

MINUTES OF THE TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee Face to Face Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland

January 9, 2009

Attendees: Carl Younger (Boston Globe); Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe (Seattle); Matthew Olson (**Kenosha**); Ka Yan Ng (**CMG**); Vincent Proteau (CMG); Natalie Hill (**Pittsburgh**); Vernon Clark (**Philadelphia**); Randy Gilliam (NY); Michael D'Souza (CMG – Chair) Arnold Amber (CWA/SCA Canada TNG); Sheila Lindsay (TNG-Reg. 2 VP); Barbara Saxberg (CMG); Melissa Nelson (staff-TNG);

Guests: David Hawkins (CMG); Bernie Lunzer (TNG-President); and Carol Rothman (TNG-Sec'y-Treasurer); Barbara Saxberg (CMG)

Meeting was chaired by Carl Younger in the absence of designated chair, Randy Gilliam; meeting was called to order at 1:47 p.m. and immediately recessed at 1:47 p.m., for Carl to retrieve notes; meeting resumed at 1:52 p.m. (members of the committee were still in transit to the meeting)

Proposed agenda items:

Community Organizing – suggestion by Lindsay to contact Elise Bryant of the National Labor College;

Alternate Ownership – discussion to be led by Vernon Clark (upon his arrival);

Ethnic Media (community) – Younger opened the discussion – increase in Latin, Chinese and Portuguese media papers; having mainstream newspapers establish a relationship with the Ethnic media; possibility of inserting the community media newspapers into the mainstream media papers as a way to increase mainstream media garnering more of a minority subscriber base and cutting the distribution cost for the ethnic (community) media owners.

Younger discussed trying to reach out to Ellen Hume a professor at the University of Mass-Boston to see what research she may have done in this area;

To see how many of the ethnic media papers are currently unionized – what if any ethnic papers are currently organized by TNG; Melissa mentioned the efforts to organize *El Diario* and that this could be used a success story for the Guild.

Discussion and questions on how would it work of inserting the ethnic papers into the mainstream newspapers; benefits of doing so for the ethnic (community) papers; in doing so, would this be the death of the community newspapers; selling advertisement by ethnic media (languages);

- Boston – zoned by areas (communities)
- Increase of ethnic media subscribers circulation – encouraging them to subscribe based upon their second generational families

Committee agreed that we would need to conduct research to see whether this approach has already been implemented and what organizing efforts has been done within those ethnic communities.

Minority newspapers are increasing in the African-American and Latino communities.

Reason why they may not wish to conduct business with mainstream media:

- Lack of trust towards mainstream media
- Handling of business by Howard Burton and Bush administration
- Articles generally based upon the crimes in the communities versus the needs of the community
- Not perceived as their newspaper – under the old newspaper foundation, articles, and stories geared toward what was going on in those communities.

A need for more concentration in the ethnic communities, by 2025 there will be a population increase in the ethnic/minority communities. Finding a way to incorporate these groups into the media business.

Looking at how TNG (unions) will fit this media group into mainstream media.

Alternative Ownership:

Melissa Nelson spoke about the speakers scheduled to speak during the summit who will discuss ways members (employees) can go about talking with the owners about alternative ownerships. Topics ranging from L3C, Low profit, Limited Liability, type ownerships by Bob Lang and Tom Bell.

ESOPs – taking concessions versus an ESOP – having a union person sitting at that type of table, being able to provide viable input to what works and what does not.

Implementing HRE into contracts:

Melissa has done research in this area for the U.S. contracts and has information available electronically. Melissa to provide copy to Carl.

Barbara Saxberg, spoke about a program implemented in Canada – Community Training Development – areas where it is more difficult to find local people who could be trained to work in the industry; employers can hire on a limited ability – hiring someone from a community with no media/journalistic skills for one (1) year to come in and be trained and after the year to see if the person has garnered enough skills to be hired into the industry.

- Other community opportunities in other media forums of how such ideas of hiring and training from other ethnic backgrounds;
- Becoming automatic BOLD initiatives – based on demographic realities
 - if there is no ethnic representation in the community within the mainstream media, then there is no interest.
 - Designed to have people around for a period of time.

How do you go about having these type of training opportunities to happen?

- operational issues – revenues
- minority decline in the industry

Question about Labor Priorities in Transition:

- surveying the country – minorities being the majority in today's layoffs and buyouts.
- dwindling advertising and circulation

Negotiation and making concessions – how union merges into a seat at the table of mainstream media.

Committee agreed that more research is to be done on ethnic media; obtaining contacts and coming up with more ideas on reaching out to this media group.

- President Lunzer provided background on the outcomes of the summit.

- Equity group should insert goals where diversity and equity fit into the whole plan;
- Seniority piece of our contracts;
- Better activist training – focus on skills training
- Different ownership models
- What are the owners actually saving;
- TNG is an investment – invest in us and we can grow;
- Report on a quarterly basis; and
- Organizing other groups.

Meeting turned back to Committee chair and Randy Gilliam.

Full primary objectives for the HREC –

1. Bargaining – achievements at the CMG

- Bahnet Island – language – hiring those with only High School diplomas for training;
- Nanauvut natives – 2 individuals have been hired: a 20-year old and a 30is female;
- Recruitment in TV – being trained and ready to hit the ground running after the training.

Things that have worked and we can get there in our contracts – demographics – employers changing their mindset of hiring.

1. Ethnic media – samples
2. Funding for research – credibility of Univ. Professors; obtaining hard numbers
 - Strategic Industry Fund (SIF)
 - Subject of ethnic media – research – detailed reporting of how those papers operate.

3. Organizing efforts for the Free newspapers published by mainstream media:

Successes: Melissa mentioned the one in Philadelphia suburbs that is a Spanish language paper with content and ads provided by Guild employees.

At this time the floor was turned over to Committee chair, Michael D'Souza.

Michael turned the topic over to the role of the HREC during the summit:

1. Ensure that the overall strategies continue to keep equitability on the agenda;
 2. Research into Ethnic Media and the Community – the needs of the community and how their issues will transcend into mainstream media;
 3. America's Rights at Work – trying to put a message out that the labor movement has not done a good job of getting our message out about the purpose of unions;
 4. Bargaining in the Midst of Crisis:
 - give backs – looking at the whole picture
 - what has happened with newspapers in Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, etc.
 - driving the new business modules
 - managers recognizing the employee Hispanic/Latino newspaper.
- Freelancers and students – organizing of these groups – offering them a modestly free services;

Ex: in Canada – Steelworkers – offering benefits to their home healthcare workers

David Hawkins (CMG): spoke on how they are using video advertising on their website; pitching – story telling in a multimedia way; gathering and presenting information/journalism in a different innovative way.

Various versions of newspapers being received via Blackberry's, Online, Sony, etc.

Ratio of content driven to advertisements – no content – no paper. Owner's mindset of driving content based on social networks.

- Bloggers being used versus actual journalists
- Negotiating better wages when the journalist's work is being published in many different outlets – pretty similar to TV news.

Re-establish the journalistic media into the mindset of the media; where the journalists are held accountable, whereas the bloggers are not.

Finding support services to support journalists.

Organizing of the Outsourcing – with exception of those outsourced to foreign countries.

Standardized the news leaving out the community news base.

Strategizing efforts for those who are in our industry outside of the U.S. and Canada – bringing the union to those foreign countries.

“Holding the Key to Quality” – David Hawks, 2009

Sharing of Best Practices

- better coverage
- is ethnic media actually credible
- isolation of the problems with resolution of solving the problem
- ethnic media ties in with news from their homelands
- mainstream media does not approach the communities with sensitivity.

Retaining ourselves as social changes within the industry and communities.

Organizing within the high schools and universities, important that we talk to the kids – organizing for the future.

- labor reporting
- diversity reporting
- school reporting

Alternative Ownership – Vernon Clark

- pulling in the ethnic communities;
- providing variable models;
- ESOP programs – making concessions within bargaining – gaining shares within the company – possible win-win;
- getting a community task group (ethnically diversified) together to seek buyers for the newspapers.

Training

- Recruitment – organizing efforts on those identified groups
- Government Grants for ethnic communities (need research on government grants that may be available)
- Reskilling programs – Melissa has research on this.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

ADDENDUM: SATURDAY, JANUARY 10
THE COMMITTEE MET BRIEFLY AT DINNER ON SATURDAY AND AGREED TO CONTINUE PURSUING ITS AGENDA AT THE TNG AS DEFINED IN ITS BUDGET PRESENTATION