

January 9, 2008

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Number One but Out of Step**Industry trend fair**

The Star likes to bill itself as Canada's biggest and best daily newspaper. We thought so too; that's why we came to work here. Yet the company's bargaining approach this winter runs counter to new contracts signed in the past year or already in place at every other sizable Canadian daily. Here's what's been happening:

- Vancouver Sun and Province (Pacific Press): In April 2007, our CEP colleagues there voted for a 4-year deal that included annual wage increases of 3, 3, 3 and 3.5 per cent. No concessions. Improvements in job security language, vision care (including laser surgery coverage), hearing aid coverage and life insurance.
- Here in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada, new contracts delivered wage gains and no major concessions at the Ottawa Sun, the Sudbury Star, the Edmonton Journal and our own sister papers, the Kitchener-Waterloo Record and Sing Tao.
- Current contracts at the Ottawa Citizen, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Gazette in Montreal and other dailies all carry wage gains and no concessions.
- The bottom line? No Canadian daily has negotiated wage cuts, reduced job security and working conditions or substantial benefit cuts with its unions in the areas we represent. In fact, in accepted industry key wage rates such as Reporter, our acceptance of cost-of-living wages have in recent years seen The Star fall steadily behind the Globe & Mail, Pacific Press and other papers, and that gap is widening.

Company demands

Yet here at The Star – the nation's number one daily, as management keeps telling readers and advertisers – the company wants you to accept a savage contract that would take us sharply backward. We seem to be facing the sad option of striking (or being locked out) or accepting enormous cuts in shift premiums, overtime pay and other wage particulars, much lower job security, reduced working conditions and a sharp spike in employee benefit costs. Shame.

Staff reductions loom

Some other papers are reducing their staff sizes, particularly at CanWest newsrooms. This is true. Yet we've already been told that Star management also plans to shrink our newsroom staff, plus reduce the number of workers in pre-press and ad building, as just several specific examples. Star management wants you to pay up front with an unprecedented contract retreat on every front and still see jobs vanish. This is not right.

Strike vote

Remember: Our one strike vote will be held, after we give you an up-to-the-minute update on negotiations, on Wednesday January 16 at 5 p.m., the Westin Hotel.

Guild Bargaining Committee

- Unit Chair: Maureen Dawson
- Editorial: Dan Smith and Valerie Hauch (alternate)
- Circulation: Steve Gjorkes and Jeff Bodrucky (alternate)
- Finance: Cathie Nichols and Dawn Armstrong (alternate)
- Advertising: Elizabeth Marzari and Dijana Maderic (alternate)
- Thestar.com: Craig Wattie and Tony Camara (alternate)
- Pre-Press: Lester Veszlenyi and Lorraine Wohlgemuth (alternate)



