



# First Member Survey Garners Strong Response

## Local 677 Board to act on member suggestions

*The Organizing Committee (Rick Broadwell, Steve Dinion, Keith Haugen, Brien Matson, Dean Taba) is very pleased with the outcome of our first-ever membership survey, to which 123 members - nearly 30% of our membership - responded. This high level of participation suggests that our members feel Local 677 is important to them and is worth the effort to improve.*

*The Committee presented the following report to the Board of Directors, which unanimously approved these recommendations at its February 20 meeting.*

### **Analysis and Recommendations:**

Three of the four most common reasons given for membership suggest that members see their membership as a call to action. A **desire to improve conditions in the industry** was the most common reason; **pride in membership** was the third most common response, and the **desire to build solidarity among musicians** was the fourth most common.

Members expressed strong support for the core services Local 677 and the AFM provide. Access to services and benefits was the second most common reason given for union membership, reminding us that professional musicians have specific needs that we can, and often do, address. As we expand organizing and recruitment efforts, we must maintain and improve our services in order to serve our members' needs.

1. The union's pension plan (American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund, or AFM-EPF) was rated the most important union service we provide.

• **Recommendation:** Emphasize the value of the pension plan among musicians of all ages and educate members on how to get money into the plan (LS-1, participation agreements, CBA, MSI payroll services).

2. Access to free rehearsal studios was rated as the second most important benefit of membership. Given the high cost of renting studio space, this could be a valuable recruitment tool. However, many members mentioned the need to fix the building's interior.

• **Recommendation:** Explore the feasibility of opening the building an additional evening each week.

• **Recommendation:** Communicate plans for and updates on building improvements (roof repair and replacement, air conditioning, better quality lighting, new flooring and walls, regular piano tunings) to the membership on a regular basis.

*This union is a collection of people with a common cause: making a living making music. It's not just a building with a staff, it's us: professional musicians who think enough of ourselves and each other to come together to help ourselves and therefore each other.*  
**-Brien Matson, Organizing Committee member**

**UNION — a group of people who know they can accomplish more together than they can separately.**

Chartered in 1923  
**Musicians' Association  
of Hawaii**

**Local 677**  
American Federation of Musicians

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**Vice President**

Benedicto Villaverde

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Brien Matson

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Julie Teruya, Business Representative

Stephen Dinion, Organizer

Leah Houston, Payroll Services

**Office Hours:**

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

*Affiliated with:*

Hawaii State AFL-CIO

AFM Western Conference



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3. The third most important services were legal and contract protections and the job referral service. Members also identified lack of

work as the primary challenge faced by professional musicians, followed by low pay and lack of job security (tied for second).

• **Recommendation:** Continue and expand efforts to educate musicians on the value of working under a union contract (LP-1, LS-1, CBA).

• **Recommendation:** Regularly assess the job referral and promotional services in light of both their value to working musicians and the need to make them as “user-friendly” and member-focused as possible. To that end, we must encourage member input on how to improve them.

4. The Membership Directory and the Wage Scales and Working Conditions book were rated as the most useful of the Local 677 publications. These documents are central to our members' abilities to cope in the marketplace. The survey revealed there is sometimes confusion about how the wage scales are created.

• **Done:** On the recommendation of several freelance musicians, the wage scales will now be referred to as “minimum service fees” for musicians.

• **In process:** The directory, bylaws, and minimum service fees will soon be published in a single book to facilitate use.

• **Recommendation:** Educate our members about the wage scales committee's process, and ensure that

*This survey provides the union with great feedback and information on its members' needs that can help to guide its leadership. Let's continue to address the issues raised in this survey and communicate to the membership how useful their responses were.*

*-Dean Taba, Organizing Committee member*

it remains as democratic and inclusive as possible.

• **Recommendation:** Educate members about the value of collective bargaining and explain that any employer who wishes to seek variances to set fees and/or working conditions can request that Local 677 enter into collective bargaining with him/her.

5. Members rated our newsletter, *Keola O Na Mele*, as our next most useful publication, and we should build on this. The more that *Keola* deals with the everyday concerns of working musicians, the more it will be relied on by our members. It can also serve as a useful recruitment and organizing tool and build our profile in the community.

• **Recommendation:** Encourage rank-and-file members to submit articles and reports for publication in *Keola*.

• **Recommendation:** Identify correspondents from neighbor islands for regular submissions to *Keola*, perhaps with a report in each issue.

• **Recommendation:** Feature articles about prominent or successful members as often as possible.

6. The lowest-ranked communication media on our survey were our websites. Our websites could be very useful in our recruitment and organizing efforts.

- **Recommendation:** Recruit members to work with our webmaster to upgrade both websites.

7. In order to increase our membership, members encouraged Local 677 to organize and educate musicians of all ages. Adding staff and preparing an organizing campaign were suggested, as were lowering our dues or holding a membership drive.

- **Done:** Business Representative Julie Teruya has experience organizing in the hotel, cruise ship, and healthcare industries, and we have hired a working musician as part-time organizer (Steve Dinion).

- **Done:** Local 677's Organizing Committee, made up of working musicians, prepared the recent survey to identify issues of importance and stimulate input from our current members.

- **In process:** Local 677 has gotten assurances from the AFM's Organizing Department that it will help us prepare and implement an organizing campaign.

- **Recommendation:** Approve and implement a survey of all working musicians to: 1) open the lines of communication with non-member professional musicians, and 2) give us an idea of what we need to focus on as a union in order to expand our relevance.

- **Recommendation:** Once this new survey is completed, hold a strategic planning session for an organizing campaign.

- **Recommendation:** Communicate with our members annually about our budget, showing where their dues money comes from and how - and why - it is spent.



## *Save the Date!*

### Business of Music Seminar: **21st Century Survival Skills for the Professional Musician**



Presentations by Local 677 members Jeff Peterson and Jim Decker  
Saturday, March 11, 2006 10AM-12:30PM

8. Many members remarked on the need to raise Local 677's profile in the community, both as a union representing musicians and as the best source for live music.

- **Done:** Local 677 participates in the Bridal Expo twice a year, with our own stage for live performances by members.

- **Done:** Local 677 publishes the free Live Music Sourcebook for members to advertise directly to potential purchasers.

- **Recommendation:** Develop a strategic plan to increase our visibility in the community, raise our stature among musicians and purchasers, and communicate our message to the general public

- **Recommendation:** Explore the feasibility of having showcases at State airports featuring Hawaii's great musicians, seeking funding and support from governmental and educational institutions.

9. The third most common problem facing professional musicians is undercutting by other musicians, particularly students and young musicians, but also other members.

- **In process:** Build attendance at our Business of Music seminars for young musicians, and build stronger ties with the music education community.

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Through the survey, we asked important questions and got many useful answers which we have read and analyzed. We now must get to work to let our members know what we have done, what we are doing, and what we are going to do, in response. During this process, we must continue to welcome and encourage our members' feedback and assistance. Most importantly, the survey should help guide us in addressing the membership's needs. As the first step, this report and its recommendations have been discussed and approved by the Local 677 Board. We strongly encourage members to share feedback on this report.

As musicians we perform together all the time; now, we need to truly work together. Good-paying work is scarce, and there are too many semi-professional bands working for low money in high profile venues. It's time for musicians to stop just complaining and do something about it. Local 677's staff and Board can't achieve anything without working musicians becoming active. We must recognize that we as musicians create a product that has value, and decide not to settle for less than we deserve.

*-Local 677 Organizing Committee*

# STANDING NOTICES

(You'd better sit down for these.)

The Members' Office is open weekdays from 9:00am to 4:00pm, or when the last staff member leaves, if later. Please be sensitive to the needs of others who use the members' computer—official union business gets top priority, members' music-related business comes next, personal email and websurfing only if no other members need the computer for musical business purposes. **MUSICIANS ASSOCIATION EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES MAY NOT BE USED TO PROMOTE NONUNION WORK.**

The phones in the Members' Office are available for making local outgoing calls only. Please do not answer any of the union's phones unless authorized to do so.

The Local 677 Directory – Members may pick up a copy, one to a customer, anytime at the local office, or call the office if you would like it mailed to you.

Be sure to get a Local 677 member's identification sticker for your car if you don't already have one. Unauthorized vehicles in our parking lot will be towed.

Security continues to be a problem in our building and in the parking lot. Do not leave valuables unattended. The Association assumes no liability for any loss or damage.

Members' personal mail and parcels delivered to the Association's address will be held in the

Members' Office for pickup. The Association assumes no liability for loss, theft or damage of such items.

**Kaiser group health insurance plan participants:** Finance charges of 1% per month (12% per annum) on balances overdue one month or more will be added, calculated from the due date.

Plan members who fall two months behind in payments will be automatically dropped from the plan without notice by the third month. (Unpaid balances will still be due and payable, however, even though you may no longer be covered by the insurance.)

To participate in the union's group Kaiser health plan, you must have been a member in good standing of the Association for at least six months prior to joining the plan, and you must maintain membership in good standing while on the plan.

Open enrollment period is the month of December. This is the only time when you may rejoin the plan or add family members to your coverage. (You may initially join the plan anytime after six months' good-standing membership.)

By participating in the group medical plan you are agreeing to these terms.

A returned check charge of \$20.00 will be assessed by the Association on each check not honored by your bank.

A member may resign in good standing only if (s)he is fully paid up for the quarter in which (s)he resigns. Resignations must be in writing.

Members who use the Musicians' building for teaching: Remember that studios may be reserved in advance for only three hours per week, with extended hours allowed for steady work-dues-paying members. Also remember to register your students and nonmember guests. We are required by our insurance carrier to keep a record of all nonmembers who are in the building.

If you have a problem with your employer, especially if you are not paid on time or in the right amount, please contact your union immediately. Sometimes these matters are time-sensitive, and if action is delayed, a successful resolution may not be possible.

Union dues—membership and work dues—are tax-deductible as miscellaneous deductions on Schedule A, Itemized Deductions, of your Form 1040 federal tax return. If you would like a print-out showing all the dues you paid last year to aid you in your tax preparation, call the office.

Don't donate your services for fundraising events without calling the union first. Rule of thumb: no one donates unless everyone involved in the event donates – the caterer, the venue, the producer, the headliner, the video guy, etc.

Got a Minute? The Union could use your help. Volunteers are always welcome, to help with the monthly mailings, do some simple computer data entry, office chores, or fixing things around the building. If you would like to be part of the team, please call the union office. Thanks!

Life membership does not happen automatically. It must be applied for, and life membership is not conferred retroactively. The union staff tries to remind members when they may be approaching life member eligibility, but occasionally we miss someone, especially if part of the member's tenure in the AFM was spent in another local. If you think you might be eligible for life membership, please notify us.

Please be sure that the checks you submit for payment have the same name on them as the name we have for you in our database. If you make payment on a business or organization account, write your name on the memo line to ensure the payment is applied to the correct account.

When a work dues payment is received (other than by payroll deduction), it is applied to the oldest outstanding work dues charge first. Exceptions are only for payments made according to a special payment plan authorized by the Secretary-Treasurer for prior years' delinquent work dues.

Are you moving? Is someone else handling your mail? If so, be sure the Association has your correct mailing address. Please inform the union of your new mailing address at least a month in advance of the move so that you will be assured of receiving newsletters, billings, and other important union notices on time. We cannot make any special allowances for bills not paid on time due to an incorrect mailing address on file. Update us when your email address changes, as well.

Staff and officers' desks, files, and computers are off-limits to unauthorized persons. We are a very friendly, trusting local, but members should expect that sensitive personal information will be secure. Please respect staff-only work areas.

These Local 677 and related websites are here to serve you. Check 'em out!

[www.musicianshawaii.com](http://www.musicianshawaii.com)

[www.livemusicbiz.com](http://www.livemusicbiz.com)

[www.payrollshawaii.com](http://www.payrollshawaii.com)

[www.livemusicawareness.com](http://www.livemusicawareness.com)

## Suspended and Expelled members may not:

receive job referrals

use union facilities, including studios

perform on "Live@Studio 6" series

participate in medical insurance group plan or other benefits of the Association.

(Art. 26.3, Local 677 Bylaws)

