

ICSOM SECRETARY'S REPORT – 2011

Since the last conference I have produced and distributed 13 **Settlement Bulletins** (it has finally calmed down); 9 were new settlements, 4 were amended agreements to existing collective bargaining agreements, and were also posted on the ICSOM website, Delegate-L and Orchestra-L. I know there are still updated bulletins missing but I have yet to receive any information. I encourage delegates to report this information as soon as possible.

It has become practice now to post press releases and other such announcements that require immediate attention for letter writing campaign requests, financial assistance, or even bankruptcy announcements. I'd like to encourage delegates to consider once more using the ICSOM bulletin as a means of communication because, as useful as Delegate-L and Orchestra-L have become, they have very small readership in comparison posting bulletins for all to see in our workplaces. I find I have to tell my colleagues about something that is posted on Orchestra-L but they don't or won't sign up themselves. An announcement or special bulletin can be in the mail within a day or two of receiving the information, so I please consider this in the future.

This year I have enjoyed working with, and getting to know, our new general counsel, Susan Martin, as we updated the **Delegate Manual**. I will distribute a new version of the "Manual" at the conference. I have begun discussion regarding how to distribute updates, possibly utilizing the ICSOM website. And speaking of the website, I am very pleased to be working with Charles Noble from the Oregon Symphony, our new webmaster. We have already set up a great way to communicate and transfer files for posting and Charles very quickly updated and posted files, such as ICSOM governing board minutes that had not been posted since the last conference. I will be speaking with other members of the board and with Charles to make suggested changes to our interface with the website, including the possibility of being able to register for conferences in the future and submit settlement bulletin information.

Five **delegate mailings** were sent throughout the season that included ICSOM and ROPA bulletins, Union Steward and PCC newsletters, delegate changes and roster updates, replacement pages for the ICSOM Delegate Manual, conference information and other issues of significance. (OCSM's communications continue to be spotty at best.) I continue to send letters and updated rosters to all new delegates, welcoming them to the ICSOM family. As always, please be sure that whenever there is a change in delegate status, or if you change addresses, that you inform me right away so our communication can continue seamlessly. Since we are moving to an electronic version of the Delegate Manual, this too should be transferred to the new delegate.

By the time you receive this I will have produced the **Conference minutes** and 9 sets of Governing Board minutes (including minutes from before, during and after the Conference, as well as the mid-winter meeting in Los Angeles CA.) All minutes from the Conference as well as Governing Board call/meeting minutes are posted on the ICSOM website. The Conference minutes (with proof-reading assistance by Member at Large Paul Gunther and Chairman Bruce Ridge) were completed at the end of November and were included in the early-January mailing. They will be approved at the beginning of the ICSOM Conference in Detroit.

I submitted multiple **articles for *Senza Sordino*** this season. The first issue following the annual conference always includes a summary of the proceedings (I also produce a reduced version for the October *International Musician* each year), and I compile the adopted resolutions for publication (they are also in the first delegate mailing.) Two Secretary Columns covered my visit to Detroit on Labor Day to march in the parade with Detroit Symphony Musicians, my first AFM-EPF Trustee meetings that included traveling to an educational conference in Honolulu and meeting with Honolulu Symphony musicians, and asserting that orchestra board members should receive training to be effective trustees of our institutions. Following implementation of one of ICSOM's request for a calculator available to estimate pension benefits, I wrote an article about the new AFM-EPF website's Estimator. I also provided photos for articles about the Detroit Symphony and Louisville Orchestra.

Anyone attending last year's conference knows the governing board spent a lot of time updating and rewriting the **ICSOM bylaws**. Since certain changes require ratification by the entire membership of ICSOM, I am required to distribute ratification information and ballots to orchestras within 30 days after the conference ends and 90 days after the conference ends, a majority of orchestras must approve the changes. Thankfully, by previously changing the reporting mechanism, notification was timely and 44 orchestras reported their votes prior to the deadline. My thanks to all the delegates who helped accomplish these results.

I have been **on the road** this year, sometimes for ICSOM and sometimes as a rank and file AFM-EPF Trustee – sometimes I get to wear both hats! One week after the Houston conference ended, Brian Rood and I began our

tenure in NYC as pension fund trustees. I learn something new every day since we have so many issues to deal with, from deciding which fund managers to engage to administrative issues to document verbiage to the recent bankruptcy filings by some of our orchestras. It's interesting and stimulating work and I thank AFM President Ray Hair for believing I am worthy of this important task. Days after leaving New York I joined Brian, Bruce Ridge, Ray Hair, ROPA President Carla Lehmeier, as well as Jacksonville Symphony musicians and Robert Levine, to march in solidarity with the members of the Detroit Symphony and Local 5. Former ICSOM Member-at-Large Paul Ganson, who retired from the DSO a few years ago, and his wife were kind enough to provide a bed for the night and car service to and from various events. I'm grateful for their hospitality and look forward to seeing Paul at the conference in Detroit. Following the parade, Bruce, Brian, Robert Levine and I were shuttled around by DSO ICSOM delegate Dave Everson as we toured a few prospective downtown hotels for our upcoming conference. In the end, our relationship with the Hyatt, cultivated during my visit to Houston to choose that hotel as our 2010 conference site, proved helpful and so we will meet at the Dearborn Hyatt.

Of course, the parade proved to be the tip of what was to become an enormous iceberg. Since the DSO is the orchestra I grew up with (and my teacher was a member), I had a vested interest in participating in letter writing campaigns, as well as crafting the flyer (with input and approval by my orchestra committee and NSO President & CEO Alan Valentine) the Nashville Symphony included in our program booklets the weekend Leonard Slatkin returned to conduct.

In November Brian Rood, Local 802 President Tino Gagliardi and I attended pension education meetings in Honolulu HI. Since some of our evenings were free, we were very pleased to meet one evening with a number of Honolulu Symphony committee members and Local 677 President Brien Matson. The night before we left we were invited to speak at an orchestra meeting at the Local. I admire these musicians so much for their perseverance and am so hoping their efforts to begin anew as the Hawai'i Symphony, with a new board and management, will be incredibly successful.

At our midwinter meeting in Los Angeles, I put on another hat when we met with the LA Opera committee; that was as **chair of the Membership Committee**. Brian and MAL Meredith Snow (who was an incredible host and even agreed to take me hiking one day behind the Hollywood sign!) are also members of the committee. We, along with Bruce Ridge, met to discuss the orchestra's application for membership in ICSOM. Unfortunately, there were a few concerns about terms in their CBA that would have made acceptance difficult, so the LA Opera, for now, has withdrawn their application. Brian and I also donned our pension trustee hats when we were joined by fellow rank and file trustee Phil Yao to discuss AFM-EPF funding status with LA Phil pension committee members before rehearsal. After attending the LA Philharmonic rehearsal in Disney Hall with Music Director Gustavo Dudamel on the podium, our little group was joined by orchestra committee chair Peter Rofé (who also serves on the pension committee and is a member of ICSOM's electronic media committee), and Executive Director Deborah Borda for lunch – and a photo op with Dudamel, who was at another table in the restaurant. My request to see Local 47 and visit briefly with fellow pension trustee Vince Trombetta (Local 47 President & IEB member), and other officers was an added bonus.

Following our March pension meetings I was able to drive up the road to Louisville to attend the "Keep Louisville Symphonic" joint concert between the Louisville Orchestra (AKA Major orchestra across the Ohio River from Jeffersonville, Indiana) and the National Symphony (AKA Musicians from our Nation's Capitol Orchestra) who were in Kentucky for their annual state residency. It was a great concert and very well attended. It was also a wonderful opportunity to see friends from both orchestras, followed by dinner with ICSOM electronic media committee chair Bill Foster, Louisville Orchestra ICSOM delegate Trevor Johnson, and others.

In May I visited Chicago on vacation but took time out to visit a number of potential 2012 conference hotels (even on my birthday – that's dedication, right?) We need to begin planning our 2012 conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of ICSOM, especially because of the location. MAL Matt Comerford was terrific as he and I worked with Local 10-208 choosing hotels, and then he drove me around from hotel to hotel.

Also in May, during our pension meetings in NYC, Brian and I took the opportunity to have dinner with the newest ICSOM delegate for the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Jennifer Johnson. We have also been able to see our good friend and former ICSOM member-at-large Jay Blumenthal periodically, and I hope we will be able to catch up with more of our ICSOM colleagues as we return to NYC in the future.

In June I attended the Southern Conference of Locals in Atlanta GA, where I caught up briefly with ICSOM treasurer Michael Moore, as well as many IEB members and local officers. At an earlier AFM-EPF trustee

meeting, AFM trustees decided we should have a more prominent role in the discussion of our pension fund, so a sub-group that includes myself, Brian, Bill Moriarity and Phil Yao, have taken the opportunity to report on the Fund instead of putting all the reporting responsibility on executive director Maureen Kilkelly, finance director Will Luebking and benefits director Vinni LoPresti.

I was the first “guinea pig” to make a presentation at SoCo and will next present at the ROPA conference in Portland ME, and at the TMA conference (which is also at the Dearborn Hyatt). I will be joined by Brian and Bill Moriarity for our ICSOM presentation. Other AFM-EPF trustees will also be in attendance so I encourage you to introduce yourselves to them.

Recently we received news of interest to the **Electronic Media Committee** – a decision by the NLRB upheld an earlier ruling that MAA (The Cleveland Orchestra) has an obligation to bargain electronic media terms with the AFM, not Local 4. This is very important since the IMA now has 30 signatories, with more undoubtedly in the pipeline. One of our breakout sessions at the upcoming conference is electronic media so Debbie Newmark and Bill Foster can discuss in depth the merits of this agreement, which was put in place once the managers chose to walk out of a negotiation that was 95% complete a year ago.

This past month I have been contacting people who are responsible for updating various sections of the ICSOM Delegate Manual. The **Officer Reports** are just the first piece of what will be distributed in a different form this summer. I have also spent a great deal of time writing **resolutions** for consideration at the conference (which are oddly cathartic). My opinions about the deplorable behavior of boards and managers these past few years have been pretty well documented and it is my fervent desire to reactivate some sort of major managers’ liaison committee to meet with ICSOM officers and others to begin a true, meaningful dialogue about how to help and provide our orchestras with positive messages, and practical information and ideas rather than a laundry list of excuses and reasons to shrug off the responsibility and burden onto others, especially musicians.

On my way to Detroit, I plan to stop off in Milwaukee to see what is in the **ICSOM archives**. I want to see what it contains so we can 1) begin scanning them so they are available to others, including officers, and 2) possibly display some of it at the 2012 conference. Conference planning and work never ends, it seems.

Finally, I add to the words of praise and admiration for two groups – SSD and the members of our Governing Board.

For a number of years SSD lacked real vision regarding what the division could provide to all members. SSD director Chris Durham embraced ICSOM’s recommendation to engage David Herring from the Minnesota Orchestra to improve and increase ways to use the wage charts for bargaining, and he looked for new ideas and ways to assemble and review information. SSD is vastly improved thanks to the work of Chris, Nathan, Debbie, Rochelle and Joel. Chris returns to his first love, negotiation, and he’s a great one as my orchestra, and I, can attest. I welcome Jay Blumenthal to his new position as director and know that he will continue to build on the wonderful foundation Chris has begun.

Then there are those 9 people I spend so much time with, either in person, on the phone or online. Susan Martin is a welcome addition to our cast of characters, Meredith is our “cruise director” - always considerate, Cathy is passionate, Paul is the big dreams guy, Matt is practical and thoughtful, Richard’s the one who crafts our (and his) thoughts and words so eloquently, Michael is thrifty and generous at the same time, Brian is my perpetual travel companion, and the big kahuna, the guy at the top? Bruce amazes me and leaves me speechless with all he does – he inspires all of us. These are my dearest friends; I love them and couldn’t do what I do without them. Bruce says he is never happier than when we are together – even in our worst moments, I must agree.

On a personal note, the beginning of last season was very difficult as my orchestra continued to recover from the flood that kicked us out of our hall for 8 months. Happily, our return on December 31st was a time for celebration – we were more than ready to put 2010 behind us!

This August promises to be an important conference. We have wonderful speakers, presentations, and panel discussions. It’s special for me because I am coming home after 12 years away. (Though I have now lived in Tennessee longer than in Michigan, in my heart, I will always be a Michigander.) My thanks to all of you for your support and dedication; it is one of the greatest privileges of my life to work on your behalf. See you in August my friends.

*Laura Ross
July 2010*