



AEEF News and Views

Newsletter of the Association of Employees of the Educational Foundation



JUNE 2010

Layoffs at LA Caption Center

Just 16 months after members in Media Access Group (MAG) approved a wage cut of as much as 32% in order to improve the fiscal situation in their department, Management has laid off four full-time staff employees in the Los Angeles Caption Center office. Citing a “drop in business,” Caption Center management conducted the layoffs by eliminating the most senior position of Caption Coordinator and laying off the two most senior staff members in the office, Dave Davis with 22 years of seniority and Teri Davidson with 20 years, along with Caption Writers Vonetta Harris and Kathy Guevara.

The decision to layoff the two most senior employees in the office potentially violates the contract and the Union has requested information to determine whether the layoffs have been conducted appropriately. “We don’t want to see anybody lose their job,” says AEEF president Jordan Weinstein, “especially these people who just over a year ago made such a huge financial sacrifice to help save their department. But to layoff the two most senior employees out of 15 by eliminating the most senior position is not only problematic in itself, but is part of the same pattern we’ve witnessed in National Marketing and Design.”

Members were notified of the layoffs on Tuesday, May 4 which, by making their effective layoff date Tuesday, June 1, would have left them ineligible for the federal COBRA subsidy by one day (the subsidy expired on May 31). However, in consultation with the affected members, AEEF proposed that management lay off any employee who indicated his or her desire to qualify for the subsidy one day earlier and management agreed.



WGBH has announced the end of production for *Fetch! With Ruff Ruffman*. Despite three pending Emmy nominations for the inventive multi-format show, production will end with the fifth and final season airing in September. Over the next three to four months, the production will be closing and personnel laid off in phases.

But *Fetch!* staff are not the only employees in Children’s facing layoffs: *Between the Lions*, too, is in the process of closing down with layoffs coming in the next couple of months and *Arthur*—having produced two seasons worth of content—is “suspending” production for the next year and laying off staff; PBS had provided advanced funding for the two seasons and, rather than continue funding production with an extra season completed, decided to suspend production.

These cuts to at least two if not three of WGBH’s signature national productions come amid a broader reduction in national television production at WGBH as in-house productions for *American Experience* and one-offs have all but disappeared. And while production staff lament the loss of work and job opportunities,

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Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, June 8
Communication Committee Meeting
12 noon in Gerstein (5S) conference room

Thursday, June 10
Executive Board Meeting
12 noon in 5W conference room

Tuesday, June 22
Communication Committee Meeting
12 noon in Gerstein (5S) conference room

Thursday, June 24
Executive Board Meeting
12 noon in 5W conference room

Thursday, May 13
Executive Board Meeting
12 noon in 5W conference room

WGBH and AEEF Resolve Project Contract Grievance

Thanks to a negotiated agreement between AEEF and Management, five WGBH employees who were previously working on successive project contracts have been made staff. As first reported in the January *News and Views* ("Catch Us If You Can," January 2010), the Union asserted that WGBH had violated the contract by employing seven employees on project contracts in departments where the use of project contracts was either prohibited or limited.

While WGBH was unwilling to provide staff status for two of the seven members because their work for Media Library & Archives was funded through a single restricted source set to expire shortly, they were willing to provide immediate staff status for the other five affected employees working in Media Access Group, Broadcast, and Media Library & Archives. In addition the parties agreed that the "staff-only" provision of the contract (Section 4.37) would not apply to future hires in the Media Library & Archives, though nothing would prevent Management from hiring new employees as staff and project contract employees would still become staff after two years of continuous employment in the same job title.

"It's not a perfect resolution" says AEEF president Jordan Weinstein, "but it's a reasonable one and represents what I hope is a willingness to work more collaboratively moving forward."

Where Did Children's Programming Go? *continued from page 1*

concern is spreading among the many service departments whose work is rooted in those disappearing production units: If there is no *Fetch!*, *Between the Lions*, and *Arthur*, there is little or no design, promotion, or production services work to be done for those projects.

The AEEF News and Views is published by the AEEF Communication Committee.

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Grievance Update

The Dispute Resolution Procedure in our contract provides a four-step process for resolving Management-Union disputes regarding the meaning and interpretation of our contract. If an initial dispute is not resolved satisfactorily, a formal grievance may be submitted within 30 days of the event (or knowledge thereof) asserting a violation of the contract. If the parties fail to resolve the grievance, it may be submitted to a third-party arbitrator.

The following grievances have been filed since the last update:

- WGBH has hired a subcontractor to create pre-recorded audio grantor credits for broadcast on 89.7 and 99.5 FM. **This grievance has been referred to arbitration.**
- A member received a written warning for unsatisfactory job performance—even though the Union maintains he was not given adequate resources to perform his new duties—and for willful misconduct—for swearing in a meeting with his manager. The parties have negotiated a resolution to this grievance.

The following grievances remain active pending further discussion and/or action by the Union and Management:

- The layoff of Meghan Reese without paying her the balance remaining on her project contract. **This grievance is scheduled for arbitration.**
- The hiring of Emily Rooney and Callie Crossley as managers to perform Union radio hosting duties. **This grievance is scheduled for arbitration.**
- The removal of two AEEF assignment editor positions in *The World* from the Union and their reclassification as management. **This grievance is scheduled for arbitration.**
- A new management job of Marketing Manager for The Forum Network, which the Union asserts does not involve management duties or discretion.
- The performing of Union designer duties by managers working in the position of Associate Creative Director (ACD) in Design. (Note: promotions to management should almost always involve new duties, usually managing staff or developing/implementing Foundation policies).
- The subcontracting of Union work previously performed by AEEF members in the Enterprises department by moving that work to PBSd (aka PMD). Both parties are considering a possible settlement to this grievance.

The following grievances have been withdrawn by the Union:

- WGBH's hiring of seven employees on project contracts in departments where the use of such project contracts is prohibited. The parties have negotiated a resolution to this grievance and the grievance has been withdrawn (See *Parties Resolve Project Contract Grievance* on Page 2)
- WGBH's assigning of Post Production Supervisor duties to Describers in DVS without a salary review and increase in base pay. Management discontinued the disputed practice and the grievance was been withdrawn (See *Management Ends Extra Work and Pay Rather Than Negotiate or Promote* in the April News and Views).

AEEF Member Survey Coming Soon

The 2010 AEEF Member Survey is on its way! This survey is an important part of the contract bargaining process as it helps the AEEF officers and Bargaining Committee establish priorities for our upcoming negotiations. When you receive your copy from your shop steward, please take the time and make the effort to complete and return it. AEEF negotiators can do a better job of bargaining for you when we know what's important to you!

If you're interested in helping with the survey or other Communication Committee projects (like this newsletter!), contact Business Agent Joe Montagna at joeyam@igc.org.

Boycott *shaw's*™!

With workers from Shaw's Methuen distribution center entering their third month on strike, the United Food and Commercial Workers, Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and other unions and community groups are urging consumers to refrain from shopping at all Shaw's supermarkets until the parties have settled their contract. Shortly after the 310 workers began their strike in an attempt to preserve their health insurance and prevent the outsourcing of their jobs, Shaw's—which is owned by corporate parent Supervalu—cut off access to health insurance for all the striking workers and their families.



Photo courtesy of UFCW

In order to bring more attention to their struggle, hundreds of the striking workers and their supporters recently completed a five-day march from the Methuen distribution center to the State House. For more information on the status of the strike or find out what you can do to help support these workers and their families, contact AEEF Business Agent Joe Montagna at (617) 625-0692 or joeyam@igc.org.

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