

January 24, 2018

Campaign escalates as DFM cuts staff

Negotiations for a 2018 wage re-opener covering 13 bargaining units will open soon as Digital First Media, in an all-too-familiar move, ordered a new wave of staff cuts throughout California and in suburban Philadelphia in January.

In response, **DFM workers are escalating** their contract campaign against Alden Global Capital, the New York hedge fund that owns DFM and that has been systematically stripping newspaper assets since 2012.

Through a coordinated campaign, DFM workers reached a historic agreement in 2016 to raise pay at 12 newspapers for the first time in a decade. Since launching that campaign in 2016, however, Guild-represented payroll at those 12 newspapers has been cut by 40 percent, from 975 to 585.

As Alden slashes staff and robs newspapers of crucial resources, it's plowing the profits into dubious investments, including a bone-headed gamble on Memphis-based Fred's pharmacy that's lost an eye-popping sum of more than \$100 million in value. That amount would've paid for nearly 1,700 DFM jobs for a year — almost three times the number of workers now represented by the Guild.

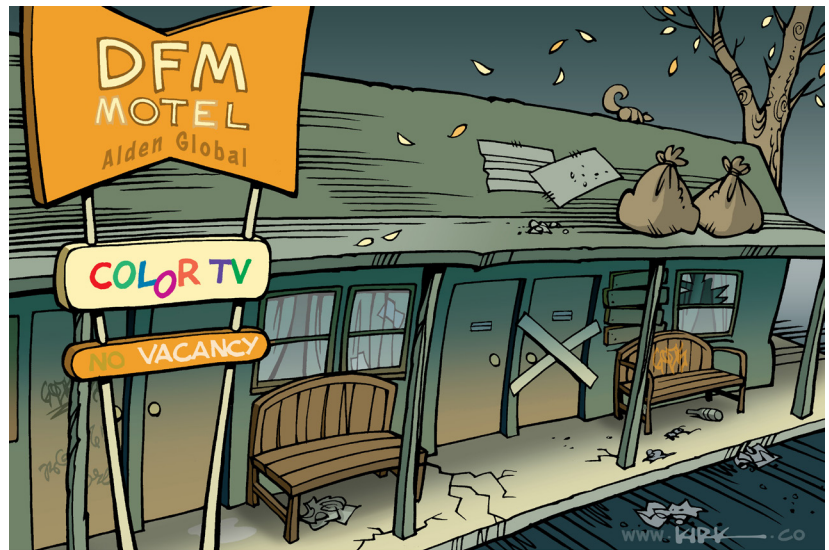
Alden founder **Randall Smith** cashed in on his DFM investment by buying 16 Florida mansions one year after becoming the primary equity holder, and seems intent on establishing his hedge fund as the worst owner in the newspaper industry.

Alden President **Heath Freeman** has spent his share of DFM profits on fitness centers, boutique coffee shops, and, for good measure, a Duke basketball jersey for which he paid \$119,000 — enough to pay for more than two reporting jobs for an entire year.

Instead of reinvesting in DFM papers, Smith and Freeman's spending sprees are depriving local communities of their right to trusted local news.

Despite Smith and Freeman's lavish displays of wealth, DFM management proposed a wage freeze for our 2017 wage re-opener. Now that negotiations are about to restart, that means representatives from 13 DFM bargaining units will negotiate both the 2017 and 2018 re-opener at the same time.

Negotiations most likely will begin in late February or early March, though no date has been set yet. Guild unit officers at each DFM newspaper will meet with members soon to report next steps in our campaign, so please do all you can to support our collective efforts for a fair pay increase.



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