



# AEEF News and Views

Newsletter of the Association of Employees of the Educational Foundation



October 2009

## WGBH to Buy WCRB

WGBH announced on September 21 that it plans to purchase WCRB 99.5, an all-classical commercial radio station owned by Nassau Broadcasting Partners. The acquisition of WCRB, with a weekly audience of 340,000, effectively doubles the listening audience of WGBH radio.

WGBH plans to convert 89.7 to a largely news, info and talk format while retaining jazz evenings and nights. WCRB will remain all-classical, and will become non-commercial. This news was greeted enthusiastically by most, though the concerns of 99.5's reception holes in Boston and points south was raised by many current WGBH listeners.

Transforming 89.7 into a news, info and talk station will put WGBH 89.7 in direct competition with WBUR 90.9, which has 4% of the market share in Boston (as compared to 89.7's 0.9%). Boston will not be unique in this respect; both Seattle and San Francisco have two NPR stations that rely heavily on news programming. Anna

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## WGBH Brings Home 10 Emmys

WGBH brought home half of the News and Documentary Emmys awarded to PBS at this year's National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Awards, in addition to another seven garnered in the Primetime category by *Masterpiece's Little Dorrit*. Congratulations to all AEEF members (and non-members!) who did their part on these award nominees and winners.

## Thanksgiving Thoughts

With Thanksgiving Day approaching, what are you most thankful for at WGBH? From the serious to the silly, send us your thoughts at [ThanksgivingThoughts@aef.org](mailto:ThanksgivingThoughts@aef.org) and look in next month's News and Views to see what your co-workers are grateful for at the workplace.

EXAMPLE: I'm thankful that High School Quiz Show got greenlighted.

### News and Documentary

- *Frontline: Bush's War*
- *Frontline: The War*
- *Nova: A Walk to Beautiful*

### Primetime

- *Masterpiece: Little Dorrit*



# From the President: Richard Knisely's Layoff

On September 15, 2009, longtime WGBH classical host Richard Knisely signed off from his *Classical Performances* radio program for the last time. Richard's illustrious 24-year career at 89.7 ended with a layoff notice that cited financial constraints in Radio requiring the elimination of his Radio Producer/Announcer position. While Richard's *position* was eliminated, his *work* was not...as existing radio staff are now splitting his former on-air shift.

Less than a week after Richard's layoff, WGBH announced a dramatic expansion of Radio with the multi-million dollar purchase of classical station WCRB 99.5. WGBH's seven hours of classical programming and the hosts who provide it will move to WCRB and become part of its 24-hour classical lineup. Management has speculated that the new 24-hour classical station may require additional classical hosts, something AEEF/CWA welcomes.

While a new 24-hour home for WGBH's classical hosts comes as good news for many, it raises one thorny question: what exactly were the "financial constraints" that required Richard to be laid off? And, with the WCRB acquisition and the need to staff the new 24-hour classical station coming just one week after his layoff, has the station's financial situation improved to the point where these financial constraints are no longer constraining?

In light of the WCRB acquisition, AEEF believes that Richard should be recalled from layoff and found a place in the lineup of top-shelf classical hosts at the new WCRB.

Such a move would be a powerful message that the Foundation is committed to fair and honest play, is true to its claim to be serving listeners (hundreds of whom have objected to Richard's layoff), and recognizes the value of Richard's knowledge, extraordinary talent and decades-long experience. These traits and more make Richard a valuable resource for any classical music station including—and perhaps especially—the new WCRB.

Jordan Weinstein, president

## Union Estimates 8% of Membership Cut in Fiscal Year 2009

According to AEEF calculations, FY09 closed with the loss of 33 AEEF members and an additional 5 full-time AEEF members who experienced a recall/reduction to part-time employment. As a result, the AEEF membership has been reduced by at least 8% since September 1, 2008, the start of fiscal 2009.

These losses do not include the routine expiration of seasonal project contracts or the end of national productions like *We Shall Remain* or *Latin Music USA* which, if not replaced with new projects, will represent additional losses.

One week into FY10, AEEF had experienced 6 layoffs so far, including 2 recalls/reductions from full-time to part-time employment.

AEEF Layoffs and Reductions in Hours	
<b>Fiscal Year 2009: Sept. 1, 2008 – Aug. 31, 2009</b>	
Layoffs	33
Reductions to Part-Time	5
<b>Fiscal Year 2010: Sept. 1, 2009- Aug. 31, 2010</b>	
Layoffs (through October 9)	4
Reductions to Part-Time (through October 9)	2

## 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 remain active pending further discussion and/or action by the union and management:

- A new management job was created, posted and filled. The union asserts the position does not contain management duties or discretion.
- The union asserts that two union members promoted to a new management position have continued to perform their previous union duties (Note: promotions to management should almost always involve new duties, usually managing staff or developing/implementing Foundation policies). Management is considering the union's proposal to reassign the union duties to existing union positions in order to resolve another outstanding grievance.
- The union contends that management has subcontracted 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.
- Classical radio host Richard Knisely was laid off last month after 24 years of service at WGBH. The union has filed a grievance in this matter.

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Christopher, a spokeswoman for NPR, tells the *Boston Globe* that the strong appetite for news in Boston could lead to success for both stations. Steve Young, Broadcast Director at WCAI, WGBH's Cape and Island station, will serve as interim News Director at WGBH.

The administration and operations of WCRB will move to WGBH's offices and studios. WGBH President Jon Abbott told the *Boston Globe* that the

## Mark Your Calendar!

- Thursday, October 15
  - Executive Board meeting
  - 12 noon in 5S
- Monday, October 19 through 26
  - Nominations for 2009 officer election
- Monday, October 26
  - FY10 wage rates take effect
- Thursday, October 29
  - Executive Board meeting
  - 12 noon in 5S
- Tuesday, November 3
  - Steward training
  - Time and location TBA
- Wednesday, November 4
  - 2009 AEEF fall meeting
  - 12 noon at The Stockyard

WCRB purchase would not lead to more layoffs of WGBH employees. At staff meetings verbal assurances were given by both Executive V.P. Ben Godley and Jon Abbott that new jobs created by the acquisition would fall under our current collective bargaining agreement.

In order to raise the money for the purchase of WCRB, WGBH has already started a capital campaign called "Keep Classical Alive." The acquisition still needs to be approved by the Federal Communications Commission, which will take around three months and will include a public comment period. Plans are in place to begin broadcasting on 99.5 in early January 2010.

### Facts about WCRB:

- In operation for more than 60 years.
- Studios located in Waltham, MA.
- Licensed to Lowell, MA
- Transmitter in Andover, MA.
- Dial position 99.5.
- Ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in Boston with a 2.8% market share. (WGBH 89.7 currently ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in the market, with a .9% market share)
- Has 340,000 listeners per week.
- Has 15 full- and part-time employees. Four WCRB hosts blog, and one, Mark Edwards, used his blog to write about WGBH's purchase of WCRB in very positive terms.

## 2009 Officer Nominations

Every November AEEF members vote to choose four of our own to serve as officers—President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer—to lead our union for the coming year. In addition, we elect delegates to represent us at the annual CWA International Convention and the CWA District 1 Conference.

No experience is necessary; just patience, commitment and the willingness to work on behalf of your AEEF co-workers in support of their collective interests. Serving as a union officer affords the opportunity to work with a variety of employees from all parts of WGBH, interact with other members of CWA throughout the US, and gain valuable leadership, decision-making, labor law, communication, and negotiating skills in the process.

Nominations will be accepted for all officers and delegates from Monday, October 19 through Monday, October 26. Nominees must be current AEEF member with at least three continuous months in good standing. To nominate an AEEF member (or yourself!) for office, contact a member of the Election Committee:

Joyce Babcock  
Joyce\_Babcock@wgbh.org  
617-924-6840

Carrie English  
Carrie\_English@wgbh.org  
x2290

Darcy Forlenza  
Darcy\_Forlenza@wgbh.org  
x3635

AEEF-CWA Local 1300  
P.O. Box 381938  
Cambridge, MA 02238