



# AFM Local 500

## 2025 1st Quarter Newsletter

Dear Local 500 members,

I hope your year has been healthy and productive so far. Inside this newsletter, you will find important information about our upcoming elections, updates from the Southern Conference, and words from our President as well as other useful information. I want to use this space to let you know that this will be the last formal newsletter I'll be writing for Local 500. At the end of the current term, I intend to step down from my current role as Secretary-Treasurer so that I can focus on other parts of my life and career. I am grateful for the past 8 years of service to our Local and Federation - I like to think I've made a positive impact, both on the financial health of our Local and the strength of our communication and community, but I know there's someone else out there who can continue the work with a fresh perspective and I think we will all benefit from it. I greatly value the work of the union and intend to stay an active member. I appreciate your patience over the next few months as I work to wrap up several long-term projects and catch up on tasks.

In Solidarity,

Jessica Kunttu

*Secretary-Treasurer, AFM Local 500*

# Message from the President

Greetings, fellow musicians:

Happy New Year to you all. As I write this, we are celebrating the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This weekend, many of us are reflecting on his legacy of service and calls to action for the greater good and a more equal, just society. At the same time, there is a momentous transformation occurring in our political landscape which will undoubtedly affect our lives as workers for the foreseeable future.

Just this morning, we received a communication from our AFM International Representative, Steve Begnoche, which was both timely and reassuring. The communication is a memo from AFM General Counsel about steps forward for locals that engage in collective bargaining. Without going into much detail and complex legal language, the gist is that the AFM has creative thinkers and unusual tools ready and waiting to help working musicians in what could turn out to be a climate inhospitable to labor unions and their rank-and-file members.

2025 is still fresh, and in the spirit of making New Year's Resolutions, I found a quote from Dr. King that resonates powerfully at this moment:

*We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there 'is' such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.*

Please consider getting involved in your Local 500. We would love to have fresh energy and positive will to work towards our collective goals. As they say, a rising tide lifts all boats, and many hands make light work. Elections for our Local Executive Board are coming later this spring. Please reach out to me (leah.peroutka@afm500.org) or anyone else on the current Board to find out more about getting involved and possibly running for office.

In solidarity,

Leah Peroutka

*President, AFM Local 500*

# Local 500 Elections Information

This is an election year for AFM Local 500! All current offices and positions serve two-year terms that will end on June 30, 2025. The next term will run July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027. All positions of the Local 500 Executive Board are open this election cycle, including:

- President / Second Delegate to Conferences and Conventions
- Vice President / Third Delegate to Conferences and Conventions
- Secretary-Treasurer / First Delegate to Conferences and Conventions
- 4-6 Board Member At-Large Positions

In accordance with Article VII of our Bylaws and guidelines set by the US Department of Labor, the elections will follow the procedures:

- March 2025 - the President will name an Elections Committee Chair. This person must be a current member in good standing who does not intend to run for an office
- April 2025 - a Nominations meeting will be held.
  - Nominations and acceptance of nominations must be made in one of two ways: either live during the nominations meeting or in writing before the meeting. To submit nominations or acceptance of nominations in writing, email the Secretary-Treasurer at [contact@afm500.org](mailto:contact@afm500.org). No nominations may be made or accepted after the conclusion of the nominations meeting.
  - At the conclusion of the nominations meeting, any officer positions and board member positions (not exceeding six) that are unopposed will be elected by acclamation. If all positions are elected by acclamation, the elections process will at this time.
- May 2025 - Voting will take place.
  - If any positions are contested, a secret vote will take place via mail-in ballot. Detailed instructions on how this process is to be conducted can be found in Article VII of our Bylaws.
- June/July 2025 - Installation of new executive board will take place.

Detailed information about the responsibilities of each position can be found in our Bylaws. If you are interested in learning more, feel free to reach out to [contact@afm500.org](mailto:contact@afm500.org) or any current member of the executive board for more information. If you'd like to be more involved but don't want to serve on the board, please consider joining a committee!

## Southern Conference Updates

The Southern Conference of Locals (SoCo) is one of the 13 Local-conferences of the AFM consisting of all of the Locals from Washington, D.C. through Texas, including Puerto Rico. The 2024 annual SoCo meeting took place in Austin, Texas. Local 500 was represented by Jessica Kunttu (Secretary-Treasurer, Local 500 and Vice President, SoCo) and Brevan Hampden (Vice President, Local 500). Some of the important highlights of the 2024 SoCo meeting included:

### Texas AFL-CIO Race and the Economy Presentation

Lorraine Montemayor of the Texas AFL-CIO presented an engaging workshop on the history of race and the economy in the United States. Delegates worked together in groups to analyze laws and policies that have impacted marginalized groups over the span of colonial era to current events. The activity led to a greater understanding of how structural racism is built into our laws and the economic impact that has on marginalized communities.

### Expansion of the SoCo Executive Board

In an effort to increase the amount and type of work that SoCo can achieve in the time between annual meetings, the executive board has been expanded to include two executive board members. The new board members are Stephanie Magnus, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 444 In Jacksonville, Florida and Laura Ross, AFM-EPF Trustee and board member of Local 257 In Nashville, Tennessee. The expansion of the board brings more structure to the organization in hopes to be able to do more to serve the Locals of the Southern Conference.

### Updates to the SoCo Bylaws

The SoCo Bylaws underwent significant changes to modernize and reflect current standards and procedures.

### New delegates

The 2024 SoCo meeting had a record number of new delegates, including our own Brevan Hampden. New delegates bring fresh, diverse ideas and energy to the conference!

## News from Our Neighbors

From our neighbors in Local 342, based in Charlotte, NC - management has cancelled the Eastern Music Festival (EMF) 2025 season. Articles have been published in Senza Sordino, the ICSOM newsletter, as well as local newspapers. This is an ongoing issue and any support you can offer will help our neighbors.

I've spoken with people from EMF and Local 342, here is a summary of the events at the time of this writing:

- EMF management has been intent on changing the model of the festival by significantly shrinking the faculty size
- EMF management did not accept an offer from a concerned donor group who had pledged \$360,000 over 3 years on the condition that an agreement would be reached with management and the musicians that would not reduce the faculty size and would also give the group a presence on the board
- EMF management cancelled the 2025 season
- Local 342 filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)
- EMF has been placed on the AFM Unfair List
- Approximately 1,000 students who applied to EMF this summer have been affected
- Several members of the EMF faculty orchestra are also members of Local 500

Please visit the EMF faculty website, [emffacultyartists.com](http://emffacultyartists.com) for up-to-date information.

There you will also find an open letter to show your support.

# Committee Updates

The Local 500 Committees that are currently active include: Diversity, Membership, and Social Media. Any member in good standing can serve in and even chair a committee! Want to join an existing committee or get involved with a different committee that's not currently active? Reach out to [contact@afm500.org](mailto:contact@afm500.org)

## **Diversity Committee**

The Diversity Committee has put together a list suggested readings and podcasts to help guide our anti-racism journey. As a labor union, it is vital that we work to create spaces in and out of the workplace that are inclusive and supportive of all people. This means working to understand our own biases and those that are built into the structure of our lives. I hope you will check out these resources if you haven't already:

### Books

“White Rage” by Carol Anderson

“So You Want To Talk About Race” by Ijeoma Oluo

“Racial Justice at Work” by Mary Frances-Winters

### Podcasts

Black History for White People

Diversity & Inclusion: Revolution or Reform

## **Social Media Committee**

The Social Media Committee is active! Check out our Instagram @afm.local500

## **Membership Committee**

The membership committee has put together a survey for both members and non-members - please scan the QR code, fill out the survey, and ask your colleagues to do the same!



## Benefits & AFM Resources

Are you taking advantage of all of the benefits and resources available to AFM members? Here's some information from the [afm.org](http://afm.org) website you might want to check out. Visit [afm.org](http://afm.org) > For Members > Benefit Programs to learn more.

### Instrument and Equipment Insurance:

As a professional musician, you depend upon your instruments and equipment. Just think of the exorbitant costs of replacing equipment if it is lost or damaged. Most homeowner's and renter's insurance is not enough to protect from loss, theft or damage on location. Thus, the AFM provides access to the **"All-Risk" Musician Instrument and Equipment Insurance Plan**. Your instruments and music-related equipment are protected from vandalism, breakage, water, fire, lightening and theft up to the full replacement value.

### Liability Insurance:

AFM members are protected if they are injured during a performance by signing up for the **Musician's Liability Insurance**. This policy provides up to \$1 million for each occurrence and up to \$2 million of aggregate coverage for lawsuits arising out of bodily injury and/or damage to property for others, occurring on or off premises during your performance.

Other Insurance: AFM also offers a number of other low-cost insurance options including:

- Accidental death and dismemberment
- Cancer care protection
- Catastrophic major medical
- Disability income plan
- Group term life
- Hospital indemnity plan
- Major medical insurance plans
- Short term medical insurance

Other Benefits: As a union member, you are entitled to all the benefits offered by Union Plus, including bargains for the home, savings on prescription drugs and other health costs, auto insurance, legal services, discounts on computers and technology, as well as discounts on travel and recreation.

You are also eligible for an AFL-CIO endorsed credit card, with a unique, valuable Member Advocacy Program.

For more information, please visit Union Plus at [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org).

## In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened to share that AFM Local 500 Life Member and double bassist of the North Carolina Symphony, Erik Dyke, passed away suddenly on March 15, 2025. Erik was enthusiastic in every aspect of his life, engaging everyone he met with curiosity and kindness. He was an involved member of the Local, attending meetings and hiring union musicians to play at his church. Erik's presence in the community will be greatly missed. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2025 at 4:00pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh, 3313 Wade Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27607.

## Upcoming Dates

April 27 - Nominations Meeting held via Google Meets at 7:30pm - link will be sent via email

April 30 - Last day to pay 2025 membership dues without late fee and suspension

May - Elections for contested positions will take place, if necessary

June/July - installation of new executive board

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