Local 41 reached an agreement with WFLD-TV/FOX 32 in Chicago after five years of talks that began in January 2011. By the time the NABET-CWA unit ratified the new agreement in March, the group endured rounds of layoffs and had not seen a raise in the five years since the contract expired.

The new deal provides for wage increases of 2%, 2% and 2.5%, along with a one-time ratification bonus of $1,000 for each member of the bargaining unit.

During the course of the lengthy negotiations, the Company insisted on a number of jurisdictional invasions in sports and production editing, as well as provisions which would allow for the sub-contracting or outsourcing of production on station-produced entertainment programming. The Union’s bargaining committee – with the support and resolve of the unit members – was able to beat back these Company proposals, and jurisdiction was preserved in those areas.

The Union did agree to some concessions in the areas of night differential, Daily Hire, premium pay, vacations, and meal periods. In some cases – multiple times, including three different news directors. These personal changes caused delays, and months would go by without communication between the two sides.

Villar said implementing a regular bargaining schedule was very instrumental in reaching closure. The turning point in the talks came in February, when the Union and Company met at the Local 41 office and were able to negotiate a compromise.

Villar led the Union’s negotiating committee and was joined at the bargaining table by unit members Chris Willadsen (Local 41 Vice President), Jeff Sutker, Ed Bartlett and George Sarantos. Sadly, in July 2014, George Sarantos died unexpectedly following a brief illness. George was a dedicated and loyal member of Local 41 for more than three decades, and brought his spirited passion for worker’s rights to the bargaining table each time he attended negotiations. Local 41, along with the FOX 32 unit members, respectfully dedicate the accomplishment of reaching this new contract in memory of Brother George Sarantos.

NABET-CWA and FOX reach settlement on firing of Local 53 officer

On April 28, NABET-CWA Local 53 reached a settlement with KTTV/FOX in Burbank on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Unfair Labor Practice charge the Union filed over the termination of 40-year employee Cheryl Bacon because of her engagement in protected union activity. Absent a settlement agreement, the NLRB was going to issue a complaint that would have led to a hearing on the charges.

The Company and the Union have agreed not to disclose the financial terms of the “non-board settlement,” which means the Company does not admit guilt and is not required to post any notice at the workplace. However, the settlement, which was approved by the NLRB and Cheryl Bacon, provides Bacon with the necessary resources to retire in the time frame that she had planned before her termination.

“I’m delighted that we were able to reach this settlement and bring closure to this matter,” said Local 53 President Steve Ross. “The most important thing is that it worked out well for Cheryl.”

Though it took a long time, Bacon said she is happy with the settlement and really appreciates the support she received from her fellow Local 53 officers Steve Ross and Joe Ayala, Sector President Charlie Braico, NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi, and the entire leadership of CWA, including CWA President Chris Shelton and District 9 Vice President Tom Runnion.

Bacon didn’t imagine her news career ending this way. “I was emotional about it. I spent 40 years at the job. It was a big chunk of my life. That urge to work in news doesn’t go away,” she said, “especially in a big election year.” On the other hand, she said the opportunity to start on a new path “is really invigorating.”

She is looking forward to the next chapter in her life and plans to continue in her elected role as the Secretary of NABET-CWA Local 53.

“IT was quite devastating at the time, but it has led me on an entirely different path,” she said. “I’ll be working in something that I feel very passionate about and where I can devote as much time as necessary to the Local and working for the members, which is something that I really enjoy.”

NABET-CWA Local 53 and Cheryl Bacon would also like to thank the CWA Members Relief/Victims of Collective Bargaining Fund and attorneys Ralph Phillips and Judi Chartier for their assistance in this fight.
A couple of days ago, I spent some time walking a Verizon picket line with some very fine CWA Sisters and Brothers. It wasn’t hard. The Verizon store is near my home and instead of just driving by and honking my horn in solidarity, I stopped to help out. As we walked and talked, I learned about their issues, the similar pressures they face and the corporate tactics they have to fight day in and day out.

They were hugely appreciative that I took some time to join them. It made us all feel good. If, as you read this column, our Verizon Brothers and Sisters are still out on strike, please take some time to join their fight at your local store. NABET-CWA has found that this type of mismanagement can adversely affect proper staffing levels and can lead to safety concerns.

It's an ongoing fight to ensure that work rules are properly observed, especially for Daily Hire employees. The basic, unassailable fact is that Daily Hires are most vulnerable. If you are hurt, the Companies will likely tell you to call back when you're feeling better. (NABET-CWA has been able to negotiate some basic sick days in the new contract but it's only a beginning.)

This is where UNITY and KNOWLEDGE come into play. If you are faced with an assignment that seems unsafe, you need to ask questions. That's KNOWLEDGE. If rules are being violated, you need to immediately notify a manager. If your concerns are not met, you MUST contact a Union representative. The quicker we know there's a problem, the quicker it can be addressed.

For specific problems or issues, please call your Company HR Department or the Flex Plan. UNITY and KNOWLEDGE. It's how we make the workplace better for us all.

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SAUL MERRILL, longtime Local 48 member, dies


“I miss Sam very much,” Jenkins said. “His presence in our newsroom, with his knowledge and experience, brought credibility. He was a great friend.”

Former Local 48 President Zaragosa Maldonado worked with Merrill for 13 years and considered him not only a colleague, but also his friend. Besides being “a big Steelers fanatic,” Maldonado also said Merrill played a “huge role” in bringing the company and the Union together to resolve the last WNEM contract deal and remarked on his professionalism: “Sam was a true newsman. He always cared about getting it right and being GOOD at getting it right. I believe he made those around him elevate their professional game you didn’t want to let him down. He was just great at what he did and you wanted to be just like him.”

Last summer, Merrill taped a video message for new and recent Union members who were hired at the station. Local 48 member and station director Gary Falkenhagen produced the piece and commented, “Without Sam being on the air there was no video. Since he was the face of the station, he was needed to make the video work.”

WNEM TV anchor/reporter Sara Simitch said of the younger people who was hired at the station within the past year, “I grew up in the Flint area and watching Sam read the news was a regular occurrence in our household. So you can imagine my excitement when, some 20 years later, Sam was one of my colleagues,” said Simitch. “All the encounters I did have with Sam were very pleasant. It was obvious that as a member combined with his seniority here in the newsroom that he had gained the respect of all.”

Maldonado said he also grew up watching Merrill’s work and marveled that he eventually was able to work alongside him. “He was a normal everyday type of guy, but also the local newsman. He did a lot to be involved in the community and knew all the politics. He would have been a great politician for the people. We talked often about his aspirations to serve his community and be their voice. He was that old type of news guy that was at a station for a long time, lived in the community, and was very recognizable and approachable. You just don’t see that a lot anymore. He will be greatly missed.”

Samuel R. Merrill, Jr., was born on Feb. 7, 1961 in Cumberland, Maryland, and spent his boyhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Livonia, Michigan; and Plymouth, Michigan. He graduated from Central Michigan University. Merrill leaves behind his wife Katya and four-year-old son James.

In lieu of flowers, those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider memorials to: James Alexander Merrill, c/o Franklin Templeton Financial Investment Services, 17628 Oakwood Drive, Spring Lake, Michigan, 49456, to support his son's college education.

—Craig McMorris, Vice President of NABET-CWA Local 48, contributed to this report.
At the start of the meeting, CEO Jeff Immelt gave a brief report on the “State of the Company.” This year, surprisingly, Jeff Bornstein, GE CFO, gave no report. Immelt then tried to blow past the election of directors and move directly to the presentation of the shareholders’ proposals. When I interrupted him and reminded him of this oversight, he asked if I had a statement to make. I said, “yes,” and delivered the following statement:

**GE’s Jeff Immelt: In His Own Words**

My name is Bill Freeda, and I am here this evening to voice my opinion. Mr. Immelt’s word cannot be trusted.

At the conclusion of last year’s shareholders meeting, the Chairman said, “I like to say to the retirees, thanks for coming. We listened to you. We honor your service. Thanks for being here.” Jeff, based on your actions, you could not have made a more disingenuous statement.

In the GE Pensioner Handbook, dated as recently as January 1, 2012, it states that “GE expects and intends to continue the GE Medicare Benefit Plans in this handbook indefinitely.” Somehow, it doesn’t seem to me that breaking that promise honors our service.

(Full Disclosure: That section continues, “reserving the right to terminate, amend, or replace the benefit programs at any time, for any reason,” but that section also gives specific examples of when taking such an extreme measure would be necessary. The Chairman and his surrogates never seem to mention that.)

As Mr. Immelt knows full well, that proviso was never meant to cut the legs out from under long-term, loyal employees and retirees who had earned coverage under GE’s post-65 Medicare supplemental plans, or were entitled to Special Benefits Protection. That, however, is the legal position GE is taking in the two lawsuits it is currently facing. Of course, the decision of legality will not be resolved here today. But, fellow shareholders, let us not confuse legal and illegal, with right and wrong. Make no mistake about it; this action that GE has taken is wrong.

We can point to times in this country’s history, when actions may have been legal, but were still wrong. As I look at our own Board of Directors today, I am reminded that less than 100 years ago, Susan Hoechst, Andrea Jung, Rochelle Lazarus, and Mary Shapira were not able to vote. That may have been legal, but who here today would claim that it was right?

In Chairman and CEO Immelt’s “Statement of Integrity,” dated January 20, 2012, he says, “Nothing—not making the numbers, competitiveness or direct orders from a superior—should ever compromise your commitment to integrity.”

And again in his Statement of Integrity, dated June 2005, Mr. Immelt says, “Do not allow anything—not making the numbers, competitive instincts, or even a direct order from a superior—to compromise your commitment to integrity.” In his most recent letter to shareholders, dated February 26, 2016, the Chairman says, “we (GE) act with unwavering integrity,” and “we do what we say we are going to do.” Uh, not so much.

Now, all of Chairman Immelt’s words need to be viewed against the background of GE’s termination of its post-65 retiree medical benefits. Not for new employees, not for employees hired after 2005, but for long-term, loyal members of the GE family. Some of these family members retired more than 30 years ago, and some are in their mid-80s and 90s. That is how Jeffrey Immelt honors the service of GE’s retirees.

It does baffle me how Mr. Immelt can claim that breaking a decades-long promise to the people on whose shoulders he stands, is not a violation of GE’s Integrity Policy. Or more likely, he simply doesn’t care.

And then, of course, there is Mr. Immelt’s compelling defense of this shameful act: Everybody’s doing it. Really, Jeff, thanks for the trip down memory lane. I haven’t heard that whiny excuse since my children were eight. And yet, here we are today hearing that very defense from the General Electric Company, its Chairman, CEO and his surrogates.

There is currently a television commercial that ends with “Do you know what GE is?” It seems incomplete to me, perhaps it should continue. Yes, I do know what GE is.

GE is a company that abandons its long-term family members at a time in their lives when they are most vulnerable. GE is a company that treats its retirees as obsolete equipment in a plant it closed. GE is a company that not only abandoned its retirees, but also its Integrity Policy.

Having worked in television for more than 40 years, I have a tendency to recall lines of dialogue. In an episode of ‘Blue Bloods,’ one of the characters describes his grandmother’s teacher as “never uncertain and seldom right.” That, in a nutshell, sums up Mr. Immelt’s tenure as GE’s Chairman and CEO.

As I said when I began, I am not voting for Jeff Immelt today because I do not trust what he says. My concern, fellow shareholders is: Will current employees, prospective employees, stock analysts, investors, customers or vendors now believe what Chairman Immelt says in the future?

Finally, I would like to thank one of my fellow retirees, Bob Rizzo, for making a DVD of the meeting. I found it on my desk at the NABET-CWA office when I returned.

**LABOR FOR BERNIE**

On March 1 in Chicago, Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign held a press conference with Labor for Bernie chairperson Larry Cohen and employees of Nabisco, which plans to move its business operations from Illinois to Mexico. The workers in Illinois argue this move will cost Chicago 600 middle-class manufacturing jobs and displace the predominantly African-American and Latino workforce. Cohen discussed Sanders’ consistent opposition to job-killing trade deals like NAFTA and the TPP, and his vision for a government that puts workers first.
Local 41 Members Cover the Illinois Primary
— March 15, 2016

Nathan Halder (NBC Photographer) and Roger Gazza (Telemundo Daily Hire Photographer) at far left of photo, await Senator Kirk press conference on Election Day.

Photographers Noel Montenegro (Daily Hire) and Roger Gazza (Daily Hire) having a little fun before the Sen. Kirk Office press conference at his headquarters.

Mable Miller, Photographer and Shop Steward for NBC covers the C2E2 Comic Convention. (photo by Jorge Lara)

Bill Montanari

NCAA Northeast Conference Women’s Basketball Championship
— March 13, 2016

Elliot Calo
GET UP, STAND UP:

OFFICE EXERCISES FOR A HEALTHY SUMMER!

By Cristina Silver, RVP1

Many of our members sit for long periods of time at a desk or behind the wheel. This lifestyle is dubbed “sedentary behavior” by researchers. A recent study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine found that the average person spends more than half of their waking hours sitting. After synthesizing 47 studies, their researchers came to the conclusion that prolonged sedentary time greatly increased the following: all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease mortality, cardiovascular disease incidence, cancer mortality, cancer incidence and Type-2 diabetes.

While the popular, modern standing work stations are not an option for several of us, there are some simple, effective exercises that can be performed inconspicuously at a desk:

- **Leg Lifts:** While seated, lift and straighten your legs out in front of you and hold them there for 5–10 seconds. If you suffer from back pain, simply alternate one leg at a time.
- **Seated Squat:** Place your hands on the outside of your knees. Press against your hands as you try to push your knees apart.
- **Abduction:** Place your arms between your legs and push against your inner thighs as you squeeze your legs together, as if trying to make your knees touch. Squeeze for 5 seconds, then release and repeat.
- **Adduction:** Place your hands on the outside of your knees. Press against your hands as you try to push your knees apart.

Now, if you don’t mind others seeing you, or if you have the good fortune to be alone at your desk or console, a larger world of office exercise can open up to you:

- **Push Ups:** If you trust the sturdiness of your console, place your feet behind you, with your hands at the edge of the desk, and push up, making sure that your back is flat and not arched or that your belly is not sagging towards the floor. Repeat 10 to 20 times.
- **Desk Dips:** Turn so that you’re facing away from your desk. Place your arms behind you to grip the edge of the desk. Bend your arms to a 90-degree angle, then slowly straighten your arms and push yourself up. Repeat 10 times.
- **Wall Sitz:** Stand against a wall, with your legs out in front of you, then slide down the wall until your knees are bent at a 90 degree angle. Maintain this position for as long as possible, or until your legs start to shake!
- **No Seat Squat:** Push your chair out of the way and, standing with both legs at shoulders width apart, bend at the knees until your legs are almost parallel to the ground. Try to hold this position for 15 seconds. Then straighten your legs and thrust your hips forward, clenching your gluteal muscles. Repeat 10 times, if possible.

Once you have completed your total body workout, you may want to consider some stretches before heading to lunch:

- **Shoulder Stretch:** Grasp your elbow and stretch your arm across your chest, without rotating your torso. Hold for 10–20 seconds. Repeat this motion with your other arm.
- **Arm/Triiceps Stretch:** Lift your arm and bend it behind your back. With your other hand, gently pull on your bent elbow to stretch your hand towards your lower back. Hold for 10–20 seconds. Repeat with your other arm.
- **Seated Hip Stretch:** Cross your left ankle over your right knee. Lean forward and press down gently on your left leg with both hands. Hold for 20–40 seconds, then repeat on the other side.

Also remember to stand and walk as often as possible. Stretch your calves while standing in place, by rising up on the balls of your feet. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. And, throughout your work day, don’t forget to drink plenty of water. Water helps saturate your muscle cells with necessary fluids. These fluids are needed to prevent muscle fatigue and help them maintain their efficiency during performance. Water also helps your kidneys, digestive system and skin.

The myriad of problems that are caused by remaining stationary are prevalent throughout our industry. We’ve had several members affected by multiple chronic conditions, diseases and even cancers. Adding a little movement to your chair-bound day, and substituting water for soda, can greatly reduce your chances of developing a condition and vastly improve your quality of life.

Honoring Biggs-Adams on 15 Years of Service

Sector President Charlie Braico presents a pin to NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams, commemorating her 15th anniversary with NABET-CWA.

CWA Next Generation activists join Sector Office staffers Kristen Helmstetter and Nikisha Lango.

Democracy Awakening

On April 18th, hundreds of CWA members joined 5,000 other activists for “Democracy Awakening” in Washington, D.C. to demand change from politics as usual. Many of these activists, including CWA President Chris Shelton, engaged in civil disobedience actions and were arrested. These actions were designed to ensure that Congress hears the message loud and clear: we want big money out of politics, hearings on Obama’s Supreme Court nominee, and our voting rights restored. The Democracy Awakening group is a coalition of 300 organizations devoted to progressive reforms in the federal government, including the expansion of voting rights and overturning Citizens United.
Local 41’s Karen Groves celebrates 30 years of service

Karen Groves celebrated her 30th year working as a Secretary at NABET-CWA Local 41 in April. Groves was hired on April 1, 1986.

A mother of three, Groves was working as a youth director at a community church when her father Dan Delaney, then the president of Local 41, asked her to come in and take care of office duties while Administrative Secretary Sue Gerb trained on a newly acquired computer system. Groves held an Associates degree in business administration and had previously worked for a computer company.

“It was all hands on deck at NABET because they were switching to computers and they asked me to help out for a year until the modernization was complete,” Groves explained. Thirty years later, she’s still there. Groves worked at both the church and NABET for a while, but in the end, she chose to stay with NABET...and her dad.

The job has evolved since then. In those early days, she used IBM Selectric type-writers and carbon paper to work on contract language, grievances and billing. Those assignments were less complicated then because the Local didn’t have the vast number of Daily Hire members they have today.

“As we got more Daily Hires, we had to figure out a billing system for dues and try to encourage people to elect dues check-off. We’ve had quite a progression of programs to try and facilitate these changes,” she explained.

Groves is now the Assistant to the Local Treasurer, Jackie Denn. There have been just two other treasurers at Local 41 before Jackie Tim Osterman, who succeeded his father Ray Osterman.

“The Local has a legacy of strong loyalty,” Groves said. “When you grow up with it and it’s passed down to you, there is an extra level of loyalty there.”

As a child, Groves grew up with the Union and got to know a lot of members who were friends of her father. She forged special relationships with these people, and when her father passed away she received numerous notes of appreciation about many things her father had done that nobody ever knew about, such as helping people with their house or car payments during strikes.

Like her father, Groves’ favorite part of the job is helping the membership, who she considers part of her family. “I really like talking to and helping the members. Some have really tough situations: a spouse loses a job, they are going through tough times, or not getting hired often enough,” she explained. “I am working with them to help keep them working. If they aren’t working, we aren’t working.”

When asked about her 30-year relationship with co-worker Sue Gerb, Groves said, “Sue and I are like sisters. We’ve been together for all of these years and we know everything about each other’s families. I feel blessed. It’s like a family. It’s good place to show up for work.”

Groves is 62 now and her three children are grown. Her “baby” is 36 years old, and she has five grandchildren, ages 6 to 21.

The office may have modernized over the years, but some habits are hard to break. Groves said that Local 41 just recently retired the old IBM Selectric typewriter.
peaceful rally — called to protest the killings — turned violent when 176 police officers ordered the crowd to disperse. After someone threw a bomb at the police, killing an officer, the police fired on the crowd. Sixty officers were injured and eight died, leading to the arrest of eight anarchists.

Throughout the bomb thrower was never identified, all eight men were convicted of the men’s death sentences were eventually commuted. In 1887, however, four of the men were hanged and one committed suicide. In 1893, the Governor of Illinois pardoned the three remaining imprisoned defendants, citing the lack of evidence against them and the unfairness of the trial.

“No single event has influenced the history of labor in Illinois, the United States, and even the world, more than the Chicago Haymarket Affair.” It began with a rally in 1886, but the consequences are still being felt today,” according to labor studies professor William J. Adelman. (http://www.lwweb.loc.gov).

Inspired by the American movement for a shorter workday, socialists and unionists around the world began celebrating May 1, or “May Day,” as an international workers’ holiday.

Though some union workers in the building and printing trades, auto and rail workers and miners worked eight-hour days in their contracts in the early 1900s, the eight-hour work week with overtime pay at time-and-a-half was not realized more broadly for American workers until 1937, when the Fair Labor Standards Act was first proposed under the New Deal.

An agreement reached between NABET and NBC in 1941 was the first to include an eight-hour day and a 40-hour, five-day work week with overtime pay at time-and-a-half.

Writing and Negotiating Contract Language

The class is part of the Bonnie Ladin Union Skills (PLUS) Training Program, which offers weekend-long courses for union leaders, staff and activists that combine in-class instruction with discussions of real-world experiences that are shared among a diverse group of participants.

From March 20-25, Gabalski attended the class with 20 others from various unions, including AFSCEME, UFCW, UAW, and IATSE, who brought a broad array of different viewpoints that enriched the training.

“Hearing the perspectives of other stewards, as well as staff representatives and local presidents, gave me additional insights and increased my understanding,” said Gabalski. “I learned helpful things from them, as well as from the instructor Michael Maurer, who was excellent. He allowed people to give a lot of input if they had something to offer.”

Participants performed exercises on the “how-to’s” of drafting contract language, including how to simplify language when ever possible so members can easily understand it, how to write strong language that will hold up over time, and to consider how an arbitrator might interpret the language in a contract dispute. The class also included some role-playing and case studies.

These new tools will come in handy when the contract with Gabalski’s employer — WIVB-TV — comes up in March 2017. As a member of the contract negotiating committee, he will represent the interests of the 60-member unit of technicians, photojournalists, producers, directors and graphic artists at WIVB, where he has worked for more than 21 years.

This is Gabalski’s second Ladin program course. The other was an intensive introduction to unionism directed toward new staff, which he said helped in navigating internal politics and interpersonal relationships within the Union.

NABET-CWA’s tuition assistance policy helped to cover some of the class’s cost (up to 50% of the cost up to $600). “I am very appreciative that the Sector has a program that provides assistance and offers these kinds of educational opportunities.”

PLUS courses are taught by experienced instructors to help participants better serve their union and community brothers and sisters. The main training areas include:

- Union administration;
- Collective bargaining (private and public sector);
- Organizing (internal and external);
- Arbitration and grievance handling;
- Communications and media; and,
- Best financial practices.

The BLUS program was named in honor of Bonnie Ladin, who was a union and social justice organizer for more than 25 years before she became a professor at the National Labor College. Ladin passed away in August 2010 after a long battle with cancer.

Most courses are held at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute, a union facility and home of the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, AFL-CIO, in Linthicum Heights, MD. For more information, visit: http://www.afcio.org/get-involved/
2016 NAB Show and Career Fair

NABET-CWA was on-site for the National Association of Broadcasters Job Fair in Las Vegas on April 20th. The Union’s booth garnered interest from prospective television employees, who were especially curious about NABET-CWA’s Associate membership and the job postings on the website. NABET-CWA Staff Representatives Lou Fallot, Bill Murray and Eric Seggi staffed the booth, answering questions and distributing “Professor Packets” designed for college educators to pass along to students. The packets contained information on the Union, the website, and the training programs available with the Associate membership.

WXYC-TV – Cleveland, OH (Local 42)

A new three-year agreement was ratified on April 9 at the offices of NABET-CWA Local 42 in Cleveland. The package contains a one-time ratification bonus of $1,000 for all eligible full-time employees, as well as the addition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a paid holiday. Full-time employees who have reached the age of 55 with at least 15 years of service are eligible for an early retirement program, with a cap of 52 weeks of severance. Employees will also be allowed to participate in a Company-sponsored incentive program whereby they could qualify for as much as five additional paid vacation days or the cash equivalent. This program is tied to future station earnings. The package, which was brokered by Federal Mediator Mike Franczak, expires on April 8, 2019. The negotiating team for the Union was Chief Steward Cathy Watkins, Local 42 President/RVP 6 Bill Wachenschwanz, CWA attorney Charles DeGross, and NABET-CWA Staff Rep Lou Fallot, who said, “Hopefully this will lead to a better relationship between our members, NABET-CWA, and the TEGNA/Gannett Company.”

WSVN-TV – Miami, FL (Local 31)

On Feb. 26, NABET-CWA Local 31 members at WSVN-TV ratified a new three-year contract with economic provisions retroactive to July 2015. The members at WSVN had voted down a previous tentative agreement reached last summer after the station created a new health care plan for part-time employees, which actually made healthcare options worse for those workers. The company created a $4,500 deductible plan – with huge out-of-pocket costs and co-payments. The union committee tried to find an alternative solution, but the station refused to pay anything more toward the coverage than legally required under the Affordable Care Act. While the law requires a subsidy at the “silver level” (up to 4 times the poverty level), when an employer offers coverage – even bad coverage – workers are not eligible for any federal subsidy. In this case, the workers were worse off because the company offered a cut-rate “bronze” level plan and many people didn’t realize they were eligible for a federal subsidy. More information regarding ACA-compliant plans can be found using the following link: http://kff.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator/ To compensate, the Union was able to negotiate an extra wage increase of 1% per year for the part-time workers. Employees will enjoy wage increases of 3% for part-timers and 2% for full-timers, with full retroactivity back to June of 2015. The Union bargaining committee consisted of Local 31 President Rich McDermott, unit member Val Mosi, and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Carrie Biggs-Adams.

WNEM-TV – Saginaw, MI (Local 48)

NABET-CWA Local 48 recently won the right to represent the unit of web producers at WNEM-TV, where it currently represents on-air, production, engineering, maintenance, news photographers and assignment desk personnel. Local 48 President Tom Knaub and Steward Kurt Rempe were instrumental in the organizing drive, which comes two years after the Union’s successful bid to represent the assignment desk editors, who were folded into the main contract between NABET-CWA and Meredith Corporation. NABET-CWA Staff Representative Eric Seggi said he hopes to merge this new unit into the larger contract as well when bargaining begins in June.

WFSB-TV – Hartford, CT (Local 12)

The contract offer brokered by Federal Mediator Joe Dubin between NABET-CWA Local 17 and WFSB-TV (Meredith Corporation) was ratified on April 16 in a secret ballot vote. The agreement for the 60-member unit is for four years without any diminution of jurisdiction and includes a 2.5% wage increase retroactive to July 1, 2015. A second wage increase of 2% will be granted on July 1, 2016. Subsequent wage increases of 2% on July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018 will be granted unless Meredith Corporation declares a broadcast-wide wage freeze for all employees except those on a personal services contract. Bargaining unit members on a wage scale will receive annual wage bumps even if there is a wage freeze. The contract will expire on June 30, 2019. The Union’s bargaining team consisted of Local 17 President Andy Halpin, Vice President Emie Whitehead, Al Wurst, John Discenza, Kyle Buchanan and NABET-CWA Staff Representative Lou Fallot.

WJLA-TV – Washington, D.C. (Local 31)

Talks were held with the Sinclair-owned station on April 14. The parties spent the day exchanging proposals on benefits. Additional dates for bargaining have been set for June 7-8.

Montgomery Community Television (MCT) – Washington, D.C. (Local 31)

With help from Kevin Celata (CWA/NETT Academy), Staff Representative Lou Fallot arranged for an Adobe Premier editing training class to be held June 24-26 at the MCT facility. Trainer Jim Talluto will lead the class.