Pittsburgh Locals in negotiations with Post Gazette

By Dan Wasser, PPMWS President

Many CWA-PPMWS locals have been exploring merger as a way to build bargaining power and continue to provide effective representation for members.

The main objective of a merger between two local unions should be to unite members so that they can better represent the rights of their collective membership when dealing with their employers. The principal objective must always be the strengthening of the local in representing its members. By merging, we create a dynamic local that can be more responsive to member needs. A local that can bargain more effectively, and grow its membership.

Mergers within the Printing Sector

By Dan Wasser, PPMWS President

Many locals have found that by merging with other Sector locals that they can not only represent their members better and more efficiently, but they also can fulfill many of the requirements needed under the Sector Bylaws and CWA Constitution. The 74th CWA Convention adopted Resolution 74A-13-3, Fully Functioning Locals, stating: “the need for fully functioning locals that effectively represent educated and mobilized members, united in fighting for our union’s goals of justice and equity for all workers, is even more critical today...”

Article 13, Section 9 of the CWA Constitution sets clear duties and obligations for Local Unions, and our...
Dear Brother/Sister:

We write this letter to you as trustees of the Union Printers Home Corporation.

As you know, at the time that the Union Printers Home was established, its purpose was to provide a nursing home facility for retired ITU members. Over time the number of ITU retirees interested in coming to the UPH got smaller and eventually the UPH trustees opened the UPH to any CWA member and then to the general public. The only difference between the general public and CWA members was the cost of being a resident at the Home. Over time the number of CWA members who were residents at the Home continued to dwindle at an alarming rate. As of today, we have approximately 120 residents and only one (1) of those is a CWA member.

It was clear to the Trustees that at this time the UPH was no longer serving the purpose for which it was created. Instead, the UPH trustees were now in the business of running a non-profit nursing home for the public. Also, over time the cost of the UPH continued to rise, management of the UPH became a greater challenge and looming over all of this was the liabilities and risks associated with operating a nursing home facility.

With the reality of the greater costs, the potential liabilities and the clear lack of interest by our members, the Trustees made the unanimous decision to attempt to sell the UPH. In light of its long history and great contribution that the UPH had made to many of our members, this was not an easy decision for the Trustees but one that had become necessary. When we put the home on the market, we listed to sell it as an operating nursing home. We also made it a condition that the remaining CWA member would continue to receive the same percentage discount that he has received while the Home was owned by the UPH Corporation.

After it was listed we received two offers. We accepted the higher offer. However, we quickly learned that the commercial real estate market, at least in the nursing home field, is very different from the residential real estate market that we are used to dealing with. Accepting an offer is just the beginning. There is a long process of “due diligence” during which the potential buyer looks at everything from all angles. At the end of that “due diligence” the potential buyer can walk away from the deal or the parties sit down to iron out the actual and final agreement.

We have hardly done this alone. Along with Sector Counsel Richard Rosenblatt’s general assistance, we have hired attorneys who specialize in nursing home real estate transactions, a broker who specializes in nursing home real estate transactions and a safety expert. Using all of their guidance we are working through the difficulties that one faces in trying to sell a 120 year old building that houses a nursing home.

If the current potential buyer works out, we expect to sell the UPH by the end of March. If that is not successful, we will put it back on the market.

Finally, when we do sell the nursing home, we intend to continue the UPH Corporation and as required by the Trust and Colorado law, put the proceeds from the sale to use for education or related purpose.

We are sending this letter to each Sector local and CWA locals that have Sector members and request that you share this with your members and retirees.

Fraternally,

Daniel F. Wasser, President
Robert C. Maida, Jr., Vice President
Albert E. Rudy, Secretary-Treasurer
SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Sector Representative
Ronald Miller

Manchester Typographical Union Local 152/CWA 14131

A settlement was reached between two employees of the New Hampshire Union Leader Corporation and the company prior to a scheduled arbitration filed by the union. Arbitration had been scheduled for February 4, 2014, over the layoff of two members with job guarantees. Sector Council Richard Rosenblatt’s assistance was invaluable in reaching an accord.

New Era CWA 14177

Negotiation began between local 14177 and the New Era Cap Company in February. After preliminary discussions between the two parties, the union and the company have exchanged proposals. Talks are scheduled to resume in early March.

Waterville, Maine CWA 14115

Waterville Local 14115 is currently in negotiations with Maine Media Today. The Union has submitted their contract proposal and is waiting for a response from the company. The two are also in discussion over the termination of a newsroom employee.

Wilkes-Barre Typographical Union 187/CWA 14837

Discussions have been held and documented and have been signed for the future merger of Wilkes-Barre Typographical Union 187/CWA 14837 and Scranton Typographical Union 312/CWA 14851 into Pittsburgh Typographical Union 7/CWA 14827.

New York Typographical Union 6/CWA 14156

Members from NY Typographical 6/CWA 14156 ratified contracts at the Fall River Herald, Brockton Enterprise, and Yankee Offset and Envelope.

Pittsburgh Typographical Union 7/CWA 14827

Negotiations between the Reading Eagle Company and the union have continued. At the last meeting the company requested ideas from the Chapel negotiating on how to help the company save money. The Chapel committee solicited input from members and later presented their ideas to the company. The company has turned down the Union’s ideas.

Sector Representative
Linda Morris-Cooley

Champaign-Urbana Typographical Union 444/CWA 14407

Champaign-Urbana Typo Union 444/14407 reached a three-year agreement with The News-Gazette, Inc., in the Distribution department. The agreement secures a 25 cent increase after year-and-a-half. Manning will be reduced, with 11 positions continuing to be guaranteed and the company filling the remaining hours will part-time employees and in certain limited times and hours temp workers. Laid-off employees will receive severance with additional medical coverage at the current contractual rate.

Chicago Typographical Union 16

Chicago Typographical Union 16 raised a grievance after being informed by the Sun-Times, they were laying off members in the prepress department. A settlement was reached and no one was laid-off.

Cincinnati Local 6300

The recently merged local Cincinnati Typographical Union #3 into Cincinnati CWA 6300 secured recognition at Cobb Printing. Thanks to the organizing efforts of Jim Plogmann (Typo president) and Dwayne Phillips (CWA president), the Company agreed to voluntarily recognize the bindery and pressmen employees. The local bargained an addendum to add the jurisdiction to the current contract making Cobb a wall-to-wall union shop.

Duluth Mailers 62/CWA 14733

Duluth Mailers 62/CWA 14733 reached a three-year agreement with Hibbing Daily Tribune editorial unit. Wage increases ranging from one and a half to two percent the first year, and one and a half percent increases in 2015 and 2016. Mileage was increased by 3 cents, personal days will be earned earlier, medical will be based on the same percentage and contributions would remain the same, but currently there are three levels of coverage that will be reduced to two.

Detroit Typographical Union 18

Detroit Typographical Union 18 held effects bargaining after receiving notice from The Detroit Media Partnership that they were moving some of the union’s work to a regional center reducing four full-time Mac Operators. The Union bargained an enhanced severance package that would be voluntary first. It included medical at their current bargaining agreement calculations.

At EGT in Detroit, Local 18 proceeded to joint standing after an employee there had been discharged. The local is investigating the situation. Also in Detroit, Local President Tom Grenfell and Organizer Norm Stachulski organized Detroit Custom Clothing & Graphics located in Clinton Township, MI. The shop specializes in silk screening and embroidery.

Mergers within the Printing Sector

p. 4A members are responding to the adopted resolution in a positive manner. They know that merging with other Printing Sector locals, and becoming a stronger collective voice is the right thing to do.

The Sector locals that have decided to merge, didn’t come to that decision lightly. The officers thought long and hard about what a merger would mean to their membership. Before deciding if a merger was the right answer for their local, they had to assess the needs of the local and analyze how best to respond to those needs.

An effective merger should combine the membership strengths and bring together the experience and talent of both unions to build a stronger nucleus of union activists. The merger should help better defend against employer assaults on the membership. A merger should improve the financial base of the local to offer greater opportunities for members.

Honesty and full communication must be the cornerstone of any merger. What is the goal of the merger? What is to be gained by the merger? What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages? Disadvantages must be faced and dealt with head on so they do not surface later.

Opposing opinions must be heard and considered. Every effort must be made to address those concerns.

A merger should bring the group together not cause strife. They should reinforce the collective strengths of the group.

All proposed local union mergers must be approved by the Sector president prior to presentation to the membership. Sector staff stands ready to assist any local with the process.

Some Sector Locals that merged in 2013 include:

- Local 14117 to Local 14156
- Local 14424 to Local 14406
- Local 14830 to Local 14827
- Local 14521 to Local 14733
- Local 14517 to Local 14503

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**West Penn Printing ratifies first contract**

Depending upon classification, members will receive a 3-4.8 percent wage increase in the first year; a 2.5-4.6 percent increase in the second year; and a 2.5-4.5 percent increase in the third year.

**Also included in the contract:**
- Four hour minimum pay
- 401K with matching from the Company, including part time employees
- Two paid personal days annually for part time employees
- Closed shop and no strike/lockout language
- Members cannot be required to perform work from other PPMWS locations that are on strike

“I am especially proud of the bargaining committee at West Penn. They listened to what the membership wanted and held strong,” said Wasser.

West Penn tried to fight the employees organizing efforts earlier in the year, claiming that the NLRB was an invalid organization as it was then structured based on a court decision involving Noel Canning. Attorneys for the employees beat back the employer’s “Noel Canning” defense and the employees’ election of CWA as their bargaining representative was validated.

**Post Gazette seeking $22 million in concessions**

percent of Post Gazette’s employees rely on public transportation.

Since June, each of the unions have been in separate negotiations for non-economic components of their contracts. It is unclear when negotiations will begin on the economics side of bargaining. “There doesn’t seem to be any sense of urgency on the company’s part to begin negotiating economics,” said Don McConnell, president, Pittsburgh Typographical 7. “These workers have worked since 2006 without a raise. The last two contracts were concessionary; my members and the Unity Council as a whole, do not want to give up anything this time around.”

“Our members in Pittsburgh remain vigilant, and their respective bargaining committees continue to do an extraordinary job at the table. Collectively, we are dedicated to fighting for the rights of all members and fighting for a fair contract in all areas at the Post, and this will not change,” said Dan Wasser, president, PPMWS.

This time around, the company is asking the unions for concessions that include:
- Increase in health care contributions
- Elimination of personal days
- Elimination of company paid dental and vision insurance
- Pension plan changes; including dropping the NPP
- Elimination of the cap on the 10 percent wage diversion
- Imposition of 60 percent sick pay

The nine-union Unity Council has produced posters comparing the 2006 cost of everyday items to what those items cost today. Each poster reiterates the fact that members are making 12 percent less than they were in 2006.