

MINUTES OF THE TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

November 22, 2008

Minutes of the TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

Saturday, November 22, 2008

PRESENT: Michael D'Souza, Chair; Randye Gilliam; Vernon Clark; Matthew Olson; Natalie Hill; Carl Younger; Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe; Ka Yan Ng and Vincent Proteau

Melissa Nelson, TNG-CWA Director of Collective Bargaining;
Sheila Lindsay, Chair SEC HRE Committee; Carol Rothman, TNG-CWA Secretary-Treasurer

MINUTES PREPARED BY MICHAEL D'SOUZA.

Checked by Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe

Welcome Ka Yan Ng and Vincent Proteau

The committee welcomed Ka Yan Ng and Vincent Proteau.

The committee had many compliments for Vince on his redesign of the committee's web page. The redesign is still hosted on Vince's own web site <http://www.vinpro.ca/Guild/index.htm> and has to be relocated to www.guildequity.org. Randye will get Vince the necessary usernames and passwords and Carol will consult with the TNG webmaster about linking the TNG web site to the committee's page. She and Melissa will send a blast to all locals once the site is fully operational at its own address, www.guildequity.org.

Ka Yan attended the CWA Minority Leadership Institute program with Carl in Washington. She's the president of the Thomson-Reuters Branch of the Canadian Media Guild. Ka Yan called in from an organizing school being run by CWA/SCA Canada and commented that they were talking about closer co-operation between the various committees of the union.

January forum

Carol reported on the planned TNG-CWA, NABET and PPMWS forum planned for Baltimore in January. The forum has four major segments on Bargaining, Organizing, Alternative Ownership and Training. (A note from Bernie Lunzer on this forum is attached.)

Carl said he and Melissa had talked about the forum and suggested a multi-pronged approach. He noted that while traditional newspapers are struggling, many ethnic publications are flourishing. He said the union should reach out to the ethnic publications and analyze their success and try to understand why they are successful. He said another prong would be seeing if such publications could be organized. He said the union should also reach out to ethnic communities through their clubs, such as the Spanish, Asian and Portuguese clubs and organizations. He said the union should work with management in understanding these communities and see what kind of issues appeal to them and perhaps have stringers who report on these communities.

Yoko suggested that unions should look at language that protects members of equity-seeking groups at times of layoffs as one way of maintaining equity in the workplace.

Melissa said she had a survey of contract language in the United States and Canada on equity and human-rights clauses.

Boston School Outreach

Carl Younger reported that he addressed junior and senior classes at a high school in Quincy, Massachusetts, with about 140 students in attendance. Carl said he spoke about the history of unions in the United States and their role in real gains for workers such as the 40-hour week, five-day work week and benefits such as health insurance. He also encouraged the students to seek the union in their workplace when they do start work and in cases where there is no union, to work toward starting one. The presentation included a video by Hector Giraldo about working in a country (Colombia) with weak labor laws. He noted that unions played a critical role in creating a middle class and such a middle class, between the extremely rich and extremely poor, led to a better, more egalitarian society.

Next meeting

The committee agreed to talk about these issues further at its next meeting in preparation for the face-to-face meeting and the forum in Baltimore in January.

The committee agreed to meet again on Saturday, December 6, at 13:00 eastern.

The committee adjourned at 13:50 Eastern.

Email from Bernie Lunzer:

I'm attaching a draft agenda for the January meeting. It is still slightly in flux, with both NABET and the Print Sector still working on certain portions. I'm also trying to complete the list of presenters, so consider this very much a work in progress. I'm attempting to add Leonard M. Baynes as a speaker. I've heard him at FreePress conferences, and I think he will have much to add. He is Professor of Law and Director of the Ronald H. Brown Center for Civil Rights and Economic Development at St. John's University.

We are planning for an Equity Committee meeting on Jan. 9 (Friday) and the large meeting is taking place on Jan. 10, 11 and 12. I want to reiterate the importance of the Equity Committee's involvement in this meeting, on all four of the issues that we have identified as crucial to our strategy and survival. I've laid out my hopes in each of the categories before, but let me reiterate:

BARGAINING - we continue to believe that we need to forge joint committees and real partnerships with our managements. In working with Melissa, and in discussions with Carl, we believe that we have substantial unused tools in our current contracts, and should pursue additional tools through new bargaining. Recognizing the importance of diversity in hiring and product/publication development is key.

ORGANIZING - recognizing the importance of Spanish media organizing, along with the importance of ethnic press is our future. Again, these ideas have been discussed over the last few months with many. I also was able to discuss Carl's ideas about ethnic press possibilities this last week.

ALTERNATIVE OWNERSHIP - FreePress and other groups have identified how media consolidation has substantially reduced minority ownership. As we cast around for new ownership possibilities it is key that we recognize the importance of diversity in ownership. We have attempted (and have not yet been successful) in trying to use this as one solution at the Sun-Times in Chicago.

TRAINING - while part of our focus will be on skills training, we have identified activist training as something that needs to be pushed forward. Achieving diversity within our own local leaderships is something we can and should be providing training on.

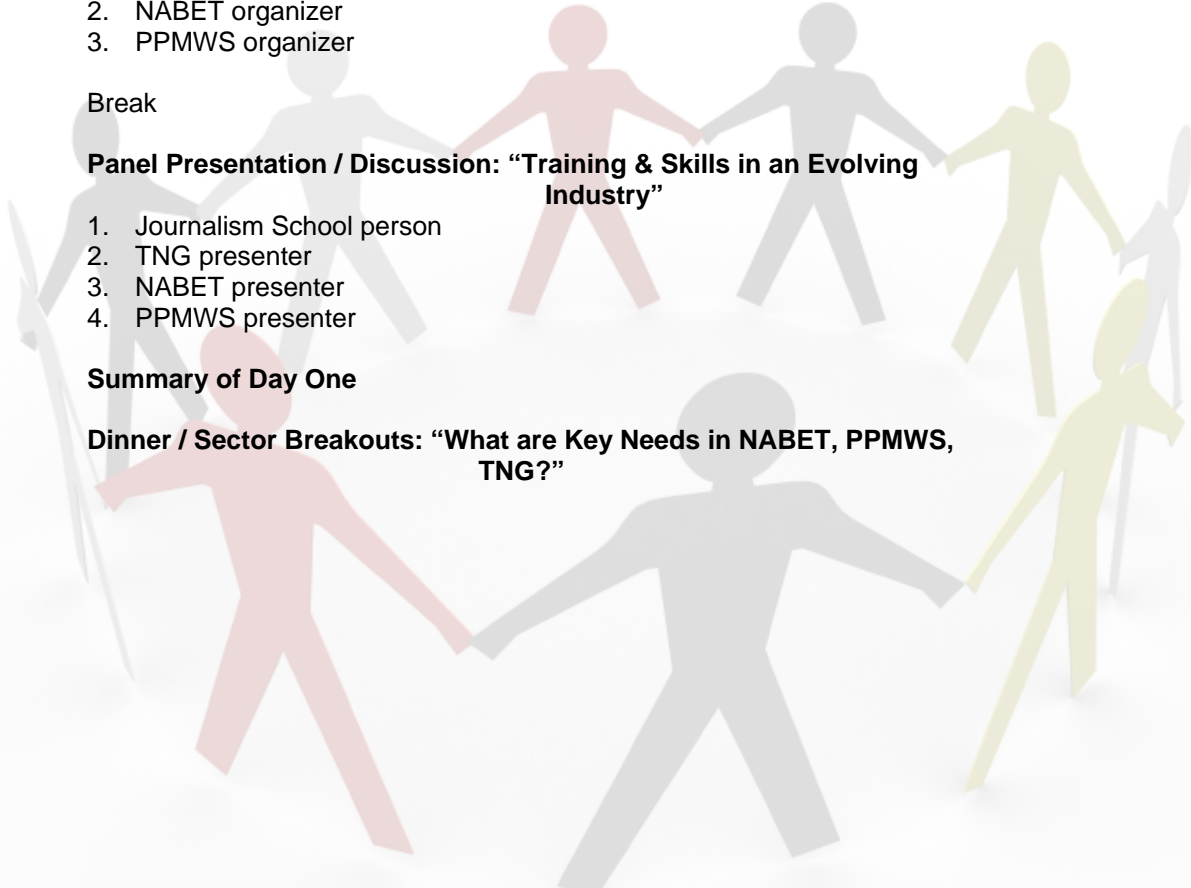
These are just a few ideas, and the goal of the January meeting is to push forward some ideas and recognize that our experienced leaders will come with many more.

Carol and I have made a point of discussing the importance of diversity within our locals at each of the fall council meetings. I think our activists understand the importance and now need ideas on how to make our workplaces and locals inclusive.

Media Forum Draft

DAY ONE

- 8:30 Welcoming Remarks – Bernie Lunzer, John Clarke, Bill Boarman
- 9:30 **Chris Benner, “The News in Crisis: Is This an Opportunity?”**
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 **Panel Presentation / Discussion: “Bargaining in Midst of the News Crisis”**
1. TNG Rep. (Minneapolis or Buffalo)
2. NABET Rep.
3. PPMWS Rep.
- 12:30 **Lunch / Speaker: Bob Kuttner, “The Transformation of American Capitalism”**
- 2:00 **Panel Presentation / Discussion: “Organizing the News”**
1. TNG organizer
2. NABET organizer
3. PPMWS organizer
- 3:15 Break
- 3:30 **Panel Presentation / Discussion: “Training & Skills in an Evolving Industry”**
1. Journalism School person
2. TNG presenter
3. NABET presenter
4. PPMWS presenter
- 5:00 **Summary of Day One**
- 6:30 **Dinner / Sector Breakouts: “What are Key Needs in NABET, PPMWS, TNG?”**



DAY TWO

8:30 **Larry Cohen, “Growing the Economy by Building Labor”**
9:30 **Report Back on Sector Breakouts during Day 1 Dinner**
10:00 Break
10:15 **Breakout Session 1: “The Market Pressures on Media Companies”**
[NOTE: snapshots of companies; each group does 1 company]

1. Gannett
2. Washington Post
3. McClatchy
4. NBC
5. MediaNews
6. Hearst Corporation
7. News Corporation
8. ABC

11:30 **Report Back on Market Pressures**
12:15 **Lunch / Panel (Chris Mackin + 2 CWA): “Alternative Ownership Models”**
2:15 **Breakout Session 2: “Protecting Jobs and Incomes in a Changing Industry”**
3:45 Break
4:00 **Report Back on Protecting Jobs and Incomes**
4:30 **Summary of Day Two**
6:00 **Dinner / Speaker: Ken Doctor, “The New Media and the Old Media”**

DAY THREE

8:30 **Rusty Franklin, “Forging New Employer-Employee Relationships”**
9:45 Break
10:15 **Breakout Session 3: Case Studies on Employer-Employee Innovations**

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11:30 **Report Back on Case Studies**
12:30 **Lunch “Building a CWA Media Identity”**
2:00 **Breakout Session 4: Bargaining, Organizing, Ownership, and Training**
3:00 **Report Back on Bargaining, Organizing, Ownership, and Training**
3:45 Break
4:00 **Planning the Future**