

MINUTES OF THE TNG-CWA Human Rights and Equity Committee

September 8, 2007

Telephone Conference

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

ABSENT: Judy Lee; Fareed Mohammed;]

ALSO ATTENDING: Linda Foley, TNG President, CWA Vice President; Scott Stephens, TNG Regional vice president. The committee started its meeting on schedule at 1:00 p.m. Eastern, 10:00 a.m. Pacific.

The committee, at its inaugural meeting on July 14, at the sector conference in Toronto, agreed to use suggestions made at the workshop on Diversity in the Workplace the previous day as the basis of its deliberations during this term. At this meeting the committee renewed that decision and proceeded with the discussion.

Outreach to journalism schools and community colleges.

Partner with schools.

Carl Younger said the union should reach out to children in schools and educate them about labour issues. Sheila Lindsay noted that most schools have councils that address issues such as lunches etc.

Michael D'Souza noted that during the two terms he taught journalism at an Ontario university union issues did not come up. He also commented that most of the young people starting in the newsroom knew little about the labor movement or the union representing them in the workplace. He also observed that journalists are wary about participating in union activities because they see themselves as professionals and not part of the labour movement. The committee agreed that in reaching out to journalism students in universities and colleges, the committee should address this issue directly and forthrightly pointing out that journalist are working people and the union protects their journalistic rights and privileges along with other rights such as a fair wage and fights exploitation.

Vernon Clark suggested contacting student unions on campus. Scott Stephen suggested the deans. The committee agreed an approach to the academic staff would be most appropriate.

Action.

Vernon Clark, Sheila Lindsay and Michael D'Souza said they would work on this item. Scott Stephens assured the committee that the TNG executive will provide the necessary support.

Carve outs.

Attend Minority Journalist Conventions/Unity.

Carve outs is a way of describing extra protection offered to segments of workers in an operation during downsizing of an operation. Vernon Clark said an example would be protecting a department, such as circulation that has only seven people but is critical to the distribution of a newspaper. In a layoff this group would be not be laid off because of their critical skills. This argument could also be applied to members of equity seeking groups because they bring a special knowledge and reflection of the community that is critical to an operation or because these groups are grossly under represented in the demographics of the operation. This argument contradicts a fundamental principle of labor contracts during layoff, the principle of seniority.

Scott Stephens suggested reaching out to organizations representing minority journalists such as the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) and the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) to consider ways of working on this issue.

Randy Gilliam suggested 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.

Action.

Sheila Lindsay and Vernon Clark agreed to look further into this issue and consider ways of addressing it.

In Reach Co-workers.

Carl Younger Library Project.

The library is a project initiated by Carl Younger in the Boston area to reach out to members of equity seeking groups. He reported that he is planning to relaunch the project at the end of September. He also reported that he had approached the public library system in the Boston about co-operating on outreach programs for members of equity seeking groups, perhaps in the area of helping new comers to the country with their English skills. The union's library project itself is working at forming study groups to enhance the skill sets of members of the union

Survey Membership.

The Future of Your Jobs survey being done by the Philip Merrill School of Journalism at the University of Maryland is in its final stages. Monday is the deadline for submissions. Linda Foley reported that to date there were 900 submissions from journalists, 200 from people in advertising and less than 100 from circulation. Randy Gilliam noted that there was some confusion at Standards and Poors whether they should participate under the journalism segment. She was asked to encourage participation in that sector. It should be noted that this is a U.S. survey only.

The university is holding a conference on the survey and its findings on October 26 and 27. The committee agreed that one member, Sheila Lindsay, should attend this meeting. And the TNG should encourage other members of equity seeking groups to attend. Linda Foley said she would ask for executive approval to cover Sheila Lindsay's expenses and the \$50 registration fee for members of equity seeking groups who may wish to attend. The registration fee also covers meals at the conference which will include events such as workshops and training.

Focus on Commercial.

Much of the discussion at the TNG often concentrates on journalism issues even though the union represents a much wider range of workers even in the communication industry. There are also other sectors represented by the union such as interpreters and nurses. Members of equity seeking groups often form a significant sector in these groups. A problem in these areas is that the jobs are being outsourced, sometimes overseas. Carl Younger noted that much of the circulation work at the Boston Globe has been outsourced. The outsourcing often goes to non-union operations. Much of the outsourcing concerns data processing. Randy Gilliam said that Standard and Poors had acquired Cap IQ and moved much of the work of data operations from her department to it. Cap IQ has now outsourced most of the work to India reducing her department to only five people.

Linda Foley said that this committee is uniquely located to consider the issue of outsourcing and perhaps design a research project with the CWA on where the jobs are going and what impact it is having on the labour movement. She noted that such outsourcing often raises xenophobic fears. Carl Younger noted that while members in Boston were concerned about jobs being outsourced overseas their anger and frustration was directed at management not the workers overseas because they accepted that these workers too needed to work.

Finding work for people who have been displaced by such outsourcing is proving to be a stubborn problem. Randy Gilliam noted that while her unit was able to find work alternate assignment for journalists it was very difficult to find other postings for employees such as clerks and typists. They lacked the skills and training to even take up jobs in the secretarial pool. Carl Younger commented that one person participating in the union's library program in Boston was working on her Power Point skills while she was helping him with his Spanish.

Action.

Carl Younger and Randy Gilliam agreed to research this project and report to the committee.

Diversity Committees with Management.

Michael D'Souza reported that he was involved in a committee with management on equity issues at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Canadian law requires this committee be established. At the sector conference Michael Cabanatuan had reported that there is a similar committee at the San Francisco Chronicle and that this committee had some success.

Sheila Lindsay said that her local had tried to include equity issues in the last contract but these had been left out. However, it is possible to raise these matters in labour-management committees and then set up a sub-committee.

Labor Movement/Civil Rights Movement.

The committee agreed that reaching out to other unions and the civil rights movement would be useful in dealing with issues faced by members of equity seeking groups. Vernon Clark said he would contact the local leader of the National Association of Colored People.

Action.

Carl Younger said he too with explore contacts with the civil rights movement.

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

The committee considered an email from Bernie Lunzer, Secretary Treasurer of the TNG, to increase diversity representation at New Local Officers Seminar (NLOS) by offering up to ten scholarships for members of equity seeking groups. Funding is to come from the Anti-Discrimination Fund which has about \$38,000 in it. (The email from Bernie Lunzer is attached below.)

Melissa Nelson said among the things the NLOS offered union activists sessions on contract negotiations, contract enforcement (grievance handling), membership mobilization as well as the nuts and bolts of running a small Local such as keeping track of the treasury, dues handling and keeping minutes of all meetings. It also has a human rights component. Randy Gilliam said she had attended the NLOS and found it very useful. The committee agreed that members of equity seeking groups participating in the NLOS would help develop a more diverse leadership in the union.

Action.

The unanimously endorse the Lunzer proposal.

Web Page.

Randy Gilliam reported that she is still having problems having material uploaded on the committee's web page. She also added that Fareed Mohammed is working with her on material for the web but not much can be done until the uploading issues are resolved. She will send a note to the executive committee asking for help resolving the issue.

Adjournment.

The committee adjourned at 2:20 pm Eastern, 11:20 Pacific, and agreed to meet again on Saturday, October 6 at one pm Eastern, 10:00 am Pacific.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Bernie Lunzer](mailto:Bernie.Lunzer)

To: younger@globe.com ; datejie.cmg@gmail.com ; seattleyoko@gmail.com ; lindsaysheila@hotmail.com ; randye_gilliam@msn.com ; nhill@post-gazette.com ; dsouzam@sympatico.ca

Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2007 11:43 AM

Subject: Possible diversity subsidies for NLOS

This is an idea I've floated past the Guild Executive Council, which will likely go forward. The goal is to increase diversity representation at our New Local Officers Seminar (NLOS), one of our better programs annually. Currently subsidies are provided to small locals on the basis below. I am proposing adding up to ten "diversity" scholarships on the same basis, from any local, in a given year. There would be a limit of one scholarship of any kind from each local, and diversity scholarships would be paid from the Anti-Discrimination Fund. Right now we have about \$38,000 in the fund, so we could get a good start on this. We might eventually have to find other funding.

I think the Diversity working group should be aware of this. Also, I've suggested to a couple of you on the committee that you take up the surveying of locals that we used to do when Anna Padia was working for the Guild. She would send around a request to each local, asking them to list the diversity background of all elected leaders and stewards in each local. She would then compile the information and make it available. It might be worth doing this again.

Let me know your thoughts on any of this, and I'll keep you apprised as to what the Executive Council thinks about going forward.

Here's the current language on subsidies for small locals to attend the NLOS:

To encourage participation by the smaller locals for which the seminar is primarily designed, TNG-CWA will partially subsidize the room, board, and travel expenses of ONE PARTICIPANT from locals without professional staff to the following extent:

Fifty percent (50%) - Room and Board costs at the Labor College

Sixty percent (60%) - Transportation Costs (Eastern Region US and Canada)

[Albany, Brockton, Erie, Harrisburg, Hazleton, Hudson County, Kingston, NY, Lehigh Valley, Lynn, Manchester, Montreal, Ottawa, Pawtucket, Pittsburgh, Portland, Quincy, Rochester, Scranton, Utica, Wilkes-Barre, Woonsocket, York]

Seventy percent (70%) - Transportation Costs (Central Region)

[Cincinnati, Dayton, Gary, Indianapolis, Kenosha, Knoxville, Lake Superior, Lexington, Memphis, Milwaukee, Peoria, Sheboygan, Sioux City, Terre Haute, Toledo, Translators and Interpreters, Youngstown, all Ontario locals (except Ottawa and CMG) and all New Brunswick and Maritime Canadian locals.]

Eighty percent (80%) - Transportation Costs (Western Region)

[Bakersfield, Eugene, Pueblo, WashTech and all other Canadian locals (Central and West)]

NOTE: AIR TRAVEL - Locals eligible for transportation subsidies should book their airfares by January 13, 2007. TNG-CWA's travel subsidy for eligible participants has been calculated on the basis of the lowest available coach fares and participants who fly should select those airlines with the most advantageous, discounted rates.

DRIVING - For eligible participants who drive, mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS rate which is currently 44.5 cents per mile.

LOST TIME - Any lost time costs are paid by the Local.

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