

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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# ...Vancouver's news room goes union

From Page 1

work them hard for a couple years, and then not bat an eyelash when they get burned out and leave the industry or leave the newspaper," Howard said. "I've only been with the Columbian a year and a half, and in that time five reporters out of a staff of 28 have left. And all of those people expressed to me that they hated leaving because they love the Vancouver community, but they just couldn't afford to live on what they were getting paid here."

In an official statement accompanying the union announcement, union supporters called The Columbian "an increasingly rare example of a thriving independent community news organization," but said journalists there are overworked and underpaid.

"We intend to bargain for equitable wages, greater diversity in the workplace, reasonable leave and health benefits, earned severance, and a fair and consistent grievance policy," the statement said.

Founded in 1890, The Columbian has been family-owned since Campbell's grandfather bought it in 1921. Printing press operators used to belong to the



The Columbian newspaper owners Scott and Jody Campbell, center, received honors as "business of the year" at a Sept. 27 ceremony organized by the Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington. [To their left is fellow awardee Kara Fox-LaRose, general manager of the ilani casino, and flanking them are Labor Roundtable vice chair Dave Letinich and president Ed Barnes, retired IBEW Local 48 business manager.]

Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU), but decertified in 2003. [The Northwest Labor Press was printed there until then.]

In 2011, the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council, the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, and Northwest Oregon Labor Council waged a boycott of The Columbian, in re-

sponse to editorials against public employee unions and an overall failure to report on the local labor movement, even on Labor Day. The boycott got owners' attention. They pledged to improve coverage of organized labor, and followed through. The boycott was lifted.

The new union includes reporters, photographers, copy ed-

itors, page designers and editorial assistants. They'll be part of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, a local of The NewsGuild, which is affiliated with the Communications Workers of America. In Washington, the union represents The Seattle Times, Kitsap Sun, Skagit Valley Herald and Yakima Herald-Republic.

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