



# AEEF News and Views

Newsletter of the Association of Employees of the Educational Foundation



**AUGUST 2010**

## WGBH Requests Bargaining

WGBH Management has formally requested bargaining with AEEF for a new contract. Since Management's request followed a decision by AEEF's Executive Board not to request bargaining—and thereby provide for an automatic one year renewal with no guaranteed general wage increase, but preserving all other benefits—it is likely that Management will be seeking to extract further concessions from members.

The parties are set to discuss scheduling and procedural matters on August 3 and begin formal bargaining two weeks later on August 17.

## Q&A

### What's the Deal with "merit raises?"

Recently, questions have come up regarding merit raises. Here's a concise outline of what the AEEF/WGBH contract has to say about them.

#### "What are merit raises exactly?"

The term "merit raise" typically refers to an increase in an employee's compensation—usually based on job performance—where both decision to increase the employee's pay and the amount by which the employee's pay gets increased is made completely at Management's discretion.

*Continued on page 3*

## AEEF Distributes Employee Surveys

**2010 Member Survey**

Contract bargaining offers a unique opportunity to unionized employees: the right to negotiate with Management over the terms and conditions of employment. What is the appropriate wage for a job given the financial resources available, the cost-of-living in the area, and the employee's experience? How often, and under what circumstances, should that wage be raised? Should an employee's job security be tied solely to funding or to the Foundation's plans for a given project? Unlike a non-union workplace, where take-it-or-leave-it rules, our union contract gives us a voice in deciding what kind of workplace WGBH is going to be.

This survey is one step in the process of negotiating a new contract. In the weeks and months ahead, you will have additional opportunities to participate in this process and help shape a contract that is truly fair. For now, please take the time to fill out and return this survey by July 16, 2010 so that your voice is heard.

**SECTION I: WORK AND CAREER**

1. What attracted you to work at WGBH? (Please check all that apply.)

- WGBH mission
- Opportunity to build skills
- Opportunity be creative
- Logical step in career path
- Non-corporate environment
- Wanted to work for non-profit
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Before becoming employed at WGBH, were you involved with WGBH in another capacity? (Please check all that apply.)

- Intern
- Volunteer
- Temp
- Independent contractor
- Board member
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Union Stewards have been busy collecting surveys from AEEF members to gather information about priorities and concerns related to their wages, benefits, and job satisfaction. This information will be used to inform the Union's approach to bargaining for our new contract.

If you have not yet filled out a survey form, there's still time! See your Union Steward for a copy or contact Business Agent Joe Montagna at [joeyam@igc.org](mailto:joeyam@igc.org).

## Shaw's Strike Ends with a Contract

After almost four months on strike, workers at the Shaw's distribution center have ratified a new four-year contract. The workers, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 791, have begun returning to work through a phased-in process as replacement scab workers are let go.

Shortly after the strike began, Shaw's (which is owned by Supervalu Inc.) cut off health insurance for the workers and their families and began hiring replacement workers. The Union—with support from the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, Massachusetts Jobs With Justice, and other local Unions and community organizations—responded with mobile picketing at 16 stores, a five-day 60-mile march from the Methuen warehouse to the State House, and other actions including a “flash mob” inside the Porter Square supermarket complete with brass band and singers.

Thanks to all AEEF members who lent their support by turning out for picketing and honoring the boycott.

The AEEF News and Views is published by the AEEF Communication Committee.

To write, edit, take photographs, or get involved, contact any officer, your shop steward, or business agent Joe Montagna.

AEEF-CWA Local 1300  
P.O. Box 381938  
Cambridge, MA 02238

Business Agent, Joseph Montagna  
Phone: (617) 625-0692  
E-mail: joeyam@igc.org

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## Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, August 3  
WGBH-AEEF pre-bargaining meeting

Communication Committee Meeting  
12 noon in Gerstein (5S) conference room

Thursday, August 5  
Executive Board Meeting  
12 noon in 5W conference room

Tuesday, August 17  
WGBH-AEEF Contract Bargaining

Communication Committee Meeting  
12 noon in Gerstein (5S) conference room

Wednesday, August 18  
WGBH-AEEF Contract Bargaining

Thursday, August 19  
Executive Board Meeting  
12 noon in 5W conference room

Tuesday, August 31  
Communication Committee Meeting  
12 noon in Gerstein (5S) conference room

End of FY10

## Kudos to MAG Employees

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, countless Americans around the country are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), landmark disability-rights legislation. Staffers in our own Media Access Group deserve a round of applause for all the hard work they do every day to provide access to TV shows, films, theme parks, museums, and more through Captioning and Description services, and continuing development of assistive technology and best practices.

**Q&A: Merit Raises** *continued from page 1*

**“How do merit increases differ from raises in the current AEEF-WGBH contract?”**

While the decision and amount of any merit increase are made at Management’s discretion, the current AEEF-WGBH contract provides for an automatic wage increase every November 1 for every AEEF member. These increases are intended to both increase an employee’s ability to keep up with the cost-of-living as well as compensate newer employees for increased experience. The rates are negotiated between AEEF and WGBH and calculated based on two separate components: The first is called the “General Component” and every member receives this increase to his or her base pay every November 1. The second, called the “Progression Component,” is based on the quartiles found in each wage range and recognizes that, as newer employees gain experience, they should move up to a higher and more appropriate wage for their job. Once an employee exceeds the top of his or her pay scale (that is the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile), the employee receives only the General Component.

**“Does the AEEF/WGBH contract allow merit raises?”**

Yes it does! Section 12.8 reads: “Although the Employer, in its sole discretion, shall have the right to grant or deny above-range merit increases, the Employer agrees that a blanket policy against such increases, written or unwritten, shall not be established. The AEEF and the Employee in question will be notified, in writing, of such merit increases including the duration of the increase.” Such merit increases may be given either in the form of a permanent increase to base pay (to which any future increases will be added) or as a one-time “bonus.”

To sum up: If your manager wishes to reward you for superlative work with a merit raise, adding to the minimum wage requirements established under the Union contract, he or she is free to do so with the AEEF’s blessing.

## **In Memoriam: John Henning**



Local news icon John Henning died on July 7 at the age of 73 from leukemia. Though Mr. Henning was best known to the public for his work as a TV reporter, anchor, and commentator on most of the Boston-area

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**Mr. Henning was not only a member of AFTRA, but held office at both the local as well as the national level, including as National Vice President.**

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stations, he was also an active member of his Union. For some 45 years, Mr. Henning was not only a member of AFTRA, but held office at both the local as well as the national level, including as National Vice President.

AFTRA’s Boston Local plans to establish a scholarship in his name.

AEEF-CWA Local 1300  
P.O. Box 381938  
Cambridge, MA 02238