



# PITTSBURGH AFTRA NEWSBRIEFS

SPRING, 2008

The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists - AFL/CIO

**Actors and Broadcasters have the right to be treated and paid fairly for the use of the only things that they own and have to sell: their images, talent, skills, personalities, and voices.**

## Myron Cope 1/23/1929 to 2/27/2008

Photo Credit: Gene J Puskar / Associated Press 1/11/05



*Editor's note. Pittsburgh's beloved raspy-voiced sportscaster and accomplished sports journalist Myron Cope will not be soon forgotten. His wacky and wonderful Steelers boosterism, his everyman accessibility on air and in public, and his amazing charitable efforts on behalf of the care for individuals with autism won huge public adoration.*

AFTRA is proud to have had Myron among the ranks of our most stellar members. We know Myron was proud of his AFTRA affiliation. When elected in 2005 to the National Radio Hall of Fame, Cope considered it his greatest broadcast honor. We asked Steelers' play-by-play announcer *Bill Hillgrove*, another proud AFTRA member, to write a few words in remembrance of his long-time associate.

## My Pal Myron

By: Bill Hillgrove

It was my good fortune to be at least a small part of that historic moment when Myron Cope launched one of the most storied broadcasting careers our industry could ever boast.

Our program director, Don Shaffer, called a meeting of the entire air staff of WTAE radio. He told us that our station had to spice up the morning show...that sports commentaries by one of our best local sportswriters would be the ticket.

I immediately suggested the name of Roy McHugh, who remains to this day one of the best in the business. That's when our radio newsman Ron Ringer spoke up: "I have an



Photo Credit: Keith B. Sniakovic / Associated Press

occasional cocktail with a guy who comes right off the wall. He's just what we need to liven up our sports image."

"His name is Myron Cope."

Newsmen are smarter than disc jockeys.

Funny how things can work out. Some 15 years later, when my career had placed me close to my first love, sports, Myron agreed to take the ailing Johnny Sauer's place as color analyst for Pitt football. Little did I know at the time that a one-year situation would be a portend of what later became an 11-year association. The 1983 Pitt season gave me a glimpse of what it would be like to work alongside a giant.

To experience Cope, the humorist, the wordsmith, the human being as directly as has been my privilege, is a lifetime treasure. ☺

### AFTRA Pittsburgh NewsBriefs

is published quarterly and mailed to Pittsburgh AFTRA members, signatories, and allies. Your article ideas, news, constructive criticism, calendar items and overall input are most welcome. Please call Production Director Nancy Barron

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# You and Your Agent

## Executive Director's Message

John Haer, Executive Director



**M**embers know that AFTRA means decent wages, benefits, and job protections. But our Union doesn't get you hired. It's up to you and/or your agent to market your skills to prospective employers. For Freelance Performers, a talent agent often is your conduit to auditions and work.

AFTRA recognizes this reality. To protect its members, the Union negotiates a contract with the talent agents. This contract, commonly known as "Rule 12-C", embodies mutual obligations

between members and agents. "Franchised agents" are those who agree to abide by Rule 12C. For finding and negotiating employment in AFTRA jurisdictions, AFTRA members may only work through franchised talent agents.

Rule 12-C includes such provisions as a 10% limitation on commissions paid to agents. Also important are standardized rules and contracts for exclusive representation and for work authorization procedures. Franchised agents also agree to fiduciary and accessibility standards, as well as a code of conduct consistent with the representation of performers and media professionals.

Under 12-C, agents may be disciplined for prohibited conduct, including: failing to turn over promptly members' monies, advising members to break AFTRA membership rules (including rules against members working for non-signatory employers),

charging fees in excess of allowable commission, or participating in certain employer activities.

Agents may not charge fees as a condition of representation, nor require members to pay fees for head shots, coaches, schools, photographers, etc. 12C limits financial investments by an agent in production or in companies engaged in production, and vice versa. Agents are prohibited from acting as employers, and may not cast (i.e., make casting decisions) nor act as employers of re-

cord (i.e., operate as a paymaster) in AFTRA jurisdictions.

Franchised agents representing both union and

non-union performers must apply these rules uniformly to all who work in AFTRA's jurisdictions.

Four years ago, in recognition of the unique challenges in our region, the Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Tri State Locals adopted an organizing plan that included a waiver

of several 12-C provisions in order to foster a more level playing field between union and non-union work. For local commercials and non-broadcast work, agents were permitted to charge employers a service fee and members agreed that the 10% commission could be subtracted from the talent fee or minimum scale. In return, the agents agreed to assist in AFTRA's organizing efforts.

This regional waiver has a time limit. It is currently under review. Your Local is now seeking your opinion and ideas about whether the regional 12C waiver should be continued. Do you believe that now there is a more level playing field locally between union and non-union work? Has your agent assisted in efforts to secure more union work opportunities?

Stay tuned for more developments

*NOTE: Material from "AFTRA's Rule 12C At A Glance" pamphlet was excerpted for this article.*

*Has your agent assisted in efforts to secure more union work opportunities?*

## Pittsburgh Local Board Highlights:

**SEPTEMBER:** The board authorized donating \$500 to the *Off The Record* production and spending \$790 for tickets. The money came from the Scholarship and Member Activity funds.

**OCTOBER:** The board authorized creation of a Humanitarian Service Award in Bill Cardille's name. He was designated the first recipient, in honor of his fifty years in the business and his work with the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon. The award was paid for with money from the Member Activity Fund.

**DECEMBER:** AFTRA National President Roberta Reardon attended the expanded board/member meeting and spoke to

the group about the history of relations between AFTRA and SAG, and gave an update on the current situation.

**MARCH:** The board approved a motion to have members survey top earning members and top producers regarding their opinions and experiences with the 12C waiver and report back at the April meeting. Dean Patterson is chairing the Nominating Committee. Members are Amy Marsalis, Gordon Spencer and Alan Boal.

**APRIL:** Board accepted recommendations of Nominating Committee (See page 3) Plans to honor Bob Kopler at May Members Meeting began to take shape.

# THIS UNION IS OURS...LET'S ALL CLAIM IT!

## What a Difference Being a Serving Member Makes

I get it now. Because I said "yes" when invited to serve on Local committees, the Board, and as a national convention delegate, I now have a personal investment in a union that exists to support and protect our collective well-being. Honestly, I didn't know what AFTRA did before I said "yes" to service. But because one of our administrators reached out to me years ago with the welcome to participate, I now know that my voice is part of a group conscience, that it is heard, and that it can make a difference. So can yours! What an honor and privilege to serve this union, and because I have gained so much from doing so, I'm stepping aside now so as to invite YOU to experience this gift as well.

I didn't know what I didn't know. But from the vantage point of an active serving member, there's little room here to share all that I have learned and participated in, both regionally and nationally. Discovering that a true spirit of altruism is alive and well at the core of AFTRA, has been humbling indeed. Our common welfare absolutely comes first! We are artist entrepreneurs, yet on a daily basis there are multitudes of unity-minded members and staff working on our joint behalf to ensure that our job opportunities will grow and that we will be treated fairly by our industry. This is simply something that we cannot take for granted.

So who takes care of AFTRA? Well, that's our job...each and every one of us is in a position to give back to this union to

ensure that it will flourish and thrive. You bet I get it now, and that's why I'd like to personally invite you to consider stepping up to serve on a committee or run for the board. You're already qualified by being a member, and all you need do to start the process is to express your interest to a committee chairperson, a current board member or officer, or one of our administrators. Don't know who those people are? Then call the AFTRA office to find out.

We are all colleagues bonded together, and by each of us developing a personal stake in the workings of our union, AFTRA grows more organized and better equipped to serve the best interest of our membership. I hope you'll consider this invitation to serve. I'm most grateful that I did. From first hand experience I can tell you that participation is the gateway to truly understanding what AFTRA does, how it's done, and how to keep a really good thing going!

Yours in service and solidarity,  
Adrienne Wehr

Freelance Board Member (term expiration: Summer 2008)



Adrienne Wehr, Pittsburgh Local Board

## NOTICE

### Report of the Nominating Committee Election of Freelance Members to the Board of Directors

At the AFTRA Board Meeting of March 12, 2008, President Paul Martino appointed a Nominating Committee. The Committee members are Dean Patterson, Chair, Amy Marsalis, Alan Boal, and Gordon Spencer.

*The Committee makes the following report of Candidates for a two (2) year term of office commencing July 1, 2008.*

#### **For Freelance Member of the Local Board of Directors:**

**Alan Boal \***

**Marc Field \***

**David Flick \***

**Randy Kovitz**

**Nancy Mimless \***

**Sam Turich**

*\* incumbent*

*The Committee wishes to remind members that, in addition to the names reported above, the name of any active member in good standing may be added and placed on the ballot. To do so, a NOMINATING PETITION signed by at least ten (10) active members in good standing must be submitted to the Executive Director of the Local. Such Petitions must be received in the Pittsburgh Office by 5:00 PM Monday, May 19, 2008. Voting will be by mail and begin immediately thereafter.*

Respectfully submitted, Dean Patterson, Committee Chair

NOTE: This Report was accepted by the Local Board at its meeting on April 16, 2008.

