

## Representing Our Local 625 Members at the 2010 AFM Convention

by Barbara Zmich  
Secretary-Treasurer, Local 625

Before I started really paying attention to Union Stuff about a decade ago, the only thing I might have noticed about the periodic AFM Convention was a different person writing the President's or Secretary-Treasurer's column every month in the International Musician. But once I was elected as your Local 625 Secretary-Treasurer I jumped in up to my neck and have immensely enjoyed the time I get to spend with fellow local and Federation officers working to make things better for professional musicians. The recent Convention, held at the Riviera Hotel and Convention Center in Las Vegas, was no exception.

A few weeks before the Convention the delegates (local officers and other elected delegates, and Player Conference officers) receive a bound booklet containing dozens of

resolutions and recommendations. All members (you too) see these proposals in the May issue of the International Musician. These run the gamut from basic bylaw revisions to financial packages to social commentary issues to basic feel-good issues. Getting through them all can

**Delegates sent a strong message by electing a new President, Ray Hair, and his unofficial slate. A majority of the incumbents were unseated; six out of the nine positions will be occupied August 1 by new faces.**

be a tedious process, since they must all be vetted by committees and then debated on the floor (using strict parliamentary procedure) before being voted upon.

While the core of this process was the same this year, it was remarkable how few resolutions and recommendations there were this time around. Only 43 recommendations and resolutions were put forward, whereas in 2007 we dealt with about 90. It seemed that everyone was focused on two issues - the proposed financial package and the hot contests for the leadership of the AFM.

That the AFM is in serious financial straits is no secret. But, just as government financial figures can be interpreted different ways depending on one's political slant, how the AFM's shortfalls are presented to your convention delegates is also a function of one's internal view. Possibly you've heard of the originally smoldering, recently flaming rift between the Tom Lee administration and the RMA (Recording Musicians Association). If you're interested, plenty of details are available on the Internet by googling "AFM RMA war". Hopefully now a thing of the past, the altercation was the Elephant in the Convention Hall all week and its effects resulted in some remarkable demonstrations of democracy.

*(Continued on p. 3)*



Local 625 Vice President Cortaz Paige makes his point at the AFM Convention.

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## International Labor Notes Conference Brings Fair-Minded Workers Together

by Celeste McClellan, AAFM Alternate Delegate

As I walked into the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn early Sunday morning, April 25th for the 2010 Labor Notes Conference, I noticed an energy and bustle not usual when entering a hotel lobby. Activists from all over the world were getting ready for the final day of the three day conference. That youthful energy was evident in older as well as younger participants. It's energizing and encouraging to see colleagues of all ages walking around in discussion, whether heated or calm, preparing to speak up as well as to listen for everyone's benefit. Later I heard that this conference had been one of the best attended and inspirational since Labor Notes began in 1979. We encountered many familiar colleagues as well as many new faces ready to do battle for workers rights and basic human rights. I was eager to get to the meetings I had selected to attend and draw on some of this energy. *(Continued on p. 5)*

## AAFM Membership Updates

as of 7/9/2010

### New Members

Philip Alejo  
3197 Oakwood St.  
Ann Arbor MI 48104  
(563) 340-3230  
palejo@umich.edu  
Bass

Yehonatan Berick  
131 Golfview Dr.  
Ypsilanti MI 48197  
(734) 985-0747  
[yberick@umich.edu](mailto:yberick@umich.edu)  
Violin

Carrie Pierce  
2037 Pauline Ct.  
Ann Arbor MI 48103  
(517) 648-1446  
cmpierce@umich.edu  
cello

### Resigned in Good Standing

Philip Alejo  
Joanna Chang  
Anton Shelepov  
Trina Stoneham

### Suspended

Rachel Lopez  
Robert Rohwer

### Expelled

Bruce Dondero  
David Gilbert  
Scott Guthre  
David Stearns  
Tony Viviano

Get the latest news about the Ann Arbor Federation of Musicians (and lots of other interesting stuff about our profession) on:

facebook

Whatever your fight, don't be ladylike.

- Mother Jones

### Minutes of AAFM Meetings Executive Board Meeting March 13, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 1:26 p.m. Present were President Kieme, Vice President Paige, Secretary-Treasurer Zmich and Executive Board members Beckerman, Grimes, Klingner and Meisel. Alternate Delegate Celeste McClellan was also present.

The minutes from February 23, 2010 were unanimously approved as corrected.

President Kieme remarked how fascinating it is that orchestras and other employers are trying to squeeze the last drops of blood out of musicians. At a recent recording job management remarked that "the musicians had too much down time" so during the scrutinizing of the takes the musicians were made to go off and hold sectionals.

Zmich presented the financial reports from February 2010. A motion was made by Beckerman to accept the financial report, subject to audit. The motion carried.

Zmich presented the list of membership changes. A motion was made by Grimes to accept/acknowledge the membership changes. The motion carried.

Zmich reported that two of the AAFM Certificates of Deposit have been renewed for 8-month terms at Bank of Ann Arbor.

The Board directed Kieme to put in a call to Huron Valley Central Labor Council President Fred Veigel to ask for an inquiry into our checks that were never cashed, to request that the practice be ceased of copying all dues checks for distribution at meetings, and to ask that the practice be ceased of sending a monthly blank dues statement.

Zmich reported that she has contacted Pinckney High School to inform them of their selection as 2010 AAFM High School Scholarship winner. Discussion was held about the difficulty of getting orchestra/band directors to respond to the notice. Discussion was held regarding the

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possibility of letting the \$2000+ scholarship fund drain down over the next 10 years instead of asking members to contribute every year.

A motion was made by Grimes to take out a business card size ad for the 2010 AFM Convention program, using new ad copy. The motion carried.

The Board discussed the continuing drama with the annarbor.com wedding supplement and online ad. Annarbor.com has not sent an invoice to the proper address, and we never were informed of the online ad's appearance or of its content, yet they expect us to pay the full amount immediately. Zmich has repeatedly requested that an invoice be sent to the correct address and asked that the online copy cost be deducted from the total.

Based on Paige's positive reports from a recent Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau breakfast, a motion was made by Zmich to renew membership in the AAACVB for 2010. The motion carried.

The Marketing Committee will meet this evening.

Meisel reported on the March 2, 2010 Huron Valley Central Labor Council meeting.

- Three guest speakers appeared, all running for Michigan House of Representatives seats in November - Lonnie Scott (54th district), Jeff Irwin (53), and Ken Schwartz (52).

- Meisel disagrees with the mindset of President Veigel that people want cars and won't ride trains. Meisel believes that especially younger people would be very open to riding public transportation.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

### Executive Board Meeting April 20, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m. Present were President Kieme, Vice President Paige, Secretary-Treasurer Zmich and Executive Board members Beckerman, Grimes, Klingner and Meisel.

The minutes from March 13, 2010 were unanimously approved as corrected.

President Kieme gave his report. People are still holding on to their money. Undercutting is rampant - high school kids are being marketed to replace professionals at dirt-cheap rates. One local "contractor" grades musicians on his website, then charges (Continued on p. 4)

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# AFM Convention

(from p. 1)

The original financial package proposed by the Lee administration called for a big increase in per capita dues (the dues we pay to the AFM on your behalf that come out of your annual membership dues, currently \$56/year of the \$147/year a regular member pays in dues) that the locals wouldn't be able to absorb for you as we've done here several times here in Ann Arbor. The proposal also called for a *mandatory dues increase of \$10 per year*, which, although technically legal, isn't in the spirit of letting our members vote their own dues increases. It also weighed heavily on the recording musicians (again). We delegates didn't think any of that was a good idea so we sent the proposal back to committee and they came back with no per capita increase and a to-be-fleshed-out dues obligation on the recording musicians.

For the rest, there were some real doozies this year. A proposal for a \$10,000 expense allowance for each of the principal officers without need for explanation or accounting for made the speediest exit. A couple of other not-so-sweet-smelling proposals also said quick goodbyes. In this environment, when the AFM is crying destitution, these kinds of ideas are insulting to the rank and file (you and me).

Delegates certainly didn't rubber stamp proposals this year. It was remarkable how many resolutions and recommendations, particularly those proposed by the incumbent administration, were either withdrawn (11) or defeated (6). Generally issues vetted in committee eventually pass after consideration and occasional amendment from the floor.

Many resolutions, of course, were worthy and received approval by the delegates.

Additionally, resolutions were generated from the floor, one condemning student orchestras that replace professional musicians, and one regarding the use of more electronic communication and less waste of paper by the AFM.

The future of the Music Performance Fund was of great concern to the delegates. Much time was spent trying to figure out ways to fund the MPF, which is collapsing because of the lack of contribution requirements in

recording contracts containing digital downloads (MPF is currently funded by a small percentage of physical product sales revenue). After extended general debate it was decided to direct the International Executive Board to look at specific options.

The big buzz all week was the emergence of a serious contender to challenge incumbent Tom Lee for the AFM Presidency. Ray Hair, President of the Dallas-Fort Worth local (72-147) had been an International Executive Board member for many terms. His platform of breaking the gridlock we've experienced for the past several years struck the right chord at exactly the right time. "Taking sides" of the AFM/RMA brouhaha just didn't matter anymore. It was time for some new ideas to move things forward. Delegates sent a strong message by electing Hair and his unofficial slate. A majority of the incumbents were unseated; six out of the nine positions will be occupied August 1 by new faces.

Local 625 was represented by two well-prepared and active delegates. Vice President Cortaz Paige made his first appearance at the Convention, participating on the national Diversity Committee and making a very respectable showing in the race for IEB. Yours truly was again countless times at the floor mike and testifying in committee on our members' behalf. Additionally, AAFM Executive Board member Kathleen Grimes made great use of her years of knowledge and expertise, representing Local 5 (Detroit) as their elected delegate.

For an excellent overview of the 2010 AFM Convention proceedings please see Robert Levine's (Milwaukee, Local 8) excellent blog, [http://theafmobserver.typepad.com/afm\\_2010\\_convention\\_diary/](http://theafmobserver.typepad.com/afm_2010_convention_diary/)

To view the speeches of the incoming and outgoing officers, as well as the speeches by the principal officers of the Player Conferences (including ROPA President Carla Lehmeier), visit <http://tinyurl.com/2czmrya>.

And of course, view all our photos on

facebook

## Among the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the 2010 AFM Convention:

*In addition to basic bylaw revisions, the AFM Convention delegates dealt with countless issues relevant to our lives as professional musicians. These included*

- Minority delegate entitlement
- Arts Funding in the US
- Canadian exclusion eliminated re: Personnel Manager/Local Officer
- Canadian Federation of Musicians recognized as distinct organization within the AFM
- Casual/Club-Date Co-Funding revisions
- "Freelance" to replace "Casual" in all Bylaw references
- Health Care Reform
- Music Anti-Piracy
- Music Performance Fund:
- Support and seek to preserve Network Neutrality
- Performance Right in Sound Recordings
- Protecting Wireless Microphones
- Structure of AFM: IEB to explore options
- Texas Ballet Theater condemnation
- Work Dues on Sound Recordings by Local 1000 (non-geographic local) members payable to Local 1000

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#### Breaking News:

The AAFM has been awarded a sizeable grant as a result of our application to the AFM's Freelance Co-Funding program. Once we receive the money we will put it toward promoting our freelance activities, including our website and our online advertising.

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## Minutes *(from p. 2)*

rates according to how "good" the musicians are. Upstanding local professional groups are being undercut at the last minute by \$25, just so the undercutters can get the gig. This behavior is patently reprehensible. As a labor union under federal oversight we are an egalitarian organization and always need to keep setting an example of fairness. "I see you're a lot older that you sounded on the phone!" has been heard from this contractor, and the "old codger" never got a gig.

Zmich presented the financial reports from March 2010. A motion was made by Beckerman to accept the financial report, subject to audit. The motion carried.

Zmich presented the list of membership changes. A motion was made by Paige to accept/acknowledge the membership changes. The motion carried.

The Board reaffirmed recent e-mail votes. A motion was made by Beckerman to affirm the e-mail vote to reimburse A2SO Union Steward Jon Luebke at \$15/hr. for his participation in the A2SO probationary members' grievance meeting. The motion carried. A motion was made by Beckerman to affirm the e-mail vote to reimburse A2SO Orchestra Committee chair Kathleen Grimes at \$15/hr. for her participation in the A2SO probationary members' grievance meeting. The motion carried, Grimes abstained.

The Board discussed a letter received from a Local 625 member citing possible uncalled for abusive comments and actions directed at the member by an officer of another Local. Kieme will follow up with the officer.

Grimes reported on the Ann Arbor Symphony negotiations. The Union team presented our proposal to management via phone conference. We await their dates for a follow-up in-person meeting to hear their response and hammer out an agreement.

The Board discussed the new Freelance Co-funding regulations and guidelines, which were not publicized to Locals, resulting in unnecessary red tape for our application. We may follow up with the IEB about the issue of timely communication.

The Board discussed Local 625's possible participation in A3, Ann Arbor Art. It may be a waste of time. Kieme will look into it.

The Board discussed whether it was appropriate to promote members' CDs in the Score or on our Facebook page if the CDs were not made under AFM contract. More discussion will follow after thinking about it more. Zmich will interview for the Score our members

**High School kids are being marketed to replace professionals at dirt-cheap rates. One local "contractor" grades musicians on his website, then charges rates according to how "good" the musicians are. Upstanding local professional groups are being undercut at the last minute by \$25, just so the undercutters can get the gig. This behavior is patently reprehensible.**

who do recording work under AFM contract.

A motion was made by Meisel to reimburse Zmich and Alternate Delegate Celeste McClellan for their participation in the Labor Notes Conference this weekend. The motion carried, Zmich abstained.

The AAFM High School Scholarship winner has been selected. He is Charlie Lukkari, a tubist from Pinckney High School. Zmich and Grimes will present the award at the A2SO Side by Side concert with Pinckney schools in May.

Zmich reported that the switch from

MyFax to One Suite Fax is on hold. It appears there are hidden charges in the One Suite Fax business account that are not advantageous to the Local.

Kieme reported that he spoke with HVCLC President Fred Veigel about issues related to uncashed checks written to the HVCLC by Local 625, as well as other issues. Veigel wanted more details, which Kieme will provide.

Zmich reported that the annarbor.com wedding supplement ad issue should be resolved with the next billing cycle, which should provide us with a bill listing the correct amount we owe.

A motion was made by Beckerman to take out a 1/8 page ad in the AFM Convention program. The motion carried.

Meisel reported on the April 6 HVCLC meeting.

- The HVCLC will recommend candidates for the upcoming elections, including Ned Stable, 53rd, David Rutledge, 54th and Mike Smith, 55th.
- The UAW has rejoined the HVCLC. They have been gone since 1968.
- The Postal Workers' food drive will take place May 8
- It's hard to organize Catholic hospitals.
- Will there be volunteer union electricians at the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival?
- U of M is targeting teachers.
- A2 public schools anticipate 190 teacher layoff notices.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

**From the AAFM Photo Archive: Poised and Ready!  
We think this fellow's ghost occasionally rattles our music stands during A2SO rehearsals at the Michigan Theater.**



**General meeting for nominations:  
Saturday, October 23 at 1 p.m.  
at the Michigan Theater. Details  
to follow.**

## Labor Notes *(from p. 1)*

Being of a certain age, my main focus this year was to attend the meetings on retirement issues. What does retirement mean for most of us living and working today? If we look at the nation divided between the "haves" and the "have nots" the trend tends to be early retirement for the "haves" and later retirement or none at all for the "have nots". How often do you see elderly workers going back to work at jobs like greeter at a Walmart or Meijer just to make a small amount of income to meet their daily needs? For these retirees healthcare is likely only

legislative support with public funding allocations, develop leaders, deal with heavy turnover, learn how to deal with conflicts.

Just as this meeting was going into specific interests I wanted to move on to try to catch some of the "Retiree Organizing" meeting. This was a small group of mostly retired auto workers. Many of whom were losing pensions and health benefits with the recent problems of GM and Chrysler. Emphasis was placed on the importance of Universal Healthcare, funding of pensions, how to do political action, the importance of negotiating contracts and collective bargaining. Until we can achieve universal healthcare many of us will continue to live in an era of insecurity.

Problems discussed included contract negotiations involving management pitting older workers against younger. The issue is who will pay for what we all need. Taxation has become a dirty word. Retirement age has steadily been moved up, 65 to 67 to 70. How do we motivate people to advocate for our rights? With our explosive growth in the number of retirees, if we could organize just within one group we could affect the political scene tremendously. Where is the anger? How do we channel our frustrations in

stop attacks on social security and protect trust funds by raising the cap.

Next I attended a workshop titled "Pensions Under Attack." The discussion started by noting that pensions are going to 401K plans or IRA accounts. Defined benefit plans are being forced out of existence. Just as there are no classes on political involvement, there are also no classes on planning for the future. How long before one becomes interested to understand pensions or even if there will be anything to retire to? Workers of the past tended to stay with a single employer their entire working life; they could fund a pension plan. Today's youth can expect to have several different employers during their lifetime. One suggestion for a public defined benefit plan was to have the states invest 3% of taxes from the Social Security system and receive 3% from private investment. This plan would be much safer from the risks of private investment plans which can possibly lose everything as evidenced recently.

We should all be considering what we expect from retirement. Retirement equals income once you are no longer working. How do you want to spend your later years in life? Shouldn't people be



**Celeste McClellan takes it all down at the Labor Notes Conference.**

what can be gotten through Medicare.

In our current era of financial instability, corruption and disregard for fellow human beings, I felt good to be with a group of people sincerely concerned with working peoples' issues; farm laborers, auto workers, immigrant workers, hotel workers, city clerks, school teachers, health industry workers and independent home care providers were among the many professions represented.

The first meeting I attended was for home-based workers. Home-based workers have something in common with freelance musicians in that both groups basically run their own business. The main points focused around structuring the home business, organizing individuals to create a community with common interests, meeting with local politicians, engaging allies, providing services for pay, responding to the demand from the community, educating, mobilizing, learning and/or knowing your rights and how to compromise when faced with opposition. Organizing with fellow home workers provides the opportunity to bring workers together and assist in getting information they need to work together to engage allies amongst the community, find funding, get group insurance, define and know their rights, and lobby for

a way that is constructive? The facilitator noted that political activism is not something many people want to think about; we are not taught in school how to be involved in the political process. It is difficult to become organized and bring together people of different ages and interests. Generally people are too busy just providing for themselves and their families; there is no more time to go to meetings and organize. It was suggested to negotiate for two-tiered pensions to protect both younger (or new hires) and older workers. One of the younger attendees expressed a word of caution: "Older people do not always listen to the younger generation." Most pension funds are declining due to the recent financial downturn. With union memberships declining there are more retirees than contributors as well. Many if not most younger members want the full amount of each job or gig not just a certain percentage put into a pension plan they may never see any benefits from. We ended with recommendations to build momentum to



**AFM Local 1000 musicians Evan Greer (L) and "Union Maid" Anne Feeney get the crowd going.**

able to survive and not live on cheap canned foods? Or not have to work part or even full time jobs? When you retire you have a right to a decent life. When you are sick (Continued on page 6)

## Labor Notes *(from p. 5)*

you have a right to decent healthcare. There should be a right for working class people to retire. The other question is how to pay for this as we are becoming a nation of more retirees than workers. The funding of Social Security has nowadays come into question. Why not fight for single payer pensions and single payer healthcare? Money is there but mishandled. One vocal attendee suggested that since banking and investors are corrupt we should do away with all pension plans since they are so corrupt and mismanaged anyway. How do we hold account managers accountable and how do we educate people to understand the importance of pensions? This is where organizing and social change comes into play. Short term organizing revolves around being able to mobilize members around any particular issue. Does your contract include pension contributions? If no, then next negotiations this may be an issue that should be addressed. If you are a free-lancer then talking with other groups and getting informed is the place to start.

I'm not a confrontational person, but even I can see clearly that for the sake of our future we need to find ways to fight back to change the current situation. That brings us to the question of how to educate people since the mass media dumbs down all news. The internet provides much independent media and news. Even though it's hard to find at times, once you figure out how to search and get to some reliable sites, lots of information is available. Labor Notes magazine and the labornotes.org website are starting places for information about workers who are getting together and leading the fight. Independent media links like Alternet or The Nation are also great resources. Also look for working peoples' stories via youtube videos. Check out the UE and CWA web sites, single payer retirement plans. Organizations working on long term solutions are Retirement USA and Pension Rights Center.

The discussions I attended were full of interesting discussion and ideas for carrying on with labor causes and ways to try to achieve better lives for working people around the world. As always, this Labor Notes conference offered more information than can be processed in a short amount of time.

But as we all left for home I reminded myself once again that social change and organizing, like everything that's important to us, takes time and patience to achieve.

## "Everybody knows Charlie and his Tuba!" Pinckney Student Receives AAFM High School Scholarship



**Kathleen Grimes presents the \$200 scholarship check to Charlie Lukkari at the A2SO's Side-by-side concert in May.**

One of the AAFM's community outreach projects is to provide a scholarship every year to an outstanding student in one of the high schools in our jurisdiction. The money for the \$200 award comes solely from donations by you, our members. There's no restriction on how the money is used, but of course it's nice if it's used for something related to music!

This year Pinckney High School was chosen. The response came back quickly when we asked the music faculty for a recommendation for this particular award. And when we called the school and mentioned the name of the recipient, the receptionist exclaimed – "Oh, that's awesome! Everybody knows Charlie and his Tuba!"

Charlie has been in the music program in Pinckney since the seventh grade and has been a true leader in the program. He has played in all of the top ensembles, served in leadership positions, learned other instruments to help out the program, always earned division one in all of his Solo and Ensemble festivals at both District and State, performed in the Michigan Youth Orchestra and Michigan Youth Band, performed with the MSU Spartan Brass group, selected for five consecutive years to perform with the MSBOA all state band and or orchestra, and recently was chosen to perform as the tubist with the ASTA National High School Honors Orchestra, *which is a very big deal.*



Barbara Zmich meets one of her Really Big Heroes, Mother Jones, at Labor Notes.

**A big thank you to David Pate of the Bank of Ann Arbor for refunding \$8 in service charges on our AAFM High School Scholarship account. Every little bit helps our student musicians! The AAFM proudly holds all our accounts at BOAA.**



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# AAFM Photo ops: Inside the AFM Convention

Clockwise from upper left: MidAmerica Conference President Martin Hodapp (Indianapolis) discusses strategy with Susan Barna Ayoub (Detroit); AFM International Rep Gene Tournour and Organizing and Education Director Janice Galassi share a light moment; Barbara Zmich with President-Elect Ray Hair; Not invited to the John Conyers reception? Invitee Kareem Powell (Dayton) had the idea to trade identities with non-invitee Kathleen Grimes; The Tower of London (Ontario) - our northern neighbo(u)r Johann Kinting whiles away time as he waits to cast his ballot; Everybody's a target - Grand Rapids' Gary Sironen is ready for the potshots from the floor; Barbara scores with a procedural correction; Finally another woman on the International Executive Board! Newly elected Tina Morrison (L, Spokane) is congratulated by the last female IEB Member at Large, Tammy Kirk (R, Tulsa).



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