

Mass Dissent

Massachusetts Chapter

National Lawyers Guild

14 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108

December 2009

www.nlgmass.org

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BOARD MEETING

December 15, 6:00 pm

14 Beacon St., 1st Fl.
Boston

The Guild Shines in 2009

We are proud to report on the past year's activities in this issue. The Massachusetts Chapter continued to assist communities in need while also strengthening its infrastructure in order to better meet members' needs. We also paused to celebrate our 40th anniversary and to salute our founding members.

In March, Nancy Kelly and John Willshire-Carrera again hosted our **Mentorship Brunch** for law students. The event was well-attended and participants were well-fed. In a brilliant scheduling ploy, we combined our St. Patrick's Day festivities with our **Annual Meeting**, where we elected new board members and heard the insightful Steve Schnapp, United for a Fair Economy, give a leftist analysis of the economic crisis. In April we honored the chapter's founders at a **40th Anniversary Founders Party**, hosted by the debonair David Kelston. Mixing business with pleasure, we pieced together our founders' recollections to create a more complete chapter history. Also in April, internationalista Judy Somberg hosted a dinner party for visiting **Venezuelan Supreme Court Justice Fernando Vegas**, a

long-time friend of the Guild. In May, we gathered to honor students, legal workers and lawyers at our **Annual Testimonial Dinner**. You'll be glad to know that the 2010 dinner committee is already hard at work, looking for ways to pump up the volume at next year's dinner. Our **annual retreat** was held in August, giving us the opportunity to do long-term planning, as was our first ever **Staff Appreciation Reception**, which will certainly become a regular event. In October, the Guild made its second appearance at my favorite, the Honk! Fest, a raucous and entertaining assembly of street bands, where we marched proudly with the **Red Bandana Brigade**. Fair warning: we'll be recruiting more marchers and baton twirlers for next year. Later that month, a Massachusetts contingent attended the **National Convention** in Seattle. Law students Cecilia Candia and Liz Dedrick give us their impressions on page 10.

In terms of our substantive work, we continue to offer a national model for effective representation of the thousands of homeowners and tenants affected by the foreclosure cri-

Continued on page 4

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Massachusetts Chapter, Inc.**

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Join a Guild Committee

Street Law Clinic Project: The Street Law Clinic project provides workshops for Massachusetts organizations that address legal needs of various communities. Legal education workshops on 4th Amendment Rights (Stop & Search), Landlord/Tenant Disputes, Workers' Rights, Civil Disobedience Defense, Bankruptcy Law, Foreclosure Prevention Law, and Immigration Law are held at community organizations, youth centers, labor unions, shelters, and pre-release centers. If you are a Guild attorney, law student, or legal worker interested in leading a workshop, please contact the project at 617-723-4330 or nlgmass-slc@igc.org.

Lawyer Referral Service Panel (LRS): Members of the panel provide legal services at reasonable rates. Referral Service Administrative/Oversight Committee members: Neil Berman, Neil Burns, Joshua Goldstein, Jeremy Robin, and Azizah Yasin. For more information, contact the Referral Service Coordinator at 617-227-7008 or nlgmass@igc.org.

Foreclosure Prevention Task Force: Created in June 2008, the Task Force's goal is threefold: (1) to draft and introduce policies that address issues that homeowners and tenants of foreclosed on houses face, (2) to provide legal assistance to these homeowners and tenants, and (3) to conduct legal clinics for them. If you are interested in working with the Task Force, please call the office at 617-227-7335.

Independent Civilian Review Board: In coalition with the American Friends Service Committee and Greater Boston Civil Rights Coalition, the NLG has been pushing for the creation of an independent civilian board to review complaints against Boston police officers. To get involved in the campaign, please contact the office at 617-227-7335.

NLG National Immigration Project: Works to defend and extend the human and civil rights of all immigrants, both documented and undocumented. The Committee works in coalition with community groups to organize support for immigrant rights in the face of right-wing political attacks. For more information contact the NLG National Immigration Project at 617-227-9727.

NLG Military Law Task Force: Provides legal advice and assistance to those in the military and to others, especially members of the GIRights Hotline, who are counseling military personnel on their rights. It also provides legal support and helps to find local legal referrals when needed. The MLTF and the Hotline exchange many questions and information through their listserves. For advice and information, GI's can call 877-447-4487. To get involved, please contact Neil Berman (njberman2@juno.com) or Marguerite Helen (mugsm@mindspring.com).

COALITIONS:

Jobs with Justice, a coalition-based organization addressing workers' rights. The NLG is a member of Jobs with Justice; any interested Guild members can attend meetings & events.

GUILD NEWS

NLG HAPPY HOUR

The NLG Massachusetts Chapter's Happy Hour - for Guild members and non-Guild members - takes place on the **2nd Wednesday of every month, 5:30 - 7:30pm, at Kennedy's Mid-Town Pub** (44 Province St., 2nd Fl., Boston, close to Suffolk Law School). See photos from the last one on page 4. Next Happy Hour will be on January 13, 2010 (we won't hold Happy Hour in December).

HOLIDAY PARTY

You are invited to the the NLG Annual Holiday Party. This year's party will be on **Friday, December 4, 5:30 - 9:00pm, at Stern Shapiro Weissberg & Garin** (90 Canal St., 5th Fl., Boston). There will be many attractions - excellent food, great wine, out-of-this-world camaraderie, and a raffle drawing with unique prizes (tickets to theater, certificates to restaurants, gifts from around the world.) Please join us!

NLG BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Saving Homes: Lawyers and Activists Partner Against Foreclosures and Evictions

with Nadine Cohen & Jeff Feuer

**Thursday, January 21, 2010
12:30 PM**

14 Beacon St., 1st Fl., Conference Room, Boston

Learn how Guild lawyers and activists are working together to keep families in their homes through protest, counseling and legal defense.

Nadine Cohen is the Managing Attorney of the Consumer Rights Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services; Jeff Feuer is a partner at Goldstein & Feuer in Cambridge. Both are members of the NLG.

Street Law Clinic Report

The following Guild member conducted trainings for law students and/or clinics for members of Boston area community organizations and agencies:

December 3: *Workers' Rights clinic at Community Learning Center in Boston, by Mark Stern.*

HOLIDAY RAFFLE

Please consider contributing an item (or items) to the NLG holiday raffle - something you brought from a trip abroad, theater tickets or spa certificates. We will appreciate any interesting donation!



NLG Executive Vice President Judy Somberg presides, for the last time, a plenary session at the 2009 National Convention. Judy did not run for re-election and her 3-year term ended. Now, she will work **ONLY** for the Chapter!

ARTICLES FOR MASS DISSENT

The February issue of *Mass Dissent* will analyze Obama's first year in the White House.

If you are interested in submitting an article, essay, analysis, or art work (cartoons, pictures) related to the topic, please e-mail the articles to nlgmass-director@igc.org.

The deadline for articles is January 15, 2010.

The Guild Shines in 2009

sis. Jeff Feurer describes the accomplishments of the **Foreclosure Prevention Task Force** on page 5. In a separate article, Jeff also brings us up to date on the **Mass Defense Committee**, which trains and

organizes the NLG Legal Observers who respond to requests from community groups (see page 7). The battle for an effective **Civilian Review Board** in Boston grinds on, but we're prepared for the long haul. See page 6. And as always, there is a growing demand for **Street Law Clinics** (page 8), which involve both Guild students and lawyers and provide invaluable assistance on an increasing range of subjects.

Other activities were intended to build solidarity within the Guild. Bonnie Tenneriello describes the more serious version, our **Brown Bag Lunch Series**, on page 9 while Ku Yoo reveals his adventures at **Happy Hours** on page 11. To better serve our members, Laura Alfring and Carl Williams were the tech-heads behind our **website upgrade** (see page 9). Coordinator Sara DeConde reports on the **Lawyer Referral Service** on page 8.

We hope these reports will inspire more of our members to join Guild campaigns, chapter programs and social events.

-Barb Dougan, Co-Chair -



NLG Student Party (l.-r.): Marianne Tassone (BU), Margaret Ciborowski & Bradley St. Pierre (NE), Derek Borchardt (BU)

NLG STUDENTS IN ACTION IN 2009

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Marianne Tassone reports:

We don't have an official NLG branch but there are several students interested in starting up a branch, and even more who would like to get involved in the Street Law Clinics. I and a couple other students have been working with Carolyn Goodwin in the CDO to try to host a handful of SLC trainings and then start running clinics. We will hold an informational meeting soon to get BU active in the Guild again. We're anxious for any input or assistance we can get!

BOSTON COLLEGE

James Rancine reports:

Law school can certainly be an alienating place. For one, it is often isolating. Most of my classmates seem to have different values, political orientations, and career goals than me. In order to make it through law school without forgetting why I came in the first place, it will help to meet like-minded students and professionals. Bringing together progressive students can help build solidarity instead

of competition and agency rather than passivity. For these reasons I'm interested in starting a chapter of the NLG at Boston College Law School in 2010.

NEW ENGLAND

Margaret Ciborowski reports:

We started off 2009 by hosting a great turn out for our Landlord/Tenant Clinic training, taught by attorney Jeff Feuer. Later on, we co-sponsored an event about the New Bedford Raids with the Immigration Law Society and were very fortunate to have both John Willshire-Carrera and Nancy Kelly speak about their involvement with the raids. Our first event for the 2009-2010 was a Stop and Search Clinic training, taught by attorney Andrew Cowan. As for the rest of the year, we plan on holding many more clinics and having a panel on foreclosures.

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Jillina Tuck reports:

Our NLG chapter was very active in 2009. In March, we organized an event series that examine the impact of the

presidential election on socially marginalized groups. Events aimed at laying out the political landscape - post Obama's election and grappled with such questions as, "Is racism dead?" and analyzed the impact of specific ballot decisions on LGBT, immigrant, and other marginalized communities.

In October: (1) we co-sponsored a speaking event, "*Why We Refuse: Israeli Conscientious Objectors Speak Out.*" The speakers, Maya Wind and Netta Mishly, both 19, are part of a group of Israeli high school seniors called the Shministim and have been imprisoned for their principled refusal to join the Israeli Army; (2) we held Tenant Rights and Legal Observer trainings, both facilitated by Northeastern Faculty and Guild Member, Millie Drew; (3) we hosted a panel event entitled "*The Human Right to Health Denied: How Health Reform is Failing Immigrants.*" The event drew a substantial crowd from immigration law students and medical professional.

We look forward to 2010!

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Foreclosure Prevention Task Force

by Jeff Feuer

The Chapter's Foreclosure Prevention Task Force has been extremely active this year in response to the continuing foreclosure and eviction crisis that has enveloped our society and undermined our national economy. Congressional projections predicted that, by 2009, Massachusetts households would lose \$58.9 *billion* in household wealth, with more than \$2.8 billion lost in property value and a concomitant loss in property taxes. With approximately 23,000 foreclosure petitions filed in Massachusetts in 2009, more than 32,000 households faced eviction.

The Task Force has fought back against these destructive forces on a variety of levels. Working as an integral component of the Massachusetts Alliance Against Predatory Lending (MAAPL) coalition, Guild attorney Lee Goldstein has helped to craft and lobby for four pieces of legislation currently pending before the Massachusetts legislature: (1) a six month moratorium on foreclosures, resulting from unfair and predatory subprime loans, of 1-4 family owner-occupied buildings; (2) a requirement that lenders participate in a court supervised mediation program before they can foreclose on a property; (3) the establishment of judicial review of all foreclosures of 1-4 unit owner occupied homes, which, unlike the present foreclosure law, would allow a homeowner to raise defenses against a foreclosing lender in a court proceeding, such as violations of the Truth in Lending Act, the Real Estate Settlement and Procedures Act, the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act, and the Massachusetts Consumer

Protections Act; and (4) a requirement (lasting through 2013) that an institutional foreclosing lender could not evict tenants and former homeowners from a property unless they had good reason to do so, such as non-payment of rent, a purchase and sale agreement with a prospective owner-occupant that required the property to be vacant, etc.

In addition to an intense lobbying effort for these crucial protections, the Task Force has worked closely with Boston City Councillors Chuck Turner and Charles Yancey, City Life/Vida Urbana, Boston Community Capital, the Chelsea Collaborative, the Bank Tenants Association of East Boston and other neighborhood organizations to provide educational community forums/clincs and support for direct action events in opposition to the destructive foreclosure actions of large institutional lenders such as the Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, HSBC Bank, and Wells Fargo. Guild volunteer attorneys, including Nadine Cohen, Neil Berman, Jeff Feuer, Lee Goldstein, Benjie Hiller and Danny Factor, along with numerous law students, participated in community foreclosure prevention forums and street law clinics, providing information, counseling and referrals to financial counselors and legal services for residents throughout Greater Boston. They have also served as legal observers at eviction blockade actions and public demonstrations against various large banks, and the attorneys have provided pro bono representation for demonstrators arrested during some of these events.

The political push-back being exercised by the Guild, MAAPL, City Life/Vida Urbana and other groups has begun to have an

effect. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have now instituted temporary moratoriums on their own foreclosure and eviction actions and Bank of America is proposing a 60 day moratorium for its borrowers facing foreclosure. Bank initiated evictions of tenants have slowed somewhat as tenants have fought back through blockades, demonstrations and winning arguments in court, resulting in increasingly large settlement payments to tenants. Boston Community Capital, a local investment bank working closely with City Life/Vida Urbana, has received federal money to buy foreclosed properties from banks at their current fair market value and then transfer them back to the former property owner with an affordable mortgage based on that true market value. The federal Homeowners Assistance Mortgage Program has been expanded, making more homeowners eligible for mortgage loan modifications.

Of course, this problem is far from over and the Task Force expects to be even more active over the next year. As always, we are looking for more law students and attorneys who would like to volunteer to participate in one or more of the Task Force's many activities: legislative lobbying, legal observing, conducting community street law clinics, representing arrested demonstrators, and taking foreclosure and/or eviction cases. If you are interested, please contact Urszula at the Guild office at any time and watch for Guild emails that announce upcoming events.

Jeff Feuer serves on the NLG Foreclosure Prevention Task Force.

The Long and Winding Road: Working for Civilian Review in 2009

by Barb Dougan

Throughout 2009, the Guild continued its campaign for an effective civilian oversight of the Boston Police Department. As previously described, in 2007 Boston created a very limited civilian review board. The three-person Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel (CO-OP) reviews the handling of complaints filed with the police department's Internal Affairs Division. Its review is based on IAD's records; it has no authority to conduct its own investigation. The Guild has been working with Northeastern University's Institute on Race & Justice, the Greater Boston Civil Rights Coalition and other allies to improve the current system.

Working with the CO-OP.

In March, we met with the CO-OP for a progress report on its upcoming 2009 report and implementation of our prior recommendations. CO-OP members have come to recognize the Guild's expertise in police misconduct issues.

Encouraging IAD complaints.

A review of IAD investigations is pointless if citizens are unwilling to file IAD complaints in the first place, due to intimidation or mistrust of the police. The Boston Police Department's website now allows complaints to be filed online. In April, IAD trained coalition members on how to assist people who wish to file complaints. IAD also agreed to implement two of the Guild's recommendations. First, signs have been posted at each district station, in both English and Spanish, with instructions on how to file either an IAD complaint or a CO-

OP appeal. Second, by the year's end the department's website will list all organizations trained to assist with the filing of complaints.

Lack of appeals studied.

In its 2008 report, the CO-OP recommended that the City explore why members of the public were not appealing adverse IAD decisions. The Kennedy School of Government surveyed those who did not file appeals and issued its report in May. The majority described negative experiences when they filed their complaints, which led to a lack of faith in the appeals process. As for the CO-OP's procedures, researchers recommended lengthening the time to file an appeal, currently a mere 14 days after IAD issues its decision.

Need for new ombudsman.

In August, ombudsman David Hall, former dean of Northeastern Law School, left the board when he moved out of state. The Guild nominated two of our members, law professors Karen Blum (Suffolk Law School) and Margaret Burnham (Northeastern School of Law) to replace him. The position has yet to be filled.

2009 report.

In October, the CO-OP issued its annual report. The number of complaints filed by civilians continues to drop, as do appeals by those whose complaints are not sustained by IAD. As in prior years, the two main reasons for IAD complaints from the public are lack of respectful treatment and excessive force. Only 17% of civilian complaints were sustained, compared to 79% of inter-departmental complaints. As for the CO-OP, the number of cases reviewed is also decreasing, from 19 in 2007, to 14 in 2008, to 5 as

of October 1. Only three people had filed appeals as of October 1. The quality of IAD decisions has improved, however. They now contain a summary explanation for the decision and the CO-OP is less likely to send them back for further investigation.

Meeting with Mayor Menino.

Thank goodness for re-election campaigns. After years of requests, we were finally able to meet with Mayor Menino himself in October. Police Commissioner Ed Davis and Superintendent Kenneth Fong also attended. We discussed how community groups can help with the CO-OP's outreach efforts so more people are willing to file both IAD complaints and appeals. Commissioner Davis also agreed to monthly meetings with our coalition; the next one is scheduled for November 23.

The *Boston Globe* said that Kennedy School report describes a civilian review board "languishing in obscurity and falling woefully short of its mission to build trust in the Boston Police Department." While this is frustrating, it is certainly not surprising. The Guild has always understood that we'd need to fight every step of the way for accountability in any police department. The battle may never be won, but we will keep building on each small victory.

Barb Dougan has been working on the NLG Civilian Review campaign since 2004.

NLG Mass Defense Committee

by Jeff Feuer

Because of the foreclosure crisis and the battle for health care reform, the Mass Defense Committee has been extremely active throughout 2009 in three areas: (1) training and providing legal observers for political events and demonstrations (see picture from the Pride Parade in Northampton); (2) providing training and written information to activists about their legal rights and the legal consequences that may attend any civil disobedience activities; and (3) providing legal advice and representation to individuals who were arrested while engaged in political demonstrations.

The attorneys and law students active in the Mass Defense Committee trained over 100 law students, lawyers and activists to be legal observers. The Committee also provided legal observers for a wide variety of progressive political events and demonstrations throughout Massachusetts, including the GLBT Pride Parade in Northampton, eviction blockades in Roxbury and Dorchester, foreclosure protests at the Boston headquarters of major banks, a

protest against the visit of the President of Colombia, environmental "camping in the city" actions, a health care reform protest at the headquarters of CIGNA Insurance in Newton, and other actions sponsored by groups such as More Jobs Now!, City Life/Vida Urbana, Jobs With Justice, Health Care for America NOW!, the Chelsea Collaborative, Mass Power Shift, and the Mass. Alliance Against Predatory Lending, among others.



Lisa Elliott, Patrick Greenhalgh, Gail Hills, and Cathy Reuben.

In addition to providing legal observers for these events, the lawyers from the Committee also provided a significant number of free clinics to groups and individuals who were planning on engaging in direct political action that

could, and often did, result in arrests. Among the more than 200 people who participated in those clinics were members of Jobs With Justice, Mass Power Shift (a statewide student environmental activist group), Cop Watch Campaign, the Chelsea Collaborative, and students from Clark University in Worcester. NLG lawyers from the Committee successfully represented more than two dozen political protestors who were arrested during various demonstrations over the course of the year, getting charges dismissed upon payments of minimal court costs. In one case, we even succeeded in having the charges dismissed before the activists were arraigned!

The NLG lawyers who volunteered a significant amount of time with the Committee this past year included **Danny Back, Neil Berman, Susan Church, Melinda Drew, Jeff Feuer, Lee Goldstein, Benjie Hiller, Dave Nathanson, Ryan Schiff, and Carl Williams.**

Jeff Feuer is a member of the NLG Mass Defense Committee.

NLG STUDENTS IN ACTION IN 2009

Continued from page 4

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY **Margaret Aylward reports:**

We've been working hard to get things moving this semester. We had an excellent turnout at our Club Fair at the beginning of the semester; we met the incoming 1Ls and added many of them as Street Law volunteers.

Following up on the success of our anti-death penalty events last year, we recently co-sponsored an event with the Rappaport Center for Law and Public Policy and the Massachusetts Citizens Against the Death Penalty. We held an awards reception to honor the work done by pro bono attorneys and academics in the field of anti-death penalty work.

We've also been working on a

series of debates for Spring semester, featuring a member of the Suffolk Guild community debating a nominee from the Suffolk Federalist Society. This will provide an excellent platform to explain the beliefs and principles of the Guild.

The Suffolk Guild is exciting to keep things moving and continue getting more students involved. And we're looking forward to the Holiday Raffle in December!

Street Law Clinic & Student Organizing

by Margaret Aylward (SLC Coordinator) & Charu Verma (Student Organizer)

To begin this year in Street Law, we attended Pro Bono Fairs at Boston University School, Boston College, Northeastern University, Suffolk University and Harvard University. At these fairs, we introduced new and returning law students to mission and work of the National Lawyers Guild by encouraging students to volunteer with the Street Law Clinics. At these events, we signed up over 100 interested students! We also attended a Pro Bono Fair at the Boston Bar Association, and signed up over 20 attorneys interested in volunteering for the Street Law Clinic program.

Currently, Boston College and Boston University do not have established National Lawyers Guild chapters at their schools. We have been meeting with students and faculty at both of these law schools, and we are getting close to having organized chapters there! In many ways, this has been accomplished through our outreach efforts to faculty involved with public interest advising. We really appreciate their efforts and are looking forward to strengthening our presence at these schools.

To welcome back our old students and get our new recruits prepared for the year, we kicked off the program with several SLC trainings. Trainings were held at Boston University, Boston College, Suffolk Law, Northeastern University, and New England School of Law. Trained attorneys prepared students to lead clinics in Tenant Rights, Foreclosure/Eviction, Workers Rights, Stop and Search and Legal Observing.

With our newly trained volunteers ready to go, we hosted clinics at Clark University, St. Ambrose Family Shelter, Span and other community organizations. Our volunteers felt empowered by the great turnouts and the effective work they were able to do.

But all work and no play is no fun so we brought our students together for an event at Felt. We had a great time getting to know each other and playing pool together!

In order to build more cohesion between the student chapters, we will be conducting our first student chapter meeting this November 17, 2009. We are hoping that this monthly meeting between chapter representatives will help the strengthen individual chapters through community and coalition building between all the schools. We are also looking forward to getting together again for our student brunch this spring.

Lawyer Referral Service

by Sara DeConde (LRS Coordinator)

The Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) is a valued project of the National Lawyers Guild. The LRS strives to provide competent legal representation at reduced rates for low to moderate-income residents of Massachusetts. Many callers, frustrated at being told for the first time in their lives they “make too much money” to qualify for free legal services, regain hope with the name and phone number of an LRS attorney scribbled on a piece of paper. Attorneys join the panel to “help [their] community by representing those indigent”, “to reach clients who may otherwise go unrepresented”, and “because [they] care about quality representation for everyone”. The LRS is one small way Guild members work to end the unequal access to justice that exists in today’s system.

By the end of the year the LRS expects to refer about 3,500 potential cases to our panel of 63 attorneys. The LRS receives about 300 calls per month placing referrals to attorneys on a rotating basis considering first a caller’s legal issue and geographic location. For this reason, many attorneys also join the LRS panel to “improve business”. While 39 attorneys renewed their membership from 2008, 19 new attorneys joined the panel this year. All except for one were also new to the National Lawyers Guild.

Fortunately for callers LRS attorneys practice roughly all areas of law; however, attorneys on the panel are not as regionally diverse. Consistent with years past, the majority of callers are searching for representation for domestic relations matters, civil cases, or tenant issues; though, most recently there has been an increase in referrals for unemployment hearings and appeals, and wrongful termination suits. Unfortunately for callers though, LRS attorneys are generally located in the greater Boston area, with no attorneys practicing in western Massachusetts or on the Cape.

With gratitude for their service LRS Board Members Neil Burns, Neil Berman, Jeremy Robin, Josh Goldstein and Azizah Yasin rendered decisions this year aimed to benefit to LRS attorneys. Most notably, the LRS adopted a graduated remittance scale and is working in conjunction with the Chapter’s Website Committee to modernize the LRS website in hopes of reaching a broader range of potential clients.

Thank you to all LRS attorneys for their hard work in 2009!

Lunch & Learn: NLG Brown Bag Lunch Series

by Bonnie Tenneriello

Many lawyers have told me that they feel badly because they are not more involved with the Guild – yet these same lawyers generally spend their weeks representing immigrants or tenants or victims of police abuse. This is the work of the Guild. Our Chapter is made up of hundreds of lawyers, paralegals, students and activists working to achieve justice for the powerless, but much of that work happens in our practices rather than under Guild sponsorship.

In 2009 the Massachusetts Chapter began a monthly “brown bag” lunch series to help our legal community act more like one. Every month a speaker brings a new topic to the table, allowing interested members to hear and share war stories and advocacy strategies. Whether it is an issue you are already involved with or one that you are newly learning about, it’s an engaging hour and helps you feel connected. It is also a chance to forge connections with Guild allies – the lunches are open to all and non-members are encouraged to present and to attend.

Please consider speaking at a

lunch program if you are working on a legal case or a political campaign of interest to Guild members and allies. It will be an excellent opportunity to get feedback and gather support for your work. Or perhaps you know of an organizer or lawyer with something interesting to share. E-mail your ideas to me at btenneriello@mcls.net.

Just to give you a sense of the range of topics, in 2009, the lunch program covered the following:

- Guild practitioner **Judy Somberg** gave us an object lesson in how an election monitoring delegation can have an impact, as she described how the Guild delegation to El Salvador pressured the U.S. Embassy to refute right-wing propaganda that the U.S. would end aid to the country if the leftist FMLN candidates were elected.

- Past national NLG president **Michael Avery** gave a behind-the-scenes look at the wrongful conviction suit against the FBI that he has been litigating, describing decades of government misconduct and the plaintiffs’ legal strategies that led to a \$103 million judgment.

- **Gunner Scott**, director of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, described the daily struggles faced by transgender peo-

ple as well as successful efforts to legislate against discrimination.

- As this issue of *Mass Dissent* went to press, **Tom Cincotta**, director of the Civil Liberties Project Director at Political Research Associates, was scheduled to speak November 17 on the new domestic security infrastructure, describing efforts by state and federal agencies to coordinate intelligence gathering and the threat this poses to civil liberties.

On January 21, **Nadine Cohen**, managing attorney of the Consumer Rights Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services, and Guild practitioner **Jeff Feuer** will discuss how lawyers and activists are responding to the foreclosure crisis through protest and legal representation.

The lunches are usually on the third Thursday of the month, at 12:30 p.m., in the first floor conference room of 14 Beacon Street. The format is casual and the presentations are lively. Please forward them to any colleagues and comrades who might be interested. Please come, bring a lunch, and bring a friend or two or three.

Bonnie Tenneriello chair the NLG Brown Bag Lunch program.

NLG Website Updates Put us at the Cutting Edge

by Laura Alfring, Website Committee

The NLG’s Website Committee has been working hard to improve our website so we can bring the Guild to the masses through better technology, frequent website updates, and interactive web features. We are working with Jonathan McIntosh of Rebellious Pixels to do a complete overhaul of the current website. We hope to have the website up and running within a few weeks.

The new website will include an updated Guild history, complete with links to media articles on significant events and campaigns, such as NLG actions surrounding the 2004 DNC, FBI investigations of the Guild, our work representing protestors, and our housing advocacy.

Additionally, the new website will incorporate several Web 2.0 features, including Facebook, Flickr,

Twitter, and YouTube. We will use Flickr to post photos from protests, rallies, Happy Hour and other events. We will use YouTube to broadcast videos of Guild events, including our monthly Brown Bag lunch series (see above). We will also have an easy-to-read calendar with links to information on Street Law Clinics and other upcoming events. *Mass Dissent* will be posted on the website in a user-friendly format that allows the reader to click on articles of interest, instead of scrolling through a cumbersome PDF document.

The new website will be much more accessible to the public. It will provide people with a better way to keep up with the Guild’s activities and allow for more frequent updates about upcoming events. With interactive features, it will allow our members to participate in the Guild in unprecedented ways.

Law Student Adventures in NLG Conventioneering

by Liz Dedrick & Cecilia Candia

In October the National Lawyers Guild took Seattle by storm for its national convention, "Law for the People," in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the World Trade Organization protests there. A strong contingent from the Massachusetts Chapter attended the convention. Two Northeastern law students report on their adventures at their first Guild convention.

Wednesday: We left for the airport straight from our co-ops at the Greater Boston Legal Services. We were so excited about our first NLG convention that we tried to check in at the wrong airline—multiple times.

Thursday: Cecilia spent all day at the NLG National Immigration Project (NIP) meeting. As a student, she was a little nervous that she would be out of her league. Instead she was happy to find that not only could she follow along, but was also able to con-

tribute to the discussion.

After meeting Urszula and Sara for dinner, we all rushed to plenary in time to hear outgoing NLG President Marjorie Cohn and keynote speaker Richard Falk. That night they went to hear live music at the Can Can Cabaret. Liz instead went to visit her sister, who gave birth to twins that morning.

Friday: Workshops included The Surveillance State and Domestic Spying in the Obama Era; Tactics to End the Bush Legacy (fascinating, excellent panelists); Effective Strategies for Dealing with Immigration Detainers (challenging but interesting); What Difference Does a Revolution Make in a Global Economic Meltdown? (interesting panel about impact of U.S. economic policies in Latin America); and the plenary session. The day ended with a screening of a new documentary about William Kunstler, "Disturbing the Universe." It is an excellent film about a long-time Guild member and civil rights activist, and we highly recommend it.

Saturday: Cecilia and Liz attended their favorite workshops. Cecilia enjoyed Communities of Color: Litigating and Organizing to Fight Back because the panelists were clear with their message and passionate in their beliefs about the importance of community lawyering. Liz liked Nuts and Bolts of Disability Rights Litigation because it provided a practical and informative explanation of employment discrimination claims brought under the Americans with Disabilities Act. That evening we attended the banquet and met more NLG members, including a Northeastern Law graduate who is practicing in Alaska.

Sunday: On the whole, we are very glad we attended this year's convention and we're even more excited for next year's in New Orleans! Mark your calendar - September 22 - 26, 2010!

Liz Dedrick and Cecilia Candia are second year students at Northeastern University School of Law.

NLG MEMBERS IN ACTION

DEBORAH ROHER

Fall River

In 2009 my consumer rights practice moved into gear. Filed federal cases under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, Truth-in-Lending Act, and Equal Credit Opportunity Act, as well as c. 93A and other cases in state court. Bankruptcy cases became more challenging, as clients with higher incomes and more assets have seen their solvency deteriorate in the face of the national financial crisis.

This was the year that Neil Berman, Neil Burns and I created a Street Law Clinic curriculum on consumers' rights and bankruptcy, which we look forward to road-testing in the coming year. Finally, having assured that my section 8 client would not be evicted from her home, I invested the settlement proceeds in

replacing eaves and trim, successfully evicting the squirrels from the attic of my own home.

MARK STERN

Somerville

I joined the Board of Directors of the NLG Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice.

I was awarded my second Iron Runner Jacket for completing all seven 2009 US Track and Field Championship Races from 5K to Marathon (in cold pouring rain); contributing to Veterans Team that won the Seven Race Combined Championship for 2009 and 2008, and placed in top 10 in one of seven races in each year.

Achievements are that I am still able to walk and am still lawyering in my spare time.

CATHY REUBEN

Boston

I headed up a team of five NLG Legal Observers at the Transgender Pride March in Northampton on October 3, 2009. Our team was ably trained by NLG member Jeffrey Feuer. Happily nobody was arrested, but our team did have to brave pouring rain, suspicious conduct by "trench coat man" and "dark glasses guy," and had to work hard not to cheer (and thereby lose our impartiality), at the incredibly moving and powerful speakers and acts throughout the day. My fellow team members were law students Lisa Elliott, Gail Hills, and Patrick Greenhalgh of WNEC (*our photo on p. 6*), and Allison Cleveland of BC law. Thanks to NLG, GLAD and MLGBA for their support and encouragement. Our presence definitely made a difference. Hooray for NLG!

NLG Massachusetts Chapter Sustainers

In the spring of 2003, the Massachusetts Chapter of the NLG initiated the Chapter Sustainer Program. Since its inception, the Program has been very successful and has been enthusiastically joined by the following Guild members:

Adkins, Kelston & Zavez • Anonymous • Michael Avery • Susan Barney & Kamal Ahmed • Samuel Berk • Neil Berman • Steven Buckley • Howard Cooper • Andrew Cornell & Shelley Kroll • Melinda Drew & Jeff Feuer • Carolyn Federoff • Howard Friedman • Roger Geller • Lee Goldstein & Ken Quat • Benjie Hiller • Stephen Hrones • Myong Joun • Martin Kantrovitz • Nancy Kelly & John Willshire-Carrera • David Kelston • Leslee Klein & Mark Stern • Petrucelly, Nadler & Norris • Hank Phillippi Ryan & Jonathan Shapiro • Allan Rodgers • Martin Rosenthal • Sharryn Ross • Anne Sills & Howard Silverman • Judy Somberg • Stern, Shapiro, Weissberg & Garin

The Sustainer Program is one of the most important Chapter's initiatives to secure its future existence. Please consider joining the Program.

YES, INCLUDE MY NAME AMONG NLG MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER SUSTAINERS!

I, _____, am making a commitment to support the Massachusetts Chapter of the Guild with an annual contribution of: _____ \$500 (not including my membership dues)
\$ _____ (other above \$500)

As a sustainer I will receive:

- special listing in the Dinner Program;
- 1/8 page ad in the Dinner Program;
- acknowledgement in every issue of *Mass Dissent*;
- two (2) free raffle tickets for a Holiday Party raffle;
- invitation to special events.

Three ways to become a sustainer:

- contribute \$500 or more a year (not including dues)
- pair up with another person and pay \$250 each, or
- join the "Guild Circle" and pay \$50/month minimum.

Please mail to: NLG, Massachusetts Chapter
14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108

NLG MONTHLY HAPPY HOUR

by *Ku Yoo*

A lawyer suggested that I check it out. I should have known then, especially considering that he had a penchant for wearing three-piece suits. But what did I know? I had just recently begun my practice with another lawyer and was eager to meet other practitioners. Some seven hours later, I found myself on a midnight

getaway from disco music in a college friend's compact sedan. But still I returned for Happy Hour the following month. That time, I ended up eating dumplings and fried rice somewhere in Chinatown at 3 a.m. with two other lawyers.

As a networking opportunity, Happy Hour offers more than just fun and games. As a new lawyer who began a small practice, I met many lawyers, new and experi-

enced, who work on their own or in a small firm. I met experienced attorneys who encouraged me to continue on the path I have chosen. There is certain camaraderie among the new lawyers, which is comforting. During the most difficult times, knowing those lawyers helps me to continue. And when facing an unfamiliar area of law, I can turn to others within the Guild for help, and the help is very congenial.

But let's get serious; it is, after all, still called "Happy Hour." The benefits continue outside of the Happy Hour setting and even the profession. I often catch lunch or an after work drink with people I met through the Guild's Happy Hour. These meetings are a good way to leave behind the confines of my office and the responsibilities and stresses that come with it.

Of course, the Guild is still a legal organization. Any time I meet Guild members, whether during Happy Hour or on our own time, we inevitably talk shop. Sometimes we make other helpful professional connections through the Guild. It is all in good fun and spirit. Now, if only I can find a lawyer to make sure that no photos taken from these extended Happy Hours ever see the light of the day...

Ku Yoo is a partner at Chang & Yoo LLP, in Boston. In light of his request, we used our discretion in the Happy Hour photo accompanying this article.



Nov. Happy Hour (l.-r.): Jonathan Pickering, Raymond Peters, Urszula Masny-Latos, and Ewelina Mroczka

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The National Lawyers Guild is...



" ... an association dedicated to the need for basic change in the structure of our political and economic system. We seek to unite the lawyers, law students, legal workers and jailhouse lawyers of America in an organization which shall function as an effective political and social force in the service of people, to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests. Our aim is to bring together all those who regard adjustments to new conditions as more important than the veneration of precedent; who recognize the importance of safeguarding and extending the rights of workers, women, farmers, and minority groups upon whom the welfare of the entire nation depends; who seek actively to eliminate racism; who work to maintain and protect our civil rights and liberties in the face of persistent attacks upon them; and who look upon the law as an instrument for the protection of the people, rather than for their repression."

Preamble to the Constitution of the National Lawyers Guild, originally adopted February 22, 1937, and most recently amended in July 1971.

Fill out and send to:

National Lawyers Guild, Massachusetts Chapter
14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: (w) _____ (h) _____

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Circle one:

____ Lawyer ____ Legal Worker ____ Law Student ____ Jailhouse Lawyer

Alumna/Alumnus of _____ Year _____

Dues (from schedule): _____

I am interested in working on the following projects:

- ____ Lawyer Referral Service
- ____ Street Law Clinic
- ____ Mass Defense Committee
- ____ *Mass Dissent* (monthly publication)
- ____ National Immigration Project

Please Join Us!

Dues are calculated on a calendar year basis (Jan.1-Dec.31) according to your income*:

Jailhouse Lawyers.	Free
Law Students	\$25
up to \$15,000.	\$40
over \$15,000 to \$20,000.	\$50
over \$20,000 to \$25,000	\$75
over \$25,000 to \$30,000	\$100
over \$30,000 to \$40,000	\$150
over \$40,000 to \$50,000	\$200
over \$50,000 to \$60,000	\$250
over \$60,000 to \$70,000	\$300
over \$70,000 to \$80,000	\$350
over \$80,000 to \$90,000	\$400
over \$100,000	\$500

* Any **new** member who joins after September 1 will be carried over to the following year. Dues may be paid in full or in quarterly installments. Dues of \$80 cover the basic membership costs, which include publication and mailing of *Mass Dissent* (the Chapter's monthly newsletter), national and regional dues, and the office and staff.

No one will be denied membership because of inability to pay.