



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHNER COMMUNICATIONS ACQUIRES THE RIVERDALE PRESS

GARDEN CITY, N.Y. — Publishers Clifford and Stuart Richner today announced that Richner Communications has acquired The Riverdale Press, the 10,000-circulation weekly covering the Riverdale section of the Bronx, with a national reputation for journalistic excellence and integrity.

Richner Communications, based in Garden City, N.Y. publishes 16 editions of the Herald Community Newspaper, the 10-edition PrimeTime Xpress shopping guide, The Jewish Star and several niche publications and affiliated web sites, all on Long Island. Both companies are privately held and the terms of the sale were not announced.

Founded in 1950 by David and Celia Stein, The Riverdale Press has been published since 1980 by their sons Bernard and Richard. Known from the outset for penetrating news coverage and hard-hitting commentary, the Press's voice has frequently been heard far beyond the borders of its northwest Bronx neighborhood.

In 1989, five days after The Press published an editorial criticizing major bookstore chains for removing Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses" from their shelves, the Press office was firebombed. A call to 911 claiming responsibility cited the editorial, and the FBI concluded that the bombing came in retaliation for the Press's defense of the right to read the novel. No arrest was ever made.

Shaken but unbowed, the Press published on schedule the next day, with a front-page editorial vowing, "We will not be silenced."

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It was for its strong, clear editorial voice that The Riverdale Press and editor Bernard Stein won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing in 1998, beating out some of the country's largest and best-known metro dailies. The New York Times characterized the Press's editorials as offering "eloquent, tough-minded critiques of local school and development issues, hell-raising over an episode of police racism, and skewering of the Mayor of New York."

Bernard Stein, currently a professor of journalism at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, will continue to write editorials for The Press, according to Cliff Richner. Richard Stein will continue in a part-time capacity with Richner Communications to work on special projects, including developing the company's web sites, and to ensure a smooth transition at The Press.

"We're proud of our newspaper and our community. Riverdale has been our home and provided our livelihood. Its well-being has been our mission. We hoped to be able to pass the paper on to people who would share that mission, and we think we have," said Bernard Stein.

"Stuart and I have known and admired the Steins and The Riverdale Press for more than 20 years," said Cliff Richner. "As brothers who are also second-generation newspaper publishers we have a lot in common. We're pleased that the Steins chose to entrust the Press to our stewardship."

Stuart Richner said that no immediate changes are planned at The Press. "It's a great newspaper, and we don't see any reason to tamper with success," he said. "We certainly expect to achieve certain efficiencies by combining the two organizations, but those will primarily be in the business office and in the production and distribution functions of The Press, and we expect any changes to occur gradually. All current Press staff members have been asked to continue in their current positions."

Robert and Edith Richner founded Richner Communications in 1964 when they purchased the Nassau Herald and Rockaway Journal. Since assuming leadership of the company in 1987 Clifford and Stuart have steadily expanded into communities across Nassau County.

The Herald Newspapers have a strong tradition of their own for independent-minded community journalism. The papers have won more than a hundred awards in recent years from state and national press associations, often for their outspoken stands on community issues. Whether fighting to close a polluting power plant or to preserve the Island's dwindling open spaces and scenic wetlands, the Herald has frequently been cited as a catalyst for community action.

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“It has been a great privilege to protect and defend the unique character of the vibrant Riverdale community, and I’m so glad we have found another pair of brothers who will carry on that tradition,” said Richard Stein.

The Steins were represented by Cribb, Greene & Associates, Charlottesville, VA, in the sale.

From a business perspective, the Richners are optimistic about the future of community newspapers, as evidenced by their investment in The Riverdale Press. They see the recent tribulations of major dailies like Newsday as more of an opportunity than a sign of impending doom.

“At a time when national and world news has increasingly become a commodity instantly available from many sources at the click of a mouse, our papers focus on the news that has the most direct impact on our readers — their neighborhoods, their schools, religious institutions and all the other organizations that shape daily life in our communities, noted Cliff Richner. “ In most cases we are the only source for independent, original reporting on these issues. In that regard, The Riverdale Press and Herald Community Newspapers are a perfect match.”

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