



Pacific Media Workers Guild

THE NEWSPAPER GUILD - CWA LOCAL 39521

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Dear Local 39521 Member:

We have spent much of the past year debating how to improve communications and reduce conflicts between our Local and our four California Federation of Interpreter bargaining units.

We endured an unusually divisive election last fall in which 60 percent of our members chose a diverse leadership team in order to keep our union intact. We saw a good-faith attempt at unity during a town hall meeting in San Francisco in February disintegrate into an emotional spectacle. On Friday, February 28, the president of the California Federation of Interpreters informed court interpreters that he was in negotiations with The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America to form a new local. In his words, the end result will either be "a negotiated truce or a separation."

I believe we can and must do better than simply agree to walk away from the dream that built this union into one of the strongest, most progressive in the CWA. That dream included all kinds of communications specialists - public and private sector, interpreters, translators, writers, editors, freelancers, students, union advocates and organizers. We wanted to support one another's struggles, not make them more difficult, and gain from our diversity.

We must focus on the values we cherish, set aside hard feelings, take a deep breath, and find a consensus on how to move forward.

Many of us have been trying to reach a true meeting of the minds inside our union, but through either misunderstanding or too much mistrust, the tone has become, unbelievably, even more difficult than it was last fall.

That must change. And it will change.

If we do not reach agreement with CFI leaders, we must take a close look at the full range of choices before us. All options will be on the table, except one: we will not allow destructive conflict to continue inside our union.

We will negotiate with CFI leadership and TNG during the next two weeks with the singular goal of keeping our Local intact. Our proposals will likely involve more autonomy for CFI, clearer lines of authority, better ways to manage our resources, improved communications, and more transparent decision-making.

I know we can reach consensus. That is my goal.

In Solidarity,

Carl Hall
Executive Officer