NABET-CWA Reaches Global Settlement with KTTV/FOX in L.A.

NABET-CWA announced that it has reached a “global” settlement with KTTV, the FOX-owned-and-operated station in Los Angeles, resolving the disputes between the Union and the Company: a new contract, an arbitration award and an unfair labor practice charge. The previous contract expired in 2011.

New Three-Year Contract
The new agreement for the engineering unit will run for three years from ratification with raises of 2% per year in the last two years of the agreement and a lump sum of $1,750 per employee upon ratification. The eight-hour paid day will be reinstated (under the previous contract implementation, the employer cut the paid day to 7.5 hours of work and one-hour unpaid meal that resulted in a 6.25% cut in pay). Under the new contract, workers will get a one-hour meal (half paid/half unpaid) and eight hours of work per day (7.5 hours of work + .5 hour meal).

In addition, missed meal penalties return to previous rates, and the MLK holiday will be reinstated as a full holiday. The agreement also increases the Daily Hire premium 2.5%, limits short turnaround assignments, and increases the number of vacation slots available. Daily Hire employees will now accrue paid sick leave in addition to Paid Time Off (PTO), and job security language has been added, including no-layoff protection.

Cheryl Bacon Firing
The overall settlement, once ratified, also provides reinstatement of Cheryl Bacon, which resolves the Union’s unfair labor practice charge over her termination. Bacon, who has worked at KTTV for 39 years, was fired from her job after appearing on-camera with a “Turn off FOX 11” information sign during one of the station’s live shots as part of the Union’s contract mobilization campaign. Bacon was off-duty when she participated in the Union activity.

The National Labor Relations Board has yet to render a decision on the charge, which leaves Bacon, who has been off the job for the past four months, wondering how long someone is supposed to wait to get relief: “How long can a person afford to wait? Even if the NLRB found it was a wrongful termination, the Company could appeal and it could go on for another year or more.”

Bacon said she is looking forward to going back to work and getting a paycheck. “I really appreciate all of the support from my Union and CWA,” Bacon said. “I’m ready to get my life back. I’ll work until retirement and then leave on my own terms.”

When asked if the Union’s mobilization campaign was effective, Bacon said, “I think any mobilization can be effective if it’s done in large enough numbers. In order to get a good contract, everybody has to be involved.”

Hubbing
In November 2011, NABET-CWA filed a grievance against KTTV after the station moved its master control operation to a centralized hub in Las Vegas. NABET-CWA contended that this work belonged to the engineers in Los Angeles under its labor contract with the Company. In a June 12, 2015, decision, the arbitrator upheld NABET-CWA’s position and determination of the remedy was remanded to the two parties. This settlement includes provisions allowing the employer to maintain the master control operation for KTTV outside of the jurisdiction of the agreement. NABET-CWA is currently in the midst of separate contract talks for the 28-person group who voted to join the Union in 2013.

Four-Year Struggle
The previous agreement expired on June 30, 2011, and was extended until Dec. 2012, when the employer cancelled the extension. After two failed ratification votes, FOX implemented terms and conditions of employment in July 2013, which included a

(Continued on page 3)

NABET-CWA Election Notice:
Regions 2, 4, and 6

NABET-CWA members seeking to run for election as Regional Vice President in NABET-CWA Regions 2, 4, and 6 may obtain nominating petitions from the Local after January 1, 2016. Original petitions must be filed by April 15, 2016, in the Sector Office in Washington, D.C.

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

Voting for these offices will be conducted by mail. Ballots will be mailed on May 2, 2016, to all active members in good standing, in each of the three Regions, to the address on file with the Sector Office. If you do not receive a ballot within a reasonable time after May 9, 2016, and believe you are eligible to vote, notify your Local so that an inquiry may be made to the Washington office, or call the office directly to request a duplicate ballot. The phone number is (202) 434-1254.

Ballots must reach the post office by 10 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time on June 6, 2016, and will be counted that day. Elected candidates will begin terms on the Sector Executive Council commencing on July 1, 2016.
Welcome to a new era!! The creation of the National Daily Hire Advisory Committee is part of the promised commitment of our new NABET-CWA leadership team to make sure that all NABET-CWA Daily Hire employees are getting the full benefit and representation that comes with membership in NABET-CWA. Sector President Charlie Braico and Sector Vice President Lou Marinaro have stressed the need for a new, open, and cohesive relationship among all NABET-CWA members – Staff and Daily Hires – and they are already acting to firm up that connection.

The fact is, at most NBC and ABC offices as well as many other represented companies, Daily Hire employees outnumber staff employees. But for way too long, some Daily Hires have been disengaged from NABET-CWA – or have felt disconnected from the Union. We must re-establish that vital connection. The companies are united in their approach to us. NABET-CWA must be unified with the same level of determination. Our future depends on it!

The National Daily Hire Committee, as well as Daily Hire Committees formed at your locals, will be a better way to address specific Daily Hire issues and help guide local Executive Boards and our Regional Vice Presidents in all contract and policy matters. These committees will be set up to identify problems and work swiftly to get them resolved. It will also give us a common information pipeline for these problems and solutions. For instance: if there’s a contract issue in Washington, which is not occurring in Burbank, but is in Chicago, we’ll be able to share it union-wide and deal with it more quickly and decisively.

Who will be on these committees? You, and you, and you.

We want lots of Daily Hire workers to join in – participate a little or a lot - whether it’s on the National Committee or your Local committee. The success we achieve in making this a better workplace for Daily Hires will depend on each of you. I know all of you have heard this before, but it is no less true: It is YOUR Union and YOU must be involved for all of us to succeed. Unions have been preaching this since we started to walk upright, but fewer and fewer Union members are paying attention. Look at where Unions stand in America today! Many members don’t seem to care, so I ask you to give this some thought. We all pay close attention to our finances – bank accounts, retirement options, etc., stocks, bonds, and other investments. All get close scrutiny in our lives, however, Union issues like elections, contract proposals, surveys and mobilization is often neglected. Many of our elections, ratification votes and surveys get less than a 20% response. Yet when NABET-CWA does, it matters, and who leads it directly affects your paycheck and your quality of life. It seems to me that following events and working for your Local and the Sector and policing our contracts should be just as important as following the Dow, NASDAQ, bond markets, and commodity prices. The money for those investments comes from your workplace and your contract.

In the coming weeks, Sector leadership will firm up the Daily Hire advisory organization, so get ready to dig in.

One personal note, if I may. As a NABET-CWA member since 1979, I too have heard lots of talk and many promises from various Union leaders. I personally know, and have long worked with, Sector Vice President Lou Marinaro (a former Daily Hire himself) and I have recently worked with Sector President Charlie Braico on a few projects. I trust their stated commitment to this initiative. I ask that you please join with me, and let’s make a better workplace for ALL of us!

Fraternally, Larry Barr
Daily Hire
NBC-TV
An estate plan consists of five documents:

1. Last Will and Testament
2. Power of Attorney
3. Living Will
4. Health Proxy
5. Digital Proxy

Each of these documents is designed to notify people of your wishes in different aspects of your life and to avoid having to ask loved ones to make some very difficult decisions on your behalf when you are unable to make them. This is not just a matter of deciding how your IRA or 401(k) will be distributed, or who receives what pieces of jewelry that may have been in your family for years. The estate plan can decide important issues, such as who will care for your minor children in the event they and your spouse cannot. Designating someone to carry out that function is not a particularly pleasant task, but it’s one that needs to be addressed.

Because these documents need to be tailored to the specific needs of you and your family, I will not describe the purpose of each one in detail here. That needs to be discussed by you, your family and an attorney who specializes in estate planning and elder care.

I was recently given a book, “5 @ 55, The 5 Essential Documents You Need by Age 55.” It is a short, but very helpful book written by two attorneys, Judith D. Grimaldi and Joanne Semanara. I highly recommend that all NABET-CWA members and retirees read it.

I urge each of you to take this subject seriously, and to take these important steps to protect your family for the future.

GE Increases Pension Payments for Long-Term GE Retirees

Effective December 1, 2015, GE pensioners who have been retired at least 10 years will receive an increase in their monthly pension payment. The increase is structured so that retirees who are retired the longest will be receiving the most money. The increase is applicable to Eligible Participants and Eligible Surviving Spouses as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Retirement</th>
<th>Annual Increase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1996</td>
<td>$360.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996-2000</td>
<td>$240.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2005</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you are contemplating retirement from NBCU before you are 65 years of service or more, you may be entitled to enroll in GE’s pre-65 medical insurance. This would be yet another option, in addition to what Comcast offers. Each individual needs to examine all of the options to determine what is best for you and your family. To check on your eligibility, call the GE Pension Benefits Inquiry Center, 1-800-432-3450, and dial the prompt for “health.” Make sure you get the full name of the representative and location, noting both the time and date.

If you meet these criteria and are told you are not eligible, please contact me at hfreedanabetcwaww.net.
Each day, the 10,000 members of NABET-CWA go to work, bringing the issues of the day to people across the country – rain or shine, night and day. Engineers, photographers, editors, directors, technicians, graphic artists, traffic coordinators, clerical workers, truck operators, writers, reporters, anchors, producers and others cover sports, general news, entertainment, weather and more. Our work helps bring awareness of issues and oftentimes makes a significant impact on people’s lives. NABET-CWA is proud to highlight a few of our members at work here.

**Local 16 New York City**

Engineer Steve Francis requiring a power supply for the dish on roof of ABC in NYC. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Anne Schoen, Tech Maintain Stockroom Supervisor, ordering equipment. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Don Faithfull, Audio Tech Support Supervisor, repairing a station's intercom. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Brendan Black, Videotape Editor, checking video and audio output levels at ABC TV in NYC. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Local 26 Binghamton, N.Y.

NTM Supervisor Joe Gardner checking out an uplink on the roof of ABC network in NYC. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Engineer Steve Francis requiring a power supply for the dish on roof of ABC in NYC. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Anne Schoen, Tech Maintain Stockroom Supervisor, ordering equipment. (Photo credit: L 16 VP Jim Nolan)

Faith Jessie from WICZ-TV News. (Photos provided by L 26 member Kate Murray)
Local 43 officers were sworn in on Oct. 22: (l-r) Lisa Dickinson (secretary); Kent Culpert (treasurer); Dorethea Brown-Maxey (President); Tom Carr (VP)

Local 31 Washington, D.C.

ABC veteran cameraman Hank Distelkamp at the White House. (Photo credit: L 31 Secretary Moe Thomas)

Freelance ENG cameraman Jim Sicile covering presidential candidate Donald Trump. (Photo credit: L 31 Secretary Moe Thomas)

Local 31 Officers Take Oath

Local 43 President Charlie Braico administers the oath of office to Local 31 President Rich McDermott and RVP1 Christina Silver.

Local 41 Chicago

L 41 member Victor Diaz gets footage of the Stanley Cup for a package on WGBO-TV (Univision) newscast. (Photo credit: L 41 member Dan Moreno)

Officer’s Take Oath

Local 31 officers take office.

Local 24 Watertown, N.Y.

Local 24 members in Watertown, NY., celebrating “Hawaiian Shirt Thursday,” a tradition at WNYW/WNYF-TV. (Photo credit: L 24 Secretary Eric Jon)
NABET-CWA Local 54: 60 Years of News

President: Dennis Csillag
Secretary: Joshua Case
Treasurer: Eddie Ray

Mike Ineman, Dan Arden, Ernie Taix, Clayton Brave, John Beatty, Lee Swanson, and Dennis Csillag at the 1983 Emmy Award ceremony

Earth Day in Balboa Park 2007: Veronica Simonides, Stuart Wiener, Frank Castillo, Jr., and John Suarez.

Mike Wallborn covering the Oscars, 1998

KOGO Radio Remote at the Hotel del Coronado, 1966

Nightcast Crew circa 1989

KOGO-TV live remote (1969)

L ocal 54 was formed just before KFSD-TV Channel 10 signed on for the first time on September 13, 1953. An ABC affiliate, Channel 10 broadcast local parades, produced live and filmed commercials and established the KFSD-TV News. In 1958, the station moved from its downtown San Diego location to its current home — "Broadcast City" — along with KFSD-AM/PM.

The new facility boasted three television studios, including one outdoors, two control rooms, two audio rooms, a live announcer booth, a scenic shop, paint shop, film processing and editing facilities, a film projection room, makeup and green rooms, and was built to handle future technologies like color television and videotape.

In 1961, the TV and radio stations changed their call letters to KOGO. Time-Life bought KOGO in 1962 and soon launched a series of local programs typical of the 1960s, including a children’s show — “The Johnny Downs Show” — that broadcast live in between reruns of cartoons and “Science Fiction Theatre” featuring horror movie host “Moona Lisa.”

By 1966, NABET members’ jobs included the “Eyewitness News” newscast, as well as live, filmed and taped commercials and programs. Reggie Phibian’s first talk show, “That Regis Phibian Show,” was broadcast live from Channel 10’s studios.

KOGO becomes KGTV

Time-Life sold all of its stations to McGraw-Hill in 1972 for $57 million. After the sale, the new owners were forced to sell its San Diego radio stations in compliance with new FCC rules restricting media ownership. KOGO-TV’s call letters were then changed to KGTV.

Soon thereafter, McGraw-Hill closed the commercial production unit at the station, which cost some NABET members their jobs, though most were absorbed into the TV station operations.

In the late 1970s, KGTG changed its affiliation to the top-rated ABC network and began using “InstaCam” units that could transmit live news from the field and by helicopter. For the next 20 years, the station’s SKY10 was the only newschopper in the San Diego market.

These changes started the transformation of the station’s programming toward an increased focus on news. The newscasts were rebranded “10News” in 1981, where they sat atop the ratings for the next 25 years. At this point, technology was changing the news business at a rapid pace. First, it was the advent of videotape and the introduction of Electronic News Gathering (ENG). Then, in 1993, robotics replaced studio camera operators and, in 2002, automated control room production assisted technicians’ jobs. Technology continues to be the biggest catalyst of change, challenging the industry and its workforce as stations transition from videotape to digital, from standard definition to high definition.

Union Busting

Through the years, the Union took pride in partnering with McGraw-Hill management to accommodate these technological changes while also helping its members. In fact, it was NABET-CWA members who prompted KGTV managers to launch a website: 10News.com. In 2005, however, the relationship changed drastically when McGraw-Hill and local management attempted to bust the Union.

When the contract expired at the end of January 2006, management negotiated to impasse, terminated employees, implemented their proposals and launched personal attacks on Union members. Local 54 members fought back, appealing to KGTV’s advertisers and the public. The station’s ratings and revenue plummeted, with the station dropping to 5th place for some newscasts. Management continued to use delay tactics and tried to weaken the employees’ support for NABET-CWA.

In March 2011, McGraw-Hill forced a decertification vote, but the employees voted by a 2-1 margin to keep their Union.

Just 90 days later, McGraw-Hill said it was selling its entire television station group to E.W. Scripps Company, which immediately announced its support for the Union. The parties negotiated a transition bonus for Union members and had an agreement in place by the end of 2012.

“The labor dispute was the only one in the 60-year history of KGTV,” said Local 54 President Dennis Csillag. “They’re gone, but we’re still here.”

Since Scripps took over, the ABC affiliate is now #2 in the market. Scripps is one of the nation’s largest independent TV stations, with 33 television stations in 24 markets and a reach of nearly one in five U.S. households. It also owns 34 radio stations in eight markets.

Contract Talks

NABET-CWA currently represents 36 members at KGTV, several of whom have been there since the late 1970s. “This tends to be a station where people stay,” said Csillag. “When I started in 1981, nearly everyone had been there since the 1950s.” The majority of the unit today has been at the station between 15 and 25 years, he said.

These members are working under an extended contract while negotiations take place. As long as the contract extension remains in force, the Union can’t mobilize or strike and the Company can’t lock the workers out.

Csillag, who lost his job at KGTV during the battle with McGraw-Hill, said the Local’s past experience has prepared for future talks. “We are very organized and prepped for mobilization,” he said. “We have kept our advertiser databases updated and we would be able to move quickly. Hopefully, this won’t be needed.”

NABET-CWA and Scripps were back at the table in December. Csillag sees similarities between Scripps and the McGraw-Hill of old: “McGraw-Hill was a great company for the first 35 years, when we worked together to solve problems. I am hopeful that we can find middle ground with Scripps on some of the contract proposals.”

Region 5 Vice President Elected

On December 1st, ballots were tabulated, and James “Suds” Sudweeks (L-51) won election as RVP-5 against Leroy Jackson (L-53).

This is the second time in six months that Sudweeks prevailed in the RVP-5 election. The first election was conducted in June, along with balloting for RVP-1 and RVP-3 offices. In that first election, Brother Sudweeks received a majority of the votes cast in Region 5. Leroy Jackson challenged the election and CWA President Chris Shelton ordered that a new election be conducted.

With the oversight of the SEC Election Committee, a new election was conducted during the month of November. James “Suds” Sudweeks won that election and has been certified as Vice President for Region 5. RVP-5 Sudweeks begins serving his three-year term of office on the Sector Executive Council immediately.
Recognizing the importance of keeping its members’ skills current, NABET-CWA has enhanced its training offerings, including the ever-popular online training that fits into anyone’s schedule.

KelbyOne
CWA/NETT, CWA’s national online training academy, has partnered with KelbyOne to bring NABET-CWA members a boutique online training program that specializes in photography.

KelbyOne delivers training in Photoshop®, Lightroom® & Photography, and allows users to learn at their own pace, on any device with simple, easy-to-follow training. Through CWA/NETT’s partnership, members get exclusive access to the world’s best instructors, thousands of self-paced classes and an inspiring community of creatives.

Lynda.com
NABET-CWA’s Lynda.com product continues to deliver outstanding online training in popular programs such as Excel, AutoCAD, Word, Final Cut Pro, Premiere, Photography and Dreamweaver.

NABET-CWA members receive complimentary access to more than 1,200 titles. Once all of the videos are completed on the same topic, you may print a certificate of completion.

Kevin Celata, CWA/NETT Academy training administrator, said there is some overlap in the KelbyOne and Lynda.com training programs, but Lynda.com hits on the fundamentals and KelbyOne gets into the “nitty gritty.” For example, Lynda.com offers general photography and KelbyOne, he says, takes “a deeper dive.”

Adobe Premiere Training
In December, Jim Talluto, Media Communications Trainer for CWA/Nett Academy and a 27-year CBS News editor/IBEW member, hit the road with the mobile video editing training lab, bringing the first Adobe Premiere Pro CC 2015 class to WICZ-TV in Binghamton, N.Y. NABET-CWA partnered with the station, which will pay its employees to take the union-provided training. Talluto said he has plans to train 24 Cleveland-area members in the near future as well.

“The employer gets the software to use at the station, but then there’s no structure in place to train people,” Talluto explained. “I give people a little shot in the arm, a jump start. By the end of the training, they can fly pretty much on their own.”

Training normally occurs over the course of three, eight-hour days. Rather than just giving a lecture, Talluto’s training is hands-on. “The only way to learn software is to use software and do a project,” Talluto said.

A typical training schedule includes:

Day 1: Introduction to the software. Participants start a project and learn all of the skills needed to put a package together: move pictures, adjust audio, etc.

Day 2: Clean up the work from the first day and add some specialty items like color correction that may not be used on a daily basis. Trainees get a chance to go out and shoot their own video. Then, they go back to the station and start from scratch, putting the video in the program and adding it in a timeline.

Day 3: Trainees continue to prepare the package on their own. Talluto is hands-off at this point in order for the trainees to figure things out on their own. He tries not to answer questions while they do two-three more packages.

By the end of the training, trainees can edit a package for their employer—a 1:30 package that you might see on the evening news—with simple graphics, titles, moving pictures and an interview or two. If they’ve worked with other editing software, Talluto says, they’ll be able to adjust to this latest product.

This is the third round of training that Talluto has provided. Over the last five years, Talluto has trained Union members at 20-30 locations around the country on Final Cut Pro and Adobe Premiere Pro.

In 2015 alone, the mobile lab trained approximately 200 people on Final Cut Pro in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. That time around, the mobile lab is responding to the needs of the membership by offering training in Premiere, the latest product, or as Talluto calls it, “the flavor of the month.” Adobe Premiere Pro is a timeline-based video editing software application that includes video editing, graphic design, and web development programs as part of the Adobe Creative Cloud.

“I do what the industry demands and right now it’s demanding Adobe Premiere,” Talluto said. “The program is very good and has features that Final Cut doesn’t have and vice versa.”

Talluto said the most difficult part of training is switching gears between different software, but he’s excited to do something new. In addition to training, he also does some freelance editing, has produced a short feature and corporate interviews, and taught classes at Columbia University. He retired from CBS in 2012.

The Premiere training, which is free for members, has a real cost equal to a $1,800 course in New York City.

“This is a very important, tangible benefit that the Union is providing for its members,” Talluto said. “It’s a sink or swim world. If your boss says they are changing software, some people only get as much as four hours notice. The Company doesn’t care; you’ve got to adapt and learn new things or you’re going to fall by the wayside.”

How to register?

Lynda.com:
Speak to your Local NABET-CWA officers, who manage their own allocation of licenses.

KelbyOne:
Go to www.cwanett.org, under the “Resources” tab or contact Kevin Celata at 571-225-1455 or kcelata@cwa-union.org

Adobe Premiere:
Contact your Local President for more information.

Minority Leadership Institute

NABET-CWA member Ivory Noble Taliaferro spent two weeks in September participating in CWA’s Minority Leadership Institute (MLI), learning the skills to be a leader in his Union.

Sector President Charlie Brisco asked Taliaferro to attend the Institute, where he joined 15 others from different sectors of CWA for the intensive leadership training program.

During the Institute’s two Washington, D.C.-based weeks, CWA’s Human Rights Department organized and led a series of seminars and workshops that allowed participants to return to their locals with a range of skills and abilities to help them become better organizers, motivators, and leaders.

“The training I received was great because I learned new leadership skills and how to be more effective during collective bargaining and in handling grievances and dealing with stress,” said Taliaferro, who is a steward at Local 11. “I’ve already noticed a difference. It has made me a more effective steward.”

Being a steward is Taliaferro’s first role in the Union, where he has been a member for 15 years. He works at MSNBC in New York as a Daily Hire audio engineer.

The MLI grew out of the work of CWA’s Committee on Civil Rights and Equity, which recommended more training opportunities for minorities. In 1983, the Executive Board established the MLI, which has been held annually ever since.

Approximately 100 men and women of CWA have completed MLI training since 1983. Participants have sharpened their leadership skills and strengthened their commitment to trade unionism. In 14 days of study and hands on experience, MLI participants receive rigorous training in leadership development, workplace issues, labor economics, labor law and communications. The Institute is available to local union minority activists who have exhibited leadership qualities and a dedication to union work.

CWA District 6 Vice President Claude Cunnings with Minority Leadership Institute class members at the Oct. 8 training session at CWA Headquarters (Ivy in green shirt).

Course offerings include:

- Labor history
- Union leadership
- Organizing
- Our core union values
- Effective writing and speaking
- Civil rights and the labor movement
- Collective bargaining
- Teaching union activists
- Communicating with computers
- International labor issues

Participants in Taliaferro’s session also discussed voting rights challenges and took up the cause of collecting individual stories to illustrate the problem. The “Voting Rights Denied Story Project” will tell the stories of CWA members who have encountered difficulties with issues such as voter registration, identification, and long lines at polling places.

With states such as Alabama, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Texas, and Maryland putting up obstacles in the way of the right to vote, CWA believes that protecting these rights is imperative in order to win legislation on workers’ issues, including the right to organize and collectively bargain, to earn fair wages, and receive proper healthcare.

All levels of Union need leadership, and many MLI graduates are now local activists, local officers, staff and National Executive Board members. The people of CWA who hold leadership roles now come much closer to mirroring the demographics of the Union’s members.
Senate Recording Studio – Washington, D.C. (Local 31)
The Senate Recording Studio unit ratified a new contract, effective November 19. The four-year deal was negotiated early in advance of a leadership change at Senate Human Resources. Congress determines the unit members' benefits and wages, so contract bargaining focused mainly on working conditions. NABET-CWA negotiated a structure for work in the event of a government shutdown. The Recording Studio employees are considered essential, so they have to work during these shutdowns (whenever the Senate is in session).

With the new structure in place, the employees' decision on whether to work or not will be determined by seniority. The bargaining committee included John Evanko, Eric Zeltman, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams.

Montgomery Community Television (MCT) – Rockville, MD (Local 31)
NABET-CWA and the company reached a three-year tentative agreement for the 50-member unit that includes a 3%-wage increase retroactive to July 1, 2015. The contract also includes a wage re-opener in May 2016. The Union was able to negotiate placing several classifications in higher rate codes and creating a new rate code "6" for employees who operate technical equipment that combines functions. In addition, the fee was increased for technicians who perform as non-technical professionals in the field, and language was included in the new contract that outlines payment for parking and travel time allowances. There are approximately 50 unit members, and the majority are Daily Hires. The talks began in May 2015. The bargaining committee included Local President 31 President Rich McDermott, Barbara Krieger and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Follot.

WNEM-TV – Saginaw, MI (Local 48)
NABET-CWA reached an agreement with WNEM (Meredith Corp.) on a wage reopener for the last year of the agreement. A prior proposal was overwhelmingly rejected, but a federal mediator helped to facilitate this agreement, which extends the contract until April 30, 2018. The agreement, which was ratified on Nov. 9, provides for 2%-year increases and includes a lump sum increase of $750. The bargaining committee included Local 48 President Tom Knaub, Local Secretary Jeff Jenkins, Gina Cicarella, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi.

WNYT-TV – Albany, N.Y. (Local 23)
A new four-year contract was ratified in September.

WSVN-TV – Miami, FL (Local 31)
A tentative agreement was reached in June; however, it is just now going out for a vote due to delays, including Company changes to health care benefits. During negotiations, the company said it would offer health care compliant with the Affordable Care Act, but instead invented a health care plan for part-timers that actually worsens their financial situation. The Company’s plan includes a $4,500 deductible and $8,000 in out-of-pocket expenses before the plan starts to pay a percentage of costs. According to NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams, the members are now worse off than if they didn’t have a plan and instead were enrolled in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Under the ACA, if employees are offered a plan that is under 95% of their gross pay, the plan is deemed “affordable” and they can’t participate in the ACA. NABET-CWA recommends rejection of the contract. The ballots were mailed out on November 18.

WTNH-TV – New Haven, CT (Local 14)
Bargaining for the Producers’ and Directors’ contracts is set to begin January 12-14, 2016. The two contracts are set to expire on January 31. NABET-CWA also represents the Technicians at the station, but that contract expires in 2017. Station owner – Media General – is set to merge in the near future with either Meredith Corp. or Nexstar.

WTRF-TV – Wheeling, WV (Local 212)
On Nov. 17, West Virginia Media Holdings sold the station to Nexstar for $130 million. There is no contract in place, but NABET-CWA has requested a contract offer from the Company. NABET-CWA has represented workers at WTRF for 40 years.

Bargaining began in November on a contract for the Daily Hires employed by Maslow Media at the U.S. House of Representatives. The Company says that it can only raise salaries 2% because its budget is constrained by Congress. Maslow lowered the Daily Hire’s salaries from $54/hour to $52/hour with no benefits. Meanwhile, the House Recording Studio’s full-time staff – who work side-by-side with the Daily Hires – continue to make $54/hour. “Congress” mandatory sequester cuts have caused Maslow to balance its budget on the backs of the Daily Hires,” said NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams. She explained that it will be a political fight to raise their wages.

FOX Digital – Burbank, CA (Local 53)
The unit rejected a four-year tentative agreement that called for yearly wage increases of 1% for network operations and 3.5% for cable operations, as well as increases in the Company’s FLEX plan contributions of 1% over the life of the agreement.

WSTM-TV – Syracuse (Local 211)
On Nov. 21, NABET-CWA members at WSTM ratified a four-year contract that includes a 2.75% pay increase effective immediately for all non-psc members and a $300 ratification bonus for all members. Additional pay raises will go into effect each year for the next three years

WXCY-TV – Cleveland, OH (Local 42)
The first round of negotiations took place at WXCY-TV in September, where the Company rejected all of the Union’s proposals within 15 minutes of deliberations. More talks are scheduled for December. The bargaining team includes Local 42 President Bill Wachenschwanz, Shop Steward Cathy Watkins, and CWA attorney Charles DeGross.

WFSC-TV – Hartford, CT (Local 27)
Negotiations for a successor agreement with Meredith-owned WFSB took place in mid-September and again on December 8-9. All issues but economics have been settled so far. The Company posted record profits in 2014-2015. The Bargaining Committee includes Local 17 President Andy Halpin, Local 17 Vice President Ernie Whitehead, John Discenza, Kyle Buchanan, Al Wurst and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Follot.

WLRA-TV – Washington, D.C. (Local 31)
NABET-CWA and new station owner Sinclair Broadcasting began talks on December 14. The Bargaining Committee includes Local 31 President Rich McDermott, Alton Morris and Rich Guastadisegni, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Louis Follot.