Ballot results by Mailers at the New York Times will be announced on February 28th. Mailers are voting to accept or reject the terms of a tentative four-year contract extension that guarantees four shifts a week with no loss of benefit contributions as schedules for the Times’ mail room workers will move from five weekly shifts to four. The union’s scale committee, in a letter accompanying the mail ballots, explained that the agreement avoids the Times’ threatened $5 hourly wage cut. The current contract expired on March 30, 2011.

Members of the negotiating committee charged that the Times tried to force an impasse on the committee which would have enabled the company to impose its 25 percent wage cut across the board.

The union battled back with the support of the Sector, help from the Allied Newspaper Unions and its own public outreach effort. “We fought back by challenging them in arbitration,” the union said. The tactic “frustrated the Times and kept the old conditions in place for much longer than the Times had intended” while an arbitration decision was pending to clarify the circumstances of job guarantee holders.

Once the arbitrator ruled that job guarantees did not protect against wage cuts, the committee had to negotiate “to keep as much as we could for as long as we could.”

The parties retained the arbitrator to act as a mediator for the balance of the negotiations.

The tentative agreement includes a $350 monthly ($80.77 weekly) stipend and a 2 percent annual bonus, paid in weekly installments of $18.56.

Long-time mailers (those with lifetime job guarantees) are eligible to work a 5th shift weekly, but at an hourly rate half the rate they are paid for the first four shifts in a week.

Starting in April, mailers would receive a $350 monthly stipend.

The CWA Printing Sector label has a significant economic value. That’s clear from the number of piracy cases the union encounters every year—especially in election years—and the number of cold calls the union fields from individuals asking about how they can get a bug. The Sector website is developing a searchable database of commercial shops licensed to use the Sector bug. That process will take some time.
May: Official Union Printers’ Home Month

May is Union Printers’ Home Month when printer and mailer chapels all over the country are encouraged to make donations to help defray the expenses of the Union Printers’ Home.

May 12, 2012 Marks 120th Anniversary of the Union Printers’ Home

The Union Printers’ Home in Colorado Springs, CO opened its doors to sick or indigent printers on May 12, 1892. Since that time, it has nursed more than 25,000 men and women through grave illnesses, or eased their final days of life.

In 2011, the home began a major facelift. Crews began remaking the common areas into a “hometown space” that has been dubbed “Union Station.” The remodeled areas now include an ice cream shop, an intimate library and reading room, a music room, a computer room and a veterans museum.

UPH already had its own museum of memorabilia from printers and mailers.

When completed, Union Station will offer 19 different shops as well as a chapel and an exercise gym.

Last July, courtesy of a grant from Home Depot, some 90 volunteers from Colorado Springs communities spent a full day landscaping, refinishing benches, fixing floors, painting and making repairs. Home Depot funded all the materials and sponsored the volunteers.

Known as the “Castle on the Hill” by its residents and built on 80 acres donated by the Colorado Springs Board of Trade, the home was one of the original extended nursing facilities in the country.

Since its founding, and throughout its 120-year history, UPH staff pioneered the treatment of tuberculosis and the development of services for the elderly and infirm.

Philadelphia philanthropists George W. Childs and Anthony J. Drexel, who donated $5,000 each, provided the initial seed money for the home. Final construction cost was $71,144.14. The balance of the construction costs and operating funds came from donations by working printers in the U.S. and Canada.

For many years, a 200 acre dairy farm on land adjacent to the home supplied wheat, chickens, pigs and vegetables to help feed the residents.

In 1908, the home added a library with a capacity for 8,000 volumes and a 300-seat auditorium.

Originally opened to serve members of the International Typographical Union exclusively, today, the home is available to the general public as an extended care and nursing home facility.

UPH Strives to Create ‘Home-like’ Atmosphere for Residents, Visitors

The park-like setting of the 80 acres of ground that surrounds the Union Printers’ Home (UPH) provides residents and visitors alike with ample opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Tables, chairs, benches and swings circle the picturesque pond that is the centerpiece to the home’s exterior. In the back, a large patio and gazebo invite residents to relax and breathe free.

With a capacity for 120 residents, the Union Printers’ Home continues as a trendsetter in providing skilled nursing and assisted living services. As a Medicare/Medicaid-certified facility, UPH is open to the general public, but any CWA member is eligible for residency at a reduced rate. UPH also has a contract with the Veterans Administration.

Under the direction of Administrator Lisa Burdo, the home’s vision is to sustain a community where residents live life to the fullest on their own terms.

“Staff and residents have the autonomy to enrich each other’s lives in a culture of acceptance, respect and dignity,” she says, adding:

“UPH strives to be a positive and safe environment that supports the needs of each individual and encourages them to be innovative, enthusiastic and to partake to their full potential. We want to put the ‘home’ in Union Printers’ Home.”

All residents have private rooms and rooms are clustered into individual neighborhoods. Each neighborhood features a common area with a sitting room and cable television, a kitchenette with a refrigerator and a stocked pantry open for use by the residents 24/7, along with a library and a recreation room.

Residents are encouraged to personalize their rooms to suit their own taste. If an individual needs assistance to do that, help is available.

The home keeps residents interested and busy with a full schedule of special events and seasonal activities. There is an Easter egg hunt, a Halloween party and a festive Thanksgiving dinner in addition to regular outings for shopping, fishing and field trips. In good weather during the Summer, the home holds an outdoor barbecue on Fridays. In conjunction with the local farm bureau and the 4-H Club, UPH sponsors a Farm Day on the grounds to showcase a variety of farm animals for residents and youngsters from nearby communities.

Other popular activities include a sporty tailgate party catered by the staff and a dessert party dubbed, “The Inn at Union Printers.”

A home is not a home without a resident character and Rusty, a young rescued golden retriever serves that role at UPH. Named by a ballet of residents and staff, Rusty is in obedience training to eventually graduate as a certified therapy dog.

In addition to skilled nursing care, the home offers physical, speech and occupational therapy. UPH maintains a busy schedule of activities and social services. Residents who use the dining room can choose meals off a menu that includes grilled entrees and a salad bar.

Pictured here is the UPH ice cream shop.

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p. 4A  ➤ Website

At its debut, the website will feature a series of rolling stories and photos of the activities of Sector locals and members as well as broader CWA programs. The Sector Label, or bug, will be prominently featured to serve as a reminder of the Sector’s unique identity and the pride associated with the work that members perform, he said.

“We are printers, after all, and we will always look at the printed page as our fundamental tool, but we are also in the 21st Century and we recognize the reality of the communications landscape;” Wasser said.

In 2009, the Sector modified its constitution to clarify PPMWS jurisdiction to specifically include digital workers such as web designers, pre-press specialists, graphic artists, programmers and individuals who compose and prepare copy for digital formats as long as that work is performed by shops authorized to display the label. This burgeoning field is largely unrepresented and the range of pay, working conditions and a general absence of benefits in digital workplaces reflect that fact.

A key feature of the new site will be its interactivity to enable members to weigh in on critical issues, to assist in organizing new members and to link users out to resources helpful to them in their daily lives, such as the AFL-CIO Union Plus program.

Wasser said the union also wants to encourage dialogue among members, locals and the Sector to help the union solve problems.

“Properly developed websites are a valuable tool for enhancing the performance of organizations such as our union. We want to be able to use it to its full capabilities, so we will be depending on the insights of our members communicating through the site to sustain and expand it,” Wasser said.

Macomb Daily Confronts Offshore Demand

Representatives of The Macomb Daily Newspaper are demanding the right to outsource ad composition to the Philippines through a company called Affinity Express.

Detroit Typographical Union No. 18 President Tom Grenfell said, “offshoring ad work has been a major push by the company in current contract negotiations.” The newspaper is owned by John Paton, owner of the parent Journal Register Company and Media News, among others. Paton has been a prime mover in efforts to move the composition work overseas from his Journal Register Corporation Newspapers.

A non-union newspaper in the same area, The Oakland Press, laid off workers and now outsources work to the Philippines.

Detroit Typographical Union No. 18 represents eight full-time employees and one part-timer. The company has offered to keep a few of the employees.

The local is part of a multi-union council consisting of CWA’s Detroit Newspaper Guild and three Teamster locals “and we are standing strong together,” Grenfell said.

Six Resolved Pacts for Detroit Local

Detroit Typographical Union No. 18 reports new or extended agreements for six units, including The Lansing State Journal—extended one year; and three-year contracts for Graham Printing, Lori’s Printing, InstaCopy, Toledo Ticket and Fosdick Printing.

St. Louis Allied Slaps Down Label Pirate; Non-Union Firm Caught Red Handed

It took some sleuthing, but upholding the integrity of the Allied Label is worth the effort. So says Matt Laufketter, owner of the Ink Spot, a bonafide Allied shop in St. Louis, MO. When Laufketter suspected his company’s label had been fraudulently used by MADCO Printing he took his suspicions to John Ebeling who heads the St. Louis Allied Printing Trades Council as well as the PPMWS unit within CWA St. Louis Local 6300. The Allied will take the case from here.

The Allied Label, also known as the union bug, is a registered trademark for the union printing industry. It is protected by federal law. Any reproduction of an Allied Label without the specific license to do so is considered an infringement or counterfeiting of that official trademark. Illegal use is a criminal offense throughout the United States and Canada.

“This is bad for the entire printing industry to have MADCO get by with doing something like this,” Ebeling said. “He’s not only defrauding the Ink Spot by using the label, he’s defrauding other union printers and, most importantly, all of the people who come to him to get union printing. A lot of innocent people and political leaders who absolutely want the union label on their printing are being deceived. MADCO is not a union shop.”

Laufketter originally got suspicious after a customer came through his door with an order for envelopes similar to those he had earlier purchased and bearing Laufketter’s label. When Laufketter informed the customer that he had not printed the original envelope, the cooperative customer brought in the original invoices from MADCO confirming Laufketter’s suspicions.

By matching MADCO’s invoices against his own Laufketter uncovered a pattern dating back some three years. Apparently, MADCO would subcontract short runs of small jobs through Laufketter to get the label then MADCO would run the remainder of the order.

According to the St. Louis Labor Tribune, it is unclear whether all of the orders involved illegal misappropriation of the Allied Label, but Laufketter says he’s not taking any more chances, he will do no more subcontract work for MADCO.

Ebeling cautions print buyers to beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakery. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes. Even if a printer tells you he will do no more subcontracting, beware of fakes.

p. 4A  ➤ Pittsburgh Local 7

linotype machine. The union’s members at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette work at coding and digitizing information in preparation for both print and internet displays. Many of those workers trace their first exposure to digital typesetting, design and composition to high school or community college courses. That realization got McConnell interested in the work of the Parkway West Career Training Center serving 14 high school districts in the Pittsburgh area—12 public schools and two private schools.

According to McConnell, “These workers in Pittsburgh are sitting right where the old and the new forces overlap.”

“When I visited the Parkway West facility I immediately recognized that their training comes the closest to preparing people for the work our local’s members perform. So we need to talk to them.”

McConnell has been appointed to the advisory board of the center, assisting with curriculum development. He points out that the youngsters who come out of Parkway West’s graphic communications and technology training go to work in enterprises that design websites and phone apps, produce digital art work and prepare material for publication throughout the Western Pennsylvania region.

McConnell points out that organizing in these new workplaces and providing representation to the workers in them may require offering different services, but it’s not like that model needs to be created out of thin air.

“A lot of these young people are creative, independent-minded and they deliberately choose occupations that keep them out of the traditional production settings that we’re used to seeing,” McConnell explained. “But, that’s no different than musicians, actors, writers and other occupations that prize their independence. Unions have been serving people in those jobs for generations. There’s no reason we can’t apply the same techniques in the new printing industry,” he said.

Matt Laufketter displays identical invitations. The one on the left was printed by his firm, Ink Spot, the sample at right was produced by MADCO with the Ink Spot’s label.
Pittsburgh Settles Retiree Health Care Case Out of Court

Pittsburgh Typographical Local No. 7 and publishers of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reached an out-of-court settlement of the union’s lawsuit over payment for retiree health care covering some 117 retirees.

The local filed suit late last year when the Post-Gazette stopped paying health care premiums for members holding lifetime guarantees.

It made sense for both sides to negotiate a settlement, explained Local President Don McConnell.

“If we had to go through the judicial proceedings, the final resolution could have taken years and many of the folks we’re fighting for might never actually see any benefit.”

“Securing satisfaction in less than six months on any dispute with a publisher is what I would call fast track,” McConnell said.

Under the terms of the settlement, the publishers agreed to pay a stipend covering Medicare advantage plans for the individuals involved. The retirees themselves choose from a menu of plans based on their health circumstances at the time of retirement.

Cadmus/Mack Printing Unit Votes to Approve Strike Authorization

Workers at Cadmus/Mack Printing in Easton, PA, voted 140 to 2 to reject the company’s final proposed contract offer. Management is demanding a 10% wage cut along with givebacks on vacation days and personal days off. The company also wants to lift limits on forced overtime that now ensure workers won’t be scheduled to work the weekends before and after their vacations.

Sector Representative Ron Miller said even though business is down generally, Mack prints several major time sensitive publications requiring frequent overtime work for everyone in the plant. A few years back, the union negotiated a schedule that guaranteed every worker at least one weekend off out of every two.

“That’s the last straw for most of these guys. How can they plan to take their families away for a decent vacation if they’re going to be scheduled for weekend work?” Miller asked.

The workers followed the rejection vote with a 129 to 7 vote authorizing a strike.

Miller explained that the company’s offers throughout bargaining have been harsh and confrontational.

For years, Cadmus/Mack and its sister company in Lancaster were the only two union printing plants among the dozens operated by Cadmus. Cadmus was gobbled up by Cenveo in 2007 and Cenveo has been on a buying spree since then, including the purchase of Mead Westvaco’s envelope business.

As a $2 billion company, Cenveo now describes itself as the third largest graphics company in North America with more than 100 facilities in the U.S. as well as locations in Asia and South America. Latest profit figures show gross sales of $500.6 million in the third quarter of 2011, a 10 percent increase, and net income of $2.8 million for the period.

With the downsizing they’ve already experienced at Cadmus/Mack, a number of senior pressmen are now working as helpers just to hold on to a job and retain their benefits.

Mack workers are currently developing a solidarity strategy in the event that a strike is called.

The unit is solid in support of their negotiating committee, Miller said.

At press time, the Sector was informed that Cadmus/Mack had convened an all-employee meeting to issue WARN notices that the plant is shutting down. The union expects to meet March 7, 2012 to discuss the effects of the closure.

New Leadership at the International Allied

Sector President Dan Wasser and Robert Stevenson, president of Columbia Typographical Union No. 101-12 have been elected president and vice president respectively of the International Allied Printing Trades. They join incumbent Secretary-Treasurer Robert Lacey at the helm of the Allied Label. “We have had very positive conversations with Brother Lacey already and we look forward to working closely with him in the future,” Wasser said.

CWA/ITU Negotiated Pension Plan

Stephen Spolar, vice president of Human Resources for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/Block Newspaper Operations, joins the NPP Board of Trustees as a management trustee replacing Jim Artz. Spolar has been with the Post-Gazette for eight years. Over his career he has worked in the newspaper industry and as an attorney in private practice. Spolar earned his law degree from Duke, along with an MA in Industrial Relations from New York State School of Industrial Relations at Cornell, and an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan.

“We look forward to working with Mr. Spolar. His background and education reflect a strong foundation for helping to guide the decisions of the NPP in the future,” declared Art Delanu, Chairman of the NPP Board and President of New York Typographical Union No. 6. “We also extend our appreciation to Jim Artz who worked diligently on behalf of NPP participants during his 11 year tenure on the Board.”

The NPP’s 2011 results show a positive 1 percent return on investments for the calendar year in a very difficult investment environment. Most stock markets experienced negative returns for the year as did most commodities and hedge funds. The NPP managed a positive return through its diversified allocations that included commercial real estate and bonds.

Annual statements showing individual contributions and accrued pension amounts were mailed to active NPP participants in February. Participants may also request statements directly from the Plan Office by calling (719) 473 3862, or via e-mail to: itunpp@aol.com.