



Philadelphia

April 2009

# SESSIONS!

A publication of the Philadelphia Local of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

## Rod Carson Enters Local Hall of Fame



**T**he AFTRA Philadelphia Hall of Fame Award honors someone who has made significant contributions to local broadcasting. Past recipients of the Hall of Fame Award include local broadcast legends **Larry Kane, Bill Campbell, Tom Moran and Edie Huggins.**

This year the Hall of Fame Award goes to Rod Carson. His is a name synonymous with “traffic” in the Delaware Valley, but during his 50 years on the radio Rod Carson has done more than tell us there’s a back up at the Conshohocken Curve, and I-95 north is crawling near the Street Road exit.

As one of the founders of Shadow Traffic, Rod created the method of traffic reporting that is the standard nationwide. He did first regularly scheduled traffic reports on KYW Newsradio in 1977 and has reported on just about every major highway traffic problem

in the Delaware Valley. If there’s been a major delay anywhere you probably heard about it from Rod, or the traffic reporting system he helped create.

Rod was one of the “Wibbage Good Guys” at WIBG. He’s been all over the dial, hosting *Rock and Roll Roots* on WMMR, deejaying and reading news at WSNI, WPEN, and WWDB... among others.

As with many broadcasters the radio bug bit Rod early in life.

Rod was born in Philadelphia, grew up in Coatesville, Pa., and graduated from Scott High School there. He began his radio career at WCOJ while still a sophomore and had a regular radio show on the station by the time he was a senior.

Rod has two children, four grandchildren, a dog named “Max”, and lives in Ardmore, right in the middle of the Mainline. Even though Rod is retired now he keeps active as a consultant for PennDot and by keeping up on the latest in computer technology.

Join us at the 2009 Annual Meeting on May 7th as we honor Rod Carson, who has entertained and informed us for five decades.

## AFTRA Entertainment & Broadcast Career Day

By Cyndy Drue

**T**he 2009 Broadcast & Entertainment Industry Career Day was held Saturday, April 4, 2009 on the campus of Villanova University. The event was sponsored and organized by AFTRA’s Philadelphia Local with the participation of Villanova University and Temple University. Philadelphia Vice President Dan Hunt created the idea and organized the event. Over one hundred and sixty people, students from area universities such as Villanova, Temple, Cabrini, University of Pennsylvania, and Drexel University, plus members of AFTRA, SAG and Actor’s Equity registered to attend. Because Villanova was in the playoffs that night in Detroit, some of the students went to see the game which lowered attendance somewhat.

Utilizing modern media technology the President of Villanova, Rev. Peter M. Donohue, delivered his opening remarks in a video, leaving the live opening remarks to Dan Hunt and Local President Catherine Brown.

Four panels consisting of On-Air Talent, Casting Directors, The Business of the Business, and Behind the Scenes were presented in three sessions so attendees would be able to access all four.

Panelists included: WMMR’s Pierre Robert, Local Secretary and staffer at WMMR and WMGK Cyndy Drue, Casting Director Diane Heery, Philly Local President Catherine Brown and Local



*The Behind The Scenes Panel: (L-R) Catherine Brown, Laura Duzen and Joe Ansolabehere shared their experience with attendees.*

Executive Director, Steve Leshinski, Local SAG president Tom McCarthy, DGA Director Laura Duzen, creator of the *Rugrats* animated series Joe Ansolabehere, WMDT news anchor woman (and former Villanova student) Katherine Amenta, attorneys Mary Cavallaro and Dave Frankel, and comedy producer/writer Clay Heery.

Many thanks to the Villanova University Department of Communications and Villanova Career Services for all their help producing the event. (See page 6 for more photos.)



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**Broadcast Steering  
 Committee Report**

by *Bill Shusta*



**B**ear with me a moment. When I graduated from college back in 1970, one of the interviews I had while seeking my first job in broadcasting was at a television station in Youngstown, Ohio. My interview was with the News Director who was just returning from covering a news event. He was carrying a huge, I mean huge, camera and the related equipment. In a smaller market, he was the One Man Band. For those in the industry today, no matter market size, it's back to the future.

AFTRANS at WUSA-TV in Washington recently approved what's termed a multimedia agreement contract. They're now termed "multimedia journalists" and reporters get to carry a camera (much lighter thanks to decades of new technology), tripod, laptop and equipment bag. They cover the story, shoot the footage, write the story, marry footage and sound to the package, add graphics if necessary and then are responsible for several live shots during the day, and a package to be used on the late newscasts. Many times this is done without ever going back to the newsroom. Negotiator Scott Broom said the union had four goals in contract talks: gain AFTRA jurisdiction, develop ways to embrace the new technologies, protect current AFTRA members and work with IBEW brothers. Concerning the M.M.J. concept, Broom said AFTRA made the decision which had to be made. An exit strategy was approved for members who don't want to work under this new umbrella. They can leave with all benefits and the decision doesn't have to be made immediately. I believe they have one year.

KTTV in Los Angeles has a new one year agreement containing new technical duties. L.A. staff member Ed Barnes said the goal was a jurisdictional foothold and job security. Member Hal Eisner said that, if there's one union left standing, it must be AFTRA.

Contract talks are underway at Channel 4 in Washington. B.S.C. co-chair Joe Krebs said management is now referring to employees not as "journalists" but as "content providers" and the newsroom now is said to be the "content center." He said management wants everyone to do everything and for lower pay. Management also is referring to viewers as either "born digital" or "lean backs." Born digitals are into the new technology while lean backs simply lean back and watch TV. Other TV stations are de-emphasizing the importance of their on-air talent. Photos and bios are being removed from some websites or placed far down the page on others.

The question facing AFTRA now is how do we survive and grow as a union? We must aim for contract jurisdiction over any and all platforms now and in the future. This would include out of home, internet, mobile, broadcast, etc. In this regard, the B.S.C.'s Organizing Sub-Committee met three times since the last meeting. It determined that to achieve success at organizing you must have a healthy union, financial and staff resources along with policies and procedures which support organizing. The subcommittee made three recommendations: increase activism in broadcast shops, provide more tools to those activists and create a national organizing committee representing all AFTRA categories. The work of the sub-committee and its recommendations will be given consideration on the national level.

**How's YOUR Web Visibility?**

Are you a "Digital Person" or are you trapped in the 20th century? No matter how hip you are to the Internet you can have your face and your contact information on a casting website for free.

**The Philadelphia AFTRA Online Talent Guide** is open to Local members (and Local SAG) for free. If you're computer illiterate call the AFTRA office at 215.732.0507 and ask them to send you an enrollment form. Send it back with your headshot and resume and we'll add you to the Talent Guide. If you're a computer user visit <http://www.aftraphiladelphia.com> to sign up online. **Promote yourself!**

# DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL MEETING MAY 7

New Venue! Awards! Special Guests! Free Food! A really big show!

**D**rum roll, please! Ladies and gentlemen, we direct your attention to the stage! The 2009 Philadelphia Local Annual Meeting is about to begin!

Sure, every year around this time the Annual Meeting is a chance to get some free food, but the Annual Meeting is much more. It's a chance to connect with your fellow AFTRA members, catch up with what the Board and Staff have been working on, and cast your vote on important agenda items.

Annual Meetings are also the time when we honor AFTRA members and friends of the union who have given of their time and energy to promote AFTRA.

This year we have three awards to bestow.

**Rod Carson** will take his place in the Hall of Fame. (See article on page 1.)

**Dan Hunt**, Local Board Vice President, will receive the Bill Evans Award for outstanding service to the Local. He was the

lead organizer of the Metro Traffic campaign bringing together a unit of ## traffic reporters under AFTRA's jurisdiction. He was also part of the team that coordinated the last AFTRA convention here in Philadelphia and the 1997 AFTRA convention also held here in Philly. The list doesn't stop there... Dan Hunt more than meets the 'outstanding service to the Local' criteria for the Bill Evans Award.

This year we also honor a Friend of AFTRA. That award goes to **Mary Cavallaro**, Esq. who has waded through legal swamps on behalf of Local members and helped win big settlements when management strayed from their contractual obligations.

It has been a tradition for several years to produce a skit before the presentation of the Bill Evans Award. Past skits have portrayed Award recipient Bill Shusta as a super hero known as Shusta Man, included sing-a-longs that turned a career in AFTRA into a melodic

rhyme and in general have brought a dose of laughter to the evening. This year's Evans Award Sketch Committee promises to maintain the silliness standards that have been achieved in the past.

And, as a special treat, the evening's headliner is a professional comedian, Mister Joe Conklin of the WIP Morning Show. If the skit falls flat we'll have a pro to leave you laughing. See you on May 7th!



*Comic Joe Conklin*

## Local Reads for Read Across America *by Susan Moses*

*Oh, the places you'll go...*

**A**nd go we did, straight to Sharon Hill School, in Sharon Hill, Pa. It was a Dr. Seuss-fun-fest as our bustling bunch of Book Buddies introduced our Philadelphia AFTRA version of Reading Goes To School.

Our original sign-up was 24 strong, but because we were forced to reschedule our original March 2nd date to March 6th (due to a snowstorm and school closings), our head count was reduced to 15 (including Robert, our driver, who jumped in to cover an additional classroom). Though our numbers were small, our forces were mighty!

Dan Hunt and his fiancée Patti, a teacher at the school, did an incredible job organizing the program. We visited twenty classrooms and touched 400 students in under three hours!

Each student was given a personalized bookmark signed by the AFTRA reader. Each bookmark had entry lines for the student to list the next ten books they read, and the class with the most books read by the end of April receives a gift certificate to Walmart.

The students and teachers had a wonderful time and were so appreciative, but the best time was had by US! What a fabulous way to give back to the community.

So to all our readers, Barry Brait, Ken Clark, Rosalina Francesca, Dan Hunt, Emily Hunt, Kaitlin Hunt, Lynn Koenigsberg, Tom McNutt, Dr. Steve McWilliams, Susan Moses, Bill Shusta, Christy Springfield, Karen Vicks and Channel 10's Lori Wilson, a huge thank you!

And for those of you who missed this wonderful opportunity:

*Our work's now done, we had such fun  
Next time we read you ought to come  
The joy we brought to those we taught  
Made big winners out of everyone!*



*Volunteer reader Christy Springfield with one of her classes.*

The National Education Association annually sponsors Read Across America. Now in its twelfth year, it focuses on motivating children to read, in addition to helping them master basic skills. For more information on Read Across America visit the NEA website: [www.nea.org/readacross/](http://www.nea.org/readacross/)



# Broadcast Beat — News from our shop stewards

## WIP NEWS

By Robb Charry

Congratulations are in order to the WIP morning show's **Rhea Hughes** and husband **Joseph Cohn** who are expecting their first child this summer. Their new addition will likely be among a throng of World Series babies (conceived during the Phils magical run last fall) expected in the summer of 2009. Also from the WIP newsroom, **Sue Shilling** is due in July with her first (note that Sue is a Mets fan, so the same rule won't apply in this case).

**Marc Farzetta**, who began at WIP as an intern several years ago and rose through the ranks, is now on-air fulltime, doing a combination of sports updates on weeknights and sportstalk on the weekends.

WIP morning show semi-regular and weekend sportstalk host **Hugh Douglas** was inducted into the Mansfield (Ohio) Senior High School's Hall of Fame in February. Hugh went on to star at Central State in Ohio, before being drafted 16th overall in the 1995 draft by the Jets.

WIP morning show comedian **Joe Conklin** is hosting a golf outing at Philmont Country Club on May 11th. It's a fundraiser to support **Mary Kate's Legacy**, a great cause in memory of his niece Mark Kate Marley, who died of Infantile Neuro-axonal Dystrophy, at the age of 11. Mary Kate's Legacy helps children with medical costs not covered by insurance. Joe and WIP overnight host/comedian **Big Daddy Graham** will be performing at the dinner after the outing. For more info visit the website: [marykateslegacy.com](http://marykateslegacy.com)

Condolences to **Ray Diding** on the passing of his father Ray Diding Sr. in January. Ray Sr. was a huge Eagles fan who passed on his passion to his son. Ray has been a Saturday midday staple at WIP for over a decade, providing knowledge and commentary on all things football, and is known as the voice of reason when it comes to the Eagles. Ray Sr., who moved to Florida years ago, was delighted when WIP made the plunge into the internet, and he was a faithful listener to his son's show.



when he was run over by a herd of 'Nova fans while doing a live shot after the 'Cat's thrilling win over Pitt.

There's a new face in the newsroom. **John Valerio**, veteran traffic reporter on TV and radio has been hired as a part-time anchor and is settling in nicely. He's also handed out some sample jars of killer hot pepper flakes he makes at home. John grows his garden during the summer then turns them into flakes for fall and winter.

And speaking of food... someone we've named "Skippy" is stealing ours! Skippy is a mouse that's been seen rummaging through desk drawers and skittering across the floor in our 10th floor office. Management has suggested we keep all dry goods in our lockers. Don't think we'll file a grievance but there's a rumour that Skippy and some friends may form a union!

## KYW CBS3 NEWS

By Neil Rattigan

The ranks of AFTRAns at KYW-TV grew by five when the staff of cbs3.com voted to join the union. Digital journalist **Nicole Brewer**, along with webmasters **Steve Beck**, **Ben Bowens**, **Kevin Coyle** and **Ted Scheid** are now covered by the agreement, which expires September 30th. This was no easy decision for them, but it underlines the strength of unions, especially AFTRA, even when times are tough as they are now. Since much of our work is repurposed on cbs3.com, it's logical to have web staffers as part of our union. We share common goals and now we will work together to achieve them.

When the contract comes up for re-negotiation, one of the issues will be jurisdiction over sister station WPSG. Eyewitness News at 10 on the CW Philly debuted in February, with anchor **Dave Huddleston**, meteorologist **Doug Kammerer**, and sports director **Beasley Reece**. **Ashley Brennan** produces the newscast at least twice a week.

Congratulations to CBS3 I-Team reporter **Jim Osman**. He received 2nd place in Health-Science Reporting in this Year's National Headliner Awards with the story *The Woman who Calls Herself Doctor*. [Full disclosure... **Dick Sheeran** and I were on the judges' panel, but disqualified ourselves from the category.]

AFTRAns at CBS3 are closely watching the change in the General Manager's office. **Michael Colleran** has been replaced by **Jon Hitchcock**, who comes here from WTNH New Haven.

## KYW-1060 NEWS

By Paul Kurtz

The Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters has announced the winners for Excellence in Broadcasting this year, and KYW Newsradio has received two major recognitions: **Michelle Durham's FBI Diary** was named the Outstanding Radio Feature/Report/Series for 2008.

And KYW Newsradio was also honored for Outstanding Local Radio Newscast.

We've been covering all things Villanova during the Wildcats' run to the Final Four. At times the job has been hazardous. Reporter **Ian Bush** suffered a serious injury to his hand



We wish best of luck to former WIOQ steward Lisa Page who has left the Philadelphia market for New York City.



**Correction:** In the Audiomax photos in the January issue of SESSIONS we called KYW staffer Lynne Adkins Paul Kurtz's "table mate" and failed to identify her. The error was due to mis-communication. Sorry Lynne.

# Shop Stewards Receive Training

By Ed Fischer



WIP steward Rob Charry makes a point. CBS3 shop steward Neil Rattigan on the right; AFTRA Philadelphia E. D. Stephen Leshinski is on the left.

**W**hat makes a good shop steward? Part of the answer is, “dedication.”

Nine shop stewards from AFTRA Philadelphia broadcasting shops spent half a Saturday in mid-February at a training workshop organized by AFTRA Executive Director Steve Leshinski and Associate Director Shelley Figures, learning how to sharpen their skills for representing their members.

Some of the shop stewards at the session had more than twenty years’ experience; others were newcomers to the role. But all had one goal in mind: doing the best job they can when faced with the difficult issues that crop up in every union shop.

The stewards — from CBS3, NBC10, KYW Newsradio, 94WYSP, 93.3 WMMR, 610WIP, and Metro-Shadow Traffic — heard a little bit of the history of AFTRA and the Philadelphia Local, took part in some role playing games, learned how to deal with management and how to differentiate between events that should become a grievance and those that shouldn’t. (It’s not always an easy assessment.)

So why did all these volunteers give up a half-day on a sunny weekend? As Steve Leshinski put it during the session, “A union is only as strong as its members, and we are the union.”

## One of our Own: Gary Bridges

By Cyndy Drue

**A** common path toward professional voice-over work is to first be an On-Air personality. Such is the case of Gary Bridges, an AFTRA member, one of our own, who is now making a living solely from voiceovers.

Gary started in radio in Detroit, then St. Louis, Miami and Minneapolis, before landing at WZZD-AM (Wizzard 100) in Philadelphia. He began doing VO’s in Minneapolis and once arriving in Philly, he immediately sought out production companies and advertising agencies here.

Gary then moved over to WYSP for a few years in the early Eighties, and later to WNBC in New York. WNBC was to become his final radio station stint in mid-1987.

From that point on, Gary considered VO’s to be his career and his later projects were side jobs. “Side jobs” over the years included hosting *The Continuous History of Rock ‘n Roll* for fellow AFTRA member Denny Somach’s Production company (*The Continuous History* aired all over the world for three years); writing and producing *John Madden’s Sports Quiz* for 16 years; producing a weekly golf show for *Sports Illustrated*; and a daily show for Bob Costas.

I asked Gary how he thought his on-air radio experience helped

with his VO career.

“It got me zeroed in on the idea of being the person speaking, not of just being a role or playing a character, but how to personalize a message. Speaking one-on-one on the radio – it’s quite a different thing. You learn to be protective of the message because there’s a large portion of *you* in it.”

Gary’s skills have taken years to develop. “Beyond acting, with voiceovers you learn where you can pick up time, pacing, and matching the timbre the producer has in his head,” he explained.

After being his own agent for over 30 years, in 2008, Gary signed with a talent agency based in New York and LA. Within a very short time, he auditioned for and won a huge account – Disney.

That’s Gary Bridges’ voice on those Disney theme park television commercials airing these days. The Disney account is signed to our sister’s union, SAG (Screen Actors Guild) but Gary got there from the bulk of the work he’s done doing jobs under AFTRA contracts.

To hear samples of Gary’s work, go to his website----: [www.WinningSounds.com](http://www.WinningSounds.com)

Like to be featured in this column? Contact [cyndy@cyndydrue.com](mailto:cyndy@cyndydrue.com)



Gary Bridges

# Kidd Chris asks “Why am I paying AFTRA?”

...and then answers that question

“Why am I paying AFTRA? I don’t get why I have to pay these guys to work. This is all seem like a racket to me.”

These are thoughts that I have had and I was **T**very vocal about on my radio show, and perhaps you have the same thoughts. I can tell you now that I was 110% wrong about AFTRA. I have learned in a **very** short time that not only do your dues go to good use, but no matter **who** you are or what kind of broadcasting you are involved in, you have a great organization in your corner.

AFTRA will not only help you through a tough situation you may have, but most importantly, they are human and will give you great moral support as well. Simply put, AFTRA is a great equalizer when the little guy is cornered. Without getting into any details, my



Kidd Chris – AFTRA was there when he needed help.

whole AFTRA experience I can equate as a David vs Goliath situation flipped into a Goliath vs Goliath.

Look, I can tell you with **full** confidence, that your quarterly dues **are** going to good use for someone who is in need of AFTRA back up, and that same support will be there for you if you ever need it. **Every** broadcaster has worked **so** hard to be where they are, so why let an ill situation destroy everything you worked so hard for? Think of AFTRA is your career insurance.

If you have questions about **anything** involving your working situation, I can promise you that everyone at AFTRA will be happy to talk with you and help you through whatever issue you have.

## Career Day Pix...



WMDT’s Katherine Amenta makes a point during one on one with a student.



Casting Director Diane Heery and AFTRA Local VP Dan Hunt answer questions after the Casting Panel.

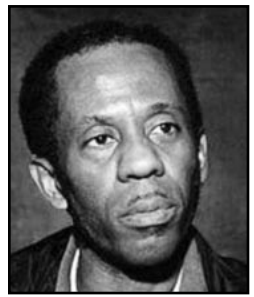


Temple student Lamar Brown, Cyndy Drue and Pierre Robert.



The Business of the Business Panel: (L-R) Stephen Leshinski, Mary Cavallaro, Clay Heery, and Dave Frankel.

## IN MEMORIAM



### Roben Psonbravos Woodson

was an actor, photographer, tireless volunteer to numerous arts and theatre projects, and roaming free spirit.

His passionate devotion to the arts, gentle, and quiet dignity, affected the many people who interacted with Roben in his travels around Center City Philadelphia and beyond. Roben’s love of the arts took him to the Prince and Freedom Theatre stages, film sets, Film Office functions, and The Philadelphia Film Festival, among others. He was a familiar face at AFTRA membership meetings and functions.

Roben may not have traveled an easy road, but the kindness, boundless optimism, and humanity he brought with him on his journey, touched and enriched the lives of so many in the entertainment community.

His untimely, tragic death came as a shock to his many friends.

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**Frank Ford**, Philadelphia radio pioneer passed away on Tuesday morning, March 3, 2009, Mister Ford was 92. Ford’s “real life” name was Eddie Felbin and he was married to Philadelphia’s District Attorney, Lynne Abraham.

Ford was often called “The Father of Talk Radio in Philadelphia.” Said Ford, “I was the first one in the country to do two-way talk where the caller could be heard as well as the host.”

Ford was first employed in the market in 1937 at WHAT. He went on to work at all the major talk stations and left the air in 2000 when WWDB switched to a music format.

Ford was also involved in business as a co-owner of the Valley Forge Music Fair, an automobile company, Auto Sport Importers, Inc. and his own advertising agency.

## SESSIONS GOES GREEN

To lessen our impact on the ecosystem (and save some cash) we are moving Sessions to an all electronic format. The process will take place over the next few issues and we need your assistance. We realize not everyone is wired to the Net and some of you will need to get printed copies. If you would like to go paperless send an email to [philadelphia@aftra.com](mailto:philadelphia@aftra.com). If you want to continue getting Sessions in the mail call the office, 215.732.0507 and let us know.

### It's Your Union

It's easy to look at a union as a "third party": people in an office somewhere whose job it is to deal with the employer about "union issues" and try to work things out, like an insurance company or legal service, and certainly a big part of any union is enforcing contracts and pursuing grievances, whether in a broadcast shop or on a commercial production or for a recording artist agreement and AFTRA does all of that.

But the staff works for the membership, not the other way around: as a member of AFTRA this is Your Union. That is why on February 21st we held a Shop Steward training to help those AFTRA members who have volunteered to be their stations Shop Steward understand better all the tools they have at their disposal but also to meet each other and share stories about successes and challenges of being an AFTRA Shop Steward. The training was attended by 10 members from 7 shops and the biggest "complaint" was that it was too short. Look for another, bigger, training in the fall to follow-up on all of the planning from our February session.

Membership involvement is also way we recently re-convened the Freelance Organizing Committee to list and discuss the ongoing radio, television, and internet commercial productions taking place in our area, including industrial productions as well. No one knows better what kind of work is and isn't taking place in our market than the AFTRA members who bid for the work

and our members are our greatest source of information and energy as we set out to try and get more work for AFTRA members. The research and activity of the committee led to recent meetings with the Greater Philadelphia Tourism board, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Innovation, and the Philadelphia City Manager – all to explore ways to generate more AFTRA work.

Finally, due to the work of Neil Rattigan and other AFTRAns at CBS3 the Web Employees voted to join AFTRA and become our "newest" local. Technically, this group will become part of the CBS3 local but they are brand new members who joined, in large part, because of the work of the current AFTRAns at the station.

Members make the union run. From the van full of AFTRAns who attended Sharon Hill Middle School for Read Across America to our AFL-CIO Delegate and AFTRA National Board members to the every day conversations about "what is the Union" that people have where they work, its AFTRA members that make AFTRA the vibrant and dynamic voice of the Television and Radio (and Internet!) artists who entertain and inform America.



### Why The Employee Choice Act?

*By Bill Shusta*

AFTRA President Roberta Reardon calls it a once in a lifetime opportunity for workers in this country. AFTRA's General Counsel and Director of Legislative Affairs Tom Carpenter believes we should strike while the iron is hot. They're referring to the Employee Free Choice Act now before Congress. Carpenter says our current system of labor law is broken. "It doesn't really give people a chance to exercise the rights guaranteed for them in our current system of labor law."

He says there are three points to the law. First it allows workers, not the employers, to choose a majority sign-up — or an election process when deciding whether to join a union. Again, the workers choose. Second, it strengthens penalties against companies gaming the system by extending labor board hearings. Third, it quarantees workers a contract in a reasonable period of time. After 90 days of bargaining either side can request mediation. If no agreement is reached after 30 days of mediation, there will be an arbitration system. Arbitration already is in use in some instances, for example, teacher, police and fire fighter contract negotiations in the public sector.

Carpenter believes this is about making the economy work for everybody. "Giving employees a chance to negotiate for health care, to negotiate for better wages. And, it's somewhat telling that the businesses and corporations lobbying against this are the same corporations that are spending millions of taxpayer dollars to grant their own executives bonuses and yet they don't want their workers and employees to have the same opportunities to have a contract that protects their wages and working conditions."

According to Carpenter, the statistics are pretty striking.

## Employee **FREE CHOICE** ACT

"Workers who are represented by unions are much more likely to have health care. If workers have an opportunity to bargain for their wages, they inevitably bring home more than non-union workers." He went on to say that organized labor has always been the backbone of the middle class. "It's not about the institutions of unions. It's about giving workers an opportunity to find a clearer path to better wages and health insurance."

No doubt you have heard or read much from those opposing the Employee Free Choice Act. Carpenter says the biggest myth is that it will end the secret ballot election. What it does is allow the worker, not the employer, to choose either a majority sign-up or a company controlled election process at the N.L.R.B.

The bill was introduced last session in Congress with substantial bipartisan support. Recently it has become a bit tighter especially in light of Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Arlen Specter's decision to withdraw his support. AFTRA members must help in the effort to get the bill passed this year. On the AFTRA website is a link to the act webpage allowing you to contact your elected representatives. Carpenter says, "Every Senator, every Congress person needs to hear from as many people as they can because the companies are lobbying hard against the bill and every e-mail or telephone call or letter that gets into the hands of your representatives, they need to hear from their constituents so they know they're safe to do the right thing." You also could make an appointment to talk to your Senator and Representative in person about the Employee Free Choice Act. As Carpenter says, "Keep at it. It's a very important issue."



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 Read Nat Wright’s History of The Philadelphia Local  
 at [www.aftraphiladelphia.com/convention/history.html](http://www.aftraphiladelphia.com/convention/history.html)

*Don't miss the really big show of the year!*

**THE AFTRA  
 PHILADELPHIA  
 ANNUAL MEETING**

**May 7, 2009**

7:00 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn, The Garden Room  
 1100 Arch Street, Philadelphia



*Refreshments!*

**Bill Evans Award — Dan Hunt**  
**Hall of Fame Award — Rod Carson**  
**Friend of AFTRA Award — Mary Cavallaro, Esq.**

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