ABC Contract Negotiations Update

As this edition of NABET News went to press, there was a late-breaking update on ABC negotiations. On Friday, March 8, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) announced that the Union and ABC, Inc. would resume mediation efforts under the auspices of Agency’s national Director. That announcement stated: “In response to a joint request of the parties concerning their ongoing negotiations, the next negotiation session will be conducted under the auspices of Director George Cohen and his colleagues in Washington, DC, on Friday, March 22.”

The NABET-CWA contract expired on March 31, 2011, and negotiations have spanned two years. Jurisdictional issues and economic considerations still remain open. In November of 2012, ABC unilaterally implemented proposals from its “Last, Best, and Final Offer” presented to the Union’s bargaining Committee last July. Unfair labor practices charges were immediately filed by the Union, and are still being considered by the National Labor Relations Board.

Updates on the March 22 mediation session will be made available at www.nabetcwa.org as soon as possible following the meeting.

Contract Reached at KGTV in San Diego

A three-year agreement was reached between Scripps-owned KGTV and NABET-CWA Local 54 on Christmas Eve and ratified five days later, on December 29, 2012. The Local reports that the members attending the ratification meeting approved the new contract.

The agreement, which expires in 2015, provides job security, wage increases and includes a signing bonus.

“As we enter our 60th year representing employees at KGTV, this agreement allows us to move forward, forge a partnership with Scripps and rebuild relationships at this station,” said Local 54 President Dennis Csillag, who still has not been re-hired. “I am extremely proud of our Executive Board and members for maintaining solidarity while continuing to produce the best product possible.”

“Although not perfect, I’m pleased to have an agreement that we can work with,” Local 54 Vice President Robert Buchanan said. “McGraw-Hill challenged our membership and was met with a stone to the forehead. Local 54 lives on to reach new levels of success with Scripps. Our members should be applauded for their solidarity. Our story will be used to motivate other labor organizations to mobilize and fight for what’s right.” Executive Board member John Suarez said the numbers tell a story. “The numbers show that there is much work to be done to make this relationship work. I’m counting on Brian Lawlor and Scripps to work with us on the remaining issues,” Suarez said.

(Continued on page 6)

IN MEMORY OF
DONALD LEWIS JERNIGAN
1945-2013

Retired NABET-CWA Staff Representative Donald “Don” Jernigan passed away on January 29, after suffering a stroke at home in Virginia. Jernigan, 67, was still in the hospital at the time of his passing.

Don was a member of NABET-CWA’s staff for 20 years, representing Local 54 in San Diego. Prior to joining the Union, Don was the Local 410 (Cadillac, MI) President and served on the NABET International Executive Council, the forerunner of the current Sector Executive Council. He also produced and directed the video coverage of CWAs Convention for many years.

Although Don retired in 2007, NABET-CWA Sector President Jim Joyce was able to coax Don partially out of retirement over the past two years to assist with the NABET-CWA Local 54 negotiations and mobilization at San Diego’s KGTV. After a nearly eight-year battle, a contract was settled recently with a new owner.

“He was as engaged in this effort then as he was before retirement,” said Joyce. “He helped me lead a contingent of a hundred or so CWA activists to rally at the station after we successfully defeated a company-orchestrated decertification campaign in March 2011. Don always put the members and his Union first.”

“Don was passionate about making sure that Union members had a solid collective bargaining agreement,” Local 54 President Dennis Csillag said. “He was much more than a Staff Rep.; He was a friend, mentor and excellent strategic planner. He had the extraordinary ability to look at all sides of an issue and come up with the best solution. Our Union family has suffered a great loss, but Don forged a strong bond with our Executive Board and members and his spirit lives on in the knowledge and passion he gave us.”

Don was born on May 5, 1945, in Dearborn, Mich. According to his family, Don started working at the age of 12 as a paperboy. Throughout his life, he worked in many fields: a lineman for Detroit Edison, a boiler operator at Mercy Hospital, a Cameraman and Director at TV 9&10 in Cadillac, Mich., and, ultimately as a member of NABET-CWA’s staff. Don also served in the U.S. Navy for three years before he marrying his late wife, Carol Michael. They were married for 28 years.

Don spent the last years of his life living on Lake Anna, in Virginia, where he spent most of his time relaxing with good friends and family. He was an active member of
Connecting All of the Dots

As we were preparing the list of stories that were going to be included in this edition of NABET News, it struck me that this newsletter really represented how all the dots can and should be connected in terms of the work the Union does, the commitments our members make on the job and to the union, the challenges we are all currently facing together, and the building of paths to overcome those challenges.

For example, you will read about Local 54 in San Diego, California, which recently ratified a new contract at KGTV, after a nearly seven year mobilization campaign and contract fight. Every member of Local 54 was engaged in this struggle, and invested their commitment both in the workplace and out in the public in the pursuit of justice.

This story involves a tale of two employers, McGraw-Hill, the owner of KGTV when negotiations began in 2005, and E.W. Scripps, the owner at the time a new contract was reached. In my opinion, McGraw-Hill sought only to thwart the collective bargaining process by bargaining to impasse, instigating decertification efforts, and targeting union supporters at the station. E.W. Scripps, on the other hand, worked from the outset with the Union toward arriving at a contract. Throughout it all, the leadership and membership of Local 54 stood together, mounting a nearly seven-year mobilization campaign that was so effective that McGraw-Hill exited the TV station business.

Connecting the next dot, you will also read about Don Jernigan, who passed away recently, after devoting a lifetime to the members of NABET-CWA. Don was a retired staff representative and former local and national officer. He was so dedicated to families of our union that he came out of retirement to assist in the final resolution of the Local 54 contract. Don gave back to the members what the union had given to Don—a commitment to justice and respect in the workplace.

That connects us to the dot concerning the fight for justice away from the workplace, where you will read a story about the efforts of NABET-CWA members to bring reform to the U.S. Senate rules. These antiquated rules have had the effect of paralyzing the National Labor Relations Board and other important agencies as Presidential appointments have been filibustered or stalled in the Senate. NABET-CWA local officers and members generated hundreds of letters and e-mails in this effort.

Despite the difficulties with administration of the NLRB, you will next connect the dots with the story about Local 42 pursuing and prevailing in a landmark decision that benefits the entire labor movement. The case overturned prior precedent and takes an underhanded tool away from employers who would cancel dues check-off to force bargaining committees into accepting concessionary proposals.

When you connect all the dots, I think you will agree that the members, local officers and staff of NABET-CWA are the most dedicated and skilled activists in the labor movement, and together we can overcome any challenge.

Stay in Touch with New NABET-CWA App

NABET-CWA has made it easier to stay connected with your local Union. Now, you can get the latest NABET-CWA News, videos and photos in one place. Three new applications for iPhone, Android/Google Play and HTML5 allow Union members to interface with the Union with your smartphone.

The app gives you access to the Union’s website, calendar, news feeds for both industry and Union news, and photo and video accounts. It also includes a section for contact information.

“It’s a nice tool to keep up with news and events right from your phone,” said NABET-CWA Staff Representative William Murray, who developed the app. “It interfaces completely with the website, and is a great way to reach our younger members.”

After seeing how his own children use their phones for “everything,” Murray figured an app would be a way for the Union to keep in touch with the newest generation of members. Murray also was responsible for the initial creation of NABET’s website several years ago.

Find the new iPhone app by searching for “NABET-CWA” in the Apple iTunes Store. The Android version is available in the Google Play Store.
Phantom Dividends

The AFL-CIO was appalled at GE’s practice of paying “phantom dividends,” and submitted a shareowner proposal similar to the one I had submitted previously. Phantom dividends refers to paying dividends, or dividend equivalents, to senior GE executives for stock they do not, and may never, own. GE claims these payments are necessary for the company to remain competitive and attract the most talented and qualified executives.

Because of Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) rules, my proposal regarding “phantom dividends” will not be included in the 2013 GE proxy statement. The SEC does not permit duplicate shareowner proposals, so after speaking to the attorney for the AFL-CIO, it was decided that I would withdraw my proposal, and speak in support of the AFL-CIO’s proposal at the shareholders meeting in New Orleans on April 2.

Unfortunately, another shareowner proposal addressing executive compensation had already been submitted, and although it had nothing to do with phantom dividends, the SEC, at GE’s urging, found our proposal to be similar, and had to be disqualified. That, however, will not prevent me from speaking on the issue at the shareholders meeting.

In protest of the practice, I am going to be asking shareowners to vote AGAINST members of the GE Board of Directors who serve on the Management Development and Compensation Committee (MDCC), and I ask those of you who are GE shareholders to do the same, since I believe that these Directors are at least in part responsible for this egregious and underserved policy. So please make your voice heard, and vote against: Ralph S. Larsen, Chairman; James I Cash; Andrea Jung; Robert W. Lane; Sam Nunn, and, Douglas A. Warner III.

GE Meeting WEBCAST to Air on April 24 at 10 a.m.

GE will provide a webcast of their annual meeting, allowing you to listen and perhaps see, the GE shareholders meeting on your computer, in the comfort of your own home. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 24, at 10 a.m. The webcast address is: www.ge.com/investors/events. Please take the time to tune in; I think you will find it interesting.

Post-65 Retirement Benefits

NABET-CWA has started the process of challenging GE’s new policy regarding their Post-65 retirement benefits. Beginning January 1, 2015, GE will no longer offer retirement benefits to any NABET-CWA members/retirees, or their spouses if you are not 65, and Medicare-eligible on that date. Those of you who were at least 55 on the day of the merger between Comcast and NBCU, January 28, 2011, received documents that spelled out what pension and retirement benefits you would be entitled to from GE once you retired. I need copies of those documents so that we can successfully challenge GE’s policy change.

When you find them you can either e-mail them to me at bfredanabetcwa@verizon.net or snail mail them to me at:

NABET-CWA Local 11
145 West 30th Street
12th Floor
New York, NY 10001

NABET-CWA has taken the first step by asking GE to provide us with a list of NABET-CWA members/retirees who will be affected by this change. I will continue to update you on any progress.

NABET-CWA Case Leads to Landmark NLRB Dues Checkoff Decision

“Bethlehem Steel” overturned/”NABET-CWA Local 42 v. WKYC-TV” is new standard

Unlike a good wine, a mistake does not get better with age,” stated the majority opinion in the National Labor Relations Board case between NABET-CWA Local 42 and Gannett-owned WKYC-TV.

In its 3-1 decision on Dec. 12, the NLRB overturned 50 years of labor law precedent when it ruled that employers must continue to check-off union dues even after the collective bargaining agreement that establishes such an arrangement expires.

The labor board’s landmark decision reversed Bethlehem Steel, a board precedent from 1962, that permitted employers to cease dues checkoff once the contract that provided for it ran out. The majority determined that federal labor law supports a finding that dues checkoff arrangements should be included among the terms and conditions of employment that remain in effect even after the contract containing them expires, and that the Bethlehem Steel decision failed to acknowledge the differences between union-security agreements, which require workers to pay certain union fees, and dues checkoff provisions, which provide an administrative convenience.

In its ruling, the majority stated, “The bargaining process is better protected by preserving the settled rules with respect to both management rights and dues checkoff. It hardly advances collective bargaining to require that some portions of negotiated agreements – i.e., those favorable to the union – survive contract expiration, while others – those favorable to the employer – do not.”

The decision removes a powerful bargaining tool that employers could use over unions. However, the new rule won’t be applied retroactively to pending cases, but will impact employers’ bargaining position in future talks. The original complaint by NABET-CWA against WKYC was dismissed.

“It’s good for labor and puts us in a better bargaining position for future labor contracts,” said Local 42 President William Wachenschwanz. “However, it doesn’t help us in our current situation.”

“This decision benefits all of organized labor going forward, because employers cannot use this economic weapon in contract negotiations unless lawful impasse has been reached,” said Sector President Jim Joyce. “I want to commend Chuck DeGross for his legal work on this case, and Bill Wachenschwanz’s perseverance and optimism in his support of this charge. The result was worth the Secter’s and Local’s resources dedicated to this case.”

“It certainly is a very, very significant victory for labor,” NABET-CWA lawyer Charles DeGross said. “We are pleased with the board’s decision in that respect, but disappointed that it doesn’t apply to the folks at Local 42 who are still working without a contract, while WKYC still is not witholding dues.”

DeGross said the Company’s refusal to withhold dues is a tool to try and force the Union to accept a substandard contract.

“NABET-CWA is losing a significant amount of money every day, but the Unit is holding tight and focused on getting a fair contract.”

The NLRB has been trying to change the Bethlehem Steel law since the 1990s, according to DeGross. Charges brought against hotels in Las Vegas and other cases helped pave the way for this decision: “A lot of other unions did work toward this ruling. Our case happened to have the necessary elements to kick it over the top.”

DeGross said he is sure other contracts are already impacted by this important decision, which is the now the law.

NABET-CWA filed the unfair labor charges with the NLRB when WKYC terminated members’ dues deductions and implemented a contract in the midst of a two-year contract struggle, in January 2010, which ignored the binding contract the station had with the Union through June 2011.

Congratulations to NABET-CWA Local 24 Secretary Eric Amundsen on his December wedding! Eric has been a member of the NABET local in Watertown, New York, since June 1982. He is very active in the local, serving as both Secretary-Treasurer and Secretary since December 2006.

Amundsen and his new bride Callie
More than 200 NABET-CWA members worked the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, on January 21, including those who work for the ABC and NBC D.C. Bureaus. In addition, those networks brought down members from New York City. There were also members working for NABET-represented television stations like WJLA, WRC, WABC, WNBC and others.

Beginning the Saturday before (Jan. 19), networks aired shows from various D.C. locations, including the National Mall, Lafayette Park and in the case of MSNBC's Morning Joe, the Dubliner pub a few blocks from the Capitol. On Inauguration Day, each network aired special coverage, beginning with the morning shows, through the afternoon. The evening newscasts on the broadcast networks, and primetime coverage on cable news also aired live from Washington, D.C. NBC expanded its nightly newscast to one hour to cover the days events. ABC had 35 on-air personnel and a broadcast booth in the Newseum on Pennsylvania Avenue.

On the broadcast side, NBC News received the most viewership, reaching one million more viewers than either of its network competitors. For the full duration of NBC's coverage – from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – NBC averaged 5.081 million viewers. Meanwhile, ABC News averaged 3.922 million viewers and CBS News averaged 3.671 million.

As is often the case with a second-term inauguration, viewership was down sharply from what each network garnered for the 2009 event, when NBC attracted more than twice as many viewers with 10.4 million and ABC almost three times as many with 10.1 million. CBS dropped from 7 million. However, NBC News' figures were 20% better than the last second-term inauguration for George W. Bush in 2005.

Social media made a bigger impact this time around, however. Many people kept up with the day's events via social media, watching and commenting on the Internet via Twitter, Facebook, etc. Viewers could follow along and comment on both ABC and NBC using Twitter and Facebook. ABC News.com provided all-day live streaming video coverage, as well as live coverage on the ABC News iPad App and mobile devices. NBCNews.com and the ABC Politics app carried live streams of NBC News' special coverage as well. The network also utilized new social media platforms and tools such as Chute, Zeebox and Storify to enhance the experience for its viewers and followers. As of 10:00 a.m. ET on Inauguration Day, Twitter reported that in the previous 90 minutes there had already been more tweets than during the actual 90-minute inauguration ceremony in 2009. During the ceremony, there were 1.1 Million inauguration-related tweets, with 27,795 tweets per minute at the peak.

Social media has turned television programs into online events, and given the broadcast industry a new marketplace. A joint Nielsen and Yahoo study in the United States last year found over 86 percent of mobile internet users chose to communicate with each other in real time during broadcasts.

NABET Scholarships: Honor a Loved One with the Gift of Education

It's often called “paying it forward," the concept of selfless giving in hopes that it someday will be repaid to others and make the world a little brighter, or in this case, smarter. Benjamin Franklin called it “a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money.”

For those looking for a unique opportunity to keep a loved one's memory alive, consider making a donation to NABET-CWA's scholarship program. Scholarship donations can be made in lieu of flowers, for instance, enabling family, friends and co-workers to create opportunities for future generations in the name of their loved one.

Each year, NABET-CWA awards $6,750 in scholarships to the sons and daughters of active, retired or deceased NABET-CWA members. Currently, eight scholarships are awarded each year, named after past NABET presidents. Recently, contributors donated to the NABET-CWA Scholarship Fund in memory of long-time Local 16 member Richard Aronson. To date, $975 has been donated in his name.

If you would like to donate to an existing scholarship in honor of someone, please send contributions to:

NABET-CWA
510 Third Street, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001
Tel: 202-434-1254

Inauguration Day: January 21, 2013

National Conference for Media Reform: April 5-7, Denver

NABET-CWA President Jim Joyce and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams will be among the presenters at the National Conference for Media Reform in Denver on April 5-7. They will present a workshop on “Labor Unions: MIA in the Media” and, in conjunction with the Newspaper Guild, a program on the media's coverage of Hispanics. The biennial conference is sponsored by Free Press, a nonpartisan organization advocating for universal and affordable Internet access, diverse media ownership, vibrant public media and quality journalism. The conference will feature information on today's pressing media and technology issues and will provide attendees with a chance to build new skills and meet activists from around the country. For more information, visit: http://conference.freepress.net/nncr-2013

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http://conference.freepress.net/ncmr-2013

Tel: 202-434-1254

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NABET News

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Remember the shot of President Obama, turning around just before he re-entered the Capitol building after taking the oath of office and saying, “I want to take a look one more time”? Daily Hire and NABET-CWA Local 31 member Mike Croke does. It was his shot captured for millions around the world to see and experience one of the few unstaged moments of the inauguration. “That was the one that everyone was talking about,” said Croke, who was the NBC pool camera operator for the inauguration. “It was neat that I could capture it. When you’re seeing it through the lens, it’s special to see someone’s true emotion, his reactions: I want to make sure I absorb this.”

Croke has worked as a photographer since 1987, when he worked in Washington, D.C. for Congress Communications and for stations in Minneapolis. He has been a freelancer since 1993, moving back to D.C. in 2000. His first pool assignment was for the inauguration of George W. Bush, which was shot in High Definition for the first time. Croke was chosen for the job because of his past experience working in HD while covering college sports.

Croke also was pool for Obama’s first inauguration, “a sea of people on the mall,” which he remembers as more “awe-inspiring” than the last. “The inaugurations aren’t the hardest thing, but you realize the world is watching. You realize every little hiccup will be seen,” Croke said. Other networks have pool cameras as well, but Croke’s was the only camera on the president and the other speakers. His camera was the one that fed to the podium. “I had the shot of Beyoncé pulling out her earpiece,” Croke noted. “Afterward, I hardly heard anything about the president’s speech, but everyone was talking about Beyoncé.”

Croke said he always wonders about what his reaction will be if something unexpected happens: “You know that your shot is the one that everyone is going to see for history. You have to be prepared and aware. You can’t daydream. You have to make all of your movements like you’re on live.”

The most recent State of the Union address also found Croke behind the pool camera. “I felt privileged to be there with all of that power in that room,” Croke said of that moment. “To be one of eight camera guys in a room with the most powerful people in the world there is awe-inspiring.”

Croke got very close to the most powerful person in the room that night when President Obama walked down the aisle. Croke was trying to capture the scene from Obama’s perspective, waiting for him to go past so he could wheel around to show him walking down the aisle, toward the exit. At this point, Obama put his hand out to shake the photographer’s hand. Croke froze. He didn’t know if he, as an impartial journalist, should be the one to shake the president’s hand. He didn’t have to worry for long. Only about two seconds went by before another hand sprung out from behind Croke and met the president.

One of the other compelling assignments Croke remembers is Ronald Reagan’s funeral at the Washington National Cathedral: “Everyone in the world was there, all of the former presidents and so many heads of state, Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev, and you’re in that place, too. But, you’re only there because of this job.”

For the most part, Croke covers a lot of sports as a freelancer: “News dries up, but sports is always there.” He has covered 10 Super Bowls, many seasons of Monday Night Football games, as well as baseball broadcasts. He also covers horse races and worked the Olympics in Beijing, which he remembers fondly. “When Michael Phelps won eight gold medals and his Mom, Debbie, was in tears. Sometimes you do a job where you are looking through the viewfinder and things don’t seem real. But it’s amazing to see the way these events impact people’s lives.”

He also remembers an especially poignant moment between quarterback legend Bob Griese and his son, Brian. The elder Griese was calling the national championship game that his son, the Michigan quarterback, had just won after a second half comeback. Croke’s son had just recently been born, so the moment stuck with him: “Sometimes you realize that you’re in a special spot and it triggers an emotion that makes it something different. You feel privileged to be around it.”

Croke travels a lot for NBC, who has worked for as a freelancer since 2005. His sports travel schedule for the network puts him on the road every weekend from August through January. One of his more recent trips was to the Pro Bowl in Hawaii, where his family, including his now-14-year-old son, joined him. Thankfully, the work schedule continues to put him in interesting places, and unlike the president, he will most likely be there to see another inauguration.
NABET-CWA Locals Participate in Senate Reform Campaign

CWA launched a “Fix the Senate Now” campaign (www.fixthesenatenow.org) in January to reform the U.S. Senate procedural rules. Members and officers from NABET-CWA Locals answered the call, writing letters to their Senators and attended CWA’s Day of Action on January 17 by calling the Senators in their state. Senate Resolutions 4 and 5, introduced bySenators Merkley (D-Oregon) and Udall (D-Colorado) and Harkin (D-Iowa), seek to limit the use of the filibuster – especially the “silent filibuster” – in the Senate to improve the legislative process. Your Union is concerned about the inability for routine legislation and nominations to get passed in a U.S. Senate that is constantly in a state of gridlock.

Use of the “silent filibuster” has grown in recent years, as politicians beholden to corporations have blocked popular progressive bills, even those with majority support, from becoming law.

In order to end a filibuster, 60 votes are needed by the majority party, a threshold that is unprecedented in American history. This practice has derailed energy and climate legislation, halted the DREAM Act, and blocked any debate on the Employee Free Choice Act, which passed the House with an overwhelming majority and had the support of 59 Senators.

“We need these reforms to unblock our democracy,” said Sector President Jim Joyce. On January 24, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky) and Majority Leader Harry Reid (D Nev) agreed to modest steps to limit the filibuster that were approved overwhelmingly by the Senate. Most of the changes to the current state of affairs are minor. Members of both parties now will be able to have more of a role in proposing changes to bills; however, the new agreement preserves the minority’s ability to force a supermajority of 60 votes to advance bills, so the majority still does not have ruling power. It will be two more years before this issue will be visited again in the Senate.

KGT V Contract

(Continued from page 1)

Csillag extended appreciation to Scripps VP of Television Brian Lawlor for listening to the concerns of the Union’s members and for his honesty. He thanked NABET-CWA President Jim Joyce and Staff Representative Bill Murray for their “diligence and guidance.”

“We also owe a great debt to retired Staff Representative Don Jernigan, who took this journey with us,” added Csillag. “We had worked with Don for 25 years, from 1986 until Scripps took over in 2011. Even then, we talked on a regular basis.”

“We also must recognize the solidarity of those who supported our fight for a fair contract,” Csillag said. “That includes our Local 54 members, NABET, CWA, the San Diego Labor Council and its member Unions, the California Labor Federation, and countless elected officials, candidates, community leaders, supportive advertisers and viewers.”

Once the contract was ratified and the bonuses and pay raises were put in effect, the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council and California Labor Federation officially lifted the economic boycott against the station.

Labor Council CEO Lorena Gonzalez congratulated Local 54 members on the deal and encouraged San Diego’s nearly 200,000 union members and supporters to return to KGT V. “Even after an amazing election season, we still managed more great news to end 2012, with the announcement that members of NABET-CWA have finally approved a new contract with KGT V Channel 10 after seven years! They can finally count on fair wages and job security, and we can enjoy San Diego’s only union newscast once again,” Gonzalez said.

Local 54 celebrated the conclusion of this long and arduous fight on January 23 and, again on March 12, with members of the NABET-CWA Sector Executive Council, which was in town for meetings.

The prior contract under former owner McGraw-Hill expired on January 31, 2006. When the contract expired, McGraw-Hill launched a five-year, union-busting campaign on employees. That campaign came to a head in 2011 when employees voted to retain their Union of nearly 60 years in the face of a company decertification drive. Ninety days later, McGraw-Hill decided to exit broadcast, ultimately selling its stations to E.W. Scripps Co.

A few days prior to the contract being reached, KGT V’s Director of Operations Mike Biltucci retired after 33 years, mentioning the “challenges” over the past few years as a collective bargaining agreement was being pursued.
Class on Demand training takes off

Since NABET-CWA launched its new Class on Demand training program in June 2012, the number of members taking advantage of the high-quality online training materials has skyrocketed.

“We have seen a 60% increase in signups since we started the direct marketing campaign,” said Paul Holtz, founder and CEO, Class on Demand. “We are adding 5-10 members/signups a day.”

Holtz said the increase can be attributed to the proactive approach taken by Class on Demand, through its email outreach.

“It’s right in front of you in an email. It takes just 30 seconds to sign up, and you usually have access to hundreds of training titles the same day,” said Holtz.

The licenses that NABET-CWA provides are filling fast. Once those are completely sold, members will have to share time with others. So, the sooner members sign up, the better.

“We tried to make it as easily accessible as possible, acknowledging how busy people are these days,” Holtz said. “Once people get in there and see how great the training is, they will motivate themselves to continue.”

Holtz likened it to a health club: “Once you get to the health club, you’re there. We try to make the effort as minimal as possible.”

Established in 1997, Class on Demand works with hundreds of companies and organizations, including the Air Force, and has won hundreds of awards for its state-of-the-art training. Beyond simple power point presentations, Class on Demand’s training product is designed for Technical and Art Directors, Producers, and Photographers. The company has created highly polished training videos with the same high-impact graphics used in television and movie productions, which leads to higher content retention.

Training is available through a NABET-CWA-branded, customized online portal, and getting started is easy. To access the entire Class on Demand course catalog, NABET-CWA members just need to create an account and log into the training portal. Hundreds of IT and media titles are available on topics such as lighting, video editing, camera techniques, broadcast graphics, and more. As new titles are published, they become instantly available to NABET-CWA members through the portal.

Class on Demand’s online learning platform lets you access your free training anywhere you have an Internet connection. Save the location in the training and pick it up where you left off. Review sections, search for specific instruction and follow along with downloadable content.

Once you’ve completed a course, you will be entitled to print a “Certificate of Completion,” proving to your employer that you have completed the course and are proficient in the product. Visit Class on Demand as often as you like. New titles added every month.

The free “Class on Demand” access is a training benefit available exclusively to NABET-CWA members. You can sign-up by visiting www.nabetcwa.org and clicking on the “Class on Demand” window on our home page.

Training Scholarships from CWA/NETT Academy

Over the next year, the CWA/NETT Academy is awarding up to 50 academic scholarships to CWA members looking to develop new skills and advance their careers. These academic scholarships can help cover the cost of things like tuition to books and exam fees.

With the CWA/NETT Academy and our new educational partner, Bismarck State College, members can learn about web design, sharpen network fundamentals, or get a full overview into Mac programming.

Take your career to the next level: Apply for a scholarship today: http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/cwa_nettscholarship_information

NABET-CWA Local 16 Member Henry Plimack Honored as Champion of Worker Health and Safety

Henry Plimack, a member of NABET-CWA Local 16, was named the 2012 Man of the Year by The Mount Sinai-Irving J. Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine (COEM) in New York City in December. Plimack received the honor for his legacy of occupational safety and health in the broadcast industry.

Representatives of over 70 labor, community, health, and business-related organizations in New York select five long-time champions of workers and their families each year. Each award recipient was cited for their dedication spanning numerous years and initiatives that have benefited the health and well being of workers and their families statewide.

For over 40 years of elected leadership, Plimack has been deeply involved in safety and health at ABC in New York. Early in his career, he attended the National Labor College (the former George Meany Center), and Cornell University’s Institute for Labor Relations’ Manhattan campus, taking courses in Health and Safety (including OSHA), Labor Law, and Union Representation.

At WABC Radio (WABC-AM and WPLJ-FM), Plimack worked with the Vice Presidents of Administration, Building, and Security, to remedy numerous safety issues at their corporate headquarters building.

His efforts successfully created an awareness of the importance of “safety first.” At ABC-TV, he worked with Mount Sinai’s Irving J. Selikoff to bring stress and hearing testing to his constituency. Plimack also raised attention to environmental issues in production studios, and helped to develop a safe environment for employees and audiences on “live” sets.

At WABC-TV, Plimack met regularly with the Company on electronic newsgathering (ENG) procedures, and studio and control room problems. He also worked with CWA’s Director of Occupational Safety and Health, and District 1’s Occupational Safety and Health Director, to insure proper procedures were followed during field coverage of the BP Gulf Oil Spill and the Japanese earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant meltdown.

Now, three years into his retirement, Plimack continues to serve on ABC’s Employee Occupational Health and Safety Committee (EHOS), the World Trade Center Advisory Committee, and the Mount Sinai-Irving J. Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine (COEM) Advisory Board. He has been key in developing the COEM Advisory Board website, and is the photographer for COEM quarterly meetings, documenting them for public awareness.

L. 11 Shop Steward Installation

Local 11 President Tom Cappe, at right, swears in Shop Stewards.
KDTV – San Francisco, CA
A new four-year contract was ratified on February 13. In the first year, pay increases of $45 per week at each pay rate and step, equaling 3.29% to 6.81%, depending on the wage, will be retroactive to January 7. Raises in the following three years are: 2%, 2.5% and 2.25%. Other contract changes involve vacation scheduling and incorporation of the new Chief Photojournalist position into the contract language. The meal penalty will move to $20 (from an hour of straight time), but the amount will increase in each subsequent year by the contract raise percentage. Other language changes also included the provision for holidays falling on an employee’s day off, possible impacts of The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and a new Impartial Umpire for arbitrations under the agreement. A new provision to provide severance payments and notice to employees who decided not to move when the station moves to a new location in the next couple of years was also negotiated, providing structure to the unknown of the probable move. The previous contract was scheduled to expire on December 31, 2012, but the parties extended the terms until February 28 in order to schedule more bargaining dates. The new contract will expire in 2016. The Bargaining Committee included Javier Barreto, a Creative Services Producer in the unit, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams. Pina Correa provided mobilization support to the negotiators.

WCCO-TV – Minneapolis, MN
On January 16, negotiations began for a successor labor agreement. The Union’s negotiating team consisting of Dave Chaney, Joe Berglove, Tom Aviles, NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Fallett presented the Company with a list of initial proposals. The proposals addressed several areas of concern brought forth by the membership. The Company presented the Union with proposals that sought to erode the members’ quality of life and continue to erode the Union’s jurisdiction. The issue of “shared” jurisdiction with AFTRA sparked a lively debate where Company spokesman Ron Temone insisted that no deal would be reached without this Side Letter (9). The Union responded to this threat by stating that the Company never lived up to its promise to get shared jurisdiction from AFTRA. Due to prior Union legal action on its issue, NABET-CWA Attorney Judi Chartier was also present for this round of negotiations. At the table she firmly stated NABET’S position on jurisdiction: that it was a permissive subject of negotiations and the Union would not agree to the Company’s proposal. While, agreement was reached on several other proposals, the two sides remain far apart on economics and jurisdiction. The parties broke off the first round of negotiations without establishing further dates for talks. The contract extension expired at the end of January.

KABE-Television – Bakersfield, CA
The two newly organized units of Engineering/Master Control/Production and Clerical employees (25 total) at Spanish-language KABE-TV began talks in Bakersfield. Five bargaining sessions were held to discuss job descriptions, jurisdiction and economics. According to NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams, the contract is about 80% settled, but pending items include jurisdiction and economics. There is also an unresolved issue concerning whether there will be separate contracts for the two units. More talks are scheduled for the first week of April.

WOIO/WUAB (Raycom Media) – Cleveland, OH
The NABET-CWA unit ratified a new three-year agreement with WOIO/WUAB in Cleveland. The unit includes about 100 engineers, producers, editors, directors, technicians, photographers, assignment desk and production employees. The contract calls for wage increases of 1.5% in the second year and 1.75% in the third year, one additional holiday (Martin Luther King Jr. Day), and the addition of domestic partner funeral leave benefit (a first for a Raycom-owned station). The contract makes clear previously ambiguous language on jurisdiction, and increases by three the number of Ohio counties applicable to the Agreement. The new agreement allows WOIO/WUAB to hire up to six Multimedia Journalists (MMJs) who will be part of the bargaining unit. (Reporters and anchors are not represented at the station.) “This a tremendous win for the unit as the employer has sought the use of MMJs in the last two agreements, but they had always been excluded from the unit,” said NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi. The Bargaining Committee consisted of Rob Hillyer, Bill Kohegan, John Potter, Ken Kosciick, Local 42 President Bill Wachenschwanz and Seggi.

WTNH-TV – New Haven, CT
On January 17, a four-year agreement was ratified with LIN Media-owned WTNH for the Photographers & Technicians Unit. This is the third of the three contracts bargained at the station in the past year. The Union negotiating committee sat across the table from corporate labor relations executives, with no local station management bothering to show up. Despite this setting, after five bargaining sessions WTNH-CWA was able to reach a tentative agreement. The terms of the agreement include raises of 2%, 2.25%, 2.25% and 2.25% in each year, as well as a $500 signing bonus to each employee. The units were given advance refunds for insurance overcharges identified last year. A new Labor Management Training Committee was created, with a specific requirement that all training must be paid. The previous contract was set to expire on February 10.

House Recording Studio – Washington, D.C.
Bargaining began on March 1 for the House Recording Studio. NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams expects the talks to be difficult. Dates for bargaining a contract for the new photographers unit at the House of Representatives Office of Photography will be decided once this contract is settled.

WHUT-TV (Howard University) – Washington, D.C.
Both of the Union’s unfair labor practice cases are in the appeals process at the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB denied the Union’s charges over the firing of the two groups of workers last summer. Station management has now declared impasse and the Union is pursuing further legal action against Howard University.

WHUT-TV discovered what solidarity means when the Washington Teachers last week refused to participate in an après-screening event of a documentary on DC schools because of NABET-CWA Local 31’s ongoing dispute with the station. “As a proud union leader, I stand behind NABET-CWA Local 31 in their struggle for a fair contract and good working conditions,” WTU Local 6 President Nathan Saunders told WHUT. Five of the station’s six workers were fired after their contract expired on June 30, 2012 and the cases are still pending before the National Labor Relations Board. Local 31 President Rich McDermott extended his local’s “heartfelt thanks” to the teacher’s union, adding that “These struggles are not easy, but with the show of solidarity by you and the Washington Teachers’ Union, our members realize the importance of standing together for the good of the labor movement. Hard working people like the teachers set a great example for their students and all Americans.”

Please submit story ideas and photos to NABET-CWA@cwa-union.org