



scene = 16

NABET-CWA Local 16 New York

Vol. 37, Issue #1

November/December 2004

October 1, 2004 General Membership Meeting

Contract: In late June the Company sent the Union its proof-read draft copy. The Union did its own proof reading and found over 200 errors. When these errors are corrected the contract can be sent to the printers. Meanwhile your Executive Board members, and Shop Stewards have draft copies. www.nabet16.org has PDF and document files of the contract.

Grievances: To date we have 29 grievances filed. Arbitrations have been scheduled for previous Network layoffs on October 12th and staff outside employment on November 16th.

Budget: October 1st is the start of our Local's fiscal year. We ended the 2004 fiscal year 40K under budget. By way of constant cost cutting, we have spent fully 1/3 less in 2004 than what we spent just two years ago.

Committee on Political Education (COPE): You can participate. Give as little as one dollar a week, through payroll deduction, and join the tens of thousands of Americans funding the fight for a better America.

Overtime: Did you know that President Bush has changed Federal rules concerning overtime? If these changes remain, next time we negotiate a contract with the Company we may well have to negotiate our

right to time and a half after 8 hours work.

ABC News Now: Our Union and the Company entered into an agreement to allow the launch of ABC News NOW via a second digital channel. This is our work. We fully expect that at the end of the agreement on November 3, 2004, NABET members will be doing this work.

Health Insurance: The Local has continued to explore the possibility of health insurance for our members upon their retirement. One option, C.M.C. (Continued Medical Coverage) allows members who meet certain age and length of service criteria to enroll in the Med 90 plan at retirement if they pay the full cost.

New York State recently passed a health subsidy law which our own Rich Gelber has long worked to create. The bill will subsidize by 50% COBRA costs for certain unemployed entertainment industry workers. Daily hires take notice.

Please call the office with any health insurance questions you might have. Do not take as the last word what a CIGNA clerk or Disney/ABC representative tells you concerning your health insurance. Gene Maxwell, Jim Joyce and Rich Gelber continue to work hard answering medical coverage questions and solving problems from both members and retirees.

Bill Bores

You might have heard, there is an election going on!

It is not too late to become involved. You can still make a difference even at this late date. No matter where you live. No matter what hours you work. Tell us when you are free to help and we can plug you into a useful and important activity.

You can help defeat Bush again by reaching out to voters in battleground states through phone banks in New York or New Jersey.

You may make a difference locally by working for candidates in Brooklyn and Staten Island.

Frank Barbaro is running in the 13th Congressional District against Vito Fossella and Diane Savino just won a four way primary to become the Democratic candidate for the open seat in the 23rd State Senate District.

Each of them is a good person with long histories of helping working families.

Both of them need your help to win on November 2.

Paul Vasquez

President's Column

What does freedom mean to me this Election Day?

This year, we are finding fewer good jobs, declining health coverage, rising unemployment and lower incomes in New York. One of the reasons for this is workers have lost the ability to form unions and bargain collectively across this state and nation.

When workers decide to form a union in their workplace to improve their lives, employers routinely resort to intimidation tactics, evading the law so they can deny workers this basic right. Workers at RCN came face to face with these tactics when Local 16 tried to help them gain a voice at work last year.

In fact, in a majority of private-sector union organizing campaigns, workers face intimidating one-on-one and group meetings with supervisors and threats to shut down if workers vote to form a union, according to research by Kate Broffenbrenner of Cornell Univer-

sity. Penalties for violating the law are so weak that one-quarter of employers illegally fire at least one worker in an organizing campaign, according to the same study. Even after workers overcome these employer tactics and vote to form a union under a National Labor Relations Board supervised election, almost half of employers refuse to bargain a first contract within two years. While ABC has not refused to bargain with Local 16 concerning the teleprompter operators at WABC-TV, we have yet to reach a first contract more than two years after NABET-CWA Local 16 was certified as the teleprompter operators' collective bargaining agent.

When workers lose their basic freedom to form unions and the ability to bargain collectively, our whole community pays a significant price. Wages and benefits are pushed

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Unit 5..... Jim Nolan
Unit 6..... Orlando Burgos
Unit 7..... Paul Vasquez

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Retiree News

Les Scheyer
Charles Burnham
Al Potter

President's Column (cont.)

down; workplace discrimination grows.

New legislation called the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) would ensure when a majority of employees in a workplace decides to form a union, employees can do so without the obstacles employers now use to block their free choice. More than 200 U.S. representatives and 30 U.S. senators have signed on as co-sponsors, including Senators Clinton and Schumer.

The freedom to form unions has technically been part of U.S. law for almost 70 years, but in practice it is constantly abused, violated and manipulated with almost no penalty or public scrutiny. The situation is so bad that Human Rights Watch has called it a fundamental human rights crisis and Amnesty International has spoken out against the problems several times in recent months.

It is critical that this Election Day, in the midst of all the other important issues, we reflect and act to ensure our fundamental human rights are not just protected on paper but also in practice. It is our responsibility to make certain America's working people have a free and fair choice whether to form a union. Please be sure to let your elected representatives know that passage of the EFCA is very important to you and please be sure to vote for a president who will sign the EFCA when it is passed by Congress.

Changes in Sick Leave for ABC Staff Employees

by Gene Maxwell

The sick leave provisions of NABET - ABC Master Agreements for more than the past twenty years, and up until the ratification of the current Master Agreement, had provided that the maximum duration of approved medical leave of absence was a minimum of three years or, in the case of an employee with more than six years of Total Company Seniority, a period equal to 50% of such seniority. The 2003-2007 Master Agreement provides that the maximum duration of approved medical leave of absence is two years. The result of the application of this new provision in the 2003-2007 Master Agreement to those employees who were already out on disability for more than two years was that said employees were notified by the Company that they no longer had a right to return to their staff employment position. History has demonstrated that vast majority of employees who have been out on disability for more than two years do not return to active employment. Nevertheless, the Company notice to those employees on LTD who believed that they had significantly more time available to get well and return to work was very troubling and disturbing.

For many months I, along with other NABET-CWA representatives, worked on finding a solution that would mitigate the effect of the changes in the 2003 - 2007 Master Agreement on those employees who went out on disability with the ex-

pectation that they had a period longer than two years (from the date of their original disability) to return to work. Recently, NABET-CWA finally convinced ABC management to address this problem by extending the period within which affected employees would still have an opportunity to return to their staff employment position. The "Extension of Medical Leave Agreement" (signed on August 22, 2004) provides that affected employees will have until - the earlier of either August 8, 2005 or the date on which their medical leave of absence would have expired under the terms of the previous Master Agreement - to return to work. This agreement does not impact on a large number of employees but it has a large impact on the affected employees. Hopefully, those employees already out on disability that are not permanently disabled and need some more time to get well enough to return to work will be able to adjust their recovery plan so that they are able to return to work within the extension period.

In addition to impacting the time period within which an employee has the right to return to work, the new sick leave provisions also alter the continuation of benefits for employees who were still actively at work as of the date of ratification of the 2003 - 2007 Master Agreement. For those employees who commence(d) sick leave after September 26, 2003 and do not return to work within two years, it can generally be said that most Company provided benefits, except for LTD Income payments (assuming an employee is enrolled in this optional plan), will terminate when the approved medical leave of absence

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2004-2005 Nolan/DiFranco Scholarship winners

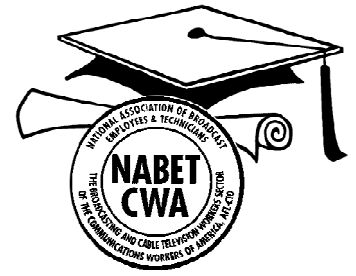
James P. Nolan Memorial Scholarship

Gabriel Millman, son of Graphic Artist David Millman

Kristen D'Elia, daughter of WABC Radio engineer Frank D'Elia

Matthew D'Alessandro, son of Larry D'Alessandro, VT Mtce

Laura Genduso, daughter of Peter Genduso, Central Stores



Donald DiFranco Memorial Scholarship

Patrick Kaminski, son of Network Videotape editor Frank Kaminski

Thanks from last year's winners:

Matthew S. Yoskowitz

Thank you for selecting me to receive the Local 16 James P. Nolan Scholarship Award.

I am a 2002 graduate of Clarkstown High School South in West Nyack, NY. I have completed my sophomore studies at Binghamton University, majoring in Environmental Science/Biology and looking forward to my junior year. When not in school, I work at a summer day camp as a group counselor, and at a local garden center/plant nursery.

Stephanie Rohlfs

Stephanie Rohlfs is a student of painting at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. As an art student, she recognizes the importance of NABET's gift and is very thankful as it means that she can devote more time to her work and serious interests than her part-time job, that only detracts from her studies.

Stephanie plans to study painting and art history abroad in Rome and has many things that she wants to accomplish after graduation; among them living in Europe, seeing more of America, pursuing her art career, perhaps becoming a professor (after grad school of course) and perhaps even living on the Moon Colony that she is convinced that she will live to see. And of course there's always the Great American Novel.

Xenya Eve Kocylowsky

Xenya Eve Kocylowsky is a May 2003 graduate of Hunter College, City University of New York. She was a Golden Key Honors Scholar while she was at Hunter College where she majored in Nutrition and Food Science at the Brookdale School of Health Sciences. In her senior year she was the recipient of the Vivian Schulte Award for academic and research excellence in the field of Nutrition and Food Science.

Xenya has always loved the sciences and knew from an early age that she would someday like to make a career in the health sciences. Xenya found that nutrition had a profound impact on good vision. At that point she decided that she would like to peruse a career in Optometry. Xenya was accepted into the prestigious New England College of Optometry in Boston, Massachusetts. Xenya will be part of the New England College of Optometry Class of 2007.

Thomas Holland

My name is Thomas Holland and I am attending the University of Scranton. I am majoring in Accounting and hope to pursue a career as an Accountant after college.

I would like to thank Local 16 for awarding me the Donald DiFranco Memorial Scholarship. I am very grateful.

Eligibility for Retiree Medical Benefits

by Gene Maxwell

Sideletter EX of the NABET-CWA-ABC Master Agreement provides that in order to be eligible for Company paid retiree medical benefits an employee must meet certain requirements of age and/or service as of March 31, 1989. Employees who were either already retired, or over age 55, on March 31, 1989, are eligible for medical coverage in retirement under the old ABC Comprehensive Medical Plan. Another group of NABET-CWA-represented employees who were employed by the Company on March 31, 1989, who had reached age 45 or whose age and service equaled at least 55 by such date, and retire at age 55 or older under the retirement plan applicable to NABET-CWA-represented employees are eligible for continued medical coverage under the Retiree MED/80 plan (the Company pays 75% of the cost of the plan, the employee pays 25%).

Earlier this summer Local 16 was contacted by a member who believed the Company had improperly applied the provisions of Sideletter EX in determining his eligibility for benefits under the Retiree MED/80 plan. Upon investigation, Local 16 determined that in our view this member was entitled to Retiree MED/80 plan benefits upon retirement. It appeared that the

Company had not given this member credit for partial years in calculating his combination of age and service.

Local 16 brought this matter to the attention of ABC Labor Relations and asked that they review the criteria used by the Disney Benefits Center in determining eligibility for Retiree Medical benefits. As a result of the review, it was determined that this employee was eligible for Retiree MED/80 plan benefits. ABC also reviewed the entire database of NABET-CWA represented employees of the Company and determined that in addition to the one employee we brought to their attention, nine additional NABET-CWA represented employees across the country that had previously been determined to be ineligible were now determined to be eligible for Retiree Medical Benefits. All ten employees were notified by the Disney Benefits Center that they would be eligible for the Retiree MED/80 plan upon retirement.

You can check your individual eligibility status by contacting the Disney Benefits Center at 1-877-702-3501. If you believe that the DBC has not made the correct determination please contact the Local 16 office so that we can review your individual situation.

Changes in Sick Leave (from page 3)

ends (after two years of disability). An individual who is disabled and is receiving Social Security Benefits for twenty-four months becomes eligible for Medicare. So at least he/she will have some medical coverage soon after the time when Company medical benefits end. Also, when Company paid benefits are terminated, an employee has the option of continuing certain Company benefit plans under COBRA. While the above statement regarding the termination of benefits is generally true, each individual situation is unique depending on the employee's age, length of service, date when employment commenced, eligibility for retiree medical, etc. NABET-CWA members should read through the Summary Plan Descriptions that were recently sent by

the Disney Benefits Center to each employee's home to get a better understanding of the various benefits that comprise the Signature Benefits Plan.

For those employees who commenced sick leave prior to September 26, 2003 benefits are continued in accordance with the provisions of the benefits plan that was in effect at the time of the commencement of the sick leave. Which benefits are continued and for what period of time is dependent upon when the employee began sick leave. Anyone who commenced sick leave prior to September 26, 2003 can review their particular benefits by calling the Disney Benefits Center.

Of course, NABET-CWA members should also always feel free to contact the Local 16 office if you need assistance in sorting out any benefits related matter.



Retiree News and Views

by Les Scheyer

lscheyer@adelphia.net

Florida ABC Retiree Luncheon

It was a lovely February 5th noontime get-together at Benvenuto's in Boynton Beach, Florida, and 95 smiling ex-ABC'ers were delighted to be seeing old friends once again. Of course our pretty ladies were present and many cliques were quickly formed to bring each other up to date.

Roz Owitz, ably assisted by Don, did a fine job of arranging for the delicious lunch in addition to all the paper-work involved in the preparation and mailing of the invitations. Benvenuto's is a classy catering facility. White-gloved waiters were extremely courteous and attentive. Our stick-on name cards each had a colored circle indicating which choice of main entree each of us had ordered in advance.... very cute and effective. Last second changes in food-selection were handled smoothly.

Subjects of conversation covered a wide range of topics: Personal health; Medical problems; anger at the way the company has treated current workers, especially medical coverage and other benefits; the way things used to be at ABC; the cold and snow up north.

Your scribe was the target of many questions regarding the lack of Scene 16 issues for some time. I promised to call Gene Maxwell the next day.... and I did so. Gene assured me that an issue would appear.... Good news!

When Charlie Brunner appeared with a tall, hand-carved cane, I accused him of using a prop, but it turned out to be a legitimate support following his hip operation.

Roz let us in on a secret before the end of our party. She had already booked the same facility for year 2005. May we all be able to enjoy it!



Test Patterns

Don't know how many fellow engineers would find interest in a little bit of TV history that has been long forgotten. Check out the web site: www.ggninfo.com.

Back in the "Good old days" of TV before we came into the 24 hour a day broadcasting TV stations did go off the air and did have some maintenance time to work on their equipment.

In the early days of TV broadcasting the TV broadcasters would air a test pattern for the service people to adjust their TV sets and for checking the quality of the picture. It also gave the stores a picture on their TV instead of snow and enabled them to sell more TV's. The test pattern quality was always good and was used as a standard for the broadcaster as well as the consumer.

Over my 40 years in the TV broadcasting business I have been collecting TV test patterns from

various sources. A lot of the stations in my collection have long been gone and in a lot of cases have changed call letters.

Now that the computer age has come along and with the help from my wife Penny and her skills as a commercial artist we were able to reproduce a lot of old TP's. from drawings and some old photos that I took with my "Brownie" back in the 50's.

Back a few months ago I ran into Norman Gagnon who is a former broadcaster and runs a web site www.ggninfo.com and has been kind enough to put a lot of my TP's on his web site.

One of the TP's WHAM-TV has always stuck out in my mind as being one of the first tropo stations I received from eastern Long Island when WNHC-TV in New Haven was off the air. WJZ-TV was the old call letters for WABC-TV 7 in New York and was seldom seen here on the eastern end of Long island.

I'm always looking for old TP's to add to my collection and I can be contacted through Norman's web site www.ggninfo.com (click on test patterns)

Hope you enjoy a bit of TV history that has been long forgotten.

Charles Burnham

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Obituary

Local 16 mourns the passing of the following members:

John McCutcheon—5/03
Alfred Gianetta—3/4
William Mertes—2/03
John Gray—6/03
Peter Murphy—8/04
Robert Guiliksen—11/03
Joseph Palmer—6/03
Mathieu Guyonnet—6/03
Melvin Handelsman—1/03
Harold Hanna—6/03
James Romano—12/03
Herbert Holter—7/03
John Scarpa—5/04
Frank Labianca—6/03
A.J. Sturhann—8/03

Warren Maisch—2/04
James Tilson—6/9/03
Peter Maitland—10/03
Richard Umansky - 11/03
Daniel Martinez—6/04
Charles Walter—6/04
George Whitaker—8/04
David Young—9/03
Mark Bogni—7/04
Horace Cardoza—10/03
Rocco Cotugno—10/03
Carmen Devito—7/03
Joe Falco—5/04
Moses Gershuny—12/03
Jack Brown—7/03

Dave Young

Passed away from Leukemia on September 4, 2003 at the age of 82. Retired from ABC Video Tape. He was a veteran of WW II and survived being torpedoed by a submarine.

Jack Brown

Was 84 years old and died from cancer on July 18, 2003. He retired from Videotape Maintenance in 1990. He was a WW II veteran, and served as a Wing Commander in the Canadian Air Force. He later settled in Lakeside, Texas with his family.

Both will be missed by their many friends.

Al Potter

ABCTVMaint. (Retired 1990)

Herb Holter

Herb Holter (Net VTR - LOA) passed away in July 2003 after a long illness. He was a graduate of the RCA Institutes and worked at ABC as a videotape editor for over 30 years. Herb had many hobbies, including photography, computers and in later years Amateur Radio (KC2FRU).

One of my first steady assignments at ABC was with Herb on Eyewitness News 2 inch tape. I learned a lot about how to deal with management and production from him. He was a great teacher and a better friend. I've missed him since he went out on disability and I miss him more now that he's gone.

Brendan Black

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BURST + CWA/NETT = Free training for NABET members

In conjunction with B.U.R.S.T., the CWA/NETT Academy, and Stanly College, NABET-CWA members can receive cost free, CCNA, NET+, and A+ Cisco systems certified training.

The normal cost of this education has been estimated at over \$5000. However, due to limited access to educational grant money provided to the CWA/NETT Academy, NABET-CWA members can enroll in the CCNA and A+ on-line education classes on a tuition free/course materials free basis. But you must act now!!! The grant money is available for a very limited time. Go to cwanett.org for information.

This free training opportunity is available only to NABET-CWA members.

Finally, in order to continue to provide NABET-CWA members with the most up to date, and pertinent training opportunities, the Task Force on Technology and Training is reminding all members to complete the on-line training survey which can be found on the B.U.R.S.T. website www.burst-training.info.

I hope you find this training opportunity, as well as all the recent B.U.R.S.T. programs provided by the Sector Task Force on Technology and Training, useful and suited to your needs as a member of NABET-CWA Local 16.

Jim Joyce

November/December 2004



The Learning Center

ABC Broadcast Operations & Engineering

COURSE CARDS ARE HERE...

WHAT IS A COURSE CARD AND HOW DO I GET ONE?

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General Membership Meeting

**Thursday, December 2, 2004
at 7:00PM**