

# SPJ Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

## April 29, 2000 - Phoenix, Ariz.

**Meeting Date:** April 29, 2000, 9:05 a.m.

**Meeting Place:** The Arizona Republic, Phoenix, Ariz.

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### Roll Call:

Board Members Present: 17

Kyle Elyse Niederpruem

Ray Marcano

Al Cross

David Carlson

Irwin Gratz

Marcia Biggs

Patrick McKeand

Dave Aeikens

Robert Leger

Todd Gillman

Jay Evensen

Oren Campbell

Mark Scarp

Lisa Rollins

Jim Parker

Kevin Koelling

Michelle Swafford

Board Members Absent: 6

Wendy S. Myers

Julie Asher

Ginny Frizzi

Melanie Ave

Charles Davis

Elizabeth Fraas

Staff Members Present: 4

James L. Gray, Julie F. Grimes

Guests Present:

Bert Bostrom

Howard Graves

Hoag Levins

Steve Geimann arrived at 9:40 a.m.

Paul Davis arrived after lunch.

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### Welcome

Mark Scarp, Region 11 director, welcomed the board to Arizona and provided everyone with a T-shirt and package of information about Phoenix.

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### Recognition of Guests

SPJ President Kyle Niederpruem recognized the following guests and had them introduce themselves: Bert Bostrom, past SPJ board member and author of SPJ's 1984 history book; Howard Graves, 1981 SPJ national president and retired Associated Press bureau chief; and Hoag Levins, executive editor of APB News.com and member of the SDX Foundation board of directors.

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## **Procedure Governing the Meeting**

Irwin Gratz, Region 1 director, will serve as parliamentarian for the meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer Al Cross called the roll.

Niederpruem introduced the headquarters staff members present.

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## **Approval of Minutes From Past Meetings**

Oct. 2, 1999:

Motion by David Carlson to approve with corrections the minutes from the Oct. 2, 1999, SPJ board meeting. Second by Jay Evensen. Motion approved.

Corrections:

- Page 1 -- Society of Professional Journalist(S) (add "S")
- Page 4 -- In the executive session policy, change "WILL FERVENTLY ENDEAVOR" to "TO FERVENTLY ENDEAVOR".
- Page 5 -- Check the tapes and correct as necessary the section of the executive session policy that reads: "2. To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice or to discuss PENDING OR POTENTIAL litigation." There is some question as to whether PENDING OR POTENTIAL belongs in the policy.
- Page 6 -- Under the fax balloting discussion, change PRESENT to PRESIDENT.
- Page 7 -- Under the FOI committee report, change MAGGIE BALOUGH RESIGNED BECAUSE OF CONFLICTS ... to MAGGIE BELOW RESIGNED. (SEE ATTACHED FOI COMMITTEE REPORT FOR DETAILS.)
- Page 8 -- Under the funding requests discussion, No. 2., change ... BY LEGER TO APPROVE UP TO ... to ... BY LEGER TO RECOMMEND TO SDX THAT IF APPROVE UP TO ...

There was a brief discussion about the reimbursement policy for board member expenses. Headquarters will confirm whether board members must report expenses for reimbursement "within two months" or "by the end of the fiscal year."

Oct. 3, 1999:

Motion by David Carlson to approve with corrections the minutes from the Oct. 3, 1999, joint meeting of the SPJ and SDX boards of directors. Second by Jay Evensen. Motion approved.

Corrections:

- Page 1 -- Society of Professional Journalist(S) (add the "s")
- Page 1 -- Change meeting date to October 3
- Page 2 -- Under the strategic planning discussion, second paragraph, change 13-MEMBER COMMUNITY to 13-MEMBER COMMITTEE.
- Page 2 -- Under the strategic planning discussion, fourth paragraph, change ... TRYING TO SPJ OUGHT TO GO ... to ... TRYING TO DECIDE WHERE SPJ OUGHT TO GO ...

Oct. 6, 1999:

Motion by Robert Leger to approve with corrections the minutes of the Oct. 6, 1999, meeting of the SPJ board of directors.. Second by David Carlson. Motion approved.

Corrections:

- Page 2 -- Change REGIONS 11 to REGION 11
- Page 2 -- Under the Region 8 report, change REGION 6 to REGION 8
- Page 3 -- Under the Region 3 report, change MARSHA to MARCIA
- Page 3 -- Under the Region 1 report, change GRANTZ to GRATZ
- Page 4 -- Under the mentor program discussion, remove ASP IS USING THE MENTOR PROGRAM.

Jan. 22, 2000, Executive Committee Meeting / March 17, 2000

Finance Committee Meeting:

Motion by David Carlson to approve the minutes of the Finance and Executive committee meetings as corrected. Second by Todd Gillman. Motion approved.

Corrections:

Finance Committee Minutes -- Confirm that PERSONNEL is spelled correctly throughout the minutes.

### **SPJ President's Report**

SPJ President Kyle Niederpruem presented her report, which is available in the April 2000 SPJ board packet. Niederpruem asked for any questions. In addition to her written report, Niederpruem mentioned that she had visited with representatives from the Donald Reynolds Foundation during a trip to the Region 10/11 Conference in Las Vegas.

There was a brief discussion of SPJ's policy of accepting donations from different groups. Board members mentioned that SPJ has goals and ideas that don't relate to determining the quality of news organizations. If someone chooses to give money to support causes that the Society has chosen, the Society has a right to accept that donation.

Executive Director Jim Gray mentioned some of his ideas for programs that could receive funding including underwriting the cost to SPJ of providing a high school membership of \$10 for students, and the funding of an SPJ Training Center.

Niederpruem reported that feedback from her "First Person" newsletter has been good. She is still interested in seeing some of that material make its way into hardcopy form in chapter newsletters.

During the discussion about publications, several board members commented on the "fabulous" improvement in Quill magazine in the last several months. The issues are interesting and there is much more SPJ news and information.

Niederpruem noted Gray's one-year anniversary with the Society and mentioned that he was very capable and is doing well.

In other publications issues, Niederpruem noted that the issue of credentials for journalists, particularly Web-based journalists, has come up several times, and this is a potential topic for the Pulliam/Kilgore intern at Baker & Hostetler to write about this summer.

Niederpruem plans to be doing more traveling to visit chapters this summer. Board members were asked to contact her about potential visits. She noted the excellent work of the Farthest North pro chapter during her recent visit there and mentioned a \$1,000 Legal Defense Fund grant given to two journalists from Alaska while she was there.

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## **Headquarters Operations Report**

SPJ Executive Director Jim Gray presented his operations report, which was included in the board packet materials.

A section of the report discussed membership, and Gray pointed out that the numbers fluctuated between 9,600 and 10,600. He introduced Traci Christler, SPJ's new director of membership and awards. Gray explained the Society's 2000 in 2000 membership campaign and discussed the recent "Re-Member SPJ" mailing to members whose memberships have lapsed for two years or more. Gray reiterated his comments that the staff was committed to increasing the membership numbers.

Gray discussed headquarters personnel issues noting that it wasn't easy to keep good employees in a tight labor market. He noted that SPJ had lost a couple of membership directors, and most recently, Liz Ellis, director of development, had resigned. Gray expressed his appreciation to staff members Grace Hudson and Helen Taylor. These two women who are dedicated to SPJ and have done a wonderful job and should be acknowledged by the board for their efforts. They will be coming into town part-time to help train their replacements. Gray also pointed out the hard work of Leslee Combs and mentioned her willingness to pitch in anywhere. Niederpruem recommended recognizing those employees during the move with a plaque or some other appropriate recognition.

Quill. Gray said he had been receiving great feedback from recent issues of Quill and that people were really enjoying what they were seeing. He's very proud of the work of Jeff Mohl, the editor of Quill. He mentioned that a past Quill editor had contacted him and offered praise for the magazine. Several board members reiterated their support for the magazine and mentioned hearing good things in their newsrooms and at chapter meetings. Gray said Mohl had worked hard to focus the magazine to become a tool for the working journalist, and he has created a solid stable of free-lance journalists to provide content. Niederpruem suggested that board members contact Mohl and let him know what they think about the magazine. Gray said that Stephanie Berry is filling the media director's position, overseeing the design of the magazine, and is doing a great job.

Gray said the new building dedication will be in August, coinciding with the Ted Scripps Leadership Training program. The governor, mayor and honorary building chair have been invited to participate in ribbon-cutting ceremonies. The date is Aug. 11 for the ribbon-cutting. Plans are on track to begin work at the new offices after the July 4 holiday. He mentioned the possibility of a major gift to the building campaign fund. The fund stands at about \$272,000 to date.

Related to the building fund, Gray presented a resolution authorizing the borrowing of up to \$400,000 for the completion of the building. The building would be the collateral for the loan. The loan would be used as necessary for the completion of the building. The text of the resolution is below.

### **RESOLUTION Of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes Society of Professional Journalists, Inc. (the "Corporation") to borrow up to Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000.00) in the aggregate from the Farmers Bank (the "Bank"), secured by certain real estate and personal property of the Corporation upon the terms provided in that certain Commitment Letter/Loan Agreement, dated November 23, 1999, a copy of which has been submitted to the Board of Directors (the "Agreement").

RESOLVED FURTHER, that James L. Gray, Executive Director of the Corporation, or any other authorized officer of the Corporation, acting singly, be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to execute for and on behalf of the Corporation any and all documents required in connection with the Agreement, including, but not limited to a, all construction notes, promissory notes, other evidences of indebtedness, real estate mortgages, loan agreements, security agreements, other collateral documents evidencing or

governing the loans pursuant to the Agreement, and any and all other affidavits, instruments or documents necessary to effectuate the Agreement, and to take all such further actions for and on behalf of the Corporation as may be required in connection with the Agreement.

RESOLVED, that all actions taken to date by and on behalf of the Corporation relating to the Agreement are hereby ratified and confirmed.

RESOLVED, that the foregoing Resolutions shall remain in full force and effect until written notice of their amendment or rescission shall have been delivered to the Farmers Bank.

**Motion by Jim Parker to approve the resolution. Second by Dave Aeikens. Motion approved.**

Gray discussed the Society's Web site, and said that staff had done a terrific job keeping the site up to date while working under some difficult conditions. The site has been moved from its location at IUPUI to a commercial server in Atlanta. Gray expressed appreciation to IUPUI for its years of hosting the site. He mentioned that Stephanie Berry at headquarters is in charge of maintaining that Web site and is doing what she can to make sure it's not static.

Gray asked if there were any questions related to his report or headquarters' operations. There was a discussion about staffing issues, and Gray said he had eliminated the marketing position and was looking at creative ways of staffing including job sharing and offering internships since the new office will be closer to several colleges and universities. Gray said he would be handling development responsibilities until a new director is hired.

Dave Carlson asked about setting up spj.org e-mail accounts for board members. Gray said it was possible and would be examined.

Dave Aeikens asked about tracking who SPJ's members are and forwarding that information to chapter leaders. The regional directors would like to be able to obtain an electronic file with contact information for members and chapter leaders in their regions. Julie Grimes, SPJ communications director, explained that it was possible to extract a file with members' contact information by each region.

**Motion by Todd Gillman that regional directors on a quarterly basis receive all the contact information for all members and chapter leaders in their regions in electronic form. Chapter presidents and campus chapter advisers should also have the option to receive information for their chapters (second priority). Second by Dave Aeikens. Motion approved.**

Grimes explained that regional directors would receive a comma delimited text file that would include contact information for members in each region. Regional directors would then need to import the data into a usable e-mail program. At a later time, information will be added to provide this type of report for chapter presidents. Regional directors would like this information to be organized by chapter and then alphabetical order.

The board took a five-minute break. The meeting reconvened at 10:30 a.m.

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## **Fiscal 2001 Budget Decision**

Niederpruem reconvened the meeting and turned the floor over to Secretary/Treasurer Al Cross, chair of the Finance Committee, to discuss the Fiscal 2001 budget.

Cross pointed out that he had proposed a deficit budget and mentioned expense hits due to a decline in Quill revenue, the migration of the Jobs for Journalists newsletter to a complimentary Web-based service for members, and the increase in the Baker & Hostetler First Amendment counsel retainer.

Gray pointed out that a budget doesn't have to be a precise prediction of where the organization's finances

are 16 months from now. It's a projection based on today. Cross noted that some changes would be made due to calculation errors. The group discussed expectations regarding membership numbers. Gray explained that the numbers were estimates only, and there was no way to exactly predict next year's numbers. There was a brief discussion about offering group memberships to all the employees of a particular organization at a discount. Gray also mentioned that he was considering options for an electronic membership, which would involve no paper or mailing costs.

Another area that is being cut back in revenue is membership list sales.

The group briefly discussed the Society's member-benefit programs and royalties received. Board members pointed out that SPJ simply offers these programs. Members can use to utilize them or not. Gray mentioned the column by Allan Wolper in Editor & Publisher magazine about SPJ's benefits programs. He mentioned that SPJ has firm guidelines of how affinity programs work, and that a company offering a program to SPJ is not allowed to use SPJ as a tool for its own promotion.

The group questioned the downturn in Quill advertising revenue. Gray pointed out that SPJ's former outside advertising representative never had a real grasp on what SPJ was about. Two new representatives have taken over SPJ's account, and he is looking for two more. He expects to see a significant increase in paid advertising in the June 2000 issue of Quill.

Cross encouraged all board members with the connections to approach people within their organizations and chains about purchasing advertising. Gray will provide a full media kit and advertising rate card to all board members.

Robert Leger pointed out that the projections for 2000 budgeted workshops indicate that they will meet budget, and they actually will not. Gray said that change would be made to reflect that the program won't make budget.

All revenue figures will be revised to reflect this correction and the computation corrections Cross initially made.

Expenses discussion. Gray indicated that even though the new building is larger than the current one, occupancy expense should be a little less in Indianapolis. As part-owner of the building, the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation will contribute \$18,000 to occupancy expenses. (This shows up as a revenue item for SPJ and an expense for SDX.)

Computer Equipment Expense. There was a question about the \$53,000 budgeted for Web expenses. Gray said this assumes that the Web proposal is passed by the Foundation. Someone pointed out that there was no amount in the grants revenue item to account for that, so \$53,475 should be added to the contributions and grants revenue line for the Web proposal, assuming it passes. Currently, the amount in the contributions and grants revenue line is \$58,270 -- \$18,000 for the presumed SDX contribution to occupancy expense and \$40,000 for the Web fellowship adopted last year.

Jim Parker questioned the other computer expenses, and Gray said the office equipment was functioning well with the exception of the server, which will soon need some upgrades.

The group discussed professional consulting fees noting that the fee paid to First Amendment counsel Baker & Hostetler was considerably lower than fees paid by other organizations.

**Motion by Todd Gillman for the executive director to explore establishing a toll free number for SPJ headquarters and to submit cost projections to the Executive Committee at its July meeting. Second Dave Aeikens. Motion approved.**

Committee Chair Travel Stipends. Niederpruem explained that the money from her president's account this year would be transferred into a fund committee chairs could use next year for travel related to committee work.

Gray explained the personnel expenses for next year included a 3 percent pay increase. The actual amount looks like a 5.8 percent increase, but that total amount includes incentives and not salary alone.

Awards. The group discussed SPJ's continued participation in the Green Eyeshade awards competition originally organized by the Atlanta pro chapter. Niederpruem reiterated that headquarters is capable of maintaining the program until the Atlanta chapter is active again. Niederpruem asked about having board members attend the Green Eyeshade Awards dinner in June. Cross and Gray won't be able to attend. Carlson, Marcano, Niederpruem and Marcia Biggs will check their schedules and see about attending.

The group discussed inactive chapters. Gray will research SPJ's policies regarding inactive and disbanded chapters and will report back to the Executive Committee at its July meeting.

There was a brief discussion about the executive director's compensation/incentive plan. Motion by Jay Evensen to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Second by Lisa Rollins. The motion carried with two "no" votes by Dave Aeikens and Jim Parker.

The executive session began at 11:55 a.m. and ended at 12:20 p.m., at which time board members took a five-minute break.

The meeting reconvened under the leadership of President-elect Ray Marcano.

**Motion by Todd Gillman that any future employment agreements entered into by the board are open to public inspection. Second by Al Cross.**

Board members discussed the motion. It was clarified that under the existing policy, the executive director's compensation agreement could not be revealed.

When asked, Niederpruem indicated that she had mixed emotions about changing the policy. Board members discussed whether opening the executive director's agreement would also result in the opening of other staff hiring agreements. The consensus was that the executive director is the only staff member hired by the board, therefore, that would be the only contract affected. Regional Director Irwin Gratz said members in his region didn't seem very concerned about compensation as long as there was a competent director running the organization well. When asked, Gray said that the American Society of Association Executives is adamantly opposed to revealing compensation agreements, and Gray would have asked for a privacy statement had he not thought it was already implied. Niederpruem said she hopes the Society will present an annual report this fall that explains how the organization's money is spent.

**Motion by Dave Carlson to table Gillman's motion. Second by Irwin Gratz.**

Niederpruem asked for input from two past presidents attending the meeting as guests. One suggested making the Society's 990 tax forms available, and Niederpruem pointed out that those forms were available at SPJ's Web site.

The board took a roll call vote on the motion to table.

Those in favor of tabling the previous motion: 12

Kyle Niederpruem, Ray Marcano, David Carlson, Irwin Gratz, Marcia Biggs, Pat McKeand, Dave Aeikens, Robert Leger, Jay Evensen, Lisa Rollins and Mark Scarp.

Those opposed: 4

Al Cross, Todd Gillman, Oren Campbell and Jim Parker

Abstaining: 1

Michelle Swafford

The motion carried and the initial motion by Gillman was tabled.

**Motion by David Carlson to approve the Fiscal 2001 budget as amended with the assumption that staff can also correct any other mathematical errors. Second by Marcano. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Marcano to approve revisions to the executive director's compensation agreement. Second by Al Cross. Motion carried.**

The group recessed for lunch at 12:45 p.m. and reconvened at 2:20 p.m.

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### **SPJ Web Site Proposal Discussion**

This discussion didn't require board action since the board had already voted to send this proposal to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation for funding. David Carlson explained that any attempt at a Web business plan in the Year 2000 is truly shooting at a moving target. Carlson explained some of the other benefits of the new system including personalizable start pages. He mentioned that an option for e-mail addresses would be incorporated when and if this is possible.

Gray explained that the new location of SPJ's site allows headquarters to offer space for chapters to create their own Web pages with and host them on the national organization's site. Interested chapters should contact webmaster Stephanie Berry. There were questions about space requirements and content oversight. Overall, board members thought this was an excellent option, and Niederpruem encouraged board members to start letting chapter leaders know about this option.

Gray pointed out that the new site may require a realignment of staff and staff positions, or the hiring of an additional staff member. He plans to outsource management for the first two years along with taking advantage the Web fellowship previously funded by the SDX Foundation. Gray mentioned the hard work of staff members Stephanie Berry and Jeff Mohl.

Board members discussed developing a policy about linking to SPJ's Web site. Staff members should research and recommend a policy for hosting chapter sites and linking to and from SPJ's main site. This should be added to the agenda for the July Executive Committee meeting.

**Motion by Robert Leger that the SPJ board of directors affirms and recommits to its decision of last October in support of funding for the two-year Web proposal. This is vital to the future of SPJ and journalism at large and the SPJ board of directors strongly urges the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation to approve this measure. Second by Cross. Motion passed unanimously.**

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### **Historic Site in Journalism**

The group discussed the nomination of The Monroe Watchman in West Virginia as a historic site. To be considered, the site should be more than just old. It should have a "first" to it, or something else of historic value.

**Motion by Todd Gillman to reject this proposal at this time. Second by Pat McKeand. Motion carried.**

The proposal can be resubmitted at a future date if it is revised to show historic value. Niederpruem will contact Nerissa Young, who submitted the proposal, and let her know about criteria and that she can resubmit later if she would like.

Niederpruem pointed out that awards criteria needs to be included in all board materials where an awards selection will take place. Niederpruem announced that Guy Baehr would be stepping in as chair of the National Awards and Honors Committee as a result of the death of June Anderson Almquist.

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## **Legal Defense Fund Request**

Al Cross presented the board with a Legal Defense Fund request totaling \$4,000. The amount would be used to cover copying costs for lawyers defending two collegiate journalists in the case of Kincaid vs. Gibson. Supporting materials are included in the board packets.

**Motion by Ray Marcano to approve this expenditure. Second by Jay Evensen. Motion carried unanimously.**

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## **Convention Update**

President-elect Ray Marcano, chair of the convention planning committee, provided an update on convention planning. Current fund raising is at \$77,500. Much time during this conference has been set aside for individual writing consultations and sessions with writing coaches. A tentative schedule should be complete by May 27.

Niederpruem mentioned that future conventions were planned in 2001 in Seattle (Bellevue) and 2002 in Ft. Worth. If chapters are interested in making a bid for the 2003 convention, they should be ready to make that bid at the convention in October.

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## **Committee Reports**

The following committee reports were submitted for inclusion in the board packet materials: ACEJMC, Diversity, Freedom of Information, International Journalism, Journalism Education, Project Watchdog and Legal Defense Fund. Committee members who were present presented reports.

### **ACEJMC**

Committee Chair Steve Geimann presented his report and discussed the importance of SPJ's "seat at the table" in evaluating journalism programs around the country. Geimann reminded board members of the need for volunteers to participate in evaluation site visits. Time requirement is four days on site at the facility and advance preparation time to read the self studies that are prepared by the schools before the visits. Each visit requires at least one "practitioner." The group considers practitioners to be persons from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, American Advertising Federation, the Public Relations Society of America and the Society of Professional Journalists.

The following board members indicated their interest in volunteering to serve as practitioners for future visits. Geimann will contact ACEJMC and make arrangements and get back in touch with these board members: Irwin Gratz, Pat McKeand, Jay Evensen, Oren Campbell, Mark Scarp, Lisa Rollins, Jim Parker, Dave Carlson and Kyle E. Niederpruem.

### **FOI Report and First Amendment Awards Nominations**

FOI Chair Ian Marquand nominated three individuals for the Society's First Amendment Awards: Charles Levendosky, Oprah Winfrey, and Mary Mapes. Nomination materials were included in the board packet under the FOI Committee Report.

**Motion by David Carlson to approve First Amendment Awards to Charles Levendosky and Mary Mapes. Second by Jim Parker. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Project Watchdog**

Al Cross presented this report on behalf of committee chair Nerissa Young. Young has been exploring the

idea of a national advertising campaign in conjunction with the Ad Council related to the press. Niederpruem will direct Young to continue this exploration and further discussion will take place at the July Executive Committee meeting. The actual message and purpose will need to be defined further.

## Nominations

Niederpruem announced that Immediate Past President Wendy Myers and Chapter Doctor Mac McKerral would be jointly coordinating the work of the nominations committee this summer. The deadline for nominations for national board seats up for election is July 1. Candidates can be nominated later from the floor during the opening business meeting of the convention, but only candidates who declare their intentions to the nominating committee by July 1 will be recognized in Quill magazine, on SPJ's Web site and in the Delegate Handbook at convention.

When asked about whether they would seek reelection, the following board members responded.

Those seeking reelection: Region 1 Director Irwin Gratz and Region 9 Director Jay Evensen. Undecided: Region 5 Director Pat McKeand, Region 7 Director Robert Leger and Region 8 Director Todd Gillman. Region 4 Director Ginny Frizzi has completed her three terms of service on the board. Bruce Cadwallader will be running for that position.

The following seats are up for election at the 2000 National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

President-elect  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Region 1 Director  
Region 4 Director  
Region 5 Director  
Region 7 Director  
Region 8 Director  
Region 9 Director  
Adviser At-Large  
Director At-Large  
Student Representatives (two seats)

Board members suggested the need for an organization chart that explains the duties of each office with a complete job description. This should be extended also to include national committee chairs and instructions on how committee appointments are made and who is in charge of those. Gratz mentioned that this could fall under the work he and Mac McKerral were doing on preparing a compilation of SPJ's policies.

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## Regional Reports

### Region 1

Gratz reported a well-attended regional conference with good programming. He has talked with two groups of students who indicated an interest in forming or reviving student chapters. Next year's regional conference may be in conjunction with RTNDA in Boston if all logistics work out. Tentative dates — March 30-April 1, 2001.

### Region 3

Biggs also reported a successful regional in Tampa, Fla., with more than 100 attendees. She is considering Orlando as the location for next year's conference. The Mobile (Alabama) pro chapter is working on reactivating.

### Region 5

The Region 5 Conference was held in conjunction with Region 7, and Leger will present that report.

McKeand mentioned that chapters in his region were interested in donation opportunities for items at the new headquarters building. Gray will prepare a list of sponsorship opportunities.

#### Region 6

Region 6 Director Dave Aeikens submitted a written report that was included in the board packets. Aeikens reported a regional conference in Minneapolis with 150 people. The conference was jointly sponsored with NPPA, NATAS and SPJ and included scholarships for four attendees from SPJ's national Taishoff Fund. Aeikens handed out copies of the Minnesota pro chapter's state audit of open records and mentioned that the Milwaukee pro chapter is struggling but is working on programming.

#### Region 7

Leger reported that the joint Region 5/7 Conference at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch had more than 200 people attended. The program included a day of computer assisted reporting training led by Investigative Reporters and Editors. Leger commented on the excellent conference Web site and the work of Staci D. Kramer in organizing the event. Next year's conference may be in Witchita, Kan. Leger mentioned the success of the Kansas City Press Club (SPJ chapter) in its revitalization efforts.

#### Region 8

Gillman reported that his regional conference was coming up May 12-14 in Austin, Texas. The conference is in conjunction with a National Writers Workshop through the Poynter Institute. Attendance to date is around 300 for the entire program, and these are not all SPJ conference participants. The majority of pro chapters in Region 8 are doing well, although the Oklahoma chapter is struggling.

#### Region 9

Jay Evensen said about 80 people came to the conference in Denver and they were pleased. The theme was e-elections. Good attendance by students. Eastern Utah College was very energetic. Group of people in western Colorado interested in starting a pro chapter. Denver is doing well. Utah is going along as usual with strong FOI issues. Next year — no commitments — may be Utah State in Logan.

#### Region 10

Regions 10 and 11 held a combined regional conference in Las Vegas. Campbell reported that the 2001 Region 10 Conference will be March 30-31 in the Tri Cities. The theme will be "Writing the Great Northwest." The William O. Douglas chapter will host the conference. Campbell mentioned that he is working with a couple of universities interested in starting student chapters.

#### Region 11

Scarp's written report was included in the board packet. Scarp summarized the Regions 10 and 11 Conference in Las Vegas and noted that the Los Angeles pro chapter will host the 2001 conference and San Francisco is in line for 2002. This year's conference was a "hostless" program. Scarp is preparing a guide titled "How to Put on a Regional Conference." It will be available for other chapters.

#### Region 12

Rollins discussed the challenges of the Region 12 Conference and said that things went well despite difficulties. She was disappointed with attendance and participation by some chapters in the region but had received positive feedback about the programming.

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### **Board Calendar / Meeting Dates**

Niederpruem asked regional directors to provide dates and locations for the 2001 regional conferences.

The board discussed the location of the spring board meeting. The board was equally divided among having next year's meeting in San Diego, New Orleans or Atlanta.

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### **Mentor Program**

Student representative Michelle Swafford said the mentor program she had begun had been turned over to headquarters for maintenance. Tammi Hughes, director of education and programming, is working on this project and hopes for a May 31 launch date. Hughes will coordinate a mailing and publicity for the program. Swafford continues to work on ideas for affinity and benefit programs for students to present to Gray for discussion by the board at a future date.

To help keep students after they graduate, board members suggested a spring mailing to graduating students offering SPJ's congratulations and reminding them to update their mailing address and inform them about the two-year post grad membership. This could also be done through a house ad in Quill.

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### **At-Large Directors Report**

Jim Parker said he has been writing up a piece about SPJ's perspective on the proposed CBS and Viacom merger. It will be published in May or June, and SPJ should let its membership know about it. This might be a good idea for a Quill story, said some board members.

Board took at break at 4:55 p.m., and the meeting reconvened at 5:05 p.m.

Niederpruem noted that the Sunshine awards and Fellows awards in this packet would be discussed and selected by the Executive Committee at its July meeting.

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### **Chapter Business**

**Motion by Todd Gillman to grant a full chapter charter to Northwestern Oklahoma State University student chapter. Jim Parker seconded. Motion carried.**

SPJ headquarters will prepare the charter and send it to the chapter.

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### **Awards Discussion**

Mark of Excellence awards

David Carlson brought up the issue that judging for Mark of Excellence awards varies considerably from year to year. Judges have the option of not making awards in categories when they don't feel an entry merits an award, and many people think that's unfair. Different judging standards in different regions could lead to one entry being disqualified while another lesser entry receives an award from another region. He suggested the possibility of offering the discretion of not making an award at the national level instead of the local level.

The group discussed what to do when categories had only a few entries and how to deal with subjective judging issues, coming to the conclusion that there is no way to ensure absolute uniformity in judging. Judging styles and philosophies lead to different judging levels. Judges are chosen because of their expertise, and they should be given the authority to decide what merits an award.

Several board members mentioned concerns about entries being in the wrong regions.

The group discussed the possibility of combining the best all around non-daily categories again, and developing a national sweepstakes award for the school winning the most awards. These and other issues will be discussed during the July Executive Committee meeting after committee chair Guy Baehr has a chance to examine the contest and make recommendations.

Sigma Delta Chi Awards

Paul Davis, past president of SPJ, shared with the board that the name of the Sigma Delta Chi awards was changed in 1989 from the Distinguished Service awards after the organization decided to change its name from Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi to Society of Professional Journalists.

### Collegiate Institutional Membership

Traci Christler, SPJ director of membership and awards, briefly discussed her ideas for SPJ's Institutional Membership program. The membership category would become less of a fund raising option and more of a membership type with benefits. Christler is preparing a benefits list and a pricing range for memberships, based on size of the organization. She asked board members for their advice and recommendations about benefits and pricing. Christler reminded board members that there was a difference between an institutional membership and a gift to the Foundation. Christler will finalize her proposal for Institutional Members and Collegiate Institutional Membership and will present it to board members for suggestions.

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### Other Business

- Niederpruem explained that the West Virginia pro chapter is going inactive. They plan to use their remaining funds to present scholarships. The last meeting is scheduled for May 12 in Charleston.
  - Niederpruem mentioned that she is looking at several collaborative efforts with other organizations and will be running those by committee chairs who would be involved with the projects.
  - Gray discussed the possibility of extending SPJ's reach internationally. The South African Free-lance Journalists Association are interested in aligning themselves in some way with SPJ. Niederpruem suggested posing this idea to International Journalism Committee Chair John Hopkins since an alignment might be difficult due to cultural, legal, and constitutional differences. Depending on Hopkins' response, this issue could be presented to the Executive Committee in July
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### New Business

- Niederpruem asked that all directors begin submitting written reports for the board packets in advance of the board meetings. These would be good for informational purposes, allowing directors to be prepared for discussions at the meetings.
- Motion by Dave Carlson to make all of the reports to the board written with the exception of the president's and the executive director's report. The motion died without a second.
- Michelle Swafford mentioned that several items were to be addressed at this meeting and were not. Those included the board policies and guidelines and the lending of SPJ's name and logo. Gratz explained that his report on the policies and guidelines is not complete but will be addressed as soon as it's finished.
- Board members asked about when governance issues would show up on the agenda. Niederpruem said this strategic planning committee has the longest timeframe for work and it will show up at some point after Niederpruem, and the committee members meet with the membership director. Niederpruem asked for potential candidates to lead the newsletters and trade publications committees related to strategic planning.
- Council of Presidents Update. Al Cross attending the COP meeting recently and volunteered SPJ to host the group's 2001 fall meeting. The obligation would include lunch, continental breakfast and meeting room for about 25 people. This would take place during SPJ's national convention in Seattle.

**Motion by Irwin Gratz to proceed with the bid to host this group's meeting. Second by Robert Leger. Motion carried unanimously.**

Cross will contact the COP leaders.

There were housekeeping announcements about tomorrow's meeting.

**Motion to adjourn by Ray Marcano. Second By Pat McKeand. Motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.**

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## Action List

### SPJ Headquarters

- Make corrections as outlined to the Oct. 2, Oct. 3, Oct. 6 and Finance Committee Meeting minutes. Post corrected minutes to the Web site.
- Mail draft of April 29, 2000, meeting minutes to SPJ board within two weeks.
- Check the meeting tapes from the October SPJ board meeting to determine the exact phrasing of the executive session policy adopted by the board. Correct minutes as necessary.
- As soon as possible, provide detailed information about the new headquarters ribbon-cutting ceremony to SPJ board members.
- Examine the option of setting up spj.org mail accounts for SPJ board members, and report back to the board.
- Prepare quarterly reports for SPJ Regional Directors to include all contact information for members and chapter leaders in each region, and provide it in electronic files. Begin the process of developing this for chapter presidents and advisers on a chapter level. Regional Directors should receive a comma delimited text file with contact information for members in their region.
- Make corrections as voted on by the board to the Fiscal 2001 SPJ Budget.
- Check the reimbursement policy for board member stipends. Should reimbursements be submitted within two months of the expense or by the end of the fiscal year? (This may have been voted on in October. Check tapes for actual phrasing.) Report findings at the Executive Committee Meeting in July.
- Provide a Quill advertising rate card and media kit to all SPJ board members.
- Inform SPJ chapters of the national organization's ability to host chapter Web sites at SPJ's site at [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org).
- Staff should prepare a recommendation for a policy on hosting local chapter sites and linking to and from SPJ's site. This should be discussed at the July Executive Committee meeting.
- Prepare news release announcing SPJ's Legal Defense Fund grant in the Kincaid vs. Gibson appeal. Have check cut and mailed immediately.
- Headquarters will prepare a list of all board positions up for election this year. That will be distributed to board members, chapter presidents and advisers.
- SPJ Headquarters will prepare and send a chartering certificate for the Northwestern Oklahoma State University student chapter.
- Julie Grimes, SPJ communications director, will send lists of the regional Mark of Excellence winners to David Carlson.
- Headquarters will further revise the plans for institutional and collegiate memberships and will send a copy of the proposal to board members for input.
- A discussion began about extending SPJ's reach internationally. The South African Freelance Journalists Association is interested in aligning in some way with SPJ. Gray will be in touch with International Journalism Committee Chair John Hopkins and will report back to the Executive Committee at its July meeting.
- The following discussion items should be researched and added to the July Executive Committee meeting agenda: board policies and guidelines (McKerral and Gratz), policies regarding inactive chapters (Gray), and the lending of SPJ's name and logo (Gray).

### Specific Board Members

- Kyle Niederpruem will contact Nerissa Young to inform her of the board's decision regarding her Historic Site in Journalism nomination.
  - Officers who will be going to Green Eyeshade awards presentations. Atlanta — June 3. Al Cross and Jim Gray won't be able to attend. David Carlson, Ray Marcano, Kyle Niederpruem and Marcia Biggs may be able to go and visit media organizations.
  - Regional Directors should talk with chapters about the opportunity to host SPJ's National Convention. Chapters wishing to submit bids should do so at the Convention in Columbus, Ohio.
  - Steve Geimann will write to ACEJMC and let them know about the board members who volunteered to participate in site inspections. Geimann will let those individuals know what they need to do now.
  - Niederpruem will notify Ian Marquand about the First Amendment Award recipients. They will decide on a method for notifying the recipients about the awards presentation.
  - All nominations for national board seats are due by July 1 to be included in publicity materials including Quill magazine, the SPJ Web site and the Delegate Handbook.
  - Irwin Gratz will continue to work with Mac McKerral and SPJ Headquarters on preparing an SPJ Policy Manual. This will include an organization chart that lists job descriptions and responsibilities for SPJ's board of directors, national committee chairs and staff.
  - By the end of May, Regional Directors should provide a date and location for 2001 Regional Conferences.
  - Al Cross will contact the Council of Presidents leadership and let them know SPJ would like to host their fall 2001 meeting.
- Board members should contact Kyle Niederpruem with suggestions for leaders of the strategic planning committees for newsletters and trade publications.