



National Lawyers Guild of Chicago

March 2012

News from the Board

By Sarah Gelsomino

Dear Chicago NLG,

We are pleased to introduce our Chicago NLG Newsletter. Our Chicago chapter has been a solid base of NLG organizing for decades and the recent renewal of energy in our local chapter is a testament to the caliber of members, both younger and older. We are one of the most active and fastest growing chapters in the country! We hope this newsletter is another venue for us to share the news and events of our vibrant Chapter with one another. Please be sure to include your highlights and projects in our upcoming editions. This year Chicago NLG approved our chapter Bylaws in a chapter-wide process and vote. With our formal structure in place, we launched our first election for the Board of Directors at our chapter dinner in November.

The Board meets in an open meeting the second Friday of every month from 5-7 at 637 S. Dearborn Ave., 3rd Floor. Please join us! Our next meeting is **April 20th**.

Meet the Board!

JEFFREY FRANK has practiced law in Chicago for over 30 years and has served on the board for eight years. While Jeff principally practiced tax law, over the last several years he has undertaken representation of protesters and other assorted dissidents.

SUSAN KAPLAN is a long time Guild member who was the Director of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights' Community Economic Development Law Project from 1985 – 2010. She joined the Chicago Board this year. She is a former Midwest Regional Vice President.

ANDREW BASHI is a third-year law student at Loyola University Chicago. He currently serves as Student Director of the Chicago chapter.

KEVIN VODAK works as the Litigation Director for the Chicago Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Chicago), where he advocates to preserve civil rights for Muslim communities. He has been a member of NLG Chicago since 1997 and is currently Treasurer.

JOANNE KINOY is a partner with Kinoy, Taren and Geraghty, P.C, specializing in plaintiff's civil rights litigation. She is a long-time Guild

member.

AMANDA GRAHAM is a 3L at DePaul and a proud Guildmember. After graduation, Amanda plans to practice criminal defense in Chicago.

JANINE "JANI" HOFT is a partner at the People's Law Office who has litigated civil rights cases for more than 25 years and has been a proud Guild member since her law school days. She has served on the Board of the Chicago Chapter for many years, only leaving Chicago to direct a public interest clinic at Syracuse Law School from 1994-97.

BEN MEYER is an attorney with NLG Chicago. He works at James R. Fennerty & Associates and serves as NLG Chicago's Chapter Administrator.

MOLLY ARMOUR is a criminal defense attorney and a proud member of the NLG and its Next Gen Committee. She currently serves as Midwest Regional Vice President.

SARAH GELSOMINO is a civil rights lawyer at People's Law Office.

TALITHA HAZELTON is a 3L at DePaul who will join the Palm Beach County's Public Defender Office in the fall.

Committee Updates



To join any of NLG Chicago's committees (or for more information), email: Chicago@nlg.org.

Mass Defense

Over the past few months, the Chicago Mass Defense Committee has been coordinating ongoing representation of Occupy Chicago arrestees, and laying groundwork to facilitate the defense of activists during the NATO summit in May.

Occupy Chicago Representation

On February 15, Guild attorneys argued a motion to dismiss on behalf of more than 90 Occupy Chicago activists in Municipal Court. The cases stem from the October arrests, in which the city refused to grant the activists an ongoing presence in any of the city's public parks. The motion argued the arrests of Occupy Chicago violated their First Amendment rights because the City refused to offer them any sufficient location to continue their protected political expression. The city's aggressive treatment of demonstrators, including heavy police presence at Grant Park and cuffing and detaining people overnight, was an obvious political attack aimed at suppressing the rights of people to express themselves. The Judge did not rule on the issue, but continued the hearing for March 28th.

Of the more than 90 defendants, nearly half say they will go to trial if their motions to dismiss are denied. Guild attorneys will continue to represent the activists in this litigation, even to trial if necessary.

NATO Legal Support Project

Despite the abrupt announcement that the G8 will no longer be meeting in Chicago, the Guild is still moving forward with plans to provide legal support to protesters during the NATO Summit scheduled for May 20th-21st. The Mass Defense Committee plans to conduct a range of "Know Your Rights" workshops, organize volunteer Legal Observers™, recruit lawyers to provide legal representation to people arrested during the protests, staff a 24-hour legal support hotline, and work with television, radio and print media on legal matters affecting anti-NATO demonstrators.

The Know Your Rights (KYR) and Legal Observer™ (LO) subcommittees will be holding trainings at the Midwest Regional Conference on Sunday, March 25 to provide Guild members with information and materials necessary to deliver the trainings to as wide an audience as possible in anticipation of the NATO summits.

The KYR trainings will be used to educate activists on their rights in the streets, and the LO trainings will help the Guild document police abuse, denial of rights, and unlawful arrests.

New Subcommittee

The Mass Defense Committee has also formed a media subcommittee to work with all Chicago Guild members to build a strong public presence to the Guild's mass defense efforts in Chicago. If you are contacted by the media and are unsure of how to respond, please reach out to us!

Labor & Employment

In January of 2012, NLG Chicago formed its Labor & Employment Committee (L&EC) so as to engage with local labor movements, to foster progressive and radical labor employment work within NLG Chicago, to strengthen the Guild's ties to the Chicago labor law community, and to serve as a bridge to our national Labor and Employment Committee.

The L&EC consists of lawyers, law students, and legal workers who are committed to a progressive vision of workers rights. The Committee has been working with UNITE HERE! on their Hyatt Boycott Campaign and with Restaurant Workers United on their Capital Grille Campaign. The L&EC is planning a workshop for the NLG Midwest Regional Conference entitled "Workers Fighting Back: Responses to Austerity, Attacks on Unions, and Economic Inequality."

We welcome new members with excitement! Our next meeting will be at Cardozo's Pub, 170 W. Washington, on April 5 at 5:45PM. Come stop by.

Next Gen

Chicago Next Gen is growing and is deeply involved in all of the Chicago Guild activities. The Chicago Next Gen Committee is a collection of young, social-justice-minded attorneys, legal workers, and law students dedicated to social change and building like-minded community. As a part of

Chicago's NLG Chapter, we are committed to supporting newer members of the Guild, and in networking, socializing, and organizing with the next generation of Guild members.

We meet monthly, usually on the second Tuesday of the month. The monthly Next Gen happy hours have grown increasingly popular, providing a relaxed way to network and build our radical resources! The next happy hour is Friday, March 23rd!

NLG Chicago would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our members and allies for coming out to our happy hour and DON8 Against G8 fundraiser! **We raised over \$1000!**

In addition to raising funds, we raised awareness about NATO, we received support from Alderman Leslie Hairston, and we saw many new faces we hope to see again in the future!

In addition to happy hours, we are committed to the skill-building and ongoing legal education of new attorneys and legal workers as they make transition into law practice.

If you are interested in joining, getting involved with the Social Committee (planning happy hours and other social activities) or the Skill-Building committee please email: nextgenchicago@gmail.com. We are presently looking for a new co-chair for the social committee and suggestions for upcoming CLEs

Member News

Rockstar Midwest Regional Vice President **MOLLY ARMOUR** was recently published in the *DePaul Journal for Social Justice* (Fall 2011, Vol. 5). Molly co-authored the article, entitled "Second Chance: Establishing a Reentry Program in the Northern District of Illinois," with U.S. District Court Judge Joan Gottschall on the formation of a federal reentry court in Chicago.

Guild attorney **JERRY BOYLE** will be a panelist on a panel entitled "A Year of Revolt: From Wisconsin to Wall Street -- and Beyond" for *DePaul's Journal for Social Justice*. The panel will take place from 1:20 to 2:45PM on March 28, in Suite 8005 of the DePaul Center.

A Victory for Free Speech

On March 20, 2003, the Chicago police illegally detained and arrested over 700 people during a peaceful protest against the disastrous war in Iraq. Since then, a team of lawyers and legal workers, all members of the National Lawyers Guild, have been working to right that wrong. Last year the team won an important victory in the case when Judge Posner of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals issued an opinion strongly criticizing the City of Chicago for its treatment of the demonstrators and reinstated the case after it had been dismissed by the District Court. This opinion, which holds that the City cannot arrest peaceful demonstrators without warning, even if they do not have a permit, will apply to all future demonstrations.

On the eve of trial, after nearly nine years of litigation, the City of

Chicago has agreed to settle with the class members in *Vodak v. City of Chicago* for \$6.2 Million, plus costs and fees. This is an important victory, not only for the class members and their attorneys, but for all of us, because it reaffirms the right of people to peacefully protest.

This substantial settlement will send an unequivocal message to the Chicago Police and police departments around the country that they must respect the right of free speech and assembly. CPD Superintendent McCarthy and City Officials have publicly acknowledged mistakes the CPD made in 2003 and have changed and instituted CPD policies that require providing orders to disperse before arresting protestors at a demonstration.

This class action lawsuit has been litigated by a legal team of attorneys and legal workers who are all proud members of the National Lawyers Guild. People's Law Office attorneys, **JANINE HOFT, JOEY MOGUL, SARAH GELSOMINO, & JOHN STAINTHORP**, along with attorneys **MELINDA POWER & JIM FENNERTY**, as well as paralegal **BRAD THOMSON** of People's Law Office, have litigated the case for almost nine years.

For more information or updates on the settlement, visit peopleslawoffice.com.



The Vodak team. Melinda Power, Brad Thomson, Jani Hoft, Sarah Gelsomino, Jim Fennerty, Joey Mogul, & John Stainthorp

DONATE TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you'd like to make a donation to support the work of the Chicago Guild, you may do so [here](#).

Law School Roundup

by Andrew Bashi

Chicago-Kent

The Chicago-Kent Chapter is gearing up to host this year's Midwest Regional Conference. In addition, the chapter is planning a screening of *The Interrupters* (date TBA).

Northwestern

Northwestern Law's newly revived Chapter of NLG had its inaugural event on March 1st for Death Penalty Awareness Day. The event was a great success, featuring remarks from clinic professors Rob Owen, Locke Bowman, Guild member Steven Saltzman and a showing of the powerful documentary *DEADLINE*. NU's chapter is in the final stages of being officially recognized and funded by the University as a student group, and has a growing and committed group of supporters. Two members of the chapter will be in attendance at the Midwest Regional Conference, many are already trained and have served as LO's, and the chapter is looking forward to providing support for the NATO protests.



Northwestern hosts Death Penalty Awareness event

Loyola

Loyola NLG has led the student body through a list of over 40 suggestions for the law school administration that were once again presented at this semester's Dean's Town Halls. It's members have been hard at work assisting in leading institutionalized programs at the Law School. Board members have played central roles in planning the upcoming Public Interest Law Reporter Symposium, "Forcing the Agenda," which will feature Guild members Shahid Buttar, Gideon Oliver, and Flint Taylor. They have also assisted in planning the upcoming Race and Law Symposium, "Beyond the Pickett Fence." They continue to lead a boycott campaign against anti-gay hate-group supporter, Chik-fil-A®.

DO YOU HAVE GUILD NEWS?

Email any relevant Guild news you want included in the newsletter to chicago@nlg.org by the first Friday of every month with the subject "Guild News."

Newsletters are sent out the second Monday of each month.

NLG Chicago Job Postings is Here!

NLG Chicago Jobs Postings is a free and easy way to **share information about a job opportunity** with passionate individuals searching for progressive legal jobs! Just send an email with a description of the opportunity to nlg-chicago-jobs@googlegroups.com. We'll handle the rest!

For those **looking for a progressive legal job**, become a member of our online posting center and check out past postings! Join here:

<https://groups.google.com/group/nlg-chicago-jobs> .

The postings are moderated to eliminate double-posting and irrelevant messages. The group settings have been optimized to keep your inboxes free of unnecessary emails (no more than 1 per day) while at the same time granting you the ability to access high-quality career opportunities.

Upcoming Events

Friday, **March 16** // 9:15AM – 3:30PM
Philip H. Corboy Law Center at Loyola
(25 E. Pearson St., 10th floor)

Forcing the Agenda – Provoking Policy Reform through Legal Action and Community Collaboration [SYMPOSIUM]

Panels: **A Place Called Home:** *Navigating Obstacles for Fair and Adequate Housing through Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration* **Health Care:** *The Necessity of Community and Legal Activism to Fuel Legislative Reform* **Repairing Justice:** *Raising Awareness and Finding Relief for Victims of Police Torture*

Scholarly Addresses: **Constitutional Catastrophe: the NDAA vs. the Bill of Rights** *Shahid Buttar, Bill of Rights Defense Committee* **Legal Responses to Police Repression of Occupy Wall Street in New York City** *Gideon Oliver, Gideon Law and National Lawyers Guild*

RSVP: PILR-Symposium@luc.edu.

Saturday, **March 17** // 9:00PM – 2:00AM
LiveWire Lounge (3394 N. Milwaukee)
Punk Rock Karaoke Chicago Benefit for the NLG NATO Mass Defense Fund

\$5 donation (no one turned away) 21+; more details here: [Facebook event](#)

Sunday, **March 18** // Noon
Loyola University Chicago School of Law (25 E. Pearson St., Room 1101)
Legal Observer Training

Friday, **March 23** // 7:30-9:30PM
Haymarket Brewery (25 E. Pearson St., Room 1101)

NLG Chicago Happy Hour

This happy hour will be the kickoff to the Midwest Regional conference

and welcome our Guild friends from all over the Midwest.

Wednesday, **March 28** // 10:30AM-2:45PM
DePaul Center (1E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 8005).

New Battlefronts: Struggles for Economic Justice in the Year of Upheavals [SYMPOSIUM]

Presented by the DePaul Journal for Social Justice, this event features three panels: **The Crisis in Communities of Color;** Tom Geoghegan on the State of the American Worker; **A Year of Revolt: From Wisconsin to Wall Street – and Beyond.**

RSVP to: ableifuss@gmail.com
(Lunch and 3.5 CLE credits are offered free of charge).

Friday, **March 30** // 12:00 – 2:00PM
Loyola University Chicago School of Law (25 E. Pearson St., 15th Floor).

Beyond the Pickett Fence: The Impact of Traditional Laws on Changing Families [PANEL]

Monday, **April 2** // 5:30PM – 7:00PM
John Marshall Law School (315 S. Plymouth Ct., Room 201).

Debtor's Prisons in 2012: Are Creditors Using Abusive Collection Tactics to Resurrect Debtors' Prisons? [SYMPOSIUM]

Sponsored in part by the John Marshall Chapter of the NLG. Features a discussion with Lea Shepard, Assistant Professor of Law at Loyola University Chicago - School of Law, and Larry Smith, Managing Director, Prairie State Legal Services, Inc. [Click here to read Professor Shepard's recent article on the issue.](#)

RSVP by Monday, April 9th

Wednesday, **April 11** // 6:00PM
Irene Dymkar's office (330 W. Adams, Suite 330)

National Police Accountability Project Meeting

The Chicago chapter of NPAP has a thriving chapter. We meet every several months to discuss issues regarding civil rights in Chicago and have an active email list which helps NPAP participants with questions, celebrates our victories and commiserates our defeats.

Midwest Regional Conference

March 23-25th

Chicago-Kent College of Law (565 W. Adams Street).

Now's the Time! Rising Up for Human Rights!

The following panels will be held:

Which Way Forward for the Guild: Legal Work for the Movement in Times of Change

Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Keeping Kids Out of Prison

Workers Fighting Back: Responses to Austerity, Attacks on Unions, and Economic Inequality

Legal Response to Mass Political Protest, NSSEs, and the NATO

We will offer the following workshops:

Crimmigration 101: A Primer on Navigating the Immigration Consequences of Criminal Cases

How To Win Section 1983 Wrongful Conviction Cases

REGISTER TODAY!:

<http://tinyurl.com/cknlq2012>

MORE DETAILS:

<http://nlgchicago.org/regional-conference/>

Guild Views

By Talitha Hazelton; talitha.hazelton@gmail.com

MASS INCARCERATION – THE ISSUE OF OUR TIMES

As many of you have heard, a new national committee is in the works! Currently, Guild members are in the process of making a Mass Incarceration Committee official. The idea for the Committee was, in part, a result of the mass incarceration panel at the National Convention in Philadelphia, where Guild members started talking about the lack of organized NLG action on this front. Initial participants on the Committee include Guild members from the Bay Area, Chicago, South Florida, Hartford, Indianapolis, New Hampshire, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Portland.

The group's provisional mission statement reads:

The Mass Incarceration Committee of the National Lawyers Guild exists in recognition that the use of incarceration in the United States has reached epidemic proportions. The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world with less than 5% of the world's population and more than 25% of the world's prisoners. The U.S. criminal justice system locks people up for a range of offenses that rarely produce prison sentences in other countries and people are kept behind bars for far longer than prisoners in other nations. U.S. law enforcement at every level falls disproportionately on African - Americans and other racial

minorities, as well as immigrants, the poor and the disabled.

The Committee believes the consequences of this over-reliance on incarceration are the foremost civil rights, racial justice and human rights concern of our times. The Committee stands against the many manifestations of racially discriminatory policies & practices including racial profiling (e.g. "stop-and-frisk," "driving while black," etc), zero tolerance policies, mandatory minimum drug sentencing, prison warehousing, overuse of solitary confinement, the death penalty, post-conviction civil sanctions, criminalization of poverty and other 'status' offenses, and continuing stigmatization of consumers of criminal justice services.

Our mission is to challenge the prison industrial complex in all its forms and advocate for prison abolition and alternatives to incarceration. We seek to dismantle the existing prison system in alliance with grassroots groups that share this goal, as well as to promote policies and practices that reduce incarceration and fundamentally alter the conversation about crime and punishment. Our Committee also aims to connect practitioners, jailhouse lawyers, and Guild members nationwide who do similar work in order to strengthen our collective and individual efforts.

I implore each NLG member to consider joining the committee, to join together with activist-lawyers across the country and work together to make concrete our opposition to Mass Incarceration, the issue of our times. We need you.

We need your ingenuity and dedication; we need your insight, your passion; finally, we need your indignation, your rage. We need all of the human energy that it will undoubtedly take to dismantle this thoroughly repressive regime. It is a long, uphill fight. There will surely be losses (there have been many to date). But with our collective energies, I have faith. Faith that we can raise up, form alliances, set aside differences, and declare in unison, in an unwavering voice: NOT ON OUR WATCH. Do not lock away, with callous disregard, one more father, uncle, cousin, son, brother, mother, sister, aunt... NOT ON OUR WATCH.

Join us as we work towards abolition.

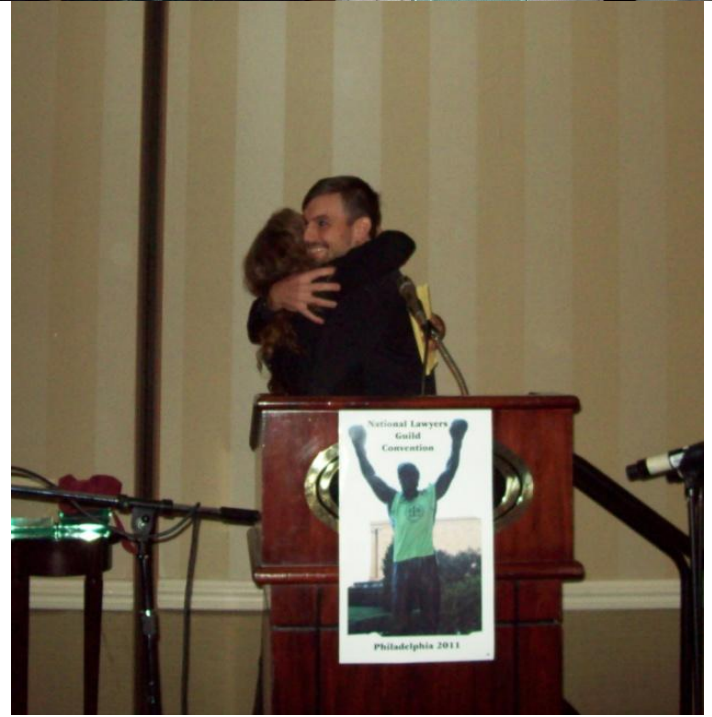
Please contact me if you'd like to be added to the group's list-serv..

Guild Views is an open forum for NLG Chicago members to address the broader Chicago Guild community on issues pertaining to the Guild's work.

To submit your Guild View for consideration, email Chicago@nlg.org with the subject "Guild Views"

Guild Members on the Move

National Convention, Philly, 2011



Guild Members on the Move

Next Gen Happy Hour & Fundraiser -- Mass Defense Legal Support Fund



Guild Members on the Move

City-Wide Disorientation, Fall 2011



National Lawyers Guild of Chicago

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