

# Facing Gannett, KGW-TV unions pass a test of unity

In a bit of bargaining-table drama, three unions at KGW-TV showed unity last month by attending each other's contract negotiating sessions, taking a company negotiator by surprise.

At KGW, Portland's NBC affiliate, SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television & Radio Artists) represents on-camera staff, IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) Local 600 represents camera operators, and International Brotherhood of Elec-

trical Workers (IBEW) Local 48 represents control room operators and technicians.

Historically, the three unions have bargained separately at KGW. But this time, facing a strange demand from a new employer, the three have banded together. Gannett—which acquired KGW in 2013 when it bought Belo Corporation—wants to end “exclusive union jurisdiction” in its union contracts. Union reps don't fully understand the ramifications of that proposal, but they think it

would mean that nonunion workers could be brought in to do the same work as union members, but under different terms. That could dramatically unravel the union, and put members' job security in jeopardy.

Union reps say when IBEW and SAG representatives showed up to a May 12 IATSE negotiating session at KGW, Gannett labor relations director Tim Fair was furious, and said he wouldn't proceed if IBEW and SAG were in the room. The unions failed to budge, so he said what followed would be an off-the-record discussion, not a negotiation.

Then IATSE and IBEW showed up to a May 13 bargaining session with SAG. This time, Fair said he wouldn't bargain, or even discuss. And he went further: Gannett might be prepared to offer SAG something it wasn't going to offer the other groups, Fair said; wouldn't they want to hear privately what it was? “No thanks,” was the collective answer.

IATSE Local 600 filed an un-

fair labor practice charge May 14 with the National Labor Relations Board, saying Gannett's stance constituted an unlawful refusal to bargain.

“The law is about as clear as it can be,” said Local 600 business representative Dave Twedell. “Unions may bring whoever they choose to the bargaining.”

Fair appeared to back down after the charge was filed, and agreed that the unions could invite whoever they want.

Further bargaining was scheduled with IATSE on June 3 (after this issue went to press) and with SAG on June 9. [No bargaining with IBEW has taken place since February.]

## Prospects revive for Oregon sick leave bill

SALEM—A bill to mandate paid sick leave statewide moved forward in a Joint Ways and Means subcommittee June 2.

Senate Bill 454, as amended, would require employers with 10 or more em-

ployees to provide up to 40 hours a year of paid sick leave. Employers smaller than that would have to allow an equal amount of unpaid sick leave. The measure would pre-empt local sick leave ordinances, but would set a separate threshold for Portland of six or more employees for paid sick leave, matching the cutoff under a Portland ordinance that took effect January 2014.

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