

We, the newsroom workers of The Columbian, are unionizing.

We are the award-winning reporters, photographers, editors, designers and other professionals who carry on the proud work of producing one of Southwest Washington's most valuable civic assets: its independent daily newspaper of record for more than a century.

The Columbian today is an increasingly rare example of a thriving independent community news organization. But our industry is under threat. As a consolidating media landscape hobbles local newspapers, talented journalists are fleeing the industry in search of more stable work.

We believe our work is worth fighting for – for the readers who rely on local journalism, for the people who produce it and for the future of the company that publishes it.

Our journalists are overworked and underpaid. We must make choices between doing the work we love and buying homes, starting families and putting down roots in this community. This doesn't serve our company, and it doesn't serve our readers.

We call on The Columbian to meet us at the bargaining table to set policies that promote job security, pay that reflects the cost of living and staffing that allows us to tell the stories of our community. 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 Columbian represents itself as one of the region's most progressive employers. We call on our family-owned newspaper to live up to that claim by respecting our right to unionize, recognizing our value to this company's future and engaging in good-faith negotiations.

We urge The Columbian Publishing Company to voluntarily recognize us as a unit of the Pacific Northwest local of The NewsGuild, which already includes our fellow journalists at The Seattle Times, Kitsap Sun, Skagit Valley Herald and Yakima Herald-Republic.

To succeed in an uncertain future, The Columbian must put its workers and readers first, united in the conviction that strong local journalism requires strong local jobs.

In solidarity,

The newsroom workers of The Columbian