

## Musicians Local 99's Fife elected international VP

Bruce Fife, president of Musicians Local 99 in Portland, was elected international vice president of the American Federation of Musicians at their recent national convention June 21-24 in Las Vegas. The AFM represents 85,000 members, including symphony, recording, and live-performance musicians throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In his first run for international office, Fife was a part of a "unity" group of candidates who campaigned on building membership, building loyalty, and building relationships while providing living wages and a safe, healthy working environment for musicians.

Among those newly elected with Fife were President Ray Hair of Dallas, Texas, and International Executive Board member Tina Morrison of Spokane, Wash., the only woman on the Executive Board. Re-elected were Secretary Treasurer Sam Folio and Vice President from Canada Bill Skolnick.

As president of Local 99, Fife has been active on both local and national issues. He helped foster the "Fair Trade Music" campaign, which promotes fair wages for local musicians and publicly recognizes "Fair Trade" establishments; he helped facilitate the acquisition of a non-commercial educational construc-



BRUCE FIFE

tion permit for full-power, non-profit radio station KZME in Portland to benefit local artists by being an outlet for local musicians; and he successfully lobbied the Oregon Liquor Control Commission in regard to minor entertainment rules, thus allowing minors to be able to perform in venues such as bars and 21-and-over clubs. Nationally, Fife has worked with the Federal Communications Commission regarding consolidation of media ownership and net neutrality, and he continues to lobby legislators in support of the Performance Rights Act, legislation to provide royalties to musicians for airplay of their music on terrestrial radio.

Prior to his post with Musicians, Local 99, Fife spent 25 years as a full time working-class musician performing throughout the western states.

## ...Three-year contract at Daimler

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ing team took the unusual step of encouraging Daimler to hold a meeting of employees to explain its proposals for cuts — something not normally allowed during bargaining. Workers made it clear they weren't pleased.

"It was communicated fairly well that this work force was solid," Kear said, "not only at the bargaining table, but at work."

Bargaining resumed June 15, just weeks before the June 30 expiration of the previous contracts. In the end, the company backed away from talk of closure, and gave workers an extra measure of security: If it does close the plant, it will pay severance of two weeks wages for every year of service to all employees who had worked there within a year of the closure. In the event of closure, Daimler would also negotiate over retiree health coverage. Past commitments mean the company would face roughly \$150 million termination cost if it closed the plant, Kear said — a factor that would weigh heavily against any decision to close.

"I'm very pleased that the company was able to talk about a long-term commitment to the Portland plant," Kear told the Labor Press.

The new contracts maintain seven sick days per year, and make no changes to the way vacation time is accrued. Daimler had earlier proposed that new hires and recalled workers accrue vacation time at a lower rate.

Daimler also agreed to pay "catch-up" pension surcharges in the amounts recommended by trustees of the Service Employees and Machinists multi-employer pension plans. The additional contributions are to make up for investment value lost in the 2008 financial meltdown. For participants in the Machinists plan, the surcharge will total 75 percent by the third year of the contract — \$769.85 a month per worker.

Union members did make concessions on the health benefit: Employees' share of the monthly premium will increase, to \$45 a month for employee-only coverage, \$90 a month for employee plus one coverage, and \$130 a month for full-family coverage. And in the Machinists' health plan, co-pays and deductibles will also increase.

In the Machinists contract, Daimler management wanted the ability to cross-train workers within 10-person work teams. The union agreed to that in return for a process of getting input from workers on the shop floor. A

joint labor management committee will oversee the cross-training.

Machinists members also agreed to change the rules on how mandatory overtime could be allocated.

Machinists approved their contract by nearly two-thirds. Members of Sign Painters and Paint Makers Local 1094 initially turned down their contract, but ratified it after members declined to authorize a strike.

"Our members now have the prospect of their jobs continuing for three years without a reduction in pay, and the confidence that the Portland truck plant will be operational for that time," Kear said in an official statement announcing the ratification.

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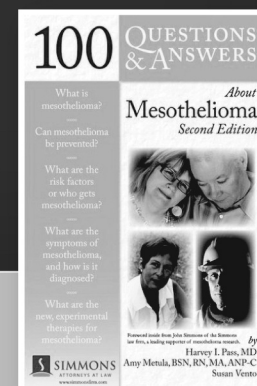
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