

Purple Bargaining Update #20

March 2, 2015

During March of 2013, employees of four Purple centers, later known as American Sign Language Interpreters United (ASLIU), began bargaining a labor agreement with Purple Communications. This came as a result of Union organizing efforts during October and November of 2012, when the four centers voted to have Communications Workers of America (CWA) represent the employees as the first ever unionized VRS interpreters. The reasons for organizing were many, but primarily they amounted to protesting multiple unilateral changes that Purple systematically imposed on its video interpreters over the years. We, as the video interpreters who were affected, found these changes to have negative impacts on our work, health, and ability to provide quality service to Purple's customers. Prior to organizing, our cries to have a voice were silenced and our pleas for better change were categorically ignored. With the help of CWA, that has changed.

ASLIU is happy to announce that, after two arduous years at the bargaining table with Purple, last Friday the Union and the Company came to its final tentative agreement in a contract that spells out employment terms for video interpreters in the four represented centers. The reason why the agreements set forth in the contract are still tentative is because the ASLIU membership must vote for the contract to be ratified and effective for all purposes. There remain a few housekeeping items and legal formalities to be done, including, but not limited to, copy-editing the contract language, and printing contracts.

Contracts will be distributed to members who will be given ample time to read and familiarize themselves with the terms. There will be ratification votes at the represented centers in the coming weeks. Bruce Meachum, ASLIU's Chief Negotiator, and Martin Yost, ASLIU Representative, will visit the four represented units to answer any questions the membership may have. Barring any unforeseen obstacles or delays, we anticipate the ratification votes to occur during the week of March 16.

CWA has found a time-honored Local for ASLIU. We have been taken-in by Pacific Media Workers Guild (PMWG), Local 39521, in San Francisco, CA. PMWG is part of The NewsGuild-CWA (TNG-CWA), which has generously funded and administered our bargaining over the last two years

and will continue the governance of our units after ratification. ASLIU owes tremendous gratitude to Local 39521 for its strength and staying power during a longer than anticipated time at the bargaining table with Purple.

Those who have yet to fill out a Union Membership Application should take the opportunity to do so now. Becoming a member is as simple as completing and submitting the form to a union officer in your center, or mailing it to: Pacific Media Workers Guild, 433 Natoma St. San Francisco, CA 94103. Membership Applications can also be faxed to 415-421-3751. Only members will be eligible to vote. See your local union officer for a membership form or print one yourself from the scanned copy attached to the email that delivered this update. Alternatively, you may access a copy of the Membership Application by visiting mediaworkers.org (click the tab “Resources” and find “Membership Application” under “Forms and documents”). When filling out the form, state ASLIU as your unit, but you may disregard inapplicable data fields, including Date of birth, Date of hire, Department, Salary, and Previous employment. ASLIU will be provided that information by Purple after ratification.

Again, ASLIU is very pleased to deliver this long awaited announcement. Everyone's patience and fortitude during this years-long, history-making process is truly appreciated.

In unity, your ASLIU bargaining team:

Mary Jane Moore, Arizona: National Unit Chair

Liz Keyser, Denver: National Vice Chair

Laurie Rivard, Oakland: National Vice Chair

Michelle Caplette, Arizona: National Vice Chair

Martin Yost, San Diego: National Vice Chair

Margie Brooks, San Diego: Bargaining Committee ad hoc Member