



MUSICENTRAL

AFM Local 660 April 2009
Central Pennsylvania Musicians Association
Founded in 1913—Tuned for the 21st Century

Local 660



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

President's Message

By now you may have seen the article about AFM 660's Sustainable Music Venue initiative that was published in the March issue of Voices Magazine or the one in the Daily Collegian on March 24.

I thought it might be enjoyable to read a few quotes from these articles to know what is being said about AFM 660 and music in central Pennsylvania:

- "This is an effort for all musicians to create a better environment and community. We want this area to be a destination for audiences seeking high quality music."
- "Our interest is in creating better music in general, not creating an environment of insiders and outsiders."
- "It's a really thoughtful gesture in terms of being considerate of the venue owners as well. It's not a take-it-or-leave-it; it's not a traditional labor demand."
- "Musicians that are worth having are worth paying." (From a bar owner)
- "AFM 660's initiative makes things more fair for musicians, adding the minimum wage proposed by AFM 660 is reasonable." (From a bar owner)
- "Other professionals, like your plumber, get paid at least a minimum wage. So why not professional musicians, too?"
- "Central Pennsylvania is a place where you can find successful, artistic fulfillment with other musicians who are inspired, ethical and cooperative."

Kind of makes you proud to be a musician and to be part of AFM 660, doesn't it?
Thanks for all you do for music and for our community.

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



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AFM 660 Newsletter

John R. Vincenti, Editor
johnrvincenti@comcast.net

AFM 660 on The Web

John Thompson, Webmaster
<http://www.afm660.org>

<http://sozoart.org>

A 'Listen to the Music' Partner

WORTH WATCHING

"Cadillac Records"

Recent DVD release chronicles the rise of Leonard Chess and Chess Records. It highlights the life and times of and its emerging recording artists including America's greatest musical legends Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Chuck Berry, Willie Dixon, and Etta James. A riveting story that takes place Chicago during the 1950s and 60s. Depicts the business, people's lives—their problems, and personal and cultural struggles. A part of music history worth watching.

<http://www.sonypictures.com/homevideo/cadillacrecords/>

Highlights of General Membership Meeting by John Thompson, AFM 660 Secretary

The first General Membership Meeting of 2009 was held February 28 at South Hills School of Business and Technology. After lunch, the meeting was called to order. The main topic of discussion was the Sustainable Music Initiative, and President Chris Lee reported that in discussions with local bar owners, he found that most were very supportive of musicians, and several venues including Zeno's, Tony's Big Easy, Dante's, and Cafe 210 were eager to get involved.

It was determined that framed certificate signed by the Local 660 president be presented to venues in compliance with the initiative; the certificates could be renewed yearly. The AFM logo plus a new SMV logo will be on the certificate, and the AFM 660 website will list a participating Sustainable Music Venue. Organizations such as the Central Pennsylvania Ballroom Dance Association, although they don't actually own a venue, will also be designated Sustainable Music Venues since they hire musicians at scale or above.

In other business, the membership voted 6-4 to allow musicians to showcase their work for less than scale or for free. Those opposed to the motion said that the union should never acknowledge support for it's members playing for free. (Follow-up note: International Representative Gene Tourneur was contacted about this in regards to AFM bylaws. He said that showcasing is allowed when it's in support of getting work.)

AFM 660 agreed to be a sponsor at Voices Of Central Pennsylvania's FunRaiser on Monday March 23, at India Pavilion. Bruce Young will also donate 2 CDs.

Cafe 210 has agreed to host the next Listen To The Music event in April, date and time TBA.

For copies of the complete draft minutes, go to <http://www.afm660.org/bylaws.html>.



In Support of Sustainable Music Venues The Central Pennsylvania Musicians Association Recognizes and Encourages Patronage of:

*Bar Bleu – Bar Q – Café 210 – Dante's –
Hiway Pizza (Westerly Parkway) – Inferno –
The Deli – The Saloon – Tony's – Zeno's*





The news of the death of big bands has been greatly exaggerated. Big bands are alive but are not doing particularly well. That is, in terms of making a living by playing in a big band (other than in the military sector or a few “Ghost” bands), this is no longer a viable option. But the opportunity for playing in a big band is a very real possibility both nationally and locally.

The days of a musician making his/her living by playing solely in a big band on the road are a thing of the past. Other than the military and some “Ghost Bands” (two of which I’ve played in—Tommy Dorsey led by Warren Covington and Glenn Miller led by Dick Lowenthal), there are few musicians who can count on a big band to provide their sustenance. My friend and mentor, Mike Brignola, was probably one of the last baritone saxophone players to make his full-time living by just playing on the road. He performed with the Woody Herman Orchestra from 1980-1987 (Woody died in 1987). In 1983 he was on the road for 47 weeks. I once played a 14 week road tour (a USO show performing 88 times in the Mediterranean area) and realized that this was a tough way to make a living. As Phil Woods once said, “They don’t pay me to play. They pay me to get there.”

Mike is currently the personnel director and road manager for the Legacy Woody Herman Herd. They play periodic dates like a few months ago in Toronto where Penn State Professor of Trombone Mark Lusk played bass trombone (he played with Woody in the 1980’s). But both Mark and Mike have stable day jobs of teaching at universities (Mike at Florida Atlantic University and sometimes at the University of Miami).

The big band which I consider to be the best today is the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. This Left Coast big band only has occasional road trips like the Jazz Cruise and a Fall trip to New York to battle the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. But even these musicians have other jobs for security reasons. For example, the baritone sax player Adam Schroeder teaches elementary school students and helps out with one of the high school stage bands and the lead trumpet player (Bjorn Watson) teaches at the middle school level. The co-leaders (John and Jeff Clayton) are Professors at USC.

As just discussed, the full-time musician on the road is relatively non-existent. In a recent conversation with Johnny Williams, baritone saxophonist for perhaps the most famous big band in the land (Count Basie), he related that they had played only 18 weeks in 2008 and that the calendar indicated less activity for 2009. But at other places around the country and on our local scene, there is a plethora of big band activity of another sort.

The Dance Band, at one time led by Skip Wareham and currently directed by Les Shaw, is a full-sectioned big band which basically goes into hibernation during the winter. But it blossoms forth in the spring for rehearsals to prepare for the active summer season of concerts at such venues as The Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, The People’s Choice Festival, The South Hills music program and a Penn State Homecoming dance at Delta Sigma Phi. These are all paid gigs with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) scale as a guideline.

Another big band in the area is the Keystone Society of Swing (SOS) which was directed by Bill Holl and is currently led by Roger Munnell. This band rehearses year round and plays most of the same venues as the Dance Band. Members are not paid for playing although substitutes are reimbursed.

There are other bands which rehearse and play at many of the same venues as the Dance Band and the SOS big band. A couple of these of which I’m aware are the Second Winds and the Senior Citizen’s Dance Band. These musicians rehearse at the Senior Citizens Center and often play at some of the local homes like Foxdale, the Oaks and Brookline. They do not receive payment for playing.

Still another big band which emerges for the “Summer Jazz Celebration” (formerly called the State College Jazz festival) is called The Friends Big Band. The idea for the festival was germinated by Joe Alessandro and Catherine Dupuis made it a reality. I contract this big band for the purpose of backing the Jazz Celebration director Catherine Dupuis. Members are paid union scale from the Musician’s Performance Trust (MPF) fund which is coordinated by union secretary John Thompson.

A big band which graced our scene for about seven years was the Valley Jazz Orchestra (VJO). This band played the first Tuesday of the month at the American Ale House and members were paid. Since the passing of the VJO there has been a void of a high level professional big band playing on a regular basis. This situation may be corrected soon when Dan Yoder (he was co-leader of the VJO with Rick Hirsch) starts a big band of town and gown players which could be called something like the Happy Valley Jazz Orchestra (HVJO).

But the real hope for the future lies in the education system. The State College Area School District has at least four big bands of which I’m aware. At the middle school level, Kim Lenaway directs the Park Forest contingent (my next door neighbor plays trumpet in this band) and John Kovalchik conducts the Mount Nittany group. John also leads the Jazz II at the high school level and Rich Victor conducts Jazz I. These bands give concerts and participate in a Jazz festival in the spring. The program has produced some notable talent in the past. These individuals have gone on to become professional musicians and educators.

Some of these musicians have moved on to Penn State’s wonderful program which is directed by Dan Yoder. The three big bands at Penn State are called the Dimensions in Jazz groups.

Centre Dimensions is conducted by Dan and is an award winning big band ensemble. This past semester three of the sax section members were State College High School products (Bryan Gillespie, Caleb Rebarchak and Alex Hepplemann). This big band typically plays three concerts each semester including such performances as Mardi Gras in February and the spring Jazz festival on April 3rd and 4th this year.

Continued on Page 3

This Jazz festival will be highlighted by guest clinicians Cyrus Chestnut (piano) and Tim Warfield (Saxophone) who will conduct master classes and play in a combo setting as well as with the Centre Dimensions Big Band.

Inner Dimensions is directed by guitarist and affiliate faculty member Mac Himes who is also a State High graduate. They rehearse two times a week and usually perform twice each semester in Esber Recital Hall.

Outer Dimensions is led by Dan's graduate assistant who this year is Charlie Heim, also a State High stellar. This band also rehearses twice a week and performs in Esber two times each semester.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the days of making your living solely as a big band performer may be a thing of the past, but there is hope for change in the future as our educational programs spawn talent and consumers of this form of music. And whatever the outcome for any individual is with regard to their musical life, they can be lifelong players at some level. Locally, big bands are alive with the hope of even better wellness in the future.



Omega Psi Phi Talent Hunt Winner Vies for Regional Contest in May



The Iota Lambda Lambda Graduate Chapter #912 at Penn State/State College, Pennsylvania, held its 5th Annual Omega Psi Phi Talent Hunt on Saturday, February 21, 2009 at Mt. Nittany Middle School. The Chapter's overall winner was **Emile Greer** on clarinet, with his mom as his piano accompanist. Emile is a sophomore, from State College Area High School. He is also co-principal clarinetist in the Central Pennsylvania Youth Orchestra and writes for the school newspaper. Emile, pictured above with the plaque, will go on to compete on Saturday, May 2, 2009, in the regional talent event in White Plains, New York. He will compete against all the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Chapters 1st Place winners from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland.

(Above photo-Left to Right) Michael Okoh, Iota Lambda Lambda Chapter Brother; Chavez Carter, Chapter Brother; contestant, Emily Brown, Art Display, a ninth grade student in the Bellefonte Area High School; contestant, Zech Houser, vocalist; Dr. Edgar Farmer, Master of Ceremonies and Chapter Brother; contestant, Kurt Martin, Rap Artist; Claude Mayo, Chapter Brother; contestant Emile Greer; contestant, Qadirah Russell, dancer; Dr. Andrew Jackson, Sr., Chapter #912 Founder and Talent Hunt Committee member; Gregory Drane, Chapter Keeper of Finance; and Wayne Gersie, Chapter Talent Hunt Chair.

(Information provided by Andrew Jackson, Sr.)



Jazz Beat by Rick Hirsch

Trumpeter Mike Vax is bringing the *Stan Kenton Alumni Orchestra* back to Pennsylvania for a concert at the Harrisburg Hilton on Sunday April, 26. This is part of the *Central PA Friends of Jazz* monthly concert series. This same band brought down the house in a concert at Bald Eagle H.S. a few years ago. With a brass section like that, it's any wonder the windows are still in tact!

And, a little closer to home, the *Blue Note 7* will be performing in Eisenhower on Tuesday, April 8. All reports lead me to believe that this collection of all-stars is a serious band that has developed a nice book – not just a gratuitous jam session. I'd make a point to go if it weren't on the first night of Passover. "Oops"

On the local front, the number of live jazz venues continues to grow. Longtime venues Zola and Tony's are now joined by the *Down Under* and the *Autoport* in venturing jazzward.

Finally, I'd like to report that the 2009 Great Lakes Tour by the *FolkJazz Project* (a duo collaboration I have with local 660 pianist extraordinaire *Arthur Goldstein*) was a success. Our music was enthusiastically received in jazz clubs in Erie and Toronto. If only we had had a similar reception from the US border crossing official upon re-entry.

Find out more about local jazz and creative music at www.HirschMusic.biz



AFM Dues information at <http://www.afm660.org/> **Debbie Trudeau, Treasurer, 1755 Cambridge Drive, State College, PA 16803 (814) 237-0979 trumusic@comcast.net** AFM Local 660 includes: All of Huntingdon, Snyder, Union, Centre, Mifflin, Juniata, Union, and Montour Counties. All of Northumberland County except Snyderstown, Shamokin, Ralpho, Zerbe, Little Mahony, Jackson, Herndon, Lower Mahanoy, West Cameron, East Cameron, Mount Carmel, Kulpmont, Marion Heights and Coal. Also all of Columbia County with the exception of Centralia, which is in Local 140 Wilkes-Barre area.



Spotlight on Richard R. Price — Union Counts



LOCAL 660

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October 29, 1913
Tuned for 21st Century

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Richard R. Price, tuba, sousaphone, and Hammond organ player, has been a member of American Federation of Musicians (AFM) since 1954, when he attended York College. Born in Logan Township near Altoona, Pennsylvania (PA), Rich spent most of his childhood and teens in Huntingdon County, PA.



Richard's love of music goes back to his family. His greatest impression and love of music came from his mother, Esther Louise Delaney Price Corbin (1903-1984), who was a church organist, including at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Mapleton Depot, PA. Price also credits his step-father Ralph Newton Corbin. Corbin was a community band director from Mapleton Depot in Huntingdon County, PA. "Ralph never missed a Mt. Union Memorial Day engagement from 1882 until his death in 1964. Richard had a sister, Joyce Price, and a half-brother, Robert William Price. Joyce sang in the school choir. "Joyce became a nurse, who later turned that into a medical doctor and then a thoracic surgeon until her death in 2006. She didn't have time to go further into music, but she was a great surgeon. Robert is a retired US Navy and IBM design engineer and lives in Cary, North Carolina. He is known in square dance circles as Ze Caller."

Other Price family members who were connected to his music development included his biological father, Raymond John Price, a military man who was originally from Altoona. "He got me started with the Hammond organ. I used to play the one he had in his home in Altoona. Later I bought one myself." Other musical tributes went to his step-brother Mark, who played the cornet. Price's step-father's brothers made an impression on him also. They were Uncle Mills, played baritone; Uncle Charlie, played drums; and Uncle Roy, played the trombone. Each were well known in the Mapleton Depot area.

Price's early development in music can be traced to his school days. He said his teachers and the curriculum were rich with music. "I began my music involvement in high school," he said. "Mixed chorus in the morning and band in the afternoon, they were full period classes then." In the band, Richard played a Conn Sousaphone. In 1948, during his senior year, Price received Mt. Union High School's Outstanding Instrumental Musician Award.

Following high school, Richard joined the U.S. Army. During his stint in the service, he was part of the 28th Infantry Division of the Pennsylvania National Guard based in Altoona, PA. He was able to play the sousaphone in the authorized military band during this time in the service from 1948 until 1953.

Richard married Sherry Dawn Imes in 1954. The Prices have four daughters. They are Ruth Ann Price Ache, Maryland; Sherry Dawn Jackson, Bellefonte; Martina Louise Day, North Carolina; and Virginia Lee Price. Virginia and her husband, Brian Scott Levine, run the Sedona Grill, in Fayetteville, West Virginia.

"In 1954, AFM members were paid \$7.00 per performance and \$3.00 per rehearsal. In York, Pennsylvania, I played with Spring Garden Band. They provided me with Martin Recorder, a fine tailored uniform, and transportation when we performed. I also had the opportunity to play with the Lyric Band of Hanover, Pennsylvania. At that time, I was never minus funds because of the help I received from the GI Bill, but having a family also created added monetary complications and therefore the need find more substantial work."

Price's first sousaphone was given to him in 1954 by his step-father. It was a Martin worth \$85.00 in those days. The purchase, however, came with a stipulation. Richard would have to play in the annual Memorial Day Parade in Mt. Union, PA. As years went by, Richard found that his use of the sousaphone had a potential health risk. It had to do with a condition called *heterotopic ossification* or calcium deposits that can cause the bone to protrude. Facing that possible problem, he decided to change instruments. He chose the tuba. From an advertisement in an AFM publication he purchased a 1945 four rotary valve N.H.White King Tuba recorder. "I bought it from Steven R. Call for \$2,000." Call has been a member of the music faculty at Brigham Young University since 1979, and is a well known jazz and Dixieland musician as well as soloist concert performer and director. When he got the tuba, Richard also purchased a \$150 stand.

In 1955, the Prices moved to Bellefonte. Richard was hired by the General Finance Corporation, based in Huntingdon, PA. During his career as a loan officer from 1958-1961, the company moved him to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. In Chambersburg he had the opportunity to play with the Shippensburg Community Band. In 1961, Richard and his family returned to Bellefonte. He was then a member of the Tyrone AFM local and later switched to AFM Local 660. In 1961, Richard and Sherry Dawn purchased the Sunrise Mobile Home Court, which they continue to manage today. Richard retired from the loan business. He said General Finance Corporation became a part of BankAmerica through a subsidiary called Security Pacific, based in San Diego.

When it comes to unions, Richard has strong positive feelings. Having grown up in a company town, he said, "Without a union, people's lives were on the line because they live in the company home, shop in the company store. When a laborer is out of work, so was their family out of a home. Unions served an important function to protect the rights and improve the lives of workers. Today our local union is attempting to make wages better for musicians."

Richard feels strongly that musical performances and performers should allow for charitable events. "The AFM strengthens the meaning of Live Music is Best." Over the years, Richard Price has played with the Jaffa Band and the VFW Band in Altoona, PA; The Bellefonte Community Band; and Trinity United Methodist Church in Bellefonte where he and several other men his age still sing. "I try to be a tenor, these days!" Since 1982, Richard has maintained and been the organist at the Hammond organ at the B.P.O.E. Lodge 1094 (Elks Club) in Bellefonte. Recently at an event at the Elks, Richard said, "It is a real treat to hear sixty men and women sing, *God Bless America* at the Elks." On December 14th, Richard Price will be 80 years young.

One can only believe that life will begin again at 80 for Mr. Price!

