buffalo Bisons game on Sept. 22, the night before the picnic. The group rate tickets would cost the Guild \$12.50 each, or \$250 for 20, which is a discount off the regular price.

Wydysh motion to buy 20 Bisons tickets for Sept. 22 game. Seconded. Approved.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette strike:

McAndrew: I contacted the VP of the striking Pittsburgh Guild to see if it has any events planned where we could show up to support them. The VP said they have a rally planned at 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 24. I am willing to drive a group of Guild members to Pittsburgh that day for the rally and back to Buffalo that night, if anyone is interested in going.

Harris adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

#### **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: Aug. 29, 2023**

Attendance:

Present: Vice President Mobilization and Communication Aaron Besecker, District Manager Co-Steward Erik Bridenbaker, President Jon Harris, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Editorial Alternate Delegate Libby March, Secretary Mike McAndrew, Editorial Delegate David Robinson, Editorial Delegate Scott Scanlon, Vice President Contract Administration Steve Watson, District Manager Co-Steward Rick Wiorkowski, Editorial Delegate Trey Wydysh.

Absent: Inside Circulation Steward Melissa Burrowes, District Manager Co-Steward Jason Kremblas, Editorial Alternate Delegate Rachel Lenzi, Editorial Alternate Delegate Mark Sommer.

Excused: Typographical Steward Mark Hanover, Editorial Delegate Mike Harrington, Treasurer Alva Hill, Past-President Sandra Tan.

Harris called the meeting to order shortly after 5:30 p.m.

Discussion on Classified Advertising and Customer Service grievances

Leiser provided information on the logistics of filing for arbitration and what help TNG may provide the Guild.

Guild officers plan to meet with The News' management again regarding proposals to resolve the two grievances.

Harris adjourned the meeting.

#### **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: Sept. 11, 2023**

Attendance

Present: Vice President Mobilization and Communication Aaron Besecker, Editorial Delegate Mike Harrington, President Jon Harris, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Editorial Delegate Rachel Lenzi, Secretary Mike McAndrew, Editorial Delegate David Robinson, Editorial Delegate Scott Scanlon, Past-President Sandra Tan, Vice President Contract Administration Steve Watson, District Manager Co-Steward Rick Wiorkowski, Editorial Delegate Trey Wydysh.

Absent: District Manager Co-Steward Erik Bridenbaker, Inside Circulation Steward Melissa Burrowes, District Manager Co-Steward Jason Kremblas, Editorial Alternate Delegate Libby March

Excused: Typographical Steward Mark Hanover, Editorial Alternate Delegate Mark Sommer

Harris called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Harrington; Second by Besecker. to approve minutes of the Aug. 14 Executive Committee meeting; the Aug. 16 General Membership meeting; the Aug. 24 Executive Committee special meeting; and the Aug. 29 Executive Committee special meeting. Motion approved.

President's Report – Harris

In the last month, we've had four Guild meetings, so I think we're all pretty caught up on where things stand.

I did want to bring one idea up that I've mentioned to the officers. Editorial member approached me with an idea about potentially trying to organize an event where members can see the presses run on the last night of production, Sept. 30.

**Mobilization Report – Besecker**

The fall picnic is scheduled Saturday, Sept 23 at Como Lake Park. Andrew Galarneau is cooking the food.

Guild night at Bisons game is on Sept. 22. McAndrew will have tickets in the newsroom.

Labor Day Parade: We activated messengers to boost participation in the Labor Day Parade. We posted photos of members marching on social media.

Leiser: We had about 15 people participate.

Striking journalists: The Guild bought lunch for striking journalists in Toronto, and Toronto strikers tweeted it out.

**Grievance Report – Watson**

Looks like we're finally wrapping up all of the payroll issue grievances. Kim has talked with people to determine who is owed what.

Leiser: There are still a few adjustments that need to be made to people's payrolls. Lee sent me a spreadsheet with all adjustments that need to be made. I've gotten a sheet for every member. We're going through them. Adjustments are in the less than \$10 range. The bulk were corrected March 10. Another adjustment was made in May. This should be the last adjustment. Hopefully Lee will finally have it right.

Other issues:

Leiser: The News recently hired a part-time copy editor. Management has been assigning him to work as a night sports editor. But that's a full-time position. Now management is saying he's just a copy editor, not the night sports editor.

Watson: We're seeing examples where contributed photos are ending up in the print edition.

Watson: Gaming content keeps showing up in prominent places on buffalonews.com. It's an ongoing issue.

**Old Business:**

Grievance settlement offers:

Leiser: We met with Lee Enterprises VP Astrid Garcia and Buffalo News HR Director Tammy Turnbull on Thursday. We said we'll accept hiring a full-time inside circulation worker to settle the grievance over the outsourcing of customer service work to a company in the Philippines. But we need more to settle the Classified Ad grievance over Lee shifting that work to a Lee Enterprises subsidiary, in violation of our contract. Lee



offered to hire a full-time reporter to settle that grievance. So the tentative deal is the Guild would get one new represented position filled to settle each of the two grievances.

Leiser: Garcia said we're not hiring anyone with the intention of laying them off.

Leiser: We hope they will move on hiring as soon as possible. If they don't live up to their bargain and hire the two people, we can still take them to arbitration.

Besecker motion to formally approve the offer to settle the grievances over the outsourcing of Classified Ads and Inside Circulation work. Seconded. Approved.

#### **New Business:**

Budget update/discussion

Leiser said the 2022-23 fiscal year ends Sept. 30. She has started work on a budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year. On this year's budget, as of early September, we had spent about \$11,000 less than what we budgeted, but we are behind on revenue received. Some of that is because Lee Enterprises is late in remitting to the Guild union dues withheld from members' pay. The Guild may need to withdraw funds from its defense fund to balance the budget. The Guild has more than \$1 million in its defense fund. We have not taken any funds from it this year. The Finance Committee of the Executive Committee has not met yet to discuss next year's budget.

Leiser said the Guild hasn't raised the dues rate paid by members since 2006. It is 1.76% of each member's salary. The Chicago Guild's dues is almost 3%. Buffalo is on the low end compared to other Guilds.

Lunch for Toronto Strikers:

Besecker motion to retroactively approve spending \$198 for lunch for striking Toronto journalists. Tan seconded. Approved.

Future of Treasurer position:

Harris: There has been discussion internally about combining the Guild secretary and treasurer positions, and paying the secretary/treasurer one stipend, the treasurer stipend. The secretary stipend would be eliminated.

Tan: In the past, the treasurer position has been a good opportunity for non-editorial members of Guild to serve as Guild officers. We could advertise to see if anyone in the Guild has any interest in filling the treasurer position.

Leiser: It is increasingly difficult to recruit non-editorial members to run for officer positions. It would have to be a district manager or one of 4 or 5 people in Inside Circulation, who I've spoken to. None of them were interested.

Harris: We could send out a notice seeking candidates for the treasurer position and make a final decision in October.

Leiser: Alva Hill's term as treasurer still has 2 years and 3 months remaining.

Arbitration symposium:

Tan motion to pay for Leiser to attend a symposium in Atlantic City in October on how to present a case for arbitration. The total cost will be about \$1,600, including hotel, travel and the \$300 symposium. Second by Scanlon. Approved.

Meeting adjourned.

#### **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: Oct. 9, 2023**

Attendance

Present: Vice President Mobilization and Communication Aaron Besecker, District Manager Co-Steward Erik Bridenbaker, Editorial Delegate Mike Harrington, President Jon Harris, Administrative Officer Kim Leiser, Secretary Mike McAndrew, Editorial Delegate David Robinson, Vice President

Contract Administration Steve Watson, District Manager Co-Steward Rick Wiorkowski, Editorial Delegate Trey Wydysch.

Absent: Inside Circulation Steward Melissa Burrowes, Typographical Steward Mark Hanover, District Manager Co-Steward Jason Kremblas, Editorial Alternate Delegate Libby March, Editorial Alternate Delegate Mark Sommer.

Excused: Editorial Delegate Rachel Lenzi, Editorial Delegate Scott Scanlon, Past-President Sandra Tan.

Harris called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Besecker motion, Wiorkowski second. Approved.

#### **President's Report - Jon Harris**

Harris: First, some good news. I have the job posting for the new reporter position that will be listed as a result of our grievance settlement – they're looking to hire an environment and climate reporter, and I'd expect that job to be posted soon.

Following up on a hot topic at the last EC meeting, I did meet with Editor Sheila Rayam on Tuesday, Sept. 26. It was actually me and Maki Becker and Managing Editor Margaret Kenny in the meeting, and we kind of approached it more as a discussion on newsroom culture. We brought up some concerns about the newsroom culture and morale. We stressed to her that we thought it was a good idea to boost internal newsroom communication and encouraged her to hold regular monthly staff meetings. Regarding office decor, none of the stuff has been displayed that we brought from One News Plaza. She said that News HR Director Tammy Turnbull is setting up something on that, which we could get involved with.

We told Sheila a lot of people were unhappy with her column because they felt it buried the lead and it wasn't very transparent with our readers.

They're going to start talking about what to do to bring people back into the newsroom.

#### **Mobilization Report – Aaron Besecker**

We had the fall picnic, the Bisons gathering, and two Saturdays ago, on Sept. 30, a gathering to commemorate the end of printing of The News in Buffalo.

The statement we put out about moving the printing to Cleveland was gigantic. The tweet itself had 80,000 views. All of the stuff we did regarding the last day of printing did well with reaching people on social media. So did McAndrew's trip to Pittsburgh to support the striking Pittsburgh Post-Gazette workers.

Kim and the Social Activities Committee will start work on the Guild holiday dinner.

McAndrew: On behalf of the Guild, Scanlon and I delivered 3 cases of beer to John Fletch, the president of the Mailers Union, during their shift on the last day of printing The News in Buffalo.

#### **Grievance Report – Steve Watson**

The settlement was approved at the last Guild Executive Committee meeting on the outsourcing grievances involving customer service and classified advertising. Kim is waiting to finalize the language of the settlement. We could get an update as soon as tomorrow. The News has put together info seeking a Climate and Environment reporter as part of the settlement.

We had a lengthy discussion about the issue in sports with the sports night copy editor/night sports editor. We're gathering more information.

Leiser: During meeting with Turnbull tomorrow we will be talking with Lee Enterprise's Director of Benefits Mark Hall about any changes to our health insurance, whether there are changes in coverage. There is supposed to be a new dental

provider. I don't have details yet. Open enrollment will be Nov. 7-17.

**Old Business:**

General membership meeting:

Harris: We'd like to move the general membership meeting scheduled for this Wednesday, Oct. 11, to sometime in November, so we can answer member questions during open enrollment.

McAndrew: We should encourage Lee Enterprises to organize an in-person event where members can ask Lee representatives and representatives of the health insurance companies questions. Like we used to have.

Wydysh: We should tell members now when Open Enrollment is going to be.

Wydysh: Motion to move General Membership meeting to Wednesday, Nov. 15. Second by Watson. Approved.

**New Business:**

Merger of Secretary & Treasurer positions:

Harris: Alva Hill's job at The News was outsourced so we don't have a treasurer. So we sent out a flyer on Sept. 12, seeking interested candidates for treasurer. We did not hear from anyone, so I'd like to see what people think about merging the secretary and treasurer positions into a secretary-treasurer job. That person would get the treasurer stipend and we would eliminate the secretary's stipend.

Wiorowski and Besecker say good idea.

Leiser: Move we merge the secretary/treasurer position. Besecker second. Approved.

Guild's 23/24 budget:

Robinson: The proposed budget is pared down. It budgets \$181,401 in expenses. We made a decision years ago to use the defense fund to balance the budget. That allows us to have an office and have Leiser. The defense fund balance is still going up. If The News shuts down and the Guild goes out of business, the defense fund goes to the national union. So the idea of using it to pay for some operating expenses is well thought out. The budget calls for spending \$80,000 from the defense fund on operating expenses.

Brief discussion of Guild dues rate.

Leiser: Our dues is 1.7811%. Last time it was changed was 2006.

Leiser: Chicago's Guild's dues is 2.3%. Around 2.0% is the average. We levy dues against all income. Some unions only levy dues on straight pay. Some only levy dues on the contractual minimum salaries. In Buffalo we collect dues on all wages, except bonuses or stipends. We tax all wages, straight time and overtime.

Robinson: Motion to accept the budget. Wydysh second. Budget is approved.

Shortage of Hoppers:

Bridenbacker: There is a bad shortage of hoppers. So they are having district managers do hopper work. They have five hoppers between three locations. The News needs to hire more hoppers. Wiorowski: It's starting to become an issue.

Bridenbacker: That's why they are having shortages of papers every night. No hoppers are there to do the work. The drivers take what they want.

Leiser to discuss with Tammy Turnbull.

Meeting ended.

Next meeting: Monday, Nov. 13.