NABET-CWA Welcomes New Staff Reps

Two new Staff Representatives are joining the NABET-CWA family. Eric Seggi and Lou Fallot were chosen to replace long-time Staff Representatives Mike Tiglio and Ed Spillett. Tiglio retired in February after 28 years in the job and Spillett, who served as a Staff Rep for 11 years, passed away in December.

Lou Fallot, Local 11’s former president, has four decades of broadcast experience to back up his work as a Staff Rep. He plans to take early retirement from NBC, where he has been an editor for 39 years, in order to take the job with NABET-CWA.

“It is a good opportunity to stay in the business and work with members on the real issues facing them today,” said Fallot, who welcomes the “tremendous responsibility and challenge.”

Fallot has worked with groups of all sizes — from two to 1,000 — and has been involved in negotiating many of the Olympics and sports agreements between the Union and NBC.

“Contract negotiation is an essential part of the job and a way to directly, positively affect the well-being of the members and their families,” said Fallot.

Calling negotiations “a really good fending match,” Fallot will trade on his network experience when facing a contract contest. His many years on the job also will help him communicate with members from a work perspective.

Ultimately, Fallot will be based in Washington, D.C., but he will start on contracts for two units that were organized by Local 11.

Eric Seggi was the President of Local 28 in Erie, Pa., where he also worked for 15 years as a director at WICU-TV (NBC). Since May, Seggi has been “in training” as a Staff Rep, which includes traveling with other Staff to learn the position “hands-on.”

Seggi, who will be based in the Cleveland area, may be covering Tiglio’s territories of Ohio and Michigan. He feels he has an advantage working with those Locals since many of them are similar in size to the stations and market that Local 28 covers. Some of the stations even have the same employers that he has worked with in the past.

“I have big shoes to fill,” said Seggi. “Mike was a good rep for a very long time.”

Seggi will draw on his 10 years of experience as a local president to do the job, which will include contract negotiations and enforcement, organizing, and handling grievances and arbitrations. During his tenure, he helped to organize WJET-TV (ABC/Fox) in 2001.

As a local president and a WICU employee, Seggi has experienced changes in the industry and understands what the Union needs to do to keep up. “You have to be as creative as possible to find ways to keep people in their jobs in a changing industry,” Seggi said.

Seggi officially starts in his new position on July 1, with Fallot following on September 1.

NABET-CWA Works Out Agreement on ESPN/ABC “Time-Buys”

NABET-CWA and ABC have entered into an agreement that would give the Union jurisdiction over ESPN sports presentations when they are broadcast over the ABC Television Network. These broadcasts, called “time-buys,” are an increasing trend in the relationship between the television network and the cable TV giant. ESPN has become a frequent purchaser of time on ABC, and many ESPN-produced events, such as NBA, WNBA, college basketball, horseracing, and auto racing, are aired on the network as time-buys. The agreement would cover time-buy presentations for these and other sports-event programs.

Until the agreement, these broadcasts were produced without the assignment of a NABET-CWA-represented technical crew.

The agreement also covers programs associated with the time-buy broadcasts, such as pre- or post-game shows, when such programs are produced to be broadcast on ABC along with the time-buys.

An example of such a program is the NBA pre-show that has aired throughout the current basketball season from Disney Times Square Studios in New York City. Under the terms of the new agreement, those programs... (Continued on page 4)

Krieger Closes Career Covering Five Decades

A steady stream of congratulatory tributes and well wishes greeted word of Network Coordinator John Krieger’s retirement on April 2, which brought an end to a varied and distinguished Union and journalistic career spanning 54 years.

On April 27, Krieger was honored at a retirement luncheon attended by Union colleagues, family and friends in Washington, D.C. Sector President John Clark expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Sector Executive Council and all of the officers and staff of NABET-CWA for Krieger’s many years of service to the Union.

“Throughout your career, you have worked for the benefit of our membership and played a significant role in improving the lives of workers in broadcasting throughout the country,” said Clark. “Our membership and our Union appreciate your efforts and will miss your dedication and expertise in the future.”

Carmine Turchi, representing CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling, presented John with the traditional gold retirement watch as he praised the honoree for his “total professionalism.” The Sector’s clerical staff gave him a number of humorous gifts symbolizing his office demeanor.

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Coming Soon: Chicago Conference

The 2005 NABET-CWA First Triennial Conference is set for August 25-27 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago. Delegates will arrive on August 24. The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, Aug. 24
Delegate registration (All day)
Orientation meeting (5:30 p.m.)
Delegate reception and dinner

Thursday, Aug. 25 – Saturday, Aug. 27
The Conference begins at 9:00 a.m. on Aug. 25. Sessions will be conducted through Saturday, Aug. 27, at which time Sector Officers will be elected. NABET-CWA Locals and the Sector Executive Council have submitted proposed amendments to the Sector By-laws, returned nominating petitions for Sector Officers, and selected delegates to the Conference.

July 25: Deadline for petitions for Sector elected officers
July 25: Changes to Sector By-Laws to be mailed to all delegates
Local 18 Burst Training

Eighteen members of NABET-CWA Local 18 participated in two Desktop Support Specialist training sessions over two weekends in April. The training was a joint venture between Local 18 and the Boston University Corporate Education Center. Members were exposed to the hardware of a PC, the Windows XP operating system, and wireless networking. Local 18 was approved for reimbursement for a portion of the cost by Jim Joyce and the BURST Training Committee. WGBH provided the conference room for the training at no charge to the local. In its recently ratified new three-year contract, Local 18 and WGBH have included a new clause that will provide $25,000 a year for further training of its members. Local 18 plans on continuing to provide training to its members to ensure employment in the ever-changing world of TV and radio.

Wage Parity a Key Issue in WJLA/News Channel 8 Talks

Pay continues to be a major bone of contention as representatives from NABET-CWA and WJLA/NewsChannel 8 bargain a over successor to the agreement that expired on January 31, 2005.

“There’s a real disparity in wages at this station,” said chief spokesman and Sector President John S. Clark. “Pay rates are all over the place, due to a second tier of wages and a merit pay system. Our bargaining committee is working hard to inject some fairness and equality into a very unfair and unjust system.”

WJLA-TV, an Albritton Communications Company-owned station in Washington, D.C., instituted a two-tier wage system as a result of the negotiations that led to the contract that expired earlier this year. Soon after the completion of that contract — a process that took more than five years — WJLA acquired NewsChannel 8, a cable news outlet serving the Washington metropolitan area. Many of the former NewsChannel 8 employees, who now work side-by-side with their WJLA coworkers, were swept into the second tier, which is compensated at much lower rate than the more veteran workers at the station receive. Pay increases are governed by a merit pay system, which guarantees a small percentage increase and leaves any larger increase to the discretion of management.

According to Clark, the current pay system creates a serious morale problem within the workforce, a problem to which company management seems indifferent. Other issues in the negotiations include company proposals to restrict vacations, increase the number of hours non-bargaining unit personnel can do work under the Union’s jurisdiction, and the elimination of arbitration to resolve disputes between the parties.

Further bargaining dates were scheduled in late June, and the Union’s bargaining team and Local 31’s mobilization committee were working on a multi-faceted campaign to put pressure on WJLA. In addition to President Clark, the WJLA membership is represented at the bargaining table by Mike Forcucci, Alton Morris and Edwin Wilson.

New Equipment, Training Boost Morale at WICZ-TV

It’s like the Berlin Wall coming down at WICZ. Local 26 President John Ziller said of the new, productive relationship between station management and NABET-CWA after the Union’s innovative ideas helped to transform the workplace.

It all started in February with a plea from Ziller to NABET-CWA Staff Representative William Murray to try to figure out how to make the workers in WICZ’s (FOX/UPN) news department happy. Ziller said that ongoing equipment problems and a lack of training had lowered morale to the point where people were quitting their jobs.

Murray came up with the idea to survey the 25-member unit, asking them what problems they faced on a day-to-day basis and what types of training would improve their workplace. The members almost unanimously described having to deal with old equipment that was always breaking down and a lack of training to do their jobs.

NABET-CWA set up a series of meetings with management and shared the results of the surveys with them. Along with the surveys, however, the Union had done its homework and presented a series of solutions to all of the current problems facing the news department.

“We worked with Joe Salvaggio of B.U.R.S.T. and put together a package of affordable editing and camera systems to replace the ones currently in use. We also offered to pay for the training (through B.U.R.S.T.) on the new equipment if the company bought the new systems,” described Murray. “The company approved the new equipment the next day.”

The main selling point to the station, which is owned by Stainless Enterprises of PA, was that the Union would pay for the training on the new equipment. The use of the survey also helped to open management’s eyes because they saw the worker’s concerns in writing.

As of May, WICZ has a whole new digital newsroom, and the workers received training in state-of-the-art software such as

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D.C.’s Local 31 Takes Action
Spotlight on Organizing, Legal Representation and Training

Representing 1,600 radio and television workers throughout the southeastern United States, Local 31 in Washington, D.C., is one of NABET-CWA’s largest units. The Local was established in 1952 to represent NBC and ABC technical employees but its membership now includes ABC, NBC, CNN, Montgomery Community Television, WRC-TV (NBC), National Public Radio, the House Recording Studio, WHUT-TV, WJLA-TV (ABC), PBS and WMAL-AM. The Local’s President, Mark Peach, further reflects changes in the membership. In 2002, Peach was the first daily-hire member to be elected President of a NABET-CWA broadcast local. Today, daily hires make up approximately 65% of Local 31’s membership.

The daily hire membership was hit by cutbacks recently at the ABC Washington bureau, which was instructed to cut its budget last month. The bureau has reduced the number of days it uses daily hires and has returned to the “one-man bands” of old, where one person is responsible for multiple tasks. However, Peach said, the House Recording Studio has picked up some of the slack by adding daily hires.

The ever-changing industry has made Local 31 take an active role in representing its members. “I believe in giving back to the members through legal representation, training and education,” said Peach. “Providing these services answers the question, ‘what do you [the Union] do for me?’”

The Local is concentrating on three main areas that provide the ultimate benefit to its membership: legal protection, organizing, and training.

Legal Protection
The Local has spent a good deal of time and money providing legal aid to the 100 CNN technical employees who were laid-off in late 2003. NABET-CWA, which the company refused to recognize as the employees’ collective bargaining agent, immediately filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board. Peach said the case is “progressing in a positive fashion,” but the Board has yet to make a decision. Many of the former CNN employees are still members of the Local, which helped to find jobs for the displaced workers at ABC, NBC, PBS and the House Recording Studio.

Additionally, the Union recently represented a WHUT-TV (Howard University) employee in an arbitration and won 10 years of back pay for the worker, who is back on the job now after being terminated without “just cause.” Peach also said the Local is working to negotiate settlements in other cases before arbitration.

Organizing
“Organizing is the future,” says Peach. By gaining new members, he hopes to stabilize the financial situation at his Local.

This summer, the Local is looking for an organizing victory at the Senate Recording Studio. On July 4, 30 in-house ENG crews will vote on Union representation. In addition, Local 31 is talking to technicians at Comcast Sports who work the Baltimore Orioles games and at the MCI Center in Washington. Many of the 75 to 100 people are daily hires who also do work for FOX and CBS Sports. NABET-CWA began the organizing campaign in March and is educating the group on the Union’s daily-hire flex plan, which enables daily hires to receive payment in lieu of benefits, including payments toward vacation and retirement.

Peach said the Local will continue to look for different avenues to pursue and will ask its members for assistance in identifying potential members.

Training
Another example of “giving back,” says Peach, is the Local’s participation in B.U.R.S.T. and other training programs. Local 31 offers its members $400 toward Avid training and will find training opportunities in cities other than Washington, D.C., for its members in other jurisdictions. This summer, the Local is putting together a camera seminar with the makers of Sony Pro products in order to bring ENG workers face-to-face with those who actually develop the equipment.

Legal Protection
Local 31 at a glance:

President: Mark Peach
Vice President: Barbara Krieger
Secretary: Maurice “Moe” Thomas
Treasurer: Ted Stewart
Membership: 1,600
Year Chartered: 1952
Web Site: www.nabet31.org

Aside from technical training, Local 31 provides Shop Steward training to teach members their rights because “knowledge is power,” says Peach.

Representation
This knowledge is something that the Union wants to instill in its members by taking a more active role at news events. The Union sends representatives to events such as the presidential inauguration and sporting events — NASCAR, arena football, horseracing, golf, etc. — to play the role of “safety agent” and to make sure the contract is adhered to.

“We are there for protection and to answer questions about the contract or the flex plan,” said Peach. “We often get on the phone with a flex plan rep. on-site to help with questions.”

Contract negotiation is one of the most important components of Union representation and Local 31 is in the midst of negotiations at many of its units: WJLA-TV (ABC), National Public Radio, PBS and the House Recording Studio.

At WHUT-TV, a contract renewal for 20 technicians was reached after two years of talks. The three-year contract was signed on April 15. The Union secured 3% increases in each of the three years, solidified its jurisdiction and removed outdated contract language.

Administration
The Local’s infrastructure is seeing action as well. Local 31 is working to streamline its communication system by switching to an ACCESS database that will make it easier for departments to communicate with each other. The Local’s website also has received a makeover and is easily updated by any of the three officers. For more information on Local 31, visit www.local31.org.

NABET-CWA Show Support for PBS
NABET-CWA continued its fight to preserve federal funding of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) by working with the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) in its lobbying efforts.

Through NABET-CWA, APTS requested the assistance of CWA because, in the words of APTS President John M. Lawson, “CWA is one of the nation’s strongest unions and one whose members are employed by many public television and radio stations.” CWA President Morton Bahr responded by writing a letter to Representative David Obey, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, asking for his support for “at least level funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.”

Bahr indicated his concern for the growing consolidation of media, stating, “Our communities need their local public broadcasters more than ever to ensure diversity of viewpoints.” In conclusion, Bahr commented on the need for Democratic support: “Republicans have tried to kill public broadcasting a number of times. It would be sad if one of the Members of Congress whom I most admire helped them to succeed.” APTS shared the letter with all of its PBS member stations, explaining the importance of “reaching out to other key groups,” such as CWA, and stating, “We deeply appreciate CWA’s support and wanted to make sure you were aware of it.”

NABET-CWA has assisted PBS’ lobbying efforts in New York State and at the national level for the last five years. The Union is trying to build a better relationship with PBS, where it represents employees at 14 locations across the country. In New York State alone, the loss of corporate, state and federal funding has meant big losses in Union membership. The Binghamton PBS station has just 16 members remaining out of 60. These members know firsthand the value of lobbying, with 45% participating in COPE.

This summer, Congress will meet on the Labor-Health and Human Services bill — a critical first step in PBS’ funding quest.
Krieger Closes Career Covering Five Decades

(Continued from page 1)

John reflected on how very fortunate he was to complete a “journey of 54 years,” which enabled him to have multiple careers in the Union, journalism, broadcasting and education. He said he has no specific plans. “I always kept saying that the word ‘retirement’ was not in my vocabulary,” he recalled. “Now, I will make every effort to find out what that word really means!”

Prior to becoming Network Coordinator, he was Assistant to the Network Coordinator from July 1986. He became an International Representative in June 1987. He was also a adjunct Professor of Journalism at several universities and colleges in Western New York, including his own alma mater, and the recipient of many awards and citations for outstanding journalistic and broadcasting achievements.

Krieger served almost 10 years as Vice President of Region 2, having been elected to five consecutive two-year terms. He is also former President and Vice President of Local 25.

He was cited in “Who’s Who in Labor” and honored in 2002 as “Alumnus of the Year” by St. Bonaventure University’s Journalism and Communication School, where his name was added to the University’s “Wall of Fame.”

John was editor of NABET News from 1987 to 1995, relinquishing the editorship upon assuming his duties as Network Coordinator.

He and his wife, Marion, have five children residing in various parts of the country, with retirement, he should now have ample time to visit.

R

NABET-CWA Staff Representative Harry Joseph Coyte, Sr., passed away at the age of 84 on Saturday, June 11, in Stuart, Fla., after a long illness. Harry and retired Sector Secretary Patricia Dix, his long-time companion and care giver, were living in Indiantown, Fla., since October 2004.

Harry became a NABET-CWA Staff Representative in 1973, following a career as a still photographer and a freelance cameraman, lighting and soundman in New York City. He was a founder and organizer of the former NABET-CWA Local 15 in 1966. Harry is a native of Jersey City, New Jersey.

A memorial service is planned for family and friends in Ft. Lee, N.J., at the Cyoteville Cemetery at a later date.

Harry is survived by his wife, Jean of Brick, N.J.; three sons, John Anthony Coyte of Lewistown, Penn., Thomas Daniel Coyte of Old Bridge, N.J., and Albert Steven Coyte of Dallas, Texas; eight grandchildren, two great grandchildren, three brothers and three sisters. His eldest son, Harry Jr., died May 1, 1986.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the charity of one’s choice or Hospice of Martin and St. Lucie, Inc., Residence, 1000 SE Ruhnke Street, Stuart, FL 34994. Harry passed away at the Hospice facility.

ESPN/ABC “Time-Buys” Agreement

(Continued from page 1)

grams would be produced utilizing a technical crew represented by NABET-CWA.

“We believe that this is a significant agreement which should bring a significant amount of work for our members at ABC,” said NABET-CWA President John S. Clark, one of the architects of the arrangement. Clark added that the agreement marked a step forward in the often-strained relationship between the Union and ABC.

The parties have been working on the agreement since last December, however, seeds for the agreement were sown as early as last summer in off-the-record talks between the parties. On the Union’s side, a subcommittee consisting of Clark, Local 16 Vice President and NABET-CWA Sector Vice President Jim Joyce, Local 16 President Gene Maxwell and Local 31 President Mark Peach were involved in the direct discussions with the company.

ABC has reached similar agreements with AFTRA and the Directors Guild of America.

The agreement applies to all time-buy events aired on ABC commencing on July 11, 2005, and runs until March 31, 2011, unless renewed by the parties by mutual agreement. ABC members should contact their Local Union office for specific details on the agreement.

New Equipment, Training Boost Morale at WICZ-TV

(Continued from page 2)

MacBasics and Final Cut Pro editing. The Union also is using its member-to-member training program to assist in training. Murray, who used to work at WICZ, taught a course to two unit members in studio lighting.

“The members are very excited and can’t believe this is here at our station,” said Ziller, who has worked in master control at WICZ for 16 years. “This case shows we sometimes helps lead the employer to the solution rather than wait for them to provide direction. We showed a willingness to share the burden and let the company know that we are here to help them succeed.”

The Union would like to try this approach at other locals. “We want to continue to use ‘solution-based bargaining’ to solve our workplace issues,” said Murray. “We do not just want to have meetings to point out problems. We want to have the answers to the problems before we meet in the meeting.”

Both Ziller and Murray said the idea was made possible thanks to Sector President John Clark, Sector Vice President Jim Joyce, RVP2 Fred Saburro and Joe Salvaggio.

NABET-CWA Mourns Death of Harry Coyte

Feb. 16, 1921 – June 11, 2005