WRGB-TV’s Unfair Contract Demands Spur Mobilization

NABET-CWA Local 21 members turned up the heat at WRGB-TV when they began a mobilization campaign 10 hours after their contract expired on September 17. They have since continued their fight for a fair contract with high-profile events throughout the fall and winter. Freedom Broadcasting management has demanded contractual concessions from Local 21 Technicians, Photographers, Engineers, Operators, Editors, including changes to the pension plan and wage cuts of up to 15%. These demands come after a 2004 annual survey when 2004 was all about.”

When ABC ended its coverage of “Monday Night Football” on December 26, it also marked the end of an era for the NABET-CWA members who worked on the 35-year-old show. It is currently the second-longest-running prime time show on American television, after CBS’s “60 Minutes.”

The NABET members on the show were daily hires and some had been part of the “Monday Night” crew for nearly 30 years, or the greater part of their careers. Most of the current 40-person NABET crew had been together since 2000. Though daily hires once made up 50% of the group, there were about 10 staff members and 30 daily hire members working on the broadcast when it ended.

According to Sector Vice President Jim Joyce, some of the members may follow the show to ESPN, which paid $1.1 billion per year for eight years to replace ABC.

The show’s producer and director have been hired by NBC to cover that network’s new coverage of the Sunday evening games. NBC, which has not broadcast NFL games for the past eight years, was the first major network to cover an NFL game in 1939.

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**NABET-CWA Election Notice**

**Regions 2, 4 and 6**

NABET-CWA members wishing to run for election as Regional Vice President in NABET-CWA Regions 2, 4 and 6 may now obtain nominating petitions from their Local. Petitions must be filed by April 15, 2006, in the Sector Office, in Washington, D.C.

Candidates must be active NABET-CWA members in good standing for at least the three (3) years immediately preceding nomination. Election procedures are specified in Article VII of the NABET-CWA Sector By-Laws.

Voting for these offices will be conducted by mail. Ballots will be mailed on or before June 5, 2006, to all active members in good standing in each of the three Regions to the address on file with the Sector Office. If you do not receive a ballot within a reasonable time after May 5, 2006, and believe you are eligible to vote, notify your Local so that an inquiry may be made to the Washington office, or call the office directly to request a duplicate ballot. The phone number is (202) 434-1254.

Ballots must reach the Sector Office by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, June 2, 2006, to be counted on Monday, June 5, 2006. Candidates who are elected will begin 24-month terms on the Sector Executive Council on July 1, 2006.

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**NABET-CWA Works Torino Games**

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**Long-time NASCAR Cameraman Retires**

Homestead, Fla., November 25, 2005

By Frank A. Pellegrino, L.11 Member

The attitude at the Homestead races, NASCAR’s final race of the season, is always quite different from other races. First and foremost, it’s the last race and the race that determines the Championship for the season. But this particular race was the last race for one of the camera crew members. Longtime NASCAR cameraman Chuck Mills was retiring. His 35+ years as “Camera One” were coming to an end with his retirement after the last race of the 2005 season. He is regarded as an icon, not only by the crew but also by the drivers as well. He was a pioneer in his field and, as he said at his farewell party, “I never missed a finish of a race in all my years!”

NBC combined Chuck Mills retirement party with its end-of-season party. There was a taped tribute presented to him by the crew, documenting his career, with comments by fellow crew members and some of the drivers and their crews. Other gifts included a racing helmet signed by all the NASCAR drivers. Chuck seemed to have a special fondness toward that particular gift. Needless to say, there was quite a bit of excitement in the air that weekend.

In addition to Mills’ retirement, NBC will end its coverage of NASCAR with the 2006 season. ABC is picking up NASCAR coverage.
Top Students Win Union Scholarships

NABET-CWA awarded college scholarships to five talented high school students. The 2005 awards, which provide $750 annually for four years toward the recipients’ college education, went to students who displayed academic and community leadership. The scholarship contest is open to sons and daughters of active, retired or deceased NABET-CWA members in good standing. Each scholarship is named in memory of past NABET-CWA International presidents and/or employees.

This year’s scholarship winners and excerpts of their essays:

Laura Azar, a graduate of Montclair High School in Upper Montclair, N.J., won the George Smith Scholarship Award. The daughter of Local 11 member Richard Azar, Laura Azar was a member of the National Honor Society and enjoyed participating in field hockey and drama in high school. She also worked with children in art classes and as a child care companion for several years. Azar began classes at Pennsylvania State University in August.

“With levels of union organization having fallen in many countries in recent years, unions are keenly aware of the need to attract new members and the need to adjust to the growth of new sectors (such as IT) and new ways of working—including technology-enabled workplaces, such as call centers, teleworking and ‘atypical working’ such as self-employment.”

Stuart Clarke, from Mount Ayr, Md., received the Edward M. Lynch Scholarship Award. Clarke, the son of Local 31 member Coleman Clarke, was an active volunteer at a sanctuary for abused and neglected animals. He also enjoys watching New York Yankees baseball, model railroad and reading. Last fall, at age 16, Clarke entered the Honors Program at McDaniel College in Westminster, Md., where he plans to major in political science and eventually attend law school. He hopes to have a career in politics.

“As the son of a NABET-CWA member, I have firsthand experience of just how important the labor union, and specifically NABET-CWA, is to the modern working individual. As a union representing communications and broadcasting employees, NABET-CWA is dealing with some of the most profound changes in the workplace, and indeed, the world, and needs a strong, skilled labor union to represent them, including my father, in an ever-changing workplace and technological environment. NABET-CWA protects his job, but more importantly, it protects his safety and well-being.”

Jacob Frank, born and raised in Natick, Mass., was awarded the Dorr C. Wilson Scholarship. Frank’s father, Local 18 member Jonathan Frank, works as a radio and television engineer at WGBH-TV in Boston. During high school, Frank interned at WGBH and taught graphics and multimedia skills to seniors. He also wrote for the school newspaper, the Spanish newspaper and for the math journal. He enjoys reading, computer programming, Spanish “and most of all being with my friends.” Frank attends Brown University, where he may major in Computer Science, Spanish or Physics.

“Over the past three decades, we have seen the upgirding of many older technologies. In television, high-definition programming, digital feeds, cable, satellite, and microwave technologies (many of which my own father has worked on) have all joined together to revolutionize the way that many receive their news and entertainment… Without labor unions, most of this technology, no matter how useful it looked or how innovative the invention was, would never have been successfully deployed on a wide scale. Unions provide a constant, ready supply of trained and skilled workers that in implementing these technologies have made the world what it is.”

Sara Vogel, a graduate of The Bronx High School of Science in Bronx, N.Y., won the James P Nolan Scholarship Award. Vogel, whose father is Local 11 member Steven Vogel, was editor-in-chief of her school newspaper, where she “made the paper more accessible to our student readers by reporting on how local and world news impacted the Bronx Science community.” Among many other extra-curricular activities, Vogel interned for a State Senator Liz Kreuger and was the founder and president of the Bronx Science Media Activism Club, which “stressed youth experience through video, print photography and other media.” Vogel began classes at Columbia University in New York last fall.

“. . .as they combat the negative repercussions of the Information Age, labor unions can use some developments to their advantage. Instantaneous communication, interconnectedness and rapid dispersion of information will allow these organizations to readily contact and rally members to take part in the bigger struggle.”

In addition, Michelle Santillio, the daughter of Local 16 member James Santillo, was awarded the Thomas F. Kennedy Scholarship Award in the amount of $1,000. Michelle graduated from Seaforth High School in Seaforth, N.Y., where she was the captain of the Varsity Soccer Team and a member of the yearbook staff. Santillo also was a camp counselor.

“Those people with jobs not protected by a labor union will find their jobs becoming obsolete as technology increases and not have anywhere to turn. Labor unions are the only protection people have from being out of work due to technological advances and the ‘Information Age’.”

Kids Need Money for College?

Send in your applications now for five 2006 NABET-CWA Memorial Scholarship Awards! Preliminary applications must be returned by April 28, 2006. Members may obtain a copy of the application form from any NABET-CWA local or the Sector office.

The scholarship contest is open to sons and daughters of active, retired or deceased NABET-CWA members. The award provides $750 annually for four years as a partial payment of tuition or other expenses to the school designated by the winner.

The scholarship conditions are as follows:

- Applicants must be in a high school class graduating in 2006.
- Winners must maintain at least a C+ average or equivalent during their four years in college and must attend full-time.
- All applications must be verified by the Local President in the space provided before mailing to the Sector Office. For more information, contact your local president or the Sector office at (202) 434-2544 or visit nabet-cwa@cwa-union.org.

NABET-CWA Campaigns for Contract at NPR

The two sides began negotiations in May 2005 and continued through the contract expiration on September 30. In December, the company’s “final offer” was soundly rejected by the 100 techni-
cians who work as NABET-CWA Local 31.

NPR claimed the existence of an impasse and implemented the jurisdiction proposal and changes to shift differential and overtime in January. The Union filed an unfair labor practices charge over the declaration of impasse and the “partial” implementation, and began to ramp up its mobilization campaign. 

CWA President Larry Cohen sent letters to elected Democrats and other newsmakers, asking them to refuse interviews on NPR unless a NABET-CWA-represented technician is assigned. NABET-CWA was able to shut down NPR’s interview with U.S. Senator Evan Bayh on Jan. 17 when NPR assigned a producer — a non-technical employee — to conduct the interview without a NABET-CWA-represented employee to perform the technical work. The Local’s campaign also included a major rally on February 10 in front of NPR studios. Also on that day, NABET-CWA negotiators Flawn Williams and Sue Klein addressed the NPR Board of Directors during the open mike session of the meeting held in Washington. Williams and Klein let the Board hear the story from those who have first-hand knowledge of the negotiations. They were joined by Bob Boilen, Director of “All Things Considered” and Executive Producer of “All Songs Considered,” which is a position represented by AFTRA. Boilen gave examples of how the “New Realities” imposed by NPR are not effective on either level of morale or costs.

Local 31 has met with AFTRA officials, since NPR is expecting members repre-

resented by that organization to do NABET-CWA work. The Union has offered to return to the table to try to reach agreement on jurisdiction, job security, pay and other matters. NABET-CWA represents NPR employees in four locations: Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. The negotiating team consists of Local 31 President Mark Peach, Vice President Barbara Kreiger, Flawn Williams, Joe Mills, Sue Klein, Frank Nelson and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Paula Olson.
WSYR-TV — Syracuse, N.Y.
NABET-CWA reached an agreement with WSYR-TV in Syracuse. The four-year agreement includes four 3% wage increases, built-in starting rates for full- and part-timers, built-in 2% wage increases for part-timers, and the removal of merit pay for the first time since 1997. Seniority layoff was retained, based on one list for on-air employees and one for technicians. This is a major gain for the membership. In the previous contract, layoff was by job description. In addition, B.U.R.S.T. and Member-to-Member training was added to the contract. The Local 211 unit also gained, for the first time, enhanced and regular severance pay for layoffs. The bargaining committee included Local 211 President Lorrie Conner, Shaun Wayson, Anthony Vecchio, Mark Philip, Scott Haight, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Bill Murray.

WFMJ-TV — Youngstown, Ohio
Two contracts were settled covering the Local 47 units of Engineers and Technicians at WFMJ. One was a five-year agreement with a $1,200 signing bonus and the other was a four-year agreement with 2.5%, 2.5%, 3%, and 3% wage increases for each year. The agreements included improvements in scheduling, fees, security, and company payment of administrative costs for 401(k) plan. The bargaining committee included Mark Gaines, Local 47 Secretary-Treasurer David Pekarick, Janet Rogers, Scott Schneider, Al Rossi, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Bill Murray. Eric Seggi assisted with negotiations.

KGTB — San Diego
The 45 members of NABET-CWA’s Local 54’s unit at KGTB continued negotiations for a new contract. NABET-CWA Staff Representative Don Jernigan called it one of the toughest negotiations at the station in the 18 years he has represented the engineering unit. In other news, their colleagues in the news department may soon join them as NABET-CWA members. An organizing campaign for representation of the 50-person unit was spearheaded by Local 54 President Dennis Cisslag and will soon culminate in an election supervised by the NLRB. NABET-CWA has represented the engineers for 25 years. A previous attempt to organize the news personnel occurred about 16 years ago.

WJLA-TV — Washington, D.C.
Negotiations are continuing for a new agreement between NABET-CWA and WILA-TV/NewsChannel 8 in Washington, D.C. Although bargaining has gone on for more than a year, the parties have made significant progress recently in a number of areas and have narrowed the open issues down to a handful, including the minimum call for daily employees, vacations, arbitration over disciplinary grievances, and wages. The most recent agreement expired on January 31, 2005, and the bargaining unit has been working without a contract since then. Wages and arbitration continue to be the major sticking points, according to Sector President John S. Clark, the Union’s chief spokesman in the talks. “Wages in general at WJLA are lower than at many of their competitors in the market,” said Clark. “Couple that to the fact that many of the former NewsChannel 8 employees who work at the station are paid much less than their Channel 7 co-workers and you can see that there’s a serious problem here, both from a moral and morale standpoint.” Clark said that the station, which is owned by the wealthy Allbritton family, is doing well in the market and can afford to pay all its workers fairly. NABET-CWA Local 31, which represents the WILA/NewsChannel 8 workers, has been engaged in a mobilization campaign against the station that includes handing bill the station’s advertisers. In addition to Clark, the Union is represented at the bargaining table by Mike Forcucci, Alton Morris, Edwin Wilson and Local 31 President Mark Peach.

WHUT-TV (Howard University) — Washington, D.C.
NABET-CWA presented initial proposals to the company on January 10. Further negotiations were held in February. The bargaining committee includes Harold Burris, Robert Curry and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Fallot.

WSEE-TV — Erie, Penn.
On February 4, 30 NABET-CWA-represented news and production employees ratified a new four-year agreement. The Local 28 unit’s new contract provides for wage increases of 3%, 3%, 4%, and 3% and increases the Company’s portion of family and dependant health care premiums from 50% to 75% over the life of the agreement. Other highlights include improved attendance provision payments for unused sick time and funeral leave language, as well as the initiation of a member training program. The bargaining committee consisted of William Palmer, Jeff Filipowski and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi.

WSFS-TV — Hartford, Conn.
The Local 72 bargaining committee reached a new three-year agreement with the WSFS’s local management team in November. The unit quickly ratified the agreement. The Company dropped many of its proposals and the Union addressed limited jurisdiction in ParkerVision (Ignite), requiring two operators (including one bargaining unit member); retention of the pay scales with annual increases, a signing bonus and increases to in-hire rates. In addition, the Union retained its work at the second station operated by WSFS in Springfield, Mass. The negotiating committee includes Andy Halpin, Rick, John, Haynes Ford, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Paula Olson.

WIVB-TV — Buffalo N.Y.
NABET-CWA has reached a tentative agreement with WIVB. The Local 25 unit received a five-year deal, retroactive to March 2005, that includes pay increases of 3%, 3%, 3%, 3%, and 3% and 3%. The Union locked in the medical benefits for the term of the agreement, gave up limited jurisdiction flexibility (only within the bargaining unit, and only under certain limited terms), and gained some improvements in daily pay upgrades for supervisors. The unit was scheduled to vote on the package in mid to late February. Bargaining committee members include Local 25 President Roy Schrodt, Jim Diavastes, Ron Gabalski, Rich Ersing and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Paula Olson.

KKEA-TV — Los Angeles
After nearly 9 months of talks, the two sides met and worked through most of the open issues. A series of meetings were held over the holiday period, where the Union made a significant modification to its wage offer. More dates were scheduled for mid-February. The company has indicated its desire to complete the talks at that time, including the outstanding jurisdiction issues and economics. The negotiating committee includes Carlos Flores, Joe Alyala, Lyeysier Parada and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Paula Olson.

Brooklyn Community Access Television (BCAT) — Brooklyn, N.Y.
After two years of talks, an agreement for the 35 technicians, editors, camera operators and producers was reached and ratified between NABET-CWA and BCAT in December. The four-year contract calls for wage increases of more than 3% per year and plus two cash bonuses in the first and second years. The new contract now provides guaranteed sick and vacation leave for the Local 11 unit, as well as severance benefits. Also, daily hires will be able to participate in the Flex Plan. The Union’s bargaining team included Local 11 Executive Board member Dan Johnson, Kareem Bland, Ryan Menzel, Joe Murgia, Local 11 President Ed McEwan and former Local 11 Secretary Gene Barnes.

Senate Recording Studio — Washington, D.C.
NABET-CWA started bargaining with the U.S. Senate for the newly organized unit at the Senate Recording Studio (organized in September 2005). The initial meeting with the management team and unit representatives in late January was “a cordial and productive first session,” according to NABET-CWA Staff Representative Paula Olson. The two sides scheduled the first official negotiations in February. Bargaining unit representatives included Marty Berman, Moe Brown and Olson. Local 31 President Mark Peach also participated in the initial session.