



Quarter Notes

Musicians of Western Montana

November, 2019 Newsletter



Old, But New Again

The Bylaws of Local 498-642, Musicians of Western Montana, require that an official “journal” of the Local be published regularly. This is the new version that you can expect to see. Vice-President Dave Thomas has volunteered to steer the process, at least for awhile, and you can contact him with any questions and comments. You should expect some bumps along the way as reconstruction takes place.

We’re open to suggestions. What would you like to see in the newsletter?

Please send comments to mowmprojects@gmail.com.

President’s message

by **Don R. Stone**

President, Local 498-642 AFM

The dictionary defines a Labor Union as “an organized association of workers, often in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests.” The American Federation Of Musicians (AFM) is the world’s largest entertainment union of professional musicians serving members throughout the US., Canada, and even here in western Montana through AFM Local 498-642 also known as “Musicians Of Western Montana” (MOWM).

Our Local, currently based in Helena, is designated to serve the needs of AFM musicians in a huge swath of western Montana, taking in the larger communities of Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, Butte, Kalispell, Havre, Dillon and all points between. (Eastern Montana is served by Local 709 based in Bozeman.)

Because of our huge geographical area, and low number of members, it may seem like not much is happening in the area of union activities. This is untrue however. For the last several years, a committed group of officers and board members has been working hard on addressing the problems of low membership, and trying to improve

our administrations, operations and communications. We applied for and received a co-funding grant to assist us in these efforts. This newsletter is an example of our efforts to reach out with meaningful information to our members and interested prospective members. We are also engaged in efforts to identify and survey Montana music professionals with questions which will help us learn how to better provide services. Please keep in mind that your corps of officers and board members are unpaid volunteers with the exception of the Secretary-Treasurer position which receives a small stipend for a very large amount of work. We are very much in need of help from our members and an influx of new members with energy and commitment to be involved. You'll be hearing much more about this, and benefits of union membership, in future newsletter installments.



Meetings Calendar

All meetings are held at the Labor Temple, 110 N. Warren St, Helena, MT, unless otherwise noticed.

Executive Board: The Board meets quarterly and on special call of the President. The next meeting is planned for Tuesday, December 3 at 7 pm.

General Membership: The next regular meeting date and time will be discussed at the Executive Board meeting on Dec. 3. General membership meetings are held in the second, third and fourth calendar quarters at a date, time and place determined by the Executive Board.

Local 498-642 Activities Update



► Check out <http://helenamusicians.com/> – the website for Musicians of Western Montana. You'll see it is under construction in many areas but you'll want to bookmark it because it will be your goto source of info from your Local. Member Alex Lee is working hard to get this important piece of our organization in place.

► We were awarded a Co-Funding grant on March 22, 2019 from AFM to work on increasing membership and keeping the local viable into the future. So far we have conducted a survey of musicians in western Montana, started a listing of venues for music, and beginning with this newsletter, are trying to improve communications with members. An improved web site is in the works, as is increased outreach to musicians, music stores and community music groups.



► On October 17 members of the Executive Board met with Wally Malone, our AFM International Representative and Allistair Elliott, Canadian International Representative. Wally conducted a required "compliance review" of our operation. Both Wally and Allistair discussed our pressing need for new members and offered suggestions and guidance.

Have questions about insurance for musicians? Here's a place to start: <https://www.afminsurance.com/>



American Federation of Musicians

The Western Conference of AFM will hold its annual meeting in Spokane, Washington on February 21-23, 2020. Sessions for training local officers will be held for two days prior to the Conference. Travel plans, deciding on delegates and other logistics will be discussed at the Dec. 3 EB meeting.

From the International Musician

October, 2019



Unity: The Key to the AFM's Future

by Dave Pomeroy, International Executive Board Member and President of Local 257 (Nashville, TN)

My first real interaction with the leadership of Nashville's Local AFM 257 many years ago was for one reason—to help solve a problem involving local live gigs and an overzealous 257 business agent. After years of silent frustration, I finally stood up and said something about it at a membership meeting, and the next thing I knew, I was named head of a committee charged with solving the problem. We met twice, identified the issue and agreed on the solution. We wrote a new local bylaw that clarified that when bands are playing "original music" in a "listening room" the bandleader can be the employer and sign the contract. This one-sentence bylaw ended years of unnecessary confusion, numerous unjust charges against members, and a rigid attitude that was long overdue for a change. It was a turning point for me, and the start of a journey that has led me down some very different paths than I expected when I first moved to Nashville in 1977. I started paying more attention after that, and made a decision to get more involved in the business of our union.

As I was making the transition from a full-time touring musician to a freelance studio player, producer, and performer, I served on the Local 257 hearing board, and then the executive board. The more I listened and learned, the more I realized that there was much that could be done to improve things at Local 257, and that most problems seemed to stem from a lack of communication and/or a resistance to change. In 2004, I became president of the Nashville chapter of the Recording Musicians Association player conference at a time when the AFM was fighting within itself and not taking care of business with the outside world. By improving communication between the members of our local and working with RMA chapters and AFM members elsewhere with similar concerns, we were able to make significant progress at the 2005 AFM Convention. My experience there changed my perspective once again, and I began to see the bigger picture. I could also see that we had a lot of work to do on the national level as well as within our local.

The next few years of internal union conflicts were frustrating, and it became apparent that something had to give, or the AFM was going to self-destruct. The timing couldn't have been worse, as all this was happening at a time of great change in the music industry. After a lot of soul searching, in 2008 I ran for, and was elected to, the office of president of Local 257, which began a wave of change that peaked at the AFM Convention in 2010. I was part of the Unity Slate that brought new leadership to the AFM, including Ray Hair as president, and I was elected to the IEB.

It has been my honor to serve in both capacities since then. I am proud of what we have accomplished as a team to repair the damage done by AFM infighting over the previous decade and the progress we have made by working together. I have learned many valuable lessons, none more important than the understanding that if we are not united, we will not succeed.

So, why am I bringing up all this history up in 2019? Because time marches on, and now more than ever it is critically important for the next generation of AFM leaders to see the value in stepping up, getting involved, and making a difference. It is in the best interest of every AFM member for us to do everything we can to keep the lines of communication open within all segments of our membership. We must be united in purpose and focused on accomplishing our goals in our dealings with the worldwide music industry.

Young members are the future of the AFM, and we welcome your input and involvement. We need your ideas and energy to not only deal with what lies immediately ahead, but also to be able to anticipate future challenges. By listening to each other and working together, we all have a chance to pay it forward and help make a stronger AFM. It's up to each of us to do our part and give back to the only organization that looks out for professional musicians. Here's to the future!



Executive Board opening

We have two Executive Board positions open. If anyone is interested in becoming a board member please get your nomination to the Local as soon as possible for the December meeting. Anyone in good standing in the Local may be nominated. Terms of service are three years but the current leadership

plans to use staggered terms of office in the future. The Executive Board generally supervises and conducts the business and affairs of the Local between General Membership meetings. It's a great opportunity to learn more and expand your leadership skills! Contact Larry at Larry@afm498 for more information.

If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please unsubscribe by emailing Larry@afm498-642.org with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

Musicians Of Western Montana Local 498-642

PO Box 1523, Helena, Montana 59624

<http://helenamusicians.com/>

406-461-2578

Larry@afm498-642.org

