

A YEAR OF PREPARATION

Starting in the fall of 2005, new media became a major topic of conversation among screen and television writers. As new methods of distribution sprang up like poppies, the Guild began to reach out to ensure that all writers in these new areas can be covered by WGA protections of health and pension benefits, proper credits, residuals for their work and fair working conditions.

As a result, the word “jurisdiction” dominated the agenda throughout the year 2006 and on into 2007, as the Guild developed strategies to expand its benefits for writers not previously covered by the MBA: many of those writing reality television, animation, nonfiction, basic cable, “mobisodes,” “webisodes,” video games and more.

The initial effort in this new direction was the support for striking reality show writers at the CW show *America's Next Top Model*, exemplified by a unity rally in September attended by nearly 1,000 writers.

In order to accommodate this shift in focus, the Organizing Department was expanded this past year to include more labor organizers, the Member Services Department became more proactive in educating and supporting members, and the Department of Public Policy was created to campaign for writers at the governmental level.

In March, the WGAW Board of Directors and the WGAE Council appointed a Negotiating Committee, the body that will conduct the 2007 contract negotiations with the Alliance of Motion Pictures and Television Producers (AMPTP) and major networks. The current Writers Guild of America Minimum Basic Agreement (MBA) expires on October 31, 2007; provisions of the MBA cover nearly 12,000 members of the WGAW and the WGAE.

Throughout its history, the Writers Guild of America, West has advanced the cause of writers, garnering them recognition, recompense and benefits. As the times change, the WGAW changes with them, continuing to advocate on behalf of those who write for the entertainment industry.

