

The Leading Tone

It's Conference Time!

Regional Orchestra Players' Association Conference



Photo courtesy <http://philip.greenspun.com>

Hotel Whitcomb
Downtown San Francisco
July 31 - August 3, 2007

Speakers

- Dick Meister, former Labor Editor for the *San Francisco Chronicle*
- Attorney Patricia Polach, of Bredhoff & Kaiser, P.L.L.C.
- "Skills for Bargaining and Leadership" - Miki Kashtan, Certified Trainer with Bay Area Non-violent Communication, PhD in Sociology, UC-Berkeley
- Grievance Handling - Nathan Kahn
- Offensive Bargaining - David Rosenfeld, Attorney
- AFM officers, SSD staff, player conference representatives

Hotel Whitcomb—San Francisco

Hotel Whitcomb (formerly The Ramada Plaza) in downtown San Francisco is a fantastic place for the ROPA Conference. The Ramada offers wireless internet in the rooms, a business center, internet café, fitness center, and access to public transportation.

It will be a great place to learn, re-connect with our old colleagues, and meet new colleagues. And perhaps, see some of the amazing sights of San Francisco.

See you there!

Attending the 2007 ROPA Conference in San Francisco, ROPA Delegates will:

- Meet at least three new musicians from other member orchestras, and exchange stories about their orchestras' bargaining history; new performance hall experience; music director search; executive director search; grievance settlements; or other news.
- Be able to identify three things covered by the National Labor Relations Act and three by Title VII Civil Rights Act.
- Be able to describe three difficult communication scenarios as an orchestra committee member, and how to handle them.
- Be able to list three categories of contract language.
- Be prepared to assist their orchestra committees and Locals with contract negotiation and administration.
- Have their reasonable travel, hotel and meal expenses reimbursed by the Local.

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ROPA

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A Note from the President

Tom Fetherston

Highlights of the 97th AFM Convention

June 18 - 20, 2007; Las Vegas, NV

Convention Delegates voted to amend the Bylaws to call for the AFM Convention to occur every three years, rather than every two years. An additional effect of the amendment is that the terms of office of AFM officers elected at the Convention are now three years, rather than two years. The next AFM Convention will take place in 2010.

The following International Officers were elected:

President

Tom Lee (Local 161-710)

Canadian Vice-President

Bill Skolnik (Local 149)

International Executive Board

Ray Hair (Local 72-147)

Bob McGrew (Local 65-699)

Erwin Price (Local 802)

Vice-President

Harold Bradley (Local 257)

Secretary-Treasurer

Sam Folio (Local 368)

Billy Linneman (Local 257)

Joe Parente (Local 77)

Convention Delegates approved a financial package that includes:

* a \$2 per-capita dues increase in the first year.

* 2% work dues on certain electronic media work with an annual

distribution not less than \$2,500, including but not limited to Sound Recording Special Payment Fund, Film Musicians Secondary Markets Fund, and Canadian equivalents.

* making permanent the work dues on certain electronic media work, as provided in Article 9, Section 40 of the AFM Bylaws.

The Convention Delegates passed an Emergency Resolution allowing Delegates from the Montréal Local to be seated at the Convention. In the absence of the Emergency Resolution, the Montréal Local would not have been eligible to be seated because its prior administration had left it in arrears on a significant sum of federation work dues. The Emergency Resolution was based on extenuating circumstances affecting the local, and directed the IEB to convert the arrearage into a loan to be repaid on an installment plan, so the Montréal Local was no longer in arrears and met the Bylaw's requirement for being seated at the Convention.

More details will be available at the ROPA Conference in the report of our Delegate-at-Large to the AFM Convention, Gary Lasley.

INFORMATION CENTER

- This newsletter is online at:
<http://www.ropaweb.org/lt/xxiii/> (* see note)
- To subscribe to the ROPA Internet Mailing List, visit
<http://ropaweb.org/mailman/listinfo>.
The list is open to musicians in ROPA member orchestras, and AFM staff and Local officers.
- The 2007 ROPA Conference will be held in San Francisco, California, July 30th — August 3rd, 2007.

* There may be a delay in getting the newsletters posted onto the web site.



HOW IT WORKS

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Every two years,* the AFM engages in a union-wide, democratic policy-making process that establishes the AFM's goals and priorities, legislates union rules and regulations, reformulates the Federation's dues structure when necessary, and elects the nine members of the International Executive Board (IEB). Since it's the union's ultimate policy-making process, understanding how the Convention works is vital to a member's ability to gain the fullest possible voice in the union, because it's a democratic political process that demands high levels of member involvement to operate at its best.

Delegates

According to the AFM Bylaws, the Convention is convened every two years (in odd-numbered years). Under the Bylaws, Delegates from every Local Union and every Players' Conference have the right to participate (provided that the Local is not delinquent in its financial obligations to the Federation). Delegates to the Convention must be nominated and elected by secret ballot by Local members and in conformity with the US Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended (LMRDA). The number of Delegates a Local may send to the Convention is determined by the number of members in the Local (on a formula established in the AFM Bylaws). These Delegates are charged with the responsibility of adopting changes to the AFM Bylaws and electing the International Executive Board. The number of Delegates a Players' Conference may send to the Convention is set at three Delegates, who have voice but not vote.

Resolutions and Recommendations

The AFM Bylaws establish the right of all Delegates, Locals and Conferences, including the individual Players' Conferences, to introduce Resolutions proposing Bylaw amendments for consideration by the Convention. The Bylaws also establish the right of the International Executive Board to introduce Recommendations to amend the Bylaws and they give the International President and International Secretary-

Treasurer the right to introduce independent Recommendations through the AFM Annual Report. In this way, all segments within the Federation have the right to propose changes to the AFM Bylaws. The Resolutions and Recommendations submitted to the Convention are published in advance of the Convention so that Convention Delegates and the rank-and-file members they represent will have time to consult regarding which initiatives they want to support. At the Convention, the Resolutions and Recommendations are reviewed by committees composed of duly elected Delegates. Each Resolution and Recommendation is assigned to a committee by the AFM President based on its subject matter. Committees include Law, Finance, Organization and Legislation, Good and Welfare, Measures and Benefits, and others. Proponents and opponents of Resolutions and Recommendations have the right to appear before the appropriate committee during the review process, at times designated by the committee chair. After review, the committees give either a favorable or unfavorable recommendation on the Resolution. The committees also have the right to amend any resolution or Recommendation or to submit Substitute Resolutions as alternatives to existing Resolutions or Recommendations. All Delegates, including Players' Conference Delegates, have the right to voice on the floor. Once the committee has made their recommendation, the full Convention body has the right to debate the committee's report prior to voting. Convention Delegates also have the right to offer amendments from the floor. According to the AFM Bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order serve as the parliamentary authority for the Federation. As a result, debate can only be limited or extended by the adoption of a formal motion from the floor. The Chair (i.e. the International President or temporary chair) cannot limit debate or close debate unless by order of the Convention.

* **Editor's note:** The AFM Bylaws were recently amended to call for the AFM Convention to occur every three years.

WVSO on the Road to Recovery

Karen Barker, WVSO ROPA Delegate

During the summer of 2006, ROPA delegates had the opportunity to visit the new home of the West Virginia Symphony, the Clay Center in Charleston, WV. Since moving into these facilities in 2000, the orchestra has enjoyed superior acoustics, a comfortable stage, and the many additional creature comforts afforded by a new hall. However, the financial picture has been less than rosy and the management and board have struggled with a financial deficit every year since moving into the new hall and have borrowed to keep the music coming. In fact, the picture was so dismal that at a December board meeting the auditors announced that they did not believe the orchestra would exist in another year if management was not able to get finances under control.

However, the management and board had already been quietly working to change this picture. For two or three years they had patiently worked over the necessary details before announcing plans publicly. On April 12, 2007 the board and management of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra scheduled a publicity announcement which was held in the lobby of the Clay Center. The new Endowment and Recapitalization Campaign was formally announced with Board Chairmen Pat Bond, Maestro Grant Cooper, and Executive Director Paul Helfrich present. Chairman of the Endowment Campaign, board member, and WV state senator, Dan Foster made the announcement. It was further announced that this is the first such campaign in 17 years and the aim is to raise \$8,000,000 to ensure the future of the orchestra in perpetuity and to retire all indebtedness.

On the date of the public announcement, \$4,000,000 had already been raised. All 56 board members had contributed to this fund, with an average gift of \$14,000 per person. On behalf of the orchestra, I say, "Bravo to the foresight and commitment of this fine group of West Virginia patrons." Privately, executive director Paul Helfrich said it was his belief that the board would be able to achieve their financial goal that allowed him to agree to the financial package

contained in our most recent CBA, one which also established, for the first time, a minimum number of services to all musicians. While previous contracts had included over 100 services, it was possible for the orchestra to withdraw any (or all) services at any time up to 30 days prior to the scheduled services and this had indeed happened on two occasions since moving into The Clay Center. The first occurred because of the delay in the completion of the hall's construction, and the second was a fund saving device. The WVSO now has basically three tiers of guaranteed services which include all services over which the management has control, but excludes services which may be offered in addition by way of tours and summer festivals. Should a musician not be offered his or her guaranteed minimum, that person would be reimbursed for those excluded services.

The musicians of the orchestra appreciate the commitment of our board, the vote of confidence in us, and the realization that it takes money to fund a great arts organization.

In Memoriam....Kyle Mills

It is with sadness that we report of the death of Kyle Mills, principal horn with Michigan Opera Theatre. Kyle was on a year's leave of absence to perform with the Great Falls Symphony along with his fiancé Jennifer Sengpiel (principal oboe with Great Falls Symphony). Kyle served as chair of our orchestra committee on a previous contract negotiation. I never met Jennifer but I know they were having a great time in Montana. My most recent email from him came in October in which he reported ... "Things here are going very well. This weekend it was 65 and sunny, so we spent it fishing and hiking. Can't get enough of those delicious trout!"

Kyle was a rare and much valued member of our family of musicians. Not only for his superb ability to render a musical line, but also for his genuine concern for his fellow musicians. Whether it be music, nature, baseball, or friends, Kyle loved life and all it had to offer.

Greg Near (Delegate from Michigan Opera Theatre)

How It Works, continued from p. 3

Voting

According to the AFM Bylaws, the manner of voting at the Convention shall be viva voce, unless otherwise ordered. Each Delegate is entitled to one vote on all matters determined by such a voice vote. When necessary, the Chair may also conduct a standing vote (division of the house) to determine the result of the voice vote. On any proposed amendment of the Bylaws, each Local may, upon roll call, cast as many votes as it has members. Roll call shall be demandable and had on demand of 30 Delegates or 15 Locals. For election of Officers and Delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention, each Local is entitled to one vote for each 100 members or major fraction thereof, but no Local shall be entitled to cast more than 50 votes. Offi-

cers and Delegates to the AFL-CIO convention are elected by secret ballot vote and in accordance with the U.S. Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended. Players' Conference Delegates have voice but not vote under the AFM Bylaws. The Bylaws specifically prohibit Players Conference Delegates from voting because the rank-and-file members represented by these special interest groups are already represented by voting Delegates from their respective Locals. Otherwise, there would be an inequity in the amount of influence certain groups would have.

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ROPA Member Orchestras

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Atlanta Opera Orchestra
Austin Symphony Orchestra
Boulder Philharmonic
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Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
Las Vegas Philharmonic
Lexington Philharmonic
Long Beach Symphony Orchestra
Long Island Philharmonic
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra
Los Angeles Opera Orchestra
Memphis Symphony Orchestra

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