



MUSICENTRAL

AFM Local 660 March 2009
Founded in 1913—Tuned for the 21st Century

Local 660



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President's Message

General Meeting = Good Food & Key Action

AFM Local 660's members met at the South Hills Business School in State College, PA on Saturday, February 28th. Fifteen members and their guests met for two and one-half hours.



March 2009 Issue

- General Membership Meeting—Phase One
- Sustainable Music Venues
- Black Musicians
- Member in the Media
- Jazz Beat—Rick Hirsch
- Spotlight on Mike Loewen

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A 'Listen to the Music' Partner

WORTH NOTING

The Recession & The Arts
Major Findings Indicate
Sharp Downturn in Funding
New York City Study
January 2009

700 organizations surveyed
100 replied to survey
Organizations with budgets of
less than \$100,000 and
over \$50million per year

78% indicate budget reductions
50% plan to lay off employees
69% deferring new hires
45% plan to cancel or postpone
programs within the next year

Report indicated that a sizeable
number are postponing fundrais-
ing and canceling or postponing
moves or capital improvements.

<http://www.allianceforarts.org/images/>

Phase One of the "Sustainable Music Venue" Initiative is Working

Efforts by AFM 660 to make this area a destination for high quality music by supporting all local musicians with higher wages and written contracts is definitely working. So far, four bars in State College have agreed to abide by the wage and contract guidelines and so will be designated as Sustainable Music Venues. They are:

Café 210 , J.R. Mangan	Dante's (Bar Bleu, the Saloon, etc.), Jennifer Zangrilli Hoag
Tony's Big Easy , Tony Sapia	Zeno's , Dave Staab, Manager

Only one bar has declined (the Rathskellar), and four or five more are still considering it, but hadn't announced by press time. Those who participate gain free advertising and a competitive advantage.

The participating venues will follow minimum wage guidelines for a gig of three hours or less:

One musician: \$100 Two musicians: \$75 each 3-5 musicians: \$65 each
6-9 musicians: \$60 each 10-13 musicians: \$55 each 14 or more musicians: \$40 each

The managers also have agreed to offer groups written contracts, which should reduce post-gig arguing and hassles. The thinking behind this initiative is that by better sustaining musicians in the area, we will provide better music and create larger audiences, effectively growing a bigger pie rather than fighting about control of a smaller pie.

Approaches are now being made to the Central PA Festival of the Arts and the Peoples Choice Festival to get them in line with the wage guidelines of AFM 660. Future elements of the program include increased AFM 660 membership (have you asked your band members to join?) and AFM 660 serving as a communication and booking clearinghouse between bars and musicians.

Onward and upward to making the best music scene better!



Photos by John Vincenti



Sustainable Music Venues

Central Pennsylvania Musicians Association

Recognition
and Encourages
Patronage of



Café 210 – Dante's – Tony's – Zeno's

Black History Month Revisted – Distinguished Musicians

In 1926, a Harvard scholar by the name of Dr. Carter G. Woodson organized the first annual Negro History Week. The said event happened on the second week of February which also coincides with the birthdays of two great civil rights leaders - Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. February's issue of AFM 660 was remiss in not recognizing this celebration, here are several profiles of famous African-American musicians.

Louis Armstrong - Musician and composer of jazz music, known as one of the founding fathers of jazz.

Chuck Berry - Blues and rock and roll guitarist and vocalist

James Brown - Vocalist and keyboardist of Soul, R&B, Funk, Pop and Dance music genres.

Ray Charles - Known as "The Genius," he was a gospel singer/songwriter and pianist.

Nat King Cole - Started as a pianist, later known as a vocalist. Primarily a jazz musician in 1930s-40s, then pop tunes in the 1950s to the 60s.

John Coltrane - Influential tenor jazz saxophonist.

Edmond Dede - Violin prodigy and Orchestra Conductor at the Alcazar Theatre for 27 years.

Duke Ellington - Composer, bandleader and jazz pianist, fondly called "The Duke."

Ella Fitzgerald - Known as "The First Lady of Song" and for her incredible scat-singing.

Dizzy Gillespie - One of the founding fathers of jazz and one of the inventors of bebop.

Billie Holiday - Dubbed "Lady Day," she was one of the foremost blues singers in history known for her soulful voice.

Francis Johnson - The inventor of cotillions and was the first major band master in the US.

Scott Joplin - Known as the "King of Ragtime" due to his classic rags for the piano.

B.B. King - Known as "The King of the Blues."

Charlie "Bird" Parker - Influenced the development of "bop" in the 1940s and was one of the greatest improvising soloists in jazz.

Florence Beatrice Price - The first African-American woman composer whose work was performed by a leading US orchestra.

Ma Rainey - Known as the first great blues singer, she made over 100 recordings under the Paramount label.

Bessie Smith - Known as "Empress of the Blues," one of the greatest blues singers of the 1920s.

Sarah Vaughan - One of the greatest jazz vocalists in history whose career spanned almost 50 years.

Fats Waller - Jazz organist, pianist, singer, composer, conductor and bandleader of small bands during the 1930s.

Other accomplished Black jazz musicians and composers: **Fletcher Henderson** (1897-1952), **Coleman Hawkins** (1904-1969), **Count Basie** (1904-1969),

Johnny Hodges (1906-1970), **Art Tatum** (1909-1956), **Ben Webster** (1909-1973), **Lester Young** (1909-1956), **Roy Eldridge** (1911-1989)

(http://jazz.about.com/od/historyjazztimeline/tp/Ten_Swing_Era_Musicians.htm) (<http://musiced.about.com/od/blackhistorymonth/a/blackhistory.htm>)



Member in the Media Andrew Jackson, Sr., Board member and former officer of AFM 660 will appear on Channel 7 (Comcast cable) in a C-Net interview with Candace Danneker regarding music in the Centre Region. Thursdays, March 19th and 26th-6:30pm; Fridays, March 20 and 27-8:am; Saturdays, March 21 and 28-7:30pm; and Sundays, March 22 and 29-11am.



Spotlight on Mike Loewen - Continued from Page 4

community concert bands and two big bands. One band was a rehearsal band in Seattle, which had some of the Seattle/Tacoma area. Loewen showed up for rehearsal once a week, just for the joy of playing big band jazz. Jeff Miller, one of Jack Miller's sons played trumpet in that band: he was working at Boeing. Jeff had played lead trumpet in the Phi Mu Alpha band.

Eventually Mike moved back to State College, and continued to find places to play. "Mark Lusk invited me (and Mike Bruster) to play with the Penn State Trombone Choir in 1989, and I learned more from him than any of my earlier teachers." Loewen said that there was no such group as the trombone choir while he was at school. "There's just no describing the kind of sound that the group gets. I bought a Bach 50B bass trombone in 1989 which I still play, although it's been heavily modified." Mike continued to play with the trombone choir on and off over the years, getting the opportunity to perform at the Eastman School of Music, PMEA and the Eastern Trombone Workshop, with players like Joe Alessi, Michael Davis and George Roberts.

Again reminiscing, he said, "One of the places I always enjoyed visiting was the HiWay Pizza on Friday nights when the Tarnished 6 (T6) was playing. I had never been particularly good at improvisation, although I did try to do a little in various big bands. Roger Munnell proved to be a real inspiration while playing trombone with the T6, and I tried to copy his style." With tongue in cheek, he continued, "My big chance came one night when Roger asked me to cover for him for an hour at HiWay. I did so well that night, that they called another trombone player to sub for Roger for the next year." Following that experience, Mike spent that year learning Dixieland tunes and sitting in with John Kepler's Deacons of Dixieland. When Roger's sub wasn't available for a Nittany Lion Inn gig they turned to me again and this time, "I was ready." Mike noted that he even knew some of his solos, and they've been using him ever since. This gave Loewen the incentive to work on his tuba playing, and the next time they needed a sub for John Kovalchik, he mentioned that he also played tuba. They gave him a shot, and he has also been subbing for John since then. The T6 got him started in Dixieland Jazz, and now he plays in the Dixie Lion Jazz Band and the Deacons of Dixieland.

Big band jazz is still one of his favorite outlets, and he feels that the Valley Jazz Orchestra (VJO) is one of the best bands he has ever played in. "We had a seven year run at the American Ale House, once a month, which unfortunately ended in 2007. What a great bunch of musicians! I'm hoping that State College will see a reincarnation of the VJO in the not too distant future."

Another style of music that Mike enjoys listening to is vocal jazz. Mike likes the Manhattan Transfer, the Four Freshmen and the Mills Brothers. The combination of the Mills Brothers and Count Basie featured some great arrangements. "I never dreamed that I'd be able to actually play for such a group. But, the Mills Brothers came to Bellefonte not once, but twice with the remaining brother Donald and his, son John. I finally got to play with the band backing them, along with our other local musicians."

Another great opportunity was to go on the road for a week, with the Hoagy Carmichael Centennial Tour. "I was hired, along with several other local musicians and a couple from eastern Pennsylvania to play in a 13 piece band behind a cast of superb singers and dancers, in a show which featured the music of Hoagy Carmichael. Hoagy's son, Hoagy Bix Carmichael was along with us on the tour."

Mike came to terms with his music career at one point in his life. "I never deluded myself that I could make a living as a performing musician, but I'm quite satisfied with the way things have worked out." Loewen has a full time job as a Senior Research Programmer with Penn State's Information Technology Services. His job affords him flexibility to take time off if an interesting gig comes along. "I consider myself a semi-professional musician, and I get to play as much as I like, sometimes even more than I like." Summers are particularly busy, with all the festivals and concert series, but he says that he can gig year round. Mike plays trombone, bass trombone, euphonium and tuba (and a little trumpet), and can get to play a variety of music in many groups. Currently, he is playing with the Dixie Lion Jazz Band, the Deacons of Dixieland, the Consord Sounds, Slide Zone (5 trombones and rhythm, jazz), the State College Area Community Band and a tuba/euphonium quartet. He also leads Trombone Chowder, a trombone quartet. Besides those regular groups, Mike subs with the Tarnished 6, the Nittany Valley Symphony and many other performing groups in Central PA.

His musical 'arsenal' also referred by him as his 'heavy metal' has grown over the years. "I never suspected (in school) that I'd need to have a different trombone to play different styles of music." Mike's instruments include: jazz trombone--Bach 16 dual-bore, symphonic horn--Bach 42 with single Thayer valve, bass trombone--Bach 50 with dual Thayers and a Shires lead pipe, Besson euphonium, a Weltklang BBB tuba, a Schilke M1 trumpet and a King Flugabone (valve trombone).

"I've been an AFM 660 member since the mid-70s, when I started playing with the Dance Band of State College. In those days, if you wanted to get paid for an MPTF gig, you needed to be an AFM member. I've maintained my membership ever since, even while out of town." Mike says the AFM has a different presence in Central PA from some of the other areas he's lived or worked in. "While I was in Maryland for two years, I called up the director of the Rockville Community band looking for a place to play. He invited me to play with the band, and then I mentioned that I was an AFM member and asked about other opportunities. It turned out that he was president of their local, and that union members weren't permitted to play for free. Basically his comment was, 'I didn't hear that.'" Mike Loewen, concludes, "I'm glad to see that our local is making allowances for members to play in organizations such as the Community Band, while upholding standards for those same members playing professional gigs. I haven't played too many out of town gigs lately, but my AFM membership has certainly helped in situations like the Hershey Theatre."

Article and Photo by Mike Loewen, Edited by John Vincenti



Jazz Beat by Rick Hirsch

www.HirschMusic.biz

On Saturday, Feb 14, 2009, Jazz drummer and bandleader Louie Bellson died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. He was 84. Born Luigi Paulino Alfredo Francesco Antonio Balassoni in Rock Falls, Illinois, Bellson performed in the 1940s and 1950s with Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Harry James and Duke Ellington. Honored with a Jazz Masters Award from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1994, Bellson also received a Living Jazz Legends Award from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2007. Bellson had more than 200 recorded appearances as leader and sideman included sessions with Jazz at the Philharmonic, Woody Herman, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong and James Brown. Bellson also penned more than 1,000 compositions and arrangements, as well as more than a dozen books and booklets on drums and percussion.

Another tragic death was that of multi-reedman Gerry Niewood who perished in the Continental plane crash near Buffalo. Among other things, Gerry Niewood was Chuck Mangione's saxophonist for many, many years.

Legendary pianist McCoy Tyner is alive and well!! As you are probably aware, his group recently performed this in Schwab Auditorium at Penn State. Internationally-known (State College, Foster Avenue resident) jazz scholar Barry Kernfeld presented a brown-bag lunch talk: *The Avant Garde meets Dance Music*, at the PSU Outreach Building Lobby, Innovation Park. He included excerpts from pianist McCoy Tyner's recordings. Kernfeld speaks about a stylistic dilemma facing jazz musicians in the 1960s, Tyner's historic solution to that problem as a member of John Coltrane's quartet, and the ways in which he carried his innovations forward into his own groups and his unaccompanied playing in later decades.



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 Mike Loewen—A Versatile Musician



LOCAL 660

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October 29, 1913
Tuned for 21st Century

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**WANTED
NEWSLETTER
Articles
Deadline
20th of month**

Michael (Mike) Loewen was born in Bellefonte, but has lived in State College most of his life. His parents are Henry and Virginia Loewen, both retired school teachers from the local school district. Mike's father taught junior high and elementary instrumental music for over 30 years. His mother taught elementary school and was a reading specialist for the last part of her career. Loewen has two younger siblings. Brother Phil is the band director at Southern Huntingdon High School in Orbisonia, PA and his sister, Chris works for Chase Financial and lives in Warrington, PA.

"My entire family has been into music," says Mike. "Actually, we joke that you have to pass an audition to get IN to the family. Fortunately, my wife Kathi, a flutist, passed the audition. Phil married a pianist and Chris married a euphonium player."

When Mike was in first grade he was encouraged to take piano lessons. "I took lessons from Dad for about a year. I quit lessons, but dabbled on the piano on my own every now and then. In fourth grade, I was about to start instrumental music lessons at Radio Park Elementary School in State College, PA. I had to decide which instrument I wanted to play. My choice of instruments went something like this: Dad—We have a trombone, a clarinet and a violin in the house: which one would you like to play? Mike—I'll play the trombone."

His father showed him how to put the horn together (which was most of lesson one at school), and had him playing 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' by the time he reported for his first school lesson. Three years later, Mike noted that his brother Phil was presented with a similar decision, except that the trombone was not an option. He chose the clarinet. When it came to his sister's turn in another three years, she also wanted to play the clarinet so they found one for her. Mike commented that when Phil took piano lessons from his Dad for a year in first grade, he quit also. When it came Chris' turn on the piano, "my parents decided to have her take piano lessons from a different teacher. Funny, she's the only one who stuck with it! Both of them are still playing, and their kids all play (or sing)." His father still plays too in the Little German Band and the Bellefonte Community Band.

Mike had interests in other instruments besides the trombone. One summer in high school he borrowed a baritone and a fingering chart, and two weeks later he had it figured out. He played baritone in the marching band that year, and also played a little tuba in high school. Upon graduation from State College Area High School in 1973, Loewen entered Penn State as an Electrical Engineering major. He said, "I know that sounds funny given my background, but I had always been interested in electronics and computers and had taught myself enough to be able to repair radios and do some rudimentary digital design. However, I had problems with the heavy mathematics course load and ended up taking some time off before switching over to Music Education. I graduated in the Fall of 1979, with a BS in Music Ed."

The early 1980s were a tough time for a newly graduated music teacher to find a full-time job in Centre County schools and even elsewhere. "I did some substitute teaching in State College and Penns Valley while sending out resumes and interviewing. My goal was to be a high school band director, and I'd actually had a bit of experience. Jack Miller hired me to direct the summer band program at Penns Valley in 1979 and I really enjoyed it." However as time passed, Mike decided a career change was in order and enlisted in the Air Force in 1982. "Everyone assumes that I played in one of the Air Force bands," Loewen commented, "but I was actually a computer maintenance technician." During that period Mike took a series of classes in computer programming and mathematics refreshers from a local community college and tacked on an Associates Degrees in Technology. He left the Air Force in September of 1986 and had a job six weeks later, working on Hewlett Packard minicomputers in Gaithersburg, MD.

Mike reminisces, "I played trombone all through junior high and high school, in practically every instrumental group available to me. I played my first musical in 9th grade, 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown,' which started a long affiliation with community theatre. In the mid-70s, there was a core group of us who played most of the shows at the Boal Barn for Kay Rossi: Herb McKinstry and Blair Pfahl on trumpet, and Mike Bruster and I on trombone." Loewen said that all four friends are still in the area, although Blair isn't playing much. "I don't play nearly as many shows these days, but I've done 'On the Town' and 'The King and I' with the Nittany Valley Symphony in recent years." Mike had the chance to play "Thoroughly Modern Millie" on its first tour at the Hershey Theatre, with a bunch of 'fantastic musicians.' Loewen remembered that Mark Lusk recommended him for the gig and told him, "It's the closest you can come to playing on Broadway."

At Penn State Mike joined Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia fraternity, which opened up many more playing opportunities. "I started playing with their big band, and discovered my love for jazz, especially big band jazz. It was also at that time that I switched over to bass trombone on a school owned King Duo Gravis, then later to a Holton TR-180. I continued to play my Dad's Olds Ambassador trombone in the marching Blue Band, which took me to five different bowl games during my time in the band. I bought my first "professional" trombone, a King 4B."

Loewen noted that a great opportunity arose while he was at Penn State around 1974, when Urbie Green was brought in as the featured soloist for the concert Blue Band. Dr. Dunlop, the director, rounded up 20 trombonists to back up Urbie on two of his 21 Trombones arrangements: 'Here's That Rainy Day' and 'Something You Got'. "It was the first time I'd every played with a trombone ensemble of that size, and to play with Urbie was a great experience."

When it came to playing music, Loewen said, "The most time I've ever been away from the trombone was the 6 weeks I spent at Lackland AFB for Basic Training, and even then I managed to borrow a horn from the rec center a couple of times. At tech school at Keesler AFB, I joined the student Drum and Bugle Corps (The Blue Knights), and played bass-baritone and contra-bass bugle during my 9 months there." When he was stationed at McChord AFB in Tacoma, WA, Mike played with two

