New Sector Leadership Takes Over in “Challenging, Difficult” Times

N A B E T - C W A  Q U A D R E N N I A L
S E C T O R  C O N F E R E N C E  —  D E T R O I T

Growing the Union through Organizing

Chicago (Local 41)

Chicago Public TV Workers Say, “YES, we CAN”!

Workers at Chicago Access Network Television (CAN TV) reached out to NABET-CWA to talk about organizing in March, and by June 75 percent of them had signed cards authorizing the Union as their bargaining representative. On August 14, the employees voted to join NABET-CWA. This is the second organizing win for Local 41 this year.

“It all happened pretty quickly,” said Local 41 President Don Villar, who organized the group along with E-Board member Dan Moreno. “Within a couple of months, the majority of the 24 employees pledged their commitment to NABET.” CWA recommends at least a 70% show of support for the Union before moving forward with election proceedings.

In light of the support, the Local first asked CAN-TV management to voluntarily recognize the Union by “card check,” instead of going through the National Labor Relations Board election process. Management at the time was noncommittal, so Villar filed for an NLRB election and went before the Board to argue for wall-to-wall NABET-CWA representation of all non-management employees at the station. The NLRB sided with the Union and the election was scheduled.

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CWA Elects New National Leaders

CWA’s 75th Convention took place the week following NABET-CWA’s Conference. On June 8, Chris Shelton, Vice President of CWA District 1 for the past 10 years, was elected CWA President by acclamation of conference delegates. Sara Steffens, who had been serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the NewsGuild-CWA, was elected CWA Secretary-Treasurer.

As Vice President of CWA District 1, Shelton represented 160,000 members in more than 300 CWA locals in New Jersey, New York and New England. Prior to this post, Shelton was assistant to the District 1 Vice President, responsible for contract negotiations and the thousands of collective bargaining agreements covering District One members.

He served as the Verizon Regional Bargaining Chair in 2000 and 2003, and overall Chair of Verizon bargaining for CWA District 1, District 2-13, IBEW New Jersey and New England in 2008 and 2011. He also chaired negotiations in New Jersey for 40,000 State Workers in 2008 and 2011. Shelton, a native of the Bronx, N.Y., started his union career when he went to work for New York Telephone in 1968 as an outside technician. He was elected a CWA Local 1101 shop steward in 1968 and served Local 1101 in various positions until December 1988 when he joined the CWA national staff.

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New Sector Leadership

Shelton succeeds Larry Cohen, who stepped down after serving as President for 10 years and organizing for 29 years in CWA. Shelton called on all CWA members to “unite and fight because we are fighting to defend the living standards not just of our members, but of the entire working class. That is our job and that is our mission.”

As TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer, Sara Steffens managed the TNG-CWA operating budget, its investments and other funds. She assisted locals with fiscal and legal compliance and also served on the NewsGuild’s collective bargaining and legal services committees.

Steffens is a native of Minnesota and worked for nine years as a reporter for the Contra Costa (California) Times. While there, she successfully led her co-workers at the Times and other newspapers in the Bay Area to organize and join the Northern Californian Media Workers Guild, now called the Pacific Media Workers Guild.

Organizing

A rise Chicago rallied with NABET-CWA Local 41 in solidarity with workers from CAN-TV

Just prior to the election, Local 41 joined with the interfaith community organization Arise Chicago in rally in support of the organizing campaign at CAN, which is a public, education and government access cable television services primarily funded by the City of Chicago. On July 30, approximately 80 people rallied in front of the station, prompting management to address the gathering to say that they would remain neutral through the process.

Executive director of CAN TV Barbara Papovic stated, “CAN TV respects the right of its workers to exercise their free will in this election. As the employer, we will not take any actions that interfere with the exercise of this fundamental right.”

“The members are very connected to the community through the station, so they are the ones who get other community groups to back us,” said Villar. Progressives from groups representing Women, Latino, African American, and Gay Rights communities as well as members of the Service Employees International Union came together in support of these workers who, ironically, did not have a voice in the CAN TV workplace.

“All of these groups use CAN TV as a way to get their message out, but the station’s workers themselves didn’t have a voice,” Villar said. The station considers itself progressive, fighting for social justice issues, except when it comes to its own employees. “It’s almost like dealing with any other corporation. There is a disconnect there,” he said.

Citing a lack of respect and unfair treatment in their workplace, the group of mostly young millennials sought out the Union to boost their quality of life. Many hadn’t received a raise in years and didn’t feel like management was listening to them. These workers are struggling, with some working multiple jobs to help pay student loans and make ends meet.

“There is a lot of anger toward managers over economic issues and a feeling that they don’t care about the workers’ concerns,” said Villar. The station’s upcoming move to a brand new headquarters building made many question the company’s financial choices. If they had the resources to build a new facility, why weren’t the employees getting raises?

“For the longest time, they thought they could never change their circumstances, but now they have a chance,” said Villar. “We often say Labor can’t connect to the younger generation, so it is very refreshing to see this young group of people reach out to us for help.” The group is unique in that there was no prior relationship with the Union.

The campaign itself exemplified the CWA Triangle: Organizing, Movement Building, Representation. Organizing this group led NABET-CWA to organize allies outside of Labor, building a movement that can bring change not only to the CAN TV workplace, but on the political front as well. It may also pay dividends at the bargaining table if the Union and its supporters can appeal to local lawmakers to increase funding for the public television station.

“We really saw everything coming together in this drive,” Villar explained. “Our goal here is to help CAN TV grow and become an even bigger voice for the city of Chicago. I really think it will be a great benefit to the labor community here.”

The Chicago City Council will soon pass a resolution applauding CAN TV for organizing.

C O N T R A C T A T K O I N - T V

After 25 months of negotiations without a contract, NABET-CWA ratified an agreement with Portland station KOIN-TV (Media General) on July 29. The members had rejected the same contract previously, but then voted in favor of it when the Union brought it back for a revote.

“The negotiating committee went back to the table several times, but the Company wouldn’t budge on the issues and the Labor Board wasn’t acting on the unfair labor practice charges,” said NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams. “It would have taken a huge mobilization effort to get any movement, so we decided to bring the contract back to the members.”

The two-year contract was accepted by a two-thirds vote of the membership. An initial raise of 4% will be effective for the first year of the contract and the second year raise will be 1%.

The previous contract expired in 2013, and the most recent talks were under the auspices of a federal mediator. In the midst of the negotiations, NABET-CWA filed numerous unfair Labor Practice charges, some of which were resolved with the Company. The Bargaining Committee included Frank Brown, Jeff Burda, Local 51 President Kevin Wilson, and Carrie Biggs-Adams.

Media General-Meredith Merger

The merger between KOIN-TV owner Media General and Meredith Corporation will become effective at the end of June 2016. Meredith-Media General says it is “creating a powerful multiplatform and diversified media company.” The companies are going to sell or swap their stations in six of their overlapping markets (see graphic).

Meredith will have to sell or swap stations in the Portland market, where it owns KPTV Channel 12 (Fox) and KQD 49 (MyNetwork TV). The Company also owns KUBN 43 (which also serves as a satellite of KPDX) in Bend, OR. Since the LIN Media merger last year, Media General owns KOIN.

“We thought it was unusual to have only gotten a 24-month contract at KOIN and that it was likely there would be a change in station ownership soon,” said Local 51 President Kevin Wilson in a Sept. 9 bulletin to members. “KOIN has changed owners many times – Emmis, New Vision, LIN, and now Media General.” Wilson pointed out that a Union contract helps keep wages, hours and working conditions intact during these changes.

Hartford/New Haven/Springfield, CT, is an overlap market in this merger. NABET-CWA represents members at three stations in the market: WTNH (Media General/No. 3), WFSB (Meredith/No. 1), and WITC/FOX (Tribune Media). The Union has three units at WTNH (Media General) in New Haven, and will begin bargaining in November for the station’s producers and directors, and bargaining for the photographers/technicians contract next year. NABET-CWA just organized WITC/FOX, which had been the only non-union television newsroom in the state.

“The stations are heavily unionized, but will change hands,” predicts Biggs-Adams. “They will have to sell/swaps before the sale is finalized and they apply for FCC approval. We should know what is going to happen by the end of the year because the deals would have to close by the end of the first quarter of 2016.”

New York (Local 16)

Organizing win at ABC/GMA

NABET-CWA Local 16 gained six new members over the summer when the EVS operators who work on ABC’s “Good Morning America” program voted unanimously to join the Union. The group was the last of the technical staff to become members of NABET-CWA, which represents approximately 30 staffors on the program.

According to Local 16 President Art Mazzacca, the workers were concerned about their job security after the network reduced their hours.

The Company has expressed willingness to negotiate with the new unit. Once the Union sits down with the members to assess their concerns, Mazzacca said he hopes to begin negotiations by late September.

The Union believes the group should be accredited into the NABET-CWA/ABC Master Agreement.

Mazzacca credited the hard work of Steve Rubbinaccio and Jim Nolan, who brought about a successful conclusion to the campaign.
in the summer, NABET-CWA and NBC Universal came to terms on a new contract to replace the Master Agreement that expired on March 31, 2015. The deal was ratified by a majority of the bargaining unit’s members on August 14. The Union’s Bargaining Committee said it was “extremely grateful to the NABET-CWA members working across the country at NBC Universal for their support and determination during this process.”

The new ratified agreement covers all of the Union’s members at NBC, including approximately 2,700 Staff and Daily Hire employees working as broadcast technicians in the studios, as well as in the field for NBC News, NBC Sports and NBC Entertainment. Also covered under the Master Agreement are building maintenance, air conditioning and plant maintenance personnel, staging services personnel, and couriers at various Network and TV station operations in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

This package contains a number of enhanced economic and benefits improvements for NABET-CWA-represented employees. The general wage increase totals 8.25% over the next three years (3%, 2.75%, and 2.5%), and becomes effective upon ratification.

Notable gains for Daily Hire employees include an increase in the payment-in-lieu of benefits, an increase in the Company-matching contribution to the Daily Hire 401(k) plan, and an increase in ‘travel-only’ pay by $6/hour over the life of the agreement. In addition, eligible Daily Hire employees who work 195 days or more in a calendar year would have the option to select NBCU/Comcast healthcare benefits in the following year.

The new contract will run through March 31, 2018. The NABET-CWA Network Negotiating Committee included Sector President Charlie Braico, Local 11 President Lou Marinaro, Local 53 President Steve Ross, Steve Minnick (Local 31 Negotiator), and Ed Dabrowski (Local 41 Negotiator).

Local 411 Elects New Local President

In April, Local 411 members elected Joe Kaczinski as their new president. Kaczinski ran unopposed to replace former local president Tony Peterson, who held the position for one term.

“When Tony stepped down, I decided to run because I thought it was important for our side of the group to be represented,” Kaczinski explained, referring to his employer, WCCO-TV, which employs a larger share of the local’s members. In total, Local 411 represents 81 full-time, part-time and Daily Hire members at WCCO and KTCA-TV (PB5). Six members are employed at KTCA.

This is the first Union position for Kaczinski, who has worked at the Minneapolis station for 13 years. He was employed previously at KSTP-TV/Channel 5 (Hubbard Broadcasting), which Kaczinski described as “notoriously non-union.” Kaczinski said WCCO is #1 in the Minneapolis market, while the Hubbard station is #3 or #4. “Because WCCO is owned-and-operated by CBS, it is very much corporate-run,” he said. “The network operates the station very seriously, and we have a very talented group of people there.”

NABET-CWA and WCCO-TV signed a new three-year agreement in August, soon after concluding a lawsuit. The Union sued the Company over its desire to allow its AFTRA employees to perform NABET-CWA members’ duties. The lawsuit was initially upheld by an Administrative Law Judge, but was eventually overturned after the Company appealed the decision. The two Unions and the Company have agreed to permit two AFTRA employees per day to perform NABET work and two NABET employees per day to do AFTRA work. If an employee is cross-utilized in a higher paid group, the Company will compensate them at the higher rate.

Adding to staffing concerns, WCCO recently added a new hour-long morning show to its programming, which they initially said would create two new positions. However, they ended up doing the show using current staff.

“The people in the group are very talented, and WCCO has traditionally had a very high level of production quality,” he said. “But adding an extra hour of production to each work day becomes challenging for a staff that is always trying to create the best they can every day.”

Job security and promoting unionism are areas that Kaczinski would like to focus on as local president. “It’s more important than ever for Unions to be involved in the workplace,” he said. “There’s an entire group of people who really need to learn what Unions are and their history. It would be really tough if we didn’t have a Union.”

Long-time Advisor to Savings and Retirement Trust (SRT) Ousted

NABET-CWA members who have participated in the CWA Savings and Retirement Trust (SRT) should have been notified that there was change in the financial advisor to the fund, effective January 1, 2015. Meketa Investment Group replaced Eric Zakarin, who had been the plan adviser for over 20 years. His removal from that position was contrary to the strong support of much of the membership. The Sector Executive Council passed a resolution – and the Network Local Presidents wrote letters to the Trustees – supporting Eric Zakarin and opposing the change in financial advisors. What makes this situation ironic is that NABET-CWA members represent a majority of the participants, and hold the largest balance of funds in the plan. The vote to remove Mr. Zakarin was 2 to 1 by the three Plan Trustees. At the time, the Union Trustees were Annie Hill, CWA Secretary-Treasurer, and Jim Joyce, NABET-CWA President. Frank Tucker is the management Trustee. Jim Joyce cast the lone dissenting vote on this action.

It is interesting to note that NABET-CWA did not have a Trustee until the summer of 2014, when Larry Cohen resigned and the CWA Executive Board appointed Jim Joyce. I do find that surprising, especially in light of NABET-CWA’s level of participation that led to the creation of the Three Plan Trustees.

That may be true, but since I am not a member, I am not entitled to that specific information regarding fees of the SRT. What I do believe has been compromised is the personal customer service provided by Eric Zakarin. When that issue was raised, NABET-CWA was told that that personal service to the participants was not the job of the financial advisor. The only responsibility of the advisor is to advise the Trustees. From my perspective that is a very shortsighted approach, and it remains to be seen if Mr. Zakarin’s personal touch will be missed.

Contact information for the CWA Savings & Retirement Trust can be found in the highlighted box. If for some reason you have a question or a problem that you feel is not being addressed, please send me a detailed email so that I may look into it.

I can be contacted at bfreeda@nabetcwa@verizon.net.

Contact information for CWA SRT

Phone: 1-800-987-0721
Hours: 8:30am-4:30pm
Kathy Richardson: krichardson@cwa-union.org
Isabel Baer: ibaer@cwa-union.org
Eoin Fitzgerald: efitzgerald@cwa-union.org

WWW.NABET-CWA.ORG
Many believe this is a way to expose a new generation to the many positive benefits of the Union.

Resolutions
Conference delegates passed ten resolutions, including resolutions for:
- Daily Hires. Vigorously address Daily Hire issues through representation, contract negotiations, effective enforcement and political/legislative activism. Daily Hires have been a part of the Union for the past 25 years.
- Trans-Pacific Partnership. Join the voices of Democrats and Republicans alike who opposed the TPP.
- End Income Inequality. Support the Fair Minimum Wage Act which increases the minimum wage to $10.10/hour as well as the CWA/AFL-CIO “Fight for $15.”
- Appreciation for RVP 2 Freddie Saburro. Wash Freddie – the “grandfather” of Region 2 – a speedy recovery from the illness that prevented him from attending this NABET-CWA Conference.
- Building up the Middle Class. Support legislation and policies at local, state and national levels that protect the bargaining power of Unions, guarantee paid sick leave, ease student debt, make higher education more accessible, and expand retirement coverage.
- Fight Right-to-Work. Recognize Missouri Governor Jay Nixon’s veto of a right-to-work bill and support the state legislators who voted against the legislation. Half of the United States is now “right-to-work.”
- Abolish Citizens United. Call on Congress and the President to rectify this corrupt decision and urge all Union members to become more politically active to counter the hundreds of millions of dollars spent by big business.

Special Presentations
Select speakers made presentations to Conference attendees on topics such as: new training programs, legal updates, drone camera technology, Hinkle owns Soaring Badger Productions and recently received one of the few FAA exemptions to fly his drones for news gathering and production purposes. With the technology advancing rapidly, Hinkle said he thinks that most news stations around the country will be using drones at some point and they will soon replace cable cams. Drones may also take the place of helicopter shots because they minimize cost and danger. Investment Advisor Eric Zakarin gave a presentation on Retirement Planning, advising people to follow these general strategies: 1. Know the available distribution options 2. Use conservative assumptions 3. Invest and consider risk in proportion to longevity 4. Diversify 5. Rebalance 6. Stay involved.

Training was the focus of CWA/NETT Academy Administrator Kevin Celata’s talk. Celata said that lynda.com is the most successful thing he’s done at CWA: “The benefits are so tangible because they engage the members and help further their jobs and interests.” He introduced CWA’s newest training product, Kelby One, which is available free for NABET-CWA members. The software simplifies the process of learning Photoshop®, Lightroom® & photography.

Jim Kolendo of NABET-CWA Local 42 administers the Union’s training programs in Regions 2 and 6. The program is so popular that he has filled every training “seat” for the past 2 1/2 years. Access to the programs is unlimited. 24/7 for both members and their families. He noted that several colleges and institutions use lynda.com, including Yale, Georgetown, Case Western Reserve, Princeton and the New York Public Library. Kolendo urged members to keep their email addresses current in order to get the latest information on training opportunities.

Richard Mack, Jr. of Miller Cohen PLC explained the NLRB’s new fast-track organizing rules, which have streamlined elections. The new rules shorten the time-frame of filing an election from 38 days to 14-21 days. Once a petition is filed, a hearing must occur within eight days. In addition, the employer is required to post notice of the petition for an election within two days after the region serves notice of the hearing. Elections are scheduled as early as possible: within two days instead of the former seven days. According to Mack, the win rate goes up 25 percent if Unions use the rules correctly.

CWA’s Director of Online Communications, Beth Allen (@CWAbeth), gave an overview of social media techniques. Allen said the two fundamentals of online communications are a website and email, which provides the structure to communicate to members and is the best way to get in touch
with them. Why use social media she asked? Because people/members use it to spread and share information. Half of Facebook users get their news there, and Unions need to be a part of the conversation. Nearly 71 percent of Internet users have a Facebook account, so Locals should start with Facebook before Twitter, which 23 percent of Internet users subscribe to. CW A also uses the Action Network to set up and plot events, which is free of charge to CW A locals. Allen asked everyone to send her old “throwback” pictures for the CW A Facebook page!

NABET-CWA is enhancing its remote production representation and servicing program. A panel of Local 16 and Local 11 representatives, including NABET-CWA Remote Service Coordinator Steve Rubbinaccio, explained that the enhanced service is a result of an increase in work assignments at ABC Sports and NBC Sports. They are recruiting people from within NABET-CWA and other unions to service and support crews at these events. Forms were available at the Conference to become part of the NABET-CWA Sports Remote Servicing Team. Those interested may also contact Rubbinaccio at NABET-CWA Local 16: 212-757-7191.

The President of the News Guild, Bernie Lunzer, spoke of the importance of growing NABET-CWA and the Guild using tools such as the Strategic Industry and Growth Funds. These initiatives, which are funded separately from a portion of members’ dues and annual investment earnings from the Members Relief Fund (MRF), respectively, are used to support movement building, enhance organizing, leadership development and research, and to increase CW A’s bargaining power. The funds helped to fight against the TPP and have supported NABET-CWA in FCC filings and in a News Guild/NABET-CWA research report on the media’s portrayal of Hispanics that is due out this fall. NABET-CWA locals are encouraged to submit their own proposals for funding.
FOX fires NABET-CWA Local 53 Officer for Union Activity

NABET-CWA Local 53 Secretary Cheryl Bacon was fired from her job at KTTV Fox 11 for appearing on camera with “Turn off FOX 11” informational signs during one of the station’s morning live shots. Bacon’s actions were part of an ongoing Union mobilization campaign to inform the public about the four-year-long contract talks between NABET-CWA and KTTV.

“We do this to get our message out to the public that FOX is unfair,” said Bacon. “The live shots are one part of a whole mobilization strategy of rallies, outreach to advertisers, community organizers, and leafleting. It’s one of many strategies that we partake in to get our message out.”

Bacon was off-duty on August 12 when she participated in the Union activity. When she showed up for her shift later that day, management fired her immediately. Bacon had appeared in live shots several times previously. “I would never do anything to jeopardize my job,” Bacon said. “I did exactly as I had in the other live shots: I stood silently behind the reporter so as to be in the picture, but I did not interfere with them at all.”

According to Bacon, she has never had any disciplinary problems in her 39 years at the station. She would have qualified for full retirement in October, but had planned to work a few more years. The 62-year-old worked as an engineer, video editor, microwave operator and satellite operations staffer, and has been a NABET-CWA member since August 1976. NABET-CWA, which has been negotiating with the station to get her job back, filed a grievance asserting that the station did not follow the discharge clause outlined in the Union contract. An unfair labor practice charge also was filed, for which Bacon provided a six-hour statement to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

The Board is expected to decide whether to take up her case in October. Vowing to “Bring Home the Bacon,” Local 53 held a rally outside of FOX 11’s studios on August 27. On Sept. 10, NABET-CWA Local 41 also spoke out in support of Bacon during a rally to highlight their fight for a new contract at FOX 32/WFLD-TV.

“Our contract expired in 2011, so this has been going on for a very long time,” said Local 53 President Steve Ross. “The company only wants concessions in wages and benefits, while at the same time we see other companies being able to reach agreement with their workers.”

Local 53 has been engaged in heightened mobilization activities since the Company declared impasse in contract talks for the Engineering unit in 2013. The members overwhelmingly rejected the Company’s contract offer in November 2012, and KTTV implemented parts of the rejected proposal on July 15, 2013. The Company reduced employees’ workday by a half hour, which amounted to a 6 1/4 percent cut in pay. The Company also decreased vacation time and reduced Daily Hires’ pay in lieu of benefits by 15 percent.

Local 53 said it will continue its mobilization campaign until a fair labor agreement is reached. However, the Local has put a temporary moratorium on its live shot mobilization efforts out of respect for the two WDBJ-TV journalists killed in Roanoke, Va., while reporting live.

Bacon has started taking blood pressure medication and is experiencing tremendous anxiety since losing her job. She had hoped her case would be resolved within a few months, but is concerned that it could take much longer.

Regions 1 and 3 Vice Presidents Elected

On June 1, ballots were tabulated, and winners were announced in elections for Vice Presidents of Regions One, Three and Five. In Region 1, Cristina Silver prevailed in an election against incumbent Richard L. Gelber and was elected RVP-1. Maurice “Moe” Thomas defeated challenger Carl Meyers to retain his position as RVP-3 on the Sector Executive Council. In Region 5, James “Suds” Sudweeks received the majority of votes; however, CWA President Chris Shelton, responding to an election challenge, has directed that the Region 5 Vice President election be re-run. At press time, that process is underway.

KWHY-TV in L.A. Lays Off Newsroom Staff

On August 31, KWHY-TV/MundoMax22 announced that RCN Television (MundoFOX’s parent company) was overseeing the station’s operations and immediately canceled its newscasts. Management then laid off most of the station’s 60 employees – from news, marketing and sales – on the spot. NABET-CWA represents 30 of those – 27 Daily Hires and three Staffers – who lost their jobs as editors, photographers, audio engineers, and automated control room operators.

Under the terms of the deal, the station’s owners – Meruelo Group – cannot produce any local content. Instead of local newscasts, Local 53 President Steve Ross said the station will carry the MundoMax network’s programming. The station’s lead anchor, who kept his job, will do one-minute local and national news briefs.

NABET-CWA’s contract with KWHY-TV runs through 2018, and the Company is still obligated to comply with its terms, which includes giving employees two weeks notice prior to any layoffs. The Union is awaiting a response from management and, in the meantime, is urging its members not to sign buyout packages.

“It’s tough enough getting jobs out here in L.A.,” said Ross, “To lose 30 more really hurts.”

Four years ago, NBCU sold KWHY-TV to the Los Angeles-based investment firm The Meruelo Group, as part of its merger with Comcast because they can’t have more than two stations in one market. Meruelo Media was an independent station until 2012 when it became MundoFOX’s flagship affiliate.
SUPPORTING THE FUTURE: NABET-CWA AWARDS 2015 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

NABET-CWA scholarships this year went to five accomplished high school students who are the daughters or sons of active NABET-CWA members. They each will receive $750 annually for four years – a total of $3,000 – toward their college education. In honor of their academic and community leadership, these students won merit-based scholarships named in memory of past NABET-CWA International Presidents and/or employees:

Simone Alexander
Simone Alexander of Boca Raton, FL, is the daughter of Local 31 member Cody Alexander. Simone graduated from West Boca High School, where she was the president of the French National Honor Society and a member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society. She also ran Varsity Cross Country and Track. Simone is the founder and operator of “Simskicks,” a custom artwork business. Simone won the Edward M. Lynch Scholarship Award and is a new member of the Gator Nation, majoring in Architecture at the University of Florida.

Julia Forsyth
Julia Forsyth is the daughter of Local 16 member Francis Forsyth. Julia was a member of the Drama, Poetry, Chorus, and Book Clubs in high school, as well as the International Thespian Society. She was an actor, stage manager, and set designer for high school theater and dance productions. Her community service included volunteer work for the elderly, with an animal shelter, and at a local middle school art club. As an intern for GameMonger, she created graphic design banners, wrote promotional materials and assisted in the game design process. Julia won the Lawrence Dworkin Scholarship Award and attends the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

Anastasia Klimovitz
Anastasia Klimovitz of Hesperia, MI, is the daughter of Local 41 member Joseph Klimovitz. Anastasia graduated from Hesperia High School, where she was ranked 11th in her class and a member of the National Honor Society. She also played Varsity Volleyball and Softball and competes in Powerlifting. Anastasia completed her freshman year of college during high school through online courses at Muskegon Community College. Anastasia won the Dorr C. Wilson Scholarship Award and attends the Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, where she is following in her father’s footsteps by majoring in Broadcasting and Cinematic Arts.

Alexander Walls
Alexander Walls of Munroe Falls, OH, is the son of Local 42 member Eric Walls. A graduate of Stow-Munroe Falls High School, Alexander earned an honors diploma from the State of Ohio and was an AP National Scholar. He also participated on the school’s football and track teams, volunteered in the community for more than 160 hours, and worked for three years at Stow Cone, a local ice cream shop. Alexander won the George Smith Scholarship Award, and attends Ohio State University in Columbus, where he is majoring in Data Analytics.

Laura Barreca
Laura Barreca is the daughter of Local 11 member Lawrence Barreca. Laura graduated 4th in her class at Miller Place High School, where she received High Honor Roll in her four years there. She was also a member of the National Honor Society, the Foreign Language Honor Society, and the Cross County and Track All-Academic teams. Laura received her school’s Outstanding Senior Athlete Award, which is given to an athlete who excels through his/her school career. Laura won the Thomas F. Kennedy Scholarship Award and attends the State University of New York-Geneseo, where she is majoring in Biology.

Annual Fred Saburro Clam Bake
Local 21 tradition continues

In September 12, NABET-CWA Local 21 hosted its annual Clam Bake, which is named after RVP2 Fred Saburro. “Freddie” has been a NABET member for more than 50 years. The picnic was held at the Colonie Elks in Latham, N.Y., just north of Albany. Sector President Charlie Braico and Vice President Lou Marinaro joined members from Capital Region stations WMHT (PBS), WNYT (NBC) and WRGB (CBS) came together each year to celebrate just after Labor Day.
WJET-TV – Erie, PA (Local 28)
The 42-member unit ratified a new three-year agreement with Nexstar Broadcasting after nearly eight months of bargaining. The Local’s mobilization efforts moved the Company off its 25% wage proposal, and were able to reach an agreement with 2%, 1% and 1% increases for each year of the contract. The Bargaining Committee included Chief Steward Bob Neeley, Brian Moffett, John Walkiewicz, Charles Deuel, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi. Neeley, who retired in August, has been a Steward and a member of every bargaining committee since NABET-CWA organized the station in 2002.

KGTV-TV – San Diego, CA (Local 54)
Members of Local 54 in San Diego are ‘blue’ over the company’s contract proposals. Blue mobilization shirts debuted in May and have been proudly worn throughout the station by NABET-CWA members. The Union and the Company met in July and August, reaching agreement on a number of issues including Union representation, part-time schedules and workplace safety. The Company withdrew and/or modified some proposals that would have cut pay. Bargaining for this contract began in April (the current agreement expired on May 31 and an extension expired on August 22). These current negotiations are the first since a 2012 negotiated settlement that left many issues unresolved for the future of the bargaining unit.

Under the previous owner, McGraw-Hill, the Local waged a six-year mobilization campaign against an implemented collective bargaining agreement. That fight ended when KGTW was sold to E.W. Scripps Co., which reported on Aug. 7 that its television station group revenue was up 2.7% in the second quarter of 2015. The Union bargaining team includes Local 54 President Dennis Cislag, Vice President Rob Buchanan, Executive Board Members Tony Velez and Frank Castillo. Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams is the chief spokesperson for NABET-CWA.

WTIC-TV (FOX) – Hartford, CT (Local 17)
The Local celebrated its 50th year by voting to accept the new WTIC-TV/FOX unit into the fold. “Bringing these brave members that have been putting their necks on the line is more than an honor,” Local 17 President Andy Halpin said. Happy 50th Anniversary, Local 17 in Hartford!

WFSB-TV – Hartford, CT (Local 17)
A 10-day extension agreement was agreed to during the second round of negotiations on July 13. The current contract between NABET-CWA and WFSB-TV (Meredith) had expired on June 30. Some progress was made on the issues and a “global grievance settlement” was reached resolving two grievances that were filed against the Company over the transfer of three maintenance jobs to the photography group. The three members will share equally in a $22,500 settlement, with two of the members volunteering to remain in the photography group. The most senior employee returned to maintenance. Under the settlement terms, the station also will hire a full-time NABET-CWA-represented employee and post the photography position internally. Another round of talks took place on September 14. The Bargaining Committee includes Local 17 President Andy Halpin, Local 17 Vice President Ernie Whitehead, John Discenzaa, Kyle Buchanan, Al Wurst, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Laffit.

FOX Network Engineering and Operations Group (NE&O) – Los Angeles, CA (Local 53)
Bargaining sessions were held Aug. 11-13 and September 23 for the 600 employees who work at FOX’s cable operations, FOX Sports 1, and the FOX MyNetwork. The Bargaining Committee, which includes Stan Edwards, Kevin Crane, Paul Ware, Albert Aguiera and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi, sent proposals to the company prior to the start of talks that were formulated from Union questionnaires to members. The Committee said it received tremendous feedback from the questionnaires. The contract has been extended through September 30, 2015.

WJLA-TV – Washington, D.C. (Local 31)
The first round of bargaining with the Sinclair-owned station took place on September 9-10, and unit members were asked to wear their red shirts for unity. Based on member surveys, the Union presented proposals emphasizing jurisdiction, wages, benefits and workload. The current contract expired on August 23.

WCCO-TV – Minneapolis, MN (Local 411)
A three-year agreement between NABET-CWA and WCCO-TV in Minneapolis was ratified by the Local 411 membership on Aug. 18. The deal contains a 2% increase in each year of the contract. The initial increase is retroactive to March 1, 2015. “In spite of the recent overturning of an Administrative Law Judge’s decision against the Union, the CBS O&O was willing to go back to the table and offer the unit a package that was deemed acceptable enough to allow the membership to vote on it,” said NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Laffit.

FOX Hub – Las Vegas, NV (Local 53)
Another round of negotiations took place September 29-31 in Las Vegas. According to Local 53 President Steve Ross, “The Company is being difficult, but ‘baby steps’ are being made every time we meet.” Talks have been ongoing since March 2014. It’s been nearly two years since the 28-person group voted to join NABET-CWA in November 2013.