



NEWSREEL

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 399

LEO T. REED, SECRETARY-TREASURER

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Getting Our Work Back

By Leo T. Reed

September 16, 2009

In the last Joint Council 42 paper, I covered certain points of the National Standard. I indicated that wages, hours and working conditions will be up graded. The right to follow our equipment remains the same. No other Local has that right. The National Standards will only improve those individual contracts all across the nation. I will continue to convey additional information relative to the National Standard up to the day of negotiations sometime in May 2010.

Right now I will cover hours of work on all productions. Yes, we are getting screwed, but we



will address the situation, especially the covering of equipment when the production is on stage.

In a way, it is our own fault that we are not covering all or most of the equipment whenever the production is on stage or on near-by locations.

It goes way back, over 50 years ago ever since the Local allowed IA members on 399's trucks. This was before any of us were around. Allowing IA members to load and unload our trucks for over half a century has come back to haunt us. Unlike us, the Teamsters in New York and Boston cover every piece of equipment on location or on stage because the Teamsters there load and unload or assist in the loading and unloading.

So how do we get our work

back? By the National Standard. The language that I proposed that has already been written, will make it mandatory that all Teamsters will unlock, load or assist in the loading, reload or assist in the reloading at the end of the work day, and finally locking his or her individual working vehicle. Each individual driver on his or her assigned vehicle. To be able to achieve this we will need total support nationwide: We will get it. If we are successful, it will increase our work force tremendously on stage and on near by locations, where productions are situated on one location for days.

Every working vehicle is covered in New York and Boston. Why not us?

The Locals nationwide are behind us, but I need you! As

the Director of the Teamsters Motion Picture Division and as the Chairperson on the Motion Picture Policy Committee, I have already made this one of our major proposals in the National Standard Agreement. Every working automotive regulated equipment including those production working trailers on stage, etc., must be covered.

If we are able to achieve this, we will be busier. Currently, as I write this article, we have 99 signed productions, most of them are TV productions, and most of

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**"Jobs, Jobs, Jobs,
this is what it is
all about..."**

Around Warners



Shown above are Sonny Pak, Dan Bradford, Gary Schmitt and Reese Some



Shop Steward Garage Guy Dean



Patricia Taylor



Ernie Taylor



Business Agent Tony Cousimano and Captain Frances Thomas

Frankie

Frances “Frankie” Thomas keeps the trucks rolling at Warner Brothers as its only female captain. “I love to drive,” said Thomas, “and I’ll drive anything! Forty-footers are my favorite.”

Thomas is in charge of 15 drivers for *Eastwick*, a new TV series based on John Updike’s novel, “The Witches of Eastwick.”

In the studio for three days of shooting each week, Frankie isn’t driving as much these days, but says she still drives whenever possible, “just to keep me in practice.”

Thomas began her love affair with driving as a child on trips to the Mojave Desert. “El Mirage is where we spent many weekends,” reflects Thomas on the famous dry-lakebed racetrack. “We would watch my father race land speed cars.”

After high school Thomas began driving water trucks, and soon fell in love with operating large vehicles. “It was rare in those days for women to be seen behind the wheel of a big truck,” recalled



Co-Captain Michael Reese and Carlos De La Torre



TOP ROW: Buddy Petruccelli, Michael Reese; MIDDLE ROW: Jerod Abbatoeye, Mike McEntyre, Dave Morrison, Tim Abbott, Frances Thomas, Brian McEntyre, Rob Franck, Bobby Crisafulli, Bobby

Keeps It Rolling

Thomas, who feels at home there herself.

Four years later, after delivering water to construction sites, movie sets, and even a fire, Thomas started working for transportation coordinators she had met along the way. "I was a daily driver for a few years," reflects Thomas. "Then I landed a Captain job on the show *Angel*." Later, Russ McEntyre offered her a job at the WB.

"Russ brought me to Warners where I first worked on *Cold Case*," said Thomas, who became a union member in 1996. "His boys, Mike and Brian, had both worked with me before. After Russ left to do a feature, I worked for Heath Culp. He had me captain a few shows for him, including *Eastwick*."

Thomas loves being on the lot, even though she isn't driving as much. "I owe a lot to these men for putting their faith and trust in me for doing a good job," Thomas added. "I've been very well taken care of by the union and Warners'

transportation department."

Thomas and her husband, Rod, who live in Riverside with their 13-year-old son, Kyle, and 11-year-old daughter, Kallin, have been able to purchase a weekend house in Lake Havasu, thanks to her income.

"I grew up around race boats and cars," said Thomas. She enjoys the time on the lake, her dirt bikes, and playing co-ed softball on Sundays. "I like to work hard and play hard."

Fellow union member Patricia Taylor agrees. "Frankie's reputation in the industry is that she can drive anything," said Taylor. "She even drove while pregnant."

Thomas, proud to be a union member at Warner Brothers, said she also wants to thank her "boyz" who make her whole job easier and "our whole department shine. I just want to thank the union and all the women who came before me for this opportunity."



ROW left to right: Heath Culp (Coordinator), Nick Stone, Joe Campise, batoye, Billy Pulaski; BOTTOM ROW: Stan Brown, Mike Kvammen, Frances Ron Diem



Coordinator Heath Culp

Teamsters Keep *The Office* Open

Transportation Coordinator Jesse Dutchover

The *Office* has a secret: a bunch of hardworking union guys. The successful NBC comedy, which chronicles the day-to-day exploits of an assortment of lovably off-beat office characters, wouldn't be open for business without the help of Local 399.

Going into its sixth season, the hit show uses a core of seven union drivers shooting five days a week. Two of those shooting days are on location, which means transporting everyone and everything needed for the shoot to a different location.

"It's probably one of the best kept secrets in the industry," said Jesse Dutchover, the transportation coordinator for the show. "People are always amazed that it isn't all shot at the studio. It's a five-day shoot per episode. We typically go out two of those days and our locations vary all the time. We don't go back to the same location twice."

Dutchover, who started driving in 1978, has been a coordinator since 1993. "I've worked for CBS, Showtime, DreamWorks and various other production companies," noted Dutchover, "and with NBC for 12 years."

Dutchover added that he and *The Office* transportation captain, Michael Storck, have been with the show for four seasons. "We have a great crew of seven drivers including Michael," he said.

The team includes Storck, co-captain Dean Macklem, Joel Moss, Richard Leung, Chris Storck, Bob Torres, and Jose "Little Joe" Reynoso.

"We call him that because he's such a big guy," laughed Dutchover, who added, "He's not pictured in our photo because he was off running that day."

Co-Captain Michael Storck

Michael Storck, transportation captain on *The Office*, came to his current job after being a guy who spent his days with rows of numbers, as an accountant. "I wanted a change," said Storck. "I had gotten pretty tired of being cooped up all in an office. I wanted to get outside more and now I can."

Storck's brother-in-law actually got him interested in working transportation for the industry. "It's been four seasons now that I've worked on *The Office*, he explained, "and I love working on the show."

Storck's days are full and offer him the variety he didn't have before. "Every week it's a different show," said Storck, "and being an accountant is actually good background for the job and what a captain has to do. It helps me with all the figures and the paperwork." He added, "There's a lot of paperwork these days."

His prior experience helps him with his union job, and the studio work is a lot more fun. "It feels more like an independent film than a TV show at a major network," said Storck, "The cast is small, no one on the show has a huge ego and everyone has a good sense of

humor. It's a great place to work."

In his off time, Storck, like many Californians, loves to surf. When he can he hits the beach, and he recently took a trip to Costa Rica.

Co-Captain Dean Macklem

Dean Macklem is Dutchover's co-captain on *The Office*. A union member since 1977, Dean also loves working on the union show. He spends a lot of time on the freeway, scouting chosen locations with his crew to keep the equipment rolling for *The Office*.

"It's great," said Macklem. "It's basically dispatching the drivers for all the runs and keeping up on the trailers, picking up and dropping off equipment when we go out on job."

Knowing the LA freeways is a must for the job and he is definitely familiar with the LA area. "I grew up in the Valley," said Macklem, where learning to drive is like learning to walk anywhere else. "That's what people did in the Valley. If you were in Detroit you'd work at GM; here it's driving. I started work with the studios and I got seniority while at Fox. I've been in the union since 1977. It has been very, very good to me."

A no-nonsense guy, Macklem makes it clear to everyone that he feels fortunate to be working for the union. "I'm lucky to be able to continue living here, enjoying the California lifestyle that I grew up with," said Macklem.

"I've been in the union since 1977. It has been very, very good to me."



Captain Dean Macklem



Coordinator Jesse Dutchover



Captain Michael Storc



Shown above are Captain Michael Storc, Joel Moss, Coordinator Jesse Dutchover, Richard Leung, Chris Storc, Co-Captain Dean Macklem and Bob Torres

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SECRETARY-TREASURER'S MESSAGE

Getting Our Work Back

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the time they are on stage with only a fraction of us working. With the new language we will increase the numbers. This is not about New York or Boston. This is all about us. Yes, the manning of all of our working equipment is major. It is a major proposal on the National Agreement. Jobs, Jobs, Jobs, this is what it is all about.

September 23, 2009 Pre-Staffing of Shows.

For years I have stated that we will go after those productions that were already set to go Union, but purposely delayed so that the Coordinators could pre-staff the productions with their out of grouping favorites before signing. Usually this involves large productions. We have brought charges against a Coordinator for pre-staffing a 75 million dollar production, and fined him \$3,000 after the trial with a strong possibility of expulsion the next time. Currently another Coordinator has been charged with pre-staffing a \$100 million production and is awaiting trial. On another scenario, we refused to sign a \$50

million production because it was pre-staffed before it went to a foreign country. So, for the most part we have been consistent. I covered this years ago in the Joint Council 42 Newspaper. It is easy to be consistent on the bigger productions, because it was so obvious that the production was geared to be union. However, we have encountered a few problems on the super low budget productions, especially in organizing. We cannot bump employees on legitimate non-union productions. The National Labor Relations Act protects them, and this usually occurs on the super low budget productions. So, we will continue to allow our 399 Drivers to go out and hustle, trying to locate and organize legitimate low budget non-union productions to create more jobs. When they get on those low budget productions, they can call us and we will be there. Help is appreciated whenever they render assistance by acting as our eyes and ears.

When we organize and sign them, we must **LEGALLY INCLUDE ALL DRIVERS**. That is not pre-staffing. IT'S CALLED ORGANIZING UNDER THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT.