

LOCAL 1000

North American
Traveling Musicians Union



NEW DEAL

FALL 2010

New Leadership, New Hope

by John O'Connor

The election of Ray Hair to the presidency of the AFM last July, along with the change of most seats on the International Executive Board (IEB) is not merely a political victory for one side or another. The change means that the AFM, for the first time in many years has the opportunity to take up the agenda of organizing and making the union relevant to the legions of musicians who remain outside its ranks.

For the past 50 years the AFM has been operating as if it was still 1949 when it comes to its approach to organizing musicians who are the practitioners of popular music. In the popular jazz era, musicians hired out to dance bands across the country, playing the popular tunes of the day. Much of the time AFM members circulated in and out of various bands, working when and where they could in order to put together a living. The music scene was much more homogeneous than it is today. This contributed to the health of the union because it made it easy for the union to enforce its rules as a "protective association." If you wanted to work as a musician you had to observe the rules. You had to be a union member.

Popular music began to change in a big way with the dawn of rock and roll. It was not as easy to enforce union membership with the self-contained musical acts that sprang up who had little need for horn or string players. The guitar changed every-

thing. It was possible for an entertainer to learn a few chords, write a few songs with little need to join the union.

What did the Musicians Union do about this? Basically, nothing. The attitude of the musician's union was to ignore the problem and confine its mission to the musicians it always had. But the more music began to change, the more popular standards and jazz faded into the background of rock, country and other portable music forms. As a result, the union's power weakened. To its peril, the union did not think it was necessary to educate and organize those musicians practicing the new forms. And in many cases the union did just the opposite by adapting an arrogant attitude which alienated musicians. The results are well known. At the end of the 1960s the AFM had 350,000 members. Today it has less than 80,000 and the number is still dropping.

When we founders of Local 1000 started organizing in the mid-1980s, we knew that the approach the AFM took toward musicians was not going to work for us and that if we wanted to organize folk musicians, a completely different strategy was needed. We knew that a new strategy was not going to come from the Federation, but would have to be invented by those of us in this part of the music business. We learned that a singer-songwriter was much more likely to listen to another singer-songwriter than a trombone player

in a big band. Once Local 1000 was given its charter, folk musicians began recruiting other folk musicians. So, while most locals in the Federation shrank in numbers, Local 1000 grew.

Now, with new leadership in the Federation, there is a possibility of looking at new approaches for the entire union. Bruce Fife, AFM's new Vice-President and officer of Local 99 in Portland, OR, brings with him a fresh approach to organizing freelance and "indie" musicians through Local 99's "Fair Trade Music" strategy. Fair Trade is a cousin of Fair Folk, the campaign that Local 1000 has adapted for fairness in the musical workplace. Similarly, new IEB member Dave Pomeroy has partnered with Local 1000 to organize bluegrass musicians. Indeed, President Hair is no stranger to creative organizing strategies that have paid off for his Local 72-147 in Dallas-Ft. Worth. Hair has indicated that he is eager to begin using these strategies and others to breathe new life into the AFM.

For the past 10 or 15 years AFM activists have stood outside the base of power in the AFM advocating for real change in the Federation that would reverse years of failed strategy or, perhaps better stated, no strategy for reversing the alarming trends our union has experienced. Now, those activists are in the driver's seat and Local 1000 has access to that leadership. The opportunity is for us to seize.

New Deal is the official organ of Local 1000. Please read it carefully.

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LOCAL 1000

The Fall Membership Meeting of Local 1000 will take place at 4:30 pm on Saturday, November 13 at the Hudson Valley Resort and Spa in Kerhonkson, NY. You must be a member in good standing (membership paid up to date) to attend.

The Executive Board Meeting will convene in New York City on Thursday, November 11 at 11 am at Local 802 Headquarters, 322 West 48th Street. Call the office for more information.

Nominations are now open for the office of Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-President. Those members wanting to nominate someone or themselves may do so by submitting the nomination to the Secretary Treasurer by mail or email by 5 pm November 12 or by submitting the name into nomination from the floor at the Fall Membership meeting.

Local 1000 on Facebook—

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/AFM-Local-1000/144321148933284?ref=ts>

Local 1000 on Myspace.com—

<http://www.myspace.com/afmtravelingmusicians>

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NEW DEAL is the official organ of the North American Traveling Musicians Union, Local 1000, AFM

On the Road...

by Jennie Avila

The Special 150th Anniversary Edition of Civil War Songs by Jennie Avila

Sponsored by The Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau • www.JennieAvila.com

In the winter of 2004 I had a sudden inspiration to write a battlefield tale in which a wounded soldier watched his fellow troupes march away, leaving him for dead. The twist would be that the abandoned soldier was actually the only survivor as he watched the spirits of the fallen troops leave the field. The inspiration came unbidden with no personal reference nor historical context to any particular war. I mentally filed the idea under "cool songs I will probably never write."

However, in the spring of 2004, I was flooded out of my Pennsylvania home and moved in with my fiancé, Stephen Wright, in Hagerstown, MD. He introduced me to an area rich in Civil War history and artifacts.

My first visit to the Antietam Battlefield in nearby Sharpsburg captured my imagination (23,000 wounded, missing or dead in one day). My mental file about a wounded soldier and ghosts found fertile ground. After sifting through reference books and Civil War soldier's letters I wrote a song I hoped would ring true to the era. A year later, with no other intention than to test the historical quality of my writing, I brought a home recording of "Warrior Spirit and The Keeper of the Bones" when I first visited the Boons borough Museum of History, near the Antietam Battlefield. The museum's owner, Doug Bast, promised to listen to the song as soon as possible. Later that evening he called to congratulate me. The song was true to the era, and there were exhibits at the museum that might inspire more music. He told me about a baby's curl, tied with a pink ribbon that was given to a Union soldier by a dying Confederate soldier who pleaded, "Take good care of this!" "That sounds like a song!" I gasped. "I was hoping you would say that!" Mr. Bast responded. (The song, "Mary Vance's Scrapbook", will be featured on my second Civil War CD.)

And so a creative research partnership was formed. Three songs later, Mr. Bast set up a meeting with Tom Riford, CEO of The Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). I introduced the songs as the beginning of a project that needed patronage. Mr. Riford recognized the unique perspective that my songs would bring to the local historical record of the Civil War in Maryland. He encouraged my research in the Hagerstown area, and directed the CVB's sponsorship of the recording of the songs on a CD we titled, "The Special 150th Anniversary Edition of Civil War Stories in Song".

My mission is to keep true stories alive by retelling Civil War tales in an intimate narrative, often writing and singing in the first person voice of a historical figure. I am more

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Member Profile: Janet Stecher

Bridging Cultures and Ideas

by Joe Jencks

Janet Stecher has been a stalwart member of Local 1000 since our very inception as a union. She has a musical career that spans decades, continents, and ideologies. Along the way, she has been a friend and mentor to many musicians, organizers and activists, and she continues to be a bridge between generations and cultures. I was delighted to have the chance to catch up with her recently in Seattle and to learn more about her musical and civic life.

Some of you may know Janet from her work with fellow Local 1000 member Susan Lewis. They started singing together in the mid 1970's in New York. And now spanning four decades, Janet and Susan have sung together in numerous groups and configurations including The Belles of Hoboken (with Marcie Boyd), Shays' Rebellion (with John O'Connor and Tim Hall) and most recently as a duo in Rebel Voices. Throughout all of her performing work, Janet has consistently brought certain talents to bear. She adores harmony singing, she loves historic songs, especially those from social movements, and she is a remarkable organizer. She might not call herself an organizer, but she is. Wherever she applies her considerable talents, things happen. Good things!

Janet grew up in a very musical family, and she says that from an early age she was encouraged to, "sing in the car, on the beach, anywhere and everywhere, to use my innate talents and creativity." She says there was little or no formal training, but it was just natural to sing and to want to apply that gift in meaningful ways.

Early in Janet's professional life, she worked for the YMCA International, coordinating foreign exchange programs. She sent musicians and cultural envoys all over the world, and traveled extensively herself. In her 20's she took a deep interest in Balkan, Indian, and Cajun singing styles. She has spoken half-a-dozen different languages over the years, and brought great compassion and awareness into the world through her cultural work. During the Cold War she managed a program for the YMCA that sent artists and musicians into the Soviet Union. She said, "It is important to get to know people. We learned and sang foreign songs for U.S. students, and we sang U.S. songs in other countries. The whole ideology was that it is harder to kill people if you know them [and their songs]." Janet continued, "Years of travel coordinating international exchange programs, led me to a deep appreciation of other cultures and an understanding of how our own country's foreign and domestic policies impact the lives of most of the world. I feel that along with the resulting privilege comes the responsibility to do something about the imbalances we've created in world."



It was through this work that Janet met Susan Lewis. Janet was responsible for sending Susan to work at a children's camp in Siberia. And upon Susan's return they began to get to know each other better. One day they were sitting in a car in the Village (NYC), and a Joni Mitchell song came on the radio. They both spontaneously began harmonizing with the song... and the rest, as they say, is history. A musical partnership that would define them both was born.

In the early 1980s, Janet and Susan both moved to Seattle where they met one of Local 1000's co-founders, John O'Connor. And while they were always concerned with matters of social justice and societal transformation, it was in fact John O'Connor that introduced them to the idea that music of the labor movement was a living tradition. And that labor music tradition has now become one of the styles that people most associate with the name Janet Stecher.

For more than a decade now Janet has been the artistic director and conductor of the Seattle Labor Chorus. Her leadership has been pivotal in maintaining the organization, but she is quick to point out that it is

a group effort. And one would expect nothing less from a labor choir!

The chorus was initially assembled in the spring of 1997. The Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle was looking for a theme, and some labor activists in the Seattle area (Bob Barnes, Scott Reed, and Lou Truskoff, among others) convinced the festival leadership to make 1997 the year of Labor at Northwest Folklife. When the festival agreed, they began to contact labor and social conscience singers from all over the country including Pete Seeger, Laurel Blaydes, John O'Connor, Anne Feeney, Jon Fromer, Linda Allen and others. Pete asked if they could assemble a chorus to sing with him. And they said yes (not knowing how in the world they were going to pull it off!). After countless miracles big and small, a 100-person choir was assembled, and Geoffrey Fairweather (then director of the NYC Labor Chorus) was signed on to be the special guest conductor. But Geoffrey needed someone to rehearse the choir leading up to the festival. And Janet Stecher got the call. Initially she was hesitant, not having a background in conducting. But her sense of artistry, harmony and ensemble singing, her dogged determination, and her leadership skills were just what the choir needed to pull off their amazing debut performance. Now in their 14th year under Janet's leadership, the Seattle Labor Chorus shines as one of the finest of its kind.

Janet reflects that the choice to put so much energy into the chorus has been at times to the detriment of her performing career.

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Why It Pays to File Your Recordings Union with Local 1000.

Like every Union contract, recording contracts provide for a minimum basic scale wage, guarantee a pension contribution for all participants, and offer the assurance of Union intervention should there be a dispute regarding the terms of the agreement. Now, most Local 1000 members are producing their own recordings, so the matter of grievance vs. a record company is probably not an issue. But providing a guideline for payment and the ability to pump up one's pension are both helpful and profitable. Filing Union also means receiving a "royalty" from the Special Payments Fund every August. This is based on the total figure of all recording contracts filed industry-wide and is a nice little bonus you can expect when the summer financial doldrums are the deepest. This year, for instance, I received what amounted to about 30% of what I was already paid for recording in the previous year...a 30% raise!

Filing Union also means that your recording is protected by the New Use clause, meaning that if a song on your recording is picked up for use in another medium (film, television, commercials, etc.) the user is obligated to pay a new scale wage to everyone involved in that recorded piece. Again, another raise.

OK, What'll It Cost?

If your entire recording budget is less than \$40,000 you qualify for Tier 2 of the Low Budget scale. This scale is \$153/musician for a 3-hour session, roughly \$50/hour. Every session has to have a "leader," who would get double scale. Remember, like all Union scales, this is a minimum wage. Nothing prevents you from paying or receiving more.

Add 11.44% of scale for Pension and that's it.

Musicians on the contract are assessed work dues of 3-1/2% of their scale wages.

Call the union and find out how to get started!

Note: A lengthier version of this article that goes into more depth appears on our website.

On the Road: Jennie Avila

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interested in individual feelings and experiences than glorifying infamous victories and defeats. As a consequence, true Civil War stories are coming out of the woodwork, attics, and archives. The project is having an interweaving effect on a community of historians, farmers, park service personnel, churches, descendent families, cemetery and museum keepers, librarians and Civil War buffs. I have made a fascinating collection of new friends who more often than not will hear about a story or artifact that has been their neighbor for a century and a half, and say, "I didn't know that!"

Through our public library, the project has blossomed into a NEA grant entitled "Picturing America" that teaches history through art and music. Also, I am designing a Civil War Music exhibit with the president and board of directors of the Discovery Station in Hagerstown, MD. It features original topical songs by myself and 5 other historical musicians.

Before the creation of the Civil War song project, I had only a surface interest in history. (I have difficulty remembering names, but singing the names is a great learning device!) Now every book is a treasure map revealing colloquial references and obscure stories. It is refreshing to write beyond my personal experience, yet through my personal vision. From the vast resources already penned about the war, I have set my song criteria to include mostly local stories that I can get my hands on and my heart around. North and South are represented. I research the subject exhaustively and write the truth from a perspective that will allow me to sing the songs hundreds of times without poisoning my spirit. For example: Mr. Bast has requested a song about his exhibited slave punishment collar (a medieval looking torture device that features iron thorns). I could write from the perspective of a callous slaveholder. Instead, the verses describe the painful affects of the punishing collar ("He can't rest his head on an iron thorn, Feels like he's punished for just being born"). The chorus is redeeming ("Unlock the rose and set him free!")

By following my inspiration, a battlefield ghost story, and by including my community, I have requested and received enthusiasm, connections, guidance, funding and friendship. The possibilities are endless. From one nebulous ghost story a new path has sprung. "Historical Songstress" is added to my songwriting repertoire.

Member Profile: Janet Stecher *continued from page 3*

In particular her work with singing partner Susan Lewis often took a back seat to the chorus. But she is deeply grateful for the opportunities that the choir has provided for her to develop her musical leadership, apply that leadership in meaningful ways, and to continue keeping the cultural side of the labor movement alive in the Northwest.

On the personal side Janet says, "Singing with Susan Lewis is my most favorite musical experience. The unique harmony styles that have emerged from our partnership have influenced other artists and the chorus. And it remains my artistic and musical center. I love sing-

ing with many people, but Susan most of all." And in that partnership, they have become the voice of the movement for many older activists and organizers. Janet says it is always a sad and sacred honor when she and Susan are asked to sing for memorial services. But having the opportunity to honor the history of the movement, and the people from the 20s and beyond who built the modern movements is also a rich gift. And next to singing with Susan, there is little that matters more to Janet than carrying that cultural history forward for new generations. May she continue to do so for a long, long time!



MEMBER NEWS

Do you want to announce New Releases, Projects, Events, Births, Deaths, Marriages etc.? Send information to Joe Jencks via joejencks@hotmail.com. Please specify in the title that the message pertains to: Local 1000 Member News. Please limit descriptions to 100 words or less. Thanks.

New Releases...

Ian Robb - Finest Kind - CD, For Honour & For Gain - On Finest Kind's fifth CD, Ian, Ann, and Shelley show what nearly two decades of singing together sounds like. They deliver yet again their signature harmonies and innovative arrangements, with a vast expanse of repertoire including: old ballads and country classics, fun parodies, songs of protest and heartbreak, and a cool new Christmas carol. The CD is half a capella and half accompanied, with instrumental guests including: Michael Ball, Jody Benjamin, Jeff McClintock, Brian Sanderson, and James Stephens. Produced by James Stephens. For more information visit, www.ianrobb.com.

In Performance...

Scott Ainslie performed recently with Branford Marsalis in the concert: Branford Marsalis & Friends: A Benefit for the North Carolina Symphony. The evening raised more than \$140,000. Ainslie, Marsalis and composer Joey Calderazzo (all with deep connections to Louisiana) played Ainslie's *It's Gonna Rain*, a song about lost love in New Orleans and south Louisiana that morphed into a requiem for the city after Katrina. Ainslie says, "The poignancy of the song has been amplified by the oil spilling into the Gulf of Mexico following the BP Deepwater Horizon explosion and fire." At the end of the evening, Ainslie led all the musicians in an encore of Stephen Foster's *Hard Times, Come Again No More*. For more information, visit www.scottainslie.com.

In Solidarity...

Local 1000 sister **Anne Feeney** received some hard news in August. On August 3rd, while on tour in Sweden, a lung specialist advised her that she had an 11 cm tumor on her lung that was stressing both her heart and lungs in dangerous ways. In order to be closer to her children, her new grandchild, and her lifelong network of friends in Pittsburgh, she has returned to the U.S. for treatment. Even the best-case scenario involves a protracted recovery period and at least six months out of work.

Anne says, "I'm pretty sure it will be difficult for me to talk on the phone for a while. But I would love it if you'd post get well wishes, stories & jokes for me on my guestbook, <http://annefeeney.com/guestbook.html>. It's a moderated guestbook, so what you write won't appear on the guestbook until I read it and approve it. Otherwise I'm pretty sure the guestbook would be nothing but ads for Viagra and such!"

This treatment has wiped out most of Anne's meager folksinger's savings. She has had to cancel dozens of engagements and has incurred a lot of unexpected travel expenses. Although most of her medical bills will be covered after the \$6,000 in deductibles and co-pay, it seems unlikely that she will be able to return to her usually hectic tour schedule for many months.

If you want to help out, Anne says, "I'm hoping to find 1000 folks who'll pony up \$50. I really don't want any larger donations. But if \$50 is hard for you to come by, PLEASE don't think about sending me a cent. I know I have enough dear friends who are doing okay that those of you who are struggling shouldn't spend a second worrying about my finances."

Checks can be sent to: Anne Feeney, 2240 Milligan Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15218. Donations can also be made via Paypal to getwellann@annefeeney.com.

Anne's friend Jan Boyd has set up a Caring Bridge page for those of you who want regular medical updates on Anne's condition. The URL is www.caringbridge.org/visit/annefeeney. (You have to log in to the site to keep spam robots from posting stupid messages.) www.annefeeney.com.

Other News...

Local 1000 members at Winfield: **Kelly Mulhollan** and **Donna Stjerna** (Still On The Hill) hosted the Newsongs contest at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. **Steve Eulberg** appeared in the showcase with his song "Sunday Afternoon Can't Come My Way Too Soon." **John McCutcheon** also performed his 29th year at the festival.

Members **Sue Passmore**, **Caroline Brooks** and **Keri Ough** (The Good Lovelies) won a JUNO for Best Roots Album and Group! Congratulations!

Faith Petric, **Peggy Seeger**, **Greg Artzner** & **Terry Leonino** (Magpie), President **John McCutcheon** and **Holly Near** are all quoted in Part II of *SingOut!* Magazine's 60 for 60, sixty people reflecting on the folk world in honor of *SingOut!*'s 60th anniversary.

Members **Jeni & Billy** (CD -Longing for Heaven), **Si Kahn** (CD -Courage), **Elise Witt** (CD -Valise) and **Carrie Newcomer** (CD -Before and After) all have garnered great reviews in *SingOut!*'s Summer 2010 issue.

Local 1000 brother, **Michael J. Miles** was featured in the August 2010 issue of the *International Musician*, the AFM monthly magazine.

John O'Connor's poem, "Beans" has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize (best of the small presses.) His poem can be read and heard on the website of the poetry journal that published it, Rattle.com, by entering "beans" in the website search feature. John's poems can also be read on his website, john-pauloconnor.com.

Vested...

The following Local 1000 members have recently become vested in the AFM Pension Plan! They join the ranks of those who are looking forward to receiving retirement income from their good labor as musicians. We wish we could afford to send official Vests to all our members who are vested. If you are vested and would like to celebrate, write to Steve Eulberg (seulberg@steveeulberg.com) and we'll pop a virtual champagne cork for you, too! **Linda Allen** writes, "Hi, Folks! I've been wondering if I was vested yet, and was prompted to check it out. I am! So pop the cork once again! Being 64, I'm now filling out the paper work to begin drawing my pension. Wahoo!" Also recently vested are **Debra Cowan**, and **Eric Erickson**. Congratulations All!



LOCAL¹⁰⁰⁰

welcomes these NEW MEMBERS

Tom Kastle
Brodie West
Tesser Call
Gregory Charles Royal
Meredith Bates
Sal Rosselli
Nicholas Cazares
Terry Irons
Andrea de Boer
Luke Roberts
Tony Nesbitt-Larking

REINSTATED:

Sam Allison
David Malachowski
Grant Gordy



Happy Birthday!

by Debra Cowan



On August 14, Local 1000 began a tradition that will hopefully continue on for many years. I made the very first Local 1000 birthday phone call to our President, John McCutcheon. Since then, I have been calling or emailing

our members to wish them Happy Birthday. Sometimes I haven't been quite on target, but if I don't get in touch on your day, a Birthday message will follow soon. If I cannot make the call, you will hear from another Board member to let you know that we are thinking of you on your day.

I got the idea from my 85 year-old aunt. She belongs to a synagogue in Los Angeles and she has made it a point to call every member of her congregation on their birthday. Her synagogue has twice as many members as Local 1000, and I figured if she can do it, we can as well.

Being scattered all over North America as we are, keeping in touch is not as easy as it is for a Local that has all of it's members in one

place. As Communications Chair, I am trying to think up new ways to reach out to our members to let them know that we are thinking of them and that we, your Officers, are available anytime you have a question or comment. Steve Eulberg and I are always discussing new ways to communicate with our members and reach out. We have an announcement list and are working on getting a discussion list going to replace the old Membertalk.

Birthdays aside, there are times when we need to contact our members and it's important that we have all of your up-to-date contact information. So if you would like a birthday call from your Local, please make sure that your current email, phone numbers (land-line and cell) and birthday are on file with the Office.

It is important that we keep in touch with each other. If you have a question, comment or concern about your union, please don't hesitate to call or email any of the Officers and Board members. You can find this information on the website at <http://local1000.com/about-us/executive-board>.

By talking to each other, it makes our union stronger and it helps us to work better for you.



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