



MUSICENTRAL

AFM Local 660 November 2008
Founded in 1913—Tuned for the 21st Century



American Federation of Musicians - Local 660

In this issue...

President Lee's Message
Important Membership Meeting

Let's Party—Nov 9

Gigging Musicians: Just What Do We Really Do?

Nittany Valley Symphony
An interview with Executive Director Roberta Strehel

Spotlight on Herb McKinstry

AFM 660 Newsletter

John R. Vincenti, Editor

<http://www.afm660.org>

John Thompson, Webmaster

<http://sozoart.org>

A Listen to the Music Partner

November 2008 Issue

Music at Thanksgiving

"Autumn Leaves" Originally a 1945 French song, "Les feuilles mortes"—literally "Dead Leaves." Johnny Mercer popularized in 1949 + jazz favorite

"Over the River and Through the Woods" A song written by Lydia Maria Child to celebrate her childhood memories at Thanksgiving

"A Mighty Fortress" Best known as Martin Luther's hymns composed between 1527-1529

"Turkey in the Straw" A 19th century folk song popularized late 1820s

"Autumn Time" A concert overture by Leo Sowerby, composed in 1916 and introduced by the New York Symphony Society in 1918

"Let us be thankful as the pilgrims at their feast. Embrace our families and our friends. Be kind to man and beast and as we go our way. Be thankful, rejoicing on this, Thanksgiving Day."

<http://www.jilesnet.com/thanksgiving/midi/>

President's Message

Vote for Change

How would you like to vote on the future direction of our society? No, this has nothing to do with Obama and McCain, but instead with the Musicians Union bylaws and wage scale, two contentious documents long in the making, which will be voted on by the general membership at the Sunday, November 2 meeting at 1:30 pm at Sozo at 256 East Beaver Avenue in State College.

You can find both documents posted on afm660.org. Please read them carefully and if you have something you'd like different, email me now at chris@boalmuseum.com so we can post your edit for everyone to consider before the meeting.

Here's why the board recommends these particular versions:

Bylaws say how we run the organization. They're pretty routine. The main contention is should there be action by a simple majority or a super-majority of 2/3 present. The board recommends a majority vote, because requiring a 2/3 super majority means veto power for the 1/3 minority which can lead to inaction.

Wage scale: this is a much more important discussion:

First, the proposal triages – removed all but the most common venues from consideration. We've focused the rules mostly on bars and concert halls and not on festivals, school and community events.

Second, we suggest but do not require the minimum pay scale listed. The document reads: "The prices listed herein are suggested minimums and are recommended (but not required) to be used by AFM Local 660 members when negotiating performance fees." We think the suggested rates will become the rates generally in practice but the rules still allow for exceptions.

One way to promote these minimum wages is to recognize and encourage attendance at bars that agree to abide by them. With the competitive market among bars, I'm sure some bars will agree and that will help all musicians.

Keep in touch!

Christopher Lee, President, Email: chris@boalmuseum.com Phone: 814-466-9266



Let's Party!

Hey, we're having a party Nov 9th and you're invited to come join the music or just listen. You get in for free and if you check with me ahead and bring your equipment to share, we'll get you some money! Now isn't that what you like to hear?

The public is welcome to this smoke-free, all-ages get-together. See www.afm660.org for the details.



AFM Local 660 includes: All of Huntingdon, Snyder, Union, Centre, Mifflin, Juniata, Union, and Montour Counties. All of Northumberland County except Snyder town, Shamokin, Ralpho, Zerbe, Little Mahony, Jackson, Herndon, Lower Mahanoy, West Cameron, East Cameron, Mount Carmel, Kulpmont, Marlon Heights and Coal. Also all of Columbia County with the exception of Centralia, which is in Local 140 Wilkes-Barre area.

Gigging Musicians: Just What Do We Really Do? By John I. Thompson



Everybody knows how cool it is to just play music for a living - hang out all day doing whatever, then show up to the gig, have a great time playing, go to the after party, then roll home just before dawn. Way cool! It sure is, but let's talk a bit about the "whatever."

10 AM Monday, and I'm stumbling out of bed heading for coffee and the newspaper, but my brain is already thinking of the day and week ahead: six -no, seven gigs, five lessons, and one recording session.

First up is the recording session, scheduled for later that afternoon. It's not a full-blown session with drums and guitars and an engineer, just an arranging session with a singer picking songs for his next album. It's here at my home studio so I don't have to go anywhere. Plus, it's our third session, so everything is already set up and ready to go; I just have to turn on the gear when he gets here. (Eventually all the songs will be demoed, I'll chart them for other musicians, and we'll schedule time at a professional studio.)

The next thought is for my regular Tuesday night piano bar gig. I always get there an hour before start time to set up, and the load-in is easy, just a few steps up and one set of doors to go through. I do have to move a table to make room for my keyboard and speakers, which is only a problem if somebody is already sitting there. No concerns, I just hope there's a decent crowd.



Thanks to football, my regular Saturday gig has to be rearranged a bit. Usually I play from 6:00 - 9:00 pm, but our local college team is playing on national TV at 8:00 pm. Even though the venue is not anything like a sports bar, people will still want to watch, so I'm going to start an hour earlier and stop at kickoff time. I use my own keyboard there, so I'll go set up around noon. The handicapped ramp makes it a long load-in, but it's easier rolling the keyboard that way than dragging it up the steps. Just a couple tables to move and I'm set.

Sunday I'm at the same venue, so all I need to do is show up a little before 6:00, sit down and start playing. Of course, I'll have to load out afterwards.

So now I'm on my second cup of coffee, I've finished scanning the newspaper, and it's time to take care of more immediate things. After walking the dogs, I'll park myself at the computer. There's email from a bride for whom I'm playing a cocktail reception. She wants me to play a couple songs that aren't currently in my repertoire, and also to play for an extra 30 minutes. I assured her the songs would be no problem, and she agreed to a surcharge for the extra time.

Then there was a call from somebody asking if I could play a function later in the week. Always hate to turn down a gig, but I was already booked, so I promised to find someone else who could do the job. Several emails and phone calls later I had her hooked up.

Next I need to update the schedule on my website, then check [Facebook](#) and [Myspace](#) pages. One of the messages I received mentions a new club opening; I think I can take some time Wednesday after lessons to go check it out, see what they're doing about entertainment. I'll also stop in and visit a new restaurant I read about in the paper. I remind myself to update promo materials by the middle of the week.

With the recording session and the extra Friday gig, I'll make a little more money this week than normal. Cool! So, counting all the time for practice, driving, loading in and out, making calls, working on the websites, answering email...oh yeah, and actually playing music, I should make around \$15 an hour. (Before taxes, before expenses, and before doing any volunteer work for a certain musicians' organization I'm involved in.)

I'm just finishing lunch as the singer arrives. There's a lot more email to wade through, the websites aren't updated yet, there's another call I have to return, a lesson that needs rescheduling, that new song for Thursday night to learn, and a broken mic cable that needs repairing. Hopefully I can do some of that after dinner tonight, and catch up with the rest tomorrow. You'll just have to go to the after party without me.

JT's Gigs

Every Tuesday: JTBlues @ Home Delivery Pizza Pub, Bellefonte PA 7:00 pm
Every Thursday: Maxwell Strait @ The Phyrst, State College PA, 10:30 pm
Every Friday: The Triple A Blues Band @ Zeno's, State College PA, 7:00 pm
Every Saturday: JTBlues @ The High Street Pub, Bellefonte PA, 6:00 pm
Every Sunday: JTBlues @ The High Street Pub, Bellefonte PA, 6:00 pm

JT's Web Sites

www.jtblues.com
<http://www.myspace.com/johnithompson>
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/JTBlues/7326705571>
<http://www.myspace.com/maxwellstrait>
<http://www.porkchopmoney.com/triple-a/>



Wednesday is also routine, a luncheon gig where they already have a piano, so all I have to do is show up, sit down, and start playing. In the afternoon I can usually get in some good practice time, and in the evening I give piano lessons.

Thursday is also fairly routine - piano lessons followed by a regular club gig with a band I've been playing in for the past four years. There is a little extra work this week, however. The guitarist emailed an mp3 of a new song we're going to play. I'll need to make some time to work out the tune; all the other band members will do the same. This constitutes our rehearsal, and we'll play the song sometime in the first set. Over the next few weeks we'll get more comfortable with the tune, and the arrangement will morph from the recorded version into a performance uniquely our own.

Friday's gigs are the ones I'm most concerned about. One is a regular band gig, but the guitarist won't be there - he's been hired as the opening act for a touring artist coming through town that evening. So the responsibility for calling tunes and keeping the show moving will fall to me. Not a big deal - it just helps to be mentally prepared for it. And also physically prepared - the load-in/load-out involves jockeying for parking space, a flight of stairs, and navigating my keyboards and amp through a sea of pedestrians in town for college football.

My main concern for Friday, however, is a one-hour afternoon concert I'm doing out of town. I'll have to make sure I leave early enough to get there about thirty minutes before start time (the venue has a nice grand piano so I don't have any set-up concerns), and then get back to town in time for my regular band gig. The concert has a theme and a script; I've already sent a set list that they'll print in the program. I'll need to run through the set a few times this week to get comfortable with the flow. I'll also make sure to pack some CDs to sell.

MEMBERSHIP-DUES Regular Members dues are \$80 per year. Dues paid in six month increments are \$45 each period. Student Members and Life Member dues are \$60 per year. To be a Life Member one must be over age 65 and have at least 35 continuous years of membership in the AFM. New and Transfer Members local dues of \$80 per year will be pro-rated for the first year only by calendar quarter. Those joining in January-March will pay 100%, April-June will pay 75%, July-September will pay 50%, and October-December will pay 25%. In addition, there is a one-time local \$10 initiation fee. New Members only must also pay a one-time \$65 Federation Initiation fee. Both initiation fees are waived for new Student members. Late Fee is \$10 for dues received after the deadline. Dues more than 6 months in arrears will result in expulsion from the union. Reinstatement fees will be required to regain membership in good standing. Reinstatement Fees for those who have been expelled for non-payment of dues are \$155. AFM 660 Treasurer, Debbie Trudeau



Nittany Valley Symphony: Interview with Executive Director, Roberta Strebel



Interviewer: John R. Vincenti
Photo provided by NVS

AFM—Can you tell us about NVS's organization.

The Nittany Valley Symphony (NVS) began playing in 1966 for the Central PA Festival of the Arts. The orchestra incorporated in the mid-to-late 80's and is governed by a 22-member Board of Directors representing the community and the players. Today, the Symphony is comprised of over 80 professional and volunteer members. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

AFM—NVS has several support groups; what are they?

NVS has a 22-member Board and 20-member Guild Board. The Board oversees our development, financial, planning, education and marketing activities. Our Guild is a strong fundraising arm of NVS. They organize activities such as an annual poinsettia sale, fashion show and our future gala. They are also responsible for our "Luncheon With The Maestro" that takes place prior to each of our concerts. The "Luncheon," which takes place at Centre Hills Country Club, is a wonderful opportunity for people interested in our concerts to learn about what they will hear in the upcoming concert. Our Music Director, Maestro Michael Jinbo gives a wonderfully informative and entertaining presentation. We also have musicians from the orchestra perform at these luncheons.

AFM—As executive director, what is your role?

Well that would be a mouth full. In sum, I'm the "hand-maiden" of both the symphony and the Boards. I try to make sure everything that should be done gets done. Ultimately, I want to get as large an audience I can to hear the symphony perform. In my opinion they are just too good to miss! Truthfully, there are too many details to get into for this piece.

AFM—Roberta, could you tell us about yourself.

This is my first venture into working for a symphony, but I like to think that everything I've done in the past has led me to this point. I moved to State College in 2003 from New York City. I've been with NVS since May, 2007. If all goes according to plan, I hope to retire from this position. I actually don't play an instrument. I have found that I was born to listen.

AFM—Where does NVS draw its musicians from?

We are fortunate enough to have a community rich in musical talent and accomplishment. Some of our musicians are professional, some are not. Our symphony is your neighbor, friend, your sister, brother, mother, father or grandparent. It's your teacher, your retired teacher, your student or your work associate. If you are a musician, and talented, you are invited to audition for NVS. If there is a need for your particular talent, you can take your place among our 80+ member orchestra. Some of our musicians have been with us from the beginning.

AFM—How many other symphonies of the same size community are there in Pennsylvania?

I know that we are the only community orchestra between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

AFM—Could you tell us about NVS's conductor Michael Jinbo.

This is Maestro Michael Jinbo's 19th season as Music Director and Conductor of NVS. He is also the Music Director of the Pierre Montoux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians. I have heard from NVS musicians that he continually challenges them with his choices of music and under his thoughtful direction, they rise to the challenge. He is dearly loved and respected by his musicians, many of whom he's worked with for 19 seasons.

AFM—Do you have any stories about your musicians?

There is a wonderful story to every one of the musicians. I couldn't tell one without telling them all. There is neither the time nor space to tell you about all of them.

(Editor's Note: Herb McKinstry, NVS musician is highlighted this month)

AFM—Supporting NVS, how do you do it?

It is a constant challenge. We rely on the generous support of our community individuals, as well as corporate sponsorship and grants, without which we could not survive.

AFM—Roberta, is there something to add as we close this interview?

The NVS has "Outreach and Education" affiliations and programs such as the following:

Ann Keller Young Soloist Competition: The Nittany Valley Symphony Guild is in its 25th year of providing cash prizes and opportunities for aspiring young musicians to play with the Symphony. Programs include Musicians in the Making, a program that provides performing opportunities for young musicians in Eisenhower Auditorium. NOTES - NVS Outreaching Traveling Educating Series, which invites students from area schools to experience a concert first-hand free of charge. Businesses from the school's area are invited to sponsor this project. Our maestro and/or players visit the school prior to the concert in order to help the students understand and appreciate the concert in a different light. We also have the Youth Flute Choir, The State College Concert Percussion Academy and the Jr. Baroque Music Festival.

In the short 17 months I've been with NVS, I have grown to love this symphony. I feel a great responsibility to them. They are so talented and wonderful to listen to; I want everyone to hear them, and I do whatever I can to make that happen. I've said this before and I truly mean it: "I couldn't love this symphony more if I'd given birth to them myself." Yes, I gush, but how many people can say they have a symphony? I can, "I have a symphony!"





American Federation of Musicians - Local 660
Chartered October 29, 1913

President

[Christopher Lee](#)

Vice-President

[Phil Jensen](#)

Secretary

[John Thompson](#)

Treasurer

[Debbie Trudeau](#)

Executive Board

Christopher Byrne

Carl Ector

Andrew Jackson, Sr.

Donald B. Keat II

Bruce Young

Get the Latest
AFM 660
News &
Information
On-line

[http://
www.afm660.org](http://www.afm660.org)

A Family of Musicians Spotlight on Herb McKinstry



The trumpet has been a part of Herb's life since he was in 4th grade and has continued to be a part of his family, church, teaching, and professional life.

A native of State College, Pennsylvania, Herb was born into a family that appreciated and participated in music. Herbert A. McKinstry, his father, played the clarinet and sax, sang in the church choir and in the State College Choral Society for many years. His mother, Jean, sang in choirs, but also played piano in movie theatres and church while growing up. In fact his siblings are also associated with music. "My sister Nancy lives in Washington State and sings, my other sister Julie is a professional singer in Syracuse, New York, and my older brother Sam is a jazz musician."

Herb's interest in music began at an early age. He is thankful to his parents for the many concerts they attended as a family: Blue Band Concerts on the mall or in Schwab auditorium; Richard Dyer-Bennet and others; numerous musicals. His father also has an extensive record collection which Herb made good use of. Herb's interest in the trumpet specifically was sparked by a program in 4th grade. "I remember Henry Loewen and others came to demonstrate several different instruments, but it was Frank Hege's cornet playing that captured my interest the most." "Looking back," McKinstry said, "I should have taken private lessons from the beginning, but I didn't. I just played trumpet in school group classes. In fact, I was also into model railroads and while in 7th and 8th grade, because I wanted money to pay for my hobby, got a paper route and quit playing the trumpet altogether."

Later, Herb did come back to the trumpet. "A friend of mine, Bill Rathfon, encouraged me to join the orchestra in 9th grade and I have been playing in orchestras ever since. I also played in a rock band in high school, and one of the other trumpet players was taking lessons from Al Conner. So I started lessons as well, but not until part way through my senior year in high school. What a load of bad habits I had developed by then!"

Al Conner, who was a graduate of Northwestern University, introduced Herb to the sound of the Chicago Symphony Brass section and specifically to the playing of Bud Herseth, who was principal trumpet in the Chicago Symphony for over 50 years. "I still remember the first time I heard Herseth's incredible rendering of the trumpet solo in the first movement of Gustav Mahler's 'Das Lied Von der Erde' (Song of Earth), and those majestic tones at the opening of Modest Mousorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition'."

Upon high school graduation, Herb entered Penn State and received a bachelor's degree in music theory. Completing his degree, one of his teacher's, John Hall, associate principal trumpet for the Pittsburgh Symphony at that time, suggested that he go to New York City and study with a master, William Vacchiano. Vacchiano's career with the New York Symphony lasted for over 36 years and he taught for many years at the prestigious Julliard School of Music. "I studied for one year with this gracious and intelligent man. It was during this year that I began to appreciate the level of playing needed to compete for and win coveted positions in major symphony orchestras."

Herb returned to State College after his year in New York City and found himself doing multiple jobs. From being a musician to working in construction to learning computer programming. He worked with his father designing programs to graphically display scientific principles for materials science students. Later Herb worked for the Materials Research Lab as a computer programmer and network administrator.

During the early 1980's Herb joined the American Federation of Musicians when he was with the Harrisburg Symphony, which required union membership. He was also asked to play with the Penn State Graduate Brass Quintet, and entered graduate school in the School of Music, majoring in music performance and studying with Robert Howard. It was during this time that he met his wife to-be, Susan Troler, who plays the euphonium. After graduating from Penn State with his master's degree, Herb became a Lecturer in Music at Juniata College, and continues his music relationship with Juniata College to this day.

Herb and Susan married in 1988. In 1998, they started their family. Today they have two children, Aileen and Nathan, who both play the violin and piano. Susan and Herb had earlier made the decision that Herb would be a stay-at-home Dad. As Herb relates, "Susan is outstanding as a teacher and researcher, and had become a world-class scientist at Penn State, where today she is Professor of Ceramic Science and Engineering and the Director of the W. M. Keck Smart Materials Integration Laboratory and travels all over the world. I would be able to play music during the evenings and weekends, and care for our children at home during their early years. It has been a challenging and rewarding experience."

McKinstry's philosophy of music is based on several training, teaching, and learning concepts, one of which is that musicians wear five different hats to really excel. The first is as designer or architect—what is it supposed to sound like, what's the model? The second is engineer—what do I need to make it happen? The third is constructor—putting all the pieces together. The fourth is supervisor—assessing my progress and making modifications, if necessary. Finally, the fifth is as the audience, appreciating the product.

"Music at its core is communication between people," Herb says, "sound is the means. Music occurs as sound in time; there is a start and a finish, rather like a journey. If I don't know where I am and where I am going, what does that communicate to the listener?" Rather, the performer should know ahead of time, "this is what I want to say."

Herb appreciates that unlike most sports (or politics) in which one side wins and another loses, in music, "it is a team effort, but everyone wins. From the composer, who sees his/her idea come to life; to the conductor, who gets the fulfillment of bringing the music to life; to the musician, who is part of something bigger than one's self; and finally the audience, which receives the enrichment and enjoyment of listening."

Today Herbert L. McKinstry, son, husband, father, computer programmer, lecturer, music teacher, and musician, is always busy. Herb performs regularly with the Nittany Valley Symphony, Altoona Symphony, Pennsylvania Centre Orchestra, Centre Brass Quintet, and at Calvary Baptist Church. During the summertime, Herb can be heard with the Penn Central Wind Band and Billtown Brass.

Photos of Herb's trumpets, including his Baroque/Natural Trumpet that he made.



(Article and photos by John R. Vincenti)

