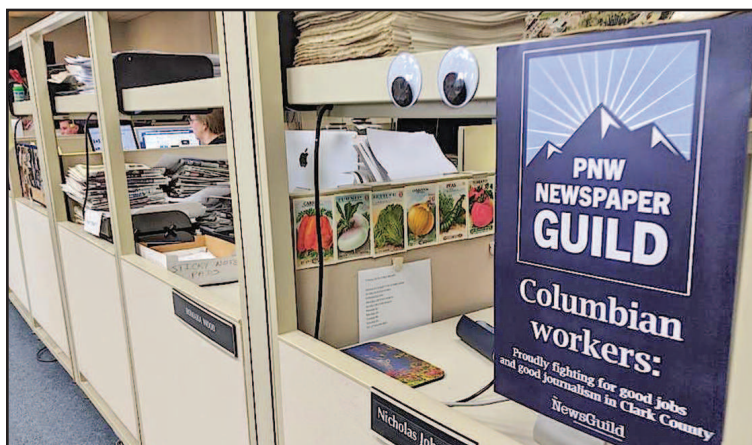


UNION ORGANIZING



All across the Columbian newsroom, workers are displaying union posters.

Union vote scheduled at The Columbian newspaper

By Don McIntosh

A group of 28 news department workers at *The Columbian* daily newspaper in Vancouver will vote Oct. 31 on whether to unionize with the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, a local affiliate of NewsGuild-CWA.

Management at the family-owned paper isn't mounting the kind of scorched-earth anti-union campaign that some employers use, but is making it clear they hope employees will vote no.

"There is nothing a labor union can get you that you can't get on your own," owner and publisher Scott Campbell wrote in an Oct. 1 letter to workers. "Labor unions put a wedge between management and employees. Instead of all being on the same team, there are two teams. Us and them. This is not what I want for our culture."

"The most disappointing thing about all this is that nobody at the company has said, 'Hey, we understand there are issues here that

need to be addressed,'" says union organizing committee spokesperson Nathan Howard, a photographer at the newspaper.

Howard said union support is holding steady and even growing in the face of management's reaction. Meanwhile, union supporters intend to keep their campaign positive.

Backed by the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council, the union is asking members of the public to sign a pledge saying they'll subscribe to *The Columbian* if it goes union. [You can sign the pledge at bit.ly/325qViR]

The plan was hatched after a delegation to an Oct. 2 meeting of the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council got a standing ovation from delegates and offers of support.

"The hope here is that when the newspaper gets on the same level with the community, with the support of the labor community that we have here, there are financial benefits," Howard said.

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