

# SPJ/SDX Combined Meeting Minutes

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April 27, 2002 - Indianapolis, IN.

**Meeting Date:** April 27, 2002

**Meeting Place:** The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis, IN.

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## Roll Call:

Board Members Present:

11 SDX board members

Paul McMasters  
Sue Porter  
Steve Geimann  
Howard Dubin  
Betsy Ashton  
David Boardman  
Fred Brown  
Frank Gibson  
Kelly Hawes  
Jane Kirtley  
Georgiana Vines

20 SPJ board members

Al Cross  
Robert Leger  
Gordon "Mac" McKerral  
Ray Marcano  
Jim Highland  
Jim Parker  
Jamie Gonzales  
Brian Joseph  
Elizabeth Bienvenu  
David Carlson  
Irwin Gratz  
Holly Fisher  
Bruce Cadwallader  
Vicky Katz Whitaker  
Dave Aeikens  
Patrick Dobson  
Todd Gillman  
Jay Evensen  
Steve Maynard  
Mark Scarp

McMasters recognized board member Betsy Ashton who thanked the board members for the flowers and kind thoughts following the death of her mother.

Staff Members Present: 12

Executive Director Terry Harper  
Deputy Executive Director Julie Grimes  
Director of Finance Catherine Davis  
Quill Editor Jeff Mohl  
Communications and Marketing Director Sarah Shrode  
Education and Programs Director Tammi Hughes  
Awards Coordinator Bobby Deckard  
Membership Manager Lynn Nerz  
Web Fellow Ben Everson  
Programs Coordinator Carrie Copeland  
Finance Assistant Erin Sanders  
Roger Whitaker.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon proper motion and second by Leger and Gibson, respectively, the minutes of the October 4, 2001 joint meeting of the boards of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists and the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation were unanimously approved.

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## **REPORT OF THE SPJ PRESIDENT**

SPJ President Al Cross referred to his printed report, which was distributed at the meeting.

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## **REPORT OF THE SDX PRESIDENT**

SDX Foundation President Paul McMasters reviewed his report, which was distributed at the meeting. McMasters has worked closely with SPJ leadership and was a member of the Executive Director Search Committee. The board has been very focused on its mission and its support of SPJ. McMasters highlighted the need for accurate, current financial information for the Foundation.

McMasters summarized a successful Pulliam Editorial Fellowship Banquet April 19 in Washington, D.C. The event honored Joe Holley of the San Antonio Express News and featured Leonard Downie, executive editor of The Washington Post.

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## **REVIEW OF GRANTS**

McMasters explained the procedure for reviewing the grant requests to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation. Grants will be discussed one at a time. The SPJ board will make a funding recommendation at this meeting, and the SDX board will review the recommendations and make a funding determination during the SDX Foundation meeting on April 28.

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## **SPJ NATIONAL CONVENTION**

SPJ presented a grant request in the amount of \$76,380 to fund the educational elements of the SPJ National Convention. The Society of Professional Journalists' National Convention is a three-day program for professional journalists, student journalists and journalism educators. Although there is official Society business conducted during the weekend, the vast majority of the programming is aimed at helping journalists hone their craft, as well as be brought up to date on the latest developments relating to issues such as the First Amendment, freedom of information and ethics, to name a few. The program is designed to build upon the skills the participants already have to make them better journalists. Unlike some past requests, this grant incorporates the staff costs of this program.

There was discussion about whether a grant request to the SDX Foundation should support an organization's staff that exists prior to the grant. This is something the board would like to address in the future. There also were discussions about SPJ's relationship with other potential media sponsors and the financial results of a convention.

Upon proper motion and second by Leger and Parker, respectively, the SPJ board recommended SDX funding for the SPJ National Convention grant request.

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## **SPJ WRITERS WORKSHOPS**

SPJ submitted a grant request in the amount of \$34,000 to conduct three National Writers Workshops during the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The grant request represented the staff costs involved in executing the educational programs as registration fees and corporate sponsorship are anticipated to cover the "hard"

costs associated with the program (meals, printing, postage, meeting space, etc.).

The Foundation board wanted to know that this program was used to recruit SPJ members. The groups discussed partnership opportunities and the history of SPJ's workshop program.

Upon proper motion and second by Parker and Gillman, respectively, the SPJ board recommended SDX funding for the SPJ Writers Workshops grant request.

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### **IRE-SPJ BETTER WATCHDOG WORKSHOPS**

A joint grant request from Investigative Reporters and Editors and SPJ to conduct a series of "Better Watchdog" workshops in the amount of \$100,000 was reviewed. The requests asks for \$25,000 now, \$25,000 in the fall and \$50,000 next spring to conduct 20 regional workshops aimed at journalists at small- to medium-sized news organizations (print, broadcast and online) and bureau reporters at larger organizations. These workshops will focus on FOI issues to stimulate investigative and enterprise journalism.

Although IRE will be the lead organization in the workshops, SPJ will share equal billing, will have influence over the programming, and some workshops will be tied in to SPJ Regional Conferences. SPJ President Cross has been working closely with IRE Executive Director Brant Houston to draft a mutually agreeable letter of agreement outlining the responsibilities of each organization.

Upon proper motion and second by Parker and Highland, respectively, the SPJ board recommended SDX funding for the IRE-SPJ Better Watchdog Workshops. As a student employee of IRE, Joseph abstained.

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### **ETHICS IN JOURNALISM WEEK**

The SPJ Ethics Committee requested \$20,120 for an Ethics in Journalism Week. Of the amount, \$8,120 would be used for printing and mailing expenses; \$12,000 would be available for regional requests to cover expenses for speakers.

Foundation board member and SPJ Ethics Committee Co-chair Fred Brown presented this request. Brown explained that past SPJ membership surveys indicated most members were interested in two major issues: FOI and ethics. The proposal calls for a National Ethics in Journalism Week, which would take place in April. The goal would be to create discussions while identifying ethical problems and ethical progress in the journalism industry.

Upon proper motion and second by Leger and Carlson, respectively, the SPJ board recommended SDX funding for the Ethics in Journalism grant request.

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### **PROJECT SUNSHINE/NATIONAL FOI COALITION CONFERENCES**

The Middle Tennessee Professional Chapter and National Freedom of Information Coalition propose spending \$2,500 to help underwrite the 2002 NFOIC Conference in Orlando on May 3-5 and \$10,000 for a conference in Nashville in 2003 to which SPJ Sunshine chairs will be invited as well as NFOIC members. McMasters explained that the Foundation Executive Committee has already approved \$2,500 of the request in principle.

Upon proper motion and second by Leger and Highland, respectively, the SPJ board recommended SDX funding for the Project Sunshine/National FOI Coalition Conferences grant request.

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## **“STRANGER WITH A CAMERA”**

Appalshop, a grass roots organization in Whitesburg, Ky., requested \$25,000 for a national outreach campaign that uses the documentary, “Stranger with a Camera,” to stimulate discussion and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of freedom of the press in America.

Upon proper motion and second by McKerral and Carlson, respectively, the SPJ board did not recommend SDX funding for this request.

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## **CORNERSTONE PROJECT**

The Cornerstone Project is a First Amendment education and awareness program of The Media Institute. The group plans to host a luncheon program three times yearly in Washington, D.C. Each luncheon will feature a speech or panel discussion by prominent First Amendment authorities. The SDX Foundation would be the sole sponsor of the luncheon series for two years for a grant of \$15,000 per annum or a total of \$30,000.

Awards and Grants Committee Chair Georgiana Vines said her committee recommended funding of this request for one year. The original request was \$15,000, but with revisions, the final amount will be \$16,000. The additional costs will be for tape recordings that will be made available to SPJ.

Upon proper motion and second by McKerral and Dobson, respectively, the SPJ recommended SDX funding for the Cornerstone Project grant request.

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the boards of directors, Presidents Cross and McMasters declared the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m. on Saturday, April 27, 2002.