

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010 FYI UPDATE



The January 12 meeting of the Executive committee was attended by Sam Chalati, Debbie Cole, Blair Crawford, Terry Garner, Lois Kirkup, Jacquie Miller, Jeff Parks, David Reevely, Joanne Schnurr and Andrea Sirman. Randall Denley, Gord Holder, Julie Oliver and DLR rep did not attend.

The February 18 meeting of the Executive meeting was attended by Sam Chalati, Debbie Cole, Blair Crawford, Terry Garner, Gord Holder, Lois Kirkup, Jacquie Miller, Julie Oliver, Jeff Parks, David Reevely, Joanne Schnurr and Andrea Sirman. Randall Denley and DLR rep did not attend.

The next General Membership meeting of the ONG will be held on **Wednesday, March 24**, at 12 noon in the Ottawa Citizen Conference Centre. Items of business include election of local delegates to the TNG Sector Conference and CWA Convention being held in July 2010, as well as election of a member-at-large for the executive.

Starting this year, CWA/SCA Canada changes from twice-a-year National Representative Council meetings to one annual meeting. The 2010 rep council meeting will be held in Ottawa at the Lord Elgin Hotel, April 23-25. ONG delegates to the NRC meeting are Debbie Cole, Blair Crawford, Gord Holder and Lois Kirkup.

Ottawa Citizen

Canwest: Following the Canwest CCAA filing on Friday, January 8, a town hall meeting was held to update employees. The Guild held a Citizen Unit membership meeting on January 11. Business has continued pretty much as usual for our members as they are employees of the company and the collective agreement remains in place. Freelancers and students don't have the same protections. After the filing, severance and salary continuance payments were stopped and the Guild will keep fighting for those people to ensure that all money owing to them is paid; there are two ONG members who were still on salary continuance. The national union, CWA/SCA Canada has a legal team in place to deal with Canwest issues. The director of CWA/SCA Canada met with Canwest officials on February 22 to address the issue of benefits clauses in collective agreements; those benefits cannot be changed without approval of local members. Pension plan guidelines are not defined in most Canwest collective agreements.

Bylines grievance: In a decision dated December 24, 2009, arbitrator Keith Whitaker allowed the Guild grievance, stating that, without a declaration of an illegal strike by the OLRB, the Citizen cannot refuse to withhold bylines at the request of Guild members. However, the arbitrator also expressed the view that the call for a bylines strike during the life of the contract could amount to an illegal strike. There were also some distinctions spelled out in the decision about pieces written by columnists as opposed to news and feature reporters. Guild counsel has recommended that, if there are situations in the future where the Guild wishes to call for mass withholding of bylines, some consideration should be given to structuring the action so that the employer could not make the argument that columns were in jeopardy.

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Building Services: There had been three outstanding grievances regarding a member. In one case, the member agreed to take a penalty for reporting late to work. In the second case, a disciplinary letter from management will be reduced to a letter of warning, but the Guild and management are still discussing the wording of the letter. The third grievance regarding shift rescheduling related to job training remains unresolved.

Reader Sales & Service: A service agreement between Canwest and Quebecor (Ottawa Sun) concerning the delivery of the newspapers to residential and dealer accounts was implemented in the fall of 2009. There were some issues and department reorganization during the transition period, with shuffling of duties, etc. completed by December. One full-time member was promoted to C-2 from C-3, and there are two members left in dealer accounts. Part-time members have been guaranteed one shift per week, but hours have been reduced generally for them.

CTV Ottawa

Chief Anchor Posting: A grievance was filed when CTV Ottawa failed to post a vacancy for the Chief Anchor position. Although the company apologized for not posting the position in its grievance response letter, this doesn't change the fact that the contract was violated. The Guild advised the company in writing that it wished to proceed to arbitration with the grievance. In response, the company requested a further meeting with the Guild to identify what specific remedy the Guild was seeking. ONG representatives met with management on Jan. 24 to seek compensation for members negatively impacted because the chief anchor position vacancy was not posted, as required under the collective agreement. The Guild has advised management of its agreement to delay the grievance temporarily in the wake of the February 7 fire at CTV Ottawa.

Fire at CTV Ottawa: There has been much upheaval for everyone at CTV Ottawa following the fire that destroyed the newsroom and a lot of stress on ONG members who work there. No news yet on the future plans for the station, though it seems unlikely that the station will return to the damaged Merivale Road location. Newsroom employees are sharing space downtown at the A-Channel building, but there is a lack of space and the stations' computer programs aren't compatible, meaning slower than usual time to prepare reports and additional stress on employees.

Delta Reprographics

Delta dues had been several months in arrears, but the employer paid the outstanding dues in January and February. The Guild is trying to get the employer to remit the members' dues each month in a timely manner.

The employer has obtained health insurance coverage for employees, with a 50-50 premium split.

DLR International

The collective agreement with DLR expired in November 2009. CWA/SCA Canada staff rep Dave Wilson met with the DLR unit about bargaining a new contract. Chief concerns for members are the wage scale and job classifications. A bargaining session was held with the employer March 2, and talks are continuing.

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Congratulations & Condolences

Basket to Dave Dutton (Citizen/Editorial) - injury/sick leave.

Donation to St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in memory of Sarafina Bohuslawsky, mother of Maria Cook (Citizen/Editorial).

Donation to University of Ottawa Heart Institute in memory of Geraldine Cross, mother of Rob Cross (Citizen/Editorial).

Basket to Linda Denley (Citizen/Editorial) - surgery/sick leave.

Donation to Houses of Providence (Toronto) in memory of James Bernard Scanlan, father of Wayne Scanlan (Citizen/Editorial).

Donation to Children's Wish Foundation of Canada in memory of Alexander Dutton, son of Dave Dutton (Citizen/Editorial).

Donation to Royal Victoria Hospital Foundation, I Believe campaign, Barrie, ON, in memory of Bernadette M. Walsh, mother-in-law of Don Campbell (Citizen/Editorial).

Basket to Leigh Chapple (CTV Ottawa) - surgery/sick leave.

Floral bouquet to CTV Ottawa Newsroom (at ATV); major fire at CTV Ottawa building, 1500 Merivale Rd. on Sun. Feb. 7/10.

Donation to Heart & Stroke Foundation in memory of Cindy Fortin, sister of Lionel Fortin (Citizen/RS&S).

Basket to James (Citizen/Editorial) & Amanda Gordon - baby boy, Owen Robert Thomas.

Basket to Nancy Ladouceur (Citizen/RS&S) from salary continuance to retirement (eff. April 1, 2009).

Basket to Allan (Citizen/RS&S) & Lynn Cameron - marriage.

Basket to Jackie Miller (Citizen/Editorial) - surgery/sick leave.

Congratulations to the following Ottawa Citizen staff recently honoured with *Awards of Excellence* by the *Society of News Design*, an international organization of designers, journalists and visual communicators. Photographer Bruno Schlumberger was recognized for a picture taken in January 2009 of a man panhandling on Rideau Street in a snowstorm. The photo ran with a story about how the city dealt with a 15-cm snowfall. A series that looked at area children who excel in sports, arts and academics, **The Price of Excellence**, was also honoured. The series ran in December and was designed by Andreas Heidebrecht and Carl Neustaedter. Also involved were editor Susan Allan, writers Ken Warren, Doug Fischer, Louisa Taylor and Shelley Page, and photographer Wayne Cuddington.

Congratulations to Citizen columnist Randall Denley, winner of the *2009 Joan Gullen Award for Excellence*. The award is presented by the Ontario Association of Social Workers Eastern Branch. Randall won in the large print media category and was selected for an article from February 2009 that criticized the lack of accountability for long emergency room wait times.

Congratulations to Citizen senior writer Robert Sibley on winning an *Award of Merit* from the *North American Travel Journalists Association* which honours travel writing, photojournalist and other activities related to the travel and tourism industry. Robert received the award for his summer series **Our Stories in Stone**.

March 2, 2010

