

GUILD LEADER

On the web at www.riguild.org

Volume XVIII, Issue 3

Providence Newspaper Guild TNG-CWA Local 31041

January 25, 2007

Members to Vote on One Big Union

Pawtucket, Woonsocket Guild Locals Seek Merger with PNG

The Executive Boards of the Providence, Woonsocket and Pawtucket Newspaper Guilds have negotiated a merger that would make the Woonsocket and Pawtucket locals units of the Providence Guild.

Under terms negotiated by leaders of the three locals and approved by the respective executive boards, the members of the Guild locals in Woonsocket (about 45 members) and Pawtucket (about 28 members) would become members of Providence Newspaper Guild. They would pay dues to the Providence local and be eligible to vote for members of the Executive Board and the local's executive officers.

The merger agreement must be approved by membership votes in each of the participating locals. Providence is voting first, with a secret ballot vote set for Feb. 28 and Mar. 1.

When this is done, members of all three locals shouldn't notice any difference in day-to-day operation of their union, Providence Newspaper Guild President John Hill said. Although the new members in Woonsocket and Pawtucket will see their dues increase.

The dues rate for the Providence Newspaper Guild is 1.7 percent, plus 22 cents. The Pawtucket rate is 1.5 percent and the Woonsocket rate is 1.384 percent. Both locals have agreed go to 1.5 percent upon ratification and then to 1.7 percent on the one-year anniversary of the merger, should it be

approved.

The Providence Guild will gain the income from new members without any appreciable increase in expenses, Hill said. The Pawtucket and Woonsocket locals will benefit by being able to shift bookkeeping, state and federal reporting requirements and other office duties to the staff of Providence Guild, freeing them up to concentrate more on member services.

In addition, members of the Pawtucket and Woonsocket locals will become eligible for the life insurance and scholarship programs offered by the Providence local.

Besides adding about 70 new dues-paying members between the two new units, the combined treasuries of the smaller locals -- more than \$20,000 -- would go into the Providence Guild treasury.

The influx of new members would also help replenish the ranks of the Providence Newspaper Guild, which has been eroded over the past several years by buyouts and attrition at the Providence Journal and Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

The merger would make official what has been an informal working relationship between the three locals for more than a decade. For some time, Guild Administrator Timothy Schick has assisted the Woonsocket and Pawtucket locals in their contract negotiations and grievance preparation. That workload would continue, but with the change that the Providence Guild will

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be get the dues income from the locals receiving this service.

The merger is contingent on the other locals paying off all outstanding debts. That will be verified by final audits for each local that will be conducted by the Providence Newspaper Guild.

Currently, the Providence Newspaper Guild is made up of two units, the Providence Unit, which represents editorial and advertising workers at the Providence Journal, and the Worcester Unit, which represents editorial and circulation workers at the Worcester Telegram and Gazette.

Guild members at each of the two papers have their own unit councils that handle local issues like contract talks and grievances. Worcester members cannot vote on Providence matters and vice versa. Both unit councils report to the Executive Board.

Though the new members could vote for, and run for, executive officer posts and the Executive Board they would NOT be eligible to vote for Providence or Worcester unit officers or have any say in the contracts that those units negotiate.

Notice of Special Membership Meeting and Referendum Vote on Merger with the Pawtucket and Woonsocket Guild locals

Location 1

**Providence Guild office, 270
Westminster St. 2nd Floor**

Feb. 28, 2007

Meeting at noon.

Secret Ballot Voting noon to 7 p.m.

Location 2

**Worcester Guild office, 32
Franklin St. Room 301**

March 1, 2007

Meeting at noon.

Secret Ballot Voting noon to 4 p.m.

Copies of the merger documents will be mailed to all Guild members.