



## Quarter Notes

# Musicians of Western Montana

February, 2020 Newsletter



### At The Top

In this edition, we look at changes in officers, the 2020 calendar for our meetings schedule (General Membership meeting coming up on Feb. 18!), clarify information about insurance, review the most recent EB meeting and check on activities of the Local.

Remember that we want and need your input for the newsletter. Please send comments to [mowmprojects@gmail.com](mailto:mowmprojects@gmail.com) with Newsletter Comments in the subject line.

### New Secretary-Treasurer for Local 498-642

Larry Lytle, our S/T for the past 7 years (or so), has resigned from the position for health reasons, effective March 1st 2020. The Executive Board understands his position and has reluctantly accepted his resignation and extends a most sincere Thank You for his years of service. He's faithfully and exuberantly represented Local 498-642 in all union related activities.

The EB learned of member Alex Lee's interest in the Secretary-Treasurer position just recently, and at our last EB meeting, with Alex's agreement moved to appoint him to replace Larry. He will begin to work with Larry and the EB membership to make the transition as smooth as possible.

He's excited to take on this new responsibility, and the EB thinks you will appreciate his new and fresh take on the job. Over the past several months Alex has been working on updating our web page (<http://musicunionwestmt.com/>) and will continue these Webmaster duties as S/T.



### New Executive Board Member



The EB announces Jason Sleed as a new EB member. Jason is a long-time musician in the Helena area and brings fresh ideas and energy to the EB. Welcome, Jason!

## Term Life Insurance

To: members of MOWM Local 498-642

From: Executive Board

For many years, one of the understood benefits of being a member of the musicians union has been a term life insurance policy of at least \$1000. At times, this amount has been higher, at \$1250 and even up to \$2000, but the point is, there has always been a modest life insurance benefit to help the families of union members through difficult times. Unfortunately, through actions by the AFM at the national level, this benefit no longer exists. The life insurance arrangement AFM enjoyed for many years through the Met Life Insurance Company has been discontinued.

The officers of Local 498-642 have explored other insurance carriers and have determined that, due to the average age of our local members, providing the insurance coverage we once had is unaffordable. We will continue searching for a carrier who can provide affordable coverage, but so far we have not been successful.

As a result, we are very interested in member input as to how strongly you feel about this benefit and whether you might consider a dues increase to help offset the cost of term life insurance. Please send us your opinion on this matter by sending an email to [afmunion1@gmail.com](mailto:afmunion1@gmail.com).

In any case, we all have to accept that there is no “death benefit” in place at the current time.

## In Remembrance

The Executive Board was saddened to learn of the death of President Stone's mother, Ruth, on January 6, 2020 in Great Falls. On behalf of the entire membership of Local 498-642 the EB extends condolences and sympathy to Don and the extended Stone family.



## Executive Board Happenings

Meeting of Dec. 3, 2020

by Dave Thomas, V-P

On Tuesday, December 3, 2020, the EB held a scheduled meeting at the Labor Temple. I was able to attend and wanted to relay a few observations. First, we formalized a statement about life insurance, which is included elsewhere in this newsletter. Second, there was general consensus that any member in good standing is welcome to attend EB meetings. We are anxious to assure that all contributions from members are heard and considered. Finally, considerable time was spent reviewing our meetings schedule for 2020, and the result is shown below in Meetings Calendar.

**Wish List...**The newsletter will be issued bi-monthly and our wish list for information includes things like “real life adventures” of members, member interviews, articles about the music business, etc. I can help with editing your articles so don't be put off by thinking you can't write about your music.

**How You Can Help** We'd also like to build a library of photos about the Local and its members so if you have any you'd like to contribute, get in touch at [mowmprojects@gmail.com](mailto:mowmprojects@gmail.com).

**Note:** If anyone is interested in becoming a board member please express your interest to the Local. Anyone in good standing in the Local may be nominated. Terms of service are three years. 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!



## Meetings Calendar

All meetings are held at 7 pm at the Labor Temple, 110 N. Warren St, Helena, MT, unless otherwise noticed.

### **NOTICE – The next regularly scheduled General Membership meeting will be on Tuesday, February 18, 2020.**

General Membership: According to our Bylaws, general membership meetings are to be held in the second, third and fourth calendar quarters at a date, time and place determined by the Executive Board. The EB has determined that the Bylaws do not prohibit us from holding additional general membership meetings so you'll see in the schedule below we plan a GM meeting in each quarter of 2020.

The dates are: February 18, May 19, August 18 and November 17.

Executive Board: The Board meets quarterly and on special call of the President. *The EB reminds everyone that any member in good standing is welcome to attend EB meetings.*

## Web Page Update

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.

## Local 498-642 Activities Update

► Wish List...do you have any **photos of MOWM members** or performing groups you'd be willing to share? Both the Newsletter and web page could use them **to showcase the membership.** Send to [mowmprojects@gmail.com](mailto:mowmprojects@gmail.com).



► Dues statements for 2020 have been mailed out. Please take a moment to honor your obligation to the Local by sending in your dues as soon as possible. Your continued support is appreciated more than you realize.



## 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. EB Member Jason Sleed has been designated our delegate to the Conference. Many thanks to Jason for stepping up on short notice to serve in this capacity.

# From the International Musician

December, 2016

## To Your Health



by Dr. Marc Brodsky, Dr. John (Jack) Dowdle, Michele Lenes, and Joseph Corsello

**Repetitive use injuries, particularly in the hands, are common for instrumentalists. Pain in the hands can be a result of many different ailments and musicians seeking treatment should be cautious.**

Diagnoses should always be made by medical professionals. A team approach, especially consultation with specialists in musician injuries, can often provide the best treatment options. As pain can often have more than one cause, you should consider the possibility of following more than one treatment option.

## Case Study

A 69-year-old professional jazz drummer had pain, accompanied by numbness and tingling, in both hands and could not bend his fingers. He experienced moderate aching pain and difficulty holding his sticks both while practicing (two to three hours a day) and during two or three gigs a week. The pain was relieved by rest and breaks from drumming, though he sometimes woke up at night with a burning pain in both hands.

A rheumatologist originally diagnosed the problems as psoriatic arthritis, an autoimmune disease of the joints and skin. Powerful medications did not improve his condition and the pain proved debilitating. An MRI then revealed osteoarthritis resulting from overuse and general wear-and-tear of the joints.

An exam by an orthopedic hand specialist included observation of the musician playing the drums, which showed bone deformity and swelling around the middle joints of the fingers. Because the musician also had stiffness, numbness, and tingling the physician used Tinel's test—tapping his wrists near the palm of his hands—and detected possible nerve compression in the carpal tunnel. In the end, a hand specialist, occupational hand therapist, and integrative medicine pain management specialist were all enlisted as part of the drummer's comprehensive treatment program.

## Orthopedic Treatment

The orthopedic hand specialist fitted the musician with hand splints for use at night, while the occupational therapist began hand therapy twice a week. Sessions included a paraffin wax dip and moist heat packs, hand massage to decrease swelling and improve mobility of the fingers, and gentle manipulation of the wrist, hands, and fingers. In addition, the therapist applied joint distractions (gentle pulling of the affected fingers). The drummer was taught hand-strengthening exercises to prevent pain recurrence.

## Integrative Approach

The integrative medicine pain management specialist performed acupuncture once a week for four weeks, gradually reducing the treatment as the musician felt relief. Treatment focused on strategic points in the neck, arms, and hands. Acupuncture is not for everyone, however studies have shown it may restore resiliency by improving circulation and reducing muscle tension and inflammation around the placement of the needles. (Always consult with your primary care physician, and find a licensed practitioner with appropriate training and credentials.)

The integrative medicine physician recommended natural anti-inflammatories, namely ginger and curcumin (found in the Indian spice turmeric). In addition, topical capsaicin, a highly purified, heat-producing component in chili peppers, was applied to the top of the hands once a day. According to the clinical studies, capsaicin depletes the amount of substance P neurotransmitter that sends pain messages to the brain.

## **The Moeller Technique**

The drummer modified his hand technique using the Moeller method. This technique uses gravity to do most of the work, emphasizing hand speed, power, and stick control, as well as the complete relaxation of the hand and arm muscles. Enlisting a strong downward whipping motion, the musician transitioned from pressing or gripping the drumstick predominately with the forefinger and thumb of the left hand down to the little finger. With this approach, the fulcrum is the back of the hand, allowing the other fingers to curl gently around the drumstick. This technique took pressure off the middle joints of the drummer's hands, decreasing the risk of injury.

By employing the above treatments and techniques, the musician had dramatic relief of his hand pain, numbness, and tingling within four weeks. In addition, he had less swelling and was able to move his fingers with greater ease. Not only that, he experienced a higher degree of function, improved sound, and an overall sense of wellness.

*Marc Brodsky, MD; John (Jack) Dowdle, MD; and Michele Lenes, OTR/L, are part of the Musicians' Wellness Clinic in the Stamford Health System and are 2017 members in good standing of the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA).*

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