ABC Negotiations Start Early, Will Continue into 2017

Negotiations for a successor agreement between NABET-CWA and ABC/Disney began on September 20 in New York City. NABET-CWA Sector President Charlie Braico, the Network Negotiating Committee’s (NNC) chief spokesman, reminded Company representatives that the proposals the Union has put forth during the talks come directly from the rank-and-file membership.

Negotiations this time around are being held well in advance of the Master Agreement’s expiration date of March 31, 2017, because it took more than two years and the assistance of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to reach the current agreement. Several meetings have taken place in September, October, and November, alternating between NABET-CWA and ABC/Disney offices in New York and California. The parties have scheduled additional bargaining dates in late January, in an effort to reach overall tentative agreement on a new contract before the March 31, 2017, expiration of the current Master Agreement.

The Union’s package of proposals is designed to improve working conditions and overall economics for its members, with a specific emphasis on Daily Hire employees. Meal periods, travel provisions, short turnaround, holidays and benefit improvements are all central themes. The parties are also working on a paid sick leave provision for Daily Hires, as well as pay seniority recognition for Daily Hire employees who have gained industry experience and who the Union believes deserve to advance on the wage escalaor in the same manner as regular employees.

The Union told the Company it also seeks to raise the quality of life for all represented Writers, Assignment Editors, Producers, Sports Producers and Desk Assistants who “have consistently responded to the challenges of the changing media landscape.”

The Company’s proposals include the move of Los Angeles Net Release to the non-union Disney Cable distribution center in Burbank, CA, as well as proposed changes for the New York and Prospect lot Central Stores operations. The Company also proposed changes relating to meal periods and stated the need for additional cost cutting and operational efficiencies that they claim are required to compete in today’s business environment.

ABC/Disney’s proposals contain significant inroads into NABET-CWAs current jurisdiction, including a proposal to use outside news services, such as ‘Fresco’ and ‘Strings’ to gather news content. These new services have been described as the “Uber of electronic newsgathering” — crowd-sourced video content captured by contributors who have registered with the service, or alternatively, content requested directly by the client. The Company revealed that KABC-TV and KGO-TV have been using such services on a preliminary basis since March. The Union has expressed serious concern about the integrity of the content and the impact on the bargaining unit, especially as it relates to ENG crews.

The NNC is fighting a Company proposal that would outsource work that “P” Unit members — NABET-CWA jobs held by members responsible for building maintenance, carpentry, electrical, plumbing and HVAC — that they have performed at ABC in Hollywood for decades. The proposal would lead to a total loss of jurisdiction and could ultimately eliminate more than 40 Staff and Daily Hire “P” Unit jobs. Local 51 Shop Steward Gene Barragan joined the NNC for the discussions involving his coworkers.

The parties have reached tentative agreement on some items, including an increase in Life Insurance coverage for Daily Hires and a confirmation that Daily Hire employees are covered by the Company’s travel accident insurance policy.

Complete copies of the Company and Union proposal packages are available on Local websites.

NNC members include Local 16 President Arthur Mazzacca; Local 31 Treasurer Maurice Thomas; RVP-4 Don Farnham; and Local 51 Executive Board member Jennifer Olney. Also attending the negotiations are Sector Vice President Lou Marinardo; Local 16 Vice President James Nolan; Local 31 President Rich McDermott; Local 41 President Don Villar; Local 51 President Kevin Wilson; and Assistant to the Sector President Jodi Fabrizio-Clontz. For the first time, NABET-CWA attorney Ralph Phillips has joined the NNC for bargaining. The parties have scheduling additional bargaining dates in late January, in an effort to reach overall tentative agreement on a new contract before the March 31, 2017 expiration of the current Master Agreement.

Network Coordinating Committee Meets

New Drone Training Announced

In September, the NABET-CWA Network Coordinating Committee – a group of network local presidents — met in Burbank, CA, for two days to review the work of the Union and plan for the future. The members of the NCC include Lou Marinardo (Local 11), Arthur Mazzacca (Local 16), Rich McDermott (Local 31), Don Villar (Local 41), Doretthea Brown-Maxey (Local 43), Joe Kaczynski (Local 411), Kevin Wilson (Local 51), Gil Maestas II (Local 52) and Steve Ross (Local 53).

The meeting included discussion of negotiations at ABC, NBC, FOX stations in Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and CBS stations in Denver and Minneapolis.

Policies was on the agenda, including the 2016 United States presidential election, the Union’s Political Action Fund (PAF) and Local Political Action Teams (LPATs).

“It is important for our members to realize the importance of taking part in our Union’s political advocacy,” said Sector President Charlie Braico. “Without their support, it makes it much more difficult to impress upon lawmakers how vital our issues are to working families.”

Legal and regulatory issues surrounding drone usage were examined. CWA is launching a new drone training program that will prepare NABET-CWA members to take the FAA license test. Any Local interested in the training should reach out to the Sector office, which will then arrange for the program to come to the Local.

The meeting also covered administrative matters such as organizing campaigns, the Entertainment Industry Flex Plan, the CWA Savings and Retirement Trust, and NABET-CWA’s Associate Membership program.

The Associate Membership program is defined at the Local level, so it is up to the Local’s Executive Board to decide if they want the program and, if so, what it would encompass. Any Local wishing to add the program must update its By-Laws.

The Network Coordinating Committee (left to right): Joe Kaczynski (Local 411), Steve Ross (Local 53), Kevin Wilson (Local 51), Asst. to the Sector President Jodi Fabrizio-Clontz, Sector President Charlie Braico, Art Mazzacca (Local 16), Lou Marinardo (Local 11), Rich McDermott (Local 31), Doretthea Brown-Maxey (Local 43), Don Villar (Local 41) and Gil Maestas (Local 52).
With the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, it’s fair to say that working families in this country are going to face a number of challenges ahead. To be sure, the labor movement is now charged with making sure the issues our members and their families care about get the attention they deserve. CWA members supported a candidate who called for an end to an economy that works against us. The revolution begun by Bernie Sanders – to fight corporate greed and raise working families’ standard of living – must continue. Our Union has achieved so much over the years, and we must work together to resist efforts to destroy our accomplishments.

We are constantly beating back proposals at the bargaining table that would set our members back financially or would endanger their jobs. At ABC, we are being asked to relinquish jurisdiction and allow the use of services that buy video from amateur videographers. The Company also has proposed to outsource work that CWA members have done for decades. These types of proposals would not only further erode trust in the media, but also exacerbate the economic turmoil that so many are experiencing today.

Our case at CNN – the second longest unfair labor practice case in National Labor Relations Board history – is currently unfolding in the United States Court of Appeals, where oral arguments were scheduled through December. However good this news sounds, it is dampened by the prospects of a Republican Administration and Congress that will likely replace the current NLRB. As dispiriting as this prospect is, we remain vigilant in our fight to hold the Companyaccountable for its Union-busting tactics.

One bright spot for Labor is the blockage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Both the Obama Administration and House Speaker Paul Ryan have said it will not be brought up for a vote in the lame duck session. The work of Union members helped to bring down this poorly negotiated trade deal that did not do enough to protect jobs in the United States or human rights abroad.

Our mission is to improve working conditions and overall economics for our members. But we can’t do it alone. The only way to fight back against the anti-worker animus of Vice President-elect Mike Pence and his party is with the SUPPORT and ACTION of everyone in our Union – at the bargaining table, in the workplace, and in our legislative efforts. Over the next four years, we must stay involved and aware to protect our rights as Union members and as citizens of this country.

Local 25 members attend “Drone School”

Eight CWA members at Local 25 in Buffalo participated in two days of “Drone School” on Nov. 19-20 at the CWA District 1 office. Drone training is a brand-new addition to CWA’s training offerings.

“Our members had high praise for the instructor and the training, which was free to them as CWA members,” said CWA President Roy Schrock. “They received expert training that enables us to offer our services to our respective employers, rather than having them contract the work out to others.”

“This training opportunity has had the most enthusiastic response of anything we have ever offered to our members in Buffalo,” said Ron Gabalski, Chief Steward for the WIVB Unit at Local 25, who spearheaded the effort to get the classes in Buffalo. “It was so well-received that I expect this is will be the first of several offerings of this training.”

The training is made possible through CWA/NETT Academy, and is performed by designated vendor Dart Drones. Each session allows for up to eight students, so the November session was full. Local 25 already has a second session scheduled for December, with every seat filled, and is working on setting up a third session in January.

“This is a valuable tool for our members,” said WIVB Shop Steward Rich Ersing, who participated in the training. “Keeping CWA members on the cutting edge of new technologies will help them grow in their jobs tremendously.”

According to Gabalski, who is taking the training himself in December, many employers in broadcasting have purchased unmanned Aerial Vehicles, a.k.a. “drones,” for use in news and production. In some cases, employers have sought to hire non-union outside contractors to operate these drones, based on the assertion that none of their current employees possess the necessary certification.

Because of the FAA’s previous policies, companies have outsourced these types of jobs, according to Ersing. However, new FAA rules that took effect on Aug. 29, 2016, simplify the regulations. “The FAA’s new policies, combined with this training, will help ensure that drone operators in the broadcast industry are Union people,” Ersing asserts. “Now, members will have a great advantage in this field.”

In Buffalo, we saw this piece of equipment as nothing more than a remote control camera that happened to require a special license. Since operating cameras is what we do as part of our contractual agreement, we didn’t see this as anything that should be outside our jurisdiction,” said Gabalski. “So when CWA/NETT Academy announced that they were launching a training program, Local 25 in Buffalo was very eager to jump on board.”

The training consisted of two full days of instruction. Day One included a complete description of how to operate one of the unmanned aircraft most commonly used for commercial photography, including practical demonstrations and an opportunity for students to get hands-on training operating the aircraft outside. The second day was intensive instruction to prepare for the FAA’s “Aeronautical Knowledge Test.” Students are provided with a course booklet during instruction, as well as access to online study materials and sample tests after their classroom training is complete. Once a member has passed the test, they must complete the FAA Part 107 Certification that is required in order to operate unmanned aircraft for commercial purposes.

A news photojournalist/Editor at WIVB, who plans on taking the FAA test, “This is just another example of how our Union works for us. I couldn’t afford to get this training on my own. Thanks to my Union, I have a new skill set that I can use to make myself more marketable and continue to advance in my field.”

“I found these sessions with Dart Drones to be very helpful laying the foundation for me to acquire my FAA certification,” said Ersing. “The hands-on flying time gave us the opportunity to get a feel for the operation of drones. Our industry is always changing, and CWA/NETT is a great source for members to learn.”

CWA/NETT Academy Director Kevin Celata helped to bring the training program to Local 25, coordinating the plans with Dart Drones and working with Gabalski, who managed the local arrangements.

(Continued on page 8)
Saying Goodbye to 46+ Years of Legal Service to the Union


Sturm and Perl were first retained by NABET in June 1950 — for $5,000 per year — for legal advice in contract negotiations, arbitrations, and as Sturm quipped, "casual work before the National Labor Relations Board." They arbitrated cases between ABC, NBC and NABET, and helped set up the NABET-ABC Pension Plan in 1963.

Steve slowly took over for his father — first working with Locals 11, 16 and 31 — until he was officially named General Counsel in 1995. Sturm and Perl guided the Union through most of its struggles and many of its successes over the past half century.

"Steve has been the Union's institutional memory, sage counsel, and a great friend and ally to all NABET-CWA members. He will be sincerely missed," said Charlie Braico, NABET-CWA Sector President. The Union has not announced his replacement.

Fred Saburro, 89, who celebrated his 63rd year as a NABET-CWA member on Dec. 7, became a NABET member at the start of Jerome's tenure and has seen Steve's career from beginning to end. "You could always trust and depend on Steve Sturm," Saburro said. "He dedicated his life to this Union, and he cared about NABET. He's going to be very difficult to replace." The independent locals in the Union will especially miss him, Saburro says: "Whenever I had a problem, I called Steve first. He always gave me good advice, and he knows NABET pretty damn well!"

Steve handled his first case for NABET before he even graduated from law school — an arbitration for NBC employee Melvin Lewis, who was set to retire. Each year, the network sent a letter to its employees, including Lewis, to let them know how much money they could count on upon retirement. Like most employees, Lewis used this figure to make decisions about his future and calculate when he could retire. The year before he retired, however, Lewis received a letter from NBC that said the Company had miscalculated his retirement for all of the prior years, so he was going to get paid less when he retired. Steve had just studied the concept of "estoppel," a contract law doctrine, in law school. Estoppel occurs when a party reasonably relies on the promise of another party, and because of the reliance is injured or damaged. NABET won the arbitration, and Lewis was paid at the higher rate.

"We spent a lot of time arbitrating and at the National Labor Relations Board," Steve said of his time at the Union. "The real goal I had wasn't only to win cases, but to also keep NABET out of trouble. There were very few cases we really lost. With CNN, we won at every step, but the problem was the wheels of justice are slow and it is really easy to clog them up."

Another case that still sticks with him today involved a distinguished, award-winning African American writer Bill Branch, who wrote a play for NBC. Afterward, he applied for a job as a newswriter, but they offered him a job as a janitor. He turned it down and then eventually got a job as a newswriter in the NABET unit in the 1970s. In the interview, they told him his salary included a modicum of overtime. However, he didn't receive overtime, so the Union took his case to arbitration.

"The case wasn't about whether he was initially offered the job as a janitor. It was a case about giving him the overtime that was promised and that others were getting. We took that to the arbitrator who clearly realized what was happening," Steve said. "This guy got a raw deal and the Union did something about it. This is typical of what the Union does for people." Steve's admiration of Branch was affirmed years later when he noticed Branch's name in the credits for Ken Burns' "Jackie Robinson" documentary. Branch used to write a nationally syndicated column with Robinson for the New York Post.

President Emeritus John S. Clark said that Sturm had a major influence on his career in Union leadership. "I met Steve in the 1970s and learned a lot from him," Clark said. "Once I became the Chairman of the Local 11 Grievance Committee in late 1982, he became one of my most valued mentors."

According to Clark, Steve Sturm worked tirelessly in his legal capacity for the benefit of Local 11 and other locals, often finding creative ways to help the membership. "I remember one time, during the 1987 strike against NBC, when Steve persuaded the management company that ran 30 Rockefeller Plaza — the network's New York City headquarters — to allow our members to picket inside the building near the entrances to NBC's facility, giving us a much greater public visibility. NBC management was incensed, but due to Steve's perseverance, the 30 Rockefeller Plaza management team didn't cave in to its pressure, and we remained visible there on picket duty until the end of the strike."

Reflecting on Sturm's long career as NABET's counsel, Clark said, "Steve Sturm will be missed by all of us who love this Union. In his decades of legal representation, he helped countless people in many NABET Locals. His unrivaled command of network arbitration history, his institutional knowledge of the organization, his good humor and his enthusiastic support for the members and officers of NABET-CWA can never be replaced or duplicated. We all owe him a debt of gratitude."

The last case Steve was directly involved in at NABET-CWA was the CNN case that began in 2003 when the network terminated its longstanding technical subcontracting relationship at Team Video Services (TVS), a firm which had employed NABET-CWA-represented workers in Washington, D.C. and New York City. During the National Labor Relations Board hearings, Steve was the Union's first witness.

Over the past few years, Steve has slowed handling cases, but has acted in an advisory role, often serving as Parliamentarian during the Union's SEC meetings and Sector Conferences: "I am one of the few who knows Robert's Rules of Order," Steve explained.

He has spent the past eight years in Sarasota, FL, where he teaches pre-law in a high school magnet program. He finds the work extremely rewarding and plans to spend more time teaching and offering legal aid to the poor.

The work is done through the Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Florida, which teaches, counsels and mentors honor students interested in becoming attorneys. The group meets once a month, hosts speakers, and gives back to the community. "I love teaching kids who want to learn," Steve said. "It's nice to hand the baton to motivated, good kids. It gives me hope for the future.

Law was not his first inclination as a student. Instead, Steve wanted to teach English to college students and he received degrees in English and the Humanities from New York University and Columbia. Reality set in, however, when his son was born. He ended up getting his law degree — which his father had urged him to do all along — because it was "quicker" than getting a Ph.D. in English. Ironically, his first client was the teachers' union at the City University of New York, where Steve negotiated the first labor contract in New York State covering public college teachers.

Fortunately, he soon realized the practice of law was very different from studying law, which he had found "irrelevant" to real life. At the time of his graduation, the Civil Rights movement was underway and that appealed to his nature: "There's nothing more satisfying than seeing someone with a problem and being able to help them," Steve said.

At age 75, and after a 46-year run with NABET-CWA, Steve said business travel was taking its toll and he says the Union today is in good shape and is running smoothly. "It was time and they don't need me as much anymore," he said. "I'll miss the people at NABET-CWA. I worked with loads of different labor clients when I first started in law, but as time went on, I gravitated towards people I enjoyed working with, which was NABET-CWA."

"It's heartbreaking to lose not only a great attorney, but a great mentor and friend," said Jodi Fabrizio-Clontz, Assistant to Sector President Braico. "He's been a staple of NABET-CWA since I started 22 years ago. It's hard to see him go since he brings so much knowledge. It's a huge loss for us all!"
Members of NABET Local 17 (Hartford, CT) were recently surprised during their annual members meeting with a memento of their original WFSB Broadcast House: their old “Satellite Truck Only” parking sign. The station moved to a brand new facility in Rocky Hill nine years ago. Soon afterwards, the building was demolished and the sign was all that remained. With the permission of the city, former Local secretary Brenda Kestenbaum (center) salvaged the sentimental souvenir.

Local 16 member Billy Lind is a 34-year NABET-CWA engineer at WABC-TV in New York City.

ABC Network ENG Cameraman Gary Rufuse and Frank Gilliams is the network soundman.

World Series in Cleveland:

Local 44 Secretary-Treasurer Rusty Blake (center) and the WCPO-TV, Cincinnati, OH, 900OnYourSide Weekend Evening Crew loving their job!

L42 members Kevin Dorenkott (dark shirt) and Pete Sarschev (white shirt)

Daily Hire Corner

Putting together this column reminded me of a story I was covering for the late news many years ago. I don’t remember the specific event, but likely it was either a government or school board meeting. The meeting was supposed to end with a vote on an issue. Management didn’t want to pay overtime for us to stay for the vote. They said to shoot two different closing stand-ups: one had the issue going down, the second had the issue being approved. We returned, cut the body of the package, and went home on time, leaving the stand-ups for the producer and editor to tack on when they got the results at about 10:30 that night. When the story ran, we had the up-to-the-minute outcome, but it was a mystery when I left the office.

I mention this because the deadline for this column was October 28, but you will be reading this AFTER the vote is in on one of the most important and contentious presidential elections in history and we have a new president. It’s a bit tough writing this column for the obvious reason. I won’t bore you with predictions of what we will face depending on who wins, but I think it’s important for all of us in the DH community to ramp up our involvement and efforts to make our Union AND our workplaces better, no matter who has won. Our futures depend on it.

Even with an outcome that favors organized labor, we will still have to do battle in a country that has been brainwashed into believing that unions are bad. A GOP-controlled Congress will continue to fight any pro-union legislation. And at the state level, we will continue to see efforts to take back “Closed Shop” laws, Union Dues Collection laws, and other laws which benefit working men, women, and families. While we have beaten back some of these anti-Labor laws in the Courts, we cannot rely on the judicial system as a supporter of union rights. So what to do?

We Daily Hires need to, as an old film electrician buddy of mine told me when I was starting out, “take an interest in the business.” First, we need to stay informed about Labor and union issues in our states and at the federal level. While surfing on that handheld device, take a few minutes to e-mail your opposition to your local, state, or federal representatives when something anti-Labor is under consideration. Also let them know you support any pro-Labor issue, and pass along the word to your family members and friends to help out.

Second, talk up the benefits of being a union member earning union wages, especially to young people. The middle class of America — that is US — was built on union jobs and union wages. We need to show pride in that and remind the younger generations that unions bring good things to the lives of working families. We need to counter the significant anti-union rants we are getting from the political right. Keep in mind, if the companies had their way, we’d be making minimum wage or less. And they will take as much as they can from us, if we weaken.

Third, we need to work with the Staff members at our companies to form a stronger union bond. At companies where contracts are outstanding, make sure you ask about status of the talks. And be sure to join solidarity actions such as NABET shirt days or other actions such as rallies or picketing. At Comcast-NBC, the DH community makes up more than half of the Technical staff, and Daily Hires are growing stronger at our other companies. CWA’s victory over Verizon should stand as an example of what unity can do.

Finally, we need to continue to hold our employers’ feet to the fire and make sure our contracts are honored. So, READ YOUR CONTRACT. Sorry to say, way too many of you haven’t read your contract and made yourselves aware of work rules and benefits. I still find people who are cheating themselves out of income because they’re not aware of the rules. If you are a new Daily Hire, find out who the Shop Stewards, E-Board members, and Union officers are. And know that they want to hear from you. Ask about your Union and contract benefits. But also let us know what you believe is NOT working and why.

Flex Plan Reminder:

Shortly after Thanksgiving, Daily Hires at NBC, ABC, and some of our other employers should receive an information package from the Flex Plan. It will contain re-enrollment details, including Health, Dental and Vision coverage, as well as Disability and Life Insurance plans. The information package will include options and rates for the new year. If your health insurance comes from the Flex Plan, you MUST re-enroll (or enroll for the first time) by December 31, or you will lose your coverage.

You also have the option of signing up for the pre-tax payroll deduction. This health savings option allows you to set aside a percentage of your weekly salary to help pay your monthly premiums. This money is NOT taxed, which could result in a 25-35% savings. This money is in addition to the money contributed by your employer as part of your DH contract benefits. You must fill out a separate form for the pre-tax deduction, and it is due at the same time.

Flex Plan insurance is a group plan. If you are looking for insurance for the first time, their website offers comparison information. The website is: flexplan.com and the phone number is: 888-353-9401. Remember: if you haven’t received the mailing by December 15, you should call the Flex Plan and/or your NABET-CWA Local office.

If you have questions or problems with the Flex Plan or anything else in your contract, somebody’s here to help.

As I write this, I don’t know how this cliffhanger election has come out, but I do know that in either case, we still have plenty of hard work ahead to protect the DH world.

Hang in there!!
Cameras at WABC-TV since the 1970s. In his role as Shop Steward, he advocates for the 40 people who work in the field for Eyewitness news, and has heard many stories of mistreatment. He said anger toward the media in the political realm is relatively new, but news crews have often dealt with unpleasant or unsafe situations, especially when out on the street.

"It comes in cycles," de Mond said, remembering how he used to cover the New York Mets: "If the Mets were good, everyone was happy, but when they weren’t, people would blame us and egg the station’s trucks. Years ago, there was a rash of thefts where people were stealing cameras." More recently, the station’s trucks have been broken into and personal items stolen. In the San Francisco Bay Area, thieves once pulled a laptop right out of a reporter’s lap while she was writing a script and took a camera while it was recording.

"Theft is a big problem in New York and other major cities around the country," de Mond said. "In the Bay Area, for example, once the mast goes up on the live truck, the crew can’t leave, so they are more vulnerable to thieves."

Working at night can be precarious, especially with a two-person crew. During one recent early morning live shot, three untrained men decided to hug the female news reporter during a live shot. The cameraman did his best to intervene and a scuffle ensued.

"Management has acquiesced during the morning hours," according to de Mond, who now works in the mornings to be there as the second camera operator with another cameraman and reporter.

The turning point came last year when Roanoke, VA, news reporter Alison Parker and cameraman Adam Ward were murdered on the air during an early morning, live television interview. Following this terrifying crime, ABC decided to use three-person crews – two photographers and a reporter – in the mornings in New York, and have hired armed guards to accompany journalists in Oakland and San Francisco.

"We are always concerned with emotionally disturbed people, and in a big city, they’re everywhere," de Mond said.

Being assigned to cover a crime story brings another set of issues. "We’re the last people they want to see," says de Mond. KHOI-TV in Houston has made it a policy that no one visit the home of an alleged criminal for a "door knock" because crews were being accosted. NABET-CWA was told it would be determined on a case-by-case basis, despite an incident where a female reporter was threatened with gun violence after going to the home of a convicted criminal for a story.

In Washington, D.C., the Newseum’s Journalists Memorial permanent exhibit pays tribute to reporters, editors, photographers and broadcasters who have died reporting the news. The names of 2,291 individuals from around the world are etched on the glass panels. Each year, the Newseum selects a representative group of journalists whose names are added to the memorial and whose deaths illustrate the dangers faced by journalists around the world.

In addition to verbally assaulting the news media on the campaign trail, Trump said he plans to "open up" libel laws in the United States so that he can sue news organizations that "write purposely negative and horrible articles."

In October, the Committee to Protect Journalists, whose global mission is to try to keep journalists from being jailed or killed, took an unusual step when it entered the political fray and put out a statement calling the Republican presidential nominee an "unprecedented threat to the rights of journalists." CPJ added that he has "insulted and vilified the press" in "an unprecedented threat to the rights of journalists."

A common occurrence is dealing with people who just don’t want to be put on television, so they start yelling at the news crew. In one particular case, de Mond turned the camera around and started filming the attacker. "Perhaps the reporter should have called the police right away," he acknowledges.

On larger stories, there is a camaraderie that develops among journalists who are all hanging out together: they watch out for each other. Their strength in numbers helps deter crime.

**Targeting the media**

Calvin de Mond, a Shop Steward at NABET-CWA Local 16, has worked as a cameraman at WABC-TV since the 1970s. In his role as Shop Steward, he advocates for the 40 people who work in the field for Eyewitness news, and has heard many stories of mistreatment. He said anger toward the media in the political realm is relatively new, but news crews have often dealt with unpleasant or unsafe situations, especially when out on the street.

"It comes in cycles," de Mond said, remembering how he used to cover the New York Mets: "If the Mets were good, everyone was happy, but when they weren’t, people would blame us and egg the station’s trucks. Years ago, there was a rash of thefts where people were stealing cameras." More recently, the station’s trucks have been broken into and personal items stolen. In the San Francisco Bay Area, thieves once pulled a laptop right out of a reporter’s lap while she was writing a script and took a camera while it was recording.

"Theft is a big problem in New York and other major cities around the country," de Mond said. "In the Bay Area, for example, once the mast goes up on the live truck, the crew can’t leave, so they are more vulnerable to thieves."

Working at night can be precarious, especially with a two-person crew. During one recent early morning live shot, three untrained men decided to hug the female news reporter during a live shot. The cameraman did his best to intervene and a scuffle ensued.

"Management has acquiesced during the morning hours," according to de Mond, who now works in the mornings to be there as the second camera operator with another cameraman and reporter.

The turning point came last year when Roanoke, VA, news reporter Alison Parker and cameraman Adam Ward were murdered on the air during an early morning, live television interview. Following this terrifying crime, ABC decided to use three-person crews – two photographers and a reporter – in the mornings in New York, and have hired armed guards to accompany journalists in Oakland and San Francisco.

"We are always concerned with emotionally disturbed people, and in a big city, they’re everywhere," de Mond said.

Being assigned to cover a crime story brings another set of issues. "We’re the last people they want to see," says de Mond. KHOI-TV in Houston has made it a policy that no one visit the home of an alleged criminal for a "door knock" because crews were being accosted. NABET-CWA was told it would be determined on a case-by-case basis, despite an incident where a female reporter was threatened with gun violence after going to the home of a convicted criminal for a story.

In Washington, D.C., the Newseum’s Journalists Memorial permanent exhibit pays tribute to reporters, editors, photographers and broadcasters who have died reporting the news. The names of 2,291 individuals from around the world are etched on the glass panels. Each year, the Newseum selects a representative group of journalists whose names are added to the memorial and whose deaths illustrate the dangers faced by journalists around the world.

In addition to verbally assaulting the news media on the campaign trail, Trump said he plans to "open up" libel laws in the United States so that he can sue news organizations that "write purposely negative and horrible articles."

In October, the Committee to Protect Journalists, whose global mission is to try to keep journalists from being jailed or killed, took an unusual step when it entered the political fray and put out a statement calling the Republican presidential nominee an "unprecedented threat to the rights of journalists." CPJ added that he has "insulted and vilified the press" and "refused to condemn attacks on journalists by his supporters." CPJ felt it was imperative to stand up against someone who had the potential to restrict press rights or endanger journalism around the world.

On the day after the presidential election, de Mond said ABC hired security to accompany the crews covering the Trump and Clinton campaigns. They worked alongside press from all over the world, many of whom they didn’t know. This, along with the pressure over the past few weeks at Trump rallies, made them a little apprehensive to be out there because they’ve made threats, win or lose."
ABET-CWA scholarships this year went to five accomplished high school students who are the daughters or sons of active NABET-CWA members. They each will receive $750 annually for four years—a total of $3,000—toward their college educations. In honor of their academic and community leadership, these students won merit-based scholarships named in memory of past NABET-CWA International Presidents and/or employees:

**Terrence Levens**
Terrence Levens of Somers, NY, is the daughter of Local 11 member/Audio Engineer David Levens. Terrence, who attended John Jay High School, is a member of the National Honor Society, Big Brother/Big Sister, and the University of Michigan MREACH. She volunteers as a teaching assistant for children and helps out with events in the Union Hall. While at Cass Technical High School, Jonae was a member of the track team and marching band, and served as a member of the Executive Board. Terrence won the James P. Nolan Scholarship Award. While a high school honor student, Terrence ran her own ice cream company, was a columnist for a local newspaper, and taught at the Jewish Family Congregation. Terrence held leadership positions in the Future Business Leaders of America, the Board of Education and in student government. He also plays clarinet and independently studied Mandarin Chinese. Terrence is a member of the Class of 2020 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

**Jonae Maxey**
Jonae Maxey is the daughter of Local 43 President Dorethea Brown-Maxey. Jonae is a member of the National Honor Society, Big Brother/Big Sister, and the University of Michigan MREACH. She volunteers as a teaching assistant for children and helps out with events in the Union Hall. While at Cass Technical High School, Jonae was a member of the track team and marching band, and served as an Executive Board officer. Jonae won the George Smith Scholarship Award and attends the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

**Jennifer Steine**
Jennifer Steine is the daughter of Local 42 member/Editor Mary Steine. Jennifer attended Strongsville High School in Ohio, where she was awarded the Academic Scholar Award for achieving a 3.5 or above GPA throughout her high school career and was in Honors Pre-Medical Health. She was inducted into the National and Math Honor Societies, was the captain of the JV soccer team, and a squad leader in the marching band. In addition, Jennifer served her community at food banks and churches. Jennifer won the Lawrence Dworkin Scholarship Award and attends the University of Cincinnati. Jennifer also received the James Harris Scholarship Award, which provides a one-time scholarship of $500.

**Megan Trentacosta**
Megan Trentacosta, the daughter of Local 16 member Richard Trentacosta, won the Edward M. Lynch Scholarship Award. Megan, of Valley Stream, NY, was a member of the National, Science, Math and LOTE Honor Societies, as well as the High Honor Roll in high school. She sang in the Women’s Choir and District Chorus and served as the Secretary of the Senior High Student Council. Megan also worked at a catering company during her last two years of high school. She attends Binghamton University in New York.

**Sydney Simon**
Sydney Simon is the daughter of Local 11 member/Editor Mary Simon. Sydney graduated with honors from Lakewood High School, where she played violin in the school’s chamber orchestra and received an instrumental music department award, including outstanding soloist and violinist. She used her violin skills to perform community service and instruct students. Sydney also ran cross-country and swam for her high school. Sydney won the Dorr C. Wilson Scholarship Award and attends DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

**Dominique DeAngelis**
Dominique DeAngelis of Somers, NY, is the daughter of Local 16 member/Graphic Designer Richard DeAngelis. While in high school, Dominique was awarded several awards in Forensics and Studio Art, as well as a Bronze Scholarship Medal. She was a member of her high school’s basketball, softball, and field hockey teams, and served on the school’s yearbook and newspaper. Dominique also volunteered her time as a Tutor/Advisor at the community middle/high school and worked part-time at an orchard. Dominique won the Thomas F. Kennedy Scholarship Award and attends the University of Massachusetts–Amherst.

**Jayme Pride**
Jayme Pride, the daughter of Local 22 member James Pride of Rochester, NY, was a Creative Writing major in high school and directed/acted in the 24-Hour Play Festival 2015. She is a member of the National Honor Society, is a Black Scholar and an AP Scholar. She also works at a restaurant and serves her community by teaching at a nursery school and planning and participating in walks for charities such as MS, Breast Cancer, and the Women’s Foundation. Jayme won the Region Two James P. Nolan Memorial Award and attends the Rochester Institute of Technology.

**Presley Bower**
Presley Bower, the daughter of Local 47 member/Photographer James Bower, won the James Harris Scholarship Award, which provides a one-time scholarship of $1,000. Presley attended Mineral Ridge High School in Ohio, where she served as the Class Secretary and played on her high school’s soccer and track teams. She also played soccer for the Rockers Futbol Club traveling across Ohio, and coached the Mineral Ridge boys’ soccer team to a winning season. In 2016, she won the Captain’s Award in soccer for the 2016 year. Presley attends Youngstown State University in Ohio.

Apply Today for College $$$$
Local 41 Welcomes New Steward

Raza Siddiqui, a self-described “proud member of Local 41,” was recently appointed Alternate Steward for the WSNS-TV unit at the Local. Siddiqui works as a Daily Hire at WMAQ/WSNS-TV. Prior to working at the stations, Siddiqui was the owner and operator of Skyline Media in Chicago, a small business that serviced the needs of domestic and international news networks.

“I learned the true value of a business is the efforts brought to it by hard-working, talented employees and subcontractors who let their art speak through their efforts, and that good management, in part, is treating those who help build a company fairly — where work is valued as much as wealth,” Siddiqui said.

In his role as a Steward, Siddiqui is proactive in helping his co-workers, with special emphasis on the unique needs of his fellow Daily Hires. He worked with WMAQ Shop Steward Mable Miller to ensure that bankable members at their shop to take advantage of banking with ABE Federal Credit Union, which offers favorable rates to the Union’s members. “I led the charge when I learned that some members of our shop, particularly Daily Hires, were not afforded these bank privileges because of miscommunication and an outdated policy,” Siddiqui said. “Being able to bring about this change gave me a lot of satisfaction and made me want to become more proactive going forward.”

Celebrating and Giving in Detroit

NABET-CWA Local 43 held its yearly general membership meeting and holiday celebration on Dec. 5. The Technicians and Engineers and Local guests enjoyed great food while donating Toys for Tots and dropped off the leftover food to the soup kitchens of Detroit. Local 43 President Dorethea Brown-Maxey gave thanks to sister Tina Culver/President of CWA Local 4069 and brother Dave Skotarczyk/President of CWA Local 4050/4090 for their support as the Local prepares for contract talks with WDIV/Local 4. She also acknowledged John Cromer from Toys Making IMPACTS/Tots for Tots, which sponsored the toy drive, brother Jim Prest/Leader of the Detroit NABET-CWA retirement chapter, and the Local’s new Associate Member Michele Basemore. “Most of all I want to thank my brothers and sisters of Local 43 who came out and brought toys for the kids,” Brown-Maxey said. “Happy Holidays!”

Left to right: John Cromer from Toys Making IMPACTS/Tots for Tots, Local 43 President Dorethea Brown-Maxey, and Local 43 Secretary Lisa Dickerson. Local 43 collects toys from members every year for Toys Making IMPACTS, which serves over 400 homeless and needy children throughout Southeast Detroit and Toys for Tots.
Meeting with GE Human Resources Covers OneExchange, Insurance Issues

On Nov. 2, I attended a meeting with members of the GE Human Resources team in Schenectady, NY. The meeting was chaired by Greg Capito, GE’s Vice President of Labor Relations and Operations. Several other union retiree representatives attended from International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IEUE-CWA) locals in Louisville, KY, Lynn, MA, Pittsfield, MA, Schenectady, NY, and Waterford, NY, as well as representatives from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) in Erie, PA, and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in Evanuda, OH.

My gratitude goes to Greg Capito, who invited a representative from OneExchange, David Speier, the brokerage company GE contracted to help retirees move from their GE group Medicare Supplement plan to individual plans. Yes, I did say “brokerage” company. GE did confirm that the $1,000 would continue for 2017, but would not commit for the future. Even if they did, why would we believe them?

At last year’s meeting I was told that neither OneExchange nor GE made money from the insurance companies for the Medicare Supplement, Medicare Advantage Plans, or prescription drug plans that OneExchange directed us to. However, Mr. Speier made it clear that OneExchange not only received a commission, they were indeed a broker. So now I wonder, is GE receiving “a piece of the action as well?” Clearly, I was given the wrong information last year, and that is the polite version. It is important to understand that you must buy at least one of these plans through OneExchange in order to be eligible for the $1,000 RRA. The problem with that scenario is that OneExchange does not offer all plans available in a geographical area, and in some cases they do not offer the most cost-effective plans because some insurance companies do not do business with brokers. In other words, if you shop on your own and find less expensive plans, you are not eligible for the $1,000 per person RRA. That certainly is an area that GE can improve upon, with relatively little cost to our company. The question is do they care enough about their retirees to find a solution?

I once again pointed out what AT&T is offering their retirees under similar circumstances: $2,700 for the retiree and an additional $1,500 for the eligible spouse. That also includes catastrophic drug coverage after you have paid $5,000 in out-of-pocket expenses. So much for GE being competitive with other large corporations.

We discussed the survey GE used to determine that 80% of retirees were satisfied with the OneExchange experience. Mr. Speier told us that the survey was conducted by an independent survey company, which I now know to be InMoment in Salt Lake City, UT. John Philips, President of BMC Chapter 81359 in Waterford, NY, did his own extensive survey, and his results do not reflect the same rosy results reported by Jeff Immett.

I once again raised the issue of “derisking,” the practice of purchasing annuities that would provide enough income to cover GE’s pension obligations. Mike Gorman, who was invited to the meeting expressly to answer questions about our pension plan, assured us that there have been NO SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

“Thank You Paul Pecora” Update

On October 27, I received an email from Mary Mooney, ABC’s Executive Counsel, Labor Relations to confirm that “Medicare Supplemental refunds are being processed.” Approximately 40 retirees were impacted and not all are NABET-CWA members. Due to privacy regulations, the names of those retirees cannot be revealed. I want to thank Mary Mooney, and Susan Skinner, Sr. Manager, Benefits Service Delivery and Communications in Orlando for acting so quickly on this issue.

Medicare and Vaccinations

Medicare Part B covers very few vaccinations – flu, pneumonia, and hepatitis type B – if you are at medium or high risk of contracting the disease.

Medicare Part D for 2017

In 2017, you will reach the coverage gap, more commonly known as the “donut hole,” when you and your plan have spent a total of $3,700. Once you are in the donut hole, according to OneExchange, you will receive a discount for generic drugs and a 60% discount for brand name drugs. After your yearly out-of-pocket limit reaches $4,950, you will exit the donut hole and you will enter “catastrophic coverage,” where Medicare pays most of the cost. As you can see, the donut hole for 2017 is $2,250. The donut hole will disappear completely in 2020, unless the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is repealed and “elimination of the donut hole provision is retained in a new healthcare law.”

For GE, those eligible spouses, once you have True Out-Of-Pocket expenses (TROop) of $4,950, the GE Pharmaceutical Assistance Fund (GEPAF) kicks in. TROop is the actual out-of-pocket money spent by each individual, not be confused with “donut hole limit.” You must apply for TROop reimbursement by submitting a form to GE. I can provide that form, so email me at bfreedanabetcwaw@verizon.net. For those of you who are technologically challenged, you can call me at 1-800-928-5279.

In trying to gather information as to how Medicare Part D actually works, the one constant factor seems to be that Medicare Part D is confusing and difficult to understand. So we should all ask the questions necessary for us to understand our plans, and keep asking them until we are satisfied with the answers.

Finally, remember: “There are no stupid questions.”

Training at NABET-CWA

(Continued from page 2)

“we are looking forward to informing employees in Buffalo that syndicated broadcast employees from NABET-CWA continue to be the highest skilled and best trained workers in the business, and that we have members who are certified by the Federal Aviation Administration to perform the task of operating unmanned aerial vehicles for any of the employers’ television needs,” Galski proclaimed.

The November training session included six members from the WBVB Unit (Chris Broadbent – News Photographer/Editor; Steward Rich Ersing – News Photojournalist/Editor; Andrew Meyer – Producer/Director; Shane Phillips – News Photographer/Editor; Kim Root – News Photojournalist/Editor; Paul Woodson – News Photographer/Editor) and 2 members from the KWWB Unit (Joe Burke – Technician and Dave Morales – News Photographer), Col. Rommberger of Dart Drones led the training.

Local 411 Trains in Final Cut Pro

For two weeks in October, more than 30 Local 411 members were trained in Final Cut Pro X (FCPX), WCCO-TV (CBS) in Minneapolis switched to the editing system in November. Jim Talluto led the training, which was provided by NABET-CWA.

“our members thought the training was excellent,” said Local 411 President Joe Kaczynski. “The NABET Computer Lab is a great resource, and our members are glad the Union offers it.”

Kaczynski also praised Talluto’s “amazing knowledge base and great experience as a network editor.”

The Union sent the lab to the Local a few days before Talluto’s arrival. “We set it up and it worked like a charm,” Kaczynski reported.

Local 11 Daily Hire members advance their skills in fiber optics

In September, more than 30 NABET-CWA Local 11 Daily Hires participated in CWA/NETT Academy training funded by the Union’s Strategic Industry Fund (SIF). The technicians took the advanced training in order to be certified in fiber optics.

“These technicians will be able to perform the work at NBC, receive more pay and keep the work in the Union, as opposed to the company using outside non-union contractors,” said Local 11 President Lou Marino. “This is a great example of making SIF funding work for the Union.”

Fiber Training at NABET-CWA Local 11

I did some research regarding the shingles vaccine and found out that your Medicare Part D prescription plan may cover it with a co-pay. I was advised by a Silver Script representative that if I went to my local CVS, I would pay a co-pay of approximately $10.54. If a shingles vaccination interests you, check with your Medicare Part D insurance company.