



Quarter Notes

Musicians of Western Montana

May/June, 2020 Newsletter



At The Top

In this edition, we see more impacts from COVID-19 and ask for your updated contact information.

Dues Payment Update

It is now an option to pay your regular dues electronically via our web site. There is a small fee for the convenience but it offers the first of many new services Local 498-642 plans to provide the membership. It's also an important way for us to streamline and modernize our operations. Specific instructions will be distributed soon or you can call Alex at 406-916-8800 if you need help right away.

Local 498-642 Activities Update

► ***Covid-19 Pandemic International Executive Board Advisories (from AFM)***



The IEB recently adopted emergency policies with regard to membership dues, effective March 1, through June 30, 2020. To summarize, Locals may:

1. waive late fees, reinstatement fees, or any such similar fee
2. extend the suspension or expulsion of members who fail to pay their 2020 dues
3. extend the due date by up to 90 days for work dues (not applicable to MOWM)
4. conduct its executive board and committee meetings via electronic means
5. conduct its membership meetings via electronic means
6. waive requirements for secret ballot voting in electronic membership meetings
7. suspend its membership meetings until public health officials deem it reasonably safe

In its April 28, 2020 meeting via Zoom, **the Local 498-642 Executive Board voted unanimously to adopt advisories 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7** (#3, Work Dues, are not applicable to our Local). If you find yourself in a money crunch please contact S/T Alex Lee for assistance.

► S/T Lee has an urgent need for members' current contact information. Please contact him directly if your email address, phone number or mailing address has changed!
You can contact Alex at 406-916-8800. Remember, emailing has become the primary means for us to notify you of the Local's activities and you won't know what's happening if we don't have your correct address.

- ▶ Your Executive Board has been meeting regularly via Zoom and will continue to do so until the current situation changes enough to safely resume physical meetings.
- ▶ When physical meetings generally resume, all will continue to be held at the Labor Temple, 110 N. Warren Street.

President's Report

No one expected anything like this coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent shutting down of so many businesses. It took us all by surprise and the consequences have been profound. Working people, including musicians, all around the nation have suffered the loss of their primary forms of sustenance. There seems to be little we can do to help the situation other than trying to stay healthy. We musicians have taken a huge hit with a complete loss of income for many of us. We ask, "what can we do to help our gigs come back?" One answer is to take a proactive stance in letting those that have hired us in the past know that we are anxious to get back to work. Officers from your union have been writing to organizations such as the Montana Tavern Association, the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce and several active music venues to let them know that musicians are eager and ready to help bring music back to clubs, restaurants and concert halls as soon as it is safe to do so. MOWM invites you to join us in this effort to make sure our sustainers don't forget that live music can be a huge help to them in bringing their customers back. They have so much to deal with this days that our needs can wind up on the bottom of the stack if we're not careful. So join us in contacting a few of your favorite venues with an email or letter which identifies you as a union member, thanks them for their past patronage and reminds them that we musicians are ready and willing to roll up our sleeves and get back to work. Thank you and please stay healthy.

Don Stone

President, Local 498-642 AFM

Reminder to check out our Web Page/Facebook Page

Our updated and improved web page is up and running. Check out <http://musicunionwestmt.com/> – the website for Musicians of Western Montana. New additions include a link to our Facebook page and the latest newsletter under the News tab.

The web site is a work in progress, and you can expect revisions and updates over the next few months. **One urgent need is for photos of yourself and/or your music group you are willing to share.** The photos will appear on our home page with a clickable link to information about you – type of music played, instruments, etc. Details are being worked out but our hope is to build a foundation for future referrals to musicians.



Meetings Calendar

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic our meetings calendar is in transition. We are currently discussing the best way to resume a more consistent schedule. For now, please check our Facebook page and web site for up-to-date information.



American Federation of Musicians

(From March 2020 International Musician)

Advice for Taking Care of Your Mental Health as a Musician
by Roz Bruce, Guest Contributor



When you're a musician, be it in a rock band, jazz ensemble, or a classical orchestra, it's likely you have a schedule that's tough on your body and your mind. Even if you're not a full-time musician, those late nights and the fast-food meals can take their toll. For many people, listening to music or playing an instrument is a way of dealing with problems and can help improve mental health. However, many musicians struggle with mental illness, which in some cases ends in tragedy. As a songwriter and musician, I know how easy it can be to let your health slip when you're gigging, touring, or even just heavily involved in a creative process. I remember, in the early days of my songwriting, sacrificing sleep, food, and relationships as I allowed myself to be possessed by the creative process that would end up taking its toll on my mental well-being as I suffered depression and anxiety. Later albums, which I recorded more healthily, were undoubtedly better as well as more enjoyable to create. It's so important to look after your mental health as a musician; it's what helps you create, interpret, play, and enjoy music. Here is some advice for how you can help to take care of yourself both at home and on the road.

Take Some Time for You

This one is the hardest to stick to for musicians. You rehearse, prepare, play, get home tired, sleep in the next day, or go to work and repeat. It can be so exhausting and draining. You need to remember that music is a gift and you'll burn out if you only ever give, give, give. Take some time to do things that have no purpose other than for yourself. Read a book, have a bath, do whatever you enjoy, but do it just for you. This is an essential aspect of mental wellness. Two books that I have found particularly enjoyable and helpful are *Destination Happiness: 12 Simple Principles That Will Change Your Life*, by Mark Reklau, and *The Little Book of Self Care*, by Mel Noakes. Take some time for yourself, by yourself. You'll thank yourself.

Don't Compare Yourself to Others

This really is a psychological one. Performing makes you sensitive. Yes, even you, tough guy. After you've performed, you're much more likely to see the potential negatives in anything anyone says to you. Didn't they like the songs? They hate us. Or if nobody says anything, oh my Gosh! The worst. They were all embarrassed. They thought we were awful. Then the next band goes on, and everyone is cheering *because they know them*... and you're thinking, "Nobody did that for us ... we must have been terrible." When reflecting on your performance, reflect on your performance. What did you do well? What could have gone better? How? Comparing yourself to other bands or performers will never lead you to anything helpful or insightful.

Eat and Drink

It sounds so obvious, but this is a big one. We need to eat to stay alive, right? But when you have to be at a venue at 4:30 p.m., sound check at 6 p.m., play at 8:30 p.m., leave the gig at 11 p.m., where's the time for food? It's really worth taking some food with you to a gig. Look after your body and your mind will flourish. Just get past the uncool-ness of it and prepare a packed lunch. Alternatively, try getting a healthy meal at least some of the time, rather than burgers every time you're gigging. It's so much better for your mood. It's also easy to forget to hydrate yourself when you're out and about. Performing takes a lot of energy, and it's not unusual to sweat when you're on stage. This makes you more dehydrated. Make sure to keep water flowing. It hydrates your brain as well as your body, and you'll find your mood improving as a result. Best of all, water is free.

Reach Out

If you do find yourself struggling, don't forget that help is out there. The worst thing you can do is to keep stuff bottled up inside. Try speaking to someone close to you and getting that fear, anxiety, anger, or whatever off your chest. If you don't have health insurance, you can get free help and look for mental health resources online. For example, the SIMS Foundation in Texas helps to provide musicians with mental health resources, as does the New Orleans Musicians' Clinic. In Canada, the Canadian Mental Health Association has a presence in more than 330 communities across every province and one territory. You should also save your state's mental health crisis line, just in case you need it.

Roz Bruce is a professional musician, song-writer, and teacher based in Nottingham, UK. She has personal experience with depression and anxiety and has a commitment to helping others in mental distress.

If you or a loved one are struggling with suicidal thoughts, please reach out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741

In Montana: Mental Health Services Help Line (888) 866-0328

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/contact/hotlinenumbers>

If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please unsubscribe by emailing local498-642@afm.org with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

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