

LOCAL 1000

North American Traveling Musicians

Summer/Fall 2012



NEW DEAL



Clearwater Agreement

by Tret Fure

Local 1000 has always been about organizing. Since our charter in 1993, we have believed in the power of collective action. We have organized our membership, growing it to over 500. We are the largest local in the AFM without a major collective bargaining agreement, meaning we have no sympathy. We should be proud.

Our current goal, as many of you are aware, is our Fair Trade Music Campaign, organizing concerts, clubs and house concerts so that all performers can be guaranteed at least minimum scale and a pension contribution. An ongoing campaign has always been to bring major Folk Music Festivals under Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs), guaranteeing our membership, and the folk world at large, decent wages, a pension, and fair and better working conditions. Our first and longest running CBA is with Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and its annual music and environmental festival, Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival.

Our first CBA with Clearwater was signed June 15, 2002, at the festival. It was an historic moment. It was fitting that we should start this kind of organizing with a festival founded by one of our emeritus members, Pete Seeger. Our initial agreement covered 3 years but since then, some agreements have covered one year, some have

covered multiple years. This year we were up for renewal.

The difficulty in these negotiations, these renewals, is the turn-over in board and volunteer staff. As we worked to come to a new agreement, it was clear that the board

was not aware of the history of our work together, of issues that presented themselves in the first agreement and that are of great importance to the performers they hire. These are issues that still and always need to be addressed.

This turned out to be more complicated than I had anticipated. I have been president since January and this was my first negotiation with a major festival. I was fortunate to have John McCutcheon, our past president, by my side, helping me understand the intricacies of negotiating. I was also helped by past Secretary/Treasurer and current East Coast Representative, John O'Connor, who was responsible for closing our first agreement back in 2002.

Part of our struggle with Clearwater is the fact that they had not paid pension contributions on artists for the past 3 years, 2009 through 2011. This was a major obstacle but we were willing to move forward with a new agreement, allowing them to 'catch up' after this year's festival was

successfully completed and payments were made. All seemed well on track but as the festival date approached and we still had not come to a mutual agreement, we knew that some kind of action had to be taken. This was not going to slip through the cracks; this was not to be overlooked and past due.

We worked quickly, forming a committee of musicians, all of whom were either playing at the festival this year or who are frequent Clearwater performers, who looked over the proposals and shared our disappointment. This gave us rank-and-file representation in the negotiations and added leverage toward resolution. We also prepared for a public display of solidarity outside the offices of Clearwater. We received support from the Hudson

Valley Area Labor Council and other sister Unions and Locals. The regional press, as you can image, was very interested.

The next step is the one of which I'm most proud. We sent out an announcement to our membership that we would be picketing if we did

not come to an agreement. Our membership responded in perfect solidarity and one of our members contacted the director of Clearwater to find out why this was happening. That was all we needed. Our membership spoke and our agreement was reached. There were minor concessions, but ones with which we could work. It was a proud moment in our local's history.

Thank you all! 🐦



Debra Cowan, Steve Eulberg & Tret Fure

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

Upcoming Meetings...

The **FALL Membership Meeting of Local 1000** will take place just prior to the beginning of NERFA at 4:00 pm on Thursday, November 8th at the Hudson Resort and Spa in Kerhonkson, NY. You must be a member in good standing (dues paid up to date) to attend. Be prepared to show your Union Card.

The **Fall Executive Board Retreat** will take place at the Hudson Resort and Spa in Kerhonkson, NY beginning on Wednesday, Nov. 7th.

The **Executive Board** will meet in Toronto prior to the Folk Alliance in February 20th, 2013. The **Membership Meeting** will be held on Thursday 21st, prior to the Folk Alliance meeting.

Watch for details.

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

A Letter from Your President

by Tret Fure

Let me start this with 3 questions.

Do you have a retirement fund?

Do you have a pension fund?

Do you have social security?

These are important questions, life saving questions, ones that you might not think about too terribly hard if you are under 40 or maybe even 50. But these are poignant concerns.

We've all joined Local 1000 for different reasons. Some of you have joined only in solidarity, a belief in the importance of unions, a belief in the power of collective bargaining and the comradeship of like-minded people. Some of you have joined for equipment insurance or contract protection. I joined for the pension and also my belief in the necessity of the protection of a union. Mind you, I have been a member of the AFM since I was 16 but never really was able to reap the benefits of a union until I joined Local 1000. I've had contributions made on my behalf through recording work but that was always sporadic at best and never consistent enough to get me vested. This is what traveling musicians always have to deal with. We rarely play in our jurisdiction, our local, so we miss out on the security benefits of being a part of the American Federation of Musicians.

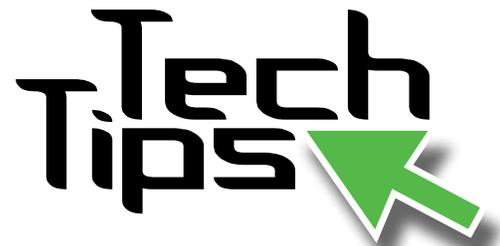
Now I am in my 60s and I'm getting it! Next year I will start collecting my social security and though it isn't huge, spending a great deal of my life self-employed, it will help each month. And I'll soon start collecting my pension and I truly realize that those minimal sacrifices I've made through my years of gigging and paying into my pension will really pay off! I can't tell you how many conversations I have had with members who tell me, "I can't part with \$20 a gig and I remind them that they are not parting with that \$20, they are investing it in their future. And I can't tell you how many members have said, "I can't deal with the paperwork!" And I tell

you, it couldn't be easier and we have worked hard to make it as simple, as transparent and as straight-forward as possible. When you are in your sixties and seventies and just can't get those gigs, don't you want the security of a pension, the rewards of being part of a union? I know I can't wait!

Now some of you might say, "but I can't afford the work dues." We're talking 2 percent of your pension payments. Do you realize that your work dues are what keeps your union alive and functioning? Yes, your annual dues are a part of our ability to pay office staff and keep our doors open, but 35% of that goes to the AFM as per capita fees. So we count on your work dues to keep us running, filing your pension contributions, answering your questions, lobbying for your rights and privileges as working musicians. You only pay work dues on contracts you file and you only collect pension on contracts you file. I see this as a win/win situation. You get a pension, we stay operational. The bulk of our income should come from work dues, but truly, only a quarter of our membership file contracts. And, in my opinion, that is just wrong.

I want to meet each and every one of you in my later years and shake hands knowing that we did well and are secure in our retirement. Granted, folkies never retire, but at least we can pay rent, buy food and continue to support ourselves and each other.

So come on! Let's get vested! 🐣



by Debra Cowan

INTERNET SECURITY: PASSWORDS AND OPEN WIFI

I was prompted to write this installment of *Tech Tips* after my webhost, Dreamhost.com suffered quite a large security breach in January. Both Dana Whittle (author of last issue's *Tech Tips*) and I use this webhost and we think they are fantastic. The fact that they were breached brings home the point that no aspect of the web is immune from security issues. Even so, you can take steps to make sure that you eliminate as much risk as possible. Protecting yourself from malicious activity such as identity theft or another individual accessing your email or social network accounts on the web should be a priority when using the Internet. Here are a few things that you can do:



PASSWORDS

This is the first line of defense. Using a weak password is a guarantee that someone could get access to your information. Do I really need to tell you that words like “password” and “hello”, not to mention the names of your children or your spouse are the best way for a hacker to get into your email, or your online bank account? Many websites now have a meter that show whether a password is weak or strong, but if you don't see a meter, you'll have to come up with something on your own. The more complex and lengthy a password is, the better protected you are. Here are some suggestions:

- Use a two to three word phrase that can easily be remembered and would not be commonly known.
- Use the caps key for characters instead of numbers, especially if your password is case sensitive.
- Change your important passwords regularly. Three to four times a year is probably sufficient.
- Write down important passwords and put them in a safe secure place
- Don't use the same password for every website.

Here's an example of a strong password: the phrase “my garden grows” can become “Myg4D#NGr0w\$”. If your password is not case-sensitive, use numbers for vowel letters where a 4 can take the place of an “A” or andn “R”. This would then read “m4g4d3ng40w5” You can even check your passwords at a website like the www.passwordmeter.com.

OPEN WIFI AT HOME AND ON THE ROAD

If you have a wireless network at home, be sure that you use a strong password or key to secure it. This should be something that you come up with, not the person who installs the wifi router. Again, use the tips from above to come up with a strong password that isn't easily guessed. If possible, “hide” your wifi connection so that it doesn't appear in a list of networks in your area. You can find out how to do this by doing a search for “How to hide a wifi signal”.

On the road, many of us access open wifi networks to do business. Anyone with some advanced technical skills can use an open wifi network to gain access to your passwords and other data that might be stored on your computer. They aren't getting into your computer, but can access the data (like passwords and credit card numbers) that is being sent over an un-encrypted network. If you are on the road and access an open wifi network it would probably be a good idea not to send private information via an open network. A great column that discusses this called “Coffee shop WiFi for



Erin & Amber Rogers are Scenic Roots.

dummies” at www.securityfocus.com/columnists/385 written by Scott Granneman.

As stated above, no one is completely immune from a web security breach. But you can take the steps to minimize risks and by doing so you protect yourself, your information and the other people with whom you communicate on the Internet.

Life on the Road

Erin & Amber Rogers

Fifty thousand miles, two hundred fifty shows, four thousand gallons of gas, six instruments, and two girls in a big green van. For the past two years, my sister, Amber, and I have been traveling the country, playing music wherever we find an audience. We call ourselves Scenic Roots, and the journey has indeed been scenic.

We started traveling as soon as we graduated

from South Plains

College (where we studied bluegrass music) in 2010. Amber was 21 and I was 23. We were too young to rent a car if our van broke down, but at least we had cell phones. We got ourselves a GPS and an atlas, packed up our instruments and some sound gear, and started calling everyone we knew to see if we could play music for them. Our first tour was not even completely planned before we left home. We literally hit the road without knowing if we would be able to cover our expenses. Somehow, we managed to actually make money, and we were hooked.

Since that first trip, we have gotten into a routine of traveling. The GPS still goes with us, and it is really helpful-- unless Amber changes the language to Italian. We got really good at making U-turns in a full-size van before we figured out how to change it back to English. I also got better at reading maps. We determined that the best way to pass the time on a ten-hour road trip is to read books. I read out loud while Amber drives; she calls me her “book on tape that feeds me”. Every once in a while, she lets me drive a little too.

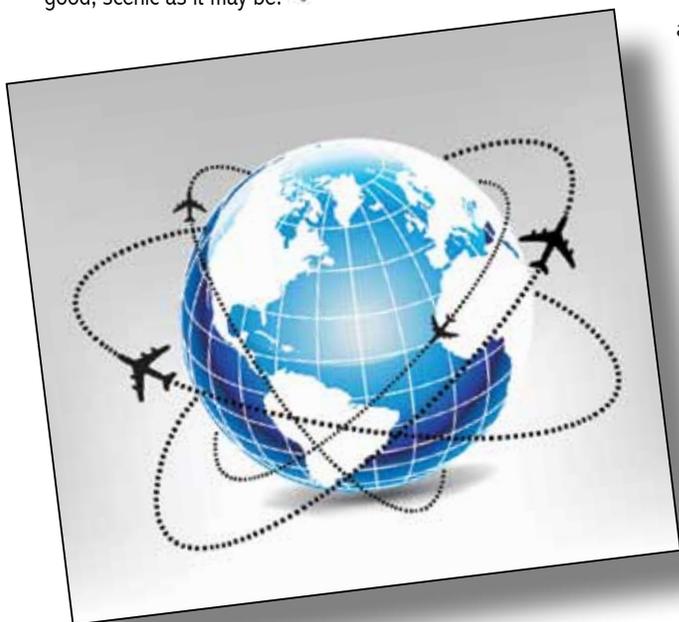
Some things frustrate us on every tour, like finding food. A girl's got to eat, but that can be a real challenge sometimes. Take an average show day. We get ready for the show around 4pm, get to the venue and set up, play for two hours,

Continued on page 4.

visit with fans and tear down, and by then it is nine or ten o'clock. We are starving, but where can we eat? IHOP here we come! Many of our host families feed us, which can be good or bad, especially if you don't like bacon or livermush or mystery food. Pizza is a popular choice, but you can only eat pizza so many times! Don't suggest packing a cooler. We've been there and done that-- boiled eggs, crawfish gumbo, and fruit salad all get pretty rank after a few days in a not-so-cold cooler.

Then there is the routine before our shows. It usually starts with an awkward first moment when we have to figure out where we are supposed to be and who is in charge. It's not a good sign when we walk into a coffee shop, tell them we are the band for the night, and they say, "We're having live music? I don't know anything about it." It's also not a good sign when they say, "You can use our sound system", and then we discover it is at least fifty years old with only one microphone in-put. Most days, though, everything goes smoothly and our sound system is up in twenty minutes. We call the set-up and tear-down our work-out program.

Music is about improvisation, but so is everything connected to the music business. No matter how many times we rehearse something or how many shows we play, there are still moments that catch us off guard and make us change our plans. Flat tires, broken pipes, cell phones with no signal, dead computers, grumpy days, and lack of sleep slow us down. Exuberant fans, helpful strangers, home cooked meals, great jams, happy students, and encouraging words keep us going one more day. It is all about sharing the music that stirs our hearts. That makes the journey good, scenic as it may be. 🐦



Airlines and the TSA

by John McCutcheon

It happened on a recent trip home, while retrieving my guitar in the Delta baggage claim area of the Atlanta airport. As always, I opened the case to check for any damage, but this time I found something. Nothing serious, but in need of attention. So I headed to the baggage office to file a claim.

Now, in the interest of full disclosure, I should preface this by saying that I fly *a lot*. I have achieved the highest status that Delta offers its travelers. I am definitely part of the proverbial 1% when it comes to frequent flyers. This is all to say I knew I was going to be treated with more deference than most of you reading this article, who only fly occasionally.

So imagine my surprise when I was told, after the agent performed a cursory investigation of the guitar and case, that I could not file a claim with the airline.

"Why on earth not?" I asked.

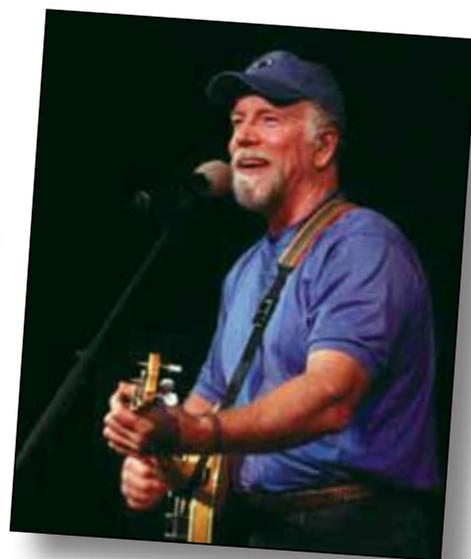
"Because of this," she replied, holding up a TSA inspection notice she'd found in my case.

She had found, in fact, more than a half dozen such pieces of paper, the kind that TSA puts in your baggage to let you know they've opened it up. And you know that almost every musical instrument is opened...out of curiosity if nothing else.

My guitar case is a little like my office desk: a place I promise I will clean out...tomorrow. So these little pieces of paper had accumulated innocently over the weeks and now were apparently a problem.

She continued, "If TSA has inspected your bag and there is damage you have to file a claim with them."

I was stunned. "You mean," I stammered, "if my instrument is



John McCutcheon

damaged after I have checked it with my airline and is delivered to me by that airline, the mere fact that TSA opened my bag relieves you all of all responsibility?"

She simply repeated the new party line, "You have to make a claim with TSA." And she was kind enough to hand me the form.

My curiosity was piqued. I called other airlines and queried them on their baggage policies and each one I talked to said they, too, had adopted a policy similar to Delta's: if there is a TSA slip in your bag, any damage claim must be made to TSA.

So my next call was to TSA's Claim Management Department.

"Oh yeah," the claim representative responded, "the airlines are completely passing the buck on this. You have a right to file a claim with both TSA and the airline, despite what they tell you. But the fact is, if they see the slip, they give you the slip." A poet.

When a traveler buys an airline ticket (s) he is simultaneously agreeing to a "Contract of Carriage" with the airline. Every airline has theirs posted somewhere deep in the bowels of their web site. Delta's contract states that they are relieved of responsibility for damage only if it happens in the TSA search process, nothing more. The policy parroted by the office agents and the phone representatives came from higher up the airline food chain. Delta corporate did not respond to a request for clarification of this discrepancy in contract and stated policy.

So this seems to be the New World Order. The airlines are looking for another way to make or save money. Charging for checked bags, for extra legroom, for the ability to deplane earlier, even for carry-on bags on Spirit. But expecting travelers to accept that any and all damage to a

bag is caused by TSA is a stretch. Plus, it means that instead of making a claim to the airline, you have to go to the federal government. By fax.

In the interests of even more full disclosure I should tell you how my issue was resolved. The woman in the Delta baggage office had an accent that I recognized as Cuban. I mentioned that I was married to a Cuban and that my in-laws were about to move in with us. All in Spanish. Suddenly an exception could be made. "Just this once. Especially for a Diamond member."

So if you find a TSA slip in your instrument case and your ax has been damaged there are three possible solutions to avoid having the airline punting you to the Feds.

- 1) Fly a whole lot.
- 2) Learn to speak Spanish.
- 3) Then there's the obvious third solution...



Holly Near with Bernice and Pete!



Steve Eulberg on hammered dulcimer with Peter Alsop looking on.

Highlander Retreat Recap

22 Local 1000 members met at the historic Highlander Center for a 2nd Membership Retreat (and the Spring Membership Meeting) under the banner of Organizing. Keynote presentations by members Si Kahn and Holly Near laid the foundation and the "boots-on-the-ground" witness from the labor struggles in Wisconsin and Ohio was shared by Tom Kastle, Deborah Van Kleef and Stephen Lee Rich.



Report from Annual Meeting

- The 2012 Budget was adopted.
- The importance of members filing contracts was highlighted.
- Members took up a collection of over \$700 in order to purchase a 2nd computer for the Office.
- As an organizing step, members took a recess to call and welcome all of our new members!

ELECTIONS: New Executive Board Seats Open

Vice President. (Debra Cowan was appointed to fill a one-year vacancy with the election of Tret Fure to President. Debra is eligible to be elected for this position.)

Eastern Representative. (John O'Connor was appointed to fill a one-year vacancy left when Debra Cowan was appointed Vice President.)

Western Representative. (Peter Alsop was appointed to fill a one-year vacancy left when Steve Eulberg was appointed Secretary-Treasurer after the resignation of Amy Fix.)

Nominations will remain open until the Membership Meeting on Thursday at 4 pm at NERFA in Kerhonkson, NY. (Room location to be announced).

We will also choose delegates to the AFM Triennial Convention in Las Vegas July 21-25, 2013. Because of the size of our local we are entitled to 3 Delegates. Our Bylaws stipulate that the first delegate be our President (Tret Fure) and the second delegate be our Secretary-Treasurer (Steve Eulberg). We will elect our third delegate at the Membership Meeting.

The Executive Board Proposes the following Bylaw Change:

Remove the following bylaw from Section V. FEES, DUTIES, and ASSESSMENTS

[Section 7. Local 1000 Members in good standing who pay more than \$500 per calendar year in work dues shall be eligible for a rebate of an amount equal to the Local's annual dues minus the amount paid to the Federation in annual per-capita dues. This rebate shall be awarded in the form of a reduction in annual dues to eligible members for each year that they qualify.]

Rationale: This rebate had the good intention of encouraging members to file contracts more regularly. In practice it has had negligible effect on raising the number of contracts filed by members, and it has complicated our bookkeeping and records.

This Bylaw change will be taken up at our 2013 Membership Meeting.



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