On May 9, NABET-CWA ABC Locals ratified the new four-year Master Agreement reached on March 22, following a 15-hour mediation session held in Washington, D.C. under the auspices of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service’s national director, George Cohen. The previous Master Agreement at Disney/ABC expired on March 31, 2011. The tentative agreement contains significant improvements to ABC’s July 17, 2012, stated “last, best and final” offer.

“The persistence of our members and our bargaining committee to achieve a fair contract was instrumental in this outcome,” said NABET-CWA President James Joyce. “NABET-CWA also appreciates the full involvement of FMCS Director George H. Cohen and CWA President Larry Cohen in producing the tentative agreement.”

The newly ratified agreement covers approximately 2,500 staff and daily hire broadcast technicians, newswriters, producers, desk assistants, publicists, and plant maintenance personnel at various Company Network and TV station operations in New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

The contract includes ABC News and entertainment programs and ESPN sports broadcasts airing on ABC. Nationally-syndicated talk shows “Katie” and “Live with Kelly and Michael,” as well as the ESPN programs “Pardon the Interruption,” “Around the Horn,” and “Highly Questionable” also are covered by this agreement. Additionally, this new contract establishes NABET-CWA jurisdiction for ABC-provided content for the newly launched “Fusion” cable news, a joint venture between ABC/Disney and Unvision.

Enhancements from ABC’s last offer were obtained in the areas of economics, jurisdiction, and retirement benefits for staff and daily hire employees. The contract offer was improved to add an additional year of security, setting a new expiration date of March 31, 2017, as well as an additional wage increase. The new agreement also requires early negotiations for the next Master Agreement, commencing by October 1, 2016, with automatic involvement of federal mediators if a successor contract is not reached by March 1, 2017.

The wage offer contains a total of 9% in wage increases over the next four years (2.5%, 2.0%, 2.0%, and 2.5%). The first annual wage increase of 2.5% is retroactive to March 30, 2013.

Local 53 Prevails in Grievances against NBC’s Tonight Show, M undo/Fox

A grievance filed by NABET-CWA Local 53 over personal leave payments turned out to be extremely successful for the 15 Daily-Hire NABET members who were the subject of the dispute. In a settlement reached with NBC in April, the company and the Local agreed to a $200,000 award, making it one of the largest cash settlements in Local 53’s history. The dispute arose when 15 NABET-CWA members employed as Daily Hire camera operators on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno were not given their annual personal leave payments as called for in the NBC contract. The payment, negotiated in lieu of vacation time or personal leave, is equal to five percent of a member’s base pay from the previous year. But, beginning about three years ago, the Company decided not to provide the personal leave payments to these employees because some of them had been paid “over scale” wages. This is a common practice, Local 53 President Steve Ross said, as the company will pay over scale to certain camera people if they really want to hire them.

Ross believed NBC was obligated to make the payment, and because the employees never signed anything to the contrary with the company, the Local filed a grievance last year. Eight months later, the case was assigned to arbitration, but the company settled prior to the hearing.

“We’ve really proud of this important victory for our people,” Ross said.

KWHY (MundoFox22)

Local 53 also won a recent arbitration case against the owners of Spanish-language KWHY-TV (MundoFox) after the company cut news editors’ pay by five percent. The award amounted to a $100,000 payout for 12 people.

The news editors contract calls for an additional $5/hour in pay if they use FinalCut Pro in their work. The trouble started in February 2012, following a change in station ownership when the new owners declined to pay the negotiated rate. The workers made the station’s General Manager aware of the missing payments, so the GM increased their pay. Unfortunately, it was a move that ended up costing the GM his job.

NABET-CWA filed a grievance when the company continued to refuse payment. The arbitrator ruled to restore their pay, including back pay to February 2012.
Today, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is without a full five-member board, making it impossible for important labor cases to move forward, including two cases involving NABET-CWA members. Your Union is fighting to bring justice to its members by urging the U.S. Senate to make the Board whole and confirm the five nominees, three of whom currently sit on the Board.

On May 22, the Senate Labor Committee approved the five nominees, with the two Republican nominees receiving unanimous approval, and the Democrats, including two “recess” appointees, gaining approval with voting along party lines. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), said he would wait until July to bring all nominations to a vote by the full Senate. The nominees must be confirmed before August, when the term of one of the current NLRB members ends and the Board will be without a quorum and be unable to function. The very real threat of a filibuster looms over this vote.

Further aggravating the process, is a recent Court of Appeals case – Noel Canning – that upheld Republican arguments that Obama’s “recess” appointments were unconstitutional. The NLRB has petitioned the Supreme Court to review this case, but if it stands, it may put more than 900 board rulings at risk, including the CNN and the NBC Content Producer cases.

Victims of the NLRB

For NABET-CWA members, a crippled NLRB means that the long-standing complaint against CNN will continue to languish until justice prevails. It has been nearly 10 years since CNN unjustly fired more than 100 employees in Washington, D.C. and New York, and five years since the NLRB Administrative Law Judge ruled in the Union’s favor. The judge ordered CNN to reinstate 110 workers, restore the economic losses of all 250 workers and recognize and bargain with NABET-CWA. CNN responded in 2011 with another round of layoffs, over which the Union filed more unfair labor practice charges. To date, these workers still don’t have their jobs, back pay or Union representation.

NLRB Nomination Campaign: A Key Step in Protecting Workers’ Rights

Unions Form United Front at FOX

NABET-CWA, IATSE and IBEW Join Forces

On May 8, NABET-CWA members joined with their brothers and sisters at the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) who are employed by FOX television stations in Chicago, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Los Angeles to push back against FOX’s continued calls for extreme cutbacks in negotiations.

The three Unions mobilized at informational hand billing outside of FOX television stations and corporate offices across the country, sending a clear message to management and the public that the unions and its members will not be divided, and further demanded a fair contract in each city. The Unions encouraged all union members at these stations to bring the message inside the workplace by wearing the “IATSE+NABET+IBEW – UNITED FOR ONE CAUSE” wristband on the job that day.

Contract talks are ongoing, seemingly without end, at WFLD, WNYW/WWOR, WTXF, WTTG/WDCN and KTTV/KCOP and are set to begin at WJBK. FOX management has insisted on turning back the clock on wages, jurisdiction, and benefits. All this, despite double-digit economic losses in recent years, and ratings as the top-owned television station group in the industry.

“FOX executives are looking to squeeze extra profits off the backs of NABET-CWA, IATSE, and IBEW members,” said NABET-CWA Local 53 President Steve Ross. “Management is attacking vacations, meal periods, and everything else we have worked so hard to gain over many years.”

Get Involved

CWA Convention delegates vowed to mobilize and work together to make the NLRB whole. A resolution, “Protect Workers Rights, the NLRB, and Reform Senate Rules,” encourages:

- Every CWA local, working with others in the labor movement and our allies, to join in a campaign of mobilization, demonstrations, and direct action to demand that the Senate confirm a full package of NLRB nominees.
- Every CWA local to urge members to “Text NLRB to 69866” in order to build a large rapid response network as part of this and other campaigns.
- CWA to join with other partners to restore our democracy, change Senate rules to permit debate and votes on nominations made by the President and eliminate the Washington gridlock which undermines government.

4th Annual New Activist Training (NAT)

Sign-up deadline is August 15!

September 20-23, 2013
The Conference Center at the Maritime Institute
Linthicum Heights, Maryland

This year’s NABET-CWA NAT is combined with the Newspaper Guild’s New Local Officer Seminar (NLOS). The joint training will bring CWA media sector activists together for three days of intensive skills-building, with hands-on, practical workshops and bargaining exercises.

Union staff and officers will conduct the training for new Union officers who want to learn more, up-and-coming stewards, Executive Board members or activists. Participants will learn mobilization techniques and strategies and discover what it takes to be a steward or local officer.

The cost per participant is approximately $630, which includes meals, lodging, and educational materials. Travel costs are not included in this fee. Locals that receive subsidies for attending Sector conferences and RAB meetings are eligible for economic assistance for one student per Local.

All questions should be directed to Carrie Biggs-Adams at cbiggs-adams@cwa-union.org, or call 202-415-1147. Information about the Maritime Institute can be found at www.cmci.org.

All Locals must notify the Sector of the names of those attending by August 15, 2013. Space is limited and is first-come, first-served.
Local 43: Working for change in Detroit

NABET-CWA's Local 43 represents about 100 members at WDIV-TV (NBC) and WJBK-TV (FOX) in Detroit, Mich. The city's economic troubles have added a new challenge to the work of the local union.

Local 43 Vice President Dorethea Brown-Maxey, who currently is serving her second term, is a News Editor at WDIV, the Post-Newswatch station, where she started her television career in 1986. Brown-Maxey was quickly introduced to NABET-CWA when, after only working there for six months on a part-time basis, her co-workers walked out over a contract dispute—and she joined them.

“I grew up in a Union household, so I knew what Unions were about,” Brown-Maxey said. “We were a UAW and Teamsters household. I soon discovered that not all Union benefits were alike.”

She credits NABET-CWA RVP Bill Wächenschwanz with convincing her to run for Union office after she took part in the CWA's Minority Leadership Institute. “I had the privilege of attending the 2008 MI Class. From that point on, I realized that for as long as I’m employed, I’m going to be intricately involved in my union.” Brown-Maxey also took part in the Union’s First New Activist Training in 2009.

The Local is involved on many fronts, not the least of which is negotiations at WJBK (FOX). Unit members wear wristbands in support of the national May 8 joint mobilization with NABET-CWA, IATSE and IBEW (see page 1). They didn’t engage a local mobilization at that time because they were working under their existing contract and bargaining hadn’t begun. Negotiations began a few weeks ago, with the next round scheduled for the end of July.

The stability of members’ work lives goes hand-in-hand with the economic health of the city of Detroit itself. In bankruptcy and with a newly appointed emergency manager at its helm, Detroit is “in a fight to stay alive,” said Brown-Maxey.

Politically, she says Michigan is “hemorrhaging” with little representation for the working class. NABET-CWA and other unions are trying to do their share in terms of helping the economic situation, but it is difficult when the city itself is bankrupt,” Brown-Maxey said. “Detroit’s unions have been struggling: city workers are taking pay cuts and teachers who already agreed to pay cuts are facing more.” In addition, she and others are concerned about the power relinquished to Detroit’s emergency manager.

Moving Forward

The key, Brown-Maxey believes, is for Unions to “re-think” its tactics and strategies, “understand our history, and get out there and do something for the workers, the people, and the schools.”

“We need to educate people,” she said. “Coming out of school, young people today don’t know us or understand the labor struggles of the past. They are willing to work for less because they don’t understand the value of their work. We need to make them realize that making $30/hour isn’t asking too much. Companies aren’t hurting. We’re the ones that are hurting. We have to get in the schools and teach this.”

Brown-Maxey thinks unions need to show others that their work is not just about jobs, but also about people.

“People seem to think we are a separate entity within ourselves, not for the people,” she said. “We need to let them know we are part of the community: we are them.”

Local 43’s “Power Up” mobilization event in 1996, which included a dinner and mobilization:

Local 21: NABET-CWA's oldest non-network local

The members of Local 21 in Albany-Schenectady-Troy, N.Y., don’t seem very fond of changes. They’ve had two presidents for most all of the last 60 years. Fred Saburro was elected in the mid-1950s and served until becoming Regional Vice President of the Union in 1980, a position he continues to hold. After brief terms of office by two successors, Bill Lambdin became local president in 1985 and has won re-election every few years since. The city of Albany has had only one mayor since the start of World War II, so perhaps lengthy terms in office are part of the area’s political tradition.

The CBS affiliate, WRGB-TV, is celebrating 85 years of broadcasting, after starting experimentally in 1928. At that time, the station was owned by General Electric, which had a large base of operations in the Schenectady area. Employees of the TV station and its powerhouse 50-thousand watt clear channel WGY-AM realized they would fare better with union representation and organized with the predecessor of NABET in the early 1940s. For many years, Channel 6 dominated the local market, drawing large audiences for local and network programming. The station had a long history of locally produced programs, including long-running kids shows Freddy Freshofer (named for a delicious area bakery), the longest running TV bowling show in the country, TV Tournament Time, with two regulation lanes in the TV station, Teen Aged Barn, a weekly talent showcase, and two forms of a high school quiz competition, Little Red Schoolhouse and Answers Please.

In the late 1960s, employees at the ABC affiliate, WAST-TV, were growing increasingly unhappy with their pay and benefits. They reached out to Local President Saburro and the international Union for organization. In 1969, members in news, engineering and production voted by a wide margin to join NABET. In the decades since, pay and ratings caught, and in some cases exceeded, the once-dominant WRGB. Now, members at the two union-represented stations enjoy significantly better conditions than at the non-union operations in the market.

Local 21 President Lambdin credits the “wall-to-wall” nature of the WNYT (WAST’s changed call letters under previous owner Viacom) unit’s composition with much of their strength. “While no bargaining unit can dictate terms on a take it or leave it basis,” Lambdin said, “the reality is that a work stoppage would remove anchors, reporters, news photographers and producers, as well as all the production and engineering work force has served to guarantee reasonable treatment in labor-management negotiations through the years.”

Over the years, the local has been responsible for small bargaining units at several other radio and TV stations in the region, including the PBS outlets. Most of the contracts have faded with changes in station operation and employment practices like centralized, remote or computer-controlled switching. “It has been disappointing from time to time,” Lambdin said. “But at least the legal backing of a strong union has assured that affected employees received reasonable treatment when change arrived.”

The local has a strong relationship with CWA Local 1118, which allows Local 21 to use its Colomie headquarters for monthly meetings, rent-free. Local 21 has also been active and prominent in Albany area labor activities. The familiar appearance of long-time NABET-CWA members at the State Capitol and other news venues has helped assure labor’s voice is heard while not compromising journalistic standards. Local 21 helped play a significant role in lobbying efforts to bar the previously widespread practice of non-compete clauses in often poorly constructed personal service contracts. Now, NABET-CWA members and other broadcast employees are free to offer their services on the open market without geographic and time restrictions when fixed terms of employment have ended.
R ick Fox had just returned from the busiest stretch of NBC’s biggest sports draw: golf. This year, Fox and his fellow members of NBC’s “Golf Crew” spent seven weeks straight—from February to April—on the road covering golf tournaments from coast-to-coast in Tucson, Houston, San Antonio, and the Florida cities of West Palm Beach, Miami, Tampa and Orlando. Though these weeks are an important time of year, golf is year-round these days, having grown from a two-day, weekend-only sport, to a four-day extravaganza of coverage.

Fox, who serves as NABET-CWA Local 11’s Shop Steward for the Golf Crew, has been with NBC since 1984. He has worked the 18th green camera since 1988 and also is a Technical Director, working closely with NBC Sports Management. Fox makes sure all of the cameras get built safely and properly, assigns camera crews together and manages their time. He also works to ensure work rules, including safety regulations, are followed precisely.

Much has changed since Fox started at NBC 30 years ago. In 1984, NBC covered six golf tournaments a year, compared to the current schedule of 26 tournaments. Each tournament involves a week of travel, set-up and broadcast. Thirty years ago the broadcast schedule consisted of 4.5 hours every weekend: two hours on Saturday and 2.5 hours on Sunday. With new commitments to produce content for multiple platforms, the crew now spends dozens of hours producing and telecasting golf coverage.

“During the U.S. Open, we were on the air for 10 hours, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.,” said Fox. “This means we are in at 4 a.m. every morning and working until 8 or 9 at night.”

Approximately 50 cameras are used for the U.S. Open, compared to about six cameras 30 years ago. “We used to cover just the 14th hole and up,” said Fox. “Now, we do full, 18-hole coverage.” For this year’s U.S. Open, there will be a crew of about 150 NABET-CWA members.

Golf Channel grows under NBC

The fastest-growing cable channel, by percentage of daily viewers, is the 500-employee Golf Channel. According to the Golf Channel’s president, Mike McCarey, the credit goes to NBC’s takeover of the channel in early 2011.

In a philly.com article, McCarey, a former NBC executive under Dick Ebersol, said that the Golf Channel, launched in 1995 by Arnold Palmer, develops programming around golf and the golfing lifestyle. In anticipation of golf’s return to the Olympics in 2016, the Golf Channel released a live-streaming application similar to one used by NBC for the London Olympics.

In 2012, the Golf Channel averaged 95,000 daily viewers, compared with 70,000 in 2010, resulting in a 36 percent increase in viewership. In comparison, the other top-five broadcast television or cable networks by daily viewership growth between 2010 and 2012 were: FOX (31%), MSNBC (25%), History (18%) and Tele- mundo (18%). Golf is distributed to 84.4 million U.S. cable- and satellite-TV homes, and is available in 35 million non-U.S. homes.

In December, Golf added the National Collegiate Athletic Association golf championships. The first men’s NCAA championship will be broadcast in 2014 from the Prairie Dunes Country Club in Hutchinson, Kan. This will be the first live college men’s championship on television in 19 years.

The Golf Channel will televise men’s and women’s championships the next year from the Concession Golf Club in Bradenton, Fla., the first live women’s college championship on television in 17 years.

NBC’s merger with the Golf Channel, as well as its agreement with the United States Golf Association, brought a whole new level of golf to NBC, and means more work for NABET members. NBC covers many national championships, including the U.S. Open, the U.S. Women’s Open, the U.S. Amateur, and the U.S. Senior Open. The NBC Sports/USGA partnership began in 1995.

“We have a terrific relationship with them,” Fox said. “Our partnership with them was a tremendous shot in the arm for us.”

The network also covers the PGA Championship, the President’s Cup, and the Ryder Cup.

“The President’s Cup and Ryder Cup tournaments are a very big deal, as they play for the pride not the money,” explained Fox. “We cover those events extensively.”

Following the seven-week tour, Fox says he and the crew go on alternating one-week on, one-week off schedules, culminating in September with the FedEx Cup in Atlanta. According to Fox, the FedEx Cup has become huge, with the winner claiming $10 million in prize money.

Technology Amps Up Coverage

Golf’s popularity has attracted the advertising dollars needed to upgrade equipment and add more people to cover the sport. Overall, everything from microphones to handheld cameras is of higher quality, adding state-of-the-art technical sophistication to NBC’s golf coverage.

The network now uses small, roving, manned vehicle cameras, dubbed “rat cams,” that move around the golf course following the action. Three or four rat cameras can move down fairways and near greens where it may be difficult to place a fixed camera. Fox likens these cameras to oversized VWs.

Most of the camera work is done on scaffold towers, which are sometimes built as high as 12 or 13 sections—100 feet in the air—or the equivalent of a 13-story building. Each tower is equipped with at least one camera.

Another big change is the use of color viewfinders. Until recently, the crew utilized black-and-white viewfinders. This upgrade, along with advancements in lenses, super slow motion, and steady cam features have helped camera operators produce a higher quality images.

The use of robotic cameras has become commonplace also, Fox said. These devices can be placed in unusual locations, such as the middle of a lake, for very specialized camera shots. At the TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedre, Fla., NBC placed a robotic (Continued on page 5)
March 17, when the island was almost se-
clearance. They had gathered up some—
American flags and sabers — and traded
them to a fighter pilot for some whiskey.
They had a St. Patrick’s Day party. Three
days later, Farnham headed back to Guam
to train for the invasion of Japan, which
was called off when Japanese surrendered
in August.

“That was great news,” Farnham said.

“We expected to be there another year,
at least.”

Instead of working in one of the paper
mills near Phoenix after the war, Farnham
— now someone with radio training
— used the G.I. Bill to fund further training.

During that time, he worked as a cam eram an for
the network, quickly becoming known as one of the
best in the business. He then moved to ABC TV in Chicago,
where he worked for 45 years, covering every major
sporting event from the Olympics to the World Series.

Farnham was decorated numerous times with
Emmy Awards, including one for his coverage of
the 1960 Winter Olympics. He was also
honored with the National Association of
Broadcasters’ highest honor, the Silver
Circle Award, in 2008.

Farnham’s legacy lives on through his
gift for storytelling and his dedication
to covering sports. He passed away in
2013, but his work continues to inspire
future generations of sportswriters and
cam eramen.
Former GE Negotiator/Retiree Scolds Company for Benefit Cuts

Something amazing happened at this year’s General Electric shareholders meeting in New Orleans on April 24. Dennis Rocheleau, a GE retiree who at one time was GE’s chief negotiator, lambasted GE’s senior management and Board of Directors for discontinuing Post-65 retirement benefits for salaried employees, retirees and their spouses if they are not 65 and enrolled in Medicare on January 1, 2015. This includes a Medicare Supplement Plan, Prescription Drug Plan and Life Insurance. I was so moved by Dennis’s words that I thought it important to include it my Nabet News column. It is a reprint from an article in the IUE-CWA Local 201 newsletter. As you read Dennis’s statement, you sense his anger and disappointment in the very people he worked for. His reference to “Jeff” is GE Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Immelt:

Thank you, Jeff… As much as I want to improve corporate governance, the character of GE as demonstrated by its treatment of its employees and retirees, is of even greater importance to me. As I wrote to you personally, Jeff, the Company’s September announcement that it was breaking certain retirement healthcare benefit “promises” was deeply disturbing to me. I asked you for a seat at the table before I was put on the menu. Being afforded none, I have crushed this venue. The lawyer in me acknowledges that Section 5.4 of the 2012 Benefits handbook for GE pensioner healthcare options at age 65 gives the company the right to amend the retiree healthcare plans for any reason. But the changes set forth in John Lynch’s September 2012 letter are so dramatic and utterly surprising to some GE retirees and long-service employees that I feel compelled to repeat the words of Edmund Burke that I quoted in a different context five years ago in Erie: “It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, it is about what humanity, reason and justice tell me I ought to do.”

The proposal at issue constitutes a sea change in company behavior contrary to all reasonable expectations and experience. It gives little consideration to recent retirees, now left with no GE post-retirement, Post-65 health care, who made irreversible and financial decisions based on the GE benefits described in their retirement papers — papers which made no reference to the possibility that this coverage could be terminated for any reason.

That company executive would propose such actions and the board would approve them is astonishing to me, given the absence of financial imperatives such as impending bankruptcy or several years of unprofitable performance or even wildly escalating healthcare expenses for the company. When the initial notice of this revocation did not even attempt to quantify the financial impact on the average salary employee or retiree and the concomitant enrichment of the company, I knew the news had to be very bad for current and future retirees. That lack of courage, candor and transparency on the company’s part was, frankly, insulting. A passion for cutting excessive costs is an admirable quality if honestly expressed and intelligently administered, but branding commitments to long-service employees as “legacy costs” does not give the company license to fleece retirees while countenancing the use of chartered or company aircraft to shadow the global empire on certain international trips. Where is the competitiveness in that?

I’m fortunate enough to enjoy a substantial pension for which I worked for 36 years and I value every penny. Being asked to shoulder an anticipated $50,000 bill in additional future costs is something of considerable consequence to me. For many other near and current retirees, the financial impact of losing coverage they counted on is much, much greater. In the case of some married future retirees who will lose eligibility for retiree life insurance, the value is $125,000 or more.

If anyone here today would like a more vivid description of the pernicious nature of this change, see me after the meeting. Suffice it to say, the changes which reduce the company’s post-retirement health and life benefit liability by $832 million comes with a high personal price tag for each of the thousands of current and future retirees.

I believe I had earned my benefits but I did not appreciate how fragile a purchase I really had on them. Naively, I believed the mantra I mouthed on behalf of GE at the bargaining table over three decades, to representatives of tens of thousands of employees and retirees: “Promises made by GE are promises kept.” In retrospect, I did not perform as well as I thought I had. I failed to live up to my standard of being candid and forthright with union representatives whom I always respected, even when I often disagreed with them.

Several efforts to establish a reasonable dialogue with the company about this decision, to understand the context and justification for it and to explore acceptable alternatives to it, have been rejected. The protocols of fair treatment for loyal, long-term salaried employees that I believe should exist have been unceremoniously abandoned.

In the eyes of many retirees to whom I have spoken, most of who are shareholders, the company defaulted on its obligations, turned its back on its traditions, and renounced its oft-stated integrity values.

Accordingly, I would like very much to have answers for three questions, which in the interest of giving others the time to talk about issues of importance to them, I will submit to you in writing with the expectation of a reply. For now, I ask only this: Where, in your view, does the process of benefits reduction logically end other than at the trust fund protected portion of our pensions?

NABET Career Day

NABET-CWA participated in Career Day at the 2013 National Association of Broadcasters Show on April 8th in Las Vegas. This is the fourth year the Union has participated in the event. Staff Representatives William Murray and Eric Seggi greeted approximately 100 people who visited NABET-CWA’s booth, engaging in dialogue about the broadcasting industry and handing out NABET-branded promotional items.

“We talked to a lot of young people, right out of college, looking for jobs in the industry,” Murray said. “They were particularly interested in the job listings on the NABET-CWA web page, especially when we showed them the new smart phone app that now includes that information. Some even downloaded the app right there on the spot.”

Along with career information, Murray and Seggi were able to talk to potential television workers about the Union’s work, including training opportunities.

“Eric and I told them what Unions are about and how important it is to work in a Union shop,” Murray explained. “Most were very open-minded about Unions and appreciated the information.”
Bill Eadie

Members of NABET-CWA Local 211 are mourning the loss of a Syracuse television pioneer: former local president Bill Eadie, who passed away on April 18 after a long illness. He was 79.

“Your can’t overstate Bill’s impact on NewsChannel 9/WSYR and the community,” said Tim Fox, a reporter for WSYR. According to Fox, Eadie helped put the station on the air as WNYS in 1962, and served as studio crew chief for many years until his retirement in 1997.

Eadie was part of the creative team that turned out hour after hour of live, local programming in those early years, including “Dance Party” with a young Rolland Smith (who later anchored the morning news at CBS) and a local phenomenon, “Baron Daemo,” a comical character who hosted late movies and a kids’ show in the 1960s. Eadie also was instrumental in the formation of NABET-CWA Local 211 in the early 1970s. Throughout his long career, Eadie was a favorite of visitors to the station, Fox remembered. He sang impromptu duets with world-famous vocalists who visited the station, and stunned Sugar Ray Leonard with a playful right hook that caught a little more chin than either of them expected. “Most importantly, Eadie was a mentor to scores of young colleagues who passed through the station, both in front of the camera and behind the scenes,” Fox said. “Our thoughts are with Bill’s wife Marie and their family.”

Bill Itkin

Bill Itkin, 89, of Tinton Falls, N.J., died on November 7, 2012. A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Itkin was a pioneering lighting director for ABC-TV, where he plied his craft for over 35 years and was a member of NABET-CWA Local 16. He retired in the 1980s. Itkin’s daughter, Susan, works for NBC and is a member of NABET-CWA Local 11. Susan writes, “His warmth, kindness, and sense of humor will be greatly missed by his family and all who knew him.”

John Polito

John Polito was born July 1, 1922, in Somerville, Mass., and passed away on June 4 at the age of 90. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Rose, his three children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. His daughter, Antonette Stealey, works in the NABET-CWA Local 57 office.

Polito served as a Staff Sergeant in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and later worked at ABC Television from 1958 through 1984. In 1984, he became the Local President of NABET-CWA Local 57 until his retirement in 1991. John also was a trustee on the ABC-NABET Retirement Trust. After his retirement, Polito returned to school to obtain a paralegal certification. “His family always was, and will remain, the most important thing to him, and the closest thing to his heart. They will miss him deeply,” the family said in a statement. A memorial service was held in his honor on June 15 in Westlake Village, Calif.

Gene Salisbury

Former NABET-CWA attorney Eugene Salisbury, 82, died on March 27 in Blasdell, N.Y., after a brief illness. He was a senior partner in one of Buffalo’s leading law firms, Lipsitz, Green, Fahringer, Roll, Salisbury & Cambrbia, specializing in labor law. He joined the firm in 1961 and continued to practice law until his death.

Salisbury served in the Army during the Korean War, attaining the rank of first lieutenant. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. Salisbury graduated cum laude from the University of Buffalo Law School in 1963, and was managing editor of the Buffalo Law Review. He took part in the honors program at the National Labor Relations Board. Salisbury was a police officer for the village of Blasdell for five years, before serving as the Blasdell village justice for 50 years. He had extensive experience in collective bargaining, grievance and arbitration procedures and regularly practiced before the New York and Federal courts as well as administrative agencies having jurisdiction in labor relations. He also represented various employee benefit funds such as retirement, health and welfare.

Salisbury told RVF2 Fred Saburro that his wife worked two jobs to put him through school. “Gene was probably the sharpest and most knowledgeable about what NABET does, of anyone I know,” said Saburro. “You didn’t want to be cross-examined by Gene and most would try to settle the case before they’d have to deal with him.”

Saburro said Salisbury worked on many arbitrations in Washington and New York, and always had the case foremost on his mind, often prepping for a case late into the night. “We won cases that we had no right to win,” Saburro said. “In addition to being an outstanding attorney, he was also one of the nicest guys I knew.” Calling him a “sartorial splendor,” Saburro said he “always looked polished and never had a hair out of place.” Saburro once complimented a tie Salisbury was wearing, and he promptly took it off and gave it to Saburro, saying, “You know this is only going to work once.”

Salisbury was named to The Best Lawyers in America since its inception in 1983. One of the attorneys that worked for him was Mark Pearce, a current member of the National Labor Relations Board. He was a past president of the New York State Magistrate Association and received its Magistrate of the Year Award in 1967. The award was renamed in his honor in 2001.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Joanne, five children, 13 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Low-power FM radio licenses available to non-profits in fall

Unions see unique opportunity to spread message

In October 2013, community groups and non-profits have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to apply for low-power FM (LPFM) radio licenses offered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Community radio stations can help unions bring their message to people who may not hear it on today’s corporation-run radio.

This is the largest expansion of community radio in U.S. history, offering a unique opportunity to unite people, build local civic participation, and create solutions to the economic and social challenges many communities face today.

Local radio is a proven organizing tool and can help expose workplace issues, bring people together for change, and is a means for cultural expression. An additional benefit would be to correct the lack of diversity in media ownership, which influences the programming heard on the public airwaves today. And, 90% of Americans listen to the radio each week.

Prometheus Radio Project

The Prometheus Radio Project, NABET-CWA, and other groups lobbied the government for over a decade to free the airwaves from corporate control. In 2011, the Local Community Radio Act was finally signed into law. Prometheus Radio’s mission is to use participatory radio as a tool for social justice, organizing, and a voice for community expression.

Prometheus helped the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) build their station in 2003 to support their struggle for human rights in South Florida’s agricultural fields. They’ve used the station, which broadcasts in five languages, to organize hundreds of farm workers and win historic labor campaigns targeting companies including McDonald’s, Burger King, Taco Bell, Subway, and more.

“This is an opportunity to provide outreach to members and get retirees involved,” stated Sector President James Joyce.

Another big benefit of radio is that it’s easy to produce, free to consume, and accessible to more people across the world than any other mass media. For the consumer, it does not require expensive equipment, literacy, or a broadband connection. Prometheus Radio estimates that the equipment needed to get up and running, including the transmitter and antenna, could cost as little as $10,000.

Competition for Licenses

This could be the last distribution of FM radio licenses by the FCC, so competition will be intense. When the law was passed, FCC chairman Julius Genachowski said in a statement, “There is no way of knowing exactly who will apply, but we expect to see literally thousands of new applicants.”

If there are multiple applicants for a single license that all meet the minimal requirements, the FCC will use a points system to help choose who gets a license.

Points are awarded to organizations that pledge to air at least eight hours of local programming daily, and offer a publicly accessible studio that is staffed 20 hours per week, among other things. In the event of a tie, the FCC will ask the two organizations to share time on the dial.

Any nonprofit can apply. They’ll be limited to 100 watts or less, limiting their range to between three and 10 miles. In some urban areas, such a station could reach as many as a million people. That’s why more than 3,000 individuals and groups have told Prometheus Radio they want to start stations.

Getting On the Air

NABET-CWA is seeking volunteers with technical expertise to match up interested members. The Newspaper Guild will provide content.

To find out more about building people-powered media in your Union, visit www.radiofront.org. Radio Spark is a community-powered site for groups that want to apply for LPFM radio licenses and for those who want to support them. Created and maintained by the Prometheus Radio Project, this site is a place for community radio novices and experts to ask questions, share resources, and connect with allies. Groups that want to start a station can connect with others nationwide to share ideas, recruit volunteers, and build a community of support by geography, target audience, genre or any other criteria they choose.
**INDEPENDENT REPORT**

**PBS – Washington, D.C.**

On June 1, members of NABET-CWA Local 31 voted to ratify a new three-year contract at PBS. The agreement, which was overwhelmingly ratified, will go into effect on July 1, but a ratification bonus of $1,000 was paid on June 14. Raises of 2.5%, 2.5%, and 2.5% per year will apply to the 44 members of the technical bargaining unit, which includes both Crystal City and Springfield, Va., facilities. Minimum rates under the contract are: Technicians: $65,000 and Supervisors: $95,678, effective July 1st. The Editor Level 1 will increase to $70,000, and uncertain terms that their proposal was way beyond any reasonable accommodation and was a non-starter.

To emphasize the Union’s displeasure with the Company’s proposal, Local 43 held an informational picket in front of the station the morning before the second bargaining session. About 25 members stood outside of WJBKTV and held signs protesting the Company’s regressive proposals. The Company’s bargaining committee got a big surprise as they drove past the picket line when they entered the building.

Needless to say, the employer heard the Union’s message loud and clear. The Company began the second day of bargaining by backing off many of their first-day proposals. “While we’re still a long way from reaching an agreement, the negotiating committee and membership have set the tone for the remainder of these negotiations,” stated NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi.

The bargaining committee consists of Local 43 President Brian Moore, Mike Moore, Kathy Herd, Kent Culpert, and Seggi.

**WFSB-TV – Hartford, CT**

As part of a mobilization for the May ratings book, the Union canceled its extension agreement with the company on April 2, which had been in place since November 2011. The Union and the Company then met on April 22, where the Company requested a mediator sit in on negotiations because of the cancellation. The session was held under the auspices of federal mediator Joe Dubin. Significant progress was made, and the two sides are working on the economic terms. Negotiations are scheduled to continue on June 24. Bargaining Committee members include Local 17 President Andy Halpin, Cory Peck, Emie Whitehead, AI Wurst, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Fallot.

**NABET-CWA** Counsel Judi Chartier has filed a number of cases with the NLRB against WFSB, including the issue of assigning non-NABET-CWA represented individuals to shoot video. An arbitration with the station took place on April 23. The Union lost a previous case over the Use of MMJs in Hartford, but held onto jurisdiction. Briefs are being prepared and must be submitted by July 13.

**KMEX-TV – Burbank, CA**

KMEX contract negotiations are ongoing. The KMEX bargaining committee last met with the Company on May 20, and there are two items remaining on the table: wages and health care. The Union met with the company again on June 21, and members are invited to attend the bargaining sessions.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the bargaining committee: Leroy Jackson, Sal Solorio, Roy Crompton or John Soltero.

**WIVB-TV – Buffalo, NY**

On June 21, a tentative four-year agreement was reached at WIVB in Buffalo, NY, for the 50-person NABET-CWA unit at the station. Contract highlights include annual wage increases of 3.25% for those making less than $55/week, and 2.25% raises for those making more than $750/week. The company also has agreed to contribute more money to the medical benefits plan, and will continue the company-sponsored Health Reimbursement Account (HRA). In the new contract the HRA will be expanded to allow a rollover period for use of funds for three years. The Union was successful in eliminating Sideletter 7, preserving jurisdiction over MMJs. Committee is unanimously recommending ratification. The Bargaining Committee includes Local 25 Chief Steward Ron (Continued on page 6)