

MINUTES OF THE TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

October 6, 2007

Telephone Conference

PRESENT: Michael D'Souza, Chair; Randy Gilliam; Natalie Hill; Carl Younger; Vernon Clark; Yoko Kuramoto-Eidsmoe; Fareed Mohammed; Melissa Nelson TNG-CWA Sector Rep;

ABSENT: Judy Lee;

ALSO ATTENDING:

Linda Foley, TNG President and CWA Vice President.

Olivia James, IAPE Treasurer.

The committee started its meeting on schedule at 1:00 p.m. Eastern, 10:00 a.m. Pacific.

Outreach to journalism schools and community colleges.

This is a project discussed at the committee's September meeting. Vernon Clark reported that he had made overtures to the deans of journalism programs at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. Michael D'Souza reported that he had discussion with CMG members who also teach at schools of journalism in Toronto. He also reported that the CBC Branch Council discussed the concept at its recent meeting. Linda Foley pointed out that the TNG offers associate membership to students which cost a few dollars a year. Sheila Lindsay reported that she will be attending The Future of Your Jobs Conference at the Philip Merrill School of Journalism at the University of Maryland on October 26 and 27 and expects to make contact with people reaching out to students. (More on this conference later in the minutes)

Action.

Vernon and Michael will continue working on the project.

Linda will forward information on associate membership to the committee.

Sheila will report on the conference before the next meeting.

Carve outs.

Randy Gilliam reported that her informal survey of activists in her local showed little awareness of carve outs as a means of making sure that members of equity seeking groups are offered some protection during downsizing to maintain the hard-earned diversity in the workplace. Michael reminded the committee the CMG had put such language forward in its last negotiations with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation but the proposal is not included in the Collective Agreement.

The committee agreed to publish an article in the Guild Reporter asking other locals if they have such clauses or have considered clauses.

Action

Michael to look into getting such an article published in the Guild Reporter on carve out and also soliciting information from locals.

Attend Minority Journalist Conventions/Unity.

The committee again discussed doing a workshop at the Unity conference in Chicago from July 23 to the 27. UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc. describes itself as a strategic alliance advocating fair and accurate news coverage about people of color, and aggressively challenging the industry to staff its organizations at all levels to reflect the nation's diversity. Its partners include AAJA, NABJ, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the Native American Journalists Association. Linda reported that a member of the organization's board has contacted her about participating in the organization.

Action.

Yoko and Linda to explore their respective contacts in the organization about participating in the conference.

Carl Younger Library Project.

Carl reported that the most recent meeting of the project, the third one, was extremely disappointing. He had contacted members of the local at the Boston Globe and the New England Local and put up leaflets. (A copy of the communication is attached.) But only two people showed up.

A couple of days later the management organized a diversity lunch with food from ethnic restaurants. It drew a huge crowd. The food was free.

Action

Carl to explore contacts among the people who organized the food fair to see if the management and union could work together on diversity projects.

Survey Membership.

The Future of Your Jobs survey by the Philip Merrill School of Journalism at the University of Maryland is now completed. Sheila will attend the follow-up conference on October 26 and 27 and report back.

Action

Sheila will file a report on the conference before the next meeting.

Focus on Commercial (Outsourcing).

Carl reported on his research showed that employers outsource jobs overseas to improve their profits. Companies also say that outsourcing some routine operations allows them to focus on their core functions such as innovations and product development. Researchers had also pointed out that the outsourced jobs usually went to companies that did not have unions. Such outsourcing also brought a level of uncertainty in the remaining workforce along with insecurity. Randy noted that there's a backlash developing against outsourcing; even the Republicans are questioning the value of free trade agreements. Yoko noted that outsourcing didn't always mean sending the jobs overseas. An example is the Seattle Times decision to outsource its call center to Wisconsin. The committee agreed that a lobbying effort was needed to counter this move to outsource jobs.

Labor Movement/Civil Rights Movement.

Vernon reported that he had made initial contact with the local leader of the National Association of Colored People whom he knows about working together. He noted that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP has sent a letter to publishers asking about the lack of diversity in their staff and the slant of their stories. But the organization had not received any replies. Linda reported that the TNG/CWA works with Wade Henderson and Mark Lloyd of Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the LCCR, on media diversity and coverage of diversity issues. Sheila reported that she gets the e-alerts from the organization.

Action.

Vernon and Natalie to further explore linkages to civil rights organization including the LCCR.

Possible diversity subsidies for New Local Officers Seminar (NLOS).

Linda reported that the initiative to offer subsidies to members of equity seeking groups to attend the NLOS will probably be considered and adopted at the next executive council.

Web Site.

Randy Gilliam reported progress on construction of the web site. She sent in the necessary material and expects it to be posted shortly. Linda commented that the committee should send a note to the Guild Reporter that the website is active.

Other

Linda reminded the committee that hundreds of interpreters working in the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Superior Courts are still out on strike. She noted that this group included a large number of members of equity seeking groups. (A note from Silvia Barden President, California Federation of Interpreters, on the strike is attached.) Linda also reported that one member of this group has offered to translate portions of the Guild Reporter into Spanish. She also noted that the TNG/CWA has a substantial membership in Puerto Rico but these members have little access to Guild materials because they are available in English only a language many of them don't speak.

The committee applauded the appointment of Nestor Soto, president, CWA Local 33225 in Puerto Rico to the CWA Executive Board as one of four at-large diversity seats established by CWA Convention delegates this year in Toronto. (The other three are: Carolyn Wade, president, CWA Local 1040; Claude Cummings, president, CWA Local 6222; and Madelyn Elder, president, CWA Local 7901.)

Adjournment.

The committee adjourned at 1:59 pm Eastern, 10:59 Pacific, and agreed to meet again on Saturday, November 3 at one pm Eastern, 10:00 am Pacific. Sheila advised that would not be able to attend but said she would have written reports in to the committee.