

**MINUTES FROM IATSE 796 GENERAL MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 16, 2011**

❖ Attendees -

DALLAS: Dwin Towell, Andy Benz

HOUSTON: Mike Brady, Kevin Allen, Frank Trevino, Raquel Clendening, Steve Shaw, Don Dorsey, Rick Stogsdill, Margaret Krausse, Paul Nolan, Ralph Cantu

SAN ANTONIO: Frank Arechiga

At approximately 7:15 pm, Frank T. motioned to start the meeting. Margaret K. 2<sup>nd</sup> motion, and to accept the agenda.

Mike motioned to approve or correct the “brief” minutes of the last meeting. He also mentioned that he had written in his President’ Report that Brown, Recording Secretary, had resigned and that he is looking for anyone who wants to become the Rec. Sec. Duties are to take notes and be the deciding vote on certain issues (in ties, on the E-Board).

Andy asked if the minutes included the report from the previous meeting, as they are referred to, but not included. Frank said that he did not include the previous meeting’s Report, but Kevin noted that it is part of the Union’s files.

Andy B. motioned to approve the minutes, Kevin A. seconded the motion.

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Mike asked if there were any questions about the President’s Report. Andy asked if the present negotiations were in the Pres. Report or the BA Report. Mike said that it was under Section E in New Business.

Raquel asked if the present negotiations will include Fox College Sports. Kevin answered that currently we don’t have a contract with Fox Cable Network, which produces FCS, but in his meeting with the Broadcast Locals in LA the previous day, there was discussion about including them in a “national contract”, if there is a successful white card collection. He wanted to further this discussion in the New Business portion of this meeting, also to be included in the discussion will be Speed Channel, FX, Fuel Channel, Fox Sports Net, some of which has been crewed locally (Earl Miller Production), but not under a contract.

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Secretary/Treasurer’s Report – Frank T. said that the Union had maintained about \$20 in savings, but that he reported operating at about a -\$6,000 net loss this year.

Andy commented that it was nice to be able to have such a savings with such a loss. Frank said that it was due, in part, to the majority of the E-Board working “for free”, and that he had to say “no” to a lot of things.

Raquel asked how the Net Operating Income compared to this time last year.

FT guessed that 12 months ago the Union was operating at a -\$2K, loss but that it increased this year due to contract negotiations & unexpected expenses. He also said that we had about \$1,700 in "outstanding" dues needing to be collected from the previous quarter. He also said that he tries to stay on budget without dipping into savings.

Andy asked about pre-paying his dues for the upcoming calendar year, Frank said that would help and that the E-Board even considered "incentives" for those who wanted to pre-pay, but that we couldn't afford to offer those incentives.

Frank said to feel free to contact him if there were any further questions concerning the reports.

Mike asked if we had a motion to accept ALL the reports.  
Paul Nolan motioned to accept the report as read, Kevin A. seconded.

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Old Business - Mike B. said that there was none that he could think of.  
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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE ---

Mike B. said that we have 400+ referrals & only 75 members.  
Frank said those figures were more like: 325 referrals & 75 members, but only about 100 of those referrals work at all during the year.

Mike said that the Union has a bad reputation and that a lot of that has to do with lack of education and that many don't know what the Union does for them.

He said that we started the local for benefits & better working conditions. And to make sure the stupid working conditions we had in the past stay in the past. That membership over the past 5 years has decreased.

Mike asked how do we get them to see that without the local there would be no health insurance, raises, and benefits?

He said that many think of the local as 4 or 5 people running it.

Mike feels that it would help if Members "talk up" the Union to others (like Rick S. did in Dallas). He further stated that if we continue on our present path, the Union could be in bad shape in the future.

Frank said that our attorney asked why isn't our membership growing. FT said that it was due to bad PR in the past, and that some people don't care. Also, Frank said that we had the unique issue of being in a Right-To-Work State.

Steve S. suggested that we need to let people know what they'd lose if the Union went away. That if the Union goes away, it all goes away – if the health insurance goes away, where would it then come from?

Mike B. suggested that Members ask others to become Members.

Paul Nolan said that he's talked to other freelancers, and they just don't care. He said that we should be targeting those that benefit the most.

Dwin asked if we could do a focus group or questionnaire or interview.

Frank Arechiga said that a lot of people think of our Union as the "Gestapo" or "extortionists". They don't understand that we are why they have the benefits they have.

Andy suggested doing a newsletter or having some type of "informational pipeline" to help disseminate information. Frank said that no one has the time to write a newsletter.

Frank brought up that when he was in Dallas he had never heard so much misinformation – mostly rumors that were totally untrue.

Steve S. said that when the economy went into the dump, we continued to thrive while others were taking pay cuts, travel cuts, per diem cuts, and no hotel accommodations. (He pointed out that the Oklahoma freelancers had to work as locals, even though they traveled beyond what was considered local). He said that if the contracts go away, so do the benefits.

Raquel said that what she feels needs to happen is that we mobilize our Members in the 3 major cities and have a get-together.

Frank T. said that he felt we needed PR help.

Mike B. asked how we all felt about hiring a local PR firm. He said that we need to clean up our act, and look professional. He also said that it's not easy to approach people when they are not approachable.

Andy said that we need to frequently and faithfully disseminate the truth, and that he thinks it can be done less expensively without hiring a consultant.

Dwin T. said that it looks like we don't have the money to hire a consultant.

Frank T. said that he didn't mind spending savings money if it is important and it will help us.

Dwin said that we need to get people to the meetings.

Frank T. said that we used to send referrals invitations to the meetings, until our attorney told us not to do so.

Rick S. stated that he didn't realize how many people are actually taking advantage of our insurance. He wanted to let his fellow worker know that "hey, I got you that".

Kevin A. said that we needed an "informational" meeting for BOTH Members & Referrals. He said that Sandy was firmly in our corner with solidarity and that he, Frank or Mike B. were to meet Sandy in Dallas to get people into an informational meeting.

Ralph C. mentioned that he didn't even know that he had money in a pension.

Mike B. said that we need to come up with a plan of action and to urge everyone to talk to people at the job site.

Frank said to remember that Sandy didn't organize us, but rather freelancers from Texas went to Seattle and asked her to come to Texas. She was already swamped with work but that IATSE believed that every worker should have access to benefits. They lose tons of money on us because they have to cover people who aren't members. Every IATSE stagehand local in the nation helps us get our insurance and their dues help the International keep our insurance rates low.

Paul Nolan asked about the possibility of having a 3-way conference call between Houston, Dallas & San Antonio.

Kevin A. said that it should be an informational meeting only with a learned individual from the International and that we need the support from Dallas.

Raquel said that we also need the support from Austin and San Antonio, as well, as that's where a lot of the future work will be.

Steve S. said that some of the anti-Union freelancers feel that they can negotiate a better day rate or deal, and that maybe one or two can.

Raquel said that they need to keep in mind that our rates are minimums. That they are not locked into our rates.

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ITEM D on the agenda – NEW BUSINESS

Frank T. said that we also need to let freelancers know what the Union can and cannot do – what the limits of what our Union can do – that we can't give people work. We can't fix their car so they can get to work and we can't mow their lawns. The contract is our "bible".

Frank T. said that we can only do what is written in our contract, and that if we all agree, as a Union, what we want in our contract, only then we can try to get something put in our contract.

Raquel said that you may not always get what you want, but you certainly won't, if you don't speak up.

Mike said that he sent out emails to all the members asking for suggestions for the upcoming contract negotiations, and the he only received 3 responses: Margaret Krausse, John Walker and Andy Benz. Kevin said that a few responses came in later, like Eric Norberg's.

Steve S. said that he felt that the video dept. was well-represented.

Paul N. said that some people felt their ideas were too "pie in the sky" and didn't bother making suggestions.

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## NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

(For obvious privacy issues, a detailed discussion on this topic is withheld from this document.)

The Union held negotiation talks on Oct. 18, 19, 25 & 26 with Michael Campolo, Jason ? & Stacy Sunny from Fox LA, along with Mike Anasstassiou,, Curtis Carr & Murphy Brown from FSN. In attendance from IATSE was Sandy England, all the E-Board (Mike Brady, Kevin Allen, Frank Trevino & Raquel Clendening), along with Damon McGavock and Margaret Krausse.

Mike B. indicated that there was discussion about elimination of late calls, as well as restructuring the pay scale for several crafts.

He also said that Fox rescinded the Tricaster proposal after first proposing it. Ralph Cantu, Steve Shaw, and Paul Nolan each suggested ways to we might handle this issue.

There was talk about updating travel issues and referrals being in arrears but still working. Frank T said that we are currently trying to re-negotiate from the 30 days referrals can work while off our referral list to 5 days in our next contract.

Raquel said that the next negotiation meeting was to be scheduled in December.

[Frank Arechiga in SA – left the conference call for about 10 minutes].

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BROADCAST LOCALS MEETING – Mike turned the meeting over to Kevin Allen to discuss his attending the Broadcast Locals meeting in Los Angeles.

Kevin said that there were several locals attending this meeting, including those from Arizona, Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, & San Francisco.

He also mentioned that the cost was picked up by the International for travel & lodging.

President Matthew Loeb began the meetings with an introduction & “kind words”, then Michael Campolo, VP Labor Relations for Fox spoke.

Campolo spoke of a general change in the broadcast industry creating a “different landscape”. Fox owns 27 stations, 15 of which are union (IATSE, NABET, IBEW, and AFTRA). Due to technology changes at the station-level there have been a lot of layoffs. He said that it was hard for independent TV stations to make a profit anymore, and that, as technology creates easier ways to do jobs, they need fewer people.

On the sports side, Campolo said there needs to be “durability” of contracts at both high- and low-levels, applying a standard test to both the changing technology and production expectations (i.e. quality vs. cost effectiveness), which was met with some trepidation by the Locals in attendance.

Campolo said Fox and the unions rely on each other.

(Kevin mentioned there are new Fox outlets that could potentially be contract work: MLS, Women's Soccer, Ultimate Fighting, Poker shows, and other collegiate sports).

Campolo also spoke about the importance of privacy laws and issues, the importance of safeguarding computers at all Locals' levels, the liability of handling personal information, encrypting websites, and developing protocols to safeguard that information.

The broadcast locals had received a survey from the International to get a feel for what IATSE was doing right and wrong, and where there was room for improvement & how the locals could better serve their members adequately.

The majority of responses were on the low end (of the scale). Some issues that were raised were: having part-time officers as opposed to full time officers; officers feeling their jobs were at risk when putting demands on the company; not enough time or training for leaders; not having enough resources, Right-To-Work state issues, size of the Locals, and their relationship with the Int'l needing improvement, and other broadcast companies to be targeted (Program Productions, ESPN).

One question raised was: How to do you hold officers accountable if they aren't being paid?

The International talked about new officer training program, Labor Education Assistance Program, courses that are reimbursable to the local leadership (one annually), such as leadership, accounting, & labor law classes.

The National Benefits Fund has updated their computer system – next on their list is their website.

The International has entered into a card check & neutrality agreement with Fox (to which the Local is a beneficiary). C-USA, Pac-12 football is now being crewed out of the Texas offices (previously not under any contract, regional nor national), so now they are under the jurisdiction of the Regional IATSE contract. Certain work such as FX, Fuel, Speed Channel, was "falling through the cracks" and not under a contract. The International asked Fox why, even though they already had contracts all over the country. Without a good reason, Fox agreed to be under the Regional contract. However, this contract expires June 2012, at which time the International is attempting to get them under a national contract, if the IATSE can prove majority status (which will involve collecting white cards from both Members & Referents and will be labor intensive, esp. for Kevin, as he mentioned).

Also, there is hope that there could be better pay, benefits, Per Diem & travel if it falls under a national contract.

It's expected that the International will be sending out a complete package of what they are looking for (in a national contract).

TAPE ROOM/EVS CONCERNS are causing a negotiating "nightmare" across the country with the various demands now placed on operators with multiple channels of input/output, playback, etc. It's become "mind-boggling" for the International & the companies to sort through. The Int'l is asking for input from EVS ops in the various markets (TX, CA, MN, and IL) to come up with a "consensus" of what is considered the standard. Currently within the 12 regions, there is no consensus with the tape room. The International wants there to be uniformity across ALL regions. (As it currently stands, Texas is the first region to have contracts expire and the first to go into negotiations).

TRICASTER EVENTS – companies are not yet committed to the level of technology. Kevin said that there were NO tricast events in our region – that they were in Portland & Phoenix (mostly WNBA).

Kevin described the Tricaster equipment as “a laptop on steroids” – that it was mostly used for webcasting and was “low budget”, with no advertising and no technical expertise required and that mostly high school students operate it (usually one person) from what “they” said.

Kevin further went on to say that it was “untested technology”. Mike described it as a rack-unit, with software, a waveform, 6 cameras, monitor and a “selector” as opposed to a “director” with a low-end bandwidth used for webcasting.

Andy Benz mentioned that Kansas City MLS was using it & that they used HD-quality output. He said that the Tricaster was being used for both low-end, as well as high-end shows.

Kevin said that the ongoing negotiations with JDub Productions in LA were not of concern to him, but that Program Productions (who is in the process of reading our regional contracts) is his concern.

Kevin is focused on the Rights Holder switch between Fox & Comcast. Both the Int’l and the Local is hoping for a seamless transition. Their hope is that Comcast will contract with a local crewer that is already a signatory to our contract. The Int’l has spoken with Comcast who is already a signatory to other IATSE contracts.

National organizing efforts with ESPN have been dampened by the NBA Lockout. The Int’l is concerned that freelancers might be worried they will lose their only work with ESPN during the lockout.

The International stressed that it is every member’s duty to report non-Union work to the Local.

Andy Benz brought up the fact that The Longhorn Network was crewed 100% by ESPN, and that they were a good “resident-base” for ESPN.

Kevin remarked that ESPN Regional & ESPN were an uphill battle.

Andy remarked that LHN creates a bigger player, now.

Kevin said that ESPN was a very low priority with him. He has his sights on getting PCS, LDM under a full contract, and finishing up the negotiations with the Regional contract with Fox & Fox Cable Network. He said that he would fully cooperate with that organizing effort when/if it happens, but right now not his priority – perhaps in 4-5 yrs.

Rick S. asked who will be the representatives in the negotiations with the C-USA, Pac-12 contract up for renewal in June 2012. Kevin said that it would be an International representative if it’s a national contract. If not, it will fall under a regional one with Fox.

Kevin said it would be great if technicians could be under a better contract (a national one). Steve mentioned that he worked under one of these “hybrid” crews last year. Kevin said that this year it’s under the local and next year, maybe a national contract. He said that they’ve been using 2-3 crews out of Texas for these shows.

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GOOD AND WELFARE:

Andy B. – Jay Lindstrom, while cured from leukemia, is now having problems with his bones from the chemo for the leukemia, and is also dealing with melanoma. He is doing well and working, but hasn't yet finished his chemo for melanoma.

Mike B. – Roger McNally's mother, who was in her late 90's, passed away on Nov. 6 peacefully. She had been battling Alzheimer's.

Raquel: Michelle McKenzie will need knee replacement surgery soon.

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SCHEDULING OF THE NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING:

Raquel: It needs to be before Rodeo, which starts Feb. 18

Mike B: We can tentatively schedule a meeting now, and change the date on the website , if necessary.

The next meeting is scheduled for: Thursday, Feb. 16, 2012

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Paul N: Motioned for the meeting to be adjourned

Frank T.: 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.