

# Mass Dissent

Massachusetts Chapter

National Lawyers Guild

14 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108

June 2012

www.nlgmass.org

Vol. 35, No. 4

## In This Edition

**Guild News**  
page 3

**"NLG Presents..."**  
**NLG Delegation to El Salvador**  
page 4

**The Problem with Public  
Interest Law**  
page 5

**A Sense of Community**  
page 6

**Summer Internship with NLG**  
page 7

**2012 Guild Gala -  
In Reflections and Photos**  
page 8

**Letter from a Graduating Law  
Student**  
page 10

## BOARD MEETING

**June 26, 6:00 pm**

14 Beacon St., 1st Fl.  
Boston

## Law Students in 2012

June is the month of graduations. Law students, after three years in school, leave to face their new lives as legal workers. For some, it's a relief; for the majority, it's a continuous source of anxiety in their minds from the start of law school. Piling student loan debt, crisis in the job market, uncertainty and doubts if legal career choices one pursues are correct - these are ever-present thoughts in the minds of today's law students.

In this issue of *Mass Dissent*, we hear from several Guild law students who are at different stages of their law career. We start with two law students, who in May, completed their first year of law school.

**Matthew Bruenig**, of Boston University, is interested in public interest law. In his article, he questions the existing understanding of "public interest law" and calls for a more accurate definition of this concept. If public interest law is suppose to fulfill needs of the public, who and how is the public defined? And who determines its "needs?"

**Naitasia Hensey**, of New England, writes about the overburdinance of law school, and how, on one hand, it contributes to a disconnect with the "outside world," while, on the other

hand, forces law students to build strong, dependable communities within the law school.

**David Samuels**, second year student at Suffolk, just began a summer internship with the NLG Litigation Committee and writes about the "behind the scene" work done by law interns and how critical and essential this work is.

**Sky Swett** is this year's law school graduate and is sharing with us her personal thoughts on why radical activists like herself decide to go to law school - how do they mold themselves? Who are their heros? What disappoints them? What do they need to succeed in the profession?

We also have two reports from the 2012 Guild Gala which took place in May. One from **Beverly Chorbajian** who attended the Guild Gala for the first time. She gives us her impressions on the event and why it was inspiring for her. The second is from **Jonathan Messinger**, who puts his thoughts in a poem which ends with a call: "*Hats off all you advocates and supporters of the Mass NLG, For you care most about We the People, not just property!*"

- Editors -

**NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD  
Massachusetts Chapter, Inc.**

14 Beacon St., Suite 407  
Boston, MA 02108  
tel.: 617-227-7335 • fax: 617-227-5495  
nlgmass@igc.org • nlgmass-director@igc.org  
www.nlgmass.org

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**CHAIRPERSON**

**David Kelston**, Adkins Kelston & Zavez

**TREASURERS**

**Patricia Cantor**

**Jeff Petrucelly**, Petrucelly, Nadler & Norris

**MEMBERS**

**Makis Antzoulatos**, CPCS

**Beverly Chorbajian**, solo practitioner

**Hillary Farber**, UMass Dartmouth

**Jeff Feuer**, Goldstein & Feuer

**David Kelston**, Adkins, Kelston & Zavez

**Jonathan Messinger**, solo practitioner

**Halim Moris**, Moris & O'Shea

**Josh Raisler Cohn**, CPCS

**Stephanie Young**, Prisoners' Legal Services

**LAW STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**Matthew Bruenig**, Boston University

**Ryan Hidden**, New England

**Molly Howe-Lembcke**, Suffolk

**Lauren Marcous**, WNEC

**James Racine**, Boston College

**Matthew Spurlock**, Harvard

**Sky Swett**, UMass Dartmouth

**Yohana Valdez & Jessica Yamane**, NUSL

**Lindsay Vick**, Roger Williams

**STAFF**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Urszula Masny-Latos**

**LRS COORDINATOR/ADMIN. ASSIST.**

**Barbara Lee**

**STREET LAW CLINIC COORDINATOR**

**Sky Swett**

*Mass Dissent* (ISSN 0887-8536) is published monthly except January, May, July and August by the National Lawyers Guild, Mass. Chapter, 14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108. Second-class postage paid at Boston, MA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Mass Dissent*, NLG, 14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108.

## *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) advocate for policies that address issues that homeowners and tenants of foreclosed 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.

**Mass Defense Committee:** Consists of two sub-committees: (1) "Legal Observers" (students, lawyers, activists) who are trained to serve as legal observers at political demonstrations *and* (2) "Mass Defense Team" (criminal defense attorneys) who represent activists arrested for political activism. To get involved, please contact the office at 617-227-7335.

**Litigation Committee:** Established in 2010, the Committee brings civil lawsuits against large institutions (such as government agencies, law enforcement, banks, financial institutions, and/or large corporations) that engage in repressive or predatory actions that affect large numbers of people and that serve to perpetuate social, racial and/or economic injustice or inequality. To get involved, please contact the Guild office.

**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 coalitions 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. 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).

---

# GUILD NEWS

---

## NLG HAPPY HOURS

We hope you will join us for this **month's NLG Happy Hour**. On the second Wednesday of each month, we rotate "Mentorship" Happy Hour with "NLG Presents...". Please see **page 4** for details about our next event. If you have an idea for a presentation topic or if you would like to be a speaker, please call the Guild office at 617-227-7335.

forum for our members to be informally engaged in a conversation about our Chapter's political work, governance, and finances. We would like to hear your opinions and see you at the retreat. Delicious food and aged wine will be provided! Please call the Guild office (617-227-7335) for the further details.

## SUMMER RETREAT

All Guild members are invited to the NLG Summer Retreat. This year, the Retreat will be held on **Thursday, July 26, from 4:30 to 9:00 pm, in Inman Square in Cambridge**. The Annual Summer retreat serves as a

## NLG CONVENTION

The NLG is celebrating its 75th birthday in 2012, and this year's NLG Convention will commemorate the occasion with presentations and workshops on the past, present, and the future of the Guild. The Convention will be held at the **Pasadena Hilton in Pasadena, CA, October 10-14**. For more information or to register call 212-679-5100 or visit [www.nlg.org/members/convention/](http://www.nlg.org/members/convention/).

---

## Street Law Clinic Report

*The following clinics and trainings were conducted for members of Boston area community organizations and agencies:*

**April 2 & April 3:** *Civil Disobedience* trainings for Occupy Boston, by **Hillary Farber, Jeff Feuer, and Urszula Masny-Latos**.

**April 4:** *Legal Observing* at a protest in Boston against MBTA fare hikes, by **Bradford Adams** (Harvard), **Jeff Feuer** and **Benjie Hiller**.

**April 6:** *Legal Observer* training for Occupy Boston and Camp Charlie, by **Urszula Masny-Latos**.

**April 11:** *Stop & Search* training for students at New England School of Law, by **Makis Antzoulatos**.

**April 14:** *Civil Disobedience* training in Boston for participants in the anti-NATO Summit in Chicago, by **Jeff Feuer**.

## NLG MEMBERSHIP FOR 2012

If you haven't renewed your NLG membership yet, please do so by filling out the form on our website (<http://www.nlgmass.org/join-the-chapter/chapter-membership-form/>) or by calling the Guild office (617-227-7335).

**April 25:** *Legal Observing* for a demonstration against Chase Manhattan Bank in Boston, by **Lee Goldstein**.

**May 1:** *Legal Observing* for a day of demonstrations, marches and protests in commemoration of May Day, by **Urszula Masny-Latos** (morning & mid-day) and **Sky Swett** (evening).

**May 21:** *Legal Observing* at a protest in Boston against MBTA fare hikes, organized by T Riders Union, by **Matthew Bruening** (BU), **KT Crossman** (Northeastern), **Jeff Feuer**, **Benjie Hiller**, **Jeremiah Meyer-O'Day** and **Daniel Widrew** (both of Northeastern).

---

## ARTICLES FOR MASS DISSENT

The September issue of *Mass Dissent* will focus on the Supreme Court.

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

**The deadline for articles is August 15.**

## NLG Mentorship Happy Hour

April NLG Mentorship Happy Hour welcomed two Guild members who talk about benefits and difficulties associated with “Going Solo and Opening One’s Own Law Practice.” **Heather Ward** and **David Conforto** have been solo practitioners for one and five years respectively. Heather Ward graduated from New England School of Law in 2008 and three years working with various attorneys and gaining legal experience. She now concentrates mostly on family law. David Conforto finished



Boston College School of Law in 2005 and, after two years of working with local labor and employment law offices, he decided to go solo. At the Mentorship Happy Hour, David and Heather engaged law students and new lawyers in a lively conversation about solo practice and why it is worth pursuing.

### NLG Mentorship Happy Hour

#### Report from the NLG Election Delegation to El Salvador

*An evening with*

**JUDY SOMBERG**

**Wednesday, June 13, 2012**

**6:00 - 8:00 pm**

**Red Hat Cafe (9 Bowdoin St., Boston)**

Join **Judy Somberg** in a discussion about what led to the recent FMLN losses in the March legislative and municipal elections in El Salvador. Judy will recount her experiences as an election observer there and also describe the popular movement -- successful so far -- to oppose environmentally degrading gold mining.



(Top) Mentorship Happy Hour speakers Heather Ward (center) and David Conforto (right) lead a discussion on how to open a solo practice - from registration to finding an office space to payroll and taxes to cooperation with other attorneys.

(Middle and Bottom) Law students and new attorneys eagerly ask questions and listen to answers from the Happy Hour presenters.

*Photos by Barbara Lee and Urszula Masny-Latos*

# *The Problem with Public Interest Law*

*by Matthew Bruenig*

Upon arrival at law school, students are presented a number of career tracks and interests. Most, at Boston University at least, aim for so-called big-law positions where they hope to sell their legal talents to the highest, and therefore richest, bidder. Those not interested in big-law, and those who become discouraged, may eventually settle into family law, real estate law, or some other private practice tracks. Those not doing any of the above wind up lumped into an amorphous, ill-defined category known as public interest law.

On its face, public interest law seems like a clear concept: a public interest lawyer is one who practices law in the interest of the people. To make this definition meaningful however, one has to actually put forward a conception of what the interests of the people are. Law schools seem unwilling to take that necessary step. Instead, public interest law is treated almost as a negative category that consists of whatever is left over when we remove out big-law and other specific kinds of private practice.

Although such a treatment might make some sense as a career advising category, it is ultimately incoherent. For instance, under this approach to public interest law, aspiring public defenders and aspiring prosecutors are lumped into the same category and community. Somehow, a person looking to spend their career funneling mainly poor people and people of color into the Prison Industrial Complex have the same legal interests as those who want to

resist that system. Needless to say, that makes very little sense.

Defining public interest law in this incoherent way also harms the construction of meaningful public interest communities in law school. Law schools are overwhelmingly hostile places for anything but greedy careerists. Those aiming to resist oppression instead of cashing in on it are significantly outnumbered. In such a climate, students oriented towards social justice will feel alienated. That alienation might motivate them to drop out, cause them to perform poorly, push them to abandon their social justice interests, or just make them have a really bad time.

To prevent this alienation, alternative law school communities are necessary, and public interest communities should serve that end. As presently constructed, however, they do not. Within the public interest community at Boston University, I have met aspiring prosecutors, at least three aspiring education lawyers who want to destroy teacher unions and privatize public education, aspiring national security lawyers who defend targeted killings, and many other unsavory characters. When the public interest community is defined so as to include these kinds of people, the alienation the community is supposed to cure only gets worse.

Why law schools choose to define public interest law in this way, I do not know. I suspect they are motivated, in part, by a desire to remain politically neutral. To cut union-busting education law students out of such a community would require a political judgment about the importance of unions for the public interest. To cut national security

law students who defend targeted killings out of such a community would require a political judgment condemning a practice that the President himself supports.

Although this aim at political neutrality is somewhat understandable, it is ultimately untenable. You simply cannot have a public interest law category or community without a defined understanding of the public interest, and such an understanding is unavoidably political. Efforts at constructing public interest law in non-political ways simply do not work. We can spend hours and hours carving up legal job categories in politically neutral language, but any politically neutral definition we come up with will either include those who should not be included or exclude those who should not be excluded.

In the place of such political neutrality then, law schools aiming to create public interest communities should specifically articulate a definition of what they take the public interest to be. They should be clear that racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and all other sorts of oppression are not in the public interest even if a student seeks to perpetuate them in government or non-profit jobs. They should be clear that the public interest means support for labor over capital and economic justice. And above all, they should be clear that public interest law holds human rights over property rights.

Ultimately, law school public interest communities should strive to promote social justice. Defining public interest law so broadly and neutrally that it includes legal jobs that are counter to social justice does no one

*Continued on page 6*



# A Sense of Community

by Naitasia Hensey

**D**uring my 1L orientation, a joke was made that told us to say “goodbye” to our friends and loved ones, and that we would see them in three and a half years (three years of school and then the Bar). It was meant to be funny, but it was probably one of the truest statements of those three days in August when everyone is either bright eyed and bushy-tailed, or furiously biting their nails. We were encouraged to get to know one another and forge relationships, because we would need them. I remember rolling my eyes thinking, “I don’t need friends in law school. Friends are drama.” I was wrong.

No one understands what a law student goes through quite like another law student. Having both a Bachelor’s degree and an MBA, and having worked for a few years, I can honestly say that nothing, to date, is like law school. While this past year has been one of the most rewarding in my life, it has also been a monumental challenge. Law school is, in a word, all-consuming. You eat, sleep, breathe, and speak law school. According to my sister, I even talk law school in my sleep on occasion.

While I did my best to keep in touch with family and some

friends, I realized quickly how hard it would be to navigate those relationships when they had no concept of the all-consuming nature of law school. They were not able to understand that just because class took up only four hours of a day, it did not mean I was done for that day. They were unable to commiserate with me during a grueling two weeks of five exams every other day, and they balked at my hysterical laughter once it was over. I got curious looks when I suddenly declared war on outlining. And those closest to me had a hard time understanding how I was too busy and stretched for time to clean my room or keep my laundry done regularly when I am normally a borderline OCD person. My classmates understood, though. We would joke about how backed up our laundry got; one friend even said, “my closet is throwing up right now.” We often laughed about our new addictions to five-hour energy drinks and who forgot to brush their hair that day. Luckily, we never got so far as forgetting to brush our teeth.

Hours of silent library time can only be made better by popping over to Starbucks with a fellow classmate and harping about the relevance (or irrelevance) of the Federalist Papers from Constitutional law and the compli-

cations of The Erie Doctrine from Civil Procedure. Creating a network of friends - and I don’t mean network in the “networking” sense that is drilled into every young person these days, rather a network in the sense of a net of people you surround yourself with for support - will help when you don’t understand a concept or have to miss class and need notes. If you ever daze in class, a friend can tell you that the professor just announced the format for the exam and you can breathe a little easier. When you feel like your head is going to explode and all is lost, a classmate-friend can remind you that you’re not alone. Because, like I said, no one understands what a law student goes through like another law student. Furthermore, a sense of community does not just come from your peers. No one can see the light at the end of the tunnel like faculty and staff members who have been there and made it out alive, and those who have chosen to surround themselves in the busy halls of legal academia. Getting to know one’s professors, the librarians, and even the security staff will make a difference. The professor who can say your name in the hallway, and the security guard who wishes you “goodnight” as you pull your tired self away from the library basement or the student lounge to grab a Red Bull, will make going to school every day that much easier, that much friendlier, and you will feel less alone.

## Public Interest Law

*Continued from page 5*

any good. Such a definition and construction does not serve the public interest and it intensifies the alienation of social justice oriented students in law school. If we want students to utilize legal

education for the interest of the public, we must actually define and aim towards that interest. Anything short of that will not do.

*Matthew Bruenig will start, in September, his second year at Boston University School of Law.*

*Naitasia Hensey, an NLG member, just finished her first year of law school. She studies at New England School of Law.*

## Summer Internship with the NLG

by David Samuels

One of the most active NLG Massachusetts Chapter committees is the Litigation Committee. Heading into its second summer, the Committee is poised to continue fulfilling its mission. Founded to actively and systematically to bring litigation within the Commonwealth in furtherance of the Guild's goals and objectives, the Litigation Committee is comprised of volunteer NLG attorneys who devote their time and energy to the cause. Working either unilaterally or closely with other likeminded organizations, the Committee has several pending initiatives, many of which will play out over the summer.

Working alongside Prisoners' Legal Services, Committee members David Kelston and Jeff Thorn of Adkins, Kelston & Zavez, are working to finalize a settlement in their class action suit against the Sheriff of Essex County. Filed last October, the case charges the Essex County Sheriff with charging inmates mandatory fees for routine medical screening in violation of the law and a decision by the Supreme Judicial Court. The Sheriff agreed to halt the practice last November,

and has agreed to return some of the money collected. Determining how much was taken, how many individuals were affected, and how best to recompense those injured will be challenging, but reaching a settlement this summer is a major goal of the Litigation Committee.

With the help of the NLG Mass Defense Committee member Myong Joun, preliminary steps have been taken to file a broad-based complaint against an aggressive officer of the Boston Police Department (BPD) who nearly choked an Occupy Boston protestor. In the moments before and after the now-infamous choking incident at an anti- Tea Party protest last April, the officer was abusive and hostile toward several other Occupy members. The purpose of the complaint is to send a message to Mayor Menino, Commissioner Davis, and the Boston Police Department that such misconduct with not be tolerated. A related initiative underway will focus on the legality of actions taken by the Massachusetts State Police, BPD, and the City related to the Occupy Boston movement.

The final major project for the summer revolves around Litigation Committee member Jeff Feuer's

have already set precedent establishing tenants' right to possession in the face of notices to vacate given by a mortgagee prior to obtaining legal ownership of the property, and will now litigate the tenants' entitlement to damages. Given the cutting-edge arguments, an appeal later this summer is likely.

Behind the scenes, legal interns help the Committee achieve its goals. The transition from spring to summer will see the departure of Bradford Adams upon his graduation from Harvard Law School and me taking over the torch for the summer. Bradford's work over the last year has been of immeasurable help to the Committee, and he will be sorely missed when he leaves this summer for the West Coast.

Bradford's talent and commitment represent what the Litigation Committee both has, and needs. The Committee is comprised of an incredible group of talented and committed members. During the workday, after hours, and often well into the evening, these attorneys dedicate their time and energy to the cause. That said, no matter how talented and committed the Litigation Committee is, the need always exists for more talent and commitment. The Committee's work has meaningful impact on individuals, particular groups, and the Commonwealth as a whole. All Guild members are encouraged to consider joining the Litigation Committee and lending a hand. The more Litigation Committee members there are, the more the Committee can achieve.



NLG law students (*l.-r.*) Daniel Widrew & Jeremiah Meyer-O'Day (NUSL), Matthew Bruenig (BU), and KT Crossman (NUSL), and Jeff Feuer legal observe a blockade of Beacon St. at the State House on May 21st by T-Riders Union activists in wheelchairs to protest MBTA fare hikes.

groundbreaking work on tenant's rights under new state and Federal laws. Two test lawsuits have been filed on behalf of tenants facing evictions from foreclosed properties in violation of Massachusetts law. The cases

*David Samuels studies law at Suffolk Law School and will start his third year in September. In the summer of 2012, he interns with the Litigation Committee of the NLG Massachusetts Chapter.*

## *Reflections on the Guild Gala 2012*

*by Jonathan Messinger*

**I**n two-thousand twelve, in the spring month of May,  
A joyous celebration transpired on Guild Gala day,  
At a wonderful “new” venue in the heart of the South End,  
Comrades gathered at Villa Victoria with rights to defend.  
Beacons of justice peaceably assembled in our Boston city,  
To savor labor's fruits prepared by a most talented committee.

Through foyer to grand hall, from balcony to stage,  
Lawyers and freedom lovers gathered to engage,  
The backing of all of us committed to equality's cause,  
Who care deeply about laws' impact yet are willing to pause,  
To celebrate your dedication, you most talented group of folks,  
A respite from wrestling The Man to cavort and crack a few jokes.

With the guidance of our fearless Director and a talented Emcee,  
All of us enjoyed eloquent speeches by each inspiring honoree.  
To those who braved access challenges by lots or by meters,  
And to Haley House caterers satiating all epicurious eaters,  
To bidders putting wallets on the line when auctioneers plead,  
For each ninety-niner mobilized against sick corporate greed,  
Thank you Woody for providing a soundtrack for fighting,  
This is your land for sharing, for all communities uniting.  
Cheers to litigation battles to keep all sheltered with rooves,

As we pursue happiness dancing to revolutionary grooves.  
Every one of you builds a collective stronger than its parts,  
So strengthen your Guild in your minds and in your hearts,  
Because the struggle continues to empty the jails,  
And to end all the wars so peace never again fails.  
Let's see you not just next year but at times in between,  
Keep donating your efforts and sustain the Guild green,  
And no matter how hard the struggle, how deep the sigh,  
What you do is most important and so is your rallying cry:  
Hats off all you advocates and supporters of the Mass NLG,  
For you care most about We the People, not just property!

---

*Jonathan Messinger is a solo practitioner in Somerville  
and a member of the Massachusetts Chapter's Board.*





(*Top row*) Lawyer Honorees David Grossman (*l.*) and Carol Steinberg (*c.*), and Lifetime Achievement Honoree Robert Sable (*r.*) give inspiring speeches during the award acceptance ceremony while Hank Phillippi Ryan (*next to Robert*) makes sure that, under her watch as an event Emcee, the ceremony runs smoothly and flawlessly.

(*Middle row*) Law Student Honorees Lauren Marcous of Western New England (*l.*) and Marianne Tassone of Boston University (*c.*) accept their awards. (*r.*) The Gala Food Crew in NLG aprons (*l.-r.*) Barb Dougan, Judy Somberg, Stephanie Young, and Bonnie Tenneriello, with their supporters John Willshire-Carrera (*far l.*) and Monica Halas (*far r.*) of GBLS.

(*Bottom row*) Legal Worker Award recipients Occupy Boston Legal Working Group and NLG Mass Defense Committee end their award acceptance in a revolutionary style by leading the whole ballroom in singing Woody Guthrie's song "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land."



Photos by Josh Raisler Cohen (top & middle) and Justin McIntosh (bottom).

# *A Letter of Reflection - from a Graduating Student*

*by Sky Swett*

I had the intention to write this article about how to stay sane as a radical law student, but with recent events I feel the need to talk about somethings I have recently witnessed.

Beginning 12 years ago, I was an avid activist in Minneapolis. I found strength and joy in the tear gas, billy clubs, and bean bags shot at me. It taught me much... of the world, and of myself. There was a group of attorneys who would come protect us. They were angels to us.

During this time I went to art school, and within a year, dropped out due to the outrageous expense. I spent several years moving around the country, and wondering what it was I wanted to do with my life. After several different adventures I found myself finishing a degree in criminology and forensic science. I didn't know where to go after that and my boyfriend at the time pointed out to me that I had wanted to be a lawyer as a child.

I thought back to those angels that looked over me back in Minneapolis. On a whim, I applied to four Ivy league schools. The day I received my last rejection letter, I received an invitation from the Southern New England School of Law. I had hoped to end up on the East Coast, so I packed my car.

In the beginning of my second year I found out that those wonderful people I was trying to emulate worked with the National Lawyer's Guild. I looked up the local chapter and joined right away. Then I saw an e-mail mentioning the Chapter's need for a Street Law Clinic Coordinator. This is generally a work-study position, but the financial aid officer told me (wrongly) that there was no such thing as work-study in graduate school. At the time I was in such desperate need of inspiration that I volunteered to take the position for free. I worked for the last year. It was wonderfully inspiring to look up from my desk to see a poster of Angela Davis.

Shortly after I began, the Occupy movement began. I was elated! I began helping organize legal observers and even hosted a

small training in my apartment for UMass students. It was liberating to be part of something so inspiring and full of life. My boyfriend and I would run up to Dewey Square every time I was feeling disheartened with law school, down here on the South Coast. I would observe and he would lock arms with beautiful protestors. One evening he thought it wise to write my number on his arm instead of the Guild's number. I received funny texts and calls for months.

I'm not sure I would have survived law school if it weren't for all of this.

The cold weather seemed to slow things down, understandably. Even the clinics seemed to slow down. I thought perhaps we were all just hibernating for the winter. I found the positive in this and hoped for the warmth of spring to breathe life back into the world.

The moment I heard of an action taking place on April Fool's I ran straight up to Dewey Square. It was a terribly chilly afternoon. I was the only observer there. All of a sudden the police began arresting people. I had a new phone and hadn't transferred my numbers so I couldn't call for back up. Then I remembered that the President of our National office was here for a visit and several people were getting together for dinner with him. I figured I would head to this restaurant and ask for back up. I got there, only to find it was a very nice place, and I was dressed up like an anarchist.

I stood outside for a moment, feeling uncomfortable, before going in. I asked the hostess if she knew if there was group of lawyers anywhere, she informed me that she didn't know, but pointed questioningly at a table full of people in suits. I slowly moved towards the table, but saw a bathroom on the right. I went in and feebly attempted to make myself look suitable for such an environment.

Then I ran right out of the building. I had become so upset and agitated. I had wanted to run to them and tell them that the people they protect were out there being arrested in the freezing rain, but I couldn't. The atmosphere was too much for me. Those places do their best to remind the rest of us that we are nothing. That, we don't belong there.

A slow month went by. I headed to Boston for May Day, hoping for a large turnout to breath life back into me. There was a funeral. It was for the death of capitalism, but I felt so much more being mourned that night. We paced slowly through the city. The somber effect was sobering. As we marched through these beautiful, darkened streets, lined with boutiques and brownstones, I wondered how many of the residents were attorneys, sitting down to a nice dinner. I watched Kat, she always inspires me... I tried to not be saddened by the fact that her and I were again, the only legal observers... and I hoped for a peaceful evening. It was quiet... sobering.. and quiet.

The Gala was fast approaching, as I finished up the last of my finals. I couldn't afford a ticket, so I unwisely volunteered to volunteer. I am not sure what motivated me. I still had two exams left and a dreadful take home. I think I needed to be inspired.

I was horribly wrong in my expectations. I knew the event was to be Occupy themed, but I didn't know that just meant that a few Occupiers would be present... seemingly tokens of a good idea. I scanned name tags, figuring I would recognize names of people. I may not have often been a physical presence at the office, but I did e-mail many of you and speak to you on the phone. I was dismayed at how few names I recognized.

I was asked by a lawyer, if I was a defendant. Apparently, one look at me told him I must not have been any other sort of person that would be at such an event. Instead of bursting in to tears, I smiled and explained that we had spoken on the phone several times, and that in fact, I was graduating law school in a few weeks.

After setting up, my job was to hand out awards to those lofty enough to deserve them. It was degrading and humiliating and I wished... mostly to run home... which I did at an inopportune moment. Standing up there through long winded speeches gave me a massive panic attack. I couldn't take anymore pretense of self pandering praise. (or humiliation for that matter)

*Continued on page 11*

## 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 • 2 Anonymous • Michael Avery • Neil Berman • Steven Buckley • Howard Cooper • Barb Dougan • Robert Doyle • Melinda Drew & Jeff Feuer • Carolyn Federoff • Roger Geller & Marjorie Suisman • Lisa Gordon • Lee Goldstein & Shelley Kroll • Benjie Hiller • Andrei Joseph & Bonnie Tenneriello • Myong Joun • Martin Kantrovitz • Nancy Kelly & John Willshire-Carrera • David Kelston • Eleanor Newhoff & 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 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 (in addition to 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

## A Letter of Reflection

*Continued from page 10*

I don't mean this as a letter of complaint. My hope is to inspire. To hold up a mirror to something that is terribly wrong, and hope that it reflects back something beautiful and hopeful. I think that maybe, instead of having pseudo black tie affairs... we could be handing bottles of baby shampoo and water to people being tear gassed. That instead of fancy dinners, we should be standing next to those brave ones being arrested in the rain. That perhaps we should not make any occupiers feel like tokens of a job well done. That we should be the job well done. And that perhaps, before the patting of one's back... we should have done something noble enough to deserve the praise. Get out! Run a clinic. Teach a law student. Observe a rally. Feel the life breathed into you by the bravery and inspirations of others.

I need to feel inspired... to know that a band of noble, heroic, angels are out there, making our profession again, one of noble intent.

I could have written this about my views on remaining sane as a radical law student, and in effect, I did. This is my cry... to inspire those of us following in your footsteps. We are listening.

What do you want to tell us?

*Sky Swett graduated in May from UMass Dartmouth School of Law. During the last academic year, she coordinated the NLG Street Law Clinic Project.*

# Mass Dissent

USPS 0760-110 PERIODICAL

Periodical  
Postage & Fees  
PAID  
USPS Permit  
0760-110

## 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."

*Preamble to the Constitution of the National Lawyers Guild*

### Donate to Support the Guild!

The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild's **Mass Defense Committee** provides legal representation and assistance to the **Occupy Boston** movement.

#### We need your support.

Please help by donating to the Mass Chapter by mailing this form and a check to **14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108** or visiting [www.nlgmass.org/donate](http://www.nlgmass.org/donate).

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), am donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the NLG  
Mass Chapter to help support the Mass Defense Committee and their work,

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) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

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  
\_\_\_\_ Litigation Committee  
\_\_\_\_ *Mass Dissent* (monthly publication)

## 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).