

Senza Sordino

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ICSOM In The CyberAge

Email and the Internet have revolutionized the way ICSOM does business. Not only is it easier for the entire Board to be involved in decision-making, but those decisions can be made based on much more complete information from the field than ever before. This new ease of daily communication among people spread over a wide geographical area has also produced a new level of discourse among the ICSOM Governing Board on the philosophical issues of our business. For instance, Mary Plaine, ICSOM Member-at-Large, wrote this to her fellow ICSOM Governing Board members on May 13, 2000:

How can we hope to have any kind of meaningful voice in the future of our industry if, on one hand, orchestra committees and negotiating committees, and on the other hand, the ICSOM Conference, have no meaningful connections? I fear that not only will we not be on the leading edge of our future but we'll be stuck back in a time-warp. Rather than having a position of influence on our future and our orchestras we will become a dinosaur and a monument to the way things were. We need to recognize that our reality is a moving and changing environment and that what used to work for almost all of us is now only useful for some of us. Some orchestras are finding different ways of relating to their management and boards and audiences. We need to make room in ICSOM for all of these voices so that we can learn from each other, benefit from the mistakes and triumphs of all, and provide resources that meet a variety of challenges. We need input from the bottom up and not only to be imposing our way from the top down.

Many of the articles that have appeared in *Senza Sordino* in recent years have been spawned in the course of these enhanced Governing Board communications. Several of the articles in this issue of *Senza Sordino*, such as those on page 2-3 relating to intra-ICSOM communication, and on page 4-5 relating to differing experiences with the Interest-Based Bargaining approach to negotiations, have been written in response to concerns such as those expressed above by Mary.

It is also now possible for ICSOM's total membership to be part of this wider cyber-discussion and information sharing via Orchestra-L. Please join in. (To subscribe to Orchestra-L, send an email asking to be added to the list to rtl@icsom.org.)

This issue of *Senza Sordino* marks the end of our three-part series on the history of ICSOM. We started by painting a picture of life in the orchestra world of the mid-20th Century, then described how things changed during the latter half of the century, after the birth of ICSOM. Now we conclude with a look at some of the facets of today's ICSOM.

When ICSOM was founded in the 1960s, orchestra musicians were fighting with their managements for the most basic of economic and human rights, and fighting with their unions for the most basic of union rights—among them, the right to ratify their contracts. But all these battles, like those we and all other union members wage today, were not really about rights, privileges, or money—they were about *respect*.

Now, all ICSOM orchestra musicians have the right to ratify their contracts. Managements now know that they must take their musicians seriously as major players in the life of their institutions. But most of us still do not have the full measure of respect that we deserve, from management or union, and the tenor of ICSOM conversations these days continues to lean toward finding ways to adjust our relationships with union and management to achieve a greater measure of that elusive respect.

As long as orchestra musicians continue in this basic struggle for respect, there will be a need for ICSOM. But the social, political, and technological developments that are changing our society and our industry are also changing ICSOM. What I hope will never change is the perseverance and determination of ICSOM to aggressively address the needs of our musicians caught in the throes of this evolution. Ira Glasser, the retiring executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (founded in 1920 initially to defend the rights of labor), said this in his final address to the members of the ACLU; it applies equally to us:

We have learned, over and over again, that these struggles never end, and that it is crucial to outlast our adversaries if we mean to prevail. I invite your stamina.

Marsha Schweitzer, Editor, Senza Sordino

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Duties of the ICSOM Delegates

*Adapted from an article by
Frederick Zenone, ICSOM Chairman, 1980-1986*

We delegates are the musicians who perform in the symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras of this country. We remain performers even as we undertake additional responsibilities of labor organization. Each of us is in a position to know first hand the requirements of orchestral performers, to understand the nature of a musician's artistic and material life. This experience that each delegate brings to and takes from the conference is something that we all share.

We have responsibilities to two organizations. We have obligations to our individual orchestras, and we have obligations to ICSOM as a national organization of many orchestras. Ideally these responsibilities are always parallel.

To our home orchestras we are responsible for *teaching and sharing the knowledge we gain* about negotiations, pension plans, fringe benefits, working conditions, electronic media activity, and many other topics. We are responsible for *gathering and reporting specific information* our orchestra directs us to get from other orchestras about working conditions, artistic matters, labor-management relations and their implementation. We are responsible for *informing the conference* of the concerns of our own orchestras.

To ICSOM we are responsible for carrying out the administrative duties of *collecting and processing ICSOM dues, directory and wage chart information, AFM Strike Fund contributions, and conductor evaluations*. We are responsible for *preparing reports for Senza Sordino* and the ICSOM Bulletin. We are responsible for *maintaining liaison* with major committees and with other orchestras.

These are the workaday duties that keep our organization operating. But the real life and energy of our organization is the reciprocal exchange of ideas among orchestras and between each orchestra and ICSOM leadership.

It is each delegate's responsibility to establish within the member orchestra the dialogue and discussion that enables the delegate to effectively represent that orchestra at conference and throughout the year. Delegates are constantly asked for opinions on issues. The conference wants to hear not only the individual's personal opinion but also that of the orchestra represented. If we have been listening to our orchestra, and if we have been convincing with our colleagues, these opinions are likely to be the same; if they are not, the difference must be noted. It is the delegate's responsibility to try to convince the conference of the validity of that opinion, but the delegate must also be willing to share conference decisions with the orchestra back home. We must be willing to take back convincing and informed opinion that may be different from that with which we came.

Too often delegates return to their orchestras with the message, "I have been to the annual ICSOM conference and I am convinced." This is not a position that will enlighten or persuade an orchestra.

Duties of the ICSOM Members-at-Large

As articulated by the ICSOM Nominating Committee

Members-at-Large are responsible for maintaining the flow of communication between member orchestras and the Governing Board by regularly contacting delegates assigned to them.

They may be called upon by the ICSOM president to undertake special communications as necessary to secure or pass on information or to urge delegates to take some action.

They participate in discussions and decisions of the Governing Board regarding policy and action, and to this end they are expected to maintain communication with other Governing Board members via telephone and email.

At least once a year, usually in late winter or early spring, and usually in New York, the entire Governing Board, including the Members-at-Large, meets to discuss major issues and conference planning.

The entire Governing Board also attends the annual ICSOM conference and holds pre-conference and post-conference meetings in addition to meeting as necessary during the conference.

Among the criteria applied by the nominating committee are candidates' personal abilities, experience and activity in ICSOM, compatibility with ICSOM policies and personnel, and willingness to serve not only as Members-at-Large, but also to run for and to serve in executive positions when vacancies occur. Balance of orchestra size and diversity on the Governing Board is also a consideration.

ICSOM's four Members-at-Large will be elected at the 2001 ICSOM Conference in August.

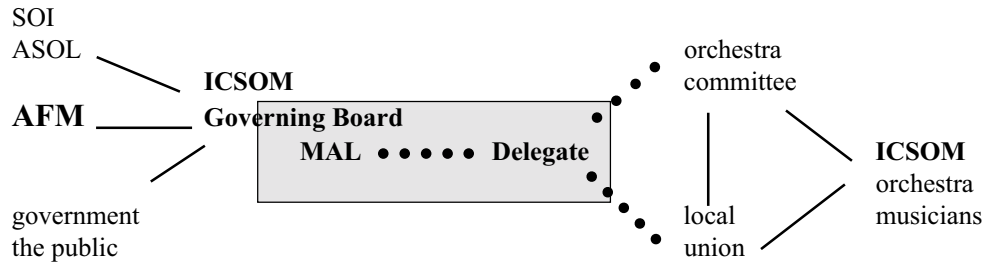
Few people at conference or at home will act as a result of such a statement. Because we are a rank-and-file organization, and because we do not make agreement a condition of membership, our single most effective tool is persuasion. We must have the power to persuade and the willingness to be persuaded.

We have been designated by our orchestras as leaders and activists. ICSOM asks us to affirm and reaffirm that position throughout the year. We are the voice in our orchestras of American orchestra musicians united on a national level. We are the persons who must constantly examine the effect our orchestra's action will have on other orchestras. Each of us must be a leader, an organizer, a conduit of information, the conscience of a movement of caring, and involved and active musicians who insist on improving the institutions through which we produce our art.

Communicating — ICSOM-Style

The ICSOM Delegate – Connecting the Dots

ICSOM Lines of Communication



ICSOM has two formal modes of direct personal communication: the annual conference and periodic communications between the ICSOM Delegate and the Governing Board Member-at-Large (MAL) who is assigned the job of keeping in touch with the Delegate's orchestra.

The narrow straits in the day-to-day passage of information are between the ICSOM Delegate and the ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large. It is helpful for the ICSOM Delegate to be either a member of the orchestra committee or fully informed of committee activity, and thus able to relay detailed information and articulate the orchestra's feelings and needs to the rest of the ICSOM community. Your ICSOM Delegate is your link to the national community of orchestras. A good line of communication between each orchestra member and his/her orchestra committee, and between the orchestra committee and the ICSOM Delegate, will allow your Delegate to communicate for you with the efficiency of a fiber-optic cable, not of a string tied to two tin cans.

After the annual Conference, the lines of communication work in the other direction. ICSOM Delegates are encouraged to report ICSOM Conference activities not only to your orchestra, but also to your local union board.

Last Call for the

2001 ICSOM Conference

San Diego California — August 22 - 26, 2001

Handlery Hotel & Resort
950 Hotel Circle North
San Diego CA 92108
(619) 298-0511 (800) 676-6567
fax: (619) 298-9793
www.handlery.com

Travel arrangements may be made with Susan Levine:

Susan Levine & Carl King
CTS (Cassis Travel Services)
200 West 57th Street, Suite 608
New York, NY 10019

Tel: (212) 333-3633 x515 (800) 726-2757 x515
Fax: 212-247-3702
email: suetravel@aol.com

ICSOM delegates and other attendees: Please make reservations by phone directly with the hotel (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday).

INTEREST-BASED BARGAINING:

Success In Minnesota

by *Mina Fisher*

ICSOM Delegate, Minnesota Orchestra

Historically, our Board has been very supportive financially and has worked hard to ensure the orchestra's future with an impressive endowment, but has neglected to understand the artistic goals of the musicians. The Board's unfortunate decision in the early '60s to change the name (from the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra) and subsequent decisions not to market and promote the orchestra through recordings and touring led to years of stagnation and loss of reputation and prestige. Musicians found it hard to reconcile the Board's lip service to quality with its unwillingness to market the orchestra worldwide in ways that would enhance its ability to attract the best musicians, conductors, and soloists.

At one point musicians were even advised not to communicate with Board members until the orchestra committee found a way of communicating we could all endorse. But since the nadir of the 1992 strike, Minnesota Orchestra musicians have made progress in communications with its Board of Directors.

Musicians were dealing with the ultimate powers, rather than dealing with conduits to power. Our viewpoints were listened to with respect, and consequently we could listen with respect.

In the aftermath of the strike, federal mediators suggested that for the pension negotiations due in two years we might lessen the tensions by trying Interest-Based Bargaining. They suggested that both parties simply be introduced to the concept, then take training in it, and begin bargaining. At any point either party could decide against using IBB. After management and musicians agreed to try IBB, negotiations began with both parties stating their interests and goals for the negotiation without taking formal positions. This immediately freed both sides. The fact emerged that the Board's lawyer had repeatedly advised the Board at the beginning of a negotiation to set a wage goal and never deviate from it! This interim pension negotiation was so successful that IBB was chosen for our '96 contract negotiations as well.

The result of bargaining directly with the Board, instead of playing "telephone" with management being the conduit, was enormous. Not only did the process save time and emotional energy, it enabled the musicians to educate our Board about the importance of our artistic goals. Instead of management's communicating the musicians' viewpoint to the Board, the musicians were easily able to talk about their artistic concerns directly to Board members, thus winning the respect and confidence of Board negotiators. Musicians were dealing with the ultimate powers, rather than dealing with conduits to power. Our viewpoints were listened to with re-

spect, and consequently we could listen with respect.

Roger Frisch, a violinist in the orchestra and member of the Long Range Planning Committee, wrote of his interaction with the board, "Many of us have discovered we all pretty much want the same thing, but like a successful marriage, the only way to accomplish this goal is through open and ongoing communication. ... Many of these business leaders wished they had the unique expertise to be a professional musician, were quite willing to recognize that they did not know what it was like to be rehearsing and performing on a daily basis, and furthermore, welcomed our opinions. To be fair, those of us representing our musician colleagues were quick to point out that we, likewise, did not possess their business expertise and equally appreciated their perspective."

Negotiating musicians cautioned that there is no fairy tale ending; both sides gave up things they wanted in the negotiation. Also, they note that, had we not been in a good economic situation, the financial outcome may have not been as beneficial to us. Still the direct contact with Board members and resultant ability to educate Board members was invaluable.

The result of IBB was a respect that carried over past the successful conclusion of the agreement. After the agreement, influential Board members invited more orchestral input, and the orchestra decided to send members to meet on the Board committees. Ultimately, the Long Range Planning Committee proved to be the best match of orchestra players to the Board, the committee most likely to bring our artistic ideas to fruition. In Long Range Planning Committee meetings, the ideas of artistic excellence, repertoire, venues, touring, recording, and of course, conductor selection and performance are paramount.

Our musicians found it very helpful to identify sympathetic and receptive Board members, and simply speak to them. Those key members of the Board often then had the vision to change the consensus.

The energy of musicians articulating their dreams is powerful to drive and inspire Board volunteers. Not all Board members are completely sympathetic to an orchestra's artistic excellence and presence in the community. Our musicians found it very helpful to identify sympathetic and receptive Board members, and simply speak to them. Those key members of the Board often then had the vision to change the consensus.

If your orchestra is considering the IBB technique or looking for change in your methods of communicating to your Board of Directors, please contact Richard Marshall at viola56@earthlink.net or call him at 763-546-3375 for further discussion.

INTEREST-BASED BARGAINING: In Whose “Ineterest”?

by Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel

I’ve been bad-mouthing “IBB” for some time now. Nevertheless, I’m not completely satisfied that I have clearly articulated the reasons for my opposition, and why I believe the process to be actually harmful. Thus, I thought that if I forced myself to write this article, it would help me to clarify my own thoughts and hopefully help musicians with another perspective when they are contemplating agreeing to engage in it.

First, let me get a couple of observations off my chest—even though they neither prove nor disprove anything definitively. They are, however, instructive and, I hope, thought-provoking.

1. Each time I attend a session at which the IBB process is being described (and proposed), not a single instructor has ever actually negotiated a collective bargaining agreement; at least not as an advocate.

2. Virtually all the instructors are mediators. One must understand that a mediator’s role is different from that of an advocate. A mediator’s job is to try to have the parties reach an agreement—any agreement!—not necessarily the *best* agreement for either side, just an agreement.

The advocate, whether it’s the lawyer, the union officer, or the negotiating committee, is supposed to be trying to get the *best* agreement possible under the circumstances. Anyone who doesn’t care about the quality of the contract can easily reach an agreement.

Thus, it is understandable that the IBB process was invented by, and is being pushed by, mediators!

3. Invariably the suggestion to engage in the process comes from management. Indeed, the American Symphony Orchestra League has been trumpeting the process as the revolution of the new millennium. If this process is so great for *us*, why do *they* love it so much?

On more relevant points, my concern begins with my opinion that the theory of IBB appears to be based on a false assumption. That is, that there is something called “conventional bargaining” during which no rational discussion of issues takes place, no identification of problems, and no attempts to understand the other side’s point of view. Instead, goes the assumption, the parties merely make demands, get locked into positions, and yell at each other.

While I can’t say for sure that there aren’t any such negotiations, after thirty years of bargaining I’ve never seen one. Virtually every negotiation with which I’ve been connected involved identification of issues, more or less “rational” discussion of issues, attempts at trying to understand and compromise conflicting interests, and very little screaming and yelling.

In those negotiations, the parties caucus, discuss the issues, and come up with a proposal or a counterproposal designed to reach agreement. It doesn’t always work—but neither does IBB.

Well, one might ask, if “conventional bargaining” is just like IBB, what’s your gripe with IBB?

First of all, as I mentioned earlier, the goal of IBB appears to be to reach an agreement, and not necessarily the best possible agreement under the circumstances. Thus, and here I speak for the Union side only, our negotiators often get swept up in the overwhelming desire to reach agreement, which results in too many sacrifices being made without equivalent value in return. Witness, for example, the number of extremely long-term—very long-term—agreements which have resulted from this process in recent years. Any seasoned labor negotiator knows that the employer is the overwhelming beneficiary of long-term agreements. While I realize that our side often feels that such agreements give them a respite from the rigors of negotiations, the fact is that if you negotiated annually (God forbid) you would have a much better contract. Why? Because, almost by definition, a long-term agreement contains concessions in time which cost you money. That is, goals, financial or otherwise, which you believe should be achieved sooner rather than later, are delayed—sometimes for years. And, what’s worse, in exchange for agreeing to such long-term deals and the concomitant backloading, we usually get nothing more than ordinary improvements.

These long-term deals are dangerous for our side. That is, if the institution does better financially than expected during the term of the agreement, we can’t realistically reopen and ask for better wages. (Well, we could ask, but . . .) However,

if the employer gets in trouble during that period, you know the routine—“if you don’t renegotiate, we’re going to have to cancel the season, file for bankruptcy, etc. . . .”

But, I digress. Back to IBB. While none of us likes it (except maybe me), the best deal is usually made at crunch time—the crisis—when everyone is facing disaster. IBB is *designed* to avoid the crisis. Once again, without the crisis, you can get an agreement, but is it the best agreement under the circumstances?

I think not.

Collective bargaining is by its very nature adversarial. And, sad to say, it has to be. They have, we want, they don’t want to give. That’s adversarial. Adversaries in this sense don’t have to be hostile or confrontational, but they must acknowledge that they are coming to the table with different, often opposite, interests. If we really believe in what we want and think we deserve, we have to be ready to fight for it. IBB is giving up without a fight—for the sake of avoiding the fight—and achieving nothing more than a non-lasting peace.

There—I’ve said it. That’s my story and I’m sticking to it!

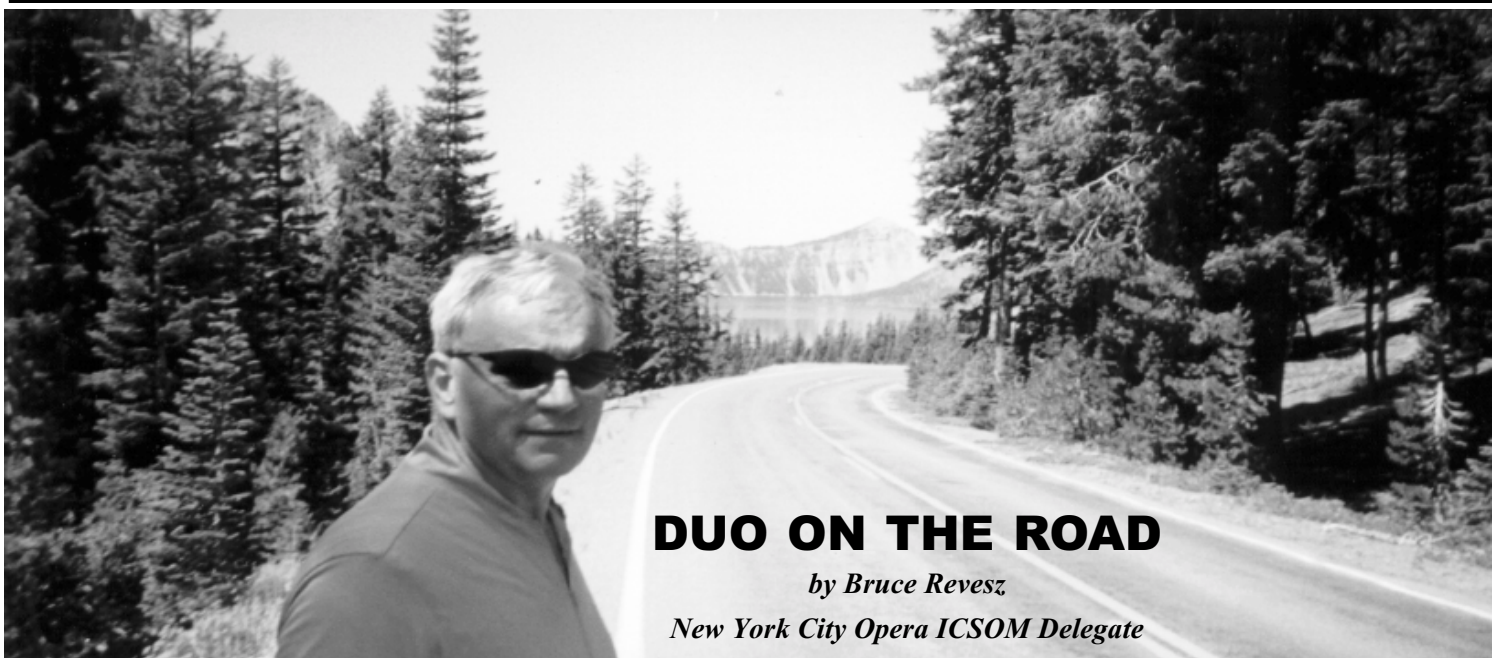
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ICSOM 2000 – 2001 Wage Chart

Orchestra	Weeks 00-01	Annual Minimum Salary	Seniority: 40-yr Cap if no max	EMG	Pension 40-yr Cap if no max	Pension Type	Pension Based on Per/Min	Vacation Weeks
Alabama	41	27,430	27,430	0	5%	AFM-EP	p	3
Atlanta	52	61,360	64,272	3,640	4.5%	AFM-EP	m	8
Baltimore	52	67,600	71,760	0	32,132			8
Boston	52	91,520	98,842	0	50,000			10
Buffalo	37	31,406	32,701	1,639	6%	AFM-EP	m+EMG	1
Charlotte	39	27,534	29,094	0	5%	AFM-EP		3
Chicago Lyric	25	44,125	47,214	0	10%	AFM-EP	p	15%/gross
Chicago Sym	52	92,040	101,309	0	53,000			8
Cincinnati	52	78,910	80,470	3,640	22,000+6%	AFM-EP	m	9
Cleveland	52	88,920	99,320	0	40,000			9
Colorado	42	33,726	35,406	2,520	7%	AFM-EP/DCP	p	4
Columbus	46	46,000	47,610	0	6%	AFM-EP	p	4
Dallas	52	67,600	69,680	6,760	4%	AFM-EP	m	9
Detroit	52	83,100	86,740	1,534	30,000+6%	AFM-EP		9
Florida Orch	36	27,210	29,550	180	6%	AFM-EP	p	3
Florida Phil	39	35,325	36,300	0	8%	AFM-EP	m	0
Grant Park	10	10,187	10,573	869	11%	AFM-EP	p	0
Honolulu	33	26,400	27,885	0	5.5%	AFM-EP	p	none
Houston	52	66,040	68,120	3,900	30,000+4.5%	AFM-EP		9
Indianapolis	52	60,580	63,700	0	34,080			8.5
Jacksonville	38	31,616	33,326	0	4.5%	AFM-EP	p	4
Kansas City	42	30,902	30,902	1,302	5%	AFM-EP/401a	p	2
Kennedy Center	29	45,442	48,773	0	10%	AFM-EP	p	7% of personal scale
Los Angeles	52	91,260	96,850	2,000	49,532	+AFM-EP	m	10
Louisville	41	28,975	29,611	1,025	2.168%	AFM-EP	m	4
Met Opera	52	81,016	81,016	0	60%		p	10
Milwaukee	44	53,372	54,932	484	6%	AFM-EP	p	6
Minnesota	52	79,430	82,030	3,640	7%	AFM-EP	m	9
Nashville	39	26,162	26,162	0	5%	AFM-EP	m	3
National	52	82,810	95,810	0	45,000	AFM-EP	m+sen.	8
New Jersey	35	35,875	37,131	1,225	10%	AFM-EP	p	2
New York City Ballet	30	47,070	50,445	0	13%/gross	AFM-EP	p	4
New York City Opera	29	36,705	40,475	0	11.5%	AFM-EP	p	4
New York Phil	52	92,300	99,892	0	49,000			9
North Carolina	42	38,304	39,354	0	8.5%	403(b)	m	24 days
Oregon	43	39,699	39,699	521	8.5%	AFM-EP	p	17 days
Philadelphia	52	91,520	98,020	0	50,000			10
Phoenix	38	33,680	35,160	0	4%	403(b)	m	3
Pittsburgh	52	85,280	88,400	0	37,523			10
Rochester	40	34,200	35,400	0	4.5%	DCP	m	3
Saint Louis	52	73,645	78,845	0	36,000			8
Saint Paul Chamber	38	59,394	60,994	1,200	10%	AFM-EP+403(b)	p	4
San Antonio	39	31,200	32,760	0	7%	AFM-EP	p	4
San Diego	38	24,720	26,880	1,200	8%	private	p	none
San Francisco Ballet	21	32,478	33,865	907	10%	AFM-EP	p	13% of base
San Francisco Opera	29	57,748	60,855	2,012	9.5%	AFM-EP	p	4
San Francisco Sym	52	90,220	95,940	1,560	44,000			10
Syracuse	38	25,645	26,245	0	.0047	private	p	4
Utah	52	45,800	47,360	0	8%	AFM-EP/403(b)	m	9
Virginia	41	22,131	22,623	0	5.5%	AFM-EP	m	1

(compiled by Treasurer Stephanie Tretick)

Relief Weeks	Notes	Orchestra
<p>none 4 services, addl 6 svc string/2nd wind/2nd brass 16 services 1 of the 10 vacation weeks none</p>	<p>Salary incl \$20/wk overscale for all players.</p>	<p>Alabama Atlanta Baltimore Boston Buffalo</p>
<p>17 services 1 opera relief, prin & asst.prin 2, plus 1 subscription & 2 summer programs 16 services for strings 1 week</p>	<p>Guar. pen. min. = 45%/base for 30yrs at age 65. All strings paid at least \$20/wk overscale.</p>	<p>Charlotte Chicago Lyric Chicago Sym Cincinnati Cleveland</p>
<p>7 svcs 6 services personal leave 12 string services 8 services for strings & 2nd winds 8 stg svc, 4 ww br & perc svc + 8 pers lv svc for all</p>		<p>Colorado Columbus Dallas Detroit Florida Orch</p>
<p>12 svcs strings, prin & 2nd wwnds & 2nd brass none 6 days/yr, cum to 12 paid days none 1 svc, 7 others during December</p>		<p>Florida Phil Grant Park Honolulu Houston Indianapolis</p>
<p>6 svc none none + 1 week strings, 2nd winds none</p>	<p>Figures approx. 3 contracts: opera,ballet,show. All non-titled stgs paid addl' 1.5% of scale.</p>	<p>Jacksonville Kansas City Kennedy Center Los Angeles Louisville</p>
<p>3 personal days 8 services 6 maximum (on seniority) + 7 strings 4 services 1 week + 1 week for strings</p>	<p>Salary does not include rehearsal or radio pay.</p>	<p>Met Opera Milwaukee Minnesota Nashville National</p>
<p>none none none 1 of the 9 vacation weeks 5 services personal leave</p>	<p>Salary includes guaranteed 75 hrs rehearsal @ \$50 per hr. Base does not include rehearsal pay. Salary includes \$20/wk overscale for all players.</p>	<p>New Jersey New York City Ballet New York City Opera New York Phil North Carolina</p>
<p>none 1 of the 10 vac wks + 4 pers days & 1 day at Saratoga none 11th deferred service week possible none</p>	<p>Seniority is 11 services.</p>	<p>Oregon Philadelphia Phoenix Pittsburgh Rochester</p>
<p>6 day week if musician has performed 40 wks the previous season 1 of 4 = relief week for all none none none</p>	<p>7% AFM-EP, 3% 403(b) Season is 38 schedulable weeks. Sal incl vac pay. Yrly contract guar = 105 perfs.+102 reh.</p>	<p>Saint Louis Saint Paul Chamber San Antonio San Diego San Francisco Ballet</p>
<p>1 opera off each fall for all 2 of 10 vac are floating & relief, 11th wk for 2nd wnds none none none</p>		<p>San Francisco Opera San Francisco Sym Syracuse Utah Virginia</p>



DUO ON THE ROAD

by Bruce Revesz

New York City Opera ICSOM Delegate

When I first met Fred Sautter (pictured above), ICSOM Delegate from the Oregon Symphony, six years ago at my first ICSOM Conference, we found out we had something in common other than being trumpet players. We both enjoy bicycling. Every conference thereafter we agreed we should somehow get together to do some bike touring. Well, this finally took place last August. After a flight from Newark, via San Francisco, both bike crate and I arrived at Portland where Fred was patiently waiting for "us." As soon as we loaded up for the drive to his house the conversation immediately started with not biking or trumpet talk, but ICSOM and orchestra issues. This continued while I was uncrating my bike and assembling it.

Most of the topics at this time centered around his orchestra's negotiations going on at that time, and when he disclosed that he hadn't enough time to get in bike-shape, it became clear why. However, the next day we set out for a trial ride around Sauvie Hills, a popular bicycling place. Several miles into the loop my rear tire blew loud and clear!

The next day we set out for a week of riding at various locations around Oregon. First we biked at two locations on the spectacular coast. One was a short beautiful ride inland from Florence and back. We followed this by sending a card to Florence Nelson, Director of the SSD, from Florence to Florence.

The greatest challenge we had was riding around Crater Lake, which is 6,100 ft. in elevation. Well, let me tell you, I'm accustomed to steep short climbs; however, these climbs were 3-5 miles long at 6-8% grade! The ride started out with a 2,600-foot climb and continued to be a bicyclist's ultimate challenge throughout the ride. We would bike about a tenth of a mile, stop momentarily to rest our legs and catch our breath which was necessary, considering the elevation. We would see a long half-mile hill in front of us and what appeared to look like the top, but when we arrived there we were presented with another half-mile climb! And so it went. There was very little traffic, which enabled us to enjoy the fantastic scenery. The downhills were superb, coasting at 36 m.p.h.

(Thank God my tire blew when it did back in Portland!) I finished the 34-mile loop in six hours which included over 6,000 feet of climbs; Fred decided to stop at about the 2/3 mark. We were so proud of what we had accomplished that day it put us on a high. What made this challenge somewhat bearable was the fact that every time we stopped for a real rest, our conversation got back to ICSOM and orchestras.

After a day at Elk Lake (4,500 ft. elevation) we drove through Bend, in the eastern portion of Oregon, and rode two routes near John Day. Here we witnessed a bolt of lightning hit the ground while a storm was passing far north of us and reported the fire it started. The terrain is high, dessert-like, desolate, hot, but beautiful.

We then met a threesome on a bike tour. We immediately told them of our feat riding around Crater Lake. Our egos were soon totally deflated when they disclosed to us that they were from Rotterdam and had been biking for three months from New York and not only rode over the Rockies but exclaimed how difficult the Ozark Mountains were to climb in Missouri! Each bicycle was loaded down with 100 pounds of gear, thirty of which was water!

We spent the next two days biking in Willamette Valley, a beautiful farm area south of Portland. During these rides we made the power bars palatable with fresh blackberries that were growing wild all over the place.

Most of our ICSOM conversations took place during our riding and driving, since at dinners we would always meet up with interesting people we ended up chatting with. Among issues we discussed between us was the need for orchestra manager evaluations and a health care plan of national scope for all union musicians and their households. Even though it took me 27 hours to get home due to airline equipment problems and severe weather at home, dreaming about our week of cycling made the trip bearable. We both had a grand time and are already thinking where we should tour next to continue our conversation.



On page 22 of the April *International Musician* there are two articles. The one on top of the page, "Investing in the Younger Generation," was very good, not because I was in the Band (!), but in making reference to Local #16 (Newark NJ), which is appreciated, and in pointing out the presentation of live music to the school children.

However, the second article about violinist Aaron Rosand, a member of Local 802 (New York City), was disturbing, since there is a reference to his recording with the Malaysian Philharmonic. What an extreme contrast! Promoting live music to our children with a local union band and then seeing a recording done outside our country with an American musician all on the same page. Isn't it a sad commentary on what our business has become.



Bruce shows off his rugged athleticism along the rugged Oregon coast.

Bruce Revesz
Board Member, Local #16
ICSOM Delegate, New York City Opera Orchestra



Hearing from my students about the Dallas Symphony flute audition recently brought back in full force the memory of my audition for the 3rd flute and piccolo chair in the Buffalo Philharmonic. That was in the spring of 1946 ... and yes, I'm really that old.

I had left my job with the Detroit public schools in the middle of a semester, much to my mother's consternation. When I came home from my job as a traveling instrumental music teacher on a Friday afternoon and announced that I was not going back on Monday, or ever, my mother wanted to know what I was going to do. Why, I was going to do what I had always wanted to do, which was to play in a symphony orchestra, and I set out to do it.

My letters to various symphonies asking about possible openings finally brought an answer from Buffalo. I was quite familiar with the conductor, William Steinberg, for he had come as a guest conductor for the Detroit Symphony on their Sunday evening radio broadcasts of "Sam's Cut-Rate Hour." The musicians spoke very highly of him, so I looked forward to the audition.

I left Detroit at a very early hour to get to Buffalo by train. By 9:00 a.m. I was seated in the Philharmonic office at Kleinhans

Music Hall, awaiting the arrival of the Maestro, who arrived, shortly followed by the personnel manager. We went to Steinberg's dressing room backstage, where I played my Mozart concerto, followed by the usual excerpts from memory. Then a piece of music was put on the stand, and I was asked if I had ever played it. I recognized the piccolo part for the Berlioz *Fantastique*, but had to admit that I had neither seen nor played it. He said they would leave the room and give me a few minutes to work it out!!

When they returned after a few minutes, I played the excerpt and he placed another on the stand ... one I did not recognize. He sat down at the piano and began to umpah, umpah ... off we went on a lovely light and bright piccolo solo. It turned out to be the lovely piccolo solo from Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*.

I left Buffalo that day with a contract for the '46-'47 season ... 23 weeks at \$55 a week, scale at the time. I just realized recently that then, at the age of 22, it never even occurred to me that I might not be successful in getting a job in an orchestra.

When I heard about the audition in Dallas having 260 flutists competing for the job, it brought back memories of how simple and relaxed the Buffalo audition was. What a great way to start a 50-year career in the symphony world! And how I have enjoyed it!

Jean Harling
Honolulu Symphony Principal Flute, retired



I thank you for using my words of corruption ("Freefall Twelve Minutes," March 2001 *Senza Sordino*), which shall live on in orchestral infamy until the world ends – or possibly until later, depending upon the musicians' proper notification of same according to the rules of the master contract.

Alan Goodman
Soon-To-Be ICSOM Emeritus, Los Angeles Philharmonic



Sign the Petition!

Pension Fund Changes Threaten Vesting and Death Benefits

In early July the AFM-EP Fund will go to arbitration to break a deadlock between the management-side and union-side trustees concerning management's proposed changes to the Fund's vesting and death benefit provisions. The proposals would increase the vesting requirement from \$1,500 to \$4,500 per year and cut death benefits by as much as 50% for musicians not yet receiving a pension. The Fund's actuaries have assured the trustees that the AFM-EPF continues to be a strong, well-funded plan and that the proposed changes are not warranted at this time.

The union is circulating a petition and asking all concerned members to sign. The petition, including instructions, can be found at your local union or on the ICSOM website (www.icsom.org). **The deadline for submitting signed petitions is June 30.**

"Voicings" graphic design and concept by Michael Gorman and Norman Foster (bass and clarinet, respectively, of the Honolulu Symphony)

Closing Cadence

Carolyn Parks

ICSOM Treasurer 1990 - 1996

I met Carolyn Parks in the summer of 1969. We were both playing in American Symphony Orchestra Leagues' Conductors' Workshop in Orkney Springs, Virginia. That fall she moved to Washington, D.C., and our journey of personal and professional friendship began.

Her first job was with the National Ballet Orchestra. When the Kennedy Center opened in 1972, she became a member of the then freelance orchestra. From 1972 to 1978 Carolyn became involved with union activities, and was the force behind the move in 1978 that helped form the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra of today. When the going got tough in the negotiations, Carolyn just got more set in her resolve that the Orchestra needed a tenure contract. She pushed and pushed until a tenure contract became a reality. It was her insight to seek out the help from Fred Zenone and Lenny Leibowitz. We were introduced to ICSOM during this time. As a matter of fact, it was Carolyn who got me involved with ICSOM, suggesting that I become the delegate from the orchestra. My first conference as delegate from the orchestra was in 1986. I have been the delegate from then until now. Carolyn served as a member of the ICSOM Governing Board and was treasurer of ICSOM for a number of years.

I will remember Carolyn for her fairness and kindness to others. She never ever had unkind words about others. It was Carolyn who would always go out of her way to welcome new members to the orchestra. She was a people person.

I will miss our yearly ritual of informing anyone who would listen to us that it was almost our birthdays. We had a routine that would start in January and continue until April, our birthday month. Our birthdays were 3 days apart.

The Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, the AFM and ICSOM have lost a true champion. Many of us have lost a dear friend. I will miss her presence, camaraderie and humor during the endless hours of rehearsal. Godspeed, my friend.

Nancy Stutsman

Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra ICSOM Delegate



Probably very few of us are forward-thinking enough to contemplate how we might be remembered by friends and colleagues after we leave our Earthly posts. We can only hope that those who lift a glass in our memory will do so fondly.

On March 13th, the family and friends of Carolyn Parks, Kennedy Center Orchestra member, union activist, and former ICSOM Treasurer, who passed away on March 5th, gathered in the Western Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., to say a final

farewell to this kind, gentle, dear friend and to express their gratitude as the beneficiaries of her union activism.

Carolyn's greatest legacy is the Kennedy Center Orchestra. Its very existence owes much to her tenacity, commitment, and hard work, and her efforts as a member of KCO negotiating committees serve as the foundation for the orchestra's current wages, benefits, and working conditions.

I first met Carolyn through our mutual involvement in ICSOM. Anyone who knew her understood that she had many different personas. The setting was important in determining which Carolyn you would encounter. At the opera house, she was a horn player and music maker. When she donned her Treasurer's robes, she was all ICSOM/union business and never spoke of music or horn playing. When she was home, the yard sale-estate sale maniac emerged, as did the relentless teaser of husband, Joe Parente. (Joe is president of Local 77 in Philadelphia.)

I hate having to write an obituary about a friend, especially one like Carolyn, not because I mourn her passing but because it would take many, many pages to say all that could be said about her. However, knowing Carolyn as I did, I'm sure it would perturb her to no end were ICSOM to waste the extra paper and ink writing about her when there are so many important issues which need to be discussed. So, it wouldn't be right for me to go much further except to say that I and the other members of the ICSOM family, past and present, all mourn the passing of Carolyn Parks and recognize her many contributions to ICSOM and to all orchestras musicians.

Lucinda-Lewis
ICSOM Secretary

I. Philip Sipser

ICSOM Legal Counsel 1968 - 1985

I. Philip Sipser, ICSOM's first legal counsel and a pioneer in the field of arts labor law, died March 31, 2001 in New York City. He was 82. As ICSOM's legal counsel, Phil was instrumental in establishing from the beginning ICSOM's ability to call upon the power of law as well as the power of union solidarity in defining management-musician relationships, both in negotiations and in daily orchestral life.

Isidore Philip Sipser was born in Manhattan in 1918. After study at Brooklyn College and Brooklyn Law School, he entered labor practice in 1940, representing the United Brewery Workers. In the course of his career sipser also represented longshoremen, dancers, and of course, musicians.

His first involvement with musicians came in 1967 when he mediated a contract impasse between the New York Philharmonic and its players. He took no fee but accepted, from both sides, a pen and pencil set engraved "To the Heifetz of Negotiators." His future as the nation's foremost specialist in orchestral labor law was thus sealed, as more and more orchestras called upon him to nego-

tiate their contracts. ICSOM enlisted his services as its first legal counsel in 1968.

The New York Times called Mr. Sipser “the Moses who has led the symphony and opera musicians of this country to within sight of the promised land of milk and honey, after years of wandering in the deserts of short seasons, low pay and no vacations.”

He was active in the political as well as the legal arena—he ran three times on the American Labor Party ticket for the New York State Legislature (always losing), and refused in 1953 to tell the House Un-American Activities Committee whether he was a Communist. He participated in civil rights demonstrations and was the subject of police surveillance. “You shouldn’t have to be brave to engage in activities protected by the Constitution,” he said.

In addition to his wife Martha, Mr. Sipser is survived by two sons, two daughters (including Margaret Leibowitz, wife of ICSOM’s current legal counsel, Leonard Leibowitz), two brothers, and a sister.



SIPSER AND ME

By Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel

Over the course of thirty years, he was my boss, my mentor, my father figure, my partner, my father-in-law, my enemy, my competition, and the grandfather of my children. Aside from a few years during which he didn’t speak to me, he was also my friend.

He was the best labor negotiator I ever saw. That’s because he was the best problem-solver (the *real* measure of a negotiator). As I sat by his side during those early years, I was constantly astounded by his ability to resolve, to everyone’s satisfaction, issues which seemed unresolvable.

In the late ‘70s he was approached by the faculty of a local vocational college who had been notified that the school was going out of business and that they were all to be terminated. After some months of negotiations, Sipser persuaded the school admin-

istration to turn over the entire school, lock, stock and barrel, to the faculty, together with their endowment and one million dollars as “start up money.” The school continues today as a thriving enterprise.

Phil Sipser was a titan for ICSOM. We should all be grateful for what he accomplished for Americas Orchestras.

Don Muggeridge
ICSOM Emeritus, Los Angeles Philharmonic

Symphony players should be reminded that the Symphony Strike Fund was created in 1969 after negotiations with Sipser about ICSOM becoming an official conference of the AFM.

Those who worked with him know that while he had very little patience with negotiating working conditions (I can still see him, eyes closed, nodding off at the table, and then, miraculously, awakening to answer a question), his passion was for pensions. And, although he was neither an actuary nor an accountant, he became the most knowledgeable pension negotiator of any labor lawyer in the country.

Perhaps his single most impressive victory in negotiating orchestra contracts throughout the nation was, in a single negotiation, the elimination of employee contributions to the Pension Plan, a substantial increase in benefits, and *getting the management to return to the players all of their contributions made in the past!* In the aggregate, the total of such contributions returned to the musicians amounted to millions of dollars. While this was happening, the following conversation took place on a plane:

Leibowitz: You know, Sipser, no orchestra ever asked for you to get their contributions returned. It was all your idea. If you had asked them if they would be willing to give you 10% of any amount returned, wouldn’t they have joyously agreed? We would be rich!

Sipser: What are you having for dinner?

He never knew how to make money. Asking union clients for appropriate fees was taking money “from the members,” and he just couldn’t get himself to do it. So, we all starved. But on the basis of value to the firm and to his clients, *he* was the most underpaid.

His illustration of the definition of “power” in negotiations is a classic. For those of you who never heard it, it’s known as “Who’s Got the Pictures?”: Sipser’s father had a fruit and tomato stand on DeKalb Avenue in Brooklyn when Sipser was a lad, at which he and his siblings worked after school and on weekends. In the late 40’s when he was just starting his legal career, earning about \$50 per week—in a good week—a man walked into his office with a set of photographs of the tomato stand with Sipser on the street selling them. When asked how much he wanted for the pictures, the man said \$50. Sipser was astounded. “\$50? That’s a week’s income for me.” The man looked at him with a smile and said “Mr. Sipser, you’re actually lucky I only asked for \$50. You’d pay me \$250 if I asked for it.”

(continued on page 12)

Date: 3/16/01 8:31:49 AM Hawaiian Standard Time
From: SWHLLP@aol.com
To: marsha.schweitzer@icsom.org

Dear Marsha,

I thought the following excerpt was extremely interesting, and that you might include it in the next edition of “Senza Sordino.”

Sincerely,
Phil Sipser

**Excerpts from *New York Review of Books* (3/29/01)
“Germans, Jews and Music” by Daniel Barenboim**

“If you wish to learn how to live in a democratic society, then you would do well to play in an orchestra. For when you do so, you know when to lead and when to follow. You leave space for others and at the same time you have no inhibition about claiming a place for yourself.”

As one having had the honor, privilege, and pleasure of working with Phil Sipser on a contract negotiation for the NJSO several years ago, I was deeply saddened to hear of his passing. His strengths of intelligence, strategy, timing of events, sincerity, and humor made being associated with him an experience I will never forget.

He was the genuine article, a true "mensch"! He had the combination of the wily, brilliant lawyer, and heart of gold, with more than a little borscht belt comedian thrown in.

Martin Andersen
Violist, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

(SIPSER & ME - continued from page 11)

Often during a negotiation he would turn to me and ask, "So, who's got the pictures?" It's still the best demonstration of negotiating power that I know.

He was virtually impossible to live with. Yet, leaving his firm in 1985 was the most difficult decision I ever had to make. Peggy was pregnant with Max, our first child, and I just knew that I couldn't continue to be his partner and have him be Max's grandfather. I chose "Papa" over "Partner." I made the right choice. He was an even better grandfather than he was a negotiator.

His inability to remember names was often hilarious. For years after I was married to his daughter he would say good night at the end of the day, and remind me to send his love to "...uh, ...uh..., your wife!"

He was allergic to injustice. But unlike an allergy to something that you then avoid, he spent his life attacking it—whether it was at the bargaining table or in the courts, or in politics.

He was an infallible barometer of political election results. Whichever candidate he supported was doomed to defeat. When Max was running for president of his elementary school, he asked Sipser to support his opponent. Sipser refused and Max lost.

No one was lukewarm about Sipser. You either loved him or hated him. I loved him. I miss him, but I know that wherever he is, he's got the pictures.

<SIPSER PHOTO>

Sipser last appeared at an ICSOM conference in 1997, where he was the keynote speaker.

Senza Sordino is the official voice of ICSOM and reflects ICSOM policy. However, there are many topics discussed in *Senza Sordino* on which ICSOM has no official policy; the opinions thus expressed in *Senza Sordino* are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ICSOM, its officers or members. Articles and letters expressing differing viewpoints are welcomed.

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